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| Council Size Submission |
| Gosport Borough Council |

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## How to Make a Submission

1. It is recommended that submissions on council size follow the format provided below. Submissions should focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.
2. The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission’s attention.

## About You

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

This submission is made by the Full Council of Gosport Borough Council.

The Council’s Policy & Organisation Board considered the Council Size submission on Tuesday, 29 September 2020 and resolved to recommend that Full Council approve this document for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Full Council on Wednesday, 07 October 2020 approved that this document be submitted as the Council’s official Council Size submission to the LGBCE and delegated authority to the Electoral Registration Officer, in consultation with the three political Group Leaders of the Council to make further changes, corrections and updates prior to submission.

## Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

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

Not applicable as LGBCE initiated the statutory review.

## Local Authority Profile

1. Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description may cover all, or some of the following:

* Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
* Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
* Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
* Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Stretching over just 26 square kilometres (10 square miles), Gosport Borough is the twelfth smallest district in England and the smallest in Hampshire. The Borough sits on a peninsula adjacent to Fareham Borough and is surrounded on three sides by the Solent and Portsmouth Harbour, with a total of 39 kilometres (24 miles) of coastline.

There are two main settlements, Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent, which are separated by the Alver Valley. The Borough is predominantly urban in character, with nearly three quarters ‘built on’[[1]](#footnote-1). Gosport Borough faces significant flood risk with approximately 4.4 square kilometres (1.7 square miles) within a flood zone, representing 17% of the total land area. Nowhere in the Borough exceeds 15 metres above sea level.

The population of the Borough in 2011 was 82,600 people[[2]](#footnote-2), an increase of 8.1% from 2001. The latest estimates show the population of the Borough in 2020 was 85,108 people[[3]](#footnote-3), the smallest population of any district in Hampshire. The Borough is densely populated with almost 33 people per hectare, almost nine times the England average at 3.7.

The latest long-term population projections show a slight decrease in the Borough’s population of 0.5% by 2036. The population is also ageing due largely to a longer life expectancy and a low birth rate. The proportion of the population over 65 is projected to increase from 20.7% in 2020 to 28% in 2036[[4]](#footnote-4), this represents over 6000 additional over 65s. As part of this trend, the proportion of the population living beyond 85 is also expected to increase by 1.8% by 2036.

At the same time, the number aged under 16 is expected to decrease from 18.3% of the population in 2020 to 15.7% in 2036. The working age population (16-64) is projected to decrease from 61% in 2020 to 56.2% in 2036, representing a reduction of 4,300 people. 94.4% of the Borough’s resident population describes itself as ‘white British’, with those from other ethnic groups having increased from 3.1% to 5.6% of the population between 2001 and 2011.

Gosport’s legacy as a support base for the Royal Navy is evidenced by the significant naval heritage across the Borough. The decline of the military around the Harbour has led to a significant supply of brownfield land and each site has a mix of issues including contamination, historic buildings and flood risk. Some sites have been redeveloped and others are available for re-use and will be redeveloped in the coming decades.

The declining presence of the military has resulted in substantial changes to the Borough’s economy and employment opportunities. These changes are set to continue with the potential closure of other military sites in the coming decade.

Employment in the Borough has changed significantly over the past two decades; in 2018, there were 21% fewer jobs than in 2000. Many of the Boroughs residents now work in different locations. In 2011, 52% of residents commuted outside the Borough for work, particularly along the A27-M27 corridor in areas where the journey to work is predominantly by private car.

There are approximately 26,000 jobs in Gosport Borough which has declined by 21.2% from 33,000 jobs in 2000. In the Solent region, Gosport stands out as recording the lowest jobs density (at 0.5 jobs per working age resident) which not only falls significantly below the South East (0.88) and UK (0.86) averages but also ranks as the 11th lowest jobs density of all local authority areas in the UK[[5]](#footnote-5).

**Key Issues**

* The needs of all ages of the population are changing. An ageing population means residents will require different services and facilities. At the same time, opportunities for young people and future generations need to be maximised to reduce deprivation and provide jobs.
* Growth is constrained by the peninsula location and amount of land in active military use. Large areas, previously used by the MoD, have significant contamination and are complex to redevelop.
* The low-lying geography and coastal location leave the Borough vulnerable to flood risk. Existing and new communities need to be protected as the Borough adapts to, and mitigates the impacts of climate change.

