

Electoral Review of Chorley Council

Draft Council Size Submission



CONTENT	PAGE NUMBER
INTRODUCTION	3
PROPOSAL	3
CHORLEY PROFILE	4
OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION	4

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Appendix 1 – Chorley Council's outside bodies list 2017/18
- Appendix 2 - Chorley Council's calendar of meetings 2017/18
- Appendix 3 - Executive Member Portfolios 2017/18
- Appendix 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/18
- Appendix 5 - Members Allowance Scheme
- Appendix 6 - Member Development Programme 2017/18

INTRODUCTION

The last periodic electoral review of Chorley Council was conducted in 1999/2000 by the Local Government Commission for England under the Local Government Act 1992. The final recommendations were published September 2000. The outcome of the review resulted in a reduction in the number of councillors from 48 to 47, and the number of wards from 22 to 20.

Chorley Council was informed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) that it would be conducting an electoral review intervention within its 2018/2019 work programme to improve electoral equality of the borough.

By law, the LGBCE have to take account of three main considerations when conducting an electoral review as set out in Schedule 2 of the Act:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

Electoral reviews are initiated primarily to improve electoral equality. This means ensuring as far as is reasonable, that for any principal authority the ratio of electors to councillors in each electoral ward or division is approximately the same.

Under the criteria adopted by the LGBCE, there are two conditions considered to warrant a review, if the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period:

- Any local authority with an electoral division or ward that has an electoral variance of 30% or over. This means a division or ward having 30% more or fewer electors per councillor than in average for the council as a whole, and;
- Any local authority where more than 30% of divisions or wards have an electoral variance of over 10% from the average for that authority.

Based on the electoral date given to the LGBCE by this authority, both of the above conditions have been met:

- 6 of the electoral wards have a variance greater than 10%
- 1 of the electoral wards (Astley and Buckshaw) has a variance of over 30%

This submission sets out the council's response to the LGBC invitation to put forward a case for council size. The council recognises the importance of electoral equality to a fair democratic process by ensuring that each vote carries the same value, whilst at the same time ensuring that governance of the council is maintained at a level which can best serve the electorate.

PROPOSAL

The approach in this submission has been to follow the LGBCE's guiding principles and address them both in terms of current arrangements and likely future trends and plans.

The council's submission has been developed by a cross party committee of 9 councillors. The Council's submission was approved ***** at a meeting of full council held on 10 April 2018.

After considering the evidence, at its meeting on the 10 April 2018, the Council resolved to reduce the council size to 42 on the grounds that: -

- The council wishes to retain its current practice of elections by thirds;
- As a consequence of the above, each borough ward should be represented by three councillors, to ensure a full and equitable representation of the electorate across the borough;
- The borough be divided into 14 electoral wards as this reflects both of the above, and also the community cohesion in the borough

- All out elections on these new proposals be held in May 2020, with the continuing cycle of borough elections by thirds commencing 2022;
- This reduction will ensure the council has the capacity to deliver effective arrangements for the management and delivery of its business and responsibilities;
- It will ensure that the council retains significant capacity to deliver and enhance its performance in these areas, whilst at the same time being able to respond to challenges facing local government in general and in particular the borough of Chorley.

CHORLEY PROFILE

The borough of Chorley is situated in central Lancashire and covers around 80 square miles. Its eastern border lies on sparsely populated upland rising towards the West Pennine Moors; the central spine is more urban, containing the market town of Chorley and settlements close to the M6, M61 and A6 that run north-south through the borough. In the West, the land merges into the Lancashire plain and is dotted with villages and hamlets. The borough is attractive with a large amount of green space.

Chorley borough is well placed for access to the major cities of the North West of England with good connections to the major motorway and good railway links to Manchester and Preston. Liverpool and Manchester International Airports are easily accessed by motorway and rail. These good links make it an attractive area to live in for people working across the North West, and this is reflected in its population, which is steadily increasing.

There are 114,400 people living in 49,900 households and this figure is expected to increase by a substantial 24.6% between 2014 and 2039. 17% of Chorley's population are aged under 15 years, 66% are aged 15 to 64 years and 17% are aged 64 years or over. The percentage of the population belonging to a black or minority ethnic community is 3.1 per cent.

Unemployment as a percentage of the working age population is below the Lancashire and regional average. A higher proportion of Chorley's population has a level four qualification which is higher than the regional and national averages, and local schools and colleges have a good record of achievement.

