

**The Local Government Boundary
Commission for England Electoral
Review for the London Borough of
Bromley**

**Council size submission on behalf of
the Conservative Group of Bromley
Council**

May 2019

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Introduction

In July 2018, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) began a three-year programme of electoral reviews of London Boroughs that it has not reviewed in the previous 5 years. Bromley's current boundaries have been effective since the 2002 local elections, and therefore the borough has been included in the programme.

The review will be initiated in June 2019 and the preliminary stage will determine the future Council size. The provisional decision on Council size by the LGBCE then informs the next stage of the review, which will consider the size and number of wards, ward boundaries and the number of councillors to represent each ward.

The Commission will form its view about the right Council size for an authority by considering the three following areas:

- **Strategic Leadership** - how many councillors are needed to give strategic leadership and direction to the authority?
- **Accountability**
 - i. *Scrutiny* - how many councillors are needed to provide scrutiny to the authority?
 - ii. *Regulatory* - how many councillors are needed to meet the regulatory requirements of the authority?
 - iii. *Partnerships* - how many councillors are required to manage partnerships between the local authority and other organisations?
- **Community Leadership** - how the representational role of councillors in the local community is discharged and how they engage with people and conduct casework.

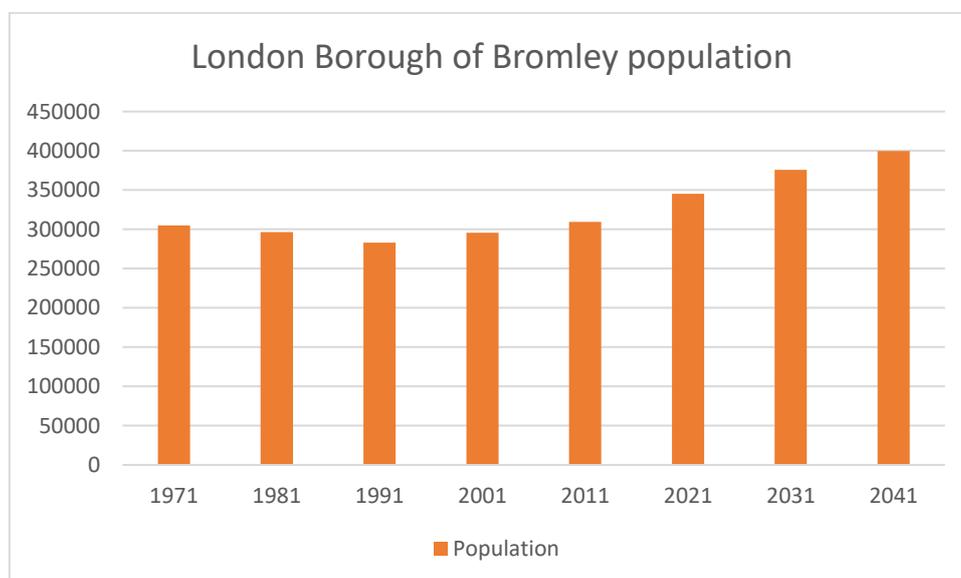
This submission presents evidence in relation to each of those criteria and supports the proposal of the Conservative Group that the size of the council should marginally increase from 60 to 62. This number will be sufficient to ensure that the strategic and community leadership functions of the council continue to be delivered effectively, while maintaining sufficient accountability.

Borough profile

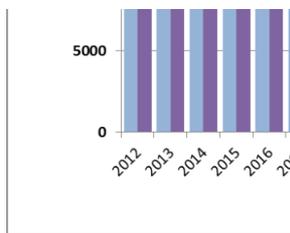
With a population of c. 331,000 and an area of 64 square miles (150 square kilometres), Bromley has the sixth-highest population amongst the London boroughs and is the largest in area. The Borough occupies a strategic position in the south east of the Capital and South East England with rail connections to Central London, easy access to the M25 and onwards to the national road network and major South East airports.

Bromley is a distinctive part of London's suburbs closely connected to London's economy, and the Borough itself has one of the largest economies south of the Thames. Open countryside, protected by the Green Belt that encircles London, makes up over half the Borough, with the majority of the population concentrated in the northern part of the Borough. The area of Green Belt has many characteristics in common with the rural parts of Kent and Surrey, while the northern and western parts of the borough contend with similar issues to those found in the neighbouring inner London boroughs.

From the formation of the borough in 1965 until 2011, the population remained relatively stable, growing or shrinking by less than 5% at each consecutive census. However, since 2011 the population of the borough has begun to grow, which is forecast to continue as seen in a recent ONS forecast:

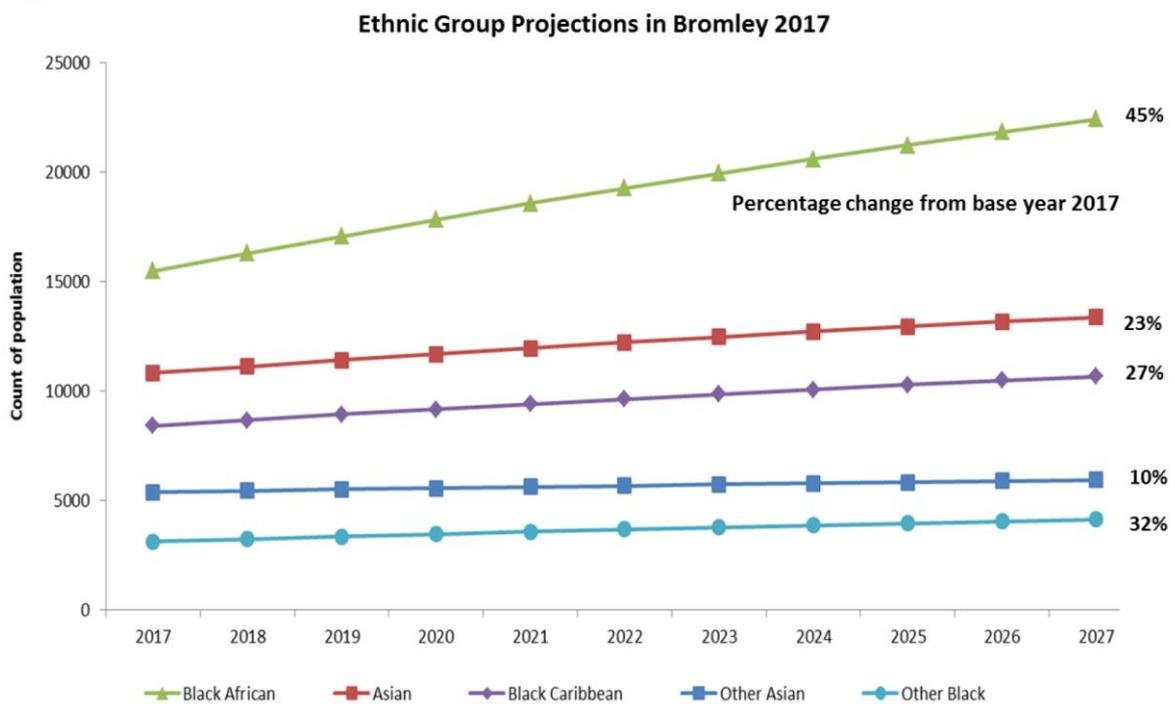


The borough's population is forecast to age significantly, with the number of residents aged 75+ years forecast to grow significantly faster than the overall population:



Source: GLA 2016 based Housing led Model Population Projections (November 2017)

Finally, it is also forecast that Bromley will become a more diverse borough in terms of ethnicity. Although the borough is one of the least diverse in London on this measure, it is more diverse than the average for England.



Source: GLA, Round Demographic Projections, 2016

Governance and leadership

The current Council size was determined by the previous review in 1999. The Council is currently comprised of 60 Councillors across 22 wards, 17 of which are three-member wards, four are two-member wards, and there is a single one-member ward. All Councillors are elected for a four year term. The total number of councillors has remained unchanged since the authority's creation.

Since the last review, Bromley has made major changes to its governance and constitution which affects the work of councillors. The Council now operates under the Leader and Cabinet model, which together constitute the Executive. The Executive has seven Members and is the Council's main decision making body. It is chaired by the Leader of the Council. It either makes decisions itself, or each of the six Portfolio Holders decide on matters relating to their specialist areas. The Portfolios cover:

- Adult Care & Health;
- Children, Education and Families;
- Environment and Community Services;
- Renewal, Recreation and Housing;
- Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management;
- Public Protection and Enforcement.

The Council's constitution specifies that the Executive must consist of at least two but not more than nine councillors other than the Leader. In addition to the seven councillors who hold Cabinet roles, five councillors act as Executive Support Assistants (ESAs), one of which is assigned to each of the following portfolios:

- Adult Care & Health;
- Children, Education and Families;
- Environment and Community Services;
- Renewal, Recreation and Housing;
- Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management;

The total number of councillors tasked with executive functions is 12, comprising the Leader, six Portfolio Holders (together the Executive) and the five ESAs. This represents 20% of the total. With this proportion, the majority of councillors from the ruling party or parties do not exercise executive functions, assuming that this party or parties have an absolute majority of seats. The preponderance of non-executive members is conducive to strong scrutiny of the Executive.

Despite the significant reduction in the council's budget and the rationalisation of services since 2010, it is not felt that the size of the Executive can be reduced without generating excessive demands on the Portfolio Holders. Any reduction of councillor numbers, as in the neighbouring borough of Bexley, would therefore increase the proportion of councillors that are part of or report to the Executive, and potentially reduce the effectiveness of scrutiny within the ruling party or parties. At the same time,

it is not expected that the demands on Portfolio Holders will grow to the extent that new portfolios will need to be created, as the council budget continues to reduce and the council undertakes additional organisational transformation.

Each portfolio holder and the Leader is scrutinised by their respective Policy Development & Scrutiny (PDS) Committee; these are discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

By law, the Executive cannot take all Council decisions. Some matters must be decided elsewhere as set out below and in the following chapter.

Full Council

There are three types of Full Council meetings.:

- The Annual Meeting;
- Ordinary Meetings; and
- Special Meetings.

All councillors are members of Full Council with full voting and speaking rights. Ordinary meetings are held 5 times a year. The annual meeting is dedicated to the appointment of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Meetings are held in the evening and are open to the public. Meetings include the presentation of public petitions, questions from the public and members to the Cabinet and motions from members. Full Council considers reports on matters as set out in the constitution including establishing the various committees of the council and their composition. Full Council's responsibilities include the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, approving amendments to the borough's constitution, election of the Leader, approval of the budget and the annual accounts. Other functions within the competence of Full Council are set out in the borough constitution.

Role and functions of the Mayor

The Mayor is the ceremonial representative of the Council, taking precedence on all official occasions. The Mayor chairs Full Council, but in their absence this function is discharged by the Deputy Mayor. Both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are elected annually. The Mayor is responsible for upholding the Constitution and, subject to the arrangements for Scrutiny and Overview, hold the Leader and Cabinet and Committee Chairs to account. The Mayor's duties are set out in the constitution as follows:

1. to uphold and promote the purpose of the Constitution, and to interpret the Constitution when necessary;
2. to preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community;
3. to ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which Councillors who are not

- on the Executive or hold committee chairs are able to hold the Executive and Committee Chairmen to account;
4. to promote public involvement in the Council's activities;
 5. to attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Mayor in his/her discretion shall think appropriate;
 6. generally to act as a representative of both the Council and the community.

It should be noted that it has been the Council's practise for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to be elected on a nonpartisan basis. Total political neutrality is expected in the chairing of Full Council and at all functions where the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor are acting as representatives of the borough. While the Mayor by convention does not serve on any council committee or subcommittee, the Deputy Mayor is permitted to serve on said committees in view of the significantly reduced time commitment. For example, the Deputy Mayor for 2018-2019 was also chairman of the Public Protection and Enforcement PDS Committee.

Officer delegation

It is the view of the Conservative Group that empowering council officers contributes to the effective delivery of public services and the Council's objectives. The Scheme of Delegation to Officers, referred to in the Constitution, sets out which powers are delegated from Full Council and/or the Leader to various officers of the Council. The Scheme of Delegation to Officers is approved each year during the Annual Meeting of Full Council.

