

27 February 2009

Electoral Review Stage 1 – Additional Submission



Report of Lesley Davies, Acting Director of Corporate Services

Background

1. I reported to the Council on 4 February 2009, the Boundary Committee's request for further evidence and reasoning to support the County Council's submission to Stage 1 of the Electoral Review (size of council). The further information requested included details of Member workload, including expectations around their community leadership/engagement role.

Additional Submission

2. Attached to this report is a draft additional submission prepared in response to the Boundary Committee request. The draft has also now been shared with the Boundary Committee in order to meet their own schedule for consideration of our Stage 1 submission, on the understanding this is subject to Member consideration and approval at today's meeting.

Recommendation

3. The Council is asked to consider and approve the draft submission.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL
ELECTORAL REVIEW STAGE 1
ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION

1. Background

In September 2008 the Council made its Stage 1 (Council Size) submission to the Boundary Committee for England (BCE). After further discussions with representatives of the BCE and following the conclusion of work on the Council's new governance structure and area working arrangements in readiness for Vesting Day on 1 April 2009, this additional submission to Stage 1 of the Electoral Review seeks to provide further evidence and reasoning on Member workload, including expectations around their community leadership and engagement role, which ultimately influence future council size.

2. Member Roles

In order to assess Member workload, their various roles have been analysed and detailed in the following paragraphs, concluding with an assessment in each case of the time commitment. The Table at the end of this submission provides further explanation of these assessments.

(a) Frontline Councillor

- **Political Representative**
Connecting with all parts of the community, to represent everyone fairly and to balance local concerns with the demands of their political group manifesto
- **Community Advocate**
Being a skilled advocate for people from different backgrounds, cultures, and values; speaking freely and constructively challenging the Council
- **Community Leader**
Exercising community development skills – supporting local projects and initiatives, educating people about local participation and involving them in policy development, service planning and decision-making
- **Service Transformer**
Understanding the complex business of local government and services provided both by the Council and others; holding service providers to account for performance/delivery (including developing local area charters or mini-local area agreements)

- **Place Shaper**
Being a local figurehead/role-model that people feel they can turn to; being able to shape the very local environment – providing direction, having the ability to identify priorities, working with officers and service providers to address public realm problems
- **Knowledge Champion**
Being the primary source of local intelligence flowing between the community and the Council

84 hours per month (4 weeks)

(b) Area Action Partnerships

In the Council's new Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) a defined role for Members has now been identified

Area Action Partnerships will be the primary interface between the Council and local communities. The focus will be on 4 themes; Engagement, Empowerment, Local Action and Performance.

AAPs will provide a means to:

- Encourage local people to engage with the local democratic process and to be involved in shaping their communities
- Involve local people in the way local services are planned and delivered and to assist partners meet their duty to involve people in decisions, policies and services that may affect them or be of interest to them
- Dialogue with Council Services and Members with regard to influencing use of their delegated budgets
- Monitor public sector performance in the AAP area

15 hours per month (4 weeks)

(c) Overview and Scrutiny

The Councils Overview and Scrutiny (OS) function focuses on contributing to policy development, policy review and service improvement in a partnership context. It has a vital role to ensure that local government services and services from across a range of other agencies under provisions shortly to be brought into force better meet the needs of our communities. It provides challenge and holds to account.

Councillors are the primary members of OS throughout all of its committees and working arrangements. Co-opted representatives are recruited onto OS who represent communities of interest.

The key principles of OS are:

- To act as a critical friend,
- To enable the voice of the community to be heard,
- To be an independent minded governor,
- To drive improvements in public service.

8 hours per month (4 weeks)

(d) Corporate Governance

All Members contribute to the Council's corporate governance

- Full Council
The Council remains the principal decision-making body, the main forum for debate and a vehicle for engagement with the public and other stakeholders
- Cabinet
The Cabinet's workload in the new unitary council will be very significant, being responsible for all functions not specifically delegated to other parts of the Council or to Officers
- Appeals and Complaints Committee
The Committee determines appeals made against any decision made by or on behalf of the Council
- Audit Committee
The Committee advises the Council and the Executive on audit and governance issues
- Highways Committee
The Committee discharges and oversees the Council's non-executive functions in relation to highways and public rights of way and provides a forum whereby the public can make representations direct to Members.
- Human Resources
The Committee discharges the Council's functions relating to Local Government Pensions and oversees Member Development and Support
- General Licensing and Registration Committee & Sub Committees (3)
The Committee is responsible for reviewing and making policy recommendations to the Council. The Sub-Committees discharge specified licensing and registration functions

