

Epping Forest District Council

Council Size Submission: Template

Epping Forest District Council

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How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to 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.**

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.

'Good' submissions, i.e. those that are considered to be most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

About You

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, a resident group, or an individual.

This report is the submission of Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on its proposals for Council Size. The report was approved by a meeting of Full Council on 24th February 2022.

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

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

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

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 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy**

context. 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 influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

EFDC welcomes the statutory review by the LGBCE as much has changed in the District since the last review 22 years ago.

We aim to set out the case within this document for a slight reduction in council size to 54 members, a reduction of 4 from the current 58 members. In doing so the Council is recognising the drive for efficiency whilst also reflecting significant planned housing growth in the district over the next few years.

The last Review on the electoral arrangements for the EFDC local authority area was carried out by the LGBCE and completed in November 2000. The main final recommendations of that review were that:

“Epping Forest District Council should be served by 58 councillors representing 32 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.”

The LGBCE concluded that the size should be reduced by only 1 member, even though proposals were put forward from groups for larger reductions.

Much has changed over the past two decades which impacts on the demands placed upon elected members. Firstly, resident's expectations have increased significantly whilst at the same time the rise of digital provision has made access to services and issue resolution easier and more flexible for many. It has also made it easier for the electorate to engage with their elected members.

Physically, the district remains dominated by its mainly Green Belt designation, protection of the internationally important ancient woodland of Epping Forest, the district's proximity to the City of London and issues of population growth. The Government's focus on increasing housing supply nationally, manifesting in the allocation of larger housing targets for all planning authorities, has created a significant challenge for the district and so planning and housing remain two of the larger issues impacting on member inboxes.

Balancing these challenges has impeded the development of the Council's new Local Plan. However, with the final hurdle immediately ahead it is expected that the Plan will be adopted in the next few months, thereby unlocking many years of pent-up development applications.

In addition, the Council is an equal partner in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town project which will also bring major housing development over the next few years.

Whilst EFDC has seen only modest growth in its electorate over the previous two decades, this is likely to significantly accelerate over the next two decades, with an associated increase in the elected members' workloads.

The Council's democratic and internal governance structures were reviewed approximately 3 years ago to arrive at the current position. In practice the Council is 'well served' with governance arrangements and with member representation in the process. There are no proposals to revise the current arrangements or structures ahead of the LGBCE's conclusion on Council size, but the Council will commit to a review of arrangements subsequent to the decision. It is generally felt that there is scope to reduce the numbers of members engaged in the scrutiny and statutory committee functions without impacting on democracy or the quality of decision making, and this would support any overall reduction in council size concluded as a result of this review.

We are mindful that the Council's ratio of electorate to elected members is low compared to many councils and in particular to its CIPFA nearest neighbour comparators. We are also aware that in the interests of efficiency the trend is for higher ratios of electorate to elected members. This factor has weighed significantly in the Council's consideration of its submission and its response to the LGBCE reflects this. However, we are also mindful that the number of members needs to be right for the Council, both for today and for the period up to the next review.

The EFDC area has an articulate and vocal electorate that demand much of the elected membership and consequently, despite all changes relating to context, their casework remains relatively high for the reasons stated and is expected to increase still further.

Ultimately, there are many factors which point to a reduction in the number of elected members required but this is equally balanced by competing pressures which increase the workload on each member, not least of all the projected impending growth in the electorate.

On balance we feel that this supports only a small reduction in Council size and the case is made as follows.

Local Authority Profile

Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics and community characteristics. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all 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?
- Community characteristics – is there presence of “hidden” or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload and community engagement?

Epping Forest District Council - Local Authority Profile January 2022

EFDC is classified statistically as urban with significant rural populations covering an area of approximately 339 square kilometres. In 2018 the resident population was estimated to be 131,137 people.

EFDC is the ninth (out of 12) most densely populated district in Essex, well below the county average (424 people per sq. km).

The district is divided into 24 town and parish councils which are mainly rural and sparsely populated in the north and east, and more densely populated in the south where the district borders the London boroughs of Enfield, Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Havering.

