

# **Surrey County Council**

## **Electoral Review of Surrey County Council**

### **Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

**November 2010**

## **1 - INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In August 2010, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (“LGBCE” or “the Commission”) announced that it would be conducting an electoral review of Surrey County Council. The review was triggered by the fact that levels of electoral representation have changed since the last review was completed in 2000 and 26 wards (33%) have an electoral variance greater than 10%.
- 1.2 The council has prepared this submission dealing with council size only at this stage. It has been agreed with the Group Leaders and will be ratified by the County Council at its meeting on Tuesday 14 December 2010. The submission makes the case for a council of 80 councillors in single member divisions. A further submission on the detailed electoral arrangements in terms of the division boundaries will be made at a later date.

## **2 - SURREY AS A PLACE**

- 2.1 Surrey is considered an attractive place to live and work with a range of natural and cultural assets. More than 80% of the county is countryside, and green belt status is applied to 75%. A quarter of Surrey is classified as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a further 8% as Areas of Great Landscape Value. Satisfaction with Surrey as a place to live is high at 91% and 74% of Surrey residents said that people from different backgrounds get on well together. (Surrey Joint Neighbourhood Survey 2009/2010.)
- 2.2 The county consists of eleven boroughs and districts ranging from the smallest, Epsom and Ewell borough, covering 3,407 hectares, to Waverley borough, covering 34,527 hectares. The borough and district with the largest population in the county are Guildford and Reigate and Banstead. However, there is no single town centre. Most population centres in Surrey are a mix of urban, suburban and rural conurbations, such as the Leatherhead and Ashted area in the East of the county and Cranleigh and Ewhurst in the West. Some conurbations are more geographically dispersed and less well serviced in terms of access to public transport and services, and in some rural areas access to high-speed broadband is patchy, affecting access to services and local businesses. Other rural population centres include villages, hamlets and dispersed settlements.
- 2.3 Surrey is a resourceful county with a strong voluntary and community sector. Levels of volunteering are high and many communities are strong and self-reliant. The 2008 Place Survey recorded that 24.4% of residents overall gave at least one day a week of unpaid help over the last year, this figure rose to 30.9% in Waverley. However, not all Surrey citizens share the same quality of life.
- 2.4 Living in some parts of Surrey, especially the rural areas, presents difficulties of accessibility, limited provision of services and infrastructure, and higher living costs can isolate others and compound the challenges facing more vulnerable people. The viability of some rural communities is threatened as young people move away to find work and homes.
- 2.5 Social and economic deprivation in Surrey is often masked by proximity to areas of affluence and dispersed communities. There are many small pockets of deprivation in Surrey such as Preston, Longmead and North Leatherhead. Four larger high areas of need have been identified using IMD data: Stanwell, Maybury and Sheerwater, Westborough and Merstham, where much of Surrey’s social housing is located. The overall prosperity of the county masks a number of inequalities and the pockets of deprivation in Surrey are often small and dispersed. Average life expectancy varies from 75.5 years in Sunbury Common to 86 years in Ash Vale. This creates challenges for public engagement in Surrey and ensuring that the views of vulnerable communities are heard.
- 2.6 Surrey has above average levels of domestic violence and a significant Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population estimated at approx 5,000 to 6,000, which is amongst the highest in the

