 Council 20 September 2017		Agenda Item No. 12
Title	Review of Warwick District Council Ward Boundaries	
For further information about this report please contact	Graham Leach, Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer 01926 456114 graham.leach@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Council 16 November 2016 Minute 51 Licensing & Regulatory Committee 31 October 2016 Minute 21	
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	Yes/No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	Yes/No
Key Decision?	Yes/No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes/No
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	12/9/2017	Chris Elliott
Head of Service		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		
Monitoring Officer	12/9/2017	Andrew Jones
Finance	12/9/2017	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	12/9/2017	Andrew Mobbs
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Insert details of any consultation undertaken or proposed to be undertaken with regard to this report.		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The report brings forward the draft submission from this Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) regarding the size of the Council as part of the review of Warwick District Council Wards.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Council notes the timetable for the review of its Wards as set out at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Council retains the current number of Councillors of 46, recognising the usual tolerance of plus or minus 1 Councillor.
- 2.2 That, subject to the approval of 2.1, the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission as set out at Appendix 3 to the report be approved.
- 2.3 That Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Chairman of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee, to finalise the wording of the submission, if required, following initial submission to the LGBCE, so long as it does not alter the proposed size of the Council.
- 2.4 The Council delegates the approval for the electorate forecasting methodology and forecast up to 2023, to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Chairman of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee;
- 2.5 The Council notes that officers will make the submissions to the LGBCE as statements of fact as outlined in Paragraph 3.12
- 2.6 That Council notes a report will be brought to Council setting out the proposed Warding arrangements once the LGBCE has accepted the proposed size of the Council.

3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 In November 2016, the Council requested a review of its Ward Boundaries by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). At that time the Council proposed a reduction in its size from 46 to 43 members with a view to having coterminous Ward Boundaries with the Warwickshire County Council Electoral Divisions. The Council also highlighted the significant growth expected within some areas of the District due to the emerging Local Plan. This would also enable the opportunity to remove the current new Town Council Wards for Kenilworth, Leamington and Warwick which will come into effect in May 2019 unless Warwick District Council amends its Warding arrangements.
- 3.2 The request for the review of the Ward Boundaries was accepted by the LGBCE and was due to start in the summer of 2017. The start was delayed by the LGBCE due to the General Election in June 2017.
- 3.3 The LGCBE officially started the review in August with the presentation to Councillors and Parish/Town Councils. The review has two main parts. Part one is the submission from the Council putting forward its view on future council size: the total number of councillors to be elected to the Council. This is where

the LGBCE expects to receive submissions from the Council which provides a rationale, backed up with evidence, for a proposed council size. Part 2 - The Commission will publish a council size which it is 'minded to' recommend and invite ward proposals based on that council size.

- 3.4 At this time, the Council needs to focus on its initial submission with regard to the proposed size of the Council and supporting evidence for this as set out within the guidance from the LGBCE at Appendix 2.
- 3.5 The initial submission, set out at Appendix 3, has been drafted by the Chief Executive and Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders.
- 3.6 To produce the submission, an evaluation has been undertaken of the current electoral register which has grown significantly due to the General Election in June 2017.
- 3.7 Following this assessment, it was recognised that the original proposal to reduce the council size to 43 would not work while retaining the principal of coterminous boundaries at all levels of Local Government. Therefore, it was proposed that the Council retains its current number of Councillors of 46, recognising the usual tolerance of plus or minus 1 Councillors, for the reasons set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.8 This initial submission is subject to checking by the LGBCE and therefore authority is sought for the Chief Executive to amend this as necessary, without amending the number of Councillors. This should help to further negate the need for the LGBCE to consult on the proposed size of the Council, which they have already stated they would be unlikely to do.
- 3.9 Delegated authority is sought to allow the Chief Executive to agree the modelling methodology submission for electoral forecasting to enable this to be submitted as early as possible to the LGBCE. This will allow others to scrutinise this and use the modelling in later stages of Warding. Several modelling formats have been used already but a detailed submission is required. The agreement of the modelling is a factual process and it is therefore considered that this can reasonably be completed under delegated authority.
- 3.10 The modelling would take account of the Housing Trajectory 2011-2029 as approved by the Planning Inspector as part of the Local Plan. From within this, the Council would consider all committed developments for 2017 to 2023 and all allocations on greenfield, brownfield and villages between 2017 and 2023. A number of models have been run, as follows, however the recommended/preferred model will be (3) without any allowance for ONS Growth:
 1. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) prediction of 4.2% population growth in WDC
 2. Population Growth of 2.97% (over 2014 to 2023) in Warwick District based on a current trend of 0.33% per year as reported by ONS
 3. Electorate of 1.58 per new build in the District (of developments of 10 or greater between 2017 and 2023) on its own plus versions with 1 or 2 included

4. Electorate of 1.61 per new build in the District (of developments of 10 or greater between 2017 and 2023) on its own plus versions with 1 or 2 included.

3.11 Once the modelling methodology is approved by the LGBCE, officers can then produce detailed forecasts of the electorate within each of the proposed wards over the next five years and. As this would be based on key building blocks (current electorate and Housing Trajectory 2011-2019 approved as part of the Local Plan), it is considered this can be completed under delegated authority.

