



TRAFFORD  
COUNCIL

# Trafford Council Size Proposal

---

2 February 2021



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background to the Review

1.1.1. This submission has been developed in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Electoral Review of the size of Trafford Borough Council ("the Council").

1.1.2. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 established the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and it has a responsibility to undertake reviews of the electoral arrangements of local authorities: the number of councillors; the names, number and boundaries of wards; and the number of councillors to be elected to each. The Commission is responsible for putting any changes to electoral arrangements into effect by submitting a Statutory Instrument for consideration by Parliament.

1.1.3. Trafford Council last underwent a review of its boundaries in 2003.

1.1.4. Eight of the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester are currently undergoing a boundary review.

1.1.5. The submission of this proposal was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 1.2. How the Council Size proposal was developed

1.2.1. This submission has been compiled by officers on behalf of the Council. It has been developed by a cross-functional working group of officers.

1.2.2. We have drawn on a range of data for the electorate and population of Trafford, the economic profile of the Borough, the prospective housing development in Trafford and the activities undertaken by the Council. We have continued to use the data sets agreed for the original submission date of July 2020.

1.2.3. We have consulted councillors extensively in helping to frame the Council's proposal. The results of the Councillor survey accompany this submission. The survey included questions on the councillors' responsibilities, their participation in other community bodies and boards, and their current workload. We also interviewed the Leader of the Council.

1.2.4. As a result of the research and analysis for this review, we recommend that the Council should retain 63 councillors across 21 wards (with three members per ward, elected in the four yearly cycle).

1.2.5. This submission has been approved by Sara Todd, Chief Executive of the Council on 29th January 2021.

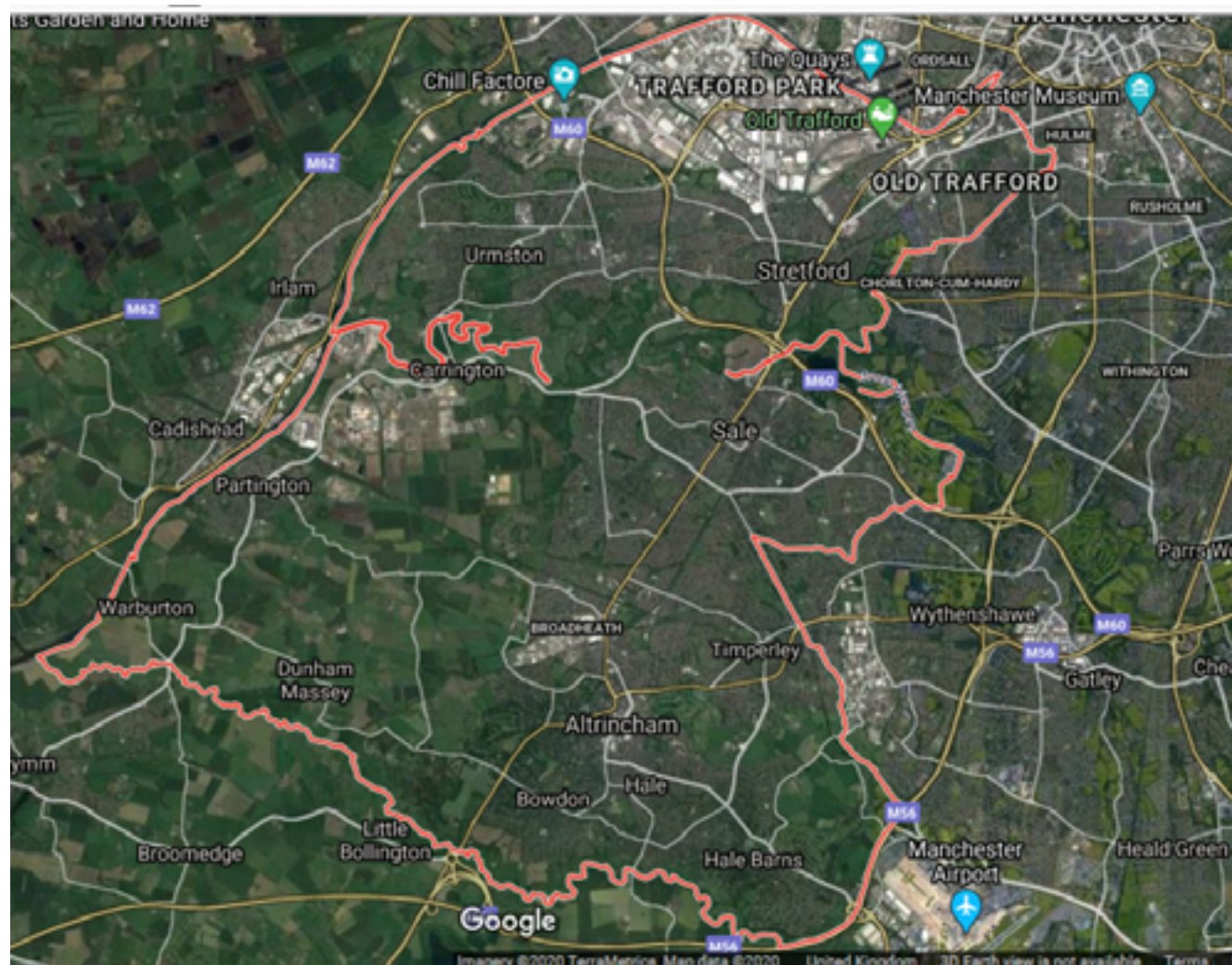
# 2. Trafford Local Authority Profile

## 2.1. Outline of the Area

2.1.1. The borough of Trafford was created in 1974. It is a metropolitan unitary authority and a member of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The parliamentary constituencies within Trafford are Stretford and Urmston in the north and west of the borough; Altrincham and Sale West in the south; and the wards of Brooklands, Priory, and Sale Moor form part of the Wythenshawe and Sale East constituency (along with five wards from Manchester City Council).

2.1.2. Trafford Council comprises 21 three-member wards, with one third elected annually three years in four.

2.1.3. Trafford borough covers 10,565 hectares to the south-west of the city of Manchester. The borough is divided, north and south, by the River Mersey.



2.1.4. To the east, Trafford borders Manchester City Council. The Manchester Ship Canal forms the western boundary with Salford City Council. Trafford borders Warrington Council and Cheshire East Council to its south, where the River Bollin forms the Borough boundary.

2.1.5. The Borough contains the four parishes of Carrington, Partington, Dunham Massey and Warburton.

## 2.2. Economic profile

2.2.1. Trafford's economic output is estimated at £8.1bn, which is approximately 13% of the Greater Manchester (GM) city region's economy. Trafford is the second largest contributor to GM's economy and 11,000 businesses are based with the Borough.

2.2.2. Several of the most strategically important assets in the north of England are located within Trafford. These having a telling impact on regional employment and skills, transport and economic development. By example, Trafford Park is Europe's largest trading estate, Trafford City is one of the largest retail and leisure destinations in the UK, and the Old Trafford stadia for Manchester United and Lancashire Cricket Club are world famous.

2.2.3. These locations are vital to the Greater Manchester and the regional North West economies and they serve functions far beyond the Borough boundary. The concentration of these venues and economic hubs within Trafford makes it quite distinct from other authorities of a similar size.

Moreover, their footfall and their economic importance are significantly above what would normally be considered to be representative of the Borough's population size. We think it important to emphasise that these assets demand considerable input from the Council across a range of services such as planning, licencing, health and safety provisions, transport and economic growth.

2.2.4. The entirety of Trafford Park falls within the Borough's boundary. This spans the wards of Gorse Hill, Davyhulme East and Davyhulme West. Trafford Park is Europe's largest industrial estate with over 1,300 businesses and 45,500 employees. There are further industrial complexes and large scale employers in the Bucklow-St. Martins and Broadheath wards.

2.2.5. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the footfall at Trafford's main leisure and retail attractions has fallen significantly due to the restrictions imposed in 2020 and 2021. We have therefore provided the visitor numbers for these sites from before the pandemic as we expect to see a return to this level of footfall as the economy returns to normal in the coming years.

