Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Council Size Submission

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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 is a submission by the full council of Barnsley MBC. It was drafted by officers of the council and then approved firstly by the Cabinet and the full Council. At each stage of the process comments and feedback have been received and incorporated into the submission. This is the council's official submission.

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?

The last review of Barnsley MBC took place in 2003, this review reduced the number of councillors to Barnsley MBC from 66 to 63 and the number of wards was reduced from 22 to 21.

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?

Introduction to Barnsley MBC

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council is one of the four boroughs that make up South Yorkshire. It is around 40 miles across with the Westerly edge of the borough in the Peak District national park and can be traversed using the trans Pennine trail. Whilst the town of Barnsley is the largest settlement in the borough there are a further six principal towns: Cudworth, Goldthorpe, Hoyland, Penistone, Royston and Wombwell and many other smaller localities. The borough enjoys good transport links with the M1 running through the West of the borough and the A1 (M) at the Eastern edge. Our borough enjoys a balance of urban and rural areas with the centre of the borough being mostly urban with outlying rural areas, particularly West of the M1. Barnsley is home to several large employers including online clothing firm ASOS and courier firm Evri. Barnsley MBC's vision is to be "a place of possibilities," to look to the future with excitement and optimism. Our borough is a place that fosters and grows ambition, enabling everyone to be the best they can be. We'll achieve this through a range of activities and initiatives, as well as looking further forward into our future possibilities working alongside our key partners. In January 2020 we asked lots of people what Barnsley could be like by the year 2030, the challenges they feel they may face, either as a business owner, a resident or a student, and their ambitions for the future

of our borough. This has helped to shape the vision, ambitions and strategy for the future of Barnsley. Barnsley 2030 sets out our long-term vision for Barnsley and how we will work together with our place partners to achieve it. We have five new priorities which are supported by 12 outcomes: Healthy Barnsley, Learning Barnsley, Growing Barnsley, Sustainable Barnsley and Enabling Barnsley. This is our underlying priority to ensure that our council is modern, inclusive, efficient, productive and high performing. It's about celebrating and championing our borough. We're looking to 2030 as we feel this will give us enough time to make some real progress in achieving our bold ambitions for the borough. We also live and work by our four values:

- **We're honest**
  We always say what we mean. Most of all we're reliable, fair and true.
- **We're a team**
  We all work together towards the same goal – to make Barnsley a better place for the people who live, work and visit here.
- **We'll be excellent**
  We work really hard to provide the best quality and value for money for the people of Barnsley. Only our best is good enough.
- **We're proud**
  We're dedicated to making Barnsley a better place. We take pride in our work.

Demographics

The recent census showed that, in Barnsley, the population size has increased by 5.8%, from around 231,200 in 2011 to 244,600 in 2021. This was the fourth fastest rate of population increase in the Yorkshire and Humber region over that period. As of 2021, Barnsley is the 10th most densely populated of Yorkshire and the Humber's 21 local authority areas. Over the census period Barnsley saw a significant increase of 19.2% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 2.2% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 6.0% in children aged under 15 years. Around 92% of the borough identifies their ethnicity as White British with around 2% of people identifying a non-white background.

The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation ranked Barnsley as the 38th most deprived of the 317 local authorities. This is particularly marked in the areas of education, health and employment, but the borough fairs much better in the areas of access to housing and living environment. Deprivation varies widely within the borough, around 20% or the borough falls within the 10% most deprived areas in England, however, other areas experience little of no deprivation.

As a result of this our borough is incredibly varied, with big differences between the north, south, east, west and the centre. Each area features wards with often unique combinations of localised issues that makes for an important and often complex role for Councillors to represent and consult their communities. In most wards there is a town centre or high street that generates a strong community feel to the area.

The deprivation many of our residents are subject to presents difficult challenges that impact on the work of the Council and the workload of our councillors. The following present increased pressures on councillors:

- Demographic pressures – some parts of the borough have an ageing population, whereas others are seeing a surge in net population growth as a result of development and increasing gaps in terms of deprivation.

- Health inequalities between the East and West of the borough are striking. This affects life expectancy and the amount of casework relating to health issues
- There are 489 looked after children; 400 care leavers and 50 UASC (unaccompanied asylum seekers) and a large number of children and families in contact with children's social care.
- The ongoing pressure of austerity has compounded the challenges faced due to demographics and increased demand for council services

The typical Councillor casework quantity differs depending on the Ward they represent. As the statistics above demonstrate, there is great variety to our demographics, localities and geography. Below is more detail about the different regions of the borough. These areas are by no means uniform but grouping them together in this way helps provide a narrative as to their nature.

