

Appendix A

# Council Size Submission

to

The  
Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
for England

20 December 2021

## Foreword by The Executive Leader, Councillor Seán Woodward

I am delighted to support and endorse Fareham Borough Council's submission on its future council size for consideration by the Local Government Boundary Review for England.

The Council has concluded that a council size of 32 councillors across 16 wards is the appropriate number which will ensure that the Council can continue to deliver an efficient and effective decision-making process. In reaching its conclusion, the Council has carefully considered how the Borough has evolved in recent years, the work and output of this high-achieving Council and the expected growth in the electorate over the next 20 years.

Planning consent has very recently been issued to Buckland Development Ltd (Buckland) for its outline planning application for Welborne Garden Village, a new community of 6000 homes to the north of Fareham, making it the largest ever development scheme to be approved by the Council. This significant milestone means preparatory work can now begin onsite to deliver Welborne.

This is a momentous leap forward for Welborne and marks a real turning point in terms of bringing forward our new community. In the coming decades we will see six thousand new homes, a huge boost to the local economy and provision for almost six thousand jobs. Its importance to the Borough of Fareham should not be underestimated. We will be supporting the delivery of a secondary school, three primary schools, a district shopping centre, a number of local centres and many community facilities along with a huge amount of public open space. We have worked hard to secure the funding for the new motorway junction at junction 10 of the M27 and we have held firm to the pledge I made years ago that not a brick of Welborne will be laid until all of the infrastructure required is identified, we know where it is going and most importantly how it will be funded.

Fareham Borough Council has also submitted its proposed Local Plan, the Publication Plan, to the Secretary of State. It will now be examined by an independent Planning Inspector who will be appointed by the Government to determine if the proposals are sound.

This is a hugely significant step for the Council as various changes to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) since 2015, when the Council first began work on revising its Local Plan, have led to significant changes to the number of new homes the Council has to plan for which, in turn, have led to delays in finalising its proposals. It is crucial for us to have a robust Local Plan in place as that will set out where and how development can take place across the Borough of Fareham. I am delighted that, as a result of the hard work by the team that have spent the last five years working on this, we have now submitted our Publication Plan for inspection.

The significance of this Council Size Submission must therefore be appreciated against the context of this anticipated housing development growth alongside the

expectation that councillors are able to effectively represent their communities and manage their casework. It must also allow the Council to continue to fulfil its responsibilities to its partners through existing joint working arrangements.

And most importantly, the Council is determined and committed to continuing to implement systems thinking across all Council services to ensure a customer focused approach and the quick resolution of problems. Systems thinking interventions help to design Council services so that the needs of the customer are met in the simplest and most efficient way. To date significant lessons have been learnt from each intervention and new ways of working have been implemented, which have resulted in a more responsive, customer focused approach.

We are proud of our Borough and of the work which is carried out by officers of the Council on behalf of the Executive and of the Council. We consider ourselves to be "Team Fareham" where political debate and questions from opposition members is encouraged whilst politics do not create a barrier to success and accomplishment.

It is remarkable and quite impressive that all the achievements are delivered with Fareham's Council Tax rate being one of the lowest "district" rates in England.

I am confident that you will find the information contained within this submission document useful in your deliberations on the future size of the Council and look forward to the commencement of the next stage of the review process in early 2022.



Councillor Seán Woodward  
**Executive Leader of the Council**

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## SUBMISSION SUMMARY

1. At its meeting held on Thursday 16 December, Fareham Borough Council resolved to submit a recommended council size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England that would slightly increase the number of Fareham Borough Councillors from the current 31 councillors to:

### 32 Councillors

2. The Council has followed the advice and guidance provided by the Commission and in doing so has considered the following headings:
  - **Strategic Leadership** - how many councillors are needed to give strategic leadership and direction to the authority?
  - **Accountability**
    - a) *Scrutiny* - how many councillors are needed to provide scrutiny to the authority?
    - b) *Regulatory* - how many councillors are needed to meet the regulatory requirements of the authority?
    - c) *Partnerships* - how many councillors are required to manage partnerships between the local authority and other organisations?
  - **Community Leadership** - how the representational role of councillors in the local community is discharged and how they engage with people and conduct casework.
3. Detailed responses under these headings are provided below.

## INTRODUCTION

4. This submission is the official response approved by Fareham Borough Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) and sets out its proposals for the number of Ward Councillors required for the future delivery of effective, efficient and accountable local democracy.
5. This submission is prepared by Officers on behalf of the Council and has been reported to and reviewed by the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2021, before being recommended for approval by a meeting of the Council on 16 December 2021.
6. This submission forms part the preliminary stage of the Electoral Review process and is in keeping with guidance provided by the Commission. The Council has therefore not sought to address future ward patterns and boundaries as part of this submission.
7. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is tasked to periodically review electoral arrangements for every council area in England. The last review in Fareham took place in 2000 and this review is scheduled to be completed in time for the 2024 local elections.

