

Islington Electoral Review

Council Size

February 2019



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking a review of the London Borough of Islington's local government electoral arrangements. The outcome of the review will be implemented for the 2022 Council elections.
- 1.2. This report has been produced to help inform the first part of the review on Council Size. The Commission will form its view regarding the correct Council size for Islington by considering the following three areas:
 - The governance arrangements of the Council
 - The Council's scrutiny functions
 - The representational role of Councillors in the local community
- 1.3. This report is the output of the Council's officer working group. The working group comprised of officers from across the Council including; Democratic Services, Electoral Service, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Planning, Public Health Intelligence, and Strategy and Change.
- 1.4. The report was approved by Full Council on the 28 February 2019.

2. Summary and Recommendation

- 2.1. The Council has carefully considered the factors outlined in the Boundary Commission's guidance document to determine its recommendation to the Commission in terms of the number of the Councillors and the resulting electoral ratio.
- 2.2. The Council recommends that Islington should increase the existing number of Councillors from the current 48 elected Members to 51. This will equate to an electoral ratio of 3,301 electors for each Councillor by 2024, based on GLA population forecasts and considering planned housing activity and electoral registrations. In terms of the total population, this will equate to 4,848 residents per Councillor. The high levels of deprivation and the acute shortage of affordable housing in the borough create disproportionate demands on services and Councillors in comparison with more affluent areas of London and makes it more challenging for Councillors to fulfil their other duties in relation to governance and scrutiny.
- 2.3. The Council considers 51 Councillors to be the optimum number of Councillors required to ensure effective governance and scrutiny. Maintaining a council size of 48 in the face of rising demand for services, population growth, challenging budget cuts, growing levels of complex casework, the increasing ease in which residents can contact Councillors and their expectations of an immediate response, would likely result in progressively unsustainable workloads for elected Members. This would be detrimental to the effectiveness of the local authority. Increasing the number of Councillors by 3 will help ensure Councillor resilience and representativeness, and lead to more manageable workloads.

- 2.4. It is acknowledged that there is a relatively small financial implication for the Council as a result of any increase, with each Councillor currently receiving an annual allowance of £10,312 per year.
- 2.5. We have considered other council sizes in making our request for an increase and believe that maintaining or reducing councillor numbers from the current 48 would put significant further pressure on Councillor workloads. It would become challenging for Councillors to effectively represent their communities and governance arrangements would be negatively impacted.
- 2.6. In addition to reviewing Councillor's meeting and decision-making commitments, casework loads, community engagement work and forecast population growth, the views of Councillors have been considered, obtained via a Member Survey conducted specifically for the review. The survey was completed by 70% of current elected Members.
- 2.7. The following summarises the main factors that have led to the Council's recommendation;
- 2.7.1. The number of Councillors in Islington is low in comparison with the boroughs 15 nearest neighbours, as determined by CIPFA. In comparison with the boroughs three geographic neighbours, Islington's current 48 Councillors is notably fewer; Camden has 54 Councillors, Hackney has 55 Councillors and Haringey has 57 Councillors.
- 2.7.2. The population of Islington has grown significantly since 1999, impacting on the density of the borough and therefore increasing demands on public services. This coupled with the deep social challenges within communities in Islington, as a result of deprivation and inequality, has significantly increased the volume of complex casework undertaken by Councillors. On average Members are spending nearly 65% of their time as a Councillor dealing with more complex or long-term issues. If the council size remains at 48, further population growth will increase the amount of time that Members spend on casework; reducing their overall effectiveness and making it increasingly challenging to consider meeting papers fully, undertake in depth scrutiny reviews and undertake proactive community engagement.
- 2.7.3. Members have high workloads and demands on their time. Results from the Member survey found that on average Councillors are attending 27 meetings per month, taking an average of 50.4 hours. Use of email and social media has also significantly increased Councillors' workloads and created a pressure to respond very quickly; residents now expect responses in hours, as opposed to days. Members on average spend 36 hours a month communicating by email in addition to 20 hours a month on telephone calls.