- The centre and East of the borough features the wards of Central, Kingstone, Dearne North and South, North East, St. Helen's and Stairfoot. These areas have higher rates of deprivation, lower average income and house prices, and poorer life outcomes for residents in the areas of education and health
- The West of Barnsley features Penistone East and West at the base of the Pennines that touch the Peak District National Park. These wards include the town of Penistone surrounded by outlying villages, some of the highest levels in South Yorkshire of house prices, average income, car ownership, home ownership etc

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		
Governance Model	*Key lines of explanation*	➢ *What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?* ➢ *The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?* ➢ *If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority.* ➢ *By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will*

	Analysis	**Our Council** The Council follows the Leader and Cabinet model. We have 63 Councillors representing 21 wards with 3 councillors for each ward. **The Cabinet** The Cabinet is made up of the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and 7 other Cabinet Members. All Cabinet members except for the Leader and Deputy Leader are assisted by a Cabinet Support member (seven for the nine portfolios) who attend Cabinet with them. Overall Cabinet is attended by 16 councillors. Cabinet makes decisions on council affairs and the improvement plan and performance. They approve policies, and deal with strategies and programmes of activity within the overall policy framework and budget. The cabinet also make recommendations on matters needing Full Council approval and approves key decisions. Cabinet members are the councillors who are in the cabinet. They each have a portfolio of services for which they're responsible. They have meetings to discuss their specific duties. Each cabinet member can make decisions related to their portfolio, which aren't key decisions, up to a value of £500,000. You can find out what decisions have been taken by cabinet members and officers on our delegated decisions webpage. Being a Cabinet Member represents a significant time commitment. The Cabinets meet formally to make decisions every two weeks, approximately 24 times a year, with meetings lasting approximately 2 hours depending on the issues to be discussed. All Cabinet meetings (as all Council meetings) are held in the mornings making their significant responsibilities difficult to align with day jobs.

		Being a Cabinet Member represents a significant time commitment. The Cabinets meet formally to make decisions every two weeks, approximately 24 times a year, with meetings lasting approximately 2 hours depending on the issues to be discussed. All Cabinet meetings (as all Council meetings) are held in the mornings making their significant responsibilities difficult to align with day jobs. Aside from Cabinet meetings, private cabinet briefings are also held on conclusion of Cabinet business which can last 2 hours.
		Being a Cabinet member involves much more than formal decision making meetings. It also involves attendance at weekly briefings which often last 3 hours and attending regular liaison with Executive Directors and senior staff on at least a weekly basis. Cabinet members also liaise regularly with the Council's 4 local MPs on casework and service issues, whilst the Leader and Deputy Leader have regular liaison with the MPs on a bi-monthly basis. They represent the Council at political meetings of the South Yorkshire Combined Authority, the Local Government Association and a variety of other outside bodies and meet other stakeholders in relation to their portfolio responsibilities on a regular basis. They carry out these duties in addition to the representative role of a local councillor.
		Barnsley MBC is not intending to change its model of governance. We consider that our current Leader and Cabinet model best meets the needs of the council, our communities and councillors. As you will see below, the portfolios of the council are expansive and demanding. Whilst we do not require our portfolio holders to be full time the demands are not often compatible with other employment.
		Every elected member is expected to attend 14 meetings per year (8 meetings of full council and six meetings of their area council). In addition to these there are 117 meetings Cabinet and the other council committees, each of which requires an average of 16 members to attend. If the workload is split equally, councillors have to attend an additional 30 meetings per year. This number of meetings in addition to the casework, outside appointments and other activities councillors undertake make the role of councillor to be very demanding and time consuming.
		The Leader and Cabinet governance model allows for a small number of councillors whose occupation and

