



ELECTORAL REVIEW OF BROXTOWE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Submission by Broxtowe Borough Council on Council Size

1. Introduction

1.1 This submission sets out the Council's response to an invitation from the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) to put forward a case for Council size.

1.2 The Council's submission has been developed by a cross-party working group of borough councillors. The submission will be considered at a meeting of the full Council on 26 June 2013.

1.3 The submission has been informed by:

- briefings given by the LBGCE to the borough councillors, leaders of the political parties on the Council, town and parish council representatives and key officers of the Council
- current and projected electorate figures for Broxtowe Borough

1.4 The Council was advised in July 2012 that the LGBCE intended to commence an electoral review of the Council with the findings of the review being effective from October 2014.

1.5 The criteria for the commencement of an electoral review is triggered should 30% of wards have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average and/or one ward has an electoral variance of more than 30% from the average.

1.6 Based on the electoral figures at 1 April 2013 the Council's current electoral arrangements indicate that the ward of Eastwood North and Greasley (Beauvale) has a variance of -36% (or 1,237 electors per councillor) with the following wards all having a variance above or below 10% indicating areas where councillors are representing a higher or lower number of electors than the borough average of 1,925 electors per councillor:

Awsorth – below average at 1,710 or -11%
Beeston Central – below average at 1,594 or -14%
Eastwood South – above average at 2,382 or +24%

2. The Council's Submission

Broxtowe's Local Distinctiveness

2.1 Broxtowe has a population of 109,500 (2011 census) and covers an area of some 31 square miles. It is characterised by a more urban south with the separate settlements of Attenborough, Chilwell, Beeston, Bramcote, Stapleford, Toton and part of Trowell together comprising over 60% of the borough's population and forming part of the western side of the built up area of Greater Nottingham.

2.2 The north is more rural with the largest settlements at Eastwood (population approximately 11,000) and Kimberley (population approximately 6,200). All of the rural parts of the borough are within the defined Nottingham–Derby green belt, which comprises 64.4% of the total borough area.

2.3 Historically and culturally there are strong links to the world famous writer D H Lawrence with a heritage centre and museum in Eastwood (his birthplace) with much of his writing influenced by the coal mining heritage and landscape in the north of the borough which he referred to as 'the country of my heart'. The majority of Broxtowe is within the former Nottinghamshire coalfield, which influences the setting for a number of mature landscape areas concentrated in the central and northern parts of the borough and with easy access to the Derbyshire countryside and the Erewash valley.

Economic Issues

2.4 Broxtowe is a relatively affluent borough being ranked 219 out of 326 English local authorities in the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation (with 1 being the most deprived). Unemployment in the Borough was 3.8% in October 2011, which is a significant rise from the previous year. However, rates vary significantly between wards with pockets of unemployment concentrated in more deprived areas, in particular the three wards of Eastwood South, Chilwell West and Stapleford North which also have higher proportions of unskilled workers. In education, skills and training two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the same ward (Eastwood South) rank in the top 10% most deprived nationally. There is therefore a need to focus resources on providing opportunities to develop further training to enable residents to access skilled employment, particularly given manufacturing decline in these areas.

Social/Community Issues

2.5 There is a strong history of manufacturing, pharmaceutical and communications businesses in the borough. Whilst the continuing decline of manufacturing has led to a need to re-skill the workforce, established businesses such as Boots and the excellent location of Beeston Business Park puts the borough in a strong position to attract new inward investment.

2.6 At the 2011 census 7.2% of the borough's population was of ethnic origin with the largest BME groups being Indian and Chinese. The strong influences of the University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University and Castle College are attracting a student population to Beeston. These are key drivers attracting significant student population to the borough, in particular high proportions of

international students, as both the University of Nottingham and the Further Education College in Beeston have strong links with China and South East Asia.

Governance arrangements

2.7 There are currently 44 members of Broxtowe Borough Council. The regulatory committees are compiled as follows.

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Meetings per year</u>
Council	44	10
Cabinet	8	17
Development Control	10	11
Alcohol and Entertainments Licensing	10	4
Licensing and Appeals	13	4
Overview and Scrutiny	10	10
People and Places Scrutiny	9	8
Sustainable Communities Scrutiny	9	8
Services Scrutiny	9	8
Standards	10	4
Housing Payments	10	4
General Purposes and Audit	8	4

In addition to the above a joint executive committee exists with a neighbouring authority to oversee bereavement services in both areas. Three executive members are on this committee which meets four times per year.

2.8 The current cycle involves 92 formal meetings of the Council and committees per year. This results in a total of 1206 potential member attendances per year.

2.9 In addition to the formal meetings there are a large number of working groups, informal meetings and task groups which make up the business workload of councillors and enable the standing committees and Council meetings to function effectively. Many of the working groups play a key role both in terms of financial strategy and policy development and can effectively be regarded as an extension to the more formal committee meetings outlined above. Examples include the Budget Working Group, the Planning Policy Working Group and the Housing Performance Group. Further information on the number of members appointed to working groups and informal meetings is attached at appendix 2.

