

Hartlepool Borough Council

Electoral Review of Hartlepool Borough Council

Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Council Size from the Mayor of Hartlepool Borough Council



Executive Summary

This submission proposes reducing the size of the council from 47 members to between 30 and 33 members. My preference being for 32 members which could be achieved through creating 10 wards each with three members and two single member wards, which may likely be Greatham and Elwick.

The above proposal will require ward boundary changes, however at this consultation stage of the Electoral Review this submission is only proposing the reduction in council size.

The national average number of electors per councillor is 2860 and Hartlepool currently has approximately 1,477 per councillor (though this varies). A council size of 32 would provide an average councillor:elector ratio of 1: 2227 which still provides more electoral representation than the UK average and provides for necessary considerations to ensure effective representation and a reflection of community identity.

This reduced council size would be complimented by a reduction in the number of council meetings, bodies, and committees. This would allow for councillors to be more efficient and would reduce the burden of bureaucracy that is caused by excessive meetings, committees, and bodies. It would also provide greater opportunity for limited resources to be utilised to represent the views of the community.

Proposals for the continued effective operation of the authority can be developed to reflect how a reduced number of councillors will operate in line with both the statutory and representational aspects of local democracy.

The reduction in council size was previously proposed in the last Electoral Review and gained wide support. At the time, it was stated that the reduction in council size was not suitable due to the recent change to a Mayoral system.

In 2010 I wish to resubmit the proposal for a reduction in council size and feel that the Mayoral and Executive system in place in Hartlepool is well established and can be run more effectively with a reduction in council size.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The council was informed by The Local Government Boundary Commission for England that an Electoral Review of Hartlepool Borough Council would be undertaken in July 2010. The review was officially started on the 20th July 2010 with a consultation on council size. All submissions for proposed council size are required to be submitted by the 30th August 2010.
- 1.2 This submission forms my response to the consultation; a separate response from the full council has also been submitted.
- 1.3 Hartlepool Borough Council continues to achieve high standards and has been awarded either an “Excellent” or 4 star status in each of the Comprehensive Performance Assessments, last year the council received a 3 out of 4 rating in the Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- 1.4 The council is currently comprised of 47 councillors across the 17 wards of Hartlepool. There are two wards, Elwick and Greatham, which are each represented by one member. The remaining 15 wards all have three members representing them.
- 1.5 All members, including myself, are elected for a four year term. Councillor elections are done by thirds, where each year a third of the council is up for election.
- 1.5 Following the Local Government Act 2000, the council has been operating executive arrangements based on a directly elected Mayor and Cabinet Model since 2002. I became the first directly elected Mayor of Hartlepool in 2002 and I am now in my third term of office.
- 1.6 The Cabinet is comprised of seven councillors and myself and collectively they make up the Executive. Each member of the Executive is a portfolio holder and is responsible for one of the following areas:
 - Community Safety and Housing (Mayor’s Portfolio)
 - Transport and Neighbourhoods
 - Culture, Leisure and Tourism
 - Children’s Services
 - Adult and Public Health Services
 - Regeneration and Economic Development
 - Finance and Procurement
 - Performance

2 Key Considerations of the Electoral Review

2.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England provides guidance on the key elements of an electoral review. The key factors for consideration in an electoral review are as follows:

- Council Size
- Electoral Representation
- Community Identity
- Effective and Convenient Local Government
- Number of Councillors in each ward or division

2.2 This submission will consider each of the above factors to support the proposal to reduce the council size from 47 councillors to 32.

2. Background

2.1 In 2001 a review of Hartlepool's electoral arrangements was conducted. The review was started by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) however, following the transfer of the LGCE's functions to The Electoral Commission the review was completed in 2003 by The Boundary Committee for England (BCFE).

2.2 The findings from the report concluded that the electoral arrangements in Hartlepool provided an unequal representation of electors. In nine of the 17 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varied by more than 10% from the average for the borough and two wards varied by more than 20%. It was forecast that by 2006 this situation was expected to continue, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in eight wards and by more than 20% in two wards. The final recommendations from the 2003 report were:

- Hartlepool Borough Council should have 47 councillors, as at present;
- there should be 17 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified and two wards should retain their existing boundaries.

3.3 Following the report the above recommendations were implemented. It was noted that these changes would ensure that in 15 of the proposed 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the borough average. It was forecast that this level of electoral equality would marginally deteriorate in three wards, Elwick, Greatham, and Seaton which are expected to vary by more than 10% from the average for the borough in 2006.

