



Oversight and Governance

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Published 19 June 2024

CITY COUNCIL – SUPPLEMENT PACK

Monday 24 June 2024
2.15 pm
Council House, Plymouth

Members:

Councillor Tuohy, Chair

Councillor Murphy, Vice Chair

Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Bannerman, Mrs Beer, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Cuddihee, Dann, Darcy, Dingle, Evans OBE, Finn, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Loveridge, Lowry, Luggier, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Ney, P.Nicholson, S.Nicholson, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, M.Smith, R.Smith, Sproston, Steel, Stephens, Stevens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Ms Watkin and Wood.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

You can watch any of our webcast meetings on [YouTube](#). For further information on attending Council meetings and how to engage in the democratic process please follow this link - [Get Involved](#)

Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

City Council

3. Council Electoral Review:

(Pages 1 - 58)

City Council



Date of meeting:	24 June 2024
Title of Report:	Electoral Review 2024
Lead Strategic Director:	Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author:	Liz Bryant
Contact Email:	liz.bryant@plymouth.gov.uk
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the Council's commitment to the delivery of a statutory Local Government Boundary Commission for England Electoral Review. It outlines the purpose of the review and the recommended option being put forward as part of our Council Size submission.

Recommendations and Reasons

That Full Council:

Considers the report and resolves that the preferred submission option to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is that the council increases its size with three additional councillors (60 in total across 20 wards).

Reason: To comply with the statutory requirement to carry out an Electoral Review (Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (Sec 56)). The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has a legal requirement to review all local authority boundaries from time to time. An Electoral review is an examination of a Council's electoral arrangements and Plymouth was last reviewed over twenty years ago; and

That recommendations set out in paragraph 3 in the briefing report relating to next steps are approved and progressed.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. As part of the Electoral Review process and in gathering data and evidence as part of the Council's submission on Council Size, a number of options were considered in relation to the future size of the Council and the number of elected councillors required (taking into consideration governance arrangements, scrutiny and regulatory functions and councillor roles in their local communities. These options were:
 - a. A reduction in Council Size. This was not recommended as it would increase the pressure on remaining councillors. Individual councillors would be required to attend more council meetings, committees, outside bodies, and partnerships. The casework load would be spread over fewer councillors, and this would result in a reduction in the level of service provided to their communities. It could lead to councillors leaving office

or being reluctant to take up positions, and increase the challenge associated with improving councillor diversity.

- b. Maintaining the current Council size. This was not recommended because it is not sustainable in the long-term given the city's growing population, and need for Councillors to provide effective representation for the increased diversity of communities across the city. Councillors have clearly indicated that the time spent on their duties has grown exponentially over the years since the last review, and maintaining the status quo would not address this. The increase we have seen in casework volumes and complexity is a trend that is set to continue given the predicted population and housing growth, the persistent deprivation across a significant proportion of the city and our aging population.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Effective democratic leadership and good governance impacts upon all aspects of the Corporate Plan

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The resource implications of the preferred option would be the funding of a further three councillors (payment of their basic annual allowance), as well as any additional expenses incurred. The basic allowance rate including National Insurance contributions is approx. £13,000 per councillor per annum. This would mean an additional annual cost of approx. £39,000 per annum plus expenses. No additional staffing resource will be required.

An additional budget for IT, telephone and training etc. would be required for three new councillors.

Financial Risks

None as a direct result of this report other than outlined above

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None as a result of this report.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

There is a risk that increasing the number of councillors and as a result more spending may have reputational impact at a time when the authority has significant budget pressures. The counter argument to this being that with further budget savings to be made, the authority will face challenges to respond to concerns within communities, and that a small increase in additional councillors will become more important in ensuring communities are effectively represented and the voices and needs of local people, in increasingly diverse communities, are heard.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)
		<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Final Council Size Submission							
B	Council Size Submission Briefing Note							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Liz Bryant

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 14/06/2024

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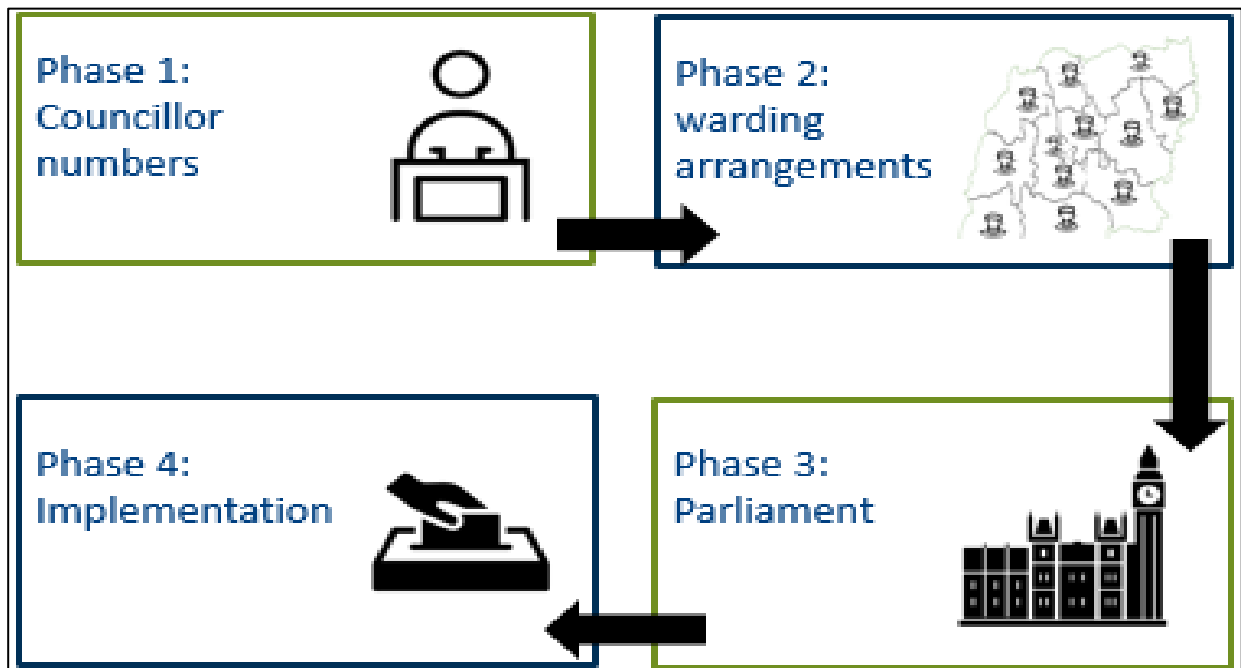
ELECTORAL REVIEW

Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England



I. BACKGROUND

- I.1. Last Autumn the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) announced an electoral review of Plymouth City Council. The LGBCE's statutory remit is to periodically review all local authority arrangements for local elections. The rolling review period is approximately 20 years and the Councils last electoral review was in 2001.
- I.2. The LGBCE is responsible for the electoral review however, the Council must:
- Prepare and submit a proposal on how many members the Council believes there should be in the future.
 - Prepare electorate forecasts, mapping and details of housing developments: these are expected to be five-year forecasts.
 - Prepare and submit a warding pattern during the first public consultation and respond to draft recommendations by the LGBCE.
- I.3. Additionally, the LGBCE expect the Council to support them in publicising the review, including by sharing details of interested parties and supporting meetings with community and residents' groups.
- I.4. The review will have four distinct parts:



- I.5. We are currently in phase one (councillor numbers). The key output from this phase is the Council's proposal on how many members the Council believes it needs in future, this is known as a council size proposal.
- I.6. Phase two is split into two distinct parts. The first will be a consultation on future warding arrangements, due to run from July to September 2024, during which the Council and other stakeholders will be invited to submit their views on how wards should be arranged. The second stage will be a consultation on the draft ward boundaries proposed by the LGBCE, which will run from January to March 2025.

2. COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION

2.1. The first phase of the review will determine the total number of councillors to be elected to the council in future. The LGBCE will make its judgement on Council Size by considering three broad areas:

- **Governance Arrangements** and how the council takes decisions across the broad range of responsibilities.
- **Scrutiny functions** relating to own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.
- **Representational role of councillors in the local community** and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

2.2. Our draft proposal is that our council size should increase to 60 Councillors.

- This proposal is within the 'expected range' established with reference to LGBCE guidance and our CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) benchmarking group.
- We utilised Southampton's successful proposal as a benchmark where the guidance was not fully comprehensive to ensure our proposal is 'well evidenced'.
- LGBCE guidance suggests proposals meeting their two criteria are unlikely to be challenged.

2.3. **The key evidence** to support our case is:

- The increasing demands of our ambitious growth programme.
- Our housing led population forecast, which shows that an increase in Councillor numbers would sustain the current ratio of Councillors to residents ensuring future sustainability.
- The increasing volume and complexity of Councillor case work and time spent in meetings.
- The challenge of maintaining strong connections to a growing and tech savvy community, complicated by the communications preferences of the growing population of older people.
- The need for the council to reflect growing diversity in the city and to ensure a good work/life balance to attract Councillors from all walks of life.
- The relatively elevated levels of deprivation and age-related need across the city.

2.4. The submission has 6 sections and 7 appendices.

- The national and local policy context and how it has changed since the last review
- A profile of the local area including geographical and demographic data, reference to the council's level of ambition and a community pen portrait
- A description of our current council size and governance arrangements
- A description of our current scrutiny arrangements and the extent of partnership working
- A section covering community leadership which draws heavily on the recent member survey to ensure councilor voices are central to our case

- The appendices provide supporting evidence to points referenced in the submission.
- Finally, there is a summary section drawing together all the evidence to support our key arguments and making the final recommendation for a sixty-member solution.

2.5. The LGBCE have asked us to highlight key paragraphs on which our submission is based in a table; this is appended for information.

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1. In November 2022 full Council agreed to undertake a public engagement consultation on the issue of moving from the current electoral cycle of elections to 'whole council' elections once every four years. At its meeting in January 2024, full Council agreed that the electoral cycle consultation would run concurrently with the Boundary Commission (BC) consultation in relation to ward patterns, names and boundaries, as well as agreeing the consultation question proposed by Audit and Governance Committee.

3.2. The BC has now confirmed that it will not conduct its own consultation processes until such time as the Council has concluded its own consultation on electoral cycles and a decision has been made one way or the other by full Council as to whether to make a change. It has also indicated that we will need to submit an addendum report to the Council Size Submission updating the Boundary Commission on the outcome of the electoral cycle consultation and decision.

3.3. In light of the above, Council is now requested to approve the following:

- 1) To acknowledge that it is not possible to run the electoral cycle consultation and BC Ward consultation concurrently, therefore the BC should be informed of the electoral cycle consultation timetable accordingly so that they can propose their own revised timetable for their consultation processes;
- 2) To approve the Council Size Submission for the BC prior to submission on the 25 June, an addendum will be provided to the BC once the outcome of the electoral cycle is known;
- 3) It delegates to Audit and Governance Committee that they will review and finalise the consultation process and task officers with progressing the consultation exercise within an agreed timeframe.