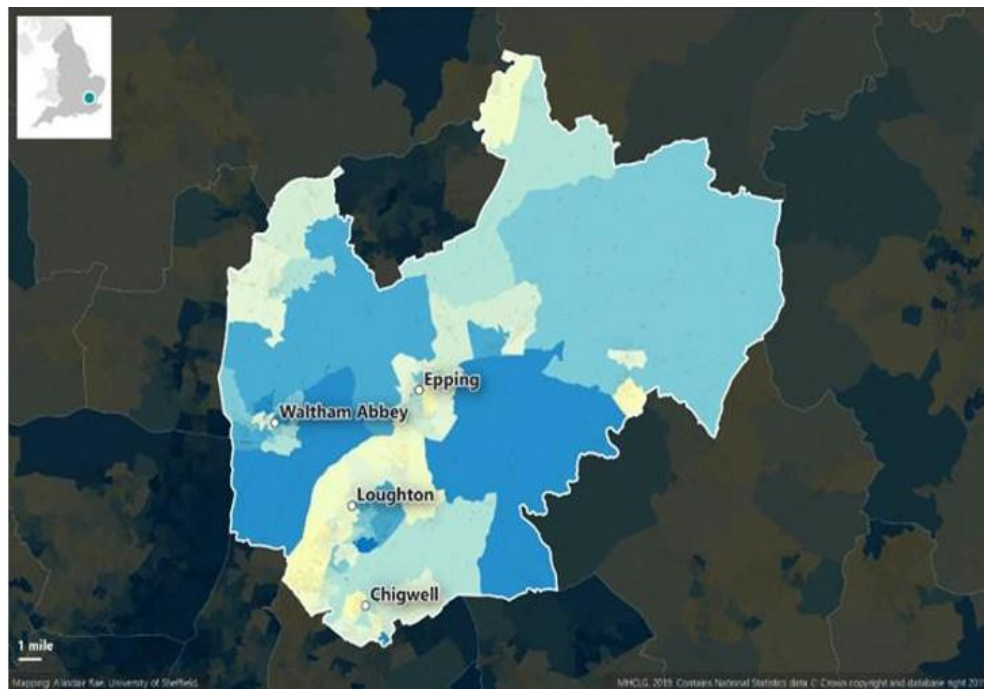
The majority of residents live across four suburban settlements; in Loughton, Waltham Abbey, Epping and Buckhurst Hill.

There are two sites of specific scientific interest. Epping Forest and Roding Valley. Epping Forest District is an attractive Green Belt area with good road and rail links (it sits on the Central Line) and is therefore easily accessible to the City of London and consequently is popular with commuters.

The total number of dwellings in the District was around 55,630 in April 2017. Of these properties, around 85% are in the private sector. It is estimated that approximately 70% are owner occupied and 15% are privately rented. As of 31 March 2021, 6,384 properties (11%) were owned by the Council, which is by far the main social landlord in the District.

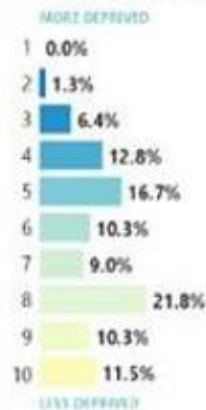
Local Deprivation Profile

EFDC is split into 78 neighbourhoods known as 'Lower Super Output Areas'



Local deprivation profile

% of LSOAs in each national deprivation decile



What this map shows

This is a map of Indices of Deprivation 2019 data for **Epping Forest**. The colours on the map indicate the deprivation decile of each Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) for England as a whole, and the coloured bars above indicate the proportion of LSOAs in each national deprivation decile. The most deprived areas (decile 1) are shown in blue. It is important to keep in mind that the Indices of Deprivation relate to small areas and do not tell us how deprived, or wealthy, individual people are. LSOAs have an average population of just under 1,700 (as of 2017).



17 of EFDC's neighbourhoods are ranked in the top 20% of the least deprived areas nationally.

In 2019 Loughton Alderton was ranked in the most deprived 20% of areas in England, with a population of 1,647 people. This equates to 1.3% of the EFDC population and is lower than the Essex average of 8.6% in the most deprived 20% of the Country.

Between 2015 and 2019 Waltham Abbey Paternoster moved up from the bottom 20% (decile 2), to decile 3 of the most deprived areas of England.

The neighbourhood which saw the most improvement between 2007 and 2019 was in the ward of Lower Sheering.

Between 2015 and 2019 a total of 48 neighbourhoods increased in their rank and 30 decreased their rank.

Top 10 most deprived neighbourhoods in Epping Forest

The table below lists the 10 most deprived neighbourhoods in EFDC in 2019 and the wards where they are located.

	LSOA Name	Ward Name	Rank	Decile
10 Most Deprived Areas	Epping Forest 013A	Loughton Alderton	5,221	2
	Epping Forest 007E	Waltham Abbey Paternoster	6,610	3
	Epping Forest 009A	Waltham Abbey High Beach	8,666	3
	Epping Forest 003C	Passingford	9,468	3
	Epping Forest 007A	Waltham Abbey North East	9,594	3
	Epping Forest 017A	Grange Hill	9,597	3
	Epping Forest 011C	Loughton Broadway	10,408	4
	Epping Forest 009B	Waltham Abbey North East	10,509	4
	Epping Forest 011B	Loughton Broadway	10,606	4
	Epping Forest 011A	Loughton Broadway	11,012	4

Top 10 least deprived neighbourhoods in EFDC

The table below lists the 10 least deprived neighbourhoods in EFDC in 2019 and the wards where they are located.

