

ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday, 25th July, 2013

10.00 am

Swale 3, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone





AGENDA

ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday, 25 July 2013, at 10.00 am
Swale 3, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

Ask for: **Peter Sass**
Telephone: **01622 694002**

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting

Membership (9)

Conservative (5): Mr G K Gibbens (Chairman), Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D L Brazier,
Mr A J King, MBE and Mrs P A V Stockell

UKIP (2) Mr J Elenor and Mr A Terry

Labour (1) Mr W Scobie

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr I S Chittenden

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Substitutes
- 2 Election of Vice-Chairman
- 3 Declarations of Interest on any items on this agenda
- 4 Minutes - 27 February and 23 May 2013 (Pages 1 - 6)
- 5 Electoral Review of Shepway - Draft recommendations (Pages 7 - 36)
- 6 Electoral Review of Canterbury - Council Size (Pages 37 - 68)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services

(01622) 694002

Wednesday, 17 July 2013

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 27 February 2013.

PRESENT: Mr G K Gibbens (Chairman), Mr J F London (Vice-Chairman), Mr K A Ferrin, MBE, Mr M J Harrison, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr T Prater and Mrs P A V Stockell.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

23. Substitutes

(Item 1)

There were no substitutes.

24. Declarations of Interest on any items on this agenda

(Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Minutes - 27 November 2012

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

26. County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses

(Item 4)

- (1) Mr Sass introduced the report which considered the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for Kent County Council elections for 2013/14. He said there had been no increases since 2012/13 although a number of new items had been introduced that were explained in the report and that the County Scale reflected the Kent Scale which in turn largely reflected the scale of fees for national elections and the recommendations of the Electoral Commission.
- (2) Committee members raised a number of questions about the proposed County Scale for 2013/14, as follows
 - (a) Referring to items 9 to 12 in the proposed scale, why was it proposed to remunerate some staff involved in the elections with their travelling expenses per mile whereas others were paid a lump sum? Instead, a suggestion was made that all election staff should be paid the same

mileage rate, 45p per mile, which would ensure consistency and accuracy.

- (b) Whether the role of polling station supervisors was necessary or justifiable and that the proposed payment of £197.25 (the same as for a Presiding Officer) seemed a lot of money to pay for the role.
 - (c) The proposed fees for uncontested elections seemed high given the work that the District Councils were required to do in the event of there being no poll to conduct or votes to count.
 - (d) The proposed fees for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks in combined elections appeared high, given that costs were supposed to reduce with combined polls.
 - (e) Why was there a difference in fees for the counting of votes for single and two-member divisions?
 - (f) Whether the proposed payment for the hand delivery of poll cards at 34p per card was appropriate given that in some houses, 4 or 5 poll cards might be delivered to a single address.
 - (g) Questions were asked about the appropriateness of some of the costs for fitting up polling stations and the suitability of some venues as polling stations
- (3) Following a lengthy discussion, and given the various concerns and issues that they had raised, Members concluded that they were not yet able to approve the proposed County Scale. Accordingly, it was proposed by Mr Prater, seconded by Mr Harrison and agreed by the Committee that authority be delegated to the Director of Governance and Law and the Head of Democratic Services to negotiate further with district and borough councils about the questions raised by the Committee and finalise the proposed County Scale for 2013/14.
- (4) In response to a question about items 34 and 36 of the County Scale, the Director of Governance and Law confirmed that any expenses incurred would be referred to this Committee for approval.
- (5) The Chairman thanked officers for the progress that had been made over the past two years to formalise the arrangements for the conduct of county council elections and acknowledged that the arrangements were on a much firmer than for previous County Council Elections.
- (6) **RESOLVED:**
- (a) that authority be delegated to the Director of Governance and Law and the Head of Democratic Services to negotiate further with district and borough councils about all the questions and concerns raised by the Committee and finalise the proposed County Scale for 2013/14.

- (b) that the proposed County Scale of Fees and Expenses for future years be presented for approval annually.
- (c) that a report be prepared and submitted to the Committee following the election in May 2013 detailing all of the costs by each borough or district council in relation to the County Council Elections as well as an analysis of what went well and lessons learned and that this is used to inform the protocol and procedure note for the administration of future county council elections.

27. Any Other Business

Count Venue in Canterbury

- (1) Mr Harrison said he was concerned that the proposed venue for the count in Canterbury was at Kings Hall in Herne Bay, which had no parking and inadequate access for disabled people. The Westgate Hall had previously been used for the counting of ballots but this was no longer available. He asked for assistance in identifying a more suitable venue within Canterbury.
- (2) **RESOLVED** that the Head of Democratic Services be asked to work with Canterbury City Council to identify a suitable venue in Canterbury for the counting of ballots in the county council election.

Electoral Review of Shepway

- (3) Mr Prater said that the Local Government Electoral Commission was currently consulting on warding arrangements in the Shepway area on the basis of having 30 district councillors and this was likely to have an impact on the county divisions. Mr King said, that through this Committee, the County Council should always take the opportunity to consider and comment on the implications of re-organisations proposed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- (4) **RESOLVED:**
 - (a) That the Committee note the information.
 - (b) That the Head of Democratic Services be asked to circulate the report to Members and seek their views on the latest proposals for the Shepway District.

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ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 23 May 2013.

PRESENT: Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D L Brazier, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr J Elenor, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr W Scobie, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr A Terry

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Membership

(Item 1)

The Committee noted its Membership as set out above.

2. Election of Chairman

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that Mr G K Gibbens be elected Chairman.

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From: Graham Gibbens, Chairman of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee
Geoff Wild, Director of Governance and Law

To: Electoral and Boundary Review Committee – 25 July 2013

Subject: Electoral Review of Shepway – Draft Recommendations

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides information on the draft recommendations for the electoral review of Shepway District published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on 18 June and which are the subject of a consultation which will close on 9 September 2013.

1. (1) In November 2011 Shepway District Council established a working group of Councillors to look at introducing predominantly single member wards and reducing the number of councillors. Shepway currently has 46 councillors.

(2) In response to the report of the working Group, the District Council passed the following resolutions:

“(a) To support the submission of a proposal to the LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England) incorporating the proposed new arrangements which demonstrate how the Council would operate with 38 member wards where necessary according to current electorate size, future electorate projections and geographical considerations.

(b) That the overall system of governance should continue to be the strong leader and cabinet model with independent overview and scrutiny.”

(3) The Commission noted Shepway’s proposal for 38 Members but considered that the evidence provided by the Council pointed towards a council size of 30 Members and that this reduction would be sustainable. The Commission noted the work already done by the Council to streamline its committee structure and considered that 30 Members would be sufficient to effectively manage committee work and to allow individual Councillors to perform their representative role.

(4) At its meeting on 2 August, 2012, this Committee considered a report on the proposals and resolved that the submission made to the LGBCE by Shepway District Council be noted and that Shepway District Council be informed that the County Council would not want to see any review of Ward Boundaries that would lead to the creation of more two Member Electoral Divisions or any difficulties caused if the County Council wanted to change existing two Member divisions to single Member divisions in the future; A letter

was sent to the LGBCE and a response received which was circulated to all Members (copy attached as **Appendix 1**).

(5) The LGBCE has now published their draft recommendations and are proposing that there should be 30 Councillors on Shepway District Council with the wards organised as follows - one single-member, seven two-member and five three-member wards. Full details of the proposed wards are set out in the LGBCE report (attached as **Appendix 2**). A copy of a map showing the proposed wards and the related electoral divisions will be displayed at the meeting.

(6) The consultation on these proposals will close on 9 September 2013. The LGBCE expects to publish its final recommendations in early 2014.

Recommendation(s): The Committee is invited to consider whether it wishes to respond to the consultation on the proposed recommendation from the LGBC to reduce the Council size of Shepway District Council to 30 Councillors and the related warding proposals.

Background Documents

Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Shepway Review
<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/shepway-fer>

Contact details

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694269

Rec 20/09/12

The
**Local Government
Boundary Commission**
for England

Councillor Graham Gibbons
Chairman of the Electoral and Boundary
Review Committee
Kent County Council
Members' Suite
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone ME14 1XO

19 September 2012

Dear Councillor Gibbons
COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

Thank you for your letter of 12 September to the Commission's Chief Executive, Alan Cogbill, about the Commission's work in a number of Kent districts, and its potential impact on Kent county divisions.

As you recognise in your letter, there are no direct implications for county divisions resulting from these district reviews. Equally, however, you are correct that in any electoral review of the County's electoral arrangements, the Commission would seek to use existing district wards (and parishes) as the building blocks for new divisions.

The Commission has no current plans to review the County's electoral arrangements. However, from the electoral data available to us (December 2008 electoral registers), it would appear that the County meets our criteria for a review to address electoral imbalances. The data indicates that 36 per cent of divisions have electoral variances in excess of 10 percent of the average for the county council area and one division (Romney Marsh) has a variance of 38 per cent from the average.

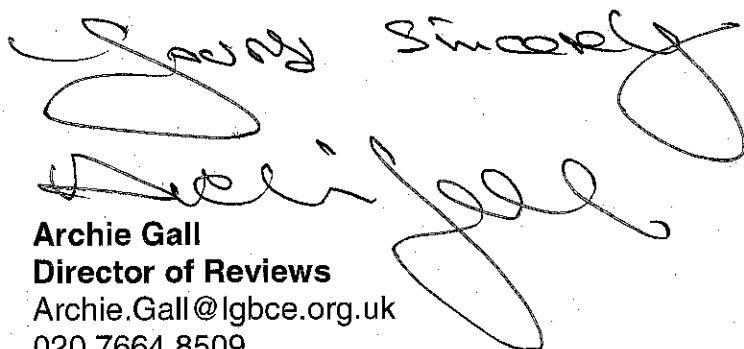
Clearly, this data is some four years' out of date, and the Commission will wish verify the current position following the publication of this year's registers. However, there would be no prospect of the Commission considering any review of Kent until 2015/15 financial year at the earliest.

I note your point that the Council would not wish to see any increase in the number of multi-member divisions, or any difficulties in reducing the number of such divisions, as a

consequence of a review. Clearly, the Commission does have the power to recommend multi-member electoral areas. However, since the last review of the County, new legislation has been introduced. Under section 57 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, a local authority that elects by whole council (as Kent does), can request the Commission to undertake a single-member electoral area review. There is a presumption in legislation that the Commission should accede to such a request, and seek to provide single-member electoral areas throughout the local authority area.

Of course, the Commission cannot guarantee to deliver a uniform pattern of single-member electoral areas. If such a pattern were to conflict with the Commission's statutory criteria in terms of electoral equality, community identities and interests, and effective and convenient local government, the criteria takes precedence.

I hope this is helpful. If you have any other queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Archie Gall
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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Shepway District Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in September 2012. This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 October 2012	Consultation on council size
29 January 2013	Submission of proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
8 April 2013	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
18 June 2013	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
10 September 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

We received 27 submissions during our consultation on council size and 37 submissions during consultation on warding arrangements. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

As part of this review, Shepway District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2019, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 7% over the period from 2012–19. The Council made an amendment to its figures after consultation had ended, to reflect the fact that a housing development in Stanford parish was no longer expected to proceed.

Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

Shepway District Council currently has 46 councillors. During preliminary discussions on council size, a working group on the Council proposed a council size of 30, a

reduction of 16 councillors. The Council later passed a resolution proposing a council size of 38.

We considered that the evidence we received supported a council size of 30, rather than a council size of 38. Therefore, we consulted publicly on a council size of 30.

Following the consultation we considered that the Council's initial submission represented the most persuasive evidence available, and we have therefore based our draft recommendations on a council size of 30.

General analysis

During our consultation on warding arrangements, we received 37 submissions. We received a district-wide submission from Shepway District Council. Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party and Shepway Liberal Democrats each commented on the District Council's proposals and made proposals of their own. The other submissions we received made localised proposals, while some submissions did not refer directly to warding arrangements.

