

Nottingham City Council

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

Final Version – 20.04.17



Nottingham City Council Full Submission to the LGBCE Review

Executive Summary

(a) This report is the submission of Nottingham City Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on its proposals for Council Size. This report constitutes Stage One of the review process and does not include a detailed Nottingham City Council scheme of warding patterns.

(b) On the evidence considered by the authority, Nottingham City Council recommends **maintaining a Council Size of 55 Councillors**.

(c) This will provide for effective democratic representation to the public and enable the authority to continue to govern itself and exercise its functions efficiently.

(d) The City Council's warding proposals will be submitted at Stage Two of the review, in line with the timetable set out by the LGBCE. The warding proposals we put forward will support our preferred council size of 55 Councillors, whilst also meeting the LGBCE's criteria on electoral equality.

(e) The authority continues to support holding Whole Council elections every four years on the current cycle.

1. Introduction

1.1 This document is Nottingham City Council's Full Submission to the LGBCE electoral review of ward boundaries for Nottingham City.

1.2 In July 2016, the LGBCE wrote to the Chief Executive to advise that Nottingham would be subject to an electoral review. In November 2016, representatives of the LGBCE met with the Chief Executive and Deputy Leader of Nottingham City Council to confirm the process and timetable for the review.

1.3 At December 2016, there were 204,355 registered electors in Nottingham City, an average of 3,715 electors for each of the 55 City Councillors. Nottingham is being reviewed on the basis that:

- More than 30% of the Council's wards have an electoral imbalance of more than 10% from the average ratio for the city (Arboretum, Bilborough, Bridge, Clifton North, Dunkirk & Lenton and Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey wards)
- One Ward (Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey ward) has an electoral imbalance of more than 30% from the average ratio for the city.

1.4 In arriving at our preferred council size, Nottingham City Council has considered the LGBCE's statutory criteria for the Review:-

- Delivering electoral equality for local voters

- Providing for effective and convenient local government for the City of Nottingham.
- Maintaining the interests and identities of local communities in the city

1.5 Nottingham City Council believes that the council size proposed in this submission is the most appropriate to enable the authority to continue to provide efficient local government and effective decision making, whilst allowing our Councillors to continue their representational and leadership roles in the city, and respond to increasing workloads.

1.6 Nottingham City Council is minded to recommend a council size of 55 councillors. This represents no change from the current arrangements.

1.7 In forming our view on a preferred council size, we have also considered the appropriate number and pattern of wards in the city. More details of our ward proposals are set out in the Technical Report that will be submitted at Stage Two of the review. We are satisfied from work undertaken to date that an effective warding pattern can be achieved for our preferred council size.

1.8 Population versus Electorate. The introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) has had an impact on the number of registered electors in Nottingham. Whilst the overall population of Nottingham has increased slightly, the number of registered electors has decreased significantly following the introduction of IER.

1.9 Overall, low levels of registration continue to be a problem in Nottingham. During the annual canvass the local authority invests a lot of time and resource into the registration process; from sending forms to all households through the post to arranging canvassers to visit non-responding properties so they can assist citizens with their registration. Responding to this form is quick and easy and can be done through various different channels such as online, telephone, text message and post. However, the number of households responding remains consistently low in several wards.

1.10 Whilst acknowledging the Commission is bound by Statute in this, we would like to put on record our concern that using the registered electorate figure following the introduction of IER, rather than population size or the registered electorate at the time of the EU Referendum, as the basis for determining council size and ward boundaries under-represents the potential electorate in Nottingham. This leads to some councillors in the city representing wards with significantly larger populations than those in other areas because electoral registration is lower in those areas. This is a particular issue in wards with a higher number of students.

1.11 There are three wards (Arboretum, Dunkirk & Lenton and Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey), where the number of electors per councillor is much lower than the city average due to relatively low registration rates. These wards have high numbers

of university students and there is a strong correlation between high student numbers and low registration rates across the city.

1.12 In future, we are hopeful that initiatives to increase student registration, such as auto-registration at enrolment, will result in the number of students registering in the city increasing. There is a clear direction of travel in support of auto-enrolment of students, as indicated by the recent Lords amendment to the *Higher Education and Research Bill* making auto-enrolment and data sharing with local authorities a statutory requirement on Universities. We believe it is only a matter of time before a combination of auto registration, and/or greater partnership working between the City Council and the city's two universities leads to the numbers of registered student voters in Nottingham rebounding, and our proposals take this into account.

2. An Overview of Nottingham City

2.1 Nottingham is one of the 10 UK Core Cities and is recognised as the regional capital of the East Midlands. It has a diverse and growing economy, specialising in the life sciences, low carbon tech and digital/creative industries. It has two globally recognised universities, global links to China, India and Germany, vibrant culture and award winning transport links.

2.2 The latest estimate of the city's resident population is 318,900 (2015 mid-year estimate, having risen by over 43,000 since the last ward boundary review in 2003. The population is projected to rise by 9,200 people between 2015 and 2020 and by a further 19,800 people by 2030. *[2014 based ONS population projections]*

2.3 International migration (recently from Eastern Europe) and natural change (the excess of births over deaths) are the main reasons for the recent population growth.

2.4 In terms of population, 29% of the population are aged 18 to 29 – full-time university students comprising about 1 in 8 of the population. The number of births has risen in recent years although the latest figures show a small decline.

2.5 The 2011 Census shows 35% of the population as being from Black and/or Minority Ethnic groups; an increase from 19% in 2001.

2.6 Despite its young age-structure, Nottingham has a higher than average rate of people with a limiting long-term illness or disability.

2.7 The city gains young adults due to migration, both international and within Britain, whilst losing all other age groups - this includes losing families with children as they move to the surrounding suburban districts. There is a high turnover of population – 21% of people changed address in the year before the 2011 Census.

2.8 The wards which have had the greatest population increase since the 2003 review are those with large numbers of students, such as Arboretum and Radford and Park. Bridge and St. Ann's have also seen large increases driven by increases in city centre developments for both students and non-students. These four wards

have each seen population increases of more than 5,000 people. All wards have seen population increases since 2003, but four wards, Bulwell, Bulwell Forest, Clifton South and Dunkirk and Lenton increased by less than 300 people.

2.9 Deprivation. Nottingham is now the 8th most deprived of the 326 English local authorities. Estimates of deprivation at a ward level show nine of the 20 city wards would rank in the most deprived 10% nationally, with Aspley and Bulwell wards ranked in the 100 most deprived wards in England. Only the Wollaton West ward ranks outside the 40% most deprived. This presents particular challenges and demands on our councillors that aren't present in more affluent and less deprived local authorities/where residents are less reliant on the services provided by the local authority. [*English Indices of Deprivation 2015, Department for Communities and Local Government*]

2.10 Ratio of Councillors to Electors. At December 2016, there were 204,355 registered electors in Nottingham City, an average of 3,715 electors for each of the 55 city councillors.

2.11 Nottingham City contains no Parish Councils.

3. Governance and Decision Making

3.1 There are currently 55 councillors in the City of Nottingham comprising:

- Labour – 50 councillors
- Conservative – 3 councillors
- Independent – 1 councillor
- 1 vacancy following resignation

What kind of governance arrangements are in place for your authority. Does the council operate an executive mayoral, cabinet executive or committee system?

3.2 Nottingham City Council operates the 'Strong Leader and Cabinet' model of Executive Governance as set out in the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000.

3.3 The Leader determines responsibility for the discharge of the executive functions of the Council. The Leader of the Council may determine to exercise any of the 'executive' functions of the Council personally, or may arrange for the exercise of any of the Council's 'executive' functions by:

- (i) the Executive Board; or
- (ii) by another Executive Councillor; or
- (iii) by a committee of the Executive; or

(iv) by an officer of the Council.

3.4 Decisions are taken by meetings of Full Council, Executive Board (Cabinet) and Committees of the Board, various Committees, Executive Portfolio Holders, Ward Councillors and Officers. Decision making relating to areas is undertaken by Area Committees. A full list of meetings/committees is included as Appendix A.

How many Portfolios are there?