	LSOA Name	Ward Name	Rank	Decile
10 Least Deprived Areas	Epping Forest 010D	Theydon Bois	32,583	10
	Epping Forest 004B	Chipping Ongar, Greensted and Marden Ash	31,834	10
	Epping Forest 016C	Chigwell Village	31,216	10
	Epping Forest 015D	Buckhurst Hill West	30,719	10
	Epping Forest 014A	Loughton Forest	30,205	10

	Epping Forest 014B	Loughton Forest	30,176	10
	Epping Forest 015F	Buckhurst Hill West	30,169	10
	Epping Forest 006B	Epping Hemnall	29,787	10
	Epping Forest 015E	Buckhurst Hill West	29,635	10
	Epping Forest 015G	Buckhurst Hill West	29,416	9

Population Growth

The age distribution of the estimated population of 131,137 in 2018 was 0-15 (18.9%) 16-64 (61.4%) older people 65+ (19.6%).

All Age Categories

EFDC household population for all age categories was projected to increase to approximately 131,695 people in 2021 then by 3.9% to 136,762 people by 2033 and by 4.9% to 138,197 people by 2037

Older People

It is estimated that by 2033 there will be an increase of c. 22% in the 65+ household population and c.24% increase in the 75+ household population.

By 2037 it is estimated that there will be an increase of c.29% in the projected 65+ household population and a c.34% increase in the projected 75+ household population

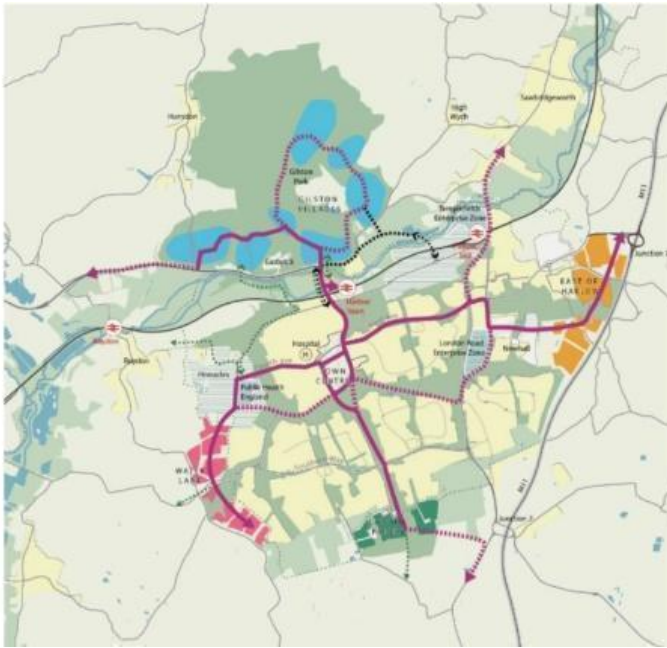
Major Development Schemes and/or proposals

Harlow and Gilston is a designated Garden Town with sites in EFDC, Harlow and East Herts. The intention is to develop around 3,900 new homes in EFDC between 2020 and 2033 and this has been factored into the Electorate projections. The Development sites are;

2,100 in Water Lane (to the south west of Harlow) 1,050

in Latton Priory (to the south of Harlow)

750 in East Harlow (the site will provide 3,350 new homes in total. The remaining 2,600 will be delivered on land within Harlow district)



The Council has been developing a new Local Plan over many years and it is now in its final stages of approval. New development has been heavily restricted within the district because of the significant Green Belt designation and the internationally important Epping Forest site of Scientific Special Interest. It is anticipated that approval of the Local Plan will unlock a number of development sites and the build out of these will see a comparatively quick increase in Electorate numbers in some locations within the district.

Planning Considerations

The District is largely rural and over 92% of the land is currently designated as being in the Metropolitan Green Belt. Agriculture is mainly arable, particularly in the north east of the District. There is a significant amount of horse keeping in parts of the south and glasshouse horticulture is a prominent land use in parts of the Lea Valley especially in Roydon and Nazeing. The District has two towns and four district centres – Loughton/Loughton Broadway and Buckhurst Hill in the south, Waltham Abbey to the west, Epping in the centre of the District, and Chipping Ongar towards the east. Epping, Chipping Ongar and Waltham Abbey are market towns of mediaeval origin. Villages and smaller settlements are dispersed throughout the rest of the District. Several of these villages are also designated as conservation areas. The overall result is a significant concentration of population in the south of the District – the combined populations of Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell and Loughton/Loughton Broadway (55,473) accounted for about 44.5% of the District total as of the time of the 2011 Census

Article 4 Areas

Permitted development rights have been removed in the following areas resulting in higher caseload work associated with higher planning applications.

AD01 Staples Road, Loughton

AD02 York Hill, Loughton

AD03 Parklands, Waltham Abbey

AD04 Lee Valley Nursery, Waltham Abbey

AD05 Packsaddles Farm, Waltham Abbey

AD06 Little Stiles, Nazeing

AD07 Back Lane, Sheering

Conservation Areas

There are 25 designated conservation areas in EFDC with special controls for buildings and trees.

Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role.

