

Chesterfield Liberal Democrats

# Council Size Submission

Chesterfield Borough Council

## Contents

How to Make a Submission.....	2
About You .....	2
Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only) .....	2
Local Authority Profile .....	2
Council Size .....	9
Other Issues.....	22

## How to Make a Submission

1. It is recommended that submissions on council size follow the format provided below. Submissions should 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.
2. 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.

## About You

3. 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, or an individual.

This submission is made by Chesterfield Liberal Democrats, having a minority of 17 councillors of 48 councillors on Chesterfield Borough Council.

## Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

4. 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.*

N/A – Identified by Commission.

## Local Authority Profile

5. Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description may cover all, or some 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?
  - Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

## **Overview**

Chesterfield Borough is home to 104,837 people (2019 estimate, ONS) with Chesterfield town the second largest settlement in Derbyshire (Derby City is the largest).

It is a relatively compact and mainly urban borough. The market town of Chesterfield acts as the sub-regional centre for north eastern Derbyshire and provides a range of retail, commercial, leisure and cultural facilities.

In addition to Chesterfield, there are several other key neighbourhood centres; the largest being Staveley and Brimington. Staveley lies on the eastern side of the borough, approximately five miles from Chesterfield town centre – it is linked to the M1 and Chesterfield by the A619.

## **Local Government context**

Chesterfield is a borough council in a two-tier area with seven other district councils and Derbyshire County Council. The Borough currently has 48 elected members (28 Labour, 17 Liberal Democrat and 3 Independent) serving 19 wards.

Two areas of Chesterfield Borough are parished:

- Staveley Town Council representing the wider Staveley settlement including Barrow Hill (part of the Barrow Hill and New Whittington ward), Hollingwood, Inkersall Green, Lowgates, Middlecroft, Poolsbrook and Duckmanton.
- Brimington Parish Council represents the Brimington North ward and the Brimington part of Brimington South ward.

Chesterfield Borough also has nine Derbyshire County Council electoral divisions with nine elected members representing Chesterfield Borough residents at Derbyshire County Council.

## **Parliamentary constituency context**

The Chesterfield Borough Council wards of Barrow Hill and New Whittington and Lowgates and Woodthorpe fall within the parliamentary constituency for North East Derbyshire. The remaining Chesterfield Borough Council wards form the Chesterfield parliamentary constituency.

## **Future Electorate Size**

Chesterfield Borough has a population of 104,837 (2019), 21% are under 19 and 21% being over 65. Like many areas Chesterfield Borough's population profile is an ageing one with over 65's set to make up 25% of the population by 2030. Chesterfield Borough's population is estimated to grow by 2% between 2019 and 2030 which is considerably slower than nearby local authorities including Bolsover (8%), North East Derbyshire (4%), Amber Valley (7%) and Derbyshire Dales (3%). Source – Derbyshire Observatory.

The voting age population in Chesterfield Borough is set to rise by 2,976 (3.6%) between 2019 and 2030.

## Challenges

The latest indices of multiple deprivation figures, health profile, official labour market statistics (NOMIS) and child poverty statistics indicate that despite extensive investment to grow Chesterfield's economy, our communities are still struggling to access the proceeds of growth due to a variety of factors including poor health, caring responsibilities and poor educational and skills attainment.

Our key challenges include:

- Covid-19 response and recovery
- Town centre regeneration including preservation of outdoor market and development of retail and leisure spaces
- Higher number of workless households at 27.1% (2019 - NOMIS) compared to both the East Midlands at 13.1% and National average at 13.9%
- Lower levels of qualifications of NVQ4 and above 27.9% (2019 – NOMIS) compare to the East Midlands 34.1% and National average 40.3%
- Higher levels of ESA and Incapacity Benefits 8.8% (2016 – NOMIS) compared to the East Midlands 6.0% and national average 6.1%
- Higher levels of carers benefits 2.3% (2016 – NOMIS) compared to the East Midlands 1.8% and national average 1.7%
- Higher levels of disabled benefits 1.2% (2016- NOMIS) compared to the East Midlands 0.7% and national average .8%
- Increasing the rate of housing delivery and evidencing a five year supply of available housing sites
- A legacy of industrial restructuring: a high level of working age benefit claimants (particularly health related) and concentrated deprivation in some local communities