2.2.6. In retail and leisure, the Trafford Centre (Davyhulme East) is the UK's third largest shopping centre and it provides 11,000 jobs. The wider Trafford City, which comprises the Trafford Centre and a range of entertainment and leisure venues, attracts 44 million visitors a year (before the pandemic). We are investing in our town centres. Altrincham is now cited as the model for town regeneration.

It experienced year-on-year growth in footfall for the five years prior to the pandemic. We have similarly ambitious plans for regenerating Stretford, Sale and Urmston towns also.

2.2.7. Trafford is home to two world renowned 'Old Trafford' sports stadia. Manchester United Football Club has been based in the Old Trafford area since 1910, and Lancashire County Cricket Club since 1864. The footballing Old Trafford is the largest league football ground in the country. It plays host regularly to 75,000 fans (15,000 more than the next largest stadium), as well as other events. This includes the forthcoming 2021 Rugby League World Cup final.

The cricketing Emirates Old Trafford is an important Test ground for the England cricket team, as well as the most commonly used ground for Lancashire. It regularly hosts up to 25,000 spectators throughout the summer. Moreover, it is a popular venue for music for up to 50,000 concert goers. The two stadia combined attract 3 million visitors per year.

2.2.8. Trafford Council has significant responsibilities under Safety at Sports Grounds legislation for the safety and security of these spectators. The Council also holds the responsibility for coordinating and licensing the supporting infrastructure and businesses that enable these events to happen. This impacts directly on the work of councillors and is a vital part of the Council's business.

2.2.9. Some of GM's most popular and most visited cultural, leisure and sporting attractions are based in Trafford. The Chill Factor<sup>®</sup> skiing complex (near the Trafford Centre) attracts 1.2 million visitors a year. Furthermore, planning permission has been granted for Therme Manchester, a large scale development of a water park and spa resort at Trafford City. This is expected to attract over 2 million visitors a year when it opens in 2023. Trafford Council own and manage Sale Water Park, which is a very popular visitor attraction and leisure facility. The National Trust's estate of Dunham Massey in the south of the Borough had 330,000 visitors in 2019/20. This is the National Trust's most visited property in the North West. Furthermore, The Imperial War Museum North drew 334,500 in 2018.

2.2.10. Trafford is a vitally important location for the regional transport network in Greater Manchester and the North West. The M60 runs through the Borough and gives immediate access to the rest of Greater Manchester. The M56, linking Manchester and Cheshire, runs along the Borough's easterly boundary.

2.2.11. Trafford is well connected by rail. Trafford is a key part of the Metrolink tram network in Greater Manchester. Metrolink passenger numbers have more than doubled since 2010. Trafford is home to Metrolink's Network Management Centre and Customer Services operation as well as one of the network's two depots. 18 of the network's 99 stops are situated in the Borough (only Manchester has more).

The Manchester-Liverpool railway line runs through Trafford. This includes stations at Flixton, Chassen Road, Urmston, Humphrey Park and Trafford Park to the west of the Borough. The Mid-Cheshire railway line from Stockport to Chester includes a section in Trafford with stations in Hale, Altrincham and Navigation Road.

The proposed HS2 station for Manchester Interchange, connecting to the airport, is planned to be built in Trafford. This phase of the HS2 development is currently planned to start in 2033.

2.2.12. Manchester International Airport borders Trafford to the South-East. This is a vital link for the Borough and provides employment for many of our residents.

2.2.13. Of the 165,500\* jobs in Trafford Borough, 130,539 (79%) are currently filled. 60,351 (36%) are occupied by people who live in Trafford, meaning that around 70,188 (64%) are occupied by in-commuters. Around 51,114 (21.7%) residents commute out of the Borough for work. This is the fifth highest level of out-commuting in GM. The trend of out-commuting is forecast to decline through to 2026 and beyond.

2.2.14. The reasons for the high levels of commuting out are mainly related to the Borough's location close to the key employment locations of central Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Merseyside and Cheshire. Workers commuting into Trafford are attracted by the wide range of employment opportunities

## 2.3. Demographic pressures

2.3.1. Trafford's population is estimated at 236,370 (2018). This constitutes 8.5% of the population of Greater Manchester. The Borough's population has grown by approximately 11% since its last Boundary Review in 2003.

2.3.2. The highest population growth area is within the 65+ age group. The 0-15 age group is forecast to grow by 2.5% (1,285), 16-64 age group by 4% (5,663) and 65+ by 19.8% (5,195), suggesting the need for care provision and appropriate housing for later life. This forecasted increase in the 65+ age group shows a nominal increase in the dependency ratio in Trafford, from 62% in 2018 to 66% in 2027. The overall GM ratio is lower at 57%.

2.3.3. Trafford has high levels of life expectancy, with ONS population projections estimating that from 2018-2028 the population aged 85+ will increase by 22% (1,321). However, persistent health inequalities remain between different parts of Trafford. While Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) in the most affluent areas of Trafford such as Hale and Bowdon is 83 years for males and 87 years for females, in the most disadvantaged areas, such as Bucklow-St. Martins, Clifford and Gorse Hill, healthy life expectancy is as low as 75 years for males and 79 years for females.

2.3.4. Trafford is ranked 191 on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) out of 317 local authority districts in England, and it is the lowest in GM. In the IMD, seven Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Trafford were classed in the top 10% most underprivileged in the country, see P8.

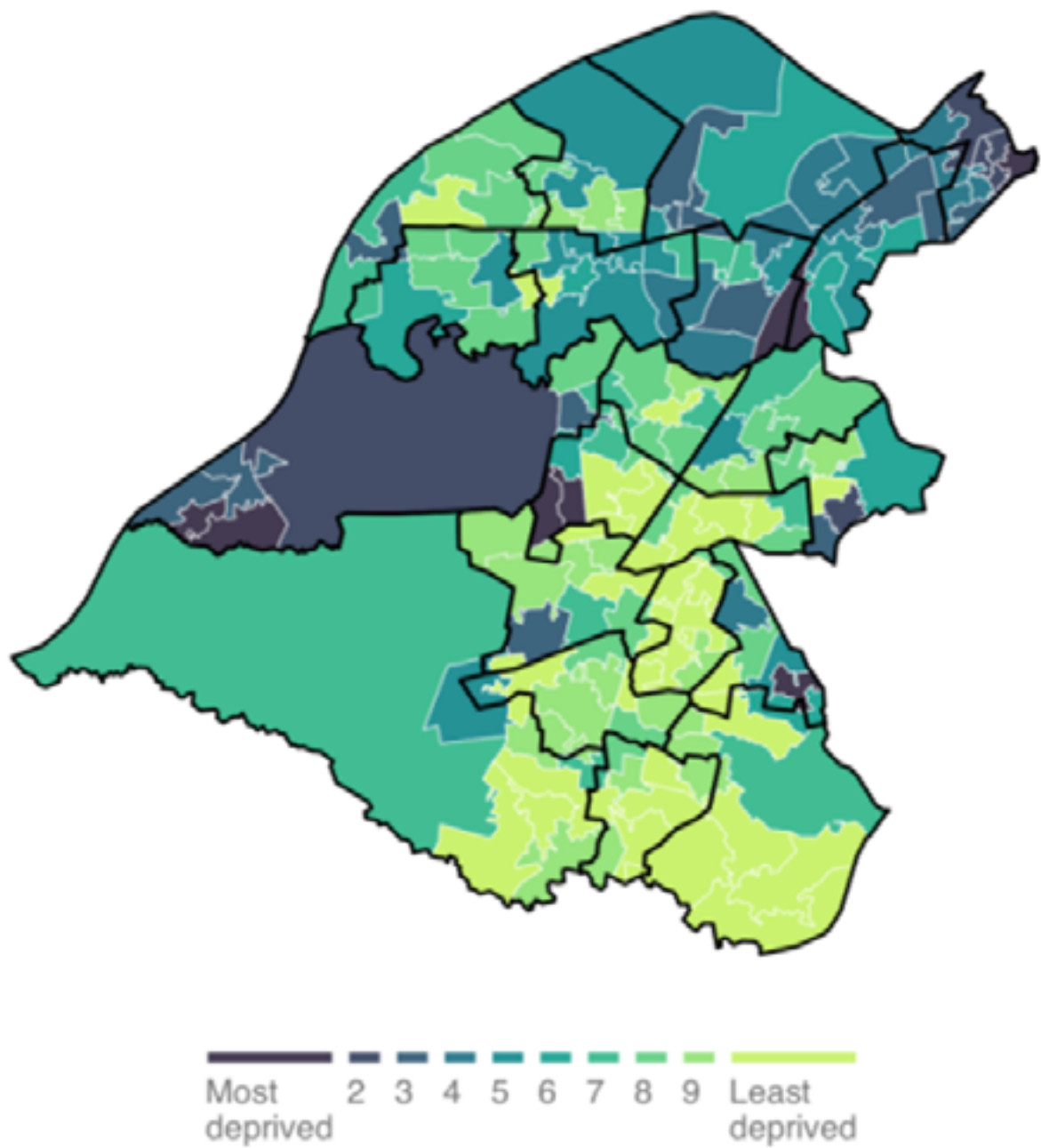
LSOA	Ward	Rank in England
Trafford 017E	Bucklow-St Martins	490
Trafford 001A	Clifford	1,726
Trafford 019E	St Mary's	1,782
Trafford 017B	Bucklow-St Martins	2,097
Trafford 011C	Stretford	2,202
Trafford 022C	Village	3,193
Trafford 019D	St Mary's	3,203