3.4 It became clear to me very soon after my initial election as Mayor in 2002 that the then councillors had not embraced the new approach to council governance introduced by the Local Government Act 2000. The majority of them were still trying to operate through council and

committees as though the executive function had not been created. As a consequence it was apparent to me that many meetings were being held but to no apparent affect.

- 3.5 It was therefore proposed by myself and Cabinet for a reduction in council size from 47 to 32 councillors. This proposal took into consideration that the new management structure of the Mayor and Cabinet could allow the council to operate with a significantly smaller number of members. It was suggested that the three member wards in the non parish, urban part of the borough should be reduced to two member wards. Within the rural parish wards it was proposed that Elwick and Greatham were combined to form a two member ward.
- 3.6 This previous proposal to reduce council size was well supported with 98 submissions supporting the proposal to reduce the number of members from 47 to 32. A further 34 submissions were received proposing for a general reduction in council size, this included submissions from two councillors. Of these 132 submissions received approximately 50 of these all argued that a reduction in the council size would aid the town financially.
- 3.7 Furthermore, the proposal for a reduction in council size also gained more than 500 responses of support from the public.
- 3.8 The final recommendation in 2003 of retaining the existing 47 councillors was warranted due to the new Mayoral system having just come into position. It was deemed that the Mayoral system would have significant implications for how the council could be run in the future but at the time of the review these implications were not known. Therefore it was stated that retaining the existing council size for the current period would be acceptable.
- 3.9 My current submission for the 2010 review revisits the previous proposal for a reduction in the size of the council.

4 Council Management Structure

- 4.1 This past year has seen a drastic reorganisation of the Council's management structure.
- 4.2 The executive in conjunction with the Chief Executive have reduced the number of council departments from five to three and have reduced the number of chief officers by a third from 31 to 21.
- 4.3 The three departments now comprise of:
- Chief Executive's
 - Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
 - Children and Adults Services

- 4.4 This has been a reduction in the council management structure of a third, however the processes and systems are in place and are now able to deal with this smaller management structure without impacting on service delivery.
- 4.5 A similar reduction of councillors as chief officers will not affect the ability of councillors to represent their wards and constituents, nor will it compromise service delivery.

5 Political Arrangements

- 5.1 I have been the directly elected Mayor of Hartlepool Borough Council since 2002. Therefore, this Mayoral and Cabinet system has been running for the last eight years, which means that the way the council operates under the system is now well established and understood.
- 5.2 The move towards a Mayoral system was an essential component of the drive for modernisation of local authorities and was intended to provide efficiency, transparency, and accountability that were considered lacking in the previous committee system.

5.1 The Role of the Executive

- 5.1.1 Prior to 2001 the democratic process was governed through full council and a series of committees with decision making powers. The majority of these decisions are now undertaken by full Cabinet and a series of portfolio holder meetings, all of which have decision making powers. Thus the vast majority of decisions that would have been taken by all 48 councillors are now taken by myself and my seven executive portfolio holders.
- 5.1.2 The Executive (comprised of myself and my Cabinet) has overall responsibility for all functions other than those specifically stated as “non-executive”. In addition to this collective responsibility each portfolio holder also has responsibility for decisions in regards to the service areas and functions that fall within their portfolio, thereby increasing the individual accountability and responsibility of each portfolio holder.
- 5.1.3 The Local Government Act 2000 which saw the introduction of various Executive systems in local authorities was underpinned by the White Paper “Modern Local Government: in touch with the people”. The role of the executive was described as:

“The executive role would be to propose the policy framework and implement policies within the agreed framework. The role of backbench councillors would be to represent their constituents, share in the policy and budget decisions of the full council, suggest policy improvements, and scrutinise the executive's policy proposals and their implementation.”

- 5.1.4 The role of the executive has been created to undertake much of the responsibility of full council and the previous committee system. As previously discussed above with the introduction of this Mayor and Cabinet model in Hartlepool many decisions that would have previously been made at full council are now made within the executive. This has greatly reduced the volume of decisions that need to be made by non-executive councillors.
- 5.1.5 There is a high level of personal responsibility placed on each portfolio holder and there is a substantial amount of time and energy required. Now that decisions are made within full cabinet and across a series of portfolio holder meetings it also serves to allow other councillors and members of the public to hold someone to account for the decisions made, thereby increasing transparency and accountability in decision making within the council.
- 5.1.6 Not all decisions can be made by portfolio holders or the executive. Decisions which are stated as “non-executive” are put to full council or the relevant committees to be made, such as the Planning and Licensing Committees. Non-executive councillors play an important role within the council however the introduction of the Mayor and Cabinet model has reduced the responsibility of non-executive councillors.

