Council Size Submission

Reading Borough Council

Contents

How to Make a Submission

1. It is recommended that submissions on council size follow the format provided below. Submissions should focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal.

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

About You

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

Reading Borough Council. Approved by Policy Committee, 15 July 2019

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

4. Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one if its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

Identified by the Commission

Local Authority Profile

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

Reading is the principal regional and commercial centre of the Thames Valley, a major retail and leisure destination, with a thriving night-time economy.
There has been a huge shift in the town's economy, from its origins in 'beer, biscuits and bulbs' to a compact service economy which specialises in business

and insurance services, and has some of the finest high-tech business parks in the South East, with many international companies such as Microsoft and Oracle choosing Reading as their home.

The town is a major transport interchange, continuing to benefit from its strategic location on the M4 corridor and proximity to Heathrow Airport and London. Reading is also home to the University of Reading and Reading College, with a large percentage of the local working population highly skilled. However, prosperity has brought its own problems, with pressure on infrastructure, communities and the environment. The high cost of living and, in particular, the high cost of housing, have had a significant impact on local communities. Although Reading can undoubtedly demonstrate success and wealth, the town also contains wards amongst some of the most deprived in the country.

The Borough has a population of 162,600 residents, living in 66.000 households, which is projected to grow by 12.5% to 181,900 (77,000 households) by 2039.

See Borough Profile on website - http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/7654/Profile-of-Reading/pdf/borough_profile_2017_updated.pdf

Council Size

6. The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership. Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

7. Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified.

Topic		
Governance Model	*Key lines of explanation*	➢ *What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?* ➢ *The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?* ➢ *If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you have represents is most appropriate for the authority.*
	Analysis	• The Council currently has 46 Councillors, elected by thirds. The Council's political composition in 2019-20 is Labour 30, Conservative 10, Green 4, Lib.Dem 2. We have four active political groups.

- The Council has operated a committee system of governance since 2013.
- The purpose of the committee system of governance is set out in Article 7 of the constitution. There are four standing committees, covering the range of the authority's services formerly exercised by Cabinet, together with regulatory and other committees which the authority had when it had an executive system of governance (2001- 2013) which are explained in Article 8.
- The standing committees cover the following areas:
  - Policy – strategic, financial and corporate services, plus urgency decisions
  - Adult Social Care, Children's Services & Education (ACE) - personal services, including oversight of Brighter Futures for Children
  - Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure (HNL) – 'place' services
  - Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (SEPT) – services linked to environment and climate change
- The regulatory and other committees, which the authority had during executive arrangements to involve Councillors from all groups in non-executive functions, are:
  - Audit & Governance
  - Licensing Applications
  - Personnel
  - Planning Applications
  - Standards
  - Health & Wellbeing Board (requirement of Health & Social Care Act 2012)
- A number of Committees have set up Sub-Committees under the provisions of Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972
- Full Council meets 6 times a year, including the AGM
- For the Municipal Year 2019-20, the Council has set up the following committees with membership as indicated:
  - Policy Committee (16 – 10:4:1:1) - 9 meetings a year
    - Mapledurham Playing Fields Sub-Committee (7 – 5:2:0:0)
  - Adult Social Care, Children's Services & Education Ctte (15 – 10:3:1:1) – 4 meetings a year
  - Audit & Governance Committee (8 – 5:2:1:0) – 4 meetings a year
  - Health & Wellbeing Board (4 – Lead Councillors – with 3 named substitutes, and opposition group spokespersons have observer status) – 4 meetings a year
  - Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee (16 – 10:4:1:1) – 3 meetings a year
  - Licensing Applications Committee (10 – 7:3:0:0) – 3 meetings a year

		• Licensing Applications Sub-Committees 1 and 2 (ad hoc – Section 6 of Licensing Act 2003)
		       • Licensing Applications Sub-Committee 3 (6 – 4:2:0:0 – plus 3 named substitutes)
		       • Around 40 meetings a year - o Personnel Committee (5 – 4:1:0:0) – 3 scheduled meetings a year, plus Director / Assistant Director appointments
		       • Investigating & Disciplinary Committee (5 – 4:1:0:0)
		       • Appeals Committee (5 – 4:1:0:0) - o Planning Applications Committee (14 – 9;3:1:1) – 12 meetings a year - o Standards Committee (7 – 5:2:0:0 – with 2 named substitutes) – I scheduled meeting a year - o Strategic Environment, Planning & transport Committee (14 – 9:3:1:1) – 3 meetings a year
		       • Traffic Management Sub-Committee (13 – 8:3:1:1) – 5 meetings a year
		• Unless otherwise specified, all Committees and Sub-Committees operate under the provisions of Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972
		• Full Council, and all committees meet in the evening (normally 6.30pm start) with the exception of some Licensing Sub-Committees which may meet during the day.