- **Statutory Licensing Committee & Sub-Committee**
The Committee is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the Council on policies in relation to licensing matters under the Licensing Acts 2003 and 2005. The Sub-Committee discharges all the functions of the Committee except policy development.
- **Pension Fund Committee**
The Committee exercises powers and duties arising from the Superannuation Act 1972 and regulations made there-under
- **County Planning Committee & Area Planning Committees (3)**
The Committees exercise the Council's functions relating to town and country planning and development control
- **Standards Committee**
The Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct both for the Council and all of the Parish and Town Councils in the County
- **Corporate Parenting Panel**
The Panel has responsibility to monitor and ensure the quality of services to children and young people for whom the Council has a corporate parenting responsibility

22 hours per month (4 weeks)

A further breakdown of this particular assessment is attached at Appendix 1.

(e) Linkage with Local Councils

The County Council's unitary bid placed great emphasis on working with local councils and we wish to strengthen this relationship to ensure that the local council has clear routes into the new unitary authority.

Many Unitary Members are also Parish or Town Councillors. Whether or not they have this dual membership, there is a hope and expectation that all Unitary Members will be able to regularly attend their local council meetings to provide this vital link between the strategic and local levels.

There are 109 Parish and Town Councils in County Durham with the number set to increase. It is the Council's long-established policy to support and encourage the full parishing of the County.

3 hours per month (4 weeks)

Based upon a Council size of 126, the time commitment for Members to undertake these varied roles effectively is 132 hours per month or 33 hours per week.

3. Other Relevant Factors and Issues

There are a number of other relevant factors and issues which will have a bearing on Member workload and time commitments but where it would be very difficult to identify time values. These were referenced in the Council's earlier submission and are detailed again below;

Outside Bodies

In addition to the roles identified above, the Council appoints Members to represent its interests on many national, regional and local bodies. Whilst these appointments are currently being reviewed and rationalised, this area of work will continue to represent a significant commitment for many of our Members.

Working Groups

Internally within the organisation, Members are often involved in working groups with officers to develop policies, work programmes and other Council initiatives.

Cabinet Support

The Council has recently bolstered support in this area with the appointment of up to 10 Executive Support Members, providing support to both the Cabinet in general and individual portfolio holders. As yet, the additional workload for these Members is unmeasured, but is potentially considerable.

Members Holding Senior Positions

Where Members hold senior positions within the Council, for example, Leader, Committee Chairman, Cabinet Portfolio Holder or Opposition Group Leader, this inevitably involves significant demands on their time for briefings and consultations (some of which are formally embodied within the Constitution for the exercise of officer delegations). As the Civic Head, the Chairman of the Council (and the Vice-Chairman) have numerous diary engagements which are set to increase from 1 April with the cessation of Borough/District Councils.

Geography and Socio-Economic Conditions

As emphasised in our first submission, the transition to unitary local government will result in the creation of a very large authority, both in terms of electorate/population and area. This needs to be reflected in the size of the new council.

County Durham covers an area of 222,600 hectares and has a unique settlement pattern, unlike any other shire, i.e., many post-industrial large settlements. Some 44% of adult residents in the County live in areas classified as being rural according to the Government's urban/rural classification system. The County's rurality should not be ignored in the determination of council size.

Many parts of the County have high levels of deprivation; County Durham is by some distance the most deprived shire county in England. This will inevitably impact on the workload of Members.

The workload/time assessments referenced earlier make no allowance for travel associated with council responsibilities.

Other Considerations

In its first submission, the Council also emphasised the following points:

- the significant additional demands that will be placed on Members with the transfer of the current District Council functions
- the need to secure stability in the early years of the new Council;
- the need to be in a position to embrace all of the additional expectations being placed on local authorities and their Members by Government
- the significant overall reduction in elected representation that will be experienced in the County when the District Councils cease to exist; and
- the need to work effectively with partner organisations such as Fire and Police, Health Authorities and the business, community and voluntary sectors.

4. Support Measures

The new Council has invested heavily in additional support measures for Members:

- a comprehensive learning and development programme;
- direct support staff and workspace accommodation both at the Council Headquarters and in localities;
- Area Action Partnership Coordinators and support staff; and
- a full range of ICT facilities both at the Council and at home, with dedicated technical support.

