

DRAFT V8

Medway Council

Council Size Submission

Medway Council

Contents

How to Make a Submission.....	2
About You	2
Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)	2
Local Authority Profile	2
Council Size	6
Other Issues.....	18

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 should be 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.

This submission was developed by a cross party Member Working Group and was agreed by Full Council on 10 October 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 of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

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?

Medway Council is a unitary authority providing all local government services for a population of 277,000 people. Medway is one of the largest urban areas in the South East outside London and the biggest regeneration zone within the Thames Gateway. Supported by significant government funding, with the potential for a further £1 billion of private sector investment, Medway is recognised as an area of strategic development by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Council's budget in 2019/20 is £535.386m.

Medway has 11 parishes covering the rural areas on the Hoo Peninsula and the upper reaches of the River Medway, all of which have a parish council. Currently 6 of the 55 Members of Medway Council also serve as a parish councillor.

A major regeneration programme is already transforming Medway's landscape bringing 30,000 new homes and significant new employment space to the area. More than 14,000 businesses have their home in Medway and the area has a growing reputation as a hub for high tech engineering and creative businesses.

Medway is a place of contrasts – an area with a rich heritage, ideally located and boasting stunning green spaces – but the closure of the Chatham Dockyard and the decline of many manufacturing industries in the 1980s brought a legacy of high unemployment, health inequalities, low skills, and poor self-esteem and confidence.

Tackling these challenges has been at the heart of the Council's priorities and ambitions but there are still issues to be addressed. The Council is determined to be at the vanguard of regional development, taking advantage of the Thames Gateway initiative to drive growth in Medway.

Recently the Council has announced it will bid to become City of Culture in 2025.

Demographic pressures

The 2018 mid-year estimate provided by the ONS indicates that the population of Medway reached 277,855 – 239 fewer persons, a +0.1% increase above the 2017 mid-year figure. Medway's growth rate in 2018 was at the lowest level seen over the past fourteen years, a similar level was seen in 2004. For the fifth consecutive year Medway has a lower rate of growth than Kent, the South East and the UK. Medway's growth peaked in 2012, after the 2011 Census.

Medway has a younger population than nationally, with proportionally more younger people and working-age residents and fewer older people. Medway has a younger median age of population at 38.1 years against 40.1 years for the UK.

Natural growth remains Medway's main source of population growth. However significant outward migration from Medway - most notably to other parts of Kent - has reduced the overall level of growth in recent years. In 2018, 13,587 people moved out of Medway, which exceeded the inflow of 12,392. This resulted in a net loss of 1,195 residents via migration flows within the UK. Medway had previously seen a trend of net inward flows, which made a significant contribution to Medway's growth. However, over the last three years Medway has seen an increasing net outflow of residents moving from Medway to neighbouring areas (internal migration). A lower inward flow to Medway via a drop in international migration in the past two years, resulted in a net outflow, reducing the overall growth level in Medway significantly.

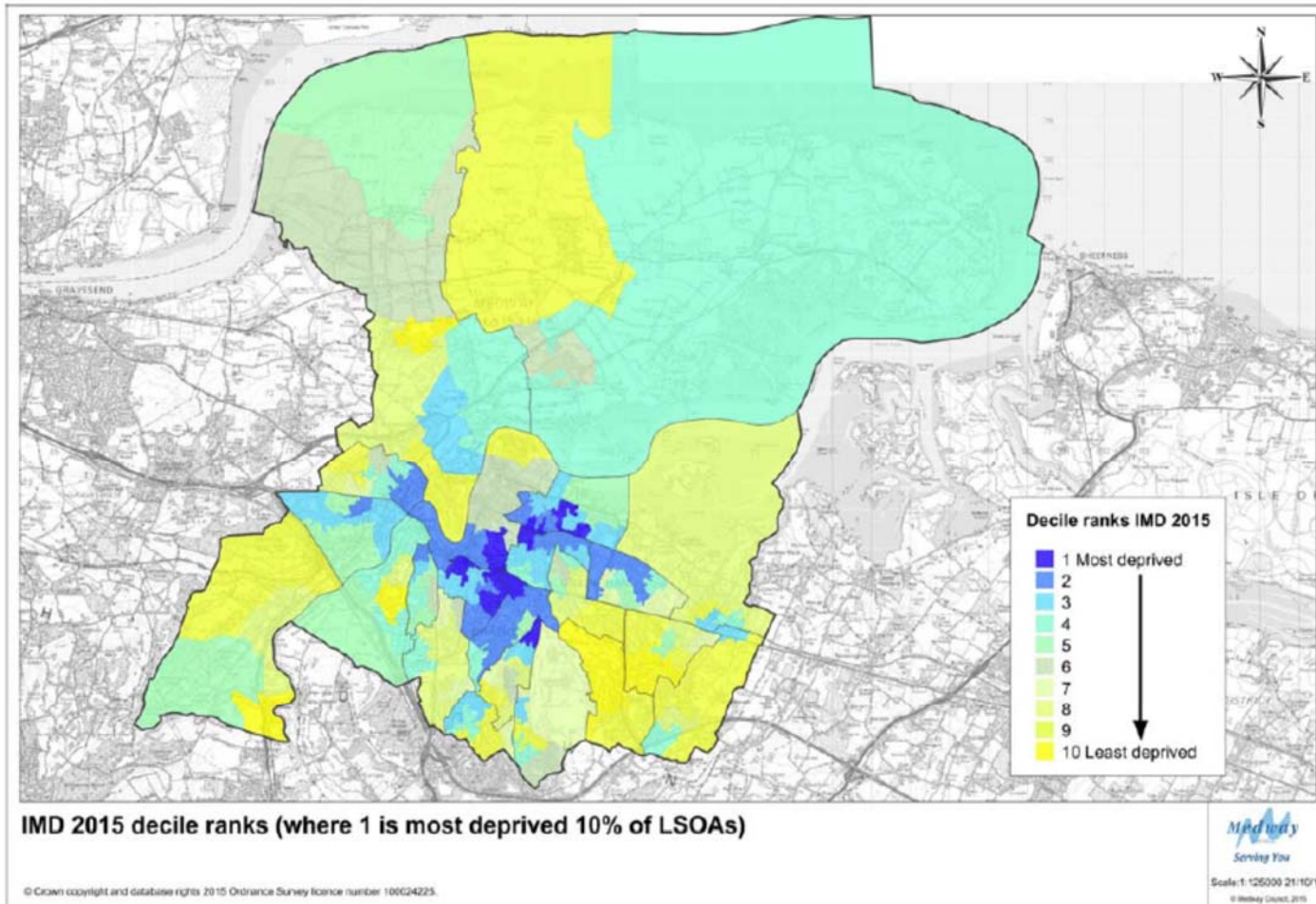
Medway has become more ethnically diverse, with rising numbers of people identifying with minority ethnic groups in the 2011 census. Despite the White British ethnic group decreasing in size since 2001, it is still the majority ethnic group that people identify with.