Portfolios	*Key lines of explanation*	

	Analysis	• The Council has retained Lead Councillors, responsible for portfolios covering all Council services, as explained in Article 6 of the constitution. Together with the Leader, they form the administration of the Council, and are the controlling group's membership of the Policy Committee.
		• One of the Lead Councillors is also Deputy Leader
		• For the Municipal Year 2019-20, there are 9 Lead Councillors, and 10 portfolio areas, as follows:
		    o Leadership
		    o Adult Social Care
		    o Children
		    o Corporate & Consumer Services
		    o Culture, Heritage & Recreation
		    o Health, Wellbeing & sport
		    o Housing

		○ Neighbourhoods & Communities ○ Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (Deputy Leader) - The Lead Councillors report to the Committee(s) responsible for their services. - Neither the Leader or Deputy Leader, nor Lead Councillors, are full-time positions - Under the committee system of governance there is no delegation to individual councillors. All decisions are taken either by committee or under the scheme of delegation to officers (see below). - In the current Municipal Year, one third (10 out of 30) Councillors from the majority group hold Lead Councillor positions. A further 8 are chairs or vice-chairs of committees or sub-committees. - The Audit & Governance Committee is chaired by an opposition Councillor. The Standards Committee is chaired by an independent Member.
Delegated Responsibilities	*Key lines of explanation*	*➢ What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?* *➢ How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?*
	Analysis	- The Council's decision-making arrangements are set out in Article 13 of the constitution - The Council has an extensive scheme of delegations to officers. - The constitution identifies the following types of decision: ○ Functions reserved by statute to full Council (listed in Article 4) ○ Policy, strategy and budget decisions: ▪ the Council's budget is set by full Council on the recommendation of Policy Committee ▪ Committees set policies, plans and strategies for the services delegate to them ▪ Policy Committee sets the policies, plans and strategies covering the whole Council, or more than one committee ○ Regulatory functions (Planning and Licensing) ▪ The Planning Applications Committee takes decisions which fall outside the Committee's scheme of delegation to officers ▪ The Licensing Applications Committee takes decisions on individual cases where officers are not minded to grant consent under the scheme of delegation to officers ○ Operational decisions ▪ The Council has a definition of key decisions, comparable to that when it had an executive, which are reserved to committee. ▪ The scheme of delegation to officers covers non-key decisions ▪ Officers can also take decisions in consultation with the responsible Lead Councillor, subject to their being published in the Decision Book

		- Councillors from all political groups will be involved in taking key decisions, through Committee. All Councillors are members of at least one Committee - The Policy Committee is comprised the Leader and Lead Councillors, and the Leaders of the three opposition groups. For the principal opposition group there are a further 3 Councillors as shadow spokespersons, including the chair of the Audit & Governance Committee. - The Leader and Lead Councillors, and committee chairs, will be involved to different extents in the processes leading to the taking of decisions through committee, and also key decisions. - The three opposition Leaders, as members of the Policy Committee, and the chair of Audit & Governance, receive regular officer briefings on matters being considered by that committee, as do the opposition spokespersons on other committees. - As indicated above, 19 Councillors, and the 3 opposition group leaders, (22 out of 46) are actively involved in the committee decision-making process as Lead Councillors, chairs and vice-chairs. - Supporting the formal committee structure there are a number of Member-officer working parties, which in the current year include: - Civic Board - Local Joint Forum (with the trades unions) - Planning Management Panel - The Personnel Committee makes appointments to Director, Deputy and Assistant Director posts. During 2018-19 the Committee involved Councillors in 15 senior management recruitment processes.

