

CITY HALL,
SUNDERLAND.
10 February 2023.

TO THE MEMBERS OF SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of Sunderland City Council to be held in the **Council Chamber, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, SR1 3AA** on **WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2023 at 6.00 p.m.**, or at the conclusion of the **Council (Budget) meeting** which commences at **4.00 p.m.**, whichever is the **later**, at which it is proposed to consider and transact the following business:-

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 1. | To read the Notice convening the meeting. | - |
| 2. | Apologies. | - |
| 3. | Receipt of Declarations of Interest (if any). | - |
| 4. | Review of Council Size and Ward Boundaries – report of the Chief Executive (copy attached). | 1 |
| 5. | Appointments - report of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance (copy attached). | 37 |

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P. Melia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a small dot over the "i" in "Melia".

PATRICK MELIA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

The meeting will be livestreamed for the public to view on the Council's YouTube channel at https://youtube.com/live/9oB2TCGu_NU?feature=share

Report

Review of Council Size and Ward Boundaries**Report of the Chief Executive****1.0 Purpose of the Report**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) contacted the Council in July 2022 to indicate that it intended to carry out a review of the overall composition of the Council and Ward arrangements.

At its meeting in November 2022, Council considered the process to be adopted in relation to completion of the Council's submission in relation to Council size and agreed to establish a politically balanced Boundary Review Working Group of Members (the Working Group), to assist with formulation of the submission document. The Council's submission must be delivered to the Commission by 28th February 2023 and it was originally proposed that a draft document would be presented to the ordinary meeting of Council scheduled for 25th January 2023, being the last scheduled meeting prior to the submission deadline. The process of obtaining and collating relevant information has however proved to be resource intensive and it became apparent that additional time was required in order to prepare a properly considered and reasoned document. At the Council Meeting in January 2023 it was agreed that an extraordinary meeting be convened on 22 February 2023 with regard to the completion of the Council's submission in relation to Council Size. Further reports to Council in relation to Ward arrangements will be submitted in due course at the appropriate time.

2.0 Background

2.1 The background to the review, process to be followed and review timetable were set out in the report to the Cabinet meeting on 10th November 2022, this report was also circulated to all Members for the Council Meeting on 25 January 2023.

2.2 Current Progress

The Working Group that Council agreed to establish at its November meeting is made up of seven members (4 Labour, 2 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat) and has met on 3 occasions (25 November 2022, 16 December 2022 and 3 February 2023).

The draft Council Size proposal document has been developed and is attached to this report at Appendix 1. Members are requested to consider the draft and approve it for submission to the Commission by 28 February 2023.

Further reports to Council will be submitted as the Commission's review progresses beyond the considerations of the proposals relating to the Council Size and it begins the process of reviewing the Ward arrangements.

3.0 Financial Implications

There are no additional direct financial implications that arise from this report. The development of the Council Size proposal document will be supported through existing officer time.

4.0 Reasons for Decision

The review is a periodic review undertaken by the Commission. By developing and putting in place appropriate arrangements within the Council, it will be able to participate in the review process and respond accordingly.

5.0 Alternative Options

There are no real alternative options available. The Council has to participate in the review to provide certain information such as property forecasts and data. The Council is invited by the Commission to submit Council Size proposals during the preliminary stage of the review. If the Council did not make a submission, it would mean that the Commission would make its final recommendations without the benefit of the Council's views.

6.0 Background Papers

The Commission's briefing papers to the Council on the process of the Review.

7.0 Recommendations

To recommend to Council that it:

- i) notes the work that has been undertaken by the Boundary Review Working Group on developing the draft Council Size proposal document;
- ii) approves the Council Size proposal document for submission to the Commission by 28 February 2023; and
- iii) authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Group Leaders, to make any minor typographical or stylistic amendments to the proposal document prior to submission.

Sunderland City Council

Council Size Submission: Template

Sunderland City Council

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How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. **Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.**

The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

'Good' submissions, i.e. those that are considered to be most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

About You

The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, a resident group, or an individual.

This submission has been prepared by a cross party working group of Councillors supported by Officers. This is Sunderland City Council's official submission and was approved by the Council at its meeting on 22 February 2023.

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy**

context. The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
- To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?
- Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
- What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

The Council's internal governance arrangements were reviewed as part of the implementation of the Local Government Act 2000 and the adoption of the Leader and Cabinet model of governance. Prior to the implementation of this governance model the Council operated under the committee system of governance. It is difficult to quantify the impact that the change in governance arrangement had on the Council's effectiveness and it is important to note that at the time of the enactment of the 2000 Act, the policy drive of the Government was to move away from the committee system of governance. The Council chose the Leader and Cabinet model of governance over the other models of governance that were available (e.g. Elected Mayor and Cabinet model or Council Manager model) as this in the Council's view was the best fit for Sunderland. The Council operated the Leader with Cabinet model from 2002, with the whole executive being appointed by the Council and subsequently, in November 2009, in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Council resolved to adopt the new style "Strong Leader" and Cabinet model, to be operative from 10 May 2010. Under this model of governance, the Leader once appointed has the responsibility to appoint the Council's Cabinet.

In terms of the transference of strategic or service functions impacting on service delivery, whilst the Council has a number of partners it has one main strategic partner – Together for Children. Together for Children (a company limited by guarantee) was established on 1 April 2017, and delivers children's services on behalf of the Council. It provides a range of services for children and their families including:

- Early Help - providing targeted support to children, young people and families at the earliest point of identified need.
- Social Care - providing support to children in need of help and protection.
- Education - supporting schools in relation to curriculum development and school leadership as well as providing support and challenge for school improvement and effectiveness.
- Local Offer for SEND - providing support services for children and young people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.

