

# Council Size Submission

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

DRAFT

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## How to Make a Submission

1. It is recommended that submissions on council size follow the format provided below. Submissions should focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal.
2. The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses should be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

## About You

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

The Council Size Submission is being submitted by the full Council following the Council Meeting on 21 January 2021.

## Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

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

N/A as the Commission have identified Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council for review.

## Local Authority Profile

5. Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description may cover all, or some of the following:
  - Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraint 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 transitional populations, is there any large growth anticipated?

- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Stockport is located in the south east of the Greater Manchester conurbation, between the city of Manchester and the Peak District national park. Stockport is a large town with a busy central retail area, many district centres and many international and local businesses. It employs the second largest number of people in Greater Manchester and has good access to national rail and road networks, and an international airport. However, despite its urban status Stockport has significant areas of green space, especially towards the Peak District borders.

The Borough is extremely varied in its demographic with inner city areas of Greater Manchester, more affluent areas towards the Cheshire border and rural areas neighbouring the Peak District. Around a third of the Borough is deprived inner city, around a third consists of very affluent suburbs, and the remaining third includes areas of more affluent inner city, suburban towns and a few small villages. Stockport experiences much internal variation in deprivation; meaning it can be challenging to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and services to reduce inequalities.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Stockport shows that the population of the Borough is growing and is expected to continue to do so:

- There are currently more births than deaths and the population is living longer, although since the last JSNA the rate of improvement in life expectancy has slowed meaning the projections for the growing older population are now very slightly lower.
- There are significant planned housing and economic developments, including significant development within the town centre. The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), which sets out amongst other things, the economic and housing needs across the ten GM boroughs to 2037 continues to be developed and includes provision for 3,700 housing units across the Borough. In addition a further 5,000 housing units are to be delivered through the Council's town centre residential development programme. The Council is at present developing its Local Plan, this will include an ambitious total housing target for the Borough, presently this equates to approximately 14,500 homes although is subject to further consideration as the Local Plan (and GMSF) is further developed. These developments, alongside plans for the regeneration of Stockport's town centre economy and transport infrastructure are likely to lead to significant population changes in this area over the next ten years.
- By 2028 the population of Stockport is projected to be 306,300 (a 5% increase from 291,772 in 2018).

Significantly, forecasts and demographic data indicate that the population is likely to have a higher demand for need:

- Stockport has seen a trend of population growth being more rapid in the deprived areas over the last decade, this trend may change as there are some planned large scale housing developments in the less deprived areas, but (as referenced above) significant growth is still expected in the town centre.
- Birth rates have grown most rapidly in priority areas, where there are potentially more children at risk. This is especially true of a cohort born 2009-2014, where almost half of all births were in the two most deprived quintiles. This cohort is currently in primary education and will move into secondary education over the next few years. Currently around 45% of all births occur in the two most deprived quintiles (around 1,500 a year). This trend is expected to continue over the next ten years.
- The ageing population brings increasing and complex needs – Stockport’s dependency ratio is increasing and is expected to continue to increase, mainly due to the increase in the older population. The dependency ratio is the total population aged 0-14 and 65+ divided by the total population aged 15-64, which roughly shows the ratio of dependent to economically active people in the population. As the ratio increases there will be an increased demand on services and expenditure.
- More people are living in one person or lone parent households – the 2011 census showed that 38,535 people live in one person households, there were 15,400 dependent children living with one parent, a further identified risk for vulnerability.
- The population of Stockport continues to become more ethnically diverse, especially in younger populations to the west of the Borough.

The above demographic trends are having, and will continue to have, a significant impact on Councillors’ workloads (casework) - in relation to both the level and complexity of demand. This means that a reduction in the Council size will not allow Members to effectively perform their functions as these trends take effect and pressures increase, and that even retaining 63 Councillors as proposed will ultimately not represent a status quo in this regard.

Enabling improved outcomes for all citizens and communities is a fundamental part of the Council’s ambition. Integral to this vision is a collaborative approach, with Councillors proactively working together in local neighbourhoods, with partners and

communities, to develop local solutions to strengthen resilience and enable all residents and communities to lead independent, happy and healthy lives. The current Council size reflects the increasing and complexity of demand across the Borough and therefore no changes to the size of the Council are proposed.

