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22 January 2024

CORPORATE SUPPORT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Support Committee will be held in **The Council Chamber at The Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF** on **Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 6.00 pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors Oppler (Chair), Tandy (Vice-Chair), Bower, Brooks, J English, Jones, Lawrence, Lloyd, O'Neill, Turner and Warr

PLEASE NOTE:

A live webcast of the meeting will be available via the Council's Committee's Web Page

Any members of the public wishing to address the Committee meeting during Public Question Time, will need to email Committees@arun.gov.uk by 5.15 pm on **Wednesday, 24 January 2024** in line with current Committee Meeting Procedure Rules.

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact Committees@arun.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1.   APOLOGIES

2.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are invited to make any declaration of pecuniary, personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda, and are reminded that they should re-declare their interest before consideration of the items or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

Members and Officers should make their declaration by stating:

a)   the item they have the interest in
b)   whether it is a pecuniary/personal interest and/or prejudicial interest
c)   the nature of the interest

3.   <u>MINUTES</u>   (Pages 1 - 8)

The Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Support Committee held on 12 October 2023.

4.   <u>ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIR OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES</u>

5.   <u>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</u>

To receive questions from the public (for a period of up to 15 minutes)

6.   <u>MICROSOFT LICENCE RENEWAL [15 MINUTES]</u>   (Pages 9 - 14)

Microsoft licences are purchased on a three-year cycle and the current licence expires at the end of June 2024. We are seeking approval to enter into a new contract at the pre-award stage.

7.   <u>CORPORATE SUPPORT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 & QUARTER 3 [30 MINUTES]</u>   (Pages 15 - 28)

This reports set out the performance of the Key Performance indicators at Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 covering the periods 1 April to 31 December 2023.

8.   <u>COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT - SERVICE SPECIFIC - BUDGET 2024/25 [15 MINUTES]</u>   (Pages 29 - 36)

The purpose of the report is for this Committee to consider and recommend its revenue budget for inclusion in the Council's overall 2024/25 revenue budget. These recommendations will be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024 when it considers the overall revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25 so recommendations can be made to a Special Meeting of the Council on 21 February 2024 regarding the budgets to be set and level of Council Tax for the District for 2024/25.

9.   BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2023   (Pages 37 - 40)
     [QUARTER 3] [15 MINUTES]

     The purpose of this report is to appraise the Corporate
     Support Committee of its forecast outturn against the 2023/24
     budgets, which were approved by Full Council at its meeting
     of the 9 March 2023.

10.   PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024-2025 [10 MINUTES]   (Pages 41 - 56)

     The Localism Act 2011, section 38 (1) requires that local
     authorities prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement. This
     paper introduces the draft Pay Policy Statement for
     2024/2025 (attached) and asks members to approve it.

11.   ELECTORAL REVIEW [45 MINUTES]   (Pages 57 - 142)

     The Committee is asked to consider an initial report and
     recommendations in relation to an Electoral Review of the
     Arun District.

OUTSIDE BODIES - FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS

There are no feedback reports for this meeting.

12.   WORK PROGRAMME [5 MINUTES]   (Pages 143 -
                                                  144)

     The committee work programme is attached for members to
     note.

**Note : If Members have any detailed questions, they are reminded that
         they need to inform the Chair and relevant Director in advance of
         the meeting.**

Note :   Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings – The District Council
         supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision making and
         permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are
         open to the public. This meeting may therefore be recorded, filmed or broadcast
         by video or audio, by third parties. Arrangements for these activities should
         operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council and as available via
         the following link Filming Policy

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Subject to approval at the next Corporate Support Committee meeting

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CORPORATE SUPPORT COMMITTEE

12 October 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Oppler (Chair), Bower, Brooks, J English, Jones, Turner, Lury (Substitute for Warr), McDougall (Substitute for Tandy), Nash (Substitute for O'Neill), Mrs Stainton (Substitute for Lloyd) and Wallsgrove (Substitute for Lawrence)

290.   APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Lawrence, Lloyd, O'Neill, Tandy and Warr.

291.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

292.   MINUTES

The minutes of the previous Corporate Support Committee meeting held on 27 June 2023 were approved by the committee and signed by the Chair.

293.   ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There were no urgent items for the meeting.

294.   PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received for the meeting.

295.   TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL ANNUAL UPDATE

The ICT Operations Manager advised members that the report before them provided an update on the activities and progress of Technology & Digital over the last 12 months. He confirmed that the team had maintained a high level of service and progressed a number of key projects.

Corporate Support Committee - 12.10.23

The Chair invited questions from members where it was asked what the timetable was for the removal of analogue telephone lines, and it was commented that the donation of 350 computers to local schools was great to see. The ICT Operations Manager confirmed that the work being completed to remove analogue telephone lines was being done by BT, and the council could help in providing reports on the district but that was all. He also said that the council was proud to be able to deliver 350 laptops and provide local schools with support. Additionally, it was asked for information on the council's cyber security defences where it was explained that it would not be possible for that to be discussed in public. Members then raised questions on Data Protection training that could be provided for members where the Group Head of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer confirmed that all staff had recently completed Data Protection refresher training and that relevant Data Protection training would be delivered to members as a priority. It was also stated that the ICT support that had been provided to members during their recent induction programme following the May 2023 election had been exceptional.

Members then noted the report.

296.   HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Environmental Health Team Manager explained to members that report concerned the council's Health and Safety Policy in particular part 2 of that policy which detail the council's health and safety organisation and responsibilities. Part 2 sets out who does what in relation to management of Health and Safety, he confirmed that this was previously adopted by the Committee in January 2022 with some minor amendments made in September 2022. The updates included in the report before members were, the council's structure and service area activities, the activities are the risk areas identified within service area and ensures that the necessary help and support can be provided to help management of these risks. Additionally, the terms of reference for the Staff and Safety Panel which was approved by the Panel in May 2023. Driving Licence checks content had been updated to show that these would now be completed on a risk-based frequency rather than annually as previously resolved by the committee, this was due to the recent checks completed in 2022 that resulted in no issues being found. He also addressed some minor inaccuracies that had been documented in the council's structure that had been provided with the report and advised that these would be corrected under delegation to make minor amendments should the committee approve the recommendation to allow the Group Head to make minor amendments Policy.

Members were then invited to ask any question or make comments by the Chair. The following points were raised including, how its confirmed that staff have read and understood the policy, what mental health support measures were in place for staff and where was this documented within this policy. It was confirmed that all Policies were publicised through the councils' communications team and Managers were required to ensure that their teams understand the policy and their relevant responsibilities. Regarding Mental Health support, this was provided through Human Resources. A

question regarding the councils' asbestos register in relation to the amount of asbestos found at the Windmill Entertainment Centre after the recent fire and had the council been aware of these levels prior to the fire, it was confirmed that the asbestos arrangements varied however they were robust, specifically regarding the Windmill that detail would need to be provided by the Property and Estates team. Clarification was sought regarding the driving licence checks on how the risk-based approach would work in practice. As the debate due to a close one member raised their concern regarding the current state of the Bognor Regis Arcade specifically the health hazard that had been created by the amount of pigeon activity, whilst it was explained that this concern wasn't specific to the policy before members the Environmental Health Team Manager stated he would follow this up with the Property and Estates team as this would be a potential public health concern for the council to address.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Nash and seconded by Councillor McDougall.

The Committee

RESOLVED

2.1. that the Health and Safety Policy: Organisation and Responsibilities be adopted; and

2.2. that authority be given to the Group head of Technical Services to make minor and administrative amendments to the Policy

297.   DATA PROTECTION POLICY UPDATE

The Information Governance Manager advised members that the purpose of the report was for them to review and agree to adopt the update Data Protection Policy. It was explained that the last updated in August 2020 and was intended for annual update, however the requirement for the update was highlighted by the Information Governance audit in December 2022. The main updates were relevant to Council employees, roles and responsibilities, and recognising the impact of UK GDPR as well as linking in more closely with the council's ICT Policy.

As there were no questions the recommendation was proposed by Councillor Nash and seconded by Councillor Wallsgrove.

The Committee

RESOLVED

2.1 that the revised Data Protection Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be adopted.

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298.   BUDGET PROCESS REPORT

The Group Head Finance and Section 151 Officer introduced the report to members, where he explained that the report outlined the budget process for 2024/25 that would be followed, members were being asked to note its content which was a high-level outline of the process and had already been approved by Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting on 11 July 2023. The detailed committee budget was due to be presented to Corporate Support Committee at its meeting scheduled to be held on 31 January 2024 and a medium-term financial report which would contain more information ahead of the next committee report would be presented to Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting on 26 October 2023, finally he reminded members that the budget challenges previously documented still remained.

The Chair then invited questions, where clarity was sought regarding the uncertainty over the long-term government funding, it was confirmed that the medium-term financial report and a follow-up report would be presented to the Policy and Finance Committee meeting scheduled for 6 December 2023 and this would be when the details might be provided to the council from Government. It was explained that certain assumptions would be made within the forecast, however these come with uncertainty.

Members noted the report.

299.   BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Group Head Finance and Section 151 Officer introduced his report to members, where he explained the report outlined the committees budget forecast out turn against the 2023/24 budget. He explained that the virements that members were being asked to approve were not additional spend, it was presentational. He outlined the importance of members receiving this new report in order to keep them informed of performance against the approved committee budget. He then highlighted some of the underspends and overspends highlighted within the report, he confirmed that the finance team were actively working with Group Head and budget holders to drive down and mitigate overspending where possible and reminded members to read the Financial Prospects report being delivered to the Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting on 26 October 2023.

The Chair then invited questions from members where the following was raised, comments regarding the level of agency staff was asked, in particular how many agency staff were currently employed, what was the total cost of this to the council alongside what would the cost be should these positions be filled by permanent council employees. It was confirmed that the detail requested would be provided in writing to Committee members, however the Group Head of Finance also highlighted the difficulties with recruitment that were being faced since the pandemic. The Group Head of Law and Governance also confirmed that he was seeing the same difficulties, however specifically addressing comments made regarding paragraph 4.7, he stated that last year the spend had been over £420,000 and this year it was forecast to see a

reduction of £100,000, confirming that the focus to drive down spending was effective as well as highlighting that the flexible working that has arisen from the pandemic was something that the council could take advantage of. The Group Head of Organisational Excellence confirmed that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) were reviewing the use of agency staffing very closely and regularly and there would be an improvement seen in this area over time.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Wallsgrove and seconded by Councillor Lury.

The Committee

RESOLVED

2.2. Noted the report.

RECOMMEND TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

2.3. that it approves virements of £190,900 from the Corporate Support Committee to the Economy Committee and £34,423 from the Policy and Finance Committee to the Corporate Support Committee

300.   SUNDRY DEBTS WRITE OFFS 2022/23

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer advised members that the retrospective report asked them to note that £39,521.56 of sundry debt had been written off in respect of 81 cases as shown in appendix 1. He explained that members were now also being asked to approve this write in line with Part 7, Management Structure, Delegations and Authorisations, Section 2, Officer Scheme of Management, Group Heads, paragraph 1.1.9. In summing up he confirmed for members that, all debts were reviewed and challenged thoroughly.

The Chair then invited questions from members, where clarification was sought on what specifically made up the debts classed as 'miscellaneous' and 'uneconomic', it was confirmed that the detail of each of these would be provided in writing to members. The Group Head of Finance did confirm that for those that sit in the 'uneconomic' column these were debts that had exhausted the recovery process and further work to attempt to recover these debts would prove most costly than the level of debt itself. Further questions on the recovery process were asked where it was confirmed that the process varied from case to case in terms of length of time pursued and that additional detail would be provided outside of the meeting. Members where keen to understand if the council's level of write offs for sundry debt was in line with other local authorities. Final comments made were to ask the Group Head of Finance if he was seeing the levels of debt increase given the current economic situation. He confirmed that the area he expected to see collection rates fall was in council tax and business rate collection,

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however these were seen to be currently holding well, overall, the councils' collections rates have remained steady.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Nash and seconded by Councillor Brooks.

The Committee

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee note that £39,521.38 of sundry debt has been written off in respect of 81 debts under delegated authority during 2022/23 shown in appendix 1.

301.   CUSTOMER SERVICES – ANNUAL UPDATE

Before inviting the report to be presented the Chair thanked the Customer Services Manager and her team for the tour that had been provided for some members today it had been gratefully received. The Customer Services Manager confirmed that the report provided members with an overview of the customer services performance in 2022/23 and it identified merging operational trends compared to the previous 3 – 5 years. She confirmed that since October 2022 a security team had been implemented at both the Civic Centre and Bognor Regis Town Hall for the safety of staff and customers, as well as providing security services they also provide our customers with a triage service. When surveyed customers had fed back that they were happy to speak and interact with the security staff and understood why they were in place. Since April 2023 to August 2023, they have handled a total of 3137 customer interactions. She confirmed that over 6500 webchats had been handled this year almost double what had been handled for the last period. As documented in the report, reporting on data was easily managed in house and allowed for better internal management. One trend highlighted from the data was a decrease in telephone calls received, she explained that this was due to a change in contact pattern from customers and further detail was provided at paragraph 4.3. She also highlighted that appendix 5 showed a decrease in customers who visited the council's reception areas, this was believed to be due to customers using the councils' online services.

The Chair then invited comments from members where further comments regarding the customer services tour where heard, it was commented by one member that they were amazed at the fantastic job completed by the team, it was acknowledged that this role was varied and not always easy and there was a concern for the mental well-being of staff given the variety of issues that they deal with. Comments regarding staffing of the team were also raised, where it was noted that the team were already 1 staff member down with 2 more retiring in the new year and should recruitment for these positions not be well underway by now. This was also echoed by other members who had been in attendance on the tour where it was stated that as the team who were front facing, they should be afforded the highest priority for recruitment. It was also

recommended that future tours for members be organised, and all members should attend. Further discussion was had regarding the need for the security team to be in place and the Chair stated that he had previously raised concerns about the need for the team, however he confirmed that after attending the tour he now understood fully why the team was needed and in place. Discussion then turned to the cost of employing an external company to provide this service and would it be more cost effective for the council to recruit its own security team. A query was raised regarding the level of social media content that was currently provided and could this be increased to improve key messages from the council. It was confirmed that the Communications Team were responsible for the corporate social media posts. There was discussion regarding the opportunity for individual teams to take control of their own social media messaging, how members did have differing opinions on if this would be possible. One member commented that the current set up for council communications was entirely right and proper and should remain with the Communications team managing it. The Group Head of Finance addressed the comments regarding exploring the opportunity to recruit the council's own security team and confirmed that he would investigate the costings for this suggestion for members.

The Committee noted the report.

302.   Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Chair confirmed that the report would be taken as read and as there were no questions, members noted the report.

303.   WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the Work Programme for the remaining municipal year.

(The meeting concluded at 7.06 pm)

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Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	**Corporate Support Committee – 31 January 2024**
SUBJECT:	**Microsoft Licence Renewal**
LEAD OFFICER:	**Paul Symes, Head of Technology & Digital**
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Francis Oppler, Chair of Corporate Support
WARDS:	**All**

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:

The work of Technology & Digital supports the following themes in the Arun Vision: A better future 2022 -2026.

- improving the wellbeing of Arun
- supporting our environment to support us
- fulfilling Arun's economic potential

DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:

- ICT Service Strategy

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

Enter into a 3-year contract for Microsoft licences at an annual cost of approximately £278,000 per year.

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

Microsoft licences are purchased on a three-year cycle and the current licence expires at the end of June 2024. We are seeking approval to enter into a new contract at the pre-award stage.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) The council purchases a three-year Microsoft licence agreement through a Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) compliant framework.

3.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Microsoft licences are purchased on a three-year cycle and the current licence expires at the end of June 2024.

We are looking to lock-in a new three-year term. The total contract value will be above the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) threshold.

We wish to procure the new licences via a GPA compliant framework using mini-competition and award based on the most economically advantages tender (MEAT).

Microsoft prices can change on a monthly basis and there are a number of factors that affect that including inflation and exchange rates. As a public sector organisation we receive a government discount for the life of the contract.

We estimate the licence renewal in June 2024 will be approximately £278,000 and funds are being included in the budget for 2024/25.

Locking into a three-year contract fixes the price for the duration of the contract and provides protection from price increases over that period, three years is the maximum contract length Microsoft allows.

4.   DETAIL

Microsoft technologies are a fundamental part of the councils IT infrastructure and support the delivery of all services.

They are used to deliver end-point access (e.g. Windows), corporate telephony, on-premise servers, cloud infrastructure, databases, administration tools, cyber security, Office 365 and mobile applications.

They are also deeply embedded and integrated into many of our 3rd party line-of-business applications i.e. corporate and departmental systems.

We also use Microsoft as our cloud provider and continue to move services from on-premise to the cloud in-line with our IT strategy. This has helped scale back our on-premise hardware refresh programme, avoid additional support costs, improve our resilience and reduce energy consumption.

Microsoft prices can change on a monthly basis and there are a number of factors that affect that including inflation and exchange rates. As a public sector organisation we receive a government discount for the life of the contract.

Licencing uses a subscription model and at an enterprise level this is not a simple or straightforward process. There are many combinations and choices of licence components that build up our overall holdings (in our case over 20 sub-licences).

The government is in current negotiations with Microsoft on the amount of public sector discount, this won't be known until around May 2024 and have based this report on the current price of licences and included 4.6% for inflation.

We estimate the licence renewal in June 2024 will be £278,000 pa which is an increase of £35,000 based on the price three years ago.

- software: £167,000 pa
- servers: £63,000 pa
- cloud: £48,000 pa

Due to the final subscription pricing not being available until May 2024 and the need for continuity of service we are seeking approval to enter into a new contract at the pre-award stage based on estimates.

5. CONSULTATION

None.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Our IT strategy over many years has been based on Microsoft technologies. We have investigated alternative products but these have been dismissed based on cost, effort, disruption and risk. If we were to change our approach, we would effectively be discarding our investment in time, money and knowledge across the council.

There are alternative products such as Google and Amazon these may be free for home users however at an enterprise level they are not and costs are broadly in line with Microsoft. Any savings on licences would be negated by the cost of transitioning.

Microsoft provides a wide range of integrated services and tools that work seamlessly within their own ecosystem. Moving to a different infrastructure provider could introduce compatibility issues with existing applications and services resulting unreliable performance and degradation of service.

Some back-office systems may not support connectors or integrations to non-Microsoft products and consideration would need to be given to the cost and effort to replace those systems.

During the transition we would need to maintain Microsoft licences alongside any new providers licences effectively doubling up on licences for several years. It is also likely that we would still need to maintain a holding of Microsoft licences post transition.

The IT team would need to undergo significant training and adapt to new tools and platforms, this would be time-consuming and costly. Also all users (officers / members) will need to learn new systems and during the transition period there would be a drop in productivity and quality of service.

Transferring data from one provider to another is a time consuming, complex and a risky process. Significant time and expertise would be required to ensure data integrity and security are maintained during the migration to prevent data loss or breaches. There would also be long periods of downtime for users of those systems along with additional migration costs.

Migrating to a new provider will mean dealing with different support structures which initially would impact response times and issue resolution.

Our IT infrastructure is regulated and audited as part of our Public Service Network (PSN) compliance. Moving to a new infrastructure model will require additional compliance assessments, security checks and audits to be undertaken, and will require specialist resources to be bought in.

7.   COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

The revised contract costs have been reviewed with a prudent approach taken with current information and have been included in the budget for 2024/25.

8.   RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Failure to have a Microsoft licence agreement in place means we would have to stop using all Microsoft products. This would mean the loss of IT systems and telephony for staff, members and customers.

9.   COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

The contract will be procured and awarded in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders. Advice will be sought at all appropriate stages from the Council's Legal Services and Finance teams, and from Hampshire County Council's procurement advisors.

10.   HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

None.

11.   HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

None.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

None.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

None

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

None

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

None.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

None.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

None.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Name: Paul Symes
Job Title: Head of Technology & Digital
Contact Number: 01903 737585

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS*:*

ICT Strategy

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Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee – 31 January 2024
SUBJECT:	**Key Performance Indicators 2022-2026 – Quarter 2 performance report for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.**
LEAD OFFICER:	**Jackie Follis, Group Head of Operational Excellence**
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Francis Oppler, Chair of Corporate Support Committee
WARDS:	N/A

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:
The Key Performance Indictors support the Council's Vision and allows the Council to identify how well we are delivering across a full range of services.
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:
This report is produced by the Group Head of Organisational Excellence to give an update on the Q2 Performance outturn of the Key Performance Indicators.
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:
Not required.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. In order for the Committees to be updated with the Q2 Performance Outturn for the Key Performance indicators for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of this report and provides any questions or comments on the indicators relevant to this Committee to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. This report sets out the performance of the Key Performance indicators at Quarter 2 for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

4. DETAIL

4.1. The Council Vision 2022-2026 was approved at Full Councill in March 2022. To support the Vision we need a comprehensive and meaningful set of performance measures which allow us to identify how well we are delivering across a full range of services. Two kinds of indicators were agreed at the Policy and Finance Committee on 17 March 2022. The first of these are annual indicators and will primarily update the progress against strategic milestones. In addition

to this 'key performance indicators' (KPIs) will be reported to committees every quarter.   These KPIs are known as our Corporate Plan.

4.2.   A short report and appendix will go to each of the other Committees in the cycle of meetings after each quarter has ended. This appendix will only contain the indicators which are relevant to each Committee.

4.3.   A full report showing quarterly performance against all indicators (which are measured at that quarter) will go to the relevant Policy and Finance Committee meeting at the end of the cycle of the other Committee meetings. Members of the other Committees will be able to give comments or ask questions about the KPI indicators that are relevant to their Committee and these will be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration.

4.4.   This is the quarterly report covering performance from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023 and will cover only those indicators that are due to be measured at this point.

4.5.   Thresholds are used to establish which category of performance each indicator is within.

	Achieved target	100% or above target figure
	Didn't achieve target but within 15% range	85%-99.9% below target figure
	Didn't achieve target by more than 15%	85% or less target figure

4.6.   There are 42 Key Performance indicators. 10 of these indicators relate to this Committee and of those 10, 9 are measured at Q2.