Its services are rated "Outstanding" by Ofsted. Together for Children was established in response to an "Inadequate" Ofsted rating of the Council's children's services function. That inspection raised issues in relation to capacity. The work of Together for Children to move

the Council's children's services offer from "Inadequate" to "Outstanding" has shown that this strategic partnership has had a very positive impact on the delivery of those services on the Council's behalf. The Council manages its relationship with Together for Children via the service contract that is in place and through the effective use of its scrutiny function to hold the service to account.

As detailed in the information below, the Council considers that it has effective decision making and scrutiny processes that require the active involvement of members to make it work.

In terms of national policy changes, other than the current cost of living issues that the country is trying to manage, devolution will impact upon the Council. The details of the proposed devolution deal have only recently been announced and they include the creation of a new North East Mayoral Combined Authority. These proposals are significant and will involve the Council and some of its Members in supporting the operation of the new Authority.

The Council's proposal in respect of size is that it remains at 75 members. The Council considers that this will maintain the Council's efficiency and effectiveness in relation to dealing with the challenges and requirements that are placed on the authority to deliver its statutory functions and the opportunities, for example, that will arise from the development of the proposed North East Mayoral Combined Authority, which has only recently been announced.

Local Authority Profile

Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics and community characteristics. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all of the following:

- Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
- Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
- Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
- Community characteristics – is there presence of "hidden" or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload and community engagement?

SUNDERLAND CITY

Geography

Sunderland is in Tyne and Wear and is bounded by Gateshead and South Tyneside to the north, County Durham to the south and west and the North Sea to the east.

The Local Authority area for Sunderland covers a total of 53 square miles.

Sunderland displays a polycentric development pattern – with its main centres in Sunderland itself, the former New Town of Washington which was established in the 1970s and the communities of Houghton-le-Spring and Hetton-le-Hole which are in the former Durham Coalfield.

The River Wear runs East/West through the city. There are six road bridges, one rail/Metro bridge and one footbridge crossing the river within the Local Authority area.

The A19 trunk road runs North/South through the Local Authority area, separating the main urban centre of Sunderland from Washington, and Houghton-le-Spring and Hetton-le-Hole.

Population and Demography

The current population of Sunderland from Census 2021 is 274,200 and is forecast to rise to 287,000 by 2038. The population of Sunderland at the 1991, 2001 and 2011 Censuses was:

Census	Population
1991	289,040
2001	280,807
2011	275,506

Population	
Total Population	274,200
Total Population 0 to 5	13,800
Total Population 5 to 16	37,689
Total Working Age Population (16 to 64)	173,600
Total Population 65+	56,200
Total Population 80+	14,400
Number of Households	122,200

Sunderland's population is ageing and the number of people aged 65 or over will increase by over 35% by 2033.

Sunderland Usual Resident Population by 5 Year Age Bands				
Band	Census 2011	Census 2021	Change	% Change
0 – 4	15,378	13,800	-1,578	-10.26%
5 – 9	14,133	15,200	1,067	7.55%
10 – 14	15,355	16,000	645	4.20%
15 – 19	17,787	14,600	-3,187	-17.92%
20 – 24	19,709	15,100	-4,609	-23.39%
25 – 29	16,945	17,000	55	0.32%
30 – 34	15,877	18,000	2,123	13.37%
35 – 39	17,040	17,100	60	0.35%
40 – 44	19,937	15,700	-4,237	-21.25%

45 – 49	20,944	16,800	-4,144	-19.79%
50 – 54	20,020	19,500	-520	-2.60%
55 – 59	17,577	20,000	2,423	13.79%
60 – 64	18,011	18,900	889	4.94%
65 – 69	13,198	16,100	2,902	21.99%
70 – 74	11,833	15,500	3,667	30.99%
75 – 79	9,759	10,200	441	4.52%
80 & over	12,003	14,400	2,397	19.97%
All ages	275,506	274,200		

Sunderland's population is becoming more diverse. The population of the city identifying themselves as an ethnicity other than "White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British" has increased from 14,297 (5.19%) to 19,518 (7.12%).

Ethnicity	2021		2011		Change 2011 - 2021	
	Total	% of Total Popn	Total	% of Total Popn	No	%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	2,908	1.06%	2,075	0.75%	833	40.14%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	937	0.34%	1,536	0.56%	-599	-39.00%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	1,906	0.70%	1,736	0.63%	170	9.79%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	685	0.25%	669	0.24%	16	2.39%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	1,768	0.64%	1,320	0.48%	448	33.94%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	2,304	0.84%	1,062	0.39%	1242	116.95%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	133	0.05%	111	0.04%	22	19.82%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	228	0.08%	100	0.04%	128	128.00%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	897	0.33%	608	0.22%	289	47.53%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	536	0.20%	239	0.09%	297	124.27%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	438	0.16%	539	0.20%	-101	-18.74%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	634	0.23%	392	0.14%	242	61.73%
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	254,655	92.88%	261,209	94.81%	-6554	-2.51%
White: Irish	511	0.19%	608	0.22%	-97	-15.95%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	228	0.08%	70	0.03%	158	225.71%
White: Roma	110	0.04%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
White: Other White	3,871	1.41%	2,395	0.87%	1476	61.63%
Other ethnic group: Arab	417	0.15%	292	0.11%	125	42.81%
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	1,007	0.37%	545	0.20%	462	84.77%
Total	274,173	100%	275,506	100%	-1443	

Key Statistics	Sunderland	NE	GB
Economic Activity	73.4%	74.4%	78.5%
Unemployment (Claimant Count Rate)	4.7%	4.2%	3.7%
NVQ Level 4 Qualification and above	24.7%	34.5%	43.6%
No Qualifications	10.2%	8.2%	6.6%
Total Employee Jobs	118,000	-	-
Employee Jobs in Manufacturing	16.9%	10.0%	7.9%
Gross Weekly Pay	£513.10	£538.70	£612.80
Under 75 Mortality Rate from CVD Considered Preventable (per 100,00 population)	37.8	33.6	-
Male Healthy Life Expectancy from Birth	56.1	59.1	-
Female Healthy Life Expectancy from Birth	56.9	59.7	-

Deprivation

Sunderland is ranked the 33rd (37th in 2015) most deprived Local Authority in England in the English Indices of Deprivation (IoD) 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

23% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Sunderland (42 of 185) are in the top 10% most deprived areas of England. 40% (74 of 185) are in the top 20% most deprived areas of England. The total city population living in Sunderland LSOAs in the top 10% and top 20% most deprived is 63,000 and 112,000 respectively.