Accountability

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

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
Key lines of explanation	➢ *How will decision makers be held to account?* ➢ *How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?* ➢ *How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?* ➢ *How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?* ➢ *Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.* ➢ *Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.*
Analysis	• The Council, having reverted to a committee system of governance in 2013, no longer has a scrutiny committee. As can be seen from the text above, Councillors from all four political groups are actively involved in the process of taking key decisions through committee. • The statutory scrutiny function is embedded within the terms of reference of the standing committees, and the Council has retained a facility for Councillors to set up task-and-finish groups to carry out individual scrutiny exercises where necessary. • The Council has an Audit & Governance Committee, chaired by an opposition Councillor, which has specific responsibility for overseeing internal audit, corporate governance, risk management and compliance with contract procurement rules. • The Council has a Standards Committee which oversees the ethical behaviour of Councillors and compliance with the local Member Code of Conduct. This is chaired by an independent Member (not a Councillor) – see Article 9 of the constitution • In addition the Council has or participates in a broad number of consultative committees and forums, described in Article 10 of the constitution, which involve Councillors from all groups. In the current Municipal Year, these are: o Access & Disabilities Working Group (4 – 3:1:0:0)

		○ Alliance for Cohesion & Racial Equality (4 – 1:1:1:1) ○ Arts & Heritage Forum (7 – 5:2:0:0) ○ Cleaner Air & Safer Transport Forum ○ Cycle Forum (7 – 4:1:1:1) ○ Older People's Working Group (6 – 5:1:0:0) ○ Town Twinning Group (3 – 2:1:0:0) • The Council also appoints Councillors to participate in the following partnerships and education and safeguarding bodies: ○ Adult Safeguarding Panel (5 – 3:1:0:1) ○ Children's Safeguarding Panel (5 – 3:1:0:1) ○ Community Safety Partnership (3 responsible Lead Councillors – 1 opposition observer) ○ Cultural Partnership Board (3 responsible Lead Councillors) ○ Community Learning & Skills Advisory Board (3) ○ Parenting Panel (5 – 3:1:0:1) ○ SACRE (5 – 3:1:0:0) ○ Safer Reading Neighbourhood Forum (4 – 3:1:0:0) ○ School Admission Forum (Lead Councillor and Committee Chair – 2 opposition observers) ○ Secure Accommodation Panel (1 plus 1 opposition observer)
Statutory Function		This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?
Planning	*Key lines of explanation*	➤ *What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?* ➤ *Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?* ➤ *Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?* ➤ *Will executive members serve on the planning committees?* ➤ *What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?*
	Analysis	• Planning ○ Long-standing scheme of delegation to officers ○ In 2018-19 Municipal Year, the Committee determined 98 applications over 12 meetings (an average of 7 per meeting). This was 4.5% of total number of applications submitted. The average over the last three Municipal Years is 4.3%. ○ In 2018-19, the Committee also considered / determined 15 other matters - TPOs (97), street

		naming reports (1), and updates on enforcement, monitoring and government consultations. o No area planning committees – there is a single, Borough-wide committee o Committee of 14 - to get breadth of representation across Borough. o 4 Lead Councillors serve on Committee o Committee meets on roughly monthly basis (12 a year). Each committee preceded by Planning Management Panel, a Member-officer planning meeting involving Councillor spokespeople from groups (5 – 3:1:0:1, or nominees) o Planning site visits are held when necessary: if the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans and any supporting material including photographs taken by officers; or if the application is particularly contentious, to supplement the comments of the applicant and objectors as expressed in writing in the officer report.
Licensing	*Key lines of explanation*	*➢ How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?* *➢ And what will be the time commitment for members?* *➢ Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?* *➢ Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?*
	Analysis	• The Licensing Applications Committee meets 3 times a year • The Committee appoints 3 sub-committees to take decisions on individual cases which meet ion an ad hoc basis approximately 40 times a year, subject to caseload
Other Regulatory Bodies	*Key lines of explanation*	*➢ What will they be, and how many members will they require?* *➢ Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.*
	Analysis	Audit & Governance (5:2:1:0) • 4 meetings a year Standards Committee (8 - 5:2:0:0 + 1 non-Councillor) • 1 scheduled meeting a year • Ad hoc meetings to hear individual complaints (none in 2018-19)
External Partnerships		Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.
Key lines of explanation		*➢ Will executive members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies?* *➢ How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What*