- 2.7.4. All Councillors actively participate in community engagement. Each Councillor holds one surgery per month, with the exception of August, totalling over 500 surgeries across the borough each year.
- 2.7.5. Members have limited support; backbench Members must be self-sufficient, personally managing most of the casework and their diaries of local meetings, events and Council commitments themselves.
- 2.7.6. The Member questionnaire strongly suggested that Councillors are working beyond capacity. Long-standing Councillors report that their workload is increasing, and newly elected Councillors advise that workloads exceed what they had anticipated. The demands of council work have led some Councillors to reduce other commitments. Some of those Councillors whose working life is consultancy based, have advised they are taking on less work. One Councillor has given up work completely. Reducing or maintaining the current council size would result in unsustainable workloads. Councillors would find it impossible to balance their council responsibilities alongside their home lives and/or full-time employment. Increasing the council size by three would assist in addressing this imbalance and enable councillors to spend more time proactively engaging with their communities.
- 2.7.7. Islington is a diverse borough that is led by people who represent a range of backgrounds. Increasing workloads would mean that those Councillors who have other responsibilities (i.e. child / carer's responsibilities and full-time work) may not be able to continue in the role, making Councillors less representative of the borough's population. Several Councillors advised that they already find it challenging or impossible to balance the demands on their time, one councillor advised that they would not stand for reselection if the number of councillors were reduced. Maintaining a council size of 48 would not address the current challenges that members face. To ensure that the Islington continues to have Councillors that represent the borough social demographic, Member numbers need to be increased so that representativeness can be retained and there is no detrimental impact to the governance and scrutiny of the council.
- 2.7.8. Ward Members make finance decisions regarding the Local Initiative Fund (LIF), Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 fund. To ensure that the process of allocating this spend is transparent the Islington constitution sets out that at least 2 of the 3 ward Members must agree to the use of any funds before it can be allocated. Reductions in ward Member would impact this process.
- 2.8. Members are under considerable pressure, with increasing and complex caseloads. To ensure that Islington continues to have Councillors who effectively represent the community, and who are able to fulfil the council's governance and scrutiny functions effectively, it is requested that councillor numbers are increased by 3 to 51. This would help improve the levels of representation for electors and residents as the population

grows, result in more manageable caseloads and ensure governance and scrutiny functions are fulfilled.

3. Borough Profile

- 3.1. Islington is an inner London borough situated towards the north of Central London and bounded by Camden, Hackney, Haringey and the City. Excluding the City, Islington is the second smallest London borough covering an area of approximately 1,485 hectares. The borough is well serviced by transport links, with 10 underground stations, several over-ground and mainline stations, as well as the main arterial routes of the A1 and A501.

Population

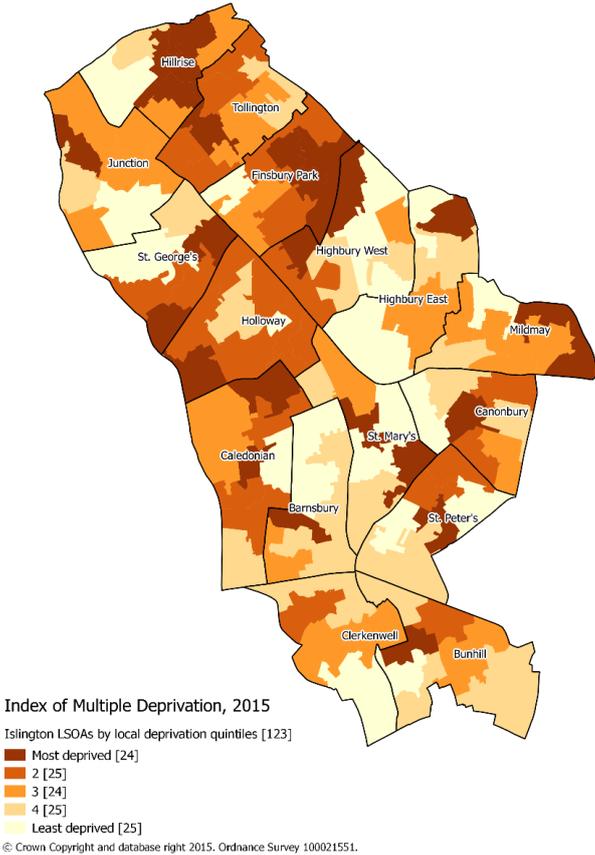
- 3.2. The GLA estimates that Islington's current population stands at about 238,300 people, an increase of 15% since the census in 2011 and nearly 35% increase since the last review in 1999. By 2024 Islington's population is expected to rise a further 4% to approximately 247,800 residents.
- 3.3. Islington's population is comparatively young compared to national figures, with the borough's population age structure dominated by those of working age, 75% of the total population. In the future it is anticipated that the older population will grow faster compared to younger groups, with people at or over the pension age increasing by 28% (5,900 people) by 2028.
- 3.4. Islington has an ethnically diverse population, with Black and other minority ethnic (BME) groups accounting for 32% of the whole population. This diversity is generally more pronounced in those aged under 25 years, where nearly half of the population is from non-white ethnic groups. In 2016, it was estimated that 46% of Islington Secondary school pupils were known or believed to have another language other than English as their first language.
- 3.5. Overall, about 3% (6,600) of residents do not speak English well or at all. Older age groups tend to have lower levels of English proficiency than younger residents, and a higher proportion of women than men cannot speak English well or at all.
- 3.6. Being one of London's smallest boroughs, the rising population has resulted in Islington being the most densely populated borough in England with 155.6 residents per hectare, notably above the Greater London average of 56.2. The high population density means that there is a limited amount of available open space, with Islington having the lowest ratio of open space to built-up area of any London borough.
- 3.7. Islington's population is highly mobile with the 6th highest turnover rate in London (256 per 1,000 population) in 2016-17. The international and internal migrations accounted for approximately two thirds of the population growth over the last decade. Although there are still more people moving in to the borough than those moving out, the gap has recently decreased due to a sudden increase in number of people moving out in 2016-17. It is anticipated that there will be more people moving out from the borough than those moving in for the next decade, slowing the population growth. High levels

