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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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28 March 2013

Dear Mr Dunkeyson

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND – ELECTORAL  
REVIEW OF EREWASH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

At the meeting of the Borough Council held on Thursday 7 March 2013 which was attended by all 51 Members of the Council, consideration was given to a report on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's intention to conduct an electoral review of Erewash. Council was asked to determine its preferred number of councillors to represent the Borough's residents.

I am writing to inform you that the Borough Council resolved that its preferred Council size is 47 Members. This decision was reached on the basis of a single majority vote.

I attach for your information a copy of that part of the draft minutes of the Council meeting that relate to this matter showing the decision together with a copy of the report that was considered. That report supports the Council's decision regarding preferred size. Also attached are documents providing the information required by the Boundary Commission.

If you require any further information relating to the submission, please do not hesitate to contact me or my project manager, Stuart Lloyd, at [stuart.lloyd@erewash.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.lloyd@erewash.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Jaroszek  
Chief Executive

## EREWASH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report of the Chief Executive to the  
Ordinary Meeting of Council

7 March 2013

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND – ELECTORAL REVIEW**

#### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (the Commission) intention to conduct an electoral review of Erewash and to ask Council to determine its preferred Council size.

#### 2 Recommendations

- (a) That the details of the forthcoming electoral review of the Borough be noted ; and
- (b) That the Council determines its' preferred Council size for submission to the Commission.

*Note: In preparing this report due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental, efficiency, risk management and health considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial, personnel or property implications and comments received are reflected in the report.*

#### 3 Information, Issues and Options

- 3.1 The Commission have served notice that they intend to undertake a statutory electoral review of the Borough with a view to any changes taking effect from the Borough and Parish elections in May 2015. This report sets out the process to be undertaken and asks Council to determine a submission as to the preferred Council size. The Commission is responsible for making recommendations to Parliament about representative arrangements for all local authorities in England.
- 3.2 The main purpose of the review is to try to ensure that each Councillor represents around the same number of people and that there is electoral balance across the Borough. The conclusion of the review is likely to result in changes to electoral ward boundaries and a further polling district review will be required before implementation in May 2015.
- 3.3 The last electoral review of Erewash was undertaken prior to the 1999 Borough and Parish elections and resulted in many ward changes and a reduction in Council size from 52 Members to 51.

- 3.4 The Commission have identified electoral inequalities in some 36% of the Council's electoral wards according to their tolerance indicators. This means that some of the wards have too many or too few electors per Councillor compared to the average for the Borough. The Wards affected are spread across the Borough as a whole so the review will in effect encompass the whole Borough.
- 3.5 The final recommendations and changes proposed by the commission must be approved by Parliament. A draft Order which is the legal document which brings into force the Commissions recommendations is then laid in Parliament. The Order will provide new electoral arrangements for the Council to be implemented in May 2015.
- 3.6 The review will decide the pattern of wards for the entire Borough not just wards where there are levels of electoral inequality. The Commission will have to decide, taking into account statutory criteria of electoral equality, Community identity and effective and convenient local government-
- Total number of Councillors
  - Number of Wards
  - Names of Wards
  - Boundaries of Wards
- 3.7 When considering representations, which can be submitted by anyone, not just the Council the Commission cannot take into account factors relating to –
- Parliamentary constituencies
  - Current borough wards
  - Local political implications
  - School catchment areas
  - Postcodes
  - Polling districts
- 3.8 The review process is split into several distinct stages as set out below –
- Council size discussion – over a 6 to 8 week period
  - Council size consultation - over a 6 to 8 week period
  - Further information gathering by the Commission over a 10 week period
  - Publishing of draft recommendations and open consultation over a period of 10 to 12 weeks
  - Final recommendations and laying of an Order in Parliament.
- 3.9 Now we come on to the main purpose of this report which is for Council to determine a submission to the Commission on preferred Council size which needs to be informed by evidence taking into account the electorate ratio and providing key information requested by the Commission. The remainder of

this report sets out key information to be taken into account and detailed in the Council's formal submission.