- country. Gypsies and Travellers have significantly poorer health status. Traveller sites in Surrey are often in geographically isolated areas with poor transport provision, and literacy levels tend to be low, which can impact on access to information.
- 2.7 The dispersal of populations by age is varied across the county with the highest number of older people (65 and over) living in Waverley. Twenty six percent of the county's 0–4 year olds live in Elmbridge and Reigate and Banstead, and 10.3% of Surrey children live in low income households, with the largest number of these in Woking and Runnymede.
- 2.8 Surrey is changing. More than half of Surrey's population is over 50 years of age, and the number of people over 85 is increasing by 1,000 people a year. The 2001 census recorded 5% of the population from black and minority ethnic communities compared to 8.7% for England and Wales. Experimental population statistics from the ONS suggested that this might have risen to 7.9% by 2006, and 8.6% by 2007. Although the ONS estimates must be used with caution, Surrey school census figures in January 2009 recorded 12% of children from a black or minority ethnic background.
- 2.9 Surrey is the most densely populated shire county in England. The population density is 6.6 people per hectare in comparison to a national average of 3.9. The ONS estimated the population of Surrey was 1,113,100 on 30 June 2009. This was an increase of 12,400 since 2008. Surrey's population has increased every year since 1981 (except 1986/87). In 2008, based on recent trends, the population was projected to rise steadily at a rate of about 0.75% per year until 2031. This level of population growth would require an average of about 4,500 additional dwellings per year. This growth reflects similar projected growth in the South East and England as a whole.
- 2.10 Surrey has more than 3,000 miles of roads, 63 miles of motorway, 437 miles of A-roads, 2,486 miles of local roads and 2,000 miles of paths and public footways. More than 70% is green belt, 16% urbanised and the other 11% is non green belt countryside. In total, 22% of the county is wooded and the county covers a total of 167,005 hectares. Geographical barriers to accessing services were identified in the 2009 accessibility project 'Bringing People and Services Together'. Mapping using 2001 census and public transport timetable data identified some areas where access to GP surgeries, hospitals, schools, colleges and town centres in peak hours using public transport varied considerably for some populations. For example, 5.8% of the population would have journey times of more than one hour to access a hospital compared to 65.3% whose journey time would be between 10 and 30 minutes. In the 2010 equality scheme consultation, disabled people highlighted that the difficulties they face in accessing leisure activities were compounded by barriers to accessing public transport.
- 2.11 There are high levels of car ownership and availability, which adds pressure to the road network. In 2008 the road network was carrying twice the national average traffic, which in turn impacts on local roads and increases journey times. The county is bisected by major highways such as the M25, A31 and A3, which can affect the interaction between communities closely located geographically but separated by a major highway. Car travel is the primary source of transport for most people in Surrey, which also has implications for people unable to access cars. Access to county level democracy and services can be harder for people in more rural communities who have to travel further on busy roads and for some residents who may have limited or no access to cars. For example, Surrey's older population in Surrey's rural population is growing. There are more older women than men in Surrey and older women are less likely to drive and more likely to be caring for people who were the primary driver in the household who is no longer able to drive.
- 2.12 The county council currently has 80 councillors representing 80 divisions with elections taking place every four years. In addition to the eleven borough and district councils there are 84 parish and town councils with elected representatives. Each district and borough

council varies in size and has their own electoral arrangements. There are currently 37 county councillors who are also borough or district councillors.

### 3 - GUIDANCE ON CALCULATING COUNCIL SIZE

- 3.1 This first stage of the electoral review is for the Commission to consider submissions on the appropriate size of the council i.e. how many councillors there should be on the council in order to deliver effective and convenient local government. Once the number of councillors has been determined, this can be used to calculate the optimum number of electors per councillor.
- 3.2 In the technical guidance issued by the Commission, it is recommended that the following issues are considered when developing a proposal for council size:
- The **model of local governance** used by the local authority: these models have impacts on the workload of councillors and the working practices of the council;
  - The existence of **parish and town councils**: and the impact this has on a councillor's role and workload;
  - The **scrutiny and regulatory functions** of the council;
  - The **representational role of Members**: these may have changed following new practices put in place by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 3.3 Each of these issues is considered in this submission when putting forward the case for the recommended size for the council. This submission concludes that the optimum council size would be 80.

### 4 - MODEL OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

- 4.1 Prior to the Local Government Act 2000, Surrey County Council had operated a standard committee system with each committee having its own terms of reference and decision-making powers within a particular service area of the council.
- 4.2 The 2000 Act changed the way in which local councils are managed politically, separating executive from non-executive functions. The County Council as a collective body continues to have an important role in setting the broad budget and policy framework but the responsibility for executive decision-making rests largely with the Cabinet. This does not have to reflect the political make up of the council and in Surrey; the Cabinet has traditionally comprised 10 Members, all from the majority party.
- 4.3 Non-executive functions cannot be exercised by Cabinet and so committees with decision-making powers have been established to deal with these functions. In Surrey, these include:
- Planning and Regulatory Committee
  - Audit and Governance Committee
  - Standards Committee
  - People, Performance and Development Committee.
- 4.4 There are also seven select committees and a Health Scrutiny Committee, which together carry out the council's scrutiny function. Both the select and regulatory committees are dealt with in more detail in section 6.
- 4.5 As a result of the changes introduced by the 2000 Act, the role of all councillors has changed significantly. The day-to-day decision-making is concentrated in the hands of the ten members of the Cabinet although in Surrey, it is important to acknowledge that some executive functions have also been delegated to local committees, the council's area committees. Local committees are covered in more detail below.
- 4.6 In the council's annual survey of Members, undertaken in February 2010, Members were asked a number of questions in relation to the time spent by councillors on county council

business. When asked how many hours on average were spent per week on council and political business for the county council, the answers ranged from 8-60 hours. This is a wide range but can in part be attributed to the different council positions individuals hold (for example, a Cabinet Member or Chairman of the Council versus a backbench Member who doesn't hold a position of special responsibility). The overall average was 26.5 hours per week.

- 4.7 Members were then asked to specify how this time was generally divided between three areas. Again, there was a wide range but the averages for each are below:

<b>Area of work</b>	<b>Av hours per week</b>
Attendance at council meetings, committees, group meetings etc (incl prep)	10.8
Engaging with constituents, surgeries, dealing with constituent enquiries and liaising with officers/partners to resolve issues (incl prep)	8.8
Other e.g. external meetings, seminars, training, travel related to council etc.	6.9

- 4.8 We have confirmed the appointed commitments of each Member of the Council. The average number of appointments is shown in the table below.

