

Insert Your Organisation Name Here

Council Size Submission

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

About You

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

This submission has been prepared by the Leaders of all of the Councils political groups and has the support of all those groups.

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.*

The Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria.

Local Authority Profile

5. Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description may cover all, or some of the following:
 - Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
 - Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
 - Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
 - Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

At 1,235 square miles Shropshire is the second largest inland council in England in terms of geography. It has a population of 323,600 (Census 2021), which is similar to Dudley but 33x times bigger in area. It is predominantly rural and sparsely populated (c1 person per hectare) with the

people living in most areas of the county, reflected in 57.2% of the population living in rural areas. Shrewsbury is the largest urban centre with a projected population of over 74,000, with the five larger market towns having populations ranging from over 18,000 in Oswestry to between 10,500 and 12,300 in Whitchurch, Ludlow, Bridgnorth and Market Drayton (based on mid-year estimate 2016). Shropshire's landscape is one of its defining features, with the hills and valleys, and the River Severn, as well as some of its tributaries marking geographic boundaries that shape communities.

Demographically, Shropshire has an older population than the national average and this trend is projected to continue into the future, with strong growth in the 85+ population also a feature. Currently 25% of the population is over 65 years of age compared to 18.5% nationally. Set against this, the 0 to 16 population has been and is projected to continue to decrease. By 2040 the Council area will have a dependency ratio that is close to 1:1.

The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 years. The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
- To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?
- Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

The Council currently operates a Strong Leader and Cabinet model which has been in place since 2009; indeed, a motion to Council earlier this year seeking to re-introduce a "committee-system" was rejected. Whilst there is a Scrutiny Review currently being undertaken by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and the Council is committed to taking on board any recommendations made, it is not expected that this will lead to a whole-sale restructure of the system. With population growth within certain parts of the County going to increase the constituency workload of particular councillors, a small increase in the overall size of the Council membership is envisaged from 74 to 76.

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	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<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>Shropshire Council has 74 elected members (over 63 divisions) with elections every four years and operates a Leader and Cabinet structure. The last elections were held in May 2021. The current political make-up of the council is 41 Conservative, 14 liberal Democrat, 9 Labour, 4 Green, 4 Independent and 1 non-affiliated. There is currently also 1 vacancy following the recent death of a councillor.</p> <p>The council has operated a Strong Leader and Cabinet model since Local Government reorganisation in the area in 2009. There are provisions in the Councils Constitution for delegated decision making where the Leader can determine that cabinet members can make decisions individually for their portfolio areas although this is not currently exercised. Decisions are made by the whole cabinet at monthly cabinet meetings and decisions must be in accordance with the budget and plans within the Policy Framework all of which have been agreed by Council. This makes for clear, transparent decision-making and strong</p>

accountability. Further information on the functions and the role of cabinet are outlined in the council's Constitution.

The Leader's role is to provide clear political leadership for Shropshire and the council and is elected at the AGM for a four-year period following elections held every four years. The Leader is responsible for appointing a cabinet (executive) of no fewer than three and no more than ten councillors (including themselves) and determining a scheme of delegation for executive functions. Currently there are nine members of the Cabinet who collectively set a direction for the Council (reflected in the Shropshire Plan and financial strategy), as well as defining corporate priorities and ensuring they are reflected in the budget and other planning and decision-making processes. The council also has an extensive scheme of delegations to officers as set out in the Constitution which is regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.

A proposal to change the governance structure (to re-introduce the committee system) was recently rejected by Council and the current administration does not intend to move away from the established Strong Leader and Cabinet model.

Full Council is held around six times per year (including the AGM and the budget meeting) and is attended by all 74 members, chaired by the Chairman who is elected at the AGM which is held in May each year.

Since the pandemic Full Council (and most other decision-making meetings) is live streamed to ensure easy accessibility, openness, and transparency. Extraordinary Council meetings are held, as required, to consider any urgent business although this is rare in practice. The purpose of Full Council is to set the budget and council tax and it makes important decisions that affect the whole council, as well as agreeing the Policy Framework including important plans (such as the Local Transport Plan and the Local Plan). Members of the public can attend and are actively encouraged to submit questions or petitions. This tends to be well used. The agenda also includes tabled questions from elected members to be asked and this opportunity is also well used. All questions are published, as are the answers that are given.

