

**BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE****Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R.J. Sloan (Chairman), K.T. Blundell, S. Davies, N.J. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, A.D. McClements and R.A. Overton.

**BRC-5      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

**BRC-6      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**BRC-7      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**BRC-8      BOROUGH ELECTORAL REVIEW – OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL SIZE**

Members received the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection which provided briefing information of the Further Electoral Review of the Borough. The report concluded the Committee's work in considering what Council size should be recommended to Full Council. The report covered information previously requested by the Committee on

- Committee workloads
- Results of a councillor workload survey
- Consideration of additional challenges and developments facing the role of the elected councillor.

Referring to the results of the councillor workload survey, Councillor R.A. Overton noted that a large number of members had reported that workloads had noticeably increased. The additional challenges and developments outlined in the report would make the role of councillors more demanding in the future. Cuts to budgets tended to increase councillors' casework, particularly in the more deprived wards of the Borough. The ethos of a Co-operative Council placed an onus on councillors to actively engage with their community, this added significantly to the workload of elected members.

Councillor A.D. McClements told members that the workload survey provided data on formal meetings but that she knew that there were many more informal meetings undertaken by councillors, particularly with Scrutiny work. Councillor K.T. Blundell agreed that case work had increased, noting that an effective councillor engaging

with their community would tend to create sustained workloads at a high level. Councillor Blundell also felt that reducing the number of councillors and increasing workloads significantly had the potential to exclude a wide range of people that might otherwise come forward to serve as councillors. Councillor S. Davies noted that reductions had been made on the cost of councillors through voluntary reductions, expenses were now at a minimum and it was not sensible to make large reductions in the numbers of councillors on the basis of cost reductions. The Council needed an appropriate number of councillors in order to deliver the Council’s responsibilities efficiently. Councillor N.A. Dugmore told the meeting that the previous review resulting in 54 councillors had been conducted 10 years previously and the current review would be effective for a further 10 years. Circumstances changed and it would not be appropriate to continue with a model that would effectively be 20 years old. He felt that where councillor workloads were high, neighbouring councillors could support and assist each other and that better ways of working could ensure that councillors were better utilised.

Councillor R.J. Sloan (Chairman) believed that work was being passed down from central to local government and that workloads would continue to increase. The issue was not solely around savings but in ensuring that elected councillors were able to properly serve the people who had elected them. Councillor A.J. Eade felt that there could be different ways to deliver a reduction in councillor numbers and that this could be done with a different Committee and governance structure.

Following further discussion a proposal that the Council size should be 54 was proposed and seconded. Following a vote this proposal was carried by 5 votes to 2 with no abstentions and it was:

**RESOLVED – That the Committee recommend to Full Council that the appropriate Council size should be 54 councillors and that the Boundary Review Committee make a formal submission on behalf of the Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

The meeting ended at 6.41 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL****BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE 26 SEPTEMBER 2012****FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW OF THE BOROUGH – COUNCIL SUBMISSION****REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: LAW, DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1.0 SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) will commence a further electoral review of the Borough in October 2012. The last review was completed in 2002, and the Order that came out at that time gave the Borough a pattern of 33 wards and 54 councillors. 16 wards are single member; 13 wards elect two members and 4 wards elect three members. One of the crucial requirements for such a review is the appropriate number of councillors because this then leads to the quota of electors to councillors. This, in turn leads to the allocation of councillors to wards, ensuring that, as far as possible, every councillor represents approximately the same number of electors. The Commission's technical guidance document can be viewed at the following link

[http://www.lgbce.org.uk/\\_documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/electoral-review-guidance-august-2012.pdf](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/electoral-review-guidance-august-2012.pdf)

The Boundary Review Committee met on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 19<sup>th</sup> July and 23<sup>rd</sup> August to consider information and form a recommendation on the preferred Council size. The initial meeting provided an overview of the review and its statutory requirements, the Committee selected two notional models of 50 and 40 members to assess the effects of such Council sizes. The second meeting considered both models based on statutory criteria and forecast electorate numbers. The third meeting looked at information on Committee workloads, results of a councillor workload survey and future developments, challenges and demands that would impact on the role of a councillor. In particular, the Co-operative council way of working placed an emphasis on active engagement with the community which would increase workloads. After consideration of the information, the meeting by a majority of votes, made a recommendation to Council for a preferred Council size of 54 councillors. Council, at its meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> September approved the

recommendation for a preferred council size of 54 councillors and recommended that the Boundary Review Committee make the council's submission to LGBCE by the end of September.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the committee approves the Council size submission (attached) which proposes retaining 54 councillors and requests that the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection make arrangements for the document to be sent to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) as the Council's agreed submission.