4.7.   This report gives the status of the indicators at Q2. Appendix A gives full commentary for each indicator.

Status	Number of Key Performance indicators in this category at Q2
Achieved target	4
Didn't achieve but within 15% range	3
Didn't achieve target by more than 15%	2
TOTAL	9

4.8.   Actions to be taken

For the two indicators which are not achieving at Q2 (CP1 and CP2), both of these are being monitored by CMT, the Interim Group Head of Housing and the Information Management Team. Housing complaint delays continue to be the cause of this KPI not achieving but work is continuing to improve the complaints process in housing. Monthly reporting is sent to the management team, and weekly meetings held with service managers on their open complaints. The actions which the Interim Group Head of Housing is implementing to resolve issues and facilitate responses, should lead to an improvement in the performance of these two indicators.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1.   No consultation has taken place.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1.   To review the report
6.2.   To request further information and/or remedial actions be undertaken

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF COPRORATE SUPPORT/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1.   None required.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1.   None required

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1.   As this report is an information paper, there are no recommendations for the Committee to consider. This report is to be taken as read only with Members having the opportunity to ask questions at the meeting on service performance. Members can also submit questions or comments on the indicators relevant to their Committee and these will be considered by the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1.   Not applicable.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1.   Not applicable.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1.   Not applicable.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1.   Not applicable.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1.   Not applicable.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1.   Not applicable.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1.   Not applicable.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1.   Not applicable.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Name: Jackie Follis
Job Title: Group Head of Organisational Excellence
Contact Number: 01903 737580

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS*: None*

No.	Indicator	Service Committee to consider this	CMT Member	Assess by	Target 2023	Q1 Status	Q2 Commentary	Q2 Outturn and status (April-Sept 2023)	Improved or not since Q1 figure (Q2 compared to Q1)
CP1	% of Stage 2 responses responded to in time	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	80%	Not achieving **Outturn for Q1 50%**	Housing complaint delays continue to be the cause of this KPI not achieving. Commentary from Housing as follows:- Work is continuing to improve the complaints process in housing. Monthly reporting is sent to the management team, and weekly meetings held with service managers on their open complaints. We have continued to see a rise in the volume of complaints coming into our repairs service which has impacted on our response rate, we have also had a number of complex Stage 2 responses which have meant we have had to extend our timescales outside of the 20 days to enable us to respond fully.	Not achieving **Outturn for Q2 47%**	Down by 3% (worse)
CP2	% of Stage 1 responses responded to within 10 working days	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	80%	Not achieving **Outturn for Q1 39%**	Housing complaint delays continue to be the cause of this KPI not achieving. Commentary from Housing as follows:- Our response rates for Stage 1 is below our target but is improving compared to Q1 and we anticipate further improvements throughout the year in the response rates from Housing, and whilst there has been a slight drop in September we anticipate an increase moving forward due to the monitoring measures put in place.	Not achieving **Outturn for Q2 55%**	Up by 16% (better)
CP3	% of FOI requests responded to in 20 working days	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	80%	Achieving **Outturn for Q1 99%**		Achieving **Outturn for Q2 99%**	Same as Q1

No.	Indicator	Service Committee to consider this	CMT Member	Assess by	Target 2023	Q1 Status	Q2 Commentary	Q2 Outturn and status (April-Sept 2023)	Improved or not since Q1 figure (Q2 compared to Q1)
CP4	Sickness absence	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Lower is better	2.2%	Not achieving but within 15% range **Outturn for Q1 2.43%**	This equates to an average of 5.73 days. Absence rates remain consistent.	Not achieving but within 15% range **Outturn for Q2 2.44%**	Same as Q1
CP5	Staff turnover	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Lower is better	14%	Not achieving but within 15% range **Outturn for Q1 15.90%**	This equates to 60 leavers which is a slight decrease on previous months.	Not achieving but within 15% range **Outturn for Q2 14.56%**	Down by 1.34% (better)
CP6	Compliance with Health and Safety programme	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	100%	Not achieving but within 15% range **Outturn for Q1 92%**	Two tasks were issued in this quarter; First Aid and Health & Safety Policy (service areas and activities). By the end of Q2 a total of 322 first aid responses were received from 33 service areas. The safety policy task continued to be completed throughout September resulting in a 100% response rate. The overall performance for Q2 was 93%, which was below target, but represents a high response rate. The average usefulness score rating given by those completing the tasks was 4.52 out of 5.	Not achieving but within 15% range **Outturn for Q1 93%**	Up by 1% (better)
CP7	Average call wait time (secs) for the last month	Corporate Support	Philippa Dart	Lower is better	4 minutes	Achieving **Outturn for Q1 2.44**	The quarterly average wait time is below target. August is known to be one of the quieter call volume months of the year which assists in keeping the average wait time down overall. During September the average wait time rose as call volumes started to rise in line with Council Tax post that was sent out: w/c 04/09 – 3 mins 2 secs w/c 11/09 – 4 mins 37 secs w/c 18/09 – 2mins 49 secs w/c 25/09 – 3 mins 23 secs. In Week 2 of September we were over target by 37 secs. This was due to Council Tax post hitting door mats later than planned and then further letters being sent out.	Achieving **Outturn for Q2 2.33**	Down by 11 seconds (better)

No.	Indicator	Service Committee to consider this	CMT Member	Assess by	Target 2023	Q1 Status	Q2 Commentary	Q2 Outturn and status (April-Sept 2023)	Improved or not since Q1 figure (Q2 compared to Q1)
CP8	Business rates collected	Corporate Support	Philippa Dart	Higher is better	97%	Achieving **Outturn for Q1 30.70%**	Collection rate is cumulative. Target for September collection is 51.2%. Over target for September/Q2.	Achieving **Outturn for Q2 58.90%**	Up by 28.2% (better)
CP9	Council tax collected	Corporate Support	Philippa Dart	Higher is better	96.5%	Achieving **Outturn for Q1 32%**	Collection rate is cumulative. Target for September collection is 58.3%. Over target for September/Q2.	Achieving **Outturn for Q2 58.90%**	Up by 26.9% (better)
CP10	The level of public satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of the Council's services	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	75%	No data - Annual indicator	No data - Annual indicator	No data - Annual indicator	No data - Annual indicator

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Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee – 31 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Key Performance Indicators 2022-2026 – Quarter 3 performance report for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023
LEAD OFFICER:	Jackie Follis – Group Head of Organisational Excellence
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Oppler - Chair
WARDS:	N/A

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:
The Key Performance Indictors support the Council's Vision and allows the Council to identify how well we are delivering across a full range of services.

DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:
This report is produced by the Group Head of Organisational Excellence to give an update on the Q3 Performance outturn of the Key Performance Indicators.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:
Not required.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. In order for the Committees to be updated with the Q3 Performance Outturn for the Key Performance indicators for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of this report and provides any questions or comments on the indicators relevant to this Committee to the Policy and Finance Committee on 7 March 2024.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. This report sets out the performance of the Key Performance indicators at Quarter 3 for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023.

4. DETAIL

4.1. The Council Vision 2022-2026 was approved at Full Councill in March 2022. To support the Vision we need a comprehensive and meaningful set of performance measures which allow us to identify how well we are delivering across a full range of services. Two kinds of indicators were agreed at the Policy and Finance Committee on 17 March 2022. The first of these are annual indicators and will primarily update the progress against strategic milestones. In addition to this 'key performance indicators' (KPIs) will be reported to committees every quarter. These KPIs are known as our Corporate Plan.

4.2.   A short report and appendix will go to each of the other Committees in the cycle of meetings after each quarter has ended. This appendix will only contain the indicators which are relevant to each Committee.

4.3.   A full report showing quarterly performance against all indicators (which are measured at that quarter) will go to the relevant Policy and Finance Committee meeting at the end of the cycle of the other Committee meetings. Members of the other Committees will be able to give comments or ask questions about the KPI indicators that are relevant to their committee and these will be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration.

4.4.   This is the quarterly report covering performance from 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023 and will cover only those indicators that are due to be measured at this point.

4.5.   Thresholds are used to establish which category of performance each indicator is within.

	Achieved target	100% or above target figure
	Didn't achieve target but within 15% range	85%-99.9% below target figure
	Didn't achieve target by more than 15%	85% or less target figure

4.6.   There are 42 Key Performance indicators. 10 of these indicators relate to this Committee and of those 10, 9 are measured at Q3.

4.7.   This report gives the status of the indicators at Q3. Appendix A gives full commentary for each indicator.

Status	Number of Key Performance indicators in this category at Q3
Achieved target	5
Didn't achieve but within 15% range	0
Didn't achieve target by more than 15%	4
TOTAL	**9**

4.8.   Actions to be taken

CP1 and CP2: These indicators are monitored by Corporate Management Team, Group Heads and the Information Management Team. Regarding complaints within the Housing service, actions are in place by the Group Head of Housing to resolve issues and facilitate responses, which should lead to an improvement in the performance of these indicators, and which are reported to the Housing & Wellbeing Committee. Housing complaints performance has improved significantly in recent months, and this is reflected in improved performance against these KPI's. A Joint Complaints Handling Code comes into effect during the course of 2024, and further improvements will be driven across the organisation.

CP4 and CP5: These are being monitored by CMT, the relevant Group Heads and HR.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1.   No consultation has taken place.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1.   To review the report
6.2.   To request further information and/or remedial actions be undertaken

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF CORPORATE SUPPORT/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1.   None required.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1.   None required.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1.   As this report is an information paper, there are no recommendations for the Committee to consider. This report is to be taken as read only with Members having the opportunity to ask questions at the meeting on service performance. Members can also submit questions or comments on the indicators relevant to their committee and these will be considered by the Policy and Finance Committee on 7 March 2024.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1.   Not applicable.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1.   Not applicable.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1.   Not applicable.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1.   Not applicable.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1.   Not applicable.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1. Not applicable.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1. Not applicable.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1. Not applicable.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Name: Jackie Follis
Job Title: Group Head of Organisational Excellence
Contact Number: 01903 737580

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: *None*

No.	Indicator	Council Vision Theme	Service Committee to consider this	CMT Member	Assess by	Target 2023	Q1 Status	Q2 status	Q3 status	Better or worse since Q2 figure (Q3 compared to Q2)	Q3 Commentary
CP1	% of Stage 2 responses responded to in time	Corporate	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	80%	Not achieving Outturn for Q1 50%	Not achieving Outturn for Q2 47%	Not achieving Outturn for Q3 48%	Up by 1% (better)	This indicator is monitored by Corporate Management Team, Group Heads and the Information Management Team. Regarding complaints within the Housing service, actions are in place by the Group Head of Housing to resolve issues and facilitate responses, which should lead to an improvement in the performance of this indicator and which is reported to the Housing & Wellbeing Committee. Housing complaints performance has improved significantly in recent months and this is reflected in improved performance against this KPI. A Joint Complaints Handling Code comes into effect during the course of 2024, and further improvements will be driven across the organisation.
CP2	% of Stage 1 responses responded to within 10 working days	Corporate	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	80%	Not achieving Outturn for Q1 39%	Not achieving Outturn for Q2 55%	Not achieving Outturn for Q3 67%	Up by 12% (better)	This indicator is monitored by Corporate Management Team, Group Heads and the Information Management Team. Regarding complaints within the Housing service, actions are in place by the Group Head of Housing to resolve issues and facilitate responses, which should lead to an improvement in the performance of this indicator and which is reported to the Housing & Wellbeing Committee. Housing complaints performance has improved significantly in recent months and this is reflected in improved performance against this KPI. A Joint Complaints Handling Code comes into effect during the course of 2024, and further improvements will be driven across the organisation.
CP3	% of FOI requests responded to in 20 working days	Corporate	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	80%	Achieving Outturn for Q1 99%	Achieving Outturn for Q2 99%	Achieving Outturn for Q3 99%	Same	All performing well – no concerns
CP4	Sickness absence	Corporate	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Lower is better	2.2%	Not achieving but within 15% range Outturn for Q1 2.43%	Not achieving but within 15% range Outturn for Q2 2.44%	Not achieving Outturn for Q3 2.64%	Up by 0.2% (worse)	Sickness absence figures have been steadily increasing since April 23 albeit by only 0.5%. The increase has been spread evenly over both long term and short term absence. In total, 2,431 working days were lost to sickness absence for the period 1 January 23 to 31 December 23. Stress was the largest contributor to long term absence, with a loss of 581 working days across the organisation. A further 184 days were lost due to mental health absences. Covid and infection related absences were the largest contributor to short term absences resulting in a combined loss of 491 working days. Concerningly for staff, 254 days were due to cancer related absences and 180 days for operations. This equates to an average of 6.45 days per annum
CP5	Staff turnover	Corporate	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Lower is better	14%	Not achieving but within 15% range Outturn for Q1 15.90%	Not achieving but within 15% range Outturn for Q2 14.56%	Not achieving Outturn for Q3 16.50%	Up by 1.94% (worse)	This is based on 65 leavers for the period 01.01.23 - 31.12.23. Data analysis shows that Wellbeing and Communities had the largest turnover at 22.5% followed by Housing with a turnover of 20%. Staff are asked to complete a survey to state why they are leaving but unfortunately many choose not to respond. We are therefore unable to identify trends for why staff are choosing to leave without further investment of time and resource in this area.
CP6	Compliance with Health and Safety programme	Corporate	Corporate Support	Karl Roberts	Higher is better	100%	Not achieving but within 15% range Outturn for Q1 92%	Not achieving but within 15% range Outturn for Q1 93%	Achieving Outturn for Q3 100%	Up by 7% (better)	Two tasks were issued during this quarter. The October task on violence and aggression at work has now been completed by 320 staff representing 100% of service areas.
CP7	Average call wait time (secs) for the last month	Corporate	Corporate Support	Philippa Dart	Lower is better	4 minutes	Achieving Outturn for Q1 2.44	Achieving Outturn for Q2 2.33	Achieving Outturn for Q3 1.39	Down by 54 seconds (better)	Q3 in comparison to Q2 average wait time has decreased by 43 seconds which is 30%. This is again likely due to it being a quieter period for us and the fact that we had less working days in December.

No.	Indicator	Council Vision Theme	Service Committee to consider this	CMT Member	Assess by	Target 2023	Q1 Status	Q2 status	Q3 status	Better or worse since Q2 figure (Q3 compared to Q2)	Q3 Commentary
CP8	Business rates collected	Corporate	Corporate Support	Philippa Dart	Higher is better	97%	Achieving **Outturn for Q1 30.70%**	Achieving **Outturn for Q2 58.90%**	Achieving **Outturn for Q3 82.2%**	Up by 23.3% (better)	Collection rate is cumulative. Target for December collection is 79.40%. Over target for December
CP9	Council tax collected	Corporate	Corporate Support	Philippa Dart	Higher is better	96.5%	Achieving **Outturn for Q1 32%**	Achieving **Outturn for Q2 58.9%**	Achieving **Outturn for Q3 86%**	Up by 27.1% (better)	Collection rate is cumulative. Target for December collection is 82.70%. Over target for December

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Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee – 31 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Committee Revenue and Capital Budgets 2024/25
LEAD OFFICER:	Antony Baden, Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Francis Oppler
WARDS:	All

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:
The Council's financial planning and budget promotes all the Council's Corporate Priorities.
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:
The Council's financial planning and budget influences all Directorates of the Council.
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:
The draft budgets for this Committee are shown in the appendices.

1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1.   The purpose of the report is for this Committee to consider and recommend its revenue budget for inclusion in the Council's overall 2024/25 revenue budget. These recommendations will be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024 when it considers the overall revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25 so recommendations can be made to a Special Meeting of the Council on 21 February 2024 regarding the budgets to be set and level of Council Tax for the District for 2024/25.

2.   **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1   It is recommended that this Committee:

(a) Agrees the 2024/25 Revenue Budget as illustrated in Appendix A of this report;

(b) Agrees the 2024/25 Capital Programme as illustrated in Appendix B of this report; and

(c) Recommends to the Policy and Finance Committee that the Revenue Budget for this Committee be included in the overall General Fund Budget when the Policy and Finance Committee considers the overall budgets at its meeting on 8 February 2024.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 The purpose of the report is for this Committee to consider and recommend its 2024/25 revenue budget, which will be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024. The Policy and Finance Committee will consider the overall revenue budget for 2024/25 so that it can make recommendations to a Special Meeting of the Council on 21 February 2024.

4. DETAIL

4.1 The general background to the budget was included in the Financial Prospects 2024/25 to 2028/29 report to Policy & Finance Committee on 26 October 2023. An updated report was also presented to Policy & Finance Committee on the 8 January 2024.

4.2 Financial forecasting continues to be extremely difficult due to high inflation rates and various other external factors affecting the economy therefore budgets have been compiled on the best information available.

4.3 The basis of revenue budgeting for 2024/25 broadly assumes that current levels of service provision will remain unchanged. This means that whilst cost increases have been included, there is no growth within the budget proposals.

4.4 The net change in the revenue budget between 2023/24 and 2024/25 is £149k and the key changes are summarized in the table below:

Change	Amount £'000
Salary inflation	259
Computer Services – increase in supplies, rolling maintenance and software costs	145
Increase in postage costs and prices post Covid-19	130
Increase in external audit fee	81
Introduce full Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance	29
Committee Services - increase in insurance and printing costs	31
Reduction in Election Services costs due to less elections taking place in 2024/25	(280)
Savings identified by the Financial Strategy paper	(249)
Other minor changes	3
Total	**149**

4.5   The savings of £249,000 identified in the Financial Strategy paper referred to in paragraph 4.4 are as follows:

Saving	Amount £'000
Reduce frequency of the annual residents' survey	10
Cease Vuelio media monitoring	6
Cease Snapsea subscription	3
Reduce publishing frequency of Arun Times	9
Reduce hours of vacant Graphic Design Assistant post	5
Reduce overtime in the ICT team	5
Cease email journals	10
Undertake e-forms project in house	10
Reduce the specification of the Geographic Information System (GIS) contract	8
Delete vacant IT apprentice post	18
Delete vacant 0.5 fte Web administrator post	21
Extend life cycle replacement of laptops to 7 years	13
Remove flu vouchers for staff	2
Remove budget for staff engagement activities	1
Cease Infinistats (a business intelligence tool) subscription	2
Cease Croner (professional) subscription	2
Delete vacant 0.33 fte HR adviser post	10
Reduce the number of digital based projects	50
Undertake Members treasury management training in house	1
Delete redundant budget no longer required in Finance	12
Delete vacant Committee Services officer post	18
Delete vacant Information Management Assistant post	17
Reduce Legal Services subscriptions costs through wider use of West Sussex wide consortium services	10
Reduce Legal Services subscriptions costs through West Sussex-wide group purchasing Recharge Payroll service costs to third parties	6
Total Savings	**249**

4.6   The level of funding for the capital programme will be determined at the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024. Existing schemes and new schemes will continue to be reviewed during 2024/25 for affordability and deliverability. The impact of any new borrowing will also be kept under review and reported to Members during the course of the financial year.

4.7   There is no new planned capital programme for this committee during 2024/25 as shown in Appendix B.

5.   CONSULTATION

5.1   No consultation has taken place with external organisations regarding this committee's budget, but a wider budget consultation process is taking place in respect of the Council's overall budget.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1   Not applicable.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1   The financial implications are shown throughout the report. It is important that close monitoring of both revenue budgets, and the capital programme is in place.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1   The risks outlined in the Financial Prospects Report 2024/25 to 2028/29 to Policy & Finance Committee on the 26 October 2023 remain relevant. Members may wish to review these alongside this report.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1   The Council has a legal duty to ensure its revenue and capital expenditure can be met by its income, inclusive of reserves.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1   There are no direct implications. Any subsequent Human Resources impact arising from the savings programme will be managed in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1   There are no direct implications.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1   There are no direct implications.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1   There are no direct implications from this report, impacts arising from subsequent actions will be identified in future reports.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1   There are no direct implications.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1   There are no direct implications.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 None.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 There are no direct implications.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Name: Antony Baden
Job Title: Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Contact Number: 01903 737558

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS*:*

2023/24 Budget Report to Full Council 1 and 9 March 2023

Report

Financial Prospects 2024/25 to 2028/29 –Policy & Finance Committee 26 October 2023

Financial Prospects Report

Financial Prospects 2024/25 to 2028/29 update – Policy & Finance Committee 8 January 2024

Financial Prospects Report – 8 January 2024

Corporate Support Committee
General Fund Revenue Budget 2024/25

Actual 2022-23 £'000	Description	Budget 2023-24 £'000	Budget 2024-25 £'000
	Corporate Support Committee		
	Direct Services		
149	Elections	384	104
232	Registration of Electors & Elections	216	219
381	**Total for Direct Services:**	**600**	**323**
	Corporate Support Committee		
	Management & Support Services		
209	Communications & Design*	231	245
635	Customer Services	803	793
682	Democratic Services	857	879
153	Print & Post Services*	175	340
1,641	Financial Services (Accountancy, Payroll, Procurement and Internal Audit)	1,497	1,686
394	Human Resources	424	440
1,845	Information & Communication Technology	2,133	2,417
573	Legal & Administration	621	683
165	Policy & Partnerships	34	36
337	Staff Support	303	355
6,634	**Total for Management & Support Services:**	**7,078**	**7,874**
	Salary adjustment		(101)
7,015	**Committee Sub Total:**	**7,678**	**8,096**
	Potential Committee Savings		
	Savings identified by Financial strategy		(249)
	Total Potential Committee Savings		**(249)**
	Committee Total:		**7,847**

* Design cost centre moved to "Communications" from "Print & Post"

Corporate Support Committee
Capital Programme 2024/25

Actual 2022/23 £'000	Description	Original Budget 2023/24 £'000	Updated Budget 2023/24 £'000	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Budget2025/26 £'000	Budget 2026/27 £'000	Budget 2027/28 £'000	Note
0	ICT	0	315	0	25	225	100	1
0	**Committee Total**	**0**	**315**	**0**	**25**	**225**	**100**	

1. The ICT 2023/24 budget is all related to delayed projects (access controls, wireless, VMware, telephony, digital & cyber security) – the wireless infrastructure project has been delivered in 2023/24. The move of systems to the cloud has meant that costs which may have previously been capital have become annual subscriptions contained within the revenue budget.

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REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee - 31 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Budget Monitoring Report to 31 December 2023
LEAD OFFICER:	Antony Baden – Group Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Francis Oppler, Chair of Corporate Support Committee
WARDS:	All

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:

The Council's budget supports all the Council's Objectives.

DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:

Budget monitoring and forecasting are key in ensuring sound financial control and control of spending is in place. It is also a major part in ensuring sound governance arrangements.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

The report shows the Committee's Revenue budget and Capital programme forecast outturn position for 2023/24 to the end of Quarter 3.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. The purpose of this report is to appraise the Corporate Support Committee of its forecast outturn against the 2023/24 budgets, which were approved by Full Council at its meeting of the 9 March 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. The report sets out in further detail the Committee's Revenue and Capital programme budget performance projections to the 31 March 2024.

4. DETAIL

4.1. Table 1 below details the 2023/24 forecast revenue budget out turn to the end of Quarter 3 and anticipates an overspend of £221k which shows no movement overall against what was reported in Quarter 2.

Table 1

Corporate Support Committee					
	Budget	Forecast	Variance	Variance	Movement
	2023-24	Q3	Q3	Q2	
Description	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Elections	384	384	0	0	0
Registration of Electors & Elections	215	215	0	0	0
Communications & Design*	232	202	(30)	(30)	0
Customer Services	804	794	(10)	0	(10)
Committee Services	856	781	(76)	(77)	1
Print & Post Services*	176	314	139	139	0
Financial Services	1,497	1,626	129	136	(7)
Human Resources	424	424	0	0	0
ICT	2,133	2,094	(39)	(39)	0
Legal & Administration	619	712	93	78	15
Policy & Partnerships	34	34	0	0	0
Staff Support	303	317	14	14	0
Total - Corporate Support Committee:	**6,152**	**6,374**	**221**	**221**	**0**

*Design Cost Centre has been moved from Print & Post Services to Communications

Table 2

Project	Original 2023/24 Budget £'000	Slippage from 2022/23 £'000	In Year Additions £'000	Reprofling & Other Changes £'000	Revised 2023/24 Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000	2024/25 Budget £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000	2026/27 Budget £'000
ICT	0	347	0	-32	315	315	0	0	25	225
Total Corporate Support Committee Capital	**0**	**347**	**0**	**-32**	**315**	**315**	**0**	**0**	**25**	**225**

4.2. Table 2 above details the Committee's 2023/24 forecast capital programme out turn as at Quarter 3. The total capital budget for 2023/24 is £315k which includes slippage from the previous year of £347k mitigated by a £32k saving due to Edge Switch no longer proceeding (deferred until 2027/28).

4.3. The Capital programme is being reviewed as part of the budget setting process and will take account of progress against the 2023/24 budget. Any changes will be reported to this Committee for approval by Policy & Finance Committee.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1. Consultation with other stakeholders is not required for this report.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1. There are no alternative options to this report.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1. There are no additional financial implications arising from the matters set out in this report. Committee will note that the Group Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer will work throughout the financial year with other Group Heads to mitigate any overspends that have been highlighted in the report and to maximise potential income generation opportunities/cost avoidance efficiencies.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. Regular budget monitoring and forecasting mitigates against the risk of poor financial control and ensures that Members are informed when corrective action is required and what action has been taken.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1. There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1. None.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1. None.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1. None.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1. None.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1. None.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1. None.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1. None.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1. None.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Name: Antony Baden
Job Title: Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Contact Number: 01903 737558

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS*:*
Budget Book 2023/24

Minute 779, Full Council 9 March 2023 – Arun District Council budget 2023/24

Minutes

Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report, Corporate Support Committee, 12 October 2023

Report

REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee – 31 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Pay Policy Statement 2024 – 2025
LEAD OFFICER:	Jackie Follis, Group Head of Organisational Excellence
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Matt Stanley – Chair
WARDS:	N/A

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:

It is a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011 for Local Authorities to prepare and publish their Pay Policy Statement and therefore a priority of the Council that this legal obligation is met. It is also important that the Council's pay policy is available and transparent to elected members, staff, staff representatives and the public.

DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:

The Pay Policy Statement reflects existing pay and reward policies and guidance as agreed by the Joint Consultation Panel where appropriate.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY: The Pay Policy Statement outlines current pay policies. There have been no cost-of-living increases agreed yet for the year 2024/25 and the financial implications of national negotiations is unknown at the time of publication of this report.

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. The Localism Act 2011, section 38 (1) requires that local authorities prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement. This paper introduces the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2024/2025 (attached) and asks members to approve it.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.2. The Committee is requested to:

(a) Note the contents of the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1.