**Table 1: The most disadvantaged Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Trafford**

2.3.5. Not all residents benefit from strong economic growth within Trafford. There were 3,420 benefit claimants in Trafford in 2019, which is the result of a small rise in the number of out-of-work benefit claimants observed since 2018. Trafford continues to have the lowest number of benefit claimants in GM. However, we recognise that the economic difficulties experienced during the pandemic will exacerbate this situation.

2.3.6. There is a clear distinction between the north and south of Trafford with the former having a much higher proportion of lower income communities and residents who are out of work. The highest levels of out-of-work benefit claimants (May 2019) are in three wards – Clifford has the highest level at 460, Bucklow St Martins and Gorse Hill with 325 claimants. In contrast, Timperley has 35 claimants; Hale Barns and Hale Central both have 60 claimants. Clifford has one of the highest LSOA claimant counts at 135 whilst some LSOAs in the south of Trafford have zero claimants.





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**Figure 1: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 – LSOAs in Trafford (compared to the highest levels of deprivation nationally)**

## 2.4. Future electorate size

2.4.1. In terms of the electoral roll for the Borough, the following table shows the registration rate of Trafford’s adult population in 2018, 2019 and 2020 at borough level. The 18 or over population figures shown below derive from the 2018-based ONS Population projections and the elector count from the Trafford Electoral Register.

Year	Electors	Adult Population	Rate (%)
2018	169626	180283	94
2019	168630	180877	93
2020	172622	181668	95

**Table 2: Electoral Registration rate in Trafford**

2.4.2. By 2026 the adult population for Trafford is forecast by the ONS to grow by 3.21% from 2021, to 187,508. The average registration rate for Trafford over the last three years is 94.11%. From these two figures, we forecast the borough-wide number of electors in 2026 to be 176,470, and increase of 2.23% on 2020.

2.4.3. In addition there are 19 housing developments of more than 30 units currently approved, which are very likely to be completed by 2026. This gives a forecast of 2671 additional electors.

2.4.4. The electoral forecast for 2026 is the sum of these two figures, a total of 179,140, a rise of 3.78% on 2020.

2.4.5. The full calculation, including ward and polling district breakdown, is contained in the accompanying methodology note.

2.4.6. It should be noted that there are developments planned in Trafford that we envisage being built after 2026. These would have a marked effect on the population of the borough, see section 2.6.

## 2.5. Rural/Urban characteristics of the authority

2.5.1. The population of Trafford is heavily concentrated along the route of the A56, which passes in a generally northeast-central-south direction across the Borough, meaning that the largest population centres are Old Trafford, Stretford, Sale, and Altrincham .

2.5.2. The populations of Urmston and Trafford Park, based on numbers and comparative ward size, are far less dense than along the A56 corridor. However, and as stated above, major sources of employment exist in the industrial complexes of Trafford Park, Carrington (Bucklow-St. Martin’s) and Broadheath.

2.5.3. Almost two thirds of Trafford is countryside, especially to the south and west of the Borough. The majority of which is designated Green Belt and other protected open land status.



**Key**

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Trafford borough                                | Town centres                    |
| Metrolink / stop                                | District centres                |
| Metrolink Extension / stop (Under construction) | Employment areas                |
| Railway / station                               | Growth areas                    |
| HS2 proposed line / station                     | Manchester Airport              |
| Motorways                                       | Imperial War Museum North       |
| Main roads                                      | Manchester United Football Club |
| Green infrastructure                            | Lancashire County Cricket Club  |
| Trans Pennine trail                             | Longford Park                   |
| Canals and rivers                               | Dunham Massey                   |
| Green Belt (Currently adopted)                  | Sale Water Park                 |

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## 2.6. Future constraints and challenges

2.6.1. Demand for housing in Trafford remains high. As stated above, Trafford is very well connected with its transport links. The schools in the Borough are highly rated. The affordability of housing is a concern in Trafford with the income to house-price ratio being 7.73 in 2018 (in comparison to 5.82 across the North West).

2.6.2. In our forecast for this Boundary Review, we estimate that there will be at least an additional 2000 homes built within the Borough by 2026. This is expanded upon in the methodology note.

2.6.3. The development plans for Trafford are included in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), which seeks to support the population growth within the city region with sustainable housing development and transport infrastructure. The publication of the GMSF was delayed in December 2020 following Stockport's decision to withdraw from the regional framework. However, the remaining nine Greater Manchester Councils are committed to increasing the housing stock in the region. Even without the GMSF, the Government's National Housing Targets mean that significant new growth must take place in Trafford in future years.

2.6.4. As part of the GMSF, there are two proposed large scale developments in Trafford Council in 'New Carrington' and 'Timperley Wedge' by 2037. Both developments are currently under consultation and these developments are also contingent on infrastructure investments. According to our projections for this Review, these developments will not be included in our forecast for 2026.

2.6.5. Trafford Council has ambitious plans to regenerate and transform Stretford. The Council launched its Stretford Masterplan in 2017 and has completed the acquisition of Stretford's mall. The Masterplan aims to reinstate the town's high street, develop new residential, hospitality and retail properties, and open access to the Bridgewater Canal and new public spaces. We recently secured a £17.6m grant to invest in the town centre's redevelopment as part of this strategy.

2.6.6. Plans were approved in 2018 for the 'Trafford Waters' development on an area by the Manchester Ship Canal, close to the Trafford Centre.

2.6.7. There are a number of other developments in the pipeline that we do not think will be complete by 2026. Table 3 includes the largest prospective developments in Trafford that are likely to take place after 2026. These would potentially add over 14,500 homes to the borough.

Moreover, these would have a significant impact on the local population within the lifespan of the ward boundaries proposed in this Review. These include:

2.6.8. The development of the HS2 high speed rail link from Birmingham to Manchester will pass through the south-west corner of the Borough, near Partington, and the south-east of the Borough, near Timperley and Hale Barns. The planned Manchester Airport High Speed Station is planned to be built in Trafford, close to Hale Barns. We envisage that this will increase the economic and transport activity in this area.

Name of development	Proposed area (Current wards)	Number of homes proposed	Stage of development
Civic Quarter Area Action Plan	Area surrounding Trafford Town Hall and Old Trafford. (Gorse Hill and Longford)	4,000	The completed Area Action Plan is being consulted on January to March 2021.
Trafford Waters	Trafford Wharf (Gorse Hill)	3,000	Planning permission granted. Building yet to commence. Planned gradual development over 20 years.
New Carrington	Carrington (Bucklow St. Martin's)	5,000	4,300 homes will be delivered in the GMSF plan period up to 2037.
Timperley Wedge	Timperley and Hale Barns (Village and Hale Barns)	2,500	1,700 homes will be delivered in the GMSF plan period up to 2037

**Table 3: Proposed large scale housing developments in Trafford forecasted to be built after 2026**

## 2.7. Summary

2.7.1. Trafford is at the heart of the North West's economy. Trafford Park and Trafford City are vital to regional growth. This will become even more salient as the economy recovers from pandemic. Likewise, Trafford is the home of some of the most important cultural and sporting attractions in the north of England. Trafford Council plays a crucial role in supporting these developments. We expect this to continue for the foreseeable future.