- 3.10 The majority of recent reviews show a trend for a reduction in District Council sizes. This report makes a case for a reduction in Council size from the present 51 seats to 45 or 47 seats. This recommendation is based on detailed examination of the working practices of the Council and the need to ensure proper democratic accountability for the decisions taken by Members in representing the views of local communities.
- 3.11 The approach adopted in preparing this report has been to follow the guiding principles of the review to support a proposed change and the following paragraphs set out the case for change.
- 3.12 The rationale for reducing the Council size is based on the business and other needs of the Council going forward during the next ten years.
- 3.13 The Council has adopted a strong leader and cabinet structure with the Leader appointed for a four year term. Since the implementation of the Local Government Act 2000 Council has taken a deliberate decision to reduce the number of Committee meetings to allow Members to spend more time representing their electorate. Council relies more heavily on delegated decision making and as result the number of formal committee meetings and other meetings has fallen from around 350 in 1999/2000 to around 70 in the present civic year.
- 3.14 Other local Council numbers vary widely from 37 to 63 but the trend of recent reviews has been for fewer Members. Based on the present electorate the following figures show the electorate ratio based on 43 to 47 Members. At present the ratio is 1:1691.
- 43 Members (1:2005)
  - 45 Members (1:1916)
  - 47 Members (1:1835)
- 3.15 The case for a reduction in council size and the evidence to support the submission can be summarised as –
- Fewer Members are directly involved in day to day decision making
  - The Council is clear that sufficient Councillor capacity must always be available to perform the Regulatory and Scrutiny functions of the Council
  - Council could meet its representational needs with slightly fewer councillors
  - The adoption of an Executive model allows concise decision making and the use of delegation enables effective decision making freeing up other Members to spend time on their representational duties.
  - The workload for Members would remain manageable with slightly fewer Councillors
  - A reduction of this nature would retain a good level of representation for communities and give value for money to residents

- 3.16 The case for reduction and fuller evidence is set out at Appendix A (Key lines of enquiry) in the case submission documents and will be supported by a detailed description of the Councils democratic structure to evidence the Council's preferred option.
- 3.17 The case for the Councils preferred size has been informed by meetings with Political group leaders, a briefing from the Commission and statistical analysis by officers.
- 3.18 Once Council has determined its position in relation to Council size the evidence based submission will be sent to the Commission who make a determination of size and give open consultation. The submission of preferred size must be made by 1 April 2013.
- 3.19 Council will receive further reports as necessary, but in particular Member input will be sought on Ward make up and names once the size of the Council is determined.
- 3.20 The Council is asked to support a submission based on a council size of 45 or 47 Members but may vary this number if they so wish. Additionally Council may choose not to make a submission and allow the Commission to set the number. However it is generally preferred that the approved Council size remains an odd number to facilitate ease of decision making and proportionality.

#### 4 Risk and Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Council must comply with the directions of the Commission in facilitating a review of electoral arrangements in time for the next local election in May 2015.

#### 5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Commission are acting under statutory powers to lead a review of electoral arrangements in Erewash to ensure electoral equality.

#### 6 Personnel Implications

- 6.1 There will be substantial staffing implications that arise as a result of conducting the review but these will be met from existing staffing resources.

#### 7 Alignment to Council Priorities

- 7.1 Electoral equality links fundamentally to all of the Councils' Corporate aims and priorities.

#### Background Papers

None directly linked to this report.

Contact Officer  
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Hayley Brailsford

Key Decision Status (Executive decisions only)  
Not applicable

Appendices  
Appendix A – Evidence based submission.