And to recommend to Full Council to:

(b) Approve the Pay Policy Statement 2024/2025 for publication on the Arun website by 1 April 2024; and

(c) Give delegated authority to the Group Head for Organisational Excellence to make changes to the Pay Policy Statement should the need arise because of new legislation being introduced or changes to the pay structure resulting from national pay negotiations during the forthcoming year.

2.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1.   The Council's Pay Policy Statement is reviewed and approved annually by Full Council and is published on the Council's website. The statement must be approved annually before 31 March each year prior to the financial year to which it relates.

4.0   DETAIL

2.2.   The Localism Act 2011, Section 38(1) requires that local authorities prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement (The Statement). Each Local Authority is an individual employer and so the Statement should set out the authority's own policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff and its lowest paid employees. This statement must be prepared for each financial year and must be approved by Full Council ready to be published by April 2024.

2.3.   The Statement sets out our processes for determining remuneration and several related issues, including the use of bonuses, severance pay, enhancement of pension entitlement, allowances etc.

2.4.   At this current time there has been no agreement regarding the 2024/2025 annual cost of living increases which are negotiated on behalf of councils between the Local Government Association and Trade Unions. Once agreement is reached, the Council's published pay scales, which are linked from the Pay Policy Statement, will be updated.

2.5.   The Pay Policy Statement for 2024/ 2025 is attached with its two appendices: the Senior Management Structure, and the most up to date schedule of Elections Fees and Charges, which is the schedule for 2023-2024 as agreement has not been reached about the Elections Fees and Charges for 2024-2025.

5.0   CONSULTATION

2.6.   The contents of the Statement are matters of fact and simply set out current practice therefore formal consultation is not required.

6.0   OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

2.7.   No other options were considered, this is part of our statutory duty under the Localism Act 2011.

7.0   COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

2.8.   There are currently no direct financial implications arising from this report.

8.0   RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

2.9.   The requirement to review the Pay Policy Statement annually will be met for 2024/25 when the Statement is considered by Full Council and published on 1 April.

9.0   COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1   The Pay Policy Statement sets out the Council's policy regarding remuneration in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 (The 'Act') and associated statutory guidance. The purpose of the statement is to provide transparency regarding the Council's approach to setting the pay of its employees. The Act requires that pay policy statements, and any amendments to them, are considered by a meeting of full council and cannot be delegated to any sub-committee.

10.0   HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1   The Pay Policy Statement reflects existing policies and procedures on pay and reward.

11.0   HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1   Not Applicable

12.0   PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1   Not Applicable

13.0   EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1   The Pay Policy Statement reflects current policy in relation to pay and reward. The impact on the equality of these policies would have been assessed at the time they were adopted by the Council.

14.0   CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1   Not Applicable

15.0   CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1   Not Applicable

16.0   HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1   Not Applicable

17.0 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 It is a requirement that the Council's Pay Policy Statement is published and accessible to the public. The Secretary of State has stated in guidance that they do not consider that the consider that pay policy statements engage the Data Protection Act, as they should contain the general principles underpinning the decisions on pay and not personal data. There should therefore be no reason to exclude the public from discussions about the statement on these grounds and such meetings should be open to the public and should not exclude observers.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Name: Karen Pearce
Job Title: Human Resources Manager
Contact Number: 01903 737807

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS*:*

Appendix 1 – Pay Policy Statement
Appendix 2 - Scale of Returning Officer's expenditure for Local Government Elections, Polls and Referendums.
Appendix 3 – Management Structure

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL Pay Policy Statement Financial Year 2023 – 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This Pay Policy Statement (Statement) is provided in accordance with Section 38(1) to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Statement will be updated annually from April each year.

1.2 The Act requires relevant authorities to produce a statement which must articulate an authority's approach to pay and its related policies. The statement must be approved annually by Full Council before 31 March each year prior to the financial year to which it relates.

1.3 The Statement sets out Arun District Council's (ADC) policies relating to the pay of its workforce for the financial year 2024 – 2025, in particular:

- The remuneration of its senior management, third tier and above
- The remuneration of its "lowest paid employees"
- The relationship between the remuneration of its senior managers and employees who are not senior managers.

2. Definitions

2.1 For the purpose of this Pay Policy the following definitions will apply:

"Pay/Remuneration" in addition to salary includes charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increases in/enhancements to pension entitlements and termination payments.

"Chief Officers" refers to the following roles within ADC (Appendix 1):

- Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service
- Directors
- Group Heads

"Lowest Paid Employees" refers to those staff employed on Grade 2 of the Council's pay scales. The definition for the "lowest paid employees" has been adopted because Grade 2 is the lowest grade on which employees are paid within the Council's pay framework.

"Employee who is not a Chief Officer" refers to all staff who are not covered under the Chief Officer group above. This includes the "lowest paid employees".

3. Pay Framework and Remuneration Levels

3.1 Remuneration of the Chief Executive

3.1.1 At recruitment stage, the starting salary of the Chief Executive is decided at Full Council. Thereafter, annual pay awards are determined by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of Local Authorities. The Chief Executive does not receive any additional payment other than fees in connection with election duties in the role of Returning Officer. Election fees are set out annually in the 'Scale of Returning Officer's expenditure for Local Government Elections, Polls and Referendums', attached as Appendix 2. Increases to election fees have not yet been agreed for 2024/25.

3.1.2 There is no provision for the payment of bonus payments to the Chief Executive. Other payments made will be in line with Council policies on allowances and includes access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

3.1.3 The Chief Executive is employed on PAYE taxation arrangements. In exceptional circumstances, such as interim arrangements, an alternative form of employment may be used if appropriate.

3.2 **Remuneration for staff up to and including Director Level**

3.2.1 *Determining the Grades of Posts*

3.2.2 The Council uses a locally agreed Job Profiling Scheme to evaluate the grade applied to each job role. This is to ensure that jobs are graded fairly, equitably, and consistently and that the Council complies with the Equal Pay Act.

3.2.3 Decisions on grading are by consensus of a pay profiling panel following a thorough assessment of each job role. The panel is made up of both employer and union representatives and panellists are trained in use of the scheme to ensure fairness in application.

3.2.4 The profiling scheme covers all posts within the Council except for the Chief Executive. This is because an evaluation exercise is not needed to establish that this is the highest paid post in the Council as the post holder will have ultimate accountability and responsibility.

3.3 *Pay Structure*

3.3.1 The Council's pay and grading structure is based on the national pay scale issued by the National Joint Council (NJC) as part of the National Agreement for Local Government Services. This pay scale incorporates posts graded 2 to 14 (Grade 14 is covered by an extension to the National Pay Scales). Incremental rises within each grade are automatic on the 1 April each year until the employee reaches the top of the scale.

3.3.2 The Council has a separate pay scale for Group Heads and Directors. Incremental increases are not automatic for these staff and are at the Chief Executive/Director's discretion.

3.4 *Pay Increases*

3.4.1 Pay awards for Group Heads and Directors are determined nationally by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers.

3.4.2 Staff below Group Head level are awarded an annual cost of living increase which is linked to national pay negotiations for the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (Green Book).

3.4.3 There is no provision for the payment of bonus payments or performance related pay to any staff.

3.5 *Pay Progression*

3.5.1 With the exception of the Chief Executive who will receive a spot salary, all other posts are assigned a grade which has an associated grade range made up of several pre-determined spinal column points (scp).

3.5.2 Pay progression is by annual increment on 1 April each year until the employee has reached the top of the grade.

3.5.3 For new starters that join the Council after 1 October, the first annual increment is not automatic and is at the manager's discretion.

3.5.4 In exceptional circumstances, such as the attainment of a professional qualification, the manager has the discretion to accelerate progression beyond one increment per annum but only to the top of the grade.

4.0 Publication of Chief Officer Salaries including the Chief Executive

4.1 Information on remuneration for the Chief Executive, Directors and Group Heads is published as part of the Annual Statement of Accounts. This is published each year in June/July and can be found on the Council's website. Officers below this level will not be identified in this way.

4.2 A structure chart showing the membership of the Senior Management Team is attached to this document as Appendix 1.

5 Other Pay Elements

5.1 Market Premia Payments

5.1.1 The Council will consider the use of market supplements, retention payments or other recruitment incentive payments where there are significant recruitment or retention difficulties. In situations where a market premia payment is being considered, a report detailing the business case will be presented for consideration by the Corporate Management Team in conjunction with the HR Manager. Market premia payments are time limited and subject to review.

5.2   Honoraria/Honorariums

5.2.1   There is provision within the Council's Human Resources guidance for the payment of "honoraria" in exceptional circumstances to staff employed by the Council. Approval to pay an honorarium to Directors, must be given by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council. For Group Heads, this must be approved by the relevant Director in consultation with the Chief Executive.   For the Chief Executive this must be approved by the Leader of the Council.

5.3   *Other Allowances*

5.3.1   There are several other allowances which staff may be eligible for such as car allowance, standby/call out allowance etc. Any allowance or other payment will only be made to staff in connection with a particular role or the patterns of hours that they work. Allowances will be payable subject to the employee meeting the eligibility criteria as laid out in the relevant policy.

5.3.2   Payments made to staff working during elections, polls and referendums will be in line with the Scale of Returning Officer's expenditure for Local Government Elections, Polls and Referendums, as attached at Appendix 3.

6   Pensions

6.1   All employees are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).   Full details of the scheme can be found at www.lgps.org.uk. The LGPS is a contributory scheme and contributions are made by both the employer and the employee. The level of contribution is dependent on the employee's earnings.

6.2   The LGPS requires employers to prepare and publish a written policy on its discretionary powers in relation to pensions. These are known as the Council's Pension Discretions; they are reviewed annually and can be found on the Council's intranet.

7   New Starters Joining the Council

7.1   Employees new to the Council will be appointed to a salary point within the grade for the post considered appropriate considering their experience and ability to undertake the role. This will be at the discretion of the hiring manager.

8   Termination of Employment

8.1   All employees who leave the Council's employment are entitled to payment of their contractual notice (except in cases of summary dismissal following disciplinary proceedings) along with any outstanding holiday pay.

8.1.2 The Council has determined that a vote by the Council regarding severance payments is not required. This is because the Joint Consultative Panel agrees all pay policies including those affecting severance payments. All severance payments are paid in accordance with Council policy and in compliance with employment legislation.

8.2   Redundancy Payments

8.2.1 Redundancy payments are payable to employees whose post is made redundant and the post holder has two years' service or more. ADC's redundancy payments are determined by the age of the employee and length of service and are based on actual salary. Details of how the redundancy payment is calculated is set out in the Council's redundancy policy.

8.2.2 There is no local discretion to increase an employee's total pension scheme membership or award additional pension except in exceptional circumstances where compassionate grounds apply.

8.3   Settlement Agreements

8.3.1 In exceptional circumstances, and specifically to settle a claim or potential dispute, the Chief Executive in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, can agree payment of a termination settlement sum up to the value of £50,000. Settlement agreements up to the value of £95,000 may be made by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition and Section 151 Officer. Any settlement payment above the value of £95,000 needs to be considered by Full Council. In such cases, each decision as to the level of payment will be taken on its individual merits and with advice taken from the Human Resources Manager.

8.4   Re-employment of Officers

8.4.1 The Council needs to retain the flexibility to respond to recruitment demands and labour shortages and therefore, in some circumstances, it may be in the Council's best interests to re-employ former local government employees who have previously left the service on the grounds of redundancy or efficiency. If the Council were to re-employ a previous local government employee who had received a redundancy or severance package on leaving, then the Council's policy is to ensure that the rules of the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc) (Modification) Order 1999 is applied. In addition, the Council will ensure that a fair, transparent selection process has taken place before any appointment is confirmed.

9   Relationship between remuneration of "Chief Officers and "employees who are not Chief Officers".

9.1   The mean average remuneration for the 2024/2025 budget is £43,414 and the highest paid employee £182,564. This includes all allowances and employers pension contributions at 17.5%. The pay multiple between the two is 4.04. This

is based on current pay scales and excludes a national pay award for 24/25 budget as this is currently unknown.

In comparison, the mean average remuneration for the 2023/2024 budget was £45,571 and the highest paid employee £167,184. This included all allowances and employers pension contributions at 17.5%. The pay multiple between the two was 3.67. This was based on 2022/23 pay scales as the annual pay award was not agreed at the time of publication of the 2023/2024 pay policy statement.

9.2   The lowest paid employee is at £28,597 and the highest paid employee £182,564 per annum. This includes allowances and employers pension contribution at 17.5% and the pay multiple between the two is 6.38 (this was 6.34 in 2023/24). This is based on current pay scales and excludes a national pay award for 24/25 budget which is currently unknown.

In comparison, for the 2023/2024 budget, the lowest paid employee was at £17,716 (apprentice pay) and the highest paid employee £167,184. This included allowances and employers pension contribution at 17.5%. The pay multiple between the two was 9.42. This was based on 2023/24 pay scales, excluding a national pay award.

Date approved by Full Council

SCALE OF RETURNING OFFICERS EXPENDITURE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS, POLLS AND REFERENDUMS IN HELD WEST SUSSEX 2023/2024

The rates which will apply from 1 April 2023 are as follows:

	Rate from April 2023	Annual increase (£)	Annual increase (per cent)
National Living Wage	£10.42	0.92	9.7
21-22 Year Old Rate	£10.18	1.00	10.9
18-20 Year Old Rate	£7.49	0.66	9.7
16-17 Year Old Rate	£5.28	0.47	9.7
Apprentice Rate	£5.28	0.47	9.7
Accommodation Offset	£9.10	0.40	4.6

PART A – PERSONAL FEE FOR RETURNING OFFICER'S SERVICES

A.1 Personal fee in respect of each electoral area for executing all the statutory duties of the Returning Officer for the conduct of the election, including the appointment of Deputy Returning Officers, the publication of prescribed notices, the distribution preparation, verification and adjudication of candidates' nomination papers and consents, the provision of polling stations and ballot papers (including the dispatch and receipt of postal ballot papers), the appointment of presiding officers, poll clerks and counting assistants, the dispatch of poll cards, the issue of notifications of secrecy, the supervision of the counting of votes and declaration of the result of poll, the submission of returns and the custody of records.

For all services in an uncontested election or for services up to the close of the withdrawals period in a contested election

£79.00

For services after the close of the withdrawals period in a contested election

£31.00 for every 500 local government electors (or part 500)

For a countermanded election:-

a) If countermanded before the close of the withdrawals period

£79.00

b) If countermanded after the close of the withdrawals period

£79.00 plus £16.50

PART B – DISBURSEMENTS BY RETURNING OFFICER

B.1 Staff for polling Stations

a)	Presiding Officer's services	£255.00
b)	Supplementary fee to Presiding Officers for combined polls for district, parish or county elections	£45.50
c)	Poll Clerk's services (one clerk for each 1000 local government electors or part 1000 allocated to a polling station)	£170.00
d)	Supplementary fee to Poll Clerk for combined polls for district, parish or county elections	£30.00
e)	Services of part-time Poll Clerk (where not required for whole of polling hours)	Hourly rate (as proportion of normal fee) on basis of hours employed
f)	Supplementary fee to Presiding Officer who acts as Senior Presiding Officer at a polling place where there is more than one polling station	£15.50
g)	Polling Station Inspector	£255.00
h)	Fee in respect of attendance at training session for up to	£43.50
i)	Polling Station Marshalls/ Stewards	£187.00
(j)	Supplementary fee for staff in connection with cleaning the polling station	Up to £35 in addition to the normal fee
(k)	Supplementary fee for Presiding Officer to collect and deliver poll booths	£15.00

B.2 Staff for Counting of Votes

a)	Counting Assistant's services (for sorting and counting ballot papers)	£25.00 plus £10.50 per hour, or part, of duration of count proceedings or £25.00 plus £15.50 per hour, or part, of duration if count held overnight
b)	Counting Supervisor's services (for directing Counting Assistant's functions to ensure proper verification of ballot boxes)	£18.50 (responsibility supplement for each electoral area) plus £15.50 per hour (day count), £22.50 per hour (overnight count), or part.
c)	Deputy Returning Officer's services	£44.50 (responsibility supplement for each electoral area) plus the fee for Counting Assistant's services
d)	Fee in respect of Count Supervisors attendance at training up to	£43.50

B.3   Staff for Clerical Assistance

a)   General Assistance for purposes of preparation for the dispatch and receipt of postal ballot papers

£28.50 for every 50 ballot papers (or part of 50)

b)   General assistance for all other matters in district, parish or county elections (including completing, handling and dispatch of poll cards)

£8.50 for every 100 electors (or part 100); allowance to be reduced by 5% in parish elections where no poll cards are issued

c)   Staff payments in respect of despatch and opening of postal ballot papers

£28.50 per half day session or £10.50 per hour (or part hour) where hourly rate is applicable **or** £12.00 per hour (or part hour) where working after 5pm is involved **or** £15.00 per hour (or part hour) where weekend/bank holiday working is involved

d)   Postal Vote Supervisor (opening and despatch)

£18.50 plus payment of despatch/opening fee

Travelling and Subsistence Expenses

a)   Journeys necessarily made for any purposes approved by the Returning Officer in relation to the election proceedings

Actual cost of rail fare (second class) or other forms of public transport. Top allowance on NJC Scale for use of private vehicle

b)   Travel Expenses paid to staff in connection with the election

Fixed Fee for Presiding Officer   £10.00
Fixed Fee for Poll Clerks/Counting Assistants   £7.00

For those being paid mileage rate   .45p per mile

B.5   Ballot Boxes and Stamping Instruments

a)   Cleaning and preparation of equipment before issue from storage place

£3.00 for each polling place

B.6   Poll Cards

For hand delivery of poll cards   20p per card

B.7   All other expenses necessary for the proper conduct of the election proceedings, including the following particular matters:-

a)   Provision, use and fitting up of accommodation for polling stations

b)   Provision and transport of equipment for polling stations (e.g. voting compartments, tables and chairs)

c)   Provision and publication of notices, poll cards, ballot papers, registers of electors and postal and proxy voters' lists

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d)   Provision of all other stationery and documents

e)   Postage and telephone charges

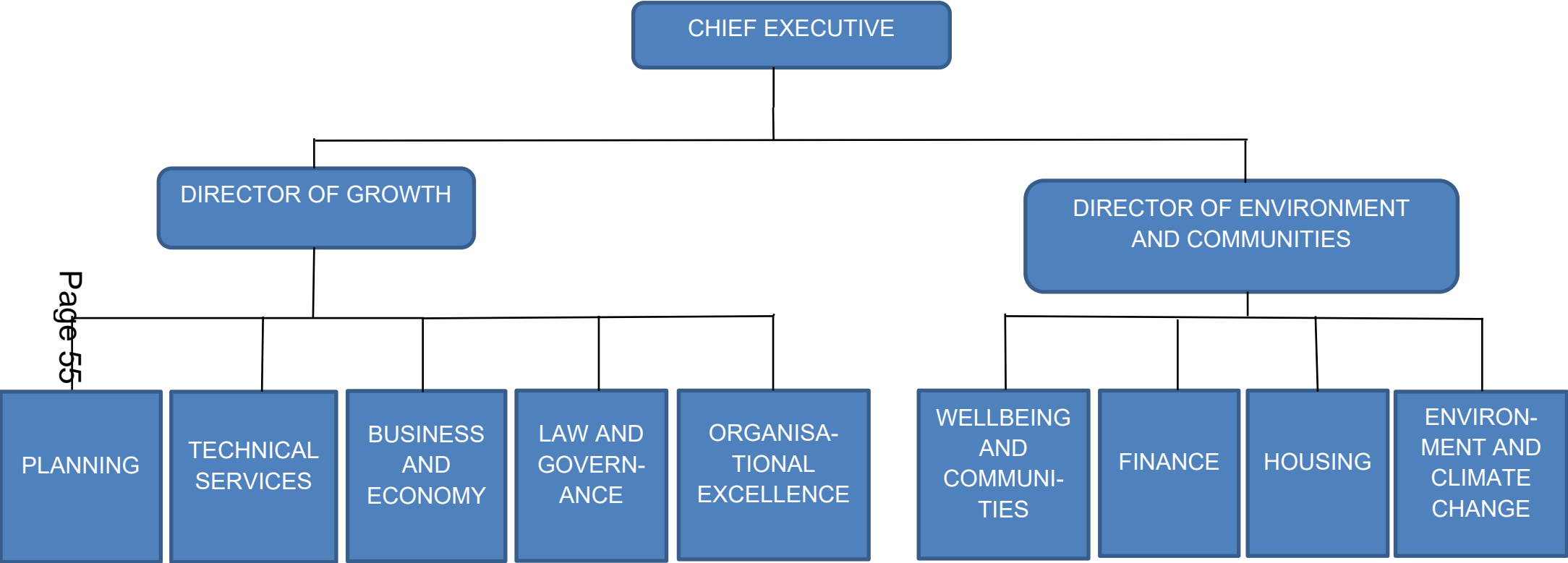f)   Compensation for injury to persons or damage to property

<u>Holiday Pay</u>

Holiday pay is to be paid at a rate of 12.07% of the total paid to the staff member on top of their pay, excluding mileage claims

Notes

1   The prescribed amounts in the scale are payable in respect of each separate electoral area

2   "Electoral area" means any ward/parish/division for which a separate election is held

3   The prescribed amounts in the scale are maximum sums and Returning Officers may pay lesser amounts for those items in circumstances where they consider this to be specifically justified

4   "Elector" means a person registered as a local government elector in the register for the electoral area concerned.