The 'white' ethnic group in Medway accounted for 90 per cent of residents in 2011, against 86 per cent in England and Wales. In Medway the majority of these belonged to the 'White British' group (86 per cent of the total population, 225,700). Over the past three years the average percentage of the adult population registered to vote was 88.7%.

Deprivation

In the overall measure of deprivation, the most 'relatively' deprived communities are concentrated in central urban areas in Medway – most notably in Chatham Central, Gillingham North and Luton & Wayfield. The Index of Deprivation 2015 showed that Medway is relatively worse off compared to the 2010 index - with a general widening and worsening of Medway's central most deprived neighbourhoods. Medway is ranked 118th most deprived Local Authority of 326 in England in the latest index. This is a relatively worse position than in the previous index in 2010, when Medway was ranked 136th most deprived of 325.

Deprivation in Medway – by wards (2015 figures)



The River Medway forms a natural barrier and river crossings for residents, particularly for pedestrians, are very limited. This obviously has an impact on the community identity of the areas north and south of the River Medway as well as the warding patterns that can be developed. Apart from the bridge at Rochester the following crossings are available:

- a viaduct over the river south of Rochester to carry the first section of the M2 motorway. Although there is a pedestrian footpath on the bridge, this is not widely used and, in any event, connects areas with a low population density.
- the Medway Tunnel, connecting Gillingham to Strood, although there is no public footpath through the tunnel.
- a railway bridge constructed for High Speed 1 and lies parallel to the M2 motorway bridges. Again there is no public access here.
- a new road bridge outside of Medway in the administrative area of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council from the A228 between Holborough and Halling across to Hall Road, Wouldham,

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		
<p>Governance Model</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>Medway is made up of 22 wards (12 three member wards, 9 two member wards and 1 one member ward), comprising a total of 55 councillors. Following the elections on May 2 2019, the political balance of the Council is currently 33 Conservatives, 20 Labour and Co-operative and 2 Independents.</p> <p>The Council has adopted the Leader and Cabinet model as its political management structure. Every four years, the Council's 55 councillors elect a Leader. The Leader then appoints a Deputy Leader and up to 8 other councillors to form a Cabinet. At the Annual Council meeting on 22 May 2019 Councillor Alan Jarrett was appointed as Leader for a four-year term. The Leader has appointed Councillor Howard Doe as Deputy Leader and eight other Members to form a Cabinet.</p> <p>The Mayor is elected annually by Full Council and is the “first citizen” of Medway. In addition to chairing Full Council the Mayor is responsible for representing the Council at any civic functions and also undertakes fundraising activities for his/her designated charity.</p>

		The Council also appoints a Deputy Mayor who is authorised to chair Full Council if the Mayor is unavailable and will also deputise at various civic events, as and when needed
	Analysis	In November 2017 the Local Government Association visited Medway to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge. The Team found that the Council enjoyed good governance “ <i>with positive relationships at all levels that are founded upon mutual respect and a very clear understanding of respective roles and responsibilities</i> ” and that “ <i>democratic processes are clear, well understood and respected, as are levels of delegation and related processes</i> ”.
Portfolios	Key lines of explanation	<p>The Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council and nine other elected Members each of which have a specific portfolio.</p> <p>The Cabinet meets monthly and is responsible for implementing the Council's budget and policies as well as forming partnerships with other key organisations.</p> <p>Serving as a Cabinet Member is a full time role for most of the Cabinet.</p> <p>Individual Cabinet Members play an active role in formulating and developing proposals that are presented to Cabinet for consideration. They do not have individual decision making powers delegated to them so meet collectively to take decisions, although each Cabinet Member has a portfolio of responsibilities, which are determined by the Leader. Details of portfolios can be found at :</p> <p>https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200167/councillors/116/whos_in_the_cabinet/1</p> <p>The Cabinet has also established a number of Cabinet Advisory Groups to assist in the key areas of corporate parenting, the local development framework, regeneration and the Council’s procurement arrangements. These groups have no decision-making powers and consist of both executive and non-executive Councillors. Some are cross party in nature and some include external representatives.</p> <p>Officers are also delegated responsibility for executive functions, as detailed in the Council’s Constitution</p>
	Analysis	Cabinet meetings usually last about 2 hours and in 2018 (January-December) the Cabinet took 165 decisions.
Delegated Responsibilities	Key lines of explanation	<p>Full Council - all councillors sit on Full Council, which is the ‘sovereign body’ of the Council and is chaired by the Mayor. The Full Council is responsible for setting the budget, considering recommendations from the Cabinet and making some decisions such as changes to the Constitution, determining electoral issues and dealing with matters which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet.</p> <p>There is a scheme of delegation for senior officers. Matters which are the responsibility of the Executive are delegated to officers by the Leader and non-executive functions are delegated either by the Full Council or a Council Committee.</p>

		All decisions not delegated to officers are taken by Members, either at Full Council, Cabinet or a Committee of the Council. Key decisions are taken by the Cabinet.
		The Council's decision making structure is set out in Appendix 1.
	Analysis	The full Council meets six times per year and each meeting lasts around 4 hours. Attendance levels are high with an average attendance of 50 Councillors (91%). Members of the public may ask questions of Cabinet members or chairmen of Committees at meetings of the Council. In 2018 62 questions from the public were submitted.