Chorley is a borough that does not have inner urban areas that have experienced significant depopulation or new immigration. It does not have a university and is not subject to changing populations of students or armed forces. Historical data is not readily available on a ward basis. However, it is a borough that has experienced significant housing development in recent years. More homes have been built in Chorley than anywhere else in Lancashire in recent years and the council receives the highest new homes bonus in the county. The borough has exceeded its housing requirements every year for the past eight years and has consistently successfully defended its deliverable five year housing supply.

OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION

The council's submission addresses the key points raised in the LGBCE's technical guidance which stresses the importance of submitting 'well-reasoned proposals that are based on the individual characteristics and needs of each local authority area and its communities.'

Furthermore, the council's submission satisfies the LGBC's aims of being able to:

"Recommend a council size that allows:

- The council to take decisions effectively;
- Manage the business and responsibility of the council successfully;
- Provide effective community leadership and representation."

Near neighbour comparison data

As part of the council's submission, a comparison exercise was undertaken to compare the electorate, with the number of councillors.

The table below compares the authority equally with our CIPFA nearest neighbours for comparable size across the county and the council's geographical neighbours.

Authorities	Electors	Number of Councillors	Number of Wards	Average Electors per Councillor
Chorley Borough Council	85,575	47	20	1,821
Nearest Neighbours				
Amber Valley Borough Council	98,225	45	15	2,150
Bassetlaw District Council	86,523	48	25	1,782
Broxtowe Borough Council *	84,632	44	20	1,742
East Northamptonshire Council	70,200	40	22	1,708
East Staffordshire Borough Council	86,335	38	23	2,272
Erewash Borough Council *	86,632	47	19	1,864
Gedling Borough Council *	89,887	41	19	2,192
High Peak Borough Council*	71,880	48	28	1,497
Kettering Borough Council	73,810	36	17	1,960
North Warwickshire Borough Council	49,446	35	17	1,423
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	93,978 (tbc)	34	17	2,764
South Kesteven District Council	108,320	56	30	1,883
Local Neighbours				
Preston City Council *	95,764	48	16	2,084
South Ribble Borough Council	85,032	50	23	1,700
West Lancashire Borough Council	86,468	54	25	1,601

Key: * an electoral review has taken place in the last 5 years.
(tbc) figure to be confirmed

PART 1: GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

LEADERSHIP

<p>1.1 What kind of governance arrangements are in place for the authority?</p>	<p>Under the Local Government Act 2000, Chorley Council adopted a Cabinet style system with a Leader and Executive. The council operates a 'strong Leader' model whereby the Executive is appointed by the elected Leader.</p> <p>All of the Council's functions are exercised by the Executive arm of the Council unless the law makes specific provision to the contrary. Where the law provides the Council with a choice, the council's constitution determines whether a function may be exercised by the Executive.</p> <p>The Executive Cabinet consists of an Executive Leader and a Deputy Executive Leader together with four other Councillors appointed as members of the Executive by the Executive Leader. The Executive Leader is also Leader of the Executive Cabinet. The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor may not be appointed as Executive Members.</p> <p>In the event of the Executive Leader being unable to discharge his/her duties as Leader due to absence, the Deputy Executive Leader shall assume those duties until the Leader is able to resume his/her duties or full Council appoints a new Executive Leader. The Executive Cabinet is made up of the Executive Leader, Deputy Leader and four Executive Members each of whom hold a portfolio.</p> <p>There are 8 formal meetings of the Executive per year and 8 informal briefings.</p>
<p>1.2 How many portfolios are there?</p>	<p>There are 6 portfolios, one held by each member of the Executive as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development and Public Service Reform (Leader of the Council) • Resources (Deputy Leader of the Council) • Early Intervention • Homes and Housing • Public Protection • Customer, Advice and Streetscene Services
<p>1.3 To what extent are decisions delegated to portfolio holders or are most decisions taken by the full Executive?</p>	<p>The Executive Cabinet may exercise any Executive Function.</p> <p>A Portfolio holder may take any Executive decision which relates to his or her Portfolio.</p> <p>The Executive Leader may take any decision which an individual Portfolio holder could take where the relevant Portfolio holder is unable or unwilling to take that decision. The Executive Leader may alter the allocation of responsibilities within any Portfolio. Chief Officers may take any Executive decision which relates to the services</p>

under their control except where the relevant Portfolio holder has instructed them not to make such a decision. Chief officers may nominate other officers to take decisions which they have the power to take.

All decisions must be made in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and any policies of the council.