[DRAFT V1]

Local Government Boundary Review – Council Size Submission

<p><b>1. Managing the business of the Council: To what extent is council size influenced by the council’s decision-making process or, conversely, the decision making structure fitted around the council size?</b></p>	
<p>1.1 What is the overall structure of decision making? Do Councillors match the work to fit the time available to them, or stretch/shrink the time they spend according to how much work they want to/need to do?</p>	<p>The Council operates a Strong Leader/Cabinet model. The Cabinet is known locally as the Council Executive. This enables swift decisions to be made and provides clear accountability. However, it also provides fewer opportunities for a significant number of members to be involved in formal decision making. As a result, workloads between members in exercising Council functions/duties vary considerably, although their workloads in representing their individual wards are thought to be more consistent.</p>
<p>1.2 Has the Council studied how much time their members spend on Council business?</p>	<p>Although there have been no recent formal studies, the Independent Remuneration Panel has interviewed members during their reviews and concluded that workloads varied amongst members but some were very busy, especially in the current economic climate. The Independent Remuneration Panel has also noted in their reports that the workload and responsibilities of elected members have increased in some areas and that managing a contracting service and a reduced budget is more challenging for members and cuts in services/funding is likely to lead to an increased caseload for many councillors. Whilst the time spent in formal Council meetings may have declined, there has been a perceived rise in member involvement in other forums eg residents associations and meetings with partners as they seek to develop their community representation role (also see 4.5). The Leader of the Council has provided evidence on the workload in his group – see Appendix 3.</p>
<p>1.3 What assessments have been made of how many members it needs to function effectively, particularly since the introduction of executive arrangements? In a hypothetical scenario where the</p>	<p>No formal assessments have been made although comparisons have been made with other districts of a similar size. The Strong Leader/Cabinet model always presents challenges regarding the formal role of non executive members and the previous streamlining of scrutiny arrangements has reduced the input of some members. The Council is however planning to have two scrutiny committees with the additional committee probably focussing primarily on external rather than internal matters</p>

council size was increased or reduced by 10%, how would you do things differently?

reflecting the Council's wider role in the community. If Council size were to be reduced by 10%, the Council may need to review the size and organisation of committees.

Whilst no formal assessment of workload has been undertaken by the Council, the Leader of the Council has carried out an exercise on his members' workload and this is appended to the report for information (Appendix 3). At the time of writing this submission details of the Opposition's assessment of its members' workload are not available but it is anticipated that this information will be included in any submission they may make to the Boundary Commission.

The adoption of the Strong Leader/Cabinet model together with associated increase in member delegations, and streamlining of the Council's decision making process would enable the Council to function with fewer members. Council aims to hold the minimum number of committee meetings consistent with discharging its responsibilities. In the last year the Council had 75 formal meetings and back bench members time was freed up to act in representing their electors. Given the planned growth of the scrutiny function and the increased emphasis on community involvement, any planned reduction should be suitably limited. The deletion of one member from the Council's size results in a marginal saving in members' allowances/expenses of approximately £4,000; this is relatively small compared to the costs of reducing the number of members to the point where there is poor democracy due to inadequate representation of the electorate and the likelihood of flawed decision making. The Council currently has 51 members and excluding the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who are otherwise engaged in their year of office, only 4 do not sit on any committee or sub committee of the Council. The Council's arrangements however provide many opportunities for them to do so if they wished or were selected to do so by their group.

Members and officers are united in the view that the Council size should be an odd number to enable effective running of the Council and policy setting. There is evidence to show that "hung" councils can lead to poor decision making and with the current political balance in the Borough it is more likely than most areas to be at risk of