2.10 In addition to formal and informal meetings, the Council makes appointments of representatives to outside bodies. There are 32 such appointments at present to 28 bodies. These involve a range of different commitments in terms of time and frequency of meetings. Further details are attached at appendix 3.

2.11 With the introduction of the modernising agenda for local councils the borough operates a system of Community Action Teams (CATs) in order to increase contact between local councillors and their constituents. The previously successful resident forum model of the early CATs was used to provide later CATs with a broader community remit, to enhance the role of councillors and reflect their leadership role within the Council. There is a CAT in all borough wards except Eastwood which has

a CAT covering two wards, making a total of 20. Further information on the number of CAT meetings held each year is attached at appendix 4.

2.12 Current member workloads are not distributed evenly across all members. For example, members in leading positions, (e.g. Cabinet Portfolio Holders and committee Chairs etc.) have a higher involvement in meetings than those who are not in positions of responsibility. Every committee meeting will involve the Chair and Vice Chair attending at least one pre-meeting with the officers.

Summary

The Council's submission to maintain the existing number of members was approved at its meeting on 26 June 2013 on the grounds that:

1. it is in line with the Commission's objective of a review which is to provide for good levels of electoral representation across an authority's area;
2. it will ensure effective and convenient local government for Broxtowe which enables decisions to be taken efficiently.

The key criteria set by the LGBCE for Council size are addressed in the appendix and are cross referenced back to support the reasons below. The responses contained in appendix 1 have been based on a survey of members carried out recently, a copy of which is attached at appendix 5.

In summary, the Council considers that its case can be justified for the following reasons:

1. Decision-making structure

Although Broxtowe has been a Council with no outright overall political control by any one political group since 2003, the Council has developed a strong model of working together across the political parties through the cabinet system, with all main political parties being represented in the cabinet. This is an unusual model of governance compared with some authorities, but one which is supported by all the parties, and which councillors wish to see continue into the foreseeable future.

In such a balanced authority, the size and make-up of the committees has to be at such a level as to ensure that the three main political parties have a realistic representation on each of those committees. In authorities where there is not such a political balance, then this becomes less of a problem and committees with fewer members may be sustainable.

The balanced nature of the Council has meant that councillors have preferred not to give delegated decision making powers to portfolio holders, and instead make decisions mainly within the cabinet system, supplemented by delegations to officers for day to day operations. It is likely that this system will be the preferred model in the future, and therefore maintaining a strong cabinet and scrutiny system will be important to ensuring decision-making effectiveness.

The cross party approach that has been adopted without delegation to individual councillors has helped maintain the good relationships and high regard with which the Council is held. It does however mean that the "burden" of decision making is

handled by a larger group of councillors than may occur in some authorities where a one-party system prevails.

2. Democratic engagement

Broxtowe has developed a pattern of scrutiny committees which review and develop policy and monitor performance. These are multi-party and generally operate in a consensus fashion across the political groups, ensuring political proportionality is reflected. Councillors at Broxtowe place a high value on opportunities for councillors to engage in decision-making. For example the number of full Council meetings was extended from 6 to 10 a year to reflect the importance that councillors place on enabling all members to represent their communities in open democratic debate. Members wish this to continue.

Both the decision-making structure and the desire for a high level of democratic engagement mean that the ideal council size needs to recognise the delicate political balance of the borough and comprise of a sufficient number of councillors to engage with these structures. It is considered that the current level of councillors is the minimum level necessary to enable this system to work well.

3. Community engagement

Another relatively unusual aspect of Broxtowe's arrangements is the degree to which there is a tradition of engaging directly with local communities through what are known as "Community Action Teams" or "CAT" meetings. These are chaired by ward councillors and take place usually three times a year in each ward. Through these meetings matters of concern are raised by local residents, and information is shared. Events are also organised such as "clean ups" and "litter picks", to encourage active citizenship. Although it is relatively time consuming in member and officer time, councillors have felt sufficiently strongly about the usefulness of these meetings, to want them to continue despite continuing spending restrictions. They feel these very much communicate to residents the fact that they place a high value on residents' views and opinions. CAT meetings only really work well if they are local enough to engage meaningful communities who feel a link with the local area which is under discussion. Reducing the number of councillors would undermine this important aspect of the way Broxtowe interacts with its citizens, and this is another reason why councillors feel current numbers should be maintained.