The following principles shall be observed by decision makers exercising Executive functions:

- Key decisions should normally be made by the Cabinet as a whole
- Decisions which significantly affect more than one Portfolio should normally be made by the Cabinet as a whole
- Decisions of an operational or managerial nature should normally be made by Chief Officers
- Decisions of a strategic nature would normally be made by Members.

No decision shall be open to legal challenge on the basis that these principles have been breached.

Functions of the support roles to Executive Members

Member Responsible

In relation to a Portfolio of functions and/or matters assigned to them by the Executive Leader, Member Responsible, where they are appointed are assigned special responsibilities to the Council for:

1. Maintaining knowledge and awareness of those functions or matters and of current activities and developments in relation to them;
2. Liaising with the corresponding Executive Member and the responsible Chief Officer;
3. Communicating and representing to the Executive, the views of non-Executive Councillors on all matters relating to the Portfolio;
4. Assisting the Executive Member in promoting the efficient and effective delivery of the relevant services and the achievement of all relevant Council policy objectives in compliance with the approved budgets and providing all such other assistance, advice and support as the Executive Member may from time to time require;
5. Responding to and assisting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or task groups as required;
6. In the absence of the Executive Member, deputising for him or her at meetings of the Council and responding to questions; and
7. In the absence of the Executive Member, or when otherwise requested by the Executive Member, representing the Executive Member and leading for the Council politically and publicly in external dealings and relationships, including the media.

	<p>8. Reporting to portfolio Exchange meetings on specific agreed projects undertaken and delivered by them as directed by the Executive Leader/Executive Member.</p> <p><u>Council Champions</u></p> <p>Whilst a reduced role from that of a Member Responsible, a Council Champion will still be assigned a portfolio of functions and/or particular projects by the Executive Leader.</p> <p>A Council Champion will be responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintaining knowledge and awareness of those functions or matters and of current activities and developments in relation to them; 2. Liaising with the corresponding Executive Member/Member Responsible and the responsible Chief Officer; 3. Communicating and representing to the Executive, the views of non-Executive Councillors on all matters relating to the Portfolio; 4. Assisting the Executive Member in promoting the efficient and effective delivery of the relevant services and the achievement of all relevant Council policy objectives in compliance with the approved budgets and providing all such other assistance, advice and support as the Executive Member may from time to time require; 5. Responding to and assisting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or task groups as required; 6. In the absence of the Executive Member/Member Responsible, deputising for him or her at meetings of the Council and responding to questions.
1.4	<p>Do Executive (or other) members serve on other decision making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies?</p> <p>The Leader represents the council in the community and on important public bodies e.g. Local Government Association and acts as the council's primary spokesperson (see the Outside Bodies list attached for more information).</p>
1.5	<p>In general, are leadership and/or portfolio roles considered to be full time roles?</p> <p>Chorley Council is an ambitious local authority, and as such requires a significant time commitment of its Leader and Executive Members.</p> <p>The finding of a recent survey that asked about members time commitments indicated that the Leader spent over 30 hours per week on council business with Executive Members spending an average of 25 to 30+ hours.</p>
REGULATORY	
1.6	<p>In relation to licensing, planning and other regulatory responsibilities, to what extent are decisions delegated to officers?</p> <p>The council's constitution sets out the delegation arrangements in respect of regulatory functions.</p> <p>The majority of planning applications are determined by officers, unless a ward councillor has concerns or disagrees with the case officer's recommendations, or thinks that an application maybe particularly contentious.</p>