Analysis	Joint Committees • Joint Waste Disposal Board (2 responsible Lead Councillors) • Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (3 – 2:1:0:0) • Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel (1) Partnership Bodies • Berkshire Local Transport Body (Lead Councillor – 1 standing Deputy) • Berkshire Pension Fund Panel (2 Councillors) • Bus Lane Adjudication Service Joint Committee (Lead Councillor – 1 standing deputy) • Improvement & Efficiency South East (Leader / Deputy Leader) • Local Enterprise Partnership (Deputy Leader) • Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum (Lead Councillor) • Reading UK Community Interest Company (Leader + Chief Executive) Boards • Reading Buses (2 Councillors at present – could be as many as 7)) • Homes for Reading Ltd (3 Councillors at present) National Bodies • Local Government Association (Deputy Leader) • South East England Councils (Leader – Deputy Leader named substitute) Outside Bodies • Councillor appointments or nominations to 43 local bodies – range of r9les from Board Member / Trustee to member • 26 councillors involved in 2017-18. School Governing Bodies • 2 Councillors currently appointed as local-authority governors on School Governing Bodies.

Community Involvement

9. The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties?

Topic		Description
	Key lines of explanation	➢ *In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?* ➢ *Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?* ➢ *How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?* ➢ *Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?* ➢ *Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?* ➢ *Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?*
Community Leadership	Analysis	See text above about community consultative bodies • No area committees or formal area governance. Reading is a small, tight, urban area (Former County Borough). • All Councillors hold regular ward surgeries, ranging from every two weeks to once a month; these vary from static venues to walkabout/roving surgeries covering set areas of their ward on specific dates. Duration of surgeries is generally between 90 minutes and 2 hours. Surgeries are promoted by Council produced leaflets delivered by Councillors. Static venues are booked and paid for by the Council. • Regular letters to new residents in the ward, those reaching the age of 18 who will be eligible to vote and informal consultations on issues affecting local residents/areas. • Public meetings as required on the back of informal consultations or specific issues of concern for larger numbers of residents. • Many Councillors produce and maintain their own blogs. • Interaction with young people o Reading Youth Cabinet • Interaction with minority groups

		- Access & Disabilities Working Group - Alliance for Cohesion & Racial Equality - Older People's Working Group - No parishes in Reading. - There are some active residents' associations, mainly north of River Thames - Caversham & District RA (CADRA) - The Warren RA. - Mapledurham Playing Fields - Sub-Committee – reflects a particular area of local sensitivity at present - Management Committee – of long-standing, involving local Councillors - Safer Neighbourhood Forums 7 forums, linked to local police areas – liaison with local police and community - Meet on 6-weerkly basis - Councillors from all groups represented in area can (and do) attend - Community Hubs and Centres - Based in Council Estates – 6 (Hexham Road / South Reading / Whitley Wood / Coley Park / Southcote / Weller [Amersham Road, Caversham] - Local councillors co-opted on non-voting basis - Hubs may form subsidiary working groups – possibly with links into local safer neighbourhood forum - Focus for tenant involvement / consultation
Casework	*Key lines of explanation*	*➢ How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?* *➢ What support do members receive?* *➢ How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?*
	Analysis	- The 2018-19 Remuneration Panel canvassed all Councillors on their workload. 23 Councillors responded (50%). The responses showed that most Councillors reported working at least 40-60 hours a month on their range of Councillor duties, with some respondents recording considerably more time spent on these activities. The individual responses to the Panel's questionnaire can be made available. - The 46 Councillors are supported by a Members' Services team of 3 FTE officers. This includes support to the leader and deputy leader. The Team Leader is the Leader's PA. - There are 4 group rooms, with desktop access

| | | All Councillors are offered 1 i-pad or laptop – Group Leaders and Lead Councillors can have both; Lead Councillors are also given an I-phone. Councillors are encouraged to use these to contact constituents and Council officers electronically Councillors use the FirmStep (FS) enquiry system to make councillor enquiries, which are coordinated by Councillor Services. In 2018-19 they made 2,137 enquiries, compared with 1,719 in 2017-18 and 1,892 in 2016-17 (2,430 in 2015-16). In 2018-19, levels of usage ranged from 1 to 368, with an average per Councillor of 46.5 questions. The cohorts are below: 0-10   11 (24%) 11-50   21 (45%) 51-100   9 (20%) 101+   5 (11%) |
| | | |