3.5 There are currently 10 portfolios, including the Leader and Deputy Leader. Cabinet members are designated specific responsibilities according to their portfolio:

Leader: Leadership of the city, locally, nationally and internationally
Setting the strategic direction of the City
Strategic Regeneration and Development

Deputy Leader: Neighbourhood Regeneration
Resources

Portfolio: Early Intervention and Early Years

Portfolio: Energy and Sustainability

Portfolio: Planning and Housing

Portfolio: Business, Growth and Transport

Portfolio: Adults and Health

Portfolio: Leisure and Culture

Portfolio: Community Services

Portfolio: Education, Employment and Skills

3.6 Full details of the portfolios, demonstrating the breadth and depth of the decision making and policy areas Cabinet are expected to cover, is enclosed as Appendix B. There are expected to be some changes to portfolios that will come into effect from May.

To what extent are decisions delegated to portfolio holders or are most decisions taken by the full executive and/or Mayor?

3.7 The Executive Board (i.e. the Cabinet in the “Strong Leader and Cabinet” model of governance) currently comprises 10 councillors and includes the Leader of the Council. It is responsible for major executive decisions about service delivery.

3.8 The Executive Board meets monthly and is chaired by the Leader of the Council. Meetings are open to the public.

3.9 The ability to take decisions on certain issues within their portfolio has been delegated to individual Executive Councillors and, for most operational work, to individual Council officers. This individual decision making takes place outside of Executive Board meetings and significant decisions are published on the Council's website.

3.10 For the period 06/04/16 – 06/04/17, there were 282 decisions that were taken either by the Leader or one of the Portfolio Holders, including joint Cabinet decisions taken at Executive Board.

3.11 For comparison, for the period 06/04/16 – 06/04/17 there were 107 officer decisions taken. This demonstrates the high level of involvement of our councillors in the decision-making process around the delivery of local services and the future strategic direction of the city.

3.12 Councillors who are not on the Executive are responsible for keeping an overview of Council business and City concerns and scrutinising areas of particular interest or concern, holding the Executive to account and assisting in the development and review of Council policy.

3.13 The Council must also ensure that overview and scrutiny arrangements are in place to undertake statutory responsibilities, including the scrutiny of substantial developments or variations in NHS services and the scrutiny of crime and disorder issues. Overview and Scrutiny Councillors can make recommendations for improvement to the Executive, to the whole Council, or to outside organisations.

3.14 Full Council comprises all 55 councillors elected to the City Council. One of its functions is to agree the major policies, the "Policy Framework", which provides the strategic direction for the way services are provided, and the Council's key objectives. Full Council meets 6 times per year.

3.15 The following functions can only be exercised by Full Council:

(a) adopting and amending the constitution;

(b) approving, amending and adopting the following: (i) the **Policy Framework** which includes the following strategies: Community Strategy (The Nottingham Plan); Local Transport Plan; Development Plan; Licensing Policy; Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Strategy; Children and Young People's Plan; Civil Contingencies Plans: Managing an Emergency; Pipeline Safety Plan; (ii) the **Budget**;

(c) approving any application to the Secretary of State in respect of a Housing Land Transfer;

(d) decisions about matters covered by the Policy Framework or the Budget which the decision maker is minded to resolve in a manner which would be contrary to the Policy Framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget, subject to the urgency procedure contained in the Access to Information Procedure in Part 4 of the Constitution. (Standing Orders, also in Part 4 – allow budget allocations to be moved from one service to another without reference to full Council, provided certain conditions are satisfied);

(e) electing the Leader at the post- election annual meeting and appoint members, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of other Council bodies. Where the Council does not appoint the Chair or Vice-Chair of a body, the body itself may do so;

(f) removing the Leader by way of resolution by a simple majority. If the Council passes a resolution to remove the Leader, a new Leader is to be elected: (i) at the meeting at which the leader is removed from office; or 11 (ii) at a subsequent meeting;

(g) establishing committees and agreeing and amending the terms of reference, determining the powers they may exercise, determining their composition and making appointments to them, unless delegated elsewhere in the Council;

(h) adopting or amending a Members' Allowance Scheme, having regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel, and determining other allowances payable to Councillors;

(i) conferring the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman or the Freedom of the City;

(j) confirming the appointment of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors;

(k) making, amending, revoking, re-enacting and adopting byelaws and promoting or opposing the making of local legislation;

(l) deciding whether or not to delegate non-executive functions to another local authority or to accept delegations from another Council;

(m) considering any recommendation from the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee for the dismissal of the Chief Executive in accordance with the Local Authority (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001;

(n) the passing of a resolution not to issue casino premises licences (Section 166 and 154(2)(a) of the Gambling Act 2005);

(o) approval of the "The Gambling Act Statement Of Principles (Section 349 and 154(2)(c) of the Gambling Act 2005)";

(p) the power to delegate to an officer powers that are not required by law to be exercisable solely by the Council, solely by a specified office holder or solely by an executive body or executive of the Council;

(q) the power to introduce, vary or end a scheme relating to the payment of a late night levy under the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the functions of making, varying or revoking an early morning alcohol restriction order under section 172A of the Licensing Act 2003

(r) all other matters which, by law, must be reserved to Council.

Extraordinary meetings as held as necessary (when called by the Lord Mayor or by any five City Councillors. If the Lord Mayor refuses to call a meeting, or fails to do so within seven days, any five City Councillors may themselves call the meeting).

In full City Council election years, the nominations and election or appointment of civic office holders takes place at the Annual meeting. In all other years, nominations to such posts take place at the meeting prior to the Annual meeting. Meetings of the City Council are normally held at 2pm although the Lord Mayor has discretion to vary the time if s/he deems necessary.

Do Executive (or other) members serve on other decision-making partnerships, sub regional, regional or national bodies?

3.16 Our councillors are actively involved in a variety of other decision making partnerships, sub regional, regional and national bodies. Details for some of the key local, regional and national partnerships for the city are set out below. More details are enclosed in the register of Membership of Outside Bodies (Appendix H).

3.17 Key Partnerships:

One Nottingham

One Nottingham is the strategic community partnership for Nottingham, made up of a family of partnerships and partners across the city. The purpose of One Nottingham is to encourage and facilitate city-wide collaboration for the benefit of Nottingham and its citizens. The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Early Years and Early Intervention attend One Nottingham and help set its priorities and objectives.

Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership

The Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership (CDP) is a multi-agency organisation responsible for tackling and addressing crime and substance misuse in Nottingham. It is a statutory partnership under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and is made up of a range of statutory and non-statutory agencies including the Police, the City Council, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Probation Service, Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group, alongside voluntary sector organisations such as Victim Support and Neighbourhood Watch. The Leader of the Council sits on the CDP Board.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a partnership bringing together key local leaders from the City Council, NHS and the wider community to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Nottingham and reduce health inequalities. The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Health and Adult Social Care, plus the Portfolio Holder for Early Years and Early Intervention sit on the Board.

Core Cities

The ten Core Cities urban areas deliver 28% of the combined economic output of England, Wales and Scotland (26.5% of the UK economy) and are home to almost 19 million, 30.7% of the combined English, Welsh and Scottish population (29.8% of the UK population). Core Cities already contribute more than a quarter of the combined wealth of England, Wales and Scotland and, with more freedoms and flexibilities, and are best placed to improve the UK's economic fortunes. Core Cities UK is a vital delivery partner for Government and its agencies. The Leader of the Council attends as a member of the Core Cities Cabinet, with the Deputy Leader deputising as required.

D2N2

The Local Enterprise Partnership for Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire was established in 2010, with the aims of supporting a more prosperous, better connected, and increasingly resilient and competitive economy in the D2N2 area. It is one of the largest LEPs in England, covering an area with a population of more than two million people (ONS report, February 2015). D2N2's main objective is to support the creation of 55,000 new jobs in D2N2 by 2023. The LEP is led and governed by a private sector-led Board; which is made up of high profile leaders from the D2N2 area's businesses, local authorities, skills and training providers, community and social organisations, and other sectors. The Leader is a member of the D2N2 Board.