4. Service delivery

Broxtowe has maintained a tradition of almost entirely in-house service delivery, despite spending constraints. The quality of service delivery has been externally recognised as "good", and of a low cost. This pattern has enabled the Council to maintain services through flexible use of its resources, reducing headcount without any compulsory redundancies and without cutting services. The Council has maintained management capacity and a reputation for good performance and delivery, enabling it to take the lead in many shared service arrangements within Nottinghamshire. The Council is proud of this track record but also recognises that careful monitoring and interaction by councillors with such arrangements can be needed, which can be more demanding and complex than if delivery to a single authority were to operate. However, it also means that a sufficient number of councillors are required to monitor and scrutinise performance, since services are delivered in house. The Council believes that this requires at least the current

number of councillors for the role to be properly fulfilled. Any significant reduction would impede the extent to which this level of challenge and oversight could be maintained, and this would be undesirable. Services have neither been out sourced in any way nor curtailed and so there is no justification for changing the number of councillors due to service delivery.

5. Partnership working

The Council is actively involved in partnership working. Whereas many councils have scaled back partnership structures such as local strategic partnerships, Broxtowe is keen to maintain and develop these structures, (in which councillors are actively involved), believing that joint working has produced benefits for the local community. An example is the Greater Nottingham Joint Planning Advisory Board, which Broxtowe took a leading role in establishing, and which chairs and hosts the meetings. This has helped to develop an aligned core strategy across the greater Nottingham area, a considerable achievement of joint working across district, county and city boundaries. Another example of its leadership in partnership working, is the initiative it took to help set up the ARCH group, which is now the national body representing stock retained housing authorities in the country. Initiatives such as these have required dynamic councillor leadership, and Broxtowe wishes to maintain the capacity of councillors to take such leadership roles in partnership arenas. It is considered that maintaining current councillor numbers is essential to enabling this to happen.

6. Future challenges

The funding reductions which the Council has had to address have brought new challenges in terms of how to essentially preserve services with fewer resources and continue to engage fully with its partners and residents of Broxtowe. The Council has been successful in maintaining service levels and it is essential that there is sufficient capacity to enable it to continue to respond to these challenges and meet the expectations of residents and businesses in the borough. For this to be the case it is considered that a diverse set of councillors are required, at least the same number as at present, so that their ideas and expertise can contribute to helping to move the Council forward in the coming years.

Although the electorate is forecast to increase across the borough over the next six years it is not considered that a significant increase in the number of members will be necessary and could be justified. The Council is of the opinion that the existing capacity should be sufficient to ensure effective representation.

Part One – Governance and Decision Making

Leadership:

<p>What kind of governance arrangements are in place for your authority? Does the council operate an executive mayoral, Cabinet/Executive or committee system?</p>	<p>The Council operates the Leader and cabinet executive form permitted by the amended sections 11 and 14 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Council previously operated the Leader and cabinet form of executive permitted by sections 11 and 13 of the Act.</p> <p>The number of members was reduced from 49 to 44 following the last full boundary review completed in 2000. The present Council size is a big factor in determining the current political management, scrutiny and governance arrangements. The cabinet has 8 members and the number of members allocated to non-executive/regulatory functions is determined by that. The current number of members enables the requirement for proportionality to be met on committees. It also takes into account the fact that the Mayor is usually only appointed to 1 committee because of the number of civic engagements which they undertake during their year of office (428 in 2012/13). This effectively reduces the number of members to be allocated to committees to 43. In addition, the current Council size ensures that there are sufficient members of a committee to avoid meetings having to be cancelled because they are inquorate. The number of committee placings is considered to be appropriate and there is no support from members to make any changes.</p> <p>Although the Localism Act 2011 has offered the Council an opportunity to operate under an alternative form of governance, there is currently no desire at Broxtowe to change from the Leader and cabinet model. To ensure that the governance arrangements continue to operate effectively and enable proportionality to be maintained, a similar size Council to the existing is required for the future.</p> <p>(Decision-making structure)</p>
<p>How many portfolios are there?</p>	<p>There are currently 5 portfolio holders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Economy and Regeneration • Resources • Environment • Arts, culture and leisure

	<p>Lead members have also been appointed in the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and disorder • Licensing • Children and Young People cross cutting theme • Equalities cross cutting theme <p>The following member representatives on Local Strategic Partnerships report to the Leader:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Domestic Violence • Crime and Disorder Partnership • Children and Young People • Equalities <p>The range of services provided and the roles and responsibilities which members are required to take on external organisations are such that the current number of councillors should be maintained to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for these key roles to be carried out with a manageable distribution of demands on time.</p> <p>(Decision-making structure)</p>
<p>To what extent are decisions delegated to portfolio holders or are most decisions taken by the full Executive and/or Mayor?</p>	<p>Most decisions are taken by the executive. Portfolio holders do not have any delegated decision making powers.</p>
<p>Do Executive (or other) members serve on other decision making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies?</p>	<p>Executive and non-Executive members have been appointed to serve on a variety of external organisations at a national level e.g.: Local Government Association, regional level East Midlands Councils and county wide level e.g. Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner Panel. In addition, councillors are actively involved in a number of partnerships and responsibilities at both regional and national level.</p> <p>A reduction in Council size would impact on councillors' capacity to represent the Council and provide appropriate input into these organisations.</p> <p>(Partnership working)</p>
<p>In general, are leadership and/or portfolio roles considered to be full time roles?</p>	<p>None of the roles are considered to be full time, although that of the Leader demands a very significant input lasting for several hours each day, including weekends.</p>