There was an improving trend for Sunderland across IMD 2004, 2007 and 2010 but this was not reflected in IMD 2015 which saw a deterioration in the trend which continued in IMD 2019.

There is now a greater percentage of Sunderland LSOAs in the top 10% most deprived areas in England compared to previously, with the percentage higher now than it was in 2007 but not as high as it was in 2004.

IMD	% Top 10%	No. Top 10%	% Top 20%	No. Top 20%
2019	23%	42	41%	75
2015	19%	36	38%	71
2010	18%	34	37%	70
2007	22%	41	44%	82
2004	27%	51	46%	87

In IMD 2019, all of the City's Wards contained all or part of LSOAs in the top 10% most deprived in England with the exception of Doxford, Fulwell, Houghton, Ryhope and St. Peter's. All Wards contained all or part of LSOAs in the top 20% most deprived in England with the exception of Fulwell and Doxford Wards.

In most Wards deprivation is persistent (existing over one or more IoDs) with new pockets of deprivation emerging or expanding (across the 2015 and 2019 IoDs) in the St. Chad's, Washington Central, East, North and West Wards.

There were varying degrees of change between 2015 and 2019 in the percentage of Sunderland LSOAs in the top 10% and top 20% most deprived in England across the seven domains of the IoD.

Domain	Top 10% 2019	Top 20% 2019	Top 10% 2015	Top 20% 2015
Income	47 25%	79 43%	45 24%	78 42%
Employment	59 32%	94 51%	57 31%	88 48%
Education, Skills & Training	40 22%	70 38%	34 18%	71 38%
Health Deprivation & Disability	61 33%	99 54%	76 41%	118 64%
Crime	33 18%	64 35%	8 4	14 8%
Barriers to Housing & Services	0	1 0.5%	0	1 0.5%
Living Environment	0	0	0	1 0.5%

The current ratio of Councillors to electors in Sunderland is 1:2760.

Based on previous Censuses the approximate ratios to Councillors to electors at the time of each Census were:

Census	Cllr:Elector Ratio
1991	1:2908
2001	1:2825
2011	1:2765

Actual Cllr to elector ratios for 2021 to 2023 are:

Year	Cllr:Elector Ratio
2021	1:2779
2022	1:2760
2023	1:2760

The ONS's total population projection for Sunderland in 2029 is 277,050.

The standardised 2029 electorate forecast for Sunderland in 2029 is 210,868 (76.11% of the total projected population). Based on a 75 Member council the ratio of Cllrs to electors in 2029 would be 1:2812.

Taking into account planned housing construction completions in the city through to 2029, the council's projected total population for the city in 2029 is 291,207 of which it is estimated 221,638 would be electors based on 76.11% of the council's projected population being electors – see above). Based on a 75 Member council the ratio of Cllrs to electors would be 1: 2955.

The Council's proposal in respect of size is that it remains at 75 Members. The Council considers that this is appropriate for the size of the city's current and projected populations, and number of electors. It is also an appropriate number of Members to respond to and address the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population.

Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships), and Community Leadership**. Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Governance Model	<div data-bbox="459 1249 638 1332">Key lines of explanation</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other? ➤ The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require? ➤ If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority. ➤ By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them? ➤ Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.
	<div data-bbox="507 1843 635 1881">Analysis</div> <p>Sunderland City is currently made up of 25 wards (with 3 members per ward), comprising a total of 75 councillors. The political balance of the Council is currently 42 Labour, 16 Conservatives, 14 Liberal Democrats and 3 non grouped members.</p> <p>The Council has adopted the strong Leader and Cabinet model of governance (as defined in the Local Government Act 2000) as its political governance structure. The Leader and Cabinet model of</p>