Our draft recommendations are broadly based on Shepway District Council's proposals, although we have proposed different ward boundaries in some areas in order to improve electoral equality and provide for more easily identifiable boundaries. Our draft recommendations are for a pattern of one single-member, seven two-member and five three-member wards.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which time we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Shepway District Council contained in the report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.** We will take into account all submissions received by **9 September 2013**. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations. Express your views by writing directly to us at:

Review Officer Shepway Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

You can also view our draft recommendations for Shepway District Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 During our consultation on warding arrangements, we invited the submission of proposals on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during this stage of the review have informed our draft recommendations.

3 We are now conducting a full public consultation on the draft recommendations. Following this period of consultation, we will consider the evidence received and will publish our final recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Shepway District Council in early 2014.

What is an electoral review?

4 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

5 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in Shepway?

6 We decided to conduct this review following a request from Shepway District Council and because, based on December 2011 electorate figures, 36% of wards in Shepway had a variance of greater than 10% from the average for the district. Additionally, one ward (Folkestone Harvey Central) has 41% more electors per councillor than the average for the district. The electoral inequality in this ward is not forecast to improve significantly before 2019.

How will the recommendations affect you?

7 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your ward name may also change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. The names or boundaries of parishes will not change as a result of our recommendations.

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

8 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence based and we therefore stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will accept comments and views until 9 September 2013. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in early 2014. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 17 and more information can be found on our website, www.lgbce.org.uk. You can also view our draft recommendations for the Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

9 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

10 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Shepway District Council we invite views on these draft recommendations. We welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries and ward names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

11 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Shepway is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,² with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
 - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

12 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

13 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

14 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Shepway District Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

15 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (‘the 2009 Act’). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different divisions or wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division or ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

16 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority ward arrangements. However, principal councils have powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct Community Governance Reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

Submissions received

17 During the initial stage of the review, we visited Shepway District Council and met with members, parish council representatives and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance.

18 We received a preliminary submission on council size from a working group on the Council which favoured a council size of 30. The Council later resolved to support a council size of 38 and submitted new evidence to us in support of this figure. We felt that the evidence we received made a stronger case for a council size of 30 and so decided to consult publicly on this figure. We received 27 submissions in response to our council size consultation. During consultation on proposed ward boundaries we received one district-wide submission – from the Council – and submissions from Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party and Shepway Liberal Democrats, which commented on the Council's submission and provided alternative proposals in some areas. We also received seven representations from district councillors, 12 from town and parish councils and one from a group of parish councillors, one local organisation, and 12 local residents.

19 All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Electorate figures

20 As part of this review, Shepway District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2019, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 7% over the period from 2012–19. The Council made an amendment to its figures after consultation had ended, to reflect the fact that a housing development in Stanford parish was no longer expected to proceed.

21 The Council provided details of all of the proposed housing developments expected to take place across the forecast period, and a year-by-year breakdown of how each development will progress. The most significant development in the district is at Shorncliffe Barracks, on land sold by the Ministry of Defence to a property developer.

22 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

23 Shepway District Council currently has 46 councillors elected from 22 wards, comprising four single-member, 12 two-member and six three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council had considered reducing the council size to 30 members. The Council's formal proposal to us, however,

argued in favour of a council size of 38. We considered that, based on the evidence received from the Council, that a council size of 30 was most appropriate.

24 During the consultation on council size we received 27 submissions. In general, respondents supported a reduction from 46, with many of those supporting a reduction favouring a council size of 30.

25 We considered that the Council's initial submission had sufficient regard to the governance and management structure which would exist under a council size of 30, and to the scrutiny of the Council, work on outside bodies, members' representational role and the Council's other statutory functions.

26 During our consultation on warding patterns we received seven submissions commenting on council size. We are content that a council size of 30 members would not impact adversely on governance arrangements, member workload or councillors' representational role. Therefore, our draft recommendations for Shepway District Council are based on a council size of 30.

Electoral fairness

27 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

28 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (82,514 in 2012 and 88,795 by 2019) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 30 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,750 in 2012 and 2,960 by 2019.

29 Under our draft recommendations, all of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of less than 10% from the average for the district by 2019. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Shepway.

General analysis

30 We received 37 submissions in response to our consultation on warding arrangements for Shepway. The Council submitted district-wide proposals based on a council size of 30. Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party and Shepway Liberal Democrats commented on the Council's submission and provided alternative proposals in some areas. We received additional representations from seven district councillors, including a joint one from two councillors and from one councillor who sent more than one submission; 12 town and parish councils; (as well as a submission from some town councillors on Hythe Town Council), one local organisation; and 12 local residents.

31 The Council's district-wide proposal resulted in good levels of electoral equality across the district and generally used recognisable boundaries.

32 We note that the Council carried out some consultation with some stakeholders in the district and that many of the responses we received were as a result of having viewed the Council's proposals. As mentioned above, two political organisations commented on the Council's submissions and proposed alternative warding arrangements in some areas of the district. The remainder of the submissions we received were focused on particular local areas.

33 We have largely adopted the wards proposed by the Council in its submission. However, we have departed from its warding pattern around Hythe, and more significantly, in Folkestone. These modifications are proposed to improve electoral equality and provide for more easily identifiable ward boundaries.

34 Our draft recommendations are for one single-member, seven two-member and five three-member wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

35 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 20–21) and the large map accompanying this report.

36 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations. We also welcome comments on the ward names we have proposed as part of the draft recommendations.

Electoral arrangements

37 This section of the report details the proposals we have received, our consideration of them, and our draft recommendations for each area of Shepway. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- West Shepway (pages 8–10)
- Central Shepway (pages 10–11)
- North-east Shepway (pages 12–13)
- Folkestone (pages 13–15)

West Shepway

38 West Shepway is largely a rural area, containing Walland Marsh and Dungeness power station. The main settlements in this area are New Romney and Lydd.

39 The Council proposed two two-member wards covering this area: New Romney and Walland & Denge Marsh. Both wards would have good electoral equality and good internal communications links.

Walland & Denge Marsh

40 The Council's proposal for a two-member Walland & Denge Marsh ward included the town of Lydd, as well as a number of rural parishes to the north of Lydd. This proposed ward also included the Dungeness area and would run up the coastline to Greatstone-on-Sea. It was supported by Lydd Town Council, as well as a local resident. Shepway Liberal Democrats considered that the Council's proposal,

while not ideal, was the only viable arrangement for this area.

41 We received a submission from the Coastal Community Group which proposed a different warding arrangement for the area. The proposal from the Coastal Community Group was to have a ward based on coastal areas, running from the south-eastern tip of the district up to the edge of New Romney. This proposal was supported by three local residents. The Group provided evidence of community links along the coastal area and indicated that it has been attempting to establish a parish council in the area as it considered the coastal area is separate from Lydd town. The Group also provided electorate figures for its proposed wards. However, on investigating the proposals we were concerned that the Group's proposed Lade ward (covering the coastal area) would have 19% fewer electors than the district average by 2019. We consider evidence has not been received to support such a variance.

42 Having considered the different warding proposals for this part of the district, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposed two-member Walland & Denge Marsh ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward would have 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

43 Councillor Tillson (Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay) suggested that the ward be named Romney Marsh West, as this name would be more familiar with local electors. We have decided not to adopt this alternative ward name as it was supported by limited community identity evidence. We welcome views on our proposed ward name of Walland & Denge Marsh during this consultation period.

New Romney

44 The Council proposed a two-member ward for New Romney which was based on combining two existing wards, New Romney Coast and New Romney Town. This ward would comprise the town of New Romney as well as part of Greatstone-on-Sea. New Romney Town Council stated that it was 'content with the proposed SDC [Shepway District Council] representation of two District Councillors'.

45 The Coastal Community Group submission recommended dividing New Romney in to two single-member wards and suggested including Dunes Road in its proposed Lade ward. Shepway Liberal Democrats also supported two single-member wards for New Romney, as did Councillor Tillson and three local residents. Two of the residents stated that Greatstone-on-Sea ought to be in a ward with New Romney rather than with Lydd, as its residents are more likely to use New Romney's services and facilities.

46 As mentioned above, we considered the possibility of a coastal ward as we recognise the community links in the area. However, given the large electoral variance that would result from such a ward, we are unable to recommend it as part of our draft recommendations.

47 The other proposals for single-member wards covering New Romney would use existing district ward boundaries to divide the parish. This would result in single-member New Romney Coast and New Romney Town wards, with equal to the average and 7% more electors than the district average by 2019, respectively.

48 On balance, having considered the different proposals for New Romney, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposed two-member ward as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that a two-member ward would not divide the

community and would provide for good electoral equality as it would have 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. We would, however, welcome views on this proposal, as we recognise the views of those favouring two single-member wards in this area.

Central Shepway

49 The central Shepway area consists of the eastern part of Romney Marsh. It includes a coastal area as well as some rural parishes inland. Hythe town is also in this part of the district.

Romney Marsh

50 The Council proposed a two-member ward for Romney Marsh, consisting of the parishes of Burmarsh, Dymchurch, Newchurch and St Mary in the Marsh. St Mary in the Marsh and Dymchurch parish councils supported the Council's proposal for this area. However, we also received submissions proposing alternative warding arrangements for this part of the district.

51 Shepway Liberal Democrats and Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party both favoured single-member wards covering Hythe. Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party proposed having one ward based on Dymchurch parish and the other comprising the remaining three parishes of Burmarsh, Newchurch and St Mary in the Marsh. Both of these two wards would provide for good levels of electoral equality. Shepway Liberal Democrats proposed two single-member wards. One ward would comprise Dymchurch and Burmarsh parishes, with the other comprising Newchurch and St Mary in the Marsh parishes. This proposal would result in a Dymchurch & Burmarsh ward having 13% more electors than the district average by 2019. This is a higher variance than we would normally propose, particularly as we have received limited community identity evidence to warrant such an imbalance.

52 Councillor Mullard (Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay) commented on the Council's proposals to the effect that the reduction in councillors in this area would be detrimental to representation for electors. The increase in workload would make 'ward representation almost impossible unless councillors are prepared to do the job as an almost full-time occupation'.

53 Councillor Tillson and a local resident also proposed a ward for Dymchurch and Burmarsh parishes. Councillor Tillson stated that there are 'historical antipathies' between Dymchurch and St Mary in the Marsh and so they ought not to be in the same ward. He also suggested that the Council's proposed two-member ward be named Romney Marsh East.

54 Burmarsh Parish Council stated that it would prefer to be in a ward with rural parishes with similar concerns, for example, the parishes to its west. It asserted that it did not want to be in a ward with areas with a coastal focus 'such as Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay'.

55 We have considered the different warding proposals for the Romney Marsh area. We consider that on the basis of evidence received the Council's proposed two-member Romney Marsh ward provides the best balance between the statutory criteria. This ward would have good electoral equality, with 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. We have therefore decided to adopt this ward as part of our draft recommendations.

Hythe Rural and Hythe

56 Hythe is the second-largest settlement in the district, after Folkestone. The District Council proposed two wards based on Hythe. One was a three-member Hythe ward focused on the centre of the town and the area to the east. The other, a two-member Hythe Rural, comprised the western part of Hythe town and the parishes of Lympe and Saltwood.

57 Hythe Town Council supported the District Council's proposed Hythe ward. However, some town councillors on Hythe Town Council proposed an alternative warding pattern for Hythe. They proposed four wards based on Hythe parish, in contrast to the District Council which had proposed to include the western part of Hythe parish in a ward with the parishes of Lympe and Saltwood. The town councillors' proposal would result in an unacceptably high electoral variance for their proposed Hythe North, as it would have 16% more electors than the district average. Additionally, significant reorganisation of warding arrangements in the rural area around Hythe would be required in order to achieve a pattern of wards with good electoral equality.