Appendix I: **TABLE OF KEY PARAGRAPHS**

Section	Key Paragraph	Page
Policy Context	Like most upper tier authorities, the most significant governance change Plymouth has embraced was a result of the Local Government Act 2000 when we moved to a Leader and Cabinet model.	3
	The Council actively sought a Level 2 Devolution Deal with government to form a Combined County Authority with Devon and Torbay, however the Council did not proceed as it was felt that the Deal on offer would not provide either the right level of additional funding or powers for Plymouth. As a result, we continue to liaise directly with government and its agencies, building relationships and exploring other avenues to unlock funding and other freedoms and flexibilities; this inevitably involves a high workload for senior Councillors as they manage complex briefs and maintain the necessary networks and stakeholders.	3
	The Council has carried out regular governance reviews since 2002.	4
Local Authority Profile	Plymouth is one of the largest cities on the south coast, with a population of approximately 264,700. With the backdrop of Dartmoor to the north, Plymouth lies between the River Plym to the east and the river Tamar to the west with both rivers flowing into the natural harbour of Plymouth Sound.	5
	Since 1967, the unitary authority of Plymouth includes the once independent towns of Plympton and Plymstock which lie along the east of the river Plym.	6
	The ward with the biggest population is St Peter and the Waterfront (17,700) whilst Plympton Chaddlewood has the smallest population (8,200). Budshead, Compton, Stoke, and Plympton St Mary wards have seen the greatest decline in population between 2011 and 2021. In contrast Plymstock Radford, St Peter and the Waterfront, Southway, and Moor View wards have seen population growth of between 9.7 per cent and 15.8 percent.	7
	Plymouth's population will continue to grow. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that the city's population will be around 268,882 by 2030,	7
	The University of Plymouth is the UK's 15 th largest university, with more than 18,500 students. There are just under 22,500 people studying at Plymouth's three universities.	8
	The Armed Forces are an integral part of the history and heritage of Plymouth; the city has the second largest number of veterans in England, after Leeds.	8
	The population diversity within Plymouth is very slowly changing. In 2021, 94.9 per cent (248,727) of usual residents in Plymouth identified their ethnic group within the high-level 'White' category, a decrease from 96.1 per cent (246,509) in the 2011 Census. Whilst the proportion of these ethnic groups is only currently one third of those seen in England and Wales (circa 18%), the percentage increase in Plymouth, over the last 10 years is proportionally larger.	8
	There will be a notable change in Plymouth's age structure over the next twenty years. The over 65 age group is predicted to rise by 31.6 per cent between 2021 and 2043 (from 48,900 to 64,372). The over 75 age group is predicted to rise by 60.3 per cent. This rise will see Plymouth's over 75s increase from 22,800 to 36,550. The over 85 age group will see an 83 per cent increase (from 6,400 to 11,746) in 2043. Within this cohort, the number aged 90 or more is projected to double.	8

	The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 is the current official measure of relative deprivation in England. Analysis of the IMD 2019 for Plymouth reveals that deprivation in Plymouth remains higher than the England average. At a local authority district level Plymouth ranks 64 th (out of 317) using the average score summary measure. This places Plymouth within the 20 per cent most deprived districts in England.	8
	The Plymouth City Survey 2022 found that just over one in five respondents (21%) agreed that the food they buy just doesn't last and they don't have money to buy more. This rises to over 30 per cent in wards such as Drake, Honicknowle and St. Peter and the Waterfront.	9
	Plymothians are proud of their heritage and natural environment and tend to have a strong affiliation with their local area. This is especially true of the wards on the east of the Plym which were outside the City's administration area until 1967. The areas of highest population growth are mostly in the wards with the highest levels of deprivation.	10
Strategic Leadership	Plymouth has 57 elected members, representing 20 wards, elected in thirds. 17 wards have three members, and three wards have two members.	12
	The Cabinet is the primary decision-making body of the Council. It is responsible for policies, plans and strategies which give effect to the budget and policy framework adopted by full Council.	12
	Full council meets six times per year, with extraordinary meetings when required. It approves the most significant decisions which impact upon the Council's Policy Framework and budget.	14
	The council operates several other committees ranging from centralised planning and licensing committees to service specific committees. A full overview of our committee structure is available in Appendix A	15
	Legislation places a limit of ten on the allowable number of portfolio holders/ cabinet members inclusive of the Leader and Deputy. These portfolio areas are determined by the Leader within the Leader's Scheme of Delegation and are summarised below.	15
Accountability	All the Overview and Scrutiny committees are politically proportional and currently are comprised of 11 members. Each committee meets at least quarterly.	19
	The Leader, Shadow Leader and relevant Cabinet Members are actively involved in key citywide partnership boards, the principal ones are listed below. Typically, they meet formally on a quarterly basis, members may attend more frequent meetings on an exceptional or "task and finish" basis.	25
	In addition to the key strategic partnerships there are several service-related improvement boards providing oversight of important council functions. These meet at least quarterly and may meet more frequently as required for the transaction of urgent business.	29
	The Council is a member of a number of national and regional networks used to make the case for Plymouth at a national level, influence policy development and share best practice.	29
	Several Cabinet appointments are made each year to bodies which have a link to the delivery of executive responsibilities.	24

	Plymouth City Council collaborates with various outside bodies to enhance its services and fulfil its responsibilities. These external organisations operate independently from the council and are embedded in local communities.	24
	Overall, there are ninety-five appointments / positions available to be allocated across fifty-seven councillors.	25
Community Leadership / Casework	In order to assist with the development of a robust council size submission and gain insight into councillors' community leadership and casework responsibilities, a member survey was issued to all councillors between 22 March 2024 and 10 April 2024.	33
	Respondents rate the most time-consuming activity (per month) as dealing with casework. Based on median scores the 'typical' councillor spends more than 16 hours a month dealing with casework.	39
	Based on median scores, each month, the 'typical Councillor' spends 6-10 hours in external meetings, 11-15 hours attending full council or council committee meetings, 1-5 hours attending Councillor training or briefing sessions, 6-10 hours attending internal meetings with officers or as part of a working group, 16-20 hours dealing with casework, 6-10 hours meeting with residents, 11-15 hours on other activities necessary to the role, 6-10 hours on party business and 6-10 hours preparing for meetings.	39
	Two thirds of Councillors said they spent more time on council business than they had expected when they were elected, and the majority tended to rely on specific council officers or the PA team for assistance.	40
	Two thirds of Councillors said the amount of time they spent on council business had increased throughout their time as a Councillor.	40
	When asked to identify the aspect of council business that had increased the most; the majority of respondents cited casework (overwhelmingly the most commonly cited), meetings and preparation for them, and correspondence especially via email, text and social media.	40
Summary	Overwhelmingly the key concern for 'backbench' members is the increase in complex councillor case work and commitments related to scrutiny and quasi-judicial Committees. The typical councillor deals with up to 30 casework enquiries per month and for senior councillors this can rise to over 50 casework enquiries per month, many of which will be highly confidential. Casework related to the cost-of-living crisis and housing need is seen as being particularly complex and increasing in volume. Every Councillor is a member of at least one Committee, with many having multiple roles, including serving as trustee or director of an 'outside body'.	43
	Overall members were broadly supportive of three member wards feeling this provided a good level of resilience at ward level when individual councillors were sick or otherwise unavailable for ward level work. The consensus was that the increases in ward population and changing demographics, especially an aging population that would require more support would increase the workload. More councillors were needed to help to fulfil commitments, including scrutiny and other committee meetings. There was a high level of concern about any potential reduction in the overall number of councillors, related to the increasing volume and complexity of casework, Committee work and demand for partnership working as well as the Council's growth ambitions.	43
	To provide a more accurate prediction of future growth we have developed a housing led approach, which compares our existing dwelling stock in 2023, with projected dwelling stock in 2030, considering the major strategic sites that are included in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP). This	43

	produces a slightly higher forecast of 203,976 electors in 2030 and an average of 3,579 electors per councillor. The housing led forecast also has significant implications for the spatial distribution of growth.	
	<p>Within this range we have considered three options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A decrease in council size to 54 Councillors 2. Maintaining the current council size of 57 Councillors 3. An increase in council size to 60 Councillors 	44
Recommendation	Increasing the current Council size is recommended. Based on our housing led projection of the increase in our electorate in 2030, increasing our council size to 60 members would mean that the average number of electors per councillor would be 3,400. This figure is consistent with the current ratio of 3,451 electors per councillor ensuring future resilience is maintained.	45
	We therefore submit that the proposition that is the best fit to our evidence base and which provides some much-needed additional capacity, is to increase the council size to 60 councillors across 20 wards.	45

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Council Size Submission

Plymouth City Council

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How to Make a Submission

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

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

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

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

About You

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

This submission is made by the Full Council. The matter has been discussed and considered in detail through cross-party briefings, and subject to a full report to Council in June 2024.

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

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

N/A

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

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?

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

Like most upper tier authorities, the most significant governance change Plymouth has embraced was a result of the Local Government Act 2000 when we moved to a Leader and Cabinet model. This followed a referendum in 2002 which rejected the option of an elected mayor by a substantial majority. In 2016 the Council formally reviewed this arrangement with a specific focus on a return to the committee system and reaffirmed its commitment.

We work closely with other Devon authorities to ensure holistic arrangements are in place for spatial planning, regional and sub regional transport requirements etc. Primarily this is through delegated joint committee arrangements such as Joint Local Plan Partnership Board and Peninsula Transport. The transfer of public health functions to the Council has worked well and aided the integrated working between the health and local authority sector.

The Council has become increasingly involved in commercialisation. The Plymouth family of companies includes several companies with senior Councillors as Company Directors that were established to support our ambitious growth programme. Examples include the Plymouth Science Park that was set up as a joint venture between Plymouth City Council and the University of Plymouth. Also, the Plymouth City Centre Company is a Business Improvement District established to promote the city centre in 2005, and this was followed in 2012 by the Plymouth Waterfront Partnership which serves a similar purpose for the 4 square miles of Plymouth's waterfront.

More recently the Council has embarked on two new commercial ventures, The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Company which is a partnership between the public and private sector established in 2022 following our successful bid to host one of the eight English freeports, and the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) established to create the country's first National Marine Park. The Council also supports several alternative delivery vehicles and arm's length trading companies that have Councillors as directors or stakeholders.

The Council actively sought a Level 2 Devolution Deal with government to form a Combined County Authority with Devon and Torbay, however the Council did not proceed as it was felt that the Deal on offer would not provide either the right level of additional funding or powers for Plymouth. As a result, we continue to liaise directly with government and its agencies, building relationships and exploring other avenues to unlock funding and other freedoms and flexibilities; this inevitably involves a high workload for senior Councillors as they manage complex briefs and maintain the necessary networks and stakeholders.

Like many other Local Authority areas and public services, national austerity measures and economic conditions have impacted significantly on our ability to address the key challenges in the city, however through the Council's Transformation Programme and the work we are doing around the cost-of-living crisis, we continue to find more efficient and innovative ways of working to do more with less, whilst providing support to our most vulnerable residents in the city. A high level

of political involvement is necessary in developing these programmes, to ensure that the priorities of the Council and the administration continue to be met.

The Council has carried out regular governance reviews since 2002. This has included reviews by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in September 2022, which followed changes in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2019. The Council has also commissioned Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Reviews in 2015 and 2018.

The most recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge was held in 2022. The review noted that the Council was a deserving winner of the MJ's prestigious 'Council of the Year Award' in 2021 and that pride and passion for the city of Plymouth and its residents is at the core of the council, evident in Members, staff and partners. The Peer Team acknowledged that the Council is without doubt ambitious, but in a new 'post-pandemic' world, suggested that the Council review the extent to which it has the capacity and resources in place to deliver all their stated priorities.

The review made 10 recommendations. In response to one of these the Council reviewed its constitution and scrutiny arrangements, and this has helped to improve the efficiency of governance controls and processes. A progress review was carried out in 2023 and concluded: "Plymouth City Council has made a great deal of progress since the corporate peer challenge took place in February 2022. The council also recognises that there is still work to do, but what is clear is that the focus on the city's strategic plan - the Plymouth Plan - really does galvanise everybody".

Since the last electoral review, Plymouth has grown in size, stature and complexity, from a relatively new unitary authority to an economic and cultural powerhouse for the far South West, with a national and international reputation for innovation. This has increased the demand on the capability and capacity of its elected members, which the Council has worked hard to address. The Council's size proposal forms part of this work.

Local Authority Profile

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

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

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

Plymouth is one of the largest cities on the south coast, with a population of approximately 264,700. With the backdrop of Dartmoor to the north, Plymouth lies between the River Plym to the east and the river Tamar to the west with both rivers flowing into the natural harbour of Plymouth Sound.