The council operates several other committees (predominantly statutory) ranging from planning and licensing committees to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and others such as the Health and Well-being Board. There is a committee structure in place, with all committees busy and fully utilised. A full overview of our committee structure is available on the Council's Website.

		Policy formulation is an integral part of the Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny function. Major policies are also considered by Full Council whereby all 74 members may contribute
Portfolios	Key lines of explanation	<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>
	Analysis	<p>There are currently nine cabinet members with each cabinet lead having responsibility for an individual portfolio. The composition has fluctuated over the years depending on the Leader's preference and corporate priorities.</p> <p>Shropshire Councils current cabinet portfolios are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader, Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications; • Deputy Leader, Climate Change, Environment and Transport; • Finance and Corporate Resources; • Growth and Regeneration • Culture and Digital • Children & Education; • Adult Social Care, Public Health and Housing; • Highways and Regulatory Services • Health (Integrated Care System – ICS) and Communities <p>More information on our cabinet portfolios can be found here. No individual decision making is undertaken by cabinet members and all cabinet member decisions are made at monthly cabinet meetings.</p> <p>Cabinet members play an active role in attending Full Council, giving updates to questions in relation to their portfolios raised by fellow councillors or members of the public. They are required to attend the council's Overview and Scrutiny Performance Management Committee and give updates on the status and performance of their portfolios. They can also be scrutinised on decisions made by the Executive through the 'call in' process. Cabinet meetings occur monthly and are open to members of the public and live streamed, which ensures public accountability. Cabinet members also attend monthly (informal) cabinet</p>

		<p>member briefings. These are not formal decision-making bodies, but informal meetings designed to discuss, in confidence, any emerging issues, policies, strategies, major and sensitive political issues. The Council has, in its view, a fit for purpose decision making and scrutiny structure which it regularly reviews and refines.</p> <p>Previous LGA Peer Reviews have not commented adversely on the structures in place and indeed the most recent review completed in 2022 reported that governance arrangements were effective. The call on members time to attend meetings is, in the round, manageable. Other calls on members time, as presented later in this submission, are greater drivers for the overall number required to deal with all Council and constituency business.</p> <p>In July 2022 the formal creation took place of an Integrated Care System in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (NHS STW) with NHS organisations working in partnership with both local authorities and other partners to take collective responsibility for managing resources, delivering NHS care, and improving the health of the population they serve formally. NHS STW will require member input and leadership, including at both the Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care Partnership (“ICP”). The ICP will be co-chaired by the Leaders of each Local Authority, to drive the priorities forward. Further input into sub-committees is also expected as these are developed.</p> <p>In addition, the role of Health Scrutiny and the Health and Wellbeing Boards will continue to have an important and enhanced role in to ensure oversight and appropriate scrutiny of services with a specific focus on increased work for joint HOSC (see further Section 8 below).</p>
Delegated Responsibilities	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<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>
	Analysis	<p>Shropshire Council has a comprehensive scheme of delegation which is reviewed by the Monitoring Officer annually (and in year as needs be) and considered by full Council at the AGM. The Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) and key decision thresholds dictate what cannot be decided by officers and form part of our Constitution. All officer decisions must of course be within policy and budget.</p> <p>Full Council takes all decisions on the policy framework, budget etc</p>

Accountability

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

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<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>
Analysis	<p>Shropshire Council currently operates five overview and scrutiny committees each consisting of 10 members each that look across the remit of council services as well as addressing the Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny (HOSC) function. There are Communities Overview Committee, People Overview Committee, Performance Management Scrutiny Committee, Place Overview Committee, and Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Overview Committees are more sighted on policy and pre-decision topics, exploring issues and making recommendations that inform decision making on service developments within their remits. They will scrutinise progress and impact where it is relevant to their scope, in particular in relation to the recommendations they have made that have been accepted.</p> <p>Performance Management Scrutiny Committee includes all of the overview and scrutiny committee chairs and the opposition group leaders in its membership. It has a more corporate focus with it's remit including matters</p>

related to how the council is progressing against strategic plans including the strategic objectives set out in the Shropshire Plan (corporate plan) and the budget and financial strategy.