	an equality of seats.
1.4	<p>To what extent is the current council size a factor in determining the political management, scrutiny and governance arrangements or is it the other way round?</p>
1.5	<p>If you had a free hand, are there any changes you would make to the political management, scrutiny and governance arrangements? If so, how might that impact on the number of councillors required.</p>
1.6	<p>How are decisions 'cascaded' down the structure? Is the balance between member decisions and officer delegated decisions effective? Is there any duplication of work?</p>
	<p>The Council's Strong Leader and Cabinet decision-making process and scrutiny processes reflect the legislative position and local political choice rather than the Council size. The last review of boundaries in 1999 pre-dates the introduction of the current governance arrangements at Erewash and therefore could not take into account changes in workload arising from the revised model. Hence the Council's view regarding the viability of fewer members.</p> <p>It is unlikely that the Council will adopt any revised cabinet/scrutiny arrangements (apart from the introduction of a further scrutiny committee) or consider returning to a committee style system of governance under the localism provisions.</p> <p>Consultation with members suggests that member workloads are manageable although they vary according to the role. It is true however that the roles and responsibilities of the councillor have changed significantly over recent years with the increased emphasis on community involvement rather than attendance at formal meetings.</p> <p>Given the revised Governance Model adopted since the last review, the Council is satisfied that a Council size of 43, 45 or 47 would warrant serious consideration and probably still retain sufficient member capacity to meet challenges facing the Council under the national policy agenda but there is no consensus on which value in that range is best.</p> <p>The Council has a clear definition and delineation between the decisions of members and officers to eliminate duplication and improve the communication of decisions of the Council. In the current process, officers are responsible for preparing reports to Council and the Executive on which members base decisions and to recommend the delegation of any non executive decision to officers or other Committees.</p> <p>Executive decisions are recorded on the committee administration system and any</p>

	<p>forthcoming key decisions added to the Council Forward Plan. It is the responsibility of Directors and Service Managers to cascade decisions down to departments, teams and the wider public.</p>
<p><b>2. Scrutiny of the Council, Outside bodies and Others</b></p>	
<p>2.1 What's the structure? An overview and scrutiny committee, or several scrutiny committees? How do subjects get tackled – in Committee or Task &amp; Finish Groups? How many subjects at any one time? What's the time-span for a particular study?</p>	<p><b>See Appendix 2.</b>  The Council currently operates formal scrutiny arrangements, with one Scrutiny Committee to which are added Task and Finish Groups as appropriate. The committee meets typically five times per year and considers two or three topics at any one time.</p> <p>The Council is aware of the potential implications of the localism agenda and its forthcoming additional responsibilities, e.g. in the area of public health. The health and wellbeing agenda will have implications for decision-making, scrutiny and councillor skill sets and retaining sufficient member capacity will be essential to deliver the Council's statutory obligations. The Council plans to introduce a second scrutiny committee to deal primarily with external matters.</p> <p>In addition, although police authorities have been replaced by Police and Crime Commissioners, joint scrutiny arrangements to hold police commissioners to account will impact on councillor time and capacity. The Council is currently reviewing the appointment of members to joint bodies such as partnerships and outside bodies with a view to rationalising these appointments and refocusing member priorities. These changes should provide space to cope with the additional partnership responsibilities outlined above.</p> <p>Erewash as a whole was formed in the 1974 reorganisation of Local Government by the merger of three distinct councils. The area comprises two main towns and 13 rural parishes each with very distinct needs and views which do not always align. The people of these areas have strong views on their needs and require significant</p>

	representation from their local councillors, again adding to the evidence that although a small decrease in members can be contained, significant representation should be retained.
2.2	<p>Is Scrutiny just the Councillors doing meetings or do they take external evidence?</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee meetings are currently focused on specific tasks, monitoring of performance data and approval of reports and recommendations through their ability to “call in” executive reports. Whilst some external evidence has been taken, this is likely to expand considerably with the introduction of a second scrutiny committee.</p>
2.3	<p>If the former, what do the members do between meetings?</p> <p>Members are actively involved in Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups, of which there are often 1 or 2 running at any one time, with between 3 and 9 members involved in each group.</p>
2.4	<p>How is the Council handling health scrutiny – who is involved? How much work do they do?</p> <p>Health scrutiny is not a statutory district council function although the Council does have wider responsibilities with regard to general public health issues. Erewash Borough Council does expect to contribute at member level to scrutiny of public health at the County.</p>
2.5	<p>How many ‘twin-hatted’ members sit on outside bodies and how are conflicts of interest resolved?</p> <p>The Council currently has member representation on 36 outside bodies. 7 of the Council’s members are also County Councillors, 18 are Parish Councillors and 2 of these are both a County and Parish Councillor.</p> <p>All Council members are required to sign the Council Members’ Code of Conduct and to maintain an up to date register of their interests with the Council’s Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, who provides members with ongoing advice and guidance on conflict of interest issues as they arise.</p> <p>Members are required to declare any interests at the outset of Committee meetings and, if a prejudicial interest in an item is declared, that member must leave the room while the item is discussed and must also abstain from any vote. If a complaint was received alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct, this would be referred for consideration by the Standards Committee. There is provision for the Monitoring</p>