		The council's Scheme of Delegation for licensing matters authorises the Director (Public Protection, Streetscene and Community) to decide specific categories of license applications. These are typically non-contentious and/or uncontested applications, which the council has no legal option but to grant.
1.7	How many members are involved in committees?	<p>Apart from the meetings of annual council, ordinary council meetings and special council meetings which all 47 members attend – the membership of the committees consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Control Committee - 15 (plus 6 substitutes (3 substitutes split between the two major parties)); • Governance Committee - 8 • Licensing and Public Safety Committee - 15 (plus 4 substitutes (2 split between the two major parties), • General Licensing Sub Committee - 5 • Licensing Act 2003 Sub Committee – 3
1.8	Is committee membership standing or rotating?	At the annual council meeting the membership of the various committees for the municipal year are agreed. Minor changes can be made through the year when necessary by approval of the full council.
1.10	What level of attendance is achieved? Are meetings always quorate?	<p>Level of attendance is generally good and meetings are always quorate. This in part may be due to the majority of meetings being held in the evening. There is also provision in the council's constitution for the appointment of named substitute members for certain committees' which include Development Control Committee, Licensing and Public Safety Committee and the Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee.</p> <p>On average, members are expected to attend 15 meetings per year (were attendance is record). Collectively, that figure represents 703 meetings, of which members have actually attended 630 meetings. This equates to an attendance rate of 89.61%.</p>
1.11	Does the council believe that changes to legislation, national or local policy will have an influence on the workload of committees and their members which would have an impact on council size?	No, to date while changes to legislation, national or local policy can and have impacted on the how services are delivered and therefore have an impact on council staff capacity, they have not had impacted greatly on the workload of committees and or their members. Based on this we do not see further changes impacting on committee workload or council size.
DEMANDS ON TIME		
1.12	Is there a formal role description for councillors in your authority?	<p>The council's constitution lists the roles and functions of all councillors as detailed below.</p> <p>All councillors will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions; 2. contribute to the good governance of the Borough and actively encourage community participation and citizen contributions to decision-making;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. represent their communities and act as the advocates of those communities in the Council's decision-making processes; 4. deal with individual casework and assist constituents in resolving particular concerns or problems; 5. respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially; 6. participate in the governance and management of the Council; 7. be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and 8. maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics. 9. have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
1.13 Do councillors receive formal training for all or any roles of the council?	<p>Each year the council delivers a comprehensive training programme which includes both skills and knowledge based training.</p> <p>All members are required to undergo Code of Conduct training at a minimum every two years.</p> <p>When a member is newly elected they are enrolled on to an induction programme which consists of a day's induction and the receipt of an induction pack containing relevant information they need as a new councillor. Two special training sessions are scheduled soon after their election which covers topics about common ward issues, and common planning issues. The aim of both sessions is to provide practical knowledge of how to handle concerns raised in their wards. The new councillor is also invited to take the option of having individual training with officers on a topic they are interested in (ie licensing, planning etc).</p> <p>In addition, those members who are new to either the Development Control Committee or the Licensing a Public Safety Committee, or have not sat on that committee for over 2 years, have to undertake mandatory training.</p> <p>Members of Development Control Committee also receive technical briefings. The purpose of the briefings are to explain complex technical information prior to a meeting in which they are expected to understand very technical information so that they can make an informed decision.</p> <p>Governance Committee members are also expected to undertake a variety of training prior to meetings in which they will be expected to make informed decisions ie Statement of Accounts.</p>
1.14 Do councillors generally find that the time they spend on council business is what they expected?	A recent survey asked about members' time commitments over 90% of the 22 respondents indicated that they did find that the time they spent on council business is as expected.
1.15 How much time do members generally spend on the business of	On the same survey as the above, 32% of members (not including the Leader and Executive Members) worked between 10-15 hours per week, 32% of members worked between 15-20 hours per week, 9% of members worked

	the council?	between 20-25 hours per week, and 27% worked 10 hours per week or less.
1.16	Does the council appoint members to outside bodies? If so, how many councillors are involved in this activity and what is their expected workload?	<p>The council appoints to 43 outside bodies in total, some of which have multiple vacancies. The total number of appointments made to the outside bodies is 64.</p> <p>The total number of councillors involved on outside bodies is 33, of which some serve on multiple bodies.</p>
1.17	Does the council attract and retain members?	<p>The council does not play an overly active role in attracting and retaining members, although historically it has provided information for prospective new members.</p> <p>As the majority of members are affiliated to a political party Chorley Council cannot become involved in who will be put forward as candidates. In the 2016 local borough elections all wards were contested.</p>
1.18	Have there been any instances where the council had been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of councillors?	There have been no instances where the council has been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of councillors.
1.19	Do councillors have an individual or ward budget allocation in their area? If so how is such a system administered?	Councillors are able to apply for a £250 from a Councillor Community Grant for a community or voluntary group working in their ward or across the borough. The purpose of the grant is to increased opportunities for member/resident engagement and allow Councillors to respond more readily to requests for small amount of funding from organisations within their wards.
PART 2: SCRUTINY FUNCTIONS		
2.1	How do scrutiny arrangements operate in the authority? How many committees are there and what is their membership?	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an overarching committee which leads and co-ordinates the Council's overview and scrutiny functions. The Committee undertakes Scrutiny reviews itself but also appoints task and finish groups to undertake individual scrutiny reviews. There are 4 meetings per year and it has a membership of 14 councillors.</p> <p>The Performance Panel monitors the Council and Local Strategic Partnership performance. Relevant Executive Members attend to answer questions on their service areas. There are 4 meetings per year and the membership consists of 6 members that also sit on the overarching committee including its Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>Each "task and finish" group is appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review into a particular matter. The membership of the "task and finish" group will normally include Councillors who are members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee but all members other than Executive Members are eligible and encouraged to participate in a task and finish group.</p> <p>Once a task and finish group has completed its investigation it will prepare a report which will be submitted to the</p>