3.12 There are a number of factual statements that the LGCBE require from the Council and therefore Officers will be making these submissions. These submissions will be as follows:

- Current electorate?
- The location of any developments with more than 10 properties were taken account of in the electoral forecast (shapefiles if possible) and the approximate number of people expected to occupy each development.
- Details of parishes, parish councillors, parish warding arrangements and election years.
- Geocoded electronic copy of the electoral register was used for the current electoral figures including the polling district for each entry. The number of people in the register should match as closely as possible the number of people in our current electorate figures.
- GIS mapping data for polling districts across the District.
- Contact details for local stakeholders who the LGBCE can contact about the review (attached).
- Details of any community governance reviews that are being planned or have been completed since the last review.
- Agreement of Local press and media contacts and communications plan.

3.12 A further report will be brought back to Council in due course on the proposed Warding arrangements for Members to consider and approve before submission to the LGBCE. This would include plans of each of the proposed Wards and the details of the number of electors for each Ward.

4. **Policy Framework**

4.1 **Fit for the Future (FFF)**

The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report is the next step forward for implementing one of the Council's Key projects for a review of the Ward Boundaries.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse

Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities • Cohesive and active communities	after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/ productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
<i>Minimal impact of the proposals externally less the potential for improved identification of a community by an individual.</i>	None	None
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

4.2 Supporting Strategies

This proposal does not relate directly to any supporting strategies of FFF but will set the basic building blocks for the Council and its governance arrangements over the coming years.

4.3 Changes to Existing Policies

The report does not bring forward amendments to any of the current Council Policies.

4.4 Impact Assessments – No impact assessments have been undertaken because the proposal is to retain the current level of Councillors.

5. Budgetary Framework

5.1 There are no budgetary implications of the report for the Council. The cost of the review is borne by the LGBCE and the current proposal of 46 Councillors would not see any further increase in cost above that arising as part of the Members Allowances review reported June 2017.

6. Risks

- 6.1 The primary focus of the report is to approve a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England with regard to Council size. This is based on an understanding of the aim for the Council to try and retain coterminous boundaries at all levels of local government within the District to aid accountability and community representation. Council should be mindful that the submission to the LGBCE has to be a number on a basis of plus or minus one Councillor. Therefore, the LGBCE could determine a figure different to that proposed by the Council. This is, however, unlikely based on what is considered a strong submission as well as the Council retaining a similar number of Councillors to its CiPFA nearest neighbours.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 The Council is required to make a submission at this stage and cannot now request that the review is stopped. Therefore, the alternative option of doing nothing cannot be considered.
- 7.2 The Council could decide to submit a different size of Council to that outlined within the draft submission. This must be based on Guidance from the LGBCE as set out at Appendix 2.
- 7.3 Therefore, if the Council was to consider making a submission to increase the size of the Council, it cannot be made on the understanding that the electorate will be increased, it needs to show that workload overall will also be increasing for Councillors. For example, it needs to show more work at formal meetings, working parties and outside appointments, this would include the number of these bodies that each Councillor is required to sit on by the Council. At present, the Council has just agreed a new members allowances scheme which recognises the level of work for Councillors is in line with the national average.
- 7.4 Equally, any proposal to reduce the number of Councillors would need to be able to demonstrate sound reasons in this.
- 7.5 In considering any alternative size Council reasons would need to take into consideration the ability to retain the primary aim of the Council to provide coterminous boundaries at all levels of Local Government within the District. Having considered this it is considered the best fit proposal would be to retain the current size of Council because either (a) at this time no evidence has been provided to show increased workload for all Councillors, or (b) a reduction in size of the Council cannot retain the correct ratio of Councillor to elector and coterminous boundaries.

Electoral review timetable

The timetable for your electoral review is set out below. Timescales occasionally change during the review but you can keep up to date with developments by looking at the dedicated page for your review on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk

Stage of review	Date/duration	Description	Note	Outputs
Preliminary stage	August 2017 – November 2017	Commission gathers information about the council e.g. electorate forecasts and briefs group leaders, the full council and parishes/community groups on the process.	<p>This is the council's opportunity to put forward its view on future council size: the total number of councillors to be elected to the council.</p> <p>We will also work with council staff to build electorate forecasts for the next 5/6 years as required by law.</p>	<p>The Commission expects to receive submissions from the council and/or council groups at the end of this phase which provides a rationale, backed up with evidence, for a proposed council size.</p> <p>The Commission will consider the council's submission(s) from the preliminary phase before deciding on a number which will form the basis of its work to draw up new ward boundaries.</p> <p>In some circumstances, for example where a major change in council size is proposed, the Commission will consider holding a public consultation on the proposal.</p>
Stage One	28 November 2017 – 5 February 2018	Public consultation on new ward boundaries.	<p>The Commission will publish a council size which it is 'minded to' recommend and invite ward proposals based on that council size.</p> <p>The council size will provide us with an optimum councillor: elector ratio to build wards which deliver electoral fairness.</p>	The Commission usually receives a council scheme for proposed new wards across the local authority. We will also consider localised evidence from organisations and members of the public on the most appropriate pattern of wards. We use that evidence to help us draw up our draft recommendations.