5   Fees for Parish polls will be adjusted according to the workload and timing of the poll.

APPENDIX 1 - SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE CHART 2024

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                          CHIEF EXECUTIVE
                                |
          +---------------------+---------------------+
          |                                           |
  DIRECTOR OF GROWTH              DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
                                      AND COMMUNITIES
```

| PLANNING | TECHNICAL SERVICES | BUSINESS AND ECONOMY | LAW AND GOVERN-ANCE | ORGANISA-TIONAL EXCELLENCE |

| WELLBEING AND COMMUNI-TIES | FINANCE | HOUSING | ENVIRON-MENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE |

For Pay Policy Statement 2024

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Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee – 31 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Electoral Review
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge, Group Head of Law & Governance
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Francis Oppler as Chair of the Committee
WARDS:	All

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: Ensuring that the correct democratic structure is in place within the Arun District supports all of the Council's corporate aims and objectives.

DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: Responsibility for the Electoral Services function and related workstreams sits within the Organisational Excellent directorate.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY: Full Council has resolved that a report be submitted to the Policy & Finance Committee setting out an assessment of the costs of undertaking an electoral review. The recommendations in this report to the Corporate Support Committee do not carry any financial implications that sit outside of existing budgets.

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1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider an initial report and recommendations in relation to an Electoral Review of the Arun District.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

(i) The Committee considers the draft timetable and provides any comments to officers and asks officers to bring a final timetable to the Committee at its meeting on 30 April 2024, for reporting to Full Council at its meeting on 9 May 2024;

(ii) The Committee requests that officers carry out an assessment of the costs of conducting an electoral review and submits a report to a meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee ahead of the Corporate Support Committee's next meeting on 30 April 2024, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the 9 November 2022 Full Council resolution.

3. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

3.1 The purpose of an electoral review is to consider the total number of councillors elected to the council, the names, number and boundaries of the wards, and the number of councillors to be elected to each ward.

3.2 The electoral review process takes around a year to complete and includes at least two phases of public consultation where proposals/comments on ward boundaries will be invited. Throughout the process, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England aims to work closely with the Council, local people and organisations.

3.3 The review aims not just to deliver boundaries that are fair for voters and reflect community ties, but it can also help councils align their local leadership ambitions with their decision-making arrangements.

4. DETAIL

4.1 At its meeting on 9 November 2022 the Full Council received a motion asking Full Council to agree to invite the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to carry out a review of the number of councillors needed in Arun, and the warding arrangements within the district.

4.2 Following debate Full Council resolved that:

(1) The Council carries out an assessment of the costs of doing a local government boundary review and provides recommendations to the Policy & Finance Committee on the resourcing implications of such a review;

(2) The Council sets up the appropriate processes and timetable for carrying out such a review, and reports this back to Full Council;

(3) Once the above steps are complete, invites the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to carry out a review of:

(a) The number of councillors needed at Arun, but with a specific focus of reducing members
(b) The warding arrangements in the Arun District This Council also agrees to:

(4) Instruct Officers to carry out an assessment of how much an individual member costs the council. This should include the Basic Allowance, IT provision and all hidden officer support;

(5) Once the number of Councillors is determined, instruct the Constitution Working Party to review the number and frequency of Committees in light of a reduction in Councillors; and

(6) Invite the Independent Remuneration Panel to review Councillor allowances in light of the above changes, once confirmed.

4.3 Under Paragraph 4.2 of Part 3 of the Constitution (Responsibility for Functions), the Corporate Support Committee has delegated authority to exercise the council's functions relating to the delivery, by or on behalf of the council directly or through any sub-committees it establishes, in relation to Elections and Electoral Reviews. These functions include:

4.3.1 Reviewing and considering electoral matters and making recommendations to the returning officer/electoral registration officer and/or the full council as appropriate (Paragraph 4.2, Function 7)

4.3.2 Considering and recommending to the full council any proposals for an electoral review of Arun District Council (Paragraph 4.2, Function 8)

4.3.3 Reviewing and recommending to the full council any proposals from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on electoral reviews of Arun District Council or West Sussex County Council and any consequential warding proposals for the town/parish councils within the Arun district. (Paragraph 4.2, Function 12)

4.3.4 Reviewing and submitting comments on behalf of the council on any proposals from the Boundary Commission for England on a review of Parliamentary constituency boundaries affecting the Arun district. (Paragraph 4.2, Function 13)

4.3.5 Undertaking community governance reviews in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and recommending any proposals for change to the full council. (Paragraph 4.2, Function 14)

4.4 This report sets out the process for the Committee, together with an indicative draft timetable for discussion at the meeting. The draft timetable is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

4.5 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) technical guidance is attached as Appendix 2. The LGBCE's Electoral Review Guidance for Councillors is attached as Appendix 3.

4.6 The LGBCE's summary of the electoral review process is attached as Appendix 4. This is a straightforward explanation of the process which when read with the draft timetable set out at Appendix 1 provides the best overview for members of the process and the necessary decisions that will need to be taken between now and May 2027.

4.7 Members are asked to consider the timetable and to offer comments to officers with a view to officers bringing a final timetable to the Committee at its meeting in April 2024.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 The draft timetable sets out when and the frequency at which elected members, officers, the LGBCE, the public and other stakeholders will be engaged with through consultation and decision-making.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 Full Council has passed a resolution that must be progressed. Failing to move forward with the agreed actions is not an option for this Committee and would be a matter for Full Council to consider. However, it should be noted that it is highly likely that the LGBCE would soon be identifying the Council for a periodic electoral review in any event. The aim of this report is to commence a process that puts the Council in a position of beginning that conversation with the LGBCE at an early stage in the 2023-27 cycle.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, with a costs assessment paper to be submitted to the Policy & Finance Committee at its 7 March meeting.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 A full risk assessment and risk register will be produced by officers are part of the project following the initial approach to the LGBCE later in 2024.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 Electoral Reviews are conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in accordance with statute, particularly the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Any changes to the district would be made by Parliamentary Order to take effect at the next District Council elections in May 2027. The Council has a duty to support the Commission's work and to provide input to that work.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 There are no human resources implications. This work will be carried out by officers under their day-to-day duties.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

13.   EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1   There are no such implications associated with this report.

14.   CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1   There are no such implications associated with this report.

15.   CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1   There are no such implications associated with this report.

16.   HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1   There are no such implications associated with this report.

17.   FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1   There are no such implications associated with this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:
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Job Title: Group Head of Law & Governance
Contact Number: 01903 737607

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS*: None

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Arun District Council - Boundary Review Draft Timetable

DATE	TASK	WHO	COMMENTS
31/01/2024	Corporate Support Committee	Group Head of Law & Governance; Electoral Services Manager	Introductory report and draft timetable
07/03/2024	Policy & Finance Committee	Group Head of Law & Governance; Electoral Services Manager	Report re resourcing implications
09/05/2024	Full Council	Chair of Corporate Support Committee; Group Head of Law & Governance; Electoral Services Manager	Recommendations from Corporate Support Committee and Policy & Finance Committee
Early December 2024	Preliminary meeting	Chair of Corporate Support Committee Chair; Relevant Officers; Local Government Boundary Commission	
Early December 2024	Identify and agree officer resource	Corporate Management Team	
Early December 2024	Agree support from Group Leaders and identify possible Working Party members	Corporate Support Committee; Electoral Registration Officer	
Early December 2024	Agree reason for making request for a boundary review	Corporate Support Committee	
Mid December 2024	Preparation of paper for Full Council	Relevant Officers	To include why, provisional timetable and establishment of Working Party
Mid December 2024	Briefings to Officers and Members	Either joint or just the Boundary Commission	Undertaken before Full Council agenda published
Mid December 2024	Briefings to Towns and Parishes (and other key partners)	Either joint or just the Boundary Commission	Undertaken before Full Council agenda published - critical to include Towns and Parishes at this point
Jan 2025	Full Council	Chair of Corporate Support Committee; Group Head of Law & Governance; Electoral Services Manager	
Week commencing 13/01/25	First meeting of Working Party	Members and officers	Determine frequency of meetings
Jan 2025	Corporate Support Committee	Group Head of Law & Governance; Electoral Services Manager	Progress report to Corporate Support Committee
April-May 2025	Final meeting of Working Party	Members and officers	In order to agree Full Council paper for May 2025
May 2025	Full Council	Chair of Corporate Support Committee; Group Head of Law & Governance; Electoral Services Manager	Report setting out final Submission(s) Failure to agree submission will put completion before 2027 elections at risk.
May 2025	Council submits proposal for council size to Boundary Commission	Officers	Full submission details included on Boundary Commission website - this stage will include electorate forecasts at ward level to 2028, mapping of proposal(s), details of developments, governance issues (councillor workload) Will include significant time from senior planner/mapping expert and elections
July 2025	Boundary Commission decision on how many members we will have	Boundary Commission	
Aug-Oct 2025	Public Consultation on warding patterns	Boundary Commission	Working Party remains very active during this period in order that they can look at issues as they arise
Dec 2025	Draft Recommendations published	Boundary Commission	Report to Full Council
Jan-March 2026	Public Consultation on recommendations	Boundary Commission	Note that Working Party remains very active during this period in order that they can look at issues as they arise
June 2026	Final recommendations published	Boundary Commission	On occasion a 6-week period of further consultation can be needed
Sep-Oct 2026	Parliamentary Approval	Parliament	Order laid in Parliament for 40 days to accept or reject
Nov-Dec 2026	Implementation - publication of new register in time for Local Elections in May 2023	Electoral Services Team	Significant input from Elections and Legal Services

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The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England
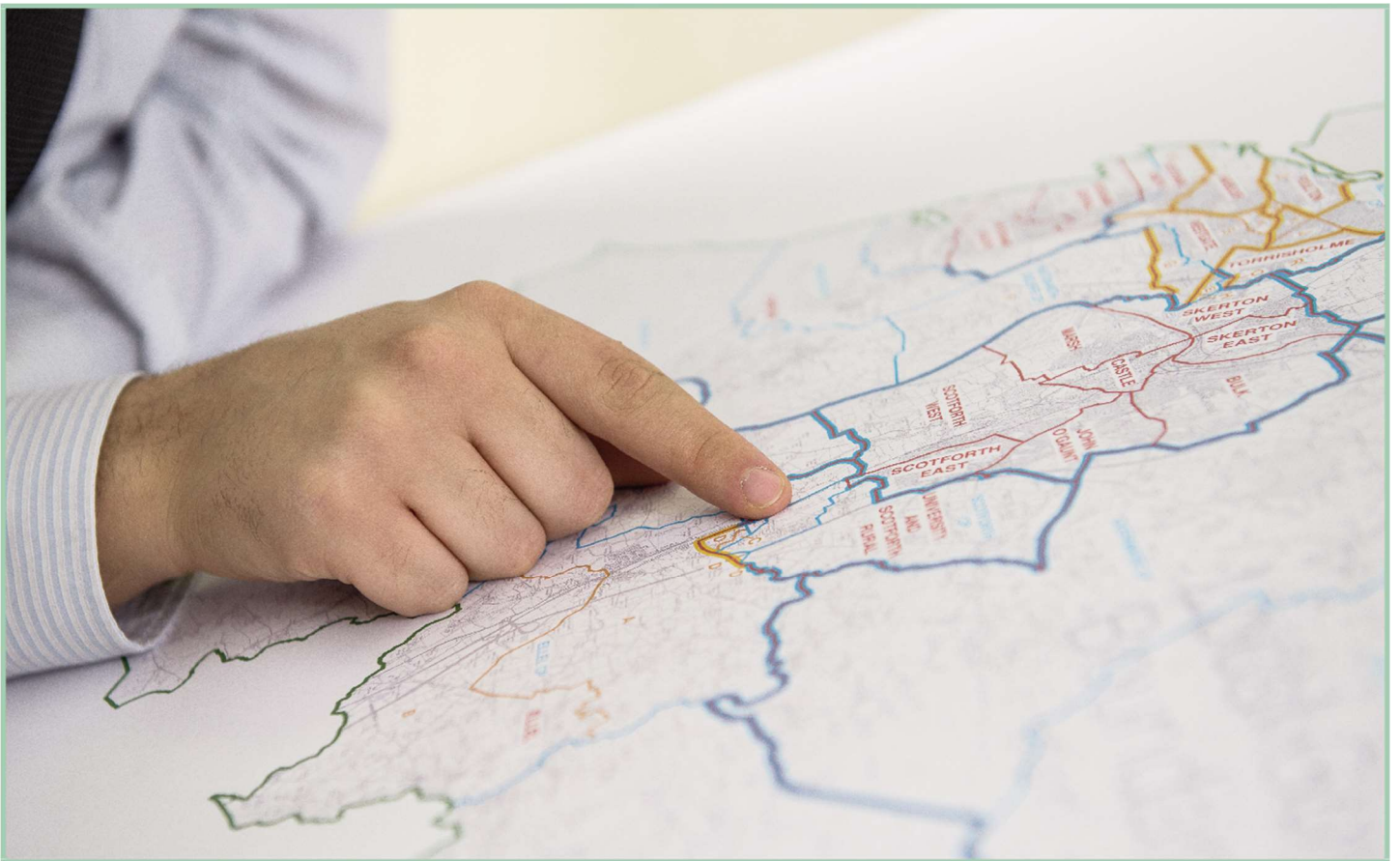
Electoral reviews

Technical guidance

Updated June 2023

Translations and other formats

For information on obtaining this
publication in another language or in
a large-print or Braille version, please
contact the Local Government
Boundary Commission for England:

Tel: 020 7664 8534
Email: publications@lgbce.org.uk

Contents

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was established by Parliament under the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). Independent of central and local government, and political parties, it is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The Commission's objectives are:

- To provide electoral arrangements for English principal local authorities that are fair and deliver electoral equality for voters.

- To keep the map of English local government in good repair and work with principal local authorities to help them deliver effective and convenient local government to citizens.

We are responsible for, among other things, conducting three main types of review of local government:

Electoral Reviews – These are reviews of the electoral arrangements of local authorities: the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions and the number of councillors to be elected to each. Electoral reviews are initiated primarily to improve electoral equality. This means ensuring, so far as is reasonable, that for any principal council, the ratio of electors to councillors in each electoral ward or division, is the same. However, electoral reviews can also be carried out at a local authority's request, for example to look at council size (the total number of councillors) or provide for single-member wards or divisions. The Commission is responsible for putting any changes to electoral arrangements into effect and does this by making a Statutory Instrument or order. The local authority then conducts local elections on the basis of the new arrangements set out in the order.

Principal Area Boundary Reviews (PABRs) – These are reviews of the boundaries between local authorities. Reviews range from addressing minor boundary anomalies that hinder effective service delivery to a few houses, to whole-council mergers. A PABR may also give rise to the need for a consequential electoral review of the local authorities involved, depending on the scale and/or nature of the boundary change. For guidance relating to the review of the boundaries between principal local authority areas, please refer to our companion document: *Principal area boundary reviews: technical guidance*.
Unlike electoral reviews, the Commission is not responsible for *implementing* PABR reviews: the orders relating to changes to administrative boundaries (and any consequential electoral arrangements) are made by the Secretary of State.

Structural Reviews – Advising the Secretary of State, at his request, on proposals he receives from local authorities to change from two-tier to unitary local government. Generally, the establishment, by the Secretary of

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State, of a new unitary authority will itself be followed by an electoral review of the new authority.

The Commission's website www.lgbce.org.uk provides details of reviews which it is or has undertaken. It also provides all representations received on current reviews.

3

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide detailed technical guidance to all those who wish to participate in an electoral review which started after 1 April 2014[1]. It is intended to be a resource for anyone requiring detailed information on the legislation, our processes, information requirements and the overall approach we take to our work on electoral reviews. It outlines the processes that we will normally follow in such reviews. However, we may vary our procedure before or during a review, where we feel that to do so is appropriate to ensure that our statutory criteria are properly considered. We will discuss with the relevant local authorities, any such variation.

1.2 We also publish three other guidance documents which set out – in simple terms – different aspects of the review, to encourage local people to get involved in the process:

- An introduction to the Commission and electoral reviews; and
- How to propose a pattern of wards or divisions.

These documents are available on our website at: http://www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance.

1.3 The electoral arrangements of every principal local authority[2] in England must, by law, be reviewed from time to time[3]. These reviews, where the electoral arrangements of every English local authority are reviewed by the Commission, are known as periodic electoral reviews (PERs). We decide when there is a need to conduct a programme of such work. The last round of PERs commenced in 1996 and was completed in 2004.

1.4 The Commission is not currently undertaking PERs but has a rolling programme of electoral reviews undertaken for a number of different reasons. The most common reasons for undertaking an electoral review are where significant change in population, localised increases from major housing developments or the movement of people into, out of, or within the local authority area, have resulted in poor levels of electoral equality.

1.5 We also undertake electoral reviews, following requests from local authorities that wish to operate with a different number of elected members or seek to replace multi-member wards with single-member wards. In addition, when a boundary of a principal local authority area undergoes significant change, there will also be a need to examine the electoral arrangements of the authorities affected in order to ensure that electoral fairness is maintained or restored. The types of electoral review, the reasons we conduct them and the overarching purpose of electoral reviews are described in **chapter 2** of this guidance.

1.6 When we conduct electoral reviews we <u>must</u> adhere to certain legislation which sets out the steps which we must take in conducting a review, the matters on which we must make recommendations and the factors we have to take into account in reaching the conclusions which underpin our recommendations [4].

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[1] There is separate guidance for the electoral reviews which commenced before that date. Electoral reviews: technical guidance. LGBCE, July 2013. www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance
[2] A county, district, metropolitan or London borough council or the Council of the Isles of Scilly
[3] Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
[4] Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

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1.7   We have limited powers in relation to parish councils. We can neither create nor abolish a parish council. Nor can we change the boundary of an existing parish. However, when making recommendations about the electoral arrangements of a principal local authority, we can make recommendations about the electoral arrangements of any parish councils that might be directly affected by new district ward or county division boundaries. In effect, this primarily means creating new parish wards or changing the boundaries of existing ones.

1.8   Details of the legislation, how it affects the way we carry out reviews, and the limits of the Commission's powers can be found in **chapter 3** of this guidance.

1.9   **Chapter 4** sets out our process for conducting reviews and our approach to matters such as the community identity and the way they interact, taking account of the geographic characteristics of a local authority area and any potential barriers to movement. It describes how we seek to recommend electoral arrangements that balance these criteria in an effective way. We also give guidance on specific technical topics, such as electorate forecasts and coterminosity (also explained in the chapter).

1.10   Coupled with our independence is our impartiality. Our decisions are based on evidence and reason. Our approach, therefore, is one of evidence-gathering through consultation with local people and organisations, and the analysis of all the evidence we receive from them. It is therefore very important that what people say to us is well-argued, and supported by credible evidence. We explain what we mean by evidence in **chapter 5**.

1.11   Further technical guidance, specifically for a local authority under review, can also be found in **chapter 6** where we give details of information that we require from the council.

1.12   When conducting electoral reviews in areas that are parished, we try to use parishes as building blocks for new wards or divisions. **Chapter 7** gives some guidance about parishes, our approach to them and what we can and cannot do as part of an electoral review.

1.13   Finally, we are responsible for the implementation of our recommendations through the making of a Statutory Instrument or order, which is subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. **Chapter 8** gives information about that process.

1.14   There are several bullet-point lists of factors, considerations, etc. set out in this guidance. Unless specifically indicated otherwise, the order in which items appear in such lists does not imply any order of priority or weight to be given to them.

1.15   The electoral areas of district councils are called 'wards'. Those of county councils and unitary counties are called 'electoral divisions', or 'divisions' for short. Throughout this guidance, unless provisions affect divisions only, we use 'ward/division' to describe the electoral areas of all principal authorities and 'parish ward' to describe the electoral areas of parishes.

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2   What is an electoral review?

2.1   An electoral review is an examination of a council's electoral arrangements. This means[5]:

- the total number of members to be elected to the council;

- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards/divisions) for the purposes of the election of councillors;

- the number of councillors for any electoral area of a local authority; and

- the name of any electoral area.

2.2   Where it appears that an area's electoral arrangements should be changed in order to provide for better representation of an area's electors, a review will give rise to recommendations for changes which we will lay before Parliament. Whenever we undertake an electoral review, we aim to deliver good electoral equality across a local authority area. This means ensuring that, for any principal council, the ratio of electors to councillors in each electoral ward/division, is as nearly as possible, the same.

2.3   We balance our consideration of electoral equality with the need to reflect local community identities and interests, and provide for effective and convenient local government. In reviews of two-tier county council areas, we must also have regard to the desirability of aligning county electoral division and district ward boundaries. Overall, we must strike what we consider to be the best balance between all these factors when conducting electoral reviews. These considerations, often referred to as our statutory criteria[6], are set out in more detail in the next chapter.

<u>Why do we conduct electoral reviews?</u>

2.4   All principal local authorities have been the subject of an electoral review, either as part of the programme of PERs (see section 1.3) or subsequently, in a review specific to the needs and circumstances of a particular local authority area. Those reviews established electoral arrangements which were appropriate at the time of, and for the years immediately following, the review.

2.5   When the electoral variances in representation across a local authority become notable, an electoral review is required. Our criteria for initiating a review in those circumstances are as follows:

- more than 30% of a council's wards/divisions having an electoral imbalance of more than 10% from the average ratio for that authority; and/or

- one or more wards/divisions with an electoral imbalance of more than 30%; and

- the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.

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[5] Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
[6] Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

We monitor the levels of electoral imbalance across all principal local authorities in England annually, and those that meet the above-mentioned criteria will, at some point, be included in our review programme.

2.6   The population – and hence electorate – of any local authority area is constantly changing, with migration into, or out of, areas as well as within the same area. For example, if a major housing development takes place and doubles the electorate of its ward/division, it is possible that a change in the representational arrangements for that area will be needed. There are two important reasons why this would be so:

a) When a council forms its policies or makes other decisions, it does so according to the votes of the members of the council. If the electors in some parts of the council's areas are under-represented relative to those in other parts, then the influence of those electors on the council's decision-making is diminished.

b) The accessibility of elected members to their electorate should be, as nearly as possible, equal. This can only be measured by reference to the numbers of electors.

2.7   We calculate electoral equality by dividing the number of electors in a ward/division by the number of councillors elected to represent that ward or division to produce an 'electoral ratio'. High levels of electoral equality for a local authority will be a situation where a high proportion of wards/divisions across the authority have roughly the same electoral ratio and where no ward/division has a ratio which varies by a great degree from, the average for the authority.

2.8   The Commission accepts that mathematically exact electoral equality across a local authority is unlikely to be achieved. This is because, when drawing boundaries, we also consider community identities and interests, the need for strong, clear boundaries and parish boundaries as well as the need to secure effective and convenient local government. As a result, there will always be some variance of actual representation from the theoretical numerical average. Similarly, changes in population, from the moment we complete a review, mean that the electoral ratio and the electoral variance from ward to ward are likely to change immediately and over time.

2.9   We also may carry out reviews for other reasons. When new unitary authorities are established by the Government we are required to consider whether we should conduct an electoral review of the new authority, in order to provide appropriate electoral arrangements.

2.10   We may also conduct an electoral review in cases where local authority administrative (i.e. external) boundaries have been subject to alteration.

2.11   Local authorities that hold whole-council elections [7] and which have wards/divisions represented by two or three members can ask us to undertake electoral reviews with the objective of providing for single-member wards/divisions. Local authorities that want to bring about a change in the total number of councillors to be elected may also ask us to conduct a review. We will not normally review an area for these reasons unless requested to do so by the council.

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[7] In which elections are held for all councillors every four years

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2.12   If a council wishes to change its electoral cycle from whole-council elections to one in which there are elections in alternate years for half its members at a time (elections by halves) or elections in three years out of four for a third of its members at a time (elections by thirds), we are required to consider whether an electoral review is desirable[8]. The purpose of this provision is to ensure that, so far as is practicable having regard to our other statutory criteria, the number of councillors in each ward reflects the council's electoral cycle. This is to give electors in every ward across a local authority's area the same opportunity to participate in every local election.

2.13   The rationale for conducting a review may raise different issues and concerns, but all involve reviews conducted under the same legislation (described in chapter 3). Similarly, our core principles for the conduct of reviews apply to all electoral reviews.

Our core principles

2.14   Councils play a major part in promoting local democracy, encouraging people to register as electors, providing information about local issues and providing pathways by which people can influence decision-making. We see our task as establishing and maintaining the conditions for a fair and representative democracy at local level.

2.15   We recognise that our recommendations may have local political implications but that is not a factor we take into account. We are also sensitive to the fact that political groups may seek to obtain an electoral advantage in contributing to a review. Our task is to ensure that our recommendations are based on evidence, and that the representations of all those participating in a review are treated equally and without bias. Consistent with this is our determination that reviews will be conducted with transparency and the involvement of local people.

2.16   We also seek to help councils at all levels by putting in place electoral arrangements which are conducive to effective and convenient local government for both them and the electorate. In initiating reviews or responding to requests for reviews, we will:

- Support councils in making changes intended to improve their effectiveness and ability to represent fairly the people of their area;

- Provide opportunities for local people and organisations to contribute to reviews;

- Respond to the need for electoral reviews in a measured way, selecting areas for review based on clearly expressed criteria;

- Give priority, when programming reviews, to areas in which electoral imbalances affect a greater number of electors than those in which a lesser number of electors is affected;

- Have regard to councils' electoral timetable, endeavouring to complete reviews within a reasonable period in advance of elections. So far as is possible, we will seek to make electoral change orders around six months in advance of the election in which the changes to electoral arrangements will be implemented;

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[8] Section 43 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

- So far as legislation permits, conduct reviews in a manner that seeks to minimise the administrative and resources burden on local authorities. Minimising the burden means informing and supporting the timely preparation of relevant and necessary information and proposals but ensuring that we have sufficient information as to enable us to reach decisions on our recommendations;