58 In response to our consultation on warding arrangements we received a representation from Saltwood Parish Council. Under the Council's proposed warding pattern, Saltwood parish would be included in a Hythe Rural ward. In its representation Saltwood Parish Council stated that it would prefer to be in Hythe ward. It cited the fact that it liaises with Hythe Town Council over highway and planning matters on School Road, their shared boundary. Both Shepway Liberal Democrats and Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party support the proposal to include Saltwood parish in Hythe ward. Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party stated that 'people from Saltwood shop in Hythe and use Hythe's facilities' in support of this proposal.

59 We consider that including Saltwood in Hythe ward would reflect community links in the area and have decided to adopt this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

60 We received another alternative warding pattern in this part of the district. A local resident proposed a ward comprising the parishes of Lympe, Sellindge and Stanford. This proposal would result in a ward with 12% more electors than the district average by 2019. However, this proposal would require a number of significant changes to the Hythe Rural and Hythe wards. We do not consider evidence has been received to justify adopting this warding pattern bearing in mind its knock-on effect. We consider that on the basis of evidence received our proposed Hythe and Hythe Rural wards provide for a better balance between the statutory criteria.

61 Having considered all the warding patterns proposed and the evidence provided in support of them, we have decided to adopt the Council's Hythe and Hythe Rural wards, subject to the inclusion of Saltwood parish in the former, as part of our draft recommendations.

62 Our proposed three-member Hythe ward and our two-member Hythe Rural ward would have 7% more and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

North-east Shepway

63 North-east Shepway comprises the North Downs area, to the north of Folkestone. The area consists mainly of rural parishes.

North Downs West

64 The Council proposed a two-member North Downs West ward, comprising the parishes of Elmsted, Lyminge, Monks Horton, Postling, Sellindge, Stanford, Stelling Minnis and Stowting.

65 Postling Parish Council supported the Council's proposal on the basis that it would be 'in a ward with villages that share similar interests and concerns'.

66 Stelling Minnis Parish Council proposed dividing the Council's proposed ward to create two single-member wards. One ward would comprise the parishes of Lyminge, Postling and Stelling Minnis, and the other the remaining parishes in the District Council's proposed North Downs West ward. The parish argued that the existing North Downs West ward 'is already too large and too diverse' and that the District Council's proposed ward was just adding another parish to it. It also stated that the main road links in this part of the district run north-south. The parish also stated that a single-member ward with just three parishes would ensure a good working relationship between the parish councils and the district councillor.

67 However, as detailed in paragraph 20, the District Council informed us that a proposed development in Stanford parish, at Folkestone Racecourse, is no longer going to take place. The Council had forecast that there would have been an additional 321 electors in 2019 than there are presently. This reduction in the forecast has an impact on the ward proposed by Stelling Minnis Parish Council. The ward comprising the parishes of Elmsted, Monks Horton, Sellindge, Stanford and Stowting would have a variance of -20%, which is significantly high.

68 We are therefore proposing, as part of our draft recommendations, a two-member North Downs West ward, which would have 10% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

North Downs East

69 The Council proposed a three-member North Downs East ward which would comprise the parishes of Acrise, Elham, Hawkinge, Newington, Paddlesworth and Swingfield.

70 We received four other submissions regarding this area. Hawkinge Town Council and Swingfield Parish Council stated their preference for being part of a three-member ward (as they are under the current arrangements). Swingfield Parish Council stated it would prefer to be in a ward with Hawkinge.

71 We also received two submissions from local residents in Paddlesworth, who stated that they wanted to be part of Hawkinge parish. However, we are unable to amend parish boundaries as part of this review.

72 Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party proposed including Newington parish in Cheriton & Morehall ward (discussed in paragraph 76), which is one of the proposed wards based on Folkestone. They argued that residents of Newington use shopping facilities at Cheriton and that there is a road link between the areas. We consider

that the M20 and Channel Tunnel entrance complex provide a clear division between Folkestone town and the rural area to the north. The majority of the Council's proposed Cheriton & Morehall ward is south of the M20 and so we consider there would not be strong community links between this area and Newington parish.

73 We did investigate whether the proposed three-member North Downs East ward could be divided to form wards which were smaller in geographic size. Our investigations indicated that a two-member Hawkinge ward, comprising the parish of Hawkinge, and a single-member Swingfield & Newington ward covering the remaining parishes would result in electoral equality of 6% more and 6% fewer electors than the district average by 2019, respectively. We note that these wards would both provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality and effective and convenient local government. However, we have limited evidence as to whether this pattern of wards would reflect community identity.

74 Having considered the evidence received we are content to adopt the Council's North Downs East ward as part of our draft recommendations. This three-member ward would have 3% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. We welcome comments on whether dividing this ward into a single-member ward and two-member ward (as outlined in paragraph 73) would better reflect community identity and provide for effective and convenient local government.

Folkestone

75 Folkestone is the largest settlement in the district. The town is parished and has an active town council. Shepway District Council proposed seven wards based on the town, with Sandgate ward including within it an area outside of Folkestone town.

Folkestone West

76 The Council proposed two wards in the western part of Folkestone: a three-member Cheriton & Morehall ward and a two-member Sandgate ward. Its proposed Cheriton & Morehall ward followed parish boundaries on its northern, southern and western boundaries. Its eastern boundary would follow the A2034, running up to the M20 and the Channel Tunnel entrance.

77 The Council's proposed Sandgate ward includes Sandgate parish, as well as part of Folkestone town. We received some submissions which opposed the Council's proposed wards in this area. Shepway Liberal Democrats opposed the Council's proposed Sandgate ward, stating that the proposal would divide the community.

78 District Councillors Love and Bunting (both Folkestone Harvey West) argued that Sandgate was a separate community from Folkestone, with Sandgate Hill being the dividing point between the communities. The Councillors proposed a different pattern of wards from the Council's proposed Sandgate, Cheriton & Morehall and Folkestone Central wards. We considered that, while the proposals had merit, the proposed boundary between Councillors Love and Bunting's Harvey and Sandgate wards was not easily identifiable and departed considerably from the existing parish boundary.

79 We consider that the District Council's proposed boundary between Cheriton & Morehall and Sandgate is more easily identifiable. Given the geographic positioning

of electors in this area and the need to achieve good electoral equality, it has been necessary to include some part of Folkestone with Sandgate parish. We have departed from the Council's proposed boundary between Sandgate and its proposed Folkestone Central ward (discussed below). However, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposed three-member Cheriton & Morehall ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. Sandgate would have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

Central and East Folkestone

80 We are proposing some modifications to the Council's proposed wards in the centre of Folkestone. We consider that the area of housing off Broadmead Road, north of the railway line, ought to be included in a ward with properties to its north, rather than included in the Council's proposed Folkestone Central ward to the south. The railway would provide a clear, recognisable boundary in this area, and we are proposing that this area off Broadmead Road become part of an enlarged Folkestone East ward.

81 In order to achieve good electoral equality, while ensuring that communities are not divided, we are proposing to combine the Council's proposed Foord and Folkestone East wards, along with the aforementioned area around to the north of Broadmead Road, to form a three-member ward. This modification results in our three-member Folkestone East ward having a variance of 2% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. However, this modification does not provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality in the proposed three-member Folkestone Central ward. Therefore, we are proposing two further modifications to the Council's proposed Folkestone Central ward.

82 We are proposing that the boundary between Sandgate and Folkestone Central runs along Shorncliffe Road, before going south along the backs of properties on Godwyn Road. The boundary would then continue south to join the parish boundary at Radnor Cliff. We are proposing to have the ward's eastern boundary incorporate Peter Street and Queen Street and run between Tontine Street and St Michael's Street. This boundary would be more easily identifiable on the ground than the boundary proposed by the Council. This boundary would also ensure that there are complete internal road connections throughout the Folkestone Central ward. These modifications would result in the three-member Folkestone Central ward having 4% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

83 Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party proposed including the area off Hill Road, which includes Dallas-Brett Crescent and Keyes Place, in Folkestone Harbour ward. The Council had included this area in its proposed Folkestone East ward. We consider that using the A260 in this area would be more recognisable as a boundary between the wards. Using this boundary also improves the electoral equality of both wards. Our three-member Folkestone East and two-member Folkestone Harbour wards would have 2% more and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

84 Shepway District Council also proposed a single-member Folkestone Park ward. We are content to adopt this ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward would have 6% more electors than the district average by 2019.

85 During consultation on warding patterns we also received a representation from Folkestone Town Council proposing an increase in the number of town councillors, to reflect anticipated additional responsibilities currently under negotiation with the county council and district council. The Town Council suggested the number of town councillors should be increased from the current size of 18 to 25. We have not adopted this proposal as part of our parish electoral arrangements for Folkestone Town Council (see paragraphs 88–90). We did not consider that the Town Council provided sufficient evidence to persuade us that such a large increase was justified at this time. We also considered that such a substantial change to the number of town councillors for the area would best be considered as part of a community governance review, which the District Council may wish to undertake after this electoral review.

86 Overall our draft recommendations for Folkestone are for one single-member ward, two two-member wards and three three-member wards. None of our proposed wards would have an electoral variance greater than 10% by 2019.

Conclusions

87 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2019 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2012	2019
Number of councillors	30	30
Number of electoral wards	13	13
Average number of electors per councillor	2,750	2,960
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Draft recommendation

Shepway District Council should comprise 30 councillors serving 13 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

88 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and

Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between divisions or wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division or ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

89 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Shepway District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

90 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Folkestone parish.

Draft recommendation

Folkestone Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, the same as at present, representing seven wards: Central (returning four members), Cheriton & Morehall (returning four members), Folkestone East (returning four members), Folkestone North-East (returning one member), Harbour (returning two members), Harvey West (returning one member) and Park (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

91 There will now be a consultation period of twelve weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Shepway District Council contained in this report. We will fully take into account all submissions received by 9 September 2013. Any submissions received after this date may not be taken into account.

92 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Shepway and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names and parish electoral arrangement. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during our consultation on these draft recommendations. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

93 Express your views by writing directly to:

Review Officer
Shepway Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, consultation.lgbce.org.uk

94 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations made during consultation will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Shepway District Council and at our offices in Layden House (London) and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

95 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, irrespective of whom they are from.

96 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

97 After the publication of our final recommendations, the review will be implemented by order subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. When made, the draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the next elections for Shepway District Council in 2015.

98 These draft recommendations have been screened for impact on equalities; with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

4 Mapping

Draft recommendations for Shepway

99 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Shepway District Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed ward boundaries for Shepway District Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Shepway District Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Appendix A

Table A1: Draft recommendations for Shepway District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Cheriton & Morehall	3	8,455	2,818	2%	8,690	2,897	-2%
2	Folkestone Central	3	8,137	2,712	-1%	8,496	2,832	-4%
3	Folkestone East	3	8,383	2,794	2%	9,026	3,009	2%
4	Folkestone Harbour	2	5,373	2,687	-2%	5,786	2,893	-2%
5	Folkestone Park	1	2,994	2,994	9%	3,149	3,149	6%
6	Hythe	3	9,076	3,025	10%	9,518	3,173	7%
7	Hythe Rural	2	4,746	2,373	-14%	5,526	2,763	-7%
8	New Romney	2	5,680	2,840	3%	6,151	3,076	4%
9	North Downs East	3	8,491	2,830	3%	9,114	3,038	3%
10	North Downs West	2	5,074	2,537	-8%	5,334	2,667	-10%
11	Romney Marsh	2	6,010	3,005	9%	6,282	3,141	6%

Table A1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Shepway District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	Sandgate	2	4,175	2,088	-24%	5,555	2,778	-6%
13	Walland & Denge Marsh	2	5,920	2,960	8%	6,168	3,084	4%
Totals		30	82,514	–	–	88,795	–	–
Averages		–	–	2,750	–	–	2,960	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Shepway District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number

Appendix B

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews.

Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council

PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

From: Graham Gibbens, Chairman of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee
Geoff Wild, Director of Governance and Law

To: Electoral and Boundary Review Committee – 25 July 2013

Subject: Electoral Review of Canterbury

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report informs the Committee of the consultation by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on proposals for the number of Councillors who should sit on Canterbury City Council.

1. (1) On 10 January 2013 Canterbury City Council passed a resolution to submit an expression of interest to the LGBCE to join the programme for an electoral review in the near future. The reasons given were that it had been over ten years since the last review and bearing in mind the future financial situation there was a general feeling amongst Members that the size of the Council would be too large for the demands made upon it. The current size of Canterbury City Council is 50 Councillors. The responses to the LGBCE's preliminary consultation with Canterbury City Council from the City Council and the Canterbury City Council Liberal Democrat Group are attached as **APPENDIX 1**.

(2) In response to this on 25 June 2013, the LGBCE started a consultation inviting proposals for the number of City Councillors who should represent Canterbury. (copy of the letter from the LGBCE to Mr Carmichael, Chief Executive of Canterbury City Council is attached as **APPENDIX 2**) The Commission is initially consulting on the number of 38 Councillors for Canterbury City Council. The consultation will close on 6 August 2013.

(3) The LGBCE intends to publicise the conclusions from the review in September 2013 and will then run a twelve week public consultation from 24 September until 16 December 2013. After this date the Commission will formulate their recommendations which they expect to publish in March 2014. This will be followed by a twelve week consultation. The Commission will then formulate their final recommendations which we expect to publish in late 2014.

Recommendation: The Committee is invited to consider whether it wishes to respond to the LGBCE consultation on the initial proposal to reduce the number of Councillors on Canterbury City Council from 50 to 38.

Background Documents

Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Canterbury Review
<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/canterbury-fer>

Contact details

Peter Sass

Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694269

Canterbury City Council

Submission on Council Size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 10 January 2013, Full Council resolved to submit an expression of interest to the LGBCE to join the programme for an Electoral Review in the near future. The basis for the review is that the council has not undergone a review for over ten years, it needs to accommodate new governance arrangements and ensure that the size of council reflects the demands made upon it bearing in mind the challenging budget situation.

The LGBCE wrote to the council in March 2013 confirming that the council could be included in the programme of electoral reviews for 2013.

2. Background

The starting point of an Electoral Review is to establish a council size. This is the number of councillors required to deliver effective and convenient local government. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) decides the Council Size and will consider proposals from the city council and other relevant stakeholders that put forward proposals when making its decision. Before the council size is determined, the LGBCE make a 'minded to' recommendation which will be subject to a public consultation.

Once the council size has been established, the second phase of the review will be to develop future warding patterns for the Canterbury district.

This paper sets out Canterbury City Council's proposal for a council size. The proposal has been developed by the council's Political Management Member Panel. The role of this cross-party Panel is to consider constitutional issues of the council in detail and make recommendations on them by a majority vote to Full Council.

In developing the proposal for council size, the council's Political Management Member Panel considered how the council functions now and how it plans to function from 2015 onwards in terms of:

- The Governance arrangements of the council
- The Scrutiny function
- The representational role of councillors in the local community

3. Summary of the council's submission

The council is putting forward a case for a reduction in council size from 50 to 38 councillors. The reasons for this proposal are dealt with in detail throughout this paper but can be broadly summarised as:

- The last Electoral Review of the council took place between 2000-01 when the council was on the cusp of moving from the committee system of political management to Executive arrangements in response to the Local Government Act 2000. The council introduced Executive arrangements in 2002 and as a result, the role of councillors and the council's decision making structure have changed significantly since the last electoral review. The average number of committee meetings per councillor has reduced from 5.2 to 1.5 meetings. Under the committee system the workload was more evenly spread between councillors. The Executive arrangements have meant that the workload between councillors now varies considerably and the council could continue to effectively take decisions if the council size was reduced to 38.
- The Political Management Member Panel has recently reviewed the council's governance arrangements. The Panel has recommended that the council should continue to operate a 'Strong Leader' model of governance from 2015. To deliver this preferred model of governance the Panel has developed a decision making structure which best meets the business needs of the council and representational role of Members. The council's current decision making structure is to an extent influenced by the number of councillors rather than business needs. To most effectively deliver the business needs of the council, the Panel concluded that the optimum council size would be 38.
- The council has changed the way that services are delivered locally since the last electoral review took place. A large proportion of the council's business is now delivered through shared services. Highways Services has been transferred to Kent County Council. The council has and continues to develop relationships with community groups to deliver services on its behalf. For example, Whitstable Castle, the district's leisure centres and the Horsebridge Arts and Community Centre in Whitstable are directly run by partner organisations. Councillors have overseen the development of these changes but once implemented, their role has evolved to become a monitoring and scrutiny one. As a result there has been a reduction in the business dealt with through the council's decision making process which means that it could continue to function effectively with a reduced size of 38 councillors.

4. The council's governance model

4.1 Full Council

The council currently has 50 councillors elected every four years. At the time of writing this submission one seat is vacant following a resignation in January 2013.

4.2 Leadership

Since May 2011 the council has operated a 'strong leader' and Executive governance model. The Leader has not chosen to delegate functions to individual portfolio holders and decisions that have not been delegated to officers are taken collectively by the Executive.

4.3 Executive

The Executive currently consists of nine councillors including the Leader although in the past it has been 10 councillors. Executive meetings are scheduled on a monthly basis and invariably there is a substantial workload to be dealt with at each meeting.

As a result of the Local Government Act 2000, the council has operated Executive arrangements since 2002. Prior to 2002 the city council was governed by a committee system of political management. The decision making structure the council used to support the committee system model is set out at Appendix A. The structure is based on the committees appointed by Full Council in 2001 and shows there were three main service area committees (policy, community services and development and planning) plus sub-committees and working groups appointed by those committees.

An assessment of the number of committee meetings held in 2001/02 (the last year that the council operated the committee system) compared to number of committee meetings held in 2011/12 has been made. The comparison shows a similar number of meetings were held under both models of governance. There were 113 meetings per year under the committee system and 136 under our present Leader and cabinet model. However, the committees had higher memberships and as a result the workload of members in delivering the councils governance function under the committee system was far greater. Councillors shared 261 places on 16 committees or sub-committees - an average of 5.3 committees per councillor. Under our current

Leader Executive arrangements councillors share 76 places on 9 committee or sub-committees - an average of 1.5 committees per councillor.¹

Average number of committee places per councillor in 2001/02 (Committee System)	Average number of committee places per councillor in 2011/12 (Leader and Cabinet)
5.3	1.5

Whilst this gives an average workload, it is of course for each political party to allocate places on committees. At the present time there are 9 Executive councillors (including the Leader), the Lord Mayor has a civic role and 40 councillors perform the council's non-Executive functions². Of the non-Executive councillors, three sit on four committees, five sit on three committees, 19 sit on two committees, 10 sit on one committee and there are three councillors that do not sit on any committees.³ This includes a seat which has been vacant since January 2013.

The move away from the committee system to Executive arrangements has had a significant impact on the role of councillors in the decision making process. Previously there were 22 councillors on each of the service committees that took decisions and the workload was more evenly spread between councillors. Multiple committees meant a higher number of councillors were needed for decisions to be taken. Now just 10 Executive councillors are directly involved in decision making outside of the regulatory committees and Full Council.⁴ This has led to the workloads of councillors to vary considerably. For example, whilst the workload of Executive councillors is significant, 13 of the non-Executive councillors are members of just one or no committees. Executive arrangements ultimately mean that fewer councillors are needed for decisions to be taken. As a result, the decision making process could continue to function effectively if the membership of the council was reduced to 38 councillors.

The Localism Act 2011 has given councils the option to return to the former committee system of political management if they wish. The council has recently considered this issue and concluded that it wishes to continue with the present 'Strong Leader' and Executive model as it allows clarity of accountability and a strategic overview when taking decisions.

The council has recently undertaken a governance review. The recommendations of the review will be implemented in the 2013/14 council year and the decision making

¹ Figures based on the council's main committees appointed by Full Council in 2001/02 and 2011/12.

² The current Executive is nine (including the Leader) but it is usually 10 (including the Leader)

³ Number of committees per councillor figures at March 2013 include one vacant seat.

⁴ Including vacant Executive seat following resignation in 2012.

structure to support these changes is set out at Appendix B. The council has also reviewed how its decision making structure should operate from 2015. This structure is set out at Appendix C. The council's Political Management Member Panel developed the structure by assessing the committees needed to deliver the statutory business of the council, local requirements and the recommendations of the governance review. It also took account of the workload of councillors both in delivering the business of the council and their representational role. The Panel concluded that the optimum council size based on these factors was 38 councillors. On the basis that political control of the council does not change, the structure will be implemented in 2015.

An assessment of the councillor workload to deliver the structure to be introduced from 2015 compared to the council's current structure is set out in the table below:

Council size	workload
50	Current model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 Executive Members (including the Leader) are involved in Executive activity, an area Member Panel (AMP) and up to one Best Value Review per year. - The Lord Mayor has a civic role outside of the decision making process. - 39 non-Executive councillors share 66 places on the council's eight regulatory and scrutiny committees. On average each non-Executive councillor sits on 1.7 of these committees plus one AMP and 0.7 Best Value or Scrutiny Reviews per year.
38	Proposed future model from 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eight Executive Members: Executive activity, an AMP and up to one Best Value Review per year. - The Mayor: civic role. - 29 non-Executive councillors: share 62 places on eight regulatory and scrutiny committees. An average of 2.1 of these committees plus one AMP and one Best Value or Scrutiny Reviews per year.

The Panel has also considered whether the decision making structure for the council could be delivered by a smaller council size of either 30 or 35 councillors as set out at appendices D and E. The Panel concluded that it could not function effectively with fewer than 38 councillors for the following reasons:

- The membership of the Executive, Overview, Scrutiny and Audit Committees would be too small to effectively deal with the council's business. The posts of Leader and Deputy Leader can be regarded full time and the workload of other Executive councillors can vary depending on the scope of the portfolio,

but is significant. Therefore an Executive of fewer than eight councillors is considered to be too small to effectively deal with portfolio work.

- Similarly, the size of the Overview, Audit and Scrutiny Committees would be too small to cope with the workload if the council size was either 30 or 35 councillors. In particular, the council's scrutiny function has a strong focus towards commissioning small panels to carry out task and finish reviews and there are no plans to change this approach. A larger pool of councillors that can be drawn on to carry out these reviews and deal with other scrutiny and audit work is needed than a council size of either 30 or 35 would allow.
- The smaller council sizes would ultimately mean councillors would be spread too thinly across the number of committees set out in these structures. This could lead to capacity issues for example, finding substitutions when councillors were unable to attend their committees.
- Too small a council size would deter people of working age from becoming councillors due to the time commitment that would be required particularly at Executive level. Currently the council has a good level of representation of younger councillors and it would not wish to see this change as a result of the workload becoming unmanageable
- A higher number was required to fulfil the representational role of councillors across a city, two coastal towns and a large rural area which have distinct characters and their own local priorities. As explained later in this submission, councillors have roles on outside bodies, provide a key link to parish councils and residents associations in their wards and champion community interest groups. The impact of a change in council size on their ability to deal with casework has also been assessed. The results of the 2011 Councillor Survey showed that city councillors spent approximately 18 hours per month responding to constituents. Using the survey results as a guide, the approximate average increase in workload per councillor that a smaller council size could create is set out below:

Council size	Approximate average number of hours responding to constituents	% change
30	30	67%
35	26	44%
38	24	33%
50	18	
National average for shire district councils⁵	26	

The results National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010 show that for shire district councillors, the average number of hours per week spent engaging with constituents, conducting surgeries and answering queries is 6.1 hours per week.⁶ This gives an average per month of 26 hours. Whilst the results of the city council's survey are an approximate average, it is indicated that a reduction in council size to 38 would not suggest an increase the workload of councillors beyond the national average. The Panel also considered that the increase in time spent dealing with casework would be manageable with a council size of 38 particularly as electronic communication methods had made it easier for councillors to respond to constituents. However, given the distinct geography of the district and the level of work involved in council business and on outside bodies, a council size of fewer than 38 would increase the workload of councillors to an extent that could undermine the community leadership and representational role.