Midlands Engine

The Midlands Engine covers 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships who have come together with their Local Authorities, businesses and wider partners, to respond to the economic and productivity challenges that the region and the wider UK face. It is home to a population of just over 11.5 million people, and makes an annual contribution to the UK economy of £222bn (Gross Value Added). Its overarching ambitions are to grow the regions' economy, creating 300,000 jobs and boosting the national economy by £34billion. Government is supporting the initiative with a £5million trade and investment package to help promote the Midlands Engine overseas, and a Midlands Engine Growth Strategy to improve the economy of the Midlands and deliver an enhanced

quality of life for its many diverse citizens and communities. The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business, Growth and Transport are actively involved.

Midlands Connect

Midlands Connect is a partnership of Local Authorities, key transport partners and businesses established to provide long-term transport planning and investment for the region covered by the Midlands Engine, with the aim of improving transport links and speeding up journey times across the Midlands. It seeks to identify early investment opportunities to improve road and rail networks and explore how new technologies can increase capacity of existing transport networks, with the goal of boosting the economy, reducing transport costs and travel times and creating new jobs and opportunities for people in the region. The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business, Growth and Transport are actively involved in Midlands Connect.

East Midlands Councils

A membership group representing the interests of Local Authorities in the East Midlands to Government and national organisations, that enables member authorities to work together on areas of joint interest and concern. Currently 45 local authorities in the region are members, including Nottingham, with the Leader of Nottingham City Council appointed as a member of its management group. It also supports the improvement and development of local councils and their workforce, and provides a reporting and governance mechanism for regional local government partnerships e.g. East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership. In addition, Nottingham City Council is the accountable body for EMC.

Derby & Nottingham Metro

The Derby & Nottingham Metro strategy recognises the strong links between Derby and Nottingham, and the emerging conurbation between the two cities, which combined, is one of the 30 largest population centres in Europe. The populations of both cities are expected to grow in coming years, but the two cities face many significant challenges. By working more closely together on areas of mutual interest we are aiming to promote Derby and Nottingham; to attract new investment and help local businesses grow, enhance the skills and employability of local people, improve accessibility and transport links between our two cities, and provide vibrant city centres and an attractive wider urban area for visitors and residents.

There is a quarterly Joint Cabinet with Derby involving our Executive Councillors and their equivalents at Derby. In addition, there is a quarterly officers' meeting of the senior leadership teams of the two authorities.

International

Nottingham has international twinning/cultural links with many cities across the world, but over the last few years, in light of the economic challenges the authority faces; it has focused on targeted activity with three key international partnerships for the city: Karlsruhe in Germany, Ningbo in China and Chandigarh in India. These cities have long standing, business, civic and/or cultural links to Nottingham, and offer the best opportunities to encourage trade and investment opportunities for local businesses, creating jobs for local people and boosting the local economy. It requires a significant investment of time and effort from Executive Councillors to support this activity. Nottingham will continue to strengthen our relationships with these cities through ongoing engagement at officer and councillor level.

In general, are leadership and/or portfolio roles considered to be full time roles?

3.18 The role of Leader is considered to be full time, the Deputy Leader role is a minimum of 4 days per week and other Portfolio Holder roles are considered to require a minimum of 3 days per week. However in reality, the demands of these roles make them full time positions, and in undertaking these roles in addition to their other responsibilities as ward councillors, the demands on Cabinet members routinely extend beyond what would be considered the “minimum” number of days expected for each role.

3.19 This has been recognised by the authority and a number of Portfolios have an “Executive Assistant” role to support the work of the Cabinet member. The role is undertaken by a councillor, who, as well as providing more general support to the Cabinet Member, will assume some responsibility for a specific area or areas of a portfolio. This helps to manage the workload of Cabinet members, as well as improving organisational resilience and providing opportunities for councillors to develop their knowledge and skills. It also helps the authority to recruit and retain a more diverse range of councillors, by offering additional responsibilities and opportunities for backbench councillors to be involved in decision making and responding to the challenges the city faces. In addition, backbench councillors representing the same ward as the Cabinet member will often support their fellow councillor in undertaking their community work and ward responsibilities.

4. Regulatory Functions

In relation to licensing, planning and other regulatory responsibilities, to what extent are decisions delegated to officers? How many members are involved in committees? Is committee membership standing or rotating? Are meetings ad-hoc, frequent and/or area based?

4.1 The City Council undertakes a number of regulatory and licensing functions. Full details of the functions are set out in Appendix C.

4.2 The Licensing Committee oversees the development and application of the Council's Licensing Policy (adopted by Full Council), ensuring it is in line with the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005. It establishes Licensing Panels and the Special Licensing Panel to determine individual applications for licences in cases where objections have been received and when licences need to be reviewed. The Committee meets as and when required and is made up of 13 councillors.

4.3 There are 3 Licensing Panels, each with a named Chair. When objections have been received to any new application for a licence, or to vary an existing licence (usually for alcohol and gambling), a Panel meets to determine the outcome of that application. The Panels meet as and when required and are made up of the Chair and 2 members of the Licensing Committee.

4.4 A Special Licensing Panel is set up by the Licensing Committee to determine particularly contentious or sensitive applications for licences (usually for alcohol or gambling), or to determine a review of a licence (if there have been issues at the venue). The Panel is normally made up of the chairs of the 3 Licensing Panels.

4.5 Most planning decisions can be dealt with by Council officers but when an application involves complex or sensitive issues or if objections have been received then it is determined by the Planning Committee. The Committee also determines planning applications that would be a significant departure from the Council's Development Plan. Full Council is responsible for adoption of the Development Plan but the Planning Committee is consulted on its formation and amendment. The Committee usually meets 12 times a year, and is made up of 15 councillors appointed to reflect the political balance of the Council.

4.6 The Regulatory and Appeals Committee is responsible for all of the Council's licensing and regulatory functions (i.e. safety certificates for sports venues, taxi licensing, sex establishment licensing) other than those covered in the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 (which are the responsibility of the Licensing Committee). The Committee is made up of 13 councillors appointed to reflect the political balance of the Council, and meets as and when required.

4.7 There are some proposed changes to the licensing and regulatory function involving licensing panels, but these have not yet come into effect.

4.8 In general, Majority Group membership of the City Council's various committees is agreed on an annual basis at the Majority Group AGM. Minority Group members are appointed to committees to reflect the political balance as appropriate. The schedule of meetings for the year ahead for each committee is agreed on an annual basis.

What level of attendance is achieved, are meetings always quorate?

4.9 Overall attendance for all councillors (including the Majority Group, Minority Group and Independent) at City Council meetings was 71% for 1st April 2016 to 31st

March 2017. This attendance rate does not include meetings where councillors were present, but in a different capacity to that of their role of councillor. The most common reasons for giving apologies for council meetings were: outside work commitments, other council commitments (including clashing City Council business or meetings), personal and leave.

4.10 If a meeting is not quorate then it can proceed informally, but cannot use any decision making powers it may have. The minutes of any informal meeting will then be ratified at the next formal meeting. There are rare occasions where it has been evident that a meeting won't have sufficient attendance to be considered quorate, in that instance the meetings are often cancelled and rescheduled for a later date. This is often caused by clashes with other council business or council commitments, or the external commitments that councillors have.

Does the council believe that changes to legislation, national or local policy will have influence on the workload of committees and their members which would have an impact on council size?

4.11 The current legislative and national policy climate is unpredictable, especially in light of the uncertainty caused by the EU Referendum result, and the upcoming General Election. National policy developments such as the development and implementation of NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) and the ongoing academisation of schools, will have direct and indirect impacts on council business and services, and potentially significant impacts on local people. If anything they will necessitate closer partnership working with our partners and increased scrutiny and oversight by our councillors and committees to ensure local people continue to receive the services they expect and deserve. Furthermore, a number of our committees have a statutory function to scrutinise any policy changes to services, for example the Health Scrutiny committee and joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee. This certainly does not support a reduced council size.

5. Overview and Scrutiny Functions

How do scrutiny arrangements operate in the authority? How many committees are there and what is their membership?

5.1 The Council has an Overview and Scrutiny function. This holds the Executive Board to account for its decisions, undertakes reviews and makes recommendations on future policy. Overview and scrutiny arrangements were introduced by the Local Government Act in 2000 when there was also an increase in the decision-making powers of Leaders and Cabinets, or directly elected mayors.