## 3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	No	
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	<i>Borough Wide</i>
<b>DELIVERY DATE</b>	<i>Timetable not currently formulated by Local Government Boundary Commission for England</i>	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	No	Costs associated with the electoral review are in the form of officer time and will be met from within existing budgets.  MLB 17.01.12
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	No	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has a statutory duty to keep under review electoral arrangements at local authority level
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has served notice on the council that it will commence a Further Electoral Review in October 2012. The outcome of any review may change the size of the council, number and boundaries of wards, names of wards and allocation of councillors to

		wards.
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	Yes	Borough-wide impact.

**PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**4.0 COUNCIL SIZE**

**Further Electoral Review of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin**

**Proposals in relation to council size**

**Introduction**

1. The LGBCE’s technical guidance sets out the following key criteria for determining council size:

*5.13 Broadly speaking, we will take a view on the right council size for an authority by considering three areas:*

- *The governance arrangements of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.*
- *The Council’s scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making and the council’s responsibilities to outside bodies.*
- *The representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.*

*5.14 The Commission also asks local authorities and local people to consider the number of councillors for the authority not simply in the context of the council’s current arrangements, but also likely future trends or plans. In every review it carries out, the Commission aims to ensure its recommendations remain relevant for the long term and will aim to recommend a number that delivers effective and convenient local government well after the completion of the electoral review*

2. The last further electoral review was completed in 2002 when the council size was retained at 54 councillors with the number of wards being reduced from 34 to 33. The Borough has 16 single member wards, 13 two member wards and 4 three member wards. The current electorate is 123,970 with the quota of electors to councillors being 2292. The Borough is entirely parished and contains 28 parishes, of which 26 have parish councils. This submission

addresses the LGBCE's key criteria on council size in order to evidence the reasons supporting retention of a 54 member council.

3. Telford & Wrekin, located in eastern Shropshire, has been a Unitary council since 1998 and comprises a mixture of mainly urban and some rural wards. The Borough's major settlement is Telford which was designated a new town in 1963. The town was created from the merger of smaller settlements, notably the towns of Wellington, Madeley, Oakengates and Dawley. The Borough comprises an urban heartland with a rural periphery and has an estimated population of 170,300 which is continuing to grow rapidly. By 2026 population is forecast to be 196,300. The Borough has more young people (0-15) than the national average. There are 4,500 registered businesses in the Borough employing around 81,000 people. The Borough is marked as the 96<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority area in England with 14 neighbourhood areas ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in England. These are focused in 8 wards: Woodside, Malinslee, Cuckoo Oak, Brookside, Hadley & Leegomery, Dawley Magna, College and Donnington. In contrast, six wards contain areas rated as being in the top 10% least deprived areas

Telford & Wrekin is a Co-operative Council which means that the Council works in a different way to traditional councils by working together with residents, partners and local organisations to collectively deliver the best it can for the Borough with the combined resources available.

By being one of 17 members currently in the national Co-operative Councils Network the Council is working to:

- Bring more public services together so that people get what they need at the right place and the right time
- Involve local people and our staff more in planning and running services
- Support our communities better and encourage people to do more to help their own communities

The council has developed a set of co-operative values that defines the way it works and interacts with the community.

### **Openness and Honesty**

- We will - be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple and timely way
- We would like everyone - to be open and honest about what they want to improve in their community

### **Ownership**

- We will - be accountable for our own actions and empower others with the skills to help themselves
- We would like everyone - to the best of their abilities, to take action and responsibility for themselves and their community

### **Fairness and Respect**

- We will - respond to people's needs in a fair and consistent way
- We will and would like everyone to - respect and care for themselves and others, valuing the different ideas and skills that people bring and treating each other as equals

### **Involvement**

- We will - work together with our communities, involving people in decisions that affect their lives and be prepared to listen and take on new ideas
- We would like everyone - to work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help us develop the way we do things

The stated value of involvement is particularly relevant as it represents how the council will work together with others in decision making and developing the way things are done. This places an onus on the role of councillors to lead the way on community involvement and in forging partnerships; working as community leaders to enable the council to work together with communities. In order to accommodate the additional expectations of the role of elected members the council requires a suitable number of councillors.