Regulatory:

<p>In relation to licensing, planning and other regulatory responsibilities, to what extent are decisions delegated to officers?</p>	<p>Planning decisions in the Council are delegated to the Development Control Committee to determine. In turn all planning decisions are delegated to the Head of Planning with certain exceptions. These are where a matter would be contrary to Council planning policy or where any member requests an application should be considered by the Development Control Committee. In practice the majority of applications are dealt with through officer delegation route. For the period 1 January to 31 December 2010 35 planning applications were dealt with by the DC Committee and 668 by officer delegation. For the period 1 January to 31 December 2011 the numbers are 41 and 703 respectively, and 37 and 653 for 2012.</p> <p>There are two committees which oversee the licensing functions of the Council. The Alcohol and Entertainment Committee deal with all matters relating to the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005. The committee is set up by statute in the legislation and requires a minimum of 10 members and a maximum of 15. Their role includes developing and reviewing the relevant policy statements and determining applications which receive representations through the consultation process by way of sub-committee hearings. Hearings are prescribed by regulation and members require specific training to deal with such applications. There is a recommended table of delegations in the statutory guidance which outlines the role of councillors under the Licensing Act 2003. Alcohol legislation has been subject to a number of changes and amendments and looks to continue to do so in the future. Councillors will need to be aware of these changes. Whilst only three hearings were required in 2012/13, there may be a greater number in 2013/14. It is difficult to predict with any accuracy how many hearings will be held in future as this is dictated by the number of representations received. However, Nottinghamshire Police and the new Police and Crime Commissioner are developing a new alcohol strategy which may impact upon that number.</p> <p>The Licensing and Appeals Committee deals with a number of other matters, HR disciplinary and grievance appeals, Rates appeals, use of square, charitable collections, Taxi matters, Massage and Special Treatments, Sex Shops and Sex Establishments, Hazardous substance consents, and homelessness appeals. This Committee comprises of 15 members together with the equal number of substitutes.</p> <p>There were eight hearings and consideration of two policies in 2012/13 which required the attention of the Committee. As with the Alcohol and Entertainment Committee training is a necessity to enable the role to be properly fulfilled.</p>
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<p>How many members are involved in committees?</p>	<p>All members are appointed to at least one committee. A number are members of a scrutiny group as well as a regulatory committee.</p> <p>Given that there is no desire to see a change in the Council's governance arrangements a Council size similar to that currently would ensure that members can still sit on a manageable number of committees, that comprehensive regulatory and scrutiny functions can be maintained and that the existing committee placings can be preserved thereby ensuring appropriate levels of attendance and reducing the potential for meetings being inquorate.</p> <p>(Decision-making structure)</p>
<p>Is committee membership standing or rotating?</p>	<p>The Committee memberships are standing. They are appointed at the Annual Council meeting each May. Substitutes are appointed to some committees.</p>
<p>Are meetings <i>ad hoc</i>, frequent and/or area based?</p>	<p>A calendar of meetings is agreed each year for the following 12 months – see above for the number of meetings scheduled for the current year</p> <p>It should be noted that additional meetings of the Council have been and are likely to be necessary to deal with significant non-routine issues such as the tram, Aligned Core Strategy and proposed HS2 route through the borough. The significance and importance of these matters is such that briefings have been necessary before members have met to consider these issues, thereby further increasing members' workload.</p>
<p>What level of attendance is achieved? Are meetings always quorate?</p>	<p>An average of 80% attendance is recorded at meetings. Only one meeting has had to be postponed in the last 3 years through being inquorate.</p> <p>By maintaining a similar Council size to that currently would ensure that members can still sit on a manageable number of committees, representation/debate is at an appropriate level and that the number of committee placings can be maintained, thereby reducing the potential for meetings being inquorate.</p> <p>(Decision-making structure)</p>
<p>Does the council believe that changes to legislation, national or local policy will have influence the workload of committees and their members which would have an impact on Council size?</p>	<p>It is expected that workload will increase if members become involved in policy decisions on issues such as the Right to Challenge/Right to Bid. There may also be an increased overview and monitoring role for scrutiny following a Right to Challenge bid.</p> <p>Policy changes will continue to influence the workload of members and committees. Recent examples include welfare benefits reform, which has led to the creation of a</p>

	<p>Housing Payments Committee, and changes to the financing of the Council's housing stock, leading to the creation of a Housing Performance Group.</p> <p>A Council size similar to the current would ensure that there will be sufficient capacity to take on this additional workload.</p>
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Demands on time:

<p>Is there a formal role description for councillors in your authority?</p>	<p>There is no formal role description, although the Member Development Framework which has been adopted as the basis for member training sets out the main activities which councillors will undertake in their various roles, e.g.: as a ward member, scrutiny member, group leader</p>
<p>Do councillors receive formal training for all or any roles at the council?</p>	<p>There is a scheduled programme of member development events set by the Member Development Working Group. These usually take place every 6/8 weeks. Specific training is undertaken by members of the Development Control and Licensing Committees at the beginning of their term of office. In addition, briefings are held for members on changes to legislation which will affect the Council as a whole or their electorate such as universal credit.</p>
<p>Do councillors generally find that the time they spend on council business is what they expected?</p>	<p>Many members find that they are spending longer dealing with case work and preparing for meetings, in particular, than they had envisaged.</p>
<p>How much time do members generally spend on the business of your council?</p>	<p>On average, members sit on 5 committees/working groups, spend around 20 hours each cycle (6 weeks) attending and 3 hours preparing for each meeting. In addition, members also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) attend meetings of the Development Control Committee as ward members to represent the views of their electorate; and (ii) carry out site visits before Development Control meetings; (iii) carry out site visits and other meetings, and undertake research on an individual basis as part of scrutiny reviews in between scheduled meetings of the scrutiny groups. They may also have to prepare reports back to the groups on their findings. <p>A recent survey has also shown that members spend at least 4-6 hours a week on case work. The majority of members attend Community Action Team (CAT) meetings three or four times a year. They need to spend time preparing for these meetings and also following up on any issues raised with officers afterwards.</p> <p>Surgeries are held by most members and often need to follow up on issues raised with them. In some wards, regular door knocking takes place rather than surgeries and in</p>

	<p>others members have a stall in the town centre where residents can meet with them.</p> <p>Members spend on average 4 hours a week communicating directly with residents about ward issues through a variety of means – face to face, e-mails, telephone calls.</p> <p>Although the basis for the review is the number of registered electors, members work for all residents, regardless of their registered status. This is particularly important in the wards where there are high proportions of students (including overseas students), academic staff, migrant workers or service personnel who may not be eligible to register or who choose to register at their home address. The time spent on case work/communicating with non-registered residents should also be recognised as a time commitment on members.</p> <p>A reduction in the number of councillors would impact on their ability to carry out the representational work as well as their business role.</p> <p>(Decision making, Democratic engagement, Community engagement)</p>
Does the council appoint members to outside bodies? If so, how many councillors are involved in this activity and what is their expected workload?	Nineteen members have been appointed to outside bodies. These appointments require members to spend time preparing for as well as attending meetings. The workload varies according to the outside body concerned with some, such as the health lead, being particularly time consuming given the health service changes which have taken place.
Does the council attract and retain members?	Yes – only 8 of the 44 councillors did not seek re-election in 2011.
Have there been any instances where the council has been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of councillors?	No
Do councillors have an individual or ward budget for allocation in their area? If so, how is such a system administered?	No

Part Two: Scrutiny Function

How do scrutiny arrangements operate in the authority? How many committees are there and what is their membership?	Scrutiny is member-led, with topics for review and the direction and outcomes being set by councillors. The scrutiny function is co-ordinated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) which also monitors service delivery and budgets, deals with call-ins and decides which topics should be subject of a scrutiny review. Together with the
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	<p>OSC, 3 Examination and Inquiry Groups (EIGs) carry out the scrutiny reviews. The OSC and EIGs invite witnesses who could be officers, other members, members of the public, members of Broxtowe Youth Council, representatives of voluntary organisations or local businesses, to provide information at meetings to assist with reviews. Site visits are often held between meetings to help members gain a better understanding of a subject. Topics are put forward for review by cabinet, officers, members and members of the public.</p> <p>There are 10 members of the OSC, plus substitutes. Each EIG has 9 members, but does not have substitutes.</p> <p>Positive recommendations and outcomes have resulted from scrutiny reviews. To enable a strong scrutiny function to continue to operate a Council size similar to the existing one is necessary to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to enable the current system to continue and for councillors to spend time preparing for meetings.</p> <p>(Democratic engagement)</p>
<p>What is the general workload of scrutiny committees? Has the council ever found that it has had too many active projects for the scrutiny process to function effectively?</p>	<p>The OSC and EIGs each normally carry out one review at a time, although other items may be considered at a meeting, such as scoping of the next review. A working group may be set up from time to time for a complex review to investigate a topic further/carry out visits.</p> <p>The work programme for all groups is set by the OSC – see below. This ensures that scrutiny functions effectively.</p> <p>A reduction in size would impact on the Council’s ability to deliver an effective scrutiny programme through either not reviewing so many topics or not undertaking such thorough reviews.</p> <p>(Democratic engagement)</p>
<p>How is the work of scrutiny committee programmed? Is the work strictly timetabled?</p>	<p>An annual scrutiny work programme has recently been introduced for the first time which sets out the work for itself and the three Examination and Inquiry Groups for the 12-month period. The work programme comprises priority issues but will also allow for the inclusion of ad hoc and urgent items which may arise during the year.</p> <p>A draft work programme was agreed by the OSC at its first meeting in the new municipal year.</p>