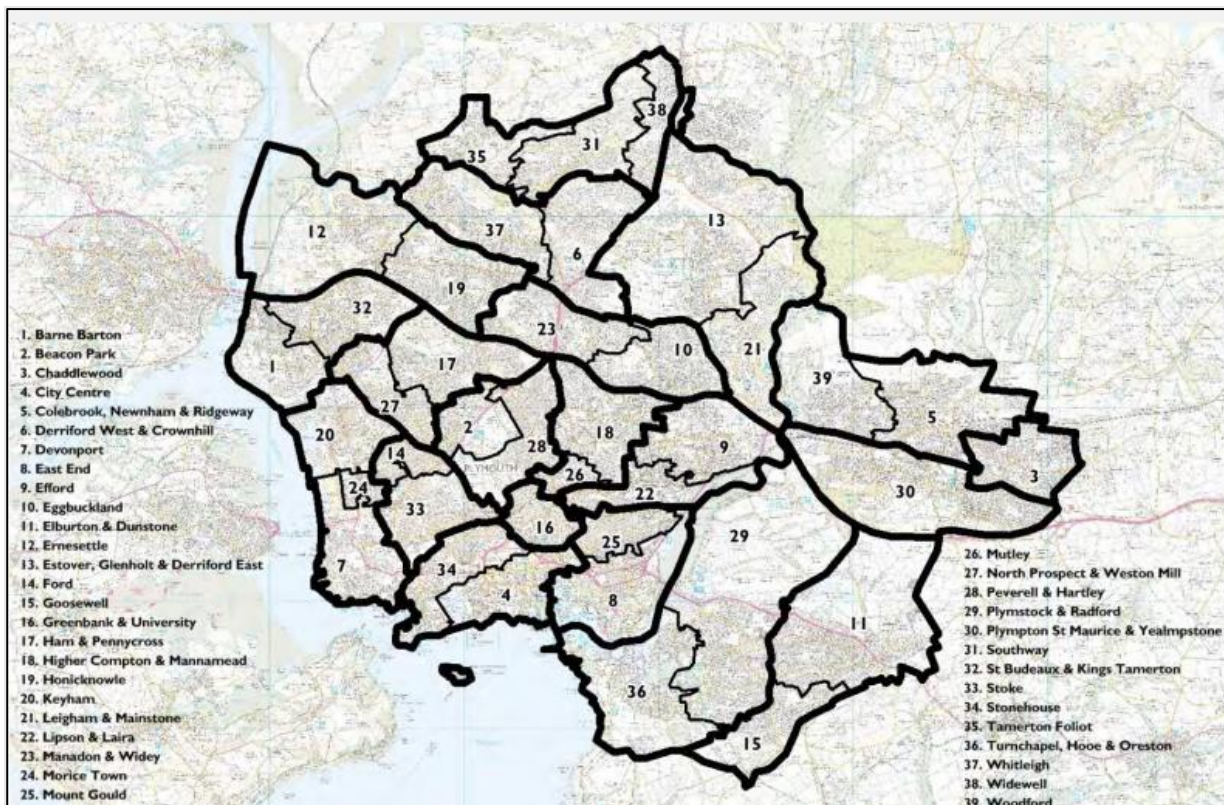
Plymouth has a world class natural setting. Over 40 per cent of the city is designated as green space and is surrounded by three Natural Landscapes, a European Marine Site, a Marine Conservation Zone, and Dartmoor National Park. Responding to the Plymouth City Survey 2022, 90 per cent of residents agreed that parks and woodlands are important to Plymouth, while 91 per cent agreed Plymouth Sound is special to the city.

Many parts of Plymouth are steeped in history, containing important buildings that provide character and identity; these are key assets in shaping our neighbourhoods, making places where people want to live. The historic environment gives us a sense of place, wellbeing and cultural identity. Responding to our City Survey in 2022, 82 per cent agreed that they are proud of Plymouth’s place in history.

Plymouth is an urban area and a significant hub for the southwest, bringing together business infrastructure, world-class research facilities and expertise, with a thriving knowledge economy. Plymouth’s key economic strengths and assets include the marine and maritime sector, the defence sector, advanced manufacturing, medical and healthcare and the visitor economy, and its primary economic nodes (the city centre/Waterfront and Derriford) have seen strong and sustained clean, green growth over a protracted period, re-balancing and driving the sub regional economy.

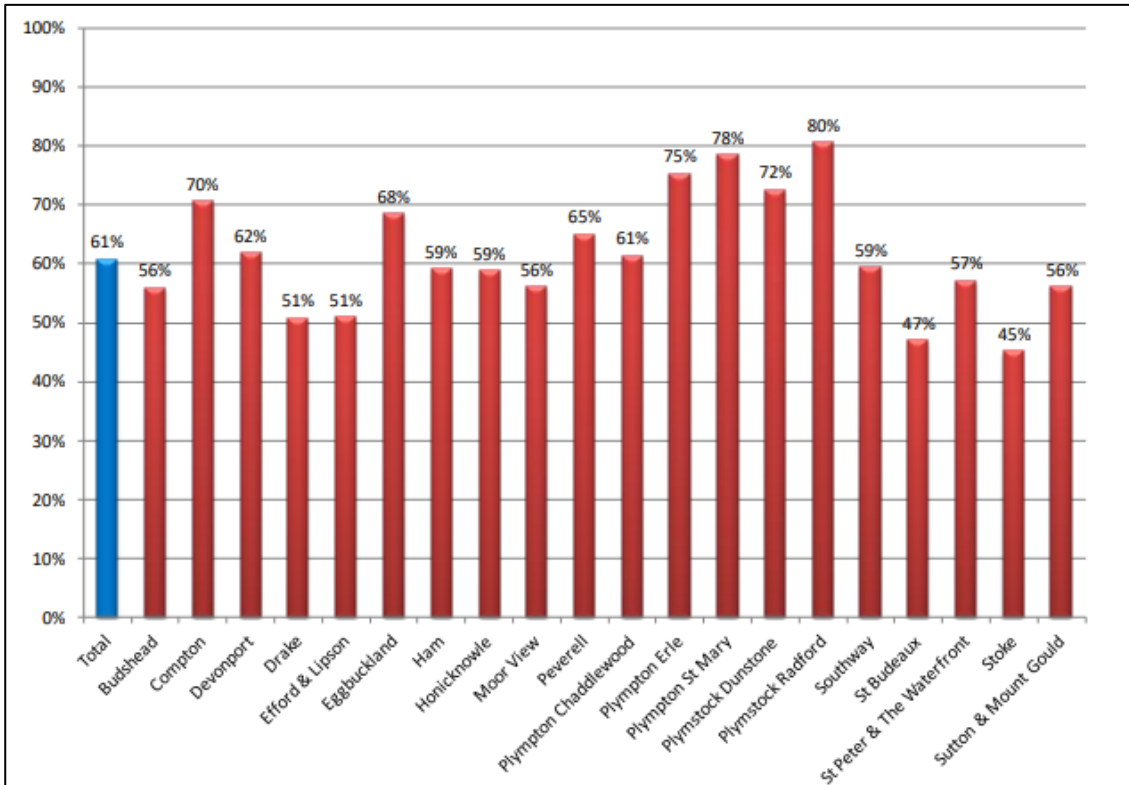
Since 1967, the unitary authority of Plymouth includes the once independent towns of Plympton and Plymstock which lie along the east of the river Plym. The city is divided into thirty-nine neighbourhoods, which are grouped together to form our current twenty electoral wards (figure 1).

Figure 1: Plymouth by Neighbourhood and Electoral Ward.



Analysis of our 2022 City Survey found that 61 per cent of respondents agreed that they feel they belong to their local area, with significant variation between wards as shown in figure 2. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent) agreed that they have pride in their local area, with younger people being less likely to agree than older people.

Figure 2: % agreeing they belong to their local area by ward, 2022 City Survey.



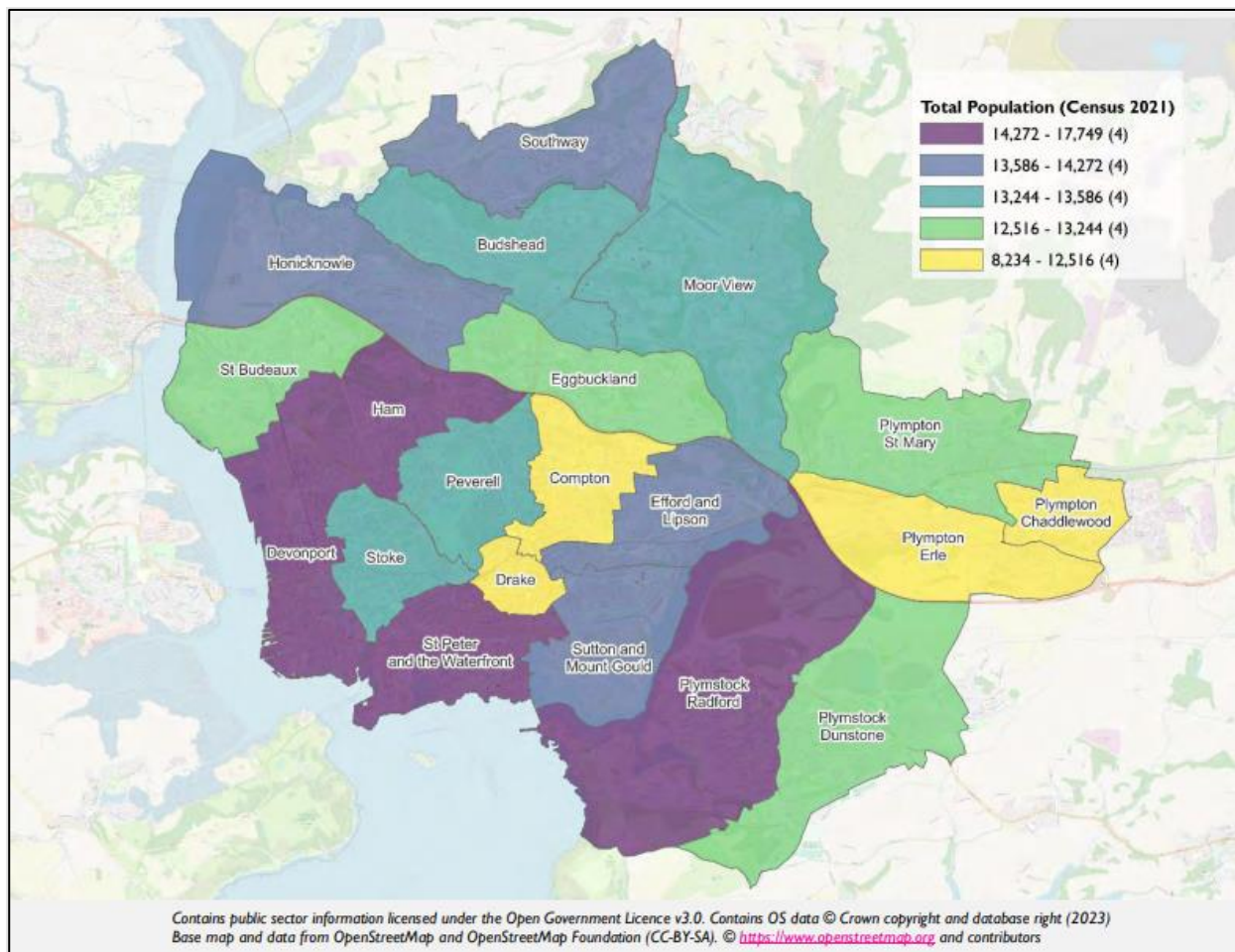
Plymouth has for many years had a radical agenda to transform the city, driven by its ambition to become “one of Europe’s the most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone”.

Plymouth’s spatial strategy is set out in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) which covers the administrative areas of Plymouth, the South Hams and West Devon. Although Plymouth only accounts for 4 per cent of the Joint Local Plan’s land area, nearly 70 per cent of its residents live in the city.

Plymouth will accommodate most of the growth that will occur in South West Devon over the plan period to 2034. At least 19,000 new homes will need to be provided in the Plymouth Policy Area which incorporates the administrative area of Plymouth along with Plymouth’s urban fringe.

Plymouth had a population of 264,700 at the 2021 Census. Between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of Plymouth increased by 3.2 per cent, from around 256,400 in 2011 to around 264,700 in 2021. The city is home to around 23.7 people per football pitch-sized piece of land, compared with 22.9 in 2011 making it the second-most densely populated local authority area across the Southwest, after Bristol. Plymouth’s population is not evenly split across the city. There are higher numbers of people living in the wards to the west and southwest of the city (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Total population (numbers) by Plymouth electoral ward, 2021.



The ward with the biggest population is St Peter and the Waterfront (17,700) whilst Plympton Chaddlewood has the smallest population (8,200). Budshead, Compton, Stoke, and Plympton St Mary wards have seen the greatest decline in population between 2011 and 2021. In contrast Plymstock Radford, St Peter and the Waterfront, Southway, and Moor View wards have seen population growth of between 9.7 per cent and 15.8 per cent.

The Census provides the opportunity for accurate long term trend analysis. Over the last 40 years, Plymouth's population has grown by 10 per cent. The population effectively stagnated for 20 years between 1981 and 2001 with most of the growth seen between 2001 and 2011, where the population increased by 15,657 (6.5 per cent).

Plymouth's population will continue to grow. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that the city's population will be around 268,882 by 2030, a projected increase of 2.2 per cent (5,782) from 2018. As the population of Plymouth grows, it will become more diverse with a growing number of people from different backgrounds.

In Plymouth, females account for 51 per cent and males 49 per cent (reflecting the England split of 50.7 per cent and 49.3 per cent) of the population. The overall female/male percentage split has been very consistent over the last 40 years.

In 2021 Plymouth had the second highest proportion of residents (9.7%) who identified as being 'disabled and limited a lot' in the Southwest region. Only Torbay with 9.9%, had a higher

proportion. Just under one in eight people (12.3%) were identified as being 'disabled and limited a little'.

The University of Plymouth is the UK's 15th largest university, with more than 18,500 students. There are just under 22,500 people studying at Plymouth's three universities.