		family arrangements allow them to give a lot of time to the cabinet portfolios or other committees of the council. This allows other members of the council who have more demanding jobs and family arrangements to attend a smaller number of meetings whilst still carrying out the casework and taking on the other community activities that councillors do. We consider that a governance model that would increase the number of meetings and workload of the majority of councillors would have a significantly detrimental impact on Barnsley MBC and impair our efforts to attract a diverse range of councillors at different stages of life, particularly young people.
Portfolios	*Key lines of explanation*	➢ *How many portfolios will there be?* ➢ *What will the role of a portfolio holder be?* ➢ *Will this be a full-time position?* ➢ *Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?*
	Analysis	There are nine portfolios in the Cabinet. Each portfolio holder holds the role on a part-time basis and is supported by a Cabinet Support Member. As above each cabinet member can make decisions related to their portfolio, which aren't key decisions, up to a value of £500,000. The individual roles and responsibilities of each portfolio are outlined below: **Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet** Responsible for: - · Appointing the Cabinet and determining responsibility for Executive functions · Appointing Area Council Chairs · Chairing meetings of the Cabinet · Leading on policy and budget matters · Issues relating to: Community Strategy and Planning · Regeneration (in its broadest sense) · Sub-regional, regional, and European issues. **Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice Chairman of Cabinet** Responsible for: - · Deputising for the Leader of the Council, when needed · Levelling up including securing government and private sector investment to deliver capital projects and revenue programmes, direct liaison with Government, strategy and programme development with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, spatial and economic strategy, project development and delivery, and asset management

| | | · Responsibility for the established policy areas with a focus on outcomes relating to i) Productivity; ii) Quality of Life; iii) Sense of place; and iv) Local leadership
 · More broadly Levelling Up activity in the Council to involve joint working across services addressing the twelve ambitions or 'missions' of Levelling Up therefore covering a wide range of domestic social and economic policy: 1) Productivity; 2) Innovation; 3) Transport; 4) Digital; 5) Education; 6) Skills; 7) Health; 8) Wellbeing; 9) Pride in place; 10) Housing; 11) Crime; and 12) Devolution.

 Cabinet Spokesperson without Portfolio

 Responsible for issues relating to: -

 · Training and development of Elected Members and the provision of the necessary facilities to perform their duties effectively
 · Member representation on and attendance at Council bodies and outside organisations
 · Management and organisation of Cabinet business
 · Member Support within the Core Services Directorate

 Core Services

 Responsible for issues relating to: -

 · Taxation and Benefits assessments (including free school meals administration) and Debt Recovery
 · Commercial and Transactional Services including financial assessments; Accounting, Budgeting and Professional and Specialist Finance
 · Risk Management, Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud; Corporate Commissioning, Procurement and Contracting
 · Human Resources and Organisation Development
 · Business Improvement including Business Intelligence
 · Customer Resolution, Barnsley 2030 and Policy, Performance and Equalities
 · Health, Safety and Emergency Resilience
 · Support for Overview and Scrutiny
 · Communications and Marketing
 · Customer Services/Contact Centre
 · Customer Services development |

		· Customer Experience and Digital Strategies, web content and design; · Information Technology hardware and software development, configuration and maintenance; application training and customer liaison/support · IT procurement · Business analysis · Council's information governance and security · Records Management · Applications Management and Support (web mobile working) · Responsibility for Legal Services, Registration Service, Governance and Business Support, Elections & Land Charges, Town Twinning and the Governance support to Joint Authorities, and ceremonial aspects of the Registration Service **Place Health and Adult Social Care** Responsible for issues relating to: - · Health and Social Care Integration · Adult Assessment and Care Management · Safeguarding and Social Workers · Assessment Care Planning · Self-directed Support Teams · Reviews · Emergency Duty Team · Commissioning · Disable Facilities Grants / Equipment and Adaptations · Independent Living at Home Services, Day Opportunities and Supporting Living, and Carers Support · Sensory Impairment Services **Public Health and Communities** Responsibility for issues relating to: - · Public Health Protection, including Regulatory Services, Trading Standards/Environmental Health, including the Dog Warden service · The Core Offer to the Clinical Commissioning Group for Health Care and Health Improvement and Public Health Strategy and Advice · Libraries; · Welfare Rights, Housing Options · Community Safety and Community Enforcement · Gypsies and travellers · Landlords

		· Community Safety, Domestic Violence, Victim and Witness Support · Drugs and Alcohol Service, including Prevention · Graffiti Removal · Area Councils and Community Engagement, Volunteering and relationship with Third Sector/Private Sector · Community Health and Wellbeing and Promoting Healthy Lifestyles · Community Cohesion **Children's Services** To act as the Designated Leader Member for Children's Services under Section 19 of the Children Act 2004 Responsible for issues relating to: - · Education Welfare · Social Care and Safeguarding Quality and Standards · Children's Social Care · Quality Assurance · Access, Assessment, Care Planning and Reviews · Advocacy, Adoption and Fostering · Children's Residential and Leaving Care Service · Stronger Families · Education Strategic Planning, including School Improvement Strategy · Improvement Advisers and Brokerage · Early Years and Family Information Services · Quality of early years provision and integrated child provision for 2–3-year-olds including Children's centres · Special Educational Needs · Outdoor Education · School Admissions · School organisation and school places, including strategies for Academies and Free Schools · School Governor Services · Leaving Care Services · Integrated Youth Services · Youth Council, Youth Voice and Participation. **Environment and Highways** Responsible for issues relating to: - · Bereavement Services