Strategic leadership

Local government has changed significantly since the last boundary review. Additional responsibilities have been devolved, reflected in the impact of the Localism Act and Care Act, the administration of council tax benefit, public health, and many other areas. Bromley has long been at the forefront of commissioning to improve efficiency and spur innovation in the delivery of public services, which is reflected in the significant reduction of the council's headcount as can be seen in the table below:

Year	Headcount
2010	2365
2011	2193
2012	1992
2013	1919
2014	1817
2015	1723
2016	1696
2017	1580
2018	1447
2019	1485

While the council's responsibilities have grown at the same time as budgets have declined, Bromley continues to be recognised for the quality of its leadership at both member and officer level. The council's auditors have not identified any significant concerns in recent years, and more positive acknowledgments of the council's achievements include the following:

- Winner of the Pensions, Treasury and Asset Management Award at the 2019 CIPFA Public Finance Awards
- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families deemed to be 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in their January 2019 report on Bromley Children's Services
- Winner of the Local Government Pension Scheme Fund of the Year (assets <£2.5 billion category) at the 2018 LAPF Investments Awards
- Winner of the British Parking Association 2018 'Parking in the Community Award' for the Bromley & Bexley Shared Parking Service blue badge misuse campaign

As there is no objective evidence that the current leadership arrangements for the council are ineffective, and there are no plans in the foreseeable future to alter the size of the Executive, there are no compelling arguments on the grounds of strategic leadership for a significant increase or decrease in the size of the council. That said, a marginal increase to 62 is supported by the Conservative Group overall for other reasons set out below.

Non-executive and scrutiny functions

Non-executive committees and subcommittees

Matters not decided by the Executive, Full Council or officers under delegated powers are determined by the non-executive committees. The two principal committees and subcommittees and their areas of responsibility are set out below. Unless stated otherwise, their membership is proportional to the strength of the parties in Full Council.

Non-executive committees

General Purposes and Licensing (GP&L) Committee – 11 councillors, not more than 1 member of the Executive

- Electoral issues
- Making byelaws
- Administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- Staffing matters
- Probity Strategy
- Audit
- Open Government
- Fraud Prevention
- Complaint Procedures
- Member appointments
- Health and Safety
- Licensing of births, deaths and marriages
- Licensing matters
- Any non-executive function not delegated elsewhere or reserved to Full Council

Development Control Committee (DCC) – 17 councillors, not more than 1 member of the Executive

- Planning and conservation. All the Council's powers and duties relating to town and country planning and development control as specified in Schedule 1 of the Functions Regulations.
- Unitary Development Plan. To be responsible for preparing, revising and recommending the Plan to the Executive.
- Highways use and regulation. The exercise of powers relating to the regulation of the use of highways as set out in Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations.
- Common land and village greens. Power to register common land or village greens and to register variation of rights of common.

Non-executive subcommittees

Audit subcommittee – 7 councillors,

- Financial regulations
- Fraud prevention
- Internal and external audit
- Scrutiny of selected invoices

Pensions Investment subcommittee – 7 councillors, not more than 1 member of the Executive

- monitoring the financial position of the Pension Fund, including consideration of the triennial actuarial valuations;
- investment of the Pension Fund, including the appointment of investment managers;
- management of the Council's additional voluntary contributions (AVC) scheme

Local Joint Consultative Committee – 9 councillors, including the Leader or named Deputy also from the Executive, the Chairman of GP&L or named Deputy also from GP&L and the Chairman of the Main PDS or named Deputy also from the Main PDS

- To enable regular consultation and discussion between the Local Authority and its employees
- To consider matters referred to it by GP&L or the Executive or by employee representatives or Trade Union representatives
- To make recommendations to GP&L or the Executive
- To refer matters for consideration by and advice of the Association of London Government

Appeals Committee – no fixed membership, appointed by Full Council as and when necessary, may not include members of the Executive

To determine appeals against any decision of the Council including:

- staff dismissal, discipline, grading, capability, early retirement, pension entitlement or other reasons
- access to information
- social services matters including domiciliary charges, registration of child minders, persons providing day care for children, registration of residential care homes and others, which carry a statutory right of appeal
- education transport appeals

Licensing subcommittee – 3 councillors to be drawn from GP&L, not more than 1 member of the Executive, no proportionality requirement

- Gaming, entertainment, food and miscellaneous licensing and functions relating to licensing and registration as set out in Schedule 1 of the Functions Regulations
- All functions arising pursuant to the Licensing Act 2003 apart from a function conferred by Section 5 of that Act in respect of the Statement of Licensing policy

Plans subcommittees – each 9 councillors and not more than 1 member of the Executive, each councillors may sit on a maximum of two plans subcommittees

- To exercise all the powers and duties of the Council as local planning authority as set out in Schedule 1 of the Functions Regulations
- To exercise all the powers and duties of the Council in relation to Building Control matters as set out in Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – up to 7 councillors, no proportionality requirement

- An independent Statutory body charged to advise the Council upon matters connected with religious worship in schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus

Industrial Relations subcommittee – 7 councillors

- To consider issues relating to threats of industrial action affecting Council services

Rights of Way subcommittee – 7 councillors

- To consider proposals to modify, upgrade and divert public footpaths.

Standards committee – 10 members, of which five are councillors, three from the largest political group and one from each of the next two political groups and five members who are totally independent of the Council, no members of the Executive

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors, co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives;
- assisting the Councillors, co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives to observe the Members' Code of Conduct and associated local protocols;
- advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct and associated local protocols;
- monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct and associated local protocols;
- developing for recommendation to the Council local protocols to supplement the Members' Code of Conduct;
- enforcing local protocols and applying sanctions in respect of breaches as appropriate;
- advising, training or arranging to train Councillors, co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct and associated local protocols;
- granting dispensations to Councillors, co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct and associated local protocols;
- undertaking preliminary assessments of complaints against Councillors, hearing reviews and hearing cases against Councillors and dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the

Monitoring Officer on any matter which is referred by an Ethical Standards Officer to the Monitoring Officer;

- to keep under review, amend and make additional provisions to the Protocol on Member/Officer relations;
- to monitor the Officers' Code of Conduct to ensure consistent application and enforcement Council-wide;
- general overview of probity matters arising from Ombudsman reports, Monitoring Officer reports, Audit Commission reports and ethical indicators.

Urgency committee – 5 councillors (the Leader, leader of the largest opposition party, chairmen of ERC PDS and GP&L, one other)

- to deal with urgent non-executive decisions of a non-sensitive nature that would otherwise require a meeting of full Council.