## BACKGROUND – LOCAL AUTHORITY PROFILE

### *The Local Area*

8. Fareham comprises approximately 30 square miles located on the south coast of Hampshire between Portsmouth and Southampton and is particularly well connected for travel with easy access to the area's major road network which includes the M27 and M3 motorways. Fareham railway station is served by trains to Southampton and Bournemouth or the Midlands to the west, or Portsmouth and London to the east. There is also easy access to the domestic and international ferry ports and to Southampton International Airport.
9. Benefiting from its rich heritage as a market town, Fareham is well-placed for a range of leisure activities for residents and visitors. It enjoys an enviable location with the seafront to the south and open countryside to the north and there are many parks and community spaces.
10. Fareham has five distinct communities: **Fareham Town; Portchester; Titchfield; Western Wards and Hill Head and Stubbington.**
11. The natural community identities of these existing Fareham communities across the borough is shaped by the trunk of the River Hamble to the west and the coastal inlet of Paulsgrove Lake to the east. The southern border of the borough follows the coastline from the mouth of the River Hamble at Warsash through the Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve at the mouth of the River Meon and on to Salterns Park before turning inland at the southern tip of Solent Airport at Daedalus.

12. The proximity of the coastline and river course and the history of nautical life in and around the Fareham settlements is reflected in the Borough's crest which features an ancient ship of gold set sail on water representing the Town's ancient prosperity as a port and shipbuilding centre.
13. The Council manages 331 acres of land for nature conservation across 25 different sites that include two nature reserves (Holly Hill Woodland Park and Warsash Common), and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (Portchester Common).
14. There are 13 conservation areas and nearly 600 listed buildings within the Borough, each offering a little piece of history and helping to weave a picture of Fareham across the ages.

#### *Population and demographics*

15. Fareham has grown since the last electoral review and continues to grow. Our population has steadily increased over the last 30 years and that trend is expected to continue. People are living longer and we have an increasingly ageing population. For example, Fareham has experienced the largest rise in the number of residents aged 85+ in Hampshire during the last 20 years. By contrast the number of people of working age living in the Borough has reduced; particularly those aged between 25 and 39.
16. Additionally, an increase in divorce and relationship break ups also means that there are now more 'blended families' living together than ever before. Minority ethnic groups make up a small, but slowly growing, proportion of the population being ethnically diverse at 5.3% (2011 census).
17. The mid-year figure published by the Office for National Statistics in June 2020 estimates the current population of Fareham to be 116,338 (results of the 2021 Census are currently being analysed). Between 2017 and 2023 Fareham's population is projected to increase from 116,000 to 118,000.

#### *Housing*

18. Consistent with the rest of the country the make-up of Fareham's households is changing. Around a quarter of people now choose to live alone which adds demand pressure to the number of smaller homes that we need.
19. Fareham residents are, on the whole, well housed. More than 86% of homes are now owner occupied, which is much higher than the national average. By contrast the proportion of social and private rented housing is very low.
20. Despite an increase of 38% in property prices between 2013 and 2018 for an average home in Fareham, house prices remain slightly lower than the Hampshire average although they are higher than some neighbouring authorities. First-time buyers in Fareham struggle to get onto the property market as the ratio between average house prices and earnings is higher than the level for most other areas in south Hampshire.

21. The development of a new Garden Village at Welborne, made up of around 6,000 homes, will create a new distinct community whilst, at the same time, help to meet our future housing needs.

#### *Education and Employment Skills*

22. A well-educated workforce makes Fareham an attractive proposition for local businesses. The local talent pool is rich with potential employees equipped with all the skills they need to meet their needs and, whilst Fareham salaries tend to be higher than the national average, they remain well below London-weighted salaries.
23. The proportion of Fareham residents educated to college level and above is higher than both the south east region and the country as a whole. This is a boost to businesses both in Fareham and its neighbouring cities. Fareham is a hard-working Borough with the percentage of local people in work higher than both regional and national averages. By contrast the number of residents claiming out of work benefits is low.