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.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>The Leader and Cabinet are held to account by four Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Support – 14 Members Children and Young People – 17 Members (plus 10 Co-opted) Health and Adult Social Care – 14 Members Regeneration, Culture and Environment – 14 Members <p>In addition to the Medway Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee, there is a joint NHS Scrutiny Committee with Kent County Council which receives evidence in relation to consultations initiated by local NHS bodies regarding proposals for substantial health service developments and variations where these affect both Medway and a substantial part of Kent.</p> <p>Task and Finish Groups - Task Groups look at issues in-depth, taking evidence from expert witnesses and service users. They are relatively small with typically 5 Members</p>
Analysis	35 seats across the O&S Committees have been allocated to the Conservative Group. Effectively these seats can only be filled from 23 of the 33 Conservative Group members, given that the Cabinet comprises 10 Members of the Conservative Group and no Cabinet Member can sit on an O&S Committee. 20 seats have been allocated to the Labour and Co-operative Group, which have to be filled from among the 20 Members of that Group. The Council has

decided, in line with the political balance rules, not to allocate any seats to the two Independent Members. 8 Members serve on more than one O&S Committee.

The Council believes that it is important to have O&S Committees of this size. Given scrutiny's role in amplifying the voices and concerns of the public, it is essential that the Committees, as far as possible, include Members from both the main centres of population and also rural areas. Smaller Committees would reduce the ability to achieve that geographical balance.

Cabinet Members are held to account by the O&S Committee on an annual basis for matters within their portfolios which relate to the O&S Committee's terms of reference. This means that some Cabinet Members are held to account by more than one O&S Committee.

The Council's O&S Committees play a key role in developing and reviewing policy through a facility to call-in Cabinet decisions for review or by undertaking pre-decision scrutiny. They also have powers to scrutinise the activities and decisions of some partner organisations, including the NHS and the Community Safety Partnership. Each Committee's membership reflects the overall political balance of the Council.

Overview and Scrutiny is also one of the most important ways in which Councillors can champion their constituents. Members of the Council can ask the Committees to discuss issues of local importance by asking for a Members item to be added to the agenda or through the facility to raise a Councillor Call for Action on a community safety issue. The Committees also debate petitions presented to Council where the petitioners are not satisfied with the response they have had.

The average length of an O&S meeting is around 3 hours and the average number of reports considered at each meeting is 7, with the Business Support O&S Committee receiving the highest number of reports.

Before each meeting of an O&S Committee an agenda planning meeting takes place involving the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson(s). These meetings are supported by senior officers and play a key role in giving officers guidance on information Members wish them to provide when scrutinising an issue.

In May 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published new statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities having taken into account the findings and recommendations of the House of Commons CLG Committee report on the effectiveness of local authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees published in December 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in place in Medway are largely consistent with the recommendations across the six areas covered in the guidance and there is evidence of some excellent practice and outcomes generated by Overview and Scrutiny in Medway. The Council is planning to do more work to clarify the role of overview and scrutiny in reviewing the performance of its commercial entities described later on in this submission.

	<p>Health scrutiny</p> <p>In recent years health scrutiny has taken up an increasing amount of Members' time given the integration of health and social care. This can often give rise to very emotive and complex issues. An example of this is the significant work Members are carrying out via the Kent and Medway Stroke Review Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) in scrutinising a recent decision to change how Hyper Acute and Acute Stroke Services in Kent and Medway are provided. If agreed, this would result in there being no acute stroke provision at Medway Maritime Hospital, the only hospital in Medway and which serves a population of more than 424,000 across Medway and Swale. Because of the wide ranging nature of the stroke review, four councils are represented on the Kent and Medway Stroke Review JHOSC. The 4 Medway Members on this Joint Committee are working in a fast moving and complex environment in partnership with other local authorities who may not always share the same objectives as Medway Council.</p> <p>It is clear that there will be more proposals coming forward to significantly change health care provision, which will require engagement with health scrutiny and lead to an increase in workloads for some Members.</p> <p>Task and Finish Groups</p> <p>In 2011 the Business Support O&S Committee agreed to exercise a more pro-active role than previously in prioritising the programme of in-depth scrutiny review work in light of staffing reductions in Democratic Services. Also in 2011 a more systematic and criteria based process was adopted by Members for the selection of review topics. This reflects national best practice.</p> <p>Whilst the membership is relatively small, they involve regular meetings over several months and therefore represent a significant time commitment for those Members. Through these Task Groups the O&S Committees can make recommendations for change to the Cabinet and partner organisations. Every effort is made to programme Task Groups to start and conclude their work within 20 weeks although, in practice, the pace is determined by Members and the degree to which evidence can be gathered within that timescale.</p>
<p>Statutory Function</p>	<p>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?</p>
<p>Planning</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p> <p>There is a single council wide planning committee comprising 15 Members. There are no plans to introduce area planning committees. Executive Members are allowed to serve on the Planning Committee and at present one executive Member sits on the Committee.</p> <p>90% of applications are determined by officers under delegated powers with 10%, the larger and more controversial or complex applications, determined by the Planning Committee. On average the Committee considers 11 applications</p>