2.7.2. We predict that the electorate will increase by nearly 4% by 2026 with the planned developments in the Borough. Moreover, there is potential for this to increase considerably with the large scale developments proposed for after 2026. This growth will place an increasing demand on the Council and its services.

2.7.3. Reducing the size of the Council could significantly encumber the ability of the Council to respond to the needs of residents and local businesses alike.

# 3. Trafford Council Governance

## 3.1. Current Governance Model

3.1.1. Trafford Council is composed of 21 wards, each comprising 3 councillors, giving a total of 63 councillors. The council elects its councillors by thirds, with elections held over a four-year cycle. The fourth year is a fallow year with no elections.

3.1.2. The Council currently comprises 34 Labour councillors, 20 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat and 3 Green councillors, with 3 vacancies. The Council is currently run by a Labour administration.

3.1.3. Trafford Council employs an executive model of governance. The Executive is made up of the Leader, who is a councillor, and a Cabinet of up to nine other councillors. The full Council appoints the councillor to be its Executive Leader and also appoints councillors to the Executive, see 5.1.

3.1.4. Trafford Council has a relatively low ratio of electors to its councillors in comparison to the other authorities in Greater Manchester and its statistical neighbours. On average, Trafford has 2,677 electors per councillor.

Authority Type	Elector/ Cllr ratio (Min)	Elector/ Cllr ratio (Max)	Elector/ Cllr ratio (Ave)	Trafford Council
Metropolitan District	2,133	7,147	3,256	2,677

**Table 4: Average ward electorates for metropolitan districts in England (Source: Local Government Boundary Commission of England)**

## **3.2. Satisfaction with current Council Size**

3.2.1. In the research for this submission, there was broad consensus among senior officers and Councillors that the current Council size is appropriate for providing community leadership, robust governance, and the considered accountability in Trafford.

3.2.2. Trafford's councillors maintain that the present model of 21 wards provides fair representation for the electors in the Borough. 96% of Councillors surveyed express being satisfied or very satisfied with the current number of wards in the borough.



# 4. Community Involvement

## 4.1. Community Leadership

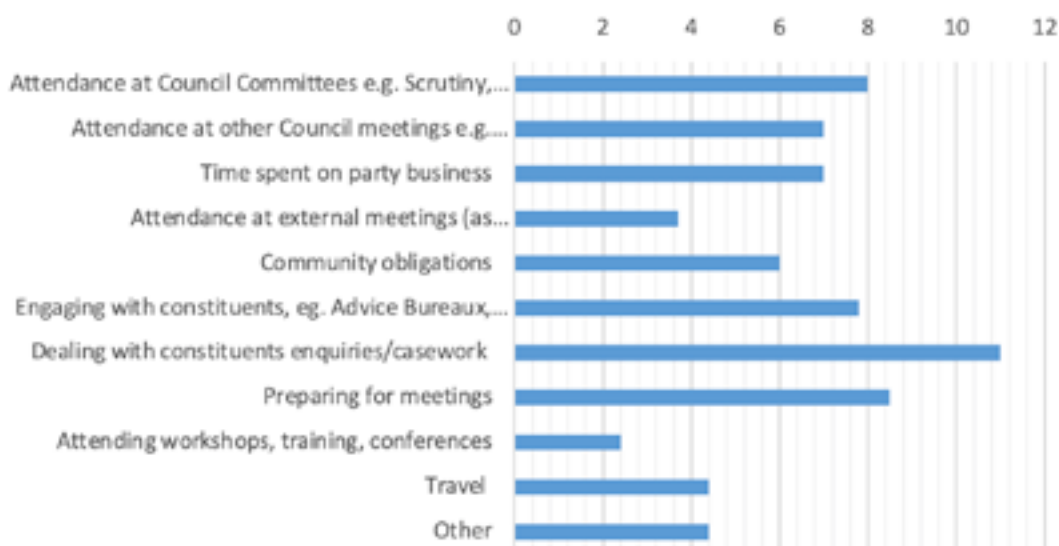
4.1.1. Our Councillors strive to provide the best possible civic leadership. They work closely with the community groups in their wards to represent the interests of residents fully.

4.1.2. Prior to the pandemic, councillors would undertake extensive public engagement with their constituents. All of our councillors surveyed said that they held surgeries, public meetings, advice bureaux, home visits and ward walk-about. Councillors estimate that they spend on average a minimum of eight hours a month fulfilling these duties. Councillors participate actively in their local community forums and networks. For understandable reasons, these activities have changed during 2020 but it is envisaged that this level of public engagement will resume fully when it is safe to do so.

4.1.3. Councillors share information with their constituents through a range of media. 93% of councillors surveyed communicate with constituents with newsletters, 78% communicate with constituents via text message and 88% are active on social media. Members use a range of media to respond to their constituents.

4.1.4. Throughout the pandemic, Councillors have continued with their digital communication with constituents. Many of them have been active with their local community support hubs. Councillors and Officers formed the Covid-19 Public Engagement Board, which meets fortnightly.

4.1.5. Based on our survey response, we estimate that Councillors spend on average at least 70 hours a month fulfilling their all of the community representation roles, see figure 2.



**Fig. 2: Average minimum time spent fulfilling all community representation responsibilities (Hours Per Month)**

4.1.6. Trafford councillors often hold senior roles on community governing bodies. 63% of Councillors surveyed hold external roles such as school governor or parish councillor.

4.1.7. Trafford manages its services based on four localities across the Borough – North (Stretford, Longford, Gorse Hill, and Clifford), Central (Ashton upon Mersey, Brooklands, Priory, St Mary’s and Sale Moor), South (Hale Central, Timperley, Hale Barns, Altrincham, Bowdon, Broadheath and Village) and West (Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton, Urmston and Bucklow-St-Martins). However, we do not use area committees or an area governance structure.

4.1.8. We note that the allowances for councillors in Trafford are less than all of its bordering authorities and its closest CIPFA statistical neighbours. This was cited as a common concern by Councillors in their survey responses. 61% of councillors expressed either being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the current remuneration. Several councillors commented that if their council workloads were to increase then they would need to reduce their paid employment hours, which would obviously affect their family incomes and their work-life balance.

<b>Local Authority (* statistical neighbour).</b>	<b>Basic allowance</b>	<b>% : Trafford</b>
Manchester	£16,926	266%
Cheshire East	£12,109	190%
Salford	£10,827	170%
Stockport*	£10,226	161%
Warrington*	£8,174	128%
Trafford	£6,369	100%