The council's Health Overview and Scrutiny (HOSC) function is delivered through the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HASC), which brings together these two strongly linked areas of focus. There is also a Joint HOSC with Telford and Wrekin Council that focuses on the services and development within the health system that provides services across the two council areas. They are expected to challenge that service delivery and help drive improvements. This committee is made up of 3 members (these represent the 3 largest groups on the Council) from each council's HASC and three co-opted members. It is jointly chaired by the Chairs of HASC from each Council. Meetings are alternately chaired at each Council.

The committees meet roughly every 4 to 6 weeks, delivering the work programmes they have set that link back to the Council's corporate plan. They deploy a range of approaches to complete their work ranging from briefing sessions to develop their understanding of topics and issues and inform lines of enquiry, themed meetings to look at topics and issues in greater detail where the public can be in attendance, and task and finish groups of varying lengths to explore topics and issues comprehensively.

The Council has undertaken Peer Reviews of Overview and Scrutiny, most recently in 2017, and the progress with implementing the recommendations was reviewed during a Corporate Peer Challenge in 2018. The Overview and Scrutiny Peer Review recommended that options for moving to a smaller number of overview and scrutiny committees with a greater focus on commissioned task and finish groups/scrutiny reviews was considered. At the time the decision was taken to maintain the five council overview and scrutiny committees and the Joint HOSC due to the breadth of remit of the council as a unitary authority, the financial challenges local government was and continues to face with the related decision making, and the importance of the role for backbench members in overview and scrutiny to inform and influence policy development and hold decisionmakers to account.

Having 10 members per committee allows greater opportunity to ensure that there is good geographic as well as politically balanced representation, without reducing member capacity to work in and with their communities and carry out their casework.

		The Council has recently arranged for the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to undertake a further review to consider the current position and look at options for the future.
Statutory Function		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?
Planning	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<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>
	<i>Analysis</i>	<p>The number of planning applications determined by members is approximately 3% of all those received by the Council</p> <p>This has not changed in the last few years and there is no expectation that this will change in the near future. Members appear broadly comfortable with the level of delegated authority to officers.</p> <p>We currently have two committees, a northern and southern committee. This has recently been reviewed through Scrutiny committee and the decision was to continue with two committees. Considerable analysis was carried out by officers as part of the review process and it was felt that this was the best approach for Shropshire.</p> <p>Executive members do not generally sit on planning committees, as there is concern about conflict of interest.</p> <p>The time commitment for members is approximately 3 hours a month for the committee, briefing session of approximately an hour for the Chair and Vice chair, and then preparation time for those members on the committee to read the agenda and familiarise themselves with the proposals so that they can make a fair and balanced decision. There is also a commitment to member training, which is probably equivalent to an hour a month</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>Licensing</p>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Licensing Panels are held each month, run by officers with delegated authority to determine applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers, vehicles and operators, applications for scrap metal sites and collectors and Personal Licences where the application goes outside of policy requirements or there has been a report/complaint of wrong-doing/breach of condition by the licence holder.</p> <p>The overarching licensing committee is the Strategic Licensing Committee. This committee has 15 members and has oversight of the Licensing Service. There are at least 4 meetings held in a calendar year but where necessary additional meetings can be added. Conversely, where there are no reports to bring forward a meeting can be cancelled. Each Strategic Licensing Committee meeting is presented with a report on the number of licences issued during the previous quarter, reports on policy reviews for different licence types, proposed fees and charges and any other changes in the law, processes or procedures arising from the changes in law.</p> <p>The Licensing Act Sub-committee consists of 3 members from the Strategic Licensing Committee who have received training in the Licensing Act 2003 (the Act). This sub-committee consider applications under the Act where representations have been made and any reviews of existing licences have been called due to breaches of licence conditions.</p> <p>The Licensing and Safety Sub Committee consists of 3 members from the Strategic Licensing Committee. This sub-committee considers applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers, vehicles and operators, applications for scrap metal sites and collectors and Personal Licences where the application goes outside of policy requirements or there has been a report/complaint of wrong-doing/breach of licence conditions by the licence holder. This committee only meets if a decision cannot be made at the Licensing Panel.</p> <p>In the year 2021/2022 the Strategic Licensing Committee had 5 meetings. The total time taken by all of the meetings for the year was 2 hours and 25 minutes. The Licensing Act Sub-committee had 3 meetings. The total time taken by all of the meetings for the year was 5 hours and 50 minutes. There were no meetings held of the Licensing and Safety Sub Committee.</p>

		<p>The Licensing Panel held 12 meetings. The total officer time taken by all of the meetings for the year was 36 hours and 30 minutes. (Please note if this process was undertaken by the Licensing and Safety Sub Committee the length of time taken to deal with all of the cases would be considerably more than the time taken by the Licensing Panel furthermore, there would be additional time to be added for committee officers and licensing officers to prepare the committee meetings, reports and attend the meetings).</p> <p>Whilst for the financial year 2021/2022 the total actual hours for each of the meeting types has been provided above, it must be noted that depending on the case being considered some meetings take considerably more time than others.</p> <p>Strategic Licensing Committee has a minimum of 4 set meetings per year but ad-hoc meetings can be added. Licensing Act Sub-committee meetings are ad-hoc depending on the applications/reviews received. Licensing and Safety Sub Committee meetings are ad-hoc depending on the decisions made at the Licensing Panel.</p> <p>Strategic Licensing Committee has fifteen core members. Licensing Act Sub-committee has three members selected from the fifteen members of the Strategic Licensing Committee to attend each meeting. Licensing and Safety Sub Committee has three members selected from the fifteen members of the Strategic Licensing Committee to attend each meeting.</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 Committee 5 Members of the Authority meets around 6 times per year</p> <p>Role - To provide those charged with governance an independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of financial reporting and annual governance processes.</p> <p>Standards Committee 9 Members of the Authority meets rarely but appoints sub-committees of three members on an ad hoc basis to consider complaints about member conduct.</p>

		<p>Role – To carry out the functions of the Council relating to complaints about the conduct of Councillors and to the granting of dispensations as set out in Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>Pensions Committee 4 Members of the Authority meets around 4 times per year</p> <p>Role – To carry out the functions of the Council relating to local government pensions as set out in Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations</p> <p>Housing Supervisory Board 9 members of the authority meets around 5 times per year</p> <p>Role – To carry out the functions of the Council as the sole Shareholder in the Local Housing Company in order to provide oversight of the company’s actions and performance.</p> <p>Appeals Panel Members of the Authority</p> <p>Role - To consider appeals against disciplinary action, dismissal, grading and grievance issues by employees of the Council</p> <p>General Appeals Panel Members of the Authority</p> <p>Role - To determine any complaint, appeal or other matter referred to it by any Chief Officer arising in connection with the exercise of any function and to determine such complaints or appeals as may by law be required to be determined by a Committee of the Authority arising in connection with any function. (In determining any such matter each Panel shall have regard to the agreed policies of the Council and the availability of any necessary finance. The Panel shall also have the right to refer any matter of policy or budgetary provision to Cabinet or the appropriate body/person with delegated authority with such recommendations as it sees fit.)</p>
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		<p>[Note: Each Appeals Panel should be appointed by the Chief Executive from a Panels List established by the Council and shall comprise such numbers of Members and independent persons as may be required by law provided that where the composition is not governed by law the membership of each panel shall normally be 3.]</p> <p>[Note: Each Panel's List comprises of Councillors and the composition of the Lists (or any Panel) need not necessarily be politically balanced.]</p> <p>West Mercia Energy Joint Committee 3 members of the Shropshire Council Cabinet plus 2 each from Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Telford and Wrekin meets around twice per year</p> <p>Role - To be responsible for the discharge of the functions of the four Councils in relation to West Mercia Energy</p> <p>Marches Enterprise Joint Committee 1 member of the Shropshire Council Cabinet plus 1 each from Herefordshire and Telford and Wrekin</p> <p>Role - To be responsible for the discharge of the functions of the three Councils in relation to the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</p>
External Partnerships	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"> ➤ <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> 	
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council Network (CCN) – 4 Councillors • Local Government Association – 4 Councillors • The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board - Leader to be appointed as Director but can have a Deputy to attend majority of meetings on their behalf – the Leader does need to attend certain meetings such as the AGM 	

- Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Fire Authority - The Council is entitled to 10 seats. (Politically balanced)
- SPARSE – 2 Councillors
- West Mercia Police and Crime Panel - The Council is entitled to 4 seats. (Politically balanced for the West Mercia area)
- West Midlands Combined Authority – Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee – 1 Councillor
- West Midlands Combined Authority – Housing & Land Delivery Board – 1 Councillor
- West Midlands Combined Authority – Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 1 Councillor

- Allatt's Educational Foundation, Shrewsbury Charity: 528294 – 3 appointments
- Ash Schoolhouse Charity Charity: 1114832 – 1 appointment
- Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) – 1 Councillor (member of the Executive)
- Bayston Hill Quarry Liaison Committee – 4 appointments
- Berwick Almshouse Charity Charity: 214070 – 1 appointment
- Birchmeadow Park Management Committee – 1 Councillor (Local member)
- Bishops Castle and District Lifeline Company (Trading as Enterprise SW Shropshire) – 3 Councillors (Local members)
- Bowdler's Educational Foundation Charity: 528366 – 6 appointments (from Shrewsbury Area)
- Brookes Educational Foundation – 1 appointment
- Childe School Endowment Fund – Trustee Charity 504145 – 3 appointments (Appointees should have local knowledge - covers Cleobury Mortimer and the villages immediately surrounding Current appointees – 1 Shropshire Councillor and 2 local people)
- Counties Furniture Group Board – 1 appointment
- Edwards and Hinksman's Foundation (Neen Savage) – 2 appointments (Appointees should have close knowledge of or connection with Neen Savage Current appointees – 1 Shropshire councillor and 1 representative from the parish council)
- Elizabeth Barbour's Educational Foundation Charity: 528309 – 1 appointment (from the local area)
- English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) – 1 appointment
- Football Liaison Committee – 5 appointments (Current members are all Shrewsbury Councillors)
- (The) Gorsuch, Langley and Prynce Charity – 1 appointment
- (The) Hanmer-Morris Charity – 1 appointment
- Helicopter Noise Liaison Group – 6 appointment

- Higginson's Church of England School – Educational Charity – 1 Councillor (Appointment should be the Whitchurch Urban Councillor)
- Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group – 1 appointment
- Ludlow Conservation Area Advisory Committee – 1 appointment
- (The) Market Drayton Sports Association Ltd – 1 appointment
- Mayfair Trust – 1 appointment
- Meverley Internal Drainage Board – 3 Appointments (Appointee should come from within the area and have an interest in drainage / flooding matters Current appointees – 2 Shropshire Councillors and a parish Council rep)
- Midland Joint Advisory Council for Environmental Pollution – 1 appointment
- Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust – 1 appointment
- Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust – 2 appointments
- National Association of British Market Authorities (nabma) 1 appointment
- Newcastle Church of England School Charity – 1 appointment
- Norton's Charity, Onibury – 1 Councillor (Local Member)
- Oswestry and District Access Group – 1 appointment
- Steering Group - Community Rail Partnership for the Heart of Wales Line – 1 appointment
- Railway Liaison Group - Shrewsbury/Aberystwyth Railway Line Liaison Committee – 2 appointments
- The Chester Shrewsbury Rail Partnership – 3 appointments
- Rea Internal Drainage Board – 2 appointments (Appointees should preferably have some local knowledge in the area which extends from Hanwood to Marton)
- Roy Fletcher Centre Management Committee – 2 Councillors (Should be Shrewsbury Councillors and have an interest in the caring charitable/voluntary sector)
- Severn Gorge Countryside Trust – 1 appointment
- Shifnal Exhibition Foundation – 1 appointment
- Shrewsbury & District Arts Association – 1 appointment
- Shrewsbury School Governing Body - Two Shropshire Council nominated representatives on board of trustees, appointed to serve up to two 5 year terms.
- Shropshire Business Board – 1 Councillor (appointment should be the Lead Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Prosperity)
- Shropshire Playing Fields Association – 3 appointments

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing Limited (STaRH) - Board of – 3 appointments (currently 2 Members & 1 Officer (Councillors should have housing stock in their division)• Shropshire Youth Association Executive Committee – 1 appointment• Shropshire Youth Foundation – 1 appointment• Sight Loss Shropshire – 1 appointment• Sir Rowland Hill's Grammar School Foundation – 2 appointments (Trustees should be local members)• South Shropshire Youth Forum Board – 1 appointment• St Leonard's CE School Charity, Bridgnorth - 1 appointment• Thomas Benyon's Educational Foundation – 1 appointment• Victoria Hall (Broseley) Management Committee – 1 appointment• West Midland Reserve Forces & Cadets Association – 1 appointment• Whitchurch Waterways Trust – 1 appointment• Wolverhampton Airport Consultative Committee (WACC) – 1 appointment• Worthen CE School House Charity – 1 appointment• Walker Trust – 2 Councillors (Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council) |
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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"> ➤ <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>A survey was carried out of all members over the Summer and of those that responded just under 50% spend between 11 and 20 hours per week on Shropshire Council role with most of the rest spending over 20 hours. Of this time on average 40% is spent on formal Council business and 50% on casework. 50% are town or parish councillors (which accounts for approximately an additional 10 hours per week).</p> <p>Just over half of those who replied indicated that the amount of time they spent on Council business in the last year to be about what they expected.</p> <p>Many describe other time-consuming roles such as school governors, charity trustees, dealing with non-council disputes. Most represent the Council on outside bodies and generally think it is about the right number.</p> <p>The rurality of much of the County cannot be under-estimated; the average travel distance of a Division is 10 miles. Many divisions cover relatively small geographical areas and there are also many which cover exceptionally large areas.</p>

		<p>Councillors engage with their constituents in a wide variety of ways including surgeries, newsletters, public meetings and blogs. This is not something that officers of the Council generally involve themselves in.</p> <p>Apart from our two planning committees which are split between North and South, most Council business is conducted through its Cabinet and there are no area committees.</p> <p>In terms of committee attendance, a sizeable majority of members who responded felt that they thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is about the right number of committees• That they sit on the right number• They are about the right size and meet frequently enough (although a significant majority felt they could meet more often) <p>Most members accept that they have an important role in liaising with their Town and Parish Councils. Given the geography of Shropshire there is a wide variation in arrangements; some members on more rural divisions may have a large number of parish councils to liaise with. Some Town and Parish Councils can be very challenging to work with and require a significant time commitment from the Local member. Shropshire has 153 Town and Parish Councils and many Parish meetings which add considerably to the demands placed upon members time.</p> <p>The work of the local elected member can be considerably affected by the geography of the Council area from the flatter plains around Shrewsbury and the north to the very hilly areas of up to 540m with deep valleys and long ranges such as Wenlock Edge, the Stiperstones and the Long Mynd in the south West. These, together with the River Severn, make transverse communications and travel difficult.</p> <p>The Council recognises that there are some excellent examples of work taking place with Town and Parish Councils, but this good practice is not systematically embedded across the whole county. However, the Council is committed to developing stronger mechanisms for locality governance, sharing best practice and, when it can, better serve the diverse needs of residents, devolution of powers and responsibilities. In order to develop these relationships, we will require the proposed number of members as detailed in our submission</p>
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Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<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>
	Analysis	<p>Councillors deal with their casework in a wide-variety of ways. Some are extremely active putting in extremely long hours taking the lead in addressing the issue. Others expect officers to take on more of the responsibility.</p> <p>Councillors have a single officer assistant who provides basic support. He is able to help with room bookings and identifying which officers are best able to assist with a particular issue. Being part of Democratic Services he also has access to the extensive experience of colleagues very familiar in working with councillors.</p> <p>Beyond that officers are expected to support all councillors in an objective, non-political manner, though inevitably there is more focus on the plans of the Executive.</p> <p>Technology has improved communications between councillors and officers and the ability of both to work with more accurate, up-to-date information</p>

Other Issues

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

There is broad agreement that the number of Councillors per division should be limited to 1 with as few multi-member divisions as possible. Please can the Commission pay particular attention to this issue.

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.

Based on the 2022 electorate, each of the 74 Councillors serve an average of 3379 electors. Taking the forecast electorate for 2028, 74 Councillors would each represent an average of 3611 electors. Considering that there are many relatively densely populated market towns within Shropshire and having in mind the rural nature of the County with a population density of only around 1 person per hectare, a reduction in numbers of Councillors would result in already large rural divisions becoming too unwieldy for Councillors to effectively manage the casework generated. Many rural divisions already encompass the areas of several Parish Councils and much time is spent attending Parish Council meetings as a representative of Shropshire Council. Further increasing the size of those large rural divisions is likely to increase the number of Parish Council meetings for those areas which would inevitably lead to the Local Member being unable to attend as many of the meetings as they would wish to. Having in mind the large amount of development proposed for Shropshire over the coming years, it is considered necessary to increase the number of Councillors by 2 to 76. This would result in an average of around 3500 electors per Councillor and ensure the continued effective representation which is expected.