The Armed Forces are an integral part of the history and heritage of Plymouth; the city has the second largest number of veterans in England, after Leeds. The top three wards with people who have 'Previously Served in the UK (United Kingdom) Armed forces' are Plymstock Radford, Eggbuckland and Plymstock Dunstone.

The population diversity within Plymouth is very slowly changing. In 2021, 94.9 per cent (248,727) of usual residents in Plymouth identified their ethnic group within the high-level 'White' category, a decrease from 96.1 per cent (246,509) in the 2011 Census. Whilst the proportion of these ethnic groups is only currently one third of those seen in England and Wales (circa 18%), the percentage increase in Plymouth, over the last 10 years is proportionally larger.

Plymouth's second largest ethnic group, at 2.3 per cent is the Asian ethnic group, which increased from 1.5 to 2.3 per cent of the population (circa 6,000 people). The number of people who identified themselves in the Mixed/Multiple ethnic group (circa 4,600 people), Black ethnic groups (circa 2,700) and Other ethnic groups (circa 2500) also increased. Most residents (92.7%) speak English as their main language, Polish and Romanian are the next most spoken, which mirrors the national picture for the three most common languages.

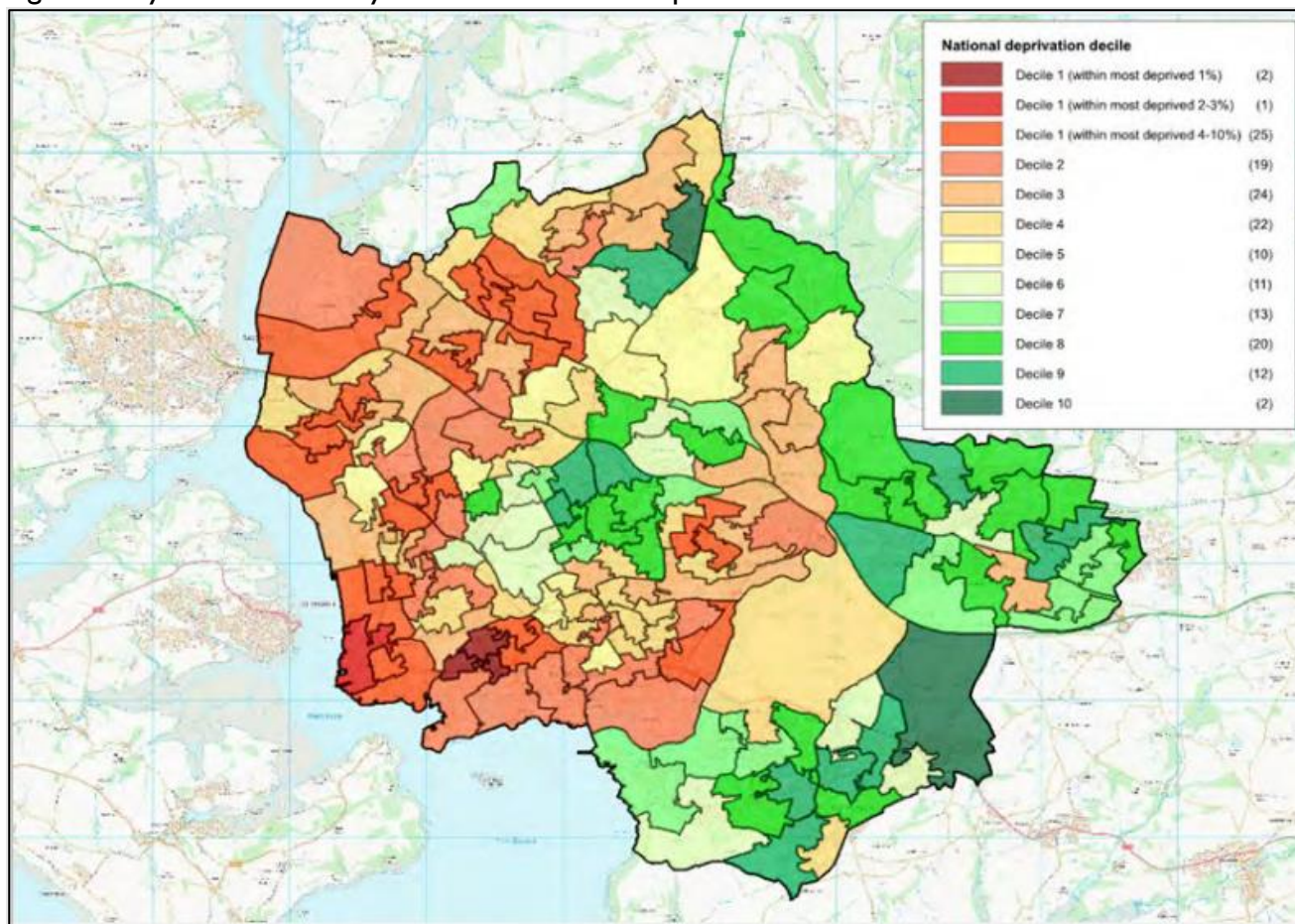
There will be a notable change in Plymouth's age structure over the next twenty years. The over 65 age group is predicted to rise by 31.6 per cent between 2021 and 2043 (from 48,900 to 64,372). The over 75 age group is predicted to rise by 60.3 per cent. This rise will see Plymouth's over 75s increase from 22,800 to 36,550. The over 85 age group will see an 83 per cent increase (from 6,400 to 11,746) in 2043. Within this cohort, the number aged 90 or more is projected to double.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 is the current official measure of relative deprivation in England. Analysis of the IMD 2019 for Plymouth reveals that deprivation in Plymouth remains higher than the England average. At a local authority district level Plymouth ranks 64th (out of 317) using the average score summary measure. This places Plymouth within the 20 per cent most deprived districts in England.

The neighbourhoods that make up each of the twenty electoral wards are aggregations of the city's 161 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Plymouth has two LSOAs in the most deprived 1 per cent in England. These LSOAs are home to 3,617 residents (1.4% of the total Plymouth population). Plymouth has 28 LSOAs in the most deprived 10 per cent in England. These LSOAs are home to 46,075 residents (17.6% of the population).

The most deprived LSOA in Plymouth is in the Stonehouse neighbourhood, which is the 163rd most deprived LSOA in England, while the least deprived neighbourhood is Woodford. Figure 4 shows which national deprivation decile each of the 161 LSOAs in Plymouth fall within. Those falling within decile one have been further split to show the areas in the city that are most deprived nationally.

Figure 4: Plymouth LSOAs by IMD 2019 national deprivation decile



The 'Income Domain Affecting Children Index' (IDACI), a subset of the IMD 2019, highlights that in Plymouth 7,594 children under the age of 16 (16.4% of the total in this age group) are living in income deprived households.

When looking at individual wards, over half of all children in St. Peter and the Waterfront and St. Budeaux are affected by income deprivation with the situation in Devonport very similar. These three wards account for 4,477 children, nearly 60 per cent of all the children living in the city who are living in income deprived households.

The Plymouth City Survey 2022 found that just over one in five respondents (21%) agreed that the food they buy just doesn't last and they don't have money to buy more. This rises to over 30 per cent in wards such as Drake, Honicknowle and St. Peter and the Waterfront.

Local analysis shows that across the city life expectancy varies, from a low of 76 years in the Drake ward to a high of 85 years 11 months in the Plympton Chaddlewood ward. Travelling the five miles south from Southway, each mile closer to St. Peter and the Waterfront represents eight months of life expectancy lost. Travelling the seven miles west from Plympton Chaddlewood to the same destination, each mile represents over one year of life expectancy lost.

In Plymouth in 2020, over 30,500 adults aged 18-64 were estimated to be suffering from common mental health problems, a figure that is projected to remain fairly static over the next 15 to 20 years. Over 11,500 adults aged 18-64 years were estimated to have more than one psychiatric disorder, a figure that is projected to remain fairly static over the next 10 to 15 years.

Homelessness is a significant challenge for Plymouth and homelessness approaches to the Council have continued to increase. In 2022/23, 3,415 households approached the Council for housing advice and assistance. The Council received 4,033 household approaches in 2023/24, an increase on 2022/23 of 18 per cent.

There are currently 12,192 households on the Devon Home Choice Register of which 1,700 are Emergency or High Housing Need. There is also a high demand for one bed units (over 6,000) and larger family homes (nearly 600 requiring four or more bedrooms) which have very limited 'churn'. At present, there are 1,922 households on the Devon Home Choice Register with accessibility needs.

Plymothians are proud of their heritage and natural environment and tend to have a strong affiliation with their local area. This is especially true of the wards on the east of the Plym which were outside the city's administration area until 1967. The areas of highest population growth are mostly in the wards with the highest levels of deprivation.

A growing and changing population raises several challenges, including the impact on future housing, education, employment and transport needs and increased demands on the provision of services related to health and children's and adults' social care. The city will also need to prepare for the changing structure of the population and a shifting demand for different housing types e.g. those over 65 living alone or larger families needing bigger homes.

A decrease in the number of people of working age in Plymouth over the next 20 years means there will be further implications. It is predicted that there will be 3 per cent less people making a potential contribution to the local economy.

Deprivation and poverty levels, which are already higher than average in some parts of the city, are likely to rise. More people in food and fuel poverty will mean that health and living conditions are likely to deteriorate for some of the city's residents.

Plymouth is also an ambitious city. In the past twelve months the council's Economic Development department has secured £100m grant funding for Plymouth economic projects which, when combined with match funding results in a capital pipeline of investment totalling over £200m:

- Plymouth and South Devon Freeport
- Plymouth National Marine Park
- Waterfront regeneration and blue/green skills
- Marine autonomy
- Marine and Maritime Launchpad
- Creative Growth Programme
- Shared Prosperity Fund
- Future Hight Streets Fund
- Heritage Action Zone

Much of this funding needs to be deployed by 2025 or 2026 when the current government spending review comes to an end, which is a massive £4m/month going into economic development and job creation projects in the city. In addition, over the past 10 years the Council has developed a £1bn development project pipeline and delivered multiple major projects including The Box, Bretonside redevelopment (Barcode Leisure), Oceansgate (Phase I and 2), Ocean Studios creative workspace,

Plymouth Science Park (Phase 5), and the Royal William Yard redevelopment. The impact on our local construction industry has been profound creating many thousands of jobs.

Plymouth faces some unique structural challenges to delivering new and affordable homes in the city. Unlike its neighbouring authorities the city is heavily reliant on brownfield land for housing delivery and low housing values which make it more difficult to deliver complex regeneration projects that involve significant upfront costs and increases the gap in funding required.

Taking all this into account, the Council will need to continue to work hard with partners, key stakeholders and communities across the city, not only to address the current and emerging challenges, but equally to deliver on the Council’s Corporate Plan, the vision for the city and an ambitious growth agenda. This will in turn likely increase levels of councillor case work and impact their role in providing strategic and community leadership.

Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships), and Community Leadership**. Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		
<p>Governance Model</p>	<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i> ➤ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i> ➤ <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> ➤ <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> ➤ <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>

	Analysis	<p>Plymouth City Council</p> <p>Plymouth has 57 elected members, representing 20 wards, elected in thirds. 17 wards have three members, and three wards have two members. As of May 2024, the political make-up of the Council is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Group – 42 • Conservative Group – 7 • Green Group – 2 • Independent Group – 6 <p>Leader and Cabinet Model</p> <p>In January 2002 a postal referendum was held on whether to move to an Elected Mayor system of governance. Turn out for the referendum was 39.8 per cent the highest turn out for a referendum of this type at the time it was held. 59 per cent of residents voted against an Elected Mayor and 41 per cent voted in favour.</p> <p>In 2016 the Council considered a move to adopt the Committee System of governance. Following a review of the pros and cons of such a move the Council voted in favour of reaffirming their commitment to the Strong Leader and Cabinet Model of governance.</p> <p>The Leader of the council is elected by fellow councillors, ensuring that the council is led by an individual who is able to command a majority.</p> <p>The council may also remove a Leader, details on how this may be achieved are set out in Part B of the Constitution.</p> <p>The Leader has responsibility for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointing members of the Cabinet. • Delegating executive responsibilities to the Cabinet. • Delegating executive functions to specified committees. • Delegating executive responsibilities to individual Cabinet members. • Delegating and allocating executive responsibilities to officers. • Allocating executive responsibilities when no-one has responsibility for them. <p>The Cabinet is the primary decision-making body of the Council. It is responsible for policies, plans and strategies which give effect to the budget and policy framework adopted by full Council.</p>
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	<p>There are currently 10 members of Cabinet appointed by the incumbent leader. This model is tried and tested in unitary local authorities and is a model which Local Authorities in the South West have returned to following periods with the elected mayor system.</p> <p>Further information on the functions and role of Cabinet are outlined in Part C of the Council's Constitution and scheme of delegation.</p> <p>The Cabinet have identified six priority areas which will be delivered as a part of the Corporate Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. • Fewer potholes, cleaner, greener streets and transport. • Build more homes – for social rent and affordable ownership. • Green investment, jobs, skills and better education. • Working with the NHS to provide better access to health, care and dentistry. • Keeping children, adults and communities safe. <p>The Corporate Plan also reflects the Council's focus not just on what it delivers, but also on the approach to delivery. The management of quality and performance, alongside value for money and good stewardship of public assets are highlighted as essential. The relationship with both our staff and our communities is a key measure of an effective Council, as is recognising the importance of prevention and early intervention in achieving positive change. The Council's ability to properly represent its communities both locally and nationally is also recognised. Plymouth City Council is a Council with ambitious plans for the future, illustrated by a clear strategic approach and underpinned by a set of realistic delivery plans. The LGA peer challenge team in 2022 encountered a council which "displays strong leadership across their city, with a deserved reputation for delivering successful regeneration and growth".</p> <p>The Plymouth Plan is a collective vision of the city's future looking ahead to 2034. It combines over 140 streamlined city strategies and plans into one overarching plan for the city. Plymouth City Council is the lead organisation with delivery shared across partner organisations. The timeframe of the plan, covering the period until 2034, conveys a high level of confidence and stability across all</p>
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sectors. The architecture that has been developed sets out a clear 'golden thread' running from the Plymouth Plan through to the delivery plans. This identifies seven key themes and associated Strategic Delivery Plans.