Achievement of the Council's aims and embedding these values across the Borough is dependent on a strong and effective governance structure supporting the work of councillors equipped with the time and resources to work effectively together with residents, partners and local organisations. The current ratio of councillors to electors enables councillors to balance the ceremonial, executive, scrutiny and representational roles with the work of the Co-operative council.

### **Executive process**

4. The Council operates a Strong Leader and Cabinet model. The Cabinet comprises 9 councillors including the Leader of the council. Service areas are:

Borough Town Development & Policy,

Resources & Service Delivery,

Children, Young People & Families,

Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative council,

Leisure & Well-Being,

Adult & Social Care,

Transport & Community Protection

Housing, Regeneration & Development.

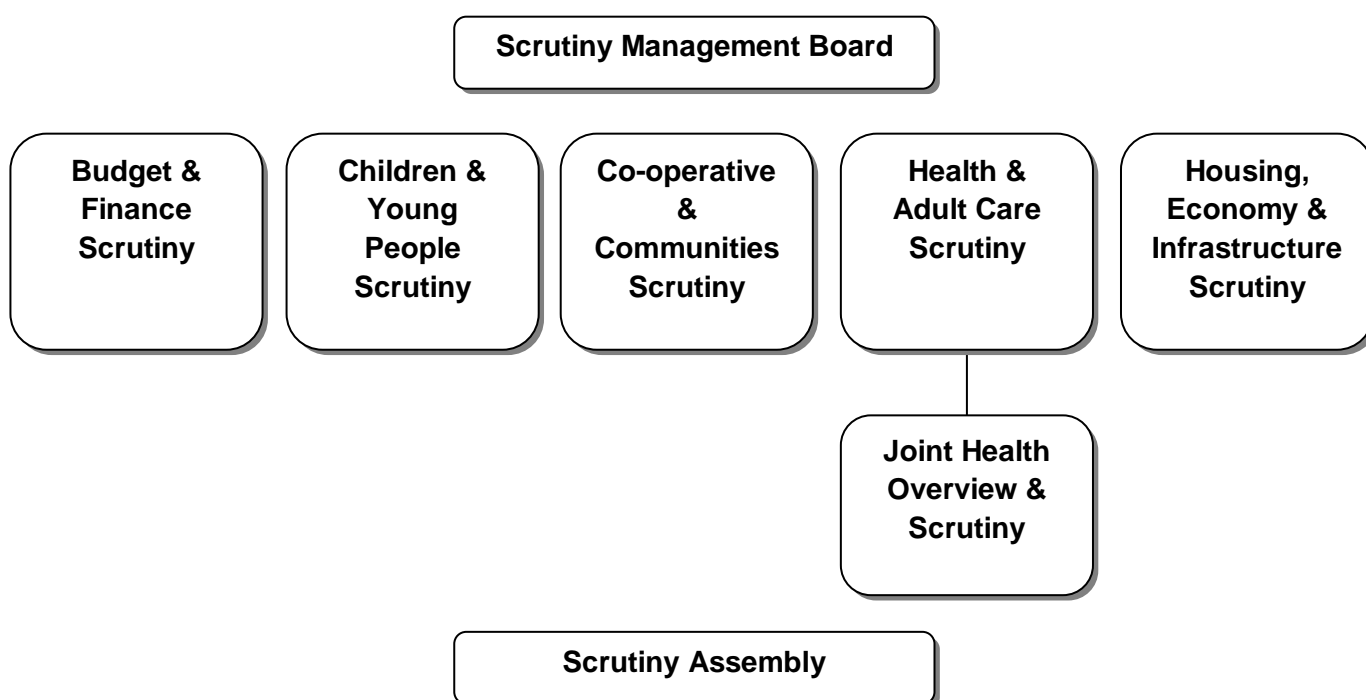
Cabinet meets monthly and during 2011/12 met 13 times and considered an average of 7 items per meeting. Cabinet meetings were previously held fortnightly but have been held monthly for the last year. The Strong Leader and Cabinet model continues to work effectively and efficiently for the Borough. The Strong Leader model has served successive administrations well and the council has no plans to change this arrangement. A very small number of councils have opted to revert to the old Committee system but this is not something that the council considers appropriate or beneficial for the Borough.