**Table 5: Basic councillor allowances for Trafford and for neighbouring authorities (2018/19)**

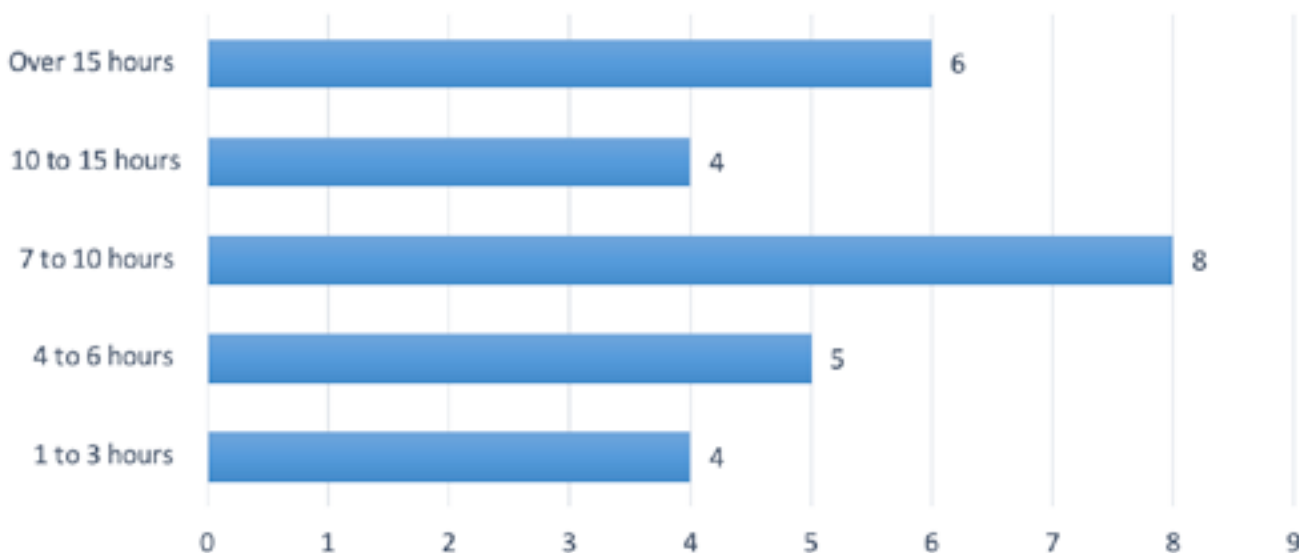
## 4.2. Councillor Case work

4.2.1. Councillors estimate that they each receive on average a minimum of 23 cases a month. This is estimated to take approximately 11 hours a month to manage. However, there was a wide range in responses to this question in the survey, with half of the members stating that they spend more than 15 hours a month dealing with constituents' issues and cases, see Fig. 3.

4.2.4. We are aware of the challenges for the political parties to attract potential members that are willing to undertake such considerable responsibilities for their communities. Any significant increase in workload for Councillors would only compound this problem.

4.2.5. Elected members in Trafford manage their caseloads and their community engagement independently.

### Time Dedicated to Casework



**Fig. 3: The time spent by members per month dealing with enquiries/casework from and on behalf of constituents (Source: Councillor Survey)**

4.2.2. Councillors attest that their council business is increasing. Over 85% spend more time on their councillor activity than when were first elected. Councillors also asserted that their council work is becoming more complex and time demanding.

4.2.3. Councillors noted that there has been a noticeable increase in workload due to the current three vacant seats on the Council. This further highlights the concern any potential reduction in the capacity of the Council.

Officers provide support and information for members to respond to residents' issues. We recognise that any reduction in the number of councillors would potentially lead to greater pressure on officer time to support councillors.

4.2.6. With the forecasted population growth and the development work planned in the Borough, it is almost inevitable that councillors' workloads will increase proportionately.

## 4.3. Summary

4.3.1. We recognise that 2020 has presented an unprecedented set of challenges for the Council and our members. We think that a smaller Council would have challenged our ability to represent our residents' issues and concerns during the last year and for the difficulties that lie ahead. Councillors adapted admirably to respond to their communities' needs during the pandemic and provided tireless support for the Council's crisis response. During this time, Councillors have had to use technology wherever possible to engage with their constituents but they are keen to resume their much-valued public engagement as soon as possible.

4.3.2. Our Councillors take a very active role in terms of community engagement. Their caseworking responsibilities are already demanding, and the nature and extent of additional responsibilities which arise by virtue of the Council's economic and visitor profiles is considerable. Furthermore, the Council population is expected to grow significantly in the years to come. These factors would support maintaining our Council size as close to our current level as possible.

# 5. Strategic Leadership - Future Model

## 5.1. Governance Model

5.1.1. Trafford Council employs an Executive model of governance. Trafford changed to an Executive model of governance in 2001. Successive Labour and Conservative administrations have continued with this model. There have been no moves to consider adopting any alternative models.

5.1.2. The Leader and the Executive Members together make up the Executive of the Council. The Executive is responsible for all key decisions and the strategic management of services in line with the policy framework and budget of the Council.

5.1.3. The Executive currently comprises a Cabinet of 10 councillors – the Leader plus nine Councillors appointed by the Leader. We expect that any future Executive would hold similar responsibilities and would therefore require a similar number of councillors, especially as members of the Executive will have Greater Manchester responsibilities related to their portfolios.

## 5.2. Key Decision Making

5.2.1. An executive decision taken by the Executive, an Executive Member or an officer will be a Key Decision if it comes within one or more of the following categories:

1. It is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure or making of savings which are significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates;
2. It is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in two or more Trafford wards.
3. It forms part of the development of, or the development of a change to, the Policy Framework or Budget.
4. It involves securing approval in principle to the acquisition or disposal of land or property the value of which is estimated to exceed £500,000.
5. It involves securing approval in principle to the taking of, or the granting, renewal, assignment, transfer, surrender, taking of surrenders, review, variation or termination of any leases, licenses, easements or wayleaves, at considerations in excess of £250,000 per annum or a premium of £500,000
6. Its consequences are likely to result in compulsory redundancies or major changes to the terms and conditions of employment of a significant number of Council employees.

5.2.2. A decision taker may only make a Key Decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution.

5.2.3. The Executive has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overarching policy and budgetary framework. If it wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, unless the matter falls within the scope of the constitutional provisions relating to special urgency, then the matter must be referred to the Council as a whole to decide. The only exception to this is if the decision needs to be taken urgently.

5.2.4. When Key Decisions are to be considered or made, the Council is obliged to publish a Notice at least 28 days before a date on which it is proposed that the decision is to be made. Where the Executive is considering Key Decisions this will generally be at a meeting which is open to the public to attend except for certain exceptions allowed in law, for example where personal or confidential matters are being discussed. The Executive has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget.

5.2.5. The Executive has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overarching policy and budgetary framework. If it wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, unless the matter falls within the scope of the constitutional provisions relating to special urgency, then the matter must be referred to the Council as a whole to decide. The only exception to this is if the decision needs to be taken urgently.

5.2.6. Trafford does not have an elected mayor. The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of Trafford are purely ceremonial roles held by Councillors for a year. The Mayor does not participate in any of the democratic processes of the borough other than the chairing of full Council meetings for the 12 month duration of their mayoralty.

5.2.7. As an indicator of the effectiveness of Trafford's current model of governance, the Council's most recent audit (Year ending March 2020) concluded that the Council "had proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources." The auditor recognised there are issues with the Council's Children's Services provision, as identified in a 2019 Ofsted inspection, but these are being addressed in a comprehensive improvement programme.

### **5.3. Executive**

5.3.1. The Cabinet hold a series of meetings each month to conduct their Council business and agree the actions for Executive members to take forward. This includes a public Executive Meeting, a private Executive Briefing, a political Executive meeting and a meeting for all of the Labour Group. The Executive also hold weekly calls with the Chief Executive to discuss the important issues being dealt with by the Council. There are additional ad hoc meetings between Executive members to discuss issues and interdependencies related to their respective portfolios.

5.3.2. The public Executive Meeting is held once a month. The Democratic Services team provide administrative support for Executive meetings including maintaining the forward plan, publishing decisions, and taking minutes. Other officers may attend depending on the papers and reports being presented. For example, a Head of Service or a senior officer may attend to present a report and take questions to support the corresponding Executive member. These meetings takes up to three hours. It takes several hours for each Executive Member to prepare thoroughly in advance of the Executive Meeting (and this is in addition to the time they spend at Executive Meetings).

5.3.3. All Councillors are invited to attend Executive meetings if they wish and are able to ask questions at the discretion of the Chair. There are currently three groups in opposition and all three have Members who regularly attend Executive Meetings.

5.3.4. This Executive Briefing is only for Executive Members and senior officers. This provides a detailed information for the full Executive to consider the agenda and reports which are proposed to be considered at the next formal meeting of the Executive. It also provides updates on the situation across the Borough. These meetings can last up to two hours.

5.3.5. Executive Members will also attend individual briefing meetings with their relevant Corporate Directors to ensure that they are able to fulfil their obligations in respect of the oversight and monitoring of the services and budgets within their respective portfolios.

5.3.6. Further to the Executive Meeting and Executive Briefing, there is a political Executive meeting each month conducted without officers for Executive Members to discuss matters affecting the borough and agree actions and strategies which they wish to take forward from a political perspective. This lasts an hour.

