

[Kirklees Council]

# Council Size Submission: Template

[Kirklees Labour Group]

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## How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. **Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.**

The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

'Good' submissions, i.e. those that are considered to be most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

## About You

The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, a resident group, or an individual.

Kirklees Labour Group Submission

## Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

## The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy context.** The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
- To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?
- Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
- What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

We introduce this submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on behalf of Kirklees Labour Group. We have 38 Labour Ward Councillors in the Kirklees area in towns and outlying areas representing their diverse communities throughout North and South Kirklees covering the towns of Huddersfield, Batley, Dewsbury, Heckmondwike, and smaller towns in the Colne Valley, Holme Valley, Denby Dale, Golcar and areas of Huddersfield such as Crosland Moor and Ashbrow, Greenhead and Dalton. The Council size of 69 Councillors gives an equitable distribution of Councillors across the area and allows for effective representation of all our communities with Councillors being highly valued in their Community Leadership role. We have 3 Councillors per ward of 23 wards. Having 3 Councillors means that we can always ensure quick responses and reactions to queries and requests for help and support, particular in times of holidays and sickness – the Councillors are able to assist with cover to ensure that a representative for that ward is always available. We are in touch with our constituents constantly and represent their areas and take on feedback from them in both casework and community involvement activities and meetings within the community. We acknowledge the population changes that have taken place

in the Kirklees area. However, we have robust systems in place which are effective and extra capacity could be absorbed into this existing regime using our current transition skills, rather than a completely new system be established. We have also embraced new technology and systems in order to support Councillors which ensures that they are as effective as possible under the current system and thus have no requirement for change to the Council Size and ward numbers and Councillor numbers – we would like it to remain the same based on this evidence.

The Council's current Leader and Cabinet model was put into place following the Local Government Act 2000. A detailed review of the governance model and potential alternative models was undertaken in 2022 by the Council's Democracy Commission which concluded that the current model was the most effective for Kirklees. Full Council approved the recommendations to retain the current model with a number of recommendations to further improve and engage non-Cabinet members in the decision making process. Councillors are considered to be at the heart of what we do in Kirklees Council, see Council Plan 2023-4 <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/delivering-services/pdf/council-plan-23-24.pdf>

The last Boundary review took place in May 2002 and draft recommendations were published in February 2003. The final recommendations were to reduce the number of Councillors from 72 to 69 and that there should be 23 not 24 wards. This current situation works very well for Labour Councillors with 3 Councillors per ward and elections in thirds. There are slight rises in the wards in Holme Valley South, Lindley and Mirfield however the Labour Group believe that the current situation is favourable and feedback from Councillors support remaining with the same numbers (see comments from survey).

### Local Authority Profile

**Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics and community characteristics.** This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all of the following:

- Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
- Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
- Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
- Community characteristics – is there presence of “hidden” or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload and community engagement?

The Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees is one of five Local Authorities in West Yorkshire. It covers an area of 157 square miles and has a population of around 433,216 (2021) 64% are aged 15-64 years, 18% over 65 years and 19% under 15 years. It is a complex area and is made up of heavily built up areas and has semi rural and rural parts to it including areas of a National Park.

The total no of businesses were 15,360 in 2022. The unemployment rate was 4.1% in December 2022. Please see the link below to the Observatory information for Kirklees.

<https://observatory.kirklees.gov.uk/overview-reports/#/view-report/558f7898ce6d480ba035a5a4ccad6631/E08000034>

Kirklees Council Local Plan was adopted in February 2019 – and the purpose is for the area to meet the growing needs of local people and businesses prepared in the context of National, and local strategies and guidance - please see link below. It is currently to be reviewed starting in 2023 and will take into account any changes that have taken place following adoption in 2019.

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-policy/pdf/local-plan-strategy-and-policies.pdf>

### Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role.

These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.**

Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

### Strategic Leadership

Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority.

Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		
<b>Governance Model</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority.</i></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Governance Model is the Strong Leader Model in line with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation with 10 Cabinet Members. This model has been in place since 2010. A detailed review of the governance model and potential alternative models was undertaken in 2022 by the Council’s Democracy Commission which concluded that the current model was the most effective for Kirklees. Full Council approved the recommendations to retain the current model with a number of recommendations to further improve and engage non-Cabinet members in the decision-making process. Full Council meets regularly throughout the year. Meetings of Council are chaired by the Mayor and attended by all 69 Members of the Council.) The Council’s role is setting the Council’s budget and determining the issues within the Policy Framework – Article 4 within the Constitution <a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-2.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-2.pdf</a></p> <p>The meeting also provides an opportunity to hold the Leader of the Council and Executive to account, by allowing Members to ask questions on areas of Cabinet Portfolio responsibility, and Council Services. The Leader is appointed in accordance with the Strong Leader model of governance for a maximum of 4 years or until the end of their period of office to which they are elected (when they are next up for election). They are usually appointed in May at the Annual Meeting of Council. The Leader then appoints Cabinet Members and decides the allocation of portfolio responsibilities within the scheme of delegation. The Cabinet comprises 10 members including the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council plus 8 other Cabinet Members each with a defined portfolio. Cabinet Political Planning meetings take place weekly and include formulation of strategic policies.</p>
Portfolios	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Cabinet is the executive decision-making body of the Council. The current members are Acting Leader, Cllr Cathy Scott, Leader’s Cabinet portfolio, Cllr Paul Davies, Deputy Leader, Cllr Viv Kendrick,</p>

		<p>Childrens Services, Cllr Elizabeth Reynolds, Learning and Aspiration, Cllr Jackie Ramsay, Health &amp; Social Care, Cllr Masood Ahmed, Housing, Cllr Yusra Hussain, Culture &amp; Greener Kirklees, Cllr Gwen Lowe, Environment, Cllr Graham Turner, Finance &amp; Regeneration, Cllr Mussarat Pervaiz, Communities. They attend regular Cabinet meetings in order to make decisions.</p> <p>The Cabinet makes decisions which affect local services (Cabinet Committee Local Issues) and also makes recommendations to the full Council on the overall policy direction. The Cabinet must make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. The Council's Scheme of Delegation provides for the delegation of decision-making powers to Cabinet members within their defined areas of responsibility. The Cabinet meets formally regularly throughout the year and Cabinet Committee – Local issues met 6 times in 2022-23. Cabinet meetings are chaired by Leader of the Council. The Cabinet are also briefed regularly by Chief Executive and Directors (approximately 2 meetings per month) to discuss policy direction and major issues and to ensure Cabinet Assurance. Cabinet Members are also regularly briefed on issues relating to their portfolios. Scrutiny Committees are also involved in aspects of policy development as part of the Annual Scrutiny programme. Also, there is a cross-party budget group looking at all areas of the budget and this is a fair system which ensures all are held to account. Both Cabinet members and Labour Group Councillors believe this system is the most effective in terms of governance and wish for this system as well as the ward size, number of Councillors and Council size and elections in thirds to remain the same.</p>
<b>Delegated Responsibilities</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Council's delegation scheme is based on a strong Leader model and comprises of Council taking decisions in accordance with the Council's policy framework and a number of committees, wards and panels to undertake decision making on regulatory and other Council functions.</p> <p>With a strong Leader model, we have a Leader who appoints a cabinet to undertake executive decision making which is complemented with an overview and scrutiny management committee and 4 panels that overview and scrutinise the Cabinet's work. The Council also has an extensive delegation scheme. Delegation to officers is only for policy framework matters, all decisions still have to be ratified by full Council. The functions and powers delegated to the Cabinet, Cabinet Members, Committees and Officers is set out in Kirklees Council constitution. Key functions of Cabinet include:-</p> <p>Recommending the policy framework to Full Council, approving policies, plans and strategies, recommending the budget to full council and implementing the policy framework and approved budget. The Scheme of Delegation provides for decisions to be taken effectively and efficiently at the appropriate</p>

		<p>level. Where decisions are to be made at full Council or by Cabinet then reports are submitted to meetings in line with legislative requirements.</p> <p>There is both a Monitoring Officer protocol and a Member-Officer protocol for guidance for Councillors and a Councillor Code of Conduct</p> <p><a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-52.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-52.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-51.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-51.pdf</a></p> <p>Advice exists in the constitution with regard to procedures relating to ward issues for Cabinet members – please see link below</p> <p><a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-54.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-54.pdf</a></p>
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Accountability

Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	<p>The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.</p>
Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i></li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;">Analysis</p>	<p>Decision makers are held to account by the Scrutiny system. Kirklees Overview &amp; Scrutiny Management Committee has to meet at least 6 times per year according to the constitution. The function is to primarily act as a check and balance to the working of Cabinet ensuring decision making is transparent accountable and open. It is led by Councillors who do not hold a Cabinet position – Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is currently chaired by a Conservative member and its make up is currently 4 other members; 2 Labour Councillors, 1 Conservative Councillor and 1 Green Councillor. It monitors decisions made and performance and quality of services, reviews policy for recommendation to Cabinet, and acts as a critical friend whilst maintaining a constructive relationship. Cabinet has to provide a written response to any recommendation Scrutiny makes. There are also the actions of raising a notice of concern, and call ins regarding a particular decision and pre decision scrutiny. It holds an informal workshop at the beginning of the municipal year to form a work programme and produces an annual report. The Leader attends twice per year to outline priorities and summarise the work done throughout the year.</p> <p>There are 4 Scrutiny Panels as well as Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These are Childrens Scrutiny Panel, Growth &amp; Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, Environment &amp; Climate Change Scrutiny Panel, and Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel. These are established annually at the Annual Meeting of Council During 2022/23 the Committee and its four Panels were themselves reviewed following a review of the Council's governance arrangements and key issues faced and strategies and responses to manage these. Revised panels were agreed at Council in May 2023, retaining the same number but changing some of the areas of focus and making one of the ad hoc panels permanent, and in engaging non-cabinet members in the decision-making process, taking place in 2023/4.</p>
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These Scrutiny Panels overall are chaired by 2 Labour Councillors, a Conservative Councillor and a Green Councillor and have a mix of 4/5 Councillor members and 1 to 2 Co-optees per Panel and they meet approximately every 7 weeks. They have their own programme of work and they may also get involved in ad hoc panels to provide an in depth focus on specific issues. Action has been taken to seek to improve member officer relationships, through a Protocol exercise and various training and awareness sessions. In relation to members working together, there have been changes in the scrutiny process, and at an administrative level, steps taken to ensure that officer delegated decisions are better recorded.

The Scrutiny process is conducted in a cross-party manner, offering opportunities to other parties to contribute and democracy to play out. Good examples of the process being effective are under Health and Adult Social Care holding outside organisations to account such as the closure of hospitals and in West Yorkshire for transport networks. Councillors play an active role in WYCA under Corporate Scrutiny Committee, and also Transport & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee and Economy Scrutiny Committee. Kirklees has 3 Councillors on each Committee out of a total of 16 and different parties are represented proportionately. The Combined Authority works closely with its local authority scrutiny counterparts and it gives an extra layer of examination and transparency to add value to the work of Local Authorities.

Please see link to Kirklees Council constitution and committees <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-33.pdf>

In terms of proportionality on committees, overall there are 10 committees that are split proportionately, including Appeals Panel(15 members in total), Licensing & Safety Committee (15), Personnel Committee (9), Planning Sub-Committee (Heavy Woollen area)(13), Planning Sub Committee (Huddersfield

	<p>area)(13), Standards Committee (7), Strategic Planning Committee (7), Statutory Officer Dismissal Committee(5), Substitutes Panel members (24) &amp; Corporate Governance &amp; Audit Committee(7). There are 2 non proportional committees, Health &amp; Well Being Board (5, 3 of which from Cabinet) &amp; Corporate Parenting Board (4 plus the Cabinet Member for Statutory responsibility for children).</p> <p>There are 7 non proportional scrutiny committees/panels, Overview &amp; Scrutiny Management Committee (5 members in total), Scrutiny Panels (total members 24) consisting of Health &amp; Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel, Children’s Scrutiny Panel, Environment &amp; Climate Change Scrutiny Panel, Growth &amp; Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, and also Calderdale &amp; Kirklees Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (4) &amp; W. Yorkshire Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee(2).</p> <p>WYCA. The Combined Authority’s membership is made up of democratically elected councillors from our six West Yorkshire partner councils, and the Chair of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (the LEP). WYCA also work with five other nearby councils and districts that are known collectively as Leeds City Region. The LEP Board brings together business and council leaders to ensure that we deliver services and investment across the full City Region and supports businesses to grow. Working in partnership, WYCA develops and delivers policies, programmes and services which directly benefit the people of West Yorkshire. WYCA aims to Work in partnership with the Local Authorities, West Yorkshire Police, business and network of suppliers and partners, Knowing and understanding their customers, communities and places, putting ‘outcomes for West Yorkshire’ at the heart of everything they do, Prioritising work based on what’s best for the collective whole, and using data to make sure projects and programmes impact the things that matter. It is another layer of transparency and democratic leadership in the West Yorkshire area and Kirklees Councillors are represented across the range of</p>
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	<p>committees, <a href="https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-transparency/governance-information-for-the-combined-authority/">https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-transparency/governance-information-for-the-combined-authority/</a></p> <p>It assists with linking Regional, and local priorities and cross party working and allows comparisons with other Local Authorities on ways of working and sharing of information and goals whilst linking to national Government and funding streams. It has similar functions to Councils in the form of Committees and Scrutiny and Kirklees Labour Group Councillors are represented throughout all of these committees. This system of regional links to West Yorkshire works well in terms of joint working and governance, and also internal scrutiny has recently been reviewed and so ensures that this effective reviewing system determines that this process should remain as it is now in terms of Council size, wards and number of Councillors.</p>				
<p><b>Statutory Function</b></p>	<p>This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?</p>				
<p><b>Planning</b></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="743 874 929 1209"> <p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p> </td> <td data-bbox="929 874 1906 1209"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i></li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="743 1209 929 1391"> <p>Analysis</p> </td> <td data-bbox="929 1209 1906 1391"> <p>The majority of planning applications are determined by officers. Currently meetings consist of Strategic Planning and 2 area committees – Heavy Woollen Planning committee and Huddersfield Planning committee. Strategic Planning meetings take place every 4 weeks, and the area committees take place</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i></li> </ul>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The majority of planning applications are determined by officers. Currently meetings consist of Strategic Planning and 2 area committees – Heavy Woollen Planning committee and Huddersfield Planning committee. Strategic Planning meetings take place every 4 weeks, and the area committees take place</p>
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		<p>every 6 weeks. The Council is currently reviewing the way it deals with planning applications, including the way applications are determined by Councillors. The time spent by Councillors per committee is 1 full working day including site visits in the morning and committee meeting in the afternoon. Protocol for planning committees and sub committees is in the Council's constitution see link below part 53.</p> <p><a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-53.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-53.pdf</a></p>
<b>Licensing</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Licensing Panel is a Sub Committee of the Licensing and Safety Committee and considers applications under the Licensing Act 2003, the Gambling Act 2005 and the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 including applications for licences, certificates, temporary event notices and all variations, transfers withdrawals and reviews of such matters.</p> <p>The Licensing Committee meetings are held 3 or 4 times per year and are set meetings. There is a core of 15 members currently with a Labour Councillor Chair and a mix of Labour, including 1 Cabinet Member and Labour Group Business Officer, Liberal, Conservative and Green members which has been proportionately allocated.</p> <p>The Committee can take 2-3 hours per meeting and requires all members to attend, and site visits are undertaken according to the agenda item specification. There is also a Regulatory Panel which meetings are called under specific conditions. There has only been 1 held in the last 6 years.</p>

		<p>The Licensing Panels are held throughout the year based on the applications received. In the year 2022-2023 11 meetings were held in the year – a minimum of 3 core members are required to attend these meetings as well as the Chair. One or 2 applications are discussed per meeting and the meetings take up to 2 hours with possible site visits additional to this time. If core members are unable to attend, then substitutions will be made from other Councillors.</p> <p>Guidance is given in the Council’s constitution regarding the Licensing and Safety Committee Protocol  <a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-58.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-58.pdf</a></p>
<b>Other Regulatory Bodies</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p><a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-33.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-33.pdf</a>  Regulatory Panels and Appeals Panels are listed above</p>
<b>External Partnerships</b>		<p>Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.</p>
	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i></li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;">Analysis</p>	<p>Kirklees has a very effective system and policies of partnership arrangements working with partners both within the area and with external partners such as West Yorkshire. Partnerships range from joint venture partnerships, thematic partnerships and their subsidiaries to key contractual agreements managing substantial amounts of public money. The main contact officer for each Partnership is responsible for assessment of the governance arrangements and providing details of any significant changes to the membership and circumstances of the partnership. This information is used by senior officers of the Council to assess the potential risk that the partnership presents to the reputation or financial standing of the Council. Policies and documents include Kirklees Community Partnership Plan, <a href="#">Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan 2022-2027</a></p> <p>Safety Partnership Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy all in developed involving consultation with Councillors. There are 99 Outside Bodies and Kirklees Council has Councillor membership on all of these bodies. Please see protocol from the Constitution on this matter as below <a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-55.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-55.pdf</a></p> <p>The Cabinet has entered into a Local Strategic Partnership with other persons and bodies within Kirklees for the purposes of bringing together the public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together. As at May 2008 this consists of the Kirklees Partnership Board and four Local Public Service Boards covering Safer Stronger Communities; Children and Young People; Adults and Healthier Communities; and Regeneration and Sustainable Development. Subject to the oversight of and decision making by the Cabinet they also work together on and monitor progress on the Local Area Agreement for Kirklees. Cabinet may</p>
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	<p>vary these arrangements at any time in agreement with the partners concerned.</p> <p>Outside Bodies of which there are 99 that Kirklees Councillors attend, include local charities and also West Yorkshire Combined Authority and representation is requested by the organisations which is spread proportionately between the groups. The Inclusive Communities Framework (ICF) is a commitment to work better with communities, that means we have to change how we do things, and as a partnership with local organisations like the Police, has also been embedded and this evidences and encourages Partners and the Council to work with Communities.</p> <p><a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/inclusive-communities-framework/index.aspx">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/inclusive-communities-framework/index.aspx</a></p> <p>Kirklees Health and Care Partnership is a partnership of health and care organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined-up services and to improve the health and wellbeing of people who live in Kirklees with a focus on preventing ill health, improving health and healthcare, reducing health inequalities, making the best of collective resources, and putting communities at the heart of all we do. The partnership brings together the local NHS, other health and care providers, Kirklees Council, Healthwatch, and community and voluntary sector organisations, to arrange and deliver services for the 470,00 people who live in Kirklees and links in with West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership and also Health and Well Being Boards. Also the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory Committee of the Council. The Board brings together the NHS and the Council to provide leadership in ensuring a strategic approach to providing integrated health and the local government services. Membership of the Board includes Councillors, NHS Clinical Commissioning Group representatives, Health Watch and Council Directors.</p>
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	<p>The Kirklees Economic Strategy also aims to build investment and industry through initiatives working with partners in the West Yorkshire area. Due to these effective partnership arrangements and approaches to partnership working within Kirklees and inclusive communities framework, we believe that the Council size, number of Councillors and ward numbers with elections in thirds should remain so that Councillors can continue their important role in assisting joint working and providing community leadership in all areas of Kirklees and representing the authority   West Yorkshire. Any changes to the size could jeopardise their joint working processes, affect capabilities and the balance is right currently and Councillors are happy to continue this role in the current setting.</p>
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### Community Leadership

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		Description
<b>Community Leadership</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident’s association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i></li> </ul>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Councillors carry out their community representation role in a variety of ways including holding surgeries, holding and attending meetings in their wards with local residents and responding to email and telephone queries and letters and informally by social media See Cllr role profile attachment below. The Council does not have area committees.</p> <p>There’s lots of opportunities for Cllrs to engage with their constituents and these vary from one place to the next. For example, some wards have regular partnership meetings, some have ward forums, others hold thematic meetings. The purpose is to engage with constituents and partners and to encourage collaboration to improve local places.</p> <p>In addition, Cllrs have been involved in place standard engagement since 2018 and so far, have spoken to over 10,000 individuals across Kirklees. The place standard tool is a great way for Cllrs to have conversation with local people about how they feel about where they live, what’s good about it, what could improve and how they can get involved as active citizens. Cllrs share feedback publicly and work with citizens and other partners to develop local action plans. So far Cllrs have endorsed 16 actions plans and helped secure over £700k in funding to deliver local priorities.</p> <p>All Councillors have the opportunity to engage with our Democracy Friendly Schools programme, which is helping our young citizens to get involved in local democracy and civic life. Already 75 schools across all wards have expressed interest in being involved in this programme, 38 are currently taking part and 7 schools have completed the programme. Cllrs are invited to take part with schools in their wards and talk about what it means to be a Cllr, how decisions are made and how young people can get more involved as active citizens.</p> <p>Councillors attend a variety of meetings in their wards that range from partnership meetings, public forums, community associations, village associations, tenants’ associations, community groups, faith organisations, community events, to name a few. The level of involvement depends on the activity, for example community events could be one off, but partnership meetings and forums may be quarterly and other meetings may be monthly. Councillor roles are diverse depending on the setting and may be to share information about council services/changes/priorities, offer advice and support, answer questions, help solve a local issue, encourage local people to get involved in local campaigns or simply to be available to connect with their community.</p>

		<p>Support is available for Councillors via the Councillor Enquiry team for casework and the Councillor Support Team for general support, and also there is 1 Group Support &amp; Development Officer per group and Councillor Support &amp; Liaison Manager manages the support services for Councillors. Technical provision is made available from 2 full time staff for IT specifically for Councillors and there is a Governance Manager Sam Lawton and also the Service Director for Governance and Commissioning Julie Muscroft, Kirklees Council Monitoring Officer, which includes legal services and the Council's constitution. Training for Councillors has taken place with 4 workshops taking place on member-officer protocols in the last year and this has also been incorporated into 1 section of the Councillor induction training which consists of a 2 day intensive training programme for new Councillors.</p> <p><a href="http://www.kirklees.gov.uk">Councillor-Protocols (kirklees.gov.uk)</a></p> <p> Councillor Role Profile.pdf</p> <p><a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-51.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-51.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-59.pdf">https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/your-council/pdf/constitution-part-59.pdf</a></p> <p>The Code of Conduct for Councillors (see link above part 51) assists the Councillors define and carry out their role and responsibilities as Councillors and also the protocol Councillors and Officers in Kirklees – a protocol for working effectively – see link above part 59, gives guidance on working together. Regular meetings are held with Group Business Managers re areas of work with links to the groups from this service.</p>
<b>Casework</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>Councillors deal with casework in a variety of ways but there is a specific service Councillor Enquiries that process email enquiries both complex and straightforward cases. There have been 3,000 enquiries from September 2022 to August 2023 from Labour Councillors. The technological system carries out a triage</p>

service, track and reference enquiries and provide service information and updates on programmes of work to be undertaken in certain wards and report back on the progress of the enquiries with the service. The system logs enquiries which issues a reference number and acknowledgement and forwards the enquiries to the relevant service and monitors and follows up the items. Responses are passed back to the Councillor. Non complex responses are sent within 3 working days and a full detailed complex response is sent within 10 working days.

Councillors are also encouraged to advise residents within their ward that they could self serve on the website – these are for frequent enquiries such as potholes, missed bins, streetlights and fly tipping matters. The Councillor Enquiry Service is the corporately agreed route by which members should raise issues to ensure that queries are logged into the system and dealt with effectively, in order to avoid duplication and any confusion.



Councillor Enquiries  
A5 Booklet - June 202

Some Councillors will contact officers directly to try to resolve matters.

Casework enquiries are also generated from ward visits, and Councillor surgeries and emails and social media enquiries to Councillors.

For the whole of 69 Councillors records show that there has been an increase in the number of enquiries. In 2021 there were 5340 enquiries, in 2022 it was 6217, and in half a year January to June 2023 it was 4154. These figures do not include where Councillors have sought help directly from services or for the self-reporting mechanisms on the website. However, the support technology in recording and monitoring the enquires has advanced massively within the last year to be able to provide further analysis and support with individual Councillor breakdowns being analysed and also as groups. This hugely developed system has the capacity to analyse all this information and to record groups of issues which allows focus to be given to the work needed in core teams leading to service improvement. Technology has increased and more Councillors stated that email enquiries are increasing together with social media requests and telephone calls. Some Councillors operate surgeries in their wards too.

Kirklees Council operate a complaints procedure <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/contact-the-council/complaints-procedure.aspx>

In general, the Council seeks requests and complaints at service level, without the need for complaints to escalate. There is a complaints form on the Council website which can be sent directly to 8 services including Adult Social Care, Councillors, Children and Young People, Families and Carers of Children and Young People, compliments and Complaints to Homes and Neighbourhoods, Schools and Taxi, Private Hire Vehicle or driver complaints and residents are advised to go down this route. A generic Council form is also available for all

other departments. Stage 2 is dealt with by the manager of the service and also the Corporate Customer Standards Officer can review any decisions if the matter is not resolved. Further to this then the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman can be contacted to investigate the situation. The main role of the elected member is to enable the complainant to effectively progress their complaint by explaining the options and to support the resident if necessary.

Some Councillors have contacted the Corporate Customer Standards officer to help resolve matters but residents are advised to follow the set procedures for complaints.

From a survey of the Labour Group Councillors (with a 76% response rate, Councillors stated that casework was mainly conducted via the use of the Councillor Enquiries system and some Councillors contacted services directly and some casework came from ward visits and Surgeries. Casework has increased and overall, the reasons Councillors gave for this was due to the Cost of Living on a national basis, plus inflationary and economic crisis together with people's expectations increasing, demanding speedy responses.

The results concluded that residents needed more support, in particular vulnerable residents. Expectations on Councillors resolving issues had increased, and phone calls and emails had increased, and a comment was made on news being instant and so people's expectations of time had increased for a response in a shorter time period. Types of queries included housing support, debt support, cost of living support and requests for support and advice had generally increased from ward residents.

Labour Group Councillors gave a very positive response at being able to manage this casework and still concluded that 3 Councillors per ward for 23 Wards and 69 Councillors in total was the right amount. The Councillors were able to support each other as a team and helped each other manage the workloads and due to having 3 Councillors they were able to cover holidays and sickness on this basis which meant that residents would still be served on each ward, concluding that the support was fair and equitable across the Kirklees area. An example of this is using an out of office email when a Councillor is on holiday or sick, that the person is advised to contact another ward Councillor who would help with their enquiry.

Please see the attached document showing the results of the survey to Labour Councillors – the response was from 76% of the group and the overall wish was for ward numbers Council size and number of Councillors to remain the same. [BCR.LGsurvey responses2023.pdf](#)

### Other Issues

Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

## Summary

In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the governance arrangements and number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future.

Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

Overall, the response from Councillors in the survey was a resounding no to increasing the size, wards and number of Councillors in the area. They wish for everything to remain the same. Comments included in a survey– “Three Councillors help because as services and staff change, three Councillors cover more meetings individually rather than all attending one meeting. This provides better representation and more. It was also stated that “any less than three Councillors per ward would mean that the job would be too onerous- three Councillors are needed to manage the workload in the ward, and to reduce the number of Councillors would be a mistake.” Councillors are currently managing their casework successfully with more innovative systems with an increase in technology, it has proved to be very beneficial. The situation isn’t going to change – it is escalating.” We are managing our more innovative systems and the advanced technology allows analysis of the enquiries in order to improve services and thus the improvement allows the Council and Councillors to work more efficiently.

Regular reviews and scrutiny of plans and policies show a continuous assessment process which involves Councillors and a recent review of the governance model and a full agreement in Council was for the governance model to remain the same and this is also the reason that Kirklees Labour Councillors conclude that their view is for the ward size, Councillor numbers and ward numbers to remain as they are. The overriding view of the group was that 3 Councillors per ward, 69 Councillors for Kirklees and 23 wards is the right number, as they can share expertise and support each other and manage workloads effectively.