5 ONS jobs density (11th lowest in 2018) – this includes employees, self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces (from MoD).

## The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 years. The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

* When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
* To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?
* Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
* What impact on the Council’s effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

The Borough Council ensures that its internal governance arrangements are reviewed, and this is carried out by the Standards and Governance Committee, who have “oversight of the Constitution, the operation of and amendments to the Constitution” as one of its terms of reference.

In May 2016 the Adjourned Annual Council meeting (held 19 May 2016) reviewed the arrangements for the discharge of the Council’s functions and agreed changes to the Boards and Committees (which had previously been reviewed and amended in May 2011). The May 2016 meeting took the decision that there was no need for a separate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that the Service Boards would set up Task and Finish Groups to undertake the “short sharply focused pieces of work on the development and review of policies and initiatives of matters falling within the terms of reference of the Board”.

At the Full Council meeting held on 10 June 2020, the decision was taken to create a Climate Change Board and a Housing Board, and changes to the Community Board Terms of Reference due to the creation of the new Housing Board, as the Community Board had previously held the remit for Housing within its Terms of Reference.

## Council Size

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

### Strategic Leadership

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

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| **Topic** |  | |
| **Governance Model** | *Key lines of explanation* | * *What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?* * *The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?* * *If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority.* * *By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them?* * *Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.* |
| Analysis | Gosport Borough Council operates the ‘alternative arrangements’ model of governance, with the current and anticipated future arrangements outlined in the “Portfolios” section of this submission.  We have 34 Councillors in total, with the political balance of the Council as follows as at September 2020, following the last Borough Council elections in May 2018 (the Borough Council elections due in May 2020 where postponed for 12months due to the Coronavirus pandemic):  Conservative – 18  Liberal Democrat – 14  Labour – 2  At its first Full Council meeting this year (held on Wednesday 11 June 2020), the Council allocated 102 seats on its Boards and Committee, based on the current political balance of the Council. Seats are appointed in accordance with the principles of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, to ensure the majority group has the majority on all committees, to prevent domination by a single group, aggregating all seats and fair shares, and ensuring as far as practicable fairness on each committee.   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Conservative** | **Labour** | **Liberal**  **Democrats** | **TOTAL** | | Members | 18 | 2 | 14 | 34 | | Proportion | 52.94% | 5.88% | 41.18% | 100% | | Seats | 54 | 6 | 42 | 102 |   The current allocations of seats on each of the Council Boards and Committee are as follows:   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Conservative** | **Labour** | **Liberal**  **Democrats** | **TOTAL** | | Policy and  Organisation Board | 8 | 1 | 6 | 15 | | Community Board | 8 | 1 | 6 | 15 | | Economic  Development Board | 8 | 1 | 6 | 15 | | Housing Board | 8 | 1 | 6 | 15 | | Climate Change Board | 8 | 1 | 6 | 15 | | Regulatory Board | 8 | 1 | 6 | 15 | | Standards and  Governance  Committee | 6 | 0 | 6 | 12 | | TOTAL | 54 | 6 | 42 | 102 |   The following table shows the proposed number of seats on each of the Council Boards and Committee should the Council Size submission be accepted by the LGBCE:   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | **TOTAL** | | Policy and  Organisation Board | 12 | | Community Board | 12 | | Economic  Development Board | 12 | | Housing Board | 12 | | Climate Change Board | 12 | | Regulatory Board | 12 | | Standards and  Governance  Committee | 12 | | TOTAL | 84 |   The resulting 84 seats split between 28 Councillors, would result in each Councillor sitting on 3 Boards or Committees, and would also give parity across all Council Boards and Committees as they would all have the same total number in their membership. |
| **Portfolios** | *Key lines of explanation* | * *How many portfolios will there be?* * *What will the role of a portfolio holder be?* * *Will this be a full-time position?* * *Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?* |
| Analysis | Gosport Borough Council is not planning to change the current number of Council Boards and Committees following implementation of this Electoral Review, it will still continue with the existing six Boards and one Committee.  As Gosport Borough Council follows the ‘alternative arrangements’ process, it does not have Portfolio holders as Local Authorities following the Cabinet arrangements do. Gosport Borough Council Chairmen of Service Boards or Committees do not have the authority to make decisions outside of Board/Committee meetings.  The Council’s Constitution is clear on the main role of the Portfolio – Chairmen of Service Boards:   1. To lead the Council’s activities in relation to those functions covered by the Terms of Reference of the Board. 2. To ensure that the Board deals with its functions in a fair and proper manner having regard to the Council’s policies and statutory provisions relating thereto including the rules of natural justice and human rights legislation.   The schedule in the Council Constitution which outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Chairmen of Service Boards can be found [here](https://www.gosport.gov.uk/media/2708/Part-2-Schedule-6-Chairmen-of-Service-Boards/pdf/Part_2_Schedule_6_Chairmen_of_Service_Boards.pdf?m=637312057771500000).  The Council’s Constitution is clear on the main role of the Portfolio – Chairmen of Standards and Governance Committee:   1. Lead the Council’s activities in relation to those functions covered by the Terms of Reference of the Standards and Governance Committee. 2. Ensure that the Committee deals with its functions in a fair and proper manner having regard to the Council’s policies and statutory provisions relating thereto, including the rules of natural justice.   The schedule in the Council Constitution which outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Chairmen of Standards and Governance Committee can be found [here](https://www.gosport.gov.uk/media/2709/Part-2-Schedule-7/pdf/Part_2_Schedule_7.pdf?m=637312057772870000).  Gosport Borough Council believes that the Standards and Governance Committee is the ‘conscience of the Authority’ and this is reflected within the Council Constitution and the terms of reference for this Committee as outlined above. |
| **Delegated Responsibilities** | *Key lines of explanation* | * *What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?* * *How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?* |
| Analysis | Gosport Borough Council operates an extensive scheme of delegation to officers which are contained within the Council’s Constitution, can be viewed at the following link:  <https://www.gosport.gov.uk/media/2713/Part-3-Schedule-10-Scheme-of-Delegations/pdf/Part_3_Schedule_10_Scheme_of_Delegations.pdf?m=637312057782370000>  The Full Council has six scheduled meetings per year. All minutes from Service Boards are included in the agenda at each Council meeting for all Elected Members, and there is a standing agenda item of ‘Member Questions’ for Elected Members to submit questions of either The Leader or a Chairmen of a Service Board to answer at the Full Council meeting. |