### **Regulatory processes**

5. The council has a Plans Board comprising 9 councillors. The Board meets at least every 3 weeks to consider applications that are not determined using delegated powers; this is required in order to ensure applications are determined within target dates. There are an average of 18 meetings per year and an average of 6 items per meeting. Between June 2010 to July 2012, 2225 applications were received with 203 applications (9.1%) dealt with by the Plans Board. Meetings average around 2 hours but this has noticeably increased following the introduction of public speaking. This process encourages involvement from Borough and Parish councillors and members of the public who exercise their right to speak on planning applications. As the Borough continues to grow we expect workloads to continue to be demanding for Plans Board.
6. Licensing Committee consists of 10 councillors and meets 4-5 times a year. This Committee was reduced from 15 members last year. Meetings last around 1.5 hours on average. Licensing Sub-Committee consists of between 3 and 5 councillors and meets 8 times per year with the average length of meetings being 3 hours. The number of meetings has reduced in the last year due to a combination of greater use of officer delegations and a large number of taxi drivers being licensed in the neighbouring Shropshire council area. Should those drivers choose to become licensed in the Borough then workloads will increase for Licensing Committee.

### **Scrutiny Process**

7. The council has a robust and hard-working Scrutiny structure comprising five service-themed Scrutiny Committees and a Scrutiny Management Board. There is also a Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee which is a sub-group of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee. The structure is shown below.



There are 8 elected members on each Scrutiny Committee and they are politically balanced. The Scrutiny Management Board is made up of the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees, plus other members as required to make up the political balance (there are currently 7 members on the Board). The Scrutiny Assembly is the collective body for all scrutiny members and co-optees carrying out scrutiny work.

Most Scrutiny work is carried out by the Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Management Board. Each Committee has a benchmark of 6 formal meetings per year, but there are also working group meetings and informal briefings. In 2012/12 there were 48 formal committee meetings (Scrutiny Committees, Scrutiny Management Board, Joint HOSC), plus around 20 working group meetings.

Scrutiny members have recognised the need to take greater responsibility for self-directed work and have agreed to hold Member-Only meetings (i.e. members arrange their own meetings, take notes and distribute them, without the need for scrutiny officer support). This is a good example of the way councillors' roles are developing and changing in response to reduced staffing support.

The Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee scrutinises issues affecting the borough. The Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin Joint Health Scrutiny Committee is a sub-group of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee which scrutinises NHS / health services delivered across the county. There are 8 elected members on the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee plus 4 co-optees. Three of the elected members and three of the Co-optees also sit on the JHOSC.

There have been 2 call-ins of Cabinet decisions in the previous year. Unlike a number of other authorities, the council has retained a strong scrutiny function which allows for effective scrutiny across the range of council activities.

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## Decision Making

### 7. Boards & Committees

<b>Committee, Group or Panel</b>	<b>No. of seats</b>	<b>E x e c</b>	<b>Non Exec</b>	<b>Number of Meetings</b>		<b>Average Length of Meetings</b>	<b>Comments</b>
				<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2011/2012</b>		
<b>Governance</b>							
<i>Council</i>	54	9	45	6	9	2 hr 30mins	<i>Meets every 2 months</i>
<i>Standards</i>	7	1	6	3	4	1 hour	<i>Meets quarterly</i>
<i>Standards Sub-Committee</i>	3			8	11	1 hour	<i>It is expected that the number of Sub-Committee meetings will decrease under the new Standards regime. These are ad hoc meetings – the three members for any one meeting can be drawn from the “pool” of the seven Standards Committee members</i>
<i>Audit</i>	7	0	7	6	5	2 hours	<i>Number of meetings reduced to four for 2012-13, but meetings have been getting longer</i>
<i>Council Constitution Committee</i>	7	1	6	6	6	1 hour	<i>Quarterly meetings programmed, but further ad hoc meetings are sometimes required</i>
<i>Boundary Review Committee</i>	7	2	5	N/A	1		<i>Regular meetings during a Boundary Review, but otherwise likely to meet intermittently</i>
<b>Executive</b>							
<i>Cabinet</i>	9	9	0	18	13	1 hour	<i>The maximum number of Cabinet members permissible (including the Leader) is ten. Meetings in 2011-12 were about every four weeks, compared with every two weeks previously. Cabinet also meets informally as a Policy Review Group – approximately monthly</i>
<b>Regulatory</b>							

