



Electoral Review of Leeds City Council

Leeds' submission on Council Size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

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JOINT STATEMENT FROM GROUP LEADERS

We introduce this submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on behalf of the constituents of the City of Leeds which we, and our elected colleagues, represent.

The last electoral review of the Leeds area concluded in July 2003. As part of that review the Commission considered the question of council size and at that time, four years after a move to a Leader and cabinet form of governance, the Commission was persuaded by the arguments we put forward that a council formed of 99 members from 33 wards presented the optimum size. In particular the Commission took account of the multiplicity and range of responsibilities and duties and members' representational role, which place considerable demands on members.

The council also argued, and the Commission agreed, that to enable a composition of members, that reflects the diversity of society and is open to all sections of it, 'workloads must not become so excessive as to exclude people from serving as a councillors unless they are prepared to give up paid employment'.

Those arguments are stronger and even more compelling now than they were in 2003. Since that time members' workloads have significantly increased. New responsibilities have been entrusted to local government for example for licensing and for public health and a new power of general competence has enabled greater creativity in working across traditional organisational and sector boundaries.

Additionally our new community committees with their delegated budgets, locally managed services and oversight of joined up local service delivery (through our appointed community committee champions and local thematic working groups), have significantly enhanced members' roles and responsibilities.

As the state shrinks our approach is to get more power down to localities and local members; both from central government to the city region level and from our own city level to localities. The council's response to these challenges has been to seize the opportunity to shape our own future.

Building on the idea of civic enterprise, developed from the Commission for Local Government, which was conceived and led by Leeds City Council, our approach to taking control of our own destiny is captured in our vision for Leeds to be the best city in the UK.

We have three key themes which drive our work to become the best city: for Leeds to have a strong economy, to be a compassionate city and for the council to become more efficient and enterprising. Our aim is that communities will be less reliant on the state and more resilient.

This shift has considerable implications for the way in which the council makes decisions and develops strategies and for our financial and workforce planning. It requires a sound understanding of people's needs and their demands (now and in the future) and a greater than ever level of engagement with the citizens of Leeds at a locality level.

Our structure of governance, and members' fundamental role in that framework, are pivotal to providing strategic and community leadership on that journey. All our councillors are on the front line. All have a highly valued community leadership role.

The strength and resilience of our governance arrangements enables the functions of the council to benefit from high quality political leadership and oversight but not at the expense of locally based constituency responsibilities.

We have considered whether there is a prima facie case for change in the number of councillors elected to the authority and found no strength of argument for either an increase or decrease.

Rather we argue in this document that our existing 33 wards, with 3 members per ward, continues to accurately reflect the individual characteristics of our district and it is our conclusion, supported by all political groups and by third parties who have expressed a view, that a council size of 99 members ensures an equitable distribution of councillors across the district, allowing for effective representation of all our communities and an optimum and proportionate division of responsibilities to executive and non-executive councillors.

It is our view that any reduction in the number of members of council would be unsustainable and inefficient and would diminish our ability to effectively undertake our statutory duties and would be to the detriment of representative democracy in the city.

Signed

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Judith Blake**

Leader of
Council &
Leader of the
Labour Group

Signed

**Councillor
Andrew
Carter**

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**Councillor
David
Blackburn**

Leader of the
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leeds is a regional capital and the main economic driver for Yorkshire and the Humber. Leeds' economic recovery is entering a considerable period of growth including the delivery of the targets set out in the Core Strategy relating to housing growth. Set against that we are faced with further reductions in our budget over the life of this Parliament requiring difficult and sensitive decisions to be taken on service provision.

The council, significantly through our 99 councillors, has a depth of understanding of people's needs, of the challenges facing communities and of the city's potential. Our level of engagement with the citizens of Leeds at a locality level is central to this, as is having sufficient capacity within our elected member structure to ensure that our ambitions can be delivered. In this regard Leeds' councillors have a strong track record in facilitating the successful delivery of major and complex regeneration programmes through managing, enabling and co-ordinating work with partners and investors both in the public and private sectors.

Our structure of governance, and councillors' fundamental role in that framework, are pivotal to providing that strategic and community leadership. All of our councillors are on the front line and take seriously their community leadership roles –particularly those expressed by the Commission for the Future of Local Government and recognised by the House of Commons Communities and Local Government report 'Councillors on the Front Line'.

Like many authorities our form of governance is based on a strong leader and executive model with scrutiny and other committees established by full council to fulfil important regulatory and governance responsibilities.

The Leader, our executive members and those undertaking shadow roles are working full-time on their portfolio responsibilities. Similarly scrutiny commitments are significant with a broad and in-depth work programme of inquiries and leadership at a regional level for example on health matters. Our regulatory committees too have an increasing workload as the economy grows.

Maintaining the capacity of members is vitally important to the city as we respond to the challenges of diminishing financial resources, increasing pressures on our demand led services in Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Public Health whilst also looking to take advantage of opportunities presented by our growing city and our increasing regional and national influence.

It is important though to emphasise that our city is not homogenous. It includes a number of very different communities with very different outlooks and needs. Our councillors relate to those communities in the constituencies they represent. The community representative role has increased greatly over the last two decades, as a more demanding and articulate public expects local councillors to champion the needs of their locality.

We have well developed arrangements for community governance through our community committees. These arrangements benefit from devolved responsibilities from the executive and are central to members' roles in their localities. It is therefore important for citizens to be able to access a sufficiency of councillors to represent these very different communities and for those members to represent community interests in service design.

Our councillors also fulfil significant leadership roles beyond the district boundary. These include the Leader of Council's Membership of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), the chairing role of the Transport Committee (of WYCA - including national/regional role as a Member of Transport for the North), and our local councillors' membership of committees established by the Combined Authority and other regional bodies such as the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, the Police and Crime Panel (where one of our councillors serves as chair) and the West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee.

We have as part of our submission canvassed the views and experiences of all our councillors. Members overwhelmingly state that workloads have increased in recent times and since the Boundary Commission last visited Leeds. New technologies, reductions in resources, changes in locality responsibilities and the higher profile of councillors more generally appear to be key drivers of this with those pressures showing no sign of subsiding. Appendices 4(i)-4(iii) provide a substantial body of evidence to support our case.

We have also sought the views of third parties. Those that we have spoken to and heard from are universally of the view that the role of local ward members is vital and that any reduction would be to the detriment of localities. That external view, particularly from such diverse sources, adds to and supports our conclusions and arguments to retain our existing number of councillors – the following extracts from written responses we have received further illustrate this :

Independent Person -

“With the new responsibilities for licensing and public health added to the Local Authority portfolio the role of the Councillor becomes even more important. Any reductions in the public health agenda will have an impact on the NHS and it is far more beneficial for Councillors to work ‘upstream’ in promoting prevention with the local communities rather than wait until the challenges grow and become a serious ‘downstream’ problem – maybe not so much to the Local Authority but certainly to the NHS. With the future agenda emphasising the link between Health and Social Care I would suggest that now is not the time to be reducing engagement with local communities by reducing the spread of Councillors across the Metropolitan City.

I believe that any attempt to dilute the contribution of Councillors in the Metropolitan City of Leeds will increase the financial pressures on the Council to deliver its statutory duties, particularly in the need to employ more staff to address the workload which is undertaken locally by the 99 Councillors in this City. It will also strike at the heart of democracy by taking away the voices of local people.”

Chair of Parish Council -

“Given the roles and responsibilities of all City Councillors, it would appear that the number of 99 is in no way excessive.

In our own Ward, we cannot envisage how fewer Councillors could possibly undertake the amount of work that our present 3 members do. Harewood is, geographically, an enormous ward, but we feel that all parishes within it have the same characteristics and aspirations and accordingly, Shadwell is very much part of this demographic. We would not support any boundary change that would be detrimental to this. Over the years, parishes within Harewood have worked together and established a good working partnership.

Any reduction in Ward members would necessarily curtail the input we receive from our Ward Councillors due to time restraints. Alternatively, if they tried to maintain the same workload, this would be unsustainable.”

Charity Chief Executive -

“Within Leeds the role of Councillors has in the past decade changed beyond recognition. Councillors across the city are active advocates for their constituents, exercising voices that are unlikely to be heard. We often witness councillors using case studies identified through their case work in various meetings. Councillors are deeply engaged in the civic life of our communities often beyond the scope of the city council services.

Leeds is a very big city and many of our communities have a strong sense of identity cultural and diversity. Councillors have a critical role in the monitoring of community tensions, unmet need, aspiration and frustration. On occasion councillors have been the “turn to people” for victims of hate crime, domestic violence and antisocial behaviour.”

Chair of Leeds City College –

“Given the scale and pace of change in our city and our local communities and reductions in public sector funding, the college would actively advocate for the need for three elected members per ward in the city. The level of casework in areas of Leeds is significant and in addition to the wider responsibilities that councillors in Leeds hold...

The range and depth of elected member involvement in the endeavours of the city is quite staggering and they are passionate about and dedicated to meeting the needs of their constituents.

As a consequence of our engagement with elected members across the city in the work that we do, it’s the view of Leeds City College that Leeds City Council should retain its 99 elected members.”

Police Chief Superintendent –

“Our work at ward level is incredibly important to the model of policing that we have adopted in West Yorkshire. Sharing intelligence and tasking work across community partnerships is central to maintaining a grip of the issues in neighbourhoods and to preventing problems from escalating. The extensive knowledge of councillors of their areas and more importantly the people in the neighbourhoods and communities of their wards provides an excellent backdrop to timely and tailored interventions to tackle criminality and respond to community concerns on a range of civil and criminal issues.

The co-terminosity of the council's administrative and delivery boundaries with the three police sub divisions and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups in Leeds provides for greater coherence in governance, planning, commissioning, and delivery. It’s important to maintain these arrangements as it promotes joint working across services, provides opportunity for the leaders of these services and local councillors to know and trust each other, for them to develop strong professional relationships around issues of common interest and indeed leads to greater efficacy and impact in the wards of the city.”

Chair of Independent Remuneration Panel –

“As the centre of the sub-region and cultural centre of the region as a whole, Leeds councillors must undertake a series of representative roles with local organisations. Within my own experience, I know how the City Councillors work with the West Yorkshire Playhouse in a range of initiatives well beyond our main artistic remit – working with young people, people with learning disabilities, older people, refugees and in areas of deprivation. We are fortunate to have four City councillors directly involved with our work. They make an invaluable contribution in tying us into the Council’s overall social and cultural strategy – and its bid to become European City of Culture.

In considering the appropriate remuneration for City councillors, I have always been conscious of the constantly increasing demands made upon them. Leeds Councillors are fully committed through their ever increasing workload. That workload has increased not only for leading members, who have to speak for the conurbation as a whole as well as the City; but also for councillors with responsibility to their increasingly demanding and very varied constituents.

I believe that a reduction in the number of councillors would be a retrograde step, which would prejudice not only the running of the Council and its leadership role in the sub-region, but also the ability of councillors to represent very different communities.”

In looking forward we have three key themes which drive our work to become the best city: for Leeds to have a strong economy and to be a compassionate city and for the council to become more efficient and enterprising. Our aim is that communities will be less reliant on the state and more resilient.

This shift has considerable implications for the way in which we make decisions, develop strategies and undertake financial and workforce planning. It requires a sound understanding of people’s needs and their demands (now and in the future) and a greater level of engagement with the citizens of Leeds. The structure of governance that we have describe in this submission, and members’ fundamental and pivotal role in that framework, is vital to the strategic and community leadership for that journey

Central Government is also giving an unprecedented emphasis to the need for local planning authorities (LPAs) to have in place an up to date and sound Development Plan (‘local plan’) for their administrative area.

We successfully adopted our Core Strategy in late 2014. This provides a 16 year spatial plan for the district, and has set the overall priorities for regeneration, environmental protection and the scale and distribution of housing and economic growth. This is a major achievement for Leeds given the scale and complexity of the district and, as the Inspector commented, “...given Leeds’ position in the region, geography, history, specific needs and the ambitions of the city council, comparisons with other major cities is of little relevance.

This achievement provides a strong and compelling example of the close and effective working, between officers and members. A key feature of which is the local knowledge of ward members and their considerable insight and experience of their patch.

A Site Allocations Plan and the Aire Valley Area Action Plan are being prepared in parallel & following on from the Core Strategy. These plans will be used as a basis to allocate land for development. This too is a major undertaking for the city council, which will necessitate close involvement with local ward and Development Plan Panel members, to help identify potential sites and options (and related issues relating to infrastructure pressures and school places).

In the table, on the pages that follow, we further summarise the council's detailed consideration of whether there is a prima facie case for increasing or decreasing the number of councillors elected to Leeds City Council.

A council size of 99 members in our view ensures both an equitable distribution of councillors across our district, allows for essential representation of all our communities and an optimum and proportionate division of responsibilities between executive and non-executive councillors that promotes effective and convenient local government and enables us to take decisions, undertake the statutory responsibilities of the council, and provide effective community leadership and representation.

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
Split of Executive and non-executive roles	<p>29 out of 99 councillors have either Executive, Deputy Executive or Support Executive Member responsibilities.</p> <p>65 out of 99 councillors are appointed to scrutiny boards</p> <p>34 out of 99 councillors are appointed to plans panels</p> <p>15 out of 99 councillors are appointed to the Licensing Committee</p> <p>There are 388 committee places allocated to councillors – 3.91 places per member.</p> <p>New responsibilities are being introduced for the council to appoint an external auditor; this will be a key role for the audit committee.</p>	<p>The current number of councillors provides sufficient flexibility to separate and balance the demands of both executive and non-executive functions</p> <p>No argument to increase.</p> <p>To decrease would put at risk effective and consistent local government</p> <p>No conclusive evidence to change, substantial evidence to remain unchanged.</p>
Executive responsibilities	<p>Due to the volume of work, executive members with portfolios and opposition leaders have assistance with their extensive responsibilities. Members from the Administration are supported by deputy (x4) and support executive (x15) members, and opposition leaders have councillors who shadow executive members with portfolio responsibilities. These roles are essential for succession planning, providing opportunities for members to gain experience of working at the executive board level, and being vital in terms of continuity and the overall stability of our governance arrangements.</p>	<p>No argument to increase.</p> <p>To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government</p> <p>No conclusive evidence to change, substantial evidence to remain unchanged.</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
Oversight and Scrutiny	<p>The scrutiny function in Leeds is a vital and integral part of our governance and accountability arrangements. Public services in the city support hundreds of thousands of people every day. Scrutiny helps stop things going wrong by working with those responsible for decision-making to help improve services for the benefit of the public.</p> <p>Our arrangements have been commended by both Ofsted and the Centre for Public Scrutiny.</p> <p>The proportion of non-executive councillors (74%) that participate in scrutiny is a significant strength; bringing a breadth of experience, expertise and local knowledge.</p> <p>All scrutiny boards have a full programme of work each municipal year with some inquiries not being progressed due to a lack of capacity.</p>	<p>No argument to increase.</p> <p>To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government</p> <p>No conclusive evidence to change, substantial evidence to remain unchanged.</p>
Regulatory Responsibilities - Planning	<p>Leeds' approach to planning is very much about delivering quality sustainable development with strong connections to local people. Leeds is one of the largest planning authorities in the country and deals with 220-250 major schemes per year. The plans panel arrangements were reviewed in 2012 and new arrangements introduced to meet the growing demand with a city wide strategic plans panel being introduced along with two area panels. There is already substantial delegation of decision making responsibility to officers and the approval of the Core Strategy has signalled the beginning of further detailed and time-consuming work for councillors relating to site allocations. DCLG recommend that 90% of planning decisions are made by officers – in Leeds this figure is closer to 96% - arguably making a case for an additional plans panel or for greater frequency of meetings.</p>	<p>Whilst workloads are increasing this is considered to be containable within the present number of councillors. No argument to increase.</p> <p>To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government</p> <p>No conclusive evidence to change, substantial evidence to remain unchanged.</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
Regulatory Responsibilities - Licensing	The council is required to take a variety of licensing decisions in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005 and other miscellaneous legislation providing for the licensing of scrap metal dealers, sex establishments, places of marriage, hypnotism, house to house collections and street collections. In addition the granting, suspension, revocation and enforcement of an individual hackney carriage license for a vehicle, driver or operator is a council function under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Members of Licensing Committee are responsible for setting taxi and private hire licensing policy with the committee taking a lead role on improving safeguarding measures in taxi and private hire licensing – this involves extensive collaboration with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and other authorities across the north of England.	No argument to increase. To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government No conclusive evidence to change, substantial evidence to remain unchanged.
Community Governance	Community committees enable the communities to have their distinct needs taken into account in decision making and service design and ensure that our strategic objectives and break through projects are rooted in the needs of local communities. Community committees appoint community committee champions to provide a local “lead” perspective and further facilitate local democratic accountability. Local ward members are central to and an integral part of the council's approach to neighbourhood planning and have taken a proactive role at a local level, their local, knowledge experience and leadership has been vital to help drive the process of plan making forward 30% of councillors (from wards with parish and town councils) are dual hatted and also serve as members of parish and town councils.	No argument to increase. To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government and put at risk the ability of the council to reflect the identities and interests of local communities No conclusive evidence to change, substantial evidence to remain unchanged.

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
Members Work Load	<p>Our questionnaire responses clearly show the variety of the role undertaken by councillors in Leeds and the work elected members do for constituents and on behalf of the city.</p> <p>The time commitment is very significant averaging nearly 177 hours per month. This shows councillors commit substantial amounts of time to their role and to maintaining a strong and healthy democracy in the city (with councillors doing as much as they can for their communities who rightly expect high quality democratic representation).</p> <p>As our submission shows, the challenge in Leeds over the next 5 years will be significant with reducing budgets it is likely that casework will increase and instances of councillors operating on the 'frontline' will also likely increase. The population of the city is also expected to increase significantly with proposals to build 70,000 new homes equating an additional 150,000 new residents in the city by 2028. This will undoubtedly result in increased case work for councillors.</p> <p>Therefore reduction in the number of councillors in the city would risk creating a democratic deficit and a situation where the councillor role is more than a full-time job. A consequence of this is likely to be that the number of councillors able to perform their elected role and also have a full or part time occupation also will reduce. Any reduction would also result in the average monthly time commitment per councillor increasing and risk some areas of the city under represented both in terms of casework and access to their local representative.</p>	<p>To decrease would put at risk effective and consistent local government</p> <p>Argument sustained to increase.</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
Identities and Interests of Local Communities	<p>Leeds is a rich and varied place with a distinctive settlement hierarchy that includes a vibrant City centre. The main urban area covers nearly a third of the District, and includes two thirds of the total number of houses. It includes the City centre and the built up areas surrounding it, from inner-City communities such as Beeston and Harehills to outer suburbs like Horsforth and Roundhay.</p> <p>The rural parts of Leeds have a variety of individual characters and identities, and include larger settlements such as Wetherby and Otley, as well as several smaller towns, small villages, and other rural settlements. These outer lying settlements have their own important histories and patterns of growth which are reflected well in the existing warding arrangements.</p>	<p>No argument to increase.</p> <p>To decrease would put at risk the ability of the council to reflect the identities and interests of local communities</p> <p>No conclusive evidence to change, substantial evidence to remain unchanged.</p>
Officer Delegations	<p>Substantial day to day decisions have been already delegated to officers. There is little scope or political appetite to further delegate to officers. Greater oversight of decision making as a result of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>Greater emphasis on delegation/increased influence for members of community committees. Officers currently take 96% of planning decisions under delegated authority – DCLG guidance is that such decisions should account for 90% of decisions. It is arguable that there is significant scope for increased plans panel workloads.</p>	<p>No argument to increase.</p> <p>To decrease would put at risk effective and consistent local government</p> <p>No conclusive evidence to change.</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
Ratio of Councillors	<p>We have long recognised that there is no one size fits all formulaic approach to ward boundaries, community leadership, addressing inequalities and representing constituents. Leeds is a multi-layered dynamic mix of communities, a densely populated core and expansion outwards, which, unlike our many of our statistical neighbours, is contained within the district boundary.</p> <p>Our analysis shows the ratio of councillors to residents to be 1:7741, the 2nd highest in the Cipfa nearest neighbour grouping and the ratio of Councillors to area (hectare) being 1:557 – the 3rd largest of the same comparison group.</p> <p>For Leeds to have equivalent ratio of councillors to area with the two nearest statistical neighbours that have recently completed a Local Government Boundary Commission Review (Sheffield and Birmingham) the number of councillors would need to rise by between 27 (to 126) and 106 (to 205).</p>	<p>To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government</p> <p>A statistical argument can be sustained to increase the number of councillors (based on analysis of ratio of councillors to geographical area when compared with nearest neighbouring authority group).</p>
Electoral Candidature	<p>In May 2015, the Council's 33 wards were contested by 186 candidates. All wards had a Conservative, Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat Candidate. This totals 132 nominations, or 70.97% of all nominations received. The remaining 54 nominations were from candidates representing Alliance for Green Socialism, Left Unity, Morley Borough Independents, Official Monster Raving Loony Party, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, United Kingdom Independence Party and Yorkshire First. No ward had fewer than 5 candidates standing for election. Over the last 3 elections on average 79% of councillors have sought re-election of which 92% were returned.</p>	<p>No argument to increase.</p> <p>To decrease would limit the number of candidates wishing to stand for election and put at risk the ability of the council to reflect the identities and interests of local communities</p> <p>No conclusive evidence to change</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
National and Regional Leadership	<p>Leeds City Council plays a pivotal role in the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and plays a lead role in leadership at the regional level. 29 councillors are appointed to significant leadership roles at a West Yorkshire level in addition to their Leeds City council responsibilities. These include the Leader of Council's Membership of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the chairing role of the Transport Committee (of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority - including national/regional role as a Member of Transport for the North), membership of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Police and Crime Panels.</p>	<p>No argument to increase. To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government No conclusive evidence to change</p>
Equality and diversity	<p>Leeds is a diverse city and is passionate about equality. The make-up of our councillors enables the differing needs of constituents to be effectively represented. Within the current number of councillors, since 2002/3 the proportion of female councillors has increased by 74% (to 40 out of 99) and the proportion of councillors from a minority ethnic background has increased by 150% (15/99). Our current Lord Mayor is from the Jewish community and the Lord Mayor in 2006/7 was from the Asian community.</p>	<p>No argument to increase. To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk equality of representation and be of detriment to the interests of local communities No conclusive evidence to change.</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
Appointments to Outside bodies	<p>The authority makes 372 formal appointments of councillors to outside organisations; on average 1 councillor to 4 formal appointments.</p> <p>In addition to this councillors have other extensive responsibilities as a result of their community leadership responsibilities. These have been detailed in Appendix 4 (i).</p>	<p>No argument to increase.</p> <p>To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government and the ability of the council to reflect the identities of local communities.</p> <p>No conclusive evidence to change, substantial evidence to remain unchanged.</p>
Population Forecast	<p>The growth of the Leeds population is estimated to reach 860,618 by 2028 (based upon a custom demographic analysis utilising local housing and GP registration data for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment report). This compares relatively closely to the ONS sub-national population projections for a Leeds population of 839,500 by 2028 (who also estimate the population to reach 877,000 by 2037). The increase in population predicated for Leeds will increase the workload for councillors. This will arise from increased planning application, licensing determinations, case work and councillor support and involvement in local bodies such as school governing bodies.</p>	<p>To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government</p> <p>Potential argument to increase.</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
Deprivation Indices	The distribution of deprivation across Leeds is varied (based upon the recently released Indices of Deprivation 2015) but generally the higher the concentration of population the greater the deprivation. There will continue to be – significant demographic change through an ageing population, increased birth rate, more transient populations and changing ethnicities. Again, these put additional pressures on public services and on members' workloads.	No argument to increase. To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government No conclusive evidence to change
Cost	Reducing the number of elected members would give rise to a corresponding reduction in the cost of basic allowances (in the order of £15k per councillors). The cost of employing staff to undertake engagement work undertaken at a community level by any members not elected has not been calculated. Our Independent Remuneration Panel consistently recommends that allowances increase in line with headline pay increases for NJC staff. In recent years councillors have not taken this increase in allowances.	No argument to increase. To decrease the number of councillors would generate savings in basic allowances of £45k per ward (of three councillors). Argument to decrease although savings likely to be offset by the potential need for additional staff to cover case work.
Ambition	Despite the challenging financial circumstances Leeds City council is committed to deliver a full range of services to residents with the democratic oversight necessary to secure value for money. Leeds is the main catalyst for the region within the Northern Powerhouse. The growth agenda for the city is set out in our Core Strategy which includes for example a 70,000 (net) housing target, enhancements to Leeds Bradford Airport, HS2 rail link to the City.	No argument to increase. To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government No conclusive evidence to change

Evaluation Criteria	Commentary	Conclusion re Council Size
3 rd Party Views	The overwhelming view from those we spoke to and heard from was that the role of local ward members is vital and any reduction would be to the detriment of localities.	No argument to increase. To decrease the number of councillors would put at risk effective and consistent local government No conclusive evidence to change

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

1. Electoral Reviews are reviews of the electoral arrangements of local authorities which determine:
 - the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
 - the number and boundaries of wards;
 - the number of councillors to be elected for each ward; and,
 - The name of any ward.
2. 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 approximately the same.
3. When the electoral variances in representation across a local authority become notable, an Electoral Review is required. The criteria for initiating a review in those circumstances are:
 - When 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
 - When one or more wards/divisions with an electoral imbalance of more than 30%; and
 - When the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.
4. The Commission wrote to Leeds on 10 June 2014 to advise that, on the basis of the electoral data they held for our authority, City and Hunslet Ward (the largest in the country) had an electoral variance from the average for our authority of 35.33%. As this met the criteria above the Commission advised its intention to conduct an Electoral Review.
5. Before the review commenced, the council was required to decide whether to continue to elect by thirds with a fallow year every fourth year, or to alternatively move to all-out elections every four years. The council has informed the Commission that there is cross party support for elections by thirds to continue and we re-state that decision here.
6. Another key issue which the Boundary Commission wished to have initial feedback on was the size of the council. Initial feedback from the Commission's staff indicated that when Leeds is compared to its statistical neighbours, Leeds, following the decision to reduce the number of Birmingham City councillors by 19, now falls outside the upper limits the Commission is guided by when undertaking electoral reviews.