Planning in Bromley

The only aspect in which Bromley is nonstandard in respect of non-executive decision-making relates to planning. The borough is an outlier in terms of the number of planning subcommittees, and the number and proportion of members that sit on those committees. The council makes c. 3,500 planning application decisions per year, with the trend in recent years being for the total number to increase. It should be noted that members only decide the outcome of c. 10% of applications, equivalent to 350 per year. The number of planning application decisions by financial year and the proportion decided by members are set out below:

Year	Number of decisions	% decided by members
2010	2651	15%
2011	2718	14%
2012	2719	13%
2013	2816	15%
2014	3049	12%
2015	3288	9%
2016	3405	9%
2017	3500	9%
2018	2932	8%

Member involvement in planning application decisions in Bromley is structured via the DCC for major planning applications, and the four planning subcommittees for smaller applications. There are a total of 53 places for councillors on the various committees; however, as the membership of DCC is drawn from the plans subcommittees, the maximum number of individual councillors that could theoretically sit on a planning committee is 36, or 60% of the total. As some councillors sit on two planning subcommittees, the theoretical minimum number is 18, or 30% of the total. In the calendar year 2018, 32 individual councillors sat on planning committees, representing

53% of the total. DCC and the planning subcommittees met 6 times each, for 30 in total.

By contrast, the London Borough of Bexley has a single Planning Committee with 8 councillors (17% of the total) that met 10 times in the same year. The London Borough of Croydon has a Planning Committee with 10 councillors (14% of the total) that met 22 times, and a Planning Subcommittee with an identical membership that met 15 times. With four exceptions the Planning Subcommittee met immediately after the Planning Committee, so effectively there were 33 days on which meetings of these committees took place.

Bromley has several factors that support an elevated level of member involvement in planning decision-making. As well as being subject to the London Plan, Local Plan and national planning laws and guidelines, more than 50% of the borough is made up of Green Belt land. The borough also includes conservation areas (e.g. in Chislehurst) and Areas of Special Residential Characters (e.g. in Petts Wood). Residents demand that councillors be active participants rather than bystanders in deciding controversial planning matters; this is reflected in correspondence. This expectation is also shared by the numerous residents' associations and area societies that permeate the borough, who are themselves crucial stakeholders in maintaining the unique character of the borough, and who work extremely closely with councillors regardless of party.

While the total number of planning committee meetings in Bromley and Croydon is relatively similar, the multiple subcommittee structure of Bromley has two key advantages. By timetabling the meetings such that there are on average two months between meetings of each subcommittee or the DCC, members are given sufficient time to conduct site visits and review proposals in depth, which improves the quality of decision-making. Moreover, by having a higher proportion of councillors involved in the decision-making process, members develop a greater understanding of planning and are able to discuss related issues with residents in a more informed manner.

Significant member involvement in planning is a strength of Bromley Council and one that is appreciated by residents. It is the view of the Conservative group that the current role of members in planning does not warrant either a significant increase or decrease in the number of councillors. Any significant reduction in councillor numbers and consequent reduction in the number of planning committees could overburden those that remain and lead to poorer decision-making, while there is no evidence that incumbent committee members feel that their current workload is excessive.

Licensing

Licensing of the sale of alcohol and public entertainment are the responsibility of GP&L. Licensing Sub-Committees of 3 members are appointed to hear licensing applications. These meetings can be lengthy, with substantial paperwork to consider and applicants represented by lawyers. Although the number of Licensing Sub-

Committee meetings has declined in recent years, there are still about eight needed every year.

PDS committees

As mentioned above, the Council has six PDS committees that scrutinise the Executive. The lead scrutiny committee (referred to as 'Main Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee' in the Constitution) is the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee. This committee, as well as scrutinising the Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management portfolio holder and the Leader, oversees the work of the other PDS to ensure that they operate in a co-ordinated way and to avoid duplication. The other five PDS committees are as follows:

- Adult Care and Health
- Education, Children and Families
- Environment and Community Services
- Public Protection and Safety
- Renewal, Recreation and Housing

In addition there are subcommittees for Health Scrutiny and Education, Children and Families Budget and Performance Monitoring.

Although the legal requirement is for there to be a minimum of one scrutiny committee, the Council's decision to opt for one per Executive portfolio holder allows for a much greater degree of specialisation on each PDS. This ensures that the portfolio holders and their respective ESAs are held to account effectively. Most 'backbench' councillors sit on at least one PDS. It is important to note that PDS committees do not exclusively concern themselves with Council services; for instance, the Public Protection and Safety PDS has frequent meetings with the Metropolitan Police, and the Adult Care and Health Committee has regular interaction with the Bromley CCG and the King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. It is essential that scrutiny extends beyond direct council activities as partner organisations provide essential services to many Bromley residents, and the instance of joint working (e.g. in public health) will increase in future years.

While the Council has operated under the Executive and Cabinet model for almost 20 years, the PDS committees operate a practise of pre-decision scrutiny of major decisions. The portfolio holders and the Leader retain decision-making power, but a practise of scrutiny prior to decisions allows backbenchers to contribute to policy development in a meaningful way. On occasion it allows for proposals to emanate from non-executive councillors. It therefore represents a practical compromise between the need for rapid decision-making and effective member scrutiny.

Each PDS committee meets at least five times a year, but many councillors carry out additional related work such as attending visits or presentations, carrying out research and attending working group meetings. A reduction in the number of councillors and consequent reduction in the number or size of PDS committees could compromise the

effectiveness of scrutiny, which would have a knock-on effect on service delivery. A marginal increase in the number of councillors to 62 will ensure that the quality of scrutiny remains high, leading to beneficial outcomes for residents.

Outside bodies

Councillors are appointed by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee to serve on a range of “outside bodies” - local or regional organisations and charities. Most Executive members attend meetings of London Councils relating to their specific portfolio responsibilities. Some of these positions may be filled by members of the public, but some 60 to 70 roles are allocated to Councillors. The amount of work involved may vary, but most roles involve attendance at several meetings a year, sometimes outside the borough. A list of outside body appointments is attached as Appendix III.