Accountability

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

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| **Topic** |  |
| **Internal Scrutiny** | The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available. |
| *Key lines of explanation* | * *How will decision makers be held to account?* * *How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?* * *How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?* * *How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?* * *Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.* * *Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.* |
| Analysis | Gosport operates its scrutiny function through the formation of ‘Task and Finish’ Groups. The purpose of Task and Finish Groups at Gosport Borough Council are:   1. A Task and Finish Group should only be appointed by the Service Board to carry out a short sharply-focused piece of work on the development and review of policies and initiatives of matters falling within the terms of reference of the Service Board. 2. Task and Finish Groups should not be set up to consider individual complaints or to consider planning applications or licensing applications.   The procedure for Task and Finish Groups is contained with the Council Constitution, and information relating to these Groups can be found [here](https://www.gosport.gov.uk/media/2722/Part-4-Schedule-18a-Task-and-Finish-Groups/pdf/Part_4_Schedule_18a_Task_and_Finish_Groups.pdf?m=637312057794600000).  Task and Finish Groups do not have sub-board status and the political balance rules in Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 will not apply but they will, subject to the availability of Members, be established on a cross-party basis. Task and Finish Groups shall comprise of up to 5 Members of the Service Board.  The Task and Finish Group may meet on as many occasions as it feels necessary to complete its work within the timescale set by the Service Board, and the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group and the timescale for the completion of its work shall be agreed by the Service Board at the meeting at which the Service Board decides to set up the Task and Finish Group.  At the conclusion of their work, the Task and Finish Group shall prepare a written report including recommendations which shall be considered by the Service Board.  The Borough Council is not expecting to change this process following the implementation of this Electoral Review, as it feels that the use of Task and Finish Groups since their adoption and use at Gosport have provided and fulfilled the overview and scrutiny role of the Council by allowing Elected Members with an interest and knowledge in the specific subject matter to provide this function. |