5.3.7. There is a monthly meeting of the Labour Group to discuss party business. This involves all Labour Councillors, including the Executive. This lasts for two hours.

5.3.8. The Chief Executive attends the hour-long Executive Members call each week. Other senior officers, such as the Director of Public Health, will join the meeting as required. The weekly call is supported by an officer for minute taking and providing administrative assistance.

5.3.9. Trafford also has a Lead Member for Education who, while not being a Member of the Executive, has a portfolio and a work load similar to an Executive Member.

5.3.10. It is important to note that there is limited delegation of decision making to officers in Trafford. This means that elected members need to maintain in-depth knowledge and understanding of their portfolio areas, supported by officers, see 5.6.

## 5.4. Portfolios

5.4.1. Each Executive Councillor holds an Executive Portfolio. The most important decisions are made by the Executive collectively, although Executive Councillors can take some decisions individually within their area of responsibility.

5.4.2. Currently the only full time Executive position is for the Council Leader. All of the other positions are held part time.

5.4.3. The current 10 executive functions are :

1. Leader of the Council – with portfolio for Sustainability and Climate Change
2. Deputy Leader – with portfolio for Children’s Services → (with all statutory children’s responsibilities)
3. Environment and Regulatory Services
4. Covid-19 Recovery and Reform
5. Adult Social Care
6. Culture and Leisure
7. Finance and Governance
8. Health, Wellbeing and Equalities
9. Communities and Partnerships
10. Housing and Regeneration

5.4.4. The responsibilities for each portfolio are outlined in the Council’s constitution.

5.4.5. Executive Councillors attend the committee meetings relevant to their portfolios and are subject to the scrutiny of the committee.

5.4.6. Executive Councillors will also participate in the GM initiatives related to their portfolios. This is an increasing commitment and helps ensure Trafford works closely with our GM partners and authorities.



## 5.5. Leader of the Council

5.5.1. The current role of the Leader of the Council includes responsibilities for leading the Executive, providing strategic leadership for the Council's work across a range of initiatives, working in tandem with the Council Leadership Team (CLT) to deliver on the corporate strategy, supporting the Local Government Association (LGA), and being a Cabinet member of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

5.5.2. The leader estimates that 50 % of his time is dedicated to his responsibilities directly within Trafford. This includes leading the Executive with its weekly meetings, the close working relationship with the Chief Executive and CLT, and extensive work with stakeholders and partners across the Borough.

5.5.3. The Leader currently chairs the boards for the Trafford Partnership, Joint Commissioning, and the Economic and Regeneration Initiative. Furthermore, he is a board member for Trafford Housing Trust and a number of joint venture partnerships for the borough.

5.5.4. The Leader estimates that a further 10% of his time is spent on LGA activity. He is the North West regional representative for his party and he is a committee member for the LGA's Councillors' Forum, which is an advisory body to the LGA Executive Advisory Board on current priority issues for local government. In this role, the Leader will also be invited regularly to present at conferences and policy roundtable discussions.

5.5.5. The remaining 40% of the Leader's role is taken up by GMCA activities. These include being a GMCA Cabinet member, strategy development, and portfolio leadership for the Green City Region and the Clean Air Plan. This also involves considerable media work. Each Council leader also provides scrutiny for the other areas of the GMCA, which is a significant demand on the Leader's time to participate in the committees and to prepare thoroughly.

5.5.6. Executive Councillors will also participate in the GM initiatives related to their portfolios. This is an increasing commitment and helps ensure Trafford works closely with our GM partners and authorities.

5.5.7. We expect the GMCA demands for the Leader and the Executive to continue for the foreseeable future.

5.5.8. It should be noted that the Leader manages all of his party leadership responsibilities outside of working hours due to the full-time demands of the Council Leader and GMCA Cabinet member roles. This includes local policy development, campaign management, pastoral support and party networking.

## 5.6. Delegated responsibilities

5.6.1. Trafford is committed to transparent decision making. Decisions are made in public wherever possible, and only taken by individuals by exception.

5.6.2. The Council and the Executive in Trafford retain the majority of their decision making powers. The scheme of delegation to officers is designed to support the efficient administration of the Council's operational functions and for the Council to operate exceptional circumstances, such as in response to the recent COVID 19 pandemic.

5.6.3. The full scheme of delegation is listed in the Council's Constitution. It is notable that 11 of the 18 local choice functions are delegated to or have elements of delegation to officers. All decisions are published online and are available to be viewed on the Council's website.

5.6.4. Of the 47 decisions that have been made in the last six months, only nine have been made by officers with the remainder being taken by the Council, the Executive, a Committee, or a Member of the Executive under a specific delegation.

## 5.7. Summary

5.7.1. Trafford have used the Executive model of governance for the last 20 years. A return to committee based governance would only likely slow the decision making of the Council and require greater time investment from Councillors and officers alike. There is currently no desire to change from the Executive model.

5.7.2. The GMCA has been formed since the last Boundary Review of Trafford. It is a welcome development and Trafford Council values the opportunity to work closely with other GM authorities. It is clear that GMCA work places a considerable demand on Councillors' time, especially for those on the Executive. It is important therefore that is taken into consideration when agreeing the future size of the Council.

# 6. Accountability

## 6.1. Internal Scrutiny

6.1.1. The Council committees play a key role in decision making in Trafford. There are three overview and scrutiny committees which support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole, namely: the Scrutiny Committee, the Health Scrutiny Committee, and the Children and the Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

6.1.2. The overview and scrutiny committees review decisions made and actions taken by the Authority. The committees also make reports and recommendations to full Council, the Executive, joint committees and area boards.

6.1.3. The overview and scrutiny committee can 'call-in' a decision which has been made by the Executive or by an individual Member of the Executive but not yet implemented. This enables them to consider whether the decision is appropriate. They may recommend that the Executive reconsider the decision. In practice, this happens infrequently but it remains an important check and balance on the Executive function to ensure that decisions are not only in line with Council policy, but also in the public interest..

6.1.4. The overview and scrutiny committees may also be consulted by the Executive or the Council on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy and have an important role in reviewing the Executive's Budget proposals each year.

6.1.5. The Health Scrutiny Committee considers health matters and engages with health commissioners and providers in addition to the Executive

6.1.6. Each overview and scrutiny committee is currently made up of 11 councillors, inclusive of 2 ex-Officio with no voting rights, from across the range of political groupings in the council. There is further representation on the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on education matters with co-opted voting members from Parent Governors (3), Church of England (1) and the Roman Catholic Church (1), as well as three co-opted non-voting members who are Teacher Representatives. Scrutiny chairs are appointed by the council, there are two from the majority party and one from the largest party in opposition.

6.1.7. The makeup of all committees as a whole is proportional to the make up of the council. The size of the scrutiny committees is currently at the smallest number we have had, they usually are around 13-14 (including ex-officio). This is the case because of the need to reflect current political balance.

6.1.8. The overview and scrutiny committees also review the work of partners, including local health services. They allow the community to have a greater say in Council matters by making inquiries into matters of local concern. These lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

6.1.9. There are 15 meetings for the various overview and scrutiny committees each year. These are:

- Six Health Scrutiny Committee meetings
- Five Scrutiny Community meetings
- Four Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

6.1.10. During 2020 all Council operations were impacted significantly. The Council suspended its standard scrutiny measures and put in place a Pandemic Scrutiny Committee, which had 17 members and met monthly. This committee has recently been decommissioned. All three overview and scrutiny committees have been reinstated in January 2021, and each committee has scheduled two meetings before the end of the financial year.

6.1.11. Each scrutiny committee is permitted one or two task and finish groups, which is given officer support to complete. The take-up of this varies over time. These task and finish groups range approximately in size from 3-11 members, and potentially can invite other non-executive members of the council that are not members of that committee. Task and finish groups can be set up whenever necessary, however they need to recruit additional officer support to undertake the work required.

6.1.12. Officers publish a Forward Plan providing details of all reports coming forward for decision by the Executive. This is updated monthly, and provides visibility to members of the public of council business, and enables them to contact their representatives in advance of decisions being made.

## 6.2. Internal Scrutiny – Standards

6.2.1. The council holds a Standards Committee as required by Law. This committee promotes and maintains high standards of conduct within the Council and deals with any complaints that councillors or co-opted members have breached the Code of Conduct for Members.