What the above data shows is a legacy of mining and heavy industry which has left the population in poorer health than the East Midlands Region and the national average. Households are workless and claiming benefits, not because of unemployment which is in line with the national average at 1.1% and only fractionally higher than the regional East Midlands average of 1%, but because of poor health and disability which results in the need for carers.

## 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 years. 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 impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

### **Internal Governance Arrangements**

Since the last Electoral Review in 1998 Chesterfield Borough Council has undertaken a full review of its leadership model and executive arrangements and in 2011 moved to a “strong Leader and Cabinet” model. The Leader is elected by members of the Council for a four year term, the Leader then appoints Executive Cabinet members. The alternative option of an Elected Mayor and Executive Cabinet has previously been considered. The Council had previously operated under a committee system selected by the Council from 2001 until its replacement in 2011 by the Leader and cabinet model.

### **Number of Electors per Councillor**

The primary consideration in determining the number of councillors required, is number of electors per councillor which needs to be in balance with other local authorities of a similar size and type. Using the CIPFA Nearest Neighbour Model for English authorities the following information was obtained.

Local authority	No of Electors	Number of wards	Council Size	Electors per councillor
Bassetlaw District Council	89,941	25	48	1,874
Bolsover District Council	61,394	17	37	1,659
Boston Borough Council	48,756	15	30	1,625
Cannock Chase District Council	74,884	15	41	1,822
Carlisle City Council	83,190	13	39	2,133
Chesterfield Borough Council	79,250	19	48	1,651
Copeland Borough Council	53,675	17	33	1,627
Gloucester City Council	89,469	18	39	2,294
Ipswich City Council	99,751	16	48	2,078
Lincoln City Council	60,383	11	33	1,830
Mansfield District Council	80,863	36	36	2,246
Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council	96,713	21	44	2,198
North East Derbyshire District Council	80,022	24	53	1,510
Redditch Borough Council	62,781	12	29	2,165
Worcester City Council	77,583	15	35	2,217
Wyre Forest District Council	78,273	12	33	2,372
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,216,928</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>31,301</b>
<b>TOTAL EXCLUDING CBC</b>	<b>1,137,678</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>29,650</b>

The information above gives the following results:

- Average number of electors per councillor 1956
- Average number of electors per councillor excluding CBC 1977

Chesterfield Borough Council is clearly below the average by only having 1,651 electors per councillor.

Based on the average number of electors per councillor (excluding CBC) of 1977 and applying this to CBC's no of electors gives a result of  $(79,250 / 1977) = 40$  councillors required.

However, the nearest neighbour group includes several authorities which have a significantly higher geographical spread than Chesterfield borough and are more rural/small settlement based.

Taking this into account the list can be reduced to other authorities that are large town/small city councils which are much more similar to Chesterfield, then the following list is produced:

Local authority	No of Electors	Number of wards	Council Size	Electors per councillor
Carlisle City Council	83,190	13	39	2,133
Chesterfield Borough Council	79,250	19	48	1,651
Gloucester City Council	89,469	18	39	2,294
Ipswich City Council	99,751	16	48	2,078
Lincoln City Council	60,383	11	33	1,830
Mansfield District Council	80,863	36	36	2,246
Redditch Borough Council	62,781	12	29	2,165
Worcester City Council	77,583	15	35	2,217
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>633,270</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>16,614</b>
<b>TOTAL EXCLUDING CBC</b>	<b>554,020</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>14,963</b>

The information above gives the following results:

- Average number of electors per councillor 2,077
- Average number of electors per councillor excluding CBC 2,138

Again, Chesterfield Borough Council is below the average by only having 1,651 electors per councillor.

