

Consultation on changes to the democratic process in light of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (26 responses received)

Options in relation to Electoral Review of Councillor Numbers

16	To request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to undertake a review of the number of councillors, wards and ward boundaries.
0	To make no changes to the current number of councillors or wards.
10	Not indicated a preference.
<p>Additional comments made:</p> <p>I believe there should only be a need for no more than two elected members per ward for each ward in Rossendale as a whole.</p> <p>Suggest 15 wards with 2 members per ward of roughly equal numbers of electors. In favour of four yearly elections.</p> <p>I think there are too many councillors and that the wards need to be redefined into more logical areas.</p> <p>I would support a review of councillor numbers in order to ensure that we continue to provide value for money.</p> <p>None of the above – we would like to see the existing Ward structure retained but Councillor numbers reduced to a maximum of two per Ward (x 9).</p> <p>In my opinion twelve wards with two councillors in each is ample. I believe that we need two members per ward in order to cover for holidays, sickness etc.</p> <p>I feel the current number of Councillors is currently excessive for the size of the borough and should be reviewed a.s.a.p. In line with this review I feel we also need to consider going to whole council elections which would also have a cost saving effect.</p>	

A combined response was received on behalf of the Conservative Group. This has been reflected above by adding 9 to the relevant response section.

Committee Changes – Licensing

2	To agree further delegations to officers in respect of Licensing appeals.
16	To deal with Taxi License applications through sub-committees (As recommended by the Governance Working Group).
12	To reduce to 3 Licensing Committees a year.
3	To make no changes to the current 4 Licensing Committees a year.
<p>Additional comments:</p> <p>[One response above had the first three options ticked, indicating a combined approach to dealing with licensing matters].</p> <p>[One response had the second and fourth options ticked with the following explanation- I have limited experience of Licensing Committee but for at least a trail period I'd keep to 4 meetings a year lasting a maximum of 2 hours each, plus a sub-committee for license applications].</p> <p>[One response had the second and fourth options ticked with the following explanation - three meetings per year may result in very long meetings depending on the number of cases to be heard].</p> <p>[One response had the first and second options ticked].</p> <p>[Two responses had the second and third options ticked].</p> <p>We feel this option (reduce to 3 committees a year) allows for maximum participation for all committee members.</p> <p>I understand that the licensing workload is heavy therefore it would seem essential to maintain an active group which meets frequently.</p> <p>To consider re-visiting the policy with a view to stricter criteria thus leading to delegating more decisions to officers.</p> <p>A sub-committee structure I feel is the best option.</p> <p>I feel that all elected members who sit on this committee should be fully involved with the day to day workings of all licensing matters, I'm also of the view that members input should not be reduced in any way what so ever, as I feel this could be a retrograde step, for both the council and also anything that may required to be licenses.</p>	

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Committee Changes – Overview and Scrutiny

25	To change to 2 overview and scrutiny committees: one to deal with policy and performance (Corporate Scrutiny - 6 meetings a year) and one to deal with the scrutiny of partner organisations and external scrutiny (3 meetings a year). (As recommended by the Governance Working Group).
1	To continue with the 3 existing overview and scrutiny committees: Policy, Performance and O&S Management.
<p>Additional comments:</p> <p>I would tend to broadly agree with these proposal's (first option).</p> <p>The one dealing with partner organisations may need to meet more frequently depending upon the organisation.</p> <p>As current O&S Chair (Management and Performance) I support the streamlining of our O&S procedures.</p> <p>I think that the present system works well. There is plenty of slack to scrutinise more areas – some meetings have been cancelled due to a lack of agenda items, yet there are many areas which need looking at which are being ignored.</p>	

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Also consider the following - would you prefer Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings to be daytime or evening?

	Daytime
26	Evening (As recommended by the Governance Working Group).
Additional comments:	
<p>I feel that if an elected member is in full time employment then it is important that wherever possible all meetings should take [place in an evening to accommodate elected members.</p> <p>As a retired person I would prefer daytime meetings but I want to encourage councillors of all ages to be elected so will prefer evening so everyone can attend.</p> <p>Changing to daytime meetings would tend to exclude members who work inflexible hours.</p> <p>Daytime will cause problems for members and the public who work during the day.</p> <p>It's important we have evening meetings so people who work during the day (Paid or unpaid, ie carers) can be councillors).</p> <p>Meetings must be held in the evening in order to ensure that working people and working Councillors are not excluded.</p> <p>Retention of evening meetings is essential to ensure being a councillor is available to all sectors of the community regardless of age, work commitments etc. (x 9)</p> <p>Most councillors are available in the evening whilst many are not (including me).</p> <p>All meetings should be in the evening to allow members who work to attend.</p>	

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Committee Changes – Member Development Working Group, Governance Working Group and Civic Matters Working Group

1	To merge the three working groups into one (4 meetings a year).
24	To merge Member Development Working Group with Governance Working Group (4 meetings a year) and keep Civic Matters Working Group as it is (to meet as and when required) (As recommended by the Governance Working Group).
	To continue with the 3 existing working groups in their current form.
*1	Not indicated a preference.
<p>Additional comments:</p> <p>*I don't have a problem with this (option1) but this committee would need to be made up of a member from all political parties, with the Mayor being given any casting vote. I don't have a problem with any amendments providing members can give them their full support in agreement. Only members of the full council should approve any such proposals.</p> <p>Too much for one group.</p> <p>I agree with this proposal (second option) provided it does not undermine the vital importance of member development.</p>	

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