Committees and members workload

In some local authorities, the number of council committee and subcommittee meetings has declined significantly since their last boundary review. This is not the case in Bromley, as can be seen from the table below:

Committee	Meetings in 2001/2	Committee	Meetings in 2018/19
Full Council	7	Full Council	8
Development Control	7	General Purposes & Licensing	8
Plans Sub-Cttees (x4)	25	Appeals Sub-Cttee	6
Education Cttee	9	Audit Sub-Cttee	3
Education Ops Sub-Cttee	6	Licensing Sub-Cttee	7
Education Review Sub-Cttee	4	Local Joint Consultative Cttee	2
School Organisation Cttee	3	Pensions Investment Sub-Cttee	6
SACRE	3	Development Control	7
LJNC Lecturers	1	Plans Sub-Cttees (x4)	25
Environmental Services Cttee	8	Appointment Panel	1
Environmental Services Sub-Cttee	5	Standards	1
Leisure Services Cttee	8	Adult Care & Health PDS	6
Consultative Panels	16	Education, Children & Families Cttee	6
Policy & Resources Cttee	11	Environment & Community PDS	6
Property & Finance Sub-Cttee	6	Executive, Resources & Contracts PDS	10
Partnership & Best Value	5	Public Protection & Enf PDS	5

Personnel & Admin Sub-Cttee	4	Renewal, Recreation & Housing PDS	6
Investment Sub-Cttee	6	EC&F Budget & PM Sub-Cttee	4
Audit Sub-Cttee	3	Health Scrutiny Sub-Cttee	5
LJCC	3	Contracts Sub-Cttee	6
Industrial Relations Sub-Cttee	2	OHSEL Joint Scrutiny Cttee	2
Org & Standards Sub-Cttee	4	Executive	10
Links Sub-Cttee	2	Portfolio Holder Meetings	1
Appointments Panel	1	Health & Wellbeing Board	5
SS & Housing Cttee	6	SACRE	3
Housing Sub-Cttee	2	Bromley Economic Partnership	4
Housing Benefit RB	12	Safer Bromley Partnership	4
Adoption Panel	12	Fostering & Adoption Panel	24
		Chief Executive Remuneration Panel	1
		Constitution Improvement WG	1
		Children's Services Governance WG	7
		Beckenham Town Centre WG	5
		School Places WG	1
TOTAL	181	TOTAL	194

Members devote considerable time to preparing for meetings, participating in them and following up subsequent action points. Any reduction in the number of councillors could reduce the effectiveness of member participation by generating excessive workloads. A marginal increase in councillors numbers from 60 to 62 will ensure that members continue to discharge their duties effectively with respect to scrutiny and non-executive functions.

Representational role

Overview

Regardless of their role as part of the Executive and/or scrutiny functions of the council, all members of the council have as their primary duty the representation of their residents to and on the council. The representational aspects of the role are described in greater detail in Article 2 of the Constitution:

- (ii) represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
- (iii) deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
- (iv) balance different interests identified within the ward or electoral division and represent the ward or electoral division as a whole;

The impact of technology

The manner in which councillors interact with residents has changed significantly since the last boundary review in 1999. Whereas historically most correspondence with residents and officers was conducted via letter, the overwhelming majority is now carried out by email. This has mixed effects; while it is now much easier for a member to forward a query from the member of the public to the relevant council officer, it is also much easier for residents to contact their members, and hence the volume of correspondence has increased. As well as correspondence from residents, councillors are regularly contacted by campaigning organisations and other groups. In addition to letters and email, many Councillors make available a home or mobile telephone number. Councillors will also offer personal home visits to residents to understand their concerns first hand.

In addition to direct correspondence, telephone contact and home visits, there are many other routes councillors use to assess public opinion in their ward and communicate regarding council decisions and policies. The most popular include the following:

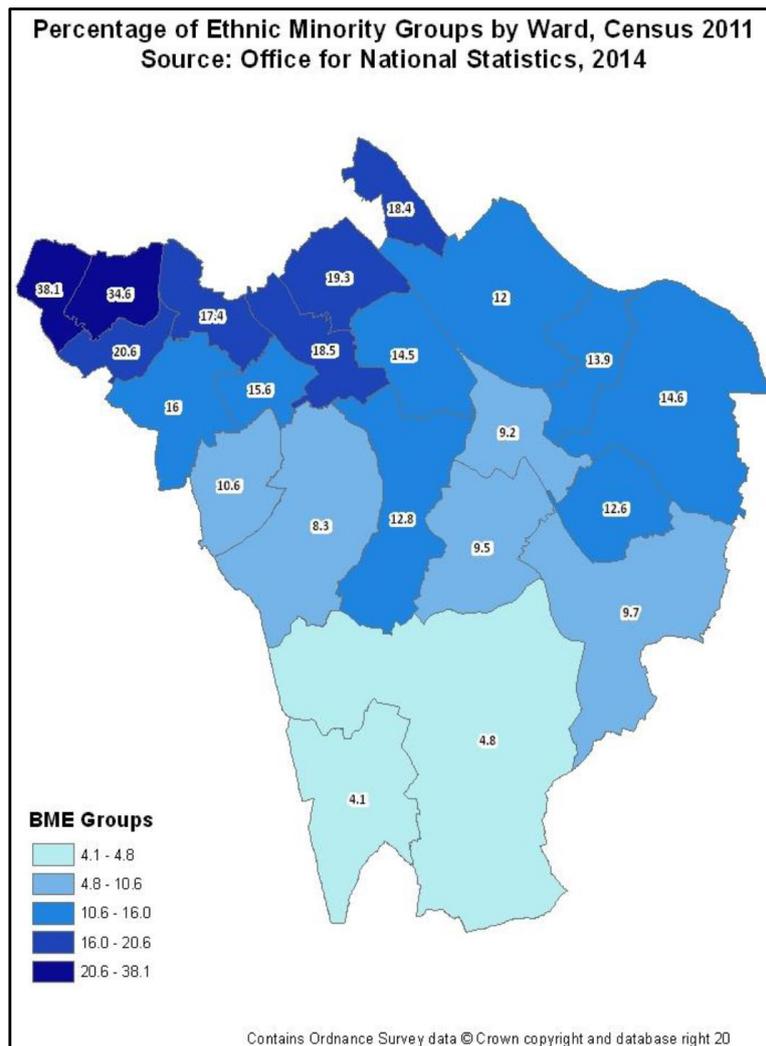
- Canvassing
- Surgeries
- Meetings with local organisations e.g. residents' associations
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)

It is the view of the Conservative Group that there is no 'best' way for councillors to communicate with their residents. It is for individual councillors to judge based on the knowledge of their particular ward and its characteristics. However, the rise of social media and other Internet-based forms of communication has on balance increased the amount of time councillors spend communicating with residents, as these are typically done in addition to more traditional methods as opposed to replacing them.

Conversely, the amount of time spent communicating with council officers has declined, as correspondence by email with the relevant officer is much faster than the repeated exchanges of letters as in the past.

Diversity and inclusion

Bromley is an increasingly diverse borough. Wards in the north and west of the borough typically exhibit greater levels of population turnover and ethnic diversity than those in the south and east, which exhibit greater diversity in terms of age.