	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>There are between 2 and 3 task and finish groups per year lasting between 2 and 6 months. There is no set number for the membership, although they tend to range between 5 and 9 councillors.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee report periodically to the full Council on its workings and its future and ongoing work programmes and working methods and those of the Performance Panel and Task and Finish Groups.</p>
2.2	<p>What is the general workload of scrutiny committees? Has the council ever found that it has had too many active projects for the scrutiny process to function effectively?</p> <p>Within its terms of reference, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions; • make reports and recommendations to the full Council, its Committees or Sub-Committees, the Executive or any Council Officers, in relations to the Council's functions; • consider any matter affecting the borough or its residents; • review decisions made or planned to be made by the Executive before they are implemented; and • undertake the scrutiny of crime and disorder in the Borough through scrutiny of the local Community Safety Partnership. <p>The Council's Scrutiny function has worked very effectively. There is a transparent approach to project delivery with updates regularly taken to Executive Cabinet for consideration. The council has an open Cabinet system where all members are invited and entitled to speak.</p>
2.3	<p>What activities are scrutiny committee members expected to carry out between formal meetings?</p> <p>All members are expected to consider published Executive Decisions and the Executive Cabinet agenda and reports. In addition they are expected to participate in task and finish groups who then report into the full Committee.</p>
PART 3: REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE OF COUNCILLORS	
3.1	<p>In general terms, how do councillors carry out their representational roles with electors? Do members mainly respond to casework from constituents or do they have a more active role in the community?</p> <p>There is an expectation that Councillors are community leaders. Whilst they do receive and act on case work, they frequently are also involved in local community groups and parish councils.</p>
3.2	<p>How do councillors generally deal</p> <p>There is definitely a mix in approaches which changes with experience. More experienced councillors or those with</p>

	with casework? Do they pass on issues directly to staff or do they take a more in depth approach to resolving issues?	specific responsibilities are often more prepared to take direct action on case work themselves. There is still a significant amount of work that is passed on for action by officers but this is generally an appropriate response to the issue raised.
3.3	What support do councillors receive in discharging their duties in relation to casework and representational role in their ward?	<p>According to the member survey members receive a variety support as detailed below to discharge their duties in relation to casework and representational role in their ward –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • officer support • ward colleagues • party colleagues • local political party office • MPs • member training
3.4	How do councillors engage with constituents? Do they hold surgeries, distribute newsletters, hold public meetings, write blogs etc?	<p>There are a number of ways which members engage with their constituents. From the recent member survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% (20 members) of respondents engage with their constituents via street surgeries/knocking door to door and produce newsletters • 41% use social media • 27% attend public meetings • 14% hold surgeries <p>Other forms of engagement used include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal/spontaneous conversations • House visits • By telephone, email • Via other agency meetings
3.5	How has the role of councillors changed since the council last considered how many elected members it should have?	<p>The role of a ward councillor has changed dramatically. Technology does and will have a significant role to play in enabling councillors to communicate with their residents and communities. Also many residents who traditionally would have approached their local councillor to access information, can access the information directly from the authority itself.</p> <p>Since the last electoral review in 1999/2000 the use and availability of technology by members in discharging their representational role had increases year on year. This has been particularly accelerated since 2014 since the council's introduction of paperless meetings as part of the council's Digital Strategy, and the use of iPads for members to access their committee papers, emails, and to report casework through MyAccount.</p>
3.6	Has the council put in place any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One members represents the council on the Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Children's trust