<b>Member appointments</b>	<b>Av appointments per Member</b>
Appointments to Select, Regulatory, Local Committees and Cabinet	3
Appointments to Task/Working groups, Advisory Panels, Outside Bodies and the Police Authority	2.5

The figures above do not include Members' travel time to and from events and locations.

- 4.9 Members were also asked about positions for which a special responsibility allowance is paid and how many hours per week relate to the extra responsibilities involved in that role. From the responses, there seemed to be agreement that the role of select committee chairman translated to approximately 10 hours a week with that of local committee chairman estimated between three and ten hours, depending on the individual.
- 4.10 All Members sit on their local committee and for five county councillors, this is the only committee they serve on. Of the remaining 65 non-Cabinet Members, the vast majority sit on either one or two committees in addition to their local committee. More information on the roles and responsibilities of Members on select and regulatory committees is set out in section 6.

## **County Council**

- 4.11 All 80 councillors are members of the County Council, which meets on average seven times a year including the budget council and annual meeting. The County Council appoints the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, the Leader of the Council, plus the membership of committees and the chairmen and vice-chairmen of those committees. It is also responsible for approving the budget and policy framework. The council adopted the strong leader and cabinet model of governance in December 2009 and therefore the Leader of the Council now appoints the Cabinet and agrees the scheme of delegation for executive functions.

## **Cabinet**

- 4.12 The Cabinet is made up of 10 Members - the Leader, Deputy Leader and eight additional portfolio holders. The portfolios are:
- Leader
  - Deputy Leader
  - Environment
  - Change and Efficiency
  - Children and Learning
  - Children and Families
  - Adult Social Care
  - Transport
  - Community Safety
  - Community Services and the 2012 Games.
- 4.13 All Cabinet Members are from the majority group. Following the adoption of the strong leader model, the council moved to some individual decision making across all 10 portfolios. The Cabinet meets as a whole 11 times a year, with meetings lasting approximately 2-3 hours each (although each also involves an agenda planning and callover meeting, which can take an additional 2-3 hours each). There are also 11 individual Cabinet Member decision-making days during the year, which include slots for each portfolio holder although, in practice, the average Cabinet Member has six individual decision making meetings a year, lasting no more than 20 minutes.
- 4.14 To support Cabinet in developing their thinking prior to decisions being made, there are a number of advisory groups. In Surrey, two such groups are the Member Asset Panel (MAP) and Fire and Rescue Advisory Group (FRAG.) MAP consists of the Cabinet Member for Change and Efficiency plus six non-Cabinet Members and meets 11 times a year, with meetings lasting for approximately two hours each. FRAG brings together the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and four non-Cabinet Members and meets four times a year for approximately 2.5 hours.

## **Local Committees**

- 4.15 As mentioned above, the county council has 11 local committees, one covering each district and borough area. The local committees currently have four roles. They:
- decide on local services and budgets delegated to them by the Cabinet
  - decide on local services and functions handed down to them within a framework of agreed performance standards and budgets
  - monitor the quality of services locally
  - engage local people in issues of concern, and influence the County Council and its Cabinet on county-wide plans and services in the light of local needs.
- 4.16 These committees include an equal number of co-opted district/borough councillors with voting rights in relation only to transportation, rights of way and highway matters. Each local committee meets formally four times a year, with meetings lasting approximately three hours. In addition, each local committee has approximately four informal meetings a year. Some local committees appoint task groups, which Members may also be required to attend.
- 4.17 Each local committee is different to ensure that it best reflects the local needs of the area it serves. The local committees also vary in size, with Guildford being the largest with 10 county councillors, and Epsom and Ewell the smallest with five county councillors. If the council size was to reduce significantly, this would reduce the size of the local committees – fewer than five county councillors is felt to be impractical, however, because if you had one or two apologies (and no option to substitute on a local committee) it quickly becomes unrepresentative.

- 4.18 It is not possible to anticipate the impact of the localism agenda on Members at this time, due to both national and local changes that are taking place around arrangements for partnership working. Surrey currently has two pilots taking place in Mole Valley and Woking exploring different ways that both tiers of local government and partners can work together to decide and deliver locally through local committees and Local Strategic Partnerships. The Leader of the Council has also been working with partners on revising Surrey's principles for partnership working and working with chief executives to determine future arrangements for delivering locally.
- 4.19 It is particularly important to get the mechanisms for delivering locally right in order to build on the priority place work that has already taken place. Partnership delivery arrangements will need to recognise the diversity of Surrey and the geographical challenges in addressing inequality in more dispersed and rural communities experiencing social and economic exclusion.

### **Effect on Governance Model of Future Legislative Changes**

- 4.20 The Decentralisation and Localism Bill is expected to be presented to parliament in the autumn of 2010. The Coalition Government has said that the Bill will devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities control over housing and planning decisions. The precise details of the Bill are at the time of writing not yet known but, among other things, it will:
- Give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services
  - Give councils a general power of competence
  - Give residents the power to instigate local referenda on any local issue and the power to veto excessive council tax increases.
  - Give greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups.
- 4.21 The Bill is likely to change the way in which councillors work within their communities by placing greater emphasis on community led decision-making. This may lead to an increased role for local committees or individual local member decision-making. At this stage, it is not possible to draw any conclusions on the impact of this.
- 4.22 A public consultation is currently being carried out on the Government White Paper, *Liberating the NHS: Local Democratic Legitimacy in Health*. The white paper proposals suggest a potential implication for the role of county councillors, specifically proposals for:
- An enhanced role for elected local councillors and local authorities to boost local democratic engagement in health;
  - Stronger institutional arrangements, within local authorities led by Elected Members to support partnership working across health and social care and public health, specifically proposals for a statutory health and wellbeing board at upper tier level;
  - A statutory obligation for local authorities to participate as members of the board; and
  - Passing responsibility for overview and scrutiny to the wellbeing board, removing health overview and scrutiny committees.

## **5 - EXISTENCE OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

- 5.1 Surrey has 84 parish & town councils, 75 of which are paying members of the Surrey County Association of Parish & Town Councils (SCAPTC). Bramley and a number of very small councils are not included. Since the last electoral boundary review, five parish councils have been created in Tandridge (Caterham Valley, Caterham Hill, Whyteleafe, Chaldon, Woldingham).

5.2 About half of Surrey is parished. Political representation for the other half is through district and county councillors, residents' associations and community groups. Most parish councils meet monthly.

5.3 The following table sets out the parishes that exist in each district and borough area. Town councils are similar to parish councils with equal powers, although town councils include the ability to appoint a mayor. Town councils are highlighted in **BOLD** in the table below.

District and Borough	Parishes	
Elmbridge <i>(partly parished)</i>	Claygate	
Epsom & Ewell	<i>Not parished</i>	
Guildford <i>(All areas beyond the city are parished)</i>	Albury Artington Ash Compton East Clandon East Horsley Effingham Normandy Ockham Pirbright Puttenham Ripley	Seale & Sands Send Shackleford Shalford Shere St. Martha Tongham Wanborough West Clandon West Horsley Worplesdon
Mole Valley <i>(partly parished)</i>	Abinger Betchworth Brockham Buckland Capel Charlwood	Headley Holmwood Leigh Mickleham Newdigate Ockley Wotton
Reigate & Banstead <i>(partly parished)</i>	<b>Horley</b> Salfords & Sidlow	
Runnymede	<i>Not parished</i>	
Spelthorne	<i>Not parished</i>	
Surrey Heath <i>(partly parished)</i>	Bisley Chobham West End Windlesham	
Tandridge <i>(mostly parished)</i>	Bletchingley Burstow Caterham-on-the-Hill Caterham Valley Chaldon Chelsham & Farleigh Crowhurst Dormansland Felbridge Godstone Horne	Limpsfield Lingfield Nutfield Outwood Oxted Tandridge Tatsfield Warlingham Whyteleafe Woldingham
Waverley <i>(fully parished)</i>	Alfold Bramley Busbridge Chiddingfold Churt Cranleigh	<b>Farnham</b> Frensham <b>Godalming</b> Hambleton Hascombe <b>Haslemere</b>

	Dockenfield Dunsfold Elstead Ewhurst	Thursley Tilford Witley Wonersh
Woking	<i>Not parished</i>	

- 5.4 The extent to which the workload of Members is affected by the presence of town or parish councils in their division will vary depending on the number of such councils. However, there is an expectation from many parish councils that their county councillor will regularly attend their meetings. In some cases, county councillors are asked to make a report to each meeting on matters that may concern the parish. As most of the larger parishes meet every month, this can impose a significant time commitment on individual county councillors.
- 5.5 Consultation with our Members suggests that interaction with parish and town councils varies substantially. Actual timing is difficult to assess but a general estimate of 30 minutes per parish council per week is felt to be accurate (i.e. eight parish councils in a division would equate to approximately four hours of a Member's time per week.) It should be noted that the number of parish councils in a division varies considerably ranging from none to as many as 10.
- 5.6 In the more urban parts of the county, Members do not have this additional parish commitment, although across the county there are also a large number of residents' associations that can draw on Members' time. The list may not be exhaustive but the following table outlines the approximate number of residents' associations by district and borough area:

District/Borough	Number of active Residents Associations
Elmbridge	41
Epsom & Ewell	25
Guildford	25
Mole Valley	30
Reigate & Banstead	39
Runnymede	22
Spelthorne	28
Surrey Heath	27
Tandridge	7
Waverly	36
Woking	16

- 5.7 An average county division would include approximately two ward/village level residents' associations and the level of commitment expected from the county councillor in attending their meetings and working with them is similar to liaising with a parish council. Of course, the number of residents' associations varies from area to area. In Waverley's Farnham Central division, for example, there are currently 16 active residents' associations.

## 6 - SCRUTINY AND REGULATORY FUNCTIONS

### Overview and Scrutiny

- 6.1 The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a requirement for councils to establish a minimum of one overview and scrutiny committee. The statutory duty to conduct overview and scrutiny matters has evolved over the years, as has the council's scrutiny process. More recently the Police and Justice Act 2006 has required the establishment of a crime and disorder scrutiny committee. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has created the Councillor Call for Action, which allows councillors to raise issues of

local concern through the scrutiny process and places an obligation on other bodies to provide information to scrutiny committees and to take note of their recommendations.

- 6.2 The council's own scrutiny arrangements have been the subject of several reviews since 2000 and the council has most recently put in place a protocol, jointly with the districts and boroughs, to ensure collaborative scrutiny on crime and disorder issues. To avoid increased bureaucracy, all 12 authorities are working to coordinate scrutiny issues in this area and will then use existing committee structures to carry out the role as necessary so the impact can be absorbed within the current committee work programmes.
- 6.3 At present the council has seven select committees and a Health Scrutiny Committee. There is no formal management committee to oversee scrutiny as a whole although the chairmen of the select committees, planning and audit committees meet informally monthly (excluding August) to discuss cross-cutting issues and share best practice.
- 6.4 The council's seven select committees between them cover the whole range of the county council's business. An eighth committee has responsibility for scrutiny of the health service in Surrey. Select committees develop policy and take an overview of the county council's performance and the work and decisions of the Cabinet. Select committees also ensure that the views and concerns of local residents and businesses are reflected in the policies of the county council. Select committees do not have decision-making powers. Their functions include:
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the Cabinet and/or council on policy development.
  - Holding the Cabinet to account by reviewing decisions made by the Cabinet and by questioning Cabinet Members and officers about their decisions and performance.
  - Reviewing and scrutinising performance by services and making reports and recommendations to Cabinet, County Council and/or local committees.
  - Reviewing and investigating matters which are not the direct responsibility of Surrey County Council but which do affect the economic, environmental and social well-being of Surrey.
- 6.5 Each select committee is politically balanced and comprises 10-11 Members. The chairmen of all eight select committees are from the majority party at present as well as the majority of vice-chairmen (although the Vice-Chairman of Health Scrutiny is a member of the Residents' Association/ Independent group). Each select committee meets formally approximately six times a year with meetings lasting between 3-4 hours.
- 6.6 All select committees may establish task groups to carry out in depth scrutiny reviews. Task groups are not formal sub committees and may be set up by one committee, or jointly between two or three interested committees. Task groups tend to include 2-4 Members depending on the scope of the work to be undertaken and are set up throughout the year as issues arise.
- 6.7 The number of times a task group needs to meet in order to complete its review varies depending on the topic. Set out below is a table showing the task groups that are currently in operation:

Task Group	Number of members on task group	Anticipated length of task group
Public Engagement	3	12 months – meets every 6 weeks
Energy Usage in County Council Buildings	4	3 months – meets fortnightly
Teenage Pregnancy Task Group	3	7 months – meets

		monthly
Elective Home Education Working Group	2	6 months – meets every 6 weeks
Fire and Rescue Public Safety Plan Working Group	4	4 months – meets monthly
Rethinking Surrey Highways Task Group	5	12 months – meets monthly
Passenger Transport Task Group	3	Ongoing – monthly
Surrey Transport Plan Task Group	3	6 months – meets every 6 weeks
Winter Performance Task Group	3	4 months – meets fortnightly
Performance, Finance and Risk Review Group (one group per select committee)	3	Ongoing – meets quarterly
Statutory Officer Reporting Lines Task Group	6	3 Months – meets every 3 weeks
Effectiveness Review of Internal Audit	3	3 Months – meets monthly

Task groups often span a municipal year and there are usually several task groups in operation at any one time.

- 6.8 In July 2009, the council began a three-year Public Value Review programme of all the council's functions, to ensure they provide maximum value for money. Each Public Value Review undertaken has a Member Reference Group established to work closely with the review team. The length of each review varies depending on the scope and therefore some reference groups will exist for a matter of weeks while others may last 6-12 months. At any one time, there are approximately 12 Member Reference Groups in existence, each consisting of 2-4 Members, meeting monthly for 2-3 hours.
- 6.9 The Health Scrutiny Committee also includes three co-opted members representing the districts and boroughs and meets approximately six times a year, with each meeting lasting approximately 2-3 hours.

### **Planning and Regulatory Committee**

- 6.10 Planning and Regulatory Committee meets once a month (excluding August.) The committee has 11 members and its chairman and vice-chairman are from the majority party. No councillor may be a member of a Planning and Regulatory Committee or attend as a substitute unless he or she has undertaken training within the previous 12 months.
- 6.11 Generally Planning and Regulatory Committee meetings last 3-4 hours. In addition to attending committee meetings, committee members often need to attend site visits lasting between one and three hours. In the last year, the Planning and Regulatory Committee undertook three site visits.

### **Audit and Governance Committee**

- 6.12 The Audit and Governance Committee comprises six Members. The chairman is from the Residents' Association/Independent Group and the vice-chairman is a member of the majority group. The Audit and Governance Committee meets seven times a year and the meetings tend to last 3-4 hours.

### **Standards Committee**

- 6.13 The council's Standards Committee comprises six county councillors and four independent representatives. Both the chairman and vice-chairman are selected from the independent representatives. This committee is not subject to political proportionality.
- 6.14 The full Standards Committee meets approximately seven times a year and the meetings tend to last three hours or less. In addition, the Standards Committee has two standing sub-committees to deal with complaints made against councillors and requests for dispensation. There are sub-committee meetings scheduled in the County Diary every four weeks to meet the legislative requirements for dealing with complaints within the specified timeframe but they only meet when there is business to consider. In the last year, there were seven sub-committee meetings, each lasting about two hours, and two hearings, one lasting four hours, the other two days.
- 6.15 It is expected that the current standards regime will be subject to legislation in the coming months and therefore the role and function of the Standards Committee may change but at this stage, it is not possible to anticipate the impact this would have on councillors' workloads.

### **People, Performance and Development Committee (PPDC)**

- 6.16 Finally, PPDC deals with employment and pay related decisions in line with the scheme of delegation and appoints to chief officer posts (the Chief Executive and six Strategic Directors). This committee includes six Members and is politically proportional. It meets approximately five times a year and meetings last between 2-4 hours.
- 6.17 PPDC also has an appointments sub-committee to appoint deputy chief officers (22 Heads of Service). The frequency with which the sub-committee will meet depends on the level of recruitment or similar issues within the council but on average, a member of the sub-committee would expect to be involved in approximately three full days of activity during any given year.

### **Conclusion on Committee Structure**

- 6.18 For each select and regulatory committee, the number of meetings indicated is based on the number of meetings agreed in the County Diary each year. However, additional meetings are often arranged as and when required based on the business of the council. For example, PPDC has met nine times already in 2010 and the Safer and Stronger Select Committee held two additional committee meetings during the summer to consider issues in a short period of time.
- 6.19 The county council is a large and complex organisation and, given the financial pressures and challenges facing the public sector at present, the role of scrutiny is more important than ever. Within this context, it is felt that the council's current select committee model provides adequate capacity for Members to scrutinise the key areas of the council and hold Cabinet Members to account.
- 6.20 It is therefore not anticipated that the number of committees will be radically reduced in the near future. However, if there was a reduction in the number of select committees, the size of the remaining committees would need to increase in order to cover their wider remit and therefore the number of overall seats would remain at a similar level, equating to a comparable workload for Members.
- 6.21 In terms of the regulatory functions, the council is not aware of any proposed changes in legislation which might affect these responsibilities and therefore it considers that there is no need to review the regulatory committee structure at this time.

## **7 - REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE OF MEMBERS**

7.1 By the nature of their role as a county councillor, Members have a number of additional responsibilities relating to service on other wider community bodies and interests. Set out below is a short overview of those responsibilities, all of which impact on a councillor's time commitment.

### **Appeals and Representational Panels**

7.2 Appeals Panels consist of 3-5 councillors and are subject to proportional representation. Panels meet as and when required to oversee the arrangements in relation to rights to appeal against decisions take by or on behalf of the council, such as school transport decisions, staff appeals, and appeals against decisions of the Chief Fire Officer. In a year, there are on average five panels, mainly in relation to home to school transport, with meetings lasting approximately 1-3 hours.

### **Representation on Outside Bodies**

7.3 The council appoints Members to a number of outside organisations every year. Some appointments are made by virtue of office whilst others (generally to voluntary bodies) are open to everyone. The number of appointments to outside bodies averages out at 2.1 per councillor, although the number varies, with one councillor serving on 10 outside bodies through to 25 councillors who are not appointed to any outside bodies by the council.

### **Police Authority**

7.4 Nine county councillors are appointed to the Police Authority at the annual meeting of the County Council. These appointments are made on a politically proportional basis and their role is to represent the interests of all local people, businesses and communities in their work with Surrey Police. The Authority sets the strategic direction for the force and holds the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the local community.