#### *Future Challenges*

##### *Recovery from the Coronavirus Pandemic*

24. The greatest challenge to the operations of the Council has clearly been the Coronavirus pandemic and the greatest impact of the pandemic has undoubtedly been on local communities. The Council has a key role to play, as a community leader, in supporting the community back to normality.
25. Of particular note was the ability of the Council's internal workforce to be re-deployed to priority services at neutral cost in response to pandemic issues
26. The Council has developed clear overarching objectives for recovery from the pandemic, accompanied by more detailed thematic plans for recovery within each of the following areas; the Community, Council Services, Public Spaces, the Economy, Democracy, and Finance.
27. During 2021/22, the success of these plans will be reviewed, and any further work streams needed will be identified along with the financial implications. In particular, activity has been continuing in relation to Financial Recovery, Economic Recovery, workforce planning, capital projects that are still on hold and social distancing measures for democratic meetings.
28. While a gradual return of most income streams is anticipated, and as costs return to normal operational levels, the Council is not anticipating that this will necessarily be to the levels previously observed or budgeted. The Council obtains regular updates from its Treasury Advisers to update the forecasts for the general economy to feed into the Medium-Term Finance Strategy.
29. The economic uncertainty presents a significant financial challenge as demand for welfare services increases and income-generating services may decline, particularly in those areas that are more susceptible to economic fluctuations (such as building regulations applications and commercial property).

#### Environment Act 2021

30. The Environment Act is a critical piece of legislation which will affect the Council's delivery of its waste and recycling strategy. The Act contains legally binding environmental targets, and is enforced by a new, independent Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) which will hold the government and public bodies to account on their environmental obligations.

#### Future projects

31. Fareham Borough Council has an ambitious growth agenda which is reflected in some of the high-profile projects which the Council is committed to delivering including:
  - the 6,000 home [Garden Village at Welborne](#), as part of a planned sustainable new community to be delivered over the next 20 years featuring high standards of design and construction, and a strong focus on placemaking;
  - the Daedalus Vision including the provision of new commercial buildings for employment opportunities; additional community facilities; improved airport infrastructure; and expansion opportunities at the Council owned [Solent Airport at Daedalus](#);
  - a new arts and entertainment venue with a specific focus on providing a community hub on the site of the 38-year-old council owned [Ferneham Hall](#) theatre; and
  - delivering [Fareham Borough Council's Climate Change Action Plan](#) against its commitment to be [Carbon Neutral by 2030](#). The Council has focussed on the natural environment for many years with the Corporate Vision being reviewed annually, the priority to 'Protect and Enhance the Environment' has been highlighted since 2011. The Council is now committed to reduce its Carbon Footprint and has identified short, medium and long term actions

#### Summary

32. This determination to continue to develop and improve the services we offer demonstrates Fareham's pro-active approach to deliver its strategic ambition and reflects an organisation which is "punching above our weight" in ambition and delivery.
33. The Council's future intention includes continuing to deliver a high level of service to its customers whilst delivering these key projects. and would benefit from one additional councillor seat to contribute to this important programme of work, taking the total number of council seats to 32.

## CONTEXT FOR THE PROPOSAL

34. The last review of governance arrangements in Fareham took place in 2002 as part of the Electoral Review which resulted in the total number of councillors being reduced from 42 to 31. Prior to that the Council operated under a Committee System of governance. Since 2002 the Council has operated with the Leader and Cabinet Model and this arrangement was reconsidered by the Council in December 2010 (in Fareham, the Cabinet is known as the Executive).
35. At the time of the change of governance structure, it was considered and agreed that the majority of decisions should be made by the Executive as a whole body and not by individual Executive Members. This was to ensure full visibility of decision making as meetings of the Executive are always held in public whereas Individual Executive Member decisions can be made without a formal committee meeting.
36. The most significant benefit of operating with a Leader and Executive system is achieving efficiency in the speed of decision-making whilst ensuring that full scrutiny of the process is encouraged and actively pursued.
37. In considering the future governance arrangements, it is recognised that the current governance structure of the Council has served the Council well since the time of the last Electoral Review. The intention is to continue the Council's approach to good governance and effective decision-making via an Executive which encourages and welcomes scrutiny and challenge.
38. All non-Executive decisions are made by the full Council with the exception of the statutory Licensing and Planning Authority functions. A description of these work areas is provided in the following section.
39. The intention is to ensure that the full Council maximises its decision-making powers to ensure that all Members are engaged in decision-making as far as possible. This means that there are comparatively few decisions delegated to other committees or to individual Members.
40. There have been no capacity or governance issues raised by external bodies or Inspectorates. Fareham Borough Council has responsibility for conducting a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. This is done at least once a year.
41. The Audit and Governance committee is a key component of Fareham Borough Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
42. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of Directors within the authority, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment and is led by the Chief Executive's Assurance Group. This consists of all directors, which includes the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer, and is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer. The Head of Finance and Audit also attends.