The Council's new Constitution will include a revised scheme of officer delegations.

These measures will support and enable Members to concentrate their time and effort to effectively deliver their role as an elected representative, both in terms of the needs of the organisation and the expectations of the communities they represent.

5. Recruitment and Retention and Work-Life Balance

Much has been made in recent years, including the work and findings from the Councillors Commission, of the importance of recruiting and retaining Members from all backgrounds and age groups, providing them with an attractive and meaningful role which at the same time offers a reasonable work-life balance. These objectives will not be achieved if there are insufficient Members to effectively carry the workload involved.

Testing Other Council Sizes

In the unitary council bid, a suggestion was made on council size of between 90 and 110 councillors.

In Appendices 2 and 3 we have assessed the implications and impacts of reduced council sizes of 90 and 110 councillors in terms of their frontline roles.

In both cases, we firmly believe the resultant increased workload (resulting in 40 and 36 hours per week in total respectively) would be an unreasonable burden and both community representation and the effectiveness of the Council would suffer as a result.

6. Conclusion

The Council will be one of a small number of flagship unitary authorities created in the latest round of local government reorganisation. The expectations are high, both in terms of the local electorate/population and the Government. It is critical to ensure that there is adequate Member capacity to meet these expectations.

This additional submission, in conjunction with the original made in September 2008, demonstrates the very considerable demands that will be placed upon Members from April, 2009. As such, it reinforces the Council's previous view that its present size, i.e., 126 Members, is the minimum requirement for a fit for purpose unitary authority for County Durham.

Table

	Role	Hours	Basis
Political Representative 2 x councillor attending 6 (each) x community partnership or group meetings per month	To link issues to services and highlight the decision making 'route' in achieving change	12 (each)	Monthly
Following up and initiating action within services.		6 (each)	Monthly
Community Advocate 2 x councillor attending 1 (each) meeting of local and /or county-wide 'diversity strand' forums	To link issues to services and highlight the decision making 'route' in achieving change	An average of 2 hours	Monthly
Following up and initiating action within services			
Community Leader See Area Action Partnerships			
Service Transformer 2 x councillor attending 3 x service and community meetings/working groups (joint)	To work internally and at joint service and community meetings to effect positive change in service delivery or work programme development	6 (each)	Monthly
2 x councillors attending 3 x service meetings (potentially 1 to 1)		6 (each)	Monthly
Following up and initiating action within services		6 (each)	Monthly
Place Shaper 2 x councillor attending 3 x joint developmental working group meetings on public realm, sustainability and regeneration	To work within joint service and community meetings to effect positive change in the local public environment	6 (each)	Monthly
2 x councillors attending 3 x joint service and community meetings in detailed design, and delivery of work programmes		6 (each)	Monthly
Following up and initiating action within services		6 (each)	Monthly

	Role	Hours	Basis
<p>Knowledge Champion 2 x councillor attending surgeries, answering calls, receiving and writing letters - the community/constituent interface</p>	To be an accessible, listening and responding councillor in addressing individual and group concerns	16 (each)	Monthly
<p>Following up and initiating action within services</p>	'Chasing' internally answers to questions	12 (each)	Monthly
<p>Area Action Partnerships 7 x councillors in each AAP (98 councillors) undertaking their AAP role effectively throughout its structures and processes.</p> <p>Further 28 councillors performing the same function without decision making powers available at formal AAP board meetings</p>	To deliver through an effective leadership and facilitation role better outcomes for communities in areas	An average of 15 hours	Monthly
<p>Overview and Scrutiny 105 councillors involved in improving standards of public services through the scrutiny structures and functions.</p> <p>Increasing demand for 'community based scrutiny' which will increase or alter scrutiny structures to meet this agenda</p>	To ensure communities better effect O&S in their role in improving services and to ensure the council and its statutory partners receive positive challenge in there desire for continuous improvement. To gather evidence, analyse and inform scrutiny of results of investigations.	8 (each)	Monthly
<p>Corporate Governance All councillors are involved throughout the governance structure of the Council to a greater or lesser degree.</p> <p>Undertaking all these roles within the structure requires a high level of commitment and time.</p>	To support the Council in performing its duties effectively through the governance structure.	A combined 22 (each)	Monthly
<p>Town and Parish Council 2 x councillors attending a monthly meeting of T & P C</p>	To fulfil a 'link' role between the local and unitary council	3 (each)	Monthly
TOTALS		132 33	Monthly Weekly

Governance Structure Assessment (excluding Overview and Scrutiny)

The Council's new governance structure is now almost complete (but subject still to final approval).