- Start a review with no pre-determined view of its outcome;

- Aim to improve electoral equality at the next election of the council, particularly where we are conducting a review to address electoral imbalances. However, we must always have regard to forecast changes to electorate. Where those forecasts are made with particular confidence, they will carry more weight;

- Precede a review by having a preliminary stage in which we will talk to the council concerned and other key partners in the area, usually some six months in advance of the review being formally commenced; and

- Give clear guidance and effective support to local authority members and officers regarding the information we require in order to undertake an effective review. This includes inviting key officers to electoral review workshops to brief them on the review process and share information.

2.17 Our approach is, therefore, one of consultation, reliance on evidence, openness, transparency and proportionality. We aim to build as many of our recommendations as possible on locally-generated proposals and, to that end, we will gather as much information and undertake consultation as is appropriate to the purposes and the context of any review. We will publicise the review and we ask that the local authorities, political parties, parish and town councils, community groups, residents' associations and other main stakeholders help us engage with local people in the electoral review process.

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3 The legislation and statutory criteria

3.1 When we conduct electoral reviews we <u>must</u> adhere to certain rules. The main piece of legislation to which we work is the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). This consolidates and amends provisions previously contained in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1992 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

3.2 Section 56 of the 2009 Act requires that we review 'from time to time' every principal local authority in England and make recommendations about electoral arrangements (but not their external boundaries). We call these periodic electoral reviews (PERs).

3.3 In addition, we can at any time review the arrangements for all or any part of a principal local authority's area. This means that we can carry out a review of a particular area if it appears to us to be desirable. For reasons set out in paragraph 3.21, we are unlikely to review only part of a council area.

<u>What can we recommend as part of an electoral review?</u>

3.4 We can make recommendations for the following aspects of local authority electoral arrangements:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council (known as 'council size');
- the number and boundaries of wards/divisions;
- the number of councillors to be elected for each ward/division; and
- the name of any ward/division.

<u>What must we take into consideration as part of an electoral review?</u>

3.5 Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act sets out the statutory criteria to which we are required to have regard in conducting electoral reviews. In broad terms, in making recommendations, we are required to have regard to:

- the need to secure equality of representation;
- the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- the need to secure effective and convenient local government.

3.6 Included in the community identities and interests criterion is the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and which will not break local ties. Our aim is to identify clear and long-lasting boundaries for ward/division. We also take into account factors such as the location and boundaries of parishes and the physical features of the local area when drawing boundaries.

3.7 In addition, in reviewing two-tier[9] county councils we are required to have regard to the boundaries of district or borough wards. We will seek to use them as the building blocks for county electoral divisions. In making our recommendations, we must ensure that every electoral division is

wholly within a single district, so that no division crosses the boundary between two neighbouring districts.

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[9] Where there are both county councils and district or borough councils

3.8   We must have regard to the desirability of setting the appropriate number of councillors in each ward of a district or borough council which elects by halves or by thirds [10]. As such, we start with a presumption that, for example, for local authorities that elect by thirds we will recommend a uniform pattern of three- member wards (and, by inference, a council size that is divisible by three) so that every elector has the same opportunity to vote whenever local elections take place. In a district that elects by halves, the presumption would be for two- member wards. However, if it can be shown that such a pattern would not meet our statutory criteria (see section 3.4) we are prepared to depart from that presumption.

Electorate forecasts

3.9   Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act also states that we should take into account any changes to the number and distribution of electors that is likely to take place within the five years following the end of a review. This requirement means that at the start of a review we ask local authorities to provide us with electorate forecasts (further guidance on forecasting is given in chapter 4).

Consultations

3.10   The legislation also provides us with rules on how we should undertake reviews. As soon as reasonably practical after deciding to conduct a review, we must take steps to inform people who we think might be interested in the review. This benefits everyone who wants to take part in a review, because they need time to:

• collect evidence about community identities and interests;
• consider how the number and distribution of electors might change;
• think about what they would like to see as an outcome of the review; and
• present their arguments and the evidence they have collected.

3.11   We cannot complete a review without first publishing draft recommendations, giving people an opportunity to comment on them and then considering any comments made. Only after doing this can we publish our final recommendations.

3.12   We can consult before we publish our draft recommendations but do not have to do so; and any such consultations do not have to be public ones. This means that we can use such consultations to gather any information we need during the early part of a review. However, where we see a need to air a particular aspect of a review, we can carry out a specific consultation exercise.

3.13   We can, and sometimes do, undertake limited further consultations following comments received during the consultation on draft recommendations. However, this only happens where we are minded to make significant changes to our draft recommendations and where we

have insufficient evidence of wider local views in relation to those changes. These consultations are additional to the statutory requirement. Our use of consultation processes is therefore intended be proportionate, to add knowledge and value to the review process and to allow people opportunity to influence the review's outcome.

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[10] 'Elections by halves' occur every two years, when half the council is elected at each election; 'elections by thirds' means one third of the council is elected every year for three years, with no elections in the fourth year. Councillors normally serve a four-year term. See Paragraph 2(3) of Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act.

Single-member ward/division reviews

3.14 Section 57 of the 2009 Act enables any local authority that elects the whole council every four years, or has resolved to do so, to request that we conduct an electoral review and make recommendations for single-member wards or divisions. We expect that this is submitted at the same time that the authority makes its submission regarding the number of councillors to be elected to the council. This is because it is important that anyone wishing to make a submission is aware of the grounds under which the review is being conducted should we agree to a request. A council wishing to make a request should communicate this to us formally. While the legislation does not require a resolution from a meeting of full council, we will wish to see evidence that the request has been formally agreed through the normal decision-making processes of the authority as detailed in its constitution. We will normally endeavour to meet such requests. If we decline a council's request for such a review we will always give our reasons for doing so.

3.15 If we do conduct a single-member warding review, we are not obliged to recommend a uniform pattern of single-member wards or divisions. We are specifically required to have regard to the desirability of securing single-member electoral areas. However, this requirement does not override the statutory criteria referred to in paragraph 3.5. This means that whilst we will endeavour to recommend single-member wards, we may include one or more two- or three- member wards if a uniform pattern of single-member wards would result in the following:

- community identity and interests would not be reflected; and/or
- that obstacles to the effectiveness and convenience of local government in the area would be created; and/or
- that resultant electoral variances would be such that we would normally consider an electoral review of the area.

3.16 We may also be requested by councils to conduct reviews for other reasons. A council may feel that a change in the total number of councillors is necessary to reflect changes in the way it works, or it may feel that a change to ward boundaries is necessary because they are no longer clear and distinct or no longer reflect community identities and local ties. Section 56(2) of the 2009 Act allows us to respond to such requests by conducting a review although it does not compel us to do so. We give advice to local authorities about making a request for a review in chapter 4.

Parishes

3.17 Our reviews can have consequences for parishes and their councils, and the legislation requires us to make recommendations to the effect that:

- every ward of a parish having a parish council (whether separate or common) must lie wholly within a single electoral division of the relevant county council, and a single ward of the relevant district council; and
- every parish which is not divided into parish wards must lie wholly within a single electoral division of the county council and a single ward of the district council.

3.18 Sometimes, we will recommend a district ward or county electoral division boundary which splits a parish that is not warded, or has wards which follow different alignments. A misalignment of electoral boundaries for county, district and parish elections is both confusing for electors and an impediment to effective and convenient local government. In those cases, we will recommend that the parish be divided into parish wards with boundaries that are common, or coterminous, with the district ward and/or county division boundary. We will also consider the number and distribution of electors across that parish before

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¹¹ Local authorities may only resolve to move to whole council elections once every five years. See sections 32-36 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

deciding on the need for and extent of parish wards, but this concern will not take precedence over the need to secure good levels of representation at district ward or county division level. It should be noted that, unlike principal councils, in creating wards for parish and town councils there is no statutory requirement on us to provide for electoral equality.

3.19   Where parish or town councils are directly affected by our recommendations for district ward or county division boundaries, we can make recommendations for their electoral arrangements. These include recommendations for:

- the number of councillors to be elected to the council or, in the case of a common parish council that represents a group of parishes, the number of councillors to be elected from each parish in the group;
- the need for parish wards [12];
- the number and boundaries of any parish wards [13];
- the number of councillors to be elected from any parish ward; and
- the name of any parish ward.

3.20   Whilst making recommendations on these aspects of parish electoral arrangements, we will not normally make recommendations to change the total number of parish councillors for any particular parish. We believe that this is a matter best resolved locally. A local authority may make such changes following a Community Governance Review.

3.21   We may recommend changes to electoral arrangements for just part of a local authority. This means that in the review of the whole of a council's area, a review may leave some aspects of electoral arrangements and some ward or division boundaries unchanged. Legislation provides for a review which only considers part of a council's area. However, we are reluctant to conduct such reviews for a number of practical reasons and potential consequential implications. For example, we may find that recommending a change in the boundary between two or three wards may only resolve unacceptable electoral imbalances if current electoral arrangements for the rest of the local authority area are satisfactory both now and on the basis of five-year forecasts. Furthermore:

- in each review we will generally wish to consider whether an authority has the appropriate council size. If we take the view that the existing council size should be altered, this is likely to have an impact across the whole of the local authority area;
- for authorities that elect by thirds or halves, we are required to consider the desirability of providing a uniform pattern of three- and two-member wards respectively for the whole district; and
- we can only implement electoral changes at an ordinary election of the authority, and not all affected wards may hold elections in the same year.

3.22   While the legislation places a number of obligations on us in conducting a review, it also places a requirement on principal local authorities and parish councils. They must, 'if requested by [the LGBCE] to do so, provide the Commission, by such date as it may specify, with any information that it may reasonably require'.

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[12] Section 56(9) of the 2009 Act

[13] The Commission will not normally recommend the creation of parish wards that contain no or very few electors (see chapter 8)

3.23   We cannot choose between the statutory considerations to which we are required to have regard. Some people responding to a review may prefer that we focus on reflecting community identities and interests to the exclusion of electoral equality, or vice versa. We need to take account of all strands of our statutory criteria and, where those strands may be in conflict with one another, seek to strike what in our judgement is the right balance, having regard to the evidence provided to us.

3.24   As part of an electoral review we cannot make recommendations for changes to the boundaries *between* local authorities or parishes, or consider the creation of new parishes [14].

3.25   We cannot make changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils that are unaffected by any changes to district wards or county divisions. Community Governance Reviews by principal local authorities can, however, be used for such purposes and be implemented by those councils' own order[15].

3.26   We cannot make recommendations about how often local authorities hold elections (the electoral cycle). Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), local authorities can resolve to change their electoral cycle at any time. Where a council resolves to move from whole-council elections to elections by halves or thirds, we must make the legal order which implements the change. Before doing so, we must consider whether an electoral review is required in order to ensure that the number of councillors being returned from each ward reflects the proposed electoral cycle.

3.27   We cannot change, or take account of, the boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies. These are reviewed under separate legislation by a separate body, the Boundary Commission for England, which has traditionally based its recommendations on the ward boundaries put in place as a result of electoral reviews we undertake. Any queries on Parliamentary boundaries should be addressed to the Boundary Commission for England[16].

3.28   Our recommendations do not affect local taxes, or result in changes to electors' addresses or postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that our recommendations have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. They do not determine the size and shape of polling districts, or the location of polling stations, both of which are decided by the local authority. We therefore will not take into account any evidence based on these factors

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[14] We can initiate reviews of the external boundaries of counties and districts (known as 'principal area boundary reviews') under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (and make recommendations for consequential changes to electoral arrangements) but we cannot alter them during an electoral review. Local authorities are able to carry out community governance reviews to create new parishes, or amend existing parish boundaries, and implement the outcome

[15] The LGBCE and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) publish separate joint guidance on community governance reviews (through which parishes can be created, abolished or their boundaries and electoral arrangements amended), which is available on our website at http://www.lgbce.org.uk/ documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/community-governance-review-guidance.pdf.

[16] The Boundary Commission for England's contact details can be found at http://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/.

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4 The electoral review procedure

4.1 This chapter sets out the procedure we will follow when we conduct an electoral review. It also gives guidance on how issues raised during an electoral review should be addressed. Our guidance draws on our experience of conducting electoral reviews, the evaluation of the 1996-2004 PER programme, conducted by the Electoral Commission and our own consultation in 2010/11 on review policies and procedures which brought forward views and ideas, many based on respondents' own experience of reviews.

4.2 The review procedure is essentially the same for requested reviews and for those where we intervene in order to address electoral imbalances. In the case of requested reviews, however, before deciding whether to agree the request, we will wish to meet with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. The purpose of that meeting will be to establish:

- the reason for the request;
- the likely scope of the review; and
- the commitment and capacity of the council to meet our information requirements in a timely manner.

4.3 For all reviews, when the Commission has decided that a review is to take place, the Commission will advise the council concerned of that decision and the likely timescale for a review at the earliest opportunity.

4.4 Figure 1, overleaf, sets out the process, the stages and the indicative timescales for the conduct of an electoral review.

Figure 1: Stages for electoral reviews

Stage	Action	Duration*
Preliminary Period	Informal dialogue with local authority. Focus on gathering preliminary information including electorate forecasts and other electoral data. Commissioner-level involvement in briefing group leaders on the issue of council size. Meetings also held with officers, group leaders, full council and, where applicable, parish and town councils. At the end of this process, the council under review and its political groups should submit their council size proposals for the Commission to consider.	Up to 6 months in advance of formal start of review
Council size decision	Commission analyses submissions from local authority and/or political groups on council size and takes a 'minded to' decision on council size.	5 weeks
Formal start of review		
Consultation on future warding/ division arrangements	The Commission publishes its initial conclusions on council size. General invitation to submit warding/division proposals based on Commission's conclusions on council size.	12 weeks
Development of draft recommendations	Analysis of all representations received. The Commission reaches conclusions on its draft recommendations.	12 weeks

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Consultation on draft recommendations	Publication of draft recommendations and public consultation on them.	8 weeks
Further Consultation (if required)	Further consultation only takes place where the Commission is minded to make significant changes to its draft recommendations and where it lacks sufficient evidence of local views in relation to those changes.	Up to 5 weeks
Development of final recommendations	Analysis of all representations received. The Commission reaches conclusions on its final recommendations.	12 weeks

* Time periods shown are the expected typical duration of stages. They are not standards or undertakings. The progress of a review will be determined by the nature of the issues to be addressed and the availability of information to underpin sound decision-making, not by a determination to complete a review within any given period.

Preliminary period

4.5   Each review will generally start with a preliminary period during which time we will meet with the local authority and interested parties to explain the review process and enable them to prepare the information we will need for the review. In this stage we will work with members and local authority officers and their key partners to gather information regarding the following:

- details of current electoral arrangements and the current electoral register;
- identification of parishes and their boundaries;
- other indicators which identify and build up a map of communities;
- five-year electorate forecasts from the planned end of the review).

4.6   We will also need to gain a clear understanding of the extent and nature of communities and the linkages between them. Furthermore, we will wish to explore the way in which councils and councillors aim to work effectively with their communities in order to understand council size proposals.

4.7   The preliminary period normally ends with the submission of proposals on council size by the council under review and/or the political party groupings represented on the council, as well as any other council size submissions received.

Council size

4.8   Council size is the starting point in any electoral review since it determines the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards or divisions of the authority. We cannot consider the patterns of wards or divisions without knowing the optimum number of electors per councillor, which is derived from dividing the electorate by the number of councillors to be elected to the authority.

4.9   We face a number of challenges in deciding on the most appropriate council size for any authority. There is wide variation in council size across England, not only between the different types of local authority – metropolitan and shire district councils, county councils and London boroughs – but also between authorities of the same type.

4.10   In our opinion, local government is as diverse as the communities it serves, providing services, leadership and representation tailored to the characteristics and needs of individual areas. Our aim, in an electoral review, is to recommend

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electoral arrangements, including a council size, which is right for the local authority in question.

4.11   Consistent with our desire for electoral arrangements to reflect local circumstances, we are unwilling to apply strict mathematical criteria for council size or impose nationally a formula for its calculation. However, this approach means that it is important that we receive well-reasoned proposals which clearly demonstrate the individual characteristics and needs of each local authority area and its communities and how its circumstances relate to the number of councillors elected to the authority.

4.12   Many councils have not considered, for a number of years, the total number of councillors which they require to manage their business and provide for effective representation of citizens. In many local authorities, council size has remained largely unchanged since local government re-organisation in 1974. Since that time, the role and responsibilities of local government and councillors have changed considerably. Following the Local Government Act 2000 (the 2000 Act), most local authorities changed the way they make decisions and operate internally, some more so than others. Subsequent legislation, including the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Localism Act 2011, introduced further opportunities for local government to alter its governance and management arrangements.

4.13   We believe that councils should take the opportunity provided by an electoral review to consider how many councillors they need, having regard to the their political management arrangements, regulatory and scrutiny functions and the representational role of councillors, both in terms of their ward work and representing the council on external bodies.

4.14   The political management structures that came into place in most local authorities following the 2000 Act changed the roles of all councillors, both those who sit on executives and those who undertake the scrutiny and representational roles. The potential to move back to a modified committee system raises different challenges and opportunities for councillors. In addition, various central government and local authority initiatives have affected the roles of local councillors, and the impact of these may affect the number of councillors needed to politically manage the authority, whether this is under a leader and cabinet or a modified committee structure.

4.15   These developments and the sharing of knowledge have provided opportunities for councils to learn from their own experience and that of others, encouraging innovation. Some councils have used their experience of working in new ways in order to reach a view of the council size they think appropriate for their area, and tested that view through local consultation.

4.16   There are levels at which an authority risks being too small to discharge its statutory functions or too large to be able to function in an effective manner. For this reason, we will normally wish to give detailed consideration to proposals for council sizes of below thirty councillors to be assured that the reduction will not jeopardise the ability of a council to manage its business effectively. Equally, we will wish to examine closely proposals for council sizes of above a hundred councillors.

4.17   In short, whatever council size local authorities have in mind, we will wish to test the assumptions underlying the proposals regardless of whom they are from.

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4.18   Our preliminary discussions with principal local authorities, which will start up to six months in advance of the formal start of the review, will give us the opportunity to hear their views about council size and begin to test the assumptions made to us. This will not be due to any presumption on our part but rather to ensure that we have a thorough understanding of why a particular council size has been proposed and that the authority has thought through all relevant considerations. The preliminary discussions will therefore progress most effectively if the local authority has considered its view at the earliest possible stage and is able to provide supporting evidence for it.

Factors to consider when making a proposal on council size

4.19   Proposals for council size are most easily, and regularly, argued in terms of effective and convenient local government (in terms of choosing the appropriate number of members to allow the council and individual councillors to conduct the council's business most effectively). Arguments can also be made on the basis of reflecting communities and allowing for fairness of representation.

4.20   Broadly speaking, we will take a view on the right council size for an authority by considering three areas:

- we will look at the governance arrangements of the council, how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities, and whether there are any planned changes to those arrangements;
- we will examine the council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision-making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies, and whether any changes to them are being considered; and
- we will also consider the representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

4.21   In short, we will be asking for council size proposals to reflect not simply the council's current arrangements, but also likely future trends or plans. In every review we carry out, we aim to ensure our recommendations remain relevant for the long term and to recommend a number that delivers effective and convenient local government well after the completion of the electoral review. Accordingly, we will be looking for those involved in a review to set out their vision for the local authority in five to ten years.

4.22   Those submitting proposals to us should examine the political management and working practices of the council under review, and make reasoned proposals. We have no pre-conceived views on the number of councillors necessary to run any particular local authority effectively, and we are content to accept proposals for an increase, a decrease or the retention of the existing number of councillors, but only on the basis that they can be justified. However, we do not accept, for example, that increases in an authority's electorate should automatically result in an increase in council size.

4.23   We are often asked for a more detailed breakdown of the sort of rationale we are seeking in support of a council size proposal. We have therefore developed further guidance (see Appendix C) that local authorities and political groups are asked to consider in submitting their council size proposals to us. They are not exhaustive and we encourage local authorities and others to present us with any such further material as they consider appropriate. We are content to discuss the guidance at preliminary meetings in advance of the review commencing.

4.24   As previously stated, we will always seek to propose a council size which is appropriate for the individual characteristics of the local authority in question, whether that would involve an increase, decrease or no change to the existing arrangements. However, we will also seek to put the council's proposal in context. To provide context to the authority's proposal on council size, we will refer to the *Nearest Neighbours* model prepared and published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) which can be found at:

www.cipfastats.net/resources/nearestneighbours/profile.asp?view=select&dataset=england

4.25   We will identify the authority's 15 *Nearest Neighbours* authorities amongst the following groups: London boroughs, metropolitan districts, unitary districts, unitary county councils, two-tier county councils, and two-tier district councils. We will then assess where the council size proposal would place the authority compared to its statistical neighbours.

4.26   In cases where the authority's proposal would mean its council size differs to a significant extent from similar authorities, we will require particularly strong evidence, based on the areas set out in 4.20 and in Appendix C. In a small number of cases, retention of the existing council size will require a strong case to be made before the Commission makes a recommendation on council size.

4.27   In the rare cases where we do not believe the council has made a sufficiently strong case to adopt a council size which is significantly different from its nearest neighbours, we will seek to recommend a council size which is nearer to that of other authorities within the relevant CIPFA grouping.