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

Demography
- The Borough's population has grown from 135,000, in 1981, to 163,000 today (a 21% increase over 38 years), living in 66,000 households
- The Profile of Reading on the Council's website projects the population increasing further by 12.5% by 2039, to 181,900, living in 77,000 households
- The Council's report on Residential Planning Commitments at 31 March 2019, published in July 2018, identified nearly 4,000 new hard commitments for new dwellings, with a further 3,000 soft commitments in the planning pipeline, giving a projected total of around 7,000 new dwellings. The majority of these are in Abbey (3,333) and Whitley (2,144) wards.
- On the basis of new residential approvals, the resident adult electorate (not including students) is projected to grow by 15,600 by 2036, to take the Borough local electorate to around 126,800. The bulk of this growth will be in Abbey (7,300) and Whitley (3,000) wards.
    [NB – there is a need for some caution for Abbey ward, as not all the new dwellings may be lived in a the principal place of residence by people qualified to vote].

New Technology

- Increasing ease for constituents and public to contact Councillors, through email / social media, and expect an immediate response
- Ease for officers to contact Lead Councillors (and vice versa)
- Greater openness, accountability and challenge, also promoted by Freedom of Information Act, and blogsites

Summary
11. In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future. Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate any other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

The Council currently has 46 Councillors, covering 16 wards (of which 1 is single member). It wishes to continue to be elected by thirds. It has therefore looked at options for size that are divisible by three – ie 42, 54 and 48.

The authority's preference is for a Council of 48 Councillors, representing 16 wards of comparable size, with 3 Councillors per ward. This would represent an increase of 2 Councillors.

The authority's case for a small increase in size, to 48 Councillors, is as follows:

1) This would enable the existing 16 wards to be re-organised to have three Councillors each and to return the whole of the Borough area to elections by thirds

2) Councillors from all parties are actively involved in decision making through the Council's system of committee government. Currently 50% of all Councillors are in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowance as Lead Councillors, chairs or vice chairs of committees, to recognise the extra work requirement for these roles.

3) The Council, in moving from an executive form of administration, has retained Lead Councillors (with no executive function) to provide a clear focus for political leadership. Other Councillors are involved as Chairs or Vice-Chairs of Committees. The Committee system gives a role to Group Leaders and group spokespeople. The Borough's four party system also spreads involvement more widely.

4) Around half of all Councillors hold positions which receive SRA. There is a need for capacity and time to support making an effective balance between leadership and ward responsibilities, including having a balance within wards between back-benchers and councillors with recognised roles in the decision-making process

5) In addition, as a long-standing arrangement, the Council supports and participates in a broad range of community and partnership bodies, and Council and its Councillors

6) Councillors from all groups are generally active in engaging with and representing their wards and constituents, including holding surgeries and meetings, issuing ward newsletters and running their own blogsites (independently of the Council)

7) The 2018-19 Remuneration Panel found Councillors reporting working at least 40-60 hours a month on their range of Councillor duties. This includes active involvement in local neighbourhood forums and community hubs, as well as ward work with individual constituents.

8) The population of Reading has grown, from 135,000 in 1981, to 163,000 today (a 21% increase over 38 years), living in 66,000 households, and on the basis of new residential approvals the electorate is projected to grow from 112,000 to 127,000 by 2035.

9) The Reading population and electorate is ethnically, culturally and socially diverse, which places particular challenges to its effective representation. 67% of the population is White UK, and 25% is non-white, with 13.6% Asian (including Chinese). On the electoral register, 11,000 electors (9.5%) are citizens of EU countries, and 3.3% of the electorate are Polish.

10) Since 2002 there has been an expansion of new technology and social media, making elected councillors more directly accountable to and contactable by their electorate, who expect responses by return to emails.

11) The growth of population and electorate in the Borough is a principal driver in supporting an increase in the size of the Council, to allow the current ratio of 1 councillor per 2,400 – 2,500 electors to be maintained.