The Panel also considered that a council size of more than 38 was not necessary to effectively deliver the council's business and the representational role of councillors going forward.

5. Regulatory

5.1 Development Management Committee

The Development Management Committee meets monthly to determine planning applications and consider other planning matters. The council has gradually increased delegation of planning matters to officers and in 2012 reduced its membership from 16 to 11 councillors.

⁵ National Census of Local Authority Councillors, analysis of results by type of authority.

⁶ Local Government Group, National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010, p7 and analysis of results by type of authority.

The Development Management Committee also appoints a Sub-Committee to undertake site visits and make recommendations back to the Committee. The Sub-Committee met 5 times in 2011/12.

Councillors new to the Development Management Committee undertake mandatory training and there is also refresher training available once a year.

Changes to the Development Management Committee

The council have proposed a further reduction in the membership of the Development Management Committee from 11 to 10 Members to be implemented from 2015. The council does not anticipate any further changes to the arrangements of the Development Management Committee or the delegation of planning matters.

5.2 Licensing Committee

The Licensing Committee comprises 11 councillors and meets annually to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair and to appoint a Sub-Committee. The Licensing Sub-Committee consists of 3 Members drawn from the Licensing Committee on a rotational basis.

In order to accommodate the transfer of the licensing function to the city council as a result of the Licensing Act 2003, the Licensing Committee initially comprised 15 councillors. Whilst the licensing workload remains high, systems are now in place for it to be effectively managed and consequently the Committee membership reduced to its present 11 councillors in 2010.

The city of Canterbury has a large number of licensed premises which results in the need for the Sub-Committee to meet frequently. 49 cases were heard at 24 meetings of the Sub-Committee in 2011/14. The cases included private hire and hackney carriage and premises licensing.

The Sub-Committee may also undertake site visits to premises in advance of a licensing hearing. Site visits usually takes place immediately before the hearing.

Councillors new to the Licensing Committee have to undertake mandatory training and there is also refresher training available once a year.

Changes to the Licensing Committee arrangements

- The council's governance review has recommended that an officer be given delegated authority for matters relating to private hire and hackney carriage licensing currently considered by the Licensing Committee. Between April and December 2012 there were 27 hearing which dealt with private hire and

hackney carriage licensing. An officer assessment concluded that the number of Licensing Sub-Committee meetings could be reduced by 10-15 meetings per year (35-40%).

- Another change that is being implemented at the start of the 2013/14 Council Year is that the Licensing Committee will be combined with the General Purposes Committee. This will create a single Licensing and General Purposes Committee and reduce the overall number of meetings by two per annum. The Licensing meetings will be incorporated into the General Purposes cycle of meetings.
- The council has proposed a reduction in the membership of the Licensing and General Purposes Committee from 11 to 10 Members.

5.3 General Purposes Committee

The General Purposes Committee comprises 11 Members and meets five times per annum.

The Committee is responsible for licensing and registration including caravan sites, market and street trading and food premises. Its remit also covers health and safety at work, elections, pensions and appeals and other miscellaneous items not covered by officer delegated powers.

Changes to the General Purposes Committee arrangements

The General Purposes Committee will be combined with the Licensing Committee from the beginning of the 2013/14 Council Year. Refer to section 5.2 above.

5.4 Standards Committee

The council's Standards Committee comprises 4 Members. In 2011/12 there were five scheduled meetings of which three were cancelled and no complaints were considered.

There are no proposed changes to the Standards Committee.

6 Scrutiny function

The council's scrutiny function has evolved since its introduction in 2002. Originally the council had an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (membership 16) and a Scrutiny Sub-Committee (membership 9). In 2011 two separate committees were

created – an Overview Committee and a Scrutiny Committee to clearly define the two aspects of the function. There are 11 places on each committee. The total reduction in membership to deliver the function has therefore reduced from 25 places to 21 places.

The roles of the two committees can be summarised as follows:

Overview Committee

- Formulates, scrutinises or reviews the policies of the Council and the Executive.
- Receives briefing on matters of major local interest.
- Pre-budget scrutiny
- Petitions

Scrutiny Committee

- Considers call-ins
- Develops and manages the annual scrutiny review programme
- Monitors the progress of the recommendations from scrutiny reviews and Best Value Reviews
- Scrutinises council and East Kent shared services performance monitoring reports
- Conducts crime and disorder scrutiny

Scrutiny Panels

The council has a comprehensive rolling programme of scrutiny reviews which is developed in consultation with councillors, members of the public and officers and managed by the Scrutiny Committee. Small panels of five Members carry out short topic or in-depth reviews of specific topics relating to council or partner services. Recent review topics include allotments, highways, High Speed 1, cycle safety and the development of the council's Engaging Communities Policy. There are approximately three scrutiny reviews per year although this is dependent on the length and nature of individual reviews.

Health Scrutiny Panel

The council also has a Health Scrutiny Panel. As the council does not have a statutory role in health scrutiny this panel meets on an ad hoc basis to respond to health consultations that affect the district's residents. The Panel has not met this

year and met once in 2011/12. The council will have a future role in health via a councillor appointment to the Local Health and Wellbeing Board which is a sub-committee of the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board.

Changes to the scrutiny function

- An outcome of the recent governance review is that the council's Audit Committee will be combined with the Scrutiny Committee to create a Scrutiny and Audit Committee from the beginning of the 2013/14 Council Year. The new committee will provide a link between scrutiny and the register of risk management and corporate governance. The membership will be 11 councillors reducing the overall number of places on council committees by five and eliminating four meetings per year.
- The council have proposed a reduction in the memberships of the Overview Committees from 11 to 10 councillors to be implemented from 2015.

The council does not anticipate any further changes to the scrutiny function.

7 Other council working groups/panels/boards

In addition to the regulatory and scrutiny functions, the council also has established other councillor groups that take account of local priorities. These are summarised below:

7.1 Joint Transportation Board

The Joint Transportation Board comprises nine City and nine County Councillors and meets quarterly. The Board acts as a forum for consultation on highways issues, performance and prioritisation of bids for future work. It specifically considers:

- Capital and Revenue funded works programmes
- Traffic regulation orders
- Street management proposals

There are proposals to streamline the number of consultations considered by the Joint Board. There are no further planned changes to the arrangements of the Joint Board.

7.2 Whitstable Harbour Board

The Whitstable Harbour Board comprises six city councillors and three co-opted independent members. The Board has the status of a council committee and discharges the functions relating to the Whitstable Harbour.

There are no planned changes to the arrangements of the Board.

7.3 Area Member Panels

There are five area Member Panels – Canterbury, Herne Bay, Whitstable, Rural North and Rural South. In practice Rural North and Rural South meetings take place at the same time. All councillors are automatically a member of the panel covering their Ward.

The Panels are mainly consultative bodies and consider matters of interest to the local community. Each Panel has an ‘opportunities fund’ of £10,000 per year which can be used to support local improvements, priorities and community projects. The Panels have delegated powers to take decisions over how this fund is spent.

Changes to the Area Member Panels

The Rural North and Rural South Panels receive less business than the other panels. As a result they have decided to reduce the number of their joint meetings from six to four for the 2013/14 Council Year.

There no further planned changes to the arrangements of the Area Member Panels.

7.4 Executive Working Groups and Best Value Reviews

- Executive Working Groups are established to oversee key council projects, policies or local issues for example the Local Plan, Environmental Policy and Student Community. They are politically proportionate and include the relevant portfolio holder and where appropriate external representatives. The regularity of working group meetings is variable depending on business need. Some meet on an ad hoc basis for example when a policy is being reviewed. Others meet with greater regularity as serve as a point of liaison between the council and external bodies.
- Best Value Reviews are conducted by small politically proportionate panels of councillors including the relevant portfolio holder. They are task and finish in

their approach and are commissioned to carry out policy development or to look at specific issues. Example review topics include Houses in Multiple Occupation, public conveniences and housing allocations. Up to three Best Value Reviews may be carried out each year. The programme of Best Value Reviews is designed to complement the scrutiny review programme. The key difference is that they are commissioned by the Executive and the portfolio holder is represented on the Review Team. Best Value Review topics tend to be service and policy based whilst scrutiny review topics are generated by councillors and members of the public and can also have an external focus.

8 Demands on time

There is an adopted role profile for councillors describing the key tasks for each role within the council. The role profile is set out at Appendix F. The council has a comprehensive training programme for councillors. The programme includes mandatory training for councillors on the audit, planning, licensing and standards committees. There is also discretionary training provided which at the last induction included topics such as casework and constituency business, scrutiny skills, budget, social media and IT. The training programme is set out at appendix G.

The council holds an event for prospective councillors to explain the role of councillors and how time commitment is divided between council meetings, reading reports and constituency work.

Members were asked at part of the 2011 Members' Survey to give an approximate indication of the amount of time spent responding to constituents each month. 34 councillors responded to the survey. The average time spent responding to constituents based on the survey results was approximately 18 hours per month. The responses ranged from three and 50 hours per month indicating local need and individual Member engagement in constituent work is variable.

Members were also asked if the level of constituency work was more or less than expected before joining the council. The response is set out below:

More than expected	4	28.57%
Less than expected	9	64.29%
No reply	1	7.14%

Finally, Members were asked if the number of council meetings attended was more or less than expected before joining the council. However, no conclusion from the responses could be drawn as the results were evenly split.

The majority of councillors share 62 places on 45 outside bodies across the district and nationally. Each year the council reviews all outside bodies to establish the number of meetings held and obtain feedback on the appointment. A scrutiny review in 2009 assessed the role of councillors on outside bodies and an outcome of the review was a small reduction in the number of bodies the council appoints to. A list of the outside bodies, number of councillor representations on each and approximate number of meetings held per annum (where known) is provided at appendix H.

The time commitment for councillors on these outside bodies is variable but in some cases significant. Some bodies hold meetings once or twice per year whilst others meet on a quarterly or six monthly basis. Two of the bodies involve a far greater time commitment with two councillors on the Whitstable Castle Trust attending meeting approximately 24 times per year and the two councillors on the Herne Bay Pier Trust attending meeting approximately 40 times per year. However, it is for the individual councillor to decide the level of their involvement on each outside body and the workload they take on as a result.

9. Representational role of councillors

Councillors carry out their representational role in a variety of ways and it very much down to the individual. In dealing with casework, councillors tend to take an in-depth approach to resolving specific issues raised by residents following the case through from start to finish.

The political groups are supported by two group secretaries whose role is to support councillors with casework, for example directing a councillor to the correct service or body when an issue is raised. The group secretaries also co-ordinate group meetings and communicate matters between councillors. Councillors are also able to access services directly to resolve issues.

Councillors use a range of communication methods to engage with constituents which include visiting individuals, phone, email, social networking sites and newsletters. Some councillors hold surgeries which are advertised in the local paper. Councillors can also receive casework from residents' associations where they are members of them. Electronic communication methods and in particular email have made councillors more accessible to constituents. As a result councillors potentially receive more correspondence from constituents but it has also become easier for them to respond more efficiently.

The council holds events for young people to engage with councillors as part of Local Democracy Week. These include a competition for young people to become 'Lord

Mayor for the Day' and an event for school children to develop campaigns which they present to councillors.

There are 26 parish councils and several active residents associations concentrated in the urban areas of the district. The frequency of parish council or resident association meetings is unique to each group and it is for the individual councillor to decide how frequently they will attend but generally councillors are active members of these groups. There is also a parish forum held twice per year attended by councillors representing rural wards in the district.