4.28   Where final recommendations of an electoral review of a council in the comparison group have been published, we will use that council size figure as the basis for the analysis. Council size figures can be found for all authorities on our website at:

www.lgbce.org.uk/records-and-resources/local-authorities-in-england

4.29   Even if we are content with the rationale provided in support of a proposal for council size, we may choose, at a later stage of the review process, to consider whether it is necessary to change this number slightly in order to ensure better levels of electoral representation across the district or county. Having regard to the nature and extent of communities or to appropriate ward/division boundaries, it is often possible to improve the levels of electoral representation across an authority by making minor modifications of one or two to the council size.

4.30   After our consideration of the evidence submitted by an authority we will announce the council size which we believe to provide the appropriate basis for the preparation of warding proposals. We will not normally carry out consultation on the specific matter of council size. In doing so, for local authorities that elect by thirds, we will ask that warding proposals be based on a uniform pattern of three- member wards. For local authorities that elect by halves, we will ask that proposals be based on a uniform pattern of two-member wards. Similarly, where we have agreed to a request from a local authority for a single-member ward or division review, we will ask for proposals for a uniform pattern of single-member wards or divisions.

4.31   Some local authorities that currently elect by thirds or by halves may wish to consider changing their electoral cycle to whole council elections prior to an electoral review. Any resolution to that effect must be made and notified to us, at the latest, before we invite proposals on warding patterns.

Ward/division patterns

4.32 Ward/division proposals include the number, names and boundaries of wards/divisions and the number of councillors to be elected to each.

Electoral equality

4.33 Electoral reviews are important in upholding integrity in the democratic process. Fairness at local elections – that is, any elector's vote being worth the same as another's – is a fundamental democratic principle.

4.34 Once we have made a decision on council size, we can work out the optimum number of electors each councillor should represent by dividing the total number of electors by the number of councillors (as described in section 2.6). This produces a figure for the average councillor:elector ratio. Using the average ratio of electors per councillor, we can measure how far the ratio in each current or proposed ward or division departs from that average. When formulating our recommendations, we will be seeking to achieve ratios as close to the authority average in every ward or division. The further that electoral equality departs from the average for the authority, the stronger the evidence of the other statutory considerations we take into account will need to be.

4.35 However, in practice we do not see reviews resulting in wards of mathematically equal size. This is because the approach to electoral equality must be tempered by other considerations which generally reflect the particular characteristics of an area under review, and its communities. This recognises that council members represent individual electors *and* collective communities.

4.36 We will therefore look for some rationale explaining why, in community or other terms, a particular pattern or set of boundaries is being proposed. We will take account of geographic considerations if they impede our ability to achieve good levels of representation in a certain area, although the presence of barriers to movement such as rivers with no crossing points or other strong geographical features are likely to be reflected in patterns of community identity and interaction and so taken into account for those reasons.

Community identity

4.37 Community identity and interest is harder to define than electoral equality for which there is a simple mathematical test. Often, it cannot easily be measured, and can mean different things to different people. It is essential, therefore, that those taking part in a review who make a case on the basis of community identities and interests can explain to us exactly what the community is and, more importantly, what defines it and marks it out as distinct from others.

4.38 For some, community identity could be defined by the location of public facilities such as doctors' surgeries, hospitals, libraries or schools. Research[17] on community identity supports this view but notes that such arguments cannot be considered in isolation. It will certainly not be the case that merely saying that such facilities exist can justify a community identity argument. We would be looking for evidence that such facilities stimulate or provide a focus for community interaction: this would be distinct from their role as points of service delivery to individual citizens.

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[17] Community identity: literature review and analysis, http://www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/policy-and-research/electoral-review-research

4.39   For others, an area's history and tradition may be the basis of its sense of community identity. However, communities change over time and historical considerations may not have such importance in areas which have been subject to recent development or population dispersal.

4.40   Major roads can be seen to be the focus of an area if they are the location of shops or community facilities which people visit regularly and where they interact. They may themselves be the subject of issue for communities, perhaps when safety, environmental or economic considerations are a catalyst to community interaction. Alternatively, major roads, rivers or railway lines are often physical barriers marking the boundary between different communities.

4.41   Evidence of the identity of a community may be presented where there are recorded community interactions and collective engagements with the principal local authority for their area. The existence, and activities of, town and parish councils, residents' associations, and local voluntary organisations will, for example, be sources of evidence on this.

4.42   Some councils have made progress in mapping the physical extent of identifiable communities and, where they have done so, such research would help those preparing proposals and our consideration of them considerably. Mapping of communities that depend heavily on area profiling will, however, be treated with caution. Area profiling often uses demographic characteristics common to individuals: it may not reflect that there are (or are not) interactions between those individuals.

4.43   In some areas, a ward or division will be greater in physical extent than an identifiable community: sometimes we have to combine two or more distinct and separate communities within a single ward or division. This is particularly so in rural areas. We will in these cases consider the nature of local ties or interactions *between* communities, as well as within them.

        Again, there may be opportunities to provide evidence of this, for example through local voluntary organisations or projects. However there are likely to be instances where we recommend a ward or division that encompass communities that have no community linkages.

4.44   We understand that people have strongly held views about their communities and the impact that new warding arrangements may have on them. It is important to us that we hear all those views. However, we ask that, rather than simply asserting that recommendations would affect a community, people explain carefully to us in terms that might be understood by those not living in their locality, why a particular warding or division pattern we have recommended would – or would not – have an adverse effect on their community. What may be self-evident to local people who work or live in an area may not be obvious to us, or even to people living in another part of a review area. It is for that reason we need to have well-argued evidence of community identity if we are to move away from equality in the number of electors each councillor represents. We will take into account all proposals we receive but those which are supported by argument and evidence are likely to carry more weight with us.

Effective and convenient local government

4.45   Effective and convenient local government is also relatively difficult to define; it is a consideration when we take our decision about council size, but is often overlooked as a consideration by people making proposals to us on warding and division arrangements. The impact of proposals on the workload of individual

councillors needs to be considered, as a ward or division may be so large in terms of its physical extent or its electorate that it prevents a councillor from effectively representing the people in it. If there are a large number of parish councils, this can also (but does not always) make demands on a councillor's time which are difficult to meet.

4.46 In either case, there should be an explanation of why this effect occurs, having regard to the council's chosen way of working either with individual electors or with parish councils and other community representative organisations. It will be the council's way of working, rather than the individual member's way of working which is important in this respect because an individual member may or may not be returned at subsequent elections. The operation, or otherwise, of area forums or similar mechanisms may, for example, add to or reduce councillor workload and these effects can be evidenced.

4.47 A practical example of effective and convenient local government for us when considering proposed warding arrangements is to ensure that wards are internally coherent. That is to say, that there are reasonable road links across the ward so that it can be easily traversed, and that all electors in the ward can engage in the affairs and activities of all parts of it without having to travel through an adjoining ward.

Number of councillors in each ward or division

4.48 Whilst there is no upper limit in legislation regarding the number of councillors that may be returned from each ward or division, there are currently no principal authority wards or divisions in England returning more than three councillors. We take the view that wards or divisions returning more than three councillors result in a dilution of accountability to the electorate. Without very compelling evidence, we will not recommend a number above that figure.

4.49 Arguments have been made in the past that if all wards or divisions in an authority return the same number of councillors this helps the local electorate to understand and therefore engage with local government. The 2009 Act states that, when reviewing district councils, we have to take account of the scheme for elections used by the council when making our recommendations [18]. In some councils, all councillors are elected at the same time; once every four years. Others elect a third of the council in each of three years out of four (elections by thirds), or half the council every two years (elections by halves). The legislation says that we must have regard to the desirability of recommending that the appropriate number of councillors is returned from each ward: where councils elect by thirds this is three, and where elections are by halves, two.

4.50 In each review of local authorities that elect by thirds or by halves we will aim to deliver such patterns of multi-member wards. However, in all cases this consideration will not take precedence over our other statutory criteria, and we will not recommend uniform patterns in the number of councillors per ward or division if, in our view or as is shown in evidence provided to us, it results in unacceptable levels of electoral inequality, does not reflect communities or hinders the provision of effective and convenient local government.

4.51 In addition, we may conduct a review at the request of any authority which elects the whole council every four years (or has resolved to do so) and wishes to move to a uniform pattern of single-member wards or divisions across the authority. In

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[18] Paragraph 2(3)(d) of Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act.

conducting any such review we are required to have regard to the desirability of securing single-member wards or divisions. This means we *must* assess whether it is appropriate – taking into account our statutory requirement to achieve good levels of electoral equality, reflect community identities and interests and provide for convenient and effective local government – that each ward or division should be represented by one councillor. If, in our judgement, the statutory criteria cannot be met by providing a uniform pattern of single-member wards or divisions, it is open to us to recommend multi-member wards or divisions.

4.52   For those authorities which hold whole-council elections and do not request a single-member ward review, we are able to propose any combination of single-, two-, and three-member wards. Some contributors to past reviews of local authorities that hold whole-council elections have argued that multi-member wards provide, in principle and practice, greater effectiveness and convenience than do single-member wards. Others have argued the reverse. Our decisions about the number of councillors per ward will be firmly based on our assessment of the evidence as it relates to our statutory criteria: electoral equality, convenient and effective local government, and community identities and interests.

Coterminosity

4.53   When we are conducting a review of a county council, we will also be seeking to provide for coterminosity between district wards and county divisions [19]. Coterminosity occurs when district ward boundaries align with county division boundaries. This is also a consideration of convenient and effective local government.

4.54   Coterminosity can improve the convenience and effectiveness of local government by facilitating representation and joint working between the county and district council. However, it is necessary sometimes to divide district wards between county divisions in order either to minimise the levels of electoral inequality or better reflect communities.

4.55   We therefore do not insist on a target for the levels of coterminosity we achieve in any county council area, as it can inhibit us from achieving a good balance between the other statutory criteria. However, if we can balance the criteria acceptably and reflect the evidence put to us, we will also seek to achieve a satisfactory level of coterminosity when making our recommendations.

Detached wards

4.56   Proposals are occasionally put forward for a detached ward, made up of two geographically separate areas. We have concerns over the use of detached wards. They lend themselves to the creation of electoral areas that lack community identity and which may owe more to purely political considerations than to community identity and interest. We therefore take the view that the use of detached wards, other than to recognise particularly unusual circumstances (offshore islands, for example) is undesirable, and we will not normally recommend them.

Doughnut wards

4.57   From time to time we receive proposals for what we have called doughnut wards, where one ward, normally based on a small town, is completely surrounded by a rural ward. Generally speaking, the rationale sometimes put to us for such a warding pattern has been that it ensures urban and rural interests are separately represented. Such considerations do not form part of our statutory criteria. In any

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[19] Paragraph 2(3)(d) of Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act.

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event, they ignore the tendency for the town to be the focus for the rural areas, for shopping, medical and other services. Indeed, rural communities to, for example, the north and south to the town area are likely to identify more with the town than with each other. Accordingly, we will not normally recommend such warding patterns unless it can be clearly demonstrated to us that they would better meet our statutory criteria than any other alternative pattern.

Rurality

4.58 Many local authorities have both urban and rural areas. When we consulted on our policies and procedures, some people said that urban areas should
have proportionately more councillors than rural areas because urban areas present the more complex issues. Others argued that rural areas should have proportionately more councillors because rural populations are more dispersed, and therefore harder to contact.
There is no provision in legislation for such proportionality. Increasing use of electronic communication methods generally makes no distinction between urban and rural areas. However, there may be exceptions where local characteristics, including topography, lead to an acceptance of a particular variance in electoral ratio for one or more wards.

Ward/division names

4.59 Councils and their communities are usually able to suggest appropriate names for wards and electoral divisions that reflect community identities and mean something to local people.

4.60 In determining names for wards and divisions, we aim to avoid causing confusion amongst local electors and ensure that names are distinct and easily identifiable, especially in two-tier areas.

4.61 Our approach to the naming of electoral areas is that, when wards or divisions remain largely unchanged, the existing name should usually be retained. This supports continuity of identification with an area and voting processes. However, even where there has been little or no change to electoral boundaries, ward names may be altered where there is good reason for change. For example, where community identity has clearly changed over time, a different ward or division name may better reflect the constituent communities of the proposed electoral area.

4.62 We may adopt compass point names when there is not a more suitable name. These are generally more applicable in larger urban and suburban settlements. In this case the compass point reference used will generally form a suffix where the rest of the name refers to a population centre, for example *Buckingham East*. Compass points will normally be used only where they are relative to another compass point (i.e. *Buckingham West* should only be used where a *Buckingham East* has also been proposed).

4.63 Our preference is for names that are short rather than those which attempt

to describe an area exhaustively, e.g. by reference to all or a number of parishes it encompasses. Excessively long electoral area names have the potential to cause confusion both to local residents and elected members, and not accurately reflect community identities.

Internal communication links

4.64   Our recommendations for ward boundaries will normally provide for people to move between all parts of the ward without having to venture outside of the ward. This normally means vehicular access by roads (but not including restricted-access roads such as motorways). Road access may include the use of roads which themselves form a ward or division boundary.

4.65   There may be occasions, however, when parts of a community are linked not by vehicular routes but by footpaths, footways, pedestrianised streets, pedestrian and vehicular ferries etc. These will be more likely to be acceptable in densely populated residential areas of towns or cities, where community identity may be centred on local schools, health facilities, religious facilities, recreational or shopping facilities. In some cases, and especially in rural areas where topography has determined settlement patterns, the formation of wards which reflect both active ties between communities and parish boundaries may lead us to recommend wards where there are no direct communication links between all parts. In these instances, we will look for evidence of community ties, local travel patterns and, if appropriate, local public transport provision and usage.

Current and forecast electorate

4.66   We require electorate statistics from the local authority. Electorate data will be most useful when they are presented by ward or division, parish and parish ward and polling district. However, we are not constrained to using existing polling districts as building blocks for wards.

4.67   The first set of data we require will normally be the electorate from the 1st of the month during which the review formally starts. This will result in statistics which reflect the changing nature of electoral registers kept up-to-date by rolling registration. Statistics are readily presented by the electoral registration software systems most commonly in use. However, we are willing to consider the use of the register published following the annual canvass if reasons for not using up-to-date information are given. We require this information in a standard spreadsheet format, which is available on our website. Furthermore, we would prefer if this data is geo-coded in a GIS format.   Appendix B to this document – Resources – also contains links to the relevant pages. Not all of these spreadsheets are appropriate for every review, and our staff can give advice and guidance on those relevant to the specific review being undertaken.

4.68   Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act states that we must also have regard to the likely increase, decrease or movement in electorate over a five-year period from the making of our final recommendations [20]. As we ask for forecasts to be prepared at the start of a review, the statutory requirement is normally satisfactorily addressed by *six-year* forecasts of electorate changes.

4.69   We appreciate that forecasting electorates can be difficult, and an inexact science. We ask the local authorities to provide these forecasts because they are best placed to know about planning permissions granted, the likely pattern and timing of future development in the area and, as a consequence, how that is likely to impact on the number of electors in the area. This does not mean that others cannot submit forecasts to us or comment on those prepared by local authorities. We will not apply any lower tests to forecasts prepared by others in order to satisfy ourselves that we can accept them with confidence.

4.70   This means that forecasts and comments upon them should be underpinned by sound evidence. We will consider carefully both the methodology used and the

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[20] Paragraphs 1(4), 2(4), 3(4) and 4(4) of Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act.

resultant figures. We expect officers preparing forecasts to reflect ONS sub-national forecasts and to consider the impact of likely housing and economic developments, local development frameworks, expected migration into, out of and within the authority and expected occupancy rate in individual areas rather than generally across the authority. We stress that our experience has found that an increase in development in one part of a council's area does not necessarily result in an increase in electorate across the whole authority.

4.71   As an aid to forecasting, we have produced a practitioners' guide which is available on our website[21].

4.72   Once we are content that forecasts are a soundly-based reflection of the electorate expected in six years' time, we will publish the figures on our website so that everyone can use the same data when making proposals to us. We acknowledge that population and development trends are dynamic. In light of this, some authorities have proposed significant revisions to their forecast electorate midway through a review. We consider that a line must be drawn, and that the forecasts provided at the beginning of a review are those that should be used as the base forecast throughout. It also ensures that all who wish to make a submission to us are using the same base forecast figures.

4.73   We have, in past reviews, placed greater focus on longer term equality as indicated by the forecasts than we have on an immediate improvement in electoral equality. The effect of this has been, in some reviews, an immediate worsening of electoral inequality in order to accommodate future expected changes in electorates arising from, for example, planned housing developments. Whilst, generally, electorate forecasts have proved to be reasonably good, there have been cases where expected developments have not materialised and our attempts to accommodate them in electoral terms have resulted in major long-term imbalances. There are likely to be circumstances in which there will be a very high degree of certainty that developments will take place and will be occupied by new electors by the end of the forecast period. Where the effect of these developments would be to create significant and lasting imbalances in an electoral scheme based on the present-day electorate, we will of course, be more confident of reflecting them in our recommendations.

4.74   In our consultation on policies and procedures for electoral reviews, we aired the view that our recommendations should be seen always to bring the greatest improvement to electoral equality at the first election at which they come into effect. This approach attracted broad support although some respondents asked us to continue to base our recommendations on the forecast pattern of electors. Our approach will lie between the two positions; we will endeavour to improve electoral equality at the next election, however we cannot dispense with the need for forecasts since we are required to have regard to them.

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[21] http://www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance.

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5 Making your views known to us

5.1   Throughout the conduct of a review, we are keen to encourage councils, their partners and other stakeholders and the public at large to tell us what they would like to see in the electoral arrangements for their local authorities. We do this when we invite proposals and when we arrange consultations on our draft recommendations and occasionally, on alterations to draft recommendations.

5.2   Commensurate with our wish to gather the views of local people is our undertaking to consider all of the suggestions or comments which we receive before we make our final recommendations to parliament.

5.3   We will provide councils and, on request, other public sector bodies with mapping data files which may facilitate their preparation of proposals for ward/division patterns under the terms of the Public Sector Mapping Agreement. Whilst people may make their views known to us by surface mail, electronic means or in face- to-face meetings, in June 2013, we made major improvements to the way in which people can propose ward or electoral division boundaries. This can now be done electronically by visiting our consultation website at:

https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node

Members of the public can now produce their own mapped proposals, using the mapping features built in to our consultation website.

The nature of evidence

5.4   In chapter 4, we emphasise the value providing evidence when making representations to us. A question often asked, however, particularly when we brief councillors and chief officers, is 'what sort of evidence is required?' Examples are often requested. This is far from straightforward since:

- each review area has its own particular characteristics and is reviewed on its own merits. Accordingly, evidence submitted in support of, or in opposition to, a particular proposal needs to be considered in the context of the review area concerned; and

- the greater the level of electoral imbalance which would result from the proposals, the more persuasive the evidence will need to be.

5.5   Evidence supplied to us during an electoral review can take a number of forms. Perhaps the most straightforward is that which is based on geographic considerations or communication/transportation links. Generally speaking, we will not seek to include areas on either side of a river or canal within the same ward – in particular if there are no bridges – or a railway line which has no crossing points, or areas which have no vehicular transport links. It may be argued that motorways and major roads provide a natural divide between communities, but in some instances they may also link them.

5.6   Parks and recreation grounds may, on the face of it, provide natural breaks between communities but they can also act as focal points. Similar considerations apply to main roads that are also the location of local shopping centres.

5.7   Rather more complex is evidence that seeks to persuade us of a particular view on community identity when proposals for ward boundaries are put forward. It is occasionally said that the local community is totally opposed to a particular

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proposal. But what is the community, how representative of the community is the respondent and what consultation has he or she undertaken before writing to us?

5.8   The best evidence of community identity is that which comes from community interactions taken outside of the context of electoral review. For example, long-standing residents' associations will have records of their activity and the extent of community involvement in those activities. Similarly, local voluntary and charitable organisations will be able to point to the extent to which people have supported them.

5.9   In determining the strength of local opinion on an issue, sheer numbers of signatures on petitions, or the number of proforma letters received are not necessarily an accurate guide. They may say more for the enthusiasm and competence of the organisers than for the real views of the signatories. In practice, a well-argued representation containing detailed factual information is likely to carry more weight with the Commission.

5.10   Occasionally, local people or groups may arrange public meetings in order to gauge the level of support or opposition to a proposal. The outcome of such meetings may be a better guide to public opinion. But even here, large attendances are unlikely to be conclusive; the proportion of the electorate attending and the breadth of their interests may be more significant than the total number. Moreover, meetings that draw their attendance from a particular political interest group may not express views that are representative of the community as a whole.

5.11   Particularly when describing a case for a certain size of council, local authorities describe the way in which councillors serve their communities through mechanisms such area forums and attendance at parish council meetings. Parish councils will, in particular, be able to indicate their opinion of the adequacy and success of those mechanisms.

5.12   In summary, we will wish to know *why* a certain view is being put forward. If a particular road is seen as a barrier between communities, why is this the case? If another road is seen as the focus of the community, why is that the case? We would look for explanations of why a particular boundary line might disrupt or help to cement community relations and interactions.

5.13   It is quite common for conflicting evidence to be received on community identity. Where this occurs, our task is to make a judgement on which strand of evidence to follow. We will be aided in this if factual information is accompanied by an explanation of why it is significant to the determination of appropriate representation and why in that respect, a particular area or community should be treated in a particular way.

5.14   We feel it important in all the reviews that we spend some time in the area concerned. This enables us to gain a better understanding of the issues being raised with us, particularly in relation to perceptions of community identity. These visits contribute to our evidence base, and are generally made before we reach conclusions on our draft recommendations, then again before we take decisions on our final recommendations. We do not normally ask interested parties to a review to accompany us on a tour of the area under review. This is both to maintain and to demonstrate our independenc e. Depending on the circumstances and the issues to be addressed, we may hold meetings in the area which can provide opportunities for people to draw to our attention particular features or issues which we may further investigate.

