

Canterbury

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Comment text:

Dear Alison/Yemi

I enclose the council's evidence in support of the Boundary Commission's review on council size. This evidence base was submitted to Full Council on 20 July 2023, and debated at length. Full Council voted to recommend a council size of 49.

Details of the Full Council agenda are provided below - see item 5(a).
<https://democracy.canterbury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=138&MIId=13375>

The audio recording can be heard in the link provided, starting at 1hr 37 and continuing to 2hrs 25 minutes. The proposal was carried with 28 voting for, 8 against and no abstentions. The minutes will be published shortly.

Prior to Full Council, the Cabinet discussed the report on 10 July (item 155). They unanimously recommended a council size of 43. The debate can be heard from 40 mins 40 secs. Again, the minutes will follow on the link below.
<https://democracy.canterbury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=755&MIId=13374>

At Full Council, the council leader revised the recommendation from 43 to 49, following publication of the supplementary report.

I am aware that you have asked us to look again at the population forecasts contained in the supplementary report. This was pointed out to

councillors before they started their debate and they were advised to consider all of the evidence put before them. We will offer you comments separately on the forecasting, but being mindful of the deadline, I thought it better to submit the evidence base today.

If you have any queries about the submission please let me know.

Regards
Matthew

Matthew Archer
Head of Corporate Governance
Canterbury City Council | [REDACTED]

Attached Documents:

- Appendix B - CCC Boundary review evidence base.pdf
- Canterbury Pen Portrait (3).pdf
- Local Government Boundary Commission LGBC review of Canterbury Districts electoral boundaries.pdf
- Supplementary report to Full Council.pdf

Appendix B

Electoral Review of Canterbury City Council

Canterbury City Council submission on Council Size –
Evidence Base

July 2023

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Council Size Submission – Evidence Base

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Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Brief Description of Changes
1	June 2023	Matthew Archer	Evidence base for consideration by Cabinet

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Council Size Submission – Evidence Base

About this Evidence Base

1. This document is submitted as evidence from Canterbury City Council (CCC) to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in respect of the Electoral Review commencing during 2023 concerning the size of the Council.
2. This document has been prepared and collated by Officers using a range of information available, for consideration by Elected Members of the City Council. This evidence base will accompany the Council submission which will be considered by Full Council.

Executive Summary

3. At present, 39 Councillors representing 21 wards serve on Canterbury City Council. All Councillors are elected every four years and serve a four year term of office. The most recent elections were held in May 2023, with the next scheduled City Council elections due to take place in May 2027.
4. It should be noted that the Submission should be considered in its entirety, rather than as a series of smaller sections, along with the covering report that puts some of the findings into a broader context.
5. The review has been triggered by the fact that electoral patterns in each ward have not panned out as predicted in the 2014 Boundary Review. It has led to a number of inconsistencies, which are highlighted in the 'pen portrait 2022' provided by the LGBCE and appended to the evidence base.
6. The evidence base demonstrates how the governance arrangements have adapted to deliver 'effective and convenient' decision making based on a council size of 39 councillors. This has been achieved in the context of diminishing staff and financial resources.
7. The councillor survey, supported by national comparative data, indicates that the council has a higher than average electorate ratio and that this is felt in the workloads of some councillors. A majority of the new cohort are working and many have caring responsibilities. Attracting a broad demographic to stand as councillors is an important consideration for future elections therefore workloads need to be realistic and manageable. Council size also needs to be at a level that enables councillors to perform their representative role effectively.
8. Options in the report include a case for a council size of 43, a case for maintaining the existing number of 39, or recommending an alternative number, if councillors feel that the evidence points that way. The final decision rests with Full Council, based on the evidence contained within this report and their experience as councillors serving the residents of the district.
9. The recommendation of Full Council will be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England along with this evidence base to assist them with the review.

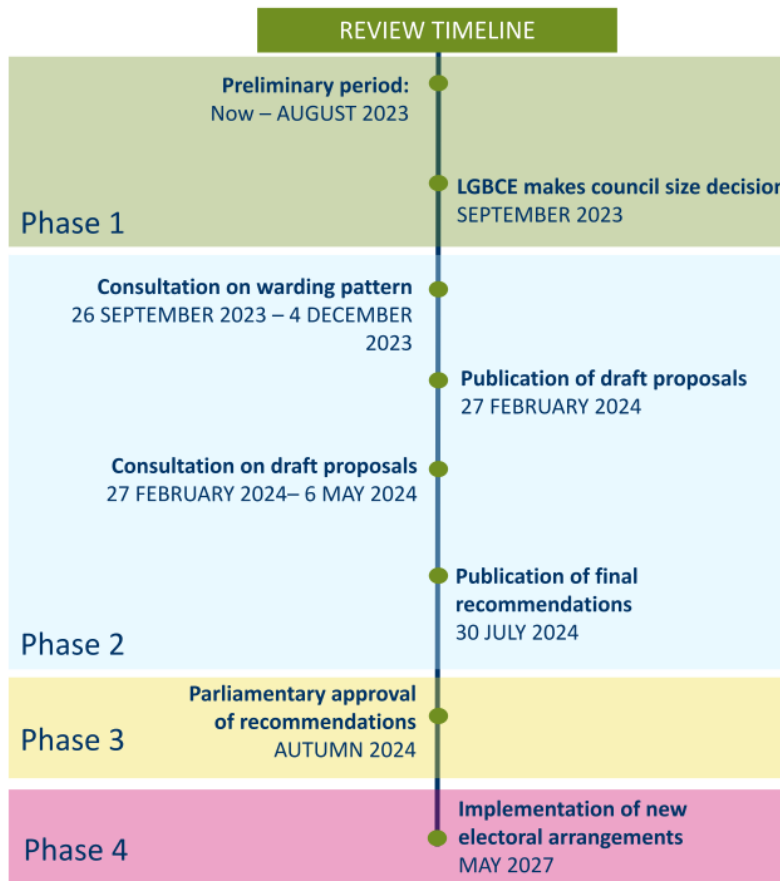
Timetable

The timetable provided by the Boundary Commission is set out below. The deadline for a submission on council size is 25 July 2023.

The covering report and evidence base will be submitted to Cabinet on 10 July, who will make a recommendation to Council.

Full Council will make the final recommendation to the Boundary Commission on council size at its meeting on 20 July 2023.

Once the Boundary Commission has made a decision on council size it will move to Phase 2 and start consultation on warding patterns.



1. Introduction

Background to the Review

10. Canterbury City Council was created in 1974 following the Local Government Act 1972. The most recent Electoral review of the authority was completed on [16 December 2014](#). This review recommended that the council size be reduced from 50 to 39 councillors, serving 21 wards comprising four three-member wards, 10 two-member wards and seven single-member wards across the District.
11. This current Boundary Review is being conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as the 2021 Electoral Register showed that Canterbury City Council met the Commission's criteria for electoral inequality.
12. Four wards have a ratio that was under the forecasted ratio of residents to councillors. They are: Blean Forest (-51%), Northgate (-38%), Barton (-14%) and St Stephens (-16%).
13. Furthermore, 10 wards have a variance that is 10% over the threshold. They are: Herne and Broomfield (+22%), Greenhill (+20%), Heron (+18%), Swalecliffe (+18%), West Bay (+17%), Nailbourne (+16%), Reculver (+16%), Little Stour and Adisham (+15%), Seasalter (+13%) and Sturry (+11%).
14. Full details of the current position can be found in the pen portrait attached as Appendix A to the evidence base.
15. The Boundary Commission's own [flipbook](#) describes the Electoral review process.
16. The initial stage of an Electoral Review is to identify and confirm the preferred council size. This is the number of elected Councillors who will serve on the City Council, and should be the number required to deliver effective and convenient local government (the number of members to enable the council and individual councillors to perform most effectively).
17. The final size of the council will determine the average number of electors per councillor, and this is then used to determine warding patterns. As such, it is important that the figure agreed is correct and reflects the needs of the authority and of the community, although it should be noted that the LGBCE may amend the recommended figure if it feels the evidence base and their own findings direct them to do so.
18. Within the review process, the LGBCE does not have an initial view on whether there should be an increase, decrease or no change in the size of the Council. However, all submissions must be evidence-led and justifiable.

Guidance on calculating Council Size

19. The LGBCE has provided [guidance](#) that highlights the areas that should be considered when developing a proposal for council size. These are set out below and considered in detail in the pages that follow:

- a) The **governance arrangements** of the Council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.
- b) The Council's **scrutiny functions** relating to its own decision making and the Council's responsibilities to outside bodies.
- c) The **representational role of councillors in the local community** and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the Council on local partner organisations.

About the District

20. Canterbury is the second largest district in Kent, with a population size of 157,400 [\[ONS\]](#). Situated in the heart of east Kent, it covers an area of around 119 square miles and incorporates the city of Canterbury (population 48,700), the coastal towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable (combined population 70,600) and a substantial rural area to the North and South of the city that includes 27 Parish Councils (combined population 38,400).
21. This represents an increase in population over the last 10 years of 4.1%, from around 151,100 in 2011. Nearby areas like Ashford and Swale have seen their populations increase by around 12.5% and 11.7%, respectively, while others such as Dover saw an increase of 4.2% and Folkestone and Hythe saw smaller growth of 1.7%.
22. There are 63,800 households with at least one usual resident.
23. It is a moderately affluent district, with a large local economy (67,000 employees and 6,000 businesses in 2021) and average levels of both unemployment (3.3%) and deprivation (ranked 185 of 317 Local Authority Areas in 2019).
24. Its local economy is however reliant upon jobs provided in education, retail & hospitality and the health/care sector. There are comparatively fewer jobs and businesses in higher paid science and technology/digital services. In turn gross disposable household income per head (in 2019) was -10% below the UK level while weekly earnings for all employees fell below national levels in 2022 (residents -9%; and workplace -12%).
25. There are pockets of acute deprivation in its coastal towns (parts of Heron and Gorrell wards) that contrast starkly with more affluent neighbourhoods. [Census data](#) used to classify deprivation using four household characteristics (Education, Employment, Health and Housing) show that 47.3% of households have no dimensions of deprivation, 34.9% are deprived in one dimension, 14.2% in two dimensions, 3.3% in three dimensions and 0.2% in four dimensions. The figures are broadly comparable with our neighbouring authorities in Dover DC and Folkestone and Hythe DC.
26. Key characteristics of this population are:
 - It has an average age of 41 years, which is broadly in line with the Kent average
 - There are slightly more female residents (52%) than male.
 - There is an overall population density of 510 residents per sq km (higher than the average of 445 for Kent), ranking 5th in Kent.
 - Ethnicity indicators show 82.5% of residents describe themselves as White British and 5.5% as 'other White', those being the two largest categories.
27. Over the last 10 years the age profile of the district has changed, with significant growth in those over 65 years of age. However, the Pen portrait indicates that the profile of the district is relatively young compared with the national average.

Table 1: Changes to the age profile in the last 10 years

Age	Population	Percentage	+/- in last 10 years
Under 15 years	34,200	15.7%	-2.2%
16-64 years	100,200	62.6%	+0.9%
65+ years	34,200	21.8%	+20.2%

28. The Canterbury district has the highest percentage in Kent of 'other household types including all full-time students and all aged 66 years and over' at [6.9%](#). Other Kent districts range from 2.6 to 3.6% in this category.
29. Forecasts indicate that the population of the Canterbury district is expected to grow by 5,719, or 3% by 2029.

2. Council Vision & Priorities

Introduction

30. The current Corporate Plan reflects the vision of the previous Conservative led administration, which held an overall majority in the last Council (2019-2023). The medium term financial strategy is designed to support the delivery of this particular vision.
31. The local elections held in May 2023 saw a change in the political balance of the Council from Conservative majority to No Overall Control. The current political balance is: Labour (18), Liberal Democrat (9), Conservative (8) and Green Party (4). The Council is now led by a Labour/Liberal Democrat coalition.
32. There are plans to review the Council's vision and priorities in the coming year to reflect the new Leadership's political priorities.

Existing Corporate Plan

33. The existing [Corporate Plan](#) priorities are as follows -

We are determined to drive real and noticeable improvements in our core services while we deliver on our key priorities. This will be at the heart of what we do for the remaining term of this council.

There is no doubt resources will remain under intense pressure for years to come so, when the inevitable choices have to be made, these priorities will take precedence.

We will always look at the evidence to see if there is a compelling cultural, heritage, environmental or market-failure reason to justify us investing council taxpayers' money.

We will ensure the services residents really care about represent value for money while we build the foundation for the district's economy to recover from the current crisis then grow and flourish.

Sustainability, our commitment to the environment and our determination to be carbon-neutral will be the golden thread that runs through all of our priorities and some of these are detailed in our Climate Change Action Plan.

Our four main priorities will be:

To support the district's economy to recover then grow

We will create a pro-business district that supports enterprise and innovation in order to drive economic development through our policies, by the use of our extensive assets and the use of technology alongside our commitment to sustainability and the environment.

To deliver a better social housing service for our tenants

We will create a housing service that is as well funded as possible so that we can provide the services tenants need, when they need them. We will also use every way we can to buy, build and maintain a stock of quality homes.

To deliver better waste collection services for all residents

Poor performance in this area has been an issue for years. Now is the time to deliver refuse collection and environmental services worthy of our residents. We aim to deliver a significant improvement in service over 2020/21 levels by the end of the 2019 to 2023 council.

To use our enforcement powers to protect the district

We will redouble our efforts to use our enforcement powers to take action against those who break the rules and affect the quality of life enjoyed by everyone else.