of population churn results in higher demand for information and support from councillors as new residents are unfamiliar with the services available or may seek support from a councillor to help them access services.

Deprivation in Islington

- 3.8. Islington is the 5th most deprived local authority in London, and 24th in England out of 326 local authorities. Islington is a borough of extremes, with very wealthy residents living adjacent to those who are suffering from deprivation. These statistics are based on averages across the whole population and to some extent mask the extent of deprivation in some communities. They suggest the whole borough is deprived in general, but levels of deprivation vary considerably across Islington (Map 1).
- 3.9. Finsbury Park is more deprived than other wards in Islington, followed by Holloway, Caledonian and Tollington. On the other hand, Highbury East is the least deprived area in the borough, followed by Highbury West, Clerkenwell and Barnsbury. The ward-level ranking has generally stayed similar to 2010, with the exception of Canonbury which has moved from the second most deprived ward in 2010 to the seventh most deprived.

Map 1: Local deprivation quintile, Islington LSOAs, 2015



Source: 2015 IMD, Department for Communities and Local Government

- 3.10. A 2017 study by Trust for London and the New Policy Institute found that a third of Islington residents live in poverty, notably more than the London average of 27%.
- 3.11. Islington has England's third highest level of income deprivation affecting children (IDACI) and fifth highest in England for income deprivation affecting older people (IDAOPI). More than one third of children (35%) and older people (36%) in the borough are living in income deprived households. The level of income deprivation affecting children varies between wards, ranging from 45% in Bunhill to 23% in Highbury East. The level of income deprivation affecting older people ranges from 47% in Finsbury Park to 28% in Highbury East.

4. Challenges for Islington

- 4.1. The high population growth, density and deprivation have meant that Islington has seen increased demands on public services such as housing, education, children's services, adult services and health. Communities in the borough face deep social challenges driven by deprivation and inequality. A report by the Cripplegate Foundation indicated that people on low incomes in Islington were under more pressure than ever, feeling insecure, with no control over their lives¹. Many residents face both complex and multiple challenges, including social isolation, mental ill health, domestic violence, substance abuse, housing and employment and so have repeated contact with Islington services and Councillors.

Housing

- 4.2. The good transport links and proximity to inner London locations has resulted in Islington being an increasingly desirable place to live. This has increased house prices well above the national average, making it increasingly difficult for local people to buy properties in the borough.
- 4.3. Over 40,000 households are residing in social housing in Islington, accounting for 42% of all households in the borough, significantly higher than the London average of 22%². The Council manages approximately 26,000 of these households (secured tenancy), with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) managing a further 16,000 properties on the borough. High property prices coupled with the borough having some of the most deprived wards in the UK, has resulted in a shortage of genuinely affordable housing in Islington and therefore unmet housing needs. Forty per cent of Council owned homes are small homes with only one bedroom, resulting in a need for more larger family-sized homes; in the 2011 Census 11% of households in Islington were defined as overcrowded. Overcrowding commonly has significant negative impacts, including children having nowhere to do homework, which affects their educational attainment and damp caused by drying washing, which can have negative consequences for health.
- 4.4. There is significant housing need in Islington with 18,000 residents on the housing waiting list. Nearly 10,000 of these are in considered as being in the 'reasonable preference category' (e.g. statutory homeless, owed housing duty, overcrowded/unsanitary housing or need to move on medical/welfare grounds). Survey data of elected Members has indicated that they are frequently spending significant amounts of time trying to help resolve the complex housing issues that residents have.