Based on the average number of electors per councillor (excluding CBC) of 2138 and applying this to CBC's no of electors, gives a result of  $(79,250 / 2138) = 37$  councillors required.

To further explore this data and to create a range of options to work within, the data can be used by applying the highest and lowest number of electors per councillor to CBC no of electors.

- Highest number of electors per councillor Gloucester City Council 2,194 applied to CBC no of electors 79,250 equals 35 councillors



- Lowest number of electors per councillor (excluding CBC) is Lincoln City Council 1830 applied to CBC no of electors equals 43 councillors

This provides a range of 35 to 43 councillors with 37 being the overall average. Any higher and we would have too few electors per councillor in comparison to our nearest neighbours, and any lower and we would have too many electors per councillor compared to similar councils.

### **Number of meetings per councillor**

A second approach was taken to look at the total number of Councillors that would be required to undertake the activities and meetings of each council committee. The number of councillors was listed against another axis consisting of all of the committee titles. The number of annual meetings was then mapped against both axes, to share the workload more or less consistently across the list of Councillors. This resulted in the conclusion that 38 councillors would be required to enable the committee workload to be achieved.

The concern is that having looked at the number of meetings each councillor would have to attend, the scheduling of meetings would become extremely challenging and councillors would have very little time between each meeting to prepare.

### **Number of councillors required for committees to function**

Currently CBC has a total of 48 councillors, with 10 councillors on the cabinet leaving the remaining 38 to be assigned to committees.

A broad brush approach would suggest:

- 3 councillors are assigned to one committee
- 13 councillors are assigned to 2 committees
- 14 councillors are assigned to 3 committees
- 8 councillors are assigned to 4 committees

The assignment of individuals takes into account the need for political balance, for example of the 3 councillors assigned to one committee one is an independent. Other factors such as employment or health may be taken into account by the person allocating committee places but this is not immediately apparent.

These figures are not indicative of workloads, however, as different committees vary considerably in terms of frequency and workloads. Being a member of Planning for example would involve approximately 19 meetings per year whereas a member of the Taxi Consultative Committee has on average 4 meetings a year.

Having considered the numbers of councillors on each committee and thought about how many are needed for each committee to function the following conclusions were drawn:

- Reduce Executive Team from current 10 posts to 8, this being 6 portfolio holders, Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition. The deputy leader could be drawn from one of the portfolio holders. The Executive team recently employed an executive Assistant and have the staff available in the Town Hall for support.
- Reduce the number on Planning to 12, 2 groups of 6.
- Reduce the number on Scrutiny to 12, 2 groups of 6.
- Reduce the number on Licensing to 12, 2 groups of 6

This would result in a reduction of 13 councillors to a total number of 35 councillors. When this is put into context with the range of number of electors per councillor it is at the lowest point acceptable in terms of representation of the electorate.

When 35 councillors is compared to the number of meetings each councillor would need to attend and the timetabling issues that would bring it becomes a figure that is simply academic but not feasible in reality. It also does not take into account the need for 'slack' in the system to allow for illness and absence of councillors.

Therefore when all the above is considered the minimum number of councillors required to ensure the effective running of the council whilst being in line with other similar authorities is agreed to be 38.

### **Governance and Capacity Issues**

We are not aware of any Governance issues having been raised by any Inspectorate or similar.

### **Council Size**

6. The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation 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**

7. 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.