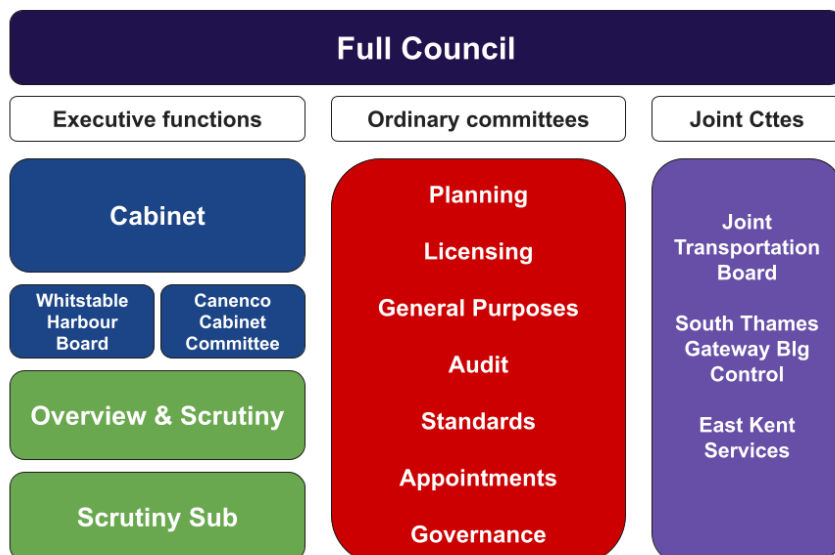
The rule breakers should be the ones expected to pay for this work wherever possible.

3. Managing the Business of the Council

Political Governance

34. Following the Local Government Act 2000 coming into effect, Canterbury City Council adopted the 'Leader and Cabinet' model in 2002. At the time the council size was 50 councillors.
35. In 2014, Council resolved ([min 187](#)) to move from the Leader and Cabinet model to the 'Committee' model of governance, to take effect at the annual meeting in May 2015.
36. This coincided with the Local Government Boundary Commission [review](#), resulting in the reduction in council size from 50 councillors to 39.
37. The change took effect at the local elections held in May 2015, meaning the new model of governance and the reduction in council size took effect at the same time. The council operated the 'Committee' model of governance from 2015 - 2022.
38. In July 2021, the Council resolved ([min 161c](#)) to change from the Committee model of governance back to the 'Leader and Cabinet' model, to take effect from the annual meeting in May 2022.
39. The structure of the new Leader and Cabinet governance model was agreed by Full Council in May 2022 ([min 737a](#) refers, [full report](#) here), and implemented at the Annual Meeting later that month. The existing model has been carried forward into the new Council. It is expected that it will be reviewed again in due course.
40. The existing governance structure is illustrated in the table below -

The existing governance model 2022/23



4. Roles and responsibilities of Councillors

Separation of Roles

41. The Constitution of Canterbury City Council formalises the separation of roles for Councillors. These include a description of the roles and functions for all Councillors ([Article 2](#)) and then more specifically for Cabinet Members ([Part 6](#)).
42. There are few specific rules about the separation of responsibilities that affect the ability of councillors to perform different roles, other than those prescribed in law such as Members of the Cabinet not sitting on Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
43. Excluding Council and Cabinet, there are currently 101 seats allocated to ordinary committees by Full Council and a further 21 to Joint Boards and Cabinet Committees, making 122 seats in total between 39 councillors, which equates to 3.13 committees per councillor outside of Council and Cabinet. Some committees meet more frequently than others so committee workloads vary significantly.
44. The council permits an unlimited number of substitutes per committee but requires them to be listed in order of selection to ensure there is a transparent 'mechanical' process in place. This process helps to minimise the occasions when there is no substitute available to attend a meeting.
45. The current allocations are set out below. The table demonstrates that it has been possible for all Parties to be represented on all committees within the existing council size.

Table 2: Committee membership allocations 2023/24

	Total	Lab	Lib Dem	Cons	Green
Council	39	18	9	8	4
Cabinet	9	6	3		
Appointments	6	3	1	1	1
General Purposes	9	4	2	2	1
Governance	13	6	3	3	1
Licensing	12	6	3	2	1
Licensing Sub	4 per mtg	-	-	-	-
Overview and Scrutiny	13	6	3	3	1
Planning	13	6	3	3	1
Planning Sub	6	3	1	1	1
Scrutiny Sub	13	6	3	3	1
Standards	9	4	2	2	1

Joint Transportation Board	8	4	1	2	1
Whitstable Harbour Board	5	2	1	1	1
Cabinet Committee (Council Companies)	8	3	2	2	1

Full Council

46. All Councillors are members of Full Council, which is responsible for approving and adopting the budget and key policies within which Cabinet decisions are taken. Council appoints members of committees and holds them and the Cabinet to account for the decisions they take.
47. The Full Council normally meets six times each year, including the Annual Meeting. Additional special meetings are held when necessary.

Cabinet

48. The Cabinet comprises nine members including the Leader of the Council. In 2022/23, the number of Cabinet members was six including the Leader of the Council. Members are responsible for most day-to-day policy decisions.
49. Whilst each member has a responsibility for a particular portfolio, all Cabinet decisions are taken collectively. There is no individual Cabinet Member decision making.
50. Cabinet meets eight times a year, with additional meetings added when required.
51. In addition to attending Cabinet meetings, each Cabinet member attends a number of regular meetings with relevant directors and other senior officers.
52. The current Cabinet portfolios are set out in [Part 6: Annex B](#) of the Constitution and can be summarised as follows -
 - Councillor Alan Baldock - Leader of the council
 - Councillor Michael Dixey - Deputy Leader of the council and cabinet member for property, performance and oversight
 - Councillor Mike Sole - cabinet member for finance -
 - Councillor Pip Hazelton - cabinet member for housing
 - Councillor Mel Dawkins - cabinet member for climate change and biodiversity
 - Councillor Charlotte Cornell - cabinet member for heritage, open space, waste and recycling
 - Councillor Alex Ricketts - cabinet member for tourism, movement and rural development
 - Councillor Connie Nolan - cabinet member for community, culture, safety and engagement
 - Councillor Chris Cornell - cabinet member for the coastal towns

Delegations to Officers

53. The City Council has a comprehensive Scheme of Delegation to Officers (as set out in [Part 8.1](#) and [8.2](#) of the Constitution), which clearly sets out where the responsibility and extent of delegation lies. Delegations are provided to the directors and service directors. They have the power to sub-delegate to other officers and this is fully documented.

54. The delegations to Officers have helped to reduce the burden on Members and ensure efficient and effective discharge of functions at the appropriate level.

Notification of Cabinet Decisions

55. Following each meeting of the Cabinet, all Members of the Council are circulated with a copy of the minutes setting out the decisions taken. Decisions are subject to a five day delay before implementation to enable decisions to be called in.

Allocation of roles and responsibilities

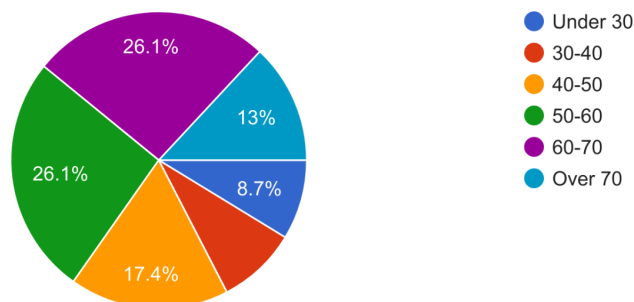
56. There was anecdotal evidence that recruitment of residents to stand as candidates was more challenging for the recent local elections. An increasing number of councillors are still working and juggling personal, professional and councillor responsibilities. It highlighted some challenging new issues for the council in terms of ensuring there is a good spread of expertise available to cover the cabinet, scrutiny and regulatory roles with appropriate separation of roles and responsibilities.

57. To establish the extent to which this is an issue, a short survey of the new councillors was undertaken to establish their age profile, employment status and caring responsibilities.

58. The results can be summarised as follows -

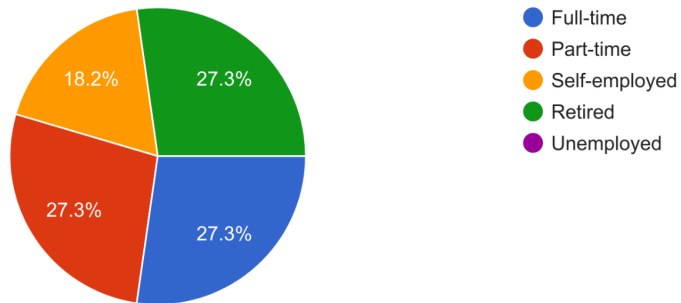
- 23 of the 39 councillors responded to the survey
- Two thirds of respondents are over 50
- Three quarters are working, with an relatively even split between full-time, part-time, self employed and retired councillors
- Just under half have caring responsibilities, primarily childcare

Age
23 responses



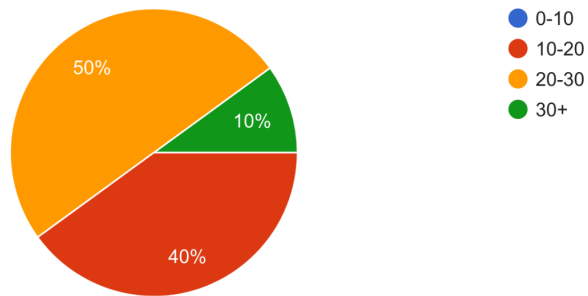
Which employment status best describes you?

22 responses



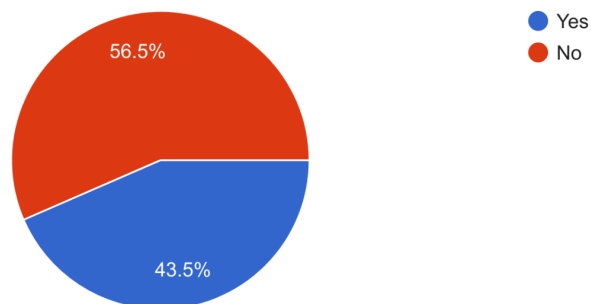
If part-time or self-employed, please state number of hours

10 responses



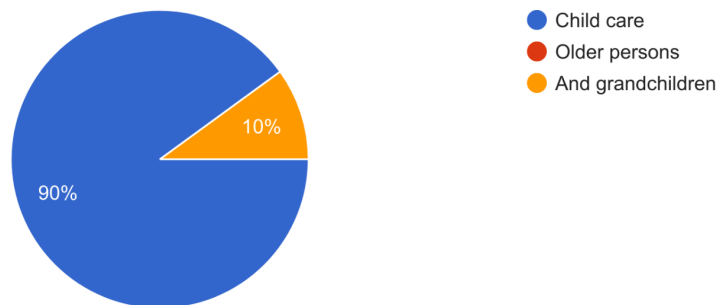
Do you have caring responsibilities for dependents that affect your ability to attend meetings

23 responses



If yes, primary nature of caring responsibilities

10 responses



59. The council wishes to balance councillor's personal and professional lives with their council responsibilities. This means the council's own arrangements need to reflect the demographic of our councillors to ensure that they can manage their commitments, otherwise they are discouraged from standing again.
60. The coalition has been able to fill all of the key roles without duplication of councillor roles. They are working with a larger majority of councillors (27). Had there been a narrow majority for a single party (20 or more) it could have been more challenging to achieve appropriate separation.
61. The previous administration had a narrow majority and was able to assign councillors to achieve this, but it is dependent on councillors having the ability to juggle work and home life with their councillor duties. This is to some degree dependent on the individual circumstances of each councillor.
62. Councillors have indicated that the introduction of hybrid technology would help with non-member attendance at committee meetings when they wish to observe. The council currently audio records its meetings and is in the process of upgrading the technology to enable hybrid attendance and webcasting. This will also allow officers and external advisers to join remotely on occasion.

5. Overview and Scrutiny arrangements

63. In the current model, the Overview and Scrutiny function supports the council in a number of ways, including:
- pre-decision scrutiny of selected reports due to be decided by Cabinet
 - constructive input and advice on matters out for consultation
 - holding the cabinet to account for the performance of services within its remit
 - use of call-in powers
 - contributing to policy development through working groups
 - acting as community champions by raising matters of general concern
 - commissioning reports on matters of concern relating to council performance
 - discharge of the crime and disorder reduction responsibilities
64. The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** meets eight times a year approximately three weeks in advance of each Cabinet meeting. Its primary role is the pre-decision scrutiny of the more significant Cabinet reports, where there is an ability to contribute ideas and influence the recommendations. It also receives the recommendations from O&S sponsored working groups, with recommendations being forwarded to the decision maker (normally Cabinet).
65. The **Scrutiny Sub-Committee** meets quarterly, with reserve dates in the calendar after each Cabinet meeting to deal with call-ins. Its primary role is holding the Cabinet to account through the scrutiny of performance reports, financial updates and action plan monitoring. This committee considers any call-ins of Cabinet decisions. It also discharges the council's statutory functions in relation to the scrutiny of crime and disorder reduction.
66. The Terms of Reference for both committees is set out in [Part 7](#) of the Constitution.
67. The O&S Committee is chaired by a member of the leadership coalition and the Scrutiny Sub-Committee is chaired by a member of an Opposition Group.
68. The O&S Committee also has an opportunity to do more in-depth scrutiny reviews on three topics each year, which will be selected by the committee based upon suggestions put forward by the political groups and senior officers.
69. The methodology is set out in a [report](#) about the management of working groups, approved by the O&S Committee in June 2023. More information is provided about working groups later in the report.

6. Regulatory Committees

70. Under the terms of the Constitution, a number of regulatory and other Committees have been established. These have delegated authority to carry out and/or oversee specific duties and functions of the Council.
71. The roles of each committee is summarised below, full terms of reference are set out in [Part 5](#) of the Constitution.

Planning Committee deals with applications referred under delegation by the Head of Service and those which are 'called-in' by a ward councillor. Typically there are between 12-15 meetings a year. Over 90% of applications are dealt with by officers under delegation and this trend has not changed significantly since the last review. The number of applications referred to the committee in the last two years has been affected by a restriction on new developments due to water contamination issues.

New ward councillor 'call-in' arrangements were introduced in 2020 ([min 285](#)), and at the same time the ability for Parish Councils and selected amenity groups to refer an application to committee were removed. The intention was to put the Ward Councillor at the heart of the process and ensure dialogue from local residents and Parish Councils flowed through them.

Planning Sub-Committee meets quarterly to receive a planning enforcement update. In the last year it was also delegated the task of overseeing the discharge of conditions on the Mountfield Park site in Canterbury - our largest single development proposal.

Licensing Committee meets once or twice a year to establish the hearing arrangements and delegate functions to the sub-committee. It has the ability to discharge various licensing regulatory functions, including policy and fee setting relating to taxi licensing, scrap metal, sex establishment and zoo licensing.