7.5 The Police Authority meets publicly seven times a year. In addition to these meetings, Members serve on panels and committees with senior officers of Surrey Police to hold them to account on key areas of police work such as performance, HR, complaints and finance. Some Members are allocated Lead Member roles where they focus on a particular area of Policing, i.e. Neighbourhood Management, Preventing Violent Extremism or Efficiency and Productivity. There are also a number of training activities and workshops that Members are expected to attend. Overall, the minimum expectation is that members of the Police Authority will spend approximately two days a week on Authority business.

### **Local and Partnership Working**

7.6 County councillors are expected to play an active part in their community, working locally and in partnership with other public sector, voluntary and community bodies. For example:

- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Community Safety Partnerships
- Being appointed as a school governors for local schools
- Attending neighbourhood police panels which meet between 4-6 times a year
- Social housing panels.

### **Community Representation**

7.7 Of course, the role of the county councillor is not restricted to formal committee meetings and representation on other public, voluntary, community or faith sector bodies. As outlined in the council's role profile for the Surrey County Councillor, Members are first and foremost community leaders, elected to represent the needs and interests of the division for which the councillor was elected.

- 7.8 According to the Members' survey, carried out in February 2010, Members in Surrey spend on average 8.8 hours a week on their local constituency work. Every Member approaches this differently but this may include:
- dealing with enquiries and casework on behalf of constituents
  - representing constituents' interests or enabling them to take action themselves as appropriate.
  - liaising with council officers and partner organisations to ensure that the needs of the local communities are identified, understood and supported, and agreed local actions are carried out.
  - being actively involved with local organisations in order to keep up-to-date with local concerns.
  - holding surgeries or similar public meetings to gather views of constituents.
  - travelling within their divisions and meeting residents on site and in their roads in order to engage with the issues facing residents.
- 7.9 The geographical size of the county and disparities in physical size between divisions can impact on the amount of time some county councillors spend on travelling, either to and from County Hall, which is located outside the county boundary in Kingston, or travelling to meetings or events within their own division. This impact would be similar for councillors whether using public transport, travelling by road or using a combination of both. For example, there is a difference of more than 115 square miles between the smallest and largest divisions. The return journey to County Hall by road from Ewell is just 10 miles but councillors travelling by road from Farnham or Haslemere to Kingston have a return journey of 58 and 65 miles respectively. One county councillor reports that she has a 40 minute drive from one side of her division to another (Mole Valley), another councillor reports that parts of his division (Epsom and Ewell) are so compact he carries out a lot of his duties on foot. These disparities can impact on the number of activities that some councillors can commit to if travel time is taken into consideration. There is also an impact on flexibility as travel time requirements may inhibit ability to attend activities and events taking place at similar times. The disparity in travel distances also impacts on some residents' ability to access representation. In a compact area, one surgery could be accessible to several geographically close communities. However, in a larger area, one Member may have to arrange a greater number of surgeries to be accessible to their residents.

## **8 - MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

- 8.1 Elected Members have a vital role in establishing and maintaining the strategic direction of Surrey County Council. To support Members in their role we need to produce a flexible approach to learning and development, which meets collective and individual development needs over the term of the council, taking into account each Elected Member's individual learning style.

### **Elected Member Development Strategy**

- 8.2 The Elected Member Development Strategy has been implemented to provide Members with an outline of development activities open to them, which will support them in their role as a county councillor through their term of office.
- 8.3 Members of the council carry out a wide range of roles, including Cabinet Member; Chairman or Vice Chairman; members of select committees, local committees, regulatory committees; representational roles on behalf of the council; and divisional Members.
- 8.4 The strategy ensures opportunities are available in response to each particular development need including role specific training, training on corporate initiatives and strategies, generic skills development and personal development.

- 8.5 A Four-Year Development Plan provides a thorough induction programme for new and returning Members, enabling them to become effective county councillors in the first year. Development in subsequent years includes further skills training and information to enable councillors to remain effective Members with priority topics identified for the year through feedback and needs analysis.

### **Personal Development Plans**

- 8.6 A variety of approaches are employed to identify specific individual learning and development needs. Personal Development Plans (PDPs) are encouraged, as they provide a rigorous approach to this. Our approach is to tailor the PDPs to individual Members, who have the responsibility to also identify their own learning and development needs.

### **Mandatory Training**

- 8.7 Members are required to undertake a training programme upon induction, which includes a general induction, Equalities and Diversity Awareness training, Code of Conduct training and role specific training, e.g. Chairing skills
- 8.8 Members who wish to sit on certain committees must have undertaken the relevant training beforehand to ensure they are compliant with the legislation, for example on the Planning and Regulatory or Standards Committees.

### **Seminars**

- 8.9 Members are invited to attend seminars on a regular basis to inform them of developments in the council and topical issues relevant to the county. So far in 2010 there have been 23 Members' Seminars. They are normally two hours long. To date, on average each Member has attended seven of these. The most any one Member has attended is 18, although nine Members are yet to attend any seminars this year.

