

# Council Size Submission Template - Waverley Draft v.3

Waverley District Council

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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 are should unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

## About You

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

This is the Council's official submission. It has been prepared with the assistance of a cross-party Working Group of Councillors supported by officers.

## ~~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.*~~

~~[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)~~

## 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?

## PROFILE OF WAVERLEY BOROUGH

Waverley Borough has a population of 126,137 and is located in the south west corner of Surrey. It is the largest of the Surrey districts at around 345 sq km (133 sq miles) and is predominantly rural. The Borough contains four principal urban settlements of varying size, each with its own distinctive character and strong local identity. About 70% of the population lives within one of the four main centres. Waverley has a large number of villages of varying size and character, and the borough is fully parished with 21 separate town and parish councils.

The distinctive natural environment in Waverley is generally of a very high quality. Approximately 92% of the Borough is rural; 61% (21,137 hectares) lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and 31% (10,653 hectares) is designated as Countryside Beyond the Green Belt. 77% of the Borough's countryside is also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and/or Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The high level of constraint in planning terms results in high land values and resilient house prices, cushioned from recessionary effects, and as a consequence there are high levels of planning appeals.

Waverley has an ageing population, with a relatively high proportion of people above retirement age. In 2019, 22.3% of Waverley's population was over 65, compared with the national figure of 18.5%. A significant percentage increase is forecast in the number of people over 65 and over 85 and could mean that potentially by 2032, 27% of Waverley's population will be over 65, and 6% over 85. Whilst 65% of Waverley's population are employed in managerial, professional or technical occupations compared to 49% nationally only 58% of population is of working age which is the lowest of the Surrey districts.

Some 96% of the Borough is white. There is a relatively large and long-standing Gypsy and Traveller community in Waverley. Waverley is generally an affluent place with high employment; 83% of the 16-64 age group are economically active. However, there are areas within the Borough that are relatively deprived. There are issues about access to services, particularly for those living in the more remote parts of the Borough and those without access to a car. Waverley has retained its housing stock and currently has 4,750 council properties.

The main road connections in Waverley are north-south, with relatively poor connections east-west. There are no motorways within the Borough and the only national trunk road is the section of the A3 between Grayshott and Milford which includes the Hindhead Tunnel. Much of Waverley's road network is rural and narrow. Bus services are relatively frequent within the main urban areas, but services are more patchy and infrequent in rural areas. Services generally are reduced at evenings and weekends. In terms of rail links, Farnham is on the London to Alton line; with Farncombe, Godalming, Milford, Witley and Haslemere all on the London to Portsmouth line. Cranleigh does not have a rail link and there are no direct east-west rail links in the Borough.

The Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1 (2018) supports the delivery of at least 11,210 additional homes in Waverley in the period 2013 to 2032 (an average of 590 homes a year). In determining the amount of housing proposed at each settlement, account has been taken of the Waverley Settlement Hierarchy. Most new development is directed to the main settlements of Farnham (including Badshot Lea), Godalming, Haslemere, and Cranleigh. Moderate levels of development are promoted in larger villages (Bramley, Chiddingfold, Elstead, Milford, and Witley), with more limited growth in/around other villages (Alfold, Churt, Dunsfold, Ewhurst, Frensham, Tilford, Shamley Green, Blackheath and Wonersh). Dunsfold Aerodrome has been identified as a suitable brownfield site for a mixed use Garden Village development of 2,600 dwellings. (see LPP1 2018,

Policies ALH1, SS7). In the summer of 2020, Surrey County Council launched a bid for a single county-unitary council, which was declined (for now) by the Government. The Leaders of the Surrey district and borough councils in the meantime commissioned KPMG to work up potential alternative unitary models. Once the Government declined the SCC bid (for now), the district/borough project's scope shifted slightly to emphasise options for collaboration. The collaborative discussions this year and the increasing pressure of imminent financial challenges has prompted Waverley and Guildford Councils' Leaders and Deputy Leaders to discuss informally whether and how the two councils could collaborate. Because of geography, local economy and other reasons, the two boroughs could have an alignment that is immediately obvious for Waverley. A bilateral partnership does not exclude further partners in future, should they be willing and should a business case make sense.