	mechanisms for councillors to interact with young people, those not on the electoral register or minority groups or their representative bodies?	<p>which engages with the local youth council to consider service needs and provision for young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average 12 councillors are involved in an annual democracy day event which engages local primary school children. • There is an annual Q&A session involving the Leader of the council and the main opposition group leader at a Runshaw College. This session is organised by the council and includes MPs from both the Chorley and South Ribble Borough constituencies. • One councillor leads Chorley's Equality Forum which engages with minority groups and their representative bodies in various events and task and finish groups throughout the year, the latest event focusing on community cohesion.
3.7	Are councillors expected to attend meetings of community bodies such as parish councils or residents associations? If so, what is the level of their involvement and what role are they expected to play?	Councillors are certainly encouraged to attend community meetings although this falls short of expected. Councillors who have specific responsibilities are expected to attend meetings such as Town Team and Town Centre Forum, the Equality Forum, Chorley Liaison, Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee, Chorley Public Service Reform Board, Chorley Public Service Reform Executive, Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Children's Partnership Board, Chorley Strategic Housing Partnership Meeting, Neighbourhood Area Meetings which are all council meetings focusing on stakeholder engagement.
PART 4: THE FUTURE		
LOCALISM AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT		
4.1	What impact do you think the localism agenda might have on the scope and conduct of council business and how do you think this might affect the role of councillors?	As a council we have already noticed a change in the role of councillors due to the localism agenda and need to work in a different way in order to provide public sector leadership for the area and to act more commercially than ever before in order to ensure the council can deliver a balanced budget and continue to deliver its services. Councillors increasingly need to develop more skills and look beyond just the council's services and their local wards, working with partners to look at the wider needs of the borough. In some cases this may include taking on additional services where we are in a better place to deliver them, or may also mean passing over some responsibility to another partner who maybe better placed than the council to deliver services to our residents. This change is not instead of the valued work they do as a ward councillor working closely with local communities, it is as well as.
4.2	Does the council have any plans to devolve responsibilities and/or assets to community organisations? Or does the council expect to take on more responsibilities in the medium to long term?	<p>The Council is regularly reviewing its assets and its responsibilities to ensure that they are delivered in the most appropriate way. Over the next 18 months we will be looking at our community centers, leisure contract and Astley Hall to consider whether these assets are best run by the council, the local community or an external service provider. Other assets and services may also be considered.</p> <p>In 2013 we purchased a 35 unit shopping center in the Chorley Town center which we manage ourselves and brings in an additional revenue income stream and also support the town center economy.</p>

	In addition, it should be noted that the Council are developing new assets in the borough which we plan to manage in house. These assets should not only deliver a sustainable income stream for the borough they will support the council to deliver its priorities such as a strong local economy and provision of high quality, affordable and suitable housing. Examples of these ambitious projects include the Market Walk Extension and the Primrose Garden's extra care scheme.
SERVICE DELIVERY	
4.3	<p>Have changes to the arrangements for local delivery of services led to significant changes to councillors' workloads?</p> <p>The council has a shared arrangement with South Ribble Borough Council for its finance and assurance service. This arrangement is due to be extended to include Legal Services and Transactional Human Resources (excluding Organisational Development).</p> <p>The council is also in partnership with the Lancashire Care Foundation Trust to deliver a new Integrated Community Wellbeing Service.</p> <p>With the exception of councillors that are on part of the membership of the committee/meeting that has responsibility for these services, these arrangements at present do not have a significant impact on the workload of members.</p>
4.4	<p>Are there any developments in policy ongoing that might significantly affect the role of elected members in the future?</p> <p>There are currently no ongoing policy developments which we think will significantly affect the role of elected members in the future.</p>
FINANCE	
4.5	<p>What has been the impact of recent financial constraints on the council's activities? Would a reduction in the scope and/or scale of council business warrant a reduction in the number of councillors?</p> <p>Periods of austerity and financial restraint are challenging times for local government in ensuring that they can continue to deliver key services and make the necessary budget cuts.</p> <p>To date, the council has managed to work within the financial constraints whilst still providing its core and discretionary services.</p>
4.6	<p>If you are proposing a reduction in the number of councillors for your authority to what extent is this a reflection of reduced activity of the council overall, an anticipation of efficiency plans or a statement to local people? Or none of these</p> <p>The proposed reduction in council size is not a reflection of reduced activity, but rather an acknowledgement that we do need to look to reduce the number of councillors to improve democratic accountability. This is balanced against consideration of the need to effectively discharge the regulatory functions of the council, the role and time placed upon Members and also allows for a good level of democratic accountability to the residents of the borough.</p> <p>In terms of democratic accountability we have taken into consideration the rate of population growth in the borough which is forecast to increase at one of the highest rates in Lancashire over the next 6 years. Based on a proposed reduction of 5 councillors to 42 the average electors per councillor will be in the region of 2,146 which will be</p>

things?	manageable increase (from 1,821) and be within a similar range of average electorate numbers when compared with other councils of a similar make up and size (nearest neighbours) and also our geographical neighbouring councils.
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