

Electoral review of Pendle Borough Council – Labour Group Submission

Submission on council size submitted to the Local
Government Boundary Commission for England

The last review in 1999 led to a reduction from 51 to 49 councillors. It is appreciated that the local government landscape and the role, responsibilities and workings of the Council have changed since then but the challenge and complexity of the roles of elected members has increased.

Recently the Council moved from an Executive arrangement to a Committee system increasing the number of Councillors who serve on the Policy and Resources Committee from 10 to 13.

The current number of people registered to vote on the electoral register is 66,626. The forecast for the next 10 years is that this will increase with the pending number of planning permissions granted for residential purposes and required number of homes allocation to be an additional 5,662 as per the Local Plan requirement. This includes the Council's strategic housing site with an approved 500 homes to be built. It is our view that as transport and other strategic objectives are achieved, Pendle will become an attractive area for people to live thus increasing the population.

Currently Councillors represent their constituents on a number of external bodies/groups including:

- Pendle Leisure Trust
- Airedale Hospital Trust
- Burnley and District Society for the Blind
- Burnley and Pendle Citizens Advice Bureau
- Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS Board
- District Councils Network
- District Early Years Forum
- Fairtrade Group
- Forest of Bowland AONB
- Growth Lancashire Ltd
- Advisory Services Committee
- PEARL Board
- LCC Health Scrutiny Committee
- Lancashire Police and Crime Commission
- Lancashire Waste Partnership
- Nelson and Colne College Board
- Pendle Community Health and Wellbeing Board
- Pendle Community Safety Partnership Steering Group
- Pendle Countryside Access Forum
- Pendle Heritage Trust Board
- Pendle Hill Landscape Board
- Pendle Public/Private Partnership Board
- Pendle Twinning Association
- Pendle Youth Orchestra
- PLACE

The total number of Councillors required alone to serve on the above outside bodies is 46 members.

The current ratio for each councillor is 1:1360 which is below the average for district councillors in England.

Our proposal is to reduce the number of Councillors to 39 giving a ratio of 1:1710 based on current registered voters. This is within the average for district councillors and doesn't take into account the complex and challenging casework and appearance at other bodies by elected members. However, if the registered numbers on the electoral register were increased up to 72,000 based on predicted a very modest increase in population this would give a ratio of 1:1850 which is towards the top end of the average in England.

Currently the Council has committed to operate on a Committee basis for the next 5 years. As Local Government funding is reduced with austerity the direct responsibility for elected members may appear to decrease hence our proposal to reduce the number by 20% is a rationale number pending the reorganisation of Local Government at some point in the future.