



ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Submission on Council size, to be submitted to the
Local Government Boundary Commission for England

MAY 2018

Executive Summary

The Council has been invited by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to submit its view in relation to the future Council size (number of Elected Members) for Halton Borough Council. The Commission has to determine the right size of Council for Halton. This stage represents the first step in the process of reviewing the Ward boundaries for the Borough.

There is no formula to assist in arriving at the right number of members for a Council, however, the Commission issues guidance as to the factors it will consider in coming to its view. Those factors are referred to later on in this submission and have been used by the Council in coming to its view. In the body of this submission the Council provides detailed evidence to support its viewpoint, however, this Executive Summary draws out the key reason as to why the Council has reached the conclusion it has.

The Council's conclusion takes into account the Commission's assertion that there should be three member wards within the Borough wherever possible. This means that the Council only has two basic choices to make, as the current number of 56 is not divisible by three. So the number of Members can only go up or down. Having considered all the relevant facts and looked at all available evidence, the Council has come to the conclusion that a small reduction in Elected Members should be supported. The Council strongly believes that 54 Members are required for Halton to ensure that:

- 1) The Council's governance arrangements have sufficient members in place in order for its business to be conducted efficiently and effectively;
- 2) There are sufficient members in place to ensure that effective scrutiny takes place, not only in relation to the Council itself, but also to those outside bodies that the Council has a responsibility to scrutinise; and
- 3) There are sufficient members available to members of the public, to enable appropriate representation to take place in relation to those issues that the community sees as important.

The Council believes that the evidence provided in this submission supports the above view but would wish to draw out the following key factors in support:

- The Council is in a unique position in that it is part of Cheshire for the purposes of Police and Fire services and is an active member of the Cheshire Sub-Regional Managerial Board but is also part of the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority for the purposes of sub-regional devolution. There needs to be sufficient

member capacity to ensure the Council is appropriately represented at all levels in both the Cheshire and Merseyside arrangements.

- Deprivation levels are such in Halton that many people look to their local representatives for support and advice. This can be about a whole range of issues and not necessarily confined to matters relating directly to the responsibilities of the Council.
- With the number of Parish Council's in the Borough being relatively small, the overall number of directly elected representatives available for the public in the Borough is low in comparison with our nearest neighbours and would continue to be even with the 54 Members proposed for the Borough Council.
- Both the introduction of Universal Credit and the implementation of the Government's austerity measures have had a major impact in the Borough. The member survey and member diaries (see later) show the subsequent impact this is having on their time. The reduction in staff numbers at the Council has meant that the support to Elected Members in dealing with these type of enquiries has reduced significantly. This has put more pressure on members themselves.
- The most striking feature of the Borough is that of the River Mersey that runs through the middle of it. The Council recognises that the Commission prefers strong and identifiable boundaries between wards and therefore believes that a smaller number of wards served by less than 54 Members would make it more difficult at the later stages of the Commission's review to proportion electoral arrangements equitably.
- The member survey work demonstrates the significant time commitments that already face elected members and the subsequent pressures that brings on those Members who work, have parental or other care dependency responsibilities. A significant reduction in Members would only make this situation worse, hence the suggestion to reduce the number by 2.
- Member workloads need to be realistic in order to continue to attract a diverse range of individuals to stand for the Council.
- As part of its analysis the Council considered both increases and further reductions in Council size from its proposed position of 54. In relation to increases in size the Council concluded that an increase would neither add value, nor contribute to improved governance or representation arrangements. Analysis of further reductions in size (51, 48, 45, 42) were also considered. However, with any number below the proposed 54 the average hours input required per week per member starts to increase to above 30 hours and indeed heads towards 40 hours, which, as

previously stated, would reduce the opportunity to attract a diverse range of people to stand for public office. It would also result in up to 70% members having an executive, regulatory or development control role on the Council. The Council also felt that any further reduction below 54 would result in the lack of opportunity for fair representation of communities in stage 2 of the review – with the possibility of only 7 wards for each of the major towns of Runcorn or Widnes.

Given that City Region issues are going to put greater pressure on Executive Board members, which in turn will increase the workloads on non-Executive Board members in their scrutiny capacity, it is felt that the correct size for the Council is 54 Members, representing, as far as is possible, three member wards.

The rest of this submission looks at the following issues and provides the evidence to back-up what is outlined above in this Executive Summary:

- 1) Background – the reasons for the view.
- 2) Facts About Halton - some contextual information to support the Council's conclusions.
- 3) Methodology – the approach the Council took to developing the submission.
- 4) Applying the Commissions three criteria:
 - Governance Arrangements
 - Scrutiny Arrangements
 - Representational role of Councillors
- 5) Future Issues
- 6) Conclusion

1. Background – The Reasons for the Review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) is undertaking an Electoral Review of Halton Borough Council. This review has been triggered by the fact that the electorate in the Farnworth Ward in Widnes is 33% higher than the average electorate across each of the Wards in the Borough. Significant divergence in the size of one ward from the average electorate in the other wards in the borough is one of the Commission's criteria that triggers a review.

During the first stage of the electoral review, the Commission is required to reach a decision on the size of the Council (the number of Councillors on the Council). This document is Halton Council's submission to the Commission, and provides the Commission with the Council's view as to the optimum Council size for Halton and the evidence supporting this. In the second stage of the review the Commission will draft a new set of Ward boundary arrangements for the Borough based on the number of Members the Commission deems is sufficient for the Borough following consideration of the Council's submission.

The Local Government Boundary Commission states in its technical guidance that the key factors that it will take into consideration in an electoral review are as follows:

- the governance arrangements of the Council, how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities, and whether there are any planned changes to those arrangements;
- the Council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision-making and the Council's responsibilities to outside bodies, and whether any changes to them are being considered; and
- the representational role of Councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the Council on local partner organisations.

In addition to these factors and as the Council elects by thirds, there is a presumption that the Commission will seek to achieve a pattern of three member wards across the Borough wherever possible.

2. FACTS ABOUT HALTON – SOME CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE COUNCIL'S CONCLUSIONS

Halton Borough Council became a Unitary (all purpose) Council on 1st April 1998. It had previously been a District Council within Cheshire with Cheshire County Council providing the upper tier local authority functions. The Council serves a population of **125,700** with the two largest settlements of Widnes and Runcorn facing each other across the River Mersey. The borough benefits from excellent connectivity and transport infrastructure. There are good road and rail connections to London (less than 2 hours by train) and Birmingham. Similarly there is good proximity and access to airports at Liverpool and Manchester and to the Merseyside seaports.

Halton is part of the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority. This is one of the few City Regions to have secured a Devolution Agreement with the Government, meaning decision making and resources around a number of key priorities are made by the Elected Mayor and/or the Combined Authority.

The initial Devolution Agreement signed in November 2015 secured £900 million of funding over the next 30 years and identified a number of priority areas where resources and decision making would be devolved to the Liverpool City Region. They relate to employment and skills, housing and planning, transport, innovation, business growth and support, energy, culture and finance. It is critical to Halton that it has capacity both at Elected Member level and officer level to play a full role within those new arrangements to ensure the Borough fully benefits from that Devolution Deal.

The Borough has inherited a difficult legacy from its industrial past, particularly around some social and economic issues. With changes that have taken place to industry and employment the Borough has comparatively high levels of deprivation. The Council has, however, a record of being a high performing Council and has a strong record of delivering good services and impressive regeneration projects across the Borough. It is committed to continuing that drive for improvement.

The Council's approach to regeneration has been transformational, ranging from the Sci-Tech Daresbury campus (with Enterprise Zone status) an international hub for world class science; to the building of the Mersey Gateway bridge that consolidates the strategic position of Halton in the region; and the Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) that will become the UK's largest inter-modal logistics park with 6 daily train services to the south coast and handling 150,000 containers per annum.

The work, led by the Council, with housing provider partners has transformed the Castlefields estate from the concrete deck access flats through an investment of £100m over a 10 year period. What has been innovative is the follow-up work, with housing trusts, the Halton Employment Partnership and Halton People into Jobs and other partners, to

work with residents to create sustainable employment opportunities. This includes, for example, supporting residents to find employment on the Mersey Gateway build, through establishing job clubs, signposting support to employment and providing volunteering opportunities. Council Members play a very direct role in the design, consultation and delivery of regeneration progress, including working with community interest groups and partners.

Regeneration is crucially important for Halton to help address levels of deprivation and poor health. Regeneration over the last ten years has seen the remodelling of the borough leading to major improvements in its physical appearance. The next phase will be to consolidate this, through major projects scheduled as part of the Mersey Gateway *Plus* Regeneration Project. This unlocks significant development and investment opportunities within Halton, the City Region and beyond. It seeks to build on the existing strengths and assets of the local area to continue the physical regeneration and transformation of Halton and further enhance its economic offer. The plan sets out a cohesive package of development opportunities and identifies the key infrastructure and enabling projects the Council is looking to bring forward to complement and support growth.

There is also continuing work to adjust the balance of the housing market that currently has a high 25.7 per cent of social housing (compared to the North West average of 18.5 per cent) so that there is more intermediate and market housing for residents and to attract workers who work in the borough to also live there. Given that social housing represents a significant element of the housing sector, the Borough has a significant number of registered social landlords, generating additional work for Members in dealing with tenants' queries and issues.

The point of the above narrative is that given some of the challenges the Borough faces, the drive from elected members to deliver improvement is important. Much of the improvement needs community engagement and involvement and Halton's members are at the heart of much of that activity and will need to continue to be so over the coming years.

Population & Demography

With a population of 125,746 at the 2011 Census, Halton is England's 163th largest Authority out of 326. The population of Halton has increased by 6.4% between the 2001 and 2011 censuses and is forecast to continue to grow.

There are two main towns within Halton separated by the River Mersey. Runcorn has a population of 63,684 and Widnes has a population of 62,062. A breakdown of current wards and the population change over the period 2001 to 2011 can be found in the table below:

Ward	Town	2001 Population	2011 Population	Population Change	Population Change (%)
Appleton	Widnes	6,390	6,789	399	6.2
Beechwood	Runcorn	3,984	3,673	-311	-7.8
Birchfield	Widnes	4,449	6,909	2,460	55.3
Broadheath	Widnes	6,448	6,164	-284	-4.4
Daresbury	Runcorn	3,906	4,501	595	15.2
Ditton	Widnes	6,249	7,326	1,077	17.2
Farnworth	Widnes	5,908	7,308	1,400	23.7
Grange	Runcorn	6,865	6,923	58	0.8
Hale	Widnes	1,898	1,841	-57	-3.0
Halton Brook	Runcorn	6,597	6,605	8	0.1
Halton Castle	Runcorn	6,429	6,138	-291	-4.5
Halton Lea	Runcorn	6,413	6,670	257	4.0
Halton View	Widnes	6,886	6,745	-141	-2.0
Heath	Runcorn	5,507	5,861	354	6.4
Hough Green	Widnes	7,067	6,861	-206	-2.9
Kingsway	Widnes	6,096	6,600	504	8.3
Mersey	Runcorn	6,146	7,406	1,260	20.5
Norton North	Runcorn	6,494	6,720	226	3.5
Norton South	Runcorn	7,227	6,772	-455	-6.3
Riverside	Widnes	4,814	5,519	705	14.6
Windmill Hill	Runcorn	2,435	2,415	-20	-0.8

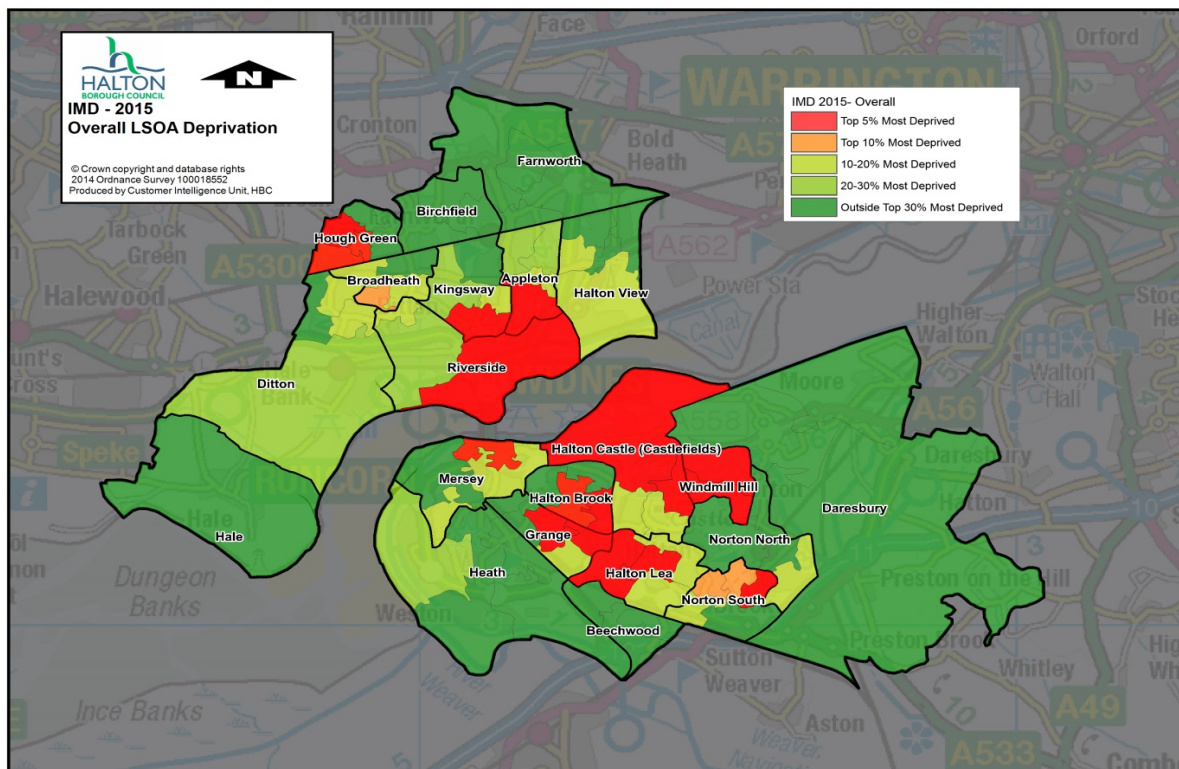
There are also 6 Parish Councils within the Borough:

- Daresbury
- Hale
- Halebank
- Moore
- Preston Brook
- Sandymoor

The Parish Councils at Sandymoor and Halebank are relatively new Parish Councils. However, the vast majority of the Borough is unparished.