Full Council

The Council remains the principal decision-making body, with responsibilities for the Constitution, policy framework and budget, key appointments and the highest profile vehicle both for Members debate and engagement with the public and other stakeholders.

The Council will meet 10 times a year. Allowing for both attendance and preparation and based upon the existing Council size of 126 Members this would translate into approximately 525 hours of work per month.

Cabinet

The Cabinet's workload in the new unitary council will be very significant, being responsible for all functions not specifically delegated to other parts of the Council or Officers. Allowing for attendance and preparation at 10 formal, briefing and agenda-setting meetings as well as liaison and work for portfolio holders with their services this would translate into approximately 1,230 hours per month (based upon a Cabinet of 10).

Appeals and Complaints Committee

The Committee determines appeals made against any decision made by or on behalf of the Council. From a membership of 20, most of the actual business is conducted in relatively small groups and based upon most recent experience this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 18 hours per month.

Audit Committee

The Committee advises the Council and the Executive on audit and governance issues to provide an independent assurance over the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and associated control environment. Based on a combination of formal meetings and focus groups numbering 10 per year and a membership of five, this would translate with attendance on preparation into approximately 25 hours per month.

Highways Committee

The Committee discharges and oversees the Council's functions in relation to highways and public rights of way. Based upon past experience of meetings frequency and membership of 20, this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 30 hours per month.

Human Resources

The Committee discharges the Council's functions relating to Local Government Pensions and oversees Member Development and Support. Based on past experience of meetings frequency and membership of 20, this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 20 hours per month.

General Licensing and Registration Committee

The Committee is responsible for reviewing and making policy recommendations to the Council and discharging specified licensing, registration and regulatory functions. The membership of 40, meeting quarterly, this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 65 hours per month.

Area General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committees (3)

These area based Sub-Committees will discharge the functions of the Committee (other than policy development). Each meeting on a three weekly cycle, with a membership of 8, this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 118 hours per month.

Statutory Licensing Committee

The Committee is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the Council on policies in relation to licensing matters under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Statement of Licensing Policy. Assuming at least four meetings a year, with a membership of 15 this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 25 hours per month.

Statutory Licensing Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee will discharge all the functions of the Statutory Licensing Committee except policy development. Meeting weekly with a rotating membership of 3, this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 50 hours per month.

Pension Fund Committee

The Committee exercises powers and duties arising from the Superannuation Act 1972 and regulations made thereunder. With 11 Elected Members and meeting quarterly, this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 18 hours per month.

County Planning Committee

The Committee exercises the Council's functions relating to town and country planning and development control. Meeting on a three weekly cycle, with a membership of 16, this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 90 hours per month.

Area Planning Committees (3)

These area based Committees will discharge certain functions relating to town and country planning and development control. Each meeting on a three weekly cycle, with a membership of 16, this would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 340 hours per month.

Standards Committee

The Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct both for the Council and all of the Parish and Town Councils in the County. The Committee includes 12 Elected Members and meets on a quarterly cycle. However, the Committee will also be responsible for Local Assessment and Determination of complaints against Members, including Parish Members. In total, with attendance and preparation, the assessment is approximately 28 hours per month.

Corporate Parenting Panel

The Panel has responsibility to monitor and ensure the quality of services to children and young people for whom the Council has a corporate parenting responsibility. The Panel has 40 Members and meets monthly, together with rota visits. This would translate with attendance and preparation into approximately 160 hours per month.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

ELECTORAL REVIEW STAGE 1

ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION – APPENDIX 2

Implications and Impacts of Reduced Number of Durham County Councillors

Example 1 – 90 Councillors (71% of current)

For comparative purposes we have highlighted the implications and the impact of a reduced number of councillors in their frontline role and in this example we look at a figure of 90 councillors, which is 71% of the current number (126).

Political Representative

Highlighted in the table in the additional submission is the amount of community activity in a given Electoral Division. If there was a reduction of 29% of councillors to undertake this role, there will be two implications/impacts:

- (1) The communities will not be given an equal opportunity to access their councillors and the councillor may need to give preference to different groups.
- (2) The councillor will have to add over 5 hours extra time to their workload to be effective in this role.