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<i>Plans Board</i>	9 (+ sub s)	0	9	18	18	2 hours	<i>Plans Board meets on a three-weekly cycle – this has generally been seen as necessary in order to ensure that applications are determined within the eight-week target. Members (and Parish Councils) can request that particular applications are determined by the Board – some of these would be determined probably under the scheme of officer delegation otherwise. The length of meetings has increased since the introduction of public speaking</i>
<i>Licensing Committee</i>	10	0	10	12	4	1 hr 30 mins	<i>There are usually four business meetings a year. There were a larger number of meetings in 2010-11 because the full Committee was dealing with hearings relating to taxi licensing. Some of these meetings lasted a full day. In 2011-12, these matters were delegated to a sub-committee. However, there were no taxi sub-committee hearings in 2011-12 owing to the increased use of officer delegation together with the large number of drivers now being licensed by the neighbouring Shropshire Council.</i>
<i>Licensing Sub-Committee</i>	3-5	0	3-5	7	8	3 hours	<i>These are ad hoc meetings, largely relating to premises licensing. The three or five members for any one meeting can be drawn from the “pool” of the ten Licensing Committee members. The meetings take the form of hearings, and can be quite lengthy</i>
<b>Scrutiny</b>							
<i>Scrutiny Management Board</i>	7	0	7	N/A	9	1 hour 30 mins	<i>The Board comprises the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees together with two opposition members</i>
<i>Scrutiny Committee – Finance &amp; Budget</i>	8	0	8	N/A	8	2 hours	<i>The information recorded for Scrutiny Committees only relates to formal public meetings convened in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972. In 2010-11, the Committees only met formally two or three times, but in addition members of the Committees met informally as working groups on a number of occasions.</i>
<i>Scrutiny Committee – Children &amp; Young People</i>	8	0	8	2	9	2 hours	See above
<i>Scrutiny Committee – Co-operative &amp; Communities</i>	8	0	8	N/A	6	2 hours	

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Scrutiny Committee – Adult Care & Support	6			2	N/A		Discontinued
Scrutiny Committee – Active Lifestyles Leisure & Culture	6			3	N/A		Discontinued
Scrutiny Committee – Joint Health	3	0	3	5	5	3 hours	3 members plus 3 co-optees
Scrutiny Committee – Housing Regeneration & Prosperity	6			3	N/A		Discontinued
Scrutiny Committee – Efficient Community Focused Council	6			3	N/A		Discontinued
Scrutiny Committee – Protection & Cohesion	6			2	N/A		Discontinued
Scrutiny Committee – Environment & Rural Area	6			2	N/A		Discontinued
Scrutiny Committee – Adult Social Care	8	0	8	N/A	5	2 hours	
Scrutiny Committee – Health	8	0	8	N/A	5	2 hours	
<b>Personnel</b>							
Appeals Committee (Transport/Employee )	7 (+ sub s)	0	7	14/4	3/13	1hr 30min/4 hrs	These are ad hoc meetings. The three or five members for any one meeting can be drawn from the “pool” of the seven Appeals Committee members, plus substitutes. The meetings take the form of hearings, and can be quite lengthy – up to a full day for employee appeals
Personnel Board	7	3	4	0	8	2 hours	These are ad hoc meetings. Some meetings where the Board is interviewing candidates for chief officer posts can take a half or