5.2 The Council appoints the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which appoints sub-committees - the Health Scrutiny Panel, the Call-in Panel and Scrutiny Review Panels. The Council also appoints 8 City councillors to the City and County Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 Overview and scrutiny helps to provide accountability and transparency in local public services. It is an opportunity for non-executive councillors to review policies, decisions and services of the City Council and other organisations operating in Nottingham to ensure they meet the needs of the community and, where necessary, makes recommendations for improvement.

What is the general workload of scrutiny committees? Has the council ever found that it has had too many active projects for the scrutiny process to function effectively?

5.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee takes an overview of key strategic issues relevant to Nottingham to ensure that decision makers are held to account for their decisions and actions. It has statutory powers to scrutinise crime and disorder issues and flood risk management. It sets and manages the scrutiny work programme and can establish scrutiny review panels to support delivery of the work programme.

5.5 The committee is made up of 12 non-executive councillors appointed to reflect the political balance of the Council and 1 co-opted member representing the voluntary and community sector. The committee meets monthly.

5.6 The Call-in Panel is a sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and meets as and when required to consider requests to 'call-in' a decision. 'Call-in' refers to the power of overview and scrutiny to ask the Council's Executive to reconsider a decision made, but which has not yet been implemented. Decisions that can be called-in are those of:

- The Executive Board
- A committee of the Executive Board (Executive Board Commissioning Committee; Executive Board Strategic Regeneration Committee)
- The City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee
- An individual Portfolio Holder
- Executive decision made by an Area Committee
- Executive decision (£10,000 or more) made by an officer under authority delegated by the Leader, Executive Board or a committee of the Executive Board

with the exception of decisions made under the urgency procedure, which cannot be called-in. The Call-in Panel is made up of 8 non-executive councillors appointed to reflect the political balance of the Council.

5.7 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual reports for 2014/15 and 2015/16 are included as Appendix D and give more detail of the work the committee undertakes.

How is the work of scrutiny committee programmed? Is the work strictly timetabled?

5.8 Each of the Scrutiny Committees has an agreed work programme for the year ahead. The work programme is set by councillors and is flexible enough to allow each committee to adapt and prioritise urgent areas of council business that may require investigation and input by the committees as they arise throughout the year. Examples of work programmes are included in Appendix D.

5.9 There is scope for a wider range of city council activity to be scrutinised by the committees, however, there are not sufficient committee resources at the present time to support this. Reductions in local government funding have resulted in fewer resources to facilitate the work of councillors in this area; the authority previously had a dedicated team of scrutiny officers to support the work of the committees, however this has now been reduced to two Senior Governance Officers that support the running of the committees alongside other responsibilities.

5.10 Given the high workload of scrutiny councillors and in particular the Chair, and following the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), it is proposed from May 2017 to increase the number of Vice Chairs from one to two, with one taking responsibility for chairing the Health Scrutiny Committee and one chairing the Children and Young People Committee (C&YP). The number of C&YP meetings will also increase from six per year to eight, to reflect the number of areas of council business within this function to examine. The IRP recognised the importance of the role of the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, and the need for additional support.

What activities are scrutiny committee members expected to carry out between formal meetings?

5.11 Councillors undertake work to support their role outside of formal meetings. This includes preparing for the formal meetings, reading and interpreting any papers, evidence gathering and site visits, along with a clear expectation the councillors will “report back” at the meeting on any investigation or research they have carried out. In addition to the formal meetings, there is a pre-meeting for councillors to go through the agenda and papers before the formal meeting takes place, as well as a Chairs Briefing for each of the Committee Chairs ahead of the formal meetings.

5.12 The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny is also responsible for approving any decisions taken by the Cabinet under urgency procedures and agreeing any decisions that are exempt from call-in by O&S.

5.13 Recent high profile governance failures in local government, including child sexual exploitation in Rotherham and governance failings in Tower Hamlets, highlight the clear need for a proactive overview and scrutiny process. In addition, given the current political balance of the authority, a rigorous overview and scrutiny

function is vital to ensure the Executive is held to account and challenged when necessary. Therefore, reducing the number of councillors would negatively impact the ability of the Council's scrutiny arrangements to function appropriately.

6. Representation Role of Councillors

6.1 Nottingham City councillors have a high profile role within their local communities; exercising community leadership is one of a councillor's most important responsibilities.

6.2 Locally, our councillors are:

- Enablers of their community - standing up for, learning from and empowering local citizens, including the most vulnerable members of the community;
- Champions of their neighbourhood and of the city of Nottingham - building a vision and a sense of place, setting a clear direction, and ensuring this is delivered;
- Challengers and scrutineers of local public services;
- Shapers of services around the citizen - forging local partnerships to marshal resources in a way that best meets the needs of residents;
- Decision-makers – setting the priorities for the city and being accountable for tough choices in balancing competing demands and interests.

Is there a formal role description for councillors in your authority?

6.3 Details of formal role descriptions are provided in Appendix E for the following:

- The Leader of the Council
- City Councillor (and general member of a committee) role
- Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny
- Chair of Appointment and Conditions of Service Committee (ACOS)
- Chair of Area Committee
- Chair of Audit Committee
- Chair of Development Control
- Chair of Licensing Committee
- Chair of Standards Committee
- Chair of Regulatory and Appeals
- Executive Assistant Role
- Group Whip Role
- Lord Mayor
- Sheriff of Nottingham
- Leader of the Opposition

Do councillors receive formal training for all or any roles at the council?

6.4 Councillors are expected to undertake training and continuing professional development relevant to their role and responsibilities as city councillors, including as members of the Cabinet, legislative or scrutiny committees, and to keep up to date and informed on matters relating to the Council, the city and local government in general. On induction as a new or returning councillor, our councillors undertake an induction programme that includes code of conduct awareness, mandatory safeguarding training, sessions on community working and ward budgets, and training on how to handle citizen and council data and information in line with information and data protection legislation.

6.5 The City Council also organises a regular shadowing programme for councillors throughout the year called "On the Frontline". This gives councillors the opportunity to meet with and shadow City Council employees to help them to understand how a service operates and what issues that service faces. Recent and future shadowing opportunities have included shadowing the gritting and waste collection teams, involvement in the Newstead Abbey energy project, visiting HMP Sherwood for Family Learning and shadowing the Domestic Abuse Team. In the past, the organisation has also arranged for councillors to attend court with Victim Support and Welfare Rights teams, to help them to better understand the complex issues our more vulnerable residents face.

6.6 Discussions on developing a more formalised training and development programme for councillors are ongoing. These will cover both general development and more specific training opportunities that better reflect and support the different needs and responsibilities of councillors. It also aims to help councillors progress towards Executive (Cabinet) roles, to allow succession planning to take place.

Does the council attract and retain members?

6.7 Nottingham City Council holds whole council elections every 4 years. At the last local election in Nottingham (2015), there were 213 candidates standing for 55 council positions, with all seats contested. Of the 55 elected at the last election, there is currently 1 vacancy following a resignation, that will be contested in a by-election taking place on 4th May 2017 and there is 1 councillor who has declared themselves to be an Independent (reducing the number of Majority Labour Group Councillors by 2 from 52 to 50).

Have there been any instances where the council has been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of councillors?

6.8 Whilst there are a small number of committees/meetings that currently have vacancies for councillors or partner representatives to sit on them, there have been no instances where the authority was unable to discharge its duties.

In general terms, how do councillors carry out their representational roles with electors? Do members mainly respond to casework from constituents or do they have a more active role in the community?

6.9 Our councillors play an active role in their wards, holding a minimum of two advice surgeries in their ward per month to listen to the views and concerns of local residents in their area and undertaking regular ward walks to spot problems. They are involved in their area committee, participate in local action groups, attend community events and local meetings, such as Tenants & Residents Association meetings, actively seek the views of residents through a number of communication channels and have clearly advertised contact details so that they can be reached by citizens. They also act as a representative of citizens wishing to raise an issue about council services, via the casework system, ensuring problems are resolved speedily and efficiently by the authority, to the satisfaction of citizens. Councillors operate in a way that best reflects the diversity of our communities and their individual needs and interests, as well as the diversity of our councillors.

