

Council Size Submission Guidance

The LGBCE has compiled the following list of headings and points for consideration that might be expanded upon during the completion of a council size submission. The list is by no means exhaustive, and particularly in the case of councils looking for a substantial alteration in numbers may need to be expanded on. We do not expect council size submissions to be exceptionally lengthy documents and have found that, as a rough guide, up to ten pages is sufficient – however each council is different.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reason for review

- Intervention – with a background on how the situation arose
- Request – with detailed reason

Aims & Objectives

Exclusions

- Unitary status issues
- Community governance reviews, any completed recently, or ongoing?

2. BACKGROUND

Local Authority Profile

- Brief outline of area/any notable geographic issues that may affect the review
- Particularly rural or urban? What are the impacts/consequences?
- Demographic makeup? Aged, young, migrant, transitional, large growth anticipated – what are the impacts/consequences?
- Model of Governance & political management arrangements. Is there an elected Mayor?
- Any other constraints/challenges/issues/ changes ahead

Previous reviews

- When was it?
- What was the outcome – any particular arising issues?
- Positive or negative changes

Who developed the proposal?

- Cross party working group/Officers/ Political Management Member Panel
- Internal review process
- If by/on behalf of Full Council, was it voted unanimously? How much opposition?

3. PROPOSAL

Outline considerations that may be made in developing a proposal

- How the council functions now
- How it plans to function five years from now; key focuses or issues for the council
- The council's position relative to its Cipfa defined Nearest Neighbours, what this means for them, and their justification for changing or maintaining this position.
- The governance arrangements for the council, now and in the future
- The council's overview and scrutiny functions, details of any other committees or boards
- The representational role of councillors within the local community and how this has changed
- How the council delivers its services

- Impact of outside bodies on the council
- Councillor Profiles; any portfolios, and the number of positions on committees and outside bodies – how many on average per councillor? What are the demands on councillors' time? How many hours per week/month/year so councillors spend on council business? How easy is it to recruit new councillors?
- Influence of technology and social media? What support are councillors given in adopting new technology and other training?
- Forecast electoral growth.
- Details of other council sizes considered and reasons for not choosing these numbers

We encourage Councils to start from a council size of zero and then look at how they operate, taking into account some of the considerations above. From this point start to build up to the size that they feel would allow them to function most effectively. If a council has pre-determined their council size by some other means or feels that their current size is appropriate then we would encourage them to demonstrate why this is so, and why a different number, either higher or lower, would be inappropriate.

It can be useful to survey members to get a better understanding as to how much time they spend on council work, meetings, committees, face to face surgeries, correspondence, social media and the like. The results help provide real justification for a proposal.

4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

This might include any specific resolutions passed or links to council meeting minutes where papers have been agreed.