It is essential that this diversity is reflected in the make-up of the council, especially in terms of the following characteristics:

- Gender
- Age
- BME
- Employment status
- LGBT

Of the current 50 councillors in the Conservative Group, 16 (32%) are women, 17 (34%) are 65+, 2 (4%) are BME, 32 (64%) are in full-time employment, and 3 (6%) are LGBT.

It is important that this level of diversity is maintained. A decrease in the number of councillors would reduce the number of opportunities for councillors to be elected from hitherto under-represented groups. Moreover, the increase in workload on those remaining may deter council candidates with significant working or caring responsibilities. A slight increase in the number of councillors will ensure that Bromley's councillors continue to be representative of the borough as a whole.

Population growth

As stated above, Bromley is forecast to see significant population growth in the medium-term. In the nearer term, the growth of the electorate is forecast to be as follows:

Ward	Electorate as at 31/01/2019	Electorate in 2024	% growth
Bromley Common & Keston	12792	12813	0%
Biggin Hill	7900	8092	2%
Bickley	11799	11955	1%
Bromley Town	13444	15462	15%
Chelsfield & Pratts Bottom	11200	11372	2%
Copers Cope	12717	12689	0%
Cray Valley East	11643	11552	-1%
Chislehurst	12099	12207	1%
Clock House	11907	11970	1%
Crystal Palace	9244	9594	4%
Cray Valley West	12278	12642	3%
Darwin	4145	4160	0%
Farnborough & Crofton	11785	12084	3%
Hayes & Coney Hall	12721	12946	2%
Kelsey & Eden Park	12470	12734	2%
Mottingham & Chislehurst North	7433	7437	0%
Orpington	12291	12795	4%
Penge & Cator	12632	12540	-1%
Plaistow & Sundridge	11762	11769	0%
Petts Wood & Knoll	10792	10977	2%
Shortlands	7724	7855	2%
West Wickham	12014	12256	2%
Total	242792	247901	2%

The forecasting methodology is set out in full in Appendix II, and is consistent with the submission made by Bromley Council itself.

The overall increase is 2%, with a range of -1% to +4% in all wards with the exception of Bromley Town. The 15% increase in the latter is driven by a large number of significant housing developments.

Based on the figures above, the under- or over-representation of the current wards is as follows:

Ward	Electorate as at 31/01/2019	Electors per cllr Jan 2019	Over/under in 2019
Bromley Common & Keston	12792	4264	5%
Biggin Hill	7900	3950	-2%
Bickley	11799	3933	-3%
Bromley Town	13444	4481	11%
Chelsfield & Pratts Bottom	11200	3733	-8%
Copers Cope	12717	4239	5%
Cray Valley East	11643	3881	-4%
Chislehurst	12099	4033	0%
Clock House	11907	3969	-2%
Crystal Palace	9244	4622	14%
Cray Valley West	12278	4093	1%
Darwin	4145	4145	2%
Farnborough & Crofton	11785	3928	-3%
Hayes & Coney Hall	12721	4240	5%
Kelsey & Eden Park	12470	4157	3%
Mottingham & Chislehurst North	7433	3717	-8%
Orpington	12291	4097	1%
Penge & Cator	12632	4211	4%
Plaistow & Sundridge	11762	3921	-3%
Petts Wood & Knoll	10792	3597	-11%
Shortlands	7724	3862	-5%
West Wickham	12014	4005	-1%

Crystal Palace, in the far north-west of the borough, suffers from the greatest degree of under-representation based on current figures.

Based on current over-/under-representation ratios and forecast electoral growth, it is clear if the current boundaries remain unchanged, the electors to councillors ratio would become most disproportionate in Bromley Town and Crystal Palace in the north and north-western parts of the borough respectively. A marginal increase in the total number of councillors from 60 to 62 will allow this underrepresentation to be remedied effectively during the second stage of the boundary review.

The cost of politics

While the growing population of the borough could be used to justify a larger increase in the number of councillors, the Conservative Group is conscious that our residents do not wish to see a significant increase in the cost of politics. For this reason, the Conservative Group and the Council voted for allowances to remain unchanged for

the financial years 2009/10 to 2018/19, reducing their real value over the period by 20% in real terms.

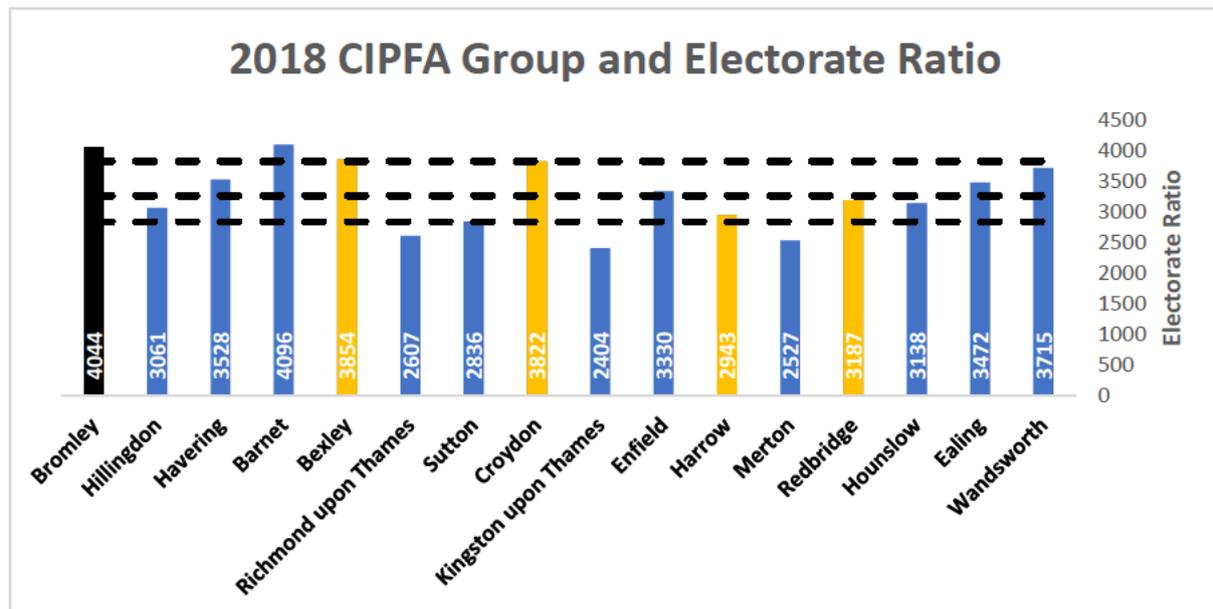
In the 2019/20 municipal year, the budget for members’ allowances, the mayoral allowance and related mayoral and civic hospitality is £1,090k. This results in a cost per elector of £4.49. An increase in the number of councillors to 62 would mean that the cost per elector in 2024 would remain at £4.49 in real terms, as the growth in councillor number matches electorate growth in percentage terms.

