

**Electoral Review of
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council**

**Submission to the Local Government
Boundary Commission for England**

July 2025



Knowsley Council

STAGE 1 – Council Size

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SECTION A INTRODUCTION – ABOUT KNOWSLEY

The strategic vision for the Borough of Knowsley is outlined in the [Knowsley 2030 Strategy](#), and the recently published [Knowsley Council Plan 2025-30](#), these prioritise “effective, high-quality services and support – that positively impact the lives of Knowsley residents”. They set out the Council's long-term ambitions for the future, along with an overview of the type of actions to be taken in order to achieve them. Fit for purpose electoral and partnership governance structures are an essential component in delivering that vision.

In particular, these structures must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to future change, and must also be capable of operating effectively with a sustainable level of resources.

The last Ward Boundary Review within Knowsley was undertaken in 2015 when the Council proposed a reduction in the number of wards from 21 to 15. Based upon a 3 Members per ward model, this equated to a reduction from 63 to 45 Elected Members providing an average councillor to elector ratio across the Borough of 1:2,512 at that time.

As predicted in the last review, the Borough and the Council are both substantially different to what they were 10 years ago. The roles and responsibilities of local government and Elected Members have also changed considerably.

This submission from Knowsley Borough Council to the Boundary Commission proposes the retention of a 3 Members per ward model, and the retention of 45 Elected Members. The proposal would provide an average councillor to elector ratio across the Borough of 1:2,842, an increase on the current arrangement and within the “expected range” when compared to the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours model for English authorities.

The Council recognises that any proposal relating to council size should be supported by evidence. This submission therefore also sets out alternate options considered in arriving at the above proposal and provides an insight into how the Council operates under the current arrangements and also how it would manage its business in the future.

SECTION B CONTEXT FOR THE PROPOSAL

The initial proposals of the Boundary Commission on the 2011 Parliamentary Boundary Review set out a split of Knowsley's then three Parliamentary Constituencies between five Parliamentary Constituencies, and proposed the complete abolition of the Knowsley Parliamentary Constituency. This would have called into question the future sustainability of the Borough and the Council responded by leading and co-ordinating a campaign against this aspect of the proposals. Alternative proposals were developed on the basis of local knowledge and experience, and the initial proposals for Knowsley were subsequently amended, resulting in the Commission adopting the Council's counter-proposal for the Borough of Knowsley in its entirety.

Whilst the Boundary Commission subsequently ceased work on that Review in 2013 (as a consequence of the amended legislation), the initial recommendations and comments of the Commission had raised issues for the Council and its Elected Members. The Commission had commented that it was *"hampered by the electoral size of the City of Liverpool Wards, which typically have more than 10,000 electors"*, which could be interpreted as meaning that the relatively small size of Wards in Knowsley had made it easier for the Boundary Commission to implement changes by re-shaping and realigning Knowsley's Wards. This led to the Council inviting the Boundary Commission to undertake a review in 2015 with a view to securing the future sustainability of the Borough, and ensuring that the democratic arrangements in Knowsley remained relevant in the long-term and continued to deliver effective local government for the Knowsley community well into the future. With this in mind, the Council proposed a reduction in the number of Wards from 21 to 15, which meant a reduction in the number of Elected Members from 63 to 45. This was subsequently agreed and implemented at all-out elections in 2016.

It should be noted that, since the last Borough Boundary Review, a further Parliamentary Boundary Review has been undertaken and implemented with effect from the Parliamentary Election on 4 July 2024. This has resulted in four [Parliamentary Constituencies](#) now covering the Knowsley Borough area. This includes the Knowsley Parliamentary Constituency, which supports the Council's position that the steps previously taken by it to secure the Authority's long-term sustainability were both necessary and effective.

As predicted during the last Borough Boundary review, the Council has continued to take on a more enabling role since that time, working collaboratively with partner organisations and other key agencies in the provision of essential services under the banner of "[Knowsley Better Together](#)" with the aim of building community resilience and, where appropriate, reducing public service demand (recognising the bespoke needs/demands of its communities). The policy driver is the need for communities to increase their resilience and, where possible, solve their own problems. The intended impact is to reduce the demand on public services. The Council, in collaboration with its partners, has now also developed the "[Knowsley Offer](#)", which sets out the package of support, information and services available to residents now, and also plans that are in place to strengthen services and facilities for residents and businesses into the future.

The Council's approach to collaborative working, together with its approach to financial management and the strong decisions taken by the Council over the previous decade, has meant that, over recent years, the Council has not had to make significant cuts to service budgets. Early announcements from the new Government has indicated a shift in policy for local government funding which will better recognise deprivation, which could benefit Knowsley in future years. However, the national economic climate is still challenging and the risk of future cuts in overall local government funding allocations remains. In addition, pressure remains on the Council in relation to the constant challenge of balancing day-to-day service delivery with the longer-term requirement to transform and reform public services.

In particular, increased demand across Children's Social Care/SEND services present financial risk in terms of demand, home to school transport, costs of care packages and sufficiency of placements. Alongside this, the challenges to recruit sufficient numbers of experienced social workers presents risks around consistency and quality of practice. Following the inspection of its Children's Social Care services between 18 and 29 November 2024 by Ofsted, where the overall judgement was that services were found to be inadequate, the Council has commenced a comprehensive improvement journey. Although noteworthy progress has already been made, it is acknowledged that there is still a significant way to go to ensure that the improvements being made are sufficient and sustainable.

It must be noted that the improvement journey is being undertaken within a context of significant challenges currently facing all local authorities, such as a lack of social workers nationally, high agency costs, and lack of appropriate placements and foster carers for those children who need to be cared for by the Local Authority. This piece of work alone will have a significant impact now, and into the future, on both officer and Elected Member resource, which has been taken into account in formulating the Council's proposal on size.

SECTION C KNOWSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH PROFILE

Knowsley is one of six local authority districts which comprise the Liverpool City Region. Located to the east of Liverpool and the west of Manchester, it is well connected to these major cities by the M57 and M62 motorways, and the A580 East Lancashire trunk road. The Borough covers an area of 33 square miles and is just over 10 miles long and up to 7 miles wide.

Knowsley comprises a belt of large suburban towns, villages and open areas. Most of the Borough's residents live in the suburban towns of Halewood, Huyton, Kirkby, Prescot, Stockbridge Village and Whiston. The majority of development in these towns dates from the 1920s onwards, with much of the growth resulting from "overspill" development from the City of Liverpool. Exceptions include the older market town of Prescot, the historic Knowsley Village (which is named in the Domesday Book), and a few pockets of older development in the other towns. The suburban housing areas are each served by town and/or district centres providing a range of mainly local shopping and other services.

The Borough is an important location for employment in the Liverpool City Region and contains a number of large industrial and business parks, which play a crucial economic role as the home to more than 3,600 businesses. Knowsley has a well-established base in manufacturing and logistics, supported by industrial estates including the Knowsley Business Park—one of the largest in the UK. Knowsley is also home to some to some big companies including QVC, Matalan, Amazon, and Jaguar Land Rover. Manufacturing and logistics continue to provide significant employment opportunities. Based on employee jobs, the largest industry in Knowsley is Human health and social work activities, followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles and Manufacturing.