Licensing Sub-Committee meets approximately 15-20 times a year, primarily to consider premises licence applications where objections have been received. The number of meetings is relatively steady year on year. A panel of 3 members plus a reserve sit as a hearing panel, drawn from a rota of Licensing Committee members. Members on the rota are assigned dates at the start of the year and are called upon if there are applications to consider.

Taxi licence applications and reviews are dealt with under Officer delegation, with the nominated officer reviewing cases in consultation with the Chair of the Licensing Committee. There is a facility to escalate matters to the committee, which is rarely used.

Audit Committee meets quarterly to review the risk register and oversee the internal and external audit plans. It receives presentations from the auditors that provide assurance and an opportunity to ask questions. It also oversees council activity in relation to the Local Government Ombudsman, treasury management and RIPA. The committee also approves the annual statement of accounts. It can raise concerns with the Cabinet or the Council.

7. Other Committees

72. Other Committees meet on an ad-hoc basis, when there is business to discuss. They include -

- **Governance Committee** - meets on an ad-hoc basis to examine any proposed constitutional changes
- **Joint Transportation Board** - joint advisory board between Kent County Council and CCC. The Board reviews transport matters, including the local transport strategy, projects, traffic regulation orders, street management proposals (yellow lines) and parking. It meets three times a year plus special meetings as required.
- **Standards Committee** - promotes standards of conduct at both CCC and parish councils, reviews code of conduct, cllr complaints and ethical issues. Meets once plus special meetings as required.
- **Appointments Committee** - senior officer appointments and appointments to partnerships. Meets on an ad-hoc basis as required.
- **General Purposes Committee** - health and safety, community governance reviews and other parish issues, election matters, various HR matters and items not covered elsewhere. Meets on an ad-hoc basis as required.
- **East Kent Services Committee** - three council partnership overseeing contact centre customer services and revenues and benefits undertaken by Civica. Meets on an ad-hoc basis as required.
- **South Thames Gateway Building Control** - four council partnership overseeing the delivery of Local Authority Building Control services. Meets quarterly.

8. Volume of meetings

73. When the model originally changed back in 2014, the following design principles were applied, which have unpinned the various reviews that have happened since -
- *Engagement – the structure should ensure that decision making is connected to local people*
 - *Economy - the overall resources including the number of meetings and workload for councillors should aim to be no greater than under the present Leader and Executive system and be capable of further refinement.*
 - *Efficiency – the structure allows the council’s operations with sufficient process both to run smoothly and to achieve timely decision making.*
 - *Effectiveness – decisions taken address issues identified as needing to be addressed.*
74. Irrespective of which governance model is in place, the political steer has been to deliver a model that does not lead to a significant increase in the number of meetings or the cost of democracy.
75. The most significant changes over time have been the adoption of three ‘service’ committees under the committee model, which replaced the work of the Cabinet and O&S function in 2015, and the reinstatement of the Cabinet and O&S functions in 2022. The other significant change was the abolition of the Area Forums in 2020, the reasons for which are set out in the report ([min 284](#)) .
76. The table below gives an overview of how business has been managed through the committee programme since the last review in 2014, taking into account the previous Leader and Cabinet Model, the change to the Committee model from 2015 - 2022, and the return to the Leader and Cabinet model in May 2022.

Table 3: Committee meetings in 2014/15, 2021/22 and 2022/23

Committees	2014/15	2021/22	2022/23
Model	Leader and Cabinet	Committee	Leader and Cabinet
Councillors	50	39	39
Council	8	13	6
Cabinet/Executive	16	-	10
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11	-	9
Scrutiny and Audit/Accounts Ctte	14	-	-
Scrutiny Sub Committee	-	-	5
Audit Committee	-	5	5
Policy Committee	-	8	-
Regeneration Committee	-	6	-
Community Committee	-	8	-
Planning Committee	15	11	13
Planning Sub-Committee	4	-	-
Licensing (& GP in 2014)	8	2	2
Licensing Sub-Committee	20	18	14
Whitstable Harbour Board	6	4	3
Standards Committee	2	1	1
Joint Transportation Board	3	2	4

Appointments Committee	3	9	3
East Kent Committee	1	2	1
Governance (inc 2014 Commission)	5	3	2
Area Forums x 4: Canterbury, Herne Bay, Whitstable and Rural (6 meetings each)	24	-	-
Decision Review Committee	-	1	-
General Purposes	-	-	-
South Thames Gateway	-	-	4
Meetings per year	140	94	82
		-32.9%	-41.4%

9. Councillors' allowances and other financial implications

77. For comparison purposes, figures below have been taken from -
- 2014/15 - the last year of the leader and cabinet model with 50 councillors
 - 2021/22 - the last year of the committee model with 39 councillors
 - 2022/23 - the first full year of the new leader and cabinet model with 39 councillors
78. One of the underlying considerations in the construction of effective and convenient governance arrangements has been the management of costs relating to the cost of democracy. One of the political steers during both governance reviews was to manage costs within the existing budget envelope, based on a framework recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
79. The impact on the Member Allowances budgets of the reduction on council size and subsequent change in governance model can be seen below.

Table 4: Members' allowances 2014/15 to 2022/23

	2014/15	2021/22	2022/23
Council size	50	39	39
Model	Leader and Cabinet	Committee	Leader and Cabinet
Basic allowance	£241,255	£225,040	£236,433
Special resp allowance	£118,861	£84,440	£84,345
Mileage claims	£10,878	£1,165	£3,049
Travel and subsistence	£732	£109	£1,528
Employers NI	£8,512	£6,110	£5,938
Mobile phone allowance	£972	N/A	N/A
PC allowance	£4819	N/A	N/A
Total pay	£386,029	£316,864	£331,293
		-17.9%	-14.2%

80. The last review of Councillor Allowances was agreed by the Policy Committee in April 2022, as part of the change in governance model ([min 711](#)). Between reviews, allowances increase in line with the staff pay award.
81. The largest single cost is the basic allowance for councillors. In 2022/23, the basic allowance payable to all councillors was £6,075 pa, the second highest of the 12 Kent districts. Special Responsibility Allowances are more difficult to compare as structures vary but for key roles such as Leader and Cabinet Member, Canterbury is comparatively lower - in some cases below the Kent average.
82. The Policy Committee opted to support an option that remunerated all councillors and at the same time reflected the affordable budget position at the time, based on the tiered structure recommended by the Remuneration Panel.
83. The estimated cost of Members Allowances for a council size of 50, based on current rates, would be approximately £400,000. This assumes basic allowances at the existing rate and a 20% increase in mileage, travel and NI costs.

84. Potential additional indirect costs that are hard to quantify include the impact on officers of additional work generated by a higher number of councillors at a time when capacity is likely to be reducing. For example, additional committees or councillor working groups would require additional officer support.

10. Working Groups

Introduction

85. When the council moved back to the leader and cabinet system in May 2022, the cabinet and overview and scrutiny committees inherited the working group system and topics previously agreed by the Policy Committee just prior to the changeover. They reflected the political priorities at that time so it was logical that they be carried forward into the new arrangements.
86. The council aims to undertake six working groups each year, with three topics selected and sponsored by Cabinet and three by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (the parent bodies). Timetables will vary but the aim is not to have too many running concurrently. Final selection is based on the parent body recommendation at the time and subject to their being sufficient capacity to support it. This approach has been endorsed by the new Council.
87. There are also three standing working groups which meet periodically when required.
88. The intention behind the working group activity is that it gives the majority of councillors an opportunity to review service delivery and policies in the areas given highest priority by Cabinet and the O&S Committee.

Volume of working group activity

89. The frequency of working group meetings varies from one review to another. Details of the number of meetings held last year is provided to give an indication of the time commitment required for each review.

Table 5: Working Group activity

Committees	Meetings 2022/23
Cabinet sponsored	
Waste, recycling and litter collections	6
Planning enforcement review	4
Whitstable Harbour South Quay projects	0
O&S sponsored	
Older persons accommodation review	6
Biodiversity review	8
Public Conveniences review	3
Seaside Byelaw Working Group (which was nearing conclusion)	1
Standing groups	
Strategic Grants Panel	3
Staff and Safety Joint Consultative Group	0
Total	31

11. Briefings

90. Councillor briefings are used by officers as a means of sharing information on key topics with councillors in private session. They are often used to provide a briefing on significant topics in order to raise awareness and provide an opportunity to ask questions. Commonly, briefings take place before matters are placed in the public domain so that councillors are familiar with the topic and can act as a conduit between the council and local residents.
91. The council held 17 briefings in 2021/22, and 10 briefings in 2022/23. Topics can be broad and varied - those covered last year are included here for illustrative purposes.
- Conservation Area Consultation
 - Change Programme
 - Affordable housing update
 - Office accommodation update
 - Local Plan
 - Economic outlook and budget setting 2023/24
 - Elections Act and local election timetable
 - Local Government Boundary Commission Review
 - KCC Community Services consultation
 - Levelling-up Fund programme

12. Council appointments to outside bodies and partnerships

92. In 2014, the City Council made appointments to 34 outside bodies and partnerships ([min 23 2011/12](#)).
93. In 2019, Council approved changes to the outside body appointments process ([min 817](#)) following concerns that appointments had the potential to lead to a conflict of interest which prevented councillors from participating in council decision making where it related to the outside body. Changes were made, such that trustee appointments were replaced with observer appointments and the number of appointees reduced to one per outside body. Organisations were advised they could invite more councillors independently if they wished.
94. Matters were reviewed again in 2021 ([min 686a](#)), at which point it was agreed that the majority of council nominated appointments to outside bodies should be removed. Councillors can still accept an invitation on a voluntary basis if invited, understanding that it might occasionally result in a potential conflict of interest with their councillor role.
95. Council appointments are now limited to 14 partnership organisations, which are made by the Appointments Committee. In addition the leader makes direct appointments to six committees and partnerships, where they are de facto nominee or nominated appointer.

Table 6: Appointment to Outside Bodies 2022/23

	Outside Body	CIrs
1	Canterbury Cathedral Archive and Library Committee	1
2	Canterbury Community Safety Partnership	1
3	Higher Education and Further Education group	4
4	Joint Advisory Committee (for Kent Downs AONB)	1
5	Superannuation Fund Committee (appointed by KCC from county-wide nominees)	1
6	Local Children's Partnership Group	1
7	Local Government Association - Coastal Issues Special Interest Group	1
8	PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee	1
9	River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board	1
10	South East Employers	2
11	Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Scheme Board	1
12	World Heritage UK	1
13	Reculver Seawater Steering Group (new 22/23)	4
14	Open Space and Biodiversity Group (new 22/23)	4
	Leader appointments	
15	East Kent Spatial Development Company	1
16	Kent and Medway Crime Panel	1
17	Kent Flood Risk Management Committee	1
18	Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1
19	Tales of England Partnership (new)	1
20	Kent Recycling Partnership	1

96. In addition, the Lord Mayor is an ex-officio member on 17 outside bodies and the Sheriff is a patron to one charitable organisation. The Lord Mayor and Sheriff attend over 400 events per

annum in the course of their civic duties, many of which are community or school based activities.

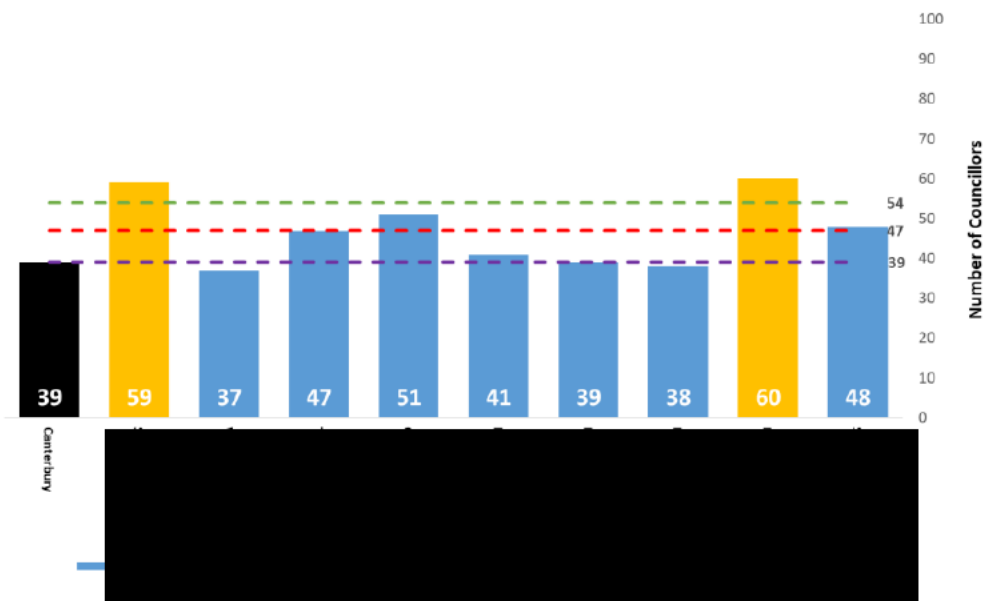
97. The Leader of the council is also a member of East Kent and Kent-wide leadership groups that include the political leaders from each authority among its membership.

13. Representational role of councillors

Comparison data

- 98. The indicators shown in the graph are from CIPFA Neighbour comparators. The Boundary Commission has been clear that the review of council size is based primarily on the council's own evidence base and local needs assessment rather than benchmark data, so this is merely provided for context, alongside an ONS table with some national comparators.
- 99. It should be appreciated that irrespective of what the benchmark data says, every council has different issues that are relevant in the context of a boundary review. The Boundary Commission is more interested in the local picture than broad brush comparisons. The graphs do however provide some national context which councillors may find informative. Commentary is provided in the covering report.