		per meeting. There was a recent review of delegated powers where a minor change was agreed to allow a slight increase in some applications being determined under delegated powers. No further changes are proposed.
	Analysis	<p>The Planning Committee meets monthly and on average meetings lasts 2.5 hours.</p> <p>Members rarely carry out site visits now as Google Street View is available for Members to view locations. Where site visits are deemed necessary their timings vary. In winter they would take place on Saturday mornings and in summer on a week day evening.</p> <p>However, Members are regularly engaged on larger scale and complex applications at pre application stage and this takes the form of presentations from the potential applicants. There are about 4-6 of these per month and each lasts about an hour, comprising a 20 minute presentation followed by 40 minutes of questions and answers.</p> <p>All Members of the Committee (plus any Councillor who will serve as a substitute on the Committee) are required to undergo planning training. This training covers the role and responsibilities of the Committee and the planning service, the legislative and policy framework, how planning decisions are taken and the Member Planning Code of Good Practice. The Head of Planning also provides briefings on national planning policy, local plan updates, design training, enforcement, review of development sites and workshops on evolving masterplans. The Head of Planning delivers 4 training sessions for all Members a year on a variety of planning matters. On average these last for 2 hours with around 15-20 Members attending but if a session relates to the Local Plan then attendance can be considerably higher.</p>
Licensing	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>The Licensing and Safety Committee comprises 10 Members and is responsible for keeping the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy under review and for licensing and registration functions principally in relation to taxis, gaming, alcohol, entertainment, food and sex establishments.</p> <p>There are Licensing Hearing Panels which act in a quasi-judicial capacity to hear a range of licensing matters such as applications for premises licenses for the sale of alcohol, reviewing applications for premises licenses, applications for street trading, night cafes and betting shops. The Panels meet on average 13 times per year with approximately one hour of preparation required and the hearings themselves last on average 1.5 hours.</p> <p>The time commitment per member will fluctuate depending on how many Panels they sit on. The Chairman and Vice Chairman each sit on half, which amounts to around 16 - 17 hours a year. The remaining Members on average each will sit on 2 Panels a year, with a time commitment of around 5 hours a year.</p> <p>There is also a Licensing Sub-Committee which acts in a quasi-judicial capacity to consider appeals where a taxi licence has either been refused, amended or revoked by officers and also deals with proposals to change taxi tariffs. On average this meets twice per year, involving 30 minutes preparation and the hearings last around 45 minutes.</p>

	Analysis	<p>Since the last review of Council size the Council became responsible for entertainment and gambling licenses in 2003 and 2005 respectively. Therefore these additional member responsibilities were not a factor during the last review.</p>
<p>Other Regulatory Bodies</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>There are a number of other committees appointed by the Council which deal with the functions of the Council that cannot be dealt with by the Cabinet. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments Committee (6-8 Members) – average 5 meetings per year. • Audit Committee (5 Members) - average 4 meetings per year. • Councillor Conduct Committee (8 Members) - average 4 meetings per year. • Employment Matters Committee (7 Members) - average 4 meetings per year. • Health and Wellbeing Board (7 Members) - average 5 meetings per year. • Kent and Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Board (4 Medway Councillors) – 4 meetings per year. <p>Except for the latter, all of these are decision making bodies.</p>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Allocation of Committee Places</p> <p>There are 138 committee places in total across all committees which have been allocated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative Group (83 + 3* seats across 33 Members) • Labour and Co-operative Group (50 seats across 20 Members). • There are 5 seats which under the rules on political balance cannot be allocated to any political group and are left vacant. <p>* There is a requirement to allocate three additional seats to the Conservative Group on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to preserve that Group's entitlement to a majority position in view of the four statutory co-optees with voting rights who have to be appointed to the Committee. These three seats do not count towards the overall total of seats for the purposes of allocations to political groups.</p> <p>As mentioned, there are 56 seats across the 4 O&S Committees allocated to the Conservative and Labour and Co-operative political groups. Of the 82 places on the remaining committees, 17 are currently filled by Members of the Cabinet. Therefore 65 of these places are filled from amongst 43 Members of the Council.</p> <p>Across all committees therefore, 121 places are spread across 43 non-executive members, meaning on average each non-executive member will sit on just under 3 (2.81) committees. One Member serves on 6 committees, 5 sit on 5 committees while 7 sit on 1 committee, with 5 serving on no committees. Given the leadership role of the Cabinet and the significant time commitments this role entails, as well as the statutory bar on Cabinet Members serving on O&S</p>

		Committee, then effectively the fact that the vast majority of the 138 committee places are filled by 43 non-executive Members of the Council is unlikely to change in any meaningful way, unless there was a change in the number of councillors.
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.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>		<p>Since the last review, Medway has become a more commercially oriented council. Increasingly councils are engaging in commercial activity usually, but not exclusively, to generate additional income, including better use of fees and charges, better use of investments (including investment in property), saving money through internal transformation, sharing services and alternative delivery models, including trading. In recent years Medway has set up the following alternative models of service delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Services <p>The Council launched its first shared service, a building control service, for Medway, Gravesham and Swale Councils in 2007 and since then the number of services delivered through shared arrangements has grown significantly. Medway hosts shared service arrangements with Gravesham to provide audit and counter fraud services, legal services, payroll and HR services. The Council is exploring more opportunities for sharing back office functions with neighbouring authorities in the North Kent Cluster of Dartford, Gravesham, Maidstone and Swale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medway Norse <p>This joint venture (JV) company was established in 2013 to provide services to the Council more efficiently, giving better value for money, growing the business by taking on external commercial contracts and increasing employment opportunities for local people.</p> <p>In October 2019 the JV became responsible for the waste collection and street cleansing activities, taking the joint venture's gross turnover up to over £25m per annum.</p> <p>The Company's Board of Directors comprises three representatives from Norse Commercial Services and two from the Council - an elected, executive member and Chair of the Board and a senior officer. The Board is responsible for the overall performance of the joint venture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medway Commercial Group <p>Medway Commercial Group is a commercial Local Authority Trading Company wholly owned by the Council and is responsible for delivering:</p>

- CCTV
- Telecare
- Out-of-Hours Call Centre
- Lone Worker Solutions and other Personal Alarm Services
- Schools Traded Services (Energy, Health and Safety, GDPR and ICT)
- Schools Traded Services (Cleaning, Catering and Waste Management Compliance)
- Temporary, Contract and Interim staffing.

The Company's Board of Directors comprises one Executive Director of MCG and two Non-Executive Directors, both of whom are Members of the Cabinet.

• **Medway Development Company**

Established in September 2017, Medway Development Company Limited (MDC) is a housing company set up to carry out development and invest in property to help meet the Council's housing delivery targets. MDC will be seeking to build houses and carry out other commercial activity for profit, with social value by-products. This will also support the delivery of the Council's regeneration programme.

Two Cabinet Members have been appointed as Directors with up to four Non-Executive Directors appointed to offer wider expertise to the company. The Chair of the Executive Board is a Cabinet Member.

Although these bodies deliver many public-facing services, it is important to note that this has not significantly affected Members' caseloads as accountability for services, as well as responsibility for policy and funding, remains with the Council. The majority of the public still perceive these services as being provided by the Council and Councillors continue to receive complaints or queries about them. Dealing with these issues can often be more complex and time consuming than it is for services directly provided by the Council.