How do councillors engage with constituents? Do they hold surgeries, distribute newsletters, hold public meetings, write blogs etc?

6.10 Our councillors hold regular surgeries for local residents, undertake ward walks with residents and Council officers to identify and resolve issues in their area, and hold public meetings when appropriate, including area committee meetings. Since the last review was undertaken, there has been significant growth in the use of social media to contact the authority. In response our councillors make regular use of email, ward Facebook pages and twitter to interact with residents. Councillors also continue to find that the ability to raise and receive responses to an issue in person, either at a council or housing office, ward surgery, on ward walks, community events or individual meetings, or discussing issues by phone, is still highly valued by the public, especially those residents and communities that don't make regular use of newer forms of communication such as email and the internet.

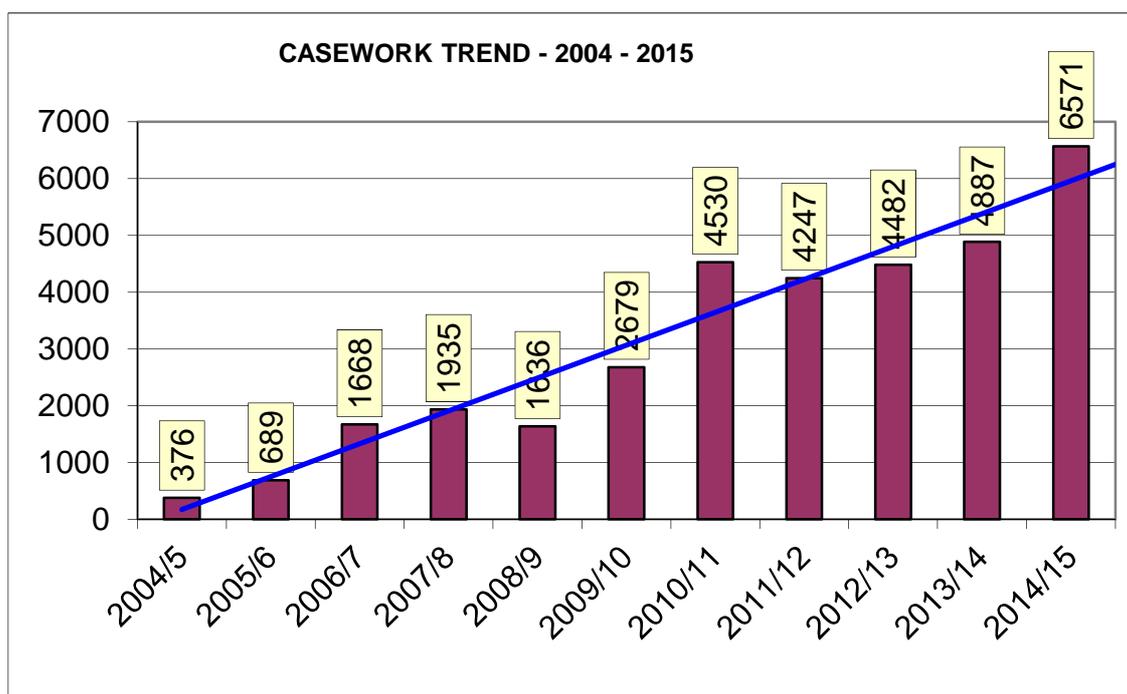
6.11. In recent years there has been a huge growth in the use of technology, email, and other forms of electronic communication such as social media. This has led to an increase in the number of channels by which residents can communicate with councillors and the authority, and a significant rise in the demands and public expectations on councillors in the city, aligned to an equal expectation of immediate or rapid response to queries and complaints.

How do councillors generally deal with casework? Do they pass on issues directly to staff or do they take a more in depth approach to resolving issues? What support do councillors receive in discharging their duties in relation to casework and representational role in their ward?

6.12 **Casework:** Responding to requests for assistance from our residents is one of the main duties of our councillors. The City Council currently has approximately

1,800 open cases on our casework management system (as at 5th April 2017), the equivalent of approximately 35 open cases per councillor. Casework is often undertaken on behalf of the city's most vulnerable residents, with complex needs, and our analysis shows that areas of the city with the highest levels of deprivation, as measured in the Indices of Deprivation, generate the most casework. These take a significant investment of councillor time and council resources to resolve.

The graph below shows the rising trend in casework for the period 2004/5 (the closest period to the last review for which data is available) and 2014/15 – an 11 year period. The amount of casework councillors in Nottingham have to deal with has increased significantly since the last review.



For the period Jan 2016 to December 2016, our workload analysis shows that Nottingham City councillors dealt with 6,844 individual pieces of casework generated by local residents. That equates to an average of 570 cases per month, or 10 per councillor.

The table below highlights the overall upward trend in casework broken down by ward between 2011/12 to 2014/15.

Ward	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Arboretum	75	59	63	63
Aspley	576	422	485	420
Basford	328	322	361	392
Berridge	149	140	181	158
Bestwood	231	328	318	504
Bilborough	269	288	470	465
Bridge	293	494	391	705
Bulwell	182	163	124	231

Bulwell Forest	108	177	147	241
Clifton North	44	25	71	253
Clifton South	42	70	54	170
Dales	261	189	352	318
Dunkirk and Lenton	133	118	139	152
Leen Valley	169	154	143	162
Mapperley	315	277	204	508
Radford and Park	87	85	169	190
Sherwood	143	189	228	233
St Ann's	443	459	457	721
Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey	387	494	390	546
Wollaton West	12	29	140	139
Total	4,247	4,482	4,887	6,571

6.13 With the ongoing severe budget reductions the City Council has to deal with, and the Government's ongoing programme of welfare reform, we anticipate that the amount of casework our councillors will have to deal with will only increase as the impact of these pressures is felt disproportionately in many of the city's most deprived areas. Our workload analysis shows a rising trend in the amount of casework between 2012 and 2016, which we expect to continue through 2017 and beyond. In terms of the future trend, our councillors are reporting the rapid growth of the use of social media by residents to contact them at all times; to try to ensure immediate attention and response to the issue(s) raised; which has the potential to bypass the tracking of the current casework system. We expect use of social media and other contact methods for our councillors to continue to increase, however, we also expect more traditional methods of contacting councillors to continue to be used.

6.14 In terms of councillor support for dealing with casework, there are currently 4 "Group Assistants" that support the 50 current Majority Group councillors. There is significant input from councillors throughout every stage of the case work process, from receipt of the initial request or complaint, to providing on guidance and support in their role as ward councillor or portfolio holder to the individual(s) that have raised an issue under the system, they are expected to undertake regular reviews of casework progress, and ensure an appropriate response is received that resolves the issue. The authority would not want to see any reduction in councillors as this would impact our ability to deal with the rising volume of casework.

6.15 Other support for councillors. In terms of additional support to the Executive, they receive support from one personal assistant per two Executive Councillors. There is also a Political Assistant who supports the wider Majority Group. However, overall, there is an expectation that councillors will “do things for themselves”.

6.16 In addition, briefings on new legislation and policy are provided by the Corporate Policy Team as and when necessary for councillors. A Policy Digest covering policy developments and new legislation that impact local government is circulated to all councillors on a monthly basis, alongside a “Look Ahead” document highlighting upcoming legislative changes, key Government consultations and partnership activity. For significant Government policy announcements affecting the authority, bespoke “Policy Alerts” are prepared and circulated to all councillors, covering areas such as the Spring Budget and Autumn Statement, the Industrial Strategy, and Brexit, amongst others.

Do councillors have an individual or ward budget for allocation in their area? If so, how is such a system administered?

6.17 Neighbourhood Working. Nottingham’s Neighbourhood Management model is a unique service nationwide, focusing on delivering the Nottingham City Council Plan in our neighbourhoods. It seeks to improve performance and facilitate the efficient use of resources, by putting local citizens, the community and neighbourhoods at the heart of its work. Central to its work is enabling all citizens to be aware of opportunities to have improved access to succeed in education and employment, while living in a safe clean city with access to good housing, leisure and health facilities. Councillors play a key role in understanding local issues and where decline or problems in communities become apparent, allowing early intervention. Details of our Neighbourhood Regeneration Strategy, Neighbourhood Development Officers and a sample Area Committee Action Plan for 15/16 are enclosed at Appendix F.