These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory 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

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. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		
	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i> ☐ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i> ☐ <i>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.</i> ☐ <i>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?</i> ☐ <i>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.</i>
Governance Model	Analysis	<p>The Council comprises 58 councillors in 32 wards. Each ward elects between 1 and 3 councillors. 11 wards with 1 councillor, 16 with 2 councillors and 5 with 3 councillors, apart from every fourth year when elections are held to elect county councillors to Essex County Council. The political balance for 2021/22 is Conservative 36, Loughton Residents Association 13, Green 3, Liberal Democrat 3, Independent 2 and For Britain Movement 1.</p> <p>Since 2002 the Council has operated under the leader and cabinet model as provided for by the Local Government Act 2000. Councils were required to review executive arrangements under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Council has 9 executive councillors who take individual decisions in their portfolio areas. Each Executive Councillor attends a relevant scrutiny committee which firstly considers officer reports prior to those decisions being taken, a form of pre-scrutiny.</p> <p>‘Full’ Council sets the overall policy and budgetary framework. It meets six times a year (with additional meetings as required).</p>

		<p>Following a review in 2018 the Council decided on a revised Overview and Scrutiny framework, based on a structure of 'select committees' aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan. There is currently one Overview and Scrutiny committee with 3 themed sub-committees, Stronger Communities Select Committee, Stronger Council Select Committee, and Stronger Place Select Committee.</p> <p>As part of its submission the Council has compared the current model with those of all other Essex district councils, its CIPFA nearest neighbours and the neighbouring councils in Hertfordshire (which share similar location based challenges). This highlighted no uniform approach to Governance structures and only served to highlight that appropriate Governance is really defined by the issues that each council faces. The Council concluded that there was no immediately obvious alternative preferable pattern that could be determined as part of this review. However, it was identified that the Council does have a large number of councillors involved in the scrutiny and democratic processes and a large number of committees and sub-committees compared to others. Whilst the Council did not conclude any alternative Governance structure it did conclude that the number of structures and members involved might be reduced without harming democracy or the quality of decision making.</p>
<p>Portfolios</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i> ☐ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i> ☐ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i> ☐ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The Council has 9 executive councillors which meet at scheduled Cabinet meetings throughout the year, Each has a portfolio of services, plans and policies for which they are responsible, and these are listed below. The key decisions and most non-key decisions required of each executive councillor are pre-scrutinised by a scrutiny committee</p> <p>The Executive portfolios are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader • Planning & Sustainability • Customer & Partnerships • Community & Regulatory Services

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental & Technical Services • Finance, Qualis* Client & Economic Development • Housing Services • Corporate Services • Programmes & Projects <p>*The Council created its own arms-length development and delivery company in the 2020 and is assessing the opportunities to move more service delivery functions to it. The Council is the sole shareholder and has member and officer representation on the board, together with a Portfolio Holder acting as the Council's shareholder representative. This represents an increasing area of focus for the Council.</p>
<p>Delegated Responsibilities</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>☐ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i></p> <p>☐ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i></p>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Cabinet Committees</p> <p>These are Committees that have defined Terms of Reference related to Executive functions.</p> <p>1. Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee</p> <p>The Committee is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management & Economic Development and a Vice-Chairman will be appointed by the Leader of Council from members of the Cabinet. It has 5 members and, although in the constitution, it is currently not meeting as a Cabinet Committee.</p> <p>It deals with the management of the council-owned property assets, including North Weald Airfield.</p> <p>This Committee also makes recommendations to the Cabinet on an Economic Development Strategy for the District and on ways of coordinating the management of the Council's property assets to assist with achieving the objectives of that Strategy.</p> <p>2. Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee</p> <p>This Committee has 5 members and 4 scheduled meetings per year. It considers and recommends to</p>

	<p>the Cabinet the Development Strategy for the Council's House Building Programme on an annual basis.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3. Local Plan Cabinet Committee</p> <p>This Committee has 5 members and 4 scheduled meetings per year.</p> <p>The Cabinet itself has 9 scheduled meetings per year, which also includes agenda planning meetings with officers.</p> <p>Work patterns of the Executive</p> <p>This will vary with each portfolio but, in general terms, each Portfolio Holder will attend regular meetings with officers to monitor performance and develop policy options.</p> <p>They also attend meetings of the relevant scrutiny Select committee and meetings of external bodies which relate to their portfolio.</p> <p>They will also attend meetings with stakeholders concerning their portfolio responsibilities.</p>
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Accountability

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. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ☐ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ☐ <i>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?</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ☐ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ☐ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>This is the main scrutiny committee with 17 members and meets 6 times per year. The Committee has sub committees (called select committees) themed along the Council Plan priorities, and a task and finish panel:</p> <p>Stronger Communities Select Committee</p> <p>Has 11 members and has 5 scheduled meetings per year</p> <p>Stronger Council Select Committee</p> <p>Has 11 members and has 6 scheduled meetings per year</p> <p>Stronger Place Select Committee</p> <p>Has 11 members and has 4 scheduled meetings per year</p> <p>Local High Streets Task & Finish Panel</p> <p>Has 11 members and has no scheduled meetings.</p> <p>O&S are also constitutionally able to create Task and Finish Groups to address particular issues. These are actively used by the committee.</p> <p>O&S Chair</p> <p>These meetings are internal with the Chairman of the relevant committees to discuss any issues that come up across the year. The committee has 8 members and has 2 scheduled meetings per year</p> <p>As referred to in an earlier section, as part of its submission the Council examined other arrangements in comparative authorities and concluded that whilst Epping Forest District Council had more than most, the appropriateness of arrangement was heavily determined by local issues. The Council will review the current arrangement following the Commission’s conclusion of the Council’s size.</p>