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							<i>full day</i>
<i>Employee JICF</i>	7	3	4	1	2	1 hour	<i>Employee JICF has recently been “reactivated” and is meeting on a quarterly basis</i>
<b>Other Committees</b>							
<i>Parish Forum</i>	7	2	5	4	3	2 hours	<i>Meets quarterly</i>
<i>Combined Fire Authority</i>	6	0	6				
<b>Seats available for non executive members</b>			<b>119</b>				<b>119 seats available to 44 councillors giving an average of 2.7 seats per non executive councillor</b>

**\*Sub- Committees not included in total non executive seats**

**\*The Number of seats available to non executive members = 119. There are 45 non executive members. The Mayor does not sit on any boards/committees during his/her term of office, leaving 44 councillors available. This gives an average of 2.7 Committee positions for each non executive councillor.**

**\*Health & Wellbeing Board (4 seats) is operating in shadow form until 2013/14 when it will become an appointed Board of the Council.**

The ratio of 2.7 committee positions per non-executive councillor is comparable with many other authorities and works effectively. Meetings are generally well attended and all meetings are quorate. Committees are not too small to work effectively and are able to benefit from a broad range of councillor experience and expertise. This structure ensures that councillors will also have sufficient time to properly prepare and contribute to meetings as well as being able to work together with residents, partners and local organisations as part of a Co-operative council.

## Representative role of councillors

- 8 The Borough appoints councillors to 96 seats on 55 different outside bodies, this is reviewed every year. This equates to an average of 1.77 seats on outside bodies per councillor.

As part of the submission process a survey of councillors was undertaken for the council's Boundary Review Committee in order to gain information on workloads and time spent on different activities. 35 responses were received, a return rate of 65%. The full returns have been appended to this report.

Some key points from the survey are summarised below:

57% were employed part or full time

83% were also Parish/Town councillors

76% felt that Borough councillor workloads had increased in the last 2 years

94% served on outside bodies, with 83% being members of Community groups

89% held councillor surgeries, this varied from weekly to monthly surgeries

57% spent more than 11 hours per month preparing/reading papers for meetings, with 68% spending more than 11 hours per month in meetings

43% spent more than 16 hours per month dealing with residents' queries.

The information from the survey return indicates that councillors are currently spending significant time in supporting residents, engaging with their communities and preparing for and attending meetings.

The council's Co-operative approach means that the role of the councillor is crucial in increasing engagement with local communities. The councillor survey reflects 76% of those responding feeling that workloads had increased. The survey also finds that in addition to attendance at meetings, significant time is being spent in preparing for meetings and dealing with residents' queries. Members representing wards where deprivation is higher are likely to have greater amounts of case work than those members representing more affluent wards. The effects of the recession, public spending reductions and changes to benefit systems will further increase councillor workloads. A reduction in the number of councillors and associated increase in workloads would almost certainly serve to disadvantage those people in most need. Although councillor workloads are increasing the current arrangements allow councillors to function effectively and to properly represent the interests of electors.

## 10 Reasons in support of retaining a council comprising of 54 councillors

- *The governance arrangements of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.*

The council's Co-operative ethos places councillors at the centre of engagement with the community. The council believes that electors deserve an effective level of representation and that current arrangements provide this. The current organisational and governance arrangements work effectively and efficiently and have ensured the delivery of £45m savings in 4 years during a period of unprecedented public spending cuts as well as securing improvement in a number of the council's key priority areas. The council's medium term plan contains further detailed information on the Co-operative council's objectives and can be found at

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4649/telford\\_and\\_wrekin\\_council\\_medium\\_term\\_plan\\_201213\\_to\\_201415](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4649/telford_and_wrekin_council_medium_term_plan_201213_to_201415) Expenditure on allowances has been reduced in the last year by £40k, which includes Cabinet members taking a voluntary 10% reduction in their allowances.

The council recognises that cost is a factor but this council is committed to ensuring that elected councillors are able to properly and effectively serve the people who elected them. This means that ratios of electors to councillors and the workloads of those councillors must be both appropriate and manageable.

Current arrangements work well, allow good representation for all electors in the Borough and enable the Co-operative council to transact its business effectively now and in the future.

- *The Council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.*

The council has a robust and effective Overview & Scrutiny structure that leads to continued change and improvement in council policy and service delivery. A reduction in the number of councillors would compromise effective scrutiny and reduce the service and policy benefits that are currently developed from scrutiny.