5.2 The Role of the Mayor

- 5.2.1 As the Mayor I form part of the Executive alongside my chosen Cabinet members. In addition to my portfolio (Community Safety and Housing) I am also responsible for the following:
- to be the principle public spokesperson for the council,
 - to give overall policy direction to the Council,
 - to appoint the Executive and Deputy Mayor,
 - to decide on the scheme of delegation for Executive functions,
 - to chair meetings of the Executive,
 - to represent the local authority on such external bodies as the Mayor and/or the Council decides
 - to attend civic and ceremonial functions,
 - if the Cabinet is inquorate, it will be open to the Mayor to make any decision having regard to the views expressed by the Members of the Cabinet present

5.3 The Role of Council and Non-Executive Councillors

5.3.1 It is vital that there is the optimum number of members to ensure that local people are properly represented yet non-executive functions are carried out as efficiently and effectively as possible.

5.3.2 The number of decisions that must be taken to full council has reduced with the advent of the Mayor and Cabinet system. However there are roles for councillors within the democratic structures other than the executive roles.

5.3.3 These democratic roles within the council include:

- Overview and Scrutiny function. It is prohibited by law for executive members to be on any of the committees. This is to ensure that a transparent inspection can be conducted without bias and the Executive can be held to account for the decisions that are made.
- Participating in Full Council which sets the broad policy and budgetary framework.
- Involvement in non-executive decision making through membership on the Standard's Committee or General Purpose Committee (and a Staffing and Appeals sub committee) or on one or more of the Council's Regulatory Committees, for instance the Licensing or Planning Committees.
- The Council also has in place a Constitution Committee (and an underpinning working group), and Contract Scrutiny Committee

5.3.4 In total, members sit on approximately 35 committees or bodies within the council, excluding any executive committees. Attached as Appendix 1 to this report are the attendance figures for all councillors at those forums and committees enshrined in the constitution.

5.3.5 In addition to the above roles, members also represent the council on approximately 82 outside bodies or organisations. Around two thirds of these outside bodies are made in order to benefit the effectiveness of the council and the remaining third being to strengthen the voice of the organisation that the member then represents. Please see Appendix 1 for a list of these outside bodies.

5.3.6 There are a large number of various bodies that members may be involved with. However, by far the most important role of a councillor is that of representational and leadership role in their local community.

5.4 Council Bodies and Committees at Present

5.4.1 As mentioned above there are currently approximately 35 non-executive bodies or committees within the council. This increases to 45 committees or bodies when executive functions are incorporated.

- 5.4.2 The estimated number of individual attendances by councillors per annum is currently 3225. This includes 480 attendances at full council and 270 attendances for members of the executive. This equates to 2955 non-executive councillor attendances per annum. Although actual attendance for the last year was only 1976. Please see Appendix 1 for a full breakdown of member attendance.
- 5.4.3 Irrespective of the current review on council size, there is an urgent need to review the number of council meetings, bodies, and committees that are currently active due to the high demand on councillors' time. There is also a significant amount of officer time linked with these meetings as it requires officers to organise meetings and attendances, write and distribute reports, take minutes and so forth.
- 5.4.4 I have drafted an options paper for discussion with my portfolio holder for Performance in order that we can put proposals to council. As stated previously having reduced the council management structure by a third I feel it is entirely appropriate that councillor numbers are also reduced by a third. The main principle that I am working to is to avoid any impact on service delivery. Clearly this then involved reviewing the number of non-executive committees, their membership, and the number of meetings per year.
- 5.4.5 As stated in the White Paper Modern Local Government: in touch with people, councillors are "over burdened, often unproductively, by committee meetings which focus on details rather than concentrating on essentials."
- 5.4.6 Interestingly, when the number of actual councillor attendances are recorded for the previous year the number is significantly less with only 2213 attendances rather than the proposed 3225 attendances. If the level of committee and meeting attendance is further examined, it can be seen attendance for executive functions was 88%. However for non-executive functions out of the 2955 meetings only 1976 were attended, this places non-executive attendance at 67%. Therefore approximately one third of all non-executive committees are not being attended. Please see Appendix 1 for exact attendance figures.
- 5.4.7 This would suggest that meetings and committees where there are actual decision making and accountability are far better attended than others. This may imply that councillors only give low priority or relevance to the high number of non-decision making committees and meetings.
- 5.4.8 Reducing the number of council meetings, bodies, and committees may also act to increase accountability as it provides a simpler decision making structure by which responsible individuals or bodies can be identified. A consequence of the high number of non-decision making bodies within the council is there is little or no responsibility attached to

such bodies. This often makes these bodies and committees difficult to regulate. In the instance that informal decisions are made individuals or groups are unlikely to be held to account for any such decisions.