2022/2023 CIPFA Group and Councillor Counts



2022/2023 CIPFA Group and Electorate Ratio

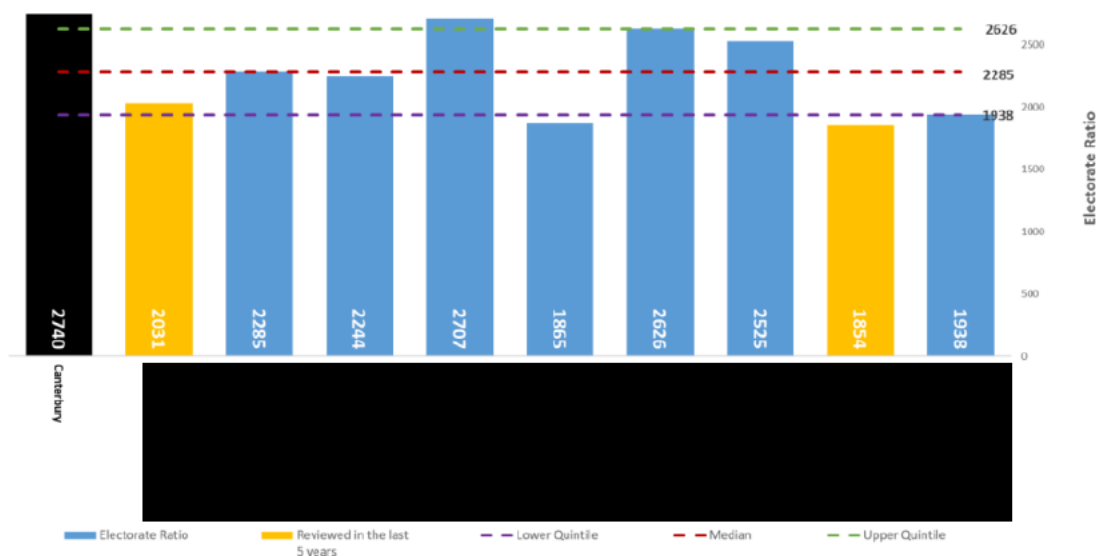


Table 4: Comparison with other two-tier district authorities - [ONS 2022](#)

	Canterbury	Two-tier district position
Electors	106,848	36th highest of 181 councils
Council Size	39	=100th of 181 councils
Electorate ratio	2740	11th highest of 181 councils

The table below sets out the date council size was reviewed in each of the benchmarked authorities and provides a link to the outcome. As is evident, a number of the councils in the benchmark group have been reviewed since Canterbury's last review in 2014.

Table 4: CIPFA Neighbourhood Group: Last Electoral reviews

Local Authority	Year of last review	Council Size (Cllrs)	Electorate ratio (22/23)
Canterbury	2014	39	2740
Somerset West and Taunton*	2018	59	2031
Worthing	2002	37	2285
Teignbridge	2017	47	2244
Colchester	2015	51	2707
Lewes	2016	41	1865
Eastleigh	2016	39	2626

Havant	2023	36	2525
Lancaster	2023	61	1854
Sedgemoor*	2010	48	1938

*now subsumed into Somerset County Unitary

Councillor survey

100. In April 2023, the Council undertook a survey of councillors who were coming to the end of their latest four year term. The purpose of the survey was to establish councillor workload supporting their local residents and undertaking other council related business. There were 20 responses received, and the results are summarised below.

101. Highlights of the survey results include the following:

The headlines, broadly speaking

- half of respondents had served a single term
- a majority had served as cabinet member, committee chair or group/deputy group leader
- half have casework of between 10-20 cases per month
- half spent 10+ hours per month in committee meetings (the rest less) and a similar amount of time preparing for those meetings
- half spent 0-5 hours per month on parish council and/or amenity group activity (the rest more)
- three-quarters spend between 10-20+ hours on casework (the rest less)
- the vast majority don't operate surgeries and use other methods of contact
- email is the preferred method of contact with phone or in-person also popular
- political group work varies and is evenly distributed
- two-thirds felt the time commitment was greater than expected
- just over half share constituency casework with another council member
- half felt the technology provided was v.good/good (it is upgraded every four years)
- the majority felt the officer support ranged from good to excellent

A full summary of the survey is provided below, along with the councillor's comments.

102. By way of context, referring to the Boundary Commission pen portrait appended to the report, the current electorate ratio is 2779 (May 2023) residents per councillor. The imbalance of electorate per ward is likely to have had an adverse impact on the workload of some councillors where the ratio is higher. The warding patterns are designed to be broadly consistent across the district.

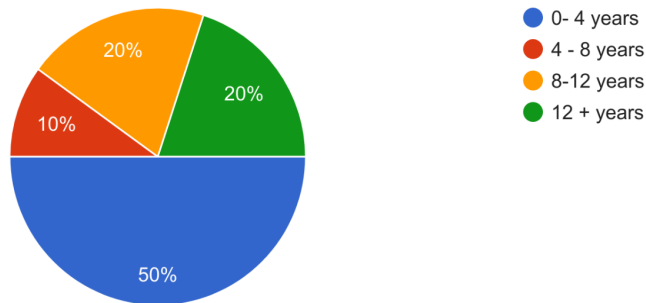
103. The feedback provided in the councillor survey informs the assessment of the councillors representative role in the community.

104. The survey results can be seen below.

Survey results (April 2023)

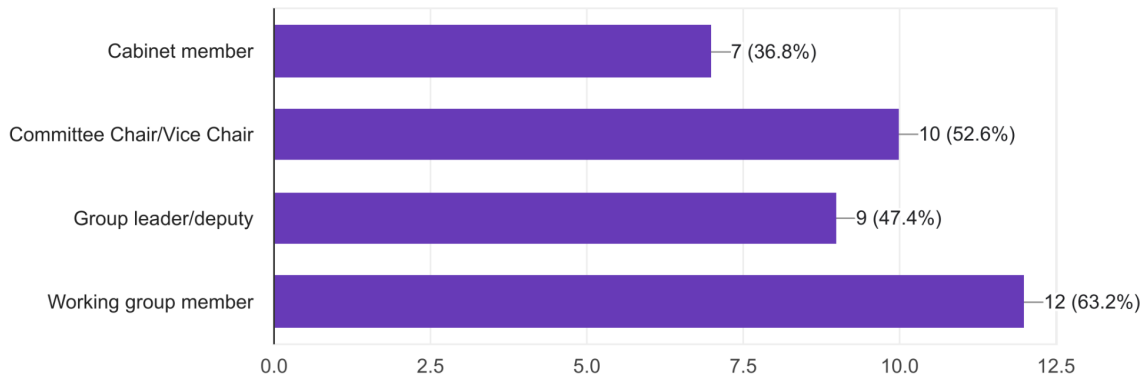
How long have you been a Councillor?

20 responses



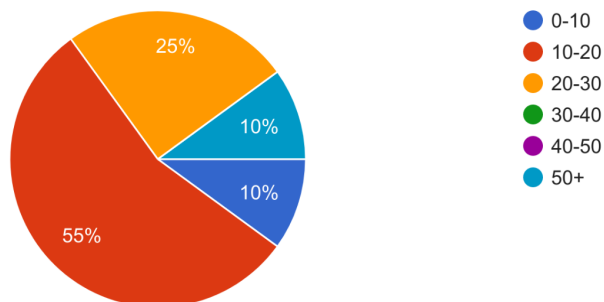
Roles - have you undertaken any of the following roles this year (please tick all that apply)

19 responses

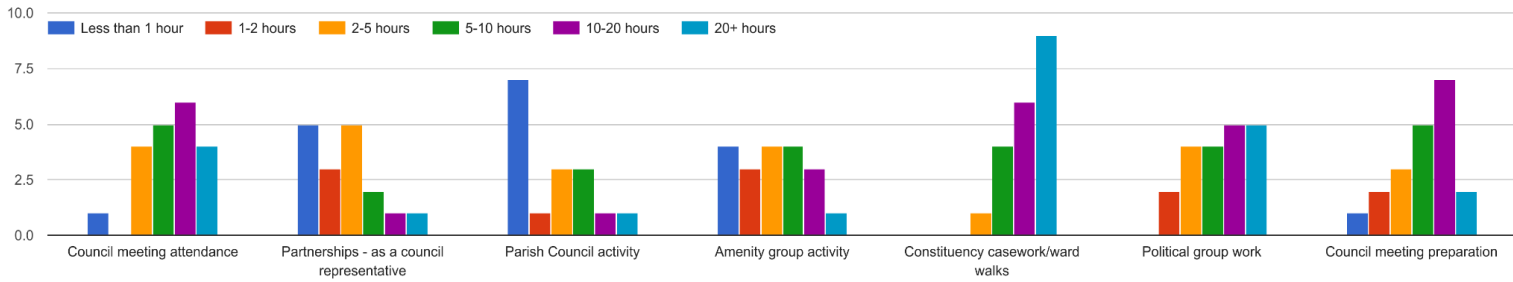


Casework - on average, how many resident's cases do you deal with per month?

20 responses

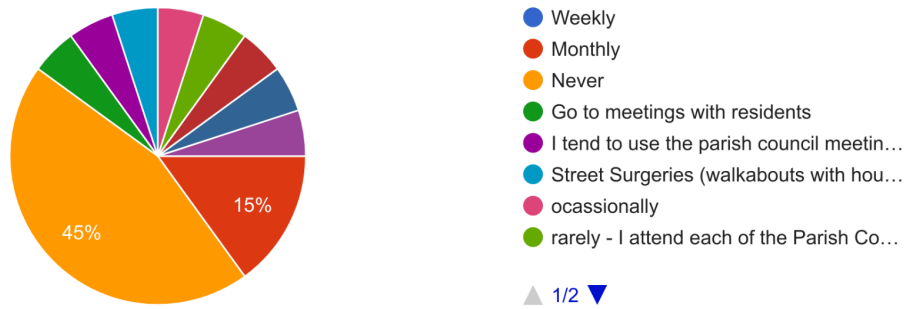


On average how many hours per month do you spend on the following core activities

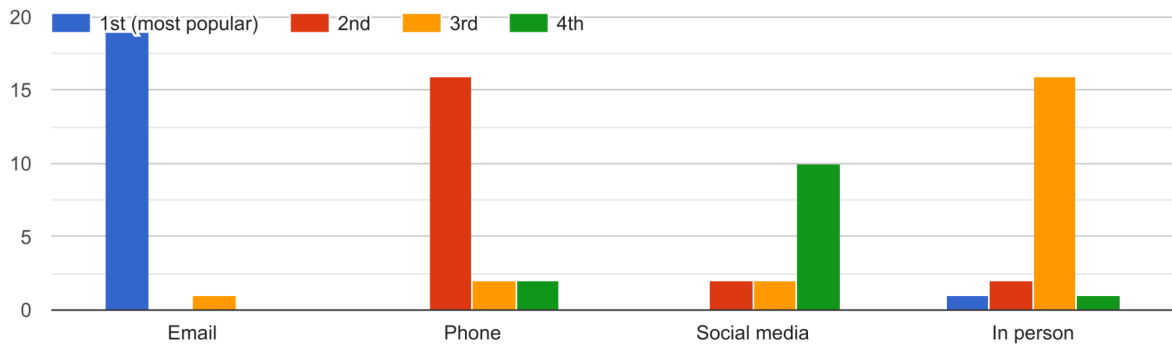


How frequently do you hold drop in surgeries

20 responses

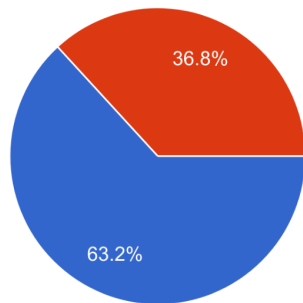


In order - preferred method of contact by constituents



Is the time commitment required of you as a councillor...

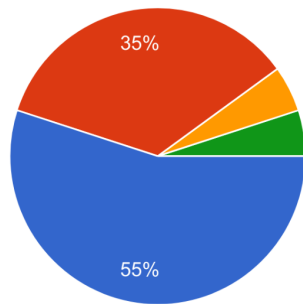
19 responses



- Greater than you expected
- In line with expectations
- Less than you expected

Do you share your casework with other ward councillors?

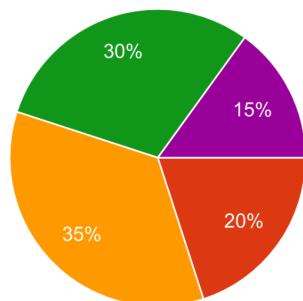
20 responses



- Yes
- No
- occasionally
- We take casework as it comes to us. We share info but not the workload

Generally speaking, how would you rate the technology provided by the council to support your work?

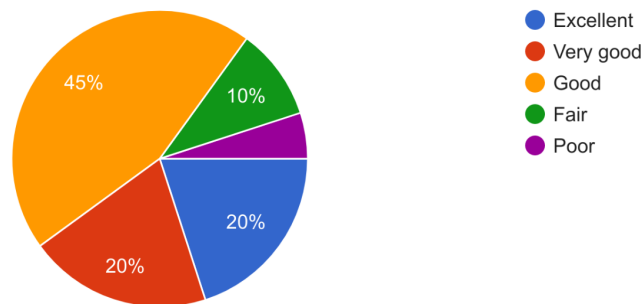
20 responses



- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Generally speaking, how would you rate the officer support provided by the council to support your work?

20 responses



Summary of comments relevant to the review regarding technology and officer support

- Additional officer support needed with challenging and difficult cases x 4
- Casework software, ideally integrated with council systems x 3
- Officers are under pressure, particularly following reductions in capacity. This can sometimes affect the speed of responses x 4
- The public contact councillors if they cannot easily access services from the council x 1
- Email made it easier for residents to contact councillors leading to an increase in councillor workload
- Officers need case monitoring software x1
- Hotdesks for councillors in the office x1
- Facility needed for those not relying on the internet or related electronic systems x1
- Upgrade to technology would help x1

Summary of responses to likely changes in cllr role in the future (i.e. changing demands from constituents, businesses, community groups and how will these likely shape your responsibilities?)