		· Waste Management and Recycling
		· Highways and Network Management, Bridges and Footpath Maintenance
		· Trans Pennine Trail
		· Street Lighting
		· Safer Roads/School Crossing Patrol strategy and operations
		· Drainage and Reservoirs and Flood Management
		· Transport Strategy including PTE
		· Transport, including Home to School Travel and Looked After Children and specialist transport
		· Fleet Management
		· Street Cleansing, Litter Picking and Fly Tipping
		· Car Parks and Car Parking
		· Grounds Maintenance, Horticulture and Arboriculture
		· Sports and Active Lifestyle
		· Climate Change
		· Energy and Sustainability
		· Clean and Green and Parks and Allotments
		Regeneration and Culture
		Responsible for issues relating to: -
		· Support for Business and Start Up, Business Growth and Inward Investment
		· Regeneration
		· Worklessness, Skills and Enterprise
		· Adult Learning and Apprenticeships
		· Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, including Building Control/Development Control, SYMAS and Highways Development Control
		· Planning Enforcement
		· Strategic asset management including acquisition and disposals
		· Property valuations, condition surveys and management of maintenance
		· Energy and Carbon management
		· Tenanted non-residential property management and management of PFI and BSF schools
		· Community asset transfers and assets of community value
		· Hybrid mail, parcel services and digital printing
		· Building support and porterage (excluding Records Management)
		· Town Centre Management, including Town Centre Market and strategic market development
		· District Markets
		· Housing Strategy and Growth

		· Private Sector Housing, Affordable Housing and Contract and Client Management for Berneslai Homes · Culture and Visitor Economy
	Key lines of explanation	➢ *What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?* ➢ *How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?*
Delegated Responsibilities	Analysis	**Outline of the Council's Decision-Making Arrangements** The route that decisions take is determined by what is laid down in the Terms of Reference of full Council, Cabinet and the Area Councils and the matters specifically delegated to officers. The delegated powers of individual Cabinet Spokespersons relate to any matter within their Portfolio not otherwise specified. These decision-making responsibilities are set out in the Council's Constitution. The decision-making powers of full Council are generally those specified in law: approval of the budget and council tax; the policy framework and other strategies (although this is relatively loosely defined in Barnsley); regulatory policies; issues relating to Member representation; Members allowances; electoral issues; decisions relating to the Council's role as a trustee. The original intention was that full Council should have a relatively "strong" decision making role, beyond what is statutorily required, although this has been more limited of late. The main exception to this is approval of the first consultation stage on school reorganisation proposals, which are required to go to full Council. The Cabinet's responsibilities focus on the co-ordination of Council affairs, the improvement agenda and performance, the approval of policies, strategies and programmes of activity within the overall policy framework and budget. The Cabinet also makes recommendations on matters that will need full Council approval and specifically approves Key Decisions (anything that involves expenditure or income over £500,000 or affects communities in two or more Wards). The specific responsibilities Area Councils relate to decisions on the commissioning of expenditure from the relevant area budget.

Cabinet Spokespersons decision making powers are not specified, with the exception of the Leader of the Council's power to appoint Cabinet and Area Council Chairs and approve the distribution of Executive Functions and powers of the Development, Environment and Culture Spokesperson in relation to the Decent Homes Programme. This means that Spokespersons can approve expenditure from the approved budget of more than £250,000 but less than £500,000, in addition to any matter not reserved for full Council / Cabinet or delegated to an officer.

Officers have two types of delegated powers: those included in the general provisions that relate to the Chief Executive and all Executive Directors and Directors; and functions and powers, often arising from particular pieces of legislation, relating to specific senior officers. General provisions include the financial limit of officer decision making of £250,000. Some specific delegations have other financial limits, as stated in the scheme of delegations.

Whilst officers or individual Cabinet Spokespersons might have delegated powers, they can always opt to "refer a decision up" where this is felt appropriate. Typical examples include relatively low levels of expenditure where the nature of the choice involved in taking the decision might require some political input. In some cases, matters might need Cabinet / Spokesperson approval because there is an expectation that Members will be involved in decisions of that nature, rather than what is strictly said in the Constitution.