5.4.9 In addition, any planned reduction in council meetings, bodies, and committees will aim to ensure that councillors are not burdened by bureaucracy and are therefore able to better attend to their duties as councillors and represent their own constituents.

5.4.10 Further the real value of bodies such as Constitution Committee (with an underpinning working group) in adding value to the decision making and democratic management of the authority is questionable.

5.5 Proposed Council Bodies and Committees

5.5.1 I propose to reduce the number of council committees and meetings. For a full list of my proposed changes to council committees please see Appendix 2.

5.5.2 One key area for my proposal to reduce committees is the in the Overview and Scrutiny function. There are currently six Scrutiny Forums, and membership of these forums often overlaps. Within these six forums 15 investigations were conducted in 2009/10. I propose reducing the number of Scrutiny Forums from six to three.

Figure 1- Proposed Scrutiny Forums

Body	Number of Members	Number of Meetings	New Proposed Number of Individual Attendances by Members
Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee	7	4	28
Child and Adult's Services Scrutiny Forum	9	11	99
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Forum	9	11	99
Total		26	226

5.5.3 I propose restructuring the Scrutiny Forums to reflect the new departmental structure of the council. On average all the previous Scrutiny Forums meet 11 times a year so I'm proposing to keep the same number of members per committee and the same average number of meetings.

5.5.4 Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee is made up of the chair of the committee appointed by council and the chairs and vice chairs of the

Scrutiny Forums plus one other member from each of the forums. The reduction in the number of Scrutiny Forums automatically reduces the number of councillors on the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. The core role of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee is to coordinate and in order to do so I believe that they only need to meet twice a year for that purpose. Once to review performance of the previous year, and to set the work programme for the coming year, and another to review performance during the course of the year. As the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee will also be responsible for the “back office” functions of the council I consider it appropriate that two further meetings a year are held for those issues.

- 5.5.5 Reducing the number of Scrutiny Forums to three will reduce the number of meetings per annum from 78 to 26. This in turn will reduce the number of projected attendances by individual councillors from 856 to 226.
- 5.5.6 The quality of council functions does not need to be diminished by these proposed reductions. Hertfordshire County Council (a county of one million people) has recently successfully reduced its Scrutiny Committees from six to two and has changed the way Scrutiny operates within their authority. Despite only having two Scrutiny Committees they still undertake 25 investigations a year. They have also reduced the length of reports and frequency of meetings to encourage more members to become involved. The meetings although less frequent are held in a “café style” lasting for a day which has positively increased engagement from members. This streamlined approach has reduced time spent by members and officers on reports and in meetings but has had positive results for the Scrutiny Function. In fact Hertfordshire County Council received the Local Government Association sponsored award for overall impact at the Centre for Public Scrutiny’s (CfPS) recent scrutiny awards. For more details on the Hertfordshire County Council example please see Appendix 3.
- 5.5.7 The above example of Hertfordshire County Council demonstrates how the Scrutiny function can be streamlined to produce efficient and effective results. As previously described reducing the number of Scrutiny Forums to three reflects the management structure of the council and will be more efficient and effective. I believe that this example from Hertfordshire clearly shows that this new structure will easily be capable of carrying out the 15 investigations a year that we currently undertake.
- 5.5.8 We are one of only two authorities in the world (or so I am lead to believe) that has a Contract Scrutiny Committee. It is not necessary and does not perform any useful function I therefore propose that this committee is removed altogether and we revert back to the constitutional requirements for three members to be present when contracts are opened.

Figure 2- Proposed Contract Scrutiny Committee

Body	Number of Members	Number of Meetings	New Proposed Number of Individual Attendances by Members
Contract Scrutiny Committee	3	24	72

5.5.9 The Constitution Committee as the name suggests keeps our Constitution under review. The manner in which it works is inefficient and works to little effect. In my view it needs only meet once a year prior to the annual general meeting to ensure that the Constitution remains fit for purpose. The Committee is supported by a Constitution Working Group, made up of the same members. It serves little useful purpose therefore I would propose it be disbanded.

Figure 3- Proposed Constitution Committee

Body	Number of Members	Number of Meetings	New Proposed Number of Individual Attendances by Members
Constitution Committee	11	1	11
Constitution Working Group	0	0	0

5.5.10 For the three Neighbourhood Consultative Forums and the three Police and Community Safety Forums all members are represented on both types of forum. Therefore a reduction in the number of councillors will automatically reduce the number of members on those forums. Please note that depending on the final configuration of councillors and ward boundaries the distribution of members may change across the forums.