The strategic delivery plans are as follows:

- A Bright Future (Children and Young People)
- Delivering Economic Growth (Economy)
- Plan for Homes (Homes and Communities)
- Climate Strategic Narrative for the city (Environment)
- Transport Implementation Plan (Transport)
- Local Care Partnership Plan (Health and Wellbeing)
- Plymouth and South West Devon Plan for Infrastructure and Investment (Spatial)

The Plymouth Plan and all of its related strategies and plans may be viewed on the Council's website [The Plymouth Plan | Homepage](#)

Full Council

Full council meets six times per year, with extraordinary meetings when required. It approves the most significant decisions which impact upon the Council's Policy Framework and budget.

Full Council provides an opportunity for all councillors to ask questions of the Cabinet and Committee Chairs.

Full Council also includes an agenda item "Motions on Notice" where councillors are able to bring forward motions for the council to agree on a range of topics.

Meetings last between 4-7 hours and are webcast.

Plymouth City Council has elected a mayor annually since 1439. In 1935 the city was awarded the dignity of a Lord Mayor via letters patent issued by George V. The Lord Mayor and Deputy perform ceremonial duties and the Lord Mayor chairs the meetings of the Full Council.

In line with legislation both positions may not simultaneously hold a portfolio within the cabinet.

The Lord Mayor is nominated by the Lord Mayor Selection and Advisory Committee, which is made up of 5-7 members and meets annually, the nomination is approved at the Annual General Meeting of Council.

		<p>Committee Structure</p> <p>The council operates several other committees ranging from centralised planning and licensing committees to service specific committees. A full overview of our committee structure is available in Appendix A</p>
<p>Portfolios</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i> ➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i> ➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i> ➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Ten Cabinet members currently have significant individual portfolios. Numbers have fluctuated according to need and the incumbent Leader’s strategy, but the current Cabinet members report a significant workload, effectively working full-time hours.</p> <p>Legislation places a limit of 10 on the allowable number of portfolio holders/ cabinet members inclusive of the Leader and Deputy. These portfolio areas are determined by the Leader within the Leader’s Scheme of Delegation and are summarised below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leader • Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications. • Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care. • Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Cemeteries & Crematoria. • Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities. • Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships. • Cabinet Member for Finance. • Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport. • Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change. • Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD. <p>The full Scheme of Delegation sets out the responsibilities of the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members.</p> <p>The Leader has determined that certain executive decisions must be agreed by the Cabinet. These decisions are made</p>

	<p>collectively by all Cabinet members, unless the Cabinet takes the approach to delegate that decision to a specified individual Cabinet Member, Committee or Officer.</p> <p>Separate guidance applies to new and innovative decision making. There is an expectation that all decisions meeting thresholds for determination as a key decision are discussed at Cabinet. The only exceptions are urgent key decisions which are signed off by the Leader and the relevant Scrutiny Chair.</p> <p>The Leader has additionally determined that certain decisions may be agreed by the individual Cabinet Member who has responsibility for that function, unless the Cabinet Member renders a specific decision to delegate that decision to a committee or officer. These decisions are termed “Delegated Decisions” and are published on the Council’s website.</p> <p>The Cabinet has additionally seen fit to appoint six ‘champions’ from the administration with responsibility for key local issues to assist the Cabinet with delivering the priorities of the Council and its strategic plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed Forces • Violence Against Women and Girls • Wellbeing • Buses • Welcoming City (equality, diversity and inclusion) • Walking and Cycling <p>These members are required to maintain awareness of local and national issues relevant to their role, undertake appropriate training and development to ensure effective performance within the role, and report to relevant Cabinet Members on their progress against assigned projects/initiatives. They shadow the relevant Cabinet Member(s) at appropriate meetings with officers to develop a thorough understanding of the Portfolio(s), noting that care must be taken to share relevant information. They will also attend community events to support and listen to those communities and work with partners and other organisations to deliver better outcomes and services for the city. This also includes representation on a number of outside bodies or partnership boards for example the Armed Forces Covenant. They can also report to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required, alongside the relevant Cabinet Member(s).</p>
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		<p>Legislation sets out that Cabinet members may not serve on Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The Cabinet meets in public on a monthly basis. All meetings are webcast and the public are welcome to observe proceedings in the meeting room.</p> <p>Cabinet members meet frequently with senior officers in relation to their portfolios.</p> <p>Cabinet also meets informally on a regular basis designed to discuss, in confidence, any emerging issues, policies, strategies, major and sensitive political issues.</p> <p>More information on Leader commitments can be found in Appendix B.</p>
<p>Delegated Responsibilities</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>An officer can only carry out a responsibility if they (or an officer who reports to them) possess budgetary or managerial responsibility for it and the constitution or the law does not require it to be carried out by someone else.</p> <p>Officers are not required to utilise their delegated powers; they may request the person or body that delegated the power to them to make a decision or refer the matter to the relevant committee. Officers who have had a decision delegated to them can authorise officers who they line manage to do it on their behalf (unless it was delegated on condition that they do it themselves).</p> <p>Some decisions must be taken by Council as a whole which are detailed in Part B Section I of the Constitution. Full Council takes all decisions on the policy framework, budget, etc.</p> <p>Councillors can be involved in the making of decisions, if they are not Cabinet members, through other Committees such as regulatory committees and Overview and Scrutiny committees.</p> <p>The full scheme of delegation can be viewed here.</p>

Accountability

Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external

dimensions of this role. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
<p>Internal Scrutiny</p>	<p>The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.</p>
<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ➤ <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> ➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The system of scrutiny is constantly under review and has been amended several times across the last decade.</p> <p>The following scrutiny committees are currently operating and are guided by Part D of the Constitution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Management Board • Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel • Natural Infrastructure and Growth Scrutiny Panel • Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel • Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel <p>An annual report in reference to the ongoing operations and findings of scrutiny is presented at Full Council.</p> <p>The aims of the Overview and Scrutiny process are to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add value to Council business and decision-making. • hold the Cabinet to account. • monitor the budget and performance of services. • assist the Council in the development of policy and review the effectiveness of the implementation of Council policy. • review relevant central government policy development and legislation to assess the impact on the city and make recommendations to Cabinet.

	<p>Scrutiny plays a key role in decision making and each of the Committees set their own programmes of work but must also review anything they are asked to review by Council. They must also hear any decisions that are called in within 10 working days of the end of the call-in period.</p> <p>All the Overview and Scrutiny committees are politically proportional and currently are comprised of 11 members. Each committee meets at least quarterly. Scrutiny arrangements were amended at the May 2024 Annual General Meeting (Appendix C).</p> <p>Each Overview and Scrutiny committee is able to identify issues which would benefit from more intensive investigation and discussion. “Select Committees” are time limited task and finish groups to enable such discussions to take place. A good example of “Select Committees” are the Budget Scrutiny process which brings together members from across the scrutiny function to consider the budget for the next financial year.</p> <p>Part D of the Constitution sets out the responsibilities of each of the Overview and Scrutiny committees.</p>				
<p>Statutory Function</p>	<p>This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?</p>				
<p>Planning</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="357 1167 564 1536"> <p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p> </td> <td data-bbox="564 1167 1460 1536"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="357 1536 564 2051"> <p>Analysis</p> </td> <td data-bbox="564 1536 1460 2051"> <p>The Planning Committee is a single committee covering the Local planning Authority Area. It undertakes all the Council’s functions in relation to Town and country Planning and Development control, along with associated highways functions.</p> <p>The Planning Committee is a proportional committee made up of 13 members.</p> <p>Executive members do not currently sit on the Planning Committee but are not restricted from doing so.</p> <p>In addition to the time taken to prepare for monthly meetings, which can range in length from 2-4 hours, Councillors also undertake site visits in support of the committee’s work.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i> 	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The Planning Committee is a single committee covering the Local planning Authority Area. It undertakes all the Council’s functions in relation to Town and country Planning and Development control, along with associated highways functions.</p> <p>The Planning Committee is a proportional committee made up of 13 members.</p> <p>Executive members do not currently sit on the Planning Committee but are not restricted from doing so.</p> <p>In addition to the time taken to prepare for monthly meetings, which can range in length from 2-4 hours, Councillors also undertake site visits in support of the committee’s work.</p>
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		<p>Members also undertake mandatory annual training to be able to sit on the committee.</p>
<p>Licensing</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i> ➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Licensing Committee</p> <p>The licensing committee makes and revokes orders, sets terms and licensing conditions for a range of licensable activity.</p> <p>This is usually achieved by infrequent focused meetings which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an annual report • a review of the operation of the licensing process • numbers of applications • Reports from Devon and Cornwall Police <p>Twelve members are appointed to the committee in line with proportionality.</p> <p>The Licensing Sub Committee is established to decide applications and sets terms and conditions for licensable activity. The focus for the committee is hearings. It is comprised of members from the parent committee with members sitting on a rotational basis.</p> <p>Licensing Sub Committee meetings are held when hearings are required.</p> <p>Up to twelve meetings are scheduled per municipal year. Members also need to be available to sit for expedited hearings when required by local partners such as the Police.</p> <p>The Democratic Support team seek availability from whips to fulfil numbers when a meeting is called, drawing from the appointed 12 members.</p> <p>Members have a commitment to prepare for and attend meetings which take place over two hours, but which can require significantly more time depending on the complexity of cases.</p> <p>Taxi Licensing Committee</p>

		<p>Plymouth City Council administers a Taxi Licensing Committee which comprises seven members, appointed in line with proportionality.</p> <p>The Committee carries out all the taxi and private hire and other vehicle licensing responsibilities in Paragraph B of Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and in the Plymouth City Council Act 1975.</p> <p>All Councillors sitting on the above committees undertake annual training to undertake their duties, this includes reference to a large amount of legislation and complex policy.</p> <p>Councillors may also have to attend court to give evidence when required.</p> <p>Members also undertake mandatory annual training to be able to sit on these committees.</p>
<p>Other Regulatory Bodies</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i> ➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Audit & Governance Committee</p> <p>Our Audit and Governance Committee is a key component of Plymouth City Council’s corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.</p> <p>The purpose of our Audit and Governance Committee is to provide independent assurance to the Council of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of Plymouth City Council’s governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes.</p> <p>There are six councillors who sit on the committee, with the addition of an independent member. The committee is politically balanced and the meets five times a year.</p> <p>The committee’s terms of reference are extensive and based upon CIPFA best practice. The Committee also oversees any constitutional issues and recommends the code of conduct for approval.</p> <p>Committee members undertake mandatory annual training to sit on the committee.</p>

		<p>Chief Officer Panels</p> <p>Three panels are responsible for –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I) Undertaking the selection process for the appointment, and formulating recommendations to the Council in relation to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the appointment and dismissal of the Head of the Paid Service. the designation of an officer to act as Monitoring Officer and Responsible Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer). b) the appointment/dismissal of Monitoring Officer and Responsible Finance Officer. <p>In accordance with legislation, Council policies, conditions of service and the appropriate procedures set out in the employment standing orders.</p> <p>These panels are proportional and made up of seven councillors. The appointments committee meets frequently with the two other panels only meeting when required.</p> <p>Standards Committee</p> <p>Standards Committee was established in 2024 as a hearings committee to deal with complaints in line with the code of conduct and arrangements.</p> <p>There are five members of the committee which will meet when required.</p>
<p>External Partnerships</p>	<p>Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.</p>	
<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <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> ➤ <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> ➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i> 	
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Statutory Partnerships</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Board</p> <p>The primary purpose of the Health and Wellbeing Board is to address the key issues affecting health and well-being in Plymouth. It aims to work collaboratively across health and social care to improve outcomes for residents. The membership of the group includes all of those required by the Health and Social Care</p>	

Act 2012. More information on the Health and Wellbeing Board can be found [here](#).