Once an executive decision is made, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can choose to "call-in" the decision for review, effectively delaying its implementation. In the case of Cabinet decisions, implementation must be delayed for a short period pending any review. Technically, officer decisions could be called in if not implemented, although there is no requirement to delay implementation, so in practice they would seldom be called in.

The (Executive) Officer Delegations include information on the recording of decisions that are designed to comply with the recording requirements mentioned above. The arrangements for individual delegated decision making by Cabinet Spokespersons include the requirement that any report coming forward for decision on these arrangements must first be the

		subject of consultation with relevant Senior Officers. This is in addition to any internal officer consultation that has taken place in the drafting of the report concerned. Delegations also include requirements on the recording of decisions, which ensure compliance with the requirements referred to above, and the need for this to be on the basis of written reports.

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.
Key lines of explanation	➤ *How will decision makers be held to account?* ➤ *How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?* ➤ *How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?* ➤ *How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?* ➤ *Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.* ➤ *Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.*
Analysis	**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a group of councillors hold the decision makers to account. They can review decisions and services and can influence future decisions. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has three committees which align with the Council Plan priorities: Sustainable Barnsley workstream Healthy Barnsley workstream Growing Barnsley workstream The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is made up of a number of councillors who aren't in the Cabinet. They're across all the political parties that make up our Full Council.

The chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a councillor decided annually by Full Council. 34 members sit on the committee including the chair.

Formal Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings happen approximately 12 times per year in total, each lasting approximately 2 hours with 30 minutes briefing beforehand.

The OSC meetings are themed according to the agreed workstreams.

Full OSC committee – 34 Members
Healthy Barnsley workstream 12 members (though any of the 34 Members can take part)
Growing Barnsley Workstream – 12 members (though any of the 34 Members can take part)
Sustainable Barnsley Workstream – 12 members (though any of the 34 Members can take part)

The OSC's work programme is approved by Cabinet. It also carries out this programme through three 'Task and Finish Groups' (TFGs), which each examine specific topics and report their findings to Cabinet. Each TFG usually consists of eight councillors drawn from the OSC's membership and is chaired by a Task and Finish Group Lead. The OSC is responsible for: scrutinising key Cabinet decisions/recommendations and exercising 'call-in' if deemed necessary; scrutinising important decisions taken by other organisations; keeping a watching brief on a wide range of performance data, for the Council and for its partners; monitoring progress against their respective work programmes and recommending any amendments to them to Cabinet; and reporting findings and recommendations to Cabinet.

There are 3 task and finish groups, which meet informally to undertake in depth investigations into certain pertinent subjects. Each of the 3 task and finish group selects a topic to investigate over the course of a 4-month period every year. Meetings are held approximately 6 times per task and finish group, and the culmination of their work is a report to cabinet with recommendations for cabinet to consider. All OSC Members are invited to take part in each task and finish group, however many select one on which to focus.

The OSC is also responsible for: considering Councillor Calls for Action (CCFAs), except where they are referred to an Area Council, in which case the OSC will retain a monitoring role; receiving and considering the findings of exercising powers on behalf of the local authority. The Committees may: refer back to Cabinet for further consideration those items on which,

under the Council's constitution, Cabinet can make recommendations, but which are subject to approval by the full Council; exercise a power of "call-in" in respect of Cabinet decisions, provide comments and advice to Cabinet on current and future executive business; launch their own in-depth investigations and produce reports to Cabinet on important policy issues. (The agreed protocol for determining the response of Cabinet to these and other issues is included in the constitution); require Cabinet members and senior Council officers to answer questions and give evidence at their meetings.

The relevant legislation provides for attendance by any officer at a Scrutiny Committee meeting when required, but it is considered appropriate within the Council's constitution to limit this in normal circumstances to attendance by officers of appropriate seniority; and ask representatives of outside organisations to answer questions and give evidence at their meetings.

The Council has a protocol on how Scrutiny Committee reports are produced, and the timescales within which Cabinet is expected to respond to them. The protocol is included in the constitution.

It is the Council's belief that effective scrutiny is essential to a well-run authority. Effective challenge on a wide range of subjects through the overview and scrutiny committee ensures that decision making is robust and takes into account the widest range of factors. Having an OSC committee of 34 members enables workstreams of 12, where Members can develop a greater understanding around a particular subject. The same is true for a task and finish group, it enables all OSC Members to take part in a task and finish group meaningfully without placing undue workload on any particular member.

An Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 34 in total, allows more than half of Councillors to be involved in policy development, and the decision making process, which they may otherwise be unable to be due to decisions taking place through Cabinet, it also provides representation from a geographical perspective, as each ward is represented as part of the Overview and Scrutiny process.

The committee, its work plan, and its ways of working have been developed and refined over a number of years, and as this is believed to work well we would like to see the model retained.

		The number of meetings of the Scrutiny Committee has not significantly changed over the past 5 years. There is a full table of all council meetings in Appendix 1. The council adapted its Scrutiny function in 2021 to align it to the priorities of the new council plan resulting in changes to the workstreams and a realignment of the task and finish groups. The council also hosts the South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is also chair of this body. This committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services covering the work of NHS England and the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board over this geographical footprint.
Statutory Function		This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?
Planning	*Key lines of explanation*	➢ *What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?* ➢ *Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?* ➢ *Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?* ➢ *Will executive members serve on the planning committees?* ➢ *What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?*
	Analysis	The Council has a single planning committee, the Planning Regulatory Board. The Planning Regulatory Board exercises the functions of the Council in relation to town and country planning, and development and building control, highways use and regulation, minerals and waste disposal planning and control; matters concerning the safety of sports grounds; and supervision of all land subject to reclamation that is for the time being owned by the Council. The Board also approves the delegation to officers of any of the above functions, as identified in the delegation section of the constitution. Planning committee meets approximately every 4 weeks – meaning around 13 times per year. This is a 2-hour meeting, however there are approximately 2 site visits per year, which take around 2 hours. 25 members attend the Planning Regulatory Board, in the last 12 months 24 applications were referred to the Board for decision. The Board is made up of members from across the

		council, at present none of the 25 members are also Cabinet Portfolio holders.
Licensing	*Key lines of explanation*	➢ *How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?* ➢ *And what will be the time commitment for members?* ➢ *Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?* ➢ *Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?*
	Analysis	There are two Licensing Committees: The Statutory Licensing Regulatory Board and the General Licensing Regulatory Board. Each committee deals with different aspects of licensing in line with the Licensing Act 2003. They are standing Boards. There are 15 members on the Statutory Licensing Board and 26 on the General Licensing Board. General Licensing Regulatory Board and Statutory Licensing Regulatory Panel meet every 2 months (6 times per year, 12 meetings in total) for approximately 1 hour in total (30 mins per Board). General Licensing Regulatory Board Panel meetings take place every 4 weeks, around 13 per year. Each meeting takes around 1 hour per panel on average. 3 board members sit on each panel. Statutory Licensing Sub Committee meets when required, which on average is two times per year on with each hearing lasting 3 to 4 hours. 3 board members sit on each panel. Member preparation time may take a day for each meeting. Special meetings, called expedited hearings are meetings conducted by email in special circumstances when the police require a temporary closure of a premises due to serious criminal activity.
Other Regulatory Bodies	*Key lines of explanation*	➢ *What will they be, and how many members will they require?* ➢ *Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.*
	Analysis	Barnsley MBC maintains three other regulatory committees. The Audit and Governance Committee is made up of four elected councillors and five independent people, who are not councillors. It ensures that the council is complying with it rules and regulations for governance and finance, including the value for money of council services. All of the External Auditor's reports are considered by the Council's Audit and Governance Committee. It meets seven times per year. The Health and Wellbeing Board is made up of elected members and officers of the Council, representatives of

		Barnsley's Clinical Commissioning Group of GPs (this is now NHS South Yorkshire) and other health providers, and the local Health Watch, which represents the interests of patients and service users. People from other organisations that have an impact on health and wellbeing, such as the District Police Commander, also attend the meetings. Its job is to agree the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and work with all organisations to join up health and social care for the Borough. It meets 2-3 times per year in public with around 3 private development sessions. The Appeals, Awards and Standards Regulatory Board is made up of 26 elected councillors. It is responsible for dealing with appeals against council decisions that are not specifically covered by the other Boards. It also enforces the code of conduct for elected councillors and employees. It only meets when necessary and has not met in the last five years. The Corporate Parenting Panel meets around 8 times per year.
External Partnerships		Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.
Key lines of explanation		➢ *Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?* ➢ *How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?* ➢ *What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?*
Analysis		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. The council appoints members to serve on many different sub-regional and regional groups. The Leader of the council is appointed to the Board of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and two members are appointed to each committee of the Combined Authority. Council members are appointed to many other regional bodies including: South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel and Doncaster Sheffield Airport Consultative Committee Partnership. The Council also appoints council members to sub regional bodies including Berneslai Home a company wholly owned by the council to manage council owned housing stock of approximately 18,000. It nominates 2 Councillor directors to its Board and receives its report and agrees its business plan on an annual basis. Members also sit on a number of panels and bodies governing education including the Corporate Parenting Panel, Virtual School

		Governor's Board and the Schools Council. The Council makes appointments of Councillors to around 100 partnership organisations and external bodies. Around 75% of outside body appointees are portfolio holders. The workload varies considerably depending on the outside body, from meetings held monthly to around one a year.