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	<p data-bbox="384 501 536 645"><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p> <ul data-bbox="555 353 1294 741" style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ☐ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ☐ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ☐ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ☐ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i> <p data-bbox="555 792 1390 831">District Development Management Committee (DDMC)</p> <p data-bbox="544 853 1374 891">This comprises 15 councillors and meets 7 times per year.</p> <p data-bbox="544 920 1358 987">Under delegated powers, officers determine over 90% of all applications received.</p> <p data-bbox="555 1048 1174 1086">There are 3 area planning sub-committees:</p> <p data-bbox="555 1122 1414 1196">Area Planning Sub-Committee East - 19 members, meets 13 times per year</p> <p data-bbox="555 1234 1437 1308">Area Planning Sub-Committee South - 25 members, meets 13 times per year</p> <p data-bbox="555 1346 1422 1420">Area Planning Sub-Committee West - 14 members, meets 13 times per year</p> <p data-bbox="555 1458 746 1496">DDMC Chair</p> <p data-bbox="555 1525 1445 1675">These meetings are internal with the Chairman of the relevant committees to discuss any issues that come up across the year. The committee has 10 members and has 2 scheduled meetings per year.</p>
Licensing	<p data-bbox="384 1756 536 1899"><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p> <ul data-bbox="555 1756 1430 2020" style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i> ☐ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i> ☐ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i> ☐ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i>

	Analysis	<p>Licensing Committee</p> <p>This Committee deals with those functions pertaining to licensing and registration and permits and consents. The main committee has 15 members and meets twice a year. Most matters are determined by a Sub-committee of 3 of the 15 members based upon a predetermined rota and has 11 scheduled meetings a year.</p>
Other Regulatory Bodies	Key lines of explanation	<p>☐ What will they be, and how many members will they require?</p> <p>☐ Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</p>
	Analysis	<p>Audit & Governance Committee</p> <p>The Council has a number of strategies in place to regulate its activities and demonstrate the robustness of its governance arrangements. One of the functions of the Audit and Governance Committee is to take a view on whether these strategies have been properly formulated and remain effective, in order to provide independent assurance to the Council on the adequacy of the internal control and risk management frameworks. The areas covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the assurance framework, including the production of the annual Statement on Internal Control; (b) the local Code of Corporate Governance, incorporating risk management, internal control, standards of conduct and accountability, excluding matters within the terms of reference of the Standards Committee; (c) the review of corporate arrangements in place for ensuring Value for Money; (d) to ensure that anti-fraud arrangements are in place; and (e) to receive a summary report annually on anti-fraud measures and prosecutions. <p>This Committee consists of 5 elected Members and 2 independent members of the public.</p> <p>Standards Committee</p> <p>This Committee has 9 elected District Council members, 5 Parish or Town Council representatives and 3 independent members of the public. It does not have scheduled meetings and will meet as required.</p> <p>Member Remuneration Panel</p>

		<p>The Remuneration Panel comprises of 3 independent members of the public.</p> <p>Parish Remuneration Panel</p> <p>The Parish Remuneration Panel comprises of 3 independent members of the public.</p> <p>Constitution Working Group</p> <p>Has 11 members and has 4 scheduled meetings per year. This Group reports directly to the Council with any recommended changes to the Council's Constitution.</p>
External Partnerships	<p>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.</p>	
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ <i>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?</i> ☐ <i>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?</i> ☐ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i> 	
Analysis	<p>Local Councils Liaison Committee</p> <p>Since the inception of the Epping Forest District in 1974, the District Council and the parish and town councils have come together to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. The Local Councils' Liaison Committee, comprises representatives from all parish and town councils, Essex County Councillors and District Councillors</p> <p>The committee has 9 District Council members, all 7 of the District's County Council members and 2 representatives from each of the 24 Town or Parish Councils within the District. It has 2 scheduled meetings per year.</p> <p>The Council uses its Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Select Committee to actively hold partnership bodies and other public bodies to account through the process of external scrutiny and challenge.</p> <p>There are a number of outside bodies and organisations that the Council participate in and make appointments too. To avoid this section becoming unduly lengthy, these are set out in Appendices 2 and 3.</p>	

Community Leadership

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? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i> ☐ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i> ☐ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i> ☐ <i>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?</i> ☐ <i>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?</i> ☐ <i>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?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The role of Councillors at EFDC is more than attending Committee meetings. Each Councillor decides how to organise their work individually. The recent EFDC workload survey (December 2021) shows a wide variation as to how individual Councillors carry out their role depending on both the priorities within their respective wards and the Community and other Groups or bodies that the individual Councillor sits on or regularly engages with.</p> <p>The survey showed that a significant portion of their time, and a very important part of their role, is spent representing</p>