### 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>The Council operates a Strong Leader/Executive model of governance. It is not envisaged that there will be a change from the Strong Leader/Executive model of governance in the near future.</p> <p>The May 2019 Local Borough Elections returned a No Overall Control Council after 12 years of a large Conservative majority.</p> <p>The political proportionality on the Council is currently:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Conservative</td> <td>22 (38.60%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Farnham Residents</td> <td>15 (26.32%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Liberal Democrat</td> <td>15 (26.32%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>2 ( 3.51%)</td> </tr> </table>	Conservative	22 (38.60%)	Farnham Residents	15 (26.32%)	Liberal Democrat	15 (26.32%)	Green
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		<p>Labour 2 ( 3.51%)  Independent 1 ( 1.74%)  57</p> <p>In May 2019, an Executive was established comprising representatives of the four smaller Groups, with the Conservatives becoming the Principal Opposition Group.</p> <p>In the autumn of 2019 a cross-party Governance Review Working Group of Councillors explored alternative governance models, particularly in relation to how non-Executive councillors are engaged in policy development. The Working Group concluded that there were no benefits to be gained from changing to a Committee System that could not be achieved within the Strong Leader/Executive model by working with the Overview &amp; Scrutiny function to enable Non-Executive councillors to participate fully in policy development.</p>
<b>Portfolios</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Analysis</b>	<p>The Executive is made up of a Strong Leader, and nine Executive members. The Executive has comprised of 8-10 Members since May 2007. None of the positions are full-time, and in order to spread the work load it is envisaged that an Executive of 8-10 members will be required into the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The Executive carries out all of the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the authority. Some of these decisions / plans / policies / strategies require the approval of Full Council e.g. Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Local Plan.</p> <p>The Executive operates a model of collective decision-making, and there is no delegation to individual Portfolio Holders. The Executive has eleven scheduled meetings each year, with ad hoc Extraordinary meetings scheduled as required.</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>
	<b>Analysis</b>	

	<p>There is a scheme of delegation for senior officers. Matters which are the responsibility of the Executive are delegated to officers by the Leader and non-executive functions are delegated by the Full Council.</p> <p>The current Scheme of Delegation was adopted in April 2017 and is based on an exceptions approach, with officers authorised to take all actions relating to a function with the exception of certain decisions that are reserved to a specific Committee or the Council.</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>
<b>Analysis</b>	<p>The O&amp;S committees were last reviewed in 2015/16, and a new structure was introduced with effect from May 2017, comprising four committees aligned to the corporate priorities current at the time (Value for Money and Customer Service; Housing; Environment; and Community Wellbeing). Each O&amp;S committee has nine non-Executive Members. The previous arrangement was two O&amp;S committees of 19 members each, so the current maintains the high level of non-Executive councillor involvement in scrutiny.</p> <p>O&amp;S committees are chaired by a member of the Principal Opposition Group (subject to the POG comprising a minimum of 6 members, or 10% of the council). Each committee meets at least five times a year, with the ability to schedule additional meetings as required (eg to call-in an Executive decision). At the end of each committee cycle an O&amp;S Coordinating Board also meets; this consists of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each of the four committees.</p>

	<p>All the O&amp;S committees are able to establish Task and Finish Groups in order to carry out in-depth scrutiny of a particular topic or policy development. Task and Finish Groups typically take between three to six months and may involve between three to ten meetings.</p> <p>For the past few years there have been very few instances of call-ins.</p> <p>After five years of running four committees there is a feeling that the current structure should be reviewed with a potential to reduce the number of committees in future.</p>	
<b>Statutory Function</b>	<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>	
<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><b>Analysis</b></p>	<p>There are currently two area-based Planning committees, each of 15 Members (plus 8 substitutes). These two area committees have replaced – on a temporary basis for 2020/21 – a planning committee structure of four area committees (comprising 49 Members in total) and a borough-wide Joint Planning Committee of 23 Members. The temporary arrangement was introduced to streamline committee operations during the Covid pandemic, whilst meetings are taking place via Zoom.</p> <p>An LGA Planning Peer Review in 2018 recommended the council move to one borough-wide planning committee. This has been debated by Members but there has been no consensus on the future structure of the planning committees beyond a strong preference for an area-based approach and opposition to a single committee. Councillors who are not a Planning Committee member may still speak at a planning committee meeting in support or against a planning application, although they may not take part in the committee’s voting.</p> <p>96% of applications are delegated to officers (year ending to September 2020), with around 4% of applications being determined by planning committees, mostly due to being ‘called in’ by local Members (75% of applications going to planning committees in 2020/21 were ‘called in’).</p>