	2019	2024
Cost of councillors (2019 £)	£1,090,000	£1,112,230
Electors	242,792	247,901
Cost per elector	£4.49	£4.49

All figures above are stated in 2019 pounds. Nominal increases in allowances from 2019 to 2024 are assumed to be equal to inflation.

Since 2010, the council’s spending has declined, driven by the reduction in grant income from central government. This is forecast to continue until 2022. It is the view of the Conservative Group that at a time of growing pressure on local government finances, our residents expect councillors to ensure that the cost of politics is restrained to ensure that the maximum possible funding can be allocated to local services and mitigate increases in council tax. Our interactions with residents suggest almost no support for a substantial increase in the number of councillors, and a sizeable minority would prefer the number to be reduced.

Based on the latest available CIPFA figures, Bromley has the second-highest number of electors per councillor of all the London boroughs:



The figure is also above the upper quintile (3,822), and higher than the figures for other London boroughs that have recently completed boundary reviews (highlighted in yellow above).

Increases in the number of councillors has the following impact on the forecast councillors per elector ratio for 2024:

Councillors	Electors per councillor
60	4,132
61	4,064
62	3,998
63	3,935
64	3,873
65	3,814

An increase in the number of councillors to 62 will mean that by 2024:

- the electors-per-councillor ratio will be marginally lower than it is today
- the electors-per-councillor ratio will be above the 2018 upper quintile
- the electors-per-councillor ratio will be higher than the 2018 ratio for Bexley, Croydon, Harrow and Redbridge, all of which recently completed boundary reviews
- the cost per elector will be unchanged from today

Conclusion and recommendation

The London Borough of Bromley has had a relatively high electors-per-councillor ratio since its creation, as the population and electorate stayed broadly constant and the number of councillors remained at 60. During the previous boundary review in 1999, the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) appointed an independent assessor to review whether the existing number of councillors secured effective and convenient local government for the borough. He concluded that there was little objective evidence to support the then-proposed increase in council size for Bromley, which was accepted by the LGCE and the number of councillors remained at 60.

It is the considered view of the Conservative Group that in the 20 years since the last review, Bromley Council has continued to provide effective and convenient local government for its residents. The Council made an effective transition from the Committee to the Leader and Cabinet model, and the awards and external recognition mentioned above in recent years testify to the effectiveness of the Council's strategic leadership, despite the loss of more than half of central government funding. The leadership has been both supported and scrutinised by councillors serving on the non-executive and scrutiny committees, with members playing a particularly active role in planning when compared to their counterparts in most other authorities.

While the above could be used to argue that the number of councillors should again remain unchanged, the Conservative Group is conscious that the borough has experienced population growth since 2011 and is forecast to do so until 2024, particularly in the north-western and north-central parts of the borough. An increase from 60 to 62 councillors will allow additional representation to be allocated to these areas, without significantly reducing representation for other parts of the borough. While the forecast population growth of 29% by 2041 could be used to argue for an even greater increase in councillor numbers, forecasts so far into the future are dependent on assumptions that could turn out to be erroneous. At a time when our residents are determined that the cost of politics should not increase, it would not be responsible to significantly increase the number of councillors to accommodate population growth from 2024 to 2041 that may or may not arise. Even if these forecasts prove correct, improvements in efficiency may render any further increase in councillor numbers unnecessary.

Appendices

Appendix I - Data sources

Bromley population projection:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

Bromley historical population:

<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/historic-census-population>

Comparative electors-to-councillors ratios:

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/resources/electoral-data>

Bromley Constitution:

<https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=1099>

Croydon planning committees:

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?XXR=0&Year=2018&CId=165&MD=ielistmeetings>

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?XXR=0&Year=2018&CId=136&MD=ielistmeetings>

Bexley planning committee:

<http://democracy.bexley.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=144>

Appendix II – Bromley Electorate Forecasting Methodology

The Local Government Boundary Commission seeks electorate forecasts for 2024 at polling district level. A standard forecasting methodology is available for boroughs to apply, whereby the past share of the electorate by polling district is used to distribute the forecasted borough level electorate.

The Commission invites councils to present an alternative methodology, provided it is supported by appropriate evidence.

The standard methodology is based on ONS data and uses historic data trends to automate part of the electorate forecasting process. Bromley, along with other London boroughs has therefore elected to apply an alternative methodology, based on the Greater London Authority (GLA) population projections which are widely accepted to better forecast the population of London's boroughs. Furthermore the standard forecasting methodology does not take into account any planned development beyond what might be anticipated to be natural growth, and does not therefore acknowledge the geographical spread of developmental changes proposed through the recent adopted Local Plan (2019).

Bromley methodology

Baseline dwelling figures by polling district are established using a baseline year of 2015, consistent with the Local Plan housing trajectory baseline and the GLA ward-level population forecast used.

Development Data

Projected housing change for the years 2015-2024 based on the housing trajectory within Bromley's Local Plan (2019) Appendix 10.1 is assigned to relevant polling districts. The housing trajectory sets out development consistent with meeting and exceeding the minimum housing target of 641 dwellings per year as set out in the London Plan (2016). The Bromley Local Plan (2019) sets out various components of future housing supply which are distributed between polling districts as set out in A – D below.

- A. Identified sites of 9 or more units are allocated to the polling districts within which they are located. Where a site is split across more than one polling district and, detailed masterplanning is not yet available, an indicative share of the total housing yield is assigned to each polling district proportionate to the share of total site area occurring in that polling district.
- B. Housing on sites of 9 or more units not currently identified but projected to come forward in the broad locations of Bromley and Orpington Town Centres are assigned to the polling districts within which those town centres are located. As these sites are unidentified, the overall broad location housing figure for each town centre is divided up proportionately to the share of town centre land area contained in each polling district. The polling district 'land area' having first been adjusted to avoid potential 'double dipping' with sites considered under A (above).