		<p>and engaging with members of the public in their respective wards, engaging with local communities, representing their views, responding to casework from constituents and thereby maintaining a link between the users and providers of Council and other public services.</p> <p>Many of the Councillors wear a number hats alongside their District role, including Town, Parish, County, Residents Associations and Community and other groups. There is liaison with other tiers of Local Government, actively addressing local issues and concerns, supporting local community, involvement in community meetings and ensuring that local people have a voice and can influence decisions that are made that affect them or in their area.</p> <p>Councillors are issued with an electronic device after their election and the survey shows that members make good use of technology, including telephone and video calling, email and a wide variety of social media with which they engage with their electorate and Community groups.</p> <p>EFDC has a mixture of long-serving and very experienced, and newer relatively recent and less experienced Councillors as a result of regular elections by thirds. This is something that is felt to be very important locally (with a very clear decision at Council meeting in December 2021, to retain elections by thirds) as newly elected Councillors bring new skills, experiences and ideas with them. Whilst some Councillors have the experience, skills and knowledge to resolve constituents' issues, others will refer issues directly to officers. Councillors receive support from officers and other Councillor colleagues and from their political Group in carrying out their duties in relation to their casework and representational role. They regularly liaise with the Councils Senior Management Team and maintain close links with the Democratic Services Team.</p> <p>In terms of Area Governance, the Council has 3 Area Planning Committees to ensure targeted focus on the particular needs of those areas.</p>
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Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>☐ <i>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?</i></p> <p>☐ <i>What support do members receive?</i></p> <p>☐ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i></p> <p>☐ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i></p>
	Analysis	<p>The Council carried out a Member Casework Survey in December 2021. It was a very helpful exercise and received good quality responses. It made the following findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members generally make good use of technology, including telephone and video calling, email, social media including Facebook, Messenger, Twitter, WhatsApp to communicate with residents, together with attendance at Resident and Community Groups and Associations. General comments are that there has been less face to face contact as a result of the pandemic. ● Casework covered a wide variety of issues including Housing, Planning, Litter and Fly Tipping, Parking, Potholes, Broken Paving, Flooding, Lighting, and Anti-Social Behaviour. A considerable amount and percentages, where given, related to Highways ● Of members that replied, a considerable number wear multiple hats along with District including Town, Parish, Residents Associations and Community and other groups ● Hours on case work varied considerably from 3 to 4 hours per week up to 37 hours per week. A rough average from those responding was 10 to 15 hours per week on Council related casework. ● Cabinet members have the added caseload associated with their Portfolio holder responsibilities. This includes regular officer briefings, policy formation and meetings with external and partner organisations, such as the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town or key suppliers. Additionally, they need to respond to electorate queries channelled to them by ward councillors. This adds significantly to their workload.

Other Issues

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

Whilst the current governance arrangements are set out in this table, the Council will take the opportunity to have a fresh look at its governance and meetings structure following the completion of the warding arrangements part of this review.

Summary

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 governance arrangements and number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future.

Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

The last Review on the electoral arrangements for the EFDC local authority area was carried out by the LGBCE and completed in November 2000. The main final recommendations of that review were that EFDC should be served by 58 councillors representing 32 wards.

At the time of that review, the electorate totalled 93,439 (February 1999), and was estimated to grow to 96,677 by 2004. By 2022 the electorate has grown to 100,222 and is projected to increase by 2028 to 117,989.

This current submission has been developed by a cross-party group of councillors and has been agreed at a meeting of the Full Council on 24 February 2022.

The submission has been informed by:

- Briefings provided by the LGBCE to all councillors, including parish councillors and key officers
- Current and projected electorate figures, and the substantial electorate growth in some parts of the District area in the period up to 2028
- The work of the cross-party Portfolio Holders Advisory Group (PHAG), who met on a number of occasions between November 2021 and February 2022

The Council recommends that the Epping Forest local authority area should in future be represented by 54 Councillors which is a reduction of 4 Councillors. Having regard to the electorate forecast for EFDC to 2028 this would result in 1 councillor per 2,185 electors.