The community issues for Canterbury city, the coastal towns and rural areas are distinct and councillors also have a role in championing community groups of interest for their areas. Some examples include Friends of Duncan Downs, the Seasalter Project, Friends of Prospect Fields, the Canterbury Society and Whitstable Society. This role includes attendance and meetings and providing a direct link into the council.

10. The future

10.1 Localism and policy development

One of the aspirations behind the Big Society is that local people and community groups will become more empowered to run and improve local services themselves. Similarly, the Localism Act gives community based organisations new rights to bid to run council services where they can demonstrate they have the capacity to do so.

The council has already developed strong relationships with many community based organisations that provide services on its behalf or run services which benefit the communities they serve. Whitstable Castle, Rural Street Runner, Leisure Centres, the Horsebridge Arts and Community Centre and Herne Bay Festival are directly run by a partner with grant, concessions or in kind support from the council. The way these services are delivered has changed since the last electoral review. Decisions about service delivery have reduced for the council. Instead, councillors have a monitoring role or are appointed to these bodies as representatives of the council to assist with their work.

How the council manages these relationships and develops new ones is a critical issue and is set out in the council's Engaging Communities Policy which was developed by a scrutiny panel. The role of councillors in services or facilities transferred to the direct management of third parties is more of a monitoring role than where services are provided directly by the council. Councillors may be

represented on the management board or equivalent depending on the scale of the operation and the risks involved.

10.2 Service delivery and finance

Since the last electoral review of the council there have been significant changes to the way some services are delivered locally which have also changed the role of councillors.

As mentioned above, some council services are now delivered by community based organisations. Another key change since is that until 2005 Kent County Council operated a partnership arrangement for highways services with the district authorities. This meant each district council had joint responsibility for the highways in their areas and hosted a Highways Partnership team. The County Council ended these arrangements on the basis of greater efficiency and took back sole control of Kent Highways Services in April 2005. This has reduced the workload of councillors and their role has changed. Councillors are consulted on highways matters through a Joint Transportation Board, raise and signpost matters to County Council and also have a role in scrutinising the highways service.

The council has taken two approaches in response to recent financial constraints:

1) Shared Services

The council together with neighbouring authorities in East Kent has created shared services for a range of support and frontline services. The council has entered into joint arrangements for personnel and payroll and waste collection.

EK Services has been created to deliver the council's ICT, revenues and benefits, and customer contact centre functions on behalf of Canterbury city, Dover and Thanet district councils. Landlord housing services are now delivered by an Arms Length Management Organisation on behalf of Canterbury city, Dover, Shepway and Thanet district councils.

The role of the councillors in handling the business of these services has shifted to a client and monitoring role. For example, there is councillor representation on the East Kent Housing Board and areas boards. Initially an East Kent Joint Arrangement Committee and an East Kent Joint Scrutiny Committee between the four district councils and Kent County Council that would be sharing services were created. In practice only three of the district councils share services and so these committees will be abolished and a new committee created between these

three councils. Decisions relating to shared services have been delegated to officers and the East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee has not had a role in taking decisions around the delivery of services. There will no longer be a joint scrutiny committee as this monitoring role is handled by the individual district council scrutiny committees. The council's Scrutiny Committee considers the quarterly performance reports from all shared service partners.

2) Customer Focus Review

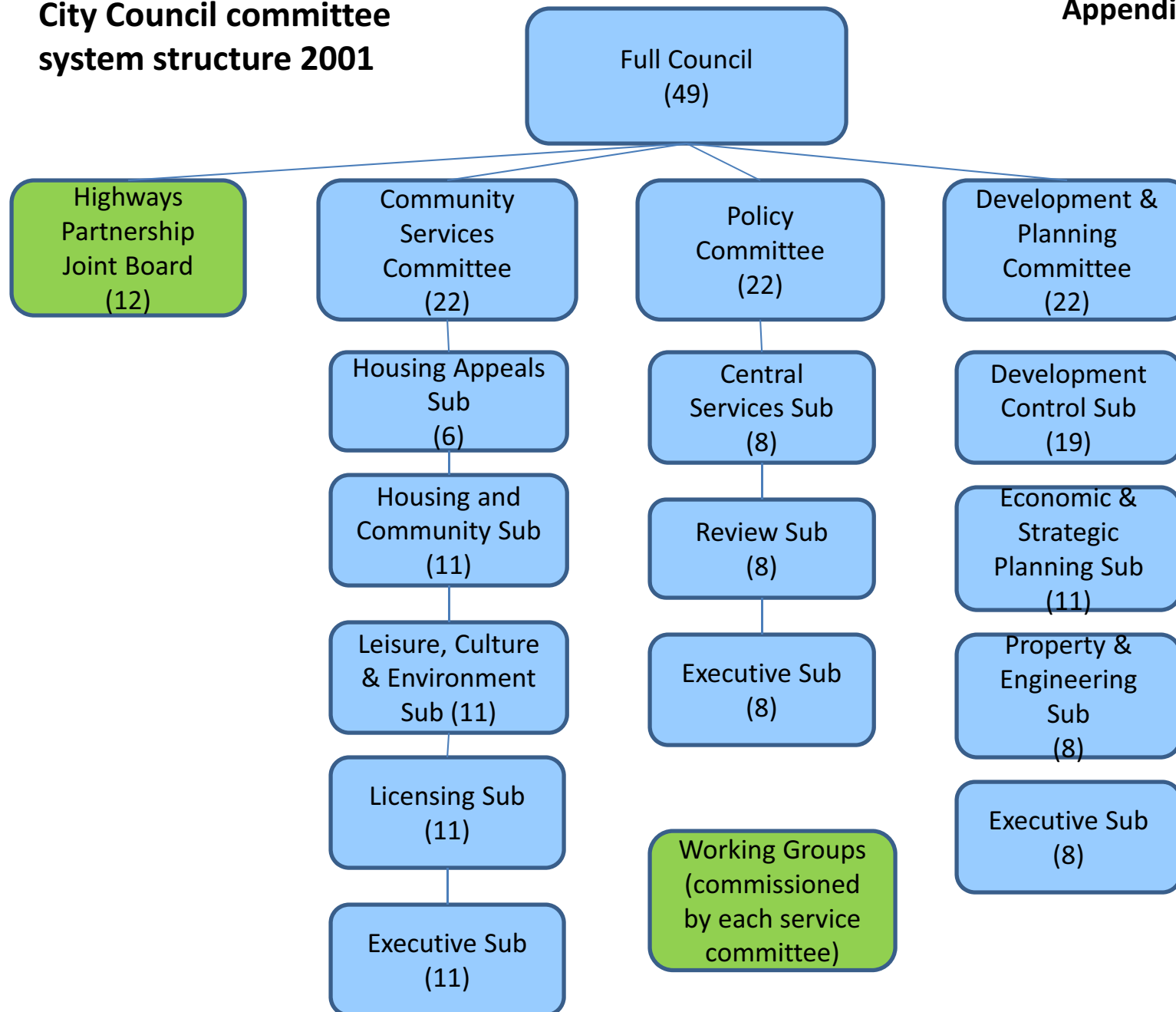
The council is currently undergoing a programme of Customer Focus Reviews of services that have not entered shared service arrangements. The purpose of the reviews is to reduce the costs of services by delivering them in different and more efficient ways. For example, recent reviews that have concluded have created a more streamlined development management service and introduced a single neighbourhood enforcement team. These changes are operational and therefore do not affect the level of service delivery. The reviews are overseen by a councillor working group but beyond this have not changed the role of councillors or their workload.

11. Conclusion

Based on the evidence set out in this submission and accompanying documents the council believes 38 councillors is the right number to manage the council's business in an effective and efficient way whilst ensuring that councillors are able to fulfil their representational role.