Stage of review	Date/duration	Description	Note	Outputs
Draft recommendations consultation	3 April 2018 – 11 June 2018	Publication of draft recommendations on new wards for the local authority and a public consultation on them.	The Commission will publish full draft proposals for new electoral arrangements: new wards, ward boundaries and ward names for public comment.	<p>We will gather views on our draft proposals where they support the recommendations or whether they propose alternative ward patterns.</p> <p>The Commission will then finalise its recommendations after considering all the evidence received at each stage of the review.</p>
Publication of final recommendations	August 2018	Once the consultation on draft recommendations has concluded, the Commission will consider all the evidence before drawing up its final recommendations for new electoral arrangements.	This stage marks the end of the Commission's direct involvement with your authority on the review. Once we have published final recommendations, we are unable to amend them.	We will produce a draft order – the legal document which will bring into force the final recommendations – in preparation for laying in Parliament.
Parliamentary scrutiny	September 2018	A draft order seeking the implementation of the final recommendation will be laid in both Houses of Parliament under the negative resolution procedure	<p>The draft order will be placed in both Houses of Parliament for 40 days (with possible gaps depending on recesses) for the consideration of members.</p> <p>Parliament can accept or reject the recommendations. It cannot modify them.</p>	Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the Commission will 'make' the order at the end of the 40 days and inform the council that order is now complete so that you can prepare for elections on the new arrangements.
Implementation	2019	New electoral arrangements: council size, ward boundaries and ward names come into effect at the elections.	Council staff will have prepared electoral registers and other arrangements on the basis of the order e.g. polling districts and polling stations.	New electoral arrangements for your area come into effect.

Part one: council size

Guidance

The first part of the review will determine the total number of councillors to be elected to the council in the future. We call this 'council size'. We will not consider ward boundaries until we have completed this phase.

By the end of the preliminary stage of the review, we expect the council and/or its political groups, to present the Commission with a case for a council size that they believe is right for their authority.

The Commission will make its judgment on council size by considering three broad areas:

- We will look at the **governance arrangements** of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.
- The Commission will look at the council's **scrutiny functions** relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.
- We will also consider the **representational role of councillors in the local community** and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

If you plan to make a submission to us on council size (whether it's for an increase, reduction or maintaining current arrangements), you should make sure you address these areas and that your view is backed up by evidence.

Below, we explain more about the three areas:

Governance arrangements

The Commission aims to ensure that councils have the right number of councillors to take decisions and manage the business of the council in an effective way now and in the future.

To support your view, the Commission is looking for evidence about cabinet and/or committee responsibilities, number of committees and their workload, delegation to officials, other bodies and plans for the future.

Scrutiny functions

Every local authority has mechanisms to scrutinise the executive functions of the council and other local bodies. They also have significant discretion over the kind (and extent) of activities involved in that process. In considering council size, the Commission will want to satisfy itself that these responsibilities can be administered in a convenient and effective way.

To support your view, the Commission is looking for evidence about the number of councillors your authority needs to hold the decision makers to account and ensure that the council can discharge its responsibilities to other organisations (e.g. other public sector bodies, partnerships, and trusts).

Representational role of councillors

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to representation and members will represent and provide leadership to their communities in different ways. However, we are interested in hearing about the extent to which members routinely engage with communities and how this affects workload and responsibilities.

To support your view, the Commission is looking for evidence about how councillors interact with their communities, their caseloads and the kind of support they need effectively to represent local people and groups.

Submission from Warwick District Council

Part one: council size

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Warwick District Council is seeking to retain its current number of Councillors of 46, recognising the usual tolerance of plus or minus 1 Councillor. The Council believes that this will not impact on the Governance arrangements, scrutiny functions of representational roles of Councillors.
- 1.2 The Council has prepared this submission dealing with council size only at this stage in order to support effective, efficient and accountable local democracy in the District of Warwick. A further submission on the number of wards and number of councillors per ward will be made at a later date.
- 1.3 The submission takes into account the governance arrangements of the authority, scrutiny functions and the representational roles of Councillors.
- 1.4 The submission recognises the changing face of Local Government with reductions in both numbers of staff and budgets for the delivery of services at the same time as an increasing and changing population.
- 1.5 The Council is mindful that while it is proposed to retain the number of Councillors it currently has (46), the Council is mindful that the electorate for the District due to increase from 109,805 to 121,087 up to 2023. Therefore, based on the current ratio of a Councillor to 2388 electors, there will be an effective reduction of four Councillors.
- 1.6 The Council has considered its size carefully, considering a reasonable size that would not be out of step with its nearest neighbours (Appendix A) but could provide the potential for it to have coterminous boundaries with both Warwickshire County Council Divisions and revised Town Council Wards.
- 1.7 With this in mind it considered and rejected the idea of increasing the number of Councillors, and also dramatically reducing the number of Councillors, as set out in section 5 of this submission.

2. Governance arrangements

- 2.1 The Council is currently composed of 46 councillors made up from five political parties; 30 Conservative, 9 Labour, 3 Whitnash Residents Association, 2 Liberal Democrat, 1 Green (and a vacancy due for election on 5 October 2017). Each represent, one, two or three member Wards. Elections are held every four years and the next election will take place in May 2019. Each councillor currently represents an average of 2388 electors.
- 2.2 Warwick District Council has adopted the strong Leader model for its democratic Structure. This means that while Council continues to have an important role in setting the broad budget and policy framework, the responsibility for the majority of decision-making rests largely with the Leader.