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*	➤ *In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?* ➤ *Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?* ➤ *How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?* ➤ *Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?* ➤ *Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?* ➤ *Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?*
	Analysis	**Engagement with Residents** Our communities operate in many different ways, and we don't stipulate to councillor what is the best way to engage with residents to represent them. Councillors are not required to hold surgeries although many do. Many do send newsletters and hold other public meetings. Many councillors engage with residents through active work in the community including volunteering at food banks and vaccination clinics.

We do not place an expectation on councillors to attend community and parish meetings. Many do attend such meetings and are very active in these groups, others prefer to use other methods and are active in local online communities.

Barnsley MBC has a youth council and a young mayor to help councillor engage with young people and vice versa. Barnsley Youth Council are a group of local young people, elected by their peers to represent the views of young people who live in Barnsley. They run campaigns on various issues including the environment, sexual health and raising police officers' awareness of SEND conditions. They have also been involved in the 2030 board which is about the ambition and plan for Barnsley for 2030. The role of our young mayor is to represent the youth council and promote their work. They shadow the Mayor of Barnsley in their ceremonial position.

Our Area Governance framework falls into two categories:

Ward Alliances
Ward alliances make decisions on ward alliance funding and priorities for the area. They're made up of local councillors and groups of local people who have put themselves forward to help improve their communities. Every councillor is automatically a member of their ward alliance. Residents can apply to be part of a ward alliance if they are already involved with a local group or are active in the community.

Each ward alliance will develop a community plan which helps them to measure their progress in delivering their priorities. Each has a small budget called the Ward Alliance Fund. Community groups can apply for ward alliance funding to help with projects that support their priorities.

Most ward alliances are active and meet regularly. A small minority of wards do not have active ward alliances.

Area Councils
There are six area councils in Barnsley, each made up of the locally elected councillors who support the ward alliances. Every councillor is a member of their respective area council. They use information provided by ward alliances about local areas to help them set the priorities for your area. They also take into account national sources of information such as the census. They use this information to commission services and provide grants to deliver against these priorities.

		We have recently standardised the meeting pattern of each area council, so each meets six times per year.
Casework	*Key lines of explanation*	➢ *How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?* ➢ *What support do members receive?* ➢ *How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?* ➢ *In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?*
	Analysis	Officers of Barnsley MBC do not assist councillors with their casework. Members will be supported by staff in Governance signposting to relevant departments internal or external. When queries are internal this will involve staff from the service providing a response to the Councillor on behalf of their constituent. It is up to each council member how to handle their own casework. Each member receives their casework directly and we do not have a system to monitor this and no data on the amount of casework councillors receive.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Our Proposal
From the information above we believe that our current structures support strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership well. However, councillor workloads are very high, with many councillors fitting their substantial council responsibilities around work outside their council duties. We believe that the future will present ever greater demands on councillor time. Since the last review of Barnsley MBC there has been substantial devolution of powers to South Yorkshire that have required significant involvement from Barnsley MBC councillors to direct and hold to account. The potential devolution combined with increased demands from the electorate lead us to believe that there is no prospect of these workloads decreasing in the medium term.

We consider that the present arrangement of 63 councillors for our electorate of 184678 is consistent with the arrangements at similar councils. The table in Appendix 2 shows the electorates and number of elected members for all 36 Metropolitan Boroughs. The number of electors per elected member in Barnsley is 2931 which is very close to the median average of the 36 metropolitan boroughs at 3035. We also note that since the last electoral review in 2003, there has been insufficient population movement to trigger an electoral review and that there is, therefore, no case in demographic terms to alter the number of elected members.

We therefore propose that the number of councillors for Barnsley MBC remains at 63.