- C. Housing of 9 or more units on retail sites and public land not current identified but projected to come forward are assigned to polling districts with locations most likely to contain these sites. For the purposes of this exercise, this approximation is limited to land within the boundaries of town centres at District level or higher (as recognised in the Local Plan). This includes Bromley (Metropolitan level), Orpington (Major level), Beckenham, Penge, Petts Wood, West Wickham and Crystal Palace (all District level) Town Centres. Similarly 'B' above these sites are unidentified, and therefore, the overall broad location housing figure for each town centre is divided up proportionately to the share of town centre land area contained in each polling district (excluding the land area of 'A' sites).
- D. Various sources of housing of less than 9 units, including completions between the baseline year and the Local Plan adoption date, commenced and projected small sites and the vacant units and prior approvals projections are generally distributed equally across wards and then assigned equally amongst polling districts within those wards, with adjustment to reflect the reduced capacity within Green Belt (Darwin Ward) and greater growth capacity, in around Bromley Metropolitan Town Centre and Orpington Major Town Centre (Bromley Town and Orpington wards).

Forecasting the electorate by Polling District

The figures for existing dwellings and proposed changes in dwellings per polling district are combined to produce a figure for the total dwellings per polling district for 2024.

An average number of adults per dwelling is calculated for each ward, using the total dwellings per polling district data and the GLA 2024 ward-level population projections for persons 18 years or older (Note: the GLA's 2024 ward-level population projections are mid-year estimates and therefore include individuals ('attainers') who become 18 during 2024). The GLA projections also reflect the housing trajectory information from Bromley's Local Plan.

The ward-level average 'adults per dwelling' calculation is applied to each polling district within that ward, forecasting the voting aged population by polling district for 2024.

Guided by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, the conversion of voting aged population to electorate utilises the change ratio methodology set out in their 'Polling District Forecasting Tool'. The electorate by ward is compared to the GLA ward-level population projections for years 2016, 2017 and 2018 to produce ward specific 'change ratios' for each years 2016-2018. An average change ratio across the three years is produced for each individual ward. The relevant ward specific average change ratio is applied to the forecast 2024 voting aged population of each polling district to produce an electorate forecast for each polling district.

Appendix III – appointments to outside bodies 2018/19

Outside Body	Representatives
Adult's Safeguarding Board	Cllr Colin Smith & Cllr Diane Smith
Age UK London	Cllr Mary Cooke
Beckenham Parochial Charities	Mr A J Duncan, Mr G Scales & Mrs Kathryn Strachan, Cllr Russell Mellor, Mrs Peggy Duffin & Mr Robert Mitchell
Biggin Hill Airport Consultative Committee	Council as freeholder: Cllr Peter Morgan (Reserve: Cllr Christopher Marlow) Biggin Hill Ward: Cllr Melanie Stevens (reserve: Cllr Julian Benington) Darwin Ward: Cllr Richard Scoates (reserve: Cllr Simon Fawthrop)
Bromley "Y" Project	Cllrs Judi Ellis and Peter Fortune
Bromley Arts Council	Cllrs Gareth Allatt, Mike Botting, Robert Mcilveen & Alexa Michael
Bromley Duke of Edinburgh's Award Support Committee	Cllr Peter Fortune (1 vacancy)
Bromley Economic Partnership	Cllr Peter Morgan
Bromley Mentoring Initiative Steering Group	Cllr David Cartwright & Cllr Kate Lymer
Bromley Town Twinning Association	Cllrs Kathy Bance, Mary Cooke & Suraj Sharma
Bromley Youth Music Trust Board of Directors	Cllr Robert Mcilveen
Children's Safeguarding Board	Cllr Colin Smith & Cllr Peter Fortune
Clarion Housing Group South London Regional Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Chris Pierce
Community Links Bromley	Cllr Peter Fortune & Cllr Nicky Dykes
Cray Valley Library and War Memorial Institute	Cllrs Peter Fortune, Yvonne Bear & Harry Stranger (one vacancy)
Crystal Palace Community Development Trust	Cllr Marina Ahmad
Diocese of Rochester Board of Education	Cllr Robert Evans
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership	Cllr Peter Fortune
Hayes (Kent) Trust	Mrs Alison Naish & Mrs C Truelove
Keston Village Hall Trust	Mr M Baker, Mrs Pam Broughton & Mrs Maureen Marshall
London Road Safety Council	Cllr Will Harmer
London Councils Children and Young People lead member	Cllr Peter Fortune
London Councils Crime and Public Protection lead member	Cllr Kate Lymer
London Councils Culture, Tourism & Sport lead member	Cllr Peter Morgan

London Councils Economic Development/Regeneration lead member	Cllr Peter Morgan
London Councils Grants Committee	Cllr Colin Smith (Reserves Cllrs Diane Smith, Peter Fortune, Kate Lymer & William Huntington- Thresher)
London Councils Greater London Employment Forum	Cllr Pauline Tunnicliffe (reserve: Cllr Michael Turner)
London Councils Health and Adult Services lead member	Cllr Diane Smith
London Councils Housing lead member	Cllr Peter Morgan
London Councils Leaders' Committee	Cllr Colin Smith (Reserves: Cllrs Peter Fortune & Kate Lymer)
London Councils Transport and Environment Committee	Cllr William Huntington-Thresher (Reserves: Cllrs Kira Gabbert, Will Harmer, David Jefferys & Kieran Terry)
London Youth Games	Cllr Graham Arthur
Management Committee of Wood Lodge Living Skills Centre	Cllr Kira Gabbert
Mytime Active Board	Cllrs Aisha Cuthbert & Robert Evans
Nash College	Cllr Stephen Wells
Newable Ltd (formerly GLE - Greater London Enterprise)	Cllr Peter Morgan
Oxleas NHS Trust: Foundation Trust Council of Governors	Cllr Yvonne Bear
Petts Wood and Hawkwood Committee	Cllr Kieran Terry (Deputy: Simon Fawthrop)
Phillips and Lubbock Foundations	Cllr Julian Benington, Mr J C Bowers, Mrs B A Powell & Mrs J Woodhead
Proactive Bromley	Cllrs Peter Fortune & Michael Rutherford
Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Greater London	Cllr Peter Fortune
Safer Bromley Partnership	Cllr Kate Lymer
Safer Neighbourhood Board	Cllrs Kathy Bance, David Cartwright & Chris Pierce
Southern Regional Flood Defence Committee	Cllr Alan Downing (LB Bexley)
St Olave's and St Saviour's Grammar School Foundation	Cllrs Robert Evans & Stephen Wells
Thames Regional Flood Defence Committee	(LB Lewisham)
Thomas Stringer Charity, Cudham	Cllrs Richard Scoates & Melanie Stevens
University of Kent	Cllr Peter Fortune