Despite much of the good work done by the Council since it became a Unitary Council in 1998, deprivation is a major issue in Halton. Halton is the 27th most deprived local authority in the country. 12 out of 21 wards have Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the 10% most deprived in the country. Over a quarter of children (25.3%) live in poverty.

Below is a map showing the deprivation levels across the Borough:



Levels of unemployment in the Borough are higher than national averages. When compared to the England average, Halton has a higher % of working age people who are economically inactive due to sickness or disability. The impact of Universal Credit is starting to be felt as Halton has the highest rate of universal credit claimants in the Liverpool City Region and has a higher rate than the North West & England.

The effects of high levels of deprivation are a significant factor in the Council's priorities, actions and governance structures and has a major effect on the workload of Elected Members. This is clearly evidenced from the member survey and diaries.

Housing related demands

There were 53,312 households in Halton in 2011, of which 25% are socially rented. This is considerably high than regional (18.3%) and national (17.7%) figures. There are over 20 social housing providers in the borough. This adds to the complexity of Member's caseloads having to develop relationships across a number of housing providers.

Health Inequality

The health of people in Halton is generally worse than the England average. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Life expectancy is 12.7 years lower for men and 9.3 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Halton than in the least deprived areas. Female life expectancy is the eleventh lowest in the country

(2016). In Halton the older people age group (65+) is projected to grow from 21,100 in 2014 to 26,700 in 2024 this coupled with health factors, such as rates of hospital admissions due to falls being higher in Halton than for England and the North West, is expected to put increasing demand on social care. Social care has faced a significant shortfall in funding and the Council is facing increasing demands to meet the needs of this client group. Again, there are complex NHS arrangements in the Borough involving numerous NHS Trusts which require Members to navigate on behalf of their constituents.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

In 2015 Halton was ranked 61st out of 326 Local Authorities, with 13 small areas falling in the top 10% most deprived nationally for crime, compared to 14 in 2010. Cheshire Police statistics continue to show that its two Local Policing Units at Halton are more affected than other parts of the county for serious crime and both child safeguarding and domestic related crime.

Again, the reason for stating these facts in this submission is to highlight the correlation between the socio-economic make-up of the Borough and the direct impact that has on member workloads. The members' diaries in particular demonstrate the variety of issues they get involved in and the increasing complexity of the life of an elected representative.

Some examples of how the above factors impact on Councillors can be found from extracts from the week long diary:



Cllr Sunday Afternoon / Tuesday Afternoon Health Example: One Halton

“Further researched Accountable Care Systems due to questions that are currently being raised due to Council plans involving One Halton” (2hrs)

“Facebook message regarding One Halton and Accountable Care Systems - research before response” (30 minutes)”



Cllr Wednesday Morning Health example: CCG / PPG

“Clinical Commissioning Group gave report and updates to Patient Participation Forum Chairs and Patients, from both Widnes and Runcorn. There were 5 presentations, questions and answer session.

Local PPG groups gave around the table report on activity within their own group”

Cllr Thursday Afternoon Housing example: New Management



“Met with Liverpool Housing Trust (LHT) manager. Discussed general issues affecting residents in our Ward, plus the likely impact of LHT now being part of ONward Homes. 1 hour”

Cllr Monday Morning Housing example: Trees



“11-12 call out – tree fallen into neighbouring garden of Halton Housing.Trust tenant. Called H.H.T to discuss having tree removed and area made safe”

Cllr Monday Afternoon Crime / ASB example: Drugs



“ASB issue neighbour nuisance. All witnessed drug drop. Emails & phone calls HHT & Police 3:45 – 4:30pm”

3. METHODOLOGY – THE APPROACH THE COUNCIL TOOK TO DEVELOPING THE SUBMISSION

Before reaching its conclusion on Council size, the Council undertook a comprehensive review of member activity to help inform its decision making. It had not previously recorded member activity in such a comprehensive way but felt it needed to understand

more clearly the demands on individual member time in order to produce the evidence required by the Commission.

The Council undertook the following activity in order to reach its conclusions:

1. Established a cross-party Member Working Group

The Council established a cross-party Member Working Group to oversee the review process and oversee the development of the Council's submission to the Commission. The Working Group comprised:

5 Labour Members
1 Conservative Member
1 Liberal Democrat Member

The Working Group was supported by officers from the Enterprise, Community and Resources Directorate.

2. Review of Technical Reports

The Working Group initially appraised itself of the Commission's technical guidance in order to fully understand their approach to such reviews. They also examined the submissions made to the Commission by other local authorities. The Working Group were advised of the statutory criteria that the Commission must have regard to when conducting reviews, this included:

- The need to secure equality of representation;
- The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- The need to secure effective and convenient local government.

3. Research and Analysis

Having taken into account the Commission's Technical Guidance, the statutory criteria the Commission has to follow and the submissions of other local authorities, it was very clear to the Working Group that in order to form a conclusion about the right size of Council for Halton information about the workloads and pressures on individual members would be required. Information of that nature had never been formally collected before so a number of exercises were put in place in order to gather it. They were as follows:

- A Member Survey – this was distributed to all Members of the Council for completion. It would provide quantitative data and qualitative data for analysis.
- Councillor Diary – these were again distributed to all Members of the Council. Members were asked, over a period of one week to keep a daily diary of all Council related activity.

- An examination of population/electorate projections over the next five years.
- An examination of the size of Halton's CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) group of authorities and neighbouring authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside.
- The information gathered from the above processes has helped the Council to come to the conclusion that 54 is the right number for Halton. The section that follows provides the evidence to support that assertion.

4. Full Council Approval

This submission was considered and approved at a full meeting of the Council held on Friday 18th May 2018.

4. APPLYING THE COMMISSIONS CRITERIA AND EVIDENCING THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED COUNCIL SIZE NUMBER

The next section uses the Commission's key factors in determining Council size to justify the Council's position, using the evidence derived from the information gathering exercises previously described.

Governance and Decision Making

The Council is made up of 56 Councillors with one-third of the seats in the Council elected three years in four (Election by Thirds). Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their ward. The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.

Halton Borough Council currently has a large Labour majority (Labour 52, Conservative 2, Liberal Democrat 2).

It is at meetings of the Full Council where Members decide the Council's overall policy framework, and set the budget each year. The Council is responsible for appointing the Leader, the Chairs/Vice Chairs and membership of Policy and Performance Boards (PPB/Scrutiny Committee), Forums, Panels and Committees. The Leader is responsible for appointing members to the Executive. Time is set aside at all Policy and Performance Boards for the public to ask questions. The Council also operates a call-in procedure for Executive decisions. Public speaking on planning applications at the Development Control Committee have been in place for some years now.

- For Municipal Year 2016/17 the Council made 21 formal decisions. However, this needs to be placed in the context of all of the work done by the Executive Board and PPBs and the extensive scheme of delegation the Council has.
- The Council meets 5 times a year plus any special meetings.

The Council's Governance Arrangements.

The Council operates the Leader and Cabinet executive model of governance. It calls its cabinet the Executive Board.

Executive Portfolios

There are currently nine Executive portfolios in addition to the Leader who also has a Portfolio:

The Portfolios are:

- Overall Leadership/Strategy, Corporate Plan and Policy, Regional/National/International Affairs and Advocacy on external bodies (Leader of the Council)
- Children, Education and Social Care
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transportation
- Community and Sport
- Community Safety
- Economic Development
- Resources
- Environmental Services
- Physical Environment

Below are the formally constituted meetings for Halton Borough Council and the attendance over the latest year:

Board Name	Number of Meetings	Number of Councillors	Full Attendance	Actual Attendance	% attendance
Business Efficiency Board	4	11	44	33	75
Children, Young People and Families PPB	4	11	44	38	86
Corporate PPB	4 (1 cancelled)	11	33	27	82
Council	7	55	385	357	93
Development Control Committee	8	11	88	78	90
Employment, Learning and Skills and Community PPB	4	11	44	35	80
Environment and Urban Renewal PPB	4	11	44	37	84
Executive Board	11	10	110	106	96
Health and Wellbeing Board	4	4	16	12	75
Health PPB	4	11	44	35	80
Mayoral Committee	1	5	5	3	60
Regulatory Committee	6	11	66	51	77
Safer PPB	4	11	44	35	80
Schools Forum	5	1	5	4	80
Standards Committee	1	8	8	8	100
Total	70	182	980	859	88

It should be noted that formal meetings of the Council are accompanied by pre-meetings and officer briefings with Members and that the respective political parties hold political group meetings.

Decision Making

As can be seen from the above attendance at meetings is very good demonstrating a level of commitment from members to their respective responsibilities. Numbers of members on each Board is kept relatively low. However, to ensure effective scrutiny takes place it is considered that those numbers are at optimum levels.

When major decisions are made, these are published in the Forward Plan in so far as they can be anticipated. If these major decisions are taken at a meeting of the Executive Board, this will generally be open for the public to attend except where personal, confidential or exempt matters are being discussed.

The Executive Board has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Council as a whole to decide.

- For Municipal Year 2016/17 the Executive Board made 120 decisions
- The Executive Board meets monthly

Involvement of Halton members in decision-making regional and sub-regional bodies?

Liverpool City Region

The Liverpool City Region is governed by the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority and its constituent Councils. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority was established on 1 April 2014 and the membership includes the Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor, five local authority leaders of Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral Councils, the elected Mayor of Liverpool City Council and the Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership. Warrington and West Lancashire Councils are Associate Members of the Combined Authority.

The Combined Authority works with the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership to promote and deliver economic growth. The Local Enterprise Partnership ensures that the views of businesses are represented in strategic decision making. It is expected that as the devolution agenda continues to grow it will place greater demands on the Elected Members of the constituent Councils, including Halton. It will be important for Members to be engaged in the policy development processes and scrutiny processes of the City Region.

The Leader of Halton Borough Council represents Halton on the Combined Authority itself and is the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Renewables.

The table shows the involvement of Halton members within the structure of the Combined Authority:

Board Name	Number of Meetings	Number of Councillors
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	9	1
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – Scrutiny*	3	3
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – Transport	7	4
Liverpool City Region Employment & Skills Board	5	1
Liverpool City Region Housing and Spatial Planning Board	4	1

*The Scrutiny Panel/Committee does a significant amount of its work via the topic groups that operate outside of the formal meetings of the Scrutiny Committee. This therefore requires further commitment from those members involved.

Cheshire

Uniquely, as well as being part of the Liverpool City Region, Halton sits within the ceremonial County of Cheshire and is covered by the following Cheshire-based services:

- Police
- Fire
- Coroner
- Youth Offending Service

Halton members participate as follows:

- For the Cheshire Fire Authority there are 5 meetings a year which require the attendance of 3 Halton Councillors for each meeting. There are also sub-committees of the Fire Authority which Halton’s Members participate in.
- For the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel there are 4 meetings a year which require the attendance of 2 Halton Councillors to consider such matters as the setting of the Police precept. The Panel also holds regular informal fact finding meetings with the Police and Crime Commissioner and conducts confirmation hearings to senior police appointments.

The leader also attends the Cheshire Sub-Regional Leaders Board. A meeting of Leaders across the Cheshire Sub-Region which works collectively to represent Cheshire’s interests regionally and nationally.

Ecclesiastical Boundaries

The Borough also has a number of ecclesiastical boundaries which impacts both on Mayoral functions and time as well as adding an additional layer of geography for the Council, particularly around education provision in the Borough. The boundaries are:

- Diocese of Liverpool (Church of England)

- Diocese of Chester (Church of England)
- Diocese of Shrewsbury (Catholic)
- Diocese of Liverpool (Catholic)

Mersey Gateway Crossing Board

The Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd (MGCB) is a special purpose vehicle established by the Council with the delegated authority to deliver the Mersey Gateway Bridge project and to administer and oversee the construction, operation and maintenance of the new bridge together with the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. Currently the Leader and Deputy Leader sit on that Board.

Time commitments of the Leader and Executive Board Members

The roles of the Leader of the Council and Executive Board Members are very much full time roles. Meetings with Leaders and Mayors within the Liverpool City Region and leaders in Cheshire all take place in the daytime. In practice, the number of hours worked by those on the Executive Board generally are such that members carrying out the role find it extremely difficult to undertake full-time employment.

Therefore the demands on the time of Executive Members is significant. The Executive Board made 120 decisions (Municipal Year 2016/17)

This is reflected in the Councillors survey which showed that of the Council's Executive Board members spent on average around 49 hours per week on Council business.

Involvement of backbench Councillors in policy

Involvement in official Council business and policy making varies widely across the body of Councillors. All Councillors sit on at least one committee (scrutiny or regulatory). Topic groups are commonly utilised for policy development by the PPBs. Task and finish groups contribute to policy development and carry out work at a more detailed level than can be achieved in more formal settings. They tend to be time limited in nature, and may meet frequently over a short period of time. However, they can still involve Members in giving up a considerable amount of their time. This is particularly so when those policy reviews involve gaining evidence from third parties or involve visits to service locations.

Regulatory Committees

The Council's Regulatory and other Committees are

- Development Control Committee
- The Appeals Panel

- The Appointments Committee
- The Regulatory Committee
- Standards Committee
- The Mayoral Committee
- The Schools Forum
- The Independent Persons Panel

Development Control

Development Control is responsible for exercising the powers and duties of the Council as local planning authority including those set out in (or in Regulations made thereunder) the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning (Listed Buildings) and Conservation Areas Act 1990, the Planning (Consequential Provisions) Act 1990, the Hazardous Substances Act 1990, the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, the Environment Act 1995, the Town and Country Planning (General permitted Development Order 1995), the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Planning and Conservation Act 1991 as amended, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Planning Act 2008, Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and the Localism Act 2011. In addition it exercises the functions of the Council in respect of archaeology and ancient monuments.

It also exercises the powers and duties of the Council in respect of building control, building safety, demolition, fire precautions and safety of sports grounds under the Building Act 1984, the Building Regulations, and the Cheshire County Council Act 1980.

The Committee determines observations on particular applications and other specific matters affecting land within the Borough which are requested by central government, other authorities and statutory undertakers.

Development Control deal with all major planning applications which is approximately 5% of all decisions, the rest are delegated to officers, unless ward members wish them to be determined by the Committee.

Development Control Committee:

- Meets 8 times a year and consists of 11 Councillors
- Made 22 decisions last Municipal Year (May 2016 to April 2017)
- Members are expected to have familiarised themselves with development sites prior to determining an application and will often make site visits.

In recent years the Council has had a number of controversial planning applications that members have had to determine including applications in relation to an Energy from Waste Plant, large housing developments on greenfield sites, a development that resulted in a

Judicial review and an application for an interim asylum seekers accommodation. When such applications are under consideration the demands on Development Committee Members time can be significant. Members can be contacted through a variety of routes when such sensitive issues are under consideration.

Regulatory Committee

Regulatory Committee:

- Considers licensing matters within the scope of the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 (where the Regulatory Committee acts as statutory Licensing Committee under that legislation)
- Acts as the Council's Licensing Committee for the purposes of Section 6 Licensing Act 2003 (including its application to the Gambling Act 2005) and to discharge all of the licensing functions of the Council which are not reserved by statute for determination only by full Council in accordance with Section 7 Licensing act 2003 and Section 154 Gambling Act 2005.
- Is responsible for determining and implementing the Council's policies in connection with the grant, variation, suspension or revocation of licences, permits or consents, except as reserved by statute or regulations to the Council or Executive Board.
- Decides upon individual applications relating to the grant, variation suspension or revocation of licences, permits or consents.
- Takes appropriate action in connection with breaches of conditions attached to licences, permits, consents or registrations.
- Exercises the regulatory powers and duties of the Council in respect of safety of sports grounds under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.

Regulatory Committee

- Meets 6 times a year and consists of 11 Councillors
- Made 11 decisions last Municipal Year (May 2016 to April 2017)

Meetings can be quite lengthy given the nature of the work done by this Committee.

Over half of Members have an executive, regulatory or development control role on the Council.

Business Efficiency

The Business Efficiency Board is responsible for drawing up an Efficiency Strategy and ensuring that it meets its statutory requirements for securing Best Value in all that it does: it is also responsible for ensuring that the Council has a high standard of corporate governance and amongst other things is required:

- To draw up an Efficiency Programme for the Authority ensuring that it meets its statutory requirements for securing Best Value and complies with the requirements placed upon it in relation to reporting efficiency gains.
- To draw up and oversee a programme of reviews aimed at securing continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of Council services.
- To monitor the implementation of the Council's Procurement Strategy.
- To oversee the Council's preparations for any organisational assessment process.
- To approve, but not direct, internal audit's strategy, plan and monitor performance.
- To review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising, and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary.
- To review and approve the annual statement of accounts.
- To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.
- To review and approve the Annual Governance Statement.
- To ensure that the Council has effective processes in place to obtain value for money from its contractual arrangements with third parties.
- To review the adequacy of arrangements for identifying and managing the Council's business risks, including the Council's Risk Management Policy and its implementation.
- To monitor and review the adequacy of the Council's anti-fraud and corruption policies and arrangements.

Currently Business Efficiency:

- Meets 4 times a year and consists of 11 Councillors
- Made 7 decisions last Municipal Year (May 2016 to April 2017)
- Reviewed 44 internal audit reports
- Oversaw production of the Council's Annual Governance Statement

How many Members are involved in Committees?

Board Name	Number of Meetings	Number of Councillors
Business Efficiency Board	4	11
Development Control Committee	8	11
Mayoral Committee	1	5
Regulatory Committee	6	11
Schools Forum	5	1
Standards Committee	1	8

Is committee membership standing or rotating?

All Committee memberships are approved annually by the Full Council.

Are meetings *ad hoc*, frequent and/or area based?

Meetings are scheduled, but with Regulatory/Standards/Dev Control can be called as and when required depending on urgency of business

What level of attendance is achieved? Are meetings always quorate?

Below are the attendance statistics for the last municipal year:

Board Name	% attendance
Business Efficiency Board	83
Development Control Committee	98
Mayoral Committee	60
Regulatory Committee	77
Schools Forum	80
Standards Committee	100

Scrutiny Function

The Council operates with 6 Policy & Performance Boards (PBBs). Those PBBs act as the Council's Scrutiny Committees. These PPBs reflect the Council's Corporate Priorities which

are detailed below:

- A Healthy Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Employment, Learning & Skills
- Children & Young People
- A Safer Halton
- Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

Within their terms of reference, Policy and Performance Boards will:

- examine the subject matter of forthcoming decisions and, where appropriate, make recommendations to inform and strengthen decision-making;
- review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Executive and/or any organisation, partnership or joint arrangement in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, when a decision is made but not yet implemented by the Executive Board.

Policy and Performance Boards may:

- review and scrutinise the decisions made by, and the performance of, the Executive Board and Council Officers both in relation to individual and collective decisions;
- review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- question Members of the Executive and Chief Officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally, in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- make recommendations to the Executive and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Policy and Performance Boards and local people about their activities, plans and performance; and
- question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

Further details on the specific role of each PPB is provided below:

Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

The primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its Partners) in seeking to ensure that children and young people in Halton have the best possible start in life and the

opportunity to fulfil their potential and succeed, and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Children and Young People Priority.

Corporate Policy and Performance Board

The primary function is to scrutinise that the Council (and its Partners) have available the necessary finance, organisation and people, physical resources, communication and information, and that those resources are effectively focused on achieving the Council's priorities.

Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board

The primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its Partners) in seeking to improve economic prosperity in Halton and the skills and employment prospects of its residents, and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Priority.

Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

The primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its Partners) in seeking to bring about the Environment and Urban Renewal of the Borough and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Environment and Urban Renewal Priority.

Health Policy and Performance Board

The primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its Partners) in seeking to improve health in the Borough and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Healthy Halton Priority. This PBB also carries out the Council's statutory role in relation to scrutinising the proposals of NHS bodies that operate within Halton.

Safer Policy and Performance Board

The primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its Partners) in seeking to ensure that the environment within the Borough is safe and attractive for local people to enjoy, and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Safer Halton Priority.

Scrutiny has a high profile in Halton and the relevant Member and Strategic or Operational Director will usually attend meetings of the PBB to account for their actions. Member's attendance at meetings is very high:

Board Name	Number of Meetings	Number of Councillors	Full Attendance	Actual Attendance	% attendance
Children, Young People and Families PPB	4	11	44	38	86
Corporate PPB	3	11	33	27	82
Employment, Learning and Skills and Community PPB	4	11	44	35	80

Environment and Urban Renewal PPB	4	11	44	37	84
Health PPB	4	11	44	35	80
Safer PPB	4	11	44	35	80
Total	23	66	253	207	82

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Currently there are 3 meetings a year which require the attendance of 3 Halton Councillors for each meeting. However the LCR Scrutiny Committee carries out its detailed work via Topic Groups. The work here can be quite intensive and requires a significant time commitment from those three members.

The PBBs work through their formal meetings and Topic Groups. They set their work programmes within the resources available (both members and officers) in mind. It is coordinated by the Chairs' Group which is chaired by the Council's Scrutiny Co-ordinator and meets quarterly.

Each PBB determines its own work programme although this is overseen and coordinated via the Chairs' Group. Topic Groups, generally, act on a task and finish basis with recommendations made to the appropriate PBB and Executive Board.

PBB members are expected to do preparatory work for both PBB meetings and contributing to topic groups. This involves

- Reading reports, articles, best practice etc.
- Conducting online research
- Carrying out public consultation, reviewing the responses
- Meeting and questioning service users, witnesses and experts
- Conducting site visits
- Contacting other local authorities

The Councillor Survey identified that preparation by PBB members by way of reading the reports and where necessary undertaking wider research is estimated to take the majority of Councillors up to 5 hours per week (according to the Councillor survey 46% of PBB members spent 6 to 10 hours per week preparing for meetings). The member diaries also identified that a large amount of time spend preparing for meetings

Topic Groups

Currently there are the following active topic groups working under the auspices of their respective PPBs:

- Culture: The aim of the review was to determine if, "the Halton cultural offer is being captured within a wider city region cultural narrative", and, "there is synergy

between a local and city-region wide cultural offer and where added value could be obtained”

- Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan (Plus): The purpose of the topic group will be to provide the forum for Members to contribute to the development and delivery of the borough’s Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan (Plus).
- Halton Health Improvement Team
- Carers
- Discharge from Hospital
- Care at Home Provision in Halton
- Cancer Services (Joint Scrutiny)
- Mental Health
- Falls Prevention
- Vascular Services (Joint Scrutiny)
- Homelessness
- Dignity
- Implementation of White Ribbon Status
- Further developing links between Halton’s Businesses and Schools

Each Topic Group has its own terms of reference and timetable. The initiating of such work always makes reference to the resources available. Scrutiny has always had an active role within the Council and pre-decision scrutiny also takes place on a regular basis. Pre-decision scrutiny is received in a positive way by the Executive Board as it means that many sensitive issues have already been subject to detailed scrutiny by colleagues prior to Executive Board consideration.

Representative roles of Halton Councillors and wider demands in their time

This section concentrates on the wider representative role of all Elected Members on the Council and demonstrates the extensive workloads Members have beyond the formal and structured meetings of the Council. The member survey and diary work has provided the Council with far more detailed evidence than it has collected before about the life of an Elected Member on Halton Borough Council.

Representative Role

Halton's Members are proactively involved within their wards as opposed to simply responding to case work and consider that they play an active part within their communities. The approach they take varies from member to member, but most Councillors are involved in some or all of the following:

- Holding surgeries – dealing with queries, providing advice and engaging with their constituents face-to-face;
- Working with, and/or offering support, to community groups and local organisations;
- Responding to digital queries (email, Facebook, Twitter etc.)
- Maintaining blogs and/or websites and social media;

Constituent led ward activity:

- Assist constituents at advice / Councillor surgeries (as advertised by the Council).
- Signpost constituents to appropriate help and support.
- Attending meetings with constituents re issues, concerns or complaints.
- Attend community meetings and residents meetings.
- Assist constituents with mediation, disputes, including anti-social behaviour and nuisance issues.
- Assist constituents with appeals and complaints against the Council.
- Assist constituents with appeals and complaints against other bodies such as housing providers and other public bodies.
- Lead ward walkabouts, organise events and activities for constituents e.g. doorstep surgeries.
- Reading, preparation time and travel time both to and from all the above.
- Deliver ward newsletters to all homes in the ward, or targeted leaflet drops on issues.
- Distribute election literature and /or campaign related literature.
- Canvassing and door knocking each household in the ward.
- Lobby MPs, government, public bodies or other parties on behalf of constituents.
- Participate in party political meetings and functions that relate to the ward / borough, as well as trade union activity promoting constituents interests.
- Undertake roles and responsibilities within a political party, including selection procedures for candidates to the Council.

Representing the Council

- Participation with outside bodies on which the Council is invited to have a nominated Council representative
- Preparation for attending at meetings of outside bodies, including making email

queries and telephone calls relating to items.

- Attendance at pre-meetings, officer briefings and the formal meetings of outside bodies.
- Chair (or hold other positions) on outside bodies to which the Councillor is representing the Council.
- Perform a range of supporting tasks to the outside body including attending at site meeting, informal meetings, events, press calls.
- Reading reports, preparation time and travel time both to and from all the above.

Representing the Community

- Attendance at meetings of bodies on which a Councillor is not necessarily a nominated Council representative but to which Halton Councillors commonly participate to represent the interests of the community
- Membership of School Governing Bodies (LEA, Academy, Free School), including positions of responsibility such as Chair / Vice Chair.
- Membership and activity with Committees to the above.
- Membership of community groups, residents associations, tenant groups, local campaign groups including holding positions of responsibility and membership of any Committees.
- Attendance at Parish Council Meetings within the Ward.
- Support and participation with community facilities and projects.
- Courtesy Visits.
- Lobby or attend at meetings to address bodies on behalf of residents / constituents (e.g. speak for or against planning applications, licensing applications).

The Councillor survey shows that all Councillors stated that they use Face to face, Telephone and Email to communicate with constituents. Text and Social Media were the least used methods of communication – although these were still used by over a third of Councillors.

In the survey one member stated :



“As services provision reduces due to budget cuts the work load for members increases especially in areas of high deprivation.”

Councillors are expected to take accountability for their casework, and manage their work appropriately, albeit with officer support. Usually, Councillors will contact officers directly – whether in person or via telephone / e-mail, and then respond to the individual.

The Councillor Survey identified that:

- 37% Cllr's stated that they deal with 6-10 cases on average per week
- 33% Councillors, stated 1-5 cases on average per week
- 25% stated 11-15 cases on average per week

This has to be put into context that 96% of Councillors stated that time you spent on Council business has increased from when they were first elected. Councillors expect this to further increase as a result of continued austerity measures and ongoing welfare reforms, in the survey one Councillor noted:

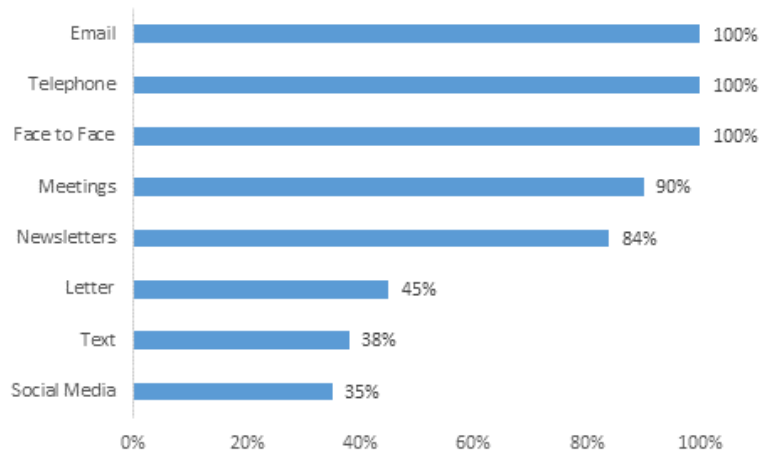


“As a Councillor in one of the largest and growing wards in the Borough, since I became a Councillor the work load has significantly increased. People are demanding to know more and expect more from this Council, which in turn increases our work load. As a Ward of three we manage the workload reasonably well and hope that this continues. Our residents depend on us for results and, hopefully if asked would say, we deliver well.”

Councillors receive support and advice from staff at all levels of the Council. However, as staff numbers at the Council have reduced, the amount of time officers are able to give to support Members is less than it used to be, meaning that they are having to shoulder more of the work themselves.

For example, the Committee Services Team has reduced from 7 members of staff to 4 and the Council has one full-time Member Services Officer.

All Councillors hold regular surgeries or are available for appointments. A chart displaying the methods of communication from the Councillor Survey can be found below:



Halton Councillors are making use of an increase of new technology to support their engagement with constituents. *Over 40% of those who use social media have said that they have seen a significant increase in the use of such means of communication.*

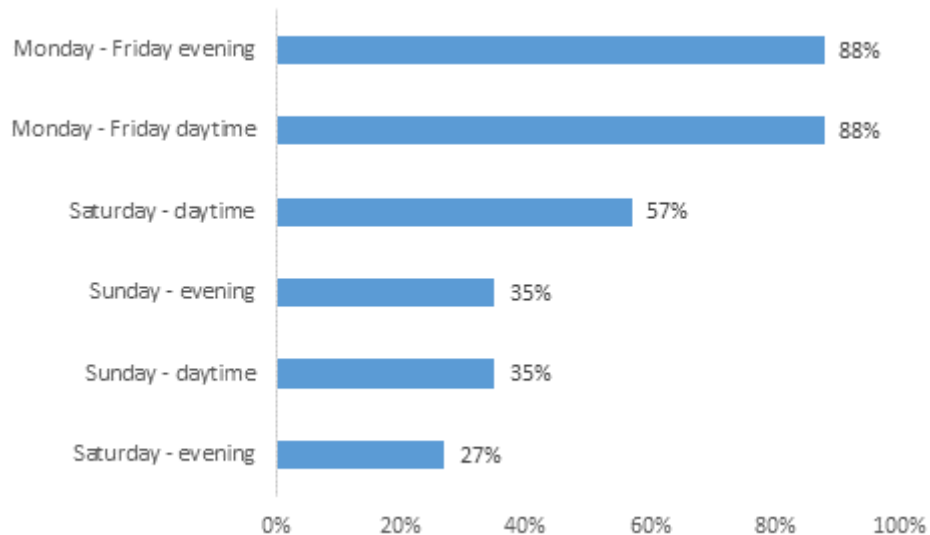
*The survey also reports that 47% of Councillors stated they spend **significant more time communicating via email** whilst over 50% stated they are spending **more time communicating via meetings***

Councillors believe that improved access to email has brought about a significant rise in the volume of enquiries against more traditional communication techniques. Expectations around response times from constituents has also increased.

The last electoral review of the Council took place in 2001. This review decided that the Council size should remain at 56 Councillors. However, the evidence gathered suggests that since that last review there have been a significant increase in demand on Members' time. Evidence from the member survey suggests that all members have seen increases in demand on their time. Many of the reasons for that are illustrated throughout this submission. However, three particular themes are returned to on a regular basis:

- The formation of the Combined Authority;
- The complexity of the delivery of health services across the Borough and the Council's scrutiny powers of those activities; and
- The impact of the Government's austerity programme and the implementation of the Universal Credit.

The pressures of the ongoing increase in Councillor responsibility is reflected in workload demands which impact Councillors the most, with Councillors experiencing workload demands 7 days a week 24 hours a day:



A third of Councillors identified that workload demands impacted on their work life balance and wellbeing and 20% stating that they are limited or unable to accept positions on the Council or representation on outside bodies owing to having carer responsibilities or child dependents.

Some extracts from the Councillor diary provide examples of how Councillors get involved in all aspects of the wider Halton community:



CLlr Wednesday Afternoon: Food Bank:

“Picked up food from Runcorn and District Foodbank Warehouse to be delivered to the Foodbank Distribution Centre in the Halton Castle Ward. 0.75 hours”



CLlr Monday Morning: School Governor:

“I was engaged in a two hour meeting in my role as chair of governors. We were discussing the Governors Action Plan to move the school forward from ‘Good’ to ‘Outstanding”



CLlr Tuesday Morning example: Ella Together (Halton Speak Out)

“Board meeting at Ella Together I'm a director.3hrs”



Cllr Thursday Evening example: Local Campaign Forum

“Meeting of Local Campaign Forum - Grangeway Community Centre
17-45 to 18-45”



Cllr Wednesday Afternoon example: Police Surgery

“15-15pm till 16-15pm attended a Police Surgery for Farnworth
residents at the Bridewell next door to St.Luke's Church”

Member Role Descriptions and Member Development

In order to support them in their role as Elected Members, the Council has clear role descriptions for all Members and all positions of responsibility. The Council has always placed great emphasis on Member training and development, in order to equip Members with the necessary skills to carry out their roles. Detailed below is further information contained in the Member role description and information on Member training and development.

Role description for Councillors

The Council, via its constitution, has identified a role description for all of its members, and follows.

- collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;
- represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
- contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making;
- deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
- effectively represent the interests of their ward and of individual constituents;
- balance different interests identified within the ward and represent the ward or electoral division as a whole;
- respond to constituents' enquiries and representations fairly and impartially;
- be involved in decision-making;
- be available to represent the Council on other bodies;
- maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics; and
- participate in the governance and management of the Council.

There are also role descriptions for all key areas of responsibility for members:

<http://Councillors.halton.gov.uk/documents/s46942/Chapter%208%20FINAL%202017.pdf>

Examples of work and tasks undertaken by Halton Councillors

- Council meetings, including full Council, Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees, Policy & Performance Boards, Appeals Panel, Working/Task Groups.
- Member seminars on key issues or tasks facing the Council.
- Party political meetings, including meetings of their political group on the Council.
- Participate with local Branch party meetings, Constituency party meetings, and Local

Campaign Forum meetings.

- Officer briefings of Leader / Deputy Leader, Executive Members, Chair / Vice Chair
- Policy & Performance Board briefings.
- Mayor / Deputy Mayor briefings, calendar planning, function hosting.
- Scrutiny Co-ordinator meetings.
- Pre-meetings / agenda meetings as required of all bodies / meetings listed above.
- Meetings with officers / public / other parties at the Council.
- Reading, preparation time and travel time both to and from all the above.
- Managing a Council email account (reading, writing and responding to email correspondence), calendar appointments, diary management.
- Handling telephone calls and making calls internal to the Council.
- Responding to telephone calls at home and visitors to the front door (including at unsocial hours).
- Preparing and writing letters, notes and reports.

Some examples of the type of work Councillors get involved in can be found from their meeting diaries.



**Cllr Monday Afternoon / Tuesday Morning Committee example:
Development Control**

“Arrived at Municipal Buildings at 1.30pm to meet with Planning Officers ahead of coming Development Control Committee left at 2.30pm”

“9.30 - 12.00 visited a number of locations across the Borough to view applications on this evenings Development Control Committee”



Cllr Friday Evening Party Political Meeting example: Labour Party Meeting

“Constituency labour party meeting and executive meeting, straight from work. Included discussion with MP. = 2.5 hours Further discussion around community engagement plans with constituency officers afterwards = 1 hour including travel home”



Cllr Saturday Morning unexpected / unsocial requests example:

“Even on my 11th wedding anniversary, out doing a community clean up from 10 till 11.30. On way home, accosted by constituent with parking problems - 30 minutes”



Clr Tuesday Afternoon Agenda reading example: Full Council

“Read Council agenda 1.30hrs”.



Clr Sunday Morning Agenda reading example: Full Council

“10am till 12-30pm reading Council Minutes and Agenda in preparation of Council Meeting on Wednesday”



Clr Friday Afternoon Managing email example:

“Working in members’ room at Municipal Building to: Review my email account entries for the week, deleting, printing, reading and electronically filing them. Organizing electronic calendar. Updating electronic task list. (2Hr. 35 Min.)”

Member Development and Training Activities

The Council has a formal Member Development Training Programme which has been recognised by obtaining Charter status from the North West Employers organisation. It includes:

- Authorised attendance at Conferences/Seminars.
- three-day induction programme (for newly elected Councillors) with a follow-up mentoring programme with Member and Senior Officers acting as mentors.
- Member Training and Development courses (each member of a learning and development plan)
- Workshops.
- Prior to each meeting, training and development has taken place with members of the Development Control Committee.
- Reading, preparation time and travel time both to and from all the above.
- Attendance at official openings, open days, events, presentations
- Attendance at inspections (including inspections of care homes).
- Reading, preparation time and travel time both to and from all the above.
- Last year there were 16 courses put on for Elected Members with an attendee total of 160

In addition and annually each member completes a Members Action Plan (MAP) which identifies their training needs over the forthcoming twelve months.

Development Control

Councillors have received training when they first start on the committee and receive 30 mins training before each committee meeting.

Regulatory

When new members come onto the Committee they receive one to one training with them and give them a training pack. Also, if training is identified by officers or if members specifically request training on a subject this training is delivered usually just before or after a Regulatory Committee meeting. Training is usually carried out in this way a couple of times a year.

Business Efficiency

Councillors receive training before each meeting covering the main roles and responsibilities of the Business Efficiency Board.

Over 60% of Councillors stated that they spend more time on Council business than they first expected. Furthermore **over 95%** said it had increased since they were first elected.

From the Councillor Survey, 92% of Councillors stated that they spend up at least 1 to 5 hours

per week on each category listed below:

- Attendance at Council Committees e.g. Scrutiny, Licensing etc.
- Attendance at other Council meetings e.g. meetings with officers, working groups etc.
- Attendance at external meetings (where you have been appointed a representative by the Council)
- Preparing for meetings
- Time spent on political party business
- Attendance at inspections (for example care homes)
- Community obligations e.g. community forums, local community groups
- Engaging with constituents, e.g. advice bureaux, community surgeries, home visits, ward walk-about
- Dealing with constituents enquiries / casework from and on behalf of constituents
- Attending workshops, training, conferences
- Travel related to Councillor business

This meant that 92% of Councillors spent at least 11-55 hours per week on Council business

As a result of the strong partnerships within Halton and the unique relationship with the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire local authorities there is a significant requirement for members to sit on external bodies both in Cheshire and Merseyside. A full list can be found below.

- Bridgewater Community Healthcare Trust
- Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum Trust Ltd
- Cheshire County Playing Fields Association
- Cheshire Fire Authority
- Cheshire Pension Fund
- Cheshire Police and Crime Panel
- Daresbury Public Sector Joint Venture Board
- Deafness Support Network
- Disability Partnership Board
- Early Years' and Childcare Partnership
- Halton Borough Transport
- Halton Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Halton Community Transport
- Halton Housing Trust Board
- Halton Play Council
- Halton Village Millennium Green Trust
- Halton & St Helens Voluntary Action

- Ineos Local Liaison Forum
- LGA Public Transport Consortium
- Liverpool Airport Consultative Committee
- Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority - Scrutiny
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority - Transport
- Liverpool City Region Employment & Skills Board
- Liverpool City Region Environment and Waste Board
- Liverpool City Region Housing and Spatial Planning Board
- Manchester Port Health Authority
- Mersey Gateway Environment Trust
- Mersey Gateway Crossings Board
- Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority
- Murdishaw Community Centre
- National Association of British Market Authorities
- Nightstop Communities North West
- North West Local Authorities Employers Organisation
- North Western Shadow Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
- Norton Priory Museum Trust
- Riverside College
- Rocksavage Community Liaison Group
- Runcorn Locks Restoration Society
- SACRE
- Sankey Canal Restoration Society (SCARS)
- SIGOMA
- T H Brown Trust
- The Mid-Mersey Housing Growth Point Board
- Warrington & Halton Hospitals, NHS Foundation Trust
- Whiston Hospital Trust

A number of Councillors referenced working with outside bodies in their weekly diary. Some examples can be found below:

Cllr Monday Afternoon Crime / ASB example: Drugs



“ASB issue neighbour nuisance. All witnessed drug drop. Emails &

phone calls HHT & Police 3:45 – 4:30pm”



Cllr Tuesday Morning / Afternoon outside body example: Halton Housing Trust

“Read 38 CV’s for the shortlisting of a new board member. I am chair of remuneration and nominations committee (2 hrs)...spoke at length on the phone to the company assisting in the procurement of the candidates (1 hour)”



Cllr Monday Morning / Tuesday Afternoon / Wednesday Morning outside body example: Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum Trust Ltd

“Second site visit with highways officers outside Catalyst Museum, disabled bays. 9:50 – 10:45am”

“Site visit Open Spaces, outside Catalyst Museum 1:50 – 2:45pm”

“Catalyst Museum with fellow Councillor meeting researcher to help catalyst bid for funding 11:45 – 13:15”



Cllr Thursday Morning outside body example: Mental Health Oversight Group

“Chaired Mental Health Oversight Group (3 Hours) - a joint group of officers from CCG, Public Health, Adult Mental, Children's Mental Health and Health Watch (Third Sector)”.



Cllr Thursday Afternoon outside body example: Cheshire Fire Authority

“1pm – 2pm – Cheshire Fire Authority Project Opening”

CLlr Friday Morning outside body example: Ineos Local Liaison Forum



“Ineos panel and briefings with officers. Including travel 3hrs”

The average length of service of the members of the present Council is 14 years; the longest serving member of the Council has 45 years of service.

At the latest local elections there were 55 candidates across all wards from the following parties:

- 18 Labour Candidates
- 17 Conservative
- 7 UKIP
- 9 Liberal Democrats
- 3 Independent
- 1 Socialist Labour
- 1 Trade Union and Socialist Coalition

It is noted, however, that over 50% of Councillors are fully retired. Councillors believe that the main barrier to attracting new members is around workloads. Clearly any significant reduction in member numbers is only going to add to that barrier.

In his Councillor Diary one member stated:



“If we as a society want to encourage working people to take on the role of Councillor, we must ensure that the workload is not at such a level that they are not able to fulfil the role properly or that they decide to step down. In my view, any significant reduction in the present number of Councillors would have the potential to create such a situation.”

There has not been any occasions when the Council has not been able to discharge its duties due to lack of members.

The Council operate Area Forums which are a cluster ward approach to responding to local needs either by community groups applying or Councillors suggesting schemes in response

to constituent issues and aspirations. There are seven Area Forums made up of neighbouring wards:-

- AF1 – Broadheath, Ditton, Hough Green & Hale
- AF2 – Kingsway, Riverside & Appleton
- AF3 – Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View
- AF4 – Grange, Heath, Mersey & Halton Brook
- AF5 – Norton North, Norton South, Halton Castle & Windmill Hill
- AF6 – Beechwood & Halton Lea
- AF7 – Daresbury

Area Forums have a budget (which is allocated per capita) and there is an established process which provides the mechanism for identifying priorities and agreeing expenditure. The process involves all Councillors supported by the Council's Community Development Team with project meetings held quarterly; decisions can also be made via an e-mail process. Utilising the funds as a match funding source has been very successful in recent years working to lever in funds from external sources:

- **Current budget:**£357,890 (2017/18)
- **Number of projects Delivered:** 114
- **Level of match funding levered:** £631,180

Members are involved throughout the process of delivering the projects, as follows.

- quarterly projects meetings,
- engaging with community groups re applications,
- follow up evaluation with some of the projects (visiting groups to see the benefits of the spend, publicity)
- and e-mail decisions which is probably about a third of the decisions made that way for either time critical reasons
- On average Members spend 3 hours working on each project.

5. FUTURE ISSUES

In preparing this submission the Council has also considered and looked at potential future issues that may have a bearing on the selection of the right number of Members for the Council. In particular, it has looked for issues that would have a significant impact on the potential number of Members required to serve the population and run the Council effectively.

It has come to the view that there are no particular issues that will fundamentally change the view expressed earlier that 54 is the right number of Members for Halton. Many of the

issues that it considers justifies this position are already covered elsewhere in this submission.

Halton has experienced severe budget reductions in recent years and ongoing reductions anticipated to continue. This year, the grant the Council receives from Government will be reduced by a further £5million (9%) – equivalent to a cut of £40 for every person living in Halton. We estimate that Halton’s Government grant funding will have been reduced by £63million (61%) or £500 per person, over the ten years between 2010 and 2020. Government grant funding is essential for a borough like Halton, which has high levels of deprivation and therefore a high demand for Council services.

Information from the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government shows that Halton has been one of the worst affected Council’s in relation to reduction in its spending power as follows:

- Over the period 2010/11 to 2019/20 the Government’s spending power analysis shows that Halton will lose £40.9m or 29.2% (in cash terms).
- For England the average loss of spending power is only 18.4%.
- Halton will therefore suffer the 39th greatest loss of spending power in percentage terms out of a total of 359 local authorities.
- Halton will also suffer the 3rd greatest loss in spending power in percentage terms out of the 55 unitary authorities.

As a result, budget decisions now take significantly more member time than was the case in the past, with lengthy decision-making processes required for Executive Board members to make the increasingly difficult recommendations to the Council, and Councillors at a local level spending significant time in meetings with local organisations and communities affected by both Council and central government reductions. This is reflected in the survey results previously mentioned.

The workload issue is further compounded with the reduction in staff within the Council. This has also placed additional pressures on members. There is less money and less staff to help Members deal with the issues raised by their constituents, however, those issues still remain and solutions more difficult to find. Working differently and with partners is becoming the norm.

The skills required of Members are also changing. Working with and across other agencies to find solutions to problems is a major part of the role. Building relationships with partner organisations is key. However, this is time-consuming and requires patience. Members are now required to influence more than direct. Whilst Halton has an excellent record of working in partnership across both the public and private sectors, success only comes from investing in the time to make those work.

6. CONCLUSION

The Council's view, having regard to all of the above factors and having taken all the available evidence into account, is that the number of Councillors on the Council should decrease slightly from 56 Councillors to 54 Councillors.

- Halton is an ambitious Council with growing complexity as to how it will achieve its objectives. It has a significant role in the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority and continues to deliver for its community despite significant financial pressure, nothing exemplifies this more than the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Bridge.
- This requires its members to be strategic and to work at a high level, seeking to influence at both national and regional level. It also requires there to be sufficient members to allow effective scrutiny to take place. Again both locally and regionally.
- Members consider their community role to be very significant. Halton has a unique position in that it has two major towns, Runcorn & Widnes, separated by the river Mersey. This is enhanced further in Runcorn which contains a new town conurbation designated 10 April 1964. Deprivation is a major issue in Halton. Halton is the 27th most deprived local authority in the country. A third of its population live within the 10% most deprived areas in the country and over a quarter of children live in poverty. Therefore it is vital that the Council size allows Councillors to continue deliver community representation across these different and challenging communities.
- The Council believes that, particularly in the current challenging times, that it has to work even harder get the best possible outcomes and ensure that Halton gets its fair share of funding.
- The reduction in the Council's financial resources does not mean that the Council should draw back from its role in ensuring that high quality services continue to be delivered and that democratic oversight is maintained.

In developing the Council's submission a range of factors were taken into account in and what the possible impact would be in changing Council size:

Factor	Reasoning	Change in size?
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Factor	Reasoning	Change in size?
Role of the Councillor in the community	Work in the community has always been central to Halton Councillors. Members have identified that caseloads have risen in recent years. With a growing regional agenda and challenges facing communities with high levels of deprivation in times of austerity it is expected that this role will increase.	No
The nature of the Council's specific governance arrangements	<p>Halton Borough Council already delegates a significant number of decisions to officers.</p> <p>It has already reduced the number and frequency of Policy & Performance Board (scrutiny) and Executive Board meetings.</p> <p>It is felt that there is little scope for further reductions in the number of meetings without adversely impacting on effective decision-making and democratic accountability.</p>	No
National and sub-regional working arrangements	<p>Halton is part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. This authority will continue to place additional responsibilities, and place additional demands on member's time. The Council has members on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority itself • Merseytravel Committee • The Scrutiny Committee; and • Various supporting working groups. 	Slight increase
Comparator Areas	The proposal of 54 will mean that Halton will be towards the lower end of its statistical nearest neighbours, which range from 44 to 75 for Council Size.	No change

Factor	Reasoning	Change in size?
Range of responsibilities of the Council	Halton has recently, and will continue to, taken on responsibility for a range of services as detailed in the chapter "The Future". Despite financial challenges, Halton Borough Council is committed to ensuring that residents continue to receive a full range of service and that democratic oversight is maintained.	No change
Cost	Achieving cost savings and value for money is a major concern for the Council. Although reducing the number of elected members would give rise to a small reduction per member/ward, this would not be significant unless the Council reduced in size very significantly as the majority of member support costs and administration of meetings would not be affected. It is not felt that a reduction of a significant magnitude would be manageable.	Slight decrease
Population	Halton's population has increased by 6.4% between 2001 and 2011, and is forecast to continue to. This growth is not significant enough to warrant an increase or decrease in Council size.	No
Diverse membership	<p>Halton Borough Council is keen to have a diverse range of Councillors from different backgrounds, employment status, age and sex.</p> <p>Currently the Council recognises that this is an area that could improve with over half of members being wholly retired from work.</p> <p>Reducing the size of the Council would further reduce the opportunity to strive for greater diversity of membership.</p>	No

The Council's submission on Council size has been informed by:

- I. Desk-based research into current ways of working – summary report can be found in Appendix A

- II. A survey of elected members asking for estimates of workload and views of their experiences. **The survey received a 90% response rate.**
- III. Diaries of Councillors workload covering 4 March 2018 – 10 March 2018– A cross section of examples can be found in Appendix B
- IV. Consideration of Halton’s approach to governance and democracy

In accordance with the Commission’s guidance comparison has been made with Halton’s 15 CIPFA statistical nearest neighbours (as extracted 1st December 2017).

The table below shows that the proposal of 54 is towards the lower end of that comparator group.

Nearest Neighbours	Council Size
Wigan	75
Gateshead	66
Rotherham	63
Wakefield	63
Barnsley	63
Doncaster	63
Rochdale	60
Salford	60
Bolton	60
Oldham	60
Tameside	57
Halton	54
Telford and Wrekin	54
St Helens	48
Knowsley	45
Stoke-on-Trent	44

The proposed number of 54 would bring the lowest in line with Telford & Wrekin who, as well as being statistically one of our closest authorities, share other similarities. On 1 April 1998, as a result of the Local Government Commission for England's review, Telford & Wrekin became a unitary authority. Halton was part of the same review and also became a Unitary Authority on 1 April 1998. Telford, like Runcorn, was also one of the new town conurbations and shares many of the same challenges facing Halton.

Within the list of statistical nearest neighbours there are also two authorities who fall within the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority, Knowsley and St Helens. The proposed number of 54 is greater than these two authorities, however when taking into account parish Councillor numbers Halton has a lower representation of elected members than these authorities. For example:

- Halton has a total of 50 Parish Councillors and a proposed number of 54 Ward Councillors. A total of 104 Councillors representing residents.
- Knowsley has 67 Parish Councillors and 45 Ward Councillors. A total of 112 Councillors representing residents.
- St Helens has 76 Parish Councillors and 48 Ward Councillors. A total of 124 Councillors representing residents
- Neither Knowsley nor St. Helens have the issues Halton faces with continuing and important relationships with the Cheshire Sub-Region.

The Council straddles the River Mersey. It is vitally important that the towns either side of the river, Runcorn & Widnes, have effective community representation. The Council believes its proposed number of 54 would achieve this.

Time analysis

Using information obtained from the Councillor Survey & Diary it has been possible to estimate total hours spent by Councillors on Council business:

Council Business	Total Hours Spent per week by Councillors
Attendance at Council Committees e.g. Scrutiny, Licensing etc.	154
Attendance at other Council meetings e.g. meetings with officers, working groups etc.	195
Attendance at external meetings (where you have been appointed a representative by the Council)	126
Preparing for meetings	202
Time spent on political party business	175
Attendance at inspections (for example care homes)	39
Community obligations e.g. community forums, local community groups	91
Engaging with constituents, e.g. advice bureaux, community surgeries, home visits, ward walk-about	191
Dealing with constituents enquiries / casework from and on behalf of constituents	239
Attending workshops, training, conferences	40
Travel related to Councillor business	115
Total	1,567

If we were to divide the total hours spent per week (1,567) by the total number of proposed Councillors (54) each Councillor **would spend on average 29 hours per week on Council Business**. This is a significant investment of time given that elected members have all the other issues in their lives as everyone else. Reducing the number of members further than this would put an increasing burden on those who remain and may well detract others from standing for public office. Which is not good for democracy.

The three diary examples found in Appendix B corroborate the survey findings:

- Executive Board Member identified a total of 44 hours spent on Councillor related business
- Regulatory Committee Member identified a total of 54 hours spent on Councillor related business
- Development Control member identified a total of 42 hours on Councillor related business.

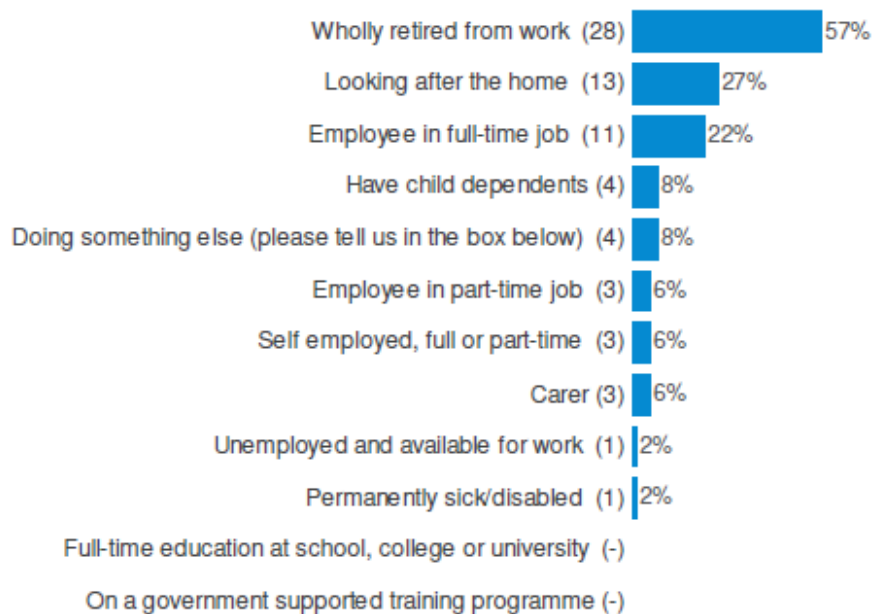
Given that City Region issues are going to put greater pressure on Executive Board members, which in turn will put greater workloads on non-Executive Board members, it is felt that the correct size for the Council is 54 Members, representing, as far as is possible, three member wards.

Appendix A Councillor Survey

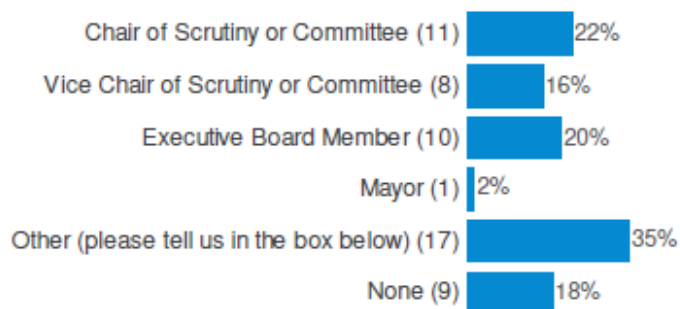


Councillor Survey Summary 50 responses

Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present? Please X all that apply



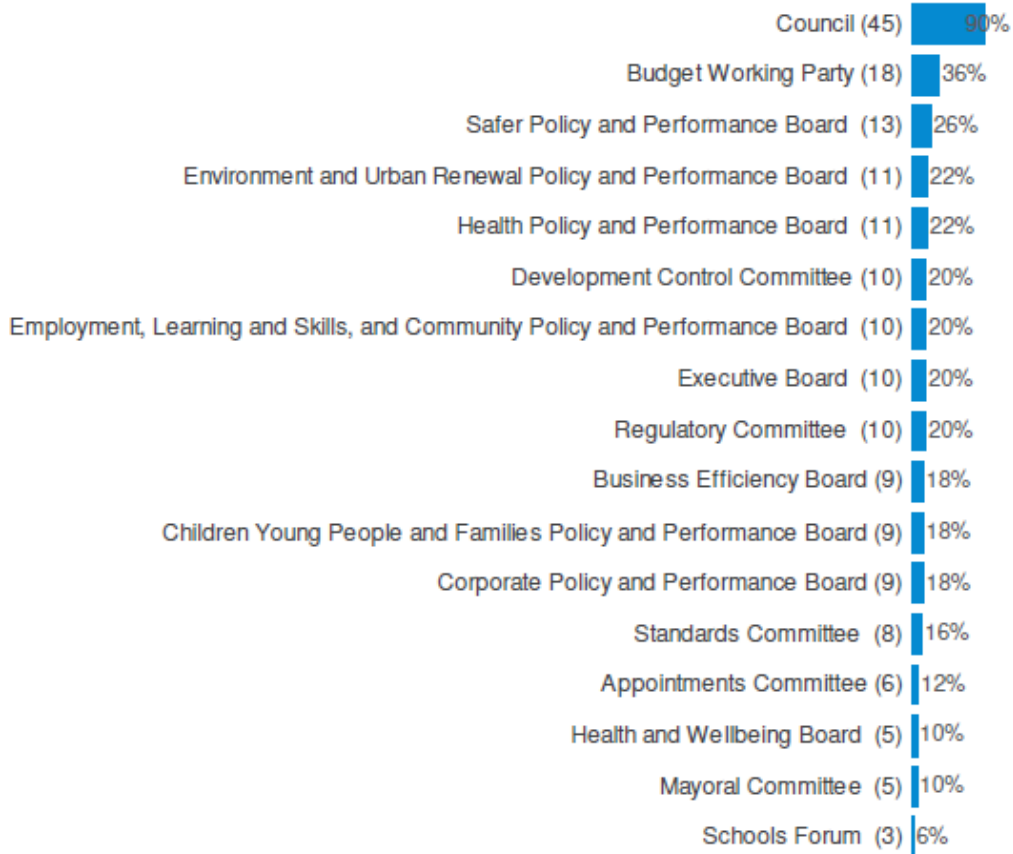
In addition to your role as a Councillor, what other position(s) do you hold within the Council? Please X all boxes that apply



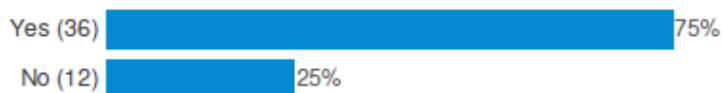


Councillor Survey Summary 50 responses

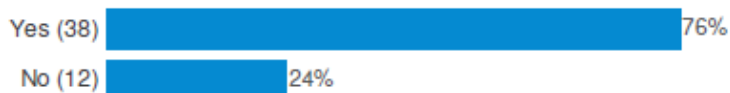
What committee's do you currently attend? Please X all that apply



Have you been appointed by the Council to any outside bodies? Please X one box only



Are you a trustee, member, governor of any outside body that you have not been appointed to by the Council? For example resident association. Please X one box only





Councillor Survey Summary 50 responses

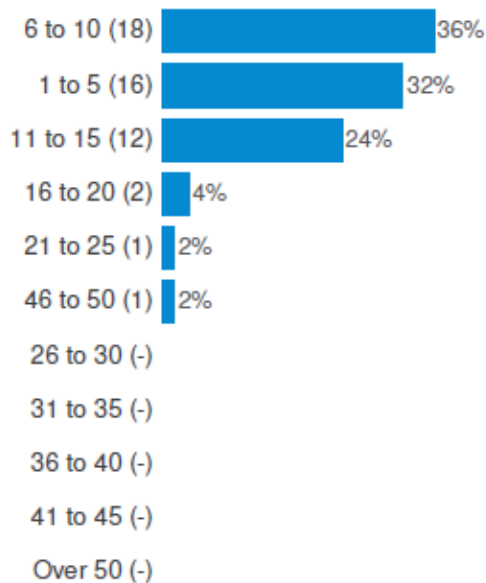
During a 'typical week', on average, how many hours do you spend on council and (political) business?



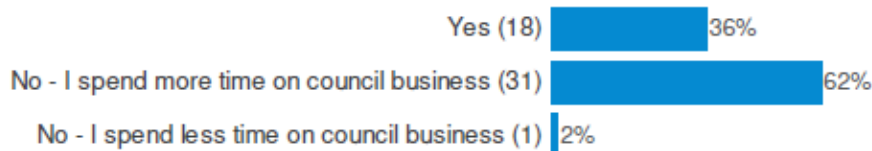


Councillor Survey Summary 50 responses

During a 'typical week', on average, how many cases / issues do you deal with? Please X one box only



Is the time you spend on council business what you expected when you become a councillor? Please X one box only

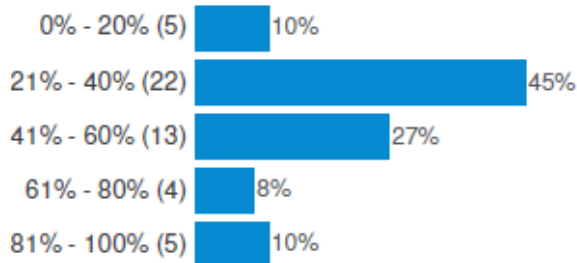


Has the time you spend on council business increased from when you were first elected? Please X one box only

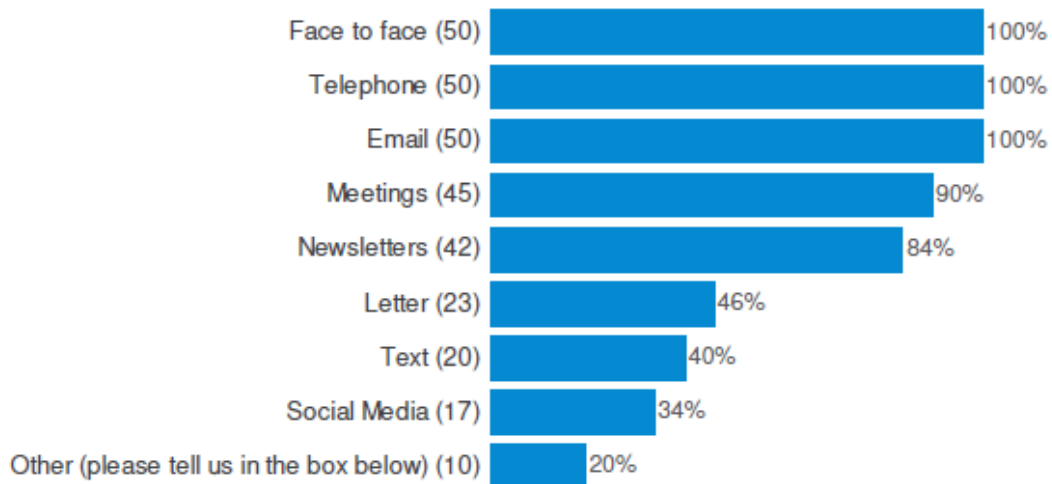


Councillor Survey Summary 50 responses

If Yes, how much would you say your workload has increased? Please X one box only



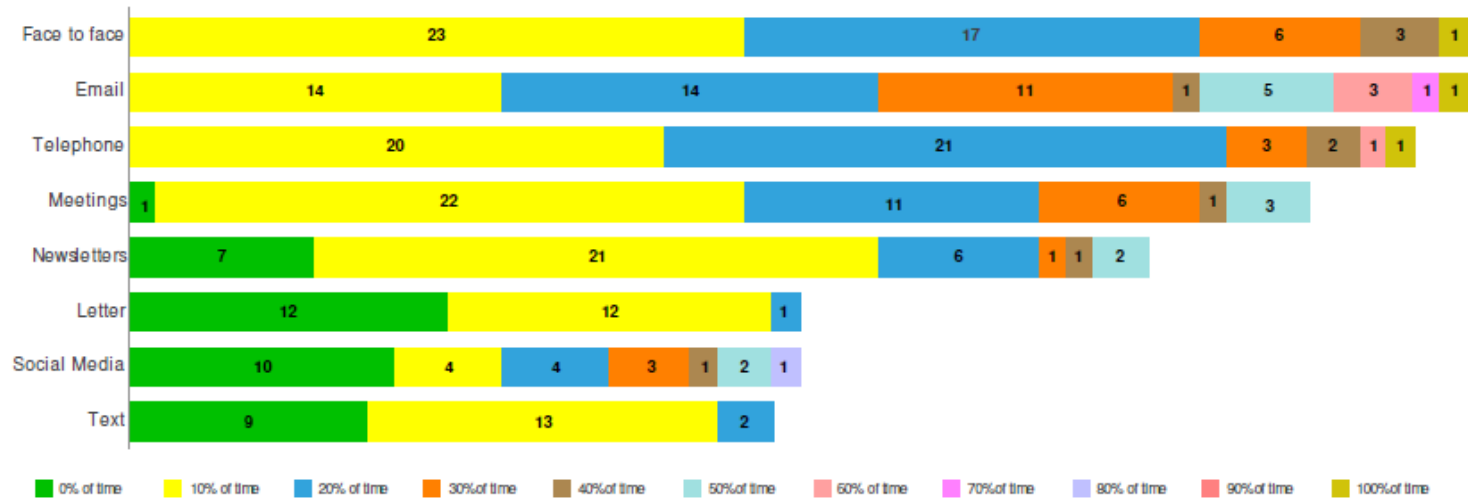
What methods of communication do you and your constituents use when exchanging contact? Please X all boxes that apply





Councillor Survey Summary 50 responses

During a 'typical week' what percentage of your time do you spend communicating with constituents via the following methods?





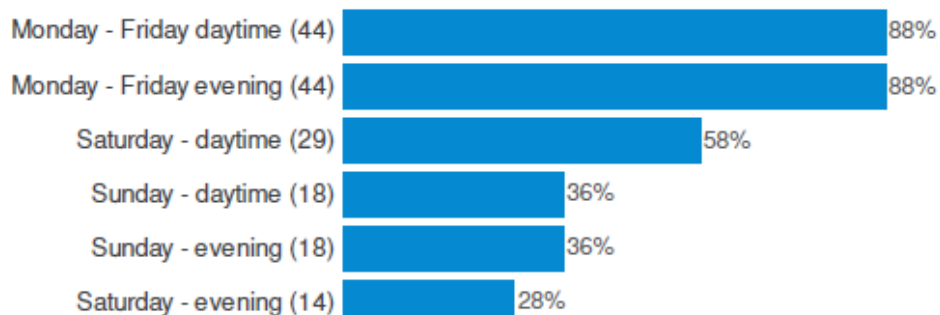
Councillor Survey Summary 50 responses

In recent years have you noticed any significant change in the amount of time you spend communicating via each of these methods?

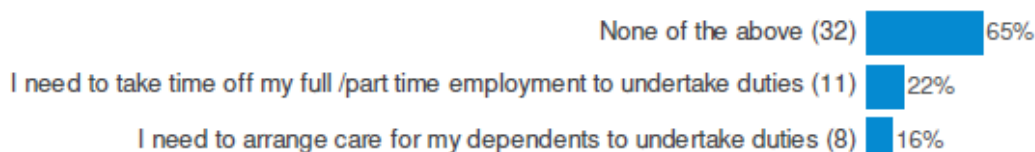


Councillor Survey Summary 50 responses

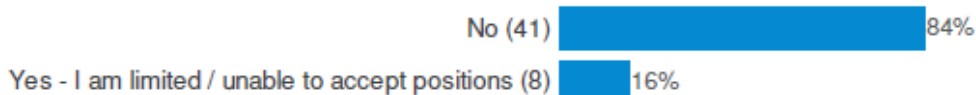
When are workload demands placed on you the most? Please X all boxes that apply



Do your workload demands impact on your work life balance and well being? Please X all boxes that apply



Are you limited or unable to accept positions on the Council or representation on outside bodies owing to full /part time employment? Please X one box only



Are you limited or unable to accept positions on the Council or representation on outside bodies owing to having carer responsibilities or child dependents? Please X one box only



Appendix B Councillor Examples Diary 4 March 2018

A Week in the Life of a Councillor

Executive Board Member

No. of Years as Councillor: 16 Years

Overview of all my Councillor roles:

Deputy Leader/Executive Board Member for Resources

Chair of Governor's Hale CE Primary School

Represent Council on Cheshire Pensions and Sigoma

Treasurer for Hale Youth Centre

TOTAL HOURS 44 hours 15 minutes

Sunday, 4th March 2018	
Morning	Nil
Afternoon	Prepare Budget Speech for Wednesday Night Council Meeting. 3 Hours
Evening	Answer e-mails prepare for week ahead read Executive Board Papers for Thursday. 3 Hours

Monday, 5th March 2018	
Morning	Attend Hale School meet Head Teacher 1 Hour Municipal Building Discuss issues with fellow Councilors. 1 Hour Meet Leader prior to meeting with Chief Executive 1 Hour Meet Chief Exec weekly meeting 1.5 hours
Afternoon	Answer e-mails, organize meetings for later in the week and next week. 1 hour

Evening	Attend Labour Group Meeting Leave home at 5.30 p.m. Arrive home at 8.15 p.m. Check e-mails 30 minutes. Total 3 hours 15 minutes
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Tuesday, 6th March 2018

Morning	Meeting in Municipal Building. Leave home at 10.30 p.m. Arrive back at 1.00 p.m. 2 Hours 30 minutes
Afternoon	Write up Labour Party Branch minutes. 2 hrs 30 Minutes
Evening	Answer e-mails, Check Budget speech for Wednesday night. 3 hours.

Wednesday, 7th March 2018

Morning	Meet resident regarding neighbour dispute. 1 hour
Afternoon	Prepare youth Centre accounts 3 hours
Evening	Attend Council meeting Leave home at 5.15. p.m. Return 7.45 p.m. 2 hrs 30 minutes

Thursday, 8th March 2018

Morning	Exec Board Pre- Agenda meeting leave home at 8.15. a.m. Followed by meeting with Operational Director for Education. Total 4hs 30 minutes.
Afternoon	Read Sigoma Report. 1 hour
Evening	LCF meeting in Runcorn 1hour 30 minutes

Friday, 9th March 2018

Morning	Attend Cheshire Pensions meeting in Chester 4 hours
Afternoon	Answer e-mails 1 hour. Phone call from Hale school 1 hour. Prepare foe school meeting on Monday 12 th March. 1 hour
Evening	

Saturday, 10th March 2018

Morning	Telephone call from resident. Answer e-mails. 1 hour 30 minutes
Afternoon	Read papers for Pensions meeting next week 2 hours.
Evening	Nil

Week in the Life of a Councillor

PBB member

No. of Years as Councillor: 17 years

Overview of all my Councillor roles:

I am currently Chair of Safer Halton PPB, and Council rep on the Police & Crime Panel. On the Council I am secretary of the Labour Group and fulfil the role as election agent for all local Labour candidates in Runcorn.

Sunday, 4th March 2018	
Morning	Viewed and answered Council emails, 30 mins. 10.30am, meeting with prospective candidate for Heath ward. As agent I need to get her election pictures, brief her on the ward, travel time, etc, 2 hours.
Afternoon	Prepared report notes from the Councillor Inspection I made earlier in the week of a Widnes Care Home, 1 hour 30 mins. Answered constituent phone calls re housing issue, 30 mins.
Evening	Viewed and answered Council emails, 20 mins. As secretary, I prepared notes for attending the Council's Labour Group meeting on Monday night. Needed to undertake web research for meeting to comment to the group, 2 hours.

Total hours for day: 6 hrs 50 mins

Monday, 5th March 2018	
Morning	Viewed and answered Council emails, 30 mins before going work. Whilst at work, received mobile phone calls from Council colleague re ward issues, 20 mins
Afternoon	Lunchtime at work, viewed Council emails made phone calls to residents. Read over past minutes for tonight meeting, 1 hour

Evening	<p>5.45pm Prepared for and attended the Halton Labour Group meeting at the Council Chamber, including travel time there and back. I was secretary to the meeting so prepared paperwork beforehand and present my report to the meeting, we discussed and agreed the Council budget for Wednesday night, after the meeting I went home and started work on writing the minutes for the meeting, 9.45pm</p> <p>Finally for hour of rest before working on another matter.</p> <p>11pm Late night, only chance I have to do this. Spent time reading my agenda for the development control committee meeting on Tuesday night, examined plans too with applications and did internet searches on pre meeting research to assist me, 2 hours</p>
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Total hours for day: 7 hrs 50 mins

Tuesday, 6th March 2018	
Morning	Viewed and answered Council emails, 20 mins before going work.
Afternoon	Lunch break at work. As Council rep on Cheshire Police & Crime Panel I read briefing sent to me on the current suspension of the Chief Constable, as I will need to consider the PCCs decision later if he recommends to dismiss him, 30 mins
Evening	<p>5.30pm, travelled to the Town Hall and prepared for the Development Control Committee at 6.30pm start, at this time the meeting begun and I spoke on the planning applications before us and the miscellaneous items, returned home to look at Council emails and respond to them, also had 2 telephone messages to reply too and address, these were both resident issues, to 9.30pm, 4 hours.</p> <p>10.30pm, reading budget papers for tomorrow night s Council meeting, 40 mins.</p>

Total hours for day: 5 hrs 30 mins

Wednesday, 7th March 2018	
Morning	<p>Viewed and answered Council emails, 20 mins before going work.</p> <p>Whilst at work, received texts re Council business which caused me to make a phone call for a resident, 10 mins</p>
Afternoon	<p>[Unable to attend walk walkabout with police owing to being at work]</p> <p>Lunch at work. Reading Council agenda at work for tonight's meeting, 1 hour</p>

Evening	<p>5.45pm travelled to the Town Hall for Council meeting at 6.30pm, we set the budget tonight and I spoke on the police budget etc, spoke with offers later, left Council and home for 8.45pm, 3 hours</p> <p>Email handing this evening, responded to officers on agreeing funding applications, me making further inspections of care homes, newsletter delivery etc, 1 hour 20 mins.</p>
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Total hours for day: 6 hrs 10 mins

Thursday, 8th March 2018

Morning	Viewed and answered my Council emails, 25 mins before going work.
Afternoon	Half day at work today, so attended to ward matters on return. Visited resident re housing issues and neighbor ASB issues, agreed to prepare letter for them, 3 hours
Evening	<p>Prepared letter for resident, received calls re the same issue, 30 mins.</p> <p>Began preparing literature for the local election campaign of which I am the Runcorn agent, 3 hours.</p> <p>[Unable to attend Halton Local Government Committee meeting at 6.30pm as I am too busy to go].</p>

Total hours for day: 6 hrs 55 mins

Friday, 9th March 2018

Morning	<p>Viewed and answered Council emails, 25 mins before going work.</p> <p>Received texts, unable to respond as in interviews today.</p>
Afternoon	No Council work this afternoon, been in interviews at work so can't catch up with work or messages.
Evening	7.00pm, drafting and preparing election material for May Council elections. Then, 30 mins of emailing re-funding, etc. Accepted Riverside housing associations invite to meet residents meeting at a supported housing scheme – provided it can be accommodated with my busy diary. finished at 10.30pm, 3 hours, 30 mins

Total hours for day: 3 hours 55 minutes

Saturday, 10th March 2018

Morning	Viewed and answered Council emails, 40 mins Picked up answerphone messages from 2 residents and called back to discuss, 45 mins
Afternoon	1.00pm travelled to meeting place for delivering community newsletters about Halton Lodge, leafleted door to door to 2.20 then travel home. 1 hour 30 mins Called at Hallwood Park to view issue that resident reported and take pictures to email later to the Council, 1 hour
Evening	Viewed emails and sent messages out re resident issues earlier, then undertook internet searches for research on issues, 1 hour 20 mins