6.18 There are eight Area Committees each covering a particular geographical area of the City (2 - 3 wards). Membership of each committee includes the ward councillors for that geographical area and appointed local community representatives, and the public are invited to attend and contribute.

6.19 The Committees meet to discuss issues of local concern and how to improve their local area, and are consulted on changes which could affect the area. They oversee the spending of their Area Capital Fund. Area Committees usually meet quarterly. Councillors work with the Neighbourhood Development Officer (NDO) for their area, who is there to support the Councillors in the ward work. The Area Committee and individual councillors will set the priorities for the NDO and monitor the progress of actions/resolution of issues. Councillors are active in the community between meetings, holding regular surgeries and ward works for residents, dealing with casework, directing local tasking work with key city partners such as the Police, and as School Governors and a host of other roles in the community and city wide

(see Membership of Outside Bodies - Appendix H for examples). Examples of Ward Working, in the form of Councillor Annual Reports, are attached as Appendix G.

Do councillors generally find that the time they spend on council business is what they expected? How much time do members generally spend on the business of your council?

6.20 Councillors for the Aspley ward in the city were approached as an example of a Nottingham ward with higher than the English average levels of need and deprivation: it is ranked in the 100 most deprived wards in England, leading to greater demands on councillors' time. Aspley ward was felt to be more illustrative of the particular issues that Nottingham City councillors face in undertaking their role. It is also home to many diverse communities which require some form of support from the authority, both in terms of the actual services the City Council provides, and the need for representation and assistance from their local councillors.

6.21 The three members that represent Aspley Ward deal with approximately four pieces of casework per day, shared between them to improve resiliency and accommodate competing demands from both their councillor roles and external commitments.

6.22 They undertake three meetings a week with the local community within the ward, in addition to the monthly ward walks, twice monthly surgeries and bi-monthly area committee meetings they attend. They also manage various funds and grants to support improvements in the area, including a dedicated area capital fund, additional funding available to improve the neighbourhood environment and revenue grants to local groups, amongst others.

6.23 In addition, one of the councillors undertakes the role of Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration, which is itself effectively a full time role, with a minimum expectation of 4 days per week spent carrying out the responsibilities associated with it.

6.24 As the above example illustrates, our councillors find that the amount of time they devote to council business, either at the City Council or within their wards is significant and they experience a consistently high level of demand on their time.

6.25 **Community Cohesion.** Nottingham has a proud history of welcoming people from different communities and supporting them to make Nottingham their home. The city has seen the emergence of many new communities in recent years, in part as a result of the dispersal of asylum seekers by the Home Office but mainly through international migration to the UK following the enlargement of the European Union, with the largest increase in numbers being from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and Roma communities.

6.26 In 2012, the Department for Communities and Local Government published its 'Creating the Conditions for Integration' publication, this was followed in October

2015 by the Government's Counter Extremism Strategy ("Prevent"), which focuses on protecting people from the harm caused by extremism. The strategy includes a priority to build cohesive communities. Responsibility for implementing the "Prevent" Strategy responsibility will transfer from the police to local authorities and we will have a general duty to understand the risk of radicalisation in our communities. In addition, the recent Baroness Jay and Casey Reviews identified a number of areas where local authorities need to strengthen their involvement in local communities.

6.27 Nottingham has established a proactive approach – for example the development of our Community Cohesion Service, Neighbourhood Action Plans and a toolkit for community cohesion in schools. Our councillors lead on this in their neighbourhoods, and whilst Nottingham has always focused on integration, and the level of community cohesion in the city is generally high (at the last Citizen Survey, 88% of respondents thought that people from different backgrounds get on well together), this is an expanding area of work, with additional responsibilities and demands being transferred to the authority and our councillors.

6.28 **Equality and Diversity.** Given the diverse make-up of Nottingham, it is vital that its elected representatives reflect the diversity of the city to be able represent their local communities. Currently 60% of councillors are male, 40% are female, 76% are White British, and 24% are from a BME background. Clearly there is more work to be done to make the City Council, its councillors and officers more representative of the city as a whole, particularly in relation to the gender balance of our councillors.

Does the council appoint members to outside bodies? If so, how many councillors are involved in this activity and what is their expected workload?

6.29 **Membership of Outside Bodies.** Nottingham City councillors are active members of outside bodies, with 42 of our 55 councillors involved in some form of external organisation or partnership. A full list of outside bodies is included as Appendix H.

6.30 **Commercialism.** For Nottingham City Council, Commercialism involves "taking a business-like approach" to the services we deliver as a Council. It has developed as an initiative in recent years (and did not exist at the time of the last review) and enables the authority to challenge and change the way we work to become more efficient and effective. At a time of reduced funding from Central Government, this has allowed the authority to utilise our strengths to generate income, have a proactive approach to reducing costs by being more efficient and effective, explore emerging opportunities, and continue to strive to offer good value for money and make the best use of public funds. This process has been championed and governed by local councillors, and has allowed the City Council to maintain services and protect local people at a time when other local authorities are cutting services and retrenching.

6.31 Wholly Owned Companies. In respect of the above, Nottingham City Council operates a number of wholly owned companies, nearly all of which have been created since the last review. This is an expanding area of work for the authority and requires a significant input of time from councillors, as board members/shareholder representatives of the companies, providing overview and scrutiny of company performance and finances, and ensuring the interests of the City Council and our residents are protected. Details are included in Appendix I.

6.32 Partnership and wider geographic working. Nottingham City Council is an active participant in a range of statutory and non-statutory partnerships at the city wide, Nottinghamshire, regional, national and international level. All partnerships benefit from the involvement of councillors and require a significant investment of time and resource. A list of partnerships is enclosed as Appendix J. Again, the breadth and depth of partnership working has increased significantly since the last review of Nottingham was concluded in May 2000.

6.33 One Nottingham is the strategic partnership for Nottingham, made up of a family of partnerships and partners across the city. The purpose of the partnership is to encourage and facilitate city-wide collaboration for the benefit of Nottingham and its citizens. It brings together and harnesses the strengths and resources of the public, private, faith, voluntary and community sectors, engages with citizens and articulates and promotes the needs and aspirations of local communities.

6.34 Representatives from these partnerships and partners, covering the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors, come together to make up the One Nottingham Board. The Board is the overarching body which provides strategic direction to the Partnership. Its Chief Officers Group (ONCOG) provides a high level forum for city leaders to connect, problem solve and develop collective approaches, and is made up of lead representatives of the main commissioners and providers of public and voluntary sector services in the city.

How has the role of councillors changed since the council last considered how many elected members it should have?

6.35 This is covered elsewhere in the submission (please see sections 6.1- 6.31), however the range of responsibilities and the expectations on our councillors has increased since the last review. Councillors are expected to be community leaders, with a greater emphasis on leading the regeneration in our neighbourhoods, addressing local unemployment and championing social cohesion. Our local communities are more diverse than they were at the time of the last review, with councillors representing a more demographically diverse range of constituents with a wider range of issues. This is challenging for our councillors both in terms of their workload, and also in terms of ensuring effective representation for our many different communities and balancing their different, and at times competing, interests.

Has the council put in place any mechanisms for councillors to interact with young people, those not on the electoral register or minority groups or their representative bodies?

6.36 As part of their duties our councillors regularly interact with a range of people and groups when undertaking their representational role within their ward, reflecting the full diversity of the city. In addition there are a number of additional ways in which councillors engage with groups that are potentially less well represented, including:

Youth Cabinet

This is formed of approximately 10-15 young people, and meets on a monthly basis to discuss and offer their youth perspective on topics such as mental health, sexual health, wildlife (nature/green space), the budget consultation, with the Portfolio Holder for Children's and Adults attending the meeting alongside an officer to represent their authority and seek their views. Our Youth Cabinet members also get involved in a range of activities across the authority, from sitting on the Children's Partnership Board and One Nottingham Board's as Youth or Children's representatives to assisting with City Council supported STEM initiatives (Science Technology, Engineering & Maths) such as the Festival of Science & Curiosity.