		<p>governance has been in place since it was introduced in the 2000 Act and subsequently transitioned to the new style Leader and Cabinet model of executive arrangements as provided for by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Every four years, the Council's 75 councillors elect a Leader. The Leader then appoints a Deputy Leader and up to 8 other councillors to form a Cabinet.</p> <p>The Cabinet (which can also be called “the Executive”) is the part of the Council which is responsible for most of the significant decisions. The Cabinet as the Executive, carry out all of the local authority’s functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council, whether by law or under the Council’s Constitution. Cabinet Decisions are taken collectively, unless otherwise decided by the Leader, who may allocate responsibility for all/any executive functions and may exercise any such functions personally.</p> <p>At the Annual Council meeting on 18 May 2022 Councillor Graeme Miller was re-appointed as Leader for a four-year term. The Leader has appointed Councillor Claire Rowntree as Deputy Leader and five other Members to form a Cabinet. The Leader has also appointed four Deputy Cabinet Members to support the work of the Cabinet.</p> <p>The Mayor is elected annually by Full Council and is the “first citizen” of Sunderland City. In addition to chairing Full Council, the Mayor is responsible for representing the Council at any civic functions and also undertakes fundraising activities for his/her designated charity.</p> <p>The Council also appoints a Deputy Mayor who is authorised to chair Full Council if the Mayor is unavailable and will also deputise at various civic events, as and when needed. In addition, the Council has 3 Honorary Aldermen who also act in a representative role should the Mayor or Deputy Mayor be unavailable.</p> <p>To guide the Council in the formulation of strategic and operational policies, the Council has developed its strategic plan - City Plan 2019-2030 – which is an Article 4 Plan in the Council’s Constitution and therefore subject to approval by Full Council. The development and review of the City Plan is led by Cabinet but subject to formal scrutiny by the Scrutiny Committees and because it is part of the policy</p>
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		<p>framework can only be approved and adopted by Full Council.</p> <p>The policy framework, as set out in the Council's Constitution, is the key strategic policy driver of the City Council. The approval and adoption of the plans within the policy framework involves all members of the Council, whether that be in Cabinet where policy development is initiated, through the Scrutiny Committees who examine proposed policy development or changes, or Full Council, where plans within the policy framework are finally approved and adopted.</p> <p>The City Plan provides the blueprint for all partners and communities to work together, to address the economic and social challenges that Sunderland faces so that the city and its people can achieve their full potential.</p> <p>Challenges include ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the city and its residents emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic in a strong and competitive position • health and wellbeing outcomes are significantly improved • residents have the skills and qualifications to secure good jobs, matching the needs of employers • the city centre including the flagship Riverside Sunderland development, drives transformational economic growth • Sunderland offers the opportunities that families and individuals need to achieve their ambitions, • families are resilient and resourceful and can achieve the best possible outcomes for their children and • Sunderland plays its role in tackling the global challenge of climate change. <p>In working to deliver on these challenges, the City Plan is focused on our bold and ambitious vision to create a connected, international city with opportunities for all.</p> <p>To achieve this, the City Plan has three themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by 2030 Sunderland will be a dynamic smart city with more and better jobs, a low-carbon economy and a great choice of housing. It will be a leading digital city, deploying smart and
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		<p>sustainable technologies for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it will be a healthy smart city where people will live healthier, independent lives for longer. It will be a clean and attractive city with great transport and travel links; and • it will be a vibrant smart city with more resilient people feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods. There will be a range of opportunities for people to participate in their communities and in cultural events and activities <p>The City's people and communities are at the heart of the City Plan, which is already being delivered, at pace, with significant investment and developments recently announced, with more to come.</p> <p><u>What does this mean for future Council size?</u></p> <p>The Council's proposal in respect of size is that it remains at 75 Members. The Council considers that its internal governance and decision making arrangements are effective and meet the needs of the Council.</p> <p>Meetings are quorate and Members participate fully in the effective and proper governance of the authority.</p> <p>Whilst Members have significant workloads (please see section on the Elected Members survey below), the majority of Members are of the view that these workloads are manageable.</p>
Portfolios	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i> ➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i> ➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i> ➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council and six other elected Members each of whom has a specific portfolio.</p> <p>The Cabinet has nine scheduled meetings per year although typically an extraordinary meeting will be held at some point during the year, as required). The Cabinet is responsible for implementing the Council's budget and policies as well as forming partnerships with other key organisations. It is the executive decision-making body of the Council.</p>

		<p>Individual Cabinet Members play an active role in formulating and developing proposals that are presented to Cabinet for consideration. They do not have individual decision-making powers delegated to them so meet collectively to take decisions, although each Cabinet Member has a portfolio of responsibilities, which are determined by the Leader.</p> <p>Details of portfolios can be found at Council, May 2022:</p> <p>Cabinet meetings usually last about 1.5 hours (with additional time taken by Cabinet Members to prepare for the meeting) and in 2022/2023 (January-January) the Cabinet met on 9 occasions with one extra-ordinary meeting.</p> <p><u>What does this mean for future Council size?</u></p> <p>The Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder roles are substantial at the present time, with great breadth and complexity and hence require the councillors to contribute significant time and effort.</p> <p>Our recommendation is that the future size of Council be retained at its current size of 75 councillors to allow the Cabinet Members to fulfil their roles effectively. A reduction in numbers would result in fewer councillors to fill key roles across the executive structure and could be less effective. It would also mean that councillors who were Members of the executive would not have the extent of the support that they have currently, from ward colleagues and other councillors to deliver their other roles on the Council in addition to the executive role.</p>
Delegated Responsibilities	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i>
	Analysis	<p>Full Council - all councillors sit on Full Council, which is chaired by the Mayor. The Full Council is responsible for setting the budget and making some decisions such as changes to the Constitution, determining electoral issues and dealing with matters which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet. Cabinet has executive decision-making powers in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000.</p>

	<p>All decisions of the authority are the responsibility of the Cabinet unless they have been reserved to Council by the law or where appropriate by the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/constitution</p> <p>There is a scheme of delegation for senior officers: Section-4-Delegations-to-Chief-Officers</p> <p>Some matters which are the responsibility of the Cabinet are delegated to officers by the Cabinet and non-executive functions are delegated either by the Full Council or a Council Committee to officers. The delegation scheme is approved by Full Council as it forms part of the Council's Constitution, although the monitoring officer does have authority to make amendments to the scheme where they are duly authorised by the relevant part of the Council. For example, delegation of executive functions may be reflected in the Constitution where authorised by the Cabinet or the Leader.</p> <p>Those decisions not delegated to officers are taken by Members, either at Full Council, Cabinet or a Committee of the Council.</p> <p>Key decisions as defined in the Council's Constitution are largely taken by the Cabinet.</p> <p>Full Council usually meets six times per year in addition to the Annual Meeting of the Council held in May in each year. Extraordinary meetings of the Council can be held for urgent matters or to deal with ceremonial business such as the granting of the Freedom of the City to a notable individual(s) and each meeting lasts between 3 and 4 hours.</p> <p>Further details of the various Council Committees and Sub-Committees and Panels that the Council operates and to which powers (where appropriate) are delegated are given in the section below entitled Regulatory Committees.</p> <p>What does this mean for future Council size?</p> <p>Over the last decade there has been significant change in terms of legislative policy from various Governments which has had a direct impact on Council business and services. This has necessitated closer partnership working and increased scrutiny and oversight by our councillors and committees to ensure local people</p>
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		<p>continue to receive the services they expect and deserve.</p> <p>The Council's decision making processes work well both internally and with partner organisations and the demands placed on councils like Sunderland City Council, whilst significant, do not support a significant reduction or increase in council size.</p> <p>Our recommendation is that the future size of Council be retained at its current size of 75 councillors.</p>
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Accountability

Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	<p>The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.</p>
Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i> ➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
Analysis	<p>Sunderland City Council has comprehensive scrutiny arrangements in place. All non executive members are eligible to be members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. There are in total 50 seats available on the Council's Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The Council appoints the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees at its Annual Meeting. The Council has four Scrutiny Committees responsible for overseeing, reviewing and scrutinising the Council's functions and responsibilities, including those delivered in partnership with other agencies and organisations - a lead Scrutiny</p>

Coordinating Committee, and three themed Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Children, Education and Skills, Health and Wellbeing and Economic Prosperity.