Topic		
Governance Model	Key lines of explanation	<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> <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><b>Governance Model</b></p> <p>Chesterfield Borough Council adopted the strong leader and cabinet model in 2011. Prior to this the committee system was in place. Although the committee system can bring the benefit of all members being more fully involved in discussions around decision making, the significant disadvantage of this is a much slower decision-making process. The benefits of the strong leader and cabinet model are that decisions are taken quickly and effectively and we acknowledge this has worked effectively over the last 10 years.</p> <p>In addition, given the current widespread disruption caused by the Covid Pandemic both in the context of the council and in wider society as a whole, we do not see this is an appropriate time to introduce widespread and fundamental changes to the council structure. For these reasons we propose the governance model should continue as the “strong leader and cabinet model.”</p> <p>In terms of governance we see the Cabinet as akin to the Executive Board of the elected membership, its primary role to provide strategic leadership and direction to the council. Each Cabinet Councillor, other than leaders or deputy leader, looks after an individual area of responsibility or portfolio. They make decisions on how policies and services are delivered. In Chesterfield the Leader of the main opposition group is also part of the Cabinet which we find commendable as it demonstrates a willingness for collaborative working and inclusivity.</p>

		<p>In this organisational model Overview and Scrutiny has a crucial role in holding the Cabinet to account for its decisions. This is through providing constructive “critical friend” challenge, to amplify the voices and concerns of the public, and to seek ongoing improvement in public services. As such good scrutiny is fundamental to good governance as it drives accountability, transparency and involvement.</p> <p><b>Formulation of Strategic and Operational Policies</b></p> <p>Policy development is currently carried out by the cabinet members on their respective portfolios which works effectively. Once developed, policy is taken to full council where all members can ask questions and vote. In some cases, policy will go to one of the scrutiny committees for further questions and examination. Scrutiny has the right to call officers to attend scrutiny meetings to answer questions and to make recommendations to the cabinet about forthcoming decisions.</p> <p><b>Number of members required for these roles - 8 (reduction of 2)</b></p> <p><b>The Cabinet</b> currently comprises 10 members, these being Leader, Deputy Leader, 6 portfolio holders, Leader of the opposition, and a special project post which was introduced in 2020. It is noted that in the current organisation the deputy leader has no specific portfolio responsibility.</p> <p>We propose streamlining the Cabinet to 8 posts, this being the Leader, 6 portfolio leads and the Leader of the opposition. The role of deputy would be drawn from the group of Portfolio leads. And it is considered that the Executive Assistant recruited and appointed during 2020 to assist the Leader is sufficient to provide immediate, targeted support.</p>
<b>Portfolios</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<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><b>Portfolio Responsibilities</b></p> <p>The 6 areas of portfolio responsibility would be as follows</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic growth</li> <li>• Finance and governance</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Internal Services – to include functions such as HR, ICT</li> <li>• External Services – to include such functions as parks and green spaces, Street Scene,</li> </ul> <p><b>Time required</b> The time a responsibility required to fully carry out a portfolio role would be equivalent to a part time role.</p> <p><b>Who takes decisions?</b> Portfolio holder roles are intensive with a broad range of responsibilities and a significant delegated authority for decision making within their portfolio area. This can be viewed within Part 3 of the constitution.</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><b>Responsibilities Delegated to Officers or Committees</b></p> <p>Part 2 of the Council's constitution details the functions carried out by Full Council. This includes a range of functions which by law cannot be delegated by Full Council alongside elements of local choice. All elected members are engaged in decision making at this level.</p> <p>The functions and decision making powers of Cabinet and five committees are also explained within the constitution. The Cabinet would include the Leader, six portfolio holders, and the Leader of the Opposition.</p> <p>All elected members would be a member of at least one committee or scrutiny committee. Some would be members of multiple committees.</p> <p>Alongside the Leader and Executive Cabinet delegated decision powers there is also an extensive scheme for officer delegations which is regularly reviewed. This can be viewed within Part 3 of the constitution.</p>

		<p><b>How Many Councillors would be involved in major decisions?</b></p> <p>All</p>
--	--	---

Accountability

8. 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.