43. In 2020/21 the group reviewed the following evidence:
- Analysis of the 23 parts of our governance framework against current knowledge, including reports seen by Senior Officers during the year;
  - Highlights from Head of Audit's Annual Report 2020/21;
  - Summary of reports and feedback we have received from external auditors, inspectors or other external agencies in the year;
  - Actions arising from the annual cyber security report;
  - Review of progress made on the actions included in the previous Annual Governance Statement.
44. The Council's independent external auditors for the year for core audit work were Ernst and Young. They have worked throughout the year in accordance with their code of practice.
45. The findings from the work carried out last year were summarised in their Annual Audit Letter which was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2021 and circulated to Members and the statutory officers. This report was very positive and unqualified opinions were given by the auditors. There are no outstanding recommendations to be implemented.
46. Other external inspections and audits undertaken during the year which have been used as a source of assurance included:
- Annual certification report from KMPG 2019/20;
  - Report of the Local Government and Social Ombudsman 2019/20;
  - Hampshire County Council review of our safeguarding arrangements;
  - External quality audit of Building Control Partnership by British Standards Institute;
  - Compliance work undertaken to meet the requirements of the Public Service Network;
  - Partnership coverage by other internal audit teams (PfSH, Project Integra, Eastern Solent Partnership)
  - Hampshire Insurance Forum—First hand inspection Report 2020/21
47. The conclusion from the review of effectiveness is that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.
48. The Audit and Governance Committee has reviewed the sources of assurances used this year and has scrutinised the content of the [Annual Governance Statement](#).

### Summary

49. With a small increase from 31 to 32 Councillors, the Council is confident that the Council's effectiveness will remain positive, and that the additional Councillor seat will allow for the forecast of a slight increase in population numbers and the Council's service growth programme.
50. The Council has considered the perceived impact on governance arrangements with a potential reduction in Councillor numbers and feels that this would have a detrimental effect on the overall confidence and assurances that the Council currently enjoys. With fewer Council seats it is possible that decisions would be forced to be made over which strategic ambitions should be dropped because there is not the capacity to either oversee the implementation of projects or to hold the Executive to account.
51. The proposed council size of 32 councillors will provide for a ratio of committee seats to councillors of 2.68 committee places per member which compares favourably with the previous ratio of 2.48 committee places per member prior to the two additional Scrutiny Panels being added (see paragraphs 72 and 73).

## COUNCIL SIZE

### Strategic Leadership

#### Governance Model

52. The Localism Act 2011 amended the Local Government Act 2000, allowing Councils to choose to operate under either executive arrangements, a committee system or arrangements prescribed by the Secretary of State. On 21 June 2012, the Council resolved to retain its executive arrangements using the leader and cabinet executive model.
53. Fareham Borough Council will continue to operate on the Strong Leader model with an Executive Leader of the Council appointed for a four-year term.
54. The intention is to continue with 6 Executive Members. The Council is of the opinion that to have the minimum of 2 Executive Members would not allow for proper peer challenge and debate on key strategic issues. Similarly, it would be difficult to maintain effective scrutiny and holding the Executive to account if the maximum of 10 Executive Members were appointed as this would be 32% of the total Council Membership.

#### Portfolios

55. The Executive Leader is responsible for allocating responsibility for the functions of the Executive between the members of the Executive. Fareham operates with 6 Executive Portfolios – all of which are designed to be easily recognisable as service functions for the public.
56. The Portfolios including their specific service responsibilities are as follows:

<b>Policy and Resources</b>	<b>Planning and Development</b>	<b>Leisure and Community</b>
Financial Strategy	Planning Policy	Leisure Strategy
Corporate Vision and Priorities	Flooding and Coastal Management	New Play Areas
Capital and Revenue Budgets	Local Plan	Fareham Leisure Centre
Public Consultation	Environmental Improvements	Holly Hill Leisure Centre
Public Relations	Development Design	Ferneham Hall
Council Tax	Tree Management	Westbury Manor Museum
Commercial Acquisitions	Transportation Liaison	Community Centres
National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR)	Parking Strategy	Community Volunteering
Procurement	Built Conservation	Sports Development
Estate Management	Street naming and numbering	Activities for Children and Young People
Economic Development	CIL	Community Development
Community Action Teams	Welborne	Town Centre Events
Daedalus Vision	Sustainability and Biodiversity	Leisure Card
Debt Recovery		Community Grants
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Health and Public Protection</b>	<b>Streetscene</b>
Housing Strategy	Environmental Health	Waste Collection
Homelessness	Community Safety	Vehicle Fleet
Council Housing - Regeneration	Air Quality and Pollution	Recycling
Council Housing - Construction	Enforcement - (litter, fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, unauthorised encampments)	Street nameplates
Housing Options	Contaminated Land	Green Waste
Housing Advice	Car Parks and Parking Enforcement	Cemeteries and Crematorium
Housing Benefits	Dog Control	Fareham in Bloom
Housing Allocations	Pest Control	Street Cleaning
Tenancy and Leaseholder Management	Emergency Planning	Public Conveniences
Housing Grants and Home Improvements	Health and Safety	Bus Shelters and Benches
Maintenance of Council Housing Stock	Equalities	Play Areas - Maintenance
Local Land Charges	ICT and Personnel	Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds Maintenance
Liaison with Social Housing Providers	Public Health	Sports Pavilions, Pitches, Greens and Courts
Housing Estate Management	Performance Management (including Systems Thinking)	Countryside Rangers
	Building Control Partnership	Henry Cort Sculpture Park - Maintenance
		Allotments