Each of the Scrutiny Committees holds 10 ordinary meetings each year, and additional extraordinary meetings may be called as appropriate. Each Scrutiny Committee is responsible for setting its own work programme, taking into account the views of all members of the committee regardless of their political group membership. This ensures members are fully engaged in scrutinising the full range of Council business.

The Scrutiny Committees also set up informal task and finish groups to examine specific issues or undertake policy development in more depth to support delivery of the work programme. There are a number of these groups scheduled this committee year to look at a range of issues including, for example, regenerating areas of the city, strengthening relationships with cabinet members and understanding the challenges with regard to the provision of adult social care.

Members also participate in joint arrangements with other North East cities as part of the North East Combined Authority. They also contribute to local health services, and are involved in the examination of major proposals such as the development and implementation of an Integrated Care System for the North East and North Cumbria.

The Council has recently commissioned the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to undertake a review of its scrutiny arrangements to ensure a transparent and robust scrutiny function is maintained. The findings of the review confirmed that scrutiny was performing well overall. The emphasis was very much on ensuring that scrutiny remained focused on those issues that were important to local people. An Action Plan has been developed and agreed following this review, and this will be monitored by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee as part of the ongoing commitment to robust scrutiny in Sunderland.

What does this mean for future Council size?

The Scrutiny Work Programme typically covers a wide range of topics across all aspects of Council service and performance, as well as the service and performance of external organisations and stakeholders.

With such an important duty and broad workload to deliver, it is vital that the existing Scrutiny structure and its size be maintained to allow all non-Executive members the opportunity to hold Cabinet to account. In doing so, it allows

		<p>all back bench members to utilise their own particular skills and experience, supplemented by specific Scrutiny training, and informed by the views of their own residents, to deliver a comprehensive and worthwhile Scrutiny programme.</p> <p>The Council continues to fulfil its Scrutiny duty within its existing structure with membership drawn from across all non-Executive members and from across all political parties and this will be supported by maintaining the current Council size.</p> <p>Our recommendation is that the future size of Council be retained at its current size of 75 councillors.</p>
Statutory Function		<p>This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?</p>
Planning	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The number/proportion of planning applications determined by Members of the Planning & Highway Committee will effectively be governed by the current Scheme of Delegation. Ordinarily, the aim is for more than 90% of all planning decisions to be delegated to officers to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the decision-making process, thereby allowing Members greater time at Committee to consider the most strategic or contentious planning applications.</p> <p>In recent years the Planning Committee regime has been amended, firstly to reduce the number of Committees down from 4 Committees (3 Sub Committees and 1 Strategic Committee) to 2 Sub Committees (Planning & Highways East and West), and with a further change in 2022 to remove these Sub Committees and establish just one overarching strategic Planning & Highways Committee. No further changes are proposed at this time.</p> <p>All members are eligible to serve on the strategic Planning & Highways Committee, and currently the Leader of the Council is Vice Chair for the Committee.</p>

		<p>Members of the Committee will be expected to attend 1 Committee meeting each month which may last up to 3 hours (or longer subject to the number of items and nature of business being considered). Committee site visits also have a significant time impact, although these are less frequent and only take place for a minority of applications being considered by the Committee. In addition to attending formal Committee meetings, Members will also be required to attend training sessions throughout the course of the year. All meetings and training will take place on an evening (5:30pm onwards).</p> <p><u>What does this mean for future Council size?</u></p> <p>A significant amount of the Council's projected housing growth is on developments on greenfield sites. Such sites often generate public interest and Member involvement within the process for determination of key planning applications is both inevitable and essential. It is anticipated that the number of major planning applications will continue to increase further in the coming years.</p> <p>It is therefore important to maintain Councillor capacity to discharge the Council's responsibilities as local planning authority.</p> <p>Our recommendation is that the future size of Council be retained at its current size of 75 councillors.</p>
Licensing	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year? ➤ And what will be the time commitment for members? ➤ Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc? ➤ Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?
	Analysis	<p>The Licensing sub-committees (panels) meet on average 5 times per year (average taken over the last 6 years). Hearings can take between 45 minutes to 3 hours, depending on the issues to be determined.</p> <p>Meetings are held during working hours and are arranged on an ad-hoc basis.</p> <p>The membership of sub-committees is made up of 3 members (politically balanced) taken from the pool of 15 members of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee.</p>
Other Regulatory Bodies	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What will they be, and how many members will they require? ➤ Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.
	Analysis	<u>The Licensing & Regulatory Committee</u>