- Public expectations are high that councillors can solve all problems, including issues outside the CCC remit x 3
- Reductions in services within in other organisations has increased workload x 1
- Workload likely to lessen as technology improves, with more self-service. Councillor role will become more strategic in setting policy. x 1
- More contact from residents by social media. Brings challenges for those councillors who do not use it x1

- Better technology will reduce the burden. x 1
- Fewer officers, with less time has led to an increase in councillor workload. Customers need to be able to access services to reduce cllr workload x 3
- Accountability will be very much more important x 1
- Social media [comments] has added to the pressures, making it increasingly difficult to find people willing to stand x 1
- Not significantly x 2
- More work for those in leadership roles x 1
- Needs of residents have notably increased leading to a spike in cllr workload x 1

Summary of responses to an invitation to add other comments about experience as a councillor that might be relevant to a council submission on council size? - 9 responses

- Councillor workload is challenging. Some cases are complex due to different needs x 6
- Workload heavy due to a prominent leadership role - resident contact is cross-district, not just ward based, leading to additional hours. x 1
- Enjoyed single member ward role. A multi-member ward, over a large rural area with several parish councils would be challenging x 1
- Current size is the right number. More would be inefficient and wasteful for the taxpayer.
- Reduced size would lead to struggles to undertake the various tasks and duties well.
- Council size should increase x 2
- Fifty councillors would be a better number x 1
- Recruitment challenging, workload is a deterrent x 1
- Residents need easier access to officers to have problems resolved x 1
- Enjoyed the challenges and felt privileged to serve as a member of the Council x 1
- Opposition do not receive the same degree of information under the leader and cabinet model. Access was better in the committee model x 1
- Wards too large for the engagement needed - challenging for working/younger cllrs to take up or sustain the role. A broad demographic preferable x 2
- Training and briefing takes up a lot of time x 1

105. The findings demonstrate that councillor workloads are heavy, with a number reporting that volumes have increased in recent years. No single reason is cited but a number report that casework has become more complex in recent years due to a general reduction in services accessible from other agencies, the voluntary sector and the council.
106. The unique profile of the Canterbury district in having a comparatively high ratio of students for the size of population is also a factor. We have three Universities in the city - University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of the Creative Arts. The Universities provide Electoral Services with the names of approximately 16,000 individuals for students living locally in halls, private accommodation or based at home.
107. We know that not all students choose to register, so the electorate ratio may not reflect the actual numbers living in the city. Perhaps the clearest evidence of this was in 2019, when there was a noticeable spike in registrations as a result of the General Election and a greater interest in registering. The pattern then differs from other periods - details below.

Table 8: Electoral register - total number registered

Register	Electorate	Electorate ratio
Dec 2019	116,508	2987
Dec 2020	107,947	2767
May 2021	108,949	2793
May 2022	108,167	2773
May 2023	108,398	2779

108. The high turnover of student residents means the population is more transient than some districts. There is a process of communication and education that takes place annually to ensure that residents who may be new to the district know how to access council services. Resident engagement is managed and issues are addressed.
109. Councillors are often at the heart of this casework and the council works closely with the Universities via the HE/FE Stakeholder Group, the Community Safety Partnership and the Business Improvement District to ensure that any matters that require attention are dealt with. Examples include public safety, walking/public transport, town centre events/night-time economy, waste collection days, recycling arrangements, neighbourhood engagement and electoral registration, to name a few.
110. Forecasts suggest that the number of electors registered will increase by approximately 6,000 from current levels by approximately 2029 to a figure of around 114,000. Based on present calculations that would amount to an increase of approximately 2 councillors if measured by electorate ratio.
111. If there were concerns about balancing workload, personal and professional commitments that led to a conclusion that the ratio should be reduced, combined with the forecast increase in electorate then a figure of 43 councillors would deliver a ratio closer to 2650 by 2029. These points are illustrated in the table below and are reflected in the covering report in option 1.

Table 9: Electorate ratio

Year	Councillors	Electorate	Electorate ratio
May 2023	39	108,398	2,779
2029	39	114,000 (est)	2,923
2029	43	114,000 (est)	2,651

14. Council changes since 2014/15

112. At the time of the last boundary review, the City Council had an annual total expenditure of £20.438m (2014/15). Over the period, there has been a significant reduction in resources. The total expenditure in 2021/22 (the last audited period) was £17.12m - a reduction of £3.318m.

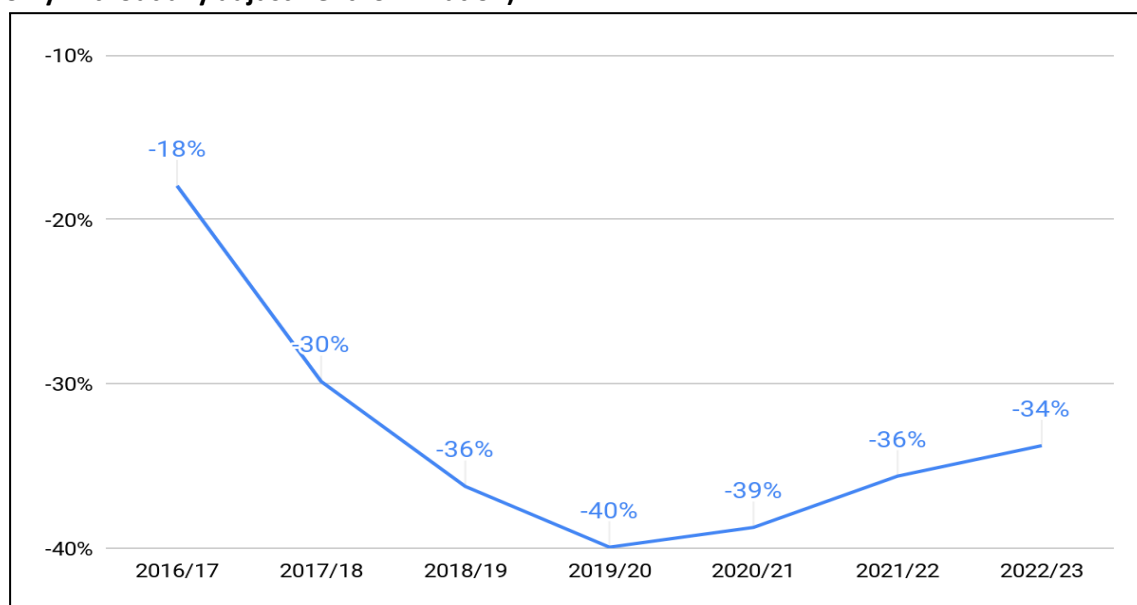
113. There have been significant organisational changes in that time with the Marlowe Theatre staff transferring to a Trust organisation in 2018, and East Kent Housing staff being transferred in-house from a four-council arms-length organisation in 2021/22. Waste Management and Grounds Maintenance is managed by a Latco. The numbers reflect the net position following those and any other changes.

114. The table and graph below show the trend in funding over recent years. Since 2014/15, total expenditure has decreased by 16.6% and staffing numbers by 26.6%.

Table 8: Changes to council expenditure and staffing 2014/15 to 2021/22

Financial Year	Total Expenditure	Staffing (FTE)
2014/15	£20,438m	759
2021/22	£17,120m	557
Decrease 2014/15 to 2021/22	-16.2%	-26.6%

Table 9: CCC cumulative reduction in central government funding 2015/16 to 2022/23 (cash only without any adjustment for inflation)



115. It is worth highlighting that the day-to-day role of a councillor has also changed substantially since 2015. The use of technology, particularly virtual meetings, has become a key element in the way both officers and councillors communicate. Many staff have adopted hybrid working arrangements, whereby they mix working at home with attendance in the office depending on business needs.

116. A practical illustration of the change is councillor briefings moved to virtual delivery during the pandemic, which councillors found more convenient as they were able to attend from any location and didn't need to travel in. It allowed councillors to juggle working and personal

commitments with their council activity. Attendance improved and the practice was retained. It is notable that mileage costs have reduced significantly compared with 2014/15.

117. In 2017/18, the council undertook a whole district Community Governance Review to look at whether changes should be made to Parish Council boundaries or size. The review also explored whether there was interest in creating Town Councils in our urban areas. The review was conducted in two phases: the first sought input on which changes we might consider and the second consulted on the draft proposals.

118. At the end of the review, a number of changes were proposed in relation to Parish Council areas and local governance arrangements. These are set out in the final report to the Policy and Resources Committee ([min 109](#)) and the Council resolution ([min 131](#)). The [Reorganisation Order](#) confirming the boundary changes was published in December 2018.

119. Town Councils were not pursued in phase 2 as it was felt that there was insufficient interest to justify their inclusion. Within our own arrangements Area Forums replaced Area Member Panels, before their eventual demise in 2020. There has been recent renewed interest in Town Councils in Whitstable and Canterbury, which is being pursued by local community groups with a view to submitting a petition later this year. If a review were to take place it is likely to conclude before the next elections in 2027.

15. Further anticipated changes

120. Over the last two years the council has undertaken a substantial transformation programme which has radically changed the structure of the council. The majority of staff now fit into one of three categories: Specialists, who focus on their areas of expertise; Locality Services, who are out and about providing a range of cross-cutting front-line services; and finally two Case teams, who focus on delivering high quality, cross-cutting customer services to our residents and customers.
121. The changes have been completed in four phases and are starting to take effect. In the coming year, the introduction of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system will provide additional tools for the management of customer enquiries.
122. Addressing some of the concerns raised about accessing services, the aim is to significantly reduce councillor interactions by encouraging queries and complaints to be routed to officers in the first instance to be managed through the CRM.
123. In the meantime, councillors have recently been provided with two email addresses to route all of their enquiries that have yet to be logged. This will allow officers to identify and address common trends and manage and monitor our interactions with each person through a single system.

16. Conclusion

124. The evidence base has sought to explain the **governance arrangements** of the Council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities; the **scrutiny functions** relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies and the **representational role of councillors in the local community**.

125. This is set within the context of the council reducing in size, in relation to its financial position and staffing capacity.

126. The headlines in relation to **the council's own position** are -

- 26.6% reduction in the number of meetings since 2015
- 43.75% reduction in Cabinet meetings since 2015
- 24% reduction in Scrutiny meetings (including Audit) since 2015
- 22% reduction in councillors since 2014/15
- 14% reduction in councillors allowances since 2015
- 41.2% reduction in reduction in annual appointments to outside bodies since 2015
- 16.2% reduction in overall expenditure since 2015
- 26.6% reduction in staffing levels (FTE) since 2015
- 4.1% increase in population since 2011, with further increase of 3% expected by 2029

127. Anecdotally, **councillor workload** has increased due to the complexity of casework and resident's using councillors as an alternative to officers. Examples are provided in the covering report. This may discourage councillors from standing or standing again and creates additional pressures for those who are elected. According to the survey results, broadly -

- Half the responding councillors reported a workload in excess of 20+ hours per month with a further six working 10-20 hours pm.
- Half are attending meetings for 10+ hours per month
- Two-thirds reporting the commitment to the role being higher than expected
- Comments referring consistently to a heavy workload

128. The **demographic mix** of the new 2023 councillor cohort shows that the majority are juggling personal, professional and their councillor commitments. This is borne out in the survey, which shows that of the 23 councillors who responded to the survey -

- Two thirds of respondents are over 50
- Three quarters are working, with an relatively even split between full-time, part-time, self employed and retired councillors
- Just under half have caring responsibilities, primarily childcare

129. The **forecasting** results indicate that -

- The electorate ratio is lower than was forecast by the Boundary Commission in the 2014 review, but
- There is a likely increase in population of approximately 6,000 by 2029
- There is a current imbalance in the electorate ratio in 14 of 21 wards, of which 10 are higher than forecast resulting in heavier workloads for some
- It is believed the electorate figures may be understated in areas with a typically younger population and also in areas with pockets of deprivation.

130. The **benchmarking** from the 'Canterbury pen portrait' and ONS data, although not material to the evidence base, indicate -

- Lower quintile council size compared with Boundary Commission CIPFA Neighbour Group
- Higher quintile electorate ratio compared with Boundary Commission CIPFA Neighbour Group
- Similar trends when compared with the ONS data reflecting the national picture

131. The **governance arrangements** demonstrate that the Council has been able to 'cut its cloth' whilst still meeting the design principles set out in the governance reviews, adapting to a reduction in the workforce and finances. It has functioned with 39 councillors under both models of governance.

132. The **organisational change programme** is designed to facilitate greater digital interaction and reduce councillor workloads by redirecting customer enquiries from councillors to officers so they can be tracked and monitored on the incoming CRM system.

133. The **cost of democracy**, when measured by Councillors Allowances, ranges from £331k at present levels to £400k for 50 councillors, based on current rates. Although not material to the Boundary Commission's deliberations it may be a factor for councillors when deciding how best to allocate resources.

134. Further commentary on the findings from the evidence base is provided in the covering report.

Appendix 1 - LGBCE Canterbury Pen Portrait 2022

Electoral Review of Canterbury City Council: Pen Portrait

Background

Review Type	Intervention		
Current Variances (Dec 2021 data)	11 of 21 (52%) wards have a variance outside 10%. Two wards have a variance outside 30%. The largest variances are Blean Forest ward (-52%) and Northgate ward (-20%)		
Council Size	39	Expected Range	Median
		39 to 54	47
Governance Model			
Last Review	Year	2014	
	Council Size	50	
Review Start	2023		
Review team	Lead Commissioner		
	Review Manager	Richard Otterway	
	Review Officer	Paul Kingsley	

Useful Information

The last review was completed in 2014, but the forecasts have not been realised. Indeed, the electorate has decreased since the last review. In 2013, at the start of the last review there were 113,105 electors. There are currently around 106,848 electors.

Since March 2022 Canterbury does not have a Chief executive, but rather a Corporate Leadership Team comprising: Head of Paid Service and Director of Corporate Services; Director of Strategy and Improvement; and Director of People and Place.

Electoral Arrangements

Authority Type	Two-Tier District
Electoral Cycle	Whole
Next Election	2023
Number of parishes	27

Electorate	106,848		
No. Councillors*	39		
Elector/ Cllr Ratio*	2,739	Expected Range	Median
		1,938 to 2,626	2,285
Electors per 1% Change	27		
No. Wards	21		
Single-Member	7		
Two-Member	10		
Three-Member	3		

* Council size is as Pre-Review.

Current Political Composition

Labour	9
Conservative	22
Liberal Democrats	6
Green	1
Independent	1

Councillor to Elector Ratios

The table below shows the maximum and minimum numbers of electors per councillor for a given authority type based on December 2021 data. Also shown is the elector to council ratio for Canterbury City Council. This shows the reader where Canterbury sits in comparison to councils of the same type.

Authority Type	Elector/Cllr ratio (Min)	Elector/Cllr ratio (Max)	Elector/Cllr ratio (Ave)	Canterbury Council
Two-Tier District	1,131	3,517	2,071	2,739

* Excludes Isles of Scilly

Electoral Equality

This table shows the current electoral equality for each of the wards in Canterbury City Council. This table contains the most recent electoral data available to the Commission it is not the data supplied by the council as part of its forecast. These figures may change between the Pen Portrait and the Draft Recommendations.