The recently published CfPS/APSE guidance on [Scrutiny of Risk Commercialisation](#) recognises that democratic scrutiny is a vital part of commercial activity for Councils but also that scrutinising "commercialisation" is by no means easy considering its complex landscape. This is echoed in the new Statutory Scrutiny Guidance for Councils and Combined Authorities which states that Overview and Scrutiny Committees will often have a keen interest in "following the Council pound" i.e. scrutinising organisations that receive public funding to deliver goods and services

	<p>• Joint Committees/Outside bodies/Working Groups</p> <p>The Council and Cabinet appoint Members to serve on a wide variety of Joint Committees, outside bodies, charities and working groups as well as a number of other bodies such as the Adoption Panel and the Community Safety Partnership etc. In total, this represents 220 places to which Members are appointed. This can be broken down further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed to between 15-20 bodies – 3 Members • Appointed to between 10-15 bodies – 2 Members • Appointed to between 5-10 bodies – 15 Members • Appointed to between 0-5 bodies – 35 Members
<p style="text-align: center;">Analysis</p>	<p>Upper tier Councils in England were each required to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board, as a Committee of the Council, under Section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The purpose of Health and Wellbeing Boards is to provide collective leadership to improve health and wellbeing across the local authority area. The Board meets 5 times per year and comprises 7 Members, 4 of whom are Cabinet Members.</p> <p>In 2018 the Health and Wellbeing Boards of the Council and Kent County Council established a Kent and Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Board for an initial period of two years to secure a collaborative approach between the Kent and Medway Health and Wellbeing Boards as they contribute to the development of the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership Plans. The Council has appointed 4 Members to this Joint Board, all of whom are Cabinet Members. The Board meets on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>A Medway Place Board made up of leaders of key Medway organisations including businesses, education, and tourism has been established to create an agenda for putting Medway on the map and to drive growth locally.</p> <p>Medway has a strong track record of collaborating with Kent County Council in identifying and addressing shared growth issues. This includes the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, joint work on the Kent Growth Infrastructure Framework, the Skills Commission, Locate in Kent board, Visit Kent board, and the Invicta Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>The Council is directly involved in reshaping and influencing the future Health and Care landscape within Kent and Medway. The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Health and Care attend key meetings of the Kent and Medway STP.</p> <p>The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is one of 38 LEPs, and is the biggest LEP outside London. It was established to provide a clear vision and strategic leadership to drive sustainable private sector-led growth and job creation in its area. The Council is represented on the SELEP Strategic Board by the Cabinet Member for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships. Part of the discussions about the development of the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in Medway will involve how to effectively scrutinise the LEP. Many members serve on</p>

decision making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies. For the most part it is Executive Members who serve on bodies of this nature. Of 16 such bodies, 2 Cabinet Members serve on 4 each.

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
Community Leadership	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>Members carry out a wide range of duties ranging from helping to develop the Council's long term strategic vision to dealing with issues raised by their constituents. They represent their communities in debates around specific local issues and also engage with those that affect entire wards or the whole of Medway.</p> <p>The key roles of a front line councillor are set out in Appendix 3.</p> <p>Ward work is a key aspect of the representational role of an elected Councillor and includes dealing with resident's concerns and representing the concerns and interests of individual constituents and the ward more generally. Many Members hold monthly ward surgeries, with some holding additional joint surgeries with other councillors on a monthly basis. Members inevitably also offer to meet constituents at other convenient times and locations. Increasingly, Members act as community leaders, bringing people together around issues and helping to formulate strategies to resolve them, as well as influencing and mediating between different interests. For example, many Members are regularly involved in meeting with partners and residents by attending PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings, having discussions with community wardens, meeting with the Medway Youth Council and participating in community litter picks etc. Many Councillors are also School Governors and/or make regular visits to schools located in, or having catchment areas covering their Ward as well as the 4 University Campuses in Medway.</p> <p>There is a Rural Liaison Committee where Members meet with parish council representatives on a regular basis. 6 Councillors are also Parish Councillors and those Councillors representing Parished areas are in regular contact with Parishes over local issues, including attending Parish Council meetings.</p> <p>The Ward Improvement Fund is a modest pot of money which councillors can spend to improve the social, economic or environmental wellbeing in their ward or meet an unmet need. In 2019/20 each councillor has been given a £2,000 budget.</p>

	Analysis	<p>An electronic portal has been developed for Councillors on which a variety of information, advice, guidance and links to other sources of information is available to assist them in undertaking their roles and provide one place to find such information, or links to it elsewhere.</p> <p>As part of the Council's transformation programme the Council has recently developed an interactive business intelligence tool for Members which provides ward information on issues such as demographics, health inequalities, deprivation and services.</p> <p>The Council facilitates paperless working by providing instant electronic access to papers for all formal Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings via the Mod.Gov App. Members are encouraged to adopt this way of working as it allows for instant access to papers for meetings and a facility to store and transport papers for meetings on a mobile device. If a Member does not already own an Ipad/tablet etc. then they are able to purchase one via the Council and pay for it over a period of two years via monthly deductions from their basic allowance. Currently about 50% of all Councillors are receiving their committee papers this way.</p>
Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	The Council does not have a case management system and there is no specific officer support to help Members deal with casework. Given the shrinking size of the workforce Councillors are faced with seeking information and advice from a much depleted officer structure. Councillors are responsible for monitoring cases and also for resolving any issues.
	Analysis	<p>It can be difficult to identify the average number of hours per week that Councillors spend on ward work as this will vary according to the type of ward the Councillor represents in terms of the issues that may be raised by constituents, how many Councillors represent the ward in question, and the number of hours the councillor can make available due to other commitments.</p> <p>A 2018 national survey ¹ found that, on average, more than half a councillor's time is spent engaging with local people individually and in groups and councillors spent, on average, 22 hours per week on council business, the largest chunk of which was on council meetings (8 hours), followed by engaging with constituents, surgeries, enquiries (6.2 hours), working with community groups (4.1 hours), and other items (3.6 hours).</p> <p>In 2016 the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel determined, based on feedback from Members that the average in Medway was 19 hours per week. The 2019 review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, just finalised by the Panel, shows that the average is now 20 hours per week.</p> <p>A recent (2018) Community Governance Review into the proposed establishment of a Rochester Town Council heard from local Councillors who reported that they deal with several hundreds of cases each year, including those met at ward surgeries and street campaigns. They deal with a range of issues such as parking, litter, dog waste and refuse,</p>