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| **Statutory Function** | | This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council? |
| ***Planning*** | *Key lines of explanation* | * *What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?* * *Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?* * *Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?* * *Will executive members serve on the planning committees?* * *What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?* |
| Analysis | The Council has a single Regulatory Board, currently comprising 15 Councillors. The Committee meets monthly to consider those applications not determined by the Development Manager under delegated powers. The number of planning applications received and included in the returns to Central Government for the last three financial years are:   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Year (financial)** | **Total Apps Determined** | **Number Apps  by Delegated Decision** | **% by Delegated Decision** | **Number Apps Decided by Regulatory Board** | **% Decided by Regulatory Board** | | 2017/2018 | 313 | 269 | 86% | 44 | 14% | | 2018/2019 | 300 | 261 | 87% | 39 | 13% | | 2019/2020 | 302 | 277 | 92% | 25 | 8% |   Following the implementation of this Electoral Review, the Borough Council is considering reducing the membership of the Regulatory Board from 15 Councillors to 12 Councillors, to reflect the reduction in numbers of overall Elected Members. However, the Borough Council believes that a reduction in membership of the Board would still ensure that the Regulatory Board retained a good geographical spread of Members from across the Council area.  The Borough Council also believes that members of the Regulatory Board spend a greater time spent on preparing for and attending formal meetings. Being a Regulatory Board Member involves significant preparation to ensure familiarity with the applications due to be considered. The greater time spent by Councillors who are members of the Regulatory Board can also be seen by the fact that Regulatory Board meets at least eight times in the municipal year, compared with five times a year for the other Service Board and Committee. |
| ***Licensing*** | *Key lines of explanation* | * *How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?* * *And what will be the time commitment for members?* * *Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?* * *Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?* |
| Analysis | Following the last review of the Council structures and governance, the Licensing Board functions were included within the Terms of Reference of the Regulatory Board of Gosport Borough Council.  The Borough Council Constitution includes a Licensing (General Applications) Sub-board, composed of 5 members of the Regulatory Board to deal with:   1. The determination of applications for the licensing of money lenders, pawnbrokers, scrap metal dealers, sex establishments and premises for ear-piercing, acupuncture, tattooing and electrolysis. 2. The administration of any dog licensing or registration schemes including the determination of applications for licensing and registration and all other matters relating to the general control of dogs and other animals. 3. The function of licensing and prosecuting authority under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. 4. The control of street and house-to-house collections. 5. The determination of applications in respect of Hackney Carriages, Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles. 6. The determination of applications in respect of Street Trading. 7. Any other licences, permits or consents for which the Council has a general or specific responsibility under any general or local Act. 8. The administration of the registration scheme under the Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001.   The Council Constitution also includes a Licensing Sub-Board, composed of 3 members of the Regulatory Board to deal with:  **LICENSING ACT 2003**   1. The determination of applications where representations or a police objection is received or where the applicant for a personal licence has unspent convictions. 2. The determination of applications to renew a premises licence or a club premises certificate. 3. The determination of a police objection to a temporary event notice. 4. Where the Council is a consultee to decide whether or not to object to an application made to another Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003.   **GAMBLING ACT 2005**   1. The determination of applications where representations have been received and not withdrawn. 2. The determination of applications for the grant or variation or transfer of a premises licence 3. The determination of applications for the review of a premises licence. 4. The determination of an application for club gaming/club machine permits. 5. The determination of a police objection to a temporary use notice. |
| ***Other Regulatory Bodies*** | *Key lines of explanation* | * *What will they be, and how many members will they require?* * *Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.* |
| Analysis | Within our terms of reference for the Standards and Governance Committee, the Borough Council has an Initial Filtering Panel of 3 members who must be members of the Standards and Governance Committee, responsible for the determination of allegations of failure to comply with the Council’s Code of Conduct, in accordance with the Council’s arrangements for dealing with such allegations.  The Panel has no scheduled meetings for this year, but would be formed if required to determine any allegations submitted to the Council’s Monitoring Officer. It is not anticipated that the membership or role of this Panel will change following the implementation of this Electoral Review. |