Despite this many Knowsley residents experience relatively high levels of unemployment and deprivation with 63% living in the most deprived 20% of England (Indices of Deprivation 2019). Many children in the borough experience poverty and the number of children who are living in relative low-income households has continued to increase. Knowsley has the highest proportion of secondary children who are eligible for free school meals in England.

Although a relatively high proportion of Knowsley residents are economically active, the rate remains below both the North-West and national averages. This highlights a key challenge: many residents are in work but still experiencing poverty. Addressing this requires a dual approach— supporting residents accessing to education, skills, and training, while also creating more high-quality employment opportunities. Educational attainment in Knowsley is lower than regional and national levels, with a higher proportion of residents having no qualifications and fewer holding Level 4 qualifications, such as a degree.

Whilst Knowsley has seen improvements in economically active residents, higher proportions live in workless households and are inactive in the labour market due to long-term sickness, compared to the England average.

The median full-time income in Knowsley continues to be lower than the England average, but similar to the North-West. However, part-time work is less well paid, women in Knowsley are far more likely to be employed in part time work.

The countryside and urban fringe areas of the Borough are currently designated as Green Belt, much of which is high grade farmland, and within which the attractive villages of Knowsley, Cronton and Tarbock are located. Knowsley Safari Park (located within the historic Knowsley Hall Estate) represents a unique tourism facility, receiving over half a million visitors per year, and Shakespeare North Playhouse which opened in 2022 is a further significant cultural asset for the Borough.

Population

The Borough has a population of approximately 159,243 people in 70,000 households.

In ten years it is estimated that Knowsley's population has grown by 8.8% (from 2013 to 2023) to 159,243. This faster than both the Liverpool City Region (5.2%) and England (7%).

This growth has been driven by children and older residents, the 0-15 population grew by 11.4% and the 65 years and older population by 15% in the same ten year period. 1 in 5 people living in Knowsley are aged 15 years, 3 in 5 are of working age (16 to 64 years) and almost 1 in 5 are age 65 years and older.

The Borough's population can be analysed across the following areas:-

- 61,259 Huyton and Stockbridge Village;
- 44,602 Kirkby;
- 30,393 Cronton, Knowsley Village, Prescott, and Whiston; and,
- 20,849 Halewood.

Social Conditions

In the year from April 2023 to March 2024, there were 91 recorded crimes per 1,000 population in Knowsley.

The total recorded crime rate in Knowsley is higher than the England average of 90 per 1,000 but lower than the Merseyside average of 100.8 per 1,000.

Knowsley faces many health challenges; health indicators show that the health and wellbeing of many residents is worse than the national average. Stubborn problems persist, the root causes being the high levels of deprivation, inequalities and poverty experienced by many residents.

- On average residents in Knowsley live shorter lives and spend more time in poorer health with long-term health conditions than the England average, this particularly true for women in the borough. There are significant differences in health outcomes between residents living in the most deprived areas and those living in the least.

- Life Expectancy (LE) for males and females has been declining in Knowsley, whilst women do live longer, the gap between the North-West, England is greater for women in Knowsley than men.
- Knowsley has one highest rate of premature deaths from cancer in England (deaths under 75 years).
- Adults and children are more likely to be overweight or living with obesity, with almost half of children being overweight or living with obesity at the end of primary school. This significant as obesity increases your risk of other health conditions such as cancer, type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease.

The levels of support that residents require for the complex social and economic challenges that exist is significant for local Elected Members. This context places a considerable demand on Councillors' casework and their need to engage within their communities. Continuing to have an appropriate number of councillors helps ensure that workloads are manageable, all communities are fairly represented and that the council can respond effectively to local needs, drive improvement and advocate for targeted resources and investment.

SECTION D COUNCIL SIZE

(i) Electoral Arrangements

Background

Since the Local Government Boundary Commission's review of Knowsley's electoral arrangements in 2015 (implemented with effect from 2016), Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council has been composed of 45 Councillors. The 45 Council seats are spread over 15 wards with one-third elected every three years in four. The next "fallow year" is currently scheduled to be 2029. All 15 wards have 3 Elected Members.

The most recent local elections were held in May 2024 when all 15 seats were contested. The overall Borough turnout was 21.48%, and turnout in individual wards ranged from 15.3% to 30.34%. A total of 36 candidates stood for election to the 15 contested seats.

Electorate

The electorate in Knowsley (as per the published register in February 2025) is 122,039. The electorate has increased by just under 7.44% since 2014. More recently, over the last 5 years, the overall increase has been 0.712% as illustrated in the table below:-

Year (Winter)	Electoral Roll
Dec 2020	121,176
Dec 2021	120,259
Dec 2022	120,948
Dec 2023	121,145
Feb 2025	122,039

Current electoral projections anticipate growth of 4.79% in the electorate up to 2031, predominantly arising from the new housing developments that are planned.

Current Population

The Borough has a population of approximately 159,243 people in 70,000 households.

In ten years it's estimated that Knowsley's population has grown by 8.8% (from 2013 to 2023) to 159,243. This is faster than both the Liverpool City Region (5.2%) and England (7%).

Parish and Town Councils

There are five Parish/Town Councils in Knowsley, each of which holds all-out elections every four years. 39.59% of the Borough's population live in a parished area. The next all out Parish Elections are scheduled for May 2027.

Future Electoral Arrangements

Completed housing developments over the next six years are expected to deliver approximately 2,763 new homes across Knowsley and, consequently, the electorate is expected to grow to 127,894 by 2031. The Council has a strong track record in delivering housing and it considers that the development of these sites within this period can be taken into account in these calculations with a high level of confidence.

Population growth is expected throughout the Borough, with developments in the Whiston and Cronton Ward followed by Halewood South, seeing the highest concentration of new households.

The current Councillor to elector ratio is 1:2,712 and has remained fairly consistent over the last decade (i.e. since the implementation of the last Boundary Review in 2016). The projected electoral figures for 2031 would see a ratio of 1:2,842 Councillors to electors as Ward boundaries currently stand.

(ii) Internal Review Process

The Council's internal review process was led by a Members' Working Group, chaired by the Resources Cabinet Member with representation from all political groups on the Council.

Taking account of the Boundary Commission's "*Electoral Reviews – Technical guidance*", the Working Group was clear from the outset that the first part of every electoral review is the consideration of the optimum council size (the total number of Councillors who represent the authority). The Working Group also noted that the Commission's preference is to base a council size decision on the consideration of locally generated proposals which are supported by sound evidence and reasoning.

In starting to consider the optimum Council size for Knowsley, the Council was clear that it did not wish to change the current elections by thirds electoral arrangements and the uniform pattern of three-Member Wards. The Council's view is that elections by thirds maintains democratic accountability while providing for stability, minimising the risk of repeated policy shifts. The current three-Member Ward arrangement works well in Knowsley and recognises the unique demands from our communities as well as providing resilience and choice within localities. It was clear that the previous review had resulted in a significant reduction in the total number of Councillors and the creation of larger Wards, and therefore the Council's view was that reducing the number of Members in each future Ward was not preferable, and indeed raised increased risks for communities. Consequently, the optimum Council size for Knowsley had to be divisible by three.