Alternative approaches

We appreciate that the Commission could propose wards with 1, 2 or 3 members but we strongly urge that Barnsley retain 3 member wards for the following reasons: -
- 3 member wards allow a mix of skills and expertise and allow the ward members to reflect the diversity of the local population
- We have recently been able to attract some younger members and so are more likely to have young children and so not be able to treat their councillor role as full time, unlike older retired members
- The casework generated by the wards would be difficult to handle with fewer than 3 members particularly if one member also sits on the Cabinet.
- 3 member wards allow for adequate cover in the event of a ward member being unavailable due to sickness etc

Our alternative approaches assume that Barnsley MBC would therefore continue with 3 member wards.

Increasing the number of councillors
An increase to 66 councillors over 22 wards would have a positive impact on councillor workload. With increasing demand, high levels of deprivation and local government funding reductions at an unprecedented level, the member effort to meet demand with diminishing resources will require huge effort on their part. As reductions bite and services are reduced, resident complaints and member enquiries are likely to grow in tandem. As reductions continue this is likely to be exacerbated and put ever more pressure on councillor time. Alongside an increasing population and large-scale local developments, councillors will inevitably have more people to represent in a financial climate that will present more problems for both local people, who are seeking more support from the Council, and the Council which will have difficult choices to make about how to meet those demands. It is because of the difficulties local people will face in the light of austerity that the Council does not wish to impose further financial burden on local residents by increasing the number of councillors. However, any reduction in the number of Councillors would require a decrease in some of their key activities, which we believe would undermine our capacity in terms of strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership.

Reducing the number of councillors

A decrease of councillors to 60 councillors over 20 wards would exacerbate the problems already outlined with councillor workload. Any reduction in the number of councillors would fly in the face of the evidence of increasing need, higher population projections, and the

very heavy workloads shouldered by councillors currently. Any reduction would inhibit councillor capacity to lead their community and be accountable to them.

Appendix 1

Number of meetings of each committee over the last five years:

Committee	Number of Members in 2022/23	Number of Meetings (May – April)						
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 *Affected by pandemic	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 Planned Meetings
Full Council	63	9	9	8	7	9	8	8
Cabinet	9 (9 support members)	21	23	22	23	22	23	23
Planning Reg Board	26	12	12	12	8	14	17	19
General Licensing Board	26	5	4	4	2	7	5	6
General Licensing Panel	3+1 Sub	10	11	10	10	8	6	12

Statutory Licensing Board	15	5	2	4	3	3	5	6
Statutory Licensing Sub Committee	3+1 sub	1	0	0	0	2	3	As required
Audit and Governance	4	7	8	5	8	7	7	7
Appeals, awards and standards	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overview & Scrutiny Committees	34	12	12	11	14	12	12	12
Area Councils	Varies between 6 and 15	Central 6 Dearne 6 North 6 N East 6 Penistone 5 South 7	Central 5 Dearne 6 North 6 N East 6 Penistone 7 South 6	Central 7 Dearne 6 North 6 N East 5 Penistone 5 South 5	Central 6 Dearne 6 North 6 N East 5 Penistone 6 South 7	Central 6 Dearne 8 North 6 N East6 Penistone 7 South 5	Central 5 Dearne 5 North 6 N East 6 Penistone 5 South 5	6 per Area (36)

Health and Wellbeing Board	3	5	4	2	2	3	3	2 public
Total		123	121	112	113	125	121	131

Appendix 2

Electorates per elected member for the 36 Metropolitan Boroughs

Metropolitan Borough	Electorate	Number of Elected Members	Number of Electors per elected member
Barnsley	184678	63	2931
Birmingham	729944	101	7227
Bolton	198553	60	3309
Bradford	361347	90	4015
Bury	142920	51	2802
Calderdale	150550	51	2952
Coventry	217818	54	4034
Doncaster	219008	56	3911
Dudley	239722	72	3329
Gateshead	144619	66	2191
Kirklees	312908	69	4535
Knowsley	118646	45	2637
Leeds	574579	99	5804
Liverpool	332091	85	3907
Manchester	359185	96	3742
Newcastle Upon Tyne	191057	78	2449
North Tyneside	156415	60	2607
Oldham	162830	60	2714
Rochdale	160770	60	2680
Rotherham	195236	59	3309
Salford	174181	60	2903

Sandwell	218539	72	3035
Sefton	216316	66	3278
Sheffield	412014	84	4905
Solihull	162614	51	3189
South Tyneside	115370	54	2136
St Helens	138214	48	2879
Stockport	221485	63	3516
Sunderland	207990	75	2773
Tameside	171507	57	3009
Trafford	170612	63	2708
Wakefield	254556	63	4041
Walsall	197239	60	3287
Wigan	238385	75	3178
Wirral	244680	66	3707
Wolverhampton	172475	60	2875