The board is a statutory requirement upon the council and meets at least quarterly to ensure the production of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and contribute to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy as element of the Plymouth Plan. The Board works with multiple partners, taking a systems approach to address increasingly complex issues faced by residents in the city which creates a substantial workload for the two portfolio holders and two opposition councillors who are appointed.

Children's Safeguarding Board

All local authorities have a children's safeguarding board. They are responsible for coordinating local work to safeguard and promote children's welfare and ensuring the effectiveness of member organisations. The Board meets quarterly and is attended by the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications.

Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board

The Plymouth Adult Safeguarding Board brings agencies together to ensure that vulnerable adults at risk are protected and safe. The Board meets quarterly and is attended by the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care.

Safer Plymouth Partnership

The Safer Plymouth Board is a sub-committee of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The broader Safer Plymouth Partnership operates within a statutory framework, with the responsible authorities working with other local agencies and organisations to tackle crime, disorder, misuse of drugs and other substances, and anti-social behaviour in order to deliver safer communities as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and all relevant subsequent legislation. The Board meets quarterly and is attended by the relevant Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member.

Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry and Joint Committee

This Committee is proportional committee and is appointed under the provisions of the Local Government Act of 1972 relating to joint committees.

The Councils of the constituent authorities, acting together, are responsible for all the responsibilities for the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry as set out in the Tamar Bridge Acts 1957, 1979, 1998 and delegations to the Committee includes:

- proposal of a business plan to Cabinet as part of the annual budget setting process.
- performance monitoring of the undertaking against the business plan and recommend variations to the business plan to the Cabinet Members.
- monitoring of performance of the undertaking to ensure value for money is achieved.
- ensuring the management of the Bridge and Ferry accords with proper financial and legal practice appropriate to local authorities.

Five Councillors are appointed to the committee which meets on average 5 times per year.

Cabinet Appointments

Several Cabinet appointments are made each year to bodies which have a link to the delivery of executive responsibilities. The fourteen bodies include:

- The Mount Edgcumbe Joint committee – A joint committee with Cornwall. Seven Plymouth councillors sit on the cross-party committee.
- The Corporate Parenting Group – Eight Councillors are appointed to the cross-party group.

In total Cabinet appoints thirty-eight Councillors to these bodies. A full list of Cabinet Appointments is set out in [Appendix D](#).

Other Outside Bodies

Plymouth City Council collaborates with various outside bodies to enhance its services and fulfil its responsibilities. These external organisations operate independently from the council and are embedded in local communities. Outside bodies associated with Plymouth City Council include:

- Access Plymouth: An organisation working to improve accessibility and mobility within the city.
- Dartmoor National Park Authority: Responsible for managing and conserving the natural and cultural heritage of Dartmoor.
- Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority: Oversees fisheries management and conservation in the region.
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority: Manages fire and rescue services in the area.
- Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council: Works toward racial equality and inclusion.
- Plymouth Community Homes: Manages social housing in Plymouth.

- Plymouth Drake Foundation: A community charity supports local community projects.

Plymouth is also the host authority for the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel. Two members represent Plymouth on the panel which meets at least quarterly and whose responsibility includes consideration of the Police and Crime Commissioner's council tax precept.

Many outside bodies meet quarterly and membership requirements are based on the standing orders / articles of association of each body.

Overall, there are ninety-five appointments / positions available to be allocated across fifty-seven councillors. A full list of Outside Bodies is set out in [Appendix E](#).

Plymouth Partnership Boards

The Leader, Shadow Leader and relevant Cabinet Members are actively involved in key citywide partnership boards, the principal ones are listed below. Typically, they meet formally on a quarterly basis, members may attend more frequent meetings on an exceptional or "task and finish" basis.

One Plymouth

'One Plymouth' is a group of city leaders from various public and private sector organisations, chaired by the Leader of the Council. It brings together key leaders from across the city on a quarterly basis to discuss and share strategic issues. It operates on a systems leadership basis rather than having a more formalised governance structure.

Plymouth Growth Board

The Plymouth Growth Board is a private sector-led partnership, bringing together representatives from key city businesses and organisations on a quarterly basis to collaborate and drive forward the economic priorities of Plymouth as set out in the Plymouth Economic Strategy 2024-2034. It is the voice of business in delivering economic growth. The Plymouth Growth Board co-ordinates and performance manages the Plymouth Economic Strategy which outlines the overall vision, long-term economic drivers and strategic priorities for growth in Plymouth and feeds into the Plymouth Plan. The Board shares market insight and intelligence and is also responsible for the delivery of some types of funding including the Shared Prosperity Funding and residual LEP funding and projects. The Leader of the Council attends.

Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Board

The Plymouth Sound National Marine Park is described as a park for the People, for Plymouth and for the Planet it is the first and only National Marine Park in the UK. This is an ambitious project for Plymouth and members have worked hard to secure funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The impact of this project extends far beyond Plymouth Sound and impacts positively on communities across the city. Our Members play a key role in encouraging people living in our communities to become 'Marine Citizens', developing closer connections with the ocean, learning to care about our coastal environment and change the way we behave in order to protect it. It has both an Executive Board and Non-Executive Board. The Leader of the Council chairs the Executive Board, and the Leader of the Opposition is a member of the Board. The Leader also chairs the Non-Executive Board. Both Boards meet on a quarterly basis.

Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Board

The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Board is the governing body of the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Company Ltd which is responsible for the delivery of the Freeport and the efficient conduct of all company business. The Leader is a Director of the Company and therefore undertakes the duties and holds the responsibility that comes with this role. The Board meets at least quarterly and may meet more frequently by exception as is necessary to conduct company business.

Plymouth City Centre Company Board

Plymouth City Centre Company is a limited company and Business Improvement District which was set up to promote the city centre, the Cabinet Member for Finance serves as a Company Director and therefore undertakes the duties and holds the responsibility that comes with this role.

Plymouth Waterfront Partnership Board

Plymouth Waterfront Partnership is a limited company and Business improvement district set up to promote the Plymouth Waterfront, the Deputy Leader serves as a Company Director and therefore undertakes the duties and holds the responsibility that comes with this role.

Plymouth Science Park

Plymouth Science Park is a limited company set up to deliver a world class centre of excellence for ground-breaking research, business and laboratory innovation, the Leader Serves as a Company Director and therefore undertakes the duties and holds the responsibility that comes with this role.

Destination Plymouth

Destination Plymouth is a private/public sector partnership whose role is to increase visitors to the city and surrounding area, grow visitor spend and tourism related jobs. They meet on a bi-monthly basis. The Leader of the Council is a formal Company Director on the Destination Plymouth Board and therefore undertakes the duties and holds the responsibility that comes with this role.

Plymouth Education Board

The purpose of the Plymouth Education Board is to improve educational outcomes in all schools by bringing key parts of the school improvement system together to address issues. The Board meets quarterly and is attended by the relevant Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member.

One Devon Partnership

The One Devon Partnership is a committee that includes a range of organisations and groups who can influence people's health, wellbeing and care. Formally known as an Integrated Care Partnership, its primary aim is drive integration by producing a strategy to join-up services, reduce inequalities, and improve people's wellbeing, outcomes and experiences. The Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board is appointed to sit on the Board.

Joint Local Plan Partnership Board

Board to oversee the preparation, monitoring and review of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan and to keep the individual local planning authorities on the agreed course to implement the plan. The Board is attended by six members from across the local authorities (Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon) including their planning leads. It is attended by the relevant Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport for Plymouth City Council.

Plymouth Net Zero Partnership Executive Board

Plymouth's mission to be a carbon neutral city by 2030 can only be achieved if the whole city plays its part. The Plymouth Net Zero Partnership exists to help make this a reality. It was formed in May 2020, when several key organisations from across the city agreed to work together to tackle the climate emergency. In November 2022, the partnership was refreshed, with an expanded membership and revised structure. The Partnership is made up of an Executive Board, to provide effective and visible strategic leadership in driving Plymouth's transition to net zero, and theme-based advisory and action groups, each bringing different areas of expertise to the city's climate response.

Child Poverty Working Group

The Child Poverty Working Group is cross-party, and includes city partners from the business sector, the voluntary sector and the city's Child Poverty Ambassador from the faith community. As a Cabinet Advisory Group, they keep Cabinet apprised of issues and initiatives in the city. The Group is chaired by the relevant Cabinet Member and is attended by the relevant Shadow Cabinet Member. There is a requirement for six councillors to be appointed (political equality by convention) currently three Labour and three Conservative councillors.

Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a nationwide agreement between the armed forces community, the nation and the government. It aims to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly. The Armed Forces Covenant Partnership and Leadership Board are chaired by a member champion and are attended by the relevant Cabinet Member. The champion attends officer planning meetings in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant Partnership and Leadership Board and supports the Armed Forces Community through attendance at community and charitable events. The champion will also lead on projects that arise as actions following each of the Board meetings. Both the Partnership and Leadership Board meet at least three times a year.

Devonport Task Group

Cross party group originally established to spearhead a campaign to prevent the decommissioning of Devonport-based warships and now continues to make the case for the future of HMNB Devonport Dockyard and Naval Base when appropriate. The Group is made up of the Council's Leader, Shadow Leader, city MPs and senior representatives of key city organisations.

In addition to the key strategic partnerships there are several service-related improvement boards providing oversight of important council functions. These meet at least quarterly and may meet more frequently as required for the transaction of urgent business. The principal ones are listed below.

Local Area SEND Partnership Improvement Board

The Board consists of senior executives and partners overseeing the Local Area SEND Improvement Plan. Members will receive exception reporting and provide advice, challenge and support to progress delivery of the plan at pace. The Board meets 6 weekly and is attended by the Leader, Shadow Leader and the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships.

Plymouth Children's Services Improvement Board

The Board consists of senior executives and partners overseeing the Children's Services Improvement Plan. The Board meets 6 weekly and is attended by the Leader, Shadow Leader and Deputy Leader.

Housing Taskforce

Internal meeting to address the complex issues around housing and homelessness in the city. The Taskforce meets monthly. Attended by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities.

Dental Taskforce

Plymouth's Dental Taskforce has agreed the three key priorities that it will collectively work towards to improve NHS dental provision for local residents. The cross-party group includes representatives from Plymouth City Council, NHS Devon, Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE), Livewell Southwest and University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust as well as the city's three MPs. It is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care.

Treasury Management Board

Attended by the Cabinet Member for Finance.

The Council is a member of a number of national and regional networks used to make the case for Plymouth at a national level, influence policy development and share best practice.

Local Government Association:

- The national voice of local government, working with councils to support, promote and improve.
- Core membership comprises 315 of the 317 councils in England and includes district, county metropolitan and unitary authorities along with London boroughs and the City of London Corporation.
- The Leader and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities are members of the Councillors' Forum.
- The Leader and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities are members of the Councillors' Forum.
- The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications is a member of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board.

- The Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities is a member of the City Regions Board as a long-term substitute.
- An Independent member attends the Community Wellbeing Board as a substitute.
- Members also attend the AGM.
- The Leader attends the LGA Labour Group and is also an LGA Peer Reviewer and mentor.

Key Cities Network:

- *'Key Cities: the network that speaks for urban UK'* - A diverse, national network covering almost half the UK's urban areas that actively champions the future of urban centres. Currently the network has members from 27 medium sized cities representing all the major political parties and places across England and Wales.
- It is chaired by Cllr John Merry CBE, Deputy City Mayor of Salford and is a Special Interest Group of the LGA.
- The Leader is a member of the Key Cities Executive Group and the Key Cities Full Group
- The Leader is also the Portfolio holder for Ports and Coastal Communities and is required to lead on this on behalf of the network. Portfolio holder positions are appointed to via a nomination and voting process and agreed at the AGM. The full group meets quarterly.

LGiU (Local Government Information Unit)

- The LGiU is a local authority membership organisation which provides intelligence, research, toolkits, best practice guidance and subject specific briefings on areas of interest to local government. The organization works with members to drive forward ideas and solutions needed to provide sustainable public services.
- The Leader is a member of the Executive Board. Board members are both Directors of the Company and charitable trustees registered with Companies House and the Charity Commission.