Ward Name	No. Cllrs	Electorate 2021	Variances 2021 (%)
Barton	3	7,091	-14%
Beltinge	2	5,996	9%
Blean Forest	3	3,990	-51%
Chartham & Stone Street	2	5,686	4%
Chestfield	2	5,716	4%
Gorrell	3	8,395	2%
Greenhill	1	3,277	20%
Herne & Broomfield	2	6,666	22%
Heron	3	9,696	18%
Little Stour & Adisham	1	3,161	15%
Nailbourne	1	3,174	16%
Northgate	2	3,397	-38%
Reculver	1	3,176	16%
Seasalter	2	6,198	13%
St. Stephen's	2	4,615	-16%
Sturry	2	6,059	11%
Swalecliffe	1	3,246	18%
Tankerton	1	2,881	5%
West Bay	1	3,203	17%
Westgate	2	5,226	-5%
Wincheap	2	5,999	9%

This table summarises how the authority meets the intervention criteria based on the figures above.

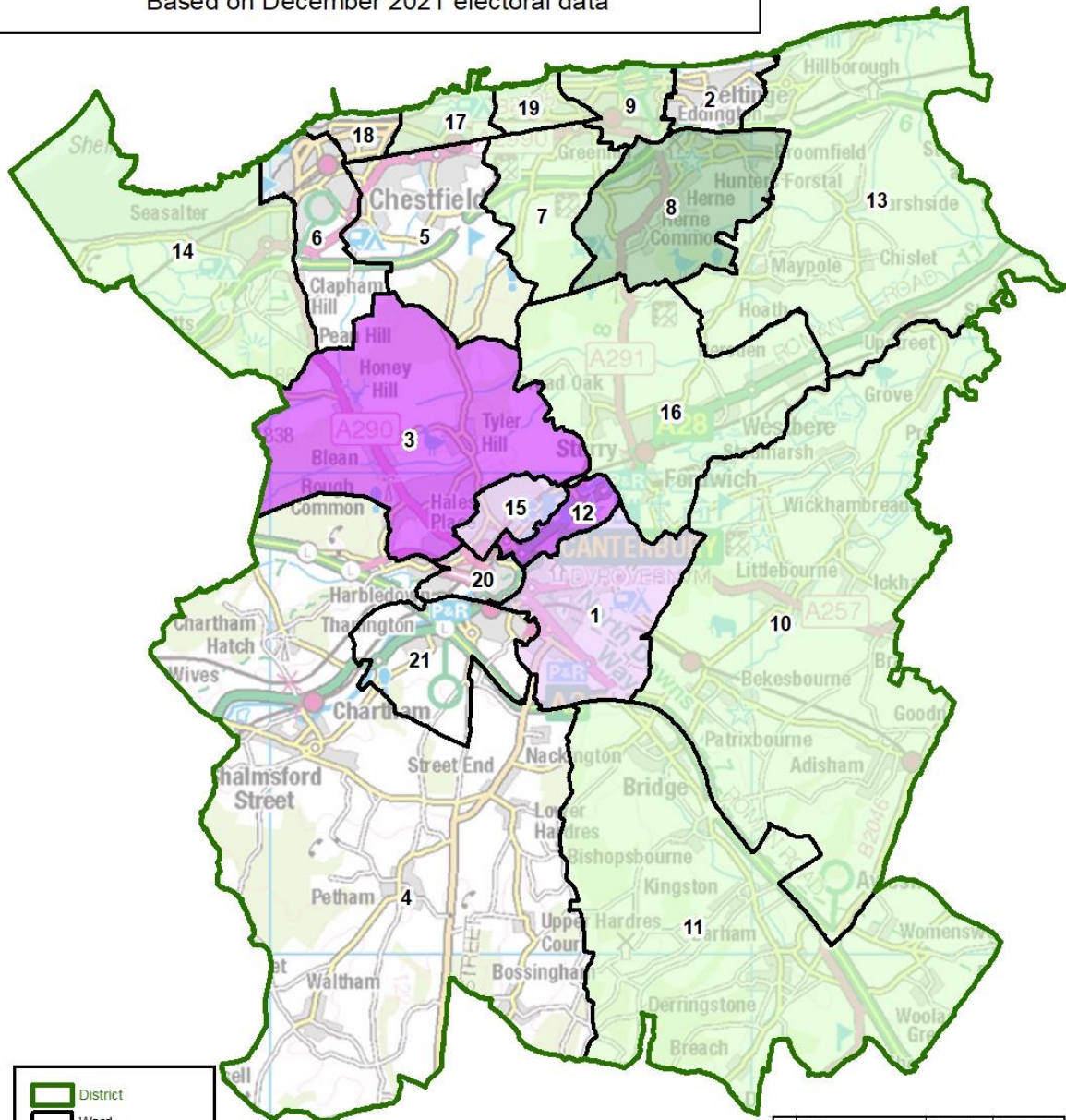
Total no. wards	21	
No. / % wards >10%	11	52%
No. / % wards >20%	1	5%
No. / % wards >30%	2	10%

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Barton	-14.6%	-15.0%	-7.5%	-13.8%	-13.7%
Beltinge	8.5%	8.8%	1.9%	8.4%	9.4%
Blean Forest	-40.1%	-36.6%	-26.6%	-50.0%	-51.5%
Chartham & Stone Street	1.4%	1.1%	-3.2%	3.8%	3.8%
Chestfield	3.8%	4.4%	-2.7%	4.0%	4.3%
Gorrell	1.5%	0.6%	-4.1%	2.1%	2.1%
Greenhill	12.9%	12.1%	5.9%	16.1%	19.6%
Herne & Broomfield	14.1%	15.2%	10.2%	19.7%	21.7%
Heron	17.3%	17.3%	10.2%	18.1%	18.0%
Little Stour & Adisham	14.0%	14.1%	8.5%	14.6%	15.4%
Nailbourne	15.1%	13.9%	8.2%	15.6%	15.9%
Northgate	-35.8%	-35.6%	-22.3%	-36.0%	-38.0%
Reculver	12.0%	13.0%	8.3%	15.7%	15.9%
Seasalter	12.2%	12.2%	5.8%	12.5%	13.1%
St. Stephen's	-6.4%	-8.4%	12.5%	-13.6%	-15.8%
Sturry	5.6%	6.6%	2.5%	9.5%	10.6%
Swalecliffe	18.5%	19.5%	11.2%	17.9%	18.5%
Tankerton	2.7%	1.7%	-3.6%	4.9%	5.2%
West Bay	15.3%	16.5%	10.3%	16.9%	16.9%
Westgate	-3.3%	-5.8%	2.9%	-4.5%	-4.6%
Wincheap	8.5%	6.6%	9.8%	10.8%	9.5%

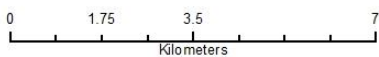
Current Wards by Variance

This map shows the current warding arrangement using the latest electoral data available. This is the data taken from the December 2021 register. Be aware that it may not be the same as either the data that was used when the authority was first identified for review or the current electoral registers held by the authority.

Canterbury City Council: Existing wards by variance
Based on December 2021 electoral data



District
 Ward
Current Variance (2021)
 < -30%
 < -20%
 < -10%
 within tolerance
 >10%
 >20%



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Ward	Councillors	Variance (%)
1 Barton	3	-14
2 Beltinge	2	9
3 Blean Forest	3	-51
4 Chartham & Stone Street	2	4
5 Chestfield	2	4
6 Gorrell	3	2
7 Greenhill	1	20
8 Herne & Broomfield	2	22
9 Heron	3	18
10 Little Stour & Adisham	1	15
11 Nailbourne	1	16
12 Northgate	2	-38
13 Reculver	1	16
14 Seasalter	2	13
15 St. Stephen's	2	-16
16 Sturry	2	11
17 Swalecliffe	1	18
18 Tankerton	1	5
19 West Bay	1	17
20 Westgate	2	-5
21 Wincheap	2	9

Electoral Change

Overall electorate for Canterbury has decreased by 1.3% in the last five years. 14 wards have seen a decrease in the size of their electorate in that time with the largest reduction in Blean Forest. This ward has reduced by 20%. 7 wards have seen an increase in the size of their electorate with the largest increase to the electorate in Herne & Broomfield. This ward/division has grown by 5%.

	2018	2022
Electorate	108,298	106,848
Percentage change since the base year (5 years past)	100%	98.7%

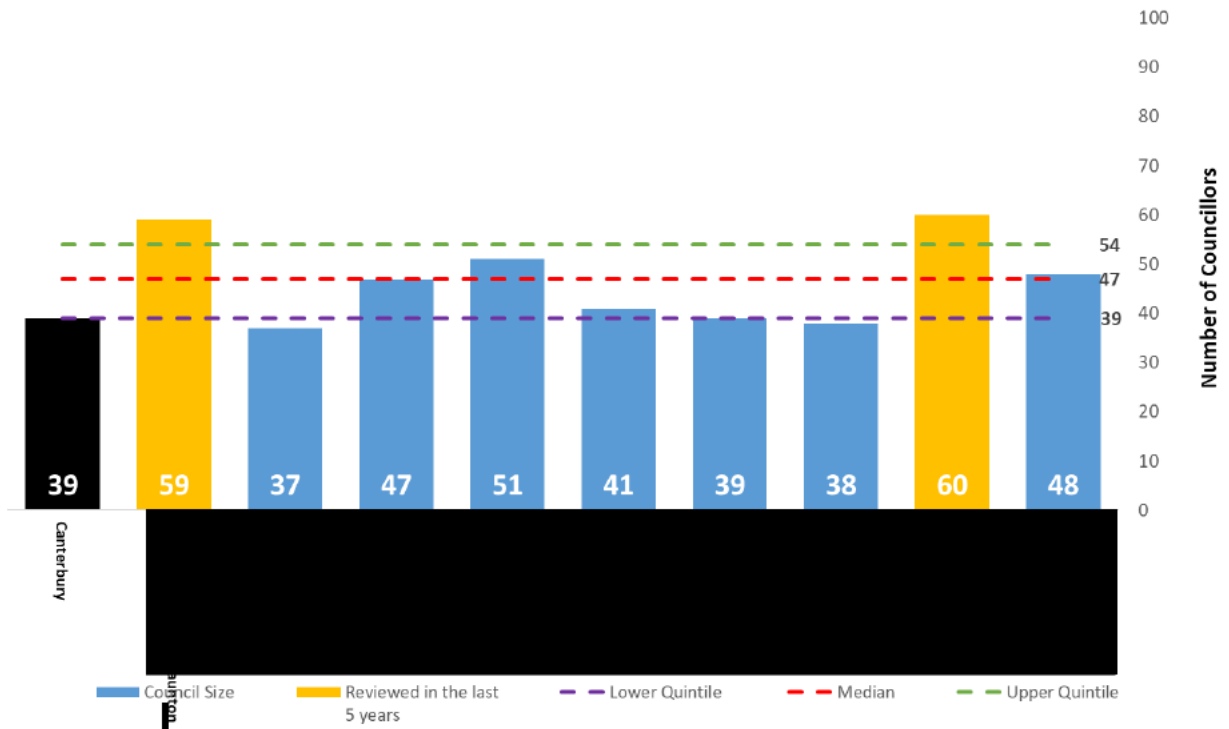
Previous Electoral Review

Review Started	August 2013	
Review Ended	August 2014	
Council Size	39	-11
No. Wards	21	-3
Election Cycle	Whole	
Full Report	Canterbury final recommendations 2014	

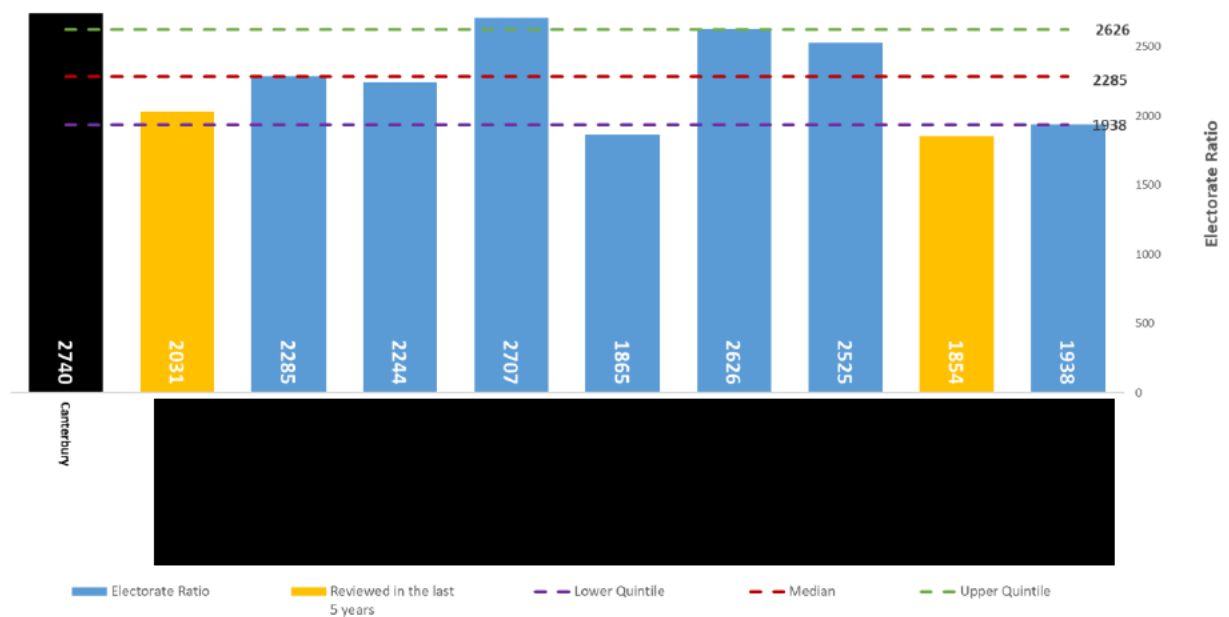
CIPFA Neighbours

The CIPFA Neighbours graphs below show Canterbury's council size and electoral ratios relative to those of other councils that have been identified as statistically. These give a guide as to where their council size fits and if there may be any interest in altering it.