The current structure allows for in depth work to be undertaken across a broad range of the council's activities and the council will continue to benefit from the high quality scrutiny work that is undertaken.

- *The representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.*

The average ratio of 2.7 committee positions for each non-executive councillor plus representation on outside bodies seems to be at an appropriate level. Significant responsibilities and workloads are being passed down from central to local government with councillor workloads continuing to increase. The councillor workload survey, with 65% of councillors responding, illustrated that a large number of members had reported that their workloads had been noticeably increased. In addition the survey showed that councillors were spending significant amounts of time preparing and attending meetings and in dealing with residents' queries. Reducing the number of councillors and increasing workloads significantly will potentially exclude a wide range of suitable people that might otherwise come forward to serve as councillors.

The council requires an appropriate number of councillors to allow for the conduct of the ceremonial, executive, regulatory, scrutiny and representational roles of the council. It considers that a reduction in the number of councillors would compromise the ability of councillors to deliver these roles effectively and to properly engage with electors. The ethos of a Co-operative Council places an onus on councillors to actively engage with their community, this adds significantly to the workload of elected members. The council considers that the present number of 54 councillors will enable councillors to properly fulfil their roles to the community and allow them to actively engage with communities in line with the Co-operative ethos.

#### *Future Trends*

There are a number of compelling factors that further support the need for the council and elected councillors to be able to properly respond to future challenges. The huge challenges ahead will place further additional demands on councillors. Future requirements that will impact the workload of the council and elected councillors. The primary area of additional demand will be the transfer of Public Health services from the NHS to the council from April 2013. The transfer of Public Health is one of the most significant changes in the remit of local government in recent years and will have a number of implications for the role of Elected Members. At a strategic level there will be the additional responsibility for Cabinet to ensure effective public health policy and value for money in the delivery of the public health services. This will also involve ensuring public health is engaged with the Health and Wellbeing Board locally and has developed effective working relationships with Public Health England both of which will require member involvement. The role of members in scrutinising the implementation of the transition and the delivery of public health services will continue.

The transition of public health also presents opportunities for the Council to demonstrate our Co-operative values. There will be a need to ensure that all Members are aware of the public health responsibilities of the Council and the public health messages that are key for our local population. This will require an ongoing process of briefing and training for Members who will be key in engaging with local organisations in the public health agenda e.g. employers and voluntary and community organisations to get the public health messages out into the community and feed back local public health concerns.

Additional considerations that will place additional demands on councillors are:

- Duty to develop Health & Well-Being Strategy
- The impact of the Welfare Reform agenda
- Continued demands of delivery of the Localism agenda
- Neighbourhood Planning requirements
- Providing services and support to communities in very difficult financial circumstances
- Engagement/support of local businesses.
- Corporate Parenting role- more than 300 children in care and significant pressures arising from this
- Adult Social Care – increasing pressures
- Continuing recession and high unemployment
- Creation of a Commercial Enterprise model – a new way of working. Potentially as a company deliver new business and generate an income stream for the council.
- Further public spending cuts and consequent reductions in available support will place further demands on councillors time and resource

The Council will need an appropriate number of councillors in order to deliver the Council's growing responsibilities efficiently, providing effective and convenient local government for the people of the Borough. Retaining 54 councillors would reflect and reinforce the pattern of communities across the Borough and ensure that the impact of any change resulting from the boundary review was minimised on those communities. A reduction in the numbers of councillors would diminish representation and engagement with electors and would not serve the interests of the Borough or its electors.

## 11. Conclusion

The council's current projected electorate numbers for 2018 of 134094 would provide an estimated councillor-electors ratio of 2483 for a 54 member council.