**Council Size**

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

**Strategic Leadership**

7. Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified.

Topic		
Governance Model	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i></li> <li>• <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i></li> <li>• <i>If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you have represents is most appropriate for the authority.</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>Stockport Council comprises 63 Councillors, with three Councillors representing each of the Borough’s 21 wards. The Council operates a Strong Leader Cabinet governance model, this has functioned well since its introduction in November 2009 and there are no proposals to change this.</p> <p>In line with the Council’s Constitution, the Leader is able to appoint a minimum of two and a maximum of nine Members to sit with them on the Cabinet as portfolio holders. Including the Leader, Stockport Council currently has eight Cabinet Members and has remained at that number since May 2014 even as portfolios have changed.</p> <p>Stockport Council is a unitary authority and thus holds responsibility for all the Borough’s local government services. When it comes to deciding the number and scope of portfolios, there are three key service areas which need to be addressed. These consist of Services to People (including Adult Social Care, Children’s</p>

		<p>Social Care, Education), Services to Place (including Growth, Culture and Leisure, Learning and Employment, Public Realm, Public Protection, and Highways and Transportation), and Corporate and Support Services. The Council’s portfolios (detailed below) are intended to effectively cover these areas whilst cutting across them, as directly basing them on existing service structures could lead to regular changes being required and the portfolio workloads becoming uneven. In addition, it is taken into account that the Leader should not have an overly large portfolio, allowing them to fully carry out their function and duties as Leader.</p> <p>It is for these reasons, along with the need to represent Stockport’s growing and increasingly complex demographic, that it is believed a smaller Cabinet would not adequately encompass the diversity of services and responsibilities carried out by the Council, and there are no plans to change this model.</p>
<p><b>Portfolios</b></p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i></li> <li>• <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i></li> <li>• <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i></li> <li>• <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i></li> </ul>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The Cabinet is currently made up of the Leader and seven portfolio holders, with portfolios split between the eight Members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader; Devolution (GMCA)</li> <li>• Deputy Leader; Resources, Commissioning &amp; Governance</li> <li>• Sustainable Stockport</li> <li>• Citizen Focus &amp; Engagement</li> <li>• Children, Family Services &amp; Education</li> <li>• Economy &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>• Inclusive Neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Adult Care &amp; Health</li> </ul> <p>The Cabinet has historically (and currently) included a mix of full time Councillors, and Councillors with work commitments outside the Council. The Council intends that Cabinet positions are open to Members with full-time work or other commitments, and this informs the number of Members in the Cabinet and the</p>

		<p>division of portfolios. These arrangements will continue to be promoted in the future in order to ensure Cabinet roles remain open to all Councillors, particularly as this allows for Councillors to better reflect the people of Stockport that they represent.</p> <p>Cabinet Members do not sit on Scrutiny Committees, the Licensing, Environment &amp; Safety Committee, or the Planning &amp; Highways Regulation Committee, though they do sit on other Committees, Working Parties and Member Bodies. Additionally, Cabinet Members will all sit on their relevant Area Committee and hold a role at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority level. On average, Members of Cabinet sit on 5.38 Council committees each – which reflects a significant workload.</p>
<b>Delegated Responsibilities</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i></li> <li>• <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>Responsibility for decision making is set out in the Scheme of Delegation, found at this link (Part 3, sections 1 to 10D):  <a href="http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=587&amp;MId=27913&amp;Ver=4&amp;Info=1">http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=587&amp;MId=27913&amp;Ver=4&amp;Info=1</a></p> <p>This includes decisions delegated to Full Council, Cabinet (collective functions), individual Cabinet Members, Area Committees, Ordinary Committees, Scrutiny and Scrutiny Co-ordination Committees, GM Joint Committees and decisions delegated to officers. The effective operation of the delegation scheme relies upon close co-operation and strong working relationships between officers and Members.</p> <p>All decisions of the Council Meeting, the Cabinet, Committees and officers, are taken in accordance with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity of aims and desired outcomes;</li> <li>• Presumption in favour of openness;</li> <li>• Proportionality (meaning the action must be proportionate to the results to be achieved) and reasonableness;</li> <li>• Consideration of relevant professional advice;</li> <li>• Appropriate consultation with stakeholders and those persons or organisations likely to be affected;</li> <li>• Respect for human rights;</li> <li>• Timeliness;</li> </ul>

- Due diligence and financial prudence.