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	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.
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>
Analysis	<p><b>How will decision makers be held to account?</b></p> <p>Decision makers are held to account by a number of mechanisms, in particular the challenge through the three scrutiny committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee,</li> <li>- the Customer, Community and Organisation Committee, and the</li> <li>- Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee.</li> </ul>

	<p>Scrutiny members act as a critical friend to the development and implementation of key council policies and provide robust challenge to the Executive (both Cabinet and senior officers). Cabinet decisions are circulated to all elected members and there is the option of call in.</p> <p><b>Task and finish groups.</b></p> <p>These are a useful mechanism enabling a smaller group of councillors to gather evidence and produce recommendations to the larger scrutiny forums on a specific topic. They are established in response to issues identified by the Scrutiny committees. Membership is decided by the parent committee and is generally drawn from existing scrutiny members reflecting interests or skills of individual elected members.</p> <p><b>Number of Councillors required on Scrutiny Committees – 12 (reduction of 4 )</b></p> <p>There are currently 16 members on the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum. Each of these members are also a member of either the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee or the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. Each committee meets six times per annum.</p> <p>This arrangement leads to a large Forum group which undermines its effectiveness. Once any officer presentations are heard, there is insufficient time available for questioning and discussion by the current 16 members. Scrutiny would function better with only 12 members on Overview and Performance By reducing the size of the group, each individual member would have more scope to delve deeper into the issues and perform a higher level of scrutiny.</p> <p>To support this streamlined approach, it is proposed that there should be a greater use of Task and Finish groups and that recruitment to these be opened up to all elected members as a matter of course. This would embed the scrutiny function more centrally at the heart of all council activity and available to all elected members to become involved in rather than the risk of scrutiny being seen as the sole responsibility of the formal scrutiny committees.</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>

	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</li> <li>➤ Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</li> <li>➤ Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</li> <li>➤ Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</li> <li>➤ What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>	Analysis	<p><b>How Many Councillors Required to fill these roles – 12 (reduction of 2)</b></p> <p>Chesterfield Borough Council has a single Planning Committee responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning applications</li> <li>• Listed Building Consent</li> <li>• regulatory functions of the Council.</li> <li>• Building control applications</li> <li>• Tree preservation orders</li> <li>• Conservation issues</li> </ul> <p><b>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members</b> Over the last three years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2017/18 72 of 734 = 9.8%</li> <li>• 2018/19 49 of 583 = 8.4%</li> <li>• 2019/20 70 of 441 = 15.8%</li> </ul> <p>The data shows the vast majority of planning items are determined by officers which is an effective use of delegated authority.</p> <p><b>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</b> Over the last three years the number of planning items has steadily decreased from over 734 in 2017/18, to 583 in 2018/19, to just 441 in 2019/20. This is a decrease of almost 40% in 3 years.</p> <p><b>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</b> The use of a single council wide committee has worked well and there is no need to change.</p>



		<p><b>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</b> The Cabinet Portfolio holder for Economic Growth currently also serves on the Planning Committee and we would expect this to continue.</p> <p><b>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</b> Membership of the planning committee is a big commitment due to the size and scale of activity within the borough.</p> <p>The Planning Committee meets every fortnight, and are lengthy committee meetings which include site visits before hand and a large amount of pre-reading.</p>
	Key lines of explanation	<p>➤ How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</p> <p>➤ And what will be the time commitment for members?</p> <p>➤ Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</p> <p>➤ Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</p>
<b>Licensing</b>	Analysis	<p><b>How Many Councillors Required to fill these roles – 12 (reduction by 2)</b> The Licensing Committee is a statutory Committee, having functions given to it directly by the Licensing Act 2003 and is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premises licensing</li> <li>• Alcohol licensing</li> <li>• Public entertainment licences</li> <li>• Betting, gaming and lottery licences</li> </ul> <p><b>What will be the time commitment for members?</b> Meetings are scheduled monthly but can be held as and when required. Due to the size of Chesterfield Borough’s economy as the largest settlement in the administrative county of Derbyshire, the Licensing Committee has a significant workload in comparison to other Derbyshire districts. This is managed via a revolving group system.</p> <p><b>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</b> The groups are flexible and respond to the demands of the Licensing function – each group generally meets between two and four times per annum as well as attending to two to four full committee meetings. This means</p>