2022/2023 CIPFA Group and Councillor Counts



2022/2023 CIPFA Group and Electorate Ratio



Key Facts

Canterbury has a population of around 157,400.

The political control of the Council has been:

- Conservative: since 2005;
- NOC: 1991 to 2005;
- Conservative: 1973 to 1991.

Council Details

Full Council Name	Canterbury City Council
Address	Council Offices, Military Rd, Canterbury CT1 1YW
Telephone	01227 862 000
Website	https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/

Our Council Contact Details

Name	Tricia Marshall, Head of Paid Service & Director of Corporate Services.
Email Address	tricia.marshall@canterbury.gov.uk
Telephone No.	TBC


Senior Staff Details

Chief Executive	N/A ¹
Leader	Councillor Ben Fitter-Harding (Conservative)
Leader of the Opposition	Councillor Dave Wilson (Labour)


MP Details


Sir Roger Gale	Consevative (North Thanet)
Rosie Duffield	Labour (Canterbury)


Councillor Biographies

Tricia Marshall	Head of Paid Service & Director of Corporate Services.
	N/A

¹ Since March 2022 Canterbury does not have a Chief executive, but rather a Corporate Leadership Team comprising: Head of Paid Service and Director of Corporate Services; Director of Strategy and Improvement; and Director of People and Place.

Councillor Ben Fitter-Harding (Conservative)	Leader of the Council and Conservative Group Leader.
	Councillor Fitter-Harding is member for Chestfield and was first elected in 2012. He has been Leader of the Council since September 2020.

Councillor Dave Wilson (Labour)	Labour Leader of the Opposition.
	Councillor Wilson is member for Barton and was first elected in 2019.

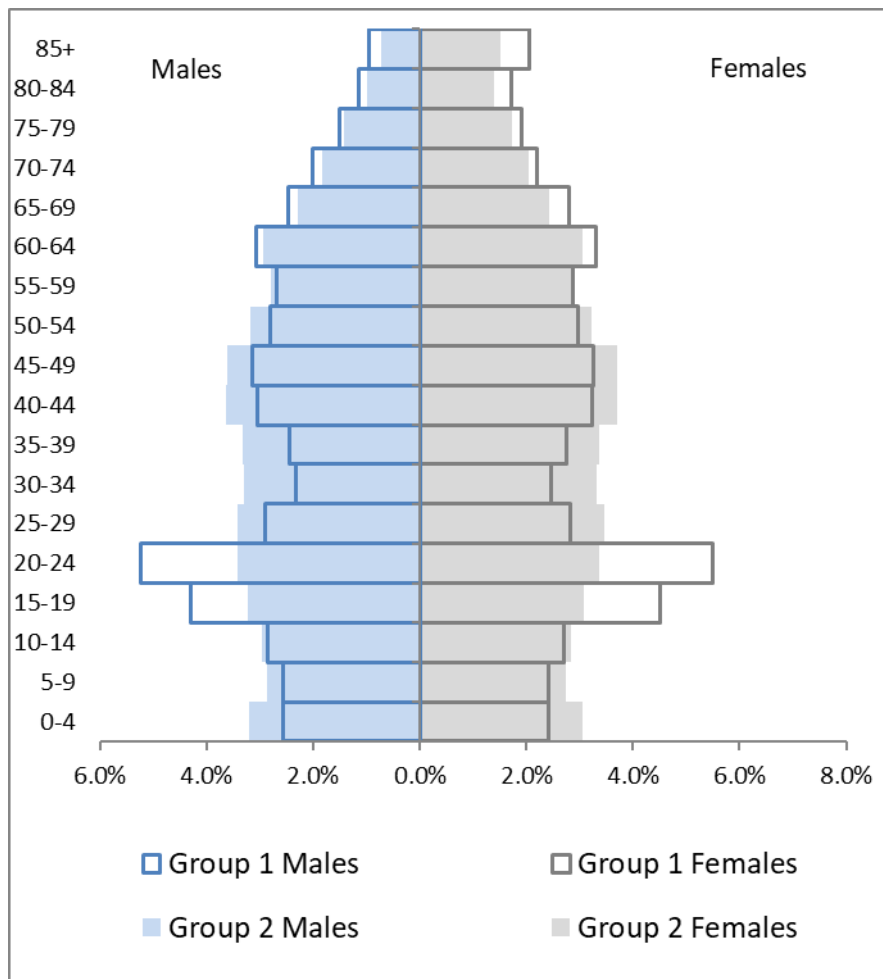
Councillor Michael Dixey	Leader of the Liberal Democrats
	Councillor Wilson is member for Westgate and was first elected in 1987.

Diversity Profiles

Age & Sex

The graph below shows the age profile by sex for the authority. The population aged 15 to 24 is higher than the average expected for England. However, the number of 25 to 54 year olds is lower than the average. The population for Canterbury is relatively young to the national average.

Group 1 = Canterbury | Group 2 = England



Ethnicity & Religion

The table below shows the ethnicity and religion for the population aged 18+ in this authority. The largest percentage of the population, 1.1% are classified as Other Asian. The next largest ethnic groups are Indian and Chinese, both with 1%.

0.7% of the population aged 18+ give their religion as Hindu, and 27% consider themselves to have no religion.

Population Aged 18+					ENGLAND			
Population aged 18+	Canterbury				Total	18+	% 18+ of total	
	Total	18+	% 18+	% of total				
All people	151,145	122,315	81%	100%	53,012,456	41,675,496	79%	100%
ETHNIC GROUP								
White British	132,269	106,843	81%	87.4%	42,279,236	33,836,906	80%	81.2%
White Irish	1,260	1,187	94%	1.0%	517,001	483,112	93%	1.2%
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	374	218	58%	0.2%	54,895	35,280	64%	0.1%
White Other	6,717	5,894	88%	4.8%	2,430,010	2,022,531	83%	4.9%
Mixed White-Caribbean	680	410	60%	0.3%	415,616	209,572	50%	0.5%
Mixed White-African	305	165	54%	0.1%	161,550	76,266	47%	0.2%
Mixed White-Asian	897	529	59%	0.4%	332,708	161,458	49%	0.4%
Mixed Other	669	451	67%	0.4%	283,005	155,566	55%	0.4%
Indian	1,448	1,186	82%	1.0%	1,395,702	1,096,752	79%	2.6%
Pakistani	306	252	82%	0.2%	1,112,282	708,959	64%	1.7%
Bangladeshi	251	197	78%	0.2%	436,514	269,505	62%	0.6%
Chinese	1,436	1,226	85%	1.0%	379,503	320,395	84%	0.8%
Other Asian	1,694	1,396	82%	1.1%	819,402	611,499	75%	1.5%
African	1,338	1,102	82%	0.9%	977,741	650,573	67%	1.6%
Caribbean	437	385	88%	0.3%	591,016	471,999	80%	1.1%
Other Black	162	111	69%	0.1%	277,857	161,709	58%	0.4%
Arab	405	340	84%	0.3%	220,985	152,145	69%	0.4%
Other	497	423	85%	0.3%	327,433	251,269	77%	0.6%
RELIGION								
Christian	91,122	75,100	82%	61.4%	31,479,876	25,721,735	82%	61.7%
Buddhist	880	761	86%	0.6%	238,626	206,086	86%	0.5%
Hindu	1,055	881	84%	0.7%	806,199	640,123	79%	1.5%
Jewish	267	231	87%	0.2%	261,282	202,654	78%	0.5%
Muslim	1,838	1,503	82%	1.2%	2,660,116	1,692,021	64%	4.1%
Sikh	245	207	84%	0.2%	420,196	322,990	77%	0.8%
Other religion	760	694	91%	0.6%	227,825	205,036	90%	0.5%
No religion	43,117	33,469	78%	27.4%	13,114,232	9,768,622	74%	23.4%
Not stated	11,861	9,469	80%	7.7%	3,804,104	2,916,229	77%	

Cabinet
10 July 2023

Subject: **Boundary Commission review - council size**

Director and Head of Service:

Director of Resources and Head of Paid Service

Officer:

Matthew Archer, Head of Corporate Governance

Cabinet Member:

This is a decision for Full Council

Key or Non Key decision: Non-Key

Decision Issues:

These matters are within the authority of the Council.

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public.

CCC ward(s): All

Summary and purpose of the report:

This report provides an overview of the Boundary Commission review process and provides a basis upon which to make a recommendation regarding the future size of the City Council.

The report is accompanied by an evidence base that describes the governance arrangements within the broader context of the operational and financial constraints affecting the council. The report also covers some of the significant governance changes that have taken place since the last review.

To Recommend:

That a preferred option is submitted to the Boundary Commission, based upon the information provided in the covering report and the evidence base.

Next stage in process:

The evidence base will be submitted to the Boundary Commission along with the recommendation of Full Council. The Boundary Commission will then make a decision about

future council size and will commence the next stage of the review looking at the warding patterns.

1. Introduction

Background

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) contacted the City Council stating that due to electoral imbalances arising in the Canterbury District since the last review in 2014/15, the criteria for triggering a Boundary review had been met, and as such the LGBCE would look to commence an intervention review.

The Electoral review comprises two distinct parts. The first part considers the total number of councillors to be elected to the Council in the future, and this is followed by a second stage that looks at the extent to which ward boundaries need to be re-drawn so that they meet the Boundary Commission's statutory criteria. This report is specifically addressing the first part of the review only.

The LGBCE ultimately make a judgement on Council size based on three broad areas:

- The governance arrangements of the Council and how it takes decisions.
- The Council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making and its responsibilities to outside bodies.
- The representational role of councillors in the local community.

Submissions on Council size need to be submitted to the LGBCE by 25 July 2023. Once this stage has been concluded then the second stage, which looks at ward boundaries, will commence. The LGBCE aims to complete the process by July 2024 and make the Order in Autumn 2024. The changes will take effect from the local elections in May 2027.

2. Detail

The drivers for the intervention review

The last review was completed in 2014, but the forecasts have not been realised. Indeed, the electorate has decreased since the last review. In 2013, at the start of the last review there were 113,105 electors. There are currently 108,398 registered electors (May 2023).

The pen portrait appended to the evidence base illustrates that the electoral number is relatively steady over a number of years but projections are not evenly spread. The divergence from the forecasted projections is based on electorate figures provided in the 5 years from 2018 - 2022.

The electoral inequality is significant, with 14 of the 21 wards being +/- 10% variance from the Electoral review forecast. This is the threshold to trigger an intervention by the Boundary Commission.

Four of the 21 wards are lower than the forecast ratio of residents to councillors. The two largest being Blean Forest (-51%) and Northgate (-38%).

Ten wards are higher than the forecast. The two highest are Herne and Broomfield (+22%) and Greenhill (+20%). Full details of all ward variances are provided in the pen portrait appended to the evidence base.

Council size submission – considerations

In considering the future size of the City Council, the starting point has been to look at trends and changes over recent years, and specifically since the last review was undertaken in 2014/15.

The evidence base provided in Appendix 1 sets out information that enables the Boundary Commission to make an informed decision about council size. It describes the governance arrangements of the Council and how it takes decisions; the Council's scrutiny and regulatory functions and the representational role of councillors in the local community, per the LGBCE guidance.

From this exercise, there are several headline findings that are summarised in the conclusion to the evidence base and this report, reflecting the overall reduction in council size since the last review in 2014.

Table 1: Summary of the evidence base analysis

	2014/15	2022/23	Percentage +/-
Number of meetings	140	82	-26.6%
Cabinet meetings	16	9	-43.75%
Scrutiny meetings (including Audit)	25	19	-24%
Number of councillors	50	39	-22%
Number of staff (FTE)	759	557	-26.6%
Council expenditure (*last available is 21/22)	£20.438m	£17.120m*	-16.2%
Member allowances	£386,029	£331,293	-14.2%
Outside body representation	34	20	-41.2%

Further information supporting these figures can be found in sections 4-12 and 15 of the evidence base. None of these reductions are determinative of themselves but they illustrate how the council has had to adapt in order to create sufficient capacity to maintain its governance arrangements with diminishing resources.

The governance model has changed twice since the last Electoral review. In 2015, the council moved from the 'leader and cabinet' model of governance to the 'committee' model. It then reverted back to the 'leader and cabinet' model in 2022.

Design principles relating to engagement, cost, efficiency and effectiveness were taken into account with each governance review. The Council has had a mind to not increase the 'cost of democracy' on each occasion. The brief was that the number of meetings should be broadly similar, irrespective of model, and costs should be managed within the existing budget envelope, having a mind to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

As such, whilst the City Council continues to do excellent work across a broad range of disciplines, it has done so in the context of reducing staff capacity and council budget.

This has meant the Council has had to use the resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. The pattern of change is demonstrated through initiatives such as the organisational change programme, maximising income streams, external funding bids, digital innovation and optimising the service delivery model.

Significant changes in the organisational structure since the last Electoral review include the creation of the Marlowe Trust in 2018; establishing a local authority company (Canenco) to deliver waste management and grounds maintenance services; and bringing various services in-house from shared service arrangements including housing tenancy management, ICT and HR. The decision to bring housing tenancy management was made following an intervention by the Housing Regulator relating to non-compliance on statutory safety inspections.

The council has also had to manage the impact of the global pandemic, inflationary increases, rising energy costs and the cost of living crisis, all of which have impacted on local residents' needs and the cost of services.

A whole district Community Governance Review undertaken in 2017/18, concluded that we should not pursue an interest in Town Councils at that particular time. There is renewed interest in Whitstable and Canterbury, which may in turn affect the governance arrangements at district level before the outcome of this review is felt in 2027.

The evidence base demonstrates how the council has adapted its governance arrangements to reflect the changing shape of the organisation. The leadership, scrutiny and regulatory arrangements are set out in detail.

The document also summarises the response to the councillor survey, which was conducted with the outgoing cohort of councillors in April 2023. It considers the impact of a growing councillor workload, which is attributed in part to an increase in the complexity of local residents' needs and diminishing resources in partner organisations/voluntary sector as well as the council.

The district has a comparatively high ratio of students for the size of resident population, not all of whom register every year with an evidential spike in the size of the electoral register from 108k to 116k in 2019, the General Election year.