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National census of local authority councillors 2018

		<p>immigration appeals, benefit appeals, a school place or school transport appeals, inadequate housing, council tax disputes, anti-social behaviour and dissatisfaction with health and social care services. Issues range from those that are relatively simple to more complex issues requiring the liaison and co-ordination with other organisations such as traffic and speed management issues, highways issues, parking, adoption of roads, funding and support of Early Learning centres, environmental issues, noise nuisance, fly tipping and street lighting. Councillors also liaise with developers with respect to major planning works and represent residents on minor works. Councillors also assist local traders and other organisations to get the support and resources required to enable them to improve and contribute to the development of responses to begging, homelessness and Traveller incursions as well as helping individuals to obtain the support and resources they need for their particular circumstances. They were also actively connected with many local groups and associations.</p> <p>Many Members have seen a significant increase in residents asking for their help in support for appeals to the tribunal about decisions made by the Department of Work and Pensions in relation to Personal Independence Payments. Although the traditional way of meeting constituents is through the use of surgeries, casework for Councillors also comes through letters, phone calls, emails, contact through social media, responses to leaflets and door-knocking. An increasing number of queries come through emails.</p> <p>Many Members are active on social media and this can also generate enquiries from constituents. Many people expect speedy responses from issues raised via social media which adds to the pressures on councillors.</p>
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Other Issues

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

The Council takes very seriously its responsibility to ensure that Councillors can fulfil their roles effectively and efficiently and places great emphasis on providing training and development opportunities for them. A programme is developed each year which is led by and prioritised by, councillors. After an intensive 3 month induction programme after each set of Local elections, on average there is a briefing or training/development session held each month, lasting between 2 and 3 hours. These vary from briefings about specific policy or legislative changes in a specific policy area, to skills development, such as chairing meetings or speed reading. All members are encouraged to attend these sessions and the time spent at these sessions, as well as any self-help training a councillor might undertake, are in addition to any other commitments referred to in this document.

On average, non-executive members who are sitting on 3 committees will be spending between 3 and 3½ hours a day on Council duties, not including any work on outside bodies, school governorship or meetings of their political Group, making it a part-time role which has an impact on the diversity of councillors because it is becoming a role that only those who can afford to give an open-ended time commitment can undertake.

We are conscious that elector ratios and ward patterns would not normally feature as part of this stage of the Boundary Review process but the geography of the area north of the River Medway and the fact that only one relatively small, urban area of Strood is not Parished, does mean it is a consideration for the Council in respect of Council size.

Currently about 25% of the electorate live in the area north of the river and 75% in the area south of the river. Currently 13 Councillors (24% of all Councillors) represent the north area in one 1 member ward and four 3 member wards. The area has 11 Parishes, four of which are warded. 42 Councillors (76% of all Councillors) represent the area south of the river. The growth in electorate projected at 2025 is not spread evenly across Medway - the forecast is for an 11.6% increase north of the River Medway and 9.3% south. Of the 19784 increase in electorate, 29% of it is forecast for north of the river and 71% south of the river. This is clearly out of proportion to the electorate split and split of Councillors.

The geographic limitations of the River, motorway and neighbouring local authority boundaries create challenges in trying to achieve an effective warding pattern and electorate equality north of the river in particular. This is further exacerbated by the fact that Parishes and Parish Wards usually feature as the building blocks for Warding proposals since they represent a community identity and would not normally be split or broken up. Thus the Council are concerned that the Council size submission must recognise the impact on warding proposals more than they would in other cases.

The Council is of the view that an increase in Councillors is the only way to achieve better electoral equality and effective warding patterns later in the process. For example, if the Council size remains at 55 and with the current split of Councillors north and south of the river, it is not possible to formulate an effective warding proposal that places each Parish ward or whole non-warded Parish within a single Council ward and achieves the statutory criteria for equality of representation, reflect the identities and interests of local communities or secure effective and convenient local government. It would also result in an elector ratio of 1:4001 which would make it the second highest amongst our CIPFA comparator group. The ratio north of the river would be 4268:1 and south would be 3918:1. The 4268 figure is close to the average for Kirklees, an authority of 305,000 electors who have 69 Councillors and a lower density. This is the highest ratio amongst the CIPFA comparator group. Retaining the existing Council size of 55 but increasing the number of Councillors allocated to the wards north of the river might improve the electoral equality and warding patterns there, but create a worsening situation south of the river where 75% of the population reside and where there are several areas of significant increase in electors forecast. There would also be a miss match between the proportion of councillors representing the two geographic areas and the electorate split. There would also be a resulting variance from the overall elector ratio.

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 following options have been considered:

a) Status Quo

Maintaining the existing number of councillors is not supported as it does not address the volumes of ward work or the forecast increase in electorate thus restricting Councillors abilities to effectively and efficiently represent their constituents and fulfil their roles as community leaders. Remaining at 55 Councillors means a likely average increase in time spent by Councillors on case work on top of their other Council duties and outside commitments. We have set out in section 10 above arguments about the impact of the geographic limitations to the area north of the river if the status quo was maintained.

b) Reduction in size

We considered reducing the number of Councillors to 48 or 51 but concluded that a reduction in the number of elected Members would be detrimental to the ability of councillors to effectively represent their constituents and provide effective governance and community leadership. It is unlikely that the size of committees or frequency of meetings and other commitments would decrease because the number and complexity of decisions and scrutiny required would not diminish. Therefore each Councillor would have to increase the number of committees and panels they are appointed to which would exacerbate the impact on the amount of time they have available to deal with the case work and to undertake their community leadership roles. Their Council role would on average occupy at least 4 hours a day. In reality, for a Councillor to maintain some work/life balance and deal with their non-Council commitments, this means they would become almost full-time on Council duties over a 5 day week. Achieving a better diversity of Councillors is likely to be impacted even more as younger people are less able to devote time because of full-time paid work or other commitments.