		<p>the Chair and Vice Chair will attend up to seventeen committee meetings per annum in a busy year. These cases are often complex and require a significant amount of pre-reading prior to the committee meeting</p> <p><b>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</b>  The Full Licensing Committee meets between two and four times per annum. For the rest of the year the Committee is divided into three groups with four elected members in each plus the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.</p>
	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i></p>
<p><b>Other Regulatory Bodies</b></p>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p><b>How Many Councillors Required to fill these roles – 14 (no change)</b></p> <p><b>Appeals and Regulatory Committee – 14 members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deals with regulatory, licensing and appeal functions of the Council</li> <li>• Hackney carriage and private hire licensing</li> <li>• Housing, benefits and local taxation appeals</li> <li>• Ad hoc meetings to support the function but need to be organised quickly</li> <li>• Can sometimes be frequent – even weekly.</li> <li>• Large committee required due to need to call meetings urgently and important to maintain quorum</li> </ul> <p><b>Employment and General Committee – 6 members (no change)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deals with appointing staff and terms and conditions on which they hold office</li> <li>• Elections and electoral registration</li> <li>• Meetings are scheduled for every six weeks but can be held as and when required.</li> <li>• Members also attend Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee – usually every six weeks</li> <li>• Issues are often complex – requiring significant pre-reading and questioning</li> </ul> <p><b>Standards and Audit Committee – 6 members (no change)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deals with standards and audit procedures</li> <li>• Monitors the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements including standing orders, financial procedures and service plans</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carries out hearings of complaints if a councillor has broken the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Makes recommendations in respect of corporate governance matters</li> <li>• Meets six times per annum but can also call special additional meetings</li> </ul>
<b>External Partnerships</b>	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.	
<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>	
<b>Analysis</b>	<p><b>Partnership roles undertaken by portfolio holders</b>  Portfolio Holders serve on a range of partnership decision making bodies including D2 Joint Economic Prosperity Committee, Safer Derbyshire, HS2 Board, Staveley Town Deal Board, Destination Chesterfield, Health and Wellbeing Board are examples.</p> <p>This is a growing area with major decision-making partnerships including Vision Derbyshire (an ambitious new model for local government) coming on stream.</p> <p>Partnership activity now accounts for around 40 -50% of the Leader’s time around 30% of the Deputy Leader’s time and 20 – 25% of other Portfolio holders time.</p> <p><b>Other external bodies</b>  Council appoints elected members to 50 outside bodies. These are varied in their nature ranging from major partnerships to joint service provision and to support local community groups.</p> <p>The appointments are a mix between portfolio holders and other elected members from different parties/ independents. The full list of outside bodies is available <a href="#">here</a>. This is an area scheduled for review within the next 18 months.</p>	

## Community Involvement

9. 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?

Topic		Description
	Key lines of explanation	<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> <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>
<b>Community Leadership</b>	Analysis	<p><b>Councillor engagement with the community</b></p> <p>The extent to which elected Councillors interact with their communities is very much up to the individual Councillor. The majority of councillors are extremely active in their local communities handling significant levels of ward case work and supporting/championing local community groups and services.</p> <p>The majority of elected members undertake static and street surgeries in their areas. Labour and Liberal Democratic Groups also produce newsletters tailored to different areas of the borough. Many are also active on social media.</p> <p>Many elected members have appointments to outside bodies both as council representatives but also in a voluntary capacity. These include specific communities of interest for example Armed Forces Champion and Equality and Diversity Forum, and also charitable and community organisations.</p>