This ratio is considered to be manageable within the current governance structure and Co-operative working arrangements of the Borough which provides effective and convenient local government for the electors of Telford & Wrekin. The council considers that, having regard to the statutory criteria and for the compelling reasons outlined in this report that the aspirations of this Co-operative council and of the community it serves would be best served by a council size of **54** for the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

Documents and information used in the preparation of this report can be found on the website of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) Of particular relevance is the Commission's guidance: *Electoral reviews: technical guidance* (May 2011). Ward maps and electorates (at 1 December 2011) can be found at our elections website at [www.telford.gov.uk/elections](http://www.telford.gov.uk/elections)

**Report prepared by Phil Griffiths, Democratic Services Manager, telephone 01952 383210**

## MEMBER WORKLOAD SURVEY RESULTS AUGUST 2012

### INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

#### **What is your employment status?**

Full time 28.6%  
Part time 28.6%  
Retired/not working 42.9%

#### **Are you a Parish/Town Councillor?**

Yes 82.9%  
no 17.1%

#### **Are you a School governor?**

Yes 48.6%  
No 51.4%

#### **Are you on any Outside bodies?**

Yes 94.3%  
No 5.7%

#### **Are you a member of any community groups?**

Yes 82.9%  
No 17.1%

#### **What positions do you hold on the Council?**

Committee Member 57.1%  
Committee Chair 31.4%  
Committee Vice Chair 8.6%  
Cabinet Member 17.1%  
Working Group Chair/Vice 2.9%  
Other 28.6%

## ABOUT YOUR WARD

**Do you hold fixed/street surgeries?**

Yes 88.6%

No 11.4%

**If yes, how often do you hold your surgery?**

weekly 22.6%

2 / 3 weeks 19.4%

monthly 45.2%

every 2 months 3.2%

quarterly 0.0%

less frequently 3.2%

## MEETINGS YOU ATTEND (AVERAGE PER MONTH)

**How long do you spend preparing/reading papers?**

up to 5hrs 11.4%

6 - 10 hours 31.4%

11 - 15 hours 14.3%

more than 16hrs 42.9%

**How long do you spend travelling?**

up to 5hrs 42.9%

6 - 10 hours 34.3%

11 - 15 hours 11.4%

more than 16hrs 11.4%

**How long do you spend in formal meetings of the Council?**

up to 5hrs 11.4%

6 - 10 hours 20.0%

11 - 15 hours 37.1%

more than 16hrs 31.4%

**How long do you spend in informal meetings with other Members?**

up to 5hrs 42.9%  
 6 - 10 hours 20.0%  
 11 - 15 hours 20.0%  
 more than 16hrs 17.1%

**How much time do you spend on meetings of outside bodies?**

up to 5hrs 36.4%  
 6 - 10 hours 33.3%  
 11 - 15 hours 18.2%  
 more than 16hrs 12.1%

**How long do you spend in meetings with Council officers?**

up to 5hrs 37.1%  
 6 - 10 hours 25.7%  
 11 - 15 hours 11.4%  
 more than 16hrs 25.7%

**How long do you spend in Group meetings?**

up to 5hrs 62.9%  
 6 - 10 hours 31.4%  
 11 - 15 hours 5.7%  
 more than 16hrs 0.0%

**How much time do you spend dealing with residents queries?**

up to 5hrs 5.7%  
 6 - 10 hours 28.6%  
 11 - 15 hours 22.9%  
 more than 16hrs 42.9%

**How much time do you spend attending meetings of the local community/forum?**

up to 5hrs 60.0%  
 6 - 10 hours 25.7%  
 11 - 15 hours 11.4%  
 more than 16hrs 2.9%

**How much time do you spend on meetings of school governors?**

up to 5hrs 77.8%  
6 - 10 hours 11.1%  
11 - 15 hours 11.1%  
more than 16hrs 0.0%

**How long do you spend at Member Information Seminars or training?**

up to 5hrs 85.7%  
6 - 10 hours 14.3%  
11 - 15 hours 0.0%  
more than 16hrs 0.0%

**How long do you spend attending conferences?**

up to 5hrs 91.7%  
6 - 10 hours 8.3%  
11 - 15 hours 0.0%  
more than 16hrs 0.0%

**How long do you spend on Parish/Town Council business?**

up to 5hrs 28.1%  
6 - 10 hours 43.8%  
11 - 15 hours 15.6%  
more than 16hrs 12.5%

**Do you feel that your workload as a Borough Councillor has increased in the last 2 yrs?**

Yes 75.9%  
No 24.1%

**Do you feel that your workload as a Parish/Town Councillor has increased in the last 2yrs?**

Yes 60.0%  
No 40.0%