		<p>This Committee is made up of 15 Members. 10 meetings are diarised per year, plus any extraordinary meetings required (usually 1 or 2 per year). Meetings usually take around 2 to 3 hours. The Committee deals with Licensing Act and Gambling Act Policy matters and also Regulatory matters such as: exercising the function of designating streets for the purpose of street trading, the free distribution of printed matter and designating areas as alarm notification areas under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. The Committee also considers the grant, refusal, amendment and cancellation of licences, certificates, permits or registration in respect of:- common land; hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and their operators and drivers; hypnotism performers; safety of sports grounds; sex establishments; street and house to house collections; street and market trading and town and village greens.</p> <p>Recent changes to the officer delegation scheme to allow the more “routine” matters to be determined by Officers saw a smaller number of applications come to the Committee. This has allowed Members to concentrate on the more complex/contentious applications coming before the Committee. As a result of this more in depth process, the number of meetings required and the number of Members on the Committee has stayed constant to ensure that applications are properly and fully considered and determined.</p> <p><u>Appeals Panel</u></p> <p>This Panel determines all staff appeals against dismissal, demotion, the withholding of increments and decisions taken in respect of grievances. Panels of 3 Councillors are convened to hear appeals, as they arise. As the appeals are always of a confidential nature they are always held in private.</p> <p><u>Audit and Governance Committee</u></p> <p>The Committee is delegated by the Council to approve the Authority's Statement of Accounts. It has an advisory role with respect to considering the effectiveness of arrangements for risk management, the internal control environment and the internal audit strategy and plan. The Committee also receives the external audit plan, considers external audit reports and reviews summaries of internal audits.</p> <p><u>Corporate Parenting Board</u></p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Board take lead oversight in exercising the City Council's responsibilities as Corporate Parent and ensuring that all Council policies reflect this.</p>
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		<p><u>Human Resources Committee</u></p> <p>The Committee exercises the functions in relation to appointments as provided by the Employment Procedure Rules and exercises the Council's non-executive functions in relation to human resources matters.</p> <p><u>Port Board</u></p> <p>The Board is responsible for the discharge of the Council's statutory and commercial functions in relation to the Port of Sunderland.</p> <p><u>Standards Committee</u></p> <p>The Committee is concerned with promoting, maintaining and advising on high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted Members of the City Council and in relation to Hetton Town Council.</p> <p><u>Assessment Sub-Committee</u></p> <p>Comprising of three Members of the Standards Committee; determines whether a complaint against a Member of the Council should be investigated.</p> <p><u>Hearing Sub-Committee</u></p> <p>Comprising three Members of the Standards Committee. Hears complaints about Members of the Council.</p> <p>As set out above in the previous section, the Council has adopted an extensive delegation scheme to its officers (<u>Section-4-Delegations-to-Chief-Officers</u>) which covers a wide range of powers that would otherwise have to be dealt with by Members in committee meetings. The regulatory committees detailed above deal with those matters where Members consider that the nature of the matters under consideration indicate that decision -making should be by themselves as elected officials or where the law requires it to be dealt with by a panel or committee.</p> <p><u>What does this mean for future Council Size?</u></p> <p>Whilst the vast majority of licensing applications are determined under delegated powers, the required involvement of members within the process for determining licensing applications has been consistent over a number of years now and is not expected to change in the future.</p>
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		<p>The Council takes its responsibility for ensuring licensing policy is administered fairly and correctly, hence its insistence that elected members undertake mandatory licensing training each year to keep up to date with any emerging legislative changes or trends within the industry.</p> <p>Premises licence applications must be determined within a prescribed timescale, which can occasionally be at short notice if a review of licence has been requested by the Police or other public body.</p> <p>By continuing to maintain elected member representation on the Licensing Committee at its present number, the Council believes it is best placed to be able to respond to its licensing obligations in the future.</p> <p>In relation to the other regulatory bodies of the Council the above functions provide valuable decision making, safeguarding and consultation mechanisms. Each of which have inherent specialisms such as a knowledge of the Council's financial regulations or the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, which provide assurance for the whole Council.</p> <p>Any reduction in Council size would potentially limit the capacity for elected members to continue to provide such assurance in the future.</p> <p>Our recommendation is that the future size of Council be retained at its current size of 75 councillors.</p>
External Partnerships		Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i> ➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i>
Analysis		<p><u>Partnerships and External Organisations</u></p> <p>The Council has a major service delivery partnership with Together for Children (a company limited by guarantee) which was established on 1 April 2017 to deliver children's services on behalf of the City Council. Its services are rated Outstanding by Ofsted.</p>

In addition to the above, the Council is part of the North East Combined Authority. This requires executive Member involvement in the Combined Authority's Cabinet. Following the very recent publication of a new devolution deal for the North East and the proposal to create a larger North East Mayoral Combined Authority, which will replace the North East Combined Authority and the North of Tyne Mayoral Combined Authority, the Council will be involved at a Member level in support to this new organisation.

Furthermore, each Municipal Year the Council makes appointments or nominations to a number of external organisations, joint committees, panels, groups and partnerships. A number of these bodies are decision-making and /or have strategic significance. Please see link to appointments: [Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies](#)

Cabinet Members represent the Council on a significant number of the outside bodies. The outside bodies Cabinet Members are appointed to include decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies directly related to their portfolios.

Over the last four years all Cabinet Members and their deputies have been appointed to external bodies.

Councillors are nominated to voluntary sector organisations as representatives of the Council. In some cases, this is in a non-management capacity with no role in the governance of the organisation. In other cases, they are appointed as trustees or directors so will have to act in accordance with the interests of the relevant organisation, but they will bring with them their skills and knowledge as councillors of their local communities etc.

Nonetheless, such roles are designed to allow councillors to act as conduits for communication between the Council and the organisation.

The time commitments will vary from partnership to partnership, but will typically represent a significant additional commitment from a Councillor.

What does this mean for future Council Size?