<p>What activities are scrutiny committee members expected to carry out between formal meetings?</p>	<p>Site visits to other authorities, Council services or external organisations are often carried out between meetings to enable members to gain a greater understanding of the issues relating to the topic being reviewed. Members also meet with officers and/or external organisations on a one to one basis and report back on their findings.</p>
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Part Three: Representational Role of Councillors

See Demand on Time for further detail

<p>In general terms, how do councillors carry out their representational roles with electors? Do members mainly respond casework from constituents or do they have a more active role in the community?</p>	<p>As well as their case work, members hold surgeries and attend Community Action Team meetings in their wards – see above Demands on Time.</p> <p>A reduction in the number of councillors would impact on their ability to carry out this work effectively, which is considered to be a key part of their role.</p> <p>(Community engagement)</p>
<p>How do councillors generally deal with casework? Do they pass on issues directly to staff or do they take a more in depth approach to resolving issues?</p>	<p>Members contact officers with issues in a variety of ways – via e-mail, telephone calls and also face to face discussions. Some issues which are relatively minor may be passed directly to officers, whilst other issues are more serious/demanding such that members can play a more involved role in any resolution including facilitating/attending meetings between officers and the members of the public that are involved.</p>
<p>What support do councillors receive in discharging their duties in relation to casework and representational role in their ward?</p>	<p>Members can refer issues to officers who will seek a resolution or provide advice as to where assistance is available. Officers also make the arrangements for and support members through CAT meetings.</p>
<p>How do councillors engage with constituents? Do they hold surgeries, distribute newsletters, hold public meetings, write blogs etc?</p>	<p>The majority of members hold surgeries/carry out door knocking or have stalls in town centres. Community Action Team meetings are also held in almost all wards. Some members produce their own newsletter and other use social media to communicate.</p> <p>A reduction in the number of councillors would impact on their ability to carry out this work which is considered to be an extremely important part of their role.</p> <p>(Community engagement)</p>

<p>How has the role of councillors changed since the council last considered how many elected members it should have?</p>	<p>A member led approach to scrutiny has been introduced which requires a greater input from members both in terms of preparation for and involvement between meetings. The Council is now also responsible for an increased number of licensing functions which require members to have an in depth understanding of legislation and the Council's duties.</p>
<p>Has the council put in place any mechanisms for councillors to interact with young people, those not on the electoral register or minority groups or their representative bodies?</p>	<p>The Council co-ordinates the work of Broxtowe Youth Council and there is regular engagement not only with the Youth Mayor through civic engagements, but the Youth Mayor and Deputy also attend and speak at meetings of full Council to speak on the work of the Youth Council and issues affecting young people generally. In addition, members of the Youth Council are involved in scrutiny and are invited to take part in reviews where appropriate. The Lead Member for children and young people takes an active interest in the work of the Youth Council and attends meetings whenever possible.</p> <p>(Community engagement)</p>
<p>Are councillors expected to attend meetings of community bodies such as parish councils or residents associations? If so, what is the level of their involvement and what role are they expected to play?</p>	<p>29 members are also members of parish/town councils. Members are also occasionally invited to attend meetings of community bodies and parish/town councils.</p>

Part Four: The Future

Localism and policy development:

<p>What impact do you think the localism agenda might have on the scope and conduct of council business and how do you think this might affect the role of councillors?</p>	<p>In line with the Localism agenda, local democracy is recognised as the key enabler of more empowered communities and a thriving voluntary and community sector. Following a recent scrutiny review on increasing interest in local democracy, members will be encouraged to engage with the local community to a greater extent through, for example, engaging with young people through events in schools and being more proactive in approaching local media about issues relating to their ward.</p> <p>(Democratic engagement & Community engagement)</p>
<p>Does the council have any plans to devolve responsibilities and/or assets to community organisations? Or does the council expect to take on more responsibilities in the medium to long term?</p>	<p>The Council is working with parish/town councils to support the development of neighbourhood plans. Policies and procedures relating to the Right to Challenge and the Right to Bid/Community Assets are also in place and will result in increased involvement of the community.</p>

Service delivery:

<p>Have changes to the arrangements for local delivery of services led to significant changes to councillors' workloads? (For example, control of housing stock or sharing services with neighbouring authorities).</p>	<p>The Council has several shared partnership/collaborative working arrangement in place covering such as ICT services, business rates administration, CCTV management, property services management and benefit fraud management. All services have been retained and it is essential that there are sufficient members to enable these functions to be managed effectively. The current Council size ensures that there is sufficient capacity to enable monitoring and scrutiny of service delivery levels.</p> <p>(Service delivery)</p>
<p>Are there any developments in policy ongoing that might significantly affect the role of elected members in the future?</p>	<p>Members will be involved in decisions relating to, for example, the Aligned Core Strategy, welfare benefits reforms and the impact of financial resource reductions on service delivery. This will increase workload and the time members have to spend keeping up to date on such issues. There is already evidence that case work is increasing as a result of changes, particularly to welfare reforms, as residents look to members and the Council for advice and assistance.</p> <p>(Future challenges)</p>
<p>What has been the impact of recent financial constraints on the council's activities? Would a reduction in the scope and/or scale of council business warrant a reduction in the number of councillors?</p>	<p>As with all similar local authorities funding support from the government to Broxtowe has been significantly reduced in the last few years and is expected to decrease even further in the years ahead. These funding reductions have brought with them a new set of problems which the Council has had to address in terms of how to essentially preserve services with less resources. The Council has addressed this in a number of ways such as working more efficiently and effectively, achieving savings from improved procurement and generating additional resources from elsewhere through such as car parking income and promotion of leisure facilities. Employee resources have been reduced through a combination of natural wastage, voluntary redundancies and flexible retirements.</p> <p>A similar approach has been adopted across all of the Council's services including those services which concern the retained council housing via the housing revenue account.</p> <p>In some service areas the demand for services has increased, most notably welfare benefits and dealing with homelessness. Further service demands are expected in coming years as the demographic make-up of the borough changes.</p>

In general terms, and despite the reduction in funding, the level of services provided by the Council has been maintained or even improved upon. No service area has been removed or significantly scaled down and it is not planned that anything should change this approach in the next few years. The Council's medium term plans for both the general fund and the housing revenue account have been prepared on this basis.

As regards the housing revenue account and council housing, expenditure has grown significantly since 2011/12 with the move to towards self-financing on this account. The housing capital programme has more than doubled to around £7.5 million per annum as from 2012/13 compared with the programme in 2011/12 and earlier years.

It is not appropriate to simply look at the financial position just in terms of spending levels since the reality is that many changes have taken place and will continue to take place which are as a result of changes in government policy which have a bearing on the Council's financial and operational position – significant examples of these relate to the introduction of universal credit as a replacement for housing benefit and the move from council tax benefit to a local council tax support scheme. Further challenges are expected to continue to present themselves in the years ahead and as the Council moves into the next Comprehensive Spending Review period.

In summary it is not a question of a reduction in the scope and/or scale of the Council's business but more a question as to the most effective way of continuing to provide the services that already exist and meeting any new challenges that may arise. Nothing in this scenario leads the Council to conclude that the work of councillors would be reduced as a result of any financial constraints.

(Future challenges)

APPENDIX 2

Current informal meetings, working parties, joint committees, briefings and task groups

Informal meetings, working groups, briefings	Number of members	Meetings per year	Maximum member attendances per year
Cabinet briefing	3	17	51
Cabinet pre-meeting	5	17	85
Development Control briefing	2	12	24
Development Control pre-meeting	8	12	96
Overview and Scrutiny briefing	3	10	30
Licensing and Appeals briefing	2	4	8
Alcohol and Entertainments briefing	2	4	8
People and Places EIG briefing	2	8	16
Services EIG briefing	2	8	16
Sustainable Communities EIG briefing	2	8	16
Bramcote Bereavement Services Joint Committee	3	4	12
Boundary Review Working Group	8	1	8
Budget Working Group	10	9	90
Child Poverty Working Group	1	2	2
Climate Change Working Group	5	2	10
Computer Working Group	5	5	25
Equalities Working Group	1	4	4
Housing Performance Group	8	4	32
Local Joint Consultative Committee	10	3	30
Member Training and Development Strategy Working Group	5	5	25
Planning Policy Working Group	10	5	50
Polling Place Review Working Group	3	1	3
Tram Working Group	1	11	11

Informal meetings, working groups, briefings	Number of members	Meetings per year	Maximum member attendances per year
Economic Development Task Group	3	4	12
Children and Young Peoples Task Group	1	4	4
Environment Task Group	3	4	12
Health Task Group	3	4	12
Positive Communities Task Group	3	4	12
South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership	2	4	8
Police and Crime Panel	1	6	6