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| **External Partnerships** | Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account. |
| *Key lines of explanation* | * *Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?* * *How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?* * *What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?* |
| Analysis | There are a number of organisations which are independent from the Council, but have an impact on its service areas and its residents. In order that the Council can maintain effective partnerships with these organisations and partners, representatives of the Council, usually Elected Members, sit on the various committees and forums established in partnership with these organisations which are active within the Borough of Gosport.    The Full Council at its first meeting each year, approves appointments to these outside bodies. The full list of outside bodies are available to view on the Council’s website at the following link:  <https://democracy.gosport.gov.uk/mgListOutsideBodies.aspx?bcr=1>  The Council also has ‘The Gosport Task Force’. This group meets quarterly and is chaired by the Member of Parliament for Gosport, but is composed of many organisations that have an interest within the Borough Council footprint.  This group’s membership is pulled from the following organisations: Ministry of Defence, HMS Sultan, Ministry of Justice, Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Oil and Pipelines Agency, Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, Hampshire County Council and the Queens Harbour Master. Participants from the Borough Council are The Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Assistant to the Chief Executive, as well as Officers invited to attend meetings as required by the agenda and discussions. |

Community Involvement

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

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| **Topic** | | **Description** |
| **Community Leadership** | *Key lines of explanation* | * *In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?* * *Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?* * *How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?* * *Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?* * *Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident’s association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?* * *Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?* |
| Analysis | Gosport Borough Council operates in a two tier local government structure, with Hampshire County Council sitting above Gosport Borough Council as the upper tier authority. Currently four Borough Councillors are twin “hatted,” in that they are separately elected as representatives to both Hampshire County Council and Gosport Borough Council.  In light of these governance arrangements, there is an increasing need to ensure that the electoral arrangements of Gosport are efficient, effective and aligned appropriately to best serve the local community.  Hampshire County Council implemented the outcome of their own electoral review to coincide with their 2017 elections, to better reflect the identities of communities across Hampshire, including Gosport Borough. It is therefore timely to build on these arrangements to align effectively and appropriately with the County and the Borough communities.  Most Councillors are proactively involved within their Electoral 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:   1. Holding surgeries – dealing with queries, providing advice and engaging with their constituents face-to-face; 2. Working with, and/or offering support, to community groups and local organisations; 3. Maintaining websites and social media, both as individual Councillors or in partnership with their Electoral Ward colleague.   Gosport does not have area committees and does not have any parishes within Borough.  The Council Constitution includes a schedule on the main duties of an Elected Member of the Borough Council, and it states:   * With all other Councillors to collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic corporate management functions. * To represent effectively the interests of the Ward for which the Councillor was elected and all of its constituents. * To contribute in a positive manner to the effective government of the Borough, and the direct, or indirect, provision of services to all residents, visitors and other interested parties. * To encourage the involvement and participation of individual citizens and the community generally in the development and review of the Council’s decision making processes.   The schedule also includes lists of Elected Members’ ‘duties and responsibilities’ and ‘key tasks’.  This schedule of the constitution can he found [here](https://www.gosport.gov.uk/media/2703/Part-2-Schedule-1/pdf/Part_2_Schedule_1.pdf?m=637312057763230000). |
| **Casework** | *Key lines of explanation* | * *How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?* * *What support do members receive?* * *How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?* * *In what ways does the council promote service users’ engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?* |
| Analysis | Councillors take accountability for their casework, and manage their work appropriately, albeit with officer support. Usually, Councillors will contact officers directly – whether in person, via telephone or e-mail, and then respond to their constituent. There is a sense of ownership and need to ensure the resident’s issue is satisfactorily resolved.  Councillor responses to queries from their constituents can now be typed and sent electronically rather than in a written letter or phone call. All Gosport Councillors have been offered Apple iPads with access to their Gosport email accounts, and to partake in virtual Full Council, Board, Committee and Task & Finish Group meetings following the restrictions placed on holding ‘in person’ meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The use of these devices and other IT equipment has made it easier to seek clarification on particular issues from Council officers, especially throughout the pandemic.  In supporting the local government modernisation agenda and electronic working, the Council has recently implemented a new computer Management System for the Democratic Services team, Modern Government. This system is already helping to provide efficiency with Gosport’s support to Elected Members and the democratic processes of the Council generally.  The use of this software system will continue to be utilised and expanded/increased following the implementation of this Electoral Review and will further support a new Council Size of 28 in fulfilling all Elected Members Community Involvement role.  Gosport Council has an ‘Independent Members Remuneration Panel’ which meets to review the current Members’ Allowances scheme, which was introduced in July 2002 and reviewed in May 2011 and December 2015. During the Panel’s last review in 2015, all Members of the Council were invited to complete a questionnaire, and the Panel invited Group Leaders, Chairmen of all the Council’s Service Boards and the Chairman of Standards and Governance Committee for interview.  The Panel indicated that Councillors worked 87.25 days a year on Council related work, which included attendance at Council meetings and case work on behalf of their constituents.  The Council has a formal three stage complaints procedure and process. None of the three stages involve either a Panel of Elected Members or individual Councillors in either investigating or resolving the complaint.  The formal process and information on the Council Complaint process can be found [here](https://www.gosport.gov.uk/complaints). |