In this overall context, the Working Group initially agreed to consider potential Council sizes within a range of options ranging from retaining the current Council size of 15 Wards (45 Members), increasing to 16 wards (48 Members) or reducing to 14 wards (42 Members).

In reaching a view on the optimum Council size, the Council was mindful of each of the principles set out in the Commission's guidance. The Council was also mindful of the broader objective of the review, i.e. the future sustainability of the Borough of Knowsley. Furthermore, the methodology for determining an optimum Council size needed to be robust and capable of anticipating future change. In summary, the principles adopted in the development of an initial proposal therefore included:-

- Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral Reviews - Technical Guidance; and,
- all Wards continuing to be represented by three Ward Members each.

Whilst there is no definitive council size and each local authority is different in terms of size and organisation, there is a certain number (depending upon the decision-making model adopted) of elected representatives required to carry out the essential functions of an administration, such as filling executive roles, scrutiny roles and regulatory roles, ensuring effective service delivery, and a representation role to constituents. In determining the optimum Council size, the Council has also taken into account the principles of its future governance arrangements (see Section E of this submission).

It was noted from the Commission's *Electoral Reviews - Technical Guidance* that the Commission does not have any preconceptions about the right number of councillors to represent an authority and instead seeks to recommend a council size that allows a council to take decisions effectively, manage its business and responsibilities successfully, and provide effective community leadership and representation. Furthermore, the Commission will seek to provide context to an authority's proposals by reference to the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours model.

The Council has therefore used the CIPFA model, and also nearest geographical neighbour data, to compare representation per Elected Member. Detailed comparisons are attached at Appendix A.

Both models provide comparative data on council size and outline council sizes ranging from 48 to 85. These variances in council size must be considered in the light of other variations, such as the range of electorate sizes (from 100,292 to 365,505), differences in how individual councils manage their business, and specific local challenges faced by individual local authorities. It is clear that there is no "one size fits all" model, and also that there is no readily available formula which can be applied to all local authorities.

Treated in isolation, a crude ratio of councillor to electorate is an unreliable indicator of democratic quality. However, when considered alongside the statistical information provided in the CIPFA model, the recognition of local knowledge and challenges provided by the nearest geographical neighbour model, an assessment of the Council's current and future governance arrangements, and the representational role of an individual Councillor, a much clearer illustration of optimum Council size can be produced.

In view of the Commission's guidance that it will form its view about the right council size for an authority by considering the areas of governance arrangements, scrutiny functions, and the representational role of the councillor, each of the options were also tested against these criteria.

(iii) Optimum Council Size for Knowsley

Taking into account the current and ongoing challenges faced by local government, the Working Group considered options for 16 Wards (48 Members), 14 Wards (42 Members) and the status quo (i.e. 15 Wards with 45 Members).

In analysing the various options for an optimum Council size, it was noted that a Council size of 16 Wards would result in around 2,664 electors per Councillor. A Council size of 14 Wards would result in around 3,045 electors per Councillor. This means that both models would still result in Knowsley remaining within the range of the elector to councillor ratio in the CIPFA model and in the geographical neighbour model. However, in respect of the 16 Ward option, only one local authority in the CIPFA model had a lower elector to councillor ratio. Given the Council's previous concerns about its future sustainability, it was considered that moving to such a model could present a risk in terms of a perception of viability, particularly within the context of the current Government's *English Devolution White Paper – Power and partnership: Foundations for Growth*, which states that unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. In particular, the Government has set out its expectation that restructuring will lead to fewer, larger councils in England and, for most areas, this will mean creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more. In view of this, the 16 Ward option was discounted.

Clearly, the smaller the Council becomes the greater the risk that it will become unable to manage its business or provide effective elector representation, not only in terms of the Council's current context but also in the light of likely future trends or plans. The Working Group decided in this context that a Council size of 14 Wards (42 Members) presented too great a risk in terms of efficient and effective decision-making and representation, particularly in view of the demands currently placed upon Elected Members as referenced in Sections E and F.

Following detailed consideration of the issues, the Council therefore concluded that the retention of a Council size of 15 Wards (45 Members) was the optimum for Knowsley. Not only would this option enable the Council to continue to manage its business effectively (see below further analysis against the Boundary Commission's criteria), but it would also provide for convenient and effective local government.

(iv) Governance Arrangements

“The Commission aims to ensure that councils have the right number of councillors to take decisions and manage their business in an effective way. We therefore look at how decisions are taken across the authority to assess the volume and distribution of responsibility amongst elected members and staff.”

Section E of this submission sets out how the work and decision-making responsibilities are distributed across the Council. Section E also refers to the regulatory and scrutiny functions of the Council. In addition, Sections E and F outline the demands on councillors’ time and proposals to assist councillors in carrying out their representational roles.

The decision-making structure has been established to ensure that Members are not overburdened with special responsibility roles and meetings. Based on the evidence provided in these Sections, and building upon the current culture of clear lines of decision-making underpinned by a robust scheme of delegation to officers, the Council is clear that it will continue to deliver effective and convenient local government with a Council size of 45. To reduce the Council size to 42 would create additional demand and pressures upon Elected Members that would have a tangible, negative impact on efficient and effective decision-making and representation.

Overview and Scrutiny Function

“Every council has mechanisms to scrutinise the executive functions of the council and other local bodies. They also have significant discretion over the kind (and extent) of activities involved in that process. In considering council size, the Commission will want to satisfy itself that these responsibilities can be administered in a convenient and effective way through the number of councillors it recommends.”

Section E of this submission outlines the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny function. The work of Overview and Scrutiny is supported by specifically nominated lead officers from the Senior Officer cohort and receives dedicated support from a specialist team that also supports the borough’s strategic partnership governance. The statutory Scrutiny Officer is a member of the Corporate Management Team and is well-positioned to promote the function’s work. The current arrangements work extremely well and at its last Corporate Peer Review it was recognised that, “the Council has strong support processes in place for Scrutiny, this includes regular surveys of Councillors involved in Scrutiny Committees, as well as audits on agreed actions and recommendations. This, alongside dedicated support from Officers, provides oversight and ‘grip’ to Scrutiny decisions and supports transparency of impact.”

For the 2025/26 Municipal Year, all of the Council’s non-Executive Members are appointed to at least one of the Council’s Scrutiny Committees; 44.7% of those Members are appointed to more than one Scrutiny Committee. The Council is clear that the current arrangements work well, ensuring the engagement and representation of all political groups and Wards across the Borough in the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny function, and would have concerns about an increased demand being placed

on Elected Members should there be a reduction in their number overall (i.e. if the option to reduce the number of Wards to 14 were introduced).

Representational Roles of Councillors in the Local Community

“The Commission understands that there is no single approach to representation and members will represent and provide leadership to their communities in different ways. However, we are interested in hearing about the extent to which members are routinely expected to engage with communities and how this affects workload and responsibilities. In particular, if the council has defined a role for elected members, the Commission would find that evidence interesting.”