Outside bodies 2012/13

Title of organisation	Representative
Age Concern, Chilwell	Cllr J C Patrick
Age Concern, Chilwell	Cllr J C Patrick
Age Concern, Eastwood	Cllr C E Robb
Attenborough Nature Reserve Visitor Centre	Cllr A J Oates Cllr D K Watts
Beeston Consolidated Charity	M Fetter D Jenkins
Beeston Rylands Community Centre	Cllr S Barber Cllr F Prince
Broxtowe Citizens Advice Bureau	Cllr J C Patrick
Broxtowe Wildlife Forum	Cllr A Cooper
Campaign to Protect Rural England (Notts) Branch Executive Committee	Cllr P Lally
Core City Board/Joint Leadership Board	Cllr S D Barber
East Midlands Councils	Cllr M Radulovic MBE or nominated representative
East Midlands Museum Service	Cllr F Prince
Eastwood Volunteer Bureau Management Committee	Cllr C E Robb
Francis Dixon and Catherine Gregory Charity	Cllr S Heptinstall MBE Cllr I L Tyler
Greater Nottingham Groundwork Trust	Cllr B Wombwell
Greenwood Partnership Board	Cllr I White
Joint Health Scrutiny	Cllr M E McGuckin
Joint Planning Advisory Board	Cllr S D Barber
Local Government Association	Cllr M Radulovic MBE
Local Government Information Unit	Cllr M Radulovic MBE
Nottingham East Midlands Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr A Cooper
Nottingham Express Transit Development Board	Cllr P Lally
Nottingham Leaders Steering Group	Cllr M Radulovic MBE or nominated representative
Nottingham Playhouse Trust	Cllr S Heptinstall
Nottinghamshire Local Government Leaders Group	Cllr M Radulovic MBE
Relate	Cllr R S Robinson
United Charities of Abel Collins	Cllr S J Carr
Volunteer Centre Broxtowe Management Committee	Cllr J C Patrick

APPENDIX 4

Community Action Teams (CATs) 2013/14

Ward	Representative	Meetings per year
Attenborough	Cllr Eric Kerry	3
Awsorth & Cossall	Cllr Lydia Ball	3
Beeston Central	Cllr Lynda Lally Cllr Pat Lally	3
Beeston North	Cllr Steve Carr Cllr Andrea Oates	4
Beeston Rylands	Cllr Steve Barber Cllr Frank Prince	3
Beeston West	Cllr Greg Marshall Cllr Janet Patrick	3
Bramcote	Cllr Stan Heptinstall Cllr Ian Tyler Cllr David Watts	4
Brinsley	Cllr John Booth	3
Chilwell East	Cllr Joan Briggs Cllr Richard Jackson	3
Chilwell West	Cllr Eileen Atherton Cllr Graham Harvey Cllr Tim Brindley	3
Eastwood & Greasley Beauvale	Cllr Charles Robb Cllr Milan Radulovic Cllr David Bagshaw Cllr Bob Charlesworth Cllr Susan Bagshaw	3
Greasley, Giltbrook & Newthorpe	Cllr Margaret Handley Cllr Mick Brown Cllr Stuart Rowland	3
Kimberley	Cllr Andy Cooper Cllr Mary McGuckin Cllr Richard Robinson	1
Nuthall East & Strelley	Cllr Nita Green Cllr Paul Simpson	3
Nuthall West, Greasley & Watnall	Cllr Derek Burnett Cllr Jill Owen	3
Stapleford North	Cllr Brian Wombwell Cllr Iris White	3
Stapleford South East	Cllr David Grindell Cllr Jacky Williams	3
Stapleford South West	Cllr Ray Darby Cllr John McGrath	3
Toton & Chilwell Meadows	Cllr Tony Ford Cllr Marilyn Hegyi Cllr Halimah Khaled	2
Trowell	Cllr Ken Rigby	3

Further Electoral Review

Assessment of Time Spent by Members on Council Business



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

<u>Council meetings</u>	
How many committees/working groups are you a member of?	
How much time do you spend over a 6 weekly cycle attending meetings?	
Do you take part in any additional site visits etc between meetings?	
How much time do you spend on average preparing for meetings?	
<u>Discussions with Officers</u>	
How long do you spend, on average, each week, in discussions with officers, either face to face or on the phone, about ward or general matters affecting the Council?	
<u>Outside bodies</u>	
How many outside bodies have you been appointed to?	
How often do they meet & how long on average do the meetings last?	
How much time on average do you have to spend preparing for the meetings?	
<u>Parish Councils</u>	
If you are NOT a member of a parish council and represent a parished area, do you attend parish council meetings?	
If yes, why do you attend?	

<u>Surgeries</u>	
How often do you hold surgeries?	
How long do these normally last?	
How many members of the public usually attend (on average)?	
How long do you spend following up issues with officers after a surgery?	
<u>Case work</u>	
How long do you spend on average each week on case work?	
<u>CAT meetings</u>	
How often does your CAT meet?	
How long do meetings usually last?	
How long do you spend following up issues with officers after a meeting?	
<u>Communicating with residents</u>	
Apart from formal surgeries and CAT meetings, how else do you communicate with residents?	
On average, how long do you spend on these other activities each week?	

Broxtowe Borough Council
The Town Hall, Foster Avenue,
Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 1AB
Tel: 0115 917 7777 or
Fax: 0115 917 3030
www.broxtowe.gov.uk