		<p>Planning Committees typically consider a maximum of 4 planning applications per meeting, and meetings typically last 2 -3 hours. Meetings take place in the evening.</p> <p>Each planning committee meets at least once a month. There are also regular formal site visits for Members to attend, and many Members undertake informal site visits for sites they are not familiar with.</p> <p>Executive Members are able to sit on Planning Committees.</p> <p>The attendance levels for the Planning Committees is typically high, and substitutes are permitted if apologies are given sufficiently early to enable them to have time to prepare for the meeting.</p> <p>All Members of the Committee (plus any Councillor who will serve as a substitute on the Committee) are required to undergo planning training. This training covers the role and responsibilities of the Committee and the planning service, the legislative and policy framework, how planning decisions are taken and the Member Planning Code of Good Practice. The Head of Planning also provides briefings on national planning policy, local plan updates, design training, enforcement, review of development sites and workshops on evolving masterplans.</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>
	<b>Analysis</b>	<p>The Licensing Act 2003 requires each local authority to set up a Licensing Committee with between ten and fifteen members. It is envisaged that most member level decisions will be made by a sub-committee of three.</p> <p>Waverley’s statutory licensing functions, including those functions derived from the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005, are delegated to the Licensing &amp; Regulatory (L&amp;R) Committee. The Committee has 12 members, giving some scope to reduce the size of the committee if the Council size was reduced. The L&amp;R Committee typically meets four times/year and sets discretionary policies, and makes recommendations on those policies reserved to Full Council by law. The L&amp;R Committee has a General Purpose sub-committee of 5 members, which meets on an ad hoc basis to consider matters relating to Taxi and Private Hire drivers that fall outside the agreed policies (typically 5-6 meetings/year); and three sub-committees, each of three members, which meet in rotation and as required, to make decisions on matters relating to the Licensing Act 2003 which are outside of the agreed Council policy (typically 6-8 hearings/year across the three sub-committees).</p>

		All Members of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee are required to undergo training in relation to the licensing functions of the council, which must be refreshed on a regular basis.
<b>Other Regulatory Bodies</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<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>
	<b>Analysis</b>	<p>Waverley has two further regulatory committees with responsibility for governance functions:</p> <p>An Audit Committee, comprising eight Members. Members of the Executive may not sit on the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee has the core Audit Committee responsibilities, as described by CIPFA, and has delegated responsibility from Full Council to approve the annual audited accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>The Audit Committee has recently considered its terms of reference and the pros/cons of combining the roles of the Audit Committee and the Standards Committee. Due to the large volume of business falling within the remit of the Audit Committee it was agreed that it would be helpful to increase the number of meetings per year from 4 to 6, including one dedicated to consideration of the External Audit Report and approval of the annual audited accounts and Annual Governance Statement. It was felt that combining the remits of the two committees would result in either a dilution of the oversight of core Audit Committee functions, or require additional meetings such that there would be no ‘efficiency’ savings for members or officers overall.</p> <p>In addition to formal meetings, the Audit Committee regularly meets informally with officers and expert advisers (risk consultants, external auditor) for briefings on topical issues.</p> <p>The Audit Committee membership has significant overlap with the councillors involved in the Overview &amp; Scrutiny function. Whilst CIPFA guidance highlights the potential risk of blurring the lines between the Audit and Scrutiny functions through shared membership, the Audit Committee has considered this and does not feel that it is an immediate priority to make the Audit Committee exclusive of both the Executive and O&amp;S committees due to the implications this would have for the O&amp;S committee structure, but has committed to revisit this in 12 months.</p> <p>Matters relating to the ethical conduct of Members and oversight of the Constitution fall within the remit of the Standards Committee, which has nine members. No more than one Executive member may be on the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee meets four times a year. If necessary, the Standards</p>

		Committee will convene a three-member Panel to hear the case against any Member following an independent investigation into an alleged breach of the Member Code of Conduct. Only one such Panel has been convened since the Standards regime was changed in 2012, following the Localism Act.
<b>External Partnerships</b>		Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Will 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>The Council has no formal decision-making partnerships or joint working arrangements.</p> <p>The Council appoints representatives to a number of Outside Bodies. These have been categorised as being of organisations of regional strategic significance (17), organisations that receive financial support from the council (11), and organisations that have relevance to Waverley’s strategic plans (11). Thirteen of these positions are held by members of the Executive in an <i>ex officio</i> capacity.</p> <p>Representatives are appointed in advisory or observer capacity, and have no authority to commit the council to any action or policy approach without reference back to the Executive or Full Council.</p>

## Community Involvement

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

Topic		Description
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>This analysis is based on a survey conducted with Councillors during the period 12-19 January 2021. The survey and responses are attached at Annexe 1.</p> <p>As a fully parished Borough, it is significant that half of councillors are also parish or town councillors and three councillors are also triple hatted being County Councillors as well. This compares with 39% of councillors nationally (LGA Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013) Those councillors not on town or parish councils comment that they do attend the meetings on a regular basis both to represent the Borough council and to keep in touch with local issues. Over one third of councillors represent the council on outside bodies. These include day centre and local transport boards, museums and hospital trusts, cycle forums, the LEP etc. Nine councillors are also members of the Surrey County Council Local Committee, discussing issues such as education, social care, young people, highways and transport.</p> <p>From the survey results the largest amount of time is spent equally on attending council and other related meetings and preparing for these meetings and dealing with, and engaging with, constituent's enquiries and casework. Half the councillors responding to the survey spend more time on council business than they expected to before they were elected and two thirds of those who have been on the council for more than one term feel that time spent on council business has increased. Reasons for increased time spent on council business are: greater expectations and need from the public, greater complexity of issues, especially planning</p>