#### Decisions taken by the Council Meeting

From May 2020, the (full) Council Meeting will take place six times a year, with extraordinary meetings convened when business requires. It is attended by all 63 ward Councillors including the Mayor. The Council Meeting has responsibility for taking decisions that affect the constitution, policy framework, budget and appointment of Cabinet Members, Mayor and Deputy Mayor and other committees. All members are expected to attend the Council Meeting and the minutes and records of attendance show excellent attendance and participation of Councillors in Council Meetings by asking questions, proposing motions, making amendments to motions, providing announcements and presenting petitions.

#### Cabinet functions and Individual Cabinet Member functions

Individual members are authorised to make executive decisions within the areas of responsibility allocated to them by the Leader from time to time. Cabinet member delegations are exercised in relation to Executive functions only and can include authorisation of grants within the Council's Budget and policy framework, budget monitoring, determining and approving policies, plans and strategies for particular services, considering review reports prepared by Scrutiny Committees and making recommendations to Cabinet for any consequent action. In addition to this, each Cabinet member has a Greater Manchester Combined Authority role with various related commitments.

When major decisions (Key Decision) are to be taken or considered they are published in advance in the Cabinet's Forward Plan, in so far as they can be anticipated. If these major decisions are to be considered at a meeting by the Cabinet that meeting will generally be open to the public, unless personal or confidential matters are to be discussed.

#### Area Committees

Areas Committees have delegated executive decision making powers from Cabinet on particular issues, generally those regarding highways or traffic regulation and the spending of ward delegated budgets. This means that every Councillor exercises some executive functions and decision making through their Area

		<p>Committee.</p> <p>The proportion of executive decisions taken by each body in the most recent complete committee cycle (September to October 2020) was 46% by Area Committees, 15% by individual Cabinet Members, and 39% by the Cabinet collectively.</p>
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Accountability

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

Topic	
<b>Internal Scrutiny</b>	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.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i></li> </ul>
Analysis	<p>Stockport Council has five Scrutiny Committees that support and monitor the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole. The Council values having a constructive pre-scrutiny and overview function which improves the work of the Council, and has recently reviewed Scrutiny arrangements in order to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council’s scrutiny resources (see below for further information).</p> <p>The Committees commission reports and undertake reviews which advise the Cabinet and the Council Meeting on specific aspects of policy and its implementation, with each Scrutiny Committee undertaking one scrutiny review per year. The committees can also “call-in” decisions made by or on behalf of the Cabinet, but not yet implemented, and may require that the Cabinet reconsiders them or refers them for debate at a Council Meeting. Additionally, they monitor the decisions of the Cabinet and may hold hearings to investigate specific issues; may be consulted by the Cabinet or the Council Meeting on forthcoming decisions and on the development of policy; as well as allowing Stockport citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public inquiries into areas of concern.</p> <p>The five thematic Scrutiny Committees are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Social Care &amp; Health</li> </ul>

- Children & Families
- Communities & Housing
- Corporate, Resource Management & Governance
- Economy & Regeneration

The division of Cabinet portfolios among Scrutiny Committees is set out below:

<b>Adult Social Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>Children &amp; Families</b>	<b>Communities &amp; Housing</b>		<b>Corporate, Resource Management &amp; Governance</b>			<b>Economy &amp; Regeneration</b>
Adult Care & Health	Children, Family Services & Education	Inclusive Neighbourhoods	Sustainable Stockport	Leader and Devolution	Resources, Commissioning & Governance	Citizen Focus & Engagement	Economy & Regeneration

In addition, the Council has a Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee which monitors and oversees the work programme of the five thematic Scrutiny Committees. The membership of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is composed of the five Scrutiny Chairs and one other Councillor, if needed to maintain proportionality.