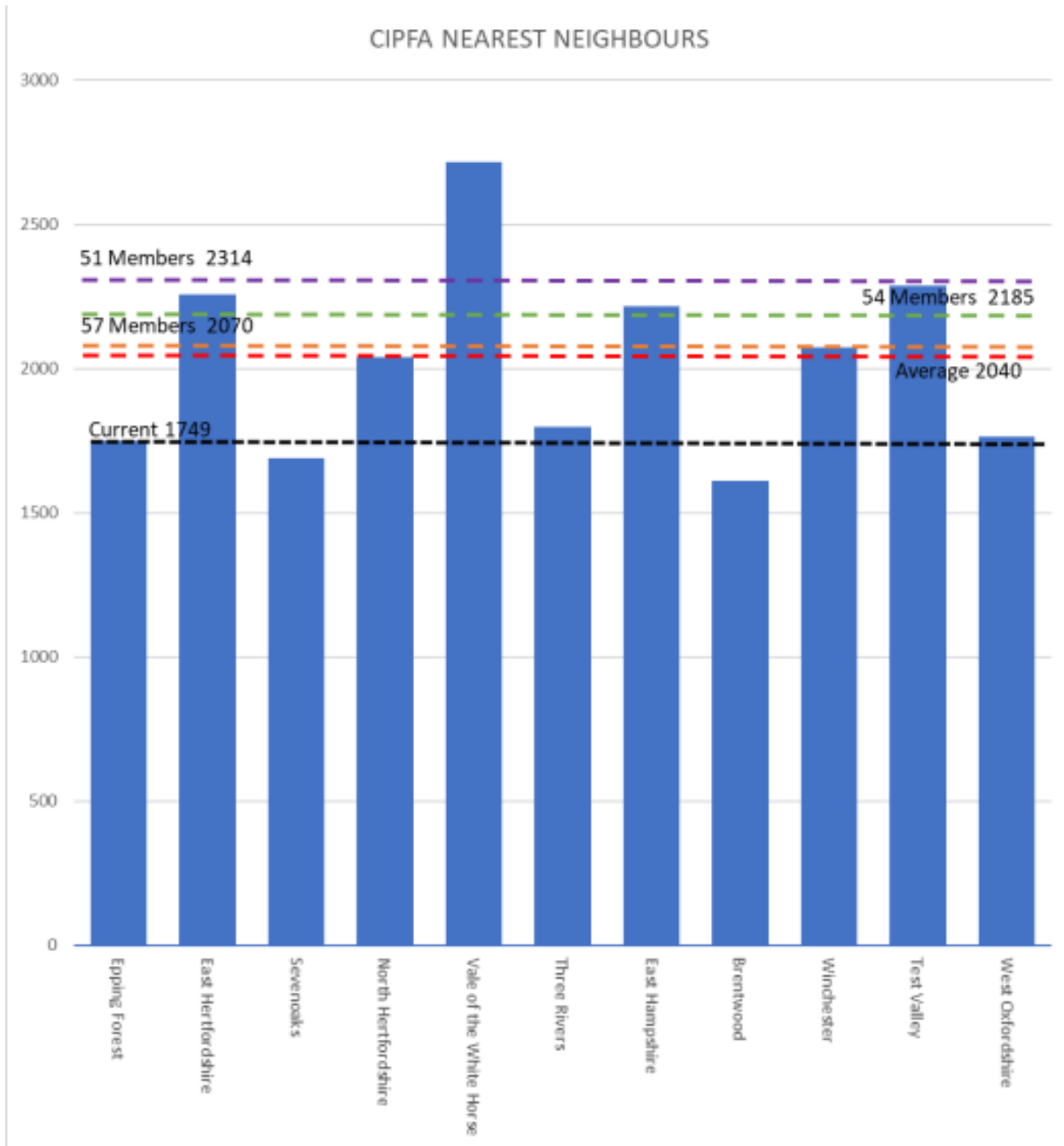
Attached as **Appendix 1** at the end of this report is a graph which illustrates the number of electors per councillor for 51, 54 and 57 councillors respectively using the EFDC predicted electorate size in 2028 and shows in table form the comparison with CIPFA nearest neighbour councils. Options of 51, 54 and 57 councillors have been considered by members, as have numbers of 45 and 48 councillors, however based on local knowledge and experience, the Council considers that 54 councillors will best represent the requirements of the EFDC electorate in the period to 2028.

The Council has also considered whether to change its electoral cycle from thirds to all out elections every 4 years and has, after consideration through its PHAG and debate at the Full Council meeting on 16 December 2021, decided that it should continue to elect by

thirds. The Council has taken into consideration the LGBCE guidance that for authorities that elect by thirds the LGBCE will be looking for a uniform pattern of 3 member wards.

Whilst this submission does not address warding issues, as that is for the next stage of the electoral review, the Council does wish to raise its concern that careful consideration will need to be given to identify suitable warding arrangements that reflect communities in some of the Councils more rural areas.

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

1. Council Appointments - Organisations Carrying Out Council Regulatory or Non-Cabinet Functions

Organisation and Allocation Category	
1.	Epping Forest Care and Repair Management Committee (3)
2.	Epping Forest Citizens' Advice Bureau (3 including 1 voting member)
3.	Campaign to Protect Rural England (Essex Branch) (1 + deputy)
4.	Epping Forest Community Transport Board of Trustees (1)
5.	Epping Forest Housing Aid Committee (1)
6.	Epping Forest Local Highways Panel (4)
7.	Epping Forest Local Liaison Group (specific ward representation only) (BCEUN) (1) (BHW) (1) (ELTC) (1) (EH) (1) (LSJ) (1) (LSM) (1) (LF) (1) (TB) (1) (WAHB) (1)
8.	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel (1)
9.	Health Overview, Policy and Scrutiny Committee (1)
10.	Grange Farm Managing Trustees (Term to 31.5.23) (3)
11.	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (2) (2 deputies) (Ongoing term to 30.6.21)
12.	Leisure Centre Liaison Groups (Leisure Centre Customer Forums) The Leisure Contract Manager has advised that two members should be appointed to each Liaison Group/Customer Forum for 2020/21.
	(a) Epping Sports Centre (2)
	(b) Ongar Leisure Centre (2)
	(c) Loughton Leisure Centre (2)