The Great South West Partnership Board:

- The Great South West's primary aim is to seek Government recognition as a pan-regional, South West Peninsula partnership, in order to secure investment for common priorities like transport infrastructure, digital, the green and blue economy (including tourism), and a shared trade and investment hub.

- The group has an associated MPs' All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) that also seeks to promote the Great South West priorities.
- The Board meets at least quarterly, and is made up of an Independent Chair, Upper-tier Local Authorities, Universities, and local Business Representatives.
- The Leader is a member on behalf of the Council and plays an active role in raising the profile of the Great South West.

Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Board (STB):

- Peninsula Transport is a partnership of the far South West highway authorities, Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council. Also co-opted onto the STB Board (but non-voting) are statutory bodies such as the Department for Transport, National Highways, Homes England and Network Rail.
- The partnership aims to guide regional investment for transport, particularly in relation to the Strategic Road Network and rail investment, provide a cohesive regional voice to the Department for Transport and lead on policy and national issues such as achieving net zero for transport carbon emissions.
- The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport is Vice-Chair of Peninsula Transport Board and will attend quarterly meetings, supporting the Chair to progress the work programme of the STB and maintain its strategic direction.

Other regional meetings attended by the Leader or relevant Cabinet Member:

- Chairs and Leaders Group (NHS)
- Plymouth & Devon County Council Leaders
- Plymouth and South Hams and West Devon Leaders & Chief Executives
- Plymouth Area Business Council
- Meetings with Local MPs
- Ongoing meetings from senior representatives with partnership agencies e.g. Police, Plymouth Community Homes
- South West Councils - Joint Strategic Consultative Forum
- Group Leaders

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

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i> ➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i> ➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i> ➤ <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> ➤ <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> ➤ <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>
	Analysis	<p>Councillor Surveys</p> <p>1. In June 2023 the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) undertook a member survey. A total of 28 councillors completed the survey, 47% of the total number of councillors.</p> <p>Key findings revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, the respondents reported spending 25 hours per week on council business. • The highest number of respondents (12) spent between 3 and 6 hours a week attending meetings, with the majority spending 9 hours or less on this aspect of council business. • The highest number of respondents (11) spent between 3 and 6 hours a week undertaking community representation, with the majority spending 6 hours or less on this aspect of council business.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highest number of respondents (11) spend between 3 and 6 hours a week undertaking casework, with the majority spending 6 hours or more on this aspect of council business. • The highest number of respondents (14) spent between 1 to 3 hours on research a week, with the majority spending 6 hours a week or less on this aspect of council business. • Excluding 'other' in a typical week the majority of respondents reported spending most of their time on casework (approx. 6 hours a week or more). • The full analysis is set out in Appendix F. <p>2. In order to assist with the development of a robust council size submission and gain insight into councillors' community leadership and casework responsibilities, a member survey was issued to all councillors between 22 March 2024 and 10 April 2024.</p> <p>The survey (see Appendix G) contained questions about the length of time respondents had been a councillor, if they had been appointed to any external bodies or organisations, and if they hold any other positions. Subsequent questions included the length of time spent on council duties, what aspect of the role takes the most time and what has changed over the past 12 months. There was a total of 40 respondents out of 57, a response rate of 70%.</p> <p>Key findings revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highest proportion of respondents have served as councillors for less than 5 years. • The majority of respondents hold an additional position to that of ward councillor. • 36 (90 per cent) report being on a committee, board, or panel other than Full Council. The average number of committee memberships per respondent is 2.3. • 14 (39 per cent) respondents report being on more than two other committees, boards or panels; 2 respondents sit on five. • 30 (75 per cent) have been appointed to an outside body. The average number of outside bodies that respondents sit on is 1.4. • 13 (43 per cent) have been appointed to two or more; 3 respondents sit on 5 outside bodies. • The average number of committees / outside bodies membership per councillor is 3.7. • Typical Cllr spends over 50 hours a month on Council Business and deals with 20 - 30 casework enquiries. • Most respondents reported regularly using a variety of communication methods to communicate with residents,
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businesses, and organisations. Email, face to face meeting and telephone calls are still the most common methods of communication used. Usage of social media, text, IM and WhatsApp is increasing.

- Members are making more use of technology but are conscious this isn't accessible to everyone especially older residents so this tends to be as well as rather than instead of traditional mechanisms such as telephone and face to face meetings. Email is useful because it maintains a record of casework correspondence, social media can be problematic because members can't be sure who they are talking to and there is perceived to be an expectation of 24/7 availability.

Councillors use a range of approaches to engage with their communities. Door knocking, leaflet dropping, home visits, posting information and updates via social media are common activities.

There is a Youth Parliament set up in the city that elects two Members and two Deputy Members of the Parliament every February. Candidates campaign on an issue important to them such as mental health awareness or job opportunities. Elections are then held in all secondary schools and colleges across the city and young people vote for who they would like to be their new representatives for the year. In 2022, over 10,000 young people voted in the Plymouth candidate election.

There is also a Youth Cabinet - a city-wide youth forum open to all 11 to 18 year olds that aims to represent the views and concerns of all young people across Plymouth and feed into local and national consultations to ensure the voices of young people are heard by decision makers. Every year young people can vote which issue is most important to them in a ballot known as 'Make Your Mark'. The ballot culminates in a series of debates at the House of Commons every November on the top five issues nationally and we send our two Members of Youth Parliament to the event. After the debates, a vote is held to decide which two issues should become the UK Youth Parliament's priority campaigns for the next year.

Community Empowerment

The Council has a cross-departmental Community Empowerment Programme at the heart of the organisation which aims to support our work to create supportive, sustainable, and empowered communities. Members are able to access support through this programme in all aspects of their work within communities, specifically through Asset Based Community Development practice – through training, learning and sharing, internally in the organisation but also across the city and within communities. We have an internal Community of Practice, a city-

wide Asset Based Community Development network and a Wellbeing Hubs alliance, a network of family hubs and neighbourhood networks that are available also to support connection within communities. Councillors participate in neighbourhood networks, wellbeing hub boards, and approximately twenty councillors have attended Asset Based Community Development training sessions.

Member Development and Induction

Induction

Induction is delivered across a number of weeks following the Local Elections in May of each year in the cycle. We have delivered sessions virtually (excluding the welcome) which enables a broad attendance of both new and existing councillors and has provided us with the ability begin a video briefing library online on the Councillor Hub.

Welcome Event

Following the Local Elections in May of each year of the cycle we hold a welcome event for all new and returning elected members. This includes:

- Welcome and presentation from the Chief Executive
- Declarations of Office
- Register of Interest / personal details
- IT equipment and set up
- Photographs
- Meet the member support team / Strategic and Service Directors

Context Setting Sessions

The welcome event is followed by a number of sessions held over the weeks following the election.

Context Setting Sessions:

- Children's Services
- Adult Social Care
- Public Health, bereavement and leisure services
- 'Place based' services (including street/highway services, culture and economic development)
- Executive Office & Resources Directorate

Specific training and briefings on:

- Councillor Casework and Community Grants
- Corporate Parenting
- Chief Officers Appointments Panel
- Planning
- Licensing
- Taxi Licensing
- Audit and Governance
- Adult Safeguarding

- Child Safeguarding

Partner sessions delivered by:

- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Integrated Care System Devon
- Devon and Somerset Fire Authority and Brigade
- Livewell SW (adult care services provision)
- Plymouth Community Homes (social housing provision)

Alongside additional sessions on:

- Understanding local government finance
- Dos and don'ts of social media
- Code of Conduct Training
- Data Management and information security
- Scrutiny

Mock Council

In advance of the first full Council meeting in the Chamber all new and returning Councillors are invited to take part in a "Mock Council". This is an opportunity to experience being in the Council Chamber, learn about the traditions of working within that space and the chance to get to grips with technology whilst debating with young people. Mock Council has been hailed as a success, with extremely positive feedback from all of those involved and will continue to be a feature of the member induction programme in the future.

Three Month Review

All new Councillors have an opportunity to meet with the Oversight and Governance Manager to feedback on their experiences over the previous three months and to identify any training/development needs.

Ad-hoc

Regular Briefing and training dates are held in all Councillors' diaries across the course of the year. These sessions have been used for a variety of purposes including briefings on:

- Equality and Diversity
- Local Government Boundary Commission Review
- Cyber Security
- Major schemes and developments
- Education Issues
- Modern Slavery

Members also benefit from offsite learning opportunities with the LGA as follows:

- Leadership Academy
- Leadership Essentials

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being and Effective Cabinet Member • Social Media and Media Training • Effective Scrutiny <p>The above activities require a significant time commitment, often with training taking place over the course of a weekend.</p>
	<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <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> ➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i> ➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i> ➤ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i>
<p>Casework</p>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Casework</p> <p>How councillors manage casework varies and depends on the level of complexity. Councillors send their casework into a business support team who log it with the relevant team for a response. In some cases, Councillors will take a more in-depth approach, but these cases are usually long-term and more complex. Portfolio holders may liaise directly with heads of service on casework issues, but all cases are recorded and logged through the Council's casework system to ensure an audit trail is available. When a response is received, this is forwarded to the councillor, whose responsibility is to share the outcome with their residents.</p> <p>An annual briefing on casework is provided each year, with training provided for newly elected members. They can also engage with the business support team to receive advice on specific cases, or to access reports and updates on their own cases logged. The members are also able to escalate cases or request further information or updates through the Business Support Team.</p> <p>Analysis of casework data from the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 financial years shows that the amount of casework raised by councillors has increased, particularly in wards that are more deprived. The full analysis is set out in Appendix H.</p> <p>Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 2022/2023 financial year a total of 5,844 cases were raised by Councillors, increasing to 6,385 cases in the current (incomplete) financial year. This is an increase of approx. 10%. On average there were 487 councillor cases raised per month in 2022/23, increasing to 532 cases per month in 2023/24.

- Typically, Q1 is the busiest period for councillors raising casework, with an average of 625 cases raised per month. The smallest number of cases are raised in Q3, with an average of 390 cases.
- The average per financial quarter has similarly increased when comparing year on year. In Q1 2022/23 there were an average of 542 cases, increasing to 708 in Q1 2023/24. In Q3 2022/23 an average of 359 cases were raised, increasing to 421 cases raised per month in Q3 2023/24.
- The data shows an increasing amount of casework being raised across the Council, with the year and quarter averages being much higher in 2023/2024 than 2022/2023 even with incomplete data for 2023/2024.
- Data shows that there is a correlation between levels of deprivation and local need and amount of casework received.

The member survey, which was live from 22 March 2024 to the 10 April 2024, revealed the following key findings in relation to quantity and management of casework:

- Respondents rate the most time-consuming activity (per month) as dealing with casework. Based on median scores the 'typical' councillor spends more than 16 hour a month dealing with casework.
- Based on median scores, each month, the 'typical Councillor' spends 6-10 hours in external meetings, 11-15 hours attending full council or council committee meetings, 1-5 hours attending Councillor training or briefing sessions, 6-10 hours attending internal meetings with officers or as part of a working group, 16-20 hours dealing with casework, 6-10 hours meeting with residents, 11-15 hours on other activities necessary to the role, 6-10 hours on party business and 6-10 hours preparing for meetings.
- At the upper end of the scale some Councillors may spend over 40 hours per week conducting Council Business.
- The typical Councillor would be dealing with 21-30 casework enquiries from the public per month. Those who are most engaged may receive more than 50.
- Two thirds of Councillors said they spent more time on council business than they had expected when they were elected, and the majority tended to rely on specific council officers or the PA team for assistance.
- Two thirds of Councillors said the amount of time they spent on council business had increased throughout their time as a Councillor. A range of reasons for this were suggested, including profile/reputation (more people know who to contact/trust to resolve query), increased population and/or diversity in the ward, or increased advocacy role related to the cost of living, increased vulnerability among

		<p>ward residents, and complexity, of casework, and other activities increasing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When asked to identify the aspect of council business that had increased the most; the majority of respondents cited casework (overwhelmingly the most commonly cited), meetings and preparation for them, and correspondence especially via email, text and social media. <p>To assist councillors with the management of their casework on a day-to-day basis, the council has recently launched a pilot scheme which allows councillors to log their own cases using an online form. This new system should allow for more ownership and direct access for members and is currently being trialled by a cohort of councillors. The current email system allows councillors to forward responses directly to residents, keeping them informed about any issues they have raised. Many councillors utilise social media and emails to allow residents to report issues to them directly. Other technology such as camera-phones and software such as What3Words have helped in communication/location of issues when reporting these to the casework team.</p> <p>Casework is expected to further increase over the next five years as a result of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased population growth with the overall population due to increase by 2.2 per cent to 268,882 by 2030. An increase of 3.69 per cent (+7,259) in our electorate by 2030. 2. An increase of 128 electors per councillor by 2030 if we remained at 57 councillors. 3. Increased demands placed upon councillors in terms of residents' expectations. In this digital age and surge in social media means residents are contacting councillors 24/7, via a range of communications platforms, and expecting speedy/ instantaneous responses to their enquiries and concerns. 4. Increasing complexity of casework 5. The Cost-of-Living crisis prompting further interaction with councillors and requests for help and support
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Other Issues

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

As part of the feedback from the member survey, issues as part of the Electoral Review process, councillors were asked for feedback on anything else about their experience as a councillor that might be relevant to this submission. Below is a capture of the major themes received. Comments in detail can be found in [Appendix G](#)

Major themes:

- Wards are too complex for a one-size fits all solution.
- Concerns about reduction in number of councillors / needing more councillors to cater for increasing workloads.
- Councillors having caring and professional responsibilities.
- Population of ward is increasing, requiring more resource to cover.
- Some residents have not registered, the actual number of residents per ward is much higher.
- Concern about coverage at different times of the year due to large student population in the city.
- Social media has impacted communication and workload.
- The Cost of Living crisis has led to an increased workload.
- Significant increase in partnership working across complex areas such as health and crime, at sub-regional and national levels.