Figure 4- Proposed Neighbourhood Consultative Forums and Proposed Police and Community Safety Consultative Forums

Body	Number of Members	Number of Meetings	New Proposed Number of Individual Attendances by Members
North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	10	6	60
Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	12	6	72
South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	10	6	60
North Police and Community Safety Consultative Forums	10	4	40
Central Police and Community Safety Consultative Forums	12	4	48
South Police and Community Safety Consultative Forums	10	4	40
Total		30	320

5.5.11 For 2009/10 Planning Committee consisted of 16 members with a quorum for meetings of 7 members. They have struggled to achieve the quorum on a number of occasions and therefore have now increased the number of members to 18, but left the quorum the same. In my view this is not an adequate reason to have such a high number of members on a committee, with the quorum now being only 39% of the membership. I proposed that the membership be reduced to 11, thus providing a more reasonable quorum of 64% of membership. 11 members should be perfectly capable of carrying out the necessary workload, and you will see from the actual attendances shown in Appendix 1 that this is the average number of attendances per meeting in any event. I see no reason why Licensing would require a greater number of members than Planning Committee therefore I propose the numbers on Licensing Committee also be set at 11.

Figure 5- Proposed Planning and Licensing Committees

Body	Number of Members	Number of Meetings	New Proposed Number of Individual Attendances by Members
Planning Committee	11	13	143
Licensing Committee	11	4	44

5.5.12 Taking into account all of the above proposals this would equate to a reduction of councillor attendances to 1,915. This is a little less than the 2,213 attendances for the past year, but this therefore makes more time available for councillors' representative work.

5.5.13 This reduction in council bodies and committees will compliment a smaller council size. The reduction in council committees will allow for a reduced number of members to efficiently and effectively operate without adding to their current workload.

6 Electoral Representation

6.1 The December 2009 electoral register shows that within Hartlepool 41% of wards have electorate variances of more than 10% from the average. Please see Figure 6 for the current and future electorate and variances.

6.2 With no changes to the current electoral arrangements this variance is set only to increase.

6.3 There are approximately 69,416 electors within the Borough of Hartlepool. With the current 47 councillors this equates to 1,477 electorates per councillor. The UK average for councillor:elector ratio is 2,860 electorates per councillor. Even with the forecast 2016 electorate increases the councillor:elector ratio is still significantly lower than the UK average with 1,516 electorates per councillor.

6.4 A reduction from 47 councillors to 32 would still provide for higher level of representation than the UK average. Using the 2016 electorate predictions this smaller council size would equate to 2,227 electors per councillor.

Figure 6 Current and Future Electorate and Variances

Name of unitary ward	Number of cllrs per ward	Electorate 2010	Variance 2010	Electorate 2016	Variance 2016
Brus	3	4,801	8%	4,976	9%
Burn Valley	3	4,167	-6%	4,149	-9%
Dyke House	3	3,464	-22%	3,300	-27%
Elwick	1	1,683	14%	1,702	12%
Fens	3	4,070	-8%	4,072	-10%
Foggy Furze	3	3,850	-13%	3,987	-12%
Grange	3	4,112	-7%	4,124	-9%
Greatham	1	1,713	16%	1,698	12%
Hart	3	5,148	16%	5,508	21%
Owton	3	4,081	-8%	4,076	-10%
Park	3	4,636	5%	4,754	5%
Rift House	3	4,630	4%	4,735	4%
Rossmere	3	4,734	7%	4,817	6%
Saint Hilda	3	4,312	-3%	4,299	-5%
Seaton	3	5,253	19%	5,188	14%
Stranton	3	3,996	-10%	5,124	13%
Throston	3	4,766	8%	4,739	4%
Total:	47	69,416		71,248	

6.5 An important requirement is to ensure that there is equal electoral representation across the borough. Therefore the councillor:elector ratio should be as similar as possible across the borough of Hartlepool.

6.6 With the 2016 electorate forecast of 71,248 and the proposed 32 councillors this would give a councillor:elector ratio of 1:2227, which remains below the UK average.

7 Ward Boundaries, Community Identity and Interests

7.1 In order to reduce the number of councillors from 47 to 32 it is proposed to change the number of wards from 17 to 12.

7.2 At this early stage in the Boundary Review consultation this submission is only putting forward a proposal for council size. It will therefore require further considerations and consultation as to the boundary changes required to create the proposed 12 wards.