	(d) Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool (2)
13.	Epping Forest Local Councils Liaison Committee (no restriction)
14	Outer North-East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (1)
15.	Princess Alexandra Hospital - Partnership Governor (1)
16.	Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve:
	(a) Management Committee (1)
	(b) Working Group (1)
17.	Stansted Airport Consultative Committee (1 + deputy)
18.	Stansted Airport Community Trust Fund (1)
19.	<p>Town Centre Partnerships</p> <p>The Service Director (Community & Partnership Services) has advised as follows with regard to the appointment of members to each Town Centre Partnership for 2020/21.</p>
	(a) Buckhurst Hill Village Forum (0)
	(b) Epping Town Centre Partnership (2)
	(c) Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership (0)
	(d) Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership (2)
	(e) Ongar Town Forum Steering Group (0)
	(f) Waltham Abbey Town Partnership (2)
20.	Voluntary Action Epping Forest (1)
21.	Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills Ltd (1)
22.	Waltham Abbey Tourist Information Centre (Joint Management Committee) (3)
23.	Leisure Management Contract Monitoring Board (6)
24.	Epping Forest College (Board of Governors of New City College and local advisory body for the Epping Forest Campus College)

2. Appointments Held by Officers – Organisations Carrying Out Executive Functions (Appointments by the Leader)

	Organisation and Committee Responsible	Representative
1.	Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH)	Service Director (Housing & Property Services) (or representative)
2.	National Society for Clean Air (SE Division)	Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services) (or representative)
3.	Standing Conference – Investigation of Air Pollution	Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services) (or representative)
4.	Roding Valley Meadow Local Nature Reserve Working Group	Service Director (Contracts & Technical Services) (or representative)

3. Appointments Held by Officers – Organisations Carrying Out Council Regulatory or Non-Executive Functions

This Appendix indicates those organisations where the Council determined on 25 April 1995 that the representatives should be officers.

	Organisation and Committee Responsible	Representative 2020/21
1.	Essex Water Safety Liaison Committee	Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services) (or representative)
2.	Voluntary Action Epping Forest (see also member appointments schedule)	Service Director (Community & Partnership Services) (or representative)

Appendix 3

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS 2019/20

1. Leader Appointments - Organisations Carrying Out Executive Functions

Organisation and Allocation Category		Nominations
1.	Association of Retained Council Housing - Executive Board (1 + Deputy)	Housing & Property Services Portfolio Holder Leader of the Council (Deputy)
2.	Civil Enforcement of Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London - Adjudication Joint Committee (1)	Contracts & Technical Services Portfolio Holder
3.	Epping Forest District Community Safety Partnership (1 + Deputy)	Community & Partnership Services Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
4.	East of England Local Government Association (1)	Leader of the Council
5.	Six Authorities Liaison Group (formerly Enfield, Essex and Hertfordshire Border Liaison Group) (3 + Deputies)	
6.	Epping Forest District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) The LSP Manager has advised as follows with regard to the appointment of members to each of the following LSP bodies for 2019/20.	
	(a) LSP Board ('One' Partnership) (1)	Leader of the Council
	(b) Health & Wellbeing Board (2)	Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder Community & Partnership Services Portfolio Holder
	(c) Economic Board (1)	Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder
	(d) Tourism Board (1)	
7.	Essex Partnership for Flood Management (1)	
8.	Essex Waste Partnership - Inter-Authority Member Working Group (1 + Deputy)	Contracts & Technical Services portfolio Holder (Deputy)

9.	Harlow-Stansted Gateway Transportation Board (1 + Deputy)	Contracts & Technical Services Portfolio Holder Community & Partnership Services Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
10.	Local Government Association - General Assembly (1 + Deputy)	Leader of the Council Deputy Leader of the Council (Deputy)
11.	North Essex Parking Partnership (1 + Deputy)	Contracts & Technical Services Portfolio Holder Community & Partnership Services Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
12.	Off-Street Car Parking Contract Monitoring Board (2)	Contracts & Technical Services Portfolio Holder
13.	South East Local Enterprise Partnership (2)	Leader of the Council Community & Partnership Services Portfolio Holder
14.	Waste Management Partnership Board (2)	Business Support Services Portfolio Holder Commercial & Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder
15.	West Essex Alliance (1 + Deputy)	Leader of the Council Commercial & Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder
16.	Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board (2 + 1 Deputy)	Leader of the Council Planning Services Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
17.	Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Board	Leader of the Council Planning Services Portfolio Holder Strategic Projects Portfolio Holder.