In addition, research carried out by the [Electoral Commission](#) indicates that young people (under 35) and those considered to be at the lower end of the social economic scale grades are less likely to register. Anecdotally, some councillors reported this when campaigning for the 2023 local elections.

Full details of the councillor survey can be found in section 13 of the evidence base. This is supplemented by some profiling of the new 2023 cohort of councillors to establish age bands, the numbers who are working and those with caring responsibilities for dependents.

The results can be found in section 4 of the evidence base alongside commentary on their roles and responsibilities. It is evident that the challenges of juggling personal and professional lives with an increasing councillor workload is an emerging issue, based on the evidence gathered.

Comparison of council size with other two-tier authorities

The Boundary Commission is clear that benchmarking information will not carry significant weight in any consideration of council size so this information is provided more for context than anything else. The pen portrait provided to the Council by the LGBCE (appended to the evidence base) includes comparisons with two-tier authorities generally and a CIPFA Neighbour Group. Comparisons are summarised below and in section 13 of the evidence base.

The table below shows the maximum and minimum numbers of electors per councillor for a given authority type based on December 2022/23 CIPFA data. Also shown is the elector to council ratio for Canterbury City Council.

Table 3: Electorate ratio in Canterbury compared with the two-tier average (LGBRE)

Authority Type	Elector/Cllr ratio (Min)	Elector/Cllr ratio (Max)	Elector/Cllr ratio (Ave)	Canterbury Council
Two-Tier District	1,131	3,517	2,071	2,739

Council size

Compared with the CIPFA Neighbour Group (which may not necessarily include direct comparables in the context of a boundary review) the City Council, with 39 Councillors, is in the lower quintile for council size. Half of the comparator group has 41 councillors or less, the Median is 47 and two authorities in particular (Somerset West and Taunton (59) and Lancaster (60)) have a significantly larger council size. Comparator graphs are provided in section 13 of the evidence base.

Electorate ratio

The CIPFA Neighbour electorate ratio shows the City Council in the higher quintile of the comparator group, with the highest ratio of electors per councillor (2740) of the comparator group. A graph is provided in section 13 of the evidence base.

There is no discernible pattern linking the date of electoral reviews in our CIPFA benchmark group to council size or electorate ratio. It is based very much on local needs. However, it might be of interest to know where Canterbury sits overall within two-tier districts. The following summary is drawn from ONS [electorate data 2023](#).

Table 4: Benchmark comparison with all two-tier district councils

	Canterbury	Two-tier district position
Electors	106,848	36th of 181 authorities
Council Size	39	100th of 181 authorities
Electorate ratio	2740	11th of 181 authorities

The last Boundary Commission review in 2014 recommended 39 councillors, serving 21 wards, with an average number of electors per councillor of 2900.

According to the 2014 review, the electoral ratio figure was projected to increase to 3,086 by 2019. The present figure of 2779 (May 2023) is therefore lower than the 2014 Boundary Commission forecast for 2019.

Electoral register data in section 14 of the evidence base shows electoral numbers being steady at approximately 108,000, even accounting for the fact there was a local election in 2023. The exception is December 2019, when numbers increased to 116,000, due to the General Election.

Other factors

In the past few years and certainly since the pandemic, there has been a considerable change in ways of working and digital accessibility, driven by a desire to deliver services in a way that reflects resident's preferences to access services through a range of different channels. These are illustrated in the evidence base.

The organisational changes currently being introduced are designed to reduce the constituency workload of councillors by placing a greater focus on resident contacting services directly through a new case team. The introduction of a new Customer Relationship Management system later this year is designed to track customer interactions and divert casework to officers, allowing councillors to focus on supporting those in most need of their help alongside their other duties.

Conclusion

The evidence base sets out the existing governance arrangements of the Council and how it takes decisions; how the scrutiny functions are managed, supplemented with working groups and briefings; the position in relation to support for external bodies and finally the councillor's representative role, supported by benchmark data and the councillor survey.

It demonstrates how the council has adapted its governance arrangements to fit the capacity and budget of the organisation, irrespective of the model in place. As the council as a whole has reduced in size, so the arrangements have reduced proportionally and the council has, broadly speaking, continued to deliver services to a high standard.

Until now, the political steer from Council has been that any changes should reflect the size and scale of the organisation and be managed within the existing cost envelope.

However, the evidence base also demonstrates that councillor workload is substantial. Councillors report that cases have become more complex.

To offer an example, there are currently around 1600 residents on the Housing Needs Register and as the criteria of the allocations scheme prioritises those with the most housing need then there is a high volume of councillor involvement with people querying their banding, and a large proportion of these have multiple medical and social needs.

Access to other services like mental health and social care can be challenging for some of our housing applicants, the reality is that council staff are taking more calls from customers when they are at crisis point. Anecdotally the same can be said for councillors who are having to try and help signpost with a variety of issues not just council service related ones.

The transient nature of the student population can also impact on workload. The council works closely with the Universities via various groups and partnerships to ensure that matters are addressed. The high turnover of students each year results in a higher volume of enquiries than the norm. Further information is provided in section 13 of the evidence base.

Any variation in council size is likely to arise from the demands of the representative role.

The forecast increase in the electorate is estimated to be approximately 6,000 to 114,000 by 2029. This equates to two additional councillors when measured by electorate ratio.

Workloads are deemed to be heavy but there are organisational measures in place that, it is hoped, will address some of this. The council wishes to attract a broad demographic of candidates who are able to juggle personal, professional and council commitments. That too may point to a further increase in council size in order to reduce the ratio.

Based on the current electorate numbers, the following table offers an illustration of the impact on the electorate ratio of different numbers. A further increase of two to 43, would achieve an electorate ratio of approximately 2500, rising to 2650 in 2029, which councillors may judge to be an appropriate target. Based on current basic allowance costs of £6075 pa, the increase in costs would be c£25,000 once expenses are factored in. This is presented as option 1.

Alternatively, councillors may judge that the council has demonstrated how it can cut its cloth and that it can continue to do so with the existing council number of 39, with the organisational measures addressing present day concerns about workload. This is presented as option 2.

If councillors believe the evidence points to an alternative number then the table below may assist in demonstrating the impact of alternative numbers on electorate ratio.

Table 5: Electorate ratio for different council size

Council size	Electorate (May 2023)	Electorate ratio (based on May 2023)
39	108,398	2779
41	108,398	2643
43	108,398	2520
45	108,398	2408
47	108,398	2306
49	108,398	2212

The final decision is taken by the Boundary Commission, not the council. The purpose of this report and evidence base is to support the case for the recommendation that is put forward. The Boundary Commission will consider it alongside evidence provided in any other submissions before reaching a conclusion. The final council size is then dependent on the outcome of the next stage of the process when they review the warding patterns.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

Constitution
 General Fund budget 2023/24
 Corporate Plan

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

The review is being conducted by the Boundary Commission, who will oversee any consultation. The Council has been invited to submit its evidence base and a recommendation on council size. No consultation is planned during this phase as it relates primarily to the way the council organises itself.

The Boundary Commission has indicated that it will consult more widely on phase 2, when it considers warding patterns.

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

Option 1 - to recommend that the council size is increased to 43

The evidence base demonstrates how the governance arrangements have been designed to

suit a council size of 39. What is also evident is that there are concerns about the workload attached to councillor's representative role and their ability to juggle personal, professional and council commitments. Added to this is the increasing complexity of the caseload arising in part from pressures on public services and the voluntary sector and an expectation that councillors can resolve multi-agency issues. An increase of two councillors to reflect the forecast increase in electors, plus a further two to reduce the electorate ratio to a more manageable level will help to address this balance, whilst containing the increase in the 'cost of democracy' to a modest sum.

Option 2 - to recommend that the existing council size of 39 is retained

The evidence base has demonstrated how the council has adapted to the changes in its financial and staff capacity to manage the leadership, scrutiny and regulatory arms of its business within existing resources. The organisational changes that are currently being introduced are designed to reduce the constituency workload of councillors by managing contact through officers using new CRM technology.

Option 3 - to recommend that the existing council size is reduced

Although the evidence base has demonstrated the council's ability to adapt to changing circumstances, there is a need to balance this against the different representation roles they perform in cabinet, scrutiny, working groups and regulatory committees. Alongside that, a number of councillors report the workload demands are heavy and sometimes complex. Two-thirds of those who responded said the commitment was greater than expected. It is therefore not recommended that the council size is reduced.

Option 4 - to recommend that the council size is increased to a different number

The reductions that have been put in place have, by and large, resulted in more streamlined arrangements that continued to meet the design principles of the governance model. What is harder to account for is the impact of the representational role of councillors in the local community or changes that might arise from future political leadership initiatives.

The benchmark data indicates that the council size is comparatively low and electorate ratio high compared to the national average.

There is evidence that workloads have increased and the council is taking steps to address that. The ongoing interest in Town Councils could also have a bearing on council activity by the time of the next elections in 2027. There are therefore a number of variables which make it difficult to determine precisely what council size should be recommended at this time.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

There is no officer recommendation attached to this report.

7. Implications

(a) Financial

The report to the Council on the 2022 revisions to the governance arrangements stated that the cost of any new proposals should not exceed the costs of the existing arrangements.

There were a number of variables that affected the resources required to support the new arrangements, such as the frequency of meetings, the number of committees and the number of reviews managed at any one time. The intention was for the package of

measures needed to support the new arrangements to be met from existing budgets.

The report on councillors' allowances anticipated that the cost of any new proposals should not exceed the current budget allocation for allowances. The current basic allowance for a councillor is £6,075 pa, plus expenses.

(b) Legal

The LGBCE has functions under Part 3 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Under S56(1) of the 2009 Act, the LGBCE must, from time to time, conduct a review of the area of each principal council, and recommend whether a change should be made to the electoral arrangements. In this regard, "electoral arrangements" means:

- The total number of members of the Council
- The number and boundaries of electoral areas for purposes of the election of Councillors
- The number of Councillors to be returned by any electoral area in that area
- The name of any electoral area

The 2009 Act does not set out how many councillors each authority (or type of authority) will have. It is the LGBCE's responsibility to determine the appropriate number of councillors for each authority.

In making its recommendations, Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act requires the LGBCE to have regard to:

- a) The need to secure that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors is, as nearly as possible, the same in every electoral area of the Council
- b) The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and, in particular
 - i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
 - ii) the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any localities
- c) The need to secure effective and convenient local government.

(c) Equalities

There is no perceived impact on end users so the assessment form has not been completed.

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity

No significant impact has been identified. The assessment form is appended to the report.

Other implications

(e) Staffing resource

Additional council size could cause a need for additional staff capacity to support additional governance arrangements.

(f) Planning including building regulations

The regulatory arrangements in relation to planning and building control are managed within the existing constitutional arrangements. Further details are provided in the evidence base.

(g) Crime and disorder

The crime and disorder reduction responsibilities currently reside with the Scrutiny

Sub-Committee. Further details are provided in the evidence base

Contact Officer: Matthew Archer, Head of Corporate Governance

Background documents and appendices

Appendix A - Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)

Appendix B - Evidence Base, supported by the Canterbury 'Pen Portrait'

Additional document(s) containing information exempt from publication:

No

Appendix A - Environmental Impact Assessment

1. Climate Change impacts

Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation of impact If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	Mitigation
Impact on the council's target of being carbon neutral by 2030 This applies to emissions of carbon dioxide as a direct result of our own activities and services. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals		
Neutral	No significant changes are proposed to the council's existing operating arrangements.	
Impact on carbon emissions in the Canterbury district This applies to the carbon dioxide emissions in the district as a result of your proposal. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals.		
Neutral	No significant changes are proposed to the council's existing operating arrangements.	
Emission of other climate changing gases including methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide		
Neutral	No significant changes are proposed to the council's existing operating arrangements.	

2. Adaptation to climate change - Impact on our resilience to the effects of climate change

The greatest risks posed by climate change to the UK are:

- Flooding and coastal changes including erosion from extreme events
- Risks to health caused by high temperatures
- Water shortages and drought
- Risk to natural environments & services - landscape, wildlife, pollinators, timber etc
- Risk to food production & trade
- Emergence of new pests and diseases affecting people, plants & animals

What impact do your proposals have on our ability to resist or tackle these problems in the future?

Impact of proposal	Explanation of impact	Mitigation
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Positive/ Neutral/ Negative		
Neutral	No significant changes proposed	

3. Further assessment work

Is a further more detailed assessment required at a later stage of this proposal?

If yes, please give a brief description

Supplementary report: Boundary Commission review - council size

1. Introduction

Cabinet considered the report on council size at its meeting on 10 July 2023. It recommended to Council that the council size be increased to 43 councillors.

2. Detail

Since the discussion took place further updated evidence has come forward about the forecast electorate in 2029.

To summarise, the electorate figure as at May 2023 is **108,398**.

The evidence base projected an increase of 6,000 to **114,000** by 2029.

Forecasts are very difficult to predict in the Canterbury district due to the ongoing issues relating to nutrient deficiencies in the river near Stodmarsh. However, further consideration has been given to the sites that may come forward for development between 2023 and 2029, based on permissions granted.

The new projected forecast is **128,312** by 2029.

To be clear, this new figure is dependent on the sites being developed within the projected timescale. It is possible that the actual figure could be somewhere between the two projections.

Taking the whole evidence base into account, the Cabinet recommended an increase from 39 to 43 councillors.

This would have resulted in a ratio of **2,651** per councillor based on the population forecast in the evidence base. The table below shows the ratios based on a revised electorate forecast of 128,312, with the closest equivalent highlighted.

This new forecast is based on the phasing of development sites over 25 dwellings which have planning permission or are allocated in the adopted 2017 Local Plan and are projected to have completions by 2028/29.

There could be circumstances, which cannot currently be predicted, when sites do not come forward as expected prior to 2029 or where additional sites gain planning permission or an allocation in future Local or Neighbourhood Plans. However, the forecast is based on the current available information. A more cautious estimation is only likely to reduce the number to approx 127,000.

The impact on the electorate per councillor is set out in the table below. This should be considered alongside all of the other elements in the evidence base.

Table 1: Electorate ratio based on the revised electoral forecast for 2029

Electorate forecast for 2029	Councillors	Electorate ratio
128,312	43	2,984
128,312	46	2,789
128,312	47	2,730
128,312	48	2,673
128,312	49	2,619