Section F of this submission demonstrates the existing arrangements and future support to enable Knowsley Councillors to fulfil their representational roles. The anticipated increased electorate to representative ratios will undoubtedly impact on Councillors’ workloads and the amount of time which they can allocate to different duties and casework. Since the previous local Ward Boundary Review was undertaken, the Council has taken on a more enabling role, working collaboratively with partner organisations and local communities to provide essential services. The intended impact of this work is to reduce demand on public services, but there will inevitably remain a higher demand on Elected Members’ time by virtue of the levels of deprivation that exist within the Borough and residents’ need for support.

Population density has also been considered, as increased demands can be placed on Councillors representing areas where the population is widely spread out. The size and geography of Knowsley enables quick and efficient travel across and within the Borough. Furthermore, the continued enhancement of mobile technology support for all Councillors will facilitate ease of access to all elected representatives.

(v) Other Key Considerations

Whilst it is noted that the Boundary Commission does not make decisions on council size purely for financial reasons, the ongoing financial challenges faced by local government cannot be ignored. The majority of local authorities are facing significant such challenges due to the Government’s previous reductions in public sector expenditure. Due to its deprivation challenges and reliance on Government funding, Knowsley has suffered some of the biggest funding cuts in the country over previous years. As referenced above, early announcements from the new Government have indicated a shift in policy for local government funding which will better recognise deprivation and will therefore benefit Knowsley in future years. However, the national economic climate is still challenging and the risk of future cuts in overall local government funding allocations remains. It is important therefore that the Council continues to identify savings as part of the budget setting process to reduce the risk that future budget shortfalls have to be resolved by unplanned or reactive service cuts.

SECTION E STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY – CURRENT AND FUTURE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Council operates a “Leader and Cabinet” model of decision-making as defined in the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended). With the exception of minor updates, this structure has remained largely unchanged since it was introduced in 2002.

Further information on the Council’s current governance arrangements is set out below.

(i) Governance Arrangements

Full Meeting of Council

There are 6 scheduled full meetings of the Council each year, where all Councillors meet together. Such meetings are open to the public except where “exempt” or “confidential” items are being considered (as defined in the Authority’s Constitution). A full meeting of the Council is required to approve the Council’s Constitution and any amendments to it, to decide the Council’s policy framework, and to set the annual budget and Council Tax. Members of the public and Elected Members may ask questions of the Leader of the Council, Members of the Cabinet, or Committee Chairpersons at these meetings (such questions must be submitted and approved in advance in accordance with the Council’s Constitution).

An Elected Member is appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May each year to act as Mayor of the Borough. In addition to undertaking ceremonial duties, the Mayor presides over full meetings of the Council.

The Annual Meeting of the Council is also used to appoint the Leader of the Council and the Committees/Working Groups of the Council (excluding the Cabinet). With regard to the appointment of the Cabinet, this decision falls to the Leader of the Council, who then reports to the Annual Meeting on the number and names of Members to be appointed to the Cabinet (including the name of the Deputy Executive Leader) and on the delegation of Executive functions.

Cabinet

The Cabinet functions collectively as the strategic policy makers for the whole Council and, in doing so, has collective responsibility for the Council’s vision of supporting residents to thrive.

Knowsley has a single party Cabinet made up of the Leader plus 6 Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders). The Cabinet is responsible for taking decisions on the Executive functions of the Council. These functions include proposing the policy framework, budget and Council Tax to full meetings of the Council and implementing the Authority’s policy framework. The Cabinet meets approximately every four to six weeks; there are currently 9 meetings scheduled for the 2025/26 Municipal Year, including a special meeting to consider the budget proposals.

Each Cabinet Member has a Portfolio area of responsibility. Portfolio Holders have regular contact with the relevant Directors and Heads of Service and are formally consulted on a range of [delegated decisions](#). Whilst departments are generally aligned to a Portfolio due to the nature of their functions, there is not always a direct correlation between Cabinet Portfolios and [Director responsibilities](#).

The [Cabinet Portfolios](#) are as follows:-

- Leader's Portfolio;
- Adult Social Care Portfolio;
- Children's Services Portfolio;
- Communities and Neighbourhoods Portfolio;
- Health Portfolio;
- Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio; and
- Resources Portfolio.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Council has five Overview and Scrutiny Committees to discharge the functions conferred by the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) with remits that broadly align with the Borough/ Council's strategic priorities but with the scope to deal with any issues that impact on the Borough and its residents. For example, in 2020, the Council declared a Climate Emergency in the borough and established a fifth scrutiny committee to oversee how the Council and its partners are responding to this challenge.

Each Committee consists of 11 Elected Members who are appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Council. This Committee size is considered appropriate to secure both politically and geographically balanced representation on each Committee. It also promotes effective scrutiny and proportionate debate at meetings. The Council would want to be able to retain this productive balance in terms of membership in the future.

The Council's current [Scrutiny Committees](#) are:

- Children;
- Climate Emergency;
- Inclusive Growth and Skills;
- Health and Adult Social Care; and
- Stronger Communities.

The Children Scrutiny Committee includes "voting" co-opted members representing the Church of England (1 representative) and Roman Catholic Church (1 representative), and two Parent Governor representatives in accordance with relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended). These representatives have the formal right to participate where the Committee is considering "education" matters. Their participation in other matters put before the Committee is at the discretion of the Chairperson. The Committee also invites "non-voting" representation from Knowsley Youth Cabinet (2 representatives) and a Parent Governor representative of academy schools in the Borough (1 representative).

The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee invites a “non-voting” representative from Healthwatch Knowsley to serve as a co-opted member on it, in accordance with the protocol with that organisation. In addition to its wider scrutiny functions, this Committee is responsible for the statutory health scrutiny responsibilities. In specific terms, this Committee is charged with considering proposals put forward for consultation by commissioners/providers to change or develop health services where they may impact on Knowsley residents. In certain instances, where proposals impact on more than one local authority area and at least two health scrutiny functions agree that proposals constitute “substantial” change or development, there is an obligation to establish a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee to consider whether the proposals are in the interest of the relevant area. In other instances, where proposals impact only in Knowsley or where Knowsley is the only Authority to consider proposals to be a “substantial variation”, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee can be charged with reaching a view on whether the proposals are in the interests of the Borough.

The Climate Emergency Scrutiny Committee is also designated as the “Flood Risk Management” Scrutiny Committee for the purposes of Section 9FH of the Local Government Act 2000.

The Committees have 5 formal meetings scheduled per municipal year. In addition to these formal sessions, their first meeting each year is an informal, workplanning session where a work programme for the year is discussed and agreed. Ordinarily a committee will commit to carrying out one task and finish review into a chosen topic. This usually involves a deep-dive into that topic. These task and finish reviews tend to be conducted as an all day session (“Review in a Day”). Whilst they are usually scheduled in as a replacement for one of the 5 formal meetings, during the course of a review, Committee Members may also engage in additional “evidence gathering” e.g. site visits, interviews, and/or focus groups to inform the review process.

A formal report setting out the outcome of the review, including recommendations, is produced and submitted to a future Cabinet meeting. At the Cabinet meeting, the executive is expected to agree a formal response to the recommendations, including actions to respond to them.