The Council has involvement in a wide variety of external organisations in the local area and across the wider region. The extent of that involvement is borne out in the results of the Members' survey as detailed on pages 30-32 below. This

	<p>involvement is of benefit to the Council, and its drive to deliver on the City Plan.</p> <p>The Council currently meets its obligations to the outside organisations it is involved with by the appointment of Members to those organisations. On average 75% of all councillors represent the Council on one or more outside bodies (56 of 75 Councillors of all political groups). 36% of Councillors also hold school governor positions.</p> <p>Any reduction in Council size would potentially limit the capacity for elected members to continue to provide such support and involvement in the future.</p> <p>Our recommendation is that the future size of Council be retained at its current size of 75 councillors.</p>
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Community Leadership

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i> ➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i> ➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i> ➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i> ➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i>

		<p>➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i></p>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Councillors in Sunderland work very hard to ensure they are representing their electors/the residents of Sunderland. Some Councillors also hold ward surgeries and undertake walkabouts with residents. New technology has made all Councillors more accessible to constituents, this has had the effect in some cases of an increase in demand from residents. The contact details for all Councillors are available on the Council website and the contact details include the Councillors' home address, telephone and email.</p> <p>Some, but not all, Councillors also have social media platforms, where they share information to support residents as well as campaign for change. The Council Area Arrangements Team also controls Area Facebook pages, which share information for residents in relation to Council services and action taken, as well as support available. The Area pages also promote the work of the Area Committee and the local voluntary and community sector.</p> <p>The Council also delivers a newsletter to every household quarterly, which updates residents on the actions of the Council.</p> <p>The elected members attend resident meetings as well as local events to ensure they are visible and accessible within the community. Elected members often take away issues and concerns from resident meetings and escalate through the Council to officers for action, via the dedicated member reporting telephone line and email. All elected members also support their area voluntary and community sector networks, often supporting the sector with their area committee funds to deliver local priorities and projects.</p> <p>The Council's Area Arrangements Service works with the elected members via the Area Committee structure, to hold 'Let's Talk' resident engagement events. These events enable residents to share their views regarding priorities to ensure the Area Committees via their neighbourhood investment plans, continue to meet the needs of residents in the area, whilst also supporting the delivery of the overarching City Plan, which focuses on Sunderland being a Healthy, Vibrant and Dynamic Smart City.</p> <p>The Council has five Area Committees. Each of the wards across Sunderland is linked to a geographical area and</p>

		<p>therefore each Councillor is a member of their Area Committee as follows:</p> <p>North – Fulwell, Southwick, Castle, Redhill and St Peter’s wards West – Pallion, Silksworth, Sandhill, St Anne’s, St Chad’s and Barnes wards Washington – Central, East, West, North and South Washington wards Coalfield – Shinee Row, Hetton, Houghton, Copt Hill wards East – St Michael’s, Millfield, Ryhope, Hendon and Doxford wards</p> <p>The Area Committees have decision making powers as set out in the Council’s Constitution (see below). Their meetings are held in public with all papers and decisions published. Each committee has a Chair and Vice-Chair and is supported by the Council’s Governance Services Team who administer the meetings.</p> <p>The Council’s Area Arrangements Service support the members of the committee to engage with residents to develop priorities and plans, as well as work closely with partners including the voluntary sector to ensure Council services are investing in and supporting resident needs at an area level.</p> <p>The Council’s constitution currently provides that the powers and functions of the Area Committees are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Leadership – Local Councillors using their unique understanding of local issues to enable improved outcomes for the people of Sunderland • Development of Neighbourhood Investment Plans and priorities • Implementation of the Neighbourhood Investment Plan priorities • Monitoring of the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the Council and other main providers in the neighbourhood • Actively encouraging local residents to become involved in decision-making on matters which affect them <p>The Area Committees are attended by Partners including Gentoo (Sunderland’s social housing landlord), Police, Fire Services and the voluntary and community sector. Each partner presents a report and works closely with the Area Committee to support area issues.</p>
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		<p>The Area Committees have financial resources to fund local area issues and projects. The funding is Neighbourhood Funding and Community Chest and each Area Committee meeting, which is held in public, approves funding to support area priorities linked to the Area Committee's neighbourhood plans. The Area Committees consult with residents and partners to develop their neighbourhood plans, which are Article 10 plans, approved by the Cabinet. The neighbourhood plans are available to view on the Council's website and residents are encouraged to monitor progress to deliver priorities.</p> <p>There is only one Town Council in Sunderland, namely Hetton Town Council. The Town Council members are invited to attend the Coalfield Area Committee but have no voting rights.</p> <p>The Area Committees often support youth organisations, as well as other minority groups with their Neighbourhood Funding and Community Chest funding, to deliver projects within the area, which may include excursions, activities to improve health and wellbeing and resilience as well as training and development. The Area Committees also support investment premises and equipment to ensure young people and minority groups have access to safe spaces, support and activities.</p> <p>The Council also has a Youth Council and a BME network as well as LGBT+ networks, which meets with the Council's Cabinet and City Board partners and influences the city's priorities.</p> <p><u>What does this mean for Council size?</u></p> <p>Councillors of the City Council are committed to their communities/residents and the responsibilities that are associated with that commitment. The work that Councillors undertake in relation to community leadership is integral to their role as a member of the Council and provides a direct link between the Council and its residents.</p> <p>The Council considers that the maintenance of this role is essential.</p> <p>Our recommendation is therefore that the future size of Council be retained at its current size of 75 councillors.</p>
Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i> ➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i> ➤ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i>
	Analysis	<p>Councillors are provided with an online 'report it' portal through which they can create their own account and submit requests they have received from constituents relating to environmental issues, roads and footpaths, housing and anti-social behaviour. Councillors can track progress in relation to these requests through their account on the system.</p> <p>In relation to social housing issues, Councillors have to interact with external providers such as Gentoo and use these third party's reporting tools to deal with enquiries/issues from residents. This can sometimes cause difficulties when seeking timely responses for residents.</p> <p>In relation to issues of varying complexity that Councillors have received from constituents to be dealt with, dedicated email addresses are provided. Councillors can submit their casework via these email addresses for an officer to deal with and provide feedback as appropriate.</p> <p>All Councillors are offered a smart phone and a laptop to enable them to utilise technology more to deal with their day to day workload. It is increasingly evident that they have been influenced by technology in that a number of requests are now submitted online. Councillors will also interact with a constituent's social media, which is increasingly used to communicate, in addition to more traditional methods of engagement.</p> <p>The Council has a formal complaints system for the management of complaints relating to the provision of the Council's services. Once a complaint is submitted through the formal complaints system it is dealt with, in the main, by Officers. Councillors may become involved in signposting residents to the formal complaint system when an issue cannot be resolved.</p> <p>In the survey of Members (see below for details) 83% of respondents said that since becoming a Councillor their workload had increased, with the predominant reason given being community engagement/working on residents' issues. This result corresponds with the overall responses on workload and the average amount of time spent on Council business, specifically community/constituent engagement and casework.</p>