Summary

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

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

Summary of Key Evidence

In the submission we have considered how the Council, and our city has changed significantly since the last Boundary Commission Review in 2002. As a significant hub for the southwest region, the city has advanced bringing together business infrastructure, world-class research facilities and expertise, to create a thriving knowledge economy. Plymouth's key economic strengths and assets include the marine and maritime sector, the defence sector, advanced manufacturing, medical and healthcare and the visitor economy, and its primary economic nodes (the city centre/Waterfront and Derriford) have seen strong and sustained clean, green growth over a protracted period, re-balancing and driving the sub regional economy.

Deprivation in Plymouth remains higher than the England average. At a local authority district level Plymouth ranks 64th (out of 317) on the Index of Multiple Deprivation placing Plymouth within the 20 per cent most deprived districts in England. Deprivation and poverty levels are likely to continue to rise and health and living conditions are likely to deteriorate for some of the city's residents. There is a strong correlation between these factors in the wards to the south and west of the city. The areas of highest population growth are mostly in the wards with the highest levels of deprivation.

Plymouth's age profile will become more skewed toward older people over time, by 2043 the proportion of people who are over 65 is expected to increase by 30 per cent. Local analysis shows that this will particularly affect wards in the north and east of the city where life expectancy is higher. As the population of Plymouth has grown it has become more diverse and whilst the proportion of the population that are from ethnic minority backgrounds is currently only one third

of the England and Wales average, the percentage increase in Plymouth, has been proportionally larger over the last 10 years. It is likely this trend will continue for the foreseeable future.

A growing and changing population presents many challenges, including the impact on future housing, education, employment and transport needs and increased demands on the provision of services related to health and children's and adults' social care. The city will also need to prepare for the changing structure of the population and a shifting demand for different housing types e.g. those over 65 living alone or larger families needing bigger homes. The housing trajectory for the city up to 2030 identifies a supply potential of approximately 4,200 dwellings from all sources (includes small sites) between 2023 and 2030.

The Council remains committed to the Leader and Cabinet Model adopted in 2002 and no significant changes are anticipated to our governance arrangements going forwards. Strategic leadership will remain with the Leader and 10 Cabinet Members. These roles are extremely demanding given the Council's ambitious growth programme and the challenges inherent to a unitary authority in managing a complex portfolio of services many of which are stretched to the limit following an extended period of austerity and elevated levels of deprivation. The Council's scrutiny capacity will increase from next year providing some additional seats on our scrutiny panels but there are no plans to change our governance arrangements around other statutory functions i.e. planning, licensing and audit and governance.

Since the last review the Plymouth Partnership Boards have been established to facilitate the Council's ambitious growth agenda and to provide additional member oversight of key areas of Council responsibility and partnership working. Senior councillors are engaged in many regional and national networks, and members at all levels are engaged in a wide range of partnership activity and outside bodies, all of which place additional requirements on their role and increase demand on their time.

Councillor voices

The general themes emerging from the Member Survey (Appendix F) are highly consistent with our wider evidence base and the survey amplifies the impact of a growing and changing demographic base, the increasing demands of our ambitious growth programme and the relatively elevated levels of deprivation and age-related need across the city.

Overwhelmingly the key concern for 'backbench' members is the increase in complex councillor case work and commitments related to scrutiny and quasi-judicial Committees. The typical councillor deals with up to 30 casework enquiries per month and for senior councillors this can rise to over 50 casework enquiries per month, many of which will be highly confidential. Casework related to the cost-of-living crisis and housing need is seen as being particularly complex and increasing in volume. Every Councillor is a member of at least one Committee, with many having multiple roles, including serving as trustee or director of an 'outside body'.

The challenge of maintaining strong connections to a growing community is putting councillors under increasing pressure. The task is complicated by the changing demography at ward level and the communications preferences of different sections of the community, in particular the competing challenges presented by the growing population of older people and an increasingly tech savvy wider population. Most councillors serve on at least one formal committee, board or panel, and councillors are spending more time in internal meetings and working groups with officers and attending external meetings.

Members were concerned that the increasing diversity in the wider community should be better reflected among councillors and felt that an improved work/life balance would be a factor in attracting the right potential candidates from groups that were currently underrepresented, especially young people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Overall members were broadly supportive of three member wards feeling this provided a good level of resilience at ward level when individual councillors were sick or otherwise unavailable for ward level work. The consensus was that the increases in ward population and changing demographics, especially an aging population that would require more support would increase the workload. More councillors were needed to help to fulfil commitments, including scrutiny and other committee meetings. There was a high level of concern about any potential reduction in the overall number of councillors, related to the increasing volume and complexity of casework, Committee work and demand for partnership working as well as the Council's growth ambitions.

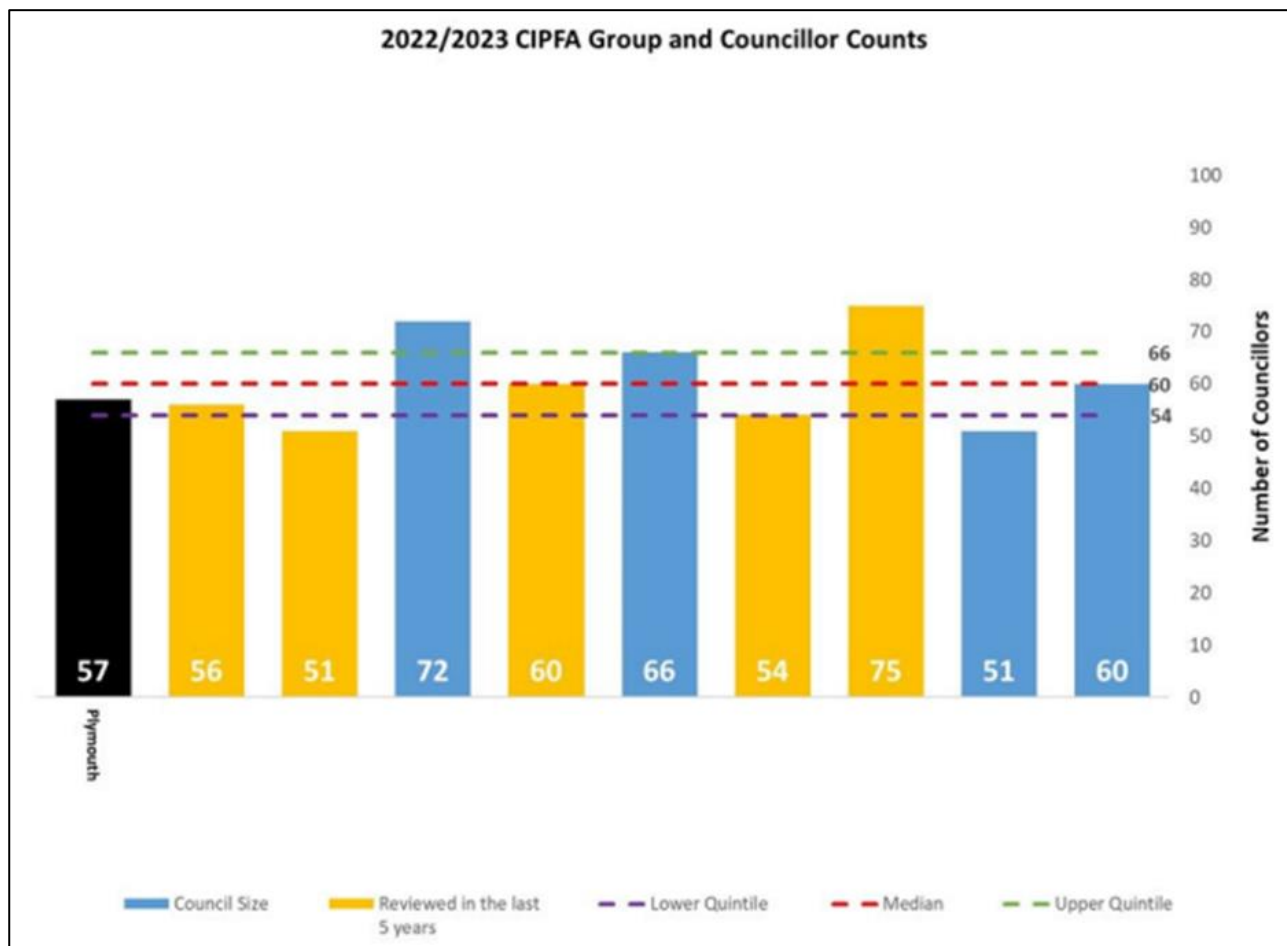
Council Size

In Plymouth between the years 2021-23 the average number of registered electors was 196,210. Utilising the Boundary Commission's methodology to forecast growth the electorate will increase in size to 203,094 by 2030. Based on this forecast the number of electors represented by each of our current 57 councillors would increase from an average 3,451 electors per councillor to an average of 3,563 electors per councillor.

To provide a more accurate prediction of future growth we have developed a housing led approach, which compares our existing dwelling stock in 2023, with projected dwelling stock in 2030, considering the major strategic sites that are included in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP). This produces a slightly higher forecast of 203,976 electors in 2030 and an average of 3,579 electors per councillor. The housing led forecast also has significant implications for the spatial distribution of growth.

The Boundary Commission has provided the Council with analysis of its current Council size, compared with comparator authorities identified by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA). This analysis is presented in figure 7.

Figure 7: Council Size expected range



Source: Local Government Boundary Commission for England, *Electoral Review of Plymouth: A Guide for Councillors*, (November 2023).

We have benchmarked our current council size against our CIPFA benchmarking group. The graph above shows the Council Size expected range of between 54 and 66 councillors.

Within this range we have considered three options:

1. A decrease in council size to 54 councillors
2. Maintaining the current council size of 57 councillors
3. An increase in council size to 60 councillors

Reviewing our evidence base and giving due regard to member views, we have drawn the following conclusions:

A reduction in Council size is not recommended. It would increase the pressure on the remaining councillors. Individual councillors would be required to attend more council meetings, committees, outside bodies, and partnerships. The casework load would be spread across fewer councillors, and this would result in a reduction in the level of service provided to their communities. It could lead to councillors leaving office or being reluctant to take up positions, and increase the challenge associated with improving councillor diversity. We could consider whether more effective use of electronic communications could facilitate a reduction, but previous initiatives have failed to significantly reduce the pressure. We have therefore rejected this option.

Maintaining the current Council size is not sustainable in the long term given the city's growing population and need for councillors to provide effective representation for the increasing

diversity of communities across the city. Councillors have clearly indicated that the time spent on their duties has grown exponentially over the years since the last review and maintaining the status quo would not address this. Scrutiny, policy and governance work forms a significant and growing part of Councillors' workload, and the increase we have seen in casework volumes and complexity is a trend that is set to continue given the predicted population and housing growth, the persistent deprivation across a significant proportion of the city and our aging population. We have therefore rejected this option.

Increasing the current Council size is recommended. Based on our housing led projection of the increase in our electorate in 2030, increasing our council size to 60 members would mean that the average number of electors per councillor would be 3,400. This figure is consistent with the current ratio of 3,451 electors per councillor ensuring future resilience is maintained.

We therefore submit that the proposition that best fits our evidence and which provides some much-needed additional capacity, is to increase the council size to 60 councillors across 20 wards.

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