The other scheduled committee meetings focus on specific themes identified at the workplanning session. The focus tends to be based on examining activity in a particular policy area (e.g. community safety, children and families, employment and skills, housing and environment, and health and wellbeing) and involves holding decision makers (both Council and partners) to account. Each year, an Annual Scrutiny Report is produced and submitted to Full Council for consideration.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee activity offers an important platform for non-executive members to provide an input into local governance and to ensure that the voice of local people is represented in those arrangements. The breadth of the function’s remit requires a robust/ substantive structure that has the capacity to meet statutory requirements in the most effective manner.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee consists of 20 Members who are scheduled to meet 9 times each year. For 2025/26, the membership includes six executive members. The Committee has authority to discharge the Council's functions and exercise all powers as the Local Planning Authority. This includes enforcement powers in relation to Local Authorities Regulations 2000 and Highways Act 1980, and the registration of Common Land or Town and Village Greens.

The Committee considers approximately 5% of all planning applications received. In particular, the Committee considers all applications to which either 5 or more individual and independent representations have been received from separate households raising 'material' planning considerations in objection to a proposed development, where the officer recommendation is to approve the application; or 5 or more individual and independent representations have been received from separate households raising 'material' planning considerations in support of a proposed development and the officer recommendation is to refuse the application.

The Government is currently consulting on the introduction of a national scheme of delegation; however, the outcome of this is yet to be determined and, currently, the Council is not intending to alter its Scheme of Delegation materially.

Licensing Committee

The Licensing Committee consists of 15 Members who are scheduled to meet four times each year. The Committee exercises all powers in respect of the licensing registration and enforcement functions of the Council (arising from the Licensing Act 2003 and other licensing and control powers). This Committee is also supported by a Licensing Sub-Committee, which consists of any 3 of the 15 Members of the Licensing Committee and which meets on an ad hoc basis. The Licensing Sub-Committee determines applications for licences, permits, registration, consents or permissions issued by or on behalf of the Council and not dealt with under delegated powers, and considers applications for review, continuation, transfer, variation, renewal, suspension, closure orders, forfeiture or revocation of all licences, permits, registrations, consents or permissions issued by or on behalf of the Council. Four Sub-Committee meetings were held during the 2024/25 municipal year.

Governance and Audit Committee

The Governance and Audit Committee consists of 11 members in total – i.e. an independent Chairperson and 10 Elected Members – which is scheduled to meet 5 times each year. The Committee oversees the Council's corporate governance arrangements, accounting and treasury management arrangements, the work of internal auditors, and the Authority's response to external audit and other external inspections. It reviews and approves the Annual Governance Statement (as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011) and approves the annual audited Statement of Accounts. The Committee also supports the Council in the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by monitoring and reviewing matters in relation to the local standards framework, and advising and commenting upon the adoption of the underpinning protocols for the local standards framework.

The Governance and Audit Sub-Committee consists of the Vice-Chairperson of the main Committee and four of the remaining Councillor Committee Members (including an opposition Member). The Sub-Committee has delegated authority to hear and determine certain appeals against, or statutory objection to, decisions made by, or on behalf of the Council. The Sub-Committee would also determine Human Resource appeals by Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers, and consider collective disputes. Meetings are held on an ad-hoc basis with only one meeting required during the 2024/25 municipal year.

Employment and Appointments Committee

The Employment and Appointments Committee consists of 6 Members who meet on an ad hoc basis. Depending on the agenda for a particular meeting, the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) will also attend. The Committee considers shortlisted applicants for interview and makes recommendations to the Council in relation to the appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, and Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer (i.e. Director) posts. The Committee also performs a number of other limited functions in relation to the Council's establishment and human resource policies (as set out in the Authority's Constitution).

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Council representation on this Board is the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, the Cabinet Member for Health and a fourth Councillor, all appointed by the Leader of the Council. It is scheduled to meet 6 times in the 2025/26 Municipal Year – 5 times on a formal basis (when meetings are open to the press and public) and once on an informal basis (in order for the Board to undertake a development session). The main purpose of the Health and Wellbeing Board is to promote improvements in the health and wellbeing of the Knowsley population and the integrated working of those engaged in providing health, social care, and related services across the Borough.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Knowsley Council is one of the constituent members of the [Liverpool City Region Combined Authority](#), which has been granted devolved powers (and associated funding) from central Government. The Leader is the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Housing and Regeneration Cabinet Lead which requires him to hold monthly portfolio catch up meetings with Combined Authority officers. His Cabinet Board meetings which are held quarterly oversee a broad range of work including the Liverpool City Region's delivery of Brownfield Land Funds, the trailblazing Housing First programme, and a range of housing retrofit programmes which are helping to reduce household energy costs.

He is also a Member of the Liverpool City Region Innovation Zone Management Board, and the Combined Authority's Audit and Governance Committee. In addition to this, the Leader is also one of the Liverpool City Region's nominations to the North West Regional Leaders's Board.

Merseyside Police and Crime Panel

Knowsley Council supports the administration and development of the Merseyside Police and Crime Panel, which examines the actions and decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner and makes sure information is available for the public so that they can hold the Commissioner to account. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods is appointed to the Panel which ordinarily meets 7 times per year

Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

The Council also acts as the Host Authority for this standing joint health scrutiny committee that was formally established in 2021. Its role is to hold the local integrated care system to account in terms of its impact on the 9 Cheshire and Merseyside local authority areas. Each authority has two representatives and the joint committee meets 4 to 5 times per year to fulfil these responsibilities.

Scheme of Delegation

The Council operates a robust Scheme of Delegation to officers in order that only the key policy or strategic decisions (and, in the case of planning or licensing issues, those where there is an element of contention or objection) need to be made by Councillors. No individual Elected Member has decision-making powers. Delegated decisions are determined by Officers in consultation with the appropriate Elected Member(s) as required, as set out in the Scheme of Delegation. The Scheme of Delegation means that changes to legislation, national or local policy do not always have an immediate direct impact on the workload of committees.

Frequency and Composition of Committees

Typically, committee membership is on a standing basis. The majority of committee meetings are scheduled in advance, and the calendar of these appointments is agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council. The timing of some meetings may remain ad hoc if such an approach is made appropriate by the nature of the associated work (for example, the Licensing Sub-Committee). The current Committee Timetable is provided at Appendix C by way of example.

Committee meetings are always held on a quorate basis and there have been no instances in recent years where a Committee has been unable to perform the duties ascribed to it due to a lack of membership. Details of Member attendance for the 2024/25 Municipal Year are attached at Appendix D.

Generally, there has been appropriate stability and continuity in the membership of the respective committees over the last 4-year period. This allows for a degree of specialisation and development of knowledge of a subject area. However, any changes are supported by a comprehensive Elected Member training programme as referenced in Section F.