## Other Issues

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

In July 2016, Full Council took to the decision to enter into a ‘shared management’ arrangement with Portsmouth City Council, due to significant financial challenges facing the Council at that time. From 01 October 2016, the three Chief Officers (Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer and the Borough Treasurer) were redundant, and the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Borough Treasurer were appointed from equivalent post-holders at Portsmouth City Council.

Gosport has always been ‘open minded’ and ‘forward thinking’ with regard to working with local authority neighbours, and we have successful shared services across a number of Gosport services:

* **Environmental Health** – shared service between Gosport and Fareham Councils;
* **Building Control** – shared service initially between Gosport and Fareham Council, but also extended to include Portsmouth City Council;
* **Portchester Crematorium** - Portchester Crematorium was opened in 1958 and is situated on the lower slopes of Portsdown Hill between Fareham and Portsmouth. The Crematorium is controlled by a Joint Committee of Councillors representing the City of Portsmouth, the Boroughs of Fareham, Havant and Gosport but operates as an independent establishment with specialised administrative and technical support from the constituent local authorities.
* **Coastal Partnership** - The Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership (ESCP) formed an alliance in 2012 to deliver a combined, efficient and comprehensive coastal management service across the coastlines of four Local Authorities of Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council, Havant Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council.
* **Project Integra** - Project Integra is a partnership working to provide an integrated approach to the collection, treatment and disposal of municipal waste in Hampshire. The partnership includes all 11 district/borough authorities in within the County of Hampshire, Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils and Veolia Hampshire (the integrated waste management contractor).

Throughout any shared services or shared management agreements, the Council has always been consistent in its approach, that the services to the Gosport residents must always been considered first and foremost as the priority.

Summary

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

In general terms, Gosport Borough Council has modernised significantly since the previous review concluded and was implemented in 2000, both from a governance perspective and also in relation to the way in which Councillors undertake their role in the community.

It is therefore considered that a Council Size of 28 is an appropriate and proportionate reduction (of 6) to ensure the Council is run efficiently and to support a balanced workload for Councillors in their community leadership roles. With the ‘alternative arrangements’ model, the Council believes that this provides the best democratic engagement of Councillors, and the newly established Service Boards structure allows Elected Members to still have the significant responsibility in the context of the day to day business, services and decisions of the Council.

In considering the current Council Size, Full Council concluded that 28 is the minimum number of Elected Members that Gosport Borough Council could function effectively and efficiently in the provision of its statutory function as a lower tier local authority for the residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough of Gosport.

1. A Land Cover Atlas of the UK: <https://doi.org/10.15131/shef.data.5219956> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ONS Census (2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ONS mid-year population estimates (mid-2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ONS Sub-national population projections (2018-based [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ONS jobs density (11th lowest in 2018) – this includes employees, self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces (from MoD). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)