City Council committee system structure 2001

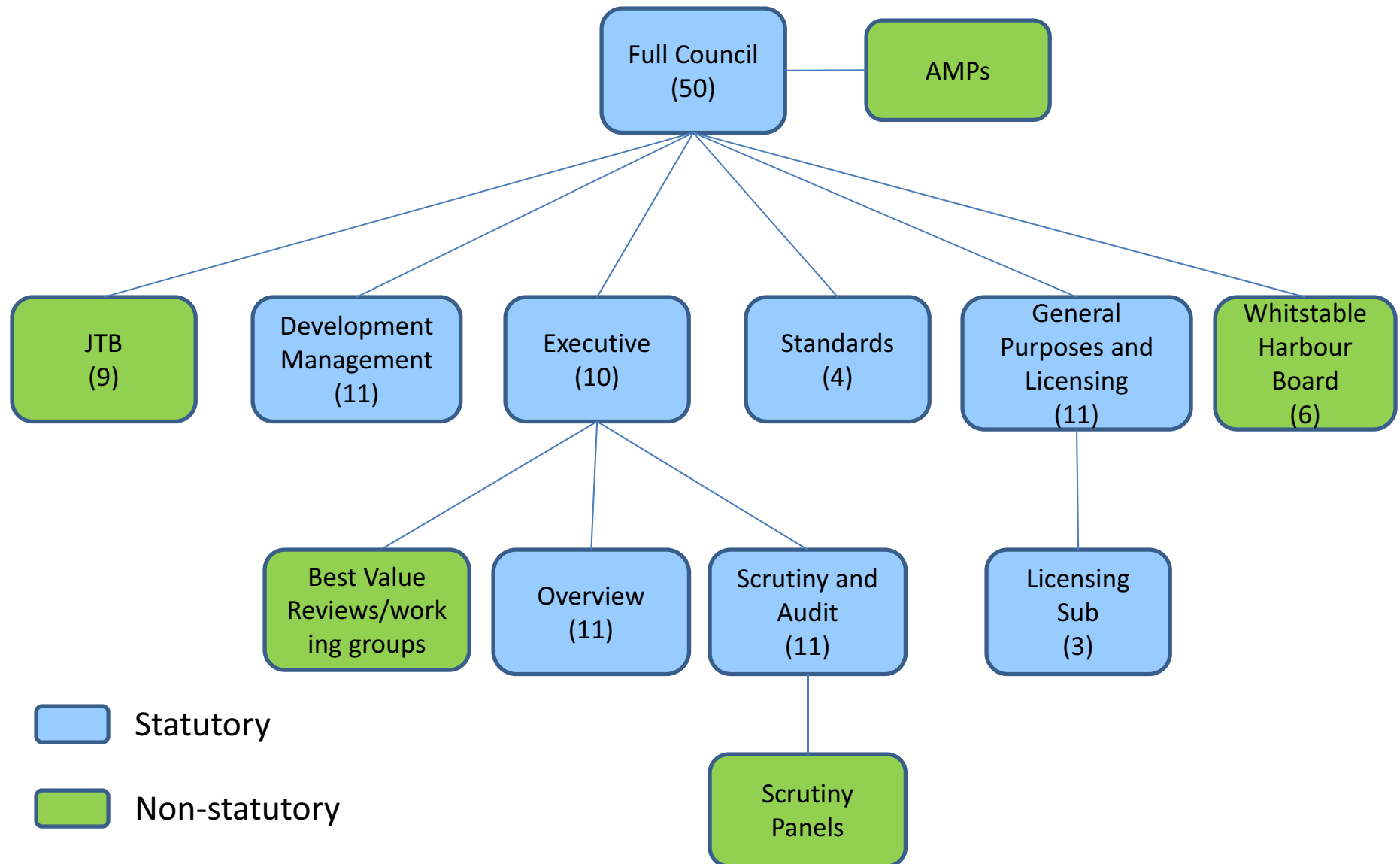
Appendix A



Decision making structure from 2013/14

Appendix B

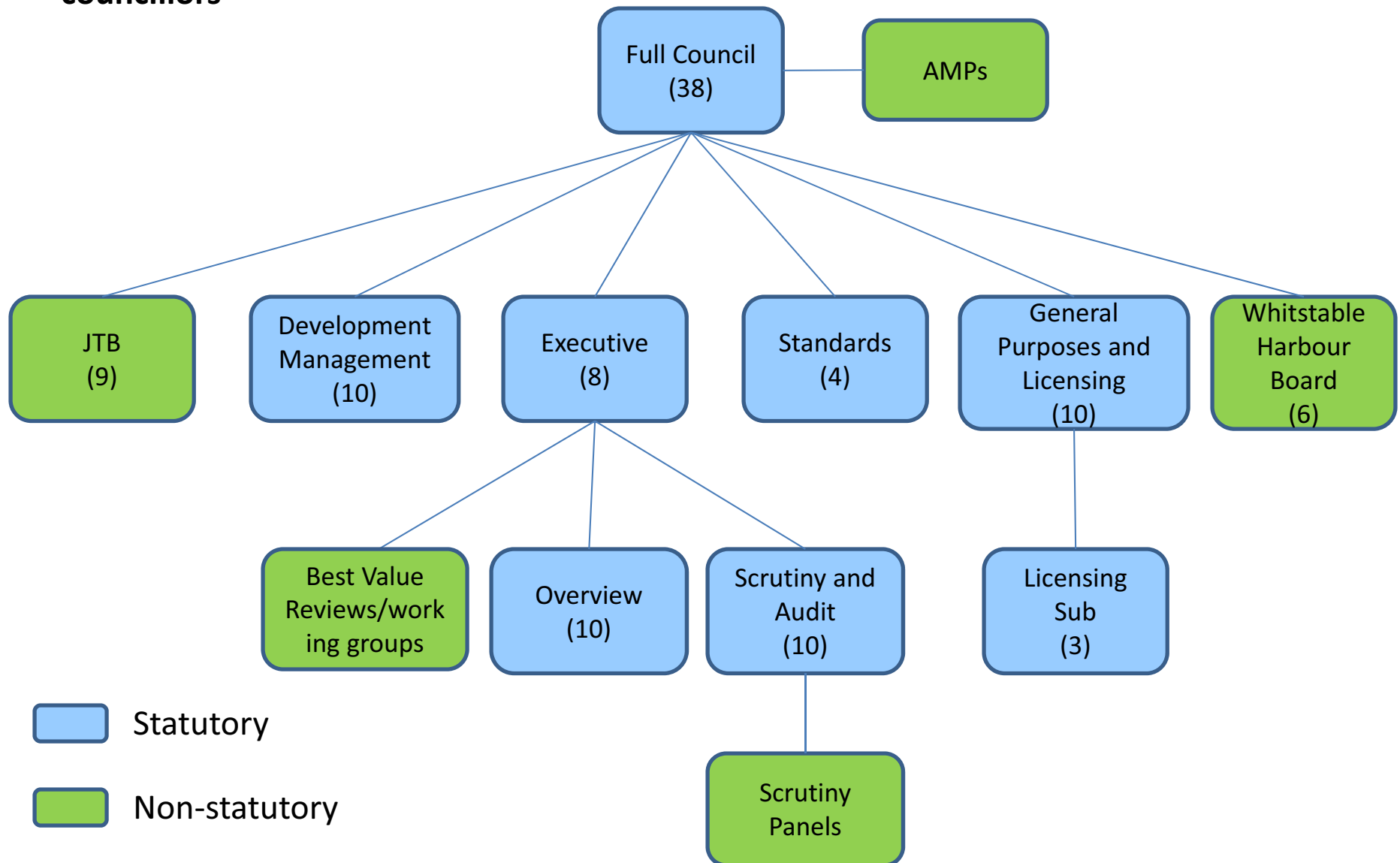
Page 57



**Proposed future decision making
structure from 2015 based on 38
councillors**

Appendix C

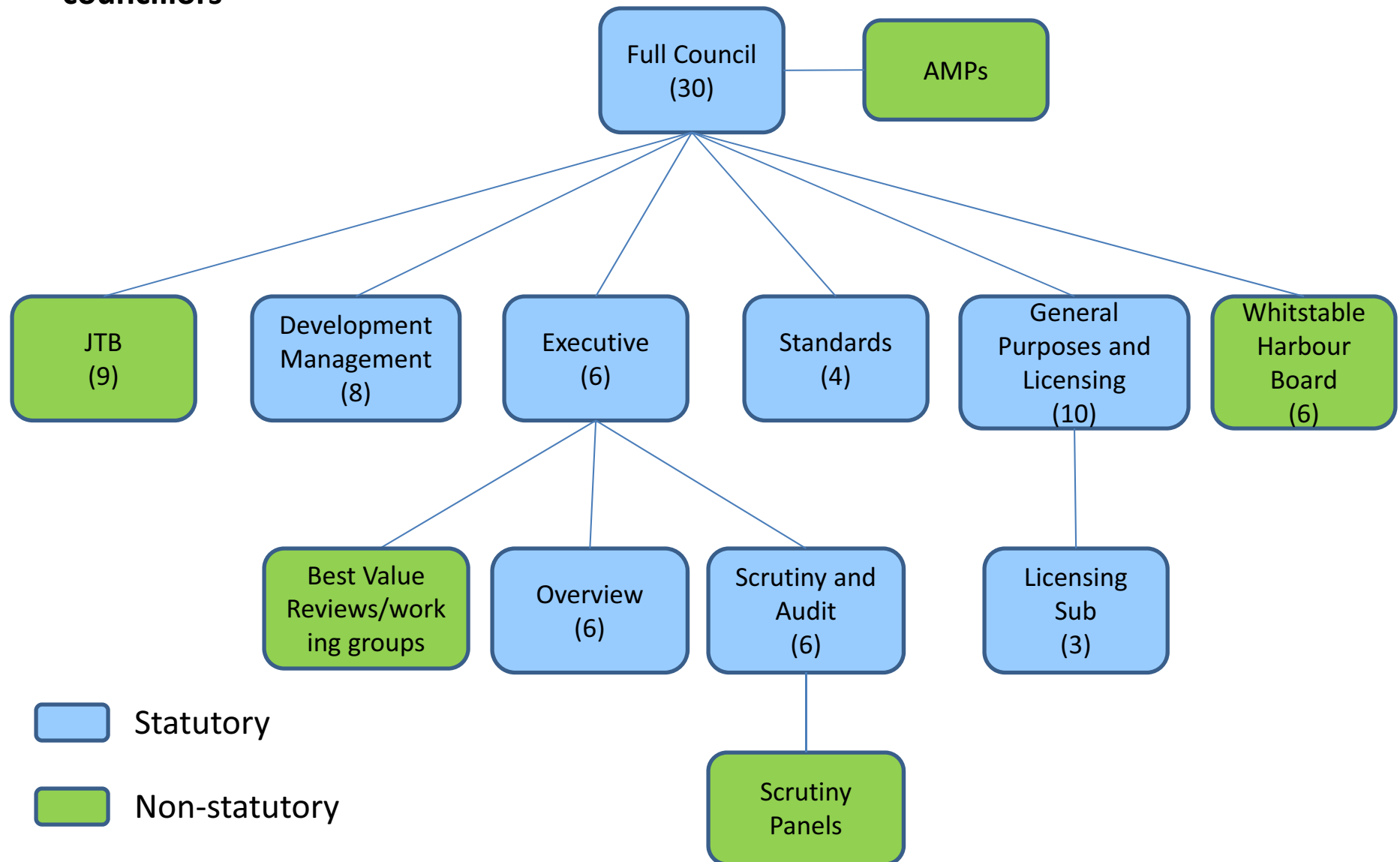
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Example future decision making structure from 2015 based on 30 councillors

Appendix D

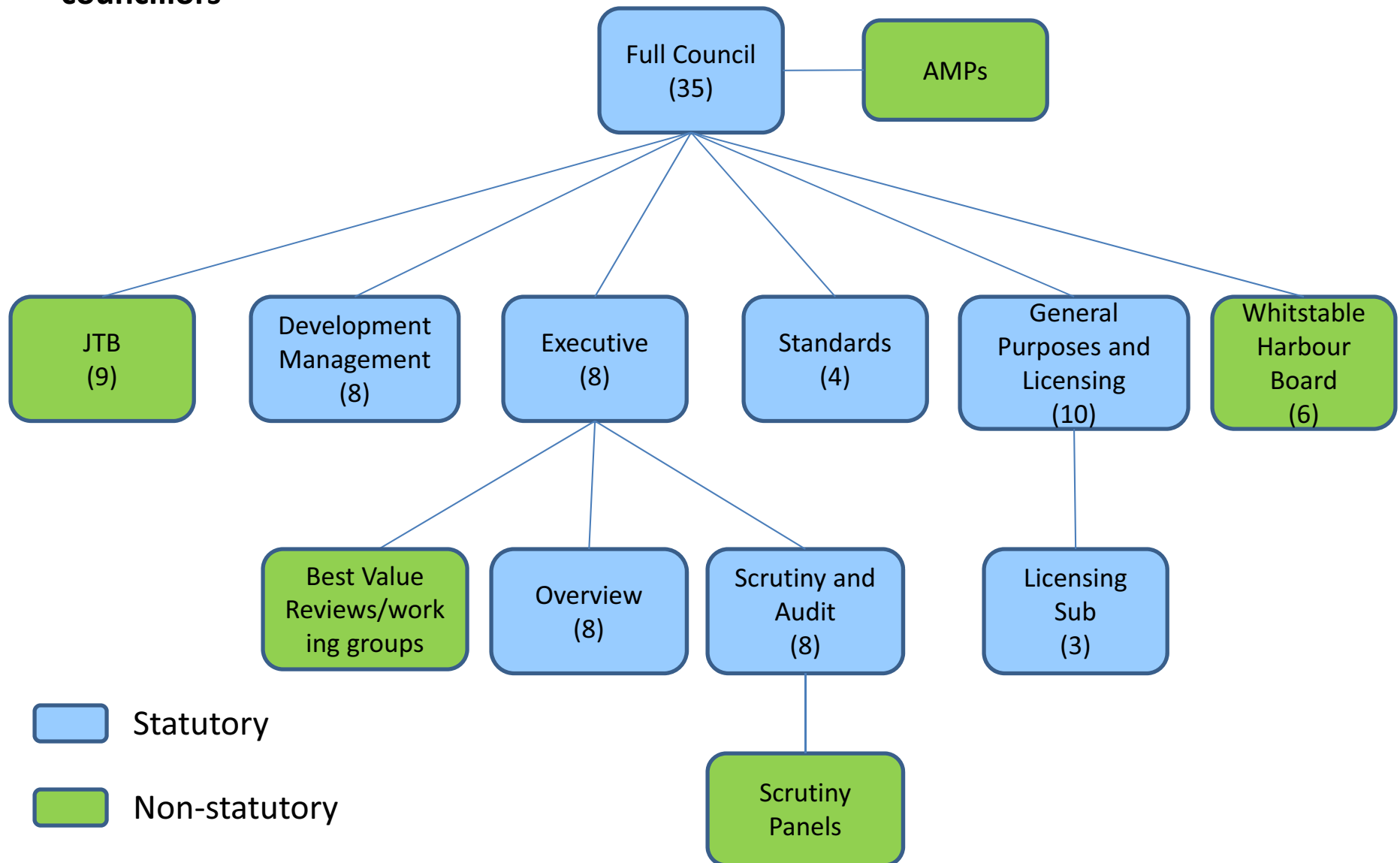
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**Example future decision making
structure from 2015 based on 35
councillors**

Appendix E

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**Electoral Review Submission on Council Size to the Local Government
Boundary Commission for England from Canterbury City Council Liberal
Democrat Group**

The origin of the approach to the Boundary Commission came from an ongoing internal exercise to seek cost reductions across the council. This was coupled with some suspicion that it might also at the same time reduce the number of back-benchers as well! Although the issue of costs is not within the remit of the Boundary Commission this has actually been the driver of the council's application. Reducing the number of committee places per councillor and re-organising committees reduces both councillor costs and officer costs and naturally means that councillors will spend less time on committee work. If the main function of councillors is to sit on committees then clearly such an approach will guarantee the need for fewer councillors. However, we challenge the original premise for making some of these changes and we do so particularly given the growing population of the district.