	<p>Officer and Standards Committee to consider applications for a dispensation in certain circumstances. Nominations in response to requests for representation on outside bodies are proposed by the ruling group and can only be approved by Council. The register of Outside Bodies is reviewed regularly and representation limited to those organisations that are of strategic significance to the Council.</p>
<p><b>3. Representational Role: Representing Electors to the Council</b></p>	
<p>3.1 What sort of engagement is there between front-line councillors with electors? One-to-one when there's a customer complaint, or gathering views about policy from the whole community? If the latter, how?</p>	<p>Frontline councillors engage with constituents in a variety of ways. These include championing local community development initiatives and events in their wards, responding to individual queries and complaints, leading local Neighbourhood Watch meetings, attending residents association and increasingly, by canvassing households in their wards and holding community meetings on issues of local concern. A number of members hold regular surgeries and many members attend the Community Forums run by the Council. Conservative Borough Councillors are expected to attend their parish council to represent the Borough Council even if they are not parish councillors themselves.</p> <p>Members also engage with the community via Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Joint Chamber of Trade meetings, Community Centre Committees and many act as School Governors.</p> <p>Members engaged in scrutiny also carry out consultations on specific scrutiny reviews, eg Town Centre Regeneration and the review of concurrent functions.</p>
<p>3.2 What is the structure of local area committees. What are their responsibilities? Is membership limited to councillors? – is it open to district councillors or co-option from the wider community?</p>	<p>Erewash Borough Council does not operate an Area Committee structure but the Council facilitates two Community Forums to which members may attend. These meetings are also attended by the Council's partners including the County Council and the Police. These meetings encourage questions from residents and seek to both highlight and resolve local issues. Presentations on relevant topics are also provided.</p>

<p>3.3 Do Councillors fix day-to-day problems by taking them to officers or by representing elector issues as policy views in meetings of the Council?</p>	<p>Councillors use a range of routes to resolve day to day problems: by researching and keeping abreast of local issues, providing support and advice, picking up on 'hot spots' and raising them with officers and/or portfolio holders and by feeding recurrent problems into policy/operational/tasking groups.</p>
<p>3.4 How does the Councillor engage?  Surgery, newsletter, blog, public meetings, or not at all?</p>	<p>In their day to day dealing with constituents, councillors give advice and information where appropriate; they will involve officers where necessary. This can sometimes be in the event of service failure but mostly when technical advice is needed. Whilst the Democratic Services Team at the Council provides some support to members with their constituency work, this is limited particularly in relation to secretarial matters where members have to be largely self sufficient which can be very time consuming for lead members.</p>
<p>3.5 Are Councillors "go-betweens" between clients/customers/electors and paid service staff to fix service delivery complaints?</p>	<p>Parish councils welcome engagement with their Borough Councillors, and a number of District Councillors are Parish Councillors. The Council also engages parishes at a Parish Forum.</p> <p>Some councillors hold regular surgeries which are promoted on the Council website and increasingly distribute newsletters to residents. At least one councillor is known to have their own Blog. Members are increasingly attending residents associations and community groups/meetings.</p>