6.2.2. This committee is also made up on 11 councillors. The Chair of Standards Committee is also currently from the majority party. There are in addition three non-voting Independent Members and two non-voting Parish Members. There are also two Independent Persons as required by law, who are required to be consulted by the Council's monitoring officer in relation to complaints received under the Code of Conduct for Members.

## 6.3. Internal Scrutiny – Committees

6.3.1. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of committees. Alongside the aforementioned Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Standards Committee, there are a further four Committees, four Sub-Committees, a Panel and a Board, see 6.3.5.

6.3.2. Executive Members cannot be members of scrutiny committees so this removes ten members from the pool available for this scrutiny work.

6.3.3. The number of meetings held by each committee, and the number of constituted committees, are driven by need and are currently agreed as appropriate by the council.

6.3.4. The current committees are:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Summary of Committee's Purpose</b>
Accounts and Audit Committee	9 cross party members of the Authority (not on the Executive) and 1 independent member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment,</li> <li>• Independent scrutiny of the Authority's financial and non-financial performance</li> <li>• Oversee the financial reporting process.</li> </ul>
Appointments and Appeals Panel	All members. Smaller number of members to form a panel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To act as the Council's appeals body regarding appeals other than those for which specific arrangements have been established.</li> <li>• Responsible for appointments of Director-level officer appointments</li> </ul>
Employment Committee	9 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and approve the pay awards for Council staff.</li> <li>• Approve the job description, salary and benefits for Chief Officers prior to appointment.</li> <li>• Consider, approve and adopt any new or significant revision to existing corporate HR strategies and policies</li> </ul>
Health and Wellbeing Board	7 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversees the Sports &amp; Physical Activity; Safer Trafford; and Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships</li> <li>• To address poor health and promote wellbeing, and increase Trafford's Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE)</li> </ul>
Planning and Development Management Committee	13 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise powers in relation to planning and development management over development proposals in the Borough</li> </ul>
Licensing Committee	15 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets annually.</li> <li>• Determines all contested applications and reviews under the Licensing Act 2003</li> </ul>
Licensing Sub-Committee	15 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determines all contested applications and reviews under the Licensing Act 2003</li> </ul>
Public Protection Sub-Committee	9 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for private/public hire vehicles and miscellaneous licensing.</li> </ul>
Safety at Sports Grounds Sub-Committee	3 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps ensure public safety at Trafford's various sports stadia.</li> <li>• Meets approximately four times through the year.</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Trafford Council Internal Committees**

## 6.4. Joint Committees

6.4.1. Trafford councillors are also members of a number of joint committees with other partners and GM authorities. These cover policies on health, procurement and commissioning.

6.4.2. These include:

Joint Committee	Partner/s	No. of Trafford members
Joint Health Scrutiny Committee	Manchester City Council	5
Greater Manchester Joint Health Scrutiny Committee	Greater Manchester Councils	1
STAR Joint Committee	Stockport, Tameside and Rochdale Councils	1

**Table 7: Trafford Joint Committees**

## 6.5. Statutory Function: Planning

6.5.1. The Planning and Development Management Committee is scheduled to meet monthly. Additional and reconvened meetings are occasionally held as required by need.

6.5.2. The committee is made up of 13 councillors, with six reserve members who are able to attend as substitutes where required. Executive Members have served on the Planning Committee in the past but do not currently.

6.5.3. As well as attending the committee meetings, members are expected to make site visits to all application sites to be determined prior to the meeting.

6.5.4. There is currently one central planning committee, and at present there are also ad hoc sub committees, which deal with matters relating to Tree Preservation orders or to Village Green applications. There are no area planning committees.

## 6.6. Statutory Function: Licensing

6.6.1. In Trafford, we have the following Licensing Committees. In total there are approximately 30 licensing meetings each year:

- The full Licensing Committee. This meets annually. It is attended by all 15 Councillors who are committee members.
- Licensing (Licensing Act 2003) Sub Committee – three elected members. This sub-committee meets as required. This meets on average 10 to 12 meetings each year.
- Public Protection Sub-Committee – nine members. This meets monthly.
- Safety at Sports Ground Sub-Committee – three members. This meets four times a year.

## 6.7. Other Regulatory Bodies

6.7.1. The Accounts and Audit Committee comprises of nine councillors and one independent member, and meets five or six times per year.

6.7.2. The Appointments and Appeals Panel is constituted as necessary in line with recruitment and appeal requirements.

## 6.8. External Partners

6.8.1. Trafford works with a variety of external partners across the functions of the authority. Councillors are often board members and/or participants in these partnerships.

6.8.2. The Trafford Partnership brings together many of these relationships, with health services, housing, community groups, Greater Manchester Police, businesses, education providers, and the Armed Forces, among others.

6.8.3. Among the partnership boards that include councillor input are the overarching Trafford Partnership Board; the Health and Wellbeing Board; the Start Well Board, the Live Well Board, and the Age Well Board; the Inclusive Growth Board; the Strong Communities Board; and the Armed Forces Covenant.

6.8.4. The Third Sector Strategy is led by Thrive Trafford, a partnership with Pulse Regeneration to support voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations in the borough

6.8.5. There is a formal relationship with NHS Trafford CCG as part of Trafford Together for Health and Social Care; and with Manchester Universities Foundation Trust (MFT); both under Section 75 agreements (pursuant to the National Health Service Act 2006). Further, Trafford Council commissioning and NHS Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group collaborate under a strategic commissioning arrangement.

## 6.9. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

6.9.1. The ten Greater Manchester local authorities work together closely across a range of policy and government responsibilities. This is embodied in the current Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), which is led by Andy Burnham as the elected city-region Mayor.

6.9.2. The GMCA has powers over public transport, skills, housing, regeneration, waste management, carbon neutrality and planning permission, with executive bodies such as Transport for Greater Manchester having responsibility for relevant service delivery.

6.9.3. The GMCA is part-funded by a precept collected from the ten member local authorities, who also contribute towards a Mayoral precept, which includes funding for GM Fire and Rescue and GM Police.

6.9.4. There is a considerable responsibility for elected members from across the ten authorities to represent their individual boroughs and/or political groups on a series of regional bodies. This constitutes a significant commitment for elected members. This regional approach has been an essential part of the pandemic response. As noted by our regional colleagues in their recent Boundary Review submissions, the GMCA is a markedly different way of working and it leads the way nationally as a model for regional governance. Members, therefore, need to balance the needs of their authority's residents with the priorities at a GM-level and increasingly with national politics.

## 6.9.5. The GM regional bodies include:

- The Leader's executive role in the GMCA
- Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA)
- Overview and Scrutiny committee
- GM Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
- GM Economy, Business Growth and Skills
- GM Joint Health Scrutiny Committee
- AGMA Statutory Functions Committee
- GM Health and Care Board
- GM Health and Care Joint Commissioning Board
- GM Culture and Social Impact Fund Committee
- GMP and Crime Panel
- GM Transport and Green Issues

6.9.6. The Leader attends at least three GM level meetings per month, as does the Chief Executive. Trafford Council elected members are represented on a range of committees and bodies, including Greater Manchester scrutiny committees.

6.9.7. During the pandemic the Leader and members of the Executive have attended more frequent meetings to respond to the crisis, especially as Greater Manchester has experienced additional Covid restrictions since August.



## 6.10. Summary

6.10.1. Our Councillors already have an exacting workload to fulfil their community responsibilities, their executive and group leadership responsibilities, and their obligations for the scrutiny committees and our partnerships. We neither envisage fewer committee meetings nor less Council activity in the years ahead. We believe that a significant reduction in the Council size would exacerbate the challenges for members in managing their workload and their ability to discharge their duties.

Similarly we envisage that our partnership and regional commitments will likely increase. This level of cooperation will continue as we support Trafford and Greater Manchester through the recovery from the pandemic and economic crisis over the coming years. We therefore conclude that the current size of the council is appropriate for the likely amount of activity conducted by councillors in future.