We believe there are two prime inter-linking strands in the role of the councillor :-

1. Representing constituents.

2. Sitting on committees.

1. Representation.

Canterbury city councillors represent just over 3,000 residents per councillor. This is the highest figure in east Kent. If the Local Plan is adopted our population will go up from the current 151,000 to about 200,000 by 2031. This would mean if we stayed at our current level of 50 councillors we would be representing a population of 4,000 constituents per councillor in 18 years time. If we moved to the suggested model of 38 councillors this would rise to 5,260 constituents per councillor over the same period.

Obviously a larger number of constituents would lead to a more full time role. This has implications for attracting more younger councillors which we have argued for some time would ensure that councillors better represent the age structure of their constituents. It is significant that the more full time role of county councillors is reflected in their generally being older and less representative in terms of age. It has also been suggested that having responsibility for more constituents would mean that councillors would have to be paid more which rather negates the cost saving argument.

It is a given that all councils are different. The area covered by Canterbury City Council can loosely be characterised in four parts:

(1) the urban area of Canterbury – a historic city. A cultural hub. Dominated by public sector employment. Strong retail and tourist sectors.

(2) the urban area of Herne Bay – a traditional seaside town facing some difficulties in adjusting to the loss of the traditional holiday business. Large elderly population. Some areas of economic deprivation.

(3) the urban area of Whitstable - the importance of the harbour and a range of small individualistic shops. Some urban renaissance from second home owners and the influx of London money. Elements of a bohemian and artistic community.

(4) a number of villages around these urban areas. Villages ranging from the classic chocolate box Kent village to ex-mining villages with continuing levels of significant social deprivation.

We would argue that there are considerable differences between the various communities in the district and indeed these are fiercely safeguarded. Whitstable residents frequently complain about playing second fiddle to Canterbury! Consequently councillors need to have detailed local knowledge and be sympathetically attuned to these different communities.

For some years there has been considerable public debate and disquiet over the governance of the district. Residents' groups such as the Canterbury Society have called variously for a more representative Executive, more power to Area Member Panels, a Town Council structure etc.

Recorded information on the amount of time spent by councillors in their representational role is sketchy and varies considerably from councillor to councillor. We certainly have councillors in our group who regularly spend between 10 and 20 hours a week on community issues related to their role as councillors. These can roughly be described as :-

- (1) Formal casework such as housing issues, refuse problems, noisy neighbours etc.
- (2) Local neighbourhood issues such as contentious planning applications, licensing and late night problems which often involve formal or informal groups of residents.
- (3) Ongoing interaction with residents' associations, parish councils, outside bodies etc.

Many residents and councillors value the fine grain local relationship which ensures local issues can be democratically voiced. This level of interaction cannot easily be achieved by county councillors with their large constituencies.

Representation means different things to different councillors. Straight forward casework has indeed been greatly eased with the availability of email and electronic media, but it has also increased the amount of casework because access by constituents to councillors is now also much easier. However, representation spreads into working with various residents' groups,

community organisations, parish councils etc. Community groups, particularly in Canterbury and Whitstable, have become much more vocal and influential. Cuts to local authority funding have spurred some of these groups into taking action to enhance, protect and improve their communities themselves and this means more involvement by councillors in those actions.

2. Committee work.

When the council was forced to abandon the old committee system it was opposed by all three parties at the time. However, the Political Management Working Group now disagrees that a return to the old committee system would be desirable. This is unsurprising because the Political Management Working Group is essentially made up of members of the Executive who would of course lose power if the committee system was re-adopted.

The old structure had fewer formal meetings than the new system. Old system 2001/2 113 formal meetings, new system 2011/12 136 formal meetings. So it could well be perceived to have been more efficient.

Some individual committees have already been reduced in size over the years. Given the diversity of the district we believe it is important that different areas are represented at committee. For example, the Development Management committee, which regularly attracts lengthy public debate with 50 to 100 members of the public attending, comprised 19 councillors in 2001. It has been progressively cut to 15 and then to the current number of 11. It is questionable that members are currently sufficiently familiar with some applications. With a bigger population in the district in 2031 and 25% more houses we would question that decision-making of a current committee size of 11 would be sound, let alone the proposal of a reduction to 10 or even 8. It must not be forgotten that already occasional absences means the committee sits with lower numbers. Only nine councillors decided on an application for 100 houses in April 2013.

This committee also needs to be balanced between our four main areas (see earlier). Currently it comprises four Canterbury councillors, four rural and three from Whitstable with no representation from Herne Bay. A smaller committee is only likely to add to this distortion. Similar concerns apply to other committee reductions which will make them less representative.

Working groups and panels can be very effective in developing new policy detail or recommending changes to the way in which the council operates. Many are topic based and most meet for a relatively short period of time, often with quite an intensive period of meetings – sometimes fortnightly or monthly. Some, like the Local Plan Working Group, can meet over a period of years with considerable volumes of paperwork and quite lengthy meetings. We would stress the importance of such groups and the role of councillors within them in contrast to formal meetings such as Full Council which is increasingly a rubber-stamping exercise with meetings that can be as short as half an hour.

Equally one needs to consider the work of councillors on outside bodies which varies hugely. Some meet once or twice a year and comprise merely formal meetings such as the University Court or the Canterbury Archaeological Trust. Others may have relatively few formal meetings, but demand huge amounts of time such as the Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre which only has six formal meetings a year, but the councillor who is chair of Trustees probably visits at least twice a week and spends several hours a week on the business of that organisation.

Work with residents' associations and parish councils is not recorded within the city council's submission, but often the decisions made at committee need to be communicated to those organisations and indeed their desires fed through to committee. Thus we would suggest that the role of councillors at committee should be considered to be subservient to their representational role.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations.

- (1) Different councillors put in different degrees of effort and time. Some regard committees and committee work as their prime functions. Others spend most time in their representation role. Some are able to devote a great deal of time. Others, perhaps because they are full time employed, much less. They may find day time meetings impossible unless they have especially understanding employers.
- (2) We recognise that cost issues are not part of the remit of the Boundary Commission, but inevitably it is an issue at a time of financial stringency in local government. In the Canterbury district 30 of our 50 councillors draw less than £6,000 per annum each in terms of remuneration including expenses. About 40% of the cost of elected members is attributable to the nine Executive members. The proposal recommended by Canterbury City Council is to cut Executive members from nine to eight ie. 11% and backbenchers from 40 to 29 ie. 28%. Reducing the size of the council will therefore not significantly reduce costs, especially if back-benchers have to be paid more in order to compensate them for larger constituencies. This would be particularly important if we are to attract younger councillors who will be working and will need to combine their chosen careers with their council work.
- (3) The balance between the representational role and the committee role is a matter of judgment. It is our view that committee work should be subservient to the representational role. Thus cutting committees is not an argument for cutting councillor numbers.
- (4) The uncertainty about the outcome of the Local Plan, which is now out to consultation and then to examination by the Inspector, means that the likely future growth of the district is uncertain. There is currently considerable debate as to whether we should be looking at growth to 200,000 or 180,000 by 2031. However, it is clear that there will be significant population growth.

- (5) There is also uncertainty about the current demands from some quarters for town councils. The issue of a community governance review was considered recently by the Executive, but a decision was made to proceed with an electoral review first. We believe the advice of the Boundary Commission should have been followed where a governance review precedes an electoral review. Without a governance review it is difficult to make firm recommendations about councillor numbers.
- (6) It is suggested that some committees should be abolished/merged/reduced in numbers. This is used to support the case for a reduction in the number of councillors although we question this in point (3) above. We would support the case for some re-organisation of the committee structure and indeed some of the proposals made seem perfectly sensible. However, we would actually prefer to see a return to something akin to the old committee structure which actually had fewer formal meetings although it involved more councillors on a much more consensual basis. Furthermore, with a population in the district that has grown 50% faster than the south east average over the last 12 years and is now set to grow at a 50% higher rate than this over the next 18 years, we question that a reduction in councillor numbers is commensurate with proper democratic representation. As has been noted earlier, we already have the highest population to councillor ratio in Kent.
- (7) However, we do accept that given the reduction in revenue, the local authority has had to re-organise its services and indeed to cut and reduce a number of its activities. This has to be balanced with an increase in the population for which this authority is responsible. Particularly, given that the population is already distorted by a large student population which has grown considerably during the last 15 years and which does not show up in the statistics. When considering councillor numbers there is a balance between the work that the council can undertake on its reduced budget and the increased population.
- (8) Thus we would accept that the current 3,000 electorate per councillor does work and given the reduction in council services we accept that this might even rise to 3,500. Looking forward to 2031 this would suggest that rather than reducing councillor numbers we should be looking to a modest increase to around 57 from the present 50. This might be staged over the next 18 years or introduced about half way through that period.

Cllr Alex Perkins and Cllr Nick Eden Green
on behalf of Canterbury City Council Liberal Democrat Group

10 May 2013

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The
**Local Government
Boundary Commission**
for England

Mr Colin Carmichael OBE
Chief Executive
Council Offices
Military Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1YW

25 June 2013

Dear Mr Carmichael

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CANTERBURY

Following my letter of 18 March 2013, I am writing to formally announce the start of the electoral review of Canterbury City Council. Canterbury is being reviewed following a request from the City Council.

A copy of the Commission's press release and posters advertising the start of the review are being sent to your Council. It would be much appreciated if you could publicise the start of the review by placing copies on display at local information points, and by taking such other steps as you consider appropriate to bring the review to the attention of the public and other interested parties.

Review timetable

The first stage of the review starts today, 25 June 2013. The Commission will initially consult on the number of 38 councillors for Canterbury – we refer to this as council size. The closing date for submissions on council size is **6 August 2013**. Once we have considered all the representations we receive, we will take a provisional decision on council size.

It is intended that these conclusions will be publicised in September 2013 on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk, and be sent to your Council, to those organisations and individuals listed at the end of this letter, and to all those who submit representations during this stage. We will then begin a public consultation on the ward boundaries which we expect to run from 24 September 2013 to 16 December 2013.

After this date the Commission will formulate our draft recommendations, which we expect to publish in March 2014. A twelve-week period of public consultation will follow this, during which time we would very much welcome your views on what is being proposed. Following this consultation period, the Commission will formulate the final recommendations; we expect to publish these in late 2014.

Please note that in the interests of transparency, copies of all representations we receive during this review will be placed on the Commission's website, at

Local Government Boundary Commission for England, 3rd Floor Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8534; Fax: 020 7298 6788; reviews@lgbce.org.uk; www.lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

Guidance on how to have your say on council size is available in the consultation area consultation.lgbce.org.uk. Technical guidance can be found on the *Policy and publications* page of our website.

Parish electoral arrangements

The Commission will make recommendations on the number of councillors, the number and boundaries of wards, and the names of wards. It can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils i.e. the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of parish councillors for each parish ward. However, this is only in circumstances where the parished area is to be divided between wards. The Commission cannot, as part of this review, consider changes to the external boundaries of a parish, or create new parishes. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, changes to external parish boundaries are the responsibility of local authorities.

Correspondence and Enquiries

Your Council's main contacts at the Commission will be:

- Lucy Ward, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review.
email: lucy.ward@lgbce.org.uk; Tel: 020 7664 8520;
- Tim Bowden, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews
email: tim.bowden@lgbce.org.uk; Tel: 020 7664 8514.

I am copying this letter to the organisations and individuals listed below.

Yours sincerely



Archie Gall
Director of Reviews
archie.gall@lgbce.org.uk
020 7664 8509

cc Kent County Council
 MPs and MEPs with constituency interests in Canterbury
 Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
 Kent Fire and Rescue Service
 Canterbury and Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group
 Kent Association of Local Councils
 Parish and town councils in Canterbury
 Local organisations in Canterbury