A 2012 report from the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee ([Councillors on the Front Line](#)) looked at barriers to becoming a councillor and heard from a number of witnesses that the time commitment involved in being a councillor was one such barrier, especially for those in full time work. The Committee also heard that younger people and those in their thirties struggled to find the time to combine being a councillor with their work, study or family commitments.

It is very important to the Council that, as far as possible, councillors come from a range of different backgrounds, age, sex, employment status and disability. Any reduction in the size of the Council runs the risk of reducing the diversity of its Members. For those groups (e.g. self-employed or working full time) who would find an increased workload a barrier to becoming a councillor then it is likely that a smaller council would be a significant disincentive to standing for office.

c) Increase in size

The Council favours increasing the number of Councillors to 59. Much of the reasoning is explained in section 10 above, relating to the geographic limitations of the area north of the River Medway and the impact on the development of effective warding proposals later in the process that achieve the statutory criteria.

Increasing to 59 councillors would maintain the current levels of time spent on average by councillors on the whole range of their Council duties as the case work from an increased electorate and their allocation to committee places would be spread across more councillors, meaning they could provide better community representation and leadership and the diversity of councillors would be less impacted.

Excluding schools based staff, the number of employees has reduced by 11% over the last 3 years. Members do not receive any officer support to deal with case work and, unlike other Councils, there is no dedicated Members' Services Team. Inevitably, given the reduction in the size of the workforce, it has become more difficult and time consuming to deal with ward work. This reduction in the workforce has been largely due to the Government's austerity programme which has also had the effect of increasing the number, and complexity, of issues constituents, particularly in the more deprived areas, look to local councillors to help with. However, not all issues are specific to someone's socio-economic status (e.g. planning issues) and people living in more economically prosperous areas also have concerns which place demands on councillors.

A comparison with Medway's CIPFA statistical neighbours² (see Appendix 2) shows that 7 out of 15 have a smaller electorate than Medway yet 5 of these have more councillors. The average number of electors for this group is 199,095 (as at 1 December 2018) with an average council size of 61. Medway has the third highest ratio of electors to councillors while also having 6 fewer councillors than the average for the group. While many in this group are northern, metropolitan councils, Medway, in terms of population density, is not so dissimilar – having a population density of 10.5 compared to an average of 12.9.

Conclusion

Having carefully considered whether maintaining or reducing the size of the Council could provide effective strategic leadership, community leadership and accountability we have concluded that these options would not meet these objectives. Moreover, a reduction would certainly diminish the capacity of Members to be community leaders and remain properly accountable to their constituents.

Like most Councils, Medway has had to contend with very significant budget reductions in recent years with a reduction in Revenue Support Grant of £46m over 5 years (88%). Compounding this has been an increasing pressure on Council services which are delivered either by the Council's diminishing workforce or via alternative, more commercial, models. As a result, decisions around identifying and agreeing savings are becoming increasingly more difficult and take up much more Member time (both the Executive and Scrutiny) than used to be the case. Austerity has also increased the amount of case work Members have to deal with. The population of Medway is set to grow by just under 10% in the near future and the number of councillors in Medway is below many of our statistical neighbours.

Taking all these factors into account, the case for an increase in the Council size is compelling.

Appendices

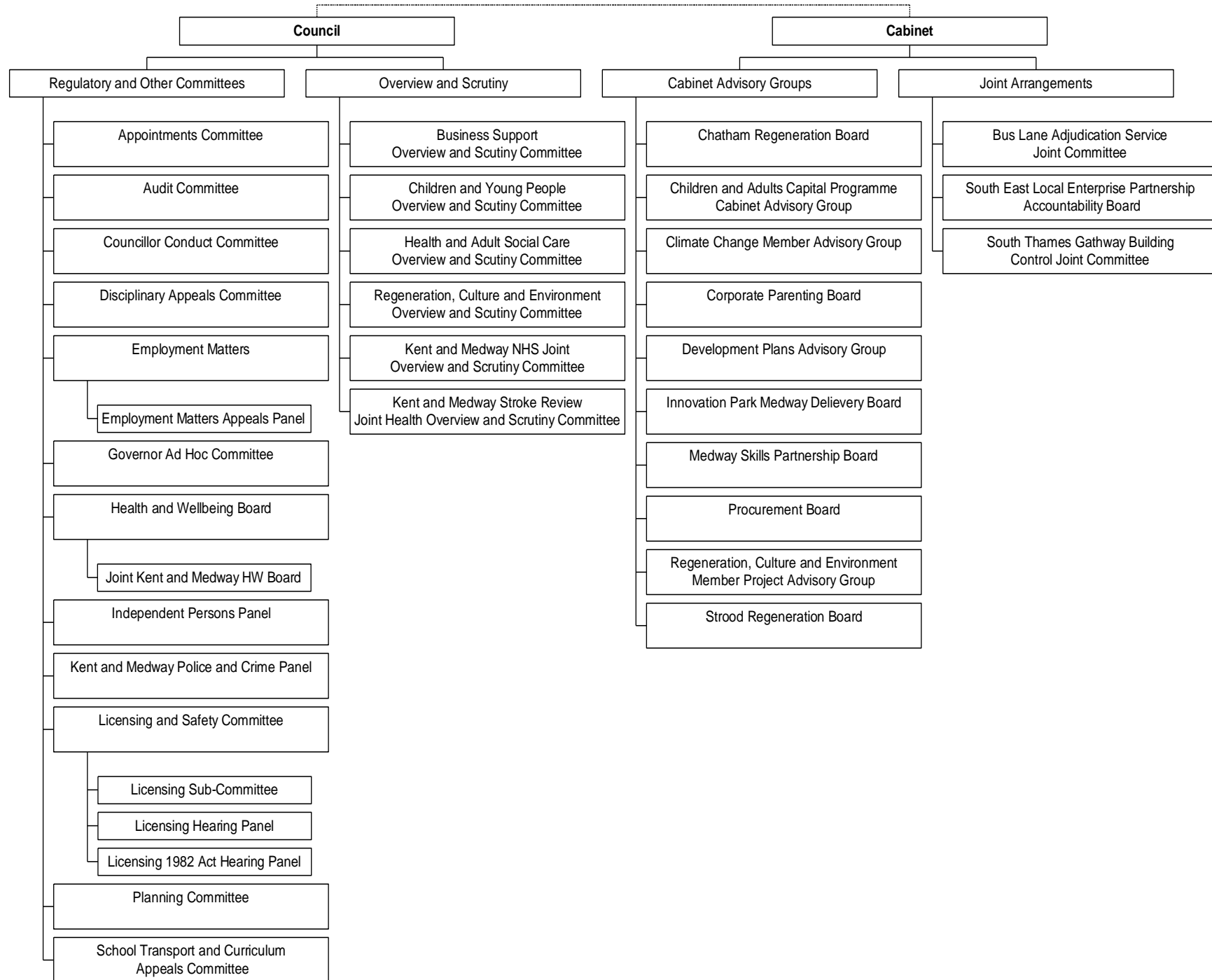
Appendix 1 – The Council's Decision Making Structures