#### **4. Representing the Council in the community**

<p>4.1 Does the councillor go to meetings of community bodies, parish councils? If so, how many? What for? Do councillors feel obliged to go to meetings of each individual parish council in their respective</p>	<p>Members manage their meeting commitments in communities, including Parish Council meetings, supporting each other to ensure attendance and effective use of their time. The Borough has 13 parishes, community forums and numerous community, residential and business organisations which are attended by councillors dependent on the nature of the business being discussed. (Also see comments under 3.1 regarding attendance at parish meetings.)</p>
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<p>divisions or is it to meetings of “clusters” of parishes? Where the former, is this an effective use of an elected members time?</p>	
<p>4.2 Does the Council attract candidates and retain members?</p>	<p>The Council has a good record of attracting candidates and retaining members. 7 members have served the Council for at least 25 years since the Council was first formed in 1974. The May 2011 local election attracted 126 candidates, and all 51 seats were contested. There is however significant turnover of elected members at each election with typically approximately 25% standing down or not being re-elected at any one election.</p>
<p>4.3 What happens when a Councillor is absent? Formal taking on of responsibility by other elected members, informal contact point for electors, or nothing? (Maybe different in multi-member wards). Do front line councillors take the strain of, for example Executive members whose time maybe limited?</p>	<p>Members at Erewash have informal arrangements within their political groups to ensure a substitute member attends formal meetings and other events. The councillors have excellent attendance figures with average attendance at meetings of the Council and committees being 91%.</p>
<p>4.4 Do Councillors learn and develop on the job or in formal training?</p>	<p>The Council is committed to member development and post the May 2011 election, as for the 2007 election, delivered a comprehensive induction programme comprising structured events on the role of the Councillor, Planning and Licensing training, Media and Communication, and a range of other necessary introductory information. Members have also received training on the role of Scrutiny by INLOGOV (Birmingham University) and chairmanship training as appropriate. Training is not limited to the immediate aftermath of an election.</p>

	<p>The Council is a member of the East Midlands Member Development Network and members are advised of countywide training and conferences by the Democratic Services Team on a regular basis.</p> <p>Financial provision is included in the Council's Annual Revenue Budget for member development and this is supplemented by resources made available by political parties which also encourage councillor development.</p>
<p>4.5 Has the Council experienced any statutory or other failures because there weren't enough councillors? Are Councillors bored or "inventing" work to do?</p>	<p>No service failures have been experienced on the grounds that there were not enough councillors to undertake their statutory roles including decision making and community representation.</p> <p>There is no evidence to demonstrate this. In interviews with the Independent Remuneration Panel, members appeared to be fulfilled and very busy discharging their statutory functions and representing their wards. A recent survey by the Conservative Group on the Council disclosed that the average time commitment of an executive member was 39 hours per week with the corresponding figure for a 'back bencher' being 13.5 hours. The latter is an average however and Chairmen, particularly of Planning, have commitments of 28-30 hours per week. Whilst some members would like to increase the time spent on Council business, they are restricted by working commitments.</p>

## **Erewash Borough Council – Model of Local Governance**

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced fundamental changes to the political management arrangements of local authorities by separating executive from non-executive functions. The Council moved from a traditional committee system to a cabinet style of governance, opting for the 'Strong Leader model' to improve efficiency and accountability in decision-making. The Council's Cabinet is known locally as "The Council Executive".

The Council's democratic arrangements and structures reflect at any one time both local political choice and statutory requirements. They are reviewed regularly in response to national legislative changes and "lessons learned" from operating the adopted arrangements. The Council's current structure reflects the wishes of the administration elected in 2011.

The change from the committee to the Executive model of governance had a significant impact on the role of a councillor with a greater focus on their community leadership role and less time spent in formal meetings. It also saw the advent of neighbourhood working and the creation of Community Forums in the Borough. This has enabled members to better define their role in the community and provide community leadership.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors**

#### **Full Council**

The Council has 51 councillors, elected every four years at a single set of elections, the last being in 2011. All councillors are members of Full Council. Full Council is responsible for appointing the Leader and the Committees of the Council, and for setting its Budget and Policy framework on the recommendation of the Cabinet. The Full Council meets on average 6 times per year.