		<p><u>What does this mean for future Council Size?</u></p> <p>From the survey results it is clear the Members of the Council have significant casework levels. Indeed Members have indicated that the increase in their workload is directly associated with casework and community engagement. The data would however not support either an increase or decrease in the Council size, bearing in mind that the vast majority of Members also indicated that their workload overall was satisfactory.</p> <p>Our recommendation is that the future size of Council be retained at its current size of 75 councillors.</p>
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Other Issues

Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

The Liberal Democrat Group and the Conservative Group indicated in the Working Group that they wished to see a reduction in the number of Members of the Council.

Elected Members' Survey

As a part of the work to prepare this submission the Council undertook a survey of its Members, via an electronic questionnaire, to obtain qualitative information on their experience and views on being a Councillor. In particular, it sought to provide information relating to the workloads placed on Councillors fulfilling their role as a Councillor.

47 responses were received to the short survey. This represents a response rate of 63%.

Members were asked to indicate how long they have been a Councillor on Sunderland City Council. The responses were as follows:

Length of Service	Number	% of Respondents
0–4 years	27	57%
5-10 years	4	8.5%
11-15 years	6	13%
16-20 years	4	8.5%
Over 20 years	6	13%

Members were asked if, in addition to their ward duties, they hold any other roles in the council. The responses were:

Other Roles Held	
Yes	No
60%	40%

Members were asked how many hours per week, on average, they spend on council business. The responses were as follows:

Activity	Average Weekly Hours
Community/constituent engagement and casework	18.5
Formal meetings and associated preparation and travel	12.5
Member development	2.5

Members were asked, thinking about their time since becoming a councillor, whether they thought their workload was about the same, increasing or decreasing. The responses were:

Workload	Number	% of Respondents
Same	7	15%
Increased	39	83%
Decreased	1	2%

The predominant reasons given for the increase in workload were working/communicating with residents or responding to issues raised by residents.

Members were asked to indicate any other responsibilities they have in addition to being a councillor, how many hours they spend on them per week on average.

29 (62%) Councillors are employed of which 23 (79%) are employed 30 hours plus per week.

Members were asked to indicate how they felt about the manageability of their average week. The responses were:

Manageability	Number	% of Respondents
Satisfactory: I can satisfactorily accommodate all of my duties/responsibilities as a Councillor in an average week	31	66%
Excessive: It is difficult to satisfactorily accommodate all of my duties/responsibilities as a Councillor in an average week	15	32%
Unmanageable: I am unable to satisfactorily accommodate all of my duties/responsibilities as a Councillor in an average week.	1	2%

The survey response rate of 63% provides a level of confidence in the representativeness and the statistical significance/reliability of the responses for the whole Council.

The overall composition of the responses in both terms of the length of service and other roles held (when compared against the actual composition of the Council) is sufficient to provide a level of confidence about the representativeness of the responses received.

Conclusions of the Elected Members' Survey

Based on the responses received, the average amount of time that Members spend on council-related activities is approximately 33.5 hours per week.

83% of respondents have said that since becoming a Councillor, their workload has increased, the predominant reason given was community engagement/working on residents' issues. This corresponds with the overall responses on workload and the average amount of time spent on council business, specifically community/constituent engagement and casework.

Whilst respondents told us that their workload is increasing, the majority (66%) indicated that their workload remains satisfactory, 33% indicated that it is excessive, and 1 respondent indicated that it is unmanageable. The majority of respondents to the survey combine their responsibilities as a Councillor with employment.

Summary

The case has already been made within each section of this submission to the significant workload the Members of the City Council have in carrying out each of their various roles. At the current time it is clear that even greater emphasis is placed on each of our Members, as community representatives, to assist with community cohesion and rebuilding our economy, all of which will be shaped by our City Plan.

It is vital that all of our Members can lead this critical work, communicating and engaging with all constituents of the City.

This Council therefore recommends to the Boundary Commission that the Council size should be maintained at 75 Councillors to ensure that the inevitably increasing needs of constituents are met.

DRAFT

Report

APPOINTMENTS

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council of changes required to the allocation of committee seats.
- 1.2 The full list of appointments to committees and outside bodies will be published on the Council's website in the Yearbook at <https://committees.sunderland.gov.uk/committees/cm15/PublicDocuments.aspx> following the meeting.

2.0 Changes to Appointments on Committees

- 2.1 Following the resignation of Councillor Greener from the Conservative Group, a recalculation of the political balance on committees to ensure places are allocated in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements was undertaken.
- 2.2 This resulted in a change to the membership of the Appeals Panel and the Corporate Parenting Board where the Conservative group lose one seat on both the Panel and the Board. These seats subsequently become "spare" seats and have been offered to the ungrouped members, i.e. to Councillor Bewick, to Councillor Donaghy and to Councillor Greener, who may also nominate a substitute member to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 2.3 Councillor Greener is automatically a member of West Area Committee and this appointment is not subject to political proportionality requirements and will stand.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council is accordingly invited to:-
 - (i) approve the appointment of Councillor Greener on the Appeals Panel in place of Councillor S. Johnston; and
 - (ii) approve the appointment of Councillor Bewick on the Corporate Parenting Board in place of Councillor McKeith and the appointment of Councillor Greener as a substitute Member to the Board in place of Councillor Hartnack.