5 hours increase

Community Advocate

To fulfil this role takes a lot of understanding and to some degree training and a knowledge of the diverse communities in which the councillor plays an advocacy role. To be skilled in both advocacy and in fully understanding and representing correctly the diverse communities is a challenging role. The implications/impacts on a 29% reduction in councillors able to undertake this role effectively are:

- (1) Communities of different culture, interest and need within the general County Durham population may remain on the margins and not be able to meet their aspirations through a fragmented community voice
- (2) The councillors will have to increase their time spent here by 1.5 hours.

1.5 hours increase

Community Leader (inc AAPs)

The community leadership role is the primary role for local councillors in delivering the 'community' agenda for local government. Working through the adopted governance structures for County Durham – Area Action Partnerships - the councillor has arguably their most important role to play here to better connect the Council with the communities it serves. The councillor plays a high profile role which is very active and visual and which is at the forefront of decision-making at a local level. There are significant impacts and implications in a reduction of such a scale (29%) within this primary role:

- (1) Durham County Council will fail its communities in not effectively addressing issues at a neighbourhood and area level within the Authority. The 'action' anticipated by all will be ineffective, without strong leadership and direction and the voice of the community will be weak and ineffective. Only councillors can fully take the issue through the Council to effect real change and a missing link between areas and the Council's decision making centre will fracture the future process for devolved power.
- (2) Councillors time needed to undertake an effective role here will need to be increased by 4 hours.

4 hours increase

Service Transformer

This role comes to the fore where action is going to be formulated and communities begin to see some positive change in transferring what they recognise as issues into addressing them effectively. The councillors play a vital facilitation role in bringing together the community and officers and services at a very practical level. Through working together, the culture of trust is built up and the Council will show its ability to listen and respond through the pivotal role of the frontline councillor. The implications/impacts are:

- (1) To be effective in addressing a recognised community need, a facilitated space in which communities and councils can connect on practical areas of development and work can make the difference between raising issues and having something done about them. The councillor as the leader in terms of ensuring this happens plays the pivotal role here.
- (2) A lot of time is required both physically in facilitating these interface meetings but also in delivering promises and action to be taken. An additional 5 hours would be required by each councillor if the numbers were reduced by 29%.

5 hours increase

Place Shaper

The focus, particularly in the most deprived areas of County Durham, will be on the environment, regeneration and sustainability of public realm, economic centres in towns and villages and in the general public space people desire or would desire to use now and in the future. This role is of a similar nature to the service transformer. However, this focuses more on the areas in towns and villages and not on the change in services within the Council. Therefore the same process is used to facilitate this interface between communities and services (not just Council). The implications/impacts are:

- (1) A reduction in councillors will delay and make this process less effective and again community aspirations may not be realised.
- (2) Like the service transformer, the time increase would be the same if they were to play an effective role now and in the future with an increased community focused remit.

5 hours increase

Knowledge Champion

Being an accessible responsive councillor requires availability and effectiveness in addressing the issues presented by constituents and in more formal community meetings and partnerships. The knowledge held matched with an ability to make a difference is key if the role as a knowledge champion is to meet the needs of communities. Implications/Impacts are:

- (1) This is what is often referred to as the 'bread and butter' role of the councillor. It is the relationship between the communities they represent and the Council that can assist. All the tasks in communicating with and between the public and the Council and in addressing very local needs and aspirations are greatly assisted where there is a councillor to perform this role in transferring and sharing their knowledge with those affected.
- (2) The councillor will have to follow up on increased activity generated through the other roles and be more productive in organising themselves, in communications and in ensuring they keep their knowledge current and transferable. A 29% increase in workload here would be anticipated (8.5 hours more)

8.5 hours increase

In total if Durham County Council were to reduce the number of councillors from 126 to 90 (by 29%), there would be a practical increase in time required to undertake their frontline/community councillor role effectively by 29 hours per month (over 6 hours a week)

- * Monthly 161 hours
- * Weekly 40 hours

*NB These figures include working hours assessed for Overview and Scrutiny, Corporate Governance and Town and Parish Council links.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

ELECTORAL REVIEW STAGE 1

ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION – APPENDIX 3

Implications and Impacts of Reduced Number of Durham County Councillors

Example 2 – 110 Councillors (87% of current)

For comparative purposes we have highlighted the implications and the impact of a reduced number of councillors in their frontline role and in this example we look at a figure of 110 councillors, which is 87% of the current number (126).