There is also a **Children in Care Group**, similar to the Youth Cabinet above, aimed at young people in care.

6.37 The authority also works with the voluntary sector to support and engage with various "Communities of Identity" offering funding small grants to support new and emerging communities in the city.

6.38 Nottingham established an Equalities and Fairness Commission, which acted as a 'sounding board' for proposed policy changes by key partners in the City (not solely the City Council); it listens to views of a diverse range of people and uses that to shape policy and direct resources. It has an independent Chair and advocates drawn from a range of minority/under-represented groups covering ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief. Advocates act as a link between those communities and the Commission. The role of the Commission is currently being reviewed.

6.39 The authority also undertakes a yearly "Citizen Survey" to seek the views of local people across the city and there is also a "Citizen's Panel", which has a rotating membership of local people. This is a forum for people to give their views on the city and policy decisions affecting the local services we provide. The range of activities the Citizen Panel undertakes is being further developed, and members of the Panel were recently involved in the recruitment process for the current Head of Customer Service at the authority. In addition, councillors are active their local communities, undertaking regular ward surgeries and attending community events and meetings, providing an opportunity to meet and speak to a range of local people.

Are councillors expected to attend meetings of community bodies such as parish councils or residents associations? If so, what is the level of their involvement and what role are they expected to play?

6.40 Our councillors are expected to play an active role within their community, including attending community events they are invited to, carrying out their role as a ward councillor and champion of their local community, attending their area committee and engaging with local residents through involvement with local community bodies and tenants & residents associations as appropriate. This could be in the form of attendance at those groups, regular engagement via their surgeries and ward walks, attendance at specific community event, or through the casework system to assist with specific issues.

7. The Future

7.1 Nottingham is not immune from the wider national challenges; ongoing reductions in local government funding, the outcome of the recent EU Referendum and the national economic climate all continue to present a challenging environment in which to deliver our ambitions and strengthen the need for effective decision making and governance at a local level.

7.2 As an area with high levels of deprivation and need, the impact of spending cuts on local government in Nottingham has been:

- greater stress/need in the community, such as to benefits, or changes to service provision, leading to greater demands on local councillors in terms of an increase in casework related to the above.
- a reduction in the number of employees working for the authority, often in back office or support functions, with the result that councillors have had to do “more for themselves” and there is less support available to help them carry out their various roles.

Does the council expect to take on more responsibilities in the medium to long term?

7.3 **Local Government Finance.** In addition to the above, the Government’s proposals to introduce 100% Retention of Business Rates, at the same time as reducing the Revenue Support Grant for local authorities will place an even greater emphasis on ensuring business growth and investment to maintain income for vital public services. This will be another area of increased focus for our councillors, both within their wards and across the city as a whole.

7.4 **Devolution and wider geographic working.** There has been an increase in local authority and councillor working on a wider regional, national and international level, and we anticipate this area of work will only increase in future, given the importance placed by Government on the Midlands Engine agenda, as evidenced by

their recently announced Midlands Engine strategy and associated £392m of funding to the region (including Nottingham).

Midlands Connect (which also includes Nottingham) will be established as a sub-national transport body for the region, with similar powers expected as for Transport for the North, will require councillor involvement.

Attracting inward investment and promoting trade opportunities is more important than ever, post the Brexit referendum. Nottingham continues to pursue its international investment and growth aims, developing mutually beneficial links with Chandigarh in India, Ningbo in China, and Karlsruhe in Germany, as well as being an active participant in Government supported trade missions under the Midlands Engine umbrella.

As one of the ten UK Core Cities, Nottingham and its councillors will continue to push for greater powers and funding for the Core Cities and advocate for the city on an East Midlands wide basis via East Midlands Councils.

7.4 Within the current financial climate, virtually all public sector organisations need to secure significant budget reductions whilst trying to ensure the aspirations of our citizens are not compromised. Public Sector reform, including moving to commissioning services rather than directly providing them requires greater levels of scrutiny and partnership working across the city and beyond, with both public and private sector organisations.

7.5 Within Public Service Reform, provision of Health and Adult Social Care presents particular demographic challenges for the city, requiring fundamental changes to be able to deliver care in more joined-up ways, working across organisational boundaries and thinking less in terms of where care is delivered and more on how it is delivered. To achieve this, the City Council, with partners across the city and Nottinghamshire, has developed a draft, 5-year, Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP). In doing so, all the partners to the STP are taking on a programme of change which is on a scale and complexity which we collectively have never undertaken before. This will give and place new opportunities and demands on our Councillors in terms of leadership, scrutiny and governance of the process, and engagement with the public and partners.

7.6 Challenge of Inclusive Growth. The Inclusive Growth Commission has defined the concept of “inclusive growth” as “place-based growth, which enables the widest range of people to participate fully in, and benefit from, the growth of their local area. Its purpose is to achieve more prosperity alongside greater equity in opportunities and outcomes”. Given the significant disparities between different parts of the city, and between the city and surrounding areas, creating inclusive growth within the city is a key challenge for our Councillors over the coming years.

Localism

What impact do you think the localism agenda might have on the scope and conduct of council business and how do you think this might affect the role of councillors? Does the council have any plans to devolve responsibilities and/or assets to community organisations?

7.7 Additional areas of responsibility devolved to local authorities as a result of national policy changes include Public Health, the Council Tax Support Scheme and Hardship support. Since the last ward boundary review was carried out in 2000, Nottingham City provides a wider range of public services, has more responsibilities, and has an enhanced role and profile as a champion of the city of Nottingham, the East Midlands region and the Midlands as a whole. In our view, there have been no developments under the localism agenda that would justify a change to fewer councillors in Nottingham.

7.8 To date, there has not been a significant level of demand within Nottingham for community organisations to take on responsibilities or assets from the local authority. There are two main reasons for this; a general view amongst the public in Nottingham that the local authority should continue to be responsible for provision of community assets and services such as leisure centres, libraries and parks, and the limited capacity amongst community organisations to take on the running of those assets or services, in part due to a lack of experience and the necessary funding to support those organisations to increase their capacity and capability to run those services. Where community organisations approach the authority with proposals to take on the running of services or assets the Council will consider their proposals and support such approaches in line with the legislation.

7.9 Nottingham, along with the other Core Cities, signed a “City Deal” with the then Coalition Government, including funding to invest in a creative quarter of high-tech firms, improve transport links and introduce super-fast broadband, encourage graduates of the city’s two universities to stay in the city by offering grants to set up businesses and help turn Nottingham into a “low carbon city” The deal aimed to provide a £60million boost the city, create 7,000 jobs and up to 300 apprenticeships for local people.

Have changes to the arrangements for local delivery of services led to significant changes to councillors’ workloads? (For example, control of housing stock or sharing services with neighbouring authorities).

7.12 **Service delivery** Whilst devolving control of housing stock in Nottingham to an arm’s length management organisation in Nottingham City Homes has shifted the responsibility from the City Council to that organisation for providing housing services at an operational (i.e. officer) level, it has not reduced the role of councillors. Housing is a key priority for the city, and our councillors are actively involved in setting NCH’s priorities and in scrutinising its performance and service delivery for tenants. Our councillors are often the first point of contact for tenants that wish to

raise any issues with the service NCH has provided, and in their role as Ward Councillor act as the tenants' representative in any discussions with NCH. Furthermore, the responsibilities of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing includes oversight of the performance of NCH, and we have three councillors that sit on the NCH Board.

7.13 Similarly, whilst the establishment of East Midlands Shared Services (EMSS), to share back office Finance and HR functions between Nottingham City Council and Leicestershire County Council has shared the operational (e.g. officer) workload and the cost of providing those functions between the two authorities, it has not reduced the level of councillor involvement in terms of Portfolio Holder and councillor scrutiny and oversight of those areas.

Are there any developments in policy ongoing that might significantly affect the role of elected members in the future?

7.14 As a result of the EU referendum result and exiting the European Union, Nottingham, alongside the other Core Cities, is calling for repatriated powers to be devolved to local areas, rather than to Westminster, as local areas and communities know best what is needed to improve their neighbourhoods and cities. Discussions with national government on a devolution deal along similar lines to those agreed by other Core Cities have taken place. Both of these developments could potentially result in changes to local governance structures and the responsibilities and functions of the local authority. In addition, as an authority we are fully engaged in initiatives such as the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect which require cross-regional working, and our councillors are actively involved in supporting those.