57. In recognition of the strength and significance of the scrutiny function, the political opposition Members are encouraged to appoint a spokesman for each portfolio, as listed above.
58. Fareham places a strong emphasis on the portfolio functions and these headings provide a strategic focus which is reflected in the Council's 6 corporate priorities:
1. Providing Housing Choices
  2. Protect and Enhance the Environment
  3. Strong, Safe, Inclusive and Healthy Communities
  4. Maintain and Extend Prosperity
  5. Leisure Opportunities for Health and Fun
  6. Dynamic, Prudent and Progressive Council
59. The Corporate Strategy for Fareham Borough Council sets out our priorities for the next five years and shows how we will achieve our vision that Fareham will remain a prosperous, safe and attractive place to live and work. Each of the 6 Corporate Priorities are underpinned by service-led projects and deliverable milestones which provide the focus for the Council's resources.

#### Delegated Responsibilities

60. In keeping with the Council's aim to ensure that most decision-making is made in the public domain with full transparency and visibility, there are very few delegations to Individual Executive Members. As of June 2021, there are only 10 [specific delegations contained within the Constitution for Individual Executive Members](#).
61. Since the introduction of Scrutiny Panels in October 2018, Individual Executive Member decisions are just 17% of the total number of formal Executive decisions (32 / 184).

Total number of individual Executive Member Decisions taken = 32

Leisure & Community x 17  
Planning & Development x 2  
Streetscene x 1  
Health & Public Protection x 2  
Housing x 3  
Policy & Resources x 5  
Executive Leader x 2

62. The [Scheme of Delegation to Officers](#) is contained within the Council's Constitution and is reviewed by the Monitoring Officer annually and any amendments considered by the Audit & Governance Committee and approved by Council.
63. Since the introduction of Scrutiny Panels in October 2018, formal Officer delegated decisions have numbered just 5 decisions.

64. All formal decisions made by Officers are subject to the full transparency of formal decision making and is subject to scrutiny and the Council's Call-In procedures.

#### Summary

65. It is expected that the current split of formal decision making will continue in the future with the majority of decisions being taken by the Executive as a committee rather than being delegated to individuals.
66. It is the opinion of the Council therefore that it would be inappropriate to reduce the Council size as this would place more burden on Executive Members as well as Scrutiny Panel Members.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

### Internal Scrutiny

67. The Local Government Act 2000 requires that where a Council has adopted an Executive model of governance it must make arrangements that "must include provision for the appointment by the authority of one or more [scrutiny] committees of the authority.
68. The Council is required by its Constitutional Standing Order 1.6 to appoint such committee or committees to undertake the function of overview and scrutiny. Standing Order 1.6.3 similarly requires the Council to determine the number of members and standing deputies to be appointed.
69. The Council carried out a Vanguard Systems Thinking Intervention in Committee Services in 2018, it was subsequently resolved at the meeting of the Council held on 11 October 2018 that the Scrutiny Board and the 5 Policy Development and Review Panels be disbanded and in their place, 6 Scrutiny Panels be created to undertake the scrutiny function of the Executive Portfolios and to assist the Council and Executive in delivering the corporate priorities.
70. The Council uses a Scrutiny Panel for each of its six portfolio areas. Each Panel is made up of seven non-executive councillors and reflects the political balance of the elected members. The Panels normally meet a minimum of four times a year with extra meetings called when needed.
71. Each Scrutiny Panel has a Priority Plan which identifies the objectives from the Corporate Strategy and areas of the executive function that require their scrutiny; for example, budget setting fall under the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel. Part of the panels' focus is to be engaged in pre-scrutiny work and to have an input in the decision-making process by making recommendations to the Executive. In some cases, specific member working groups are in place to assist in the development of service visions and strategies.
72. In acknowledgment of the work being undertaken by the Council around climate change, a new Climate Change Scrutiny Panel has recently been created. This Scrutiny Panel will consider the progress of the [Climate Change Action Plan](#) in the delivery of the service and improvement actions identified in the [Council's Corporate Priorities and Corporate Vision](#).