- 2.3 Under the model adopted by the Council the Leader has determined that the authority to take decisions will be made by an Executive of 8 Councillors including himself. The Leader is appointed by Council for four years and the Leader determines who will sit on the Executive.
- 2.4 The Council has established two Scrutiny Committees, each of 11 Councillors, to hold the Executive to account. One of these also acts as the Council's Audit Committee. The Council also has an Employment Committee, Planning Committee, Standards Committee and a Licensing & Regulatory Committee.
- 2.5 Seats are allocated to each group that nominate which of their Members will sit on a particular Committee, with Council taking the final decision on which Members are on each Committee. These allocations are politically proportional with the exception of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee where the Council has determined that the opposition Groups should have the majority of seats.
- 2.6 Since the 2011 submission by this Council, the following changes have occurred in the democratic structure of this Council, all of which serve to reduce the number of formal meetings or numbers of Councillors necessary. In summary these are:
- Council – Delegated the approval of accounts to its Audit Committee
 - Executive – Reduced in size by one Councillor
 - Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Reduced in Size by 4 Councillors
 - Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee – Designated as the Council's Audit Committee and has taken on approval of statement of accounts from Council and as a result has reduced the number of times Council meets by one per year
 - Licensing & Regulatory Committee – These two committees have been merged from two Committees (one of 11 and one of 15) to a single committee of 15 but in addition a larger proportion of their work has been delegated to officers
 - Standards Committee – The introduction of the Localism Act has seen the work of this Committee significantly reduced and the previously required sub committees for considering cases at an early stage has been removed and replaced by delegation to officers
 - Planning Committee – The membership size has increased by 1 but the frequency of meetings has decreased from once every three weeks with a second night 8 times a year to once every four weeks with a reserve night only occasionally and is often now used for briefing all Councillors on planning matters.
 - Housing Appeals Review Panels – Since the Council's submission in 2016, requesting a review, this work has been delegated to officers.
- 2.7 A summary of the Committee sizes and number of meetings per year are set out at Appendix B to this submission.
- 2.8 *Council* - Council remains responsible for setting the budget, council tax and significant policies for the area. At Council meetings, Councillors receive a limited number of cases recommendations from the Executive for them to determine; as well as petitions and motions. The minutes of the Executive are received for information. The Council agenda also allows for the questioning of the Council's portfolio holders and Leader. The Council meets 9 times per year.

- 2.9 *The Executive* - The Executive is the Council's main decision making body, and is responsible for providing effective strategic leadership. The Executive is currently composed of 8 Conservative Councillors including the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. The Executive meets collectively 10 or 11 times per year and make decisions, excluding those matters delegated to officers, and to the Standards, Employment, Audit, Planning and Licensing & Regulatory Committees.
- 2.10 *Portfolio Holders* - Each member of the Executive is a Portfolio Holder who act as spokespersons for the service areas and may be given delegated authority by the Council to take Executive decisions within these areas.
- The Portfolio Holders are:
- Neighbourhood
 - Health & Community Protection
 - Strategic Leadership
 - Development
 - Housing & Property
 - Finance
 - Culture
 - Business
- 2.11 The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees provide ideas, challenge and debate that contribute to making Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit. The wider details are described in section 3 of this submission.
- 2.12 *Employment Committee* - The Committee is responsible for setting policies relating to staffing matters as well as approving the staffing structure of the Council. It meets around 5 times per year. It has 11 members.
- 2.13 *Licensing & Regulatory Committee* - This Committee comprises of 15 Councillors and meets seven times a year mainly for training purposes and consideration of minutes of its Panels. While the Committee has a wide range of responsibilities covering licensing as well as electoral matters and boundary review. However, the majority of its work is delegated to Licensing & Regulatory Panels.
- 2.14 *Licensing & Regulatory Panels* - These sub-committees (of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee) are responsible for determining applications made to the authority under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 when representations have been made as well as specific matters relating hackney carriage, private hire drivers and private hire operators. They have 3 Members selected from the 15 Members of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee and normally meet 16 times a year although in the last 12 months they have met 30 times due to the introduction of two new policies relating to hackney carriage and private hire drivers. It is anticipated the number of panels meetings will reduce to 16 in 2017/18 municipal year.
- 2.15 *Planning Committee* - The Planning Committee is responsible for the determination of planning applications of around 250 of the 2500 planning applications received by the Council each year. It meets around 13 times per year, plus 9 site visits during the year. It has 11 Members.

- 2.16 *Standards Committee* - The Standards Committee's main purpose is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and governance within the Council and within the Parish and Town Councils within the District. It meets around 3 times per year. It currently has 15 Members comprising of 11 District Councillors and 4 Parish/Town Council representatives.
- 2.17 Warwick District Council is part of a Joint Committee comprise 8 elected Members appointed by the Authorities comprising 1 Councillor (Leader) for each of the Authorities in Warwickshire, Coventry and Hinckley and Bosworth. In addition the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership may provide 1 voting and 1 non-voting Member.
- 2.18 The overarching aim of the Joint Committee is to provide its constituent Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership with a forum in which to address collaboratively, issues relating to economic development, regeneration and strategic planning at a sub-regional level and to enable collective decision-making on issues that require sub-regional agreement from the constituent authorities. In particular the Joint Committee will have the power to:
- (1) Develop and set the economic and growth strategies for the sub-region and to keep the same under review;
 - (2) Develop and set joint investment strategies for the sub-region and to keep the same under review;
 - (3) Consider, approve and implement decisions relating to sub-regional investment, including expenditure of external funding within the sub-region;
 - (4) Develop and encourage a co-ordinated approach within the sub-region to inward investment;
 - (5) Develop and facilitate collaboration between the constituent authorities in the discharge of functions relating to economic development, regeneration and strategic planning; and
 - (6) Create a forum for elected Members to agree strategic direction and exert a collective influence over other bodies exercising similar functions.
- 2.28 Currently the total of this work results in a Councillor needing to sit on less than two Committees each (plus Council). However, at present 19 Councillors sit on either no Committees or just one Committee. The Council is also mindful that the current size of the Committees (featuring 11 members) is due to ensuring they are politically proportionate and therefore depending on the results for the 2019 election they could reduce in size to membership of 9 without adversely affecting the operation of the meeting or significantly increasing workload for the Councillors on the Committees.
- 2.19 The Council has a number of Working Parties and Forums for specific areas of work. In 2011 there were 21 active Groups of which there are now only 13. These are:

	Number of places
Green Space Development Group	6 (2 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 WRA and 2 vacancies)
Housing Advisory Group	11 (6 Conservatives, 2 Labour, 1 WRA, 1 Lib Dem and 1 Green)
Councillor IT Working Party	7 (4 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 WRA, 1 Lib Dem)

Kenilworth Town Centre Joint Steering Group	1 Conservative
Leamington Town Centre Partnership	5 (2 Conservative, 1 Labour , 1 WRA, 1 Lib Dem)
Leisure Development Member Working Party	7 (2Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Lib Dem, 1 WRA and 1 vacancy)
Members – Trades Union Joint Consultation & Safety Panel	4 (1Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 WRA and 1 vacancy)
Members’ Development Group	4 (The Four Group Leaders)
People Strategy Steering Group	5 (2 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 WRA and 1 vacancy)
Planning Forum	46 (All members of the Council)
St Mary’s Lands Working Party	4 (2 Conservative, 1Labour, 1WRA)
Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Commissioning Panel	7 Members (4 Conservatives, 1 Labour, 1 Whitnash Residents’ Association, and 1 Liberal Democrat)
Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum	2 (both Conservative)

- 2.20 The working parties are primarily established for specific pieces of work with a defined life span. Therefore the number of these will fluctuate slightly but will always be at this level. This said there are those which are ongoing as key parts of either public engagement (e.g. Planning Forum and Warwick District Conservation Forum) or key to the Council working as a good employer (Members/.Trades Unions Joint Consultation & Safety Panel). The small reduction in the number of Councillors is not considered so significant as to impact on this operation.
- 2.21 The Council appoints Councillors to act as Champions for Procurement, the Armed Forces Covenant, HS2, Heritage and Children.
- 2.22 The Council also participates at Community Forums that take place twice a year. There are seven forums within the District: Kenilworth Community forum, North Leamington Community forum, South Leamington Community forum, Warwick Rural East Community forum, Warwick Rural West Community forum, Warwick Town Community forum and Whitnash Community forum.
- 2.23 At present the forums are jointly organised by the District and County Council. They give an opportunity for residents to put their views and concerns about local issues directly to public service providers. Other local public sector bodies that attend these meetings include the Police, local Health services and Parish and Town councillors. The meetings generally take place in the evening.
- 2.24 Community forums are part of a wider strategy to improve local engagement and partnership working. There is an expectation, but not a requirement, that District Councillors will attend the community forum meetings in their area when possible because providing leadership at the forums is a vital part of their community leadership and engagement role. The forums are chaired by one of the Councillors from that area.
- 2.25 The role and remit of the Community forums has been reviewed by the District Council and as a result the number of meetings has reduced by 50% compared to the situation in 2011.

3. Scrutiny functions

- 3.1 The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees provide ideas, challenge and debate that contribute to making Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit.
- 3.2 The Council has two Overview & Scrutiny committees, both comprising 11 Councillors, which carry out this role by conducting scrutiny reviews into issues affecting the District, contributing to the development and review of policies, monitoring performance and holding decision-makers to account.
- 3.3 The two scrutiny committees are both chaired by Councillors from opposition parties and always meet the day before Executive to consider, and if felt appropriate comment, on the reports the Executive will take decisions on the following evening.
- 3.4 The two Committees, Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee, have slightly different roles to play. This is because Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee also acts as the Council's Audit Committee.
- 3.5 The prime purpose of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to review items to be considered by the Executive, to review past decisions, policy development, health and wellbeing issues, specific issues and problems within any service area.
- 3.6 It will also be able to address any other matter not otherwise specifically delegated to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.7 The prime purpose of the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment; independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment; and, issues of an audit nature and to oversee the financial reporting process.
- 3.8 The Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee will:
 - Review the robustness of business cases
 - Promote value for money and good procurement practice
 - Make recommendation on good financial management practices
 - Keep the treasury management performance under review
 - Make recommendation to the Council regarding the approval of the Statement of Accounts in accordance with regulation 10 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003.
 - Review specific Executive items and past decisions

The Committee is also the Audit Committee for the Council and undertakes the following:

- Approve (but not direct) internal audit's strategy, plan and performance
- Review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising, and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary
- Consider the reports of external audit and inspection agencies
- Consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.

- Seek assurances that action is being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
- Be satisfied that the authority's assurance statements, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it
- Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
- Review the financial statements, external auditor's opinion and report to members, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.
- Approve the Council's Audited Statement of Accounts.

3.9 The two Scrutiny Committees will occasionally hold a joint meeting to consider specific items; however this usually will be no more than twice a year and has occurred once in the current municipal year.

3.10 The Overview & Scrutiny has also established a Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee as a sub-committee. It has been delegated the task by its parent committee to handle most of the health and wellbeing scrutiny work that would otherwise fall to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.11 The two Scrutiny Committees are also entitled to set up Task & Finish Groups to look at specific areas. On average a Task & Finish Group is established each year. At present there are two, which have recently concluded working on Houses in Multiple Occupation and Car Parking respectively.