#### **Council Executive**

The Council appoints the Leader for a four year term and the Leader appoints the Executive members with their portfolio responsibilities. The scheme of delegation covers most of the day-to-day decisions required to enable the Council to function effectively. The Executive currently comprises the Leader, a Deputy Leader and 4 Lead member positions and is single party.

Individual members of the Executive are allocated portfolio responsibilities and have wide ranging individual decision-making powers in relation to their service responsibilities. These arrangements are kept under constant review by the Leader to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The Executive meets to perform its collective executive functions 9 times a year although there may also be additional meetings to allow for any urgent and unforeseen business.

### **Scrutiny Functions**

The LG Act 2000 required each local authority to establish a scrutiny process as a statutory function of the Council. The Council currently has one Scrutiny Committee that covers all of the statutory scrutiny functions. Scrutiny is made up of 17 councillors and meets on average four or five times a year, and is supplemented by Task and Finish Groups as necessary.

The Council is aware of national policy initiatives that will impact on the Council's scrutiny function and has plans to introduce another Scrutiny Committee to deal primarily with external matters.

### **Audit Committee**

Audit Committee has 9 councillors and 1 Independent member and meets 4 times a year. Its main functions are to steer internal audit arrangements, consider the reports of external audit and inspections, approve the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts and Governance Statement and reviews the Council's wider governance arrangements. It can be considered loosely to be part of the scrutiny umbrella.

### **Regulatory Functions**

The **Planning Committee** comprises 13 members and meets every four weeks to determine planning applications.

### **Licensing and Public Protection Panel Committee**

This committee has 11 members and meets approximately 6 times a year to consider Licensing Policy matters. It has two sub committees, namely the Drivers Licensing Panel (5 members) and the Licensing and Public Protection Panel (3 members) which deal with License applications.

### **Standards Committee**

The membership of the Standards Committee has recently changed to take into account the new Standards Regime. It comprises 9 Borough councillors and 3 Independent Parish Members, 2 Independent Members and 2 Independent Persons. The purpose of the Standards Committee is to promote ethical conduct within the Council, to carry out assessments of complaints and determination hearings. The Committee meets on average once every three months.

### **General Purposes Committee**

The General Purposes Committee meets around four times a year to ensure the Council's Constitution is up to date and reflects the workings of the Council. The Committee also acts as the Council's "Personnel Committee". The Committee is made up of 9 members.

### **Other less frequent Committees**

In addition to the committees previously detailed there are a number of other committees that meet infrequently. These committees do not have set work programmes and scheduled established meeting patterns. As such their meetings and business are managed on an 'as necessary' basis.

### **Appeals Committee**

This Committee comprises 5 members and is appointed at Annual Council. It is politically representative. It hears and determines appeals in accordance with the Council's procedures in respect of misconduct, capability and grievances.

### **Appointments Panel**

This Panel comprises 9 members (including the Leader and Deputy Leader). It is politically representative. It makes recommendations to Council for appointment to the post of Chief Executive. It also deals with the appointment of the Directors and Assistant Chief Executive.

### **Other Committees and Meetings**

The Council also appoints a Rate Relief Determination Committee (5 members), a Health and Safety Committee (2 members), the Bramcote Crematorium Joint Committee with Broxtowe Borough Council (3 members) and a Long Eaton Townscape Heritage Initiative Steering Group (3 members). Whilst not all these committees meet on regular set dates they do require significant commitment from the members appointed.

### **Timings of Meetings and Duration**

Full Council, Scrutiny Committee, Planning Committee and Audit Committee meet in the evening. Full Council commences at 7.00 pm with the typical start time for Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee being 6.30 pm and Planning Committee 5.30 pm. The Executive along with all other committees meet during the daytime. Council meetings are typically three hours in duration and the Executive three quarters of an hour to one and a quarter hours. Planning meetings can vary between one to three hours depending on the matters being considered.

### **Appointments to Partnerships and Outside Bodies**

There are currently 36 appointments on Partnerships and Outside Bodies for councillors. There is not however an equal spread of appointments across all 36 members reflecting their differing responsibilities consequently, some councillors have a significant number of appointments and others relatively few.