Appendix 2 – Comparison with CIPFA Statistical Neighbours

Appendix 3 – Key Roles of a Front Line Councillor

² Bolton, Bradford, Bury, Calderdale, Derby, Dudley, Kirklees, Plymouth, Rochdale, Stockton on Tees, Stockport, Swindon, Tameside, Telford and Wrekin and Wigan

Medway Council - Decision Making Structure



Comparisons with CIPFA Statistical neighbours

	type of authority	Local Govt electors at 1 Dec 2018	Council size	As at 11 April 2019					Date of last Review or in prog
				Elector ratio	Hectares	Density	No. of wards > 30%	% of wards > 10%	
Bolton	Met District	196,988	60	3283	13980	14.1	0	10	2003
Bradford	Met District	358,352	90	3982	36642	9.8	0	16.7	2003
Bury	Met District	142,560	51	2795	9948	14.3	0	11.8	2003
Calderdale	Met District	148,886	51	2919	36392	4.1	0	0	2003
Derby	Unitary District	177,213	51	3475	7803	22.7	0	11.8	2002
Dudley	Met District	241,166	72	3350	9796	24.6	0	4.2	2002
Kirklees	Met District	305,722	69	4431	40860	7.5	0	17.4	2003
Medway	Unitary District	201,662	55	3667	19203	10.5	1	4.5	2000 Y
Plymouth	Unitary District	187,063	57	3282	7983	23.4	0	10	2002
Rochdale	Met District	161,945	60	2699	15808	10.2	0	15	2003
Stockton-on-Tees	Unitary District	139,603	56	2493	20393	6.8	0	19.2	2002
Stockport	Met District	220,640	63	3502	12606	17.5	0	4.8	2003
Swindon	Unitary District	168,204	57	2951	23010	7.3	0	25	2011
Tameside	Met District	172,482	57	3026	10317	16.7	0	10.5	2003
Telford and Wrekin	Unitary District	127,908	54	2369	23031	4.4	0	10	2014
Wigan	Met District	235,118	75	3135	18819	12.5	0	12	2003

Average	199,095	61	3210	19162	12.9
Max	358,352	90	4431	40860	24.6
Min	127,908	51	2369	7803	4.1

Electoral cycle of all except Medway, Stockton-on-Tees and Telford & Wrekin, are elections in thirds

Commission criteria for a Review:

30% of wards have a variance >10%

1 ward has a variance >30%

Out of balance for last 2 years

From the stats it would appear that none of this Group would trigger a review apart from Medway

Summary of key roles of a front line Councillor

Key duties in the following areas:

Community liaison

1. To participate constructively and effectively in the good governance of the Council, Medway as a whole and your local area.
2. To act in a manner which promotes the best interests of Medway, its residents and those who work in Medway.
3. To collectively be the council's policy makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate leadership functions.
4. To deal effectively with the concerns of local residents on issues pertaining to the Council and its partners.
5. To represent the interests of the ward for which elected and their communities
6. To bring the views of the community into the council's decision making processes and to be the advocate of their communities.
7. To participate effectively in all relevant consultative processes with the local community and with other organisations.
8. To ensure effective contact with community representatives and other local stakeholders as appropriate and represent their views.
9. To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the organisation's services and activities and other matters which affect and impact on the local community.

Overview and scrutiny and regulatory roles

1. To be involved in reviewing the Council's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery through the overview and scrutiny processes when you are not a Member of the Executive, with a view to assessing their effectiveness in meeting the strategic objectives of the authority and the needs of its residents. To carry out this role in relation to scrutinising partners.
2. To participate actively and effectively as a Member on any scrutiny, regulatory or other Committee/panel, assembly or forum to which the Councillor is appointed.

Statutory

1. To fulfill the statutory requirements of an elected Member of a local authority and to participate in those decisions and activities reserved to the Council.
2. To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the authority's services, management arrangements, powers, duties and constraints.
3. To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the council's partners and their services e.g. the police and the NHS

Ways of working

1. To have a good understanding of the Council rules set out in the Constitution, determining how Council meetings are meant to be run.
2. To comply with the Council's Code of Conduct or such other code of conduct as the Council may from time to time adopt.
3. To comply with the Member/Officer protocol as set out in the Constitution.
4. To ensure that the principles of equality and fairness are integral to all actions and policies of the council.
5. To take part in training and development programmes to ensure that this role is undertaken as effectively as possible.
6. To make use of new technology as a means of effective communication.
7. To have a good understanding of the responsibilities elected members have as corporate parents.
8. To develop good working relationships with other members and with employees of the authority.

Skills and knowledge required

1. Good communication and interpersonal skills
2. Ability to use ICT to support their role
3. Ability to relate and deal with the public in a professional and timely manner
4. Ability to work effectively with council officers and outside organisations
5. Community Leadership skills including managing ward and case work

6. Ability to manage conflicting priorities, stress and time.
7. Understanding and appreciation of diversity and equalities issues
8. Understanding of the legislation relating to duties, obligations and rights of elected members
9. A good understanding of how local, national and European government operates, including the statutory and financial frameworks.
10. Ability to keep abreast of issues affecting local government