¹ <https://www.cripplegate.org/our-work/research/distant-neighbours-poverty-and-inequality-islington>
[2011 11 29]

² <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7706>

- 4.5. The Council has committed to deliver decent and genuinely affordable homes on the borough over the next 4 years with ambitious building programmes and cracking down on rogue landlords. Achieving these goals will be challenging with the already high population density, the demand for space and the impact on existing residents.
- 4.6. Councillors are actively involved in looking for potential sites for development, liaising with neighbouring residents to ensure that they fully appreciate the level of need. Councillors play a role in protecting sites as soon as the potential for development is identified, by ensuring that Supplementary Planning Briefs are developed and adopted, specifying the levels of genuinely affordable housing provision required.

Health

- 4.7. Many residents have multiple health and social care needs. There are an estimated 14,300 working age adults with moderate or serious physical disability in Islington and around 1,080 with a moderate or severe learning disability, and therefore likely to be in receipt of services.
- 4.8. The prevalence of long-term conditions is set to rise in Islington, with an increasingly ageing population and risk factors such as increasing prevalence of obesity. Approximately 28,000 adults, or one in six adults between 18 – 74 years has a diagnosed long-term condition, with a further 5,800 children and young people living with long term conditions. It is thought that a third of residents with at least one long term condition have more than one condition. People in the most deprived areas are more likely to have two or more long term conditions than people in the least deprived areas; about 8% compared to 6%.
- 4.9. Islington has the second highest prevalence of diagnosed serious mental illness in England, approximately 1.5% of the adult population. Additionally, there is a higher need for care for children's mental wellbeing also. The rate of hospital admissions for mental health conditions in under 18s is almost double in Islington (140 per 100,000 people) compared to London (77 per 100,000). Islington also has a higher prevalence of depression or anxiety (15%), compared to the London average of 12%.
- 4.10. In the current economic climate, protecting high cost services for vulnerable residents is extremely challenging and every decision made by the Executive that impacts on service provision is subject to considerable levels of scrutiny by residents and the local press and involves Councillors in a considerable amount of related casework.

Employment

- 4.11. Islington has one of the highest proportions of out-of-work benefit claimants in London (approximately 10%; 17,400 people [2016]). Around 6,400 people (4%) in Islington are on sickness / disability benefits due mental illness, meaning more than one in three out-of-work benefit claims are as a result of mental illness. The employment rate among

those with a severe mental health problem is 65 percentage points lower than the overall working age population.

- 4.12. Islington has higher levels of workless households than both London (12.9%) and national averages (14.5%), with nearly 15,000 workless households on the borough (15.9%).
- 4.13. Additionally, Islington has a higher than average rate of unemployment, with 5% of working age adults unemployed (7,500 people).

Crime

- 4.14. The Council is a lead authority in the Safer Islington Partnership, which also includes the police, fire brigade, health sector, probation services and representatives from the voluntary, community, faith and business sectors. The current priorities for the partnership include youth crime, hate crime, violence against women and girls, and anti-social behaviour, with significant work happening under each area.
- 4.15. The impact of crime on children as victims or perpetrators can have a disproportionate impact on feelings of safety among young people, families and communities. Over the years Islington has seen higher than average levels of serious youth violence, knife crime and snatch offences. Gang issues across the borough have impacted communities, with 'county lines' (organised drug supply) operations spreading across the UK. Islington Councillors have lead calls for a national strategy to tackle county lines, with huge efforts made by the Council and police in partnership to reduce the issue. The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, is involved in a considerable amount work directed at reducing the risk of young people becoming involved in gangs, including involvement in projects at regional and national levels.
- 4.16. Islington is committed to tackling hate crime in any form, recognising that there is significant under-reporting. The Islington Hate Crime Pledge has been led by and supported by elected Members. The Pledge enables individuals and organisations in the borough to support and participate in ongoing efforts to reduce hate crime in the area.
- 4.17. Following the Finsbury Park terrorist attack, Islington hosted a series of events to commemorate the victims, paying tribute to those affected and celebrate the strength of the borough's community. Members were amongst the first people to respond on the evening of the attack and played a key role in supporting the local community, both during that night, in the immediate aftermath and in organising subsequent commemorative events.
- 4.18. Ward councillors are on a daily basis working in their communities to improve people's quality of life and ensure community cohesion. This positive work was highlighted in the Residents' Survey 2018, where 92% of people indicated that they thought that people from different background got on well together in Islington. The work that Councillors

conduct to achieve this helps to provide a sound base for us to deal with traumatic and tragic events, such as the Finsbury Park attack.