Each of the five Scrutiny Committees is made up of nine Councillors and reflects the political balance of the Council. The Children & Families Scrutiny Committee has an additional four co-opted members who are not Councillors. The small number of Councillors who do not sit on either the Cabinet or a Scrutiny Committee usually take leading roles in other Committees or Member Bodies. Overall, each Member is on an average of 4.51 Committees each, demonstrating the active role each Member plays in the function of the Council.

To support members, each Scrutiny Committee has a dedicated Democratic Services officer as its Secretary, while additional officers from other directorates will assist based on the relevant items on Scrutiny Committee agendas. There is still of course a significant and increasing workload required from Members for the Scrutiny process to work successfully. This time commitment goes beyond attending meetings, as Members need to

	dedicate time to reading papers, conducting research, and undertaking activities to gather evidence for Committees. For this reason, the decision has been taken to retain the current number of Scrutiny members. Additionally, for the purposes of this submission it means that the Council requires a sufficient number of Members outside the Cabinet so that scrutiny resources (and resources for other committees) are not overstretched and the model functions effectively.
<b>Statutory Function</b>	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?
<b>Planning</b>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i></li> </ul>
	<p>The Council's Planning and Highways Regulation Committee is concerned with matters relating to town and country planning and development control, and with the regulation of the use of highways in Stockport.</p> <p>The Committee is composed of 12 Councillors, appointed by the Annual Council Meeting, and meets every month. Although they are able to do so, currently no Members of the Cabinet sit on the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee. This has been the case for several years due to potential conflicts of interest, arising from the fact that Cabinet Members often already have substantial involvement in the decision making of applications that reach the committee stage.</p> <p>Applications can be determined by officers, Area Committees, or the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee. The delegation arrangements for planning are outlined in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution. The link can be found here:-  <a href="http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/documents/s181006/Section%205%20-%20Ordinary%20Committees.pdf">http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/documents/s181006/Section%205%20-%20Ordinary%20Committees.pdf</a></p> <p>In brief, applications are determined by Area Committees if they have been called up by individual Councillors or are subject to at least four letters of objection. Applications that go to the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee are those that are for the development of 100 or more dwellings, cover 5000 square metres or</p>

		<p>more of floor space, involve the development of a site of three hectares or more, or require an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out.</p> <p>Additional applications that are heard by the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee are those where Area Committees decline to exercise their delegation, where a site visit is needed, where an application straddles or is adjacent to Area Committee boundaries, where the grant of permission would be contrary to the Council Development Plan, or where an application is for planning permission made by a Councillor, the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, a Corporate Director, a Service Head or an officer who deals with planning matters.</p> <p>All applications that are ultimately determined by the Planning &amp; Highways Regulation Committee are considered in the first instance by the relevant Area Committee(s).</p> <p>In the Municipal Year to date 1796 applications have been received. 97% of applications were delegated to officers, 1% to Area Committees and 2% to the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee. The number of delegated applications has increased since the introduction of prior approval applications.</p> <p>In the Municipal Year to dated 3050 decisions have been made. 96.7% of decisions were delegated to officers, 1.5% to Area Committees and 1.8% to the Planning and Highways Regulations Committee.</p>
<b>Licensing</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Council has a Licensing, Environment and Safety Committee, which is concerned with the licensing of taxis, gaming, entertainment and food establishments; functions relating to health and safety including those related to the control of nuisances.</p> <p>Applications are considered at meetings of one of two standing Licensing, Environment and Safety Committee Sub-Committees, A and B. The membership of Sub-Committees A and B is drawn exclusively from the 10 Councillors that compose the Licensing, Environment and Safety Committee, who are appointed at the Annual Council Meeting.</p>