# 7. Other Issues

## 7.1. Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF)

7.1.1. As stated above, despite the political uncertainty surrounding the GMSF, Trafford remains committed to the housing and employment ambitions set out in the Framework. These developments will potentially transform parts of the Borough, especially in Carrington and Timperley.

## 7.2. Impact of new trading relationship with the European Union

7.2.1. The U.K. introduced a new trading arrangement with the countries of the European Union on 1 January 2021. This change has enacted a series of new non-tariff trade barriers. This will affect directly the companies in Trafford exporting to the European Union. It is as yet too early to predict the impact this will have on the Borough's economy. However, any economic downturn would compound the problems presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, see 7.3.

7.2.2. A 2017 study cited Trafford as being more adversely affected compared to the rest of Greater Manchester and the UK, potentially due to its sectoral specialisms in exporting industries such as food and drink. Trafford ranked 28th out of the 380 UK Local Authorities by size of negative impact, with Gross Value Added expected to be between 1.3% and 2.6%.

## 7.3. Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

7.3.1. The Covid-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented demands on Trafford. The crisis response has required enormous, and unforeseen, expenditure. This was managed through using council reserve savings, government grants and some budget adjustment. Moreover, the Council's tax revenues and income generating services, especially its share of the Manchester Airport dividend, were badly affected during 2020. It is likely that these financial challenges will continue until the summer of 2021 and for several years beyond. As a result, the Council faces a stark budget deficit in the coming years. It is as yet unclear as to how this deficit will be addressed.

7.3.2. The pandemic will have a direct effect on the work of members for the foreseeable future. Councillors will have to respond to residents' concerns about their services and community support. Councillors have already seen an increase in casework during the pandemic and this is likely to continue until the vaccination programme is complete, the economy stabilises and normality resumes. Moreover, councillors will be asked to make a number of difficult decisions about the allocation of resources and changes to what services are provided.

## 7.4. Summary

7.4.1. We are working to ensure that the Council provides the best possible support to our residents and our businesses as they adapt to the difficulties presented by the pandemic and other factors.

It is currently unclear how Trafford will respond to these exceptional budgetary pressures. It is plausible that there will be a need to reduce current staffing levels for officers and/or reduce the services the Council provides. Both options would affect councillors and their workloads greatly.

## 8. Conclusions

8.1.1. It is clear from the evidence collated in this submission that the demands on Trafford's elected members are complex and continue to increase. Our members will continue to need an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issues faced by their electors. It is therefore a primary consideration for the future about ensuring adequate capacity in the Council for it to fulfil its duties and responsibilities.

8.1.2. We are working ever closer with our colleagues in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority across a series of policy and government responsibilities. As this submission notes, councillors devote an increasing amount of their time to fulfil their GMCA responsibilities. This is especially true for the Leader and the Executive. Members will also require sufficient time to represent the borough across local, regional and national partnerships.

8.1.3. As part of this consideration, it is important to recognise that the scale of economic activity in Trafford is not accounted for in its electorate. We are proud to be home to Trafford Park, Trafford City and the two Old Trafford sports grounds. Moreover, the Council has ambitious plans for growth as seen in its Stretford Masterplan and the Civic Quarter. However, it should be noted that these vital assets affect the business of the Council directly and underline the need for a sufficient number of members to support these initiatives.

8.1.4. We recognise the need for fair and effective representation for residents. The shared cross-party view is that we should continue with three member wards for the prospective Council.

8.1.5. We examined three possible options for three member wards for the Council size to inform our conclusions, see Appendix 1.

8.1.6. The breadth of activity across the Borough inevitably means that councillors are needed to ensure that the decision-making meetings, scrutiny, statutory functions, community and partnership meetings are fully supported. We expect that these commitments will continue at a similar rate in future. We believe this necessitates maintaining a similar Council size to Trafford's current arrangements.

8.1.7. We considered reducing the Council size so that its ward electorates were similar in size to the average across the UK. This would entail reducing the size of the Council to 18 wards and 54 councillors. In this scenario, we estimate that this would create average ward sizes of approximately 9950 electors. However, we estimate that such a reduction in Councillors would increase Councillors' caseloads and committee responsibilities by approximately 21 percent to account for nine fewer councillors and an increased population in the borough. This submission highlights the concerns of Councillors about their current workloads. A 20+ percent increase in workload would be untenable for many of our members.

We also concluded that such reduction in Council size is unlikely to realise any cost savings for Trafford as officers would need to provide more support to fewer councillors or councillors would require better remuneration to compensate for the additional time commitment.

8.1.8. The population of Trafford is projected to grow steadily over the coming years. We examined the feasibility of increasing the Council size accordingly, which would increase the number of wards to 22. This would create average ward sizes of approximately 8150 electors. Increasing the size in this way is preferable to reducing the Council size. However, we believe that increasing the Council Size is unnecessary at this stage. Technology is enabling members to save time by increasingly attending virtual meetings and responding to their constituents via emails and social media.

8.1.9. Based on the information collated for this submission, we conclude that the most effective size for Trafford Council is 63 councillors. We envisage that that this would create an average ward size of approximately 8500 by 2026. This balances the needs for fair representation across the Borough. Moreover, this provides the necessary capacity for the workload of councillors for their council business, to support the growth strategy for Trafford, and for their commitments to their communities and partnership working.

8.1.10. The recommendation from Trafford Council proposes that the Council retains its 21 wards and 63 councillors, (with three members per ward, elected in the four yearly cycle).

# Appendix 1: Alternative Models of Governance

Options	2020 'As is' model	2026: Reduce to national average Elector/ Cllr ratio (c. 3,256)	2026: Maintain current council size	2026: Increase Council Size proportionately to match forecasted electorate growth
Electors	172,622	179,140*	179,140	179,140
Number of wards	21	18	21	22
Number of councillors	63	54	63	66
Average number of electors per ward	8220	9952	8530	8143
2026 forecast ratio of electors per member	2740 (Current ratio)	3317	2843	2714
Forecasted change in members' average minimum caseload per month**	-	21.10%	+3.78% (as per increase in electorate)	-1%

\* As per the forecast of population growth and property development, see 2.4.

\*\* This assessment is based on a ceteris paribus assumption that members' caseloads will increase proportionally in line with the forecasted 3.78% growth in the electorate of Trafford, see 2.4.

# Notes

- i.** 'Greater Manchester Forecasting Model 2018' [https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1731/final\\_gmfm2018\\_forecast\\_paper\\_web.pdf](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1731/final_gmfm2018_forecast_paper_web.pdf)
- ii.** <https://altrinchamunlimited.co.uk/assets/uploads/docs/Annual-Report-2019-20.pdf>
- iii.** <https://www.insidermedia.com/news/north-west/progress-to-be-made-on-trafford-regeneration-plans>
- iv.** <https://traffordcity.co.uk/news/thermeapproved#:~:text=With%20an%20estimated%20cost%20in,water%2Dbased%20attraction%20in%20Europe.>
- v.** <https://nt.global.ssl.fastly.net/documents/annual-report-201920.pdf>
- vi.** <http://www.traffordjsna.org.uk/About-Trafford/Key-demographics/Population-estimates.aspx>
- vii.** Trafford Economic Profile, Trafford Council
- viii.** <https://www.trafforddatalab.io/analysis/loD2019/report/>
- ix.** Info Trafford (2017). Population by Geographic Area. Available at: <http://www.infotrafford.org.uk/trafford-population-estimates>
- x.** <http://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/housing-strategy/docs/Trafford-Council-Housing-Strategy-2018-2023-Annual-Statement-August-2019.pdf>
- xi.** <https://www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/community/partnerships-and-communities/consultations/stretford-masterplan/docs/The-Refreshed-Stretford-Masterplan.pdf>
- xii.** <https://peellandp.co.uk/trafford-waters/>
- xiii.** <https://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/docs/GMSF-FAQs/New-Carrington-Framework-Plan.pdf>
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- xvi.** As of January 20221, <http://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/about-us/about-trafford-council.aspx>
- xvii.** <http://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/about-us/docs/part-3-constitution-responsibility-for-functions.pdf> pp. 29-59
- xviii.** <https://democratic.trafford.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?bcr=1.>
- xix.** <http://www.traffordpartnership.org/about/who-we-are.aspx>
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