Political Representative

Highlighted in the table in the additional submission is the amount of community activity in a given Electoral Division. If there was a reduction of 13% of councillors to undertake this role, there will be two implications/impacts:

- (1) Some communities will not be given an equal opportunity to access their councillors and the councillor may need to give preference to different groups.
- (2) The councillor will have to add over 2 hours extra time to their workload, to be effective in this role.

2.25 hours increase

Community Advocate

To fulfil this role takes a lot of understanding and to some degree training and a knowledge of the diverse communities in which the councillor plays an advocacy role. To be skilled in both advocacy and in fully understanding and representing correctly the diverse communities is a challenging role. The implications/impacts on a 13% reduction in councillors able to undertake this role effectively are:

- (1) Communities of different culture, interest and need within the general County Durham population may not be adversely effected, providing a focus is given to these communities equally with those based in areas
- (2) The councillor will not have to increase their time expedientially provided they can still balance an increased workload

Negligible time

Community Leader (inc AAPs)

The Community Leadership role is the primary role for local councillors in delivering the 'community' agenda for local government. Working through the adopted governance structures for County Durham – Area Action Partnerships - the councillor has arguably their most important role to play here to better connect the Council with the communities it serves. The councillor plays a high profile role which is very active and visual and which is at the forefront of decision-making at a local level. There are still significant impacts and implications in a reduction of such a scale (13%) within this primary role:

- (1) Durham County Council will be restricted in not effectively addressing issues at a neighbourhood and area level within the Authority. The 'action' anticipated by all will be hampered, without strong leadership and direction and the voice of the community will be weaker and less effective. Only councillors can fully take the issue through the Council to effect real change and a missing link between areas and the Council's decision making centre will fracture the future process for devolved power.
- (2) Councillors time needed to undertake an effective role here will need to be increased by a further 2 hours.

2 hours increase

Service Transformer

This role comes to the fore where action is going to be formulated and communities begin to see some positive change in transferring what they recognise as issues into effecting service changes on the ground. The councillors play a vital facilitation role in bringing together the community and officers and services at a very practical level. Through working together, the culture of trust is built up and the Council will show its ability to listen and respond through the pivotal role of the frontline councillor. The implications/impacts are:

- (1) To be effective in addressing a recognised community need, a facilitated space in which communities and councils can connect on practical areas of development and work can make the difference between raising issues and having something done about them. The councillor as the leader in terms of ensuring this happens plays the pivotal role here.
- (2) A lot of time is required both physically in facilitating these interface meetings but also in delivering promises and action to be taken. An additional two and a quarter hours would be required by each councillor if the numbers were reduced by 13%.

2.25 hours increase

Place Shaper

The focus, particularly in the most deprived areas of County Durham, will be on the environment, regeneration and sustainability of public realm, economic centres in towns and villages and in the general public space people desire or would desire to use now and in the future. This role is of a similar nature to the service transformer. However, this focuses more on the areas in towns and villages and not on the change in services within the Council. Therefore, the same process is used to facilitate this interface between communities and services (not just Council). The implications/impacts are:

- (1) A reduction in councillors will delay and make this process less effective and again community aspirations may not be realised.
- (2) Like the service transformer, the time increase would be the same if they were to play an effective role now and in the future with an increased community focused remit.

2.25 hours increase

Knowledge Champion

Being an accessible, responsive councillor requires availability and effectiveness now in addressing the issues presented by constituents and in more formal community meetings and partnerships. The knowledge held matched with an ability to make a difference is key if the role as a knowledge champion is to meet the needs of communities. Implications/Impacts are:

- (1) This is what is often referred to as the 'bread and butter' role of the councillor, it is the relationship between the communities they represent and the Council that can assist. All the tasks in communicating with and between the public and the Council and in addressing very local needs and aspirations are greatly assisted where there is a councillor to perform this role in transferring and sharing their knowledge with those affected.
- (2) The councillor will have to follow up on increased activity generated through the other roles and be more productive in organising themselves, in communications and in ensuring they keep their knowledge current and transferable. A 13% increase in workload here would be anticipated (3.5 hours more)

3.5 hours increase

In total if Durham County Council were to reduce the number of councillors from 126 to 110 (by 13 %), there would be a practical increase in time required to undertake their frontline/community councillor role effectively by 12.25 hours per month (3 hours a week)

- * Monthly 145 hours
- * Weekly 36 hours

*NB These figures include working hours assessed for Overview and Scrutiny, Corporate Governance and Town and Parish Council links.