		<p>Sub-Committees A and B meet on an ad-hoc basis, depending on the frequency of objections to licensing applications. In the last 12 months, there has been a total of 10 meetings of Sub-Committees A and B.</p>
<p><b>Other Regulatory Bodies</b></p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i></li> </ul>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The Council has a number of other regulatory bodies, both statutory and non-statutory, that function as ordinary committees and are summarised below.</p> <p><u>Standards Committee and Sub-Committee</u></p> <p>The Council, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, has established a Standards Committee, as well as appointing Independent Persons with whom the Standards Committee will consult on the conduct of members in the event a complaint is received. There are four Councillors with membership of the Standards Committee, currently consisting of one Councillor from each of the party groups on the Council.</p> <p>The Standards Sub-Committee comprises of four members (at least one Independent Person and three Councillors) drawn from the Standards Committee and its role is to consider the outcomes of investigations of complaints about councillors and co-opted members and to determine whether a councillor or member had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. The sub-committee could also consider and recommend possible actions if appropriate.</p> <p><u>Audit Committee</u></p> <p>The Audit Committee has a membership of six, and is responsible for reviewing audit activity, risk activity, corporate governance and accounts.</p> <p><u>Appeals Panel</u></p> <p>The Appeals Panel is made up of six non-executive Councillors who hear and decide upon appeals against</p>

		<p>decisions of the Council (other than employment appeals), such as decisions regarding tenancies.</p> <p><u>Appointments Committee</u></p> <p>The Appointments Committee is concerned with the appointment of Chief and Deputy Chief Officers and all matters relating to their employment and conditions of service, including discipline and dismissal. The Committee is composed of eight Councillors appointed by the Annual Council Meeting.</p> <p><u>Employment Appeals Committee</u></p> <p>The Employment Appeals Committee is made up of three Councillors who hear and decide upon employment appeals.</p> <p>While not strictly regulatory bodies, the Council also has a number of other Ordinary Committees with important duties relating to Council functions, including the Contributors Committee, Funding Committee, Health &amp; Wellbeing Board, Health &amp; Wellbeing Board Sub-Committee, and Member Committee.</p>
<b>External Partnerships</b>	<p>Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.</p>	
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Will executive members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Analysis</b>	<p><u>Greater Manchester Combined Authority</u></p> <p>Stockport is one of ten councils which make up the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). The Greater Manchester Combined Authority is a unique model of governance for a city region. The GMCA is a statutory body with functions which cover the Greater Manchester area, including some transport functions, economic development and regeneration, and health. The GMCA is run by the first Mayor of Greater Manchester and the leaders of the ten constituent councils. The GMCA meets on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The business of the GMCA calls on the time of the Leader, Deputy Leader, and Cabinet members. It expands</p>	

the boundaries of their role as a Councillor from Stockport to the wider city region. Additionally, Councillors outside the Cabinet also sit on some of the GMCA subgroups. The GMCA will continue to require extensive councillor representation as work at a regional level continues to develop.

Examples of meetings that members attend include:

AGMA Planning and Housing Commission  
AGMA Statutory Functions Committee  
GMCA Audit Committee  
GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committees  
Greater Manchester Health and Care Board  
Greater Manchester Police and Crime Panel  
Greater Manchester Waste and Recycling Committee

In addition, there are a number of partner organisations and outside bodies that are independent from the Council but have an essential impact on its service areas. In order that the council can maintain effective partnerships with this diverse range of organisations, representatives of the council, usually elected Councillors, sit on the various committees and forums that are responsible for them. Examples of such committees and forums include:

- Pennine Care NHS Trust Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Stockport NHS Foundation Trust Council of Governors
- Various community associations, community councils and civic hall user groups
- Charities, including educational charities, nursing homes, Stockport Plaza Trust Board, Stockport Disability Forum, and Stockport Local Access Forum
- Armed Forces Covenant Group, Reserve Forces and Cadets Association
- Ring and Ride Steering Group
- Adoption Panel
- Fostering Panel
- Staying Put Advisory Committee (care leavers)
- Stockport Economic Alliance

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|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation</li><li>• The University of Manchester General Assembly</li><li>• Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities</li><li>• Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations</li><li>• Greater Manchester Airport Consultative Committee</li></ul> |
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## Community Involvement

9. The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent and provide leadership to their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties?