73. There has also been the creation of the Daedalus Scrutiny Panel. Since our acquisition of Daedalus airfield in 2015, the Council has been working on the delivery of the Daedalus Vision and Outline Strategy. Developed in 2015 and updated in 2018, the Strategy is comprehensive and extends across the whole 369-acre site, incorporating not only the airport itself but also unlocking the potential of the airfield's land and infrastructure assets for new commercial development, providing clusters for aviation and non-aviation employment and skills, training and innovation activity areas alongside our partners in the Solent Enterprise Zone. While many of the Strategy objectives have been achieved at Daedalus, there is much still to do on this dynamic strategic site with its wide-ranging opportunities and challenges.
74. A Member Working Group has been in place for some time and has been invaluable in steering the Council's direction at Daedalus. However, the strategic importance of the site to the local economy, and the ongoing commitment that is required by the Council to continue to lead on its development, makes it an excellent candidate for ongoing formal scrutiny.
75. Since the introduction of Scrutiny Panels on 11 October 2018, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of formal Executive decisions made following pre-scrutiny, as the following statistics show:

Executive Decisions made between November 2018 and November 2021:

- Total number of Executive decisions made without pre-scrutiny = 105
  - Total number of Executive decisions which have been via pre-scrutiny = 47
    - Leisure & Community x 8
    - Planning & Development x 7
    - Streetscene x 2
    - Health & Public Protection x 2
    - Housing x 7
    - Policy & Resources x 19
    - Climate Change x 1
    - Daedalus x 1
76. 45% of decisions have been made by the Executive following pre-scrutiny work carried out by the relevant portfolio Scrutiny Panel. This compares favourably to the period before Scrutiny Panels were introduced where out of a total of 297 items discussed by the Policy Development and Review Panels, only 5.7% (17) resulted in recommendations being made to the Executive for decision.
77. There had been an evident decline in the number of items being recommended to the Executive year by year:
- 2014/15 – 102 items, 11 recommendations (10.7%);
  - 2015/16 – 91 items, 4 recommendations (4.3%);
  - 2016/17 – 104 items, 2 recommendations (1.9%) 14.
- Of these, just four items were in relation to policy decisions, all of which were from the Planning & Development Panel.

78. The overview and scrutiny process must allow for call-in and there have been two such call-in notices received since October 2018:
- [Policy and Resources 30 July 2020](#) to consider the Officer Delegated Decision regarding the legal agreement concerning Nitrate Mitigation; and
  - [Health and Public Protection 18 August 2021](#) to reconsider the Individual Executive Member decision concerning off-street Parking Places Order)
79. As part of the [report to Council on the review of Policy Development and Review Panels and Scrutiny Board meetings](#), it was agreed that each Scrutiny Panel be scheduled to meet 4 times per municipal year, with additional meetings created by the Scrutiny Panel if necessary.
80. Since that report was approved, the work of the Scrutiny Panels has benefitted from this additional flexibility to respond to the work of the Council:
- Total number of additional Scrutiny Panels held (additional to those already on agreed Schedule & not including meetings which are moved) = 12
    - Leisure & Community x 5
    - Planning & Development x 4
    - Streetscene x 0
    - Health & Public Protection x 1 (call-in)
    - Housing x 1
    - Policy & Resources x 0
    - Daedalus x 1
    - Climate Change x 0

#### Summary

81. The Council is satisfied that it has a decision making and scrutiny structure which is fit for purpose and highly effective. Of particular importance is that the composition of the Scrutiny Panels reflects the political balance of the Council and therefore includes cross party representation when holding the Executive to account.
82. It is the Council's view that a Council size of 32 would strengthen the internal scrutiny process by providing an additional seat. However, to increase the Council size to 34 or 36 may dilute the scrutiny process and risk scrutiny members not having enough content to focus on.

## STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

### Planning

83. The Planning Committee is scheduled to meet monthly to determine applications not determined under delegated powers by Officers. In a typical year the Council receives between 1,300 and 1,400 planning (and related) applications. In the last

12 months this figure has been closer to 2,000 planning or related applications.

84. Members of the Council's Planning Committee typically deal with the most significant and/ or controversial development proposals within the Borough. The applications can be significant because of their scale or because of the positive contributions they make towards meeting the Council's Corporate Strategy. Controversial applications are those which have resulted in large numbers of representations to the Council from residents and other interested parties.
85. Analysis of Planning Committee items – November 2020 – October 2021
  - 55 Planning applications considered by Planning Committee
  - 48 Planning applications decided in accordance with recommendation
  - 7 Planning applications decided contrary to Officers' recommendation  
  - 47 Planning applications were reported to the Committee as at least 5 representations had been received contrary to the Officers' recommendation
  - 4 Planning applications reported as they were submitted by FBC Officers
  - 2 Planning applications called onto the Committee by Members
  - 2 Planning applications reported as Officers considered them significant
86. In addition to planning applications, Members of the Planning Committee consider a report at every meeting which sets out details of all planning appeals involving this Council along with details of all planning appeal decisions received since the previous Committee meeting. Members are able to ask Officers questions on any aspect of any current or recently decided appeal.
87. Changes to the way in which the Council delivers elements of its Development Management function (for example charging for pre-application planning advice or amendments to the Officers' Scheme of Delegation), are matters for decision and approval by the Council's Executive. The Planning Committee is invited to make comments to the Executive on such proposals, in advance of formal changes being approved by the Executive.
88. The Planning Committee also considers reports on the Council's 5-year housing land supply position, along with details of the cost to the Council of delivering the Council's Development Management function. The Development Management function includes providing pre-application planning advice, determining planning applications, defending planning appeals and ensuring planning compliance.
89. Training is provided to new Members of the Planning Committee, with ongoing training to the whole of the Planning Committee on bespoke topics throughout the municipal year as appropriate.
90. Members of the Planning Committee have commented that as a proportion of their total time spent on Council business, there is a significant amount of time

spent on Development Management work. This time can be split between preparing for committee by reading and researching planning applications including all background papers and letters of representation, and reading and understanding the [draft Local Plan](#) as it progresses through the [independent examination process](#).

#### Licensing

91. The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee has determined that a Licensing Panel with rotating membership be appointed to hear and determine various applications under the Licensing Act 2003, applications to drive or operate hackney carriage or private hire vehicles and applications under the Gambling Act 2005. Under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, such a Panel may only comprise three Members.
92. Those functions which cannot be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation to Officers are undertaken by a sub-committee of the Licensing & regulatory Affairs Committee (known as a Licensing Panel). Membership of the Licensing Panel is established on a rota basis, enabling all members of the Committee to be involved with hearings which builds capacity and expertise among members. In order to provide a level of consistency in the decision-making, the Chairman of the Licensing & Regulatory Affairs Committee presides at meetings of the Panel, with the Vice-Chairman deputising as occasion requires.
93. All Members are required to undergo regular training in order to understand their Licensing responsibilities under the relevant Acts and to be fully conversant with Licensing objectives. This training is held annually and takes approximately 2 hours to complete. Members are also required to prepare for a hearing by ensuring they have read the agenda papers for the hearing and have formulated any questions and points for clarification to enable them to reach a decision. This will typically involve a time commitment of approximately 1 hour.
94. Over the last 4 municipal years, the Council has received, on average, 524 licensing applications per year. The average number of applications determined by the Licensing Panel over the same period was 4.
95. This means that for every 131 licences applied for, 1 is determined by the Licensing Panel. The average length of time taken for the Licensing Panel to determine an application was 1 hour 25 minutes. Taking this into account, along with preparation time for the meeting, the average time commitment for a member of the Licensing Panel to sit at a hearing could be considered to be approximately 2 hours 25 minutes plus the annual training time commitment of 2 hours.

#### Other Regulatory Bodies

96. The Council has an Audit and Governance Committee which undertakes the functions of an Audit Committee in accordance with the CIPFA guidance. It reports directly to the Full Council. It usually meets four times a year and receives reports covering the range of governance issues set out in its terms of reference. In particular it receives the Head of Audit's Annual Report and the External Auditor's Audit Results Report. Due to the Covid restrictions in 2020/21 the

Committee only met three times and all meetings were held virtually using video conferencing. However, two of the meetings were extended to catch up on items scheduled for the year.

#### External Partnerships

97. The Council delivers some services by entering into partnership agreements. A Corporate List of significant partnerships is maintained and partnerships are periodically assessed for their significance in terms of the results they seek to deliver, their profile/reputation and resources involved.
98. The Council recognised fourteen partnerships of which ten were deemed significant to the Council in 2020/21. The Council's definition of a significant partnership is a partnership that:
  - a) is a legal requirement or based on statutory guidance; or
  - b) it commissions or delivers activities at a borough wide or local level that contribute substantially towards the Corporate Strategy 2017-2023 outcomes; and
  - c) there is a significant risk to the Council if there is under-performance in this area.
99. Lead officers are assigned to each partnership. They are responsible for the day-to-day liaison and for providing the Chief Executive's Management Team with details of any significant changes to the circumstances / membership of the partnership.
100. An annual report on partnerships is collated and reviewed by the Chief Executive's Management Team each year to confirm the significance of the partnerships, review any potential governance issues and review how each is performing. As a result of the 2020/21 report three partnerships were removed from the list where they were no longer considered to be operating as a partnership. In 2021/22 the CCTV partnership will also be coming to an end.
101. Additional assurance arrangements were put in place during 2020/21 in the form of an annual partnership assurance report to the Audit and Governance Committee.
102. Senior Officers and Members sit on the board of 8 of the Council's significant partnerships and take an active part in discussions and decision making. In the majority of cases, Executive Members are appointed by the Executive to represent the Council on these partnership boards.
103. The Council appoints Members to a number of Outside Bodies. These organisations are independent from the council but have an impact on its service areas.
104. There are 56 different associations, management committees, and boards which request a representative from the Council be appointed to their organisation. 28

out of the 31 Councillors are currently appointed as either a representative, a deputy or a trustee. 40% of the total appointments are carried out by Executive Portfolio holders.

105. The frequency of Outside Body meetings is varied as these are set by the external organisations with Members invited to attend as necessary. It is therefore difficult to assess the workload as it varies between the different organisations and is dependent on the role being carried out. For example, being appointed as a trustee is likely to require a higher time input from the individual Members. There are 18 trustee appointments in total, 3 of which are appointed to Executive Portfolio holders.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### Community Leadership

106. Fareham Borough Council is a shire district operating alongside Hampshire County Council in a two tier system of local government. Six of the seven County Council division seats are currently held by “twin hatted” Fareham Borough Councillors and this results in very strong representational awareness of community issues for all local government functions.

107. The [duties and responsibilities of all elected members is set out in the Constitution](#) where a key expectation of all elected members is:

- a) to meet regularly with constituents and other interested parties in order to seek and listen to their views on issues to be considered by or proposed to the Council;
- b) to act as the liaison point between the local community and Council, in order to ensure that the former's views and needs are taken into account when strategy, policy and budget issues are considered by the Council
- c) to ensure that the local communities' views are properly expressed and argued when specific decisions affecting them are considered by Council.
- d) to use local knowledge and information to assist in the determination of policy proposals and in decision making
- e) to act as a disseminator of information from the Council to constituents and other interested parties.

Add results from Member questionnaire – to be tabled

Casework

## Summary

108. The workload of elected members has been a key feature and consideration, not least because of the emergence of social media and the multitude of platforms that residents of the Borough and businesses expect to be able to communicate through. This area constantly changes and places additional pressure on elected members. In context, when the last ward boundary etc review was undertaken, mobile phones, laptops etc were in their infancy and social media platforms far less established.
109. In the opinion of the recently consulted Licensing & Regulatory Affairs Committee two member wards are successful because they enable focus and achievement through streamlined teams.
110. The Committee also commented that to return to three member wards (as was in place prior to the 2002 electoral review) would feel “top heavy” in the sense that ward members would be tripping over each other to deal with casework and community issues.
111. The [minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee](#) provides a brief summary of the discussion held on the Council Size Submission.

## SUBMISSION CONCLUSION

112. In developing our council size submission, we have considered how the working approach and culture of the council has evolved over the past two decades. We have also considered the changes throughout the Borough since the last review in 2000 and more importantly, our growing electorate.
113. We have reviewed how the council currently operates in governance terms; reflected on what we have in place and also been cognisant that we frequently review our governance arrangements and implement changes where we believe they are required (both in democratic terms and to be ‘business like’ in our approach).
114. In considering alternative council size options, the Council is satisfied that an increase of one Councillor is an appropriate adjustment for the following reasons:
- (a) to maintain an excellent track record of strong strategic direction for the Borough and delivering successful outcomes in accordance with the corporate strategy aims and ambitions;
  - (b) to provide stability in effective decision making and to strengthen the scrutiny process by increasing the number of non-Executive Councillors by one;
  - (c) to meet the Local Government Boundary Commission’s advice to have an even number of Councillors where the Local Authority is elected by halves (i.e. Local Elections occur every other year);

- (d) reflecting on an even number of Councillors, Fareham Borough Council has considered the option to lower the number of Councillors to 30 but is concerned that with a growing population and development plans approved to deliver 6,000 new properties as a new Garden Village; there must be enough capacity built in for the governance of the Council to cope with additional demand over the coming decade.

115. A reduction in the number of elected members is not recommended. If this were to be imposed it would place even greater pressure on elected members, with councillors required to attend more council meetings (assuming the number of seats on committees and outside bodies remained at its current levels). With the likely reduction in the level of service provided to our customers this would result in an increase in complaints and unhappy citizens.