- 4.19. There have been improvements in the levels of some crime types over the last year, most notably theft snatch offences, which has fallen by 50%. Despite improvements, tackling crime and antisocial behaviour is still a priority issue for residents. The 2018 Islington Residents' survey found that reducing crime and anti-social behaviour was one of the main issues respondents wanted the Council to focus on to improve the quality of life for residents.

Child poverty

- 4.20. It is estimated that 35% of children aged under 16 in Islington are living in low income households, the third highest nationally.
- 4.21. In 2016/17, 53% of primary school pupils Islington were eligible for the deprivation Pupil Premium. The proportion was even higher for secondary school pupils where nearly 70% of pupils were eligible³. Sadly, attainment levels for those pupils who are eligible for any form of pupil premium is lower compared to all other children in Islington, with 59.4% achieving 5 A*-C grades opposed to 74.8%⁴.
- 4.22. The Fair Futures Commission examined what can be done to ensure equality of opportunity for all children in the borough and made a series of recommendations to the Council. In the Council's response, every Executive Member has been allocated a recommendation and they will actively champion these and lead on the work to deliver them.

The Financial Challenge

- 4.23. Since 2010 Islington has experienced a 70% reduction in the Council's core funding, which combined with an increase in demand for services and other inflationary pressures has required total savings of over £200million. Members made protecting front line services from cuts a key priority and despite the cuts, the borough has retained services with only a limited impact, delivering key manifesto commitments and corporate priorities.
- 4.24. Members play a significant role in budget setting; scrutinising proposals made by officers, selecting those to be developed, providing challenge to ensure they can be delivered and finally agreeing which savings to take forward. As savings become harder

³ Department of Education - Pupil premium national LA final allocation tables (2016/17)

⁴ https://www.islington.gov.uk/~media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/communications/information/adviceandinformation/20172018/20180130stateofequalitiesreport2018_1.pdf

to achieve, the proposals to deliver them are becoming more complex and challenging and involve more partnership working and greater risk, which in turn is increasing Member involvement and the demands made on Member's time. Members also take an active role in budget monitoring and regularly challenge forecast overspend, which has helped to ensure that Islington is one of the small number of boroughs which is delivering its savings without recourse to using reserves.

- 4.25. The financial challenges that the Council faces are set to continue. At the same time, demand for many local services will continue to rise. Councillors have worked with the Council's senior management team on Outcome Based Budgeting to restructure service delivery around people, to make sure services are working collaboratively, that residents can get what they need more quickly and efficiently and foster a culture of innovation and early intervention.

5. Priorities

- 5.1. The Islington Fairness Commission was conceived by Councillors and set up in 2010 to gather evidence and consider how to make the borough a fairer place. The Commission articulated one clear vision for the borough; to make Islington fairer and to create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the same opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy good quality of life. Despite national government cut Islington has made significant progress tackling inequality and poverty.
- 5.2. Since the Fairness Commission, Islington has further developed its vision towards making the borough fairer. The Council has adopted a consistent overriding approach to work with people, families and communities and to build resilience through prevention and early intervention. Councillors set out seven clear objectives within the Corporate Strategy to;
- Homes - Deliver decent and genuinely affordable homes to all
 - Jobs and Money - Delivering an inclusive economy, supporting people into work and helping them with the cost of living
 - Safety - Creating a safe and cohesive borough
 - Children and Young People - Making Islington the best place for all young people to grow up
 - Place and environment - Making Islington a welcoming and attractive borough creating a healthier environment for all
 - Health and independence - Ensuring our residents can lead health and independent lives
 - Well run Council - Continuing to be a well-run Council and making a difference despite reduced resource.
- 5.3. Members and the council know that these objectives cannot be achieved working in isolation. There are already strong partnerships working across the public and the voluntary sector and members are leading on harnessing this commitment, to find ways of working with partners and the voluntary sector that are collaborative, empowering and efficient.

6. Electoral Registration and Future Projections

- 6.