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>A general expectation of the work of Councillors can be found in Article 2 of the constitution – the link can be found here:-</p> <p><a href="http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/documents/s180983/Article%20%20-%20Councillors.pdf">http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/documents/s180983/Article%20%20-%20Councillors.pdf</a></p> <p>All Councillors are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consult with and represent their local community and bring its views into the Council's decision-making process, i.e. acting as the "champions" of their community and actively encouraging good governance, community participation and citizen involvement in decision making;</li> <li>• deal with individual casework and act as advocates for constituents in resolving particular problems or grievances;</li> </ul>

- balance different, often conflicting, interests identified within the ward and represent the ward as a whole, fairly and without prejudice;
- sit as members of Ordinary and Area Committees and, in the case of non-Cabinet members, Scrutiny Committees;
- be available for nomination as the Council's representative on appropriate other bodies, and develop specialisms associated with those bodies.

Councillors undertake the following ward-based activities:

- Ward surgeries
- Ward walks
- Newsletters
- Social media activity (Facebook, Twitter)
- Participate in local community groups

#### Area Committees and Ward Committees

In order to ensure that the Council stays in touch with local issues, and to contribute a "local dimension" to the development of the Council's policies, the Council has seven Area Committees made up of ward Councillors for those areas, including Members of the Cabinet. Each of the seven Area Committees meets nine times a year.

As referred to above, Area Committees have delegated powers for particular executive and planning decisions, meaning that they play an active and important role in the functioning of the Council, and contribute to Member's workload.

In addition, the Council has a series of Ward Committees which exist as advisory bodies and meet on an ad-hoc basis. Ward Committees aim to provide people who live and work within a Ward the opportunity to meet with their local Councillors to raise issues of concern to them, to allow Councillors to respond to local circumstances, and to generally enhance the participation of residents in the decision-making process of the Council.

		A survey conducted with councillors in 2016 (81% response rate) indicated that members spend approximately 25 hours per week on their duties as a councillor. This includes time spent on case work (see below), attending party meetings, and preparing for and attending committees. This figure corresponded with the outcome of the same question in the 2012 survey.
<b>Casework</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Analysis</b>	<p>There is no specific case management system in place to support Councillors' case work and Councillors manage their work differently depending on a range of issues, including the needs of specific case. Councillors have a list of key officer contacts who they may liaise with or refer issues to depending on the specific case.</p> <p>Councillors are also able to access additional support through Democratic Services as required.</p> <p>Please see above for information relating to the amount of time spent on case work.</p>

## Other Issues

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

N/A

## Summary

11. In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future. Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate any other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

The overall arrangements discussed currently deliver strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership effectively, whilst changes within our governance model are constantly considered to maximise efficiency and effectiveness, like those being implemented to our scrutiny function.

The Council considered a reduction in size, with 60 and 57 Councillors being the most likely options, but concluded that the effects of such reductions would not allow the Council to meet its objectives and demands. First of all, this is because the already high workloads and responsibilities of Councillors would need to increase. Much of this increased workload would come from Councillors sitting on more committees, forcing Councillors not able to increase their current hours due to work or other commitments, to reduce the time they spend on being an active leader in the community. Additionally, an overall increase in the workload of Members would mean the Council would struggle to attract Members with other commitments, and thus not adequately reflect the people it serves. An alternate option with a smaller Council size would be to reduce the size and number of committees, and potentially the Cabinet. As outlined, this would weaken the ability of the Council to provide strategic leadership, accountability and perform its regulatory functions, as the number of decisions to be made and issues to be addressed will not reduce in line with the size of the Council.

Beyond these consequences, the increase in Stockport's population and the complexity of demand indicate that a reduction in Council size would have detrimental effects to the Council's functions. The Borough's increasing dependency ratio, along with a predicted population increase from 291,772 in 2018 to 306,300 in 2028, with much of this growth taking place in the Borough's deprived areas, means that existing arrangements will be stretched, and the negative consequences of any reduction would be

exacerbated. Similarly, the responsibilities that come with being a member of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority are likely to increase the workload of Members, as greater devolution takes place.

For the reasons outlined above and throughout this document, the Council believes that it is necessary to have 63 Councillors in order to meet the challenges of the future and effectively provide strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership.