

Electoral Review of Blackpool Blackpool Conservative Councillor's Submission July 2021

Part 1 Governance Arrangements

**Electoral Review of Blackpool
Blackpool Conservative Group
Submission 2021
Part 1**

Submitted on behalf of.

Cllr. Don Clapham

Cllr. Paul Wilshaw

Cllr. Christian Cox

Cllr. Gerard Walsh

Cllr. Graham Baker

Cllr. Julie Sloman

Cllr. Michele Scott

Cllr. Danny Scott

Cllr Jason Roberts

Cllr. Derek Robertson

Cllr. Andrew Stansfield

Cllr Rick Scott

Cllr. John Wing

Cllr. Paul Galley

Cllr. Bradley Mitchell

**Cllr. Tony Williams Leader of The Conservative Group Blackpool
Council**

Scott Benton MP Blackpool South

Paul Maynard MP Blackpool North & Cleveleys

The submission provided by the Blackpool Conservative Group has focussed on the following areas:

The governance arrangements of the council including membership of Committees including Scrutiny Committees, the Executive, Outside Bodies, Council owned company Boards, all other council committees and the Mayoralty.

The community work of all Blackpool Councillors has also been reviewed reflecting the competing and sometimes conflicting roles of a 21st century Blackpool Councillor as they manage and support the council as well as be a social entrepreneur as they support the growth of their local communities.

The group has also reflected on the changing nature of Blackpool itself including it's health and changing housing market.

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Committee Memberships

Blackpool Council is currently made up of the following Committee memberships:

Chief Officers Employment Committee:	7 Councillors
Planning Committee:	7 Councillors
Appeals Committee:	5 Councillors
Licensing Committee:	13 Councillors
Public Protection Sub Committee:	7 Councillors
Audit Committee:	7 Councillors and 2 Co-opted independent members.
Standards Committee:	5 Councillors
Scrutiny Leadership Board:	8 Councillors
Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee:	9 Councillors
Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee	9 Councillors
Childrens and Young People's Scrutiny Committee	9 Councillors and 4 Co-opted members
Health and Wellbeing board:	3 Councillors
Shareholder Committee	3 Councillors

The Executive

The Executive is currently made up of 9 Councillors

Cabinet Member for Climate Change: Cllr Jane Hugo

Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Public Safety, Highways and Transport, Cllr Neal Brookes

Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Schools: Cllr Jim Hobson

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health: Cllr Jo Farrell

Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Youth and Transience: Cllr Gillian Campbell

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Aspiration and Community Assets: Cllr Kath Benson

Cabinet Member for Business Enterprise and Job Creation, Cllr Mark Smith

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnerships and Performance: Cllr Ivan Taylor

Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for Tourism and Culture: Cllr Lynn Williams

Blackpool Council owned Companies

Blackpool Council owns 7 companies which are made up of the following Boards:

Blackpool Airport Operations Ltd : 8 Directors (**3 councillors**)

Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd 10 Directors (**3 Councillors**)

Blackpool Housing Company Ltd 8 Directors (**3 Councillors**)

Blackpool Waste Services Ltd (Enveco NW Environmental Services Ltd) 8 Directors, (**3 Councillors**)

Blackpool Transport Services Ltd 11 Directors (**3 Councillors**)

Blackpool Operating Company Ltd 9 Directors (**3 Councillors**)

Blackpool Entertainment Company Ltd 9 Directors (**3 Councillors**)

Outside Bodies

Blackpool Council currently appoints Councillors to the following Outside Bodies:

Lancashire Fire Authority: 3 Councillors

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: 1 Councillor

Transport for the North: 4 Councillors

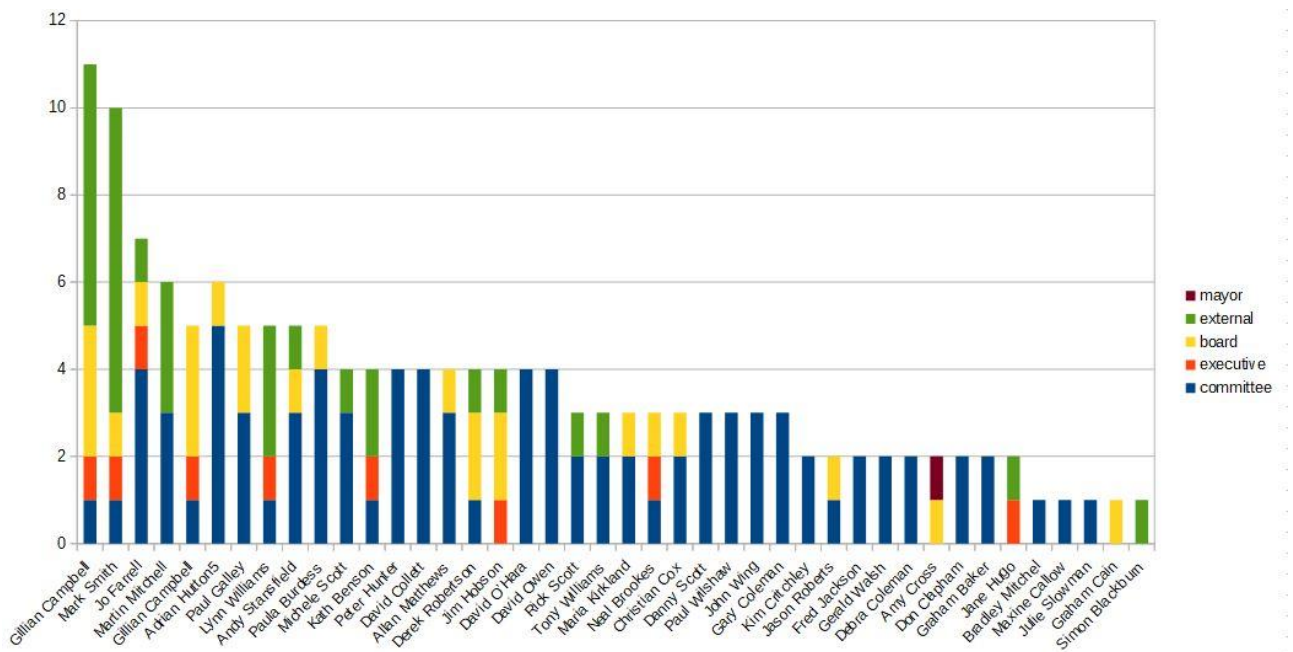
North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority 1 Councillor

Armed Forces Champion: 1 Councillor

Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Prosperity Board 2 Councillors

Analysis of Councillor membership of all council and non council bodies

Combining all of the Committee, Board memberships, Executive Memberships, Outside Bodies and the Mayoralty for all 42 Councillors produces the following chart:



The table confirms that the Medium number of membership of Committees, Boards, the Executive, Outside (external) bodies and the Mayoralty is 3.5970695970696 per Councillor.

Breaking that down in to the 4 major components gives us the following averages:

Medium Committee membership per Councillor: 2.07142857142857

Medium Executive membership per Councillor: 0.214285714285714

Medium Outside Body membership per Councillor: 0.571428571428571

Medium Board membership per Councillor: 0.714285714285714

Not including the Mayor, 13 councillors are well below the medium and only have 2 memberships with 5 of that 13 only having one membership.

This confirms there is a significant amount of elected member capacity that is not currently being utilised.

Full Council

It is assumed in these figures that all 42 councillors attend full council. In 2015, the constitution was amended to make the Full Council papers more streamlined, this has reduced on average the length of full council meetings by up to an hour in the 6 years since the constitution was amended.

Reduction in number of Councillors on Committees and Boards.

In 2014/15, Blackpool Council reduced the elected membership of boards to 3 councillors per board with councillors replaced by independent board members who could provide more commercial knowledge and support to the companies.

The trend of using more independents has continued in to the committee system with two independents joining the audit committee.

In May 2021, Blackpool Council reduced it's Councillor membership even further by one on the following committees:

Chief Officers Employment Committee.
Appeals Committee

and two on the following committees:

Audit Committee
Planning Committee
Public Protection Sub Committee
Licensing Committee

This combined reduction has again reduced the workload for a significant number of councillors allowing a large number of councillors not to be used to their full potential.

Covid Impact

Training as a result of Covid is carried out virtually, the convenience of which has already increased attendance during the pandemic and it's thought this trend will continue after the pandemic allowing elected members to save travel time giving them more capacity to support the Council in the delivery of it's duties as well as fulfilling their community role.

As numbers of councillors participating in training is higher it is expected their skill rate will increase proportionally.

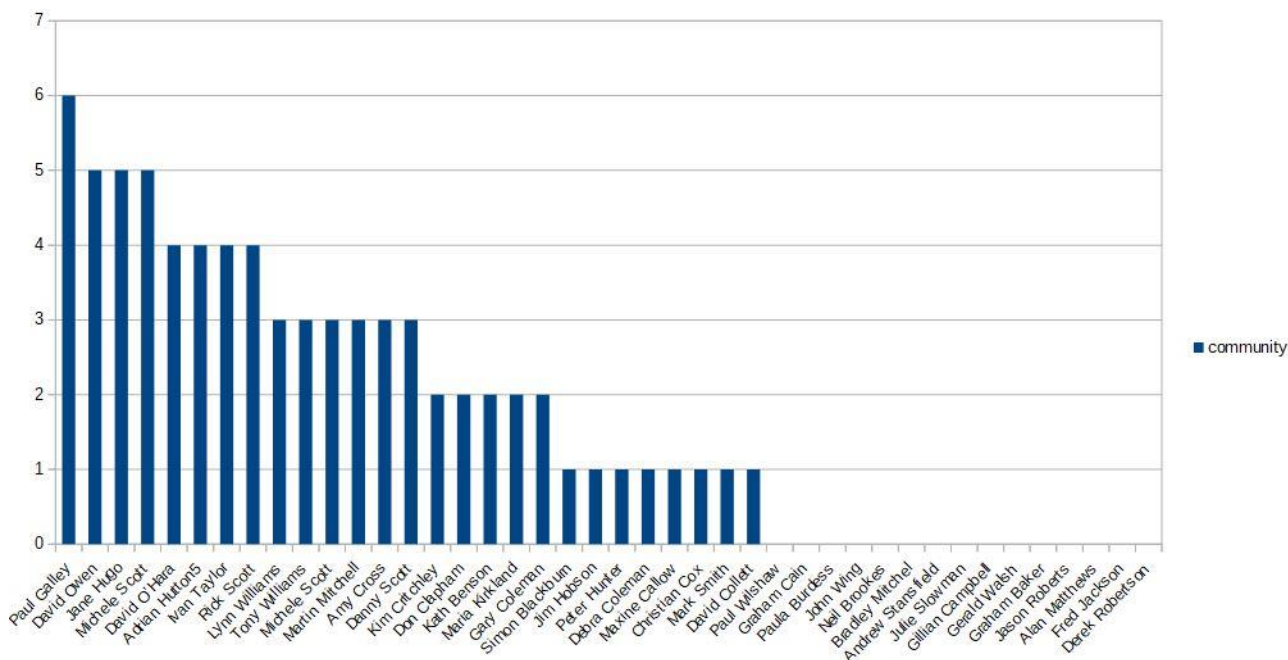
Mayor and Deputy Mayor

It is assumed the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would attend full council in their role as a councillors so their participation is included in the Full Council List.

Whilst pandemic has impacted the role of the Mayor in to more of a Chairperson, it is expected post pandemic that the role of Mayor will return to more of it's community focus this could see the Mayor attend up to 100 events per year.

Community involvement by Blackpool Councillors

Using the register of interests, the medium figure for each Blackpool Councillor that is a member of a community group or charity is just under 2 (1.738).



These cover ward areas as well as national groups so doesn't indicate how much time each elected member gives to each community group or charity.

Outside the medium of 1.738, 12 councillors are members of no community groups or charities and 14 are members of 3 or more.

These figures confirm there is capacity for Councillors to forefill their community role and support community groups.

Population of Blackpool and Electoral equality

In 2001/2002 when the last boundary review was carried out the electorate of Blackpool was: 112,260, this figure has now fallen to 104,090.

This decline of the Blackpool electorate is represented by a wider decline in the population of Blackpool with a population in the 2001 census of 142,193 and 142,065 in the 2011 census falling to an estimated 139,300 in 2019¹

As a direct result of the decline of the Blackpool electorate, there are a number of wards in Blackpool that are over represented compared to other wards for example Brunswick with 4521 electors, Bloomfield at 4585, Talbot with 4630, Victoria 4716, compared to Stanley with 5501 electors, Ingthorpe 5184 electors, Marton 5185 and Anchorsholme with 5084 electors.

The number of electors per Councillor in those wards are:

Brunswick 2261
Bloomfield 2293
Talbot 2315
Victoria 2358
Stanley 2751
Ingthorpe 2592
Marton 2593
Anchorsholme 2542

The average ward size per Councillors is 2478.

Those same wards have the following variances:

Brunswick	-9
Talbot	-7
Bloomfield	-7
Victoria	-5
Stanley	+11
Ingthorpe	+5
Anchorsholme	+3
Marton	+5

Future housing schemes proposed in the far north and far south of the town will see the populations rise in Stanley, Marton and Greenlands wards, whilst continued decline in the population of the central areas of Blackpool including Talbot, Bloomfield and Brunswick wards based on poor housing, lower life expectancy in these wards² and a limited opportunity for new housing developments because of a lack of available land.

This electoral equality imbalance is now responsible for some wards being over represented and others under represented.

1 www.blackpooljsna.org.uk/Blackpool-Profile/Population.aspx

2 www.blackpooljsna.org.uk/Blackpool-Profile/Life-Expectancy.aspx

Conclusion

Combining the decline of the electorate of Blackpool with the reduced committee membership and increased capacity of around a quarter of Blackpool's Councillors (those that fall below the medium level of 3.5970695970696) as well as the large capacity of a quarter of Blackpool's Councillors to engage more with their local communities.

The Blackpool Conservative group of Councillors believes the number of Councillors in Blackpool should be reduced from 42 to 38 councillors. This would give Blackpool better electoral equality but also allow Blackpool Council to govern in a much more efficient manor giving a wider spread of opportunities for more councillors with currently over a quarter under utilised.

To follow this document will be our proposals of how 38 councillors will be integrated into the wards of the Blackpool boundary. In order to do this to best serve Blackpool's 102,666 voters wards could possibly disappear and the councillor/voter ratio will be increased from the present 2,444 per councillor to 2,701, bearing in mind that these figures will fluctuate to make the alterations.

We will also present a revised ward map along with an analysis of the current cabinet set up and our vision for the future.