		<p><b>Town and Parish Councils</b>  There are a number of ‘twin hatters’ with members representing constituents on Chesterfield Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council or Chesterfield Borough Council and Staveley Town Council/Brimington Parish Council. There are formal liaison meetings with Staveley Town Council and Brimington Parish Council. As well as bespoke partnership arrangements for specific projects for example Staveley Town Deal.</p> <p><b>Interactions with children and young people</b>  Each year the Council delivers a programme of events designed to engage students from primary and secondary schools in local democracy. Activities take place all year round with a key focus on European Local Democracy Week in October when the Council joins with authorities across the UK and Europe to promote active involvement in local democracy.</p> <p>Activities include primary school aged children visiting the town hall and councillors attending the schools of older children in question-and-answer events with the children posing questions to the councillors.</p> <p>The programme is reviewed at the end of each civic year and a new theme and series of activities are designed which highlight important events or anniversaries taking place. In 2018/19 the topic was exploring the centenary of women gaining the right to vote and in 2019/20 the 60th anniversary of the Council’s twinning agreement with Darmstadt. The next topic will be engagement in Climate Change.</p> <p>All elected members have the opportunity to take part in local democracy activities as well as key civic events such as mayor making. In 2019/20 over 1,600 local children and young people took part in the Council’s local democracy and civic programme. Engaging children and young people continues to be a priority for the Council.</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>
	<b>Analysis</b>	

		<p><b>Dealing with casework</b></p> <p>Councillors play a central role in the democratic representation of communities. It is akin to being a community champion, looking beyond the services of the council to act more widely as an advocate, where local knowledge can have a real impact on services and decision-making. Casework is crucial in this as it provides first hand evidence of issues and problems faced by residents. We act as a bridge relaying and discussing residents' concerns with council staff, identifying options and keeping the residents informed throughout the process. Casework is generally received in writing whether in letters or responses to surveys, verbally in meeting with residents at events or at street surgeries and by telephone. In our experience the councillor takes the lead role in seeking resolution of the issue.</p> <p><b>Casework - Support to Members</b></p> <p>The induction and ongoing development programmes provide insight into the organisation of council teams and areas of responsibilities. In addition to the staff employed in Democratic Services to directly support elected representatives, other staff are very approachable and professional in providing assistance to councillors. Whether explaining on technical issues, advising on legal questions, exploring possible options or identifying necessary action the collaborative approach to problem solving is evident throughout Chesterfield Borough Council.</p> <p><b>Technology</b></p> <p>Electronic means of communications enable fast and effective communications via emails and online meetings. This has promoted the fast exchange of information both with council staff and local electors. This approach is however dependent on a working knowledge of ICT systems including use of council issued iPads.</p>
--	--	--

## Other Issues

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

## Council Finances

Like many local authorities Chesterfield Borough Council faces financial challenges and reducing the number of councillors would provide significant savings as follows:

- Reduction in 10 councillors (from 48 to 38) saves basic allowances of £59,980
- Abolition of Deputy Leader position saves special allowance of £15,592
- Abolition of Special Projects cabinet member saves special allowance of £3,812

Total savings of £79,384 in allowances

There would also be savings in mileage, subsistence, ICT equipment, printing and potentially electoral administration which could mean total savings of around £80,000.

## Summary

11. 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 number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future. Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate any 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.

## Summary

In summary, through calculations and data mapping we have concluded that 38 Councillors would be sufficient to meet all of the statutory and regulatory requirements of the Council, as well as enabling full representation of local residents. It is our current assumption that we would retain the strong leader and cabinet structure for Chesterfield Council at this point in time.

Primarily the reduction in the number of councillors would be achieved by reducing the size of four of the key committees:

- The Cabinet – to be reduced by 2
- Licensing Committee – to be reduced by 2
- Planning Committee – to be reduced by 2
- Overall Scrutiny Forum – to be reduced by 4 (2 from each Scrutiny Committee)

This would reduce the overall number of councillors to 38.

We have confirmed that all current committees could be covered by 38 councillors.

In terms of the number of voters per councillor, 38 councillors would on average represent 2,085 voters, which is a significant move towards the average for our size of council.

In preparing this submission we considered a range between 35 and 38 councillors based upon different approaches that were taken to define the number. After further discussion, and allowing for some flexibility in councillor availability, we believe that the number of 38 councillors is the most appropriate for a re-structured council in Chesterfield.