### **Internal Training**

- 8.10 There are a variety of internal training courses available to Members depending on their individual needs. Internal training sessions are advertised on a regular basis to help develop skills. To date, each Member has attended on average two training sessions in 2010. There are always internal training opportunities available and this number is likely to rise as the year progresses.

### **External Conferences**

- 8.11 To date, Members have attended 23 external training sessions/conferences in 2010. These are often required to support Members in their roles of special responsibility and nearly all external training in 2010 has been attendance by our Cabinet Members and committee chairmen. Whilst these are not always full day events, external training sessions/conferences take place all over the country and can be time consuming in terms of travel.

## **9 - CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The majority of formal committee meetings take place during the working day, with select and regulatory committees meetings usually starting at 10am and Cabinet at 2pm. Some local committees meet in the evening but this depends on the local preference and the majority are again during the working day. This impacts on those Members who also work and often makes it difficult for some Members to commit to additional responsibilities, such as serving on task groups.
- 9.2 In its report to Council in July 2010, the Independent Remuneration Panel stated: *"The Panel also considered the time commitment in fulfilling the role. Using data from the most recent National Census of Local Authority Councillors (carried out by the Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency) and results from the Democratic Services Members' Survey (February*

2010), it was determined that the average time spent by a County Councillor on their constituency/backbench role was 18 hours per week...”

- 9.3 The Panel also looked at the time commitments involved in some of the roles attracting a special responsibility allowance, as outlined in the table below:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Days per week</b>
Leader	2.5
Deputy Leader	2.5
Cabinet Member	2.5
Council Chairman	2.5
Council Vice-Chairman	1
Other Committee Chairman	1
Local Committee Chairman	0.5

- 9.4 In their report, the Panel stated “*The time commitment required for each role attracting an SRA was determined by using evidence from questionnaire responses, interviews with Councillors in different roles, and the observations and knowledge of Panel members. The Panel recognises that the time taken to carry out a role can vary between Members and over time depending on workloads and other factors. The Council Chairman, Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members in particular will often spend more than 2.5 days per week in their roles, but that is likely to be at the expense of the time available to carry out their backbench role – this in effect means that they are notionally receiving an over-payment in their Basic Allowance. Overall, the levels were felt to be a fair reflection, based on the evidence received.*”

- 9.5 The table below sets out the number of permanent seats to be filled on committees:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Meetings pa</b>
Council	80	7
Cabinet	10	11
Adult Social Care	11	6
Children & Families	10	6
Change & Efficiency	10	6
Education, Learning & Development	11	6
Environment & Economy	10	6
Safer & Stronger Communities	10	6
Transportation	10	6
Health Scrutiny	10	6
Planning & Regulatory	11	11
Audit & Governance	6	7
People, Performance & Development	6	5
Standards	6	7
Surrey Police Authority	9	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>103</b>

The table does not take account of any additional meetings that may be organised in-year, nor any task groups or sub committees.

- 9.6 With the current council size of 80 Members, excluding Cabinet and County Council meetings, there are 120 committee seats. This translates to an average of 1.7 seats on

committees available for non-Cabinet Members. All Members also serve on their local committee, increasing this to 2.7 seats each.

- 9.7 Given that the majority of these committees meet during the day, and to allow flexibility for Members to serve on more or less committees depending on their circumstances, the Council believes that this ratio is about right and would not want to see an increase in the average number of committee places per councillor as it would impact adversely on their ability to fulfil their community leadership role.
- 9.8 In terms of outside bodies, the average number of outside body memberships per councillor is currently 2.1. However, looking at current representation, this average does not reflect reality, with a number of councillors not appointed to any of the formal outside bodies while a smaller, but significant group of Members hold four or more appointments each. There is no expectation that the number of outside bodies requiring representation from the council will reduce in the coming years.
- 9.9 Aside from the formal outside body memberships there are a number of other roles that members may also have connected to their community, as discussed in Section 7. The council again believes that any increase in the number of community roles required per councillor is not sustainable and would impact adversely on Members' community leadership role.
- 9.10 In addition, any increase in Members' workloads could dissuade potential candidates from standing for election and have an adverse impact on community representation.
- 9.11 The council therefore believes that the current council size of 80 Members should be maintained as this enables the current model of local governance to function effectively while allowing Members enough time to fulfil the range of representational and community leadership roles.
- 9.12 The table below shows total electorate figures since Surrey County Councils last electoral review and the average electorate for each county councillor in that year.

Year/Date	Total Electorate			
	2000	2005	Dec 2009	Jun 2010
Number of Councillors	76	80	80	80
Overall Electorate	809,444	809,182	846,984	851,925
Average Electorate per Councillor	10,650	10,115	10,587	10,649

- 9.13 Using the forecast electorate for 2016, this represents a target for each councillor to represent an electorate of 11,115 electors in order to achieve electoral equality.

	Electorate Forecast (2016)
Number of Councillors	80
Overall Electorate	886,109
Average Electorate per councillor	11,076