3.12 The Council currently makes 24 appointments to 23 organisations or bodies so as to enhance engagement meet legal requirements or because of financial contribution the Council has made to them. These are:

1. Warwickshire Police & Crime Panel
2. West Midlands Employers formerly West Midlands Councils and West Midlands Leaders Board
3. Coventry and Warwickshire LEP (Including City Deals)
4. Limited Liability Partnership Board
5. Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board
6. South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (2)
7. Warwickshire County Council Health & Wellbeing Board
8. Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH)
9. Shakespeare's England
10. Coventry Airport Consultative Committee
11. Kenilworth Abbey Advisory Committee
12. Kenilworth Town Centre Partnership
13. LGA District Councils' Network
14. South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust
15. Warwick Town Centre Management Group
16. Warwickshire County Council – Adult Social Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee
17. Warwickshire Waste Management Forum
18. National Association of Councillors
19. Birmingham Airport Consultative Committee
20. BID Leamington Board
21. Chase Meadow Community Centre
22. Rural Services Network

23. National Parking Adjudication Service (PATROL)

3.13 It should be noted that in 2011 the Council made appointments to 48 external bodies and that since the submission by the Council to the Commission in 2016 the Council has ceased making appointments to 8 organisations. These appointments are under further review with a report to be considered by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the Autumn of 2017. It's considered that this level of appointment is reasonable and amounts to an average of less than half an appointment for each Councillor.

3.14 In addition the Leader of the Council meets with the other Council leaders in the sub region on a regular basis.

4. Representational role of councillors

4.1 All Councillors are expected to carry out their community engagements and representational roles within their wards. This means a commitment to dealing with residents' individual issues as well as involvement in the wider community concerns which may arise. In addition, Councillors are expected to attend Council, any Committees of which they are a Member, task groups and working parties as well as regular attendance at Community forums. In addition there is an expectation that Councillors will attend a number of training and briefing sessions throughout the year and act as the Council's representative on outside bodies.

4.2 Although demands vary with the number of Parish Councils and the way they operate, rural Councillors also face work demands arising from the number of Parishes in the Ward they represent.

4.3 Warwick District Councillors are encouraged to become involved and help drive Neighbourhood Plans within their communities. They also play a key role in delivering community projects such as Bishop's Tachbrook Community Centre, King George's Playing Field in Barford and the proposals for Whitnash Community Centre.

4.4 The Council's Constitution sets out the following role of all Councillors:

- (i) collectively to be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate functions;
- (ii) represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
- (iii) deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
- (iv) balance different interests identified within the ward and represent the ward as a whole;
- (v) be involved in decision making;
- (vi) be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
- (vii) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.

4.5 The Council considers that it is vital to have well trained councillors who are able to use their skills and knowledge to engage with their community and provide informed leadership within the Council itself and for the wider community.

- 4.6 To this end the Council has a comprehensive training and development programme for all councillors and participation in a wide range of developmental activities is encouraged and in some cases, compulsory.
- 4.7 There is some compulsory training for Councillors, which was agreed with Group Leaders, for example training on Planning and Licensing matters before the Councillor is permitted to sit on the relevant Committee.
- 4.8 There is an expectation that Councillors will take advantage of training and development opportunities offered to them and this does create an added time commitment for Councillors, but reflects the overall commitment of the Council to developing and providing high standards of service.
- 4.9 The Council has recently had a review of its Members Allowances which the Council accepted. This included methodology for creating allowances as follows:

"29. As the Basic Allowance is primarily a time-based allowance that must be paid equally to all Members, it should take into account the full range of duties and activities that Members are expected to undertake including:

- Attending meetings of the Council, Executive, Committees and related panels, forums and task and finish groups, including training events*
- Ward casework and constituent meetings*
- Attendance at meetings of external organisations (Outside Bodies) including local community groups, parish councils*
- Emails, reading reports, agendas and research, preparation and travel time where relevant*

30. The most up to date source of what time is required to be an effective Member is from the Local Government Association (LGA) Census of Councillors 2013 which shows that on average an elected Member of a district council who does not hold any position of significant responsibility puts in 14 hours per week on 'Council business'.¹ In effect, it is the equivalent of just under two days per week spread over a whole week and in a context whereby there is an increasing need for some Members to meet informally during the day.

31. The Panel has not opted to utilize 14 hours per week as the time element to calculate the recommended Basic Allowance as the Panel is recognising the extra time put in by Planning Members (which is included in the Councillor Census 14 hours per week) separately - see below. In addition, where the issue was explored in interview, the weight of views felt that 14 hours per week was marginally high. Consequently the Panel has used an average of 12 hours per week as the time required from a 'backbench' Member to fulfil all their duties. This equates to 78 days per year on an 8 hour working day."