Total hours for day: 5 hours 25 mins

Week records:

6 50

7 50

5 30

6 10

6 55

3 55

5 25

42.35 Total hours

A Week in the Life of a Councillor:

PBB & Regulatory Member

Overview of all my Councillor roles:

Member of Regulatory Committee Member of Urban Regeneration & Environment

PPB Member of Business Efficiency

PPB Trustee Halton Play Council

Member of Royal British Legion Centenary Event Committee

Sunday, 4th March 2018	
Morning	<p>Dealt with social media responses to the posting I had made regarding a litter pick I had arranged and carried out on Saturday 3/3/18.</p> <p>Created new facebook posting and tweet to publicise Monday 6//3/18</p> <p>Widnes Royal British Legion Event committee meeting, to begin to let the public know that the area will be doing a tribute to mark the centenary of World War I and the Council is supporting this (1hr)</p>
Afternoon	<p>Replied to an email regarding the change in terms of conditions to the Halton Hopper Bus Ticket following researching the changes (1hr)</p> <p>Replied to an email regarding a patch of Green Space that a resident thought was at risk of being built on, following researching proposed designation for it (1hr)</p> <p>Further researched Accountable Care Systems due to questions that are currently being raised due to Council plans involving One Halton (2hrs)</p>
Evening	<p>Read the agenda and minute book for next full Council meeting - 246 pages, researched various items and highlighted various points that I will need to seek clarification on and raise points on (4hrs)</p>

Monday, 5th March 2018	
Morning	<p>Research and email around an Executive Board decision that would potentially detrimentally effect my residents with a physical disability (1hr)</p>
Afternoon	<p>Meeting with Widnes Royal British Legion regarding assisting them in putting on a large community event to commemorate the First World War (2hrs)</p>

Evening	Labour Group meeting and travelling (3hrs)
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Tuesday, 6th March 2018

Morning	Four emails read and responded to regarding forthcoming Council Agenda. (1hr) Two phone calls regarding forthcoming Council Agenda (1hr)
Afternoon	Facebook message regarding One Halton and Accountable Care Systems - research before response (30 minutes) Meeting with local sports social club sited in my ward regarding their future. Advice given and then research on the situation (4hrs) Research into funding available for First World War event plus phone calls to relevant Council officers on availability and feasibility of event being held in local park (2hrs) Request from school governing body for assistance on where new roads are (1hr)
Evening	Number of emails requesting advice on appealing for school places. Advice given following emails sent requesting further detail on individual situation (1hr) Email regarding planning issue, advice and my position given (30 minutes)

Wednesday, 7th March 2018

Morning	Researched issue raised by email regarding tolls (1hr) Researched grant funding criteria for disability equipment such as stair lifts (1hr)
Afternoon	Read documents for school governing body (2hrs)
Evening	Attended Chief Executive presentation and Full Council (2hrs) Read and researched papers for forthcoming Regulatory Committee hearings (2hrs)

Thursday, 8th March 2018

Morning	Research and email regarding recent presentation to Council (1hr)
Afternoon	Enquiries regarding school place allocation (2hrs)
Evening	Meeting of Local Campaign Forum including preparation and travel (2hrs) Unpacking of tree saplings delivery to my home for upcoming planting in my ward (2hrs)

Friday, 9th March 2018

Morning	
Afternoon	Discussion with trade union regarding a motion to Council (1hr)
Evening	Researched and answered resident emails (2hrs)

Saturday, 10th March 2018	
Morning	Resident home visits to discuss issues raised that need more than email response (3hrs)
Afternoon	Walk around ward to identify any issues (2hrs)
Evening	Launched my ward Tree Nursery and Fostering scheme on social media. Received many comments and messages throughout evening from residents wanting to participate. Responded to all and organised when I would deliver the tree saplings that residents will foster until strong enough to plant in ward public places (4hrs)

Total Hours: 53 hours

A Week in the Life of a Councillor:

PBB member

No. of Years as Councillor: 6 years

Overview of all my Councillor roles:

Member of: Health PBB; Economic and Urban Regeneration PBB; LCR Scrutiny Committee;
LA Governor Runcorn All Saints Primary School

Sunday, 4th March 2018	
Morning	10.45 - 11.30 am. Checked emails, read all received since yesterday, deleted, filed and responded as appropriate.
Afternoon	
Evening	5.45 - 7.15pm. Checked emails nothing requiring action. Planned and prepared for meetings for tomorrow and took long view of week to schedule tasks for completion later in week. Began preparation for Council meeting on Wednesday. Read Half of Portfolio briefings ready for group meeting Monday. Made notes etc Following 360 degree session on Friday (Inlogov - North West Employers) carried out research into tools and suggested by consultant to assist with my skill development for Councillor role) identified web sites for use later in week.

Monday, 5th March 2018	
Morning	9 - 9.15m Check e mails for anything needing immediate action, responded to those that could be done quickly 10- 11.00am Meeting with newly elected Councillor to offer informal peer support. Total 1.15 mins
Afternoon	1.15 - 3.15 pm read, assess importance or urgency of e mails, delete rubbish, file some for information, respond to others. Follow through on a number of constituents queries, ongoing casework. 3.15 - 4.00pm read portfolio briefings for Wednesdays Full Council. Total 2.45 mins
Evening	Discussed upcoming newsletter and arrangements for community Spring Clean event on Saturday with ward colleagues following group meeting - 30mins

Tuesday, 6th March 2018

Morning	11.00 - 12.00 Completed Skills Audit for School Governor role. Total 1 hour
Afternoon	1.30 - 4.30 pm. Administrative tasks; follow through on constituents queries, contacting HBC and HH officers; continued preparation for Spring Clean event, additional publicity in ward. Total 3 hours.
Evening	

Wednesday, 7th March 2018

Morning	8.00 - 8.30am Checked e mails, responded to those needing immediate attention Total 30mins 8.45am -1.30pm LCR Scrutiny Board. Total 4.45mins
Afternoon	2pm - 3.30pm, preparing ward publicity for community event on Saturday, checking and responding to emails. Preparation for Council meeting, reading agendas and reports. Total 1.30mins
Evening	6.00pm - 7.30pm - presentation and full Council. Total 1.30mins

Thursday, 8th March 2018

Morning	Checked e mails and twitter feeds. Total 1 hour
Afternoon	
Evening	Checked e mails - liaised with ward colleagues. Total 1hour

Friday, 9th March 2018

Morning	Checked emails. 30 mins
Afternoon	Final preparation for community event tomorrow, contacting officers and community groups. All phone calls. Total 1hour
Evening	

Saturday, 10th March 2018

Morning	9am -1.30 pm Mersey Spring Clean, organised by Love Where You Live Group. I developed group with location community development officer, Chris Featherstone. Group comprises of 10 + local organisations who come together to undertake community activity. The Spring Clean is part of a national activity promoted by Keep Britain Tidy. 40 local people took part in this event. Total 4.30mins
Afternoon	
Evening	6.00 - 8.00pm follow through from the day. Preparation of material for twitter and Facebook. Preparation of follow through required, contacting officers to deal with large items of flytipping noted during Morning etc. Preparation of thank you emails to groups and officers who made day possible. Downloaded photos from day etc. A physically and organisationally demanding day, will take care of admin tomorrow as I am too tired this evening. Total 2 hours

Total Hours: 28 hours

A Week in the Life of a Councillor:

PBB member

No. of Years as Councillor: 12

Overview of all my Councillor roles:

Ward Councillor Member of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

Member of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board Member of the Standards Committee

Member of the Liverpool City Region Transport Committee

Governor of St Marys C of E (Aided) Primary School

Trustee of Norton Priory Museum Trust Ltd.

Trustee of Halton Village Millennium Green Trust

Sunday, 4th March 2018	
Morning	Reading and annotating Portfolio Briefings from members of the Executive Board.) 2.5 hours Contacting Executive Board members by eMail to clarify aspects of reports.
Afternoon	
Evening	

Monday, 5th March 2018	
Morning	Reading and annotating the various agenda items in advance of the Labour Group Council pre meeting to be held on the evening of 5 March and the full Council meeting to be held on the evening of the 7 March. 2 hours. Meeting with local Vicar re delivery of food to local Foodbank. 30 mins. Telephone conversation with resident to advise him on his application for a house through Property Pool Plus. Arranged to meet with him to discuss further. 10mins
Afternoon	Completed reading and annotating the various agenda items in advance of the Labour Group pre meeting to be held on the evening of 5 March and the full Council meeting to be held on the evening of the 7 March. 2 hours.

Evening	Attended Labour Group full Council pre meeting. 2.5 hrs including travel.
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Tuesday, 6th March 2018

Morning	Responded to eMails re Halton Borough Council and the Liverpool City Region Transport Committee. 30 mins. Read through agenda and reports relevant to our Ward, for Executive Board meeting to be held on 15 March 2018. 1 hour.
Afternoon	
Evening	

Wednesday, 7th March 2018

Morning	Attended a Community Asset Mapping Project meeting with Council officers. 1.5 hours Attended Patient Participation Group (PPG) co-ordinating meeting together with representatives from all PPG's in Halton. 1.5 hours.
Afternoon	Picked up food from Runcorn and District Foodbank Warehouse to be delivered to the Foodbank Distribution Centre in the Halton Castle Ward. 0.75 hours. Attended the Grove House Health Centre Patient Participation Group. As a Ward Councillor I am an invited member of the Group. 1 hour.
Evening	Full Council meeting. 2.5 hours

Thursday, 8th March 2018

Morning	Responded to eMails from residents and officers. 45 mins.
Afternoon	Met with Liverpool Housing Trust (LHT) manager. Discussed general issues affecting residents in our Ward, plus the likely impact of LHT now being part of ONward Homes. 1 hour
Evening	Meeting of Labour Party committee. 45 mins

Friday, 9th March 2018

Morning	Meeting with resident at his home, at his request, to assist him with his finances. 1 hour. Sent eMails. Replied to eMails. 45 mins
Afternoon	Visited resident at his home, at his request, to assist him with setting up his laptop and registering on his Housing Associations website. 1 hour.
Evening	

Saturday, 10th March 2018

<p>Morning</p>	<p>Conclusion: Over the last week, I have completed this diary. In doing so, I was very clear that without keeping a minute by minute record of each day, it is impossible to create a total picture. I therefore kept specific records of background reading. Some of that reading, together with timings, is referred to in entries for earlier days in the week. In addition, I kept a record of other necessary reading which I have detailed below. When reading a newspaper or news on the web, the items that one concentrates on are local Council and political matters. Whilst as an individual interested in politics I would undoubtedly spend time reading these articles, I know that I spend more time reading such articles than I did before I was a Councillor. My calculation is that this amounts, on a very conservative estimate, to at least an extra hour a week. In addition, there are the daily web bulletins from the LGA; the hourly web bulletins from the Government; and various blogs by leading politicians. All are in my view necessary in order to be able to contribute effectively to scrutiny and policy proposals. I kept a timed record of these instances. 3.75 hours over the week.</p> <p>One very important and significant role I carry out as a Councillor, is as a member of the Liverpool City Region Transport Committee (LCR TC). Whilst appreciating that this diary is a snapshot of one week, which will in the main average out due to some Councillors having a quiet week, whilst others will have a busy week, I do need to give an indication of my work required as a member of the LCR TC, as this will not average out as there are only 4 Halton Councillors on this committee. Meetings are held every month and start with a pre meeting at 10.00am to 12 noon; followed by a presentation from officers from 12 noon to 1.00pm; lunch and networking from 1.00pm to 2.00pm; and the Transport Committee meeting from 2.00pm to close, which on average would be 4.00pm. With travel, this would amount to 8.5 to 9 hours. In addition, there would of course be the need to keep abreast of transport issues, both locally and nationally and the paperwork in advance of and following each meeting. More general matters. As a local Councillor, it is very difficult to have a conversation with a neighbour or a friend from the neighbourhood, without issues relevant to your role as a Councillor being raised by the person you're talking to. Guessing the time spent as opposed to the amount of time spent if one was not a Councillor is very much "how long is a piece of string". I suspect it is quite substantial, but I couldn't in all honesty put a figure on it. Similarly, it is impossible to put a figure on the amount of time spent thinking about Council related matters. Once again, it is probably quite substantial, but I couldn't in all honesty put a figure on it. For the first 15 months I served as a Councillor, I was working full time and therefore know the pressures of being a Councillor and holding down a full time job. It was extremely challenging and the workload has increased since that time. If we as a society want to encourage working people to take on the role of Councillor, we must ensure that the workload is not at such a level that they are not able to fulfil the role properly or that they decide to step down. In my view, any significant reduction in the present number of Councillors would have the potential to create such a situation.</p>
<p>Afternoon</p>	
<p>Evening</p>	

Total Hours: 23 hours (27 approx with additional reading)