7. The Boundary Commission provide guidance to local authorities to enable the strongest possible case to be put to the Commission. That guidance makes clear that the aspects that the Commission look at when making a decision on council size are:
 - The council's governance and decision making
 - Committees and scrutiny
 - Councillors' representational role
8. Within these criteria the Commission has advised that it is for each authority to provide strong evidence that the preferred number of councillors is the best fit for the Council and will enable the Council to conduct its affairs effectively. Other than this the Commission has made clear that there isn't a hard and fast rule as to what arguments will achieve traction with them.
9. The Commission advised that, unless there was a strong and compelling case put forward by the council, there was a prospect of a potential reduction of between 3-9 councillors. We do not consider that such a simplistic assessment bears up to detailed scrutiny. In this submission we argue to retain our current number of 99 councillors across 33 wards as providing the most efficient and effective form of governance to serve our city.
10. The Council, with cross party support, has already made clear to the Commission that there is a compelling case to leave the number of councillors unchanged. This submission reinforces that case and is informed by.
 - Desk based research into our current governance arrangements, informed by council yearbooks, assurance reports to our Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, and interrogation of our Democratic Services Information System.
 - Reports from our Independent Remuneration Panel.
 - The Council's Budget and Policy Framework.
 - A survey of elected members asking for estimates of time commitments and methods of engagement with constituents.
 - Engagement with group leaders, whips, committee chairs and the Electoral Working group.
 - Speaking to a wide range of organisations and individuals independent from the local authority.

PART 2 LEEDS - A CITY OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Overview

11. Leeds has transformed from a mainly industrial city into a regional capital with a wide economic base. As the leading financial and legal centre in the UK outside London, the city is home to some of the largest financial institutions in the country and this economic strength is widely recognised as placing Leeds in an advantageous position in helping it to recover from the current economic downturn.
12. The city has a diverse economy, with the potential to grow in a number of key sectors; attracting major investment in housing, offices, shops, transport and other facilities. Of further significance to this are Leeds' excellent universities, higher education establishments and first-class culture and sporting venues.
13. Leeds has many strengths and great potential in achieving longer term economic prosperity, social progress and in maintaining and enhancing a quality environment. In meeting the many challenges associated with this ambition, and central to the Vision for Leeds and the Core Strategy, is the desire to ensure that the needs for job and housing growth is planned and delivered in a sustainable way. In practice this means that Leeds is a place where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life and that the form and location of development respects and enhances the unique character of local areas and meets the needs of communities.

Areas of Distinctive Character

14. The Leeds Metropolitan District covers an area of 213 square miles (551 km²) and benefits from major road, rail and air connections to neighbouring towns and cities, and to national and international networks.
15. Leeds is a rich and varied place with a distinctive settlement hierarchy that includes a vibrant city centre. The city centre provides the strategic and commercial focus to both the district and to the City Region. Over the last 10 to 15 years, the city centre has seen major changes. This has not only been demonstrated by the pace of development that has taken place but its increased economic role for jobs with 30% of Yorkshire jobs being in Leeds city centre. A major feature of this period has also been the large scale of residential development within the city centre, together with an on-going programme of regeneration and renewal of infrastructure including public spaces.
16. The main urban area covers nearly a third of the district, and includes two thirds of the total number of houses. It includes the city centre and the built up areas surrounding it, from inner-city communities such as Beeston and Harehills to outer suburbs like Horsforth and Roundhay.

17. The rural parts of Leeds have a variety of individual characters and identities, and include larger settlements such as Wetherby and Otley, as well as several smaller towns, small villages, and other rural settlements. These outer lying settlements have their own important histories and patterns of growth, and were brought under the administrative governance of Leeds district in 1974. At this time a number of residual West Yorkshire functions (Police and Fire Services and Transportation – e.g. local buses and trains) were retained by at a county level and overseen by councillors elected for the West Yorkshire County area as a whole.
18. Originally, from 1974 the City was comprised of 32 wards. However following 1980 the warding was, following a public inquiry, increased to the 33 wards, with 3 councillors per ward that continues today. This warding number has allowed the interests and identities of local communities to be reflected and represented in the city.

Formation of the Metropolitan District in 1974

(source https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_Leeds)

The former county borough is shaded in grey. Other areas:

1. Municipal Borough of Morley
2. Municipal Borough of Pudsey
3. Aireborough Urban District
4. Horsforth Urban District
5. Otley Urban District
6. Garforth Urban District
7. Rothwell Urban District
8. 8a. Tadcaster Rural District (part)
9. Wetherby Rural District (part)
10. Wharfedale Rural District (part)



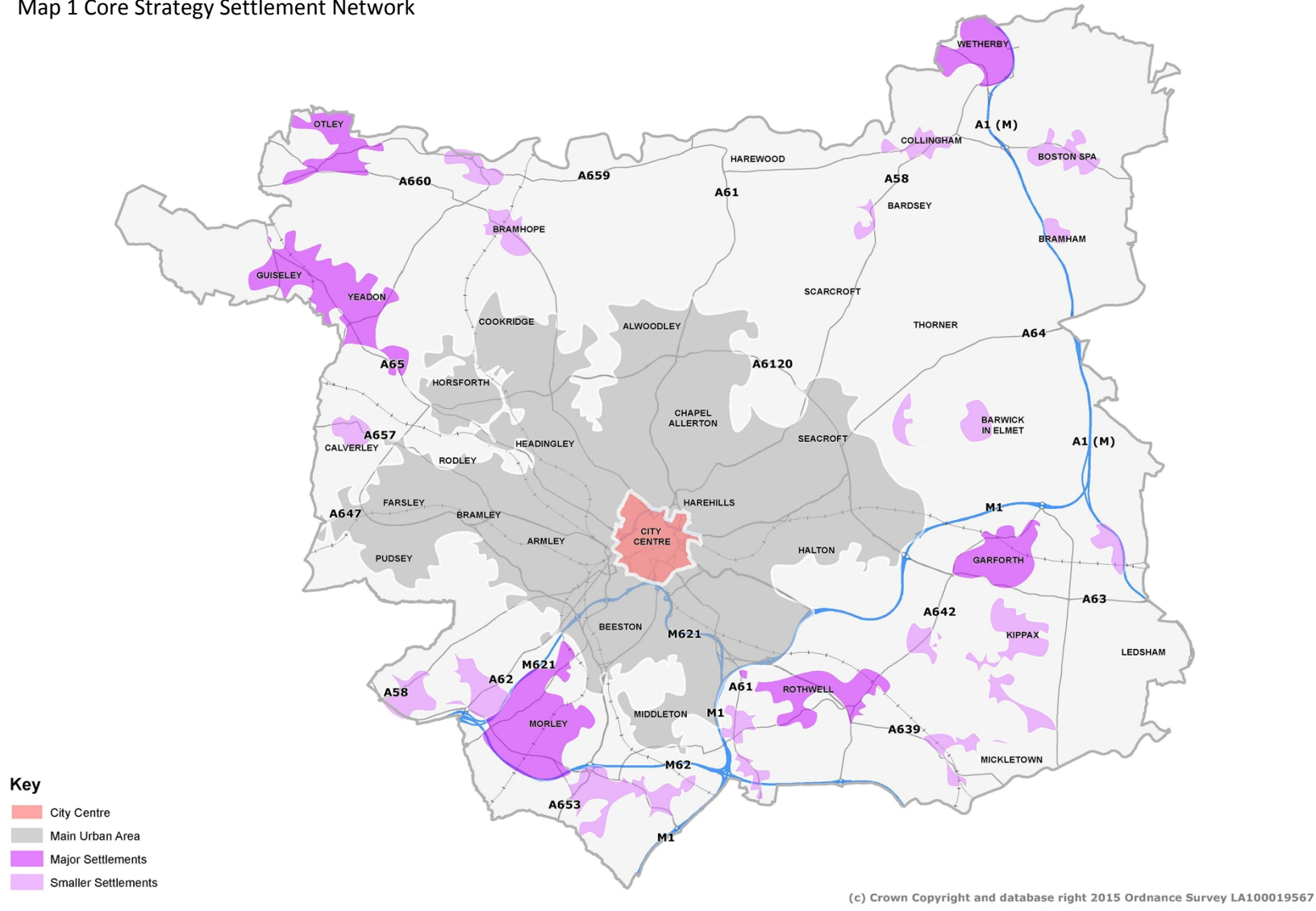
19. From 31st March 1986, the county arrangements, to oversee the residual functions, were abolished and those responsibilities were transferred to the individual West Yorkshire district councils who made appointments of their own councillors (on the basis of statutory provisions) to these bodies. These responsibilities being in addition to councillors' roles and responsibilities in their respective districts.

20. Map 1 overleaf, reproduced from our Core Strategy, identifies the settlement types and locations across the city. The main urban area of the district is formed by Leeds city

centre and the surrounding communities and neighbourhoods. These form the main urban and suburban areas of the district. In addition the district has a large number of major settlements at Garforth, Guiseley, Yeadon, Rawdon, Morley, Otley, Rothwell and Wetherby in greater number (19), smaller settlements (such as Bramham, Collingham, Gildersome, Kippax and Pool-in-Wharfedale) and other villages.

21. These settlements are at the heart of Leeds and contribute significantly to the unique character and identity of our communities. They provide for weekly and day-to-day shopping and service the varied needs of our citizens close to where they live and work. Councillors, with their local knowledge, are crucial to support the vitality and viability of these settlements, as are our 10 community committees, which provide a focus for service delivery in those communities.

Map 1 Core Strategy Settlement Network



Leeds as a Visitor Destination

22. Leeds is an increasingly important visitor destination for both business and leisure tourism. Recent research has found the value of tourism in Leeds to be estimated at £1.25 billion, supporting 25,000 jobs (according to the Cambridge Econometric Impact Model).
23. Leeds also has a nationally recognised cultural attractions and events which have been enhanced by a new headquarters for Northern Ballet and the opening of the Leeds Arena.
24. Building on the momentum and profile gained from the successful hosting of high profile events including Tour de France Grand Départ in 2014 and British Art Show, Rugby Union World Cup and the 50th anniversary of The Leeds International Piano Competition in 2015, and hosting legs of the World Triathlon Series for three years starting in 2016. Leeds is also to bid to be the European Capital of Culture in 2023.

Housing

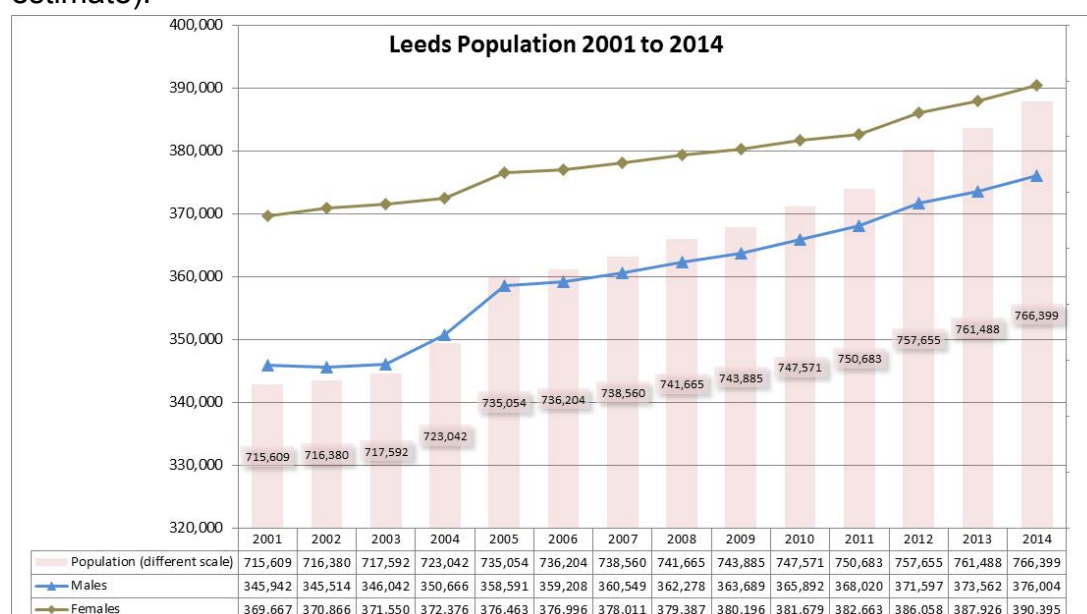
25. One of the biggest challenges Leeds faces is to provide enough quality and accessible homes to meet the city's growing population, whilst protecting the quality of the environment and respecting community identity. Within this overall context the need for affordable housing and affordable warmth are key issues.
26. The adopted Core Strategy (November 2014) sets the level and rate of new housing in Leeds between 2012 and 2028. The Core Strategy and the application of national guidance (the National Planning Policy Framework) establish a need to deliver around 41,800 new homes between 2012 and 2021. 7,222 homes were completed between April 2012 and March 2015 leaving a residual of 34,578 to deliver to 2021. It is clear that house building in Leeds needs to significantly increase and a range of Government, sub-regional and local programmes are in place to help achieve this. We also have our own council led house building programme and a series of initiatives to help stimulate the delivery of housing in regeneration areas.
27. There are clear signs that the housing market in Leeds has recovered to allow a significant increase in house building and importantly there is a significant supply of land to facilitate this. As of September 2015 2,232 homes are under construction on 117 sites with a 2,500 homes yet to start on these sites. The future pipeline also looks healthy with 8,500 new homes approved across 124 sites during 2014/15 with total stock of houses with full permission now resting at 339 sites (14,000 units). Added to this are a further 5,500 homes with outline permission.

28. We have also recently demonstrated in excess of a 5 year housing land supply and this has been upheld by the Secretary of State and the High Court. Our recently adopted Core Strategy contains a target, over the life of the plan to 2028, for a further 70,000 (net) houses to be built.

Population

29. The city's population has grown significantly during the last 20 years, unlike many others in the UK. The growth seen in Leeds has been attributed to a number of factors, including a strong economy, buoyant markets and increased in-migration levels. Over the past decade, the city has experienced a large in-migration of economically active people looking for better quality of life.
30. The 2011 Census estimated that the population of Leeds Metropolitan District was 751,500, whilst the latest mid-year estimates for 2014 show the Leeds population at 766,399 – a growth of 2% over three years. This correlates to the average population growth since 2001 of about ½ a per cent each year (see Chart 1).

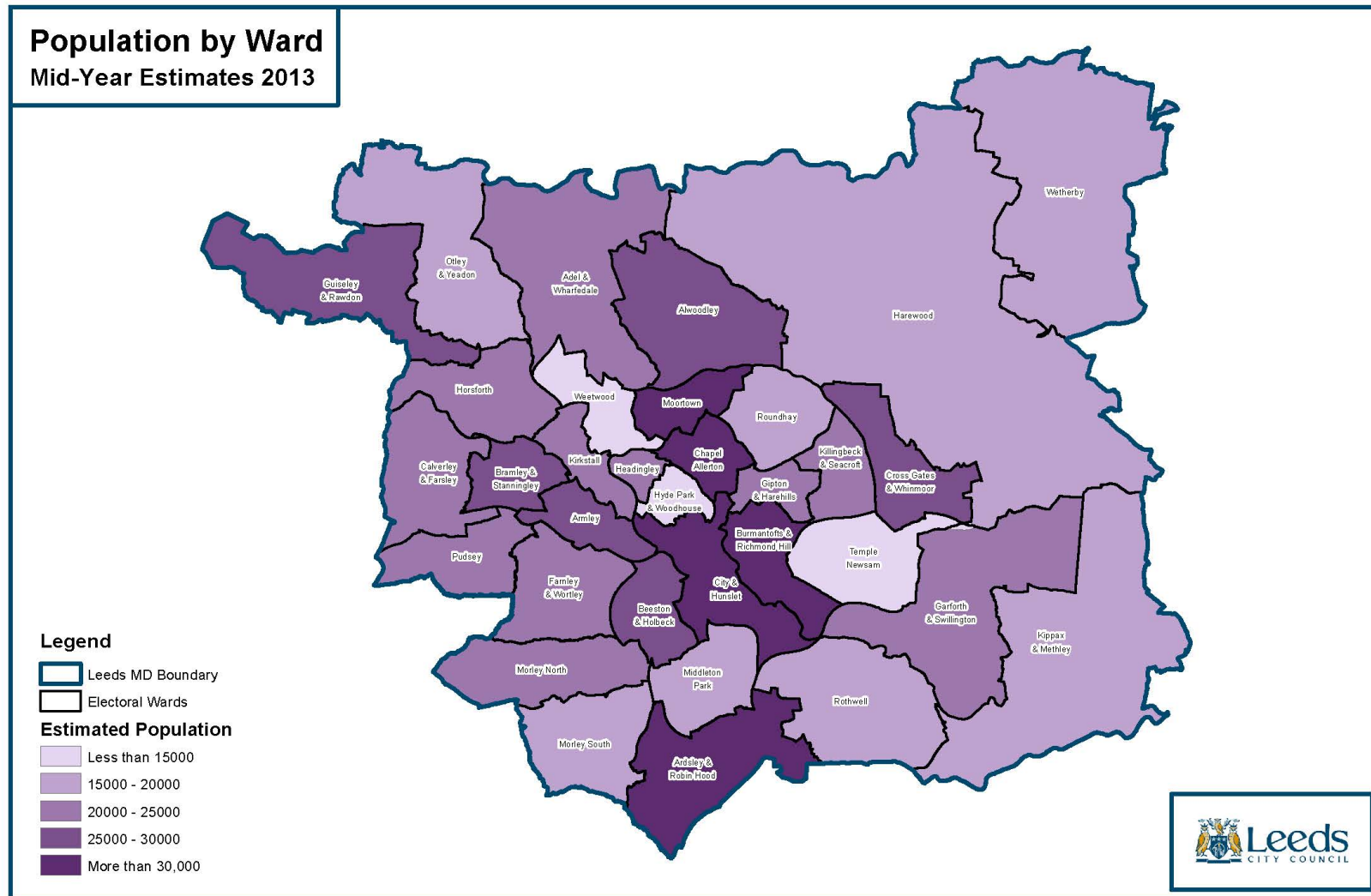
Chart 1 shows the growth between 2001 and 2014 (the latest mid-year estimate).



31. The growth of the Leeds population is estimated to reach 860,618 by 2028 (based upon a custom demographic analysis utilising local housing and GP registration data for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment report). This compares relatively closely to the ONS sub-national population projections for a Leeds population of 839,500 by 2028 (who also estimate the population to reach 877,000 by 2037).

32. The distribution of the Leeds population across the current wards has seen an influx into the centre and south of the city (see Map 2).
33. Leeds is clearly becoming a more diverse city with over 130 nationalities and an increasing numbers of people identifying with minority ethnic groups. In 2001 the city's black and minority ethnic (BME) population totalled 77,530 (10.8% of the resident population), but by 2011 the number had increased to 141,771 (19% of the resident population). Within Leeds, the Pakistani community is the largest "single" BME community in the city with 22,492 people (3% of the total resident population).
34. In some of wards, for example in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, there are communities whom are not entitled to be on the electoral register (as they do not originate from EU or commonwealth countries). These residents often present complex and time consuming case work to councillors.

Map 2 Distribution of the Leeds population across the current Wards



Produced by R.Haslett, Intelligence & Improvement Team, Leeds City Council

REF : 2015 : MISC : 017

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Electorate Size

35. The projected population growth of Leeds has informed the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2011 and updated in 2013) which underpins the Council's housing requirement between 2012 and 2028. The future size of the electorate by ward has been calculated in accordance with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance in "Electorate Forecasts – A Guide for Practitioners". **Appendix 1** sets out the results of district-wide and ward level forecasts of the change in electorate in the next six years.
36. These forecasts have been prepared using ONS population data from the Census and Mid-Year Estimates together with historic housing performance data and future delivery as taken from the Council's draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015 (SHLAA) and Publication Draft Site Allocations Plan and assumptions that Core Strategy requirements will be delivered given the land supply available. This approach is further supported by the Council's demonstration of a deliverable five year supply of housing land in line with Government guidance and an improving housing market.
37. All wards show an increase in electorate in the next six years over and above the figure calculated from the electorate. The results of applying the pattern and timing of the Council's planned housing developments to electoral register figures over the next 6 years show an increase in all wards totalling 43,123 additional electors. This is almost a 100% increase on ONS projected growth, which reflects the Core Strategy ambition for new housing planned in Leeds.

Ratio of Councillors

38. Leeds is a large authority at 55,172 hectares which makes it the second largest area of any English metropolitan district, 2nd only to Doncaster which has within its boundary a large part of wetland (at Thorpe Marsh) which is largely uninhabited. If this area is discounted from the Doncaster area, Leeds is by far the largest authority by area in England. Leeds is the second largest authority by population. Within this context the geography of Leeds is also of significance as the City of Leeds is not a single urban area.
39. The ratio of councillors to electors in Leeds is 1:5656, the 2nd highest in the Cipfa nearest neighbour grouping (to Birmingham) and the ratio of councillors to area (hectare) is 1:557 – the 2nd largest of the same comparison group with Leeds, of the top three, being the only city.

40. Statistically, for Leeds to have equivalence of councillor representation per hectare with the two nearest statistical neighbours which have recently completed a Local Government Boundary Commission Review (Sheffield and Birmingham), the number of councillors would need to rise by between 27¹ (to 126) and 109² (to 208).

Table 1: Population density per Councillor and Ration of Population to Councillor by Cipfa Nearest Neighbours (source: 2011 Census)

Cipfa Nearest Neighbours (to Leeds)	Number of Councillors	Area (Hectares)	Electorate (2015)	Density (number of electorate per hectare)	Ratio of Hectares to Councillors	Ratio of Electorate to Councillors
Leeds	99	55,172	560,000	10.15	1:557	1:5656
Birmingham	101	26,779	735,000	27.44	1:265	1:7277
Bradford	90	36,642	340,003	9.27	1:407	1:3777
Sheffield	84	36,795	400,000	10.87	1:438	1:4761
Newcastle upon Tyne	78	11,344	193,000	17.01	1:145	1:2474
Dudley	72	9,796	240,000	24.49	1:136	1:3333
Kirklees	69	40,860	306,000	7.48	1:592	1:4434
Gateshead	66	14,235	196,424	13.79	1:216	1:2976
Wakefield	63	33,861	253,723	7.49	1:537	1:4027
Trafford	63	10,604	160,000	15.08	1:168	1:2539
Stockport	63	12,606	223,000	17.69	1:200	1:3539
Walsall	60	10,395	161,373	15.52	1:173	1:2689
Salford	60	9,719	170,100	17.50	1:162	1:2835
Bolton	60	13,980	191,000	13.75	1:233	1:3183
Coventry	54	9,864	230,848	32.1	1:183	1:6249
Calderdale	51	36,392	150,001	5.6	1:714	1:4066

¹ Leeds area (55172)/ratio of councillors per hectare in Sheffield (438) = 126 equivalent councillors, 27 more than Leeds currently

² Leeds area (55172)/ratio of councillors per hectare in Birmingham (265) = 208 equivalent councillors, 109 more than Leeds currently

41. For Leeds to have an equivalence with the same two authorities of councillor representation by elector the number of councillors would either need to be raised by 19 (to 118) when compared to Sheffield or reduced by 22 (to 77) when compared to Birmingham (which would be unsustainable and unwarranted given the breadth of councillors' responsibilities).
42. By way for further analysis - Leeds councillors have a significantly higher area to cover per councillor (557 hectares) than the average of these councils (326 hectares) and a significantly higher number of electors per councillor (5656) than the average of the other councils (3984).
43. If the number of Leeds councillors were to be reduced then these ratios would increase as follows: for area per councillor – by between an additional 18 hectares per councillor to 575 hectares (based on a council size of 96 councillors) and 56 hectares to 613 hectares (based on a council size of 90 councillors) – 88% more than the average of our nearest neighbours.
44. For the ratio of electorate (based on existing data which is anticipated to substantially increase), the average increase per councillor would be between 177 (to 5833 electors) per councillor, based on a council size of 96 councillors, to 566 additional electors – at an average of 6222 per councillors (based on a council size of 90 councillors). This being 56% more than the average of the Cipfa nearest neighbours grouping.
45. Table 2 explores similar ratios for the Core City group of local authorities which this council feels more accurately reflects our nearest comparators.

Table 2: 2015 Electorate density and ratios of Electorate to Councillors by Core City Group Authorities

Core Cities Group	Number of Councillors	Area (Hectares)	Electorate (2015)	Density (number of persons per hectare)	Ratio of Hectares to Councillors	Ratio of Electorate to Councillors
Leeds	99	55,172	560,000	13.6	1:557	1:5656
Birmingham	101	26,779	735,000	40.1	1:265	1:7277
Bristol	70	10,961	320,000	39.1	1:156	1:4571
Sheffield	84	36,795	400,000	15	1:438	1:4761
Newcastle upon Tyne	78	11,344	193,000	24.7	1:145	1:2474
Liverpool	90	11,184	325,000	41.7	1:124	1:3611
Manchester	96	11,534	380,000	43.5	1:120	1:3958
Nottingham	55	7,461	195,000	41.0	1:135	1:3545

46. This analysis further supports the council's argument that a reduction of councillors would have a significant impact on the ability of Leeds members to fulfil their roles, and would place a typical Leeds councillor at a disadvantage when compared with their peers in other authorities. Leeds already has the highest geographical area for councillors in the Core City Group at 1:557 hectares and the second highest electorate per councillor in that grouping (2nd again to Birmingham).

47. For Leeds to have the equivalent number of councillors by area and by electorate to the next smallest council by number of councillors (Manchester at 96 councillors), the number of councillors would need to increase to 459 to match geographical area ratio and by 42 to match electorate to councillor ratios. This would be plainly unwarranted and unnecessary but provides a compelling and strong case for the number of councillors to remain at 99 when compared to other similar authorities.

48. Leeds is a diverse city and is passionate about equality. The make-up of our councillors enables the differing needs of constituents to be effectively represented.

49. Within the current number of councillors, since 2002/3 the proportion of female councillors has increased by 74% (to 40 out of 99) and the proportion of councillors from a minority ethnic background has increased by 150% (15/99). Our current Lord Mayor is from the Jewish community and the Lord Mayor in 2006/7 was from the Asian community.
50. We have long recognised that there is no one size fits all formulaic approach to ward boundaries, community leadership, addressing inequalities and representing constituents. Leeds is a multi-layered dynamic mix of communities, a densely populated core and expansion outwards, which, unlike our many of our statistical neighbours, is contained within our district boundary.
51. The current number of 99 councillors provides the necessary capacity to provide for equality of representation whilst also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

Deprivation and Health Inequalities

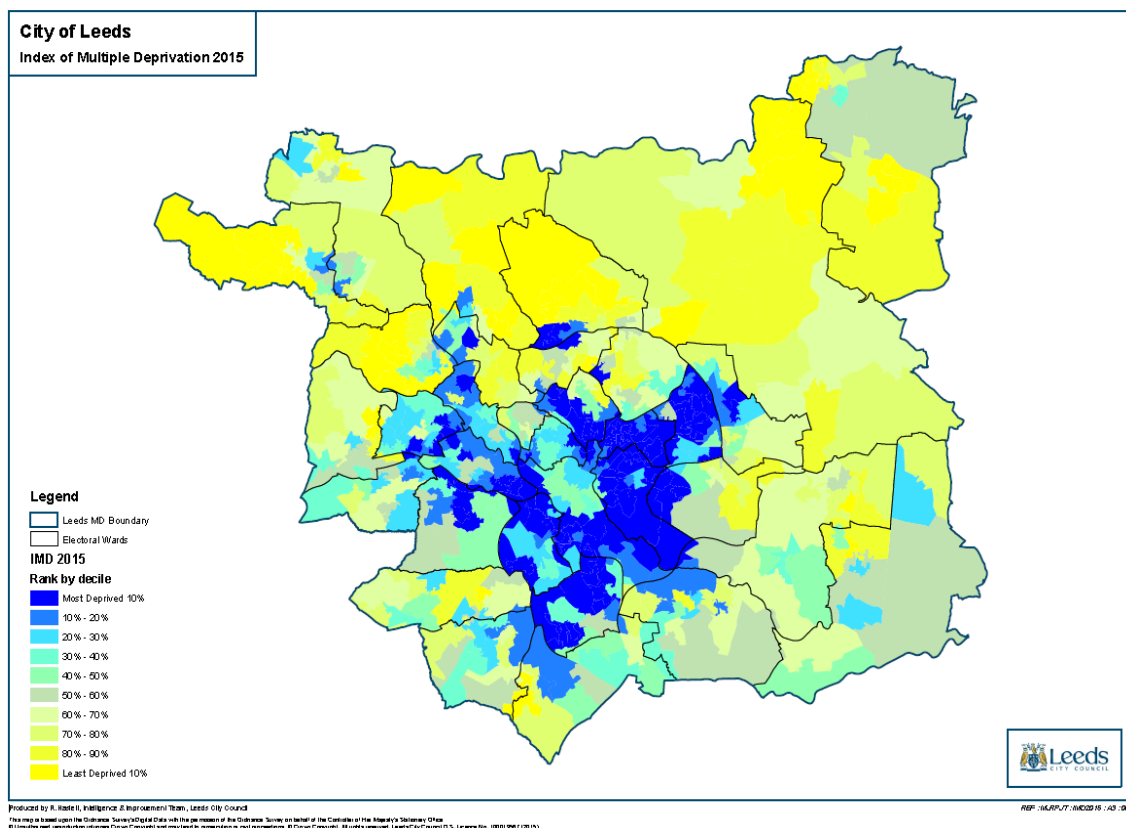
52. Whilst the health of Leeds has improved overall, the city is performing below the England average. Consequently, the need to tackle health issues and disparities across the district is a major challenge for improvement and to Leeds meeting its objective to be a healthy and caring city for all ages.
53. Despite becoming wealthier as a city over the last 20 years, Leeds still has too many deprived areas, where there is a poor quality of life, low educational performance, too much crime and anti-social behaviour, poor housing, poor health, and families where no one has worked for a few generations. The gap in life expectancy between the most disadvantaged parts of Leeds and the rest of the district remains at around twelve years.
54. Those inequalities and challenges were recently highlighted by the recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) work, including for example:
- 20% of the Leeds population live in deprived areas, centred in the Inner East and Inner South of the city;
 - Educational attainment is one of the main determinants of life chances and though good progress has been made, Leeds is below the national average on some key indicators;
 - Housing remains a challenge in terms of affordability, quality and meeting demand;
 - Health inequalities continue to impact on the most vulnerable, with increased demand on related public services through growing numbers and increased complexity of needs; and

55. Across the city and within localities there is – and will continue to be – significant demographic change through an ageing population, increased birth rate, more transient populations and changing ethnicities. The prevalence of inequalities put additional pressures on public services and has proven to be a significant feature in councillors’ workloads.

56. The distribution of deprivation across Leeds is varied (based upon the recently released Indices of Deprivation 2015³) but it generally follows that deprivation is highest where the greatest population masses exist.

57. Map 3 shows the locations of the lowest performing smaller geographies across Leeds, with the dark blue the most deprived (within the worst 10% of the country).

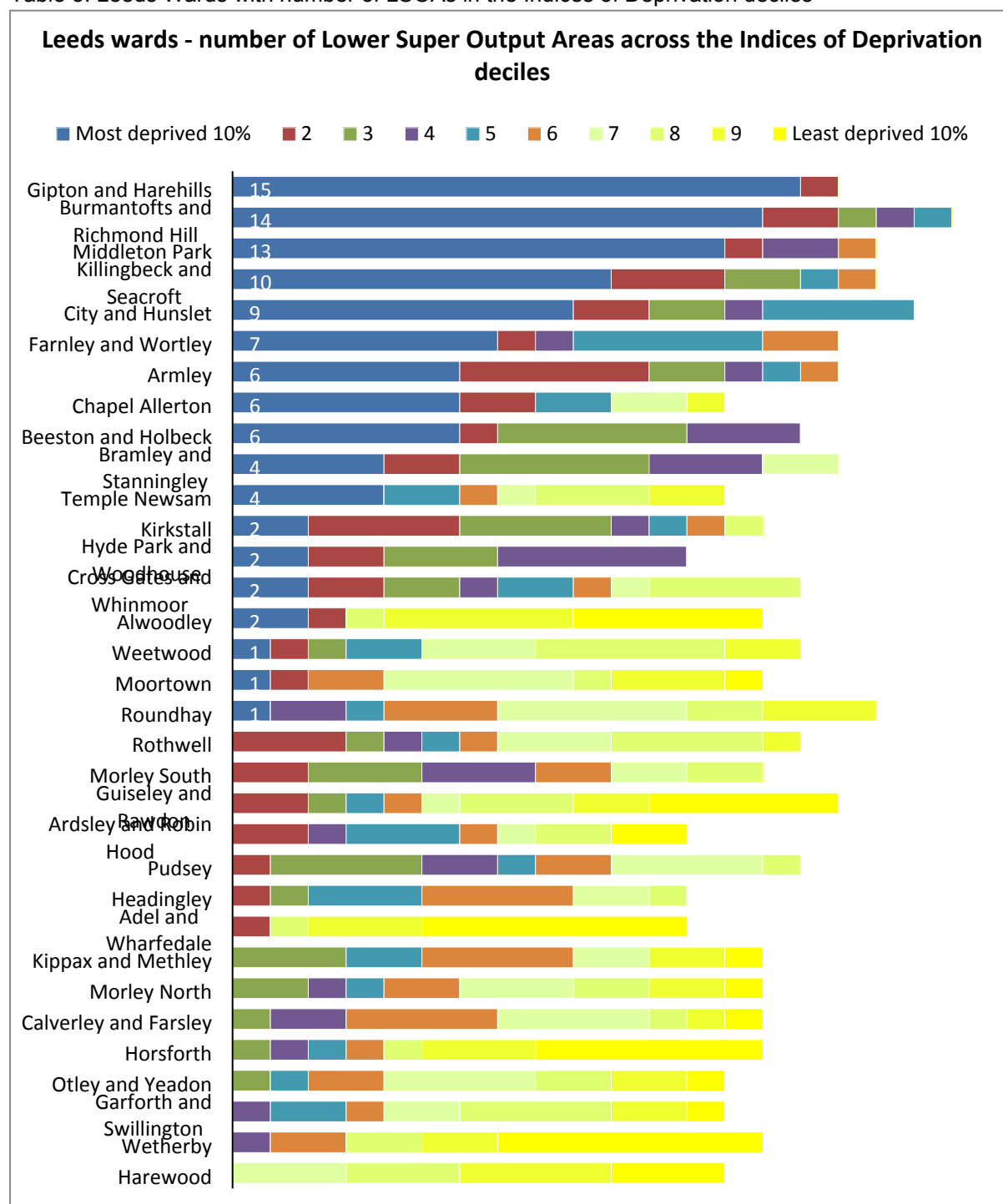
Map 3: Distribution of the deprived geographies based on the Indices of Deprivation 2015



³ The 2015 Index of Deprivation has been released by the Department of Local Government and Communities (DCLG) available via <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>,

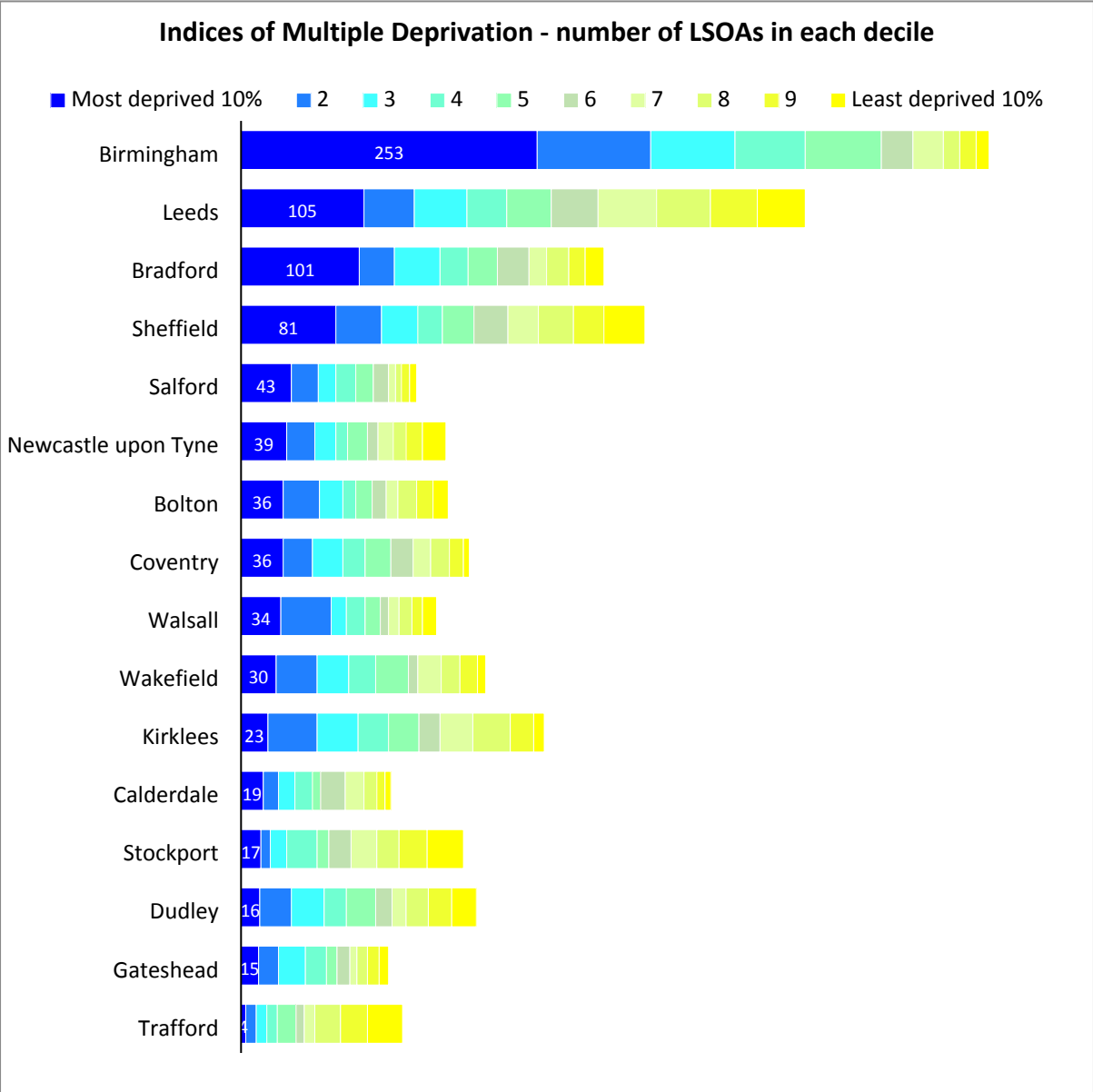
58. In a tabular format (see Table 3) the amount of deprived geographies across Wards becomes more apparent, with one Ward containing smaller geographies that are either in the worst 10 or 20% of the country. Overall, Leeds has 105 neighbourhoods (lower super output areas or LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% nationally. This represents 22% of all Leeds LSOAs.

Table 3: Leeds Wards with number of LSOAs in the Indices of Deprivation deciles



59. A total of 164,000 people in Leeds live in areas that are ranked amongst the most deprived 10% nationally, the corresponding figure in the 2010 Index was 150,000 people, but clearly not everyone living in these LSOAs are deprived. Leeds has 105 LSOAs in the most deprived 10% the second largest in the Cifpa nearest neighbour comparison group.

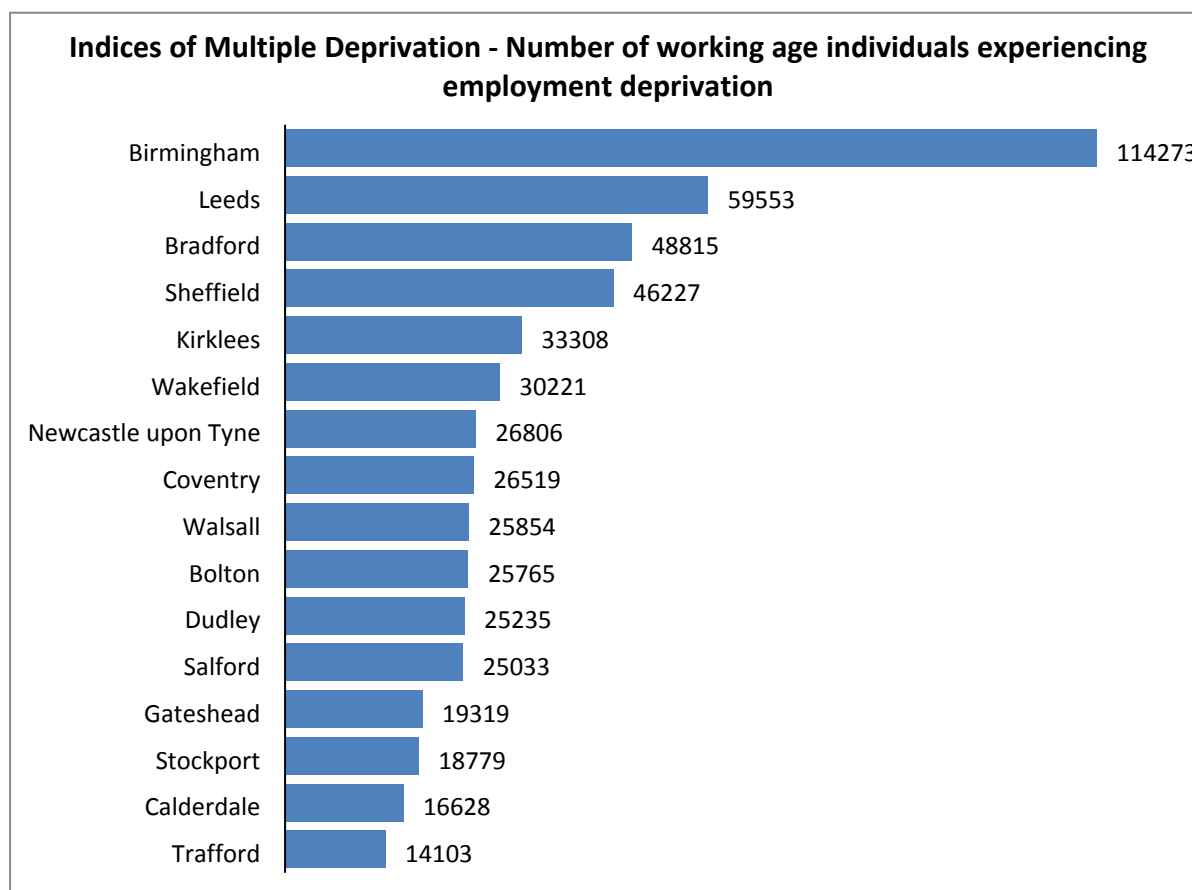
Table 4: 2015 Indices of Deprivation - Cifpa Nearest Neighbours comparison with Population Metric



60. To address these inequalities and challenges requires all of who contribute to making Leeds the ‘best city’, including, crucially, local elected members to influence what we do and how we do it.

61. The employment domain measure measures the proportion of working age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market through unemployment, sickness, disability or caring responsibilities. In Leeds, this proportion varies from 1% in the least deprived LSOAs to 41% in the most deprived. The table below further explores this by illustrating the number of working age individuals experiencing employment deprivation.

Table 5: 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation - Number of working age individuals experiencing employment deprivation - Cifpa Nearest Neighbours



62. This data reinforces our argument that the current number of councillors allows for the much needed equality of representation for constituents across the district.

63. The Commission is asked to consider the full complexity of our district by interrogating the Leeds Observatory Website - [Leeds Observatory](#) .

64. The Leeds Observatory is a '*one-stop-shop*' website for information and intelligence about communities in Leeds. The website is provided as a free resource and updated & maintained by Leeds City Council. All data (unless otherwise specified) is available via the Open Government License (OGL) meaning you re-use it without any cost or restrictions.

65. This link provided sets out detailed statistics on all our wards relating to:

- Population
- Leeds Housing Market
- Leeds House Price Comparison
- Benefits and Low Income
- Crime and Safety
- Education and Skills
- Health

66. A thorough interrogation of the data will provide a clear picture of our city and the challenges that we face at both a district wide and ward level.

Higher Education

67. Leeds has a strong higher education sector with three Universities; the University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University and Leeds Trinity University College. The City is also home to Leeds City College, Leeds College of Art, the Leeds College of Music, and the Northern School of Contemporary Dance.

68. Leeds University is now the UK's second-largest, and the third largest employer in the City with more than 30,000 students from 130 countries. It has set itself the target of being among the top 50 universities in the world.

69. A number of Colleges of Technology, Commerce, and Education came together into the Leeds Polytechnic in 1970, which in turn became Leeds Beckett University in 1992. Leeds Beckett University has another 30,000 full-time and part-time degree students, and is the City's fourth-largest employer.

70. The large student population gives the City a real energy. Leeds has a young population especially in the areas of Headingley and Hyde Park and Woodhouse. Case work in these wards has its own unique characteristics.

Local Elections

71. In May 2015, the Council's 33 wards were contested by 186 candidates. All wards had a Conservative, Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat Candidate. This totals 132 nominations, or 70.97% of all nominations received. The remaining 54 nominations were from candidates representing Alliance for Green Socialism, Left Unity, Morley Borough Independents, Official Monster Raving Loony Party, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, United Kingdom Independence Party and Yorkshire First. This accounted for 29.03% of all nominations received. No ward had fewer than 5 candidates standing for election.
72. Interest in representational democracy is demonstrably strong. Table 6 below gives an indication of the number of councillors standing for re-election and being returned over the last three elections.

Table 6 Councillors at elections

Election	Number of LCC Councillors seeking re-election	Percentage of Members Seeking re-election	Number of LCC Councillors returned at election	Return Rate of Councillors
2015	28	85%	28	100%
2014	27	82%	26	96%
2012	24	73%	19	79%

73. Over the last three elections 79% of councillors have, on average, sought re-election of which 92% were returned. This equates to an average turnover rate of 26%. It is our view that the current number of 99 councillors allows for equality of representation and for the identities and interests of local communities to be reflected at the ballot box.

Community Leadership – The National and Local Perspective

74. The Localism Act 2011 enshrined in law the role of local authorities as community leaders. It provided a general power of competence for local authorities to do anything an individual may do (subject to existing legislative limitations). Leeds has fully embraced this power and recognises that within the city locally elected members are in a unique position to act in the best interests of the communities that they represent and in such a way as to ensure the delivery of services in an efficient and innovative way that presents good value for money.
75. Most local authorities in England have responded by forming some form of local strategic partnership. The large size and complexity of Leeds militates against a one size fits all approach to local working. We have focused on a framework of local community committees which lead locality working to improve the council's responsiveness, involving local people more closely in decision-making and developing partnership working within localities to deliver better outcomes.
76. This role of community leadership was a central theme in work undertaken by the Commission for the Future of Local Government; a joint initiative, led by Leeds City Council in partnership with Glasgow and Cardiff councils. The Commission also involved input from the voluntary sector and private sector, universities and various independent think-tanks. The outcome of the Commission was to advocate a 'civic enterprise' approach to local governance; in which councillors act as 'door-openers and enablers', moving towards a more participatory model of democracy.
- "People change places and it is the civic entrepreneurs who permeate businesses, communities, councils and charities that change cities and towns for the better. There are crucial roles for councillors not only in being civic entrepreneurs but also in providing visible civic leadership to enable and support the work of others" (Commission on the Future of Local Government Executive Summary, 2012:3)
77. The notion of developing councillors as a new type of community leader is not confined to the Commission Report. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Select Committee, 'Councillors' on the Front Line' (DCLG: 2013) found that the councillors' role was changing and becoming much more community focused. Its report also stated that

"The more community – focused role of Councillors makes it all the more important to high-performing, effective Councillors...Democracy at all levels depends on the health of its Councillors base"

78. Leeds has fully embraced these approaches. Joint working between executive members and local ward councillors occupies a central position in community leadership, cross sector collaboration and local politics. As elected members, our councillors work alongside and in partnership with an array of local bodies, which together produce a multi layered framework of provision and responsibility for the strategic governance of the city and of development of our distinctive towns and other localities.

79. A Leeds' councillors' job is a 24-hour one. The immediacy of our councillors to local citizens and communities and the fact that our councillors are of those communities is a vital element of a councillors' office.

Town and Parish Councils

80. We have a substantial number of Parish/Town Councils Parish Meetings arrangements across the district.

Aberford & District Parish Council	Allerton Bywater Parish Council	Alwoodley Parish Council
Arthington Parish Council	Austhorpe Parish Meeting	Bardsey Cum Rigton Parish Council
Barwick in Elmet & Scholes Parish Council	Boston Spa Parish Council	Braham Cum Oglethorpe Parish Council
Bramhope & Carlton Parish Council	Clifford Parish Council	Collingham with Linton Parish Council
Drighlington Parish Council	East Keswick Parish Council	Gildersome Parish Council
Great & Little Preston Parish Council	Harewood Parish Council	Horsforth Town Council
Kippax Parish Council	Ledsham Parish Council	Mickfield Parish Council
Morley Town Council	Otley Town Council	Pool Parish Council
Rawdon Parish Council	Scarcroft Parish Council	Shadwell Parish Council
Swillington Parish Council	Thorner Parish Council	Thorp Arch Parish Council
Walton Parish Council	Wetherby Town Council	Wothersome Parish Meeting

81. The LCC wards that have Parish/Town Councils are:

- Adel & Wharfedale
- Alwoodley
- Garforth & Swillington
- Guiseley & Rawdon
- Harewood
- Horsforth
- Kippax & Methley
- Morley North
- Morley South
- Otley & Yeadon
- Wetherby

82. 94 of our 373 polling districts (25.2%) are part of a parish/town council and 30% of our councillors (from wards with parish and town councils) also serve as a parish or town councillors. This is a significant additional time commitment for these members and is vital to ensure effective links between the city council and the parish and town council tier of governance in the district.

Neighbourhood Forums

83. As a basis to promote a 'bottom up' approach to planning, the 2011 Localism Act introduced the commitment to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Supported by detailed guidance, this provides the framework for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans by designated Neighbourhood Forums and for these plans to be subject to a local referendum. Once approved, these plans will form part of the statutory Development Plan.

84. In reflecting the local distinctiveness of Leeds, there has been a high level of take up of the Neighbourhood Plans process (see table 7 below).

TABLE 7 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING JUNE 2015		
Outer North West Area Committee		
NP AREA	NA designated	NF designated
Horsforth	16/07/2013	N/A
Otley	29/05/2013	N/A
Aireborough	15/07/2014	15/07/2014
Rawdon	03/06/2013	N/A
Pool-in-Wharfedale	17/12/2013	N/A
Adel	06/11/2013	03/04/2014
Inner North West Area Committee		
NP AREA	NA designated	NF designated
Little Woodhouse	03/02/2015	No
Kirkstall	No	No
Hyde Park	13/11/2014	No
Headingley	22/10/2014	22/10/2014

Outer North East Area Committee		
NP AREA	NA designated	NF designated
Linton	17/09/2012	N/A
Wetherby	17/09/2012	N/A
Walton	17/09/2012	N/A
Thorp Arch	17/09/2012	N/A
Boston Spa	17/09/2012	N/A
Clifford	17/09/2012	N/A
Bramham cum Oglethorpe	17/09/2012	N/A
Aberford and District	26/06/2013	N/A
Barwick in Elmet & Scholes	26/06/2013	N/A
Thorner	31/01/2013	N/A
Shadwell	17/09/2012	N/A
Scarcroft	31/01/2013	N/A
Bardsey cum Rigton	17/09/2013	N/A
Collingham	15/08/2013	N/A
East Keswick	07/10/2013	N/A
Alwoodley	24/02/2014	N/A
Inner East Area Committee		
NP AREA	NA designated	NF designated
Seacroft	10/10/2014	27/01/2015
Outer South Area Committee		
NP AREA	NA designated	NF designated
Rothwell	09/01/2015	13/04/2015
Oulton & Woodlesford	15/07/2014	15/07/2014
Inner South Area Committee		
NP AREA	NA designated	NF designated
Beeston	24/02/2014	13/01/2015
Holbeck	11/10/2013	27/03/2014

Outer East Area Committee		
NP AREA	NA designated	NF designated
Kippax	17/09/2012	N/A
Garforth	11/11/2014	11/11/2014

Parished 
Designated Area/Forum 

85. The city council has performed a key role in helping to facilitate this process and is supporting 4 pilots (Beeston & Holbeck, Boston Spa, Kippax and Otley). These individual areas reflect the diversity of Leeds and incorporate inner urban communities, a rural settlement to the outer north east of the district, a former mining community in south east Leeds and free standing market town to the north west of the district.
86. Table 7 highlights the level of interest in Neighbourhood Plans across Leeds and the various stages of Plan preparation. Local ward members have been central to and an integral part of our approach to neighbourhood planning and have taken a proactive role at a local level, their local knowledge, experience and leadership has been vital to help drive the process of plan making forward.
87. Based upon our track record to date, Leeds has been recognised as a centre of best Neighbourhood Plan practice by both CLG and the Royal Town Planning Institute. Any reduction in the number of councillors would have a detrimental impact on neighbourhood planning across the district, particularly as the workload for councillors in this respect will not peak until after the site allocation process has concluded.

PART 3 LEEDS CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

88. Leeds City Council is comprised of 99 councillors representing 33 three member wards. Councillors are elected by thirds each year with a fallow year every four years when there are no elections – the next such year being 2017.
89. Since the last review the political make up has varied from a majority Labour Group administration to, in 2004, no overall control and a joint administration comprised of the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrat Group with support from smaller groups until, in 2010, the Labour Group regained minority control of the council and since 2011 have maintained a majority single party administration. Following the May 2015 elections the political make-up of the council is Labour 63, Conservatives 19, Liberal Democrats 9, Morley Borough Independent Group 5, and the Green Group 3.
90. Our governance structure has enabled these changes in political control to happen seamlessly and without detriment to effective and consistent delivery of local services; this is a significant strength for Leeds.

Full Council

91. The full Council meeting meets seven times per annum, with each meeting lasting around 6 ½ hours. Attendance of Councillors at this meeting is very high with average attendance being 97%. The full Council meeting performs a crucial role in engagement (with up to four deputations from members of the public being heard at each meeting), democratic debate (with periods of question time and challenge to the Executive and Committee Chairs), policy debate (with two thirds of 'White Paper Motions' being tabled by opposition groups) and in decision making (with full Council agreeing both the budget and a number of important policies within which the Executive must work).
92. In 2014/15 full council considered:
- 16 Deputations
 - 116 Questions
 - 16 White Paper Motions
 - 205 Comments on minutes
93. We are very conscious of the need to enable the public to access this area of the council's work and we have, for a number of years, webcast the full Council meeting live; public engagement to these meetings in this way is significant with a total of over 5000 live viewings since 2013 and in excess of 27000 archive viewings.

94. Improved access to our decision making arrangements through digital channels has substantially increased the volume of contact with councillors from the electorate. This is explored later in this submission. We plan to further extend webcasting other meetings (e.g. our Executive Board meetings) held in our newly refurbished committee room.
95. Our Annual Council meeting establishes committees, appoints members, on a politically proportional basis, to those committees and agrees a scheme of (non-executive) delegations to officers.
96. Outside of the framework for formal meetings of full Council an annual 'State of the City' meeting also takes place. These meetings enable direct interaction by all Councillors and collaboration with partners from across the city and from across all sectors. These sessions focus on issues such as transport, health and wellbeing, jobs, skills and apprenticeships, the economy and in 2015 a focus on the manufacturing base of the city.

Council Committees and Membership

97. The political make up of Leeds has remained constant with a continual representation from the Labour Party, Conservative Party, Liberal Democrat Party, Green Party and the Morley Borough Independents. The size of our committee structure is designed to ensure that there are sufficient seats to enable representation from all opposition groups and enable compliance with statutory requirements in respect of political balance. Table 8 below summarises our council committee structure.

Table 8 – Committees Appointed by Full Council

<u>Name of Committee</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Meeting frequency</u>
Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)	11 Members of the authority & 9 co-opted members – Executive members may not be appointed	10 formal meetings per annum for each Board with between 25 and 30 working groups meetings across all Boards.
Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS)	11 Members of the authority & 1 co-opted member Executive members may not be appointed	
Scrutiny Board (Environment and Housing)	11 Members of the authority Executive members may not be appointed	

<u>Name of Committee</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Meeting frequency</u>
Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities)	12 Members of the authority Executive members may not be appointed	10 formal meetings per annum for each Board with between 25 and 30 working groups meetings across all Boards.
Scrutiny Board (City Development)	11 Members of the authority Executive members may not be appointed	
Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)	11 Members of the authority Executive members may not be appointed	
Standards and Conduct Committee	7 Members of the authority ⁴ Executive members are not appointed	One formal meeting per annum
Corporate Governance and Audit Committee	10 Members of the authority Executive members may not be appointed	Five formal business meetings per annum with private briefings and training sessions
General Purposes Committee	12 Members of the authority	Seven formal business meetings per annum
Ten Community Committees	Between 9 and 12 depending on ward configuration and with varying numbers of co-opted members	Five formal business meetings per annum plus 4 workshops per committee per annum and a plethora of local forum meetings with residents, local council services and partners.
Health and Wellbeing Board	5 Members of the authority (nominated by the Leader) together with a representative from the third sector and from NHS (England).	Up to eight formal business meetings
Employment Committee	Minimum of 3 Members of the authority comprising at least 1 Member of the Executive	Approx. three formal appointments per annum
Member Management Committee	12 Members of the authority	Four formal business meetings per annum
Licensing Committee	15 Members of the	Ten formal business

⁴ Plus 1 non-voting co-opted Parish/Town Council Members who may attend meetings of the relevant Sub-Committee in accordance with the procedure in Part 4(m) of the Constitution.

<u>Name of Committee</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Meeting frequency</u>
	authority Executive members are not appointed	meetings per annum
Licensing Sub-Committee	3 Members of the authority ⁵	Up to thirty three formal business meetings per annum
City Plans Panel	13 Members of the authority	Sixteen formal business meetings per annum along with pre meeting morning site visits
Plans Panel (North and East)	11 Members of the authority	Eleven formal business meetings per annum along with pre meeting morning site visits
Plans Panel (South and West)	11 Members of the authority	Eleven formal business meetings per annum along with pre meeting morning site visits
Development Plan Panel	11 Members of the authority	Five formal business meetings per annum along with between 22-30 informal meetings and site visits
Housing Advisory Board	6 Members of the authority and the following co-opted by the authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three tenants/ leaseholders • Three people who are independent of the Council 	Five formal business meetings per annum

98. As when the Commission last reviewed our arrangements in 2003, Council have appointed **6 Scrutiny boards**. Those committees now have 67 committee places (compared to 49 in 2001/2) with 65 different councillors being appointed to those places. This enables 25 opposition group appointments of which three positions are those of chair with x 2 undertaken by the largest opposition group (the Conservatives) with a further chair role (around Children's Services functions) being undertaken by the second largest opposition group (the Liberal Democrats).

⁵ The Licensing Committee appoints 3 Members to each sub-committee

99. Attendance rates at scrutiny board meetings are very good, with 86% attendance across all boards. All scrutiny board members are eligible to serve as a substitute member in the case of the unavoidable absence from a meeting of an appointed member.
100. No Executive Member may be appointed to scrutiny boards and those Members performing Deputy or Support Executive Member roles are prevented from being appointed to Boards in which they have an Executive responsibility. This is also generally the case for opposition spokespersons too.
101. In addition to the above, a Leeds elected member chairs the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. Two Leeds members also sit on the West Yorkshire Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. Leeds also sends two members to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Scrutiny Board, which meets monthly. Later in this submission we further explore the work of Scrutiny.
102. Our **Licensing Committee** is comprised of the maximum number of members allowed by legislation – **15 members**, 6 more Members than were appointed in 2003. This size of committee allows for membership to be drawn from all political groups (with the exception of the smallest the Green group) and for a good local understanding (by way of ward representation and local knowledge) of the city to be achieved from those appointed – with members representing 13 different wards from geographically different locations. Attendance at Licensing Committees is very good with 96% attendance at our regular Licensing Sub-Committee meetings which determine contested applications. All committee members must attend compulsory training sessions to keep their knowledge of licensing law and practice current. Later in this submission we further explore the workload of members appointed to this committee.
103. Our Licensing Sub-Committees are comprised of three Members. The rules on political balance do not apply to sub-committees however sub-committee membership takes into account levels of experience as well as ensuring a mix of political parties and wards. Our sub committees are scheduled to sit on alternate weeks during the year.
104. We appoint to **ten Community committees** with all Members appointed to one by dint of their ward representation. These committees have extensive decision making delegation from our Executive with direct control and influence over **£20.85m**.

105. When the Commission last considered the question of council size these committees had not been formally constituted. The committees are established in a way that allows geographical boundaries to reflect local communities of interest. The boundaries were last reviewed in 2014 with the Kirkstall Ward being added to the Inner West Community Committee from the North West Inner grouping – better balancing the number of wards per community committee and reflecting the common interest of neighbouring wards in issues relating to the Aire valley corridor in that location.
106. The chairs of community committees are appointed by the membership of the committee, with full council only making that appointment in the event of a tied vote. The Labour Group has 8 chair positions with the remaining two held by the Conservative Group.
107. Attendance at formal Community committee meetings is good with an average attendance of 80%. In addition, public attendance at community committee meetings has grown significantly in the past year and provides for both quality engagement and increased expectations of local democratically elected leaders. In addition to formal committee meetings community committee members participate in large numbers of working groups linked to the committees' work programmes. Later in this submission we further explore the workload of Members appointed to these committees.
108. We have appointed **three Plans Panels** (as opposed to the two in 2001/2) to conduct the extensive work programme generated by our growing city. These cover two distinct geographical areas, the North and East and South and West, with a third Panel dealing with the City centre and applications of a strategic significance across the whole district. We appoint 34 different members (as opposed to 23 in 2001/2) to 35 seats on these panels with 13 of those seats being held by opposition members. No member of the executive has been appointed to these committees in 2015-16; each panel is chaired by a member from the Labour group. Attendance at Plans Panel meetings is exceptionally high, with 98% attendance across all panels.
109. All panel members are eligible to serve as a substitute member in the case of the unavoidable absence from a meeting of an appointed member. All committee members must attend compulsory training sessions to keep their knowledge of planning law and practice current. This pool of trained members is important and essential to enable decision making to operate effectively. Later in this submission we further explore the workload of members appointed to these panels.

110. **Two advisory committees** have been appointed by the authority, one advising both the Executive and full Council on development planning policy and a second providing a forum for advice on housing matters. An experienced previous Plans Panel Chair chairs the **Development Plans Panel** with the serving Plans Panel Chairs also appointed as members along with senior experienced councillors from the three largest opposition groups.
111. The **Housing Advisory Board** is chaired by an Executive Member with housing responsibilities and has representation from the two largest opposition groups, tenant and leaseholders and other independent people.
112. We appoint to **two committees that deal with the governance arrangements** of the Authority; the **General Purposes Committee** considers amendments to the Council's Constitution, and amongst other matters oversees and makes recommendations on Community Governance Reviews, whereas the **Member Management Committee** considers matters relating to Members more generally, for example making appointments to outside bodies and overseeing training and induction arrangements for Members. It is essential to the cross party nature of these committees that the Membership is drawn from all the political groups on the authority. Attendance at both these committees is in excess of 80%
113. Our **Corporate Governance and Audit Committee** have significant responsibilities for the oversight of our governance processes. The committee approves the Annual Governance Statement and the Authority's Accounts and has an important working relationship with the External Auditor. No member of the executive may be appointed to this committee.
114. In considering the role of the Committee the Independent Remuneration Panel stated;
- “The major task of acting as the council's formal Audit Committee as well as its formal decision-taking body on issues of corporate governance. The formal audit requirements impose considerable responsibility on the Committee.”
- Source: IRP report to Leeds City council 2008
115. It is worthy of note that this committee will have future responsibilities for the external auditors' appointment. Attendance at this committee is 61%. The importance of the expertise and experience of elected members appointed to this committee is paramount. The committee is chaired by a councillor from the largest group who is also appointed to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Audit Committee on which he serves in the capacity as Chair. However retaining a pool of experienced and knowledgeable members in this area is of critical importance.

116. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 introduced a new responsibility for Local Authorities to appoint its own external auditor. It is likely that these responsibilities will fall to Members appointed to this committee.
117. The Council's **Standards and Conduct Committee** oversees the Members' Code of Conduct and acts as a forum for any hearings to determine the outcome of complaints at stage three of the adopted complaints process. The procedures adopted by the council focus upon early assessment and resolution of complaints. Often this involves group whips assisting in that resolution process. Group whips have not been appointed to this committee in 2015-16 with appointments that have been made being drawn from 4 of the 5 largest political groups.
118. In 2014 our Independent Remuneration Panel reviewed the role of the chair of the committee commenting that;-
- "The Chair of the Committee has a significant role outside of the formal committee process in oversight of the complaints process which was recognised by our Independent Remuneration Panel During 2013/14 the workload of the Chair of the Standards and Conduct Committee has been limited to chairing three committee meetings; being consulted by the Head of Paid Service on a limited number of requests for dispensations; and being regularly consulted by the Deputy Monitoring Officer on standards related matters. Given this workload, we do not believe that removal of the SRA would be appropriate but a further reduction in SRA is justified. We equate the role with that of the statutory 'independent person'."
119. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 required authorities to establish a **Health and Wellbeing Board**. The board is chaired by our Executive Member with responsibility for Health and Adult Social Care and also includes two other Executive members and senior representation from the two largest opposition groups. The board is of significant strategic importance to the city and also includes senior representatives from each of the three clinical commissioning groups, from NHS (England) from Healthwatch Leeds and the third sector. Attendance at this board is in excess of 96%.

Committee Seats

120. When the Commission last reviewed our structures there were 262 committee seats (including full council and Executive Board) allocated to our 99 councillors on 12 Committees/Boards/Panels - 2.64 appointments per member. In 2015, we now have 29 committees with the number of committee seats increased to 388 seats – a 48% increase – with just under four (3.91) committee places per member.
121. This number of seats allows for smaller groups to have seats allocated to them on scrutiny boards, plans panels and our important governance committees such as Member Management Committee and General Purposes Committee.
122. Any reduction in the number of Councillors would be detrimental to;
- Equality of representation across the city;
 - The ability of councillors to reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - The ability of the council to secure effective and consistent local government- particularly maintaining the separation between executive and non-executive responsibilities.

Budget and Policy Framework

123. It falls to Council to set the Budget and Policy Framework. This enables all members to exercise their democratic responsibilities in setting the framework within which decisions (both council and executive) will be taken. The policies within our framework include those required by legislation and those we have chosen to include ourselves.
- Budget
 - Safer Leeds Strategy
 - Development plan documents
 - Licensing Authority Policy Statement
 - Plans and which together comprise the Development Plan
 - Vision for Leeds
 - Youth Justice Plan
 - Best Council Plan
 - Children and Young Peoples Plan
 - Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
124. All decisions of the Executive must be taken in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework save where the urgency provisions apply. This is a fundamental role for both our executive members and for the councillors involved in scrutiny and holding the Executive to account.

Executive Arrangements

125. Leeds City Council operates a strong leader and cabinet model of executive governance. This form of governance being in place since the Local Government Boundary Commission previously considered the Leeds City Council electoral arrangements in 2003.
126. The Leader is elected for a period of four years by the full Council meeting. The Leader has responsibility to establish and appoint members to a joint decision making board (our Executive Board), to assign executive portfolios to members of the board, and to establish a scheme of executive delegation to officers.
127. Executive members with portfolios do not have individual decision making authority but are routinely involved in all Key and Significant Operational decisions, providing political leadership and directing which of those decisions should be considered and determined by the Executive Board rather than under officer delegations.
128. The portfolios assigned to our Executive members enable a structured framework through which leadership is provided to officers. The Executive Member Portfolios are as follows;

Executive Portfolios
Leader of Leeds and Executive Member for Economy and Culture Lead for the council's budget and financial strategy; economic growth for all communities; the city's cultural offer and for devolution and local freedoms.
Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Children and Families Lead for building a child friendly city, putting children and families first and for the local partnership of children's services providers.
Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Resources and Strategy Lead the council to be more effective and efficient, including driving the digital and "smart city" agenda.

Executive Portfolios
<p>Executive Member for Employment, Enterprise and Opportunity</p> <p>Lead for delivering learning and employment opportunities; tackling inequalities, addressing the skills gap, raising aspirations and ambition, and engaging with citizens, learning providers and employers to promote access to secure employment for all.</p>
<p>Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults</p> <p>Lead for improving health and the quality of adult social care, reducing health inequalities through healthy lifestyles and integrating health and social care.</p>
<p>Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning</p> <p>Lead for sustainable development, regeneration and infrastructure including the sufficiency of health and learning settings.</p>
<p>Executive Member for Communities</p> <p>Lead for community and citizen focussed services and welfare support.</p>
<p>Executive Member for Environmental Protection and Community Safety</p> <p>Lead for environmental protection, community safety and dealing with the city's waste.</p>

129. In Leeds opposition leaders from the two largest opposition groups are routinely appointed to the Executive Board as full voting members. Although these appointees do not have portfolios assigned to them, their role on the board is essential to our governance arrangements and ethos of cross party working. Attendance rates for members of Executive Board are 97%
130. Due to the volume of work, executive members with portfolios and opposition leaders have assistance in their responsibilities. Members from the Administration are supported by deputy (x4) and support executive (x15) members, and opposition leaders have councillors who shadow executive members with portfolio responsibilities. Whilst sharing the extensive workload and bringing a range of perspectives to policy development, these roles are also essential for succession planning, providing opportunities for members to gain experience of working at the executive board level, and being vital in terms of continuity and the overall stability of our governance arrangements.

131. It is important to stress that opposition spokespersons have considerable time commitments in carrying out their responsibilities, particularly in remaining briefed by officers on issues of significance within their scheme of delegated authority.

132. It is also worthy of note that the IRP has recognised the vital role of the Leader of the Opposition in our governance arrangements. In the Panel's report to the authority in 2014 the Panel commented as follows.

"13. The Opposition has a major constitutional role in holding the administration to account. Following the recent elections, there has been some criticism of 'one party states' (local authorities with no opposition members). That criticism underlines the importance of an effective opposition. The Leader of the largest Opposition Group must articulate that role among his members".

Time Commitments placed on Executive Members, Deputy and Support Executive members and Opposition Shadow Members

133. The role of Leader of Council is a full time position. This is supported by the Independent Remuneration Panel who in their report in 2015 stated;

"The Panel believed (and continues to believe) that the Leader of the Council, with overall responsibility for delivering vital services to a population of nearly 800,000, deserves remuneration not less than a Member of Parliament, whose average constituency size is 76,000 and who is not responsible for the delivery of services."

134. The roles of executive members and deputy and support executive members in supporting the Leader, and of opposition executive members, and shadow spokespeople, in providing challenge and oversight, are substantial, particularly when coupled with the demands from other council appointments and ward case work.

135. Our Independent Remuneration Panel recognised this in their report in 2013, commenting that;

"We accept that the city council operates within a rapidly changing and complex environment which requires the Authority to act swiftly in order to react to the demands placed on its services, the changing legislative environment and its financial constraints."

136. To give some context to this, the number of significant executive decisions taken per annum, which require member input, is in excess of 1150. Of these around 1000 are taken by officers with executive member oversight with the remainder being determined by the Executive Board collectively at one of their nine meetings per annum (these meetings last for approximately two and a half hours).
137. As part of executive arrangements notification processes have been developed to ensure all councillors are aware in advance of Key decisions. This enables non-executive councillors to make representations about those decisions and also helps inform scrutiny work programmes. The vast majority (in excess of 96%) of our key decisions are notified in this way, with the average being 226 decisions per annum.
138. Notice is also given of decisions that have been taken by officers and by the Executive Board. This process delays the implementation of Key decisions to enable non-executive councillors to consider the decisions and whether or not they should be 'called in' and considered by the relevant scrutiny board. On average (last 4 years) 421 per annum are available for 'call in' by the relevant scrutiny board.
139. In addition to these responsibilities, our executive members sit on a wide range of committees and boards. For example the Leader of Council and Leader of the Opposition are both appointed to the Board of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority with the Leader also appointed to numerous other regional and sub-regional bodies. Part 4 of this submission considers member workloads in greater depth.
140. Our executive member portfolio holders also have significant leadership responsibilities on external bodies, for example the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning being appointed to the West Yorkshire and York Investment Committee, the Executive Member for Communities chairing the Housing Advisory Board and the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults chairing the city wide Health and Wellbeing Board.

Community Committees

141. Since the last electoral review Leeds' approach to devolved governance has evolved dramatically. Our ten community committees, operational since June 2014, have matured to now being responsible for directly controlling and influencing the provision of important local services and providing an essential framework for how local community engagement takes place in the city; with local people, with the voluntary sector and with other public and private service providers.
142. The Executive Board has delegated decision making responsibility in a number of service areas to community committees as follows-;
- Parks and Countryside
 - Youth Activity Funding
 - Street Cleansing and Environmental Enforcement Services
 - Neighbourhood Improvement and Co-ordination
 - Community Centres
 - CCTV
 - Well-being – specifically the use of annually delegated capital and revenue funds to promote and improve economic, social and environmental well-being.
 - Community Infrastructure Levy decisions at a neighbourhood level
143. The perspectives which our community communities bring enables the diverse communities, which make up the Leeds Metropolitan District, to have their distinct needs taken into account in decision making, service design and ensure that our strategic objectives and break through projects are rooted in the needs of local communities.
144. The paragraphs which follow provide further details on the delegations made by the Executive Board. Also attached at **Appendix 2** is the 2015 Community Committee Annual Report. This document was received by our full Council meeting in September 2015 and illustrates a range of case studies which show how our approach to community governance is making a real difference to peoples' lives and demonstrates the role community committees have in delivering the council's strategic objectives at a locality level.
145. Community committees allocate funding each year to both community projects and youth activities. Community committees decide how their share of a total **Well-Being budget** of £1.95m is spent on projects and activities in their area.

146. Community committees develop and approve annual Service Level Agreements covering a range of **Environmental services** such as litter bin emptying, street cleansing and enforcement works – a total of £7.8m of expenditure. The committees identify priorities for service delivery in their area, both geographically and in terms of types of service delivered.
147. Each community committee maintains an overview of the **CCTV** service in the committee's area (over £1m city wide) and receives regular information about those services and how they have been deployed.
148. Community committees have responsibility for the **community centres** in their area. They oversee the controllable revenue budgets, the operational arrangements and the use of the centres including lettings policies. The gross operational budget for community centres amounts to £1.4m across the city.
149. Each community committee agrees the priority neighbourhoods in its area and agrees and monitors **neighbourhood improvement plans** within its area.
150. Community committees have involvement in the commission, monitoring and evaluation of local play, arts, sports and cultural activity for young people (age 8-17) with the involvement and participation of children and young people, this being funded through a **Youth Activity Fund**.
151. We have taken steps to strengthen the role and influence of community committees in the provision of **geographically targeted youth work**. It has enabled elected members to influence and appropriately determine local youth work provision that addresses agreed priority outcomes for each particular area. Community committees are actively involved in the performance monitoring of the delivery of youth work services in their area. The operational budget for this service is £1.3m city-wide.
152. Control over the development and horticultural maintenance of community parks, cemeteries, recreation grounds, urban woodland, natural areas and local green space has been delegated to community committees along with the operational budget of £3.84m city-wide.
153. Community committees may establish sub-groups to focus on a particular strand of services (such as Children & Young People and the Environment) and appoint local members to act as representatives on other bodies such as Housing Advisory Panels, Neighbourhood Improvement Boards, Children's Cluster Partnerships, local charitable trusts and other local bodies.

154. Local members also have input on the planned use of Section 106 Greenspace funds. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which started this year includes 15% (or 25% if there is a neighbourhood plan in place) being paid over to Community committees or Parish Councils for local decision making around allocation to local priorities. The CIL is a tariff system that local planning authorities can choose to charge on new developments. The approach to CIL in Leeds is to support and incentivise sustainable growth through a meaningful proportion of these funds being made available, through local decision making forums, to spend on infrastructure and projects of direct benefit to local communities where growth is located.

155. Against this backdrop there continues to be an enhanced role and substantial increase in the responsibilities of community committee chairs. This being recognised by the Independent Remuneration Panel in their last report to the authority;

“9. At the Annual Council meeting members approved revised governance arrangements for Area Committees (now Community Committees). Emerging from proposals from the Commission on the Future of Local Government, the changes present a major step change in the involvement and engagement of local communities in the shaping of their neighborhoods and the delivery/improvement of services tailored to need.

10. The authority has appointed ten community committees. These are made up of either three or four electoral wards (depending on local circumstances) so that each has a population approximating to the population of the constituency of a Member of Parliament. The community committees are chaired by councillors from both the administration and the opposition. Over time the powers delegated by the Executive to these area based committees has increased and now include functions relating to community centres, community safety, street cleansing, environmental enforcement and youth activities. In addition the committees have been invested with budgets to support and pump prime wellbeing initiatives in their localities. On average these budgets are in the region of £250k per annum. In the coming months proposals are to come forward whereby community committees will be engaged in locality budgeting – that is allocating, and prioritising resources based upon locally identified need. The chairs of the community committees must secure the delivery of the council’s ambitions; drive the improvement in local democratic leadership; and involve local people in the decisions that affect them and their communities. It is intended that chairs will ensure that enhanced and effective community engagement takes place to better inform how services are designed to meet need in the locality.

11. Having regard to these substantial responsibilities the Panel believes that an increase in the region of £1,000 in the SRA payable to Community Chairs is warranted.”

156. The Panel also recognised that the role of the community committees is expanding and stated that the SRAs of their chairs should be kept under review.

157. Themed workshops on key issues of local concern are held at community committee meetings and regularly attract between 50 and 100 local residents, fundamentally enhancing chairs responsibilities and the role of local elected members as community committee champions. The increased expectations from members of the public that attend these meetings in our priority neighbourhood areas, has delivered a range of neighbourhood improvement partnerships - chaired by local members - these a range of services and partners together to work with local residents and plan and deliver improvements on a range of place and people based concerns.

158. Effective use of communications tools, including branding and social media, have raised awareness of the community committee meetings, promoted local funding available, increased the visibility of their work and enabled local councillors to engage with new audiences and tackle the issues that matter to them. The ten community committees each have their own Facebook accounts and a Twitter account - @_YourCommunity – these provide a platform to hold consultations and engage with residents the council would otherwise not have reached

159. The community committee chairs and members also play a vital role in contributing to improved community cohesion and resilience in the city, leading and supporting projects that are:

- celebratory (local cultural/community festivals and galas);
- support and advocacy projects;
- health improvement work; and,
- Promoting understanding and tolerance between communities.

Community Committee Champions

160. The Commission for Local Government identified the critical importance of local democratic leadership in driving the way in which local government responds to a changing and ever more challenging environment. Within the current financial, context where budgets are shrinking and difficult decisions need to be made in terms of service delivery, the importance of ensuring a strong local perspective and driving more local decision making is an essential ingredient to making the right decisions.

161. An all-party working group oversaw our area working review and felt it important that a core set of community committee champion roles were nominated by each community committee. The group felt these should cover the key delegated functions from the Executive and those areas linked to our best city ambitions.
162. Community committees now appoint 'Community Committee Champions' to provide a local "lead" perspective and further facilitate local democratic accountability (in conjunction with the relevant Executive Member), in the following areas:-
- Environment & Community Safety;
 - Children's Services;
 - Employment, Skills and Welfare;
 - Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care.
163. In particular the role of these community champions is:
- To provide local leadership and champion the agenda at the community committee.
 - To represent the community committee at meetings, forums and local partnerships.
 - To build links with key services and partners.
 - To provide a link between the community committee and the Executive Member to ensure local needs are represented, issues are highlighted, best practice is shared and to facilitate local solutions to any issues.
 - To maintain an overview of local performance.
 - To consult with the community committee and represent local views as part of the development and review of policy.
164. The champions' role has continued to make an impact in local areas, in particular in driving positive engagement with local communities. By linking the needs of local residents with the council's executive portfolio functions, the champions have taken the lead in ensuring interventions are targeted and fit for purpose.

Scrutiny

165. The city council places the overview and scrutiny process at the centre of its governance arrangements. As such full Council has adopted a 'Vision for Scrutiny' -

"To promote democratic engagement through the provision of an influential scrutiny function which is held in high regard by its many stakeholders and which achieves measurable service improvements which add value for the people of Leeds through a member led process of examination and review"

166. To succeed council recognises that a number of conditions need to be present including "member leadership and engagement" and a focus on 'critical friend' challenge to decision makers, through holding them to account for decisions made, engaging in policy review and policy development and adding value.

167. Added value in particular is gained through pre-decision scrutiny. Scrutiny is a valuable sounding board for new policy initiatives and scrutiny board members continue to seize opportunities to focus on those areas where they can have an influence and make a difference. This is clearly evident when scrutiny activity is linked to the delivery of the council's Best Council Objectives. The annual scrutiny report to full council provides a summary of the significant pieces of work undertaken over the last 12 months. This is attached at **Appendix 3**.

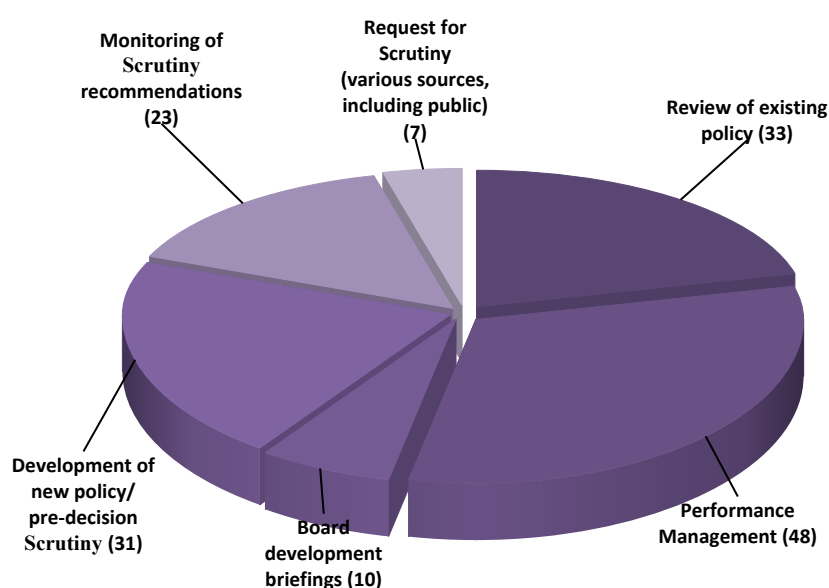
168. The number of scrutiny boards established by full Council reflects the size of the council in budgetary terms and the breadth and depth of decisions made alone or in partnership. Leeds position as regional capital also brings unique pressures upon elected Members, and in particular the Chair, in their overview and scrutiny role.

169. The Chair of the Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care, Public Health, NHS) for example through the inter-authority relationships with various NHS bodies and the associated scrutiny responsibilities. This chair also chairs the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – representing the 15 top-tier local authorities across Yorkshire and the Humber, and the West Yorkshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – representing the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities.

170. The six scrutiny boards meet monthly. In between formal meetings boards will hold task and finish working groups and undertake site visits. Each working group on average involves 5 members. In 2014-15 a total of between 30 working groups were held which on average include 5 members and last for 3 hours. Additional 'Call In' meetings are held when required.

171. All scrutiny boards have a full work programme of inquiries and reviews. The chart below highlights the type and proportion of work that the scrutiny boards have undertaken in 2014/15.

Type and total number of scrutiny work items in 2014/15



172. Leeds' members are adamant that the scrutiny process is member led and therefore commit considerable time in scoping inquiry terms of reference, gathering evidence through formal board meetings, site visits and evidence gathering working groups and scoping final recommendations.

173. The chair has a pivotal role in the scrutiny process and will in addition to the above activities spend considerable time undertaking numerous briefing sessions with officers and expert witnesses in order to fully understand the issues within a board's work programme.

174. The chair will also;

- Attend and chair a specific Scrutiny Board;
- Attend and chair pre-meetings;
- Liaise with Officers over items coming before the Scrutiny Board;
- Act as the spokesperson for that Board in all dealings with the public, media and other bodies in respect of the work of the Board;
- Represent the Scrutiny Board at meetings of Full Council, Executive Board and with external partners;
- Take forward matters on behalf of the Scrutiny Board outside of the formal meeting cycle and report progress back to the Scrutiny Board;
- Attend meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs Advisory Group;
- Attend and chair Scrutiny Board working groups, as appropriate;
- Attend other Scrutiny Board meetings and/or working groups when cross-cutting issues are being considered;
- Negotiate with and consult with stakeholders in preparing final scrutiny reports.

175. By way of example, the breadth of the remit of the Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care, Public Health, and NHS) emphasises the role of Chair in the management and development of complex relationships. These relationships include a mix of service commissioners, providers, regulators and patient representatives and are summarised below:

- Executive Board Member for Health and Wellbeing and Adults
- The Director of Adult Social Services
- The Director of Public Health
- NHS England
- NHS Leeds North Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Leeds South and East Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Leeds West Clinical Commissioning Group
- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust – which, alongside providing local hospital services for local patients, is also a regional and national provider of a large range of specialised services
- Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Leeds Community Healthcare
- HealthWatch Leeds
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- NHS Trust Development Authority
- Monitor
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- Independent providers of health and social care services

176. The scrutiny function in Leeds is a vital and integral part of our governance and accountability arrangements. Public services in the city support hundreds of thousands of people every day. Scrutiny is there to help stop things going wrong by working with those responsible for decision-making to help improve services for the benefit of the public.

177. It is crucial therefore those scrutiny board members are externally facing and draw upon the expertise of external witnesses and other decision makers within the city. Such examples include working closely with NHS Trusts, the CCGs and the other diverse providers from the private sector, Universities through to the Third Sector. Young people are also encouraged to lend their voice to the scrutiny process and Boards actively seek the views of young people when collating evidence, this is usually achieved via the City's Youth Council.

178. Our scrutiny members and the breadth and depth of their knowledge and experience (of services and of localities) are essential to this. Our scrutiny arrangements work well, are tailored to the city's priorities and are recognised as amongst the most effective in the country.

179. The Leeds approach to scrutiny continues to be well regarded and has received external validation through national awards and numerous citing of its work in policy documents. In October 2014 for example, the Centre for Public Scrutiny published a policy briefing document on the national and local policy landscape around domestic violence and acknowledged the in-depth scrutiny inquiry undertaken by the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny board.
180. The work of scrutiny was also notably praised in March 2015, when Ofsted formally acknowledged the role of Scrutiny in Leeds, stating:-
- ‘Scrutiny activity and oversight of children’s services is impressive, with strong prioritisation and a comprehensive understanding of the needs of children, young people and their families. Robust challenge is achieved through a range of pertinent inquiries and a strong corporate parenting ethos that extends beyond looked after children’
181. Looking to the future, full Council has set Scrutiny a number of key actions to reflect the changing shift towards further devolution, integration of public services and increased personal responsibility/resident involvement. These are also reflected in our attached annual scrutiny report.
182. All scrutiny boards have a full programme of work each municipal year with some inquiries not being progressed due to a lack of capacity.

Regulatory Committees

Planning

183. Council has delegated a wide range of planning functions to the Chief Planning Officer but with important exceptions that reflect the strategic and local leadership roles undertaken by Plans Panel Members and local ward councillors. A Plans Panel chair may direct that an application be determined by Plans Panel and local ward councillors may request applications in, or adjacent to, their ward to be determined by a Plans Panel rather than by an officer as must objections from statutory consultees. Each local authority is set up differently in terms of how planning matters are dealt with; with each having a different culture or approach to development – Leeds is very much about delivering quality sustainable development with strong connections to local people.
184. The city has a strong growth agenda which is clearly set out in our adopted Core Strategy adopted in November 2014 – we are the regional capital, the main economic driver for the Yorkshire and Humber and a major centre for financial services, retail, universities and culture / sport of national significance and high in the league tables for all those things. We aim to grow to 860,600 in 2028 and so in the 16 year period between 2012 and 2028 we aim to accommodate and plan for the delivery of 70,000 (gross) new dwellings in the city. Housing delivery rates have picked up in the last couple of years and we are on target to achieve 3,660 this year with over a 100 housing sites under construction delivering new dwellings.
185. As discussed earlier the city also has substantial interest in Neighbourhood Planning and Neighbourhood Plans and a strong base of Town and Parish Councils. There are presently some 32 Town and Parish Councils and 11 Neighbourhood Forums with 2 more about to be designated. We presently have 34 Designated Neighbourhood areas where Neighbourhood Plans are in preparation and this level of activity is high and recognised nationally by CLG as a place of good practice.
186. Full Council reviewed the plans panel arrangements in August 2012. New Plans Panel arrangements were agreed which established a City wide strategic Plans Panel and two area Panels to consider applications and the more significant developments of interest to local people. The new arrangements were put in place in September 2012 and have now become well established. Some 96% of planning decisions are made by planning officers (as opposed to the recommended 90% by DCLG) under delegated powers with 235 items dealt with by Plans Panels in 2014/15, the majority of which were major schemes.

Table 9 - Plans Panels in 2014/15

Panel	No. of Meetings	No of Items	Major Schemes	Decisions	Pre Apps	Position Statements	Deferred
City	18	73	59	71	10	11	7
North and East	12	86	17	58	2	1	23
South and West	12	76	45	62	2	5	9
Total	42	235	121	191	14	17	39

187. Leeds is one of the largest Planning authorities in the country and deals with some 220-250 major schemes a year. The Plans Panels play a pivotal role in dealing with the more complex and sensitive schemes – each afternoon meeting is preceded by whole morning site visits with the plans panel meetings themselves lasting on average some 4+ hours.

188. The City Plans Panel deals with strategic applications across the city as well as city centre development and meets on a 3 weekly cycle – additional meetings were held in 2014/15 to consider the East Leeds Extension (proposal for 2000 house urban extension) and the NGT project for a trolley bus scheme across the city.

Licensing

189. The Council is required to take a variety of licensing decisions in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005 and other miscellaneous legislation providing for the licensing of scrap metal dealers, sex establishment licence, place of marriage, hypnotism, house to house collections and street collections.

190. In addition the granting, suspension, revocation and enforcement of an individual hackney carriage (HC) or private hire (PH) licence whether for a vehicle, driver or operator is a council function under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. In Leeds, these functions are concurrently delegated to the Licensing Committee and to the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) under the Scheme of Delegation approved annually at full Council. Members of Licensing Committee are responsible for setting taxi and private hire licensing policy, and officers take decisions under delegated authority. Decisions taken by officers are taken in accordance with the policy and guidance decided by Members of Licensing Committee.

191. All decisions are reported to our Corporate Governance and Audit Committee annually, and twice a year to the Licensing Committee. This review of all licensing decisions taken can highlight new areas of work and licensing policies that require reviewing earlier than scheduled.

192. During the period between 2012/13 to 2014/15 an average of 74 decisions per annum have been made by Licensing Sub-Committee for Licensing or Gambling Act applications that have attracted representations. These determinations needing to be made within short timescales prescribed by regulations and in accordance with local policy statements.
193. In 2012/13 our Licensing Committee considered applications for the authority's large casino licence as part of a competitive bidding process in accordance with the legislation. A provisional statement was granted to the best bid which included a schedule of benefits for the authority that will continue to be monitored by the Licensing Committee for the life of the licence.
194. A provisional statement was granted to the best bid which included a schedule of benefits for the authority that will continue to be monitored by the committee for the life of the licence.
195. The Licensing Committee is involved in the development of policies for the Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005 and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 for the licensing of sex establishments. The Licensing Act Policy contains five cumulative impact policies for designated areas of the Leeds district which are kept under review. The committee Members contribute to the design of policies through working groups and stakeholder meetings, before the draft policies are submitted for final approval through the Executive and/or Full Council. The Licensing Act also provides for the Council to adopt a Late Night Levy but the committee's desire is to explore alternative options before any decision is taken to proceed with a levy.
196. In June 2012 the Licensing Committee began a comprehensive review of the Statement of Licensing Policy for Sex Establishments, primarily in relation to Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEVs) in response to public opinion. A thorough public consultation led to a new policy that clearly set out areas that were considered inappropriate for licensed SEVs. The introduction of the new policy led to three SEV licences being refused renewal, one being granted a time limited length licence (subsequently extended) and only two SEVs being granted licences for the full twelve months. In Leeds only three SEVs remain operational. This required a considerable time commitment for Licensing Committee Members who, for purpose of developing the policy, formed a working group which met on a monthly basis, listened to views of the trade, partner agencies, and undertook site visits when the premises were operational providing the opportunity to witness the welfare of the dancers. Members received training on the legislation and new policy before the licence applications were considered at attended lengthy sub-committee meetings until late 2013. Two SEVs launched a joint Judicial Review of the new policy in 2014 which failed.

197. Taxi and Private Hire Licensing policy is well developed in Leeds, and regularly seen as examples of best practice by other licensing authorities. There are 28 separate policies covering the application criteria, licensing conditions, and criteria to assess the “fit and proper” requirements for granting licences.
198. New policies are considered by the committee as and when required, and existing policies are reviewed at least once every three years. The last comprehensive review began in 2012 and was completed this year, which included two rounds of public consultation firstly inviting comment on what should change, and then on the committee’s proposals for change for each policy. The Committee formed a Working Group of elected Members and officers to dedicate time on various aspects of the policy review process, inviting representatives of the trade and other stakeholders to discuss policy proposals face-to-face before bringing final recommendations back to the full Licensing Committee for approval. This was well received by the trade who welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues directly with Licensing Committee Members in the Working Group.
199. The Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Policy review process is a major part of the Licensing Committee’s work programme and will begin again in 2017 to ensure policies remain up to date and fit for purpose. In 2016, the committee will be considering the specification to conduct a full Unmet Demand Survey which will determine whether the number of hackney carriages licensed by the authority needs to increase or not. This is a major piece of work which will also include consideration of wheelchair accessible vehicle provision and emission standards for vehicles. The committee fully expects to create a further Working Group to monitor progress of the unmet demand survey.
200. A current example of the depth and complexity of issues that Members of the Licensing Committee have to consider is the work the authority is leading on improving safeguarding measures in taxi and private hire licensing. This work links directly to the council’s corporate emphasis on safeguarding and supports the delivery of this strategic priority. A number of improvements have been identified which Licensing Committee have considered and recommended to Executive Board for approval. This was a significant piece of work that attracted representations from the trade that the committee had to carefully consider before deciding the direction the policy should take. The committee’s policy in this area is being rolled out to other authorities that comprise the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to ensure a consistent approach across the region.

Young People and engagement with the Council

201. There are many ways in which the council enables children, young people and families to be involved in local decision making all of which are underpinned by a key leading role by Elected Members:

Have a Voice Council

202. Leeds Children in Care Council is called “Have a Voice” and is for looked after young people aged 12-18. The aims of the group are to “make a difference and improve care services for children and young people in Leeds”. The group meet monthly at the Civic Hall and work closely with their Youth Voice Champion and Chair of Corporate Parenting Board.
203. The young people takeover the Corporate Parenting Board at least once a year and have developed a joint action tracker to ensure actions agreed are followed up. The young people have a variety of roles including youth proofing documents, shortlisting and helping choose award winners e.g. STARS, Foster Carer Awards, participating in consultations and sharing their views / ideas with staff.
204. The group developed “the Promise” which is an agreement with all looked after children and young people and their social worker and they have developed a newsletter that went out in the post directly to looked after children in the city. Councillors on the Corporate Parenting Board champion looked after young people’s voice and have for example supported Voice Group Members in making a deputation to full Council asking for all members support in raising awareness about the promise.

Care Leavers Council

205. The Care Leavers Council is comprised of looked after young people aged 16-25 who are thinking about or who have already moved into independent living. The group meet monthly at Little London Children’s Centre (and a crèche is provided). Group members are involved in delivering regular training to Foster Carers, Designated Teachers, recruitment and selection panels for senior posts in Children’s Services and regularly represent care leavers at strategic board meetings and New Belongings Care Leavers Working Group.
206. The Care Leavers Council work in close partnership with elected members and senior decision makers through their involvement with New Belongings Programme. As an example in the last few months they have attended a regional Corporate Parenting Board event in Manchester to learn how other looked after young people work in partnership with their Corporate Parenting Boards. Members have participated in an Outcome Based Accountability Planning event alongside decision makers, practitioners and Elected Members.

207. The Care leavers Council decided to focus on raising awareness of care leavers rights and entitlements and successfully applied for funding from two different sources and ran an event in April. Twenty eight care leavers attended the event and Elected Members supported the Care Leavers Council by attending on the day and being on the Question and Answer Panel.

New Leeds Youth Council Model (to be launched in March 2016)

208. Young people aged 11-18 (representatives from schools and special interest groups) are to be invited to attend three youth summit events a year. The youth summit events will be themed and linked to the Children and Young People's plan outcomes and priorities. The Leeds Children and Families Trust Board which includes elected members and decision makers from different services /organisations will be invited to attend to meet the young people towards the end of the meetings to hear their ideas and views and agree actions to take forward.

Leeds UK Youth Parliament

209. Young people in Leeds elect four members to the UK youth parliament every two years. UK youth parliament members attend regional conventions and an annual sitting every year and work with other youth parliament members to coordinate and develop national campaigns. This includes the Make your Mark national ballot for young people aged 11 to 18 years old across the UK. This involves young people being asked to vote on the issue that is most important to them.

210. The top 5 issues are then taken to the House of Commons for the Members of Youth Parliament (MYP) to debate on and choose the national campaign for the year. This year a 968,091 young people from across the UK took part in the ballot, 16,343 of these young people were from Leeds (23% of youth population).

211. The Members of Youth Parliament recently attended the House of Commons, two of the MYP's from Leeds were lucky enough to get the opportunity to speak at debate.

212. Following this trip to the House of Commons, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Children and Families encouraged current UK youth parliament members to bring a deputation to full council to raise awareness and seek support for their new campaign and this will take place in January 2015

The Leeds Children's Mayor

213. The Leeds Children's Mayor aims to engage aspirational young people, who recognise their own potential to create change through democratic participation and who are equipped to contribute to their own and the city's future wellbeing and prosperity. It directly supports the Council's ambition for a Child Friendly city.

214. The project, which relies upon working in partnership with elected members, Democratic Services and Children's Services, is aimed at Year 6 pupils. It builds upon existing systems for youth participation and provides direct exposure to democratic and political processes. It forges relationships between young people and elected members by encouraging mutual understanding and dialog.
215. The programme supports elected members in developing their role as active community leaders and enables them to promote local democracy by supporting young people in writing manifestos and forming campaigns which allows them to express their views on a topic that they are passionate about.
216. Outcomes for young people include:
- An understanding of democratic decision making.
 - Appreciating the value of:
 - Having their own views respected;
 - Respecting the views of others.
 - Learning how to present a debate for change.
217. The young person elected as 'mayor' presents their manifesto at a meeting of full Council and is actively supported in achieving as much of their manifesto as possible. Ultimately, they are invited to join the city's Youth Council in order to encourage long-term democratic involvement.

PART 4 ELECTED MEMBERS

218. Members undertake a broad range of duties across three interlinked, representational roles: Ward, City, Regional and International/National. This part of our submission explores the range and complexity of councillor roles elected to serve on Leeds City Council.

Ward Level

219. At local Ward level, members provide advice and assistance for constituents who approach them about Council-related matters. Casework comes from multiple sources (constituents can make contact at any time and on any day of the week) e.g. via email, phone, letter, social media or face-to-face, increasing the pressure on members' time. Increased availability across these channels has, in turn, increased expectations from constituents who often demand to receive an immediate response and swift resolution to their issues. Dealing with casework involves liaising with council departments and partners, external agencies, neighbourhood groups and forums as well as other residents.
220. Members hold a combination of regular surgeries in their wards where constituents attend and explain their issues, as well as 'street surgeries'. These involve members visiting constituents on particular streets on rotation, and making house calls on request. These surgeries are often scheduled at weekends and/or outside what might be regarded as regular office hours.
221. The varied and large geography of the city is mirrored at local ward level, with wards spanning many miles. Travelling to meet residents, to deal with casework and attend outside body meetings, are factors which impact on the amount of time that members have to carry out their duties.
222. Members have considerable commitments in their wards. They are involved in community groups, neighbourhood forums, residents' associations and parish/town councils. 30% of councillors (from Wards with Parish and Town councils) also serve as a Parish or Town Councillors. As well as attending these meetings and assisting with their aims, these groups also generate further casework and constituency-related issues which are routinely followed up. More recently considerable work has been undertaken (by Parish and non-Parished areas) on developing Neighbourhood Plans. This has been, and will continue to be, a considerable time commitment for our councillors.

223. Councillors' time commitments also involve organising community initiatives and events. For example councillors have arranged Christmas light switch-on events, Remembrance Sunday services, and Town festivals and work alongside the Police and West Yorkshire Trading Standards, for example to establish 'No Cold Calling' zones for residents in their wards establish Neighbourhood Watch schemes and raise awareness about PACT meetings with the local Neighbourhood Police Teams.

224. This locality role has increased in recent years as community committees have taken on more powers over local decision making. These increased responsibilities, and the expectations being placed on these committees, has increased and will continue to increase the time commitments on local councillors.

225. In a city of the size and diversity of Leeds, strong leadership at a local level is vital. During emergency incidents and periods of community tension, our local councillors' role as community leaders comes to the fore. All our councillors are listed as emergency contacts in the council's Peace and Emergency Planning Unit database. In this sense, councillors are always 'on call' and must be ready to respond to incidents at any time of the day or week. Strong local leadership was demonstrated by councillors for example after the events of 7/7 (which were linked to the city), and during EDL marches. There are no signs that the need for effective, accessible and timely local leadership will diminish in future years.

226. Councillors in Leeds are well-briefed on the council's policies and initiatives so that they are more effectively able to represent the views of their constituents. This involves attending many meetings and briefings with officers and the council's partners, where issues such as proposals for highway improvements, planning applications, service changes, and community events all typically involve consultation with local members in face-to-face meetings. Members often facilitate and help organise public meetings on subjects such as bus route changes, Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan proposals, and Neighbourhood Watch initiatives.

City Council

227. Our councillors also represent their communities on city-wide committees and lead city-wide initiatives. Formal council committees such as Full Council, Executive Board, Scrutiny Boards, Plans Panels and Licensing Committees amount to many hours of meeting time every week. When preparation for such meetings is included, the time commitment is even more significant. As part of their work programmes, scrutiny boards undertake a number of Inquiries each municipal year, which regularly involves members attending working group sessions in addition to formally scheduled meetings of the full boards.

Regional

228. A number of councillors represent the city at regional level. Bodies such as the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and its sub committees, West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority all have councillor representation. Again, the time commitment for these bodies includes extensive preparation time. With the emerging direction of travel on devolution, the importance of these regional bodies is likely to increase over time, and so Member involvement at this level is similarly likely to rise.

National/International

229. The role of the Leader and other senior members of council include representing Leeds in national and international settings. For example at a national level, this includes responsibilities to bodies like the Local Government Association and the Core Cities group. On an international level this has included taking part in trade delegations to attract inward investment and bolster trade links for the city, with the aim of growing the economy and creating jobs for residents in Leeds.

Appointments to Outside bodies

230. Members also play a pivotal role on a large number of external organisations. Depending on the nature of the organisation, these appointments are made by full Council, the Member Management Committee, or where appointments are to local community groups, by community committees.
231. Full Council appoints to the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (8 Members), the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel (3 Members), the West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee (4 Members) West Yorkshire Pension Fund (3 Members) and makes appointments and nominations to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (11 members).

232. Many of these functions (Fire, Police, transport and Joint Services etc.) are rooted in the 'county' based governance arrangements which existed pre April 1986. These roles are significant (extending the remit and responsibilities of councillors beyond the boundaries of the district) and time-consuming with regular meetings and briefings taking place for the members concerned in addition to their other Leeds City council responsibilities.
233. With the prospect of further devolved powers from government it is unlikely that the number of appointments or workload of members will reduce and indeed there is every possibility that Members workload will increase.
234. Member Management Committee also reviews annually, and appoints members to, 264 places in 107 external bodies – this range from appointments to bodies such as adoption panels to regional bodies such as the Yorkshire Power Stations Joint Committee and important statutory bodies such as the Children's Trust Board. The number of appointments has remained fairly static although as services are provided by different staff mutual organisations or 3rd sector partner organisations councillors are increasingly playing a part on the governing bodies of these organisations.
235. Community committees similarly annually review and make appointments to community and local partnerships; 79 member appointments have been made across the ten community committees to 52 external organisations. Given the evolving role and delegations to community committees there is likely to be an increase in the number of community and local partnership organisations wishing to appoint members.
236. In total the authority makes 372 formal appointments to 164 different organisations. This equates to an average of just under 4 external appointments per Member.
237. In addition to these appointments, councillors are also appointed to 91 school governing body places and have very active roles (including chairing responsibilities) on a very wide range of other organisations at a local level. A summary of all Members' appointed roles and responsibilities is presented at **Appendix 4 (i)**.

Member Questionnaire

238. To help inform our submission all elected members were given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire to obtain the views of members on their role and the number of hours they commit to their work as a councillor (see **Appendix 4 (ii)** for a questionnaire response summary). The return rate for the questionnaire was 81% with 81 of our 99 councillors completing a questionnaire. This high rate of engagement in itself demonstrates the commitment the councillors have to their role.

239. From these responses it has been possible for us to provide the Commission with a detailed insight into the workload of Leeds' councillors, particularly the breadth of duties undertaken and the substantial time commitments that they have, whether they are cabinet members, committee chairs or backbench councillors.
240. It has also provided an opportunity for us to convey to the Commission how councillors feel their role has developed, whether they believe they have enough time to carry out their duties and whether the role is greater than they expected when assuming office. The returns confirm much of the analysis contained in Part 3 of the wider submission namely that councillors on Leeds City Council have a significant number of Council committee and sub-committee appointment responsibilities as well as a wide range of external appointments, regional commitments and local community responsibilities.
241. The local element is crucial as these include a significant number of roles ranging from formal elected roles such as parish and town councils to other community leadership roles such as neighborhood planning and neighborhood forums as well as general community representation on local issues such as school places and appeals, highways, bus services, planning applications, refuse collection, street lighting and leisure provision. The case study below provides an insight into local leadership in relation to a planning/site allocations issue and the time commitment this entails.

Case Study 1 – Planning/Site Allocations local Leadership role

Local councillors in Calverley and Farsley have been involved in the fight against development at land known locally as Kirklees Knowl. This has involved formation and involvement in FRAG (Farsley Residents Action Group) a group organised to campaign against the proposals to deliver 300+ houses on a sensitive site in the Calverley and Farsley Ward.

The application process has been lengthy having been under consideration for over 3 years. The application has been to appeal, judicial review and determination by the Secretary of State. The application is still in play today and it is still uncertain what will happen with the development. The councillor role has been wide ranging in this whether it is liaising with and attending the FRAG meetings, keeping residents informed of developments or attending the various planning hearings to present a case against the proposals.

In terms of time commitments it has been significant both in attending hearings and meetings and in issuing correspondence and media on the application. This is local leadership and representation at its best, fighting for the best local outcome, representing the views of a large number of residents, organising volunteers to fight against the proposals and operating as the 'face' of the campaign at hearings and formal meetings.

242. Community obligations apply to all 99 members however; those with Cabinet/Executive Board/Shadow Executive Board and committee chair responsibilities have additional time commitments which are explored later in this section. The questionnaire reveals that additional responsibilities apply to 46 of 99 councillors; this includes Executive Board Members, Committee Chairs and Shadow, Support and Deputy Executive Board Members as well as the Deputy Leaders and Leader of council. In total therefore over half of responders have additional responsibilities.
243. While responsibilities do vary, and so therefore do time commitments, the findings from the questionnaire illustrate that all councillors commit a significant amount of time to their councillor duties. The questionnaire shows that the mean average monthly time commitment to the role is 176 hours.
244. 72% of respondents suggested that the amount of time they spend on councillor duties is more than they expected, 23% suggested it was as expected and 0 respondents thought it was less time than they had anticipated.
245. Included as **Appendix 4 (iii)** is an example of the casework from 2 of our councillors. The examples clearly show the variety of work undertaken by councillors and provide an understanding of the time it can take to resolve certain queries - further evidencing how much engagement councillors have with constituents and providing an insight into how the councillor operates as a community advocate.
246. In terms of narrative responses to the councillor questionnaire the following quote from one councillor illustrates how casework has changed over time:
- ‘Email has had an immense impact on my role as a councillor as it is a constant relentless tide of issues. Eleven years ago when I was first elected the majority of my casework was from letters and phone calls. Now I still get some letters and a lot of phone calls but the vast majority of contact with my constituents is via email. I do not use Twitter or Facebook but use email as a way to communicate and inform residents of all sorts of issues that may affect them e.g. road closures when we have road works or marathons, etc. Residents respond positively to these emails and more often than not with casework issues. Email allows residents to respond at a time convenient to them which are really important in our 24 hour economy. This is also an advantage for councillors. Replying to a resident via email is quicker, cheaper (no paper, envelopes, stamps or time to type letters etc.) and saves money. It is also easier to keep a trail of any correspondence which is easy to access. Trying to deal with this constant flow of emails can become difficult at times especially if one is in meetings all day and into the evening. There is a high expectation from residents in this 'instant' society for an immediate reply. Councillors need to manage their residents' expectations. Councillors need to ensure that they have a work/life balance to survive these pressures. Emails can become addictive and increasingly in many meetings it is noticeable that many attendees are spending a lot of time replying to their messages.’

247. As outlined elsewhere in this submission the population of Leeds is set to expand rapidly with the Council's own Core Strategy setting out the provision of an additional 70,000 new homes up to 2028, equating to a further 150,000 new residents in the city. Because of this casework will increase and the community advocate role will increase as communities will require additional infrastructure as they expand.
248. The community obligations element of our councillors' role cannot be underestimated. The questionnaire elicited a significant time commitment on activity that could be seen as 'community focused'. The questionnaire shows that on average 17.7 hours per month is committed to community obligations, a further 25.4 hours is spent dealing with constituent casework and inquiries and 20.5 hours on ad hoc approaches by constituents, surgeries and the innovative street surgeries. There is further time commitments evidenced in the questionnaire that we have termed as 'community focused'. These include community committees (6.6 hours per month) and for those councillors involved tenant and resident associations and housing advisory panels (6.8 hours per month). This amounts to 77 hours per month where, on average, Leeds councillors are primarily involved in work with local communities.
249. The geography of the city can be a challenge; councillors spend a significant amount of time travelling between meetings in their own wards and meetings at council buildings or in the city centre. The varied and large geography of the city is mirrored at local ward level. Travelling to meet residents and around wards are factors which impact on the amount of time that members have to carry out their duties. The questionnaire return supports this, with travelling time averaged out at 17.6 hours per month per councillor. In addition to this an initiative known as 'street surgeries' is evident across all the political groups on the council, this involves travelling around the ward to meet as many constituents as possible to proactively address local issues.

250. Street surgeries generate additional casework and ensure that constituents gain access to their local representatives and can resolve local problems as appropriate. This innovative method of engagement further highlights the community role that councillors in Leeds undertake.

Case Study 2 – The Street Surgery

‘Street surgeries’ involve visiting constituents on particular streets on rotation, and making house calls on request in an attempt to visit as many streets in their wards as possible. These surgeries are often scheduled at weekends and/or outside regular office hours.

Street surgeries were launched in 2012 and have been a big success. Ward councillors either jointly or individually select between 100 and 300 addresses to cover through a street surgery. Letters are then sent to those addresses setting out the councillors plans to visit the area and encouraging residents to raise any issues with them. This is done by leaving a copy of the letter in their window on the given day or through making contact with the councillor to arrange a set time.

The councillor(s) then visit the area and meet with residents face to face to identify and address issues through casework or by providing advice. The amount of casework generated does vary but typically between 10 and 20 individual cases are identified.

The following quote from the responses to question 14 gives a flavour of how street surgeries have been used in Leeds and also of wider responsibilities to residents:

‘Most of my daily work is with or for residents. I hold a street surgery every week and it inevitably leads to days of referring on to officers and following up. I visit residents with issues virtually every day. I have to visit the Civic Hall several times a week for meetings. Most evenings are spent following up emails of preparing for meetings.’

251. As noted above the number of hours a councillor spends on the role in a month is significant, but it is also worth noting the amount of unsociable hours involved in a councillor’s day. The street surgery can take place at a weekend for example. When time commitments are looked at in detail we argue that members’ are accessible as ‘a 24 hour councillor’.

252. For example a councillor with licensing responsibilities will attend site visits at night with officers to ensure licensed premises are operating within their prescribed limits. Councillors will also be involved in their casework at unsociable hours, perhaps monitoring social media or carrying out research into the early hours. Planning members go out on site visits at 9.30am and executive board members, committee chairs and ward councillors may have commitments or meetings from as early as 8.00am. Community meetings will invariably take place in the evening as do governing body meetings often stretching past 9.00am.

253. Our questionnaire gives an insight into the varied day and commitments that our councillors have; supporting our contention of the '24 hour Leeds councillor'. Below are some examples with more evidenced in our questionnaire response summary at Appendix 4 (ii):

'Email check in the morning -Many meetings with officers from 8am-8.30am - Updates with office staff on yesterday's casework, correspondence and letters -Update phone calls through the day while out of the office -Lunchtime check emails and make calls to constituents -Sometimes lunchtime meetings at Civic Hall with officers and residents -Evening check in at Civic Hall and do emails/calls/write letters -Parish council/resident groups meetings or public meetings -Email and correspondence at home -Reading council minutes/agendas/papers for meetings ahead inc. ONE Community Committee, Full Council, Scrutiny Committee or other outside bodies - Weekends inc. meeting constituents, council surgeries, emails, available for events (coffee mornings, Remembrance Service, etc.) and preparations for week ahead On an ad hoc basis asked to be involved with debates, journalist requests or other activities in capacity as councillor.'

'8am to 10am I read my briefs papers for the day; I attend meetings or catch up on my emails and respond. Every three weeks I have an all-day planning meeting Thursdays, site visits from 9am - 12pm, committee meeting 1.30pm - 5.30pm or 7pm. I have officers meetings and Chairs Brief prior to these meetings - about 4 hours per week. Once a month on Mondays I attend a Scrutiny Board meeting, about 4 hours. I usually have weekly briefings with officers of Adult Social Services, Children's Services, Housing Services and community organisations plus third sector or NHS and the Police. I am an active school governor of a local high school and an adult college, The Northern College, Barnsley. I am also chair of the Armley Forum which meets every month and also involves chair briefs. Weekly advice surgeries take up around two hours every week.'

254. The questionnaire results also shows that a significant amount of time is spent at the Civic Hall or at other council buildings attending meetings, either formal council committee meetings, commitments relating to external appointments or meetings with officers such as task and finish groups or briefings. On average this accounts for a total of 20.9 hours on formal council meetings per month, a further 18.3 hours at other council meetings and 7.7 hours per month on other external meetings resulting from a council appointment.
255. We have found that a significant amount of time dedicated to political group meetings and preparation for meetings, these account for 3.9 and 10.4 hours per month respectively.
256. In total this amounts to an average of 61.2 hours per month of councillor's time performing their city councillor role as decision makers, in a political capacity or as representatives of the Council and City.
257. Councillors also juggle a number of different appointments to committees and this is born out in the questionnaire response. Many have upwards of three Leeds City Council appointments in a variety of roles whether it is Executive Board or on a Scrutiny or Community Committee or Plans Panel. This is also supplemented by outside body appointments with some members having 7 or more such appointments and the largest number having either 3 or 4 external Council appointed positions both coming in at 19.5% of respondents. A further 11% have 5 external appointments. It is clear that the role requires elected members to 'wear a number of different hats' but also the findings of the questionnaire show that any reduction in councillor numbers would create problems in terms of filling these appointments effectively.
258. Leeds has 32 parish and town councils reflecting the background of townships in Leeds which were once independent district councils. The questionnaire illustrates the involvement city councillors have with these bodies either as members or as local partners working towards local goals. A number of councillors are members of more than one parish and town council. On average the amount of time committed by those involved in parish and town councils (27 respondents) on a monthly basis is 8.4 hours. In Wetherby for instance all three Wetherby ward councillors are on the local town council.
259. In recent times during the development of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations plans that interaction can be even more significant with further involvement in local Neighborhood Plans and the 11 Neighborhood Forums established in Leeds. Parish and town councils typically have monthly meetings. The following quotes highlight some of the feelings around parish and town Councils;
- 'Have 5 parish Councils- Key part of our role liaising, joint meetings on issues like planning, housing, sports facilities and transport.'*

‘Outer North East is unusual in having so many active and effective parish councils. Other areas of the city should be encouraged to form P.C.s; they are not ‘necessary’ for L.C.C councillors but they allow us to do our jobs with better information than if they did not exist. Time spent with parish councillors is never wasted.’

‘Parish Council Meetings, planning meetings and meeting with individual parish councillors are all vital to ensure smooth co-operation between all levels of local government.’

260. The Core Strategy has necessitated councillors working with communities to identify local priorities and represent those views to the City Council. The case study below provides more details.

Case Study 3 – Councillor’s and the Core Strategy

The Core Strategy has been emerging for a number of years having gone through an issues and options consultation, an inspection and further public consultation and finally approval in November 2014. This has been followed up by the Site Allocations Plan and consultation the public element of which concluded in November 2015.

The Councillors’ involvement in this has been significant and includes attendance at the Council operated consultation events, organisation of public meetings with communities where no formal consultation drop in event was held, drafting and hand delivery of letters to affected residents, regular meetings with council officers to discuss housing sites, attendance at Development Plans Panel, speaking at full Council and dealing with queries from concerned residents and local campaign groups.

In addition to these general responsibilities some councillors have been involved in neighbourhood plan development. For instance councillors in North East Leeds have actively encouraged communities to develop their own neighbourhood plans to ensure that they have influence over housing proposals in their area. This approach has led to involvement in these groups and a significant time commitment including attendance at regular meetings and regular discussion with interested constituents to develop the plans.

261. Social media is a relatively recent phenomenon and has undoubtedly changed how councillors communicate with their constituents. Social media has moved the role of councillor closer to a ‘24 hour role’. Our questionnaire responses support this view with councillors emphasizing that they deal with Tweets or Facebook posts during unsociable hours or over weekends.

262. Councillors also commented more generally on how social media has impacted on their lives with the following quotes being of interest from the questionnaires received:

‘Difficult to give a quantitative amount of time I use social media - it’s made the job 24 hour, where people can contact you via email/twitter/Facebook/text and expect an immediate response.’;

'I use Twitter and Facebook to both to engage with the wider community and to keep up to date with current events in politics and the news. It's important to be up to date so we can respond quickly as a Labour group to questions and news stories. Alongside a new level of interaction with the public, the time spent on social media is high but necessary to be on top of the issues that local people are concerned about.' and *'It has given more people a voice and opened a new gateway for constituents to contact their Councillor without leaving their home whilst also providing a platform for councillors to promote events and proposed changes within the ward. Good way to promote community consultation delivering the same message to all.'*

'I now receive many direct communications - messages, notifications, and comments on sites like "Street Life" or Community websites. Monitoring and partaking in such activities is becoming a much more prominent part of my work.'

263. These quotes give an understanding of the impact the social media has had on local councillors, as do the other comments contained at **Appendix 4 (ii)**. It is clear that the majority of councillors use social media (62 out of 82 responders), and most commit a significant amount of time ranging from 1 hour per month to higher numbers in excess of 30 hours per month. This level of time commitment and level of interest from constituents suggests that the councillor role is changing and that effective consultation and communication with residents could soon make a social media presence compulsory. The highest percentage of councillors (13%) used it 10 hours per month, indeed 41 of 82 responders used it for either 10 or more hours per month. It is clear that social media has increased both the profile and time commitment of elected members and has opened another avenue through which they can communicate with constituents and act on their behalf.

Executive and Shadow Members

264. Executive Members have a larger role and as a consequence larger time commitments than ward councillors and this is backed up in the questionnaire. Having specific accountability for a portfolio and representing the city in a variety of ways adds to the workload that they already have as ward councillors. The number of formal appointments is enhanced and the amount of contact they receive not just from constituents but from residents throughout the city clearly create a challenging role. The role is varied with ward work going hand in hand with high profile roles such as speaking at city wide events or meeting with Government Ministers.
265. On average the time commitment of executive or shadow executive board roles added 8.6 hours onto a councillor's time commitment, it should be noted that an executive board member would likely have more time commitment than those in a shadow role but in both positions there is additional responsibility.
266. Shadow executive board members have a greater time commitment participating in more officer briefings and dealing with more media issues than ward councillors. They too will deal with matters relating to portfolios and have more responsibility in full Council meetings and in the lead up to Executive Board meetings.

Conclusions

267. 87% of responders believed that there had been changes to the demands on their time since becoming a councillor (Question 11a), 12.2% believed there had been no change. In light of the section on social media (which is one clear area of change) the responses to this question again highlight how the councillor role is becoming 24 hour in nature. Some quotes from that section are as follows (with more documented at Appendix 4(ii):

'As a council we decided to devolve functions to communities in the city so they can be better delivered. Each member has been given new governance roles in their areas. As described previously I am the children's lead member, and this entails a lot more work as councillors effectively get involved in guiding local delivery. But also it is a key role to feed up to the executive member for children's services the issues and priorities for the council. Also with shrinking budgets and fewer services councillors are the front line for many constituents to approach with a growing list of issues.'

'I am in fifth year as a councillor and there have been some changes in this time. A key change has been a greater devolvement of responsibility, community engagement, budgets and service delivery to community committees has increased work loads of backbench councillors. Many councillors now have additional new responsibilities to lead on certain issues in the community area. I lead on training skills and welfare. In addition the impact of changes to the delivery of housing services, welfare changes and reductions in council and public services have led to more issues, casework and scrutiny from the public of council services.'

'Over the last 5 years, there has been a dramatic rise in the volume of casework, considerably more conflict with council departments over city-wide issues and more meetings with officers to address these.'

268. Members overwhelmingly state that workloads have increased in recent times and since the Boundary Commission last visited Leeds. New technologies, reductions in resources, changes in locality responsibilities and the higher profile of councillors more generally appear to be key drivers of this with those pressures showing no sign of subsiding.
269. Table 10 provides a summary of the hourly time commitment revealed by the questionnaire.

Table 10 Summary of Member Time Commitments

Category of time spent	Total hours spent by 81 respondents	Average hours (mean)
Attendance at any formal Council meetings (e.g. planning, licensing, Scrutiny Full Council etc.)	1691.0	20.9
Attendance at other council meetings (e.g. meetings with officers, task and finish groups, scrutiny working groups, political group meetings etc.)	1449.0	18.3
Time spent on Group business	502.0	6.8
Attendance at external meetings (where you have been appointed as a representative of the Council, rather than attending because of your ward councillor position)	597.5	7.7
Community obligations	1362.0	17.7
Community Committees/Position on community committee	524.0	6.6
Involvement with Tenant & Resident Associations/ Housing Advisory Panels	513.0	6.8
Engaging with constituents, surgeries, street surgeries, ad-hoc approaches by constituents (in person/phone/email etc.)	1643.0	20.5
Dealing with constituent enquiries, casework etc.	2070.0	25.9
Preparation for meetings (including pre-meeting briefings)	824.0	10.4
Attending seminars, conferences and training	290.5	4.0
Travel related to councillor business	1341.0	17.6
Media/press work	282.5	4.2
Discussion at Group Meetings	287.5	3.9

Category of time spent	Total hours spent by 81 respondents	Average hours (mean)
Site Visits	358.0	5.0
Executive Board Portfolio Work (either in administration or opposition 'shadowing' role)	448.0	8.6
Other	129.0	3.9
Total of all time spent	14312.0	176.7

270. The questionnaire responses clearly show the variety of the roles undertaken by councillors in Leeds and the work they do for constituents and on behalf of the city.

271. The time commitment is very significant averaging nearly 177 hours per month. This shows councillors commit substantial amounts of time to their role and to maintaining a strong and healthy democracy in the city (with councillors doing as much as they can for their communities who rightly expect high quality democratic representation).

272. As our submission shows, the challenge in Leeds over the next 5 years will be significant. With reducing budgets it is likely that casework will increase and instances of councillors operating on the 'frontline' will also likely increase. The population of the city is also expected to increase significantly with proposals to build 70,000 new homes equating an approximately 150,000 new residents in the city by 2028.

273. Therefore any reduction in the number of councillors in the city could create a democratic deficit and create a situation where the councillor role is more than a full-time job. Any reduction would see the average monthly time commitment per councillor increase and could leave areas of the city under represented both in terms of casework and access to their local representative.

274. In light of the evidence provided in the member's questionnaire response, it is the Council's view that the number of elected representatives on Leeds City Council should remain at 99.

Support to Members

275. Members receive support in their role from Democratic Services. Group Office support provided to the largest three political groups and combined support to our two smaller groups is a key feature of this.

276. Within these arrangements dedicated support is provided to the Leader of Council and Executive councillors, with case work support also provided to backbench members. Over recent years the number of full time equivalent staff employed within Democratic Services has reduced by 33%.

Members' Allowances

277. Elected Members receive a basic allowance of £14,928; this includes all telephone, office and travelling and subsistence expenses in relation to their work within the Leeds district. In addition a further allowance is payable to some councillors who hold special responsibilities in relation to the functions of the authority. Only one special responsibility allowance from the council is payable per councillors and where a councillor is eligible to receive more than one allowance the higher figure is paid.
278. The council has applied financial discipline to the members' allowances scheme. Since 2010 there have been restrictions on increases in members' allowances. During the last five municipal years members have agreed to take a 3% reduction on all special responsibility allowances over the value of £7k per annum.
279. The Independent Remuneration Panel who oversee and make recommendations to the Council on the allowance scheme commented in their most recent report in 2014 that;

“4. Leeds is one of the largest local authorities in the country. As an urban authority it is second only to Birmingham in population. In the last decade its population is estimated to have increased from 715,600 to 798,800, an increase of 11.6% from the 2001 figure. Its budget for 2014-15 is £565.8m. Between the 2010/11 and 2013/14 budgets, funding from government reduced by £94m. The cuts in grant are planned to extend for a further three years to 2017-18 and will be similar to those seen from 2010. The reduction in overall funding for local government in 2015-16 is forecast to be 14.1%.”

“5. Meanwhile the responsibilities placed on the City councillors continue to increase. The Localism Act 2011 devolved services to local authorities, though; it was complained, without the resources to discharge them. From April 2013 the City council assumed the major new responsibility for health and wellbeing. Financial austerity brings substantial and further challenges to councillors as the City council is required to make substantial cuts in its spending. Changes to the welfare system give residual discretionary powers to local authorities. Councillors are faced with unenviable choices. Demand for local authority services continues to grow. In particular, there is exponential growth in the number of old people and a corresponding increase in demand for social care. The strain on and competition for resources increase the demands made on elected members. New means of communication also increase the pressures on members: constituents expect an instant response.”

Member Development and Training

280. Good political leadership is essential for delivering high quality local government services. The role of the councillors is one of the most complex in politics or the world of work, and never ceases to evolve and develop. Both new and experienced councillors require a high level of support in order to develop the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their roles effectively.
281. As a council, we are fully committed to developing our councillors in order to achieve the Council's strategic outcomes and improvement priorities. We demonstrated this by successfully meeting the stringent standards of the IDeA Charter for Member Development. Learning and development is led by Members, for Members. This approach ensures that councillors are placed at the heart of every process connected with their own learning and development.
282. The Member training strategy provides a variety of training methods, recognising that Members have numerous demands on their time and require flexible learning opportunities. The emphasis on personal development planning means that individual needs and preferences will also be addressed.
283. The framework is based on four learning and development themes:
- An extended **induction programme** for new Members of Council and existing Members requiring a refresher. Although concentrated after the elections, core elements of the induction programme will be repeated throughout the year.
 - A set of **core skills** which cover the basic areas of competency for all elected Members.
 - A series of **role specific modules**, linked to the competencies necessary to fulfil the various roles on the Council which Members may be expected to undertake.
 - **Personal development** through the provision of a comprehensive range of training and development activities linked to a Member's individual needs. These needs are identified by the individual through an annual directed discussion.
284. Some elements of member training is designated as essential, for example safeguarding for all members and licensing and planning training for those members appointed to the Council's regulatory committees.
285. By way of example, in order to sit on a plans panel, members are required to receive compulsory training, as per the requirements in Article 8 of the Council's Constitution. New members to plans panels appointed since the Annual General Meeting of the Council have recently received training prior to attending panel meetings.
286. In previous years members have had the opportunity to shadow planning officers in the planning office to see how an application was handled end to end. Feedback from members was that this was a valuable insight and shadowing will be offered again as part of the training programme in 2015-16.

PART 5 WIDER PERSPECTIVES – VIEWS FROM THIRD PARTIES

287. An important aspect for us in developing this submission has been to seek the views from third parties. We have done this by speaking to and seeking views from a wide range of organisations and individuals including the Chamber of Commerce, the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, Faith Leaders, Health Service Representatives, Leeds Community Development Foundation, Voluntary Action Leeds, the Chair of the Leeds Magistrates Bench, our appointed Independent Person for Standards, local neighbourhood networks, West Yorkshire Police, third sector partnerships, and the Leeds older persons forum.

288. The views from those we spoke to and heard from was that the role of local ward members is vital and any reduction would be to the detriment of localities. We set out below examples of the responses that we received.

289. The appointed **Independent Person** wrote;

“The Leeds Metropolitan boundaries include both inner city and rural communities, both of which have completely differing needs. The population living within those boundaries is likewise diverse and creates equally different challenges to a Local Authority. To serve a diverse population of almost 800,000 people, I don’t feel that 99 Councillors is an unreasonable figure. In my view, Councillors know their communities and provide a highly cost effective contribution for the benefit of those communities and they are available to their communities over long hours, often in evenings and weekends when many other services are closed. They engage with their communities by attending local events and getting to know the leaders in these communities. I feel that this is particularly important for those communities with large numbers of BME residents where it is advantageous to be able to reach the heart of the community. Councillors are not civil servants and they are able to represent the interests of local people, some of whom would otherwise struggle in their dealings with the statutory services.

Yes they should have a financial allowance for the time and effort which they spend working for their communities but if this was equated to a wage then the hours served would fall well short of the minimum wage. I wouldn’t want to see the role of Councillors as a full time salaried position as this would then exclude people from serving their communities in this way, unless they were prepared to give up their own permanent employment and accept a small allowance for their work!! Councillors are directly responsible to those who elect them and the final sanction if they are not valued – is the ballot box.

Councillors are involved with their local communities and are often able to encourage and support the delivery of services through Third Sector Organisations. Acting as a conduit between these Organisations and the Council can be invaluable and, again, value for money is demonstrated. Working through the new community committees with their responsibilities for delegated budgets, Councillors are able to directly engage their communities far better than a salaried individual working from a central location. Living and working in these communities, Councillors can also provide a certain intelligence to the Local Authority and are often able to diffuse issues before they become major incidents. All of these examples in my opinion demonstrate the effectiveness of having a three Councillor per ward structure within Leeds and justify the continuation of this structure.

With the new responsibilities for licensing and public health added to the Local Authority portfolio the role of the Councillor becomes even more important. Any reductions in the public health agenda will have an impact on the NHS and it is far more beneficial for Councillors to work 'upstream' in promoting prevention with the local communities rather than wait until the challenges grow and become a serious 'downstream' problem – maybe not so much to the Local Authority but certainly to the NHS. With the future agenda emphasising the link between Health and Social Care I would suggest that now is not the time to be reducing engagement with local communities by reducing the spread of Councillors across the Metropolitan City.

I believe that any attempt to dilute the contribution of Councillors in the Metropolitan City of Leeds will increase the financial pressures on the Council to deliver its statutory duties, particularly in the need to employ more staff to address the workload which is undertaken locally by the 99 Councillors in this City. It will also strike at the heart of democracy by taking away the voices of local people."

290. The **Chairman of Shadwell Parish Council** wrote on behalf of the Parish Council and commented as follows;

"Shadwell Parish Council is of the opinion that any reduction in the number of Ward Councillors serving our Ward of Harewood would be detrimental to the smooth running of the area and would place a unacceptable burden on Ward Councillors in fulfilling their roles to the community.

Given the roles and responsibilities of all City Councillors, it would appear that the number of 99 is in no way excessive.

In our own Ward, we cannot envisage how fewer Councillors could possibly undertake the amount of work that our present 3 members do. Harewood is, geographically, an enormous ward, but we feel that all parishes within it have the same characteristics and aspirations and accordingly, Shadwell is very much part of this demographic. We would not support any boundary change that would be detrimental to this. Over the years, parishes within Harewood have worked together and established a good working partnership.

Any reduction in Ward members would necessarily curtail the input we receive from our Ward Councillors due to time restraints. Alternatively, if they tried to maintain the same workload, this would be unsustainable.

We read with interest that other large cities manage with fewer representatives, but without knowing all the details of their roles and responsibilities, it is impossible to make any direct comparisons.

In summary, Shadwell Parish Council supports the existing situation of 33 wards with 3 members per ward. The size and characteristic of Harewood and Wetherby is such that any reduction in the number of elected members representing these 2 Wards would be unsustainable, with future candidates being unable to act as Councillor while having a full time job. This is detrimental to the democracy of the city.

Shadwell Parish Council hope that you will take the above comments into consideration.”

291. The **Chief Executive Officer of Barca-Leeds** set out his charity's views as follows;

“Barca-Leeds is a local charity delivering a wide range of services across the city of Leeds. We are recognised as one of the larger community anchor organisation employing over 150 people with a further 50 or more volunteer. We are strongly rooted in the communities with whom we work and our work covers children families and adults. Our services focus upon physical and mental health, addiction, homelessness, community engagement, celebration and fun.

Within Leeds the role of Councillors has in the past decade changed beyond recognition. Councillors across the city are active advocates for their constituents, exercising voices that are unlikely to be heard. We often witness councillors using case studies identified through their case work in various meetings. Councillors are deeply engaged in the civic life of our communities often beyond the scope of the city council services.

Within the communities of West Leeds we have direct experience of Councillors engaging, participating and facilitating community groups. This has included the local community managed Swimming Baths, numerous community centres, fundraising and building of a local war memorial. In addition most of our councillors serve as school governor for at least one school and act as trustees for numerous charities.

Leeds is a very big city and many of our communities have a strong sense of identity cultural and diversity. Councillors have a critical role in the monitoring of community tensions, unmet need, aspiration and frustration. On occasion councillors have been the “turn to people” for victims of hate crime, domestic violence and antisocial behaviour.

We would fear that a reduction of the number of councillors would have a detrimental impact upon the city capacity to engage with some of its most marginalised isolated members of the community.

We recognise and value councillor new and developing responsibilities including Licensing and Health and Wellbeing. We also recognise their vital function in the facilitation of discussion across different sectors, e.g. Police CCG, VCFS. This cross sector working has been particularly significant role especially in relation to the financial constraints and cut back of services. Within the scope of our organisations work, members have chaired two 'Our Place' initiatives, supported the transfer of council assets, directly participated within community first panels chaired public meeting and act as a critical friend.

Leeds has adopted a new community committees structure with enhanced responsibilities for delegated budgets, locally managed services and greater oversight of joined up local service delivery. This has encouraged a consistent approach to their role across the city we would notice a significant impact if their number were to be reduced.

Barca-Leeds supports the notion of maintaining the number of 3 councillors across the existing 33 wards. Leeds continues to grow as a city and has a very diverse and complex population make up. Members contribute a great deal to civic life and undertake a wide range of functions within their constituency boundaries. We firmly believe reducing their numbers would be counterproductive and potentially create greater inefficiencies."

292. The **Chair of the Board of Leeds City College** also provided us with valuable feedback as follows;

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute on Leeds City College's reflections on the role of elected members towards your proposed submission to the Boundary Review Commission.

As you will be aware, Further Education left local authority control in 1993 and there has been a variable degree of collaboration reported nationally between the Further Education sector and local authorities over the intervening years. Happily, this variability has not been seen in Leeds where my predecessor chairs and their executive teams have enjoyed constructive, challenging and supportive discussions with elected members from Leeds City Council. More recently, this engagement has stemmed from the merger of a number of colleges in the city in 2009 and one in which elected members were consulted and indeed played an important part in shaping the future of our merged college.

Our engagement with the Council takes place at a strategic and operational level in the delivery of training and education to the many adult learners in the city and the provision of education and learning through a range of qualifications to young people. As you may already know we have co-developed a number of joint ventures in learning provision together and influence each other positively in the interests of the learners of Leeds.

We also have significant discussions with local elected members on the diversity of our community provision, the estates strategy, and the impact of our services on the population of Leeds. For example, we are strongly engaged with the Council's three Employment and Skills Boards serving the needs of the three major areas of the city.

Leeds is a large and complex city where a one size fits all approach to working locally militates against progress to improving outcomes and the opportunity to discuss bespoke approaches and developments to provision that best serves the needs of the many different communities in Leeds is key.

This approach was brought into sharp relief recently when reductions in the national further education adult skills budget meant significant reductions in the college's local budget for provision in Leeds. The college worked closely with local councillors in those areas where provision was under threat to articulate the concerns of the local community ameliorate losses and provide pragmatic solutions to delivery that also represented value for money for the college.

Further exploration of continued delivery would have been challenging without this level of local democratic leadership being available. Leeds City College is currently participating in an area wide review of further education provision in West Yorkshire. Our participation is heavily informed by the views of the city's elected members and the quantity and quality of provision that should be available in Leeds. We are working closely with Leeds City Council and councillors nominated to the area review process to ensure that the needs of the learners are met.

We want to help Leeds City Council in the city's endeavour to be the Best City in the UK. The Council's vision to be a compassionate city that has a strong economy and that addresses its inequalities is at the heart of the college's drive for its provision and providing life changing opportunities to its learners. It's clear that to deliver on the ambitions of a large and complex city requires a considerable level of personal involvement on the part of local councillors. As non-salaried individuals, councillors devote a lot of their personal time to the democratic leadership of their local communities.

In addition to their local ward role, elected members take on a number of other positions. For example, they voluntarily serve as champions for employment and skills and other matters, such as adult social care, health, and the environment, on local community committees and oversee delegated budgets and services for local place shaping and delivery. In addition, some elected members may have portfolio responsibilities such as chairing their local committees or holding lead or executive responsibilities. They also work with or serve on parish and town councils or as trustees of local third sector organisations.

Given the scale and pace of change in our city and our local communities and reductions in public sector funding, the college would actively advocate for the need for three elected members per ward in the city. The level of casework in areas of Leeds is significant and in addition to the wider responsibilities that councillors in Leeds hold, as I outlined earlier, the workload demands the level of support that three elected members currently provide to their wards.

Additionally, many elected members also live in the wards that they serve and this develops a greater understanding of how those communities work, how they interrelate to others, and how they grip issues harder and earlier. The range and depth of elected member involvement in the endeavours of the city is quite staggering and they are passionate about and dedicated to meeting the needs of their constituents.

As a consequence of our engagement with elected members across the city in the work that we do, it's the view of Leeds City College that Leeds City Council should retain its 99 elected members."

293. The **Chief Superintendent of West Yorkshire Police** provided his perspective to us;

West Yorkshire Police work with Leeds City Councillors at a number of different levels. It is important to say at the outset that this engagement is close, extensive, and productive. The engagement takes place at citywide strategic partnerships, local area based community safety partnerships, neighbourhood level tasking, and the community safety sub group arrangements of the local community committees.

Our work at ward level is incredibly important to the model of policing that we have adopted in West Yorkshire. Sharing intelligence and tasking work across community partnerships is central to maintaining a grip of the issues in neighbourhoods and to preventing problems from escalating. The extensive knowledge of councillors of their areas and more importantly the people in the neighbourhoods and communities of their wards provides an excellent backdrop to timely and tailored interventions to tackle criminality and respond to community concerns on a range of civil and criminal issues.

The co-terminosity of the council's administrative and delivery boundaries with the three police sub divisions and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups in Leeds provides for greater coherence in governance, planning, commissioning, and delivery. It's important to maintain these arrangements as it promotes joint working across services, provides opportunity for the leaders of these services and local councillors to know and trust each other, for them to develop strong professional relationships around issues of common interest and indeed leads to greater efficacy and impact in the wards of the city.

We are mindful that councillors do not receive a salary for their contributions. It is all the more remarkable when placed in the context of a large and growing city with complex issues and big wards with dynamic populations. In our experience of working at ward level, the complexity of these issues means that the load must be shared over a number of ward members and we value the fact that we have three ward members for each ward. This number of democratic representatives means that we are always able to engage effectively with councillors on a day to day basis. Given reductions in public sector funding and its impact on numbers of council officers and many other services, we would certainly support a case for 99 councillors in Leeds and continue to enjoy the fulsome engagement that we already have with these members.

294. **Sir Rodney Brooke**, himself an experienced local government officer, with a detailed understanding of the issues facing councillors, was keen to provide his views to us as follows;

“I offer my own perspective on the situation as;

- *a former Chief Executive of the West Yorkshire County Council (whose functions were devolved to the City Council and other local authorities in the area on its abolition in 1986);*
- *a former Chief Executive of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the ‘trade’ body for the English metropolitan authorities;*
- *the **Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel** for the City Council, which has led me to consider appropriate remuneration for the workloads undertaken by City councillors; and*
- *my present role as Chairman of the Board of the West Yorkshire Playhouse, one of the ‘big twelve’ producing theatres in the country, located in and supported by Leeds City Council.*

The Boundary Commission will be well aware that municipal responsibility for a great city like Leeds demands considerable time from the city councillors. There are a multitude of roles required from them; these have increased as the role of local authorities has moved from simply running local services to the role of ‘place-shaping’ as Sir Michael Lyons described it.

A city like Leeds is not homogenous. It includes a number of very different communities with very different outlooks and needs. Councillors must relate to those communities in the constituencies they represent. Their role as community representatives has increased greatly over the last two decades, as a more demanding and articulate public expects their local councillor to champion the needs of their locality. As a result the City Council has decentralised much decision-taking, where councillors are expected to take the lead. It is important to be able to muster enough councillors to represent these very different communities.

The abolition of the County Council thirty years ago caused the creation of a number of joint bodies, which required the participation of Leeds councillors. Indeed, as the principal city of the region and sub-region, Leeds is naturally expected to take the lead, propelling its councillors into a series of responsibilities beyond those of the City Council. The new combined authority and the devolution of powers to 'the Northern Powerhouse' again makes demands on city councillors beyond the boundaries of the City itself.

As the centre of the sub-region and cultural centre of the region as a whole, Leeds councillors must undertake a series of representative roles with local organisations. Within my own experience, I know how the City Councillors work with the West Yorkshire Playhouse in a range of initiatives well beyond our main artistic remit – working with young people, people with learning disabilities, older people, refugees and in areas of deprivation. We are fortunate to have four City councillors directly involved with our work. They make an invaluable contribution in tying us into the Council's overall social and cultural strategy – and its bid to become European City of Culture.

In considering the appropriate remuneration for City councillors, I have always been conscious of the constantly increasing demands made upon them. Leeds Councillors are fully committed through their ever increasing workload. That workload has increased not only for leading members, who have to speak for the conurbation as a whole as well as the City; but also for councillors with responsibility to their increasingly demanding and very varied constituents.

I believe that a reduction in the number of councillors would be a retrograde step, which would prejudice not only the running of the Council and its leadership role in the sub-region, but also the ability of councillors to represent very different communities."

295. We are very grateful to all those who took the time to speak to us and to provide such compelling written submissions to help inform the preparation of our council size submission. The strength of view, particularly from such diverse sources, adds to and supports our conclusions and arguments to retain our existing number of councillors.

PART 6 LEEDS – A GROWING CITY AND A CATALYST FOR THE NORTHERN POWERHOUSE - LOOKING TOWARDS 2030

296. In this part of our submission we look forward. This must of course take account of the financial pressures that we are facing, but we also explore the opportunities presented by devolution, set out our ambitions for the city and demonstrate how members are, and will become even more, central to overcoming the challenges that we face as a city.

Financial Pressures

297. Since 2010, councils have dealt with a 40% real terms reduction to their core government grant. In adult social care alone, funding reductions and demographic pressures have meant dealing with a £5 billion funding gap. Even in this challenging context, local government has continued to deliver. Public polling nationally has shown that roughly 80% of those surveyed are satisfied with local services and that more than 70% of respondents trust councils more than central government to make decisions about services provided in the local area – a trend that has been sustained during the last five years.

298. Between the 2010/11 and 2015/16 budgets, the Council's core funding from Government will have reduced by around £180m and in addition the Council has faced significant demand-led cost pressures. This means that the Council will have to deliver reductions in expenditure and increases in income totalling some £330m by March 2016. To date, the Council has responded successfully to the challenge and has marginally underspent in every year since 2010.

299. The allocation of the main ring-fenced Public Health grant funding for 2015/16 was frozen at 2014/15 levels at £40.5m. In addition, the responsibility for the 0-5 year's services which include health visiting services and Family Nurse Partnership will transfer to the Council from October 2015 with further funding of £5m.

300. However, on the 4th June 2015, Government announced a national £200m in-year reduction in the 2015/16 for the Public Health grant. At the end of July Government issued a 4-week consultation with a closing date of 28th August with a preferred option, based on ease of implementation, of a flat-rate cut across all local authorities, regardless of local needs and circumstances, for Leeds, this would amount to a funding cut of £2.8m. This would equate to a 7% cut of the current public health budget prior to the planned transfer in October 2015 of the commissioning responsibilities for health visiting services.

301. Whilst the public health grant for 2015/16 is already committed, work has been undertaken to identify potential savings and understand the resulting impact. Managing reductions of this scale will inevitably see reductions in general public health services which are provided through the council, NHS bodies and the 3rd sector and will impact on services such as health protection, tobacco control, healthy lifestyles, drug & alcohol services, health-checks and specific targeted support for vulnerable children and adults.
302. On the 5th October 2015, the Chancellor set out major plans to devolve new powers from Whitehall to local areas to promote growth and prosperity. By the end of the current Parliament, local government will be able to retain 100% of local taxes – including all of the £26 billion of revenue from business rates. Leeds is the lead authority for the West Yorkshire Business Rates Joint Committee (a committee of West Yorkshire authority councillors). It is anticipated that arrangements will face an increase in workload as a result of these changes.
303. On the 25th November 2015, the Chancellor announced the outcome of his Comprehensive Spending Assessment. In his statement the Chancellor announced that;
- Reductions to local authority funding will continue with the likely reductions for Leeds being 29%.
 - Local authorities (like Leeds City Council) with adult social care responsibilities will be able levy a social care council tax precept of up to 2.0% each year. This being a significant recognition of local authority's role in leading the integration of health and social care services.
 - Public Health funding reductions are to average 3.9% a year in real-terms over the next 5 years
 - Local councils are to be able to recycle 100% of asset sales
 - A consultation on local government finance will take place and examine the main resources currently available to councils, including council tax and business rates. As part of these reforms, the main local government grant (Revenue Support Grant) will be phased out and additional responsibilities devolved to local authorities. For example, the transfer of responsibility for funding the administration of Housing Benefit for people of pensionable age.
304. The council's response to these challenges has and continues to be to seize the opportunity to shape our own future. Building on the idea of civic enterprise, born out of the Commission for Local Government which was conceived and led by the council, the approach to and taking control of our own destiny is captured in our vision for Leeds to be the best city in the UK.

305. We have three key themes which drive our work to become the best city: for Leeds to have a strong economy and to be a compassionate city and for the council to become more efficient and enterprising. Our aim is that communities will be less reliant on the state and more resilient.

306. This shift has considerable implications for the way in which we make decisions, develop strategies and undertake financial and workforce planning. It requires a sound understanding of people's needs and their demands (now and in the future) and a greater level of engagement with the citizens of Leeds. The structure of governance that we have described, and members' fundamental and pivotal role in that framework is vital to the strategic and community leadership for that journey.

Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill

307. A Leeds City Region-based devolution bid covering the West Yorkshire districts of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield plus the North Yorkshire districts of Craven, Harrogate, Selby and the City of York was submitted on 4th September 2015.

308. West Yorkshire's Council leaders submitted 27 devolution 'asks' focusing on transport, housing, business support, public service reform skills and new fiscal powers to generate investment for major infrastructure projects designed transform the City Region's economy.

309. The leaders are convinced that there is a compelling case for devolving to the Leeds City Region. The Leeds City Region has the UK's largest city region economy outside London, with an economic output of £57.7bn. Over 92% of its 2.8m population work within its area and over 50,000 people commute between the areas of Craven, Harrogate, Selby and York and West Yorkshire.

310. The public and private sector in the Leeds City Region already have a long history of working together and last year's £1.6 billion Growth Deal secured through LEP is already creating significant growth and jobs. The leaders also see the City Region as a strong voice in their proposal for a 'Council for the North' which would see formal links established with Sheffield, Manchester, the North East, Merseyside, the East Riding and Humberside.

311. At the time of writing this submission the outcome of the bid has not been announced. What though is clear is that in light of whatever agreement is reached there will be enhanced roles for Leeds councillors, whether that is as members with decision making responsibilities, as scrutiny members with oversight of mayoral decision making or possibly as part of a wider Assembly of members.

Our Best City Ambitions

312. In 2011 the Vision for Leeds was published with the aspiration that, by 2030, Leeds would be the 'best city in the UK'. Four years on, that Vision has not changed; the aspiration remains for Leeds to be the 'best city' to live in, work in, do business in and visit.
313. To contribute to Leeds being 'the best city', the council also aspires to be the 'best council'. In September 2015, Executive Board agreed a Best Council Plan that set out the authority's six objectives for 2015/16, as well as the longer term role of local government: civic enterprise; good growth; 21st century infrastructure; social contract and devolution. Attached at **Appendix 5** is our Best Council Plan, this sets out our short term goals and our longer term plans to 2020.
314. In the rest of this part of our submission we provide some further context to our ambitions.

Employment and the Economy

315. Forecasts suggest that Leeds is expected to account for 28% of the growth (net) additional jobs in the region during the next decade. Employment will increase to reach 2006 levels by 2016 adding 39500 jobs by 2021. The leading employment sectors as a whole (financial and business services) are predicted to account of 43% of the growth, and public administration (including education and health) 25%. These are forecasted to remain the leading sectors in Leeds over the next 10 years.
316. There are clear and strong signs of renaissance in the city centre and fringe as a result of housing and non-housing developments such as the recent First Direct Arena, imminent Victoria Gate development (with the city's first John Lewis store) and the due to open southern entrance to the railway station. The latter is part of a number of recent benefits to the "South Bank" of the city centre which include the proposed HS2 rail station and recent decision by Burberry clothing group to move their manufacturing operations to Leeds. This renaissance will help ensure that the potential for housing the City Centre and fringe (chiefly focussed on the City and Hunslet ward) will materialise in the short term.
317. Below is selection of what others say about our city and the importance of the economy in the district and the wider city region.

‘Grant Thornton – “Turning up the volume: The Business Location Index” Place Analytics insight, October 2015

Leeds was the highest scoring northern city for overall quality of business location, a ranking that takes into account transport, infrastructure, skills, premises and economic performance factors.’

‘Figures from professional services firm EY found Leeds was the fourth most successful city outside of London in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2014, “Leeds led the charge” having not made the top 10 in 2013.

‘Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) 2013

Leeds is home to the largest financial and business service sector outside London.’ The city secured a total of 14 FDI projects last year, which accounted for 29 per cent of inward investment into the region and helped place Yorkshire as the fifth most successful region after London, Scotland, the South East and the West Midlands.

Leeds is outperforming Manchester, Birmingham and Edinburgh as a base for growing businesses, according to new data on business ‘scale-ups’ – companies which have achieved three years of 20% growth in revenues or staff. Figures contained in the Scale Up Report On UK Economic Growth, published in November, have now been broken down by parliamentary constituency and show that central Leeds has 81 fast growing ‘scale up’ firms, behind only London and Cambridge.’

‘According to leading think-tank Centre for Cities, based on the most recent figures available (2013), Leeds is experiencing the fastest year on year private sector jobs growth of any city in England. Cities Outlook Report 2015.’

‘The Leeds manufacturing sector has a workforce of 28,800, the third largest concentration of manufacturing jobs by local authority area in the UK. Source: BRES 2013.’

‘JLL - Urban Europe: Understanding how UK cities compete: Leeds

“Leeds economy is more dynamic than any of these immediately comparable locations. Indeed, it is forecast to be the fourth fastest growing among a sample of [European] medium-sized cities”

'Core Cities – "Recently rated as one of the top places to visit in the UK, and third best city for retail, Leeds has a diverse economy.

The largest employment sectors in the city are healthcare, manufacturing, education and retail. In 2013 Leeds' GVA was £20.4bn, putting the city in the top five UK city economies for wealth creation. The Leeds City Region generates economic output of £55 billion. With particular sector strengths in financial services, manufacturing, publishing and digital services, the city region economy is forecast to continue to grow strongly over the next ten years."

'Economic Secretary to the Treasury Harriett Baldwin – Sept 2015

"Leeds is an important financial services centre in its own right; it is the UK's second largest banking hub after London. It supports 40,000 jobs and is central to the local and wider UK economy."

Recent research has found the value of tourism in Leeds to be estimated at £1.25 billion, supporting 25,000 jobs (according to the Cambridge Econometric Impact Model)

The Local Development Framework

318. Central Government is giving unprecedented emphasis to the need for local planning authorities (LPAs) to have in place an up to date and sound Development Plan ('local plan') for their administrative area.
319. Such plans need to be based upon a comprehensive evidence base which reflects and is informed by local issues and aspirations. It is crucial therefore that local members, with detailed knowledge of localities and related planning matters are able to shape such processes. Consequently, local ward representation is integral to the process, especially in a district as geographically complex and diverse as Leeds. This level of sensitivity allows for more evidence and knowledge to be available as a basis to make more informed decisions. Leeds is at heart and a key driver of Leeds City Region. As a local planning authority Leeds has a significant responsibility to put an appropriate planning framework in place, not only to provide direction and certainty for investment decisions but also to lead by example.
320. The Plan has been prepared within the context of national planning guidance, the Community Strategy, Best Council Plan, Duty to Cooperate and has been a highly resource intensive process. This has entailed close working with Ward and Development Plan Panel members and from the Council's Executive Board.

321. As part of the planning framework we successfully adopted (at full Council) our Core Strategy in November 2014. This is a 16 year spatial plan for the district, which sets the overall priorities for regeneration, environmental protection and the scale and distribution of housing and economic growth. This document is underpinned by a substantial evidence base (which includes the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Strategic Housing Market Assessment).
322. This is a major achievement for Leeds given the scale and complexity of the district and also given the issues encountered by other neighbouring authorities (where it has been necessary for plans to be withdrawn at the point of submission for independent examination) – and, as the Inspector commented “...given Leeds’ position in the region, geography, history, specific needs and the ambitions of the city council, comparisons with other major cities is of little relevance.
323. This significant achievement provides a strong and compelling example of the close and effective working, between officers and members. A key feature of which is the local knowledge of Ward members and their considerable insight and experience of their patch. A Site Allocations Plan and the Aire Valley Area Action Plan are being prepared in parallel & following on from the Core Strategy.
324. These plans will be used as a basis to allocate land for development. This too is major undertaking for the city council, which will necessitate close involvement with local ward and Development Plan Panel members, to help identify potential sites and options (and related issues relating to infrastructure pressures and school places). Map 4 overleaf provides an overview of the Leeds district and provides a high level visual summary of our Core Strategy ambitions over the coming years. We ask though that the Commission familiarises itself with the full content (and scale) of our Core Strategy ([link here](#)) so that the arguments we have made concerning member workloads can be fully appreciated.

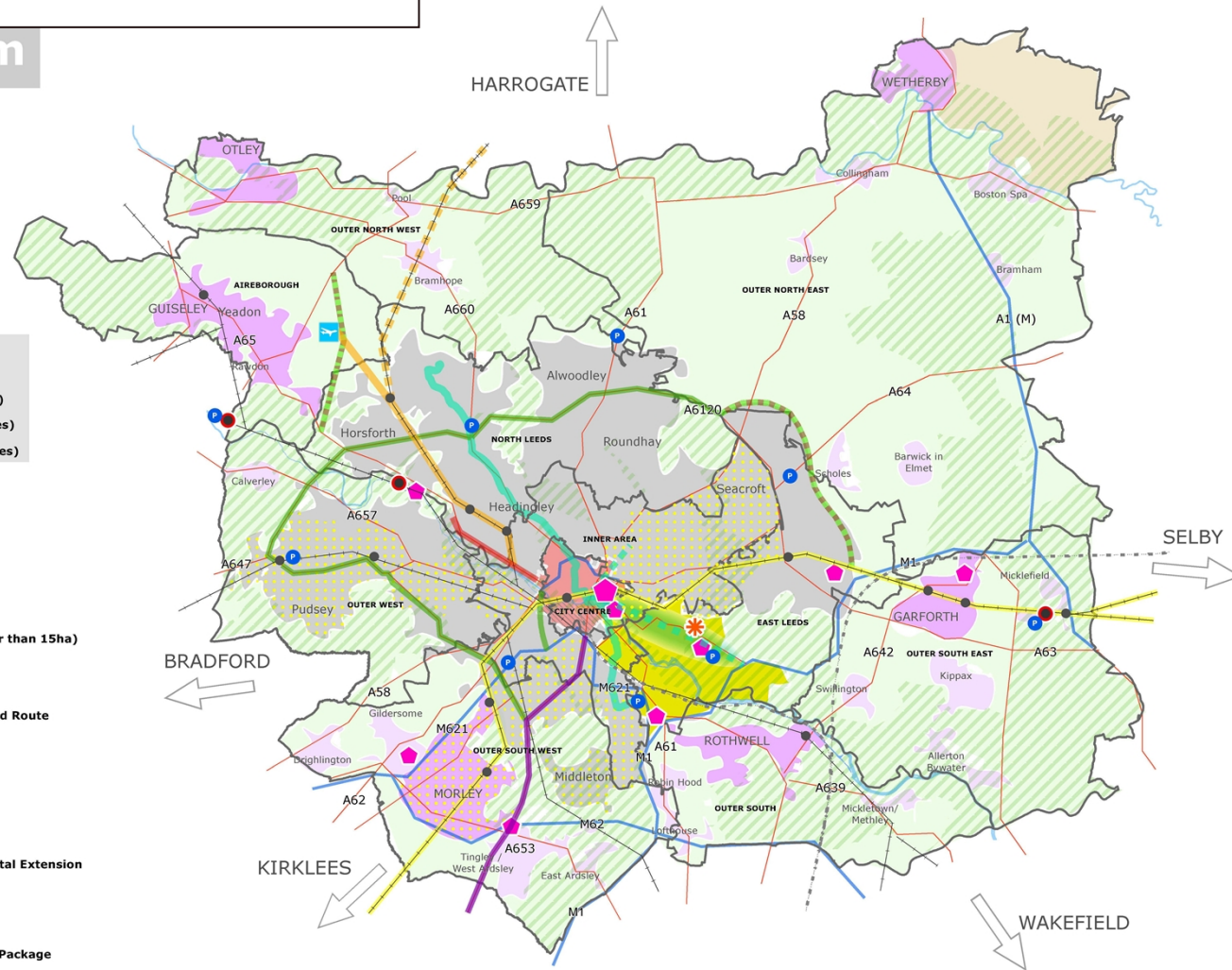
Map 4

Key Diagram

Key

Settlement Hierarchy (i)

- City Centre (10,200 New Homes)
- Main Urban Area (33,300 New Homes)
- Major Settlements (14,300 New Homes)
- Smaller Settlements (7,500 New Homes)
- Housing Market Characteristic Area
- Green Belt
- Rural Land (Non-Green Belt)
- Strategic Green Infrastructure (SGI)
- Regeneration Priority Areas
- Aire Valley AAP / Eco Settlement / Strategic Waste Facilities
- Enterprise Zone
- Strategic Locations for Job Growth (1,000+ FTE jobs + area of land larger than 15ha)
- Leeds City centre - Southern Area
- Railways
- Railways - Proposed Electrification
- High Speed Rail (HSR) Initial Preferred Route
- Railway Stations
- Proposed Railway Stations
- P Proposed Park & Ride
- A65 Quality Bus Initiative
- Proposed Tram Train - Phase 1
- Proposed Tram Train - Phase 2
- Proposed NGT Route
- Proposed NGT Route - St James Hospital Extension
- Aire Valley Transport Strategy
- Airport
- A Roads
- Motorways
- Leeds - Dewsbury Transport Corridor Package
- Highway Improvements
- Proposed Highway (East Leeds Orbital Route & Airport Link Road)
- Waterways



(i) Settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy may be subject to Green Belt review.
 Spatial Policy 7 sets out the approach to the overall scale and distribution of housing land.
 This is based upon the identification of Housing Market Characteristic Areas and percentage targets for each area.
 The identification of specific sites will be determined through the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD.

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Housing Growth

325. Leeds has a housing growth agenda driven by the ONS 2008-projections for 70,000 (gross) new homes to 2028. This will be delivered as a “step-up” with the majority of housing growth occurring between 2017 and 2028. Whilst recent performance has been slow as the city’s housing market emerges from recession there are strong signs of recovery which, if past trends are replicated, can occur very rapidly in the city centre.
326. Many sites in the city centre with permission have been “stuck” during the recession but interest in a private rented sector model is bringing these forward to construction. Our growth estimates for the next 6 years are based on the Core Strategy target as this is the target which a Core Strategy Inspector has recently endorsed as achievable and deliverable and the supply exists to meet it. The majority of this will be from sites with planning permission. The lion’s share of new housing will be delivered after the next 6 years when critical pieces of infrastructure e.g. the East Leeds Orbital Road are in place.
327. The South Bank of the city centre, at 136 hectares, represents one of the largest city centre regeneration initiatives in Europe. The potential for regeneration is substantial. Early estimates are that, once developed, the South Bank will accommodate c35,000 jobs and accommodate some 4,000 new homes, 1,000 an emerging pipeline of over 1,000 residential dwellings and the development of an educational cluster that will see up to 10,000 students using new learning facilities within the South Bank.
328. Councillors play a key leadership role in stimulating, supporting and delivering regeneration in parts of the city that have not benefitted from economic success and related investment to the same extent as its more prosperous areas. East Leeds is one of the city’s priority areas for this work. The delivery of housing is critical to supporting the city’s growth, realising the Vision for Leeds and delivering the Best Council Plan. New homes, and the investment that comes with them, will play a central role in meeting the needs of current and future residents of Leeds; enabling families and children to be healthy and to succeed; meeting older people’s needs and preference to live at home independently; and in helping communities realise ambitions for the regeneration of their neighbourhoods.
329. As an example of local ward member involvement - over the last two years ward members have worked closely with residents, and other stakeholders to create a Neighbourhood Framework for the Killingbeck and Seacroft area that will set out a local vision for regeneration, identify and help promote development opportunities to developers, guide development schemes, inform the determination of planning applications and identify wider improvements to ensure that new development is sustainable and provides benefits to the wider community.

330. The framework, identifies opportunities for housing development on both council and third party land, improvements to open space and green connectivity, improvements to public transport including walking and cycling to help local people access training and job opportunities in the local area, and sets out the likely need for new schools and additional local facilities to meet growing demand as a result of population growth and new housing development. Ward councillors and members appointed to the East Leeds Regeneration Board will have a long term involvement in the delivery of this scheme, as will similarly, councillors in the Aire Valley and those serving on the Aire Valley Regeneration Board.
331. From a city wide perspective, the Site Allocations Plan has now been through public consultation and some 10,000 representations have been received reflecting the size and complexity of our proposals and the interest there is in planning within the city. The Council is also well progressed with the production of its Site Allocations and Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plans which identify deliverable sites to accommodate growth. These documents release a further 24,500 homes including on green belt which is attractive to the market.
332. The Site Allocations Plan makes provision for significant infrastructure to accompany new housing including new schools. An increasing school age population means that Leeds is facing significant pressure to ensure that there are sufficient local school places for all children that live in the City.
333. All councillors will continue to have a significant role in this process which places considerable demands on their time. In time housing schemes will be brought forward and will add further to the workload of the Plans Panels.
334. Maintaining sufficient capacity of panel members is also vitally important as the city deals with substantial numbers of housing schemes arising from our ambitious plans to grow the city.

Local Authority Housing

335. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) became self-financing in April 2012, which gave local authorities greater freedoms to plan services and investment in council housing in the long term. However, it also transferred the risk of managing the HRA business away from central government to the local authority. It is therefore more critical than ever that Leeds has a robust HRA Business Plan which outlines how strategic priorities for council housing investment will be delivered in the long term.

336. The council has embraced the self-financing regime, making strategic decisions to use HRA resources to fund a council new build programme and support regeneration projects. However, HRA resources are limited and these strategic decisions must be made whilst also considering existing pressures on the HRA.
337. Over the next 30 years, Leeds has a £3.2 billion investment need in its council stock. It is essential that investment is targeted at housing stock which is sustainable in the long term using an asset management approach. It is a priority for the HRA to develop an asset management strategy which provides clear direction for investment and disinvestment in the stock profile.
338. While overall demand for council housing is high, there are some estates and stock types where there are low demand and management issues. Over this timespan, local councillors will have a key role in contributing the future management and investment decisions to make the housing stock more sustainable and desirable in the long term, as will scrutiny members in providing an oversight of that programme, and Housing Advisory Board members in developing policy in this area.

Health

339. We have set out earlier in this submission the challenges facing the city to address health inequalities. Despite the reduction in the ring-fenced public health funds provided by central government, our statutory functions for public health remain and our clear objective is that the citizens of Leeds enjoy a happy, healthy, active life.
340. The World Health Organisation (Europe) stated in 2012 that “local councils can have their most important long term effect on health through the decisions they take on spatial planning”. In his statutory Annual Report (2015), attached at **Appendix 6**, the Director of Public Health for Leeds highlights the hugely important public health benefits that can accrue from good urban design and planning – for health and wellbeing for all ages and as an important contribution to addressing health inequalities. He also stressed the need for local communities to have their voice heard and for citizens to have their influence felt in the planning process in order to help realise those public health benefits.
341. Our councillors are crucial to this – whether involved at a strategic level through our Health and Wellbeing Board, at a local level through community committees and neighbourhood forums, individually as local representatives making representations as part of the site allocation process or collectively at a plans panel meeting determining applications.

Adult Social Care

342. Demographic changes including an ageing society, increased life expectancy of people with long term conditions and the increasing number of family carers are factors that need to be taken into account when planning for the future. The financial and 'system' challenge in this respect in Leeds is substantial.
343. Adult social care services are responding to this and the legislative changes arising from the introduction of the Care Act in April 2015. The Care Act (2014) represents a radical redesign of adult social care services. The Act consolidates all existing legislation for adult social care into one statute.
344. The Act places an individual's wellbeing at the heart of social care with the aim of preventing, reducing or delaying the need for care and support and also introduces new duties on councils responsible for adult social care. These include: the promotion of wellbeing, compliance with a national assessment and eligibility criteria, recognising and responding to individual carers' rights, focusing resources on prevention, integrating services with the NHS, offering a comprehensive advice and information service, widening access to personal budgets (to include carers), ensuring safeguarding procedures are in place and overseeing and shaping the care market.
345. The introduction of the Care Act (2014) will require changes to the way in which our services are currently delivered with executive members, scrutiny members, community champions and local ward members playing a lead role in the development and oversight of the service.
346. The next phase of our Better Lives strategy is to focus on rolling out a model of community-led social work which will devolve greater responsibility and flexibility to our integrated neighbourhood teams.

Transport

HS2

347. Leeds station is already the busiest station in the North of England and is a major national piece of transport infrastructure, serving as a hub for the city, Leeds City Region, Yorkshire and the rest of the country. HS2 has a large role to play in delivering our Best Council objectives of sustainable and inclusive economic growth as well as ensuring that we have an economic and transport hub that not only serves the city region and the North but is a key part of the national infrastructure.

348. Leeds City Region is inherently polycentric with a population dispersed across a number of different centres. To ensure all of the city region benefits fully from HS2, members have outlined clearly that people should be able to interchange quickly and easily between HS2 and other rail services, as well as other transport links. Currently, some services across Leeds City Region are constrained by capacity at Leeds station. Better transport makes jobs more accessible and allows businesses to increase trade, share ideas and reduce costs. To properly maximise HS2's benefits, seamless interchange is needed for the three million people who live in Leeds City Region
349. The council's local knowledge and leadership role in regeneration and economic growth has been combined with London and Continental Railway's knowledge, national HS2 regeneration remit and expertise in rail led regeneration and develop mechanisms for formal partnership working to help to drive forward regeneration associated with HS2 in Leeds.
350. The council also wants to make sure that the new connections high speed rail can bring and the station itself are major contributions towards the Best Council objective for sustainable and inclusive economic growth by supporting jobs and employment, as well as our best city ambition for Leeds to have a city centre that is widely recognised as an exemplar 21st century city that is inclusive, friendly and cutting edge by residents, visitors, businesses and place-makers alike.
351. On 1st December 2015, Sir David Higgins set out his proposed solution for HS2 arriving into Leeds. This proposes a preferred solution of an integrated T shaped configuration station in the Leeds South Bank that will be the Yorkshire hub for local, regional and national services and also be a catalyst for regeneration in our expanding city centre.

Leeds-Bradford International Airport

352. Leeds-Bradford International Airport is wholly located in the Leeds district, occupying an elevated position within the Otley and Yeadon Ward. The airport is a major part of the strategic infrastructure for the City Region
353. The economic competitiveness of core cities such as Leeds is increasingly dependent on the ability of businesses to access international markets and there is strong evidence that good international connectivity by air supports the economy of the city. Growth of Leeds Bradford International Airport is supporting this by providing a more extensive airline route network that will enhance the ability of Leeds City Region to access global markets and attract inward investment and assist with business development, employment and tourism.

354. Leeds Bradford International Airport is already a huge asset for Leeds and Leeds City Region. It is one of the UK's fastest growing airports, supporting over 2,600 jobs and contributing in excess of £100m to the city region economy. The airport is currently used by 3.3m passengers per year. The Department for Transport (DfT) has forecast that there is the potential to increase this to 7.1m by 2030 and to above 9 million passengers per year by 2050.
355. At international, national and regional levels, airports play an important role as an element of key transport infrastructure. However air travel raises a number of concerns regarding its impact on climate change through the generation of emissions and also the local impact on the environment (including local transport trips). Such issues need to be balanced. The council and local councillors have a crucial role in supporting Leeds Bradford International Airport to engage closely with the local community and to work in a positive partnership.
356. The site allocations plan will allocate employment land across the city over the next plan period up until 2028. It is proposed to release employment land surrounding the airport as part of this process. This will strengthen the Airport's role as an economic hub, increase transport demand, enhancing the business case for surface access proposals, help meet needs for new employment sites in North West Leeds, and enhance the ability of Leeds to attract inward investment.
357. These infrastructure schemes are of not only local and regional significance but are also of national importance – requiring substantial political leadership and oversight at both a strategic and a locality level.

School Places

358. The council retains a statutory responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient school places in the city. Foundation schools, academies (including free schools) and voluntary aided schools all have increased powers to make changes to their own capacities. This means that we must work in partnership with schools and with sponsors of schools to meet our legal responsibility on school.
359. The site allocations plan makes provision for significant infrastructure to accompany new housing including new schools. An increasing school age population means that Leeds is facing significant pressure to ensure that there are sufficient local school places for all children that live in the city. The city is facing a rising demand for school places due to a rise in the birth rate from a low of 7,500 in 2000/1 to an average of just over 10,000 for the last 5 years.

360. As a result the authority has been engaged in an extensive programme of expansion of provision, with the creation of over 9,000 primary school places over the past four years, through expansions of existing schools, creation of new schools, and restructuring of existing schools. There is a rolling programme of further places coming forward for consultation.
361. In total approximately 80 form entry of additional primary provision is needed as a result of the housing plans, equivalent to 40 new two form entry primary schools. In total approximately 61 forms of entry of additional secondary provision are needed as a result of the housing plans, equivalent to 7-8 new secondary schools of around 8 forms of entry each. Pressure on places will also generate a number of large scale projects to expand secondary and specialist provision.
362. A cross-party steering group, chaired by the Executive Member for Children's Services, continues to direct the programme with local ward members from across the council taking a proactive role.

Community Hubs

363. From April 2015, 32 community libraries and 7 Job Shops came under the leadership and management at a locality level. Work is ongoing with Housing Leeds regarding the housing management offices and mobile library service with a view to starting to implement similar changes.
364. Our approach for our Community Hub network is to base it on 3 'types' of provision: Community Hub 'Extra', Community Hub 'Local' and Community Hub 'Mobile'. The following provides a brief outline for each:
365. Community Hub 'Extra'. These sites will be the largest Community Hubs within the network and will strive to deliver the full range of council and partners' services. The three pathfinder sites are typical examples of this type of provision. It is envisaged that there will be approximately 7 of these sites across the city.
366. Community Hub 'Local'. These sites will be the smaller, more local Community Hubs. In terms of numbers, this category will form the bulk of community hubs across the city as we redesign One Stop Centres, Libraries and housing management offices to become Community Hubs. Although they will not provide the full range of council and partner services that the Community Hub 'Extra' sites do, they will provide those services that are most required by local people. Also given they will not provide the full range of services, they will be linked to their nearest Community Hub 'Extra' site so that all customers can get the full range of service available irrespective of where they first access services.

367. Community Hub 'Mobile'. The mobile provision will be based on 'pop-up' provision in local areas where physical Community Hubs are not present but there is currently un-met demand for access to council and partner services. Again although mobile provision will provide the most limited access of the three types of provision, the team delivering the mobile service will be based out of one or more of the Community Hub buildings (Extra and/or Local) and will therefore be able to maintain relationships with customers; building trust and relationships with them so that in time people will access services at one or more of the physical Hub sites.
368. The aim is to have provision in each ward based on one or more of the Community Hubs outlined above and for local ward members and community committees to direct and influence the final proposals on the Community Hub network. The success of this vision relies on engagement by local councillors with local school clusters, neighbourhood networks and CCGs to ensure there is full integration at a local level and all local governance structures are working together to meet the full range of needs within local communities.

Community and Other Services

369. In addition to these large infrastructure developments, employment growth and the delivery of our housing ambition, local communities have a need for good access to health, education, training and community facilities and a range of high quality green space provision, which in turn will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the community. The projected increase in households across the district will lead to an increase in demand for these facilities.
370. The use and development of council owned land and building assets is essential in some areas in order to promote growth and achieve the most sustainable forms of development. Members of council are the custodians of these assets and have a hugely significant role at a local and strategic level to ensure these assets are used wisely.
371. Similarly the council has powers of compulsory purchase to buy land and properties where that is essential, for example where it is essential for site assembly in town or district centres or the delivery of local regeneration priority programme areas.
372. The Executive Board, local councillors and community committees, working in partnership with local communities, stakeholders, landowners, developers and infrastructure providers are central to ensuring that facilities are created to meet these needs in the most timely and effective way possible.

PART 7 CONCLUSIONS

373. Leeds is a regional capital and the main economic driver for Yorkshire and the Humber. Leeds' economic recovery is entering a considerable period of growth. Leeds has a strong track record in facilitating the successful delivery of major and complex regeneration programmes through managing, enabling and co-ordinating work with partners and investors both in the public and private sectors.
374. Leeds is the second largest metropolitan local authority in the country by population and 2nd largest by geographical area. We manage a hugely significant overall budget. Against this backdrop our statutory responsibilities have not diminished – indeed they have and will continue to grow.
375. Despite the reduction in our financial resources we remain ambitious. The council is undoubtedly a major and significant entity in the city. In budget terms our capital budget for the period 2015-19 amounts to £1.132billion and our gross revenue budget (including schools) amounts to over £2billion per annum (greater than the combined revenue budgets of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Leeds University and Leeds Beckett University).
376. Through and since the recession, the council has played a leading role in facilitating the award winning development such as the Leeds Arena and the subsequent regeneration of the 'Northern Quarter', retail developments at Victoria Gate and Trinity Leeds, whilst the Leeds City Enterprise Zone in the Aire Valley has gained huge momentum in the last eighteen months. Combined, these schemes are helping to further transform the regional economy and are successes on a national and international level.
377. The council, significantly through our 99 councillors, has a depth of understanding of people's needs and of the city's potential. Our level of engagement with the citizens of Leeds at a locality level is central to this. Our structure of governance, and councillors' fundamental role in that framework, are pivotal to providing strategic and community leadership. All of our councillors are on the front line and take seriously their community leadership roles –particularly those expressed by the Commission for the Future of Local Government and recognised by the House of Commons Communities and Local Government report 'Councillors on the Front Line'.
378. The strength and resilience of our governance arrangement enables the functions of the council to benefit from high quality political leadership and oversight but not at the expense of locally based constituency responsibilities.
379. Our understanding from Boundary Commission staff has been that, since the recent reduction in councillor numbers in Birmingham, Leeds, statistically, now falls outside the upper and lower parameters used by the Commission to provide a guide to Council Size.

380. We welcome the Boundary Commission's own guidance which states that the Commission will "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". In this submission we have considered whether there is a prima facie case for change in the number of councillors elected to the authority and found no compelling or strength of argument for either an increase or decrease. Whilst we do not consider an increase necessary we do acknowledge that the workload demands of local councillors are increasing at a substantial rate.

381. We have concluded that our existing 33 wards, with 3 members per ward, continue to accurately reflect the individual characteristics of our district. A council size of 99 members ensures an equitable distribution of councillors across the district, allowing for essential representation of all our communities and an optimum and proportionate division of responsibilities between executive and non-executive councillors that promotes effective and convenient local government and enables us to take decisions, undertake the statutory responsibilities of the council, and provide effective community leadership and representation.