5. Further information

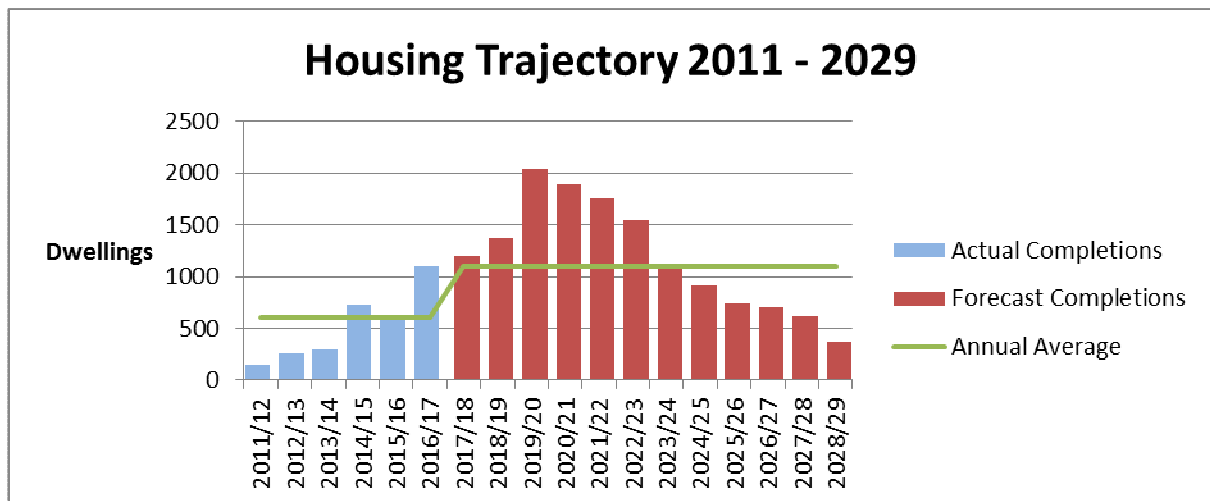
- 5.1 Warwick District Council asked officers to bring forward proposals for revised boundaries and Council size following the outcome of the Warwickshire County

¹ This does not include on average an additional 5.8 hours per week on group/party business. The data on mean hours worked by Councillors by type of council and by positions held supplied to Chair of Panel in email from S. Richards, LGA 30 September 2014

Council Divisions. The concerns arose because of the loss of coterminous boundaries at local government level, the impact of this on the town wards and therefore on the ability for residents to consistently identify with their local communities and Councillors.

- 5.2 The Council is committed to coterminous boundaries and recognises that it has been fortunate to have had coterminous boundaries at local government level for many years. In its opinion this helps to build community cohesion, gives clear identification of elected representatives and therefore should take precedent over a simple enforcement of the ratio of electors to Councillors.
- 5.3 While County Council elections are held in different years to District and Parish/Town elections, the Council is of the opinion that the loss of coterminous boundaries will lead to confusion for electors and a loss of community identity with their elected representatives when the next District and Parish/Town Council elections are held in May 2019.
- 5.4 The Council is mindful that while scheduled elections County Council and District/Parish/Town were not due on the same day, by-elections could occur on the same day with different boundaries.
- 5.5 Two examples of this scenario have now occurred. Firstly, in May 2017 the County Council election for the Division of Kenilworth St Johns was combined with a by election for the Kenilworth Town Ward of Kenilworth St Johns. They do not have the same boundaries. This resulted in voter confusion and complaints to the Returning Officer about the ability to vote in either election. Secondly, in August 2017 a by election for a Leamington Town Council Ward where political parties all canvassed part of the District Ward of the same name , which did not fall into the Town Council Ward. This resulted in accusations of electoral fraud from the public and a number of complaints at polling stations, when electors arrived and found that they could not vote.
- 5.6 The Council is mindful of other key facts:
 - There are currently 109,855 local government electors in Warwick District and 46 Councillors, giving a current ratio of 2388 electors per Councillor;
 - The current figure of electors per councillor is equal to or higher than 10% from the average predicted by the LGBCE for 2018 in three Wards, and below the said average by 10% or more in four wards within the District. The remaining fourteen wards are within 10% of the average number of electors per councillor ratio predicted by the LGBCE for Warwick District in 2018;
 - The Council has undertaken a forecasting process for its electorate and it is estimated there will be circa 121,000 electors in 2023.
- 5.7 From May 2017 all official Committee meetings take place at 6.00pm on weekdays. The exemption is the Licensing & Regulatory Committee, which will meet late afternoon and its Panels that take place during normal office hours to accommodate the applicants and interested parties who will be attending them. However nearly half of all District Councillors are now employed and the need for meetings to take place outside normal working hours has increased. The informal meetings which take place during the day make it difficult for some Councillors to commit to serving on such groups. Therefore, it is important that the future size of the Council is such that it will be possible to ensure that all meetings whether evening or day time will be well attended.

- 5.8 In respect of the budget pressures on the Council it recognises that the Banking Crisis and the resultant period of public sector austerity have severely impacted on it, as with the rest of the public sector. In 2010/11 The Council's net expenditure (as funded by council tax, business rates and Government Grant) was £18.2m, this is now forecast to be below £13m for 2018/19. The main cause for this has been the reduction in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which will be zero after 2018/19, this representing a reduction in funding of approaching £7m. Throughout most of this period the council tax charged in the district was frozen. In accommodating the funding reductions, substantial savings (or additional income generated) have been made in the cost of the services provided by the Council. However, it has not been necessary to cut or reduce any mainstream services.
- 5.9 These savings (or income) were made by reviewing how all services were provided, making sure services were provided as effectively and efficiently as possible and making use of new technology where possible. Further savings initiatives are planned over the next three years as the Revenue Support Grant reduces to zero over the next 2 years. The Council has a greater level of reserves than many comparable authorities. Whilst these do provide some resilience, the level of reserves is due to diminish in future years as some of these are invested in services.
- 5.10 Councillors further recognise the pressures on Local Government and that from 2011 to 2017 the number of full time equivalent officers (ftes) at the Council has reduced from 530 to 450. It is anticipated that in 2017/18 this will reduce by a further 42 ftes as a result in change of management of the Council Leisure Centres. This would therefore see the number of officers reducing by 24% over seven years, while continuing to deliver the same level of service. In addition to this reduction, within the next two years there will be a review of senior management along with other proposals to further streamline the Committee structure. Members are mindful of the need to reflect the change in Council size themselves but recognise the challenges ahead over the next five years and the importance there will be of representing their communities through these times..
- 5.11 At the same time the Council is working to make its services capable of serving the significant development of homes across the District as part of its Local Plan up to 2029. This is likely to see the District increase, during this time by a further 17,000 properties, a large proportion of which will occur within the first five years of the plan, as set out in the graph below:



- 5.12 A number of significant capital investments and service changes are also proposed by the Council. For example the Council has decided to make significant investment £15.2m (as at June 2017) in its leisure centres and transfer the management of them to an external party so that the same level of service can continue to be delivered while increasing their capacity and ensuring improved income for the Council.
- 5.13 Consideration was given to having two District Councillors representing each County Division. However, this would lead to a significant increase in workload for Councillors and would probably give rise to a full time role, with a similar ratio of electors to Councillors as in single tier and County Councils. Councillors understand that this would be a much more radical change to their role had they chosen to pursue this option. It is also unlikely that this route would generate much in the way of financial saving, as Officers predict that Member Allowances would need to increase significantly and would likely offset any saving that might be made by reducing the overall number of Councillors. For all of these reasons, this option is not recommended.
- 5.14 Consideration was given to deviating from the coterminous boundary principle and redrawing boundaries appropriately based on a ratio of electors to Councillors that best meets the needs of the community. This option was not brought forward because of the issues discussed in section 3 of this report. In addition, there are a number of historic Parishes within the District that the Council would not wish to impact upon by drawing boundaries which could result in new Parish Boundaries or "Warding" of these Parishes.
- 5.15 No consideration has been given to increasing the size of the Council because of the recognition of the reduction in size of the Council establishment and the desire from members to reflect this. It is also felt any increase in membership would take the Council outside the number of councillors within its CiPFA nearest neighbours.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council recognises the changing face of local government but equally the significant increase expected in electorate within the District, particularly to the south of Leamington, Warwick, Whitnash and north and west of Bishop's Tachbrook.

- 6.2 It recognises the importance of communities and being accountable for its actions to those communities. It also looks to have joint working and effective relationships across all levels of government especially in a shire district between County, District and its Parishes and Towns. These are better fostered through coterminous boundaries and to enable clarity of responsibility and accountability for the local community.
- 6.3 It recognises that even with the prospect of an increasing population, the Council is reducing in size in respect of budget, numbers of employees, direct services provided.
- 6.4 Overall the commitment of Councillors to attend formal meetings has reduced especially of its quasi-judicial committees without significantly increasing the workload of Councillors by ensuring that appropriate delegations to officers are in place. The number of Councillors on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has reduced along with the workload of the Standards Committee.
- 6.5 The Council recognises that over recent years a number of Councillors have suffered with ill health for a number of reasons and this has in effect left the Council operating at reduced number but with no significant effect on community engagement. This indicates that it has some spare capacity at a Councillor level.
- 6.6 Therefore, based on these considerations a consensus was reached on a proposed Council size of 46 councillors (plus or minus 1) councillor.

Appendix A

Council	Electors	Number of Wards	Council Size	Electors per Councillor	Hectares (Census 2011)	Density (electors/hectares)	Electoral cycle	Councillors per ward
Taunton Deane	84,478	26	56	1,509	46,236	1.8	Whole	2.15
Tunbridge Wells	82,125	20	48	1,711	33,133	2.5	Thirds	2.4
Rugby	78,221	16	42	1,862	35,111	2.2	Thirds	2.63
North Hertfordshire	99,114	24	49	2,023	37,538	2.6	Thirds	2.04
Mid Sussex	12,335	26	54	2,080	33,402	3.4	Whole	2.08
Maidstone	118,077	26	55	2,147	39,333	3	Thirds	2.12
Cheltenham	87,081	20	40	2,177	4,661	18.7	halves	2
Eastleigh	96,518	19	44	2,194	7,978	12.1	Thirds	2.32
Harrogate	120,762	35	54	2,236	130,794	0.9	Thirds	1.54
Chelmsford	130,662	24	57	2,292	33,878	3.9	whole	1.125
Cherwell	113,151	16	48	2,357	58,877	1.9	Thirds	3
Warwick (current)	109,155	20	46	2,373	28,288	3.8	Whole	2.3
Stafford	99,343	23	40	2,484	59,817	1.7	Whole	1.74
Charnwood	134,156	28	52	2,580	27,906	4.8	whole	1.86
Colchester	133,775	17	51	2,623	32,908	4.1	Thirds	3
Canterbury	105,702	21	39	2,710	30,885	3.4	whole	1.857

Appendix B

Name of meeting	Number of Councillors	Number of meetings in 2016/17
Council	43	9
Executive	9	10
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11	10
Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee	11	12
Employment Committee	11	5
Standards Committee	11	3
Licensing & Regulatory Committee	15	7
Licensing Panels	3 (from 15 members of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee)	30 (exceptional year due to policy changes average 17 per year)
Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee	6	5
Planning Committee	11	13 (plus 9 Saturdays for site visits)