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6 Our information requirements

6.1 When conducting an electoral review, we aim to build a strong partnership with the local authority under review, as a good relationship helps to facilitate a robust, timely and efficient review which is economical in its use of resources. To this end, we will hold meetings with the local authority chief officers, political group leaders and full council before the review starts. We will ask the local authority for a main contact – normally its electoral services manager – to be our main liaison throughout the review.

6.2 In order to conduct the review effectively and thoroughly, we will require some information before the review is commenced. This information will be used by us and anyone wishing to get involved in the review itself, and we will publish it on our website (if it is not otherwise publicly available). All local authorities under review are required, under the 2009 Act, to provide us with information which is relevant to the review. Establishing the information base at the start ensures that the review process tests the quality of possible outcomes rather than the merits of conflicting data. Figure 2 provides a list of the minimum information we require at the start of the review.

Figure 2: Information required from the local authority under review prior to the start of the review

Information required	Format	Reason
In the case of any review requested by a local authority, a copy of any Council report and the minutes of meetings relating to that request.	Electronic file	In order that we – and anyone else wishing to contribute to the review – can see the reasoning by which the council has formulated its request.
Current electorate for the start of the review. This should be listed by division, ward, parish, parish ward and polling district, where appropriate in the pro forma provided by the Commission. NOTE: This data should give the number of electors entitled to vote at local government elections. The number of people entitled to vote at UK or European parliamentary elections may be different.	Excel spreadsheets available from the Commission. Ideally data should be provided geo-coded in a GIS format.	In order that we – and anyone else wishing to contribute to the review – are working to the same set of electoral data
A forecast of the local government electorate in six years' time. This should be listed by division, ward, parish, parish ward and polling district, where appropriate in the pro forma provided by the Commission. NOTE: As for existing electorates, this data should give the forecast number of electors entitled to vote at local government elections. Forecasts should be accompanied by a	Excel spreadsheets available from the Commission. Ideally data should be provided geo-coded in a GIS format.	In order that we – and anyone else wishing to contribute to the review – are working to the same set of electoral data

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description of the forecasting method used, any assumptions made. Where future housing development is expected to have an impact on the size of the electorate, we should have a list of the sites of that development and each site's capacity. Furthermore, information as to the stage in the planning process a specific development site has reached (i.e outline/full planning permission granted, work commenced, etc)		
Electoral register	The local authority's chosen secured electronic format. Ideally with names removed	In order that we can verify electoral figures and consider the impact of warding proposals which cross polling district boundaries. Any electoral registers now received should include a standardised address, but most importantly they should include a UPRN (Unique property reference number) which can be used to map the electoral registers in GIS format. NOTE: we will not make the electoral register publicly available
A complete list of all parishes in the district/county, indicating the electoral year(s) of each parish or town council, which parishes do not have a council and those parishes that are grouped under a common parish council	Electronic file	For the order-making process
Maps of the local authority, including maps of each division, ward, parish, parish ward, polling district, topographical maps which match the electoral register. Ideally, the electoral register should be geo-coded for the purposes of mapping. Any other mapping the local authority considers relevant (such as community maps, catchments, or travel-to-work patterns).	In GIS format, if available	As a resource for us and local people to use
Comprehensive mailing list of community groups, partners and usual stakeholders, including parish and town councils, residents associations, community groups etc.	Electronic mergable list.	In order that we can inform all relevant bodies about the review, and encourage them to participate or publicise further
Neighbourhood/community governance arrangements	Electronic file	For us to confirm or otherwise any evidence put to us on the basis of community identity

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Political management arrangements of the council (or proposed arrangements for any new local authority)	Electronic file	As a resource for us when considering arguments regarding council size
Latest Annual Management Letter produced by the council's external auditor	Electronic file	As a resource for us when considering arguments regarding council size
Copy of any peer review report produced in the last three years	Electronic file	As a resource for us when considering arguments regarding council size
Copy of any corporate governance review produced in the last three years	Electronic file	As a resource for us when considering arguments regarding council size
Performance statistics relating to planning and licensing functions	Electronic file	As a resource for us when considering arguments regarding council size
One copy of every local order made under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 concerning changes to ward or division names	Electronic file	As a resource for us to refer to
One copy of every local order made by the council under the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 or the 2007 Act concerning parishes, parish names, parish wards, parish councillors, parish councils, and parish elections and every resolution passed by the council under section 75 of the 1972 Act and section 32 of the 2007 Act	Electronic file	As a resource for us to refer to and for the order-making process
Evidence to support the name of the authority if it does not follow the formula specified in section 2(3) of the 1972 Act	Electronic file	For the order-making process

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7   Implications for parishes

7.1   We are able to make recommendations for changes to parish electoral arrangements (i.e. the number of councillors for the parish and for each parish ward, and the number, names and boundaries of parish wards) as part of an electoral review. However, this is restricted to parish councils that are directly affected by our recommendations for changes to district wards and/or county divisions. We cannot make recommendations to create, abolish or amend the external boundaries of parishes, even if those boundaries are between parishes grouped under a common parish council.

7.2   In those circumstances where we do make recommendations affecting parish electoral arrangements, we will not normally propose changes to the total number of councillors to be elected to a parish, town, village neighbourhood or community council or any grouping of such councils. We believe that this is a matter which is best determined locally by a Community Governance Review.

7.3   Under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, local authorities have the power to conduct and implement community governance reviews for the creation, abolition and alteration of parish areas. They may also make changes to parish electoral arrangements. Subject to certain conditions, local people, by raising a petition, can require that their local authority carries out a Community Governance Review.

7.4   We will not normally recommend the creation of parish wards that contain no or very few electors (less than a hundred) unless it can be demonstrated to us that, within a short period of time, there will be sufficient electors as to warrant the election of at least one parish councillor. This is because each parish ward must by statute return at least one parish councillor. To do so, there must be a reasonable number of local government electors in the parish ward to make the election of a councillor viable.

7.5   Nor will we normally recommend any changes to the total number of parish councillors to be elected. Our view is that changes to the number of councillors to be elected to a parish or town council are best considered locally, though a Community Governance Review conducted by the relevant local authority.

7.6   Unlike district, borough and county councils, when recommending parish warding arrangements there is no requirement in legislation for us to provide for electoral equality.

7.7   Where a council elects by thirds or by halves it may be necessary to alter parish electoral cycles to ensure that parish elections occur in the same years as district elections in the associated district wards.

7.8   The importance of parishes should not be underestimated given that, where they exist, we will seek to use them as the building blocks for wards or divisions. In light of this, it is important that where any council's review parish arrangements is to be undertaken, the order implementing any external boundary changes is made before we commence an electoral review of the area.

7.9   Very exceptionally, it may be appropriate for a local authority to undertake community governance review at the same time as an electoral review of the area is being conducted. However, this can cause administrative difficulties for us and confusion for the local people affected, and any authority contemplating this approach is strongly advised to discuss with us in advance.

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7.10 Depending on the outcome of a community governance review, the authority may also recommend consequential changes to the boundaries of district wards and county electoral divisions. We are responsible for considering and implementing any such consequential changes, even if the area in question is not part of our established review programme. We have published joint guidance with the Department for Communities and Local Government on the conduct of community governance reviews.

7.11 Parish and town councils are invited to comment on proposals for changes to district or county council electoral arrangements. Their involvement in the electoral review process is valuable, and district and county councils are reminded of the importance of consulting the parish and town councils and parish meetings in their area, and to encourage their active participation. Whenever we have to split a parish into parish wards we particularly welcome the views of the parish on the appropriate number of parish councillors for each of those parish wards. Dealing with this as part of the electoral review may help save the expense of a community governance review of the parish. We write to every parish, town or community council as part of our normal process in each electoral review. We encourage common parish councils to ensure that every parish in their group can contribute to the parish council's reply.

7.12 Particularly in rural areas, parishes often represent separate local identities and because of this, grouping parishes with similar interests to form a district ward will meet opposition in certain circumstances. For example, two parishes within a National Park area might share a common interest, but not necessarily an identity. In practice, however, it is inevitable that sometimes parishes will have to be brought together, sometimes against their wishes, to form a district ward. In some cases it might also be necessary to establish new parish or town wards, not necessarily with the blessing of the councils concerned, in order to facilitate new district ward boundaries.

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8 What happens when we complete a review?

8.1 The publication of our final recommendations marks the end of the electoral review process. Our recommendations will be published locally and on our website for anyone to read. There is no provision in legislation for representations to be made on our final recommendations.

8.2 Once our final recommendations have been published, we need to make preparations for the legal order to put them into effect. We will prepare a draft order. It should be noted that we cannot make changes of substance to our final recommendations which must be replicated in the order. The final recommendations mapping that will be used as the basis of the map that will be referred to by the order (the order map). The order map will only show new district ward or county divisions and parish ward names and boundaries, and any existing county or district and parish and parish ward names that we do not propose to change. Our reference to those unchanged name and boundaries should be supported by evidence such as previous orders. Council staff are therefore strongly advised to provide copies of all orders and order maps that they have relating to current parish and parish ward names and boundaries (see chapter 6, Figure 2).

8.3 We will make arrangements for the draft order to be laid in the name of the Speaker of the House of Commons before both Houses of Parliament. It will then be subject to what is called the draft negative resolution procedure. This means that we can only confirm the order after it has been before each house for 40 sitting days (the House of Lords and the House of Commons may have different sitting days). Draft orders can be prayed against in either House. In such an event, a debate on the order may take place. If a debate on a draft order is lost, the order will not be made; there is no provision for Parliament to modify the order.

8.4 All orders will come into force at whole-council elections. In January 2013 the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government advised local authorities that elections may be brought forward from the next normal year of election in order to shorten timescales for the implementation of final recommendations of an electoral review. This means that elections could take place on the first normal local polling day after the making of an order to implement the final recommendations of an electoral review. This will normally be the first Thursday in May but when local elections are combined with others, may be on a later date.

8.5 District councils that elect by halves or by thirds will return to their normal electoral cycles as soon as possible afterwards but no district elections will be held in a year in which they are not normally held. It may be necessary to alter the years of parish elections to ensure that parish elections are held in the same years as district elections in associated district wards.

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9 Frequently Asked Questions

Is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England affiliated to any political party or Government department?

No. We are a completely independent body, and are not part of a Government department. Commission members are not permitted to conduct any political activity or have any party affiliation.

Will an electoral review affect my house value, council tax, insurance premium, stamp duty, postcode, school catchment area or hospital?

No. The review is concerned with electoral matters only; all the above factors are decided by other organisations or factors.

Will an electoral review affect who I can vote for?

Yes. The review will determine your ward or division and, in some cases, your parish ward and you can only vote for candidates who stand for election in those electoral areas. It is for the local political organisations, however, to decide who they want to stand as their candidate in any particular ward or for individuals to stand as independent candidates.

Will an electoral review affect the polling station I can vote at?

It may do. Following the making of our order, your council will need to redefine its polling districts, then identify the most appropriate polling station for each polling district. Councils are already under a statutory obligation to review polling districts and places at regular intervals.

Will an electoral review affect the dates or years of elections?

We can only implement new electoral arrangements in the authority's normal year of election. However, we can make necessary changes to the years in which parish and town council elections take place to ensure that they do so in the same years as district elections in associated district wards. The Secretary of State has separate powers to alter when local elections take place.

My ward is not changing so why do we need an election? Can we not just make the change at a by-election?

We believe that a fresh mandate is necessary for a council that has had an electoral review. Also, even if a new ward has the same boundaries as an old ward, the new ward may return a different share of the total number of councillors on the council. Therefore, we will abolish all of the existing wards and establish new ones that will come into force at a whole-council election.

When the wards are changed what happens to the county division and parliamentary constituency boundaries?

Each review will be of one local authority and we will only look at the electoral arrangements of that authority. Consequently, if we are reviewing a district we will not be altering any county division boundaries, and vice versa. We have no involvement with parliamentary constituency boundaries, which are reviewed by the Boundary Commission for England – a separate body.

When will the changes to district or county electoral arrangements, i.e. wards or divisions and numbers of councillors, come into force?

As soon as practicable at an election of the whole district or county council. If the district normally elects by halves or by thirds there will be a whole-council election to bring the new wards into force, but they will return the district council to elections by halves or by thirds, as soon as practicable afterwards.

When will the changes to parish electoral arrangements, i.e. parish wards and numbers of parish councillors, come into force?

At the next scheduled whole-council elections in the relevant parishes, unless we decide that there can be whole-council elections in those parishes before those scheduled elections. Parish electoral arrangements come into force at the same time as county or district electoral arrangements only if the parish elections take place at the same time as the county or district elections.

Can the external boundaries of the parish, district or county change?

Not as part of an electoral review. For parish boundary changes, the local district council can conduct a review and implement the recommendations, under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. We can conduct boundary reviews of district or county councils, either at the request of the Secretary of State, at the request of the relevant authority or if we identify boundary anomalies which in our view warrant a review.

Can I see the boundaries proposed in your mapping more clearly?

We suggest that you view them on the webpage for your review at:

https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node

This site enables you to zoom in on the maps to see more detail than you can see on the printed versions. You may find it helpful to compare our draft and final recommendations maps with the current electoral boundaries. We will provide councils with mapping data files for use with Geographic Information Systems (GIS). We will also provide these files on request to other organisations which are party to the Public Sector Mapping Agreement (PSMA).

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Appendix A: Glossary

Community governance review: The process by which a principal local authority reviews and makes changes to the boundaries and electoral arrangements of parishes.

Coterminosity: geographical areas identified for different purposes but having the same boundaries. This also applies where a group of areas defined for one purpose, when taken together, have the same external boundary as a larger area defined for another purpose (sometimes known as 'nesting').

Council size: the total number of elected representatives. Where a principal local authority has an elected mayor, the mayor is counted in total council size but is not counted in the total number of members for the determination of average electoral ratio.

Divisions: the electoral areas of a county council.

Elections by halves: elections every two years for half of a council's members at a time.

Elections by thirds: elections in three years out of four for a third (or as near as possible) of a council's members at a time.

Electoral arrangements:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of wards or divisions;
- the number of councillors to be elected for each ward or division; and
- the name of any ward or division.

Electoral equality: Every vote has the same weight: each councillor represents a similar number of electors or in a council in which not all wards have the same number of councillors, an appropriate multiple. For example, in a council which has a single-member ward and a three-member ward, there is electoral equality if there are three times as many electors in the three member ward as there are in the single-member ward.

Electoral imbalance: when the electoral ratio for an electoral area differs from the average ratio for the council as a whole.

Electoral ratio: the number of electors for an area divided by the number of elected representatives of that area.

Electoral Review: a review of the electoral arrangements of a principal local authority. A review may result in changes to none, some or all of the electoral arrangements of that authority.

Further electoral reviews: an electoral review of a principal local authority.

GIS: Geographic Information System: Computer-based systems for storing, viewing, reproducing and altering maps.

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Multi-member wards (or divisions): An electoral area in which people may vote for, and be represented by, more than one councillor (those people will also be entitled to vote for an elected mayor of an authority that has chosen that form of administration).

Order: See Statutory Instrument or order

Parish: In England a civil parish (usually just parish) is the smallest area used for local government. It has a boundary which the Commission cannot change. It may or may not have a parish council. Some parishes have a town council. Civil parishes are not necessarily connected to areas defined for ecclesiastical purposes.

Periodic electoral reviews: a programme of reviews of the electoral arrangements of all of the principal local authorities in England.

Polling district: An area defined for the convenient localisation of polling places.

Principal Area Boundary Reviews (PABRs): A review of the boundary between two or more principal local authorities. A review may or may not lead to the change of a boundary. The Commission can make recommendations about boundary changes to the Secretary of State who has the power to implement them by order.

Principal local authorities: County, district or London borough councils or the Council of the Isles of Scilly. Some district councils are officially called Borough or City councils.

Single-member wards (or divisions): An electoral area in which people may vote for, and be represented by, more than one councillor (those people will also be entitled to vote for an elected mayor of an authority that has chosen that form of administration).

Statutory Instrument or order: A form of legislation. The LGBCE's responsibility for making statutory instruments has been assigned by Parliament in an Act.

Two-tier local government: The responsibilities of principal local authorities are carried out by a county council and by a district council. There may also be parish councils in two-tier areas.

Unitary local government: The responsibilities of principal local authorities are carried out by a single council. There may also be parish councils in unitary areas.

Wards: the electoral areas of a district council or, where a parish is subdivided, the electoral areas of a parish council.

Whole-council elections: the election once every four years of all of a council's members at the same time.

Appendix B: Resources

This page contains links to a number of resources which those participating in an electoral review may need. The text contains hyperlinks for those accessing the document through our website.

Our website:
www.lgbce.org.uk

Our consultation portal
https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node

Representations and submissions to the Commission on electoral reviews.
By visiting our website, you can find and view submissions and representations already made to the Commission about the review of your area or any other.

About electoral reviews:
http://www.lgbce.org.uk/about-us/about-reviews/about-electoral-reviews

On this page, you can find links to this guidance, and the spreadsheets that we ask local authorities to complete at the start of the review.

Practitioners' guide to electorate forecasting
http://www.lgbce.org.uk/   documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidanc e/electorate-forecasts-guidance-2012.pdf

Community identity literature review and analysis:
http://www.lgbce.org.uk/   documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidanc e/communityidentityfinalreport12april2005_18260-13469   e   .pdf

You can find the legislation referred to throughout this document at the following links.

The Local Government Act 1972:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Revis edStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1972/cukpga_19720070_en_1

The Local Government Act 2000:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/contents

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/contents

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/contents

Localism Act 2011
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted

Appendix C

The following paper is the briefing we circulate to local authorities to assist them in their consideration of council size. It gives details of the kind of evidence the Commission is seeking in its deliberation on the most appropriate number of councillors to serve the authority in the future.

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The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Council size

Helping you make the strongest possible case to the Commission

- A guide for local authority elected members and staff

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About this briefing

The first part of every electoral review is a consideration of council size. The Commission's preference is to base its council size decisions on the consideration of locally-generated proposals which are underpinned by sound evidence and reasoning. This is as true of proposals for retaining existing council size as it is for proposals to change council size.

This briefing is designed to assist members and staff of local authorities who are preparing submissions to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on council size (the total number of councillors who represent the local authority) as part of an electoral review.

The note indicates the kinds of issues the Commission will consider in its deliberations on council size and should assist you in making the strongest possible representation to us.

Background

Before the Commission considers possible changes to ward boundaries, we will initiate discussions with the local authority about its views on council size and invite written evidence during a preliminary phase of the review.

Once we have considered this evidence, we will publish a decision on the future size of the council before starting our work on ward or electoral division boundaries.

Preparing your council size submission

The Commission has no preconceptions about the right number of councillors to represent an authority. We recognise that every local authority will represent local people and deliver services in different ways. We therefore make recommendations on the basis of the evidence we receive during the electoral review.

The Commission aims to recommend a council size that allows the council to take decisions effectively, manage the business and responsibilities of the council successfully, and provide effective community leadership and representation.

We will always seek to propose a council size which is appropriate for the individual characteristics of the local authority in question, whether that would involve an increase, decrease or no change to the existing arrangements. However, we will also seek to put the council's proposal in context. To provide context to the authority's proposal on council size, we will refer to the *Nearest Neighbours* model prepared and published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) which can be found at:

> www.cipfastats.net/resources/nearestneighbours/profile.asp?view=select&dataset=england

We will identify the authority's 15 *Nearest Neighbours* authorities amongst the following groups: London boroughs, metropolitan districts, unitary districts, unitary county councils, two-tier county councils, and two-tier district councils. We will then assess where the council size proposal would place the authority compared to its statistical neighbours.

In cases where the authority's proposal would mean its council size differs to a significant extent from similar authorities, we will require particularly strong evidence, based on the areas set out in this guidance. In a small number of cases, retention of the existing council size will require a strong case to be made before the Commission makes a recommendation on council size.

In the rare cases where we do not believe the council has made a sufficiently strong case to adopt a council size which is significantly different from its nearest neighbours, we will seek to recommend a council size which is nearer to that of other authorities within the relevant CIPFA grouping.

Where final recommendations of an electoral review of a council in the comparison group have been published, we will use that council size figure as the basis for the analysis. Council size figures can be found for all authorities on our website at:

www.lgbce.org.uk/records-and-resources/local-authorities-in-england

Whilst it might appear simplest to retain the current council size, the Commission does not consider this is, in itself, a compelling reason to maintain the existing arrangements. Similarly, an increase in council size due, for example, solely to reflect population growth or a reduction in numbers solely to achieve financial savings are both arguments that have previously failed to satisfy the Commission that such changes would promote effective and convenient local government.

Instead, the Commission will form its view about the right council size for an authority by considering three areas:

- We will look at the **governance arrangements** of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.

- The Commission will look at the council's **scrutiny functions** relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.

- We will also consider the **representational role of councillors in the local community** and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

The questions outlined below are the kinds of matters the Commission considers before reaching a decision on council size. In doing so, we recognise that each area has its own geographical, community and organisational characteristics.

Accordingly, some of the questions, and prompts, may not be appropriate to the circumstances of your council or the area you serve. You should think of them as a range of considerations that will help lead you to identify the appropriate number of councillors for your area. They are also intended to help you and present to us a clear reasoning for the number you suggest.

This is not an exhaustive list and the Commission will consider any further issues you wish to raise. We do not expect local authorities to provide lengthy responses to every question (or necessarily even respond directly to all of the questions) and you can set out your submission in any way you wish.