The frequency with which these Partnerships / Outside Bodies meet and the time commitment required from councillors appointed to them varies. All of these appointments are reviewed on an annual basis to assess their value to the Council as well as to the specific body and the intention is to focus the councillors' role on those bodies which have the greatest strategic significance for the Council.

**Parish Councils**

There are 13 parish councils in Erewash Borough, each of which holds regular meetings. Local councillors provide a key link to local parishes. **18** of our members are also Parish councillors.

## Conservative Group data on workloads and opportunities

The Leader of the Council has carried out quite a comprehensive exercise to discover the time spent by Executive and non-Executive Borough members, with information from 17 out of 26 Conservative members. He found that the average time for an Executive Member is 39 hours a week, although at present two do considerably more because they are running without a Finance Lead member temporarily. Non-Executive members average 13.5 hours per week but again this varies considerably depending on responsibility and whether or not they serve on the Planning Committee.

He has also undertaken an exercise to show the opportunities for non-Executive members to serve on committees which shows that each member could serve on 3.4 committees including full Council.

COMMITTEE/PANEL		No of Seats
Council		51
Audit		9
Executive	Exec only	5 + 1
General Purposes		9
Licensing & P P		3
Long Eaton THI	Exec only	3
Planning		13
Licensing Committee		11
Appeals Committee		5
Senior Officer Appts		9
Scrutiny		17
Standards		9
Rate Relief Determs.		5
Bramcote Crem.	Exec only	3
Corporate H&S		1
Licensing Drivers		5
Total Opportunities		159
Less Exec Only		12
Opportunities for Non Exec		147
Non-Exec members		
51 – 6 – 2		43
Average No. of Opportunities		3.4

If LGBCE reduces the number of members to 47 this increases average number of opportunities to 3.8.

In addition, there are 37 places on 32 outside bodies for councillors.

All members are expected to attend their local Community Forums (x no. per annum).

All members are expected to attend their political Group meetings to discuss policies and decisions, approx. 15 per year.

18 members are also members of their local Parish Council (17 of them are Conservative, 1 Labour), 5 members are County councillors and 2 are both County and Parish members. All Borough Councillors in Parished areas attend and speak at Parish Council meetings as Borough reps, even if they are there as Parish Cllrs.

In addition to outside bodies, members also attend Borough/Parish Liaison, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Benefits Improvement Board, Joint Chamber of Trade meetings, Digital Derbyshire Broadband, Residents Associations, Community Centre Committees, Indian Community Association, and act as School Governors.

The time spent as a councillor varies enormously but for Executive members averages out at 39 hours per week. Overall non-Executive members on the controlling group average 13.5 hours per week, but again many, such as Committee Chairmen and those on Planning Committee, average nearly 20 hours a week. The opposition wish to create a second Scrutiny Committee with an Overview & Scrutiny Board at their next opportunity and this would considerably increase the workload of non-Executive members.

Attitudes to Surgeries vary widely, some Cllrs run regular "Church Hall" surgeries whereas many others use internet/phone availability and/or have surgeries at Parish Councils and Community Forums.

Very little practical secretarial support is provided for councillors by the Borough so members have to type their own correspondence.

The ONS Age Projection 2010 indicates that the 65+ age group will grow by 12.8% in Erewash from 2009 to 2015 and this will have an impact on councillors workloads. The ethnicity of the Borough has changed from 98% white in 2001 to 95.2% in 2009 and this again increases workloads because of the need to communicate with and understand the needs of diverse communities.

Erewash is 133<sup>rd</sup> out of 356 in terms of deprivation with 1 LSOA in the most 2.5% deprived in the country and this area also lies 22<sup>nd</sup> worst for educational deprivation. There are also three more wards in the worst 10% and a total of six in the worst 5% for education. Workloads for councillors is heavier in more deprived areas where issues are often complex and interrelated.