7.3 There are many different communities and geographical areas within the 17 wards of Hartlepool and any changes to the ward boundaries should take community identity and interests into account.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 This submission for a proposed reduction in council size has taken into consideration the following:
- Electoral Representation
 - Community Identity
 - Effective and Convenient Local Government
 - Number of Councillors in each ward or division
- 8.2 This submission proposes reducing the size of the council from 47 members to 32 members. This would be achieved through creating 10 wards each with three members and two single member wards. The reduction of councillors is in line with similar reorganisation across the council, notably the reduction in council departments and chief officers by a third.
- 8.3 A council size of 32 would provide an average councillor:elector ratio of 1: 2227 which still provides more electoral representation than the UK average.
- 8.4 I have proposed a reduction in the number of council committees and believe that this would complement a reduced council size. This would allow for councillors to be more efficient and would reduce the burden of bureaucracy that is caused by excessive meetings and committees.
- 8.5 I previously proposed this reduction in council size in the last Electoral Review and gained wide support. At the time, it was stated that the reduction in council size was not suitable due to the recent change to a Mayoral system. In 2010 I wish to resubmit the proposal for a reduction in council size and I argue that this reduction in council size forms part of the overall reorganisation of Hartlepool Borough Council, as shown by the reduction in the council management structure. Further, I feel that the Mayoral and Executive system in place in Hartlepool is well established and with the new council management structure can be run more effectively with a reduction in council size.

Appendix 1

Council Meetings and Committees

Body	Number of Members 2009/10	No of Meetings held 2009/10	Projected Number of Individual attendances by Members in 2009/10	Actual attendance 2009/10	Percentage of Actual Attendance 2009/10
Council	48 including Mayor	10	480	365	76%
Cabinet	7	24	168	139	83%
Community Safety & Housing Portfolio	1	11	11	11	100%
Transport & Neighbourhoods Portfolio	1	12	12	12	100%
Regeneration & Economic Development Portfolio	1	5	5	5	100%
Culture, Leisure and Tourism	1	9	9	9	100%
Children's Services Portfolio	1	10	10	10	100%
Adult and Public Health Portfolio	1	10	10	10	100%
Finance and Performance Portfolio	1	16	16	16	100%
Joint Portfolio	2	3	6	5	83%
Grants Committee	3	5	15	15	100%
Planning Committee	16	13	208	151	73%
Audit Committee	7	5	35	25	71%
Contract Scrutiny Committee	9	24	216	139	64%
General Purposes Committee	9	6	54	52	96%

General Purposes Appeals and Staffing Committee	Varies	11	63	57	90%
Licensing Committee	15	4	60	37	62%
Constitution Committee	11	7	77	49	64%
Constitution Working Group	11	9	99	63	64%
Civic Honours Committee	9	2	18	18	100%
Standards Committee	7	7	49	40	82%
North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	15	6	90	36	40%
Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	18	6	108	60	56%
South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	13	6	78	56	72%
Pride In Hartlepool	5	8	40	28	70%
Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee	16	22	352	217	62%
Children's Services Scrutiny Forum	9	9	81	57	70%
Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum	9	9	81	51	63%
Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum	9	12	108	61	56%
Health Scrutiny Forum	9	13	117	66	56%
Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum	9	13	117	76	65%

Corporate Parent Forum	7	4	28	17	61%
Conservation Area Advisory Committee	2	4	8	3	38%
Central Police and Community Safety Consultative Forum	18	4	72	31	43%
North Police and Community Safety Consultative Forum	15	4	60	24	40%
South Police and Community Safety Consultative Forum	13	4	52	27	52%
Appointments Panel	Varies	8	77	64	83%
Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum Parish Liaison Meeting	1	3	3	3	100%
Licensing Act Sub-Committees	3	9	27	27	100%
Hackney Carriage Sub-Committee	5	8	40	33	83%
Hartlepool United Executive Committee	4	2	8	5	63%
Local Joint Consultative Committee	9	3	27	14	52%
South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum Parish Liaison Meeting	1	2	2	2	100%
Consideration (Standards) Sub-Committee	Varies	5	9	9	100%

Emergency Planning Joint Committee	1	4	4	3	75%
Assessment (Standards) Sub-Committee	Varies	9	14	14	100%
Review (Standards) Sub-Committee	1	1	1	1	100%
TOTALS			3225	2213	69%

List of Outside Bodies 2010 - 2011

Organisational Body	Councillor Membership
Archives Joint Committee	1 Member
Cleveland Emergency Planning Joint Committee	1 Member
Association of North East Councils	2 Members
Executive	1 Member
Hartlepool Economic Forum	1 Member
Hartlepool Partnership	7 Members
Hartlepool Revival Board	1 Member
Local Government Association	
General Assembly	2 Members
Urban Commission	1 Member
Rural Commission	1 Member
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust	1 Member
Safer Hartlepool Partnership	4 Members
Executive	1 Member
Tees Valley Leaders & Chief Executives Meeting	2 Members
Tees Valley Unlimited	
Leadership Board	1 Member
Planning and Economic Strategy	1 Member
Transport Tees Valley	1 Member
Housing Board	1 Member

Regional Flood Defence Committee (Rotates 2-yearly with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)	1 Member
Schools Admission Forum	5 members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum
Tall Ships Board	
Executive Members	4 Members of the Executive
Non-Executive Members	7 members
Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee	3 Members of Health Scrutiny Forum
Tees Valley Local Access Forum	1 member
Association for Public Service Excellence	2 Members
Durham Coast Rail Line Steering Group	1 Member
Durham Heritage Coast Partnership Steering Group	1 Member
Hartlepool and District Sports Council	3 Members
Hartlepool Power Station Community Liaison Committee	4 Members
Housing Hartlepool	4 Members
HMS Trincomalee Trust (3 year term expires 2011)	2 Members
National Society for Clean Air	3 Members
Museums Libraries Archives North East	1 Member
Northern Consortium of Housing Authorities	2 Members
North East Strategic Migration Partnership	1 Member
North East Rural Affairs Commission	1 Member
Regional Arts Council	1 Member
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education	2 Members

Tees Valley Arts – Board of Directors	1 Member
North East Purchasing Organisation	3 Members
Cleveland Police Authority	3 Members
Cleveland Police Joint Committee	4 Members
North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee	1 Member
Local Joint Consultative Committee	9 Members
National Association of Councillors Northern Branch	3 Members
General Management Committee	3 Members
North East Regional Employers Organisation	3 Members
Executive	1 Member
Teesside Pension Fund	1 Member
Tees Valley Environmental Protection Group	3 Members
Together Project Steering Group	5 Members
Age Concern Teesside	1 Member
Brierton Community Sports Centre Management Committee	1 Member
Cleveland Fire Authority	4 Members
Durham Tees Valley Airport Board	1 Member
Durham Tees Valley Airport Consultative Committee	1 Member
Furness Seamen's Pension Fund	2 Members
Hartbeat (Barnado's)	1 Member
Hartlepool Access Group	2 Members
Hartlepool Carers	1 Member
Hartlepool Citizen's Advice Bureau	2 Members

Hartlepool Deaf Centre	2 Members
Hartlepool Fair Trade Town Steering Group	1 Member
Hartlepool Families First	1 Member
Hartlepool Indoor Bowling Club	1 Member
Hartlepool People Centre	1 Member
Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency	3 Members
Hartlepool War Memorial and Crosby Homes	1 Member
Henry Smith Educational Trust	4 Members
Heugh Battery Trust	1 Member
Merchant Navy Welfare Board	1 Member
New Deal for Communities Steering Group	3 Members
North Tees Women's Aid	1 Member
Northern Regional Brass Band Trust	1 Member
Outdoor Bowls Consortium	2 Members
Owton Fens Community Association	2 Members
Owton Rossmere Community Enterprise Limited	1 Member
PATCH Management Committee	1 Member
Preston Simpson Scholarship in Music	3 Members
River Tees Port Health Authority	2 Members
Sarah Alice Todd Charity	2 Members
Seaton Community Centre	3 Members
SITA Board	1 Member
Sterndale Scholarship	2 Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

The Studio Management Committee	1 Member
Teesside Environmental Trust	1 Member
Teesmouth Field Centre	1 Member
Tees Valley Community Foundation – Grant Giving Panel	1 Member
Victoria and Jubilee Homes	4 Members
West View Advice and Resource	1 Member
West View Project	3 Members

Appendix 2- Proposed Council Meetings and Committees

Body	Proposed Number of Members	Proposed Number of Meetings	Proposed Number of Individual attendances by Members	Actual attendance 2009/10
Council	33including Mayor	10	330	365
Cabinet	7	24	168	139
Community Safety & Housing Portfolio	1	11	11	11
Transport & Neighbourhoods Portfolio	1	12	12	12
Regeneration & Economic Development Portfolio	1	5	5	5
Culture, Leisure and Tourism	1	9	9	9
Children's Services Portfolio	1	10	10	10
Adult and Public Health Portfolio	1	10	10	10
Finance and Performance Portfolio	1	16	16	16
Joint Portfolio	2	3	6	5
Grants Committee	3	5	15	15
Planning Committee	11	13	143	151
Audit Committee	7	5	35	25
Contract Scrutiny Committee	3	24	72	139
General Purposes Committee	9	6	54	52
General Purposes Appeals and Staffing Committee	Varies	11	63	57
Licensing Committee	11	4	44	37
Constitution Committee	11	1	11	49
Constitution Working Group	Disbanded			63

Civic Honours Committee	9	2	18	18
Standards Committee	7	7	49	40
North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	10	6	60	36
Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	12	6	72	60
South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum	10	6	60	56
Pride In Hartlepool	5	8	40	28
Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee	7	4	28	217
Child and Adults Services Scrutiny Forum	9	11	99	184
Regeneration and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Forum	9	11	99	127
Corporate Parent Forum	7	4	28	17
Conservation Area Advisory Committee	2	4	8	3
Central Police and Community Safety Consultative Forum	12	4	48	31
North Police and Community Safety Consultative Forum	10	4	40	24
South Police and Community Safety Consultative Forum	10	4	40	27
Appointments Panel	Varies	8	77	64

Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum Parish Liaison Meeting	1	3	3	3
Licensing Act Sub-Committees	3	9	27	27
Hackney Carriage Sub-Committee	5	8	40	33
Hartlepool United Executive Committee	4	2	8	5
Local Joint Consultative Committee	9	3	27	14
South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum Parish Liaison Meeting	1	2	2	2
Consideration (Standards) Sub-Committee	Varies	5	9	9
Emergency Planning Joint Committee	1	4	4	3
Assessment (Standards) Sub-Committee	Varies	9	14	14
Review (Standards) Sub-Committee	1	1	1	1
TOTALS			1915	2213

Appendix 3-

Online Report of Hertfordshire County Council Scrutiny Restructure

This can be found online at:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageld=12787560>

A watching brief



Scrutiny teams don't have to be big to be effective, writes Cllr Alan Searing

With only two officers supporting scrutiny in our large authority, and in response to concerns about scrutiny's effectiveness and impact, Hertfordshire county council decided to streamline its structure and processes.

Over an 18-month period, based on the views of those participating in scrutiny, we reduced the number of scrutiny committees from six to just two, and changed how we did things.

For example, inquiries are now more focused and linked to the corporate plan, with a clear objective, a small number of questions to be addressed, desired outcomes specified, and constraints identified (in other words, areas that the scrutiny is not covering). A detailed timetable is produced and thorough member briefings take place in advance of meetings.

Short and succinct

Rather than spending weeks or months on long-running investigations, with meetings lasting a couple of hours, we now hold one or two whole-day meetings. These gather evidence and produce short reports - because short reports are more likely to be read by decision makers than longer ones.

Around six pages long, these focus on the conclusions and recommendations (a link to all the minutes and all the evidence presented is included). Recommendations are limited to no more than eight, and must be robust, pragmatic and achievable. Officers involved in the scrutiny have an input into the report, and we follow up with a six-month progress check on implementation and the effectiveness of the recommendations.

All these factors mean scrutiny findings are likely to be implemented. Scrutiny of the council's budget has also changed, from a mechanistic meeting in the council chamber to a 'scrutiny café' approach, which has involved more people and produced more effective recommendations.

We sought to replicate what it would be like to hold a meeting somewhere like Costa Coffee. One of the factors in the budget scrutiny's success was keeping everyone well fed on Danish pastries, topped up with plenty of cups of coffee!

What also made it more effective was having a whole day spent scrutinising the budget, rather than just a couple of hours. Around 50 of our 77 elected members were involved, including all the executive, plus all chief officers and a further 30 senior officers.

They were supplied with the most concise finance reports ever produced for the budget process - thanks to scrutiny guidelines stipulating they should be just two sides long, and focused on the key issues. And at the end of the day, members' proposed recommendations were summarised to ensure 'buy in' from all the participants - something we do at the end of every scrutiny, and which removes the need for a separate meeting to agree recommendations.

This year, we will be spending more than two days on the budget to give backbench members even more time to examine the issues involved.

We believe our scrutiny team is the smallest in a top tier authority, but it still undertakes 25 inquiries a year. The success of the review of its work has not only made scrutiny more effective and valued by a range of stakeholders, but also won us plaudits - with Hertfordshire picking up the LG Association-sponsored award for overall impact at the Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CfPS) recent scrutiny awards.

The judges concluded that the county council had been realistic about the low level of resources available for scrutiny, and had adopted new ways of working that make the most of them.

Our entry demonstrated that it was possible to develop a different approach to scrutiny that was "leaner, tighter, more focused and was achieving more for less".

- Cllr Alan Searing (Con) is chair of Hertfordshire county council's overview and scrutiny committee. See www.cfps.org.uk for the full list of scrutiny award winners