Finally, you should consider the questions not simply in the context of the council's current arrangements, but also likely future trends or plans. In every review it carries out,

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the Commission aims to ensure its recommendations remain relevant for the long term. As such, councils are advised to give consideration to Part Four of this guide (The Future) in its responses to all the other sections.

We hope these questions and prompts will help guide your thinking on this important issue.

Part One: governance and decision making

The Commission aims to ensure that councils have the right number of councillors to take decisions and manage their business in an effective way. We therefore look at how decisions are taken across the authority to assess the volume and distribution of responsibility amongst elected members and staff.

Leadership:

- What kind of governance arrangements are in place for your authority? Does the council operate an executive mayoral, Cabinet/Executive or committee system?

- How many portfolios are there?

- To what extent are decisions delegated to portfolio holders or are most decisions taken by the full Executive and/or Mayor?

- Do Executive (or other) members serve on other decision making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies?

- In general, are leadership and/or portfolio roles considered to be full time roles?

> In looking at these matters, the Commission is trying to determine how work and responsibilities are distributed across the council. For example, how many councillors are involved in taking major decisions on behalf of the authority and what is the volume of those responsibilities? What does being a portfolio holder actually involve and what responsibilities are delegated to officers, other members of the council or other committees? Overall, want to assess the role councillors play at every level of decision making at the council.
>
> Evidence could be provided, for example, about the official/constitutional responsibilities of portfolio holders and/or a description of the day-to-day management of the council.

Regulatory:

- In relation to licensing, planning and other regulatory responsibilities, to what extent are decisions delegated to officers?

- How many members are involved in committees?

- Is committee membership standing or rotating?

- Are meetings *ad hoc*, frequent and/or area based?

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- What level of attendance is achieved? Are meetings always quorate?

- Does the council believe that changes to legislation, national or local policy will have influence the workload of committees and their members which would have an impact on council size?

> Evidence of the level of delegation to officers of quasi-judicial and other decisions helps the Commission understand how many councillors might be required overall to deliver effective and convenient local government. You may wish to refer to the authority's policy on delegation and statistical evidence relating to the number of decisions taken by committees and/or individuals. This is an important issue for the Commission as filling committee places and being able to discharge regulatory responsibilities are relevant factors in determining council size.
>
> The Commission is also interested in evidence that demonstrates trends in the workload and what your expectations are for the future. Reference to changing national policies and frameworks may influence the level of work you will expect of elected members in the future.

Demands on time:

- Is there a formal role description for councillors in your authority?

- Do councillors receive formal training for all or any roles at the council?

- Do councillors generally find that the time they spend on council business is what they expected?

- How much time do members generally spend on the business of your council?

- Does the council appoint members to outside bodies? If so, how many councillors are involved in this activity and what is their expected workload?

- Does the council attract and retain members?

- Have there been any instances where the council has been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of councillors?

- Do councillors have an individual or ward budget for allocation in their area? If so, how is such a system administered?

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The Commission is interested in the time and commitment pressures on elected members and how they might relate to the number of councillors required in the future to deliver effective and convenient local government. We are also interested know whether these commitments are increasing or decreasing.

Evidence to support views here might include any peer review activity undertaken recently or feedback provided directly by members. Similarly, member development programmes might be useful in illustrating your point of view.

The issues raised in Part One of this guide will help you to make a judgement on the number of councillors required to discharge decision making responsibilities in an effective way. This forms a useful starting point in your overall assessment on council size.

Part Two: scrutiny functions

Every council has mechanisms to scrutinise the executive functions of the council and other local bodies. They also have significant discretion over the kind (and extent) of activities involved in that process. In considering council size, the Commission will want to satisfy itself that these responsibilities can be administered in a convenient and effective way through the number of councillors it recommends.

- How do scrutiny arrangements operate in the authority? How many committees are there and what is their membership?

- What is the general workload of scrutiny committees? Has the council ever found that it has had too many active projects for the scrutiny process to function effectively?

- How is the work of scrutiny committee programmed? Is the work strictly timetabled?

- What activities are scrutiny committee members expected to carry out between formal meetings?

Evidence might include the practical role members play in scrutiny work and the activities and time commitment given to projects or commitments on outside bodies. A description of the kind of support members generally receive from staff as part of committee work (e.g. preparation of reports) will be helpful to the Commission in understanding the impact of scrutiny on the overall number of councillors needed to deliver effective and convenient local government.

The issues discussed in Part Two, combined with the conclusions you drew in Part One of your considerations should help identify number of councillors required not only to take decisions effectively but to ensure that the council is able to support its scrutiny functions and the other responsibilities councillors will have on bodies outside the council.

Part Three: representational role of councillors

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to representation and members will represent and provide leadership to their communities in different ways. However, we are interested in hearing about the extent to which members are routinely expected to engage with communities and how this affects workload and responsibilities. In particular, if the council has defined a role for elected members, the Commission would find that evidence interesting.

- In general terms, how do councillors carry out their representational roles with electors? Do members mainly respond casework from constituents or do they have a more active role in the community?

- How do councillors generally deal with casework? Do they pass on issues directly to staff or do they take a more in depth approach to resolving issues?

- What support do councillors receive in discharging their duties in relation to casework and representational role in their ward?

- How do councillors engage with constituents? Do they hold surgeries, distribute newsletters, hold public meetings, write blogs etc?

- How has the role of councillors changed since the council last considered how many elected members it should have?

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- Has the council put in place any mechanisms for councillors to interact with young people, those not on the electoral register or minority groups or their representative bodies?

- Are councillors expected to attend meetings of community bodies such as parish councils or residents associations? If so, what is the level of their involvement and what role are they expected to play?

> The Commission is interested in assessing what impact the number of councillors might have on the way local communities are represented. How much time do councillors spend on casework and ward activities in general and what support networks exist in the council to help them discharge their duties?
>
> You should now consider what impact the representational role of members of the authority has on the conclusions you drew in the first two parts of this guide. Your judgement should be a realistic reflection of councillors' roles in their communities and may, or may not, increase the number your came to after Part One and Part Two of this guide.

Part Four: the future

The Commission understands that the role of local authorities is constantly changing. In particular, changes such as the introduction of elected mayors in some parts of England have significantly altered the nature of decision making and role of elected members. Equally, many local authorities have not seriously considered the size of their council since the introduction of Executive/Scrutiny functions over a decade ago. We are aware that a number of local authorities have changed or intend to change their governance arrangements by reverting from executive and scrutiny models to committee administrations. The pace of change for authorities is likely to continue into the foreseeable future. That is why you should consider future trends and developments when coming to conclusions on council size.

In Parts One - Three, we set out a number of questions about how the council and councillors currently operate. If proposing a change in council size, we would also be interested in knowing what changes might be made to current arrangements, which might affect the number of councillors needed.
In particular:

Localism and policy development

- What impact do you think the localism agenda might have on the scope and conduct of council business and how do you think this might affect the role of councillors?

- Does the council have any plans to devolve responsibilities and/or assets to community organisations? Or does the council expect to take on more responsibilities in the medium to long term?

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<u>Service delivery</u>

- Have changes to the arrangements for local delivery of services led to significant changes to councillors' workloads? (For example, control of housing stock or sharing services with neighbouring authorities).

- Are there any developments in policy ongoing that might significantly affect the role of elected members in the future?

<u>Finance</u>

- What has been the impact of recent financial constraints on the council's activities? Would a reduction in the scope and/or scale of council business warrant a reduction in the number of councillors?

- If you are proposing a reduction in the number of councillors for your authority, to what extent is this a reflection of reduced activity of the council overall, an anticipation of efficiency plans or a statement to local people? Or none of these things?

The Commission aims to recommend electoral arrangements – including council size – that will deliver convenient and effective local government for the long term. It is therefore important that the overall number of councillors you propose will be right for your authority in the future. It could mean that the number you put to the Commission is different from the analysis you built up in the first three parts of this guide. Provided you have firm evidence and a strong rationale for such a difference, the Commission will give it serious consideration.

The Commission is interested in hearing firm plans for the future and evidence of trends that may affect the number of councillors required. Observations on possible developments are less likely to be persuasive.

Further reading

You may find it helpful to read the Commission's technical guidance on electoral reviews which covers our policy towards council size and the rest of the electoral review process. This can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance

The Commission also produces guidance aimed at members of the public who wish to engage with the electoral review process. This is also available on our website.
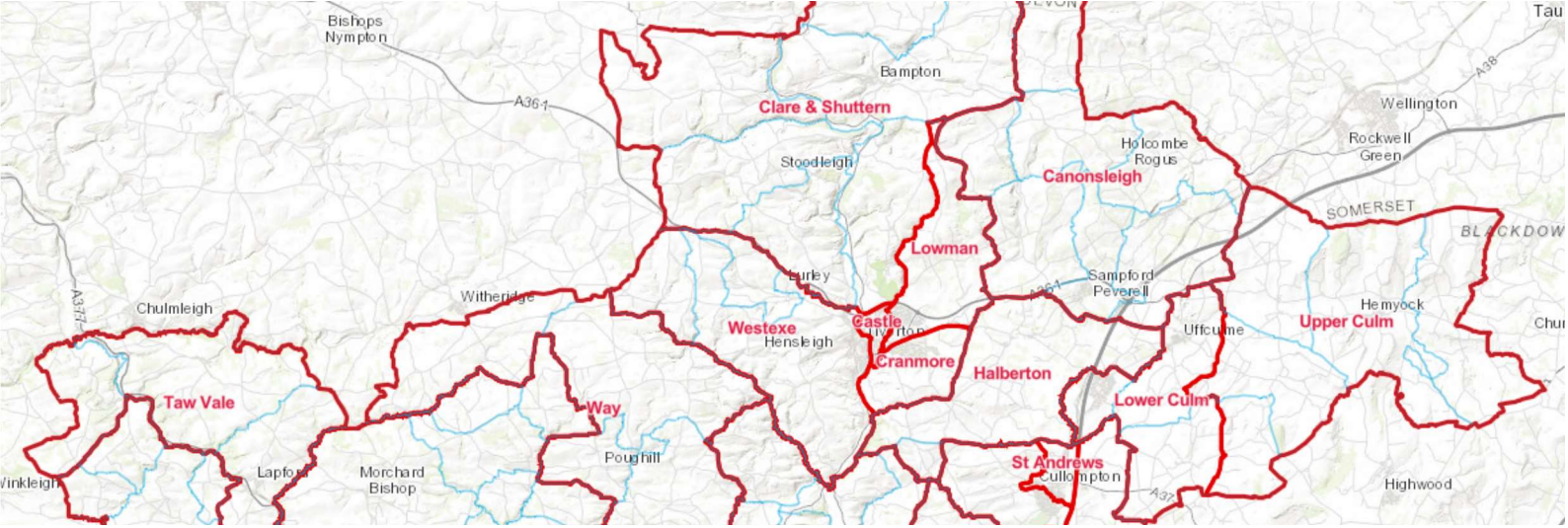
The Commission publishes all submissions it receives throughout an electoral review. Our website therefore includes previous examples of council size submissions made by local authorities across England. Our staff will also be able to advise you on previous submissions that you might find interesting.

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ELECTORAL REVIEWS

GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS

📔 Contents

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1. What is an electoral review?

An electoral review is a process which considers the electoral arrangements for a local authority. This means that it looks at the following things:

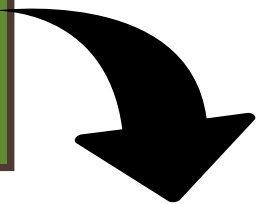|		
Number of councillors	Number of wards	The locations of the boundaries between wards
The name of each ward	The number of councillors elected to each ward	We will hold a briefing for all councillors at the start of a review.

2. Why do electoral reviews happen?

Electoral reviews can happen for one of four reasons.

1 Population changes can lead to some councillors representing significantly more or fewer electors than others in the same council. This is known as 'electoral inequality'. If inequality reaches a certain point, we may carry out a review to put it right. We call this **an intervention review.**.

2 If a council has not been reviewed for a long time (normally around 14 years), we may carry out an electoral review to make sure its electoral arrangements are still appropriate. We call this **a periodic review**.

3 Councils sometimes ask us to carry out an electoral review. There are different reasons for this. For example, there may be changes to the way the council is run that require a different number of councillors. We call this **a request review**.

4 The structure of councils in an area can change. They can be merged, or new authorities can be created. When that happens, we carry out an electoral review. We call this a **changing authority** review.'

3. Who carries out electoral reviews?

Electoral reviews are carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('LGBCE'). We were set up in 2009 by a law called the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act. Below are some things you should know about us.

Completely independent

We operate independently of government and **all** political parties. We report to Parliament through the cross-party Speaker's Committee.

Transparent

You can see exactly how we reached our decisions. All comments we receive on our proposals and all our reports are published on our website.

Accessible

We are easy to contact. If you or any of your constituents have a question about a review in your area, either send us an email or give us a ring.
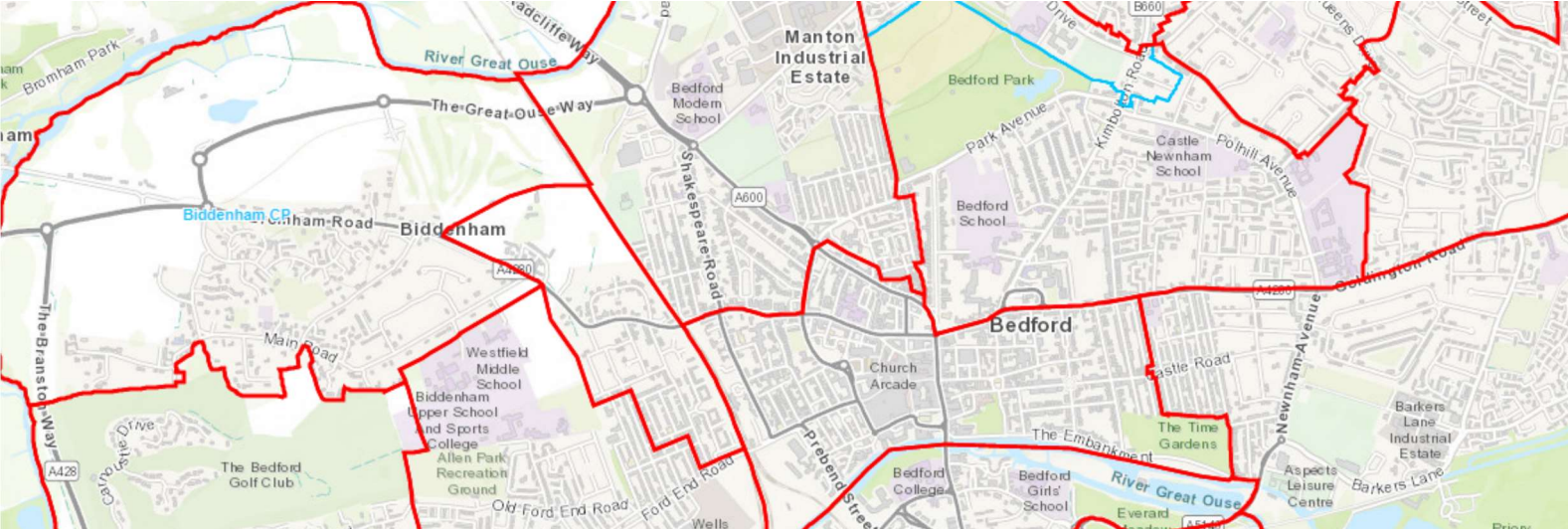
0330 500 1525

@ reviews@lgbce.org.uk

4. Our purpose and aims

We recommend fair electoral and boundary arrangements for local authorities in England. Over the course of an electoral review, we aim to do the following things:

Achieve electoral equality
Make sure that, within an authority, each councillor represents a similar number of electors.

Reflect local communities and interests
Create boundaries that are appropriate, and reflect community ties and identities

Respond to local views
Deliver reviews informed by local needs, views and circumstances.

We want to be regarded as:

Impartial	giving equal consideration to all views
Objective	making recommendations based on evidence
Responsive	listening to local opinion
Transparent	following clear and open processes
Professional	being reliable, efficient and helpful

5. Review Process

Watch the video below to get an overview of the electoral review process.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

Preliminary period
We collect information from the council. We also ask for evidence about how many councillors they think they should have.

We will set out a clear timetable for each review with dates for each of these stages.

Council size decision
We assess the evidence and decide how many councillors there should be.

Consultation on warding pattern
We ask people across the local area to tell us where they think boundaries between wards should be. We are also interested in what people think wards should be called and how many councillors each of the wards should have.

Preparation of draft proposals
We consider all comments made during the consultation. We then prepare proposals for new wards.

Consultation on proposals
We ask people across the local area to tell what they like and don't like about our proposals for ward boundaries, ward names and distribution of councillors. We also ask them to suggest changes that would improve the proposals.

Preparation of recommendations
We consider all comments made during the consultation. We make changes to our proposals and prepare recommendations for Parliament to consider.

Approval of recommendations
We publish our recommendations. If Parliament agrees them, the new electoral arrangements become law.

Sometimes we will hold an additional round of consultation if we want to test some proposals that are very different from our draft proposals.

Implementation of new electoral arrangements
The new arrangements come into force at the next local election.

6. Councillor numbers
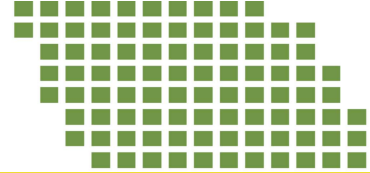
The first part of the review will determine the total number of councillors to be elected to the council in the future. We won't consider ward boundaries until we have completed this phase. We'll make a judgement on council size by considering three broad areas.

! We are happy to receive multiple submissions about councillor numbers from individual councillors and political groups, if councillors are not able to come to a unanimous view.

We will look at the **governance arrangements** of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities. We aim to ensure the council has the right number of councillors to take decisions and manage the business of the council effectively (both now and in the future), so we are looking for evidence about cabinet/committee responsibilites and their workloads, as well as delegation to officials and how all this might look in the future.

We will look at the council's **scrutiny fuctions** relating to its own decision-making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.

Every local authority has mechanisms to scrutinise the executive functions of the council and other local bodies. They also have significant discretion over the kind (and extent) of activities involved in that process. In considering council size, we will want to be satisfied that these responsibilities can be administered in a convenient and effective way.

We are looking for evidence about the number of councillors needed to hold the decision-makers to account and ensure the council can discharge its responsibilities to other public sector bodies and partnerships.
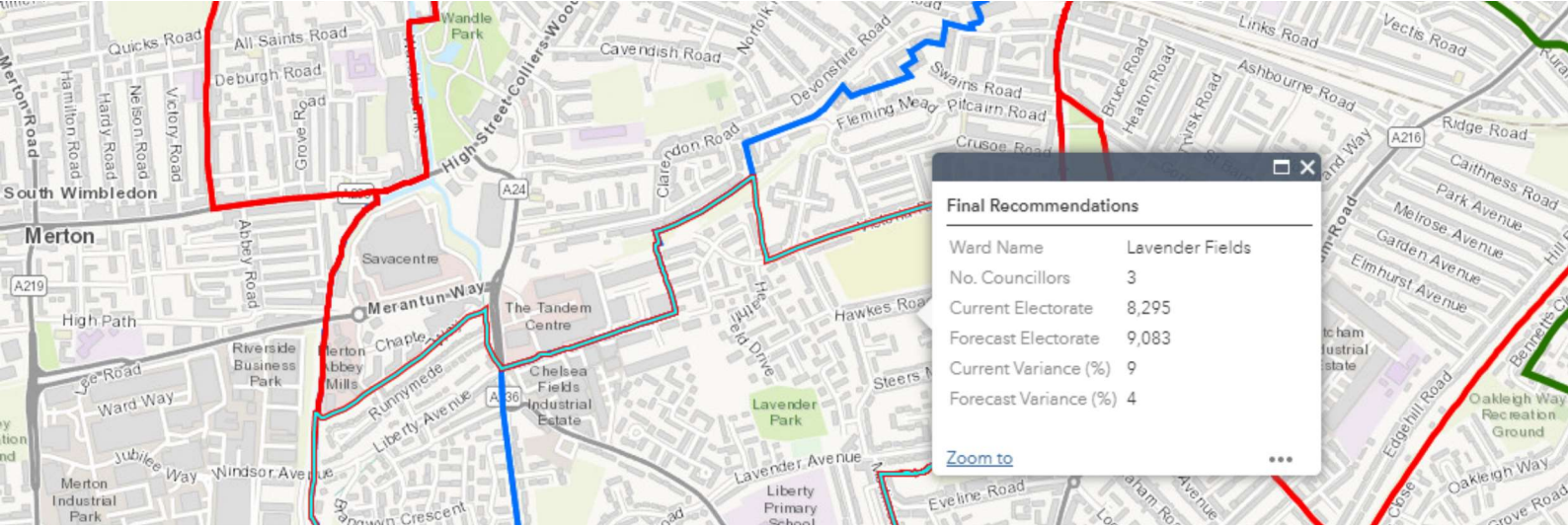
We will also consider the **representational role of councillors** in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations. We understand that there is no single approach to representation and members will represent and provide leadership to their communities in different ways. However, we are interested in hearing about the extent to which members routinely engage with communities and how this affects workload and responsibilities.

We are looking for evidence about how councillors interact with their communities, their caseloads and the kind of support they need to represent local people and groups.

More guidance on council size can be found by clicking here.

Final Recommendations

Ward Name	Lavender Fields
No. Councillors	3
Current Electorate	8,295
Forecast Electorate	9,083
Current Variance (%)	9
Forecast Variance (%)	4

Zoom to

7. Warding patterns

Once we've decided on a 'minded to' number of councillors, we'll open a public consultation on the ward boundaries and names. 'Minded to' means that the number of councillors might go up or down by one or two _if_ that means we can propose a warding pattern that better reflects the criteria you're about to read about. You'll be able to give us your views. There are lots of ways for you to do that, but first it's important to understand how we make decisions.

We have statutory criteria
The law that governs our work says that we can only make decisions about new warding arrangments based on three specific criteria.
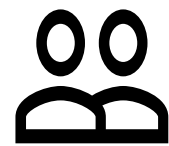
What do any of these criteria mean? We'll go into that in a bit more detail on the next couple of pages.

Electoral equaility

Convenient and effective local government

Community identity and interests

All three criteria are equal
It is our job to strike a balance between the criteria when putttng together warding arrangements. We do this by assessing the evidence we receive over the course of the review.

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8. Electoral equality

We have to make sure each councillor represents a similar number of electors. The law tells us we have to 'future-proof" the new arrangements by aiming for electoral equality five years after the end of the review. So we take into account things like population growth and new housing developments.

The easiest way of thinking about this is with an example. Red Tree Council is predicted to have 10,000 electors five years after our review. We have proposed that it should have 10 councillors and seven wards. There should be five wards with one councillor each, one ward with two councillors and one ward with three councillors. Our recomendations for new wards wiill aim for 1,000 electors in the single-councillor wards, 2,000 in the two-councillor ward and 3,000 in the three-councillor ward.

Note: Councils that have elections every four years can have any mixture of single-councillor, two-councillor and three-councillor wards. For councils that elect a third of their councillors in three years out of every four, we try to make sure all of their wards have three councillorss.

Total number of forecast electors	÷	Number of councillors	=	Number of electors that should be represented by each councillor

To make it possible to calculate electoral equality five years after the end of the review, the council provides us with electorate forecasts down to the level of individual polling districts (polling districts are geographic areas smaller than wards used by councils for administrative purposes). We publish these forecasts on our website to assist local people with calculating electoral equality for their individual proposals. Further guidance about how we calculate electorate forecasts is available on our website (here).

9. Community identity and convenient and effective local government

If we imposed rigid electoral equality we would end up with some wards which seemed odd to local people. To avoid this, the law tells us to also take into account two other things:

Community identity

A sense of community is often shaped by the amenities and services people use: shops, places of worship, schools and other facilities. It can also be shaped by attachment to representative organisations like tenants and residents associations, community organisations and local business forums.

How you can help

You can help us draw up wards that reflect the communities local people live in. All of our final reports contain recommendations that have been improved by input from local people. In the consultation on warding patterns tell us about the communities you represent. In the consultation on our draft proposals tell us how they fit with your experience of local communities.

Convenient and effective local government

We try to propose wards that use clearly identifiable boundaries, have appropriate names, and make it as easy as possible for the councillors to do their jobs.

How you can help

Please respond to our consultations and tell us where the most identifiable boundaries are in your area. Suggest names for the wards, and let us know in the consultation on our draft propoals if you think there is a better alternative.

10. How to tell us your views

We try to make it as easy as possible for you to tell us what you think. Use our consultation site, e-mail us or send a letter. Comments have to be made in writing, but you can call us for information or advice.

Go to:
https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk
This is our dedicated consultation website.

1

Use the dropdown menu to find the name of your local council. Only councils under active review will be listed.

2

Click on the name of the council and you'll be taken to a dedicated page.
You'll see an interactive map. You can click on it and scroll around, as well as zoom in and out to see the existing boundaries of your area or those we are proposing.

3

Scroll down the page and you will see a 'Have your say' box for your comments. You can write what you like there.

Tell us what ward boundaries and/or names you want to see in your local area and **make sure you tell us why.** Once you've done that, fill in your details and then click submit when you're finished, and that's it!

4

Remember! We can only accept arguments that relate to the three criteria you've just read about. If you think that our draft proposals don't reflect your community, don't just say the boundaries or names aren't very good. Tell us WHY they aren't very good, and please give us an alternative to work with.

If you'd prefer to write to us, send your comments to;
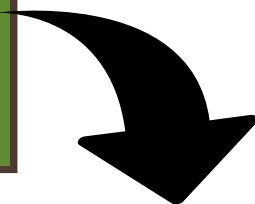LGBCE, PO Box 133, Blyth NE24 9FE

To email them, send to:
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

11. Rules about parishes

There are special rules for parishes during an electoral review.

1 We cannot create or abolish parish councils
The responsibility for creating or abolishing parish councils lies with the local authority we are reviewing. They would do something called a Community Governance Review and would ask local people for their views during the process.

We cannot amend the external boundaries of any parishes
Changing a parish's boundary is also the responsibility of the local authority. A Community Governance Review would need to take place for any changes to be made. **2**

3 If we draw a ward boundary through a parish, it means we have to create a parish ward.
Parish wards are geographic areas that elect parish councillors to sit on the parish council. We will publish special maps that show any parish warding changes that arise from the review.

! We will always write to every parish council at the start of each consultation stage letting them know what's going on. If our proposals result in any parish warding changes, we will send a special letter setting out the changes.

12. Engaging the local community

It's really important that local people know about the review and write in to give us their views. We work with the local authority to publicise the review and ask them to provide a stakeholder database for those we can contact direct (such as community organisations), but we ask that all councillors help to publicise the review and inform their constituents however they can. Below are some examples of the kind of communications activity we undertake.

Press
We will contact all local newspapers.

Social media
We will use social media advertisements to target local users.

Flyers and posters
We will send flyers and posters to the council to be placed in key community areas.

Stakeholders
Using a database provided by the council, we will write directly to all local stakeholders. For those stakeholders without access to digital communications, we will send a letter.

Community briefing
We will hold a virtual briefing for local residents where they can hear about the review and ask us questions.

Ask the local authority to promote the review
We will ask the council to use the communications channels and networks at its disposal to inform the public about the review.
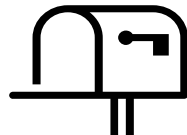
13. Contact us

There are lots of ways for you to get in touch with us or follow the progress of the review.
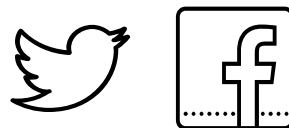
@

Email:
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Post:
LGBCE, PO Box 133, Blyth NE24 9FE

w.w.w

Website:
www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation portal:
https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Social media:
@lgbce

Phone:
0330 500 1525

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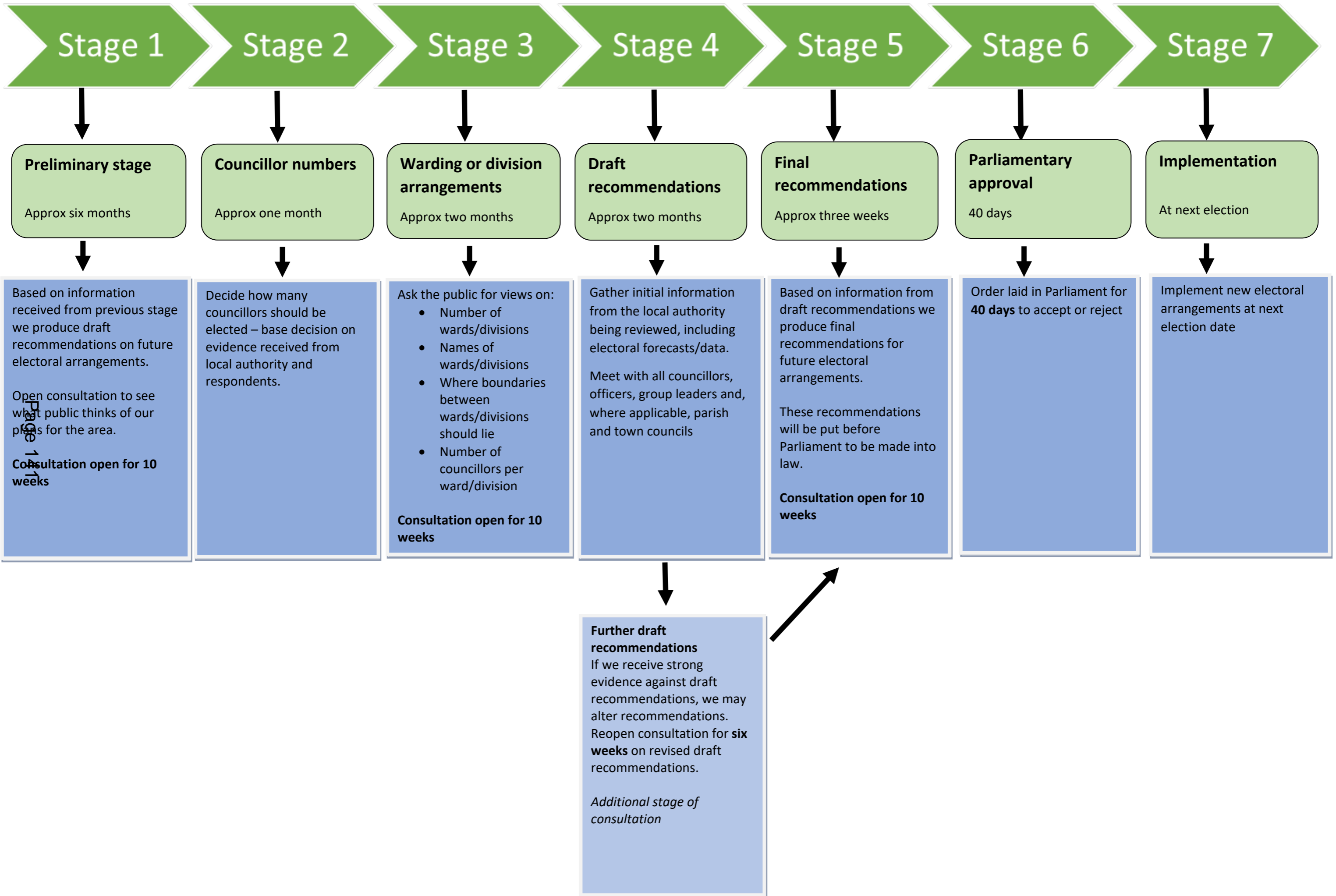
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7

Preliminary stage

Approx six months

Councillor numbers

Approx one month

Warding or division arrangements

Approx two months

Draft recommendations

Approx two months

Final recommendations

Approx three weeks

Parliamentary approval

40 days

Implementation

At next election

Based on information received from previous stage we produce draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements.

Open consultation to see what public thinks of our plans for the area.

Consultation open for 10 weeks

Decide how many councillors should be elected – base decision on evidence received from local authority and respondents.

Ask the public for views on:

- Number of wards/divisions
- Names of wards/divisions
- Where boundaries between wards/divisions should lie
- Number of councillors per ward/division

Consultation open for 10 weeks

Gather initial information from the local authority being reviewed, including electoral forecasts/data.

Meet with all councillors, officers, group leaders and, where applicable, parish and town councils

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Based on information from draft recommendations we produce final recommendations for future electoral arrangements.

These recommendations will be put before Parliament to be made into law.

Consultation open for 10 weeks

Order laid in Parliament for **40 days** to accept or reject

Implement new electoral arrangements at next election date

Further draft recommendations
If we receive strong evidence against draft recommendations, we may alter recommendations. Reopen consultation for **six weeks** on revised draft recommendations.

Additional stage of consultation

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Corporate Support Committee - Work Programme 2023/24

Corporate Support Committee	Lead Officer	Date of Meeting	Time	Full Council Meeting Date
Key Performance Indicators 2022-2026 - Quarter 4 End of year performance report for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Council Vision 2022 – 2023 Annual Report Review of District & Parish Election 2023 Work Programme	**Jackie Follis** **Jackie Follis** **Lauren Fairs-Browning**	**27 June 2023**	6pm	19 July 2023
Annual Update on Information and Digital Strategy Customer Services – Annual Update Budget Consultation Report Key Performance Report for Q1 Sundry Debt Write Offs 2022/23 Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report Health & Safety Policy Data Protection Policy Update Work Programme	**Paul Symes** **Antony Baden** **Antony Baden** **Jackie Follis** **Antony Baden** **Antony Baden** **Neil Williamson** **Lindsey Reeves**	**12 Oct 2023**	6pm	8 November 2023

Corporate Support Committee - Work Programme 2023/24

Corporate Support Performance Report Quarter 2 & Quarter 3	**Jackie Follis**	**31 January 2024**	6pm	21 February 2024 (Special Budget Council)
Committee Budget Report – Service specific – Budget 2024/25	**Antony Baden**			13 March 2024
Budget Monitoring Report Q2	**Antony Baden**			
Pay Policy Statement 2023	**Karen Pearce**			
Microsoft Licence Renewal	**Paul Symes**			
Electoral Review	**Daniel Bainbridge**			
Work Programme				
Corporate Support Committee	**Lead Officer**	**Date of Meeting**	**Time**	**Full Council Meeting Date**
Corporate Complaints (Annual Report)	**Lindsey Reeves**	**30 April 2024**	6pm	9 May 2024
Electoral Review	**Daniel Bainbridge**			
Work Programme				