(ii) Future Governance Arrangements

The Council's 2025/26 Committee structure is illustrated in the diagram attached at Appendix B. The number of Elected Members per Committee/body has been determined with a view to ensuring effective and meaningful engagement and appropriate political representation and it is considered that this structure is effective in efficiently managing the Council's business, now and in the future, achieving:

- minimised bureaucracy;
- support for all Elected Members in discharging their community leadership roles in the future larger Wards with increased electorates;
- opportunities for all Members to play a role in shaping the Council's policies and to be consulted on major strategic decisions;
- transparency and ready access to information;
- definition of the roles and responsibilities of Members (executive, non-executive, scrutiny, committee members) and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements;
- a clarity of focus on the Council's key priorities;
- a continuation of partnership working; and,
- overall benefit to the Knowsley community.

It is considered that a Council size of 45 Elected Members supports the effective delivery of the Council's governance arrangements, and would continue to do so into the future, whereas a reduction in size would become untenable in practice due to the additional demands that would be placed upon the Elected Members' time.

SECTION F COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP – THE ROLE OF THE COUNCILLOR

(i) Community Leadership and Casework

In 2025/26, the Council is made up of the following:

- 31 Labour Group Members;
- 7 Green Party Group Members;
- 3 Liberal Democrat Group Members; and
- 4 independent Members.

Employment and carer statistics for the Councillor cohort vary from election to election. Currently, 23 out of 45 Elected Members are employed (51.11%). The remaining 48.89% are either unemployed or retired.

The current cohort of Elected Members comprises Councillors who have served on the Authority for a range of time periods:-

- 10 of 45 Members have been Councillors in Knowsley for a total of 20 years or more;
- 9 of 45 Members have been Councillors in Knowsley for a total of more than 10 but less than 20 years;
- 11 of 45 Members have been Councillors in Knowsley for a total of more than 5 but less than 10 years; and,
- 15 of 45 Members have been Councillors in Knowsley for a total of less than 5 years.

Councillors are frequently involved in casework on behalf of their respective constituents. This regularly involves interaction between the Council's administration and the member of the public, which may also involve engagement with other organisations and individuals. Councillors are often sought out by constituents as a source of information regarding Council services or to explain Council policy in a certain area. Councillors are therefore expected to have a broad (albeit not necessarily in-depth) knowledge of the full range of Council services together with a knowledge of how to progress issues and with whom. The Council has produced an "App" that Councillors may use to support them in this work, which a number (predominantly new Members) have signed up to use. The App assists Members in identifying appropriate officers that may assist with particular enquiries.

Although there is no formal expectation from the Council that Councillors must become involved with local community-based organisations (e.g. parish and town councils or resident groups), many choose to do so and are extremely active within their local communities.

All Councillors have a Knowsley Council email address, are provided with computer facilities and internet access, and have their email address and telephone number made publicly available to facilitate direct contact from and with their constituents. Councillors also conduct ward surgeries: these vary in frequency ranging from weekly to monthly.

Councillors often act as “community champions” and work with the local community to deal with or progress specific issues. Examples include campaigning for or against a local facility or issue, or co-ordinating support or opposition to applications for planning consent etc. Roles on Community Associations and as School Governors are just two of the typical types of community involvement for Knowsley Councillors.

16 out of the 45 current Borough Councillors are also members of one of the local Parish or Town Councils as analysed below. Three are Members of both Knowsley Town Council and Prescott Town Council as well as the Borough Council (all of them Prescott North Borough Ward Members) and two others are Members of both Prescott Town Council and Whiston Town Council (both of them Prescott South Borough Ward Members):-

- 5 Borough Councillors are also Members of Halewood Town Council;
- 6 Borough Councillors are also Members of Knowsley Town Council;
- 5 Borough Councillors are also Members of Prescott Town Council; and
- 6 Borough Councillors are also Members of Whiston Town Council.

A more detailed list of these involvements is publicly available via the Register of Interests on each of the Councillor’s pages on the Knowsley website via the address/link below:-

[Your Councillors | Knowsley Council](#)

(ii) Representing the Council on Outside Bodies

In addition to Elected Members’ involvement in organisations within their own local communities, they may also be nominated to carry out a wider representative role on behalf of the Council on outside organisations. The Council currently appoints Elected Members to 111 positions on 53 different outside bodies/partner organisations. A full list of outside bodies to which Knowsley Council nominates Members can be found [here](#). These cover a range of themes and geographical footprints including:

- Knowsley bodies – such as the Knowsley Better Together Board, and the Knowsley Children and Families Board;
- Sub-regional bodies – such as the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority;
- Regional bodies – such as the North West Employers’ Organisation, and the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation; and,

- National bodies – for example the Local Government Association, the Special Interest Group of Metropolitan Authorities, and the Association for Public Service Excellence.

The Council is clear that collaborative and partnership working must be a priority for the future sustainability of the Borough. Consequently, the Council continually reviews the outside organisations upon which it is represented and widens the spread of membership on these bodies to share the workload more equally amongst Members.

(iii) Special Responsibility Positions

Elected Members may also be appointed to positions of special responsibility within the Council. The current special responsibility positions are outlined below.

Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council is elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council and so is a member of the majority political group on the Council. The Leader performs an important role in providing the political leadership of the Council, and representing the Council's interests in terms of relations with other local authorities and other local, regional, and national organisations/bodies. The Leader is responsible for all executive decision-making within the Authority, whether undertaken by the Cabinet (which he chairs) or by officers under delegated powers.

Deputy Leader of the Council

The Deputy Leader supports and, where appropriate, deputises for the Leader of the Council. The Deputy Leader is a Member of the Cabinet (i.e. the Vice-Chairperson) and also holds a Cabinet Portfolio.

Leader of the Opposition

The Council recognises the Leader of the largest minority group as Leader of the Opposition. In 2025/26, the Leader of the Opposition is the Leader of the Green Party Group.

Chairpersons of Committees/Health and Wellbeing Board

Chairpersons of Committees chair and preserve order at the relevant meetings and ensure that the business of such meetings is carried out effectively with due regard to all legal and Constitutional requirements and in accordance with agreed Terms of Reference.

Vice-Chairpersons of Committees

Vice-Chairpersons of Committees support and, where appropriate, deputise for their relevant Chairperson.

(iv) Support Services for Councillors

It is essential that Councillors receive the most effective support possible in discharging their community roles, which have increased in importance when compared to their traditional representational and/or decision-making responsibilities.

Clerical/Administrative

The Leader receives specific clerical/administrative support to assist him in discharging his leadership and representational roles; i.e. he benefits from the support of a named Personal Assistant. Where appropriate and necessary, ad hoc support is also provided to Portfolio Holders by the relevant Directors' Executive Support Teams, but these Members are not supported by specific individuals.

Currently, Members pass some casework directly on to relevant staff and also deal with such issues directly. Council officers work alongside Members to deal with such Council-related issues, including dealing with queries from the public, and assisting with the processing of complaints received.

Information and Communications Technology

All Councillors are issued with computers during their term of office. The importance of information technology was highlighted during the Covid-19 period when Members were supported in holding remote meetings and undertaking their business online. The Council continues to livestream its public meetings since that time.

As referenced earlier, an "App" has been developed with a view to supporting Elected Members in managing their caseloads in an efficient and data compliant manner. Newer Members in particular have been utilising this facility and the App continues to be promoted to all existing and newly elected Members.

The Council has also developed a "Members' Portal" which contains a variety of information to support Members in their role. For example:

- latest news stories (internal and external);
- a link to meetings and decisions;
- contact information;
- "how to" guides (such as software user guides);
- information on benefits and grants (to support such enquiries);
- Members' training information; and
- information in relation to hate crimes (including how to report a hate crime to Merseyside Police).

Training and Development

To assist Elected Members in their roles, training is provided across a range of topics. From the 2025/26 municipal year onwards, each Member has a "Individual Training Plan" produced, and training or development support is provided to match the needs described in those Plans. This reflects essential, in-person training at the start of a

Member's term of office and is revised annually dependent upon their appointments to Committees. The essential sessions, to be provided once during a Member's term of office, are kept under review and any major changes notified to Members by email/on the Members' Portal with an ad hoc session provided for all Members where considered appropriate. The training programme per Member is therefore as follows:

Essential Training	<p>For this element, Elected Members are expected to attend each of the following sessions at least once during their term of office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethics and Standards - GDPR - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Emergency Planning - Safeguarding Adults
Role Specific Training	<p>Members would be required to attend training sessions as appropriate depending upon their appointment to bodies at the Annual Meeting, in particular in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning Committee. - Scrutiny Committee - Governance and Audit Committee - Licensing Committee. - Visits to Children's Homes. <p>Given that such training would be providing up-to-date advice and guidance, Members would be expected to attend in each instance (i.e. not once per term of office).</p>
Ad Hoc Seminars	<p>This would involve sessions arranged at short notice at the request of an Elected Member and/or a Senior Officer and would focus on upcoming issues whereby Members would benefit from receiving an update. This could include training on any new IT systems, platforms or packages that Members may come across throughout the municipal year.</p>
Online training/ workbooks	<p>This element involves the continued use of a selection of online training/ workbooks from well-known providers (for example the Local Government Association, Learning Pool etc.) throughout the year as and when appropriate. Members may use these facilities via the Members' Portal.</p>
Leadership Academy Programme	<p>This is provided through the Local Government Association for Members in Leadership positions (e.g. Cabinet Members and Chairpersons).</p>
Leadership Essentials Programme	<p>Also provided through the Local Government Association, this element of training enables Members to undertake Leadership training in a variety of different subjects over the year.</p>

Individual Training Needs as identified by Elected Members	This theme would focus on the areas for further development identified by Members as part of their individual plans which is not covered by any of the above elements.
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In addition, to the above programme of training we also:

- Hold a 2-day induction for newly elected Members.
- Wherever possible we record our training sessions and make them available to Members to access online at a time convenient to themselves.

Formal feedback from the training and development sessions shows that they are highly valued by Members with 94.64% of feedback received scoring the sessions as either 'excellent' or 'good' and only 5.36% who rated a session as 'average' or 'poor'. The quality of this support is routinely monitored and reviewed by the Members' Training and Development Task Group.

(v) **Elected Member Survey**

In order to accurately reflect the role of Knowsley's Councillors, and their relationship with the communities they serve, an Elected Members' Survey was carried out during the period 28 May 2025 to 25 June 2025 using a Microsoft Forms survey link. A response rate of 57.8% (26 out of 45 Councillors) was achieved reflecting the following:

Appointments

- 73% of respondents also hold at least one other Council position in addition to their role as a Councillor – e.g. Portfolio Holder/Chairperson etc.
- 76.92% of respondents are appointed to at least three Council committees/working groups in addition to Full Council.
- 42.31% of respondents are appointed to four or more Council committees/working groups in addition to Full Council.
- 50% of respondents are also appointed to represent the Council on at least one "outside body".

Time spent on average per month attending/preparing for Council and Outside Body Meetings (not including travel time)

- The responses indicated a minimum monthly average of 25 hours per Councillor.
- 80.77% of respondents said that they spend over 12 hours per month attending meetings.
- 38.46% of respondents said that they spend 25+ hours on average per month attending meetings.

Constituent Work

- The responses indicated a minimum monthly average of 20 hours per Councillor.
- 69.23% of respondents said that they spend over 13 hours per month dealing with constituency work (i.e. dealing with queries, attending surgeries etc).

Training

- 100% of members said that they spend at least 1 – 5 hours per month attending training/learning events.

Time spent on Council business

- 50% of respondents consider that the time they spend on Council business is more than what they expected it to be prior to being elected.
- 76.92% of respondents believe that their time spent on Council business has increased since they were first elected.
- Reasons given for the increase included: increasing casework load (e.g. as a result of the pandemic, and due to austerity/the cost-of-living crisis and housing issues); additional roles and responsibilities; community engagement work; bigger wards/ward make-up and additional Liverpool City Region activity.

Members were also invited to comment further on matters they thought relevant, and the following examples were received, which support the Council's submission:

"I would ask the LGBCE to consider the massive commitment given by elected members in carrying out their duties on behalf of their constituents, both directly and in their duties to Council. Elected members often give up large amounts of their time supplementing their Council duties with community events, which are often not acknowledged. In order to allow good effective governance to continue at KMBC, I would ask them to consider retaining the number of elected members currently serving. This is important to continue with the commitments already carried out by members, and to allow for recruitment of future members and the retention of current members. Time devoted to serving your community must be at a realistic level to ensure a steady flow of new members applying to be a member - anything less will simply deter people from serving."

"It's not just about the numbers of people councillors deal with, it is also about the issues they face and that will depend on their social situations e.g. does poverty affect them, education, housing, health conditions etc. It is important for these people to have communication with councillors in a way that they can access and be comfortable with."

"As one of the largest and deprived constituencies in the borough we are constantly working with the residents on numerous occasions."

SECTION G SUMMARY

This submission from Knowsley Borough Council to the Boundary Commission proposes the retention of a 3 Members per ward model, and the retention of 45 Elected Members. The proposal would provide an average councillor to elector ratio across the Borough of 1:2,842, an increase on the current arrangement and within the “expected range” when compared to the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours model for English authorities.

In reaching this position, the Council took into account the following two alternate models which it discounted for the reasons shown:

- **Option 1 – 16 Wards (48 Elected Members)**

This option was discounted as it was considered having regard to elector ratio as it would place Knowsley at the lower end of the expected range when compared to the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours model.

- **Option 2 – 14 Wards (42 Elected Members)**

This option was discounted as it was considered that it presented too great a risk in terms of efficient and effective decision-making and representation due to the demands already placed upon the officer and Elected Member resource, having regard to the needs of the Borough and its residents.

Conclusion

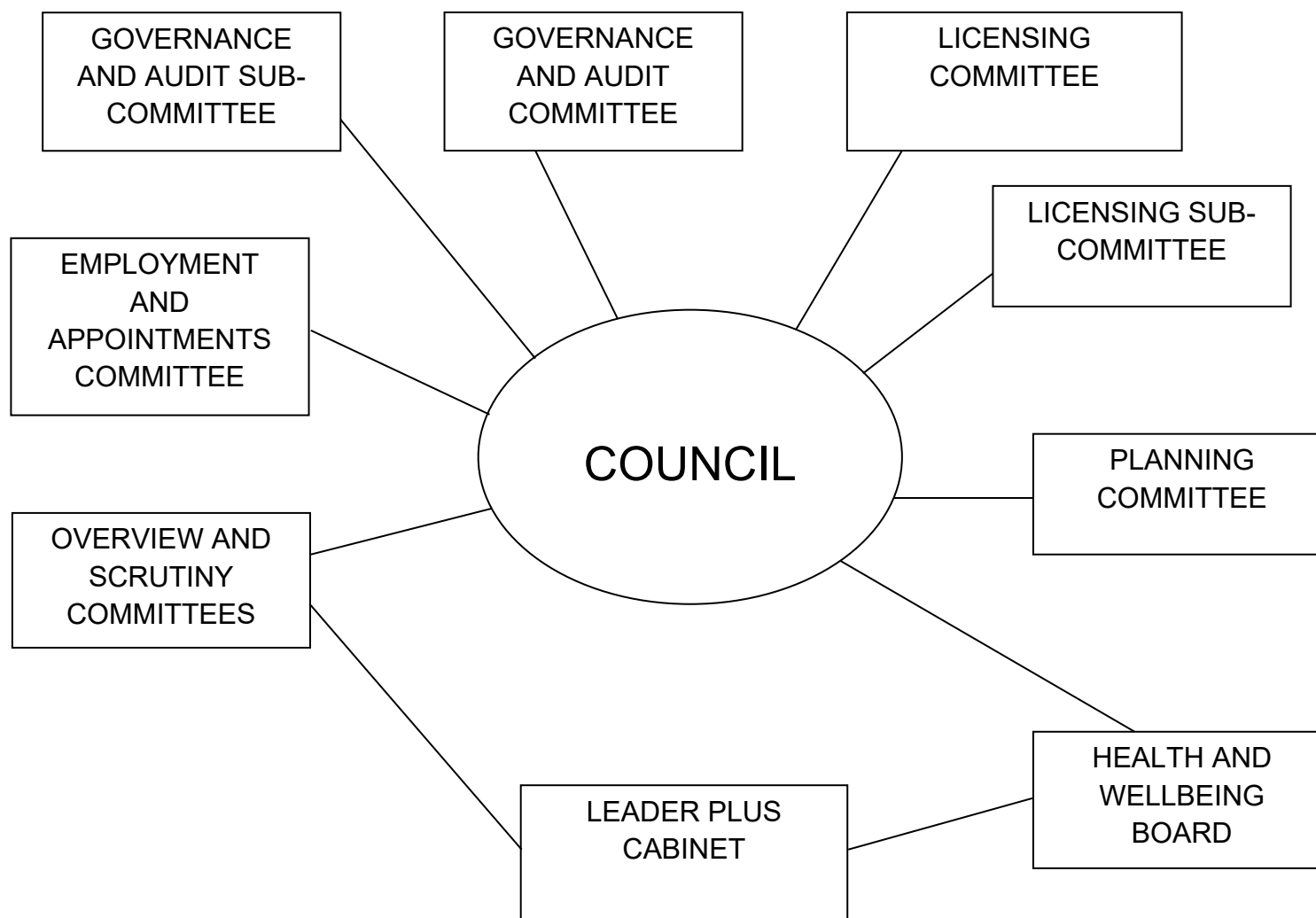
In conclusion, it is considered that the retention of the current Council size will enable the Council to continue to deliver effective and efficient strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership now and for the foreseeable future.

COMPARABLE AUTHORITIES - ELECTORATE AND WARD INFORMATION**APPENDIX A**

Authority	Electorate	No. of Wards	No. of Elected Members	Average Electors per Member
CIPFA Nearest Neighbours*				
Salford	202,469	20	60	3374
Rochdale	175,323	20	60	2922
Halton*	100,292	18	54	1,857
Barnsley	In review			
Tameside	179,961	19	57	3157
St Helens*	144,813	18	48	3017
Rotherham	206,263	25	59	3496
Wakefield	In review			
Middlesbrough	In review			
Sunderland	In review			
Telford & Wrekin	147,063	32	54	2723

Wigan	249,184	25	75	3,322
Doncaster	228,840	21	55	4,161
Bolton	213,667	20	60	3562
Walsall	In review			
Liverpool*	365,505	64	85	4,300
Sefton*	In review			
Wirral*	In review			

*Geographic neighbours



APPENDIX C

COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2025/26

Council	Wednesday 6.00pm	16 July	22 October	21 January	4 March (Budget Meeting)	18 March	Fri 22 May (Annual Meeting at 3.00pm)			
Cabinet	Wednesday 4.00pm	11 June	16 July	24 September	15 October	5 November	3 December	21 January	11 February (Budget Meeting)	18 March

Scrutiny Committees:-

Inclusive Growth and Skills	Tuesday 6.00pm	<i>*10 June</i>	15 July	9 September	**11 November	13 January	3 March
Health and Adult Social Care	Tuesday 6.00pm	<i>*17 June</i>	22 July	16 September	**18 November	20 January	10 March
Children	Thursday 6.00pm	<i>*12 June</i>	17 July	18 September	**13 November	15 January	5 March
Stronger Communities	Tuesday 6.00pm	<i>*24 June</i>	29 July	23 September	**25 November	27 January	17 March
Climate Emergency	Thursday 6.00pm	<i>*19 June</i>	30 July (Wednesday)	25 September	**4 December	5 February	19 March

Governance and Audit Committee/ Sub-Committee	Monday 6.00pm	16 June		6 October		10 November		26 January		9 March
Planning Committee	Thursday 6.00pm	26 June	10 July	11 September	9 October	6 November	11 December	22 January	12 February	12 March
Licensing Committee	Thursday 6.00pm	24 July		19 November (Wednesday)		29 January			11 March (Wednesday)	
Joint Consultative Committee	Thursday 10.00am	17 July			20 November				19 March	
Health and Wellbeing Board	Tuesday 2.00pm	10 June	tbc (Development Session)	16 September		11 November		27 January		17 March

NB:- Scrutiny Work Planning Sessions are in italics and denoted by * and possible "Review in a Day" Sessions will be denoted by ** (to be confirmed after the Work Planning Sessions).

APPENDIX D**2024/25 Municipal Year - Committee Attendance**

Committee Name	Number of Members	Number of Meetings	% Attendance
Children Scrutiny	11	4	81.8
Climate Emergency Scrutiny Committee	11	5	50.9
Inclusive Growth and Skills Scrutiny Committee	11	42	70.4
Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	11	4	81.8
Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee	11	5	63.6
Licensing Committee	15	3	73.3
Licensing Sub-Committee	3	4	100
Planning Committee	20	8	69.4
Governance and Audit Committee	10	4	77.5
Governance and Audit Sub-Committee	5	1	80
Cabinet	7	8	87.5
Council	45	7	84.8
Health and Wellbeing Board	4	5	80
Employment and Appointments Committee	6 (core membership)	4	79.2
Joint Consultative Committee (an informal, internal meeting)	7	3	66.7
Members' Training and Development Task Group (an informal, internal meeting)	10	3	46.7
Polling District Review Working Group (an informal, internal meeting)	7	4	64.3