What has been the impact of recent financial constraints on the council's activities?

7.15 Nottingham, like other local authorities, has continued to see a reduction in government funding, with the expectation that the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) will have decreased by nearly 65% since 2013/14, from £127million in 2013/14 to £25million in 2019/20 (please see table below):



7.16 As a consequence of national government policy, local government continues to operate in a challenging financial environment, and local services will be increasingly funded by local tax payers as government funding continues to fall and government policies such as the 100% retention of business rates are implemented; at the same time demand for services such as Adult Social Care and Children in Care continues to rise. In 2017/18 we expect a fall in our “core spending power per household” of -1.54% or -£28 per dwelling, and the amount of RSG received from government to continue to fall, with a reduction in the size of the grant of -23.8% or -£14million. The table below gives a comparison of Nottingham’s spending reduction compared to the England Average, other Core Cities and neighbouring unitary authorities:

Authority	2017/18 Core Spending Power		
	% reduction	£/dwelling	reduction
England	-1.14%	1,805	-21
Birmingham	-2.40%	1,932	-48
Sheffield	-2.00%	1,659	-34
Bristol	-1.84%	1,724	-32
Manchester	-1.64%	1,832	-30
Leeds	-1.61%	1,473	-24
Nottingham	-1.54%	1,796	-28
Newcastle upon Tyne	-1.23%	1,815	-23
Liverpool	-0.09%	1,922	-2
Core Cities average	-1.66%	1,769	-28
Derby	-1.89%	1,557	-30
Leicester	-1.52%	1,897	-29

7.17 In the period from 2010/11 to 2016/17 the Council has had to make annual savings totalling £204million and we have had to make difficult decisions about the services we provide in order to close a predicted budget gap of £27million in 2017/18. The authority has taken a number of steps to respond to the continued funding cuts and manage the increasing pressures on services caused by rising demand, including:-

- taking account of the Council’s priorities as set out in the Council Plan 2015-2019 agreed by Full Council on 9 November 2015;
- implementing measures to better manage increasing demographic and service pressures on the authority, in particular around Adult Social Care, where increased life expectancy and the associated additional care needs this presents have placed greater demand on the service;

- reflecting the significant reductions in external funding (especially general and specific Government grants) by reducing expenditure on those activities
- supporting the Council's determination to be efficient, improve performance and modernise the organisation; whilst placing citizens at the heart of what we do.
- minimising the impact of service reductions and changes on vulnerable citizens by protecting frontline services;
- pursuing commercialisation opportunities to generate income for the Council.

Would a reduction in the scope and/or scale of council business warrant a reduction in the number of councillors?

7.18 We have seen no evidence to suggest that councillor workloads will decrease within the context of reductions in local government finance and services, and as an authority, we are not expecting any reduction in the overall scope of Council business.

8. Conclusions

8.1 In forming a view on our preferred Council Size we have taken into account the current and future demands that will be placed on our councillors.

8.2 To support our conclusions, we have examined a number of sources of evidence from both councillors and officers. Supporting documentation is enclosed as appendices.

8.3 Our Councillors:-

- are the ultimate policy makers for the City Council and Nottingham as a whole, and carry out a number of strategic and corporate functions appropriate to a member of Council;
- represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision making process. They are the advocate of, and for, the communities they serve;
- effectively, fairly and impartially represent the interests of their ward and those of individual citizens;
- undertake the necessary action arising from citizen casework;
- contribute to the good governance of the Council and of the city and actively encourage community participation in decision making;
- are members of the area committee covering the ward which they represent;
- are willing to take on special standing or time-limited responsibilities should it be required of them;
- are available to represent the Council on other bodies;
- participate actively and effectively as a member on any scrutiny, regulatory or other committee / panel, assembly or forum to which they are appointed;

- contribute actively in the Overview & Scrutiny of the Council’s policies, budget, strategies and service delivery as a member of the committee;
- develop and maintain a working knowledge of the organisation, services and activities and other matters which affect and impact on the role of the Committee they are appointed to;
- are required to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.

8.4 At December 2016, there were 204,355 registered electors in Nottingham City, an average of 3,715 electors for each of the 55 City Councillors. This ratio places the city of Nottingham well within the range of our “nearest neighbour” authorities in terms of both the overall number of councillors and the average number of electors per councillor [*Based on CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Modelling*].

8.5 Nottingham has an average ratio of councillors to electors that is higher than 10 of its 15 nearest neighbour authorities, based on the CIPFA model. Any reduction in Council Size would therefore increase the average number of electors per councillor, making our councillors less able to fully represent current and future electors in Nottingham. As noted in paragraph 1.10, the electorate size in Nottingham is depressed following IER and the high student population, but the work of councillors does not differentiate between those on the electoral roll and those who are not. As the population of Nottingham is expected to grow further, and there is the potential for policies such as Devolution to increase the functions and powers held by the authority. We believe this, alongside the current and future demands on our Councillors outlined in our submission represents a strong rationale against any change in the current number of councillors. Please see Appendix K for the relevant data.

8.6 Nottingham is a Core City and the “Capital of the East Midlands”, as a Council we are ambitious for Nottingham, seeking to reposition the city as a nationally and internationally significant city to the benefit of local residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Our councillors, in particular the Leader and Executive members, need to be strategic and work at a high level, influencing decision making at all levels: locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This demands a significant investment of time, skills and expertise from our councillors, over and above that set out in the role descriptions.

8.7 At the same time, in light of the many challenges the city faces, the community champion role of our councillors is more important than ever, and via initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Regeneration Strategy, the Council is seeking to further enhance the role of councillors in their local communities.

8.8 The city continues to deal with the legacy of long standing problems around deprivation, education and skills, at the same time as ongoing austerity reduces financing for local government and increases demand on services. In spite of these

challenges, our city and its communities remain united, and overall resident satisfaction with the city and the services the local authority provide remains high.

8.9 We have an ambitious programme for Nottingham including:

- major regeneration projects such as the Broadmarsh Transformation,
- an award winning transport network,
- we're helping local people into work (4,809 local people were helped into work in 2015/16, including 2,300 people through our Employer Hub and 915 young people helped into work through our Apprenticeship Hub),
- we have reduced fuel poverty in the city, helping some of our most vulnerable residents' access affordable energy via the city council owned Robin Hood Energy Company and "Nottingham" tariff for city residents,
- we have many nationally recognised and lauded initiatives, such as our School Attendance programme,
- our local strategic partnership; One Nottingham, is strong and the local authority and our partners are committed to making Nottingham a city that local people would recommend as a place to live, work, visit and study at.

8.9 Our councillors, in their roles in the Executive, on committees, as backbench members and as community leaders within their wards continue to drive the city forward.

8.10 As a city we are making good progress, but there is still more to do and there is no room for complacency or resting on our laurels about the challenges Nottingham and our communities face, both now and in future. In view of this, there is no strong rationale for reducing the number of councillors in Nottingham, and limited appetite amongst the public to do so.

8.11 Nottingham is a diverse city, and any reduction in the number of councillors would not only mean that each councillor represented more constituents, reducing the effective level of democratic representation in the city, but also that they would represent a more diverse range of constituents with a more diverse range of issues. This would pose a challenge to our councillors both in terms of an increased workload, and in ensuring the fairness and effectiveness of representation for our many different communities.

8.12 We acknowledge that the Commission will form an independent view based on the evidence, including of its own investigations, our own Submission and any other views submitted to the Commission.

8.13 The preferred Council Size set out in this response is subject to endorsement by Full Council at a later date. Unfortunately, in light of the Review timescales and the pre-arranged dates for Full Council meetings, it has not been possible to seek the endorsement of Full Council prior to the submission deadline. **However, the**

position set out in this report reflects the views of the Majority Group (Labour), representing 50 of the 55 current councillors in the city of Nottingham.

8.14 The Leader of the Minority Group was consulted about the preferred council size ahead of submission of this report to the LGBCE and expressed no concerns or counter suggestions.