		<p>and finance issues, meetings taking longer, social media, emails making everyone more available, more responsibilities with roles on Executive and taking on chair's roles and more active and aware residents. Councillors were asked what aspect of their duties had increased the most and the majority of responses cited casework and queries from the public followed by attendance and preparation for meetings. Planning issues were the next most common reason.</p>
<p><b>Casework</b></p>	<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<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>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>From the survey results the majority of councillors (66%) deal with up to 10 cases or enquiries a month whilst nine councillors do between 16 and over 30 cases a month. The majority of their casework concerns planning, housing and environmental services issues such as street cleaning and refuse collection. Planning issues in particular take up a lot of time. The method of dealing with queries will depend on experience and knowledge, but the majority of queries will be dealt with without recourse to officers. Members receive good support from officers and the process for handling resident's complaints is effective. Other than administrative support for the Leader and Deputy Leader there is no other dedicated support for councillors, nor political advisors. There is one officer dedicated to supporting the four Overview and Scrutiny committees.</p> <p>Councillors use a variety of methods for communications, email and telephone being by far the highest (20%) followed by face to face and meetings (16%). Social media and texting also feature relatively highly (11% and 8%). The most preferred method is email followed by letters, face to face and then newsletters. Councillors were asked if they had noticed any significant change in the amount of time spent on communicating via different methods. The most significant increase was email followed by social media and telephone. Given the survey was conducted after almost a year of the pandemic this aspect needs to be taken into consideration, however, it can be generally accepted that the amount of email traffic has increased enormously over the last few years. Councillors have become more accessible and have had to meet the challenges of social media with the immediacy of response that this often requires. A typical response in the survey was <i>"Social Media, Telephone and Email are instant and people want answers quickly."</i> The public in Waverley are well informed, articulate and small interest groups can create a large impact and workload.</p> <p>Almost half of those responding (48%) felt that new technology had made their roles easier with 17% feeling it made it harder. During the last year councillors have adopted new ways of working and have successfully adopted virtual meeting arrangements. However, many have mentioned the difficulty of dealing with cases and</p>

		<p>engaging with constituents without face to face contact. <i>“Covid19 has forced me to communicate in different ways which are far less effective than face to face contact.....Face to face meetings are an extremely important part of the work as a ward councillor.”</i></p>
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## Other Issues

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

In addition to the committees detailed above there are other advisory and governance groups that are established to inform the decision making process. These are: the Property Investment Advisory Board, Housing Delivery Board, CIL Advisory Board, Air Quality Steering Group, Dunsfold Park Garden Village Advisory Group, the Dunsfold Park Garden Village Governance Board and the Climate Emergency Board.

## 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.

Waverley Borough is often cited as one of the best places to live in the country with beautiful countryside and a good balance of towns and villages. We have a particularly well-informed and engaged population who demand high standards of public service. The survey of our Members has shown a remarkable level of commitment and time spent on serving constituents and engaging in council business for the benefit of the wider community. The Council has considered the question of its future size carefully and appreciates that the current size of the council is at odds with other councils who have a similar area and mix of rural and urban settlements. Whilst considering the appropriate size for the council there was also consideration of the type of representative equality that exists in Waverley. Residents are currently represented by one, two or three councillors dependent on where they live. The council would also like to put forward a strong preference for two member wards as it is felt that they would be highly beneficial for electors in terms of choice, availability to the electorate and resilience in case vacancies arise. The council would certainly not wish for any wards to have only one councillor.

We have looked at the present arrangements for strategic leadership and wish to continue with 8-10 councillors serving on the Executive. The roles of the Portfolio Holders have been framed to ensure they reflect the priorities of our residents and the successful operation of the Council. We are aware that, as well as having a higher proportion of councillors to electors than most councils, Waverley has more Planning and Overview & Scrutiny committees than other district councils of a similar size. Due to Covid, our four area planning committees have been temporarily reduced in the last year to two committees. Many councillors believe that this arrangement has worked well and that this structure should continue in some form. In addition, the number of Overview & Scrutiny Committees (four) is also under review and it would seem appropriate therefore that a smaller number of committees should result in a smaller council overall. If it were in line with the average, Waverley would have around 44 councillors. However, the role of the councillor has been particularly affected in recent years by both new ways of working,

in terms of technological advances, and the increase in social media; this will not diminish or go away. Looking forward to the next fifteen years the council will find smarter ways of working, with a smaller cost base and the electors will still expect a high level of engagement and response to their issues. The Council has concluded that it can continue to deliver good public service to residents with a smaller sized council and for that reason a number of 50 is considered appropriate which will bring the Council closer to, but still a little higher than, its rural parished neighbours without affecting its ability to function efficiently.