

Guidance on councillor numbers

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

NALC published guidance in 1988 on the suggested number of parish councillors to be allocated depending on the size of the population being represented.¹ NALC recommended a council of no more than the legal minimum of five members is inconveniently small and it considers the practical minimum should be seven. It considered local council business does not usually require a large body of councillors, and business convenience makes it appropriate to suggest the practical maximum should be 25. The point that “the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors” is reiterated by the government.²

Within those minimum and maximum limits, the following allocations were recommended by NALC:

Electors	Councillors	Electors	Councillors
Up to 900	7	10,400	17
1,400	8	11,900	18
2,000	9	13,500	19
2,700	10	15,200	20
3,500	11	17,000	21
4,400	12	18,900	22
5,400	13	20,900	23
6,500	14	23,000	24
7,700	15	over 23,000	25
9,000	16		

However, in rural authorities with sparsity of population, even this table may not be appropriate.

¹ Paragraphs 154 and 155, [DCLG and LGBCE Guidance on community governance reviews](#); NALC, Circular 1126 / 1988

² Paragraph 157, [DCLG and LGBCE Guidance on community governance reviews](#)

Aston Business School

The Aston Business School also conducted research that was published in 1992 showing the then levels of representation.³ It is likely these levels have not greatly changed in the intervening years.

Electors	Councillors
< 500	5-8
501-2,500	6-12
2,501-10,000	9-16
10,001-20,000	13-27
> 20,000	13-31

³ Tricker, M. et.al., *Roles and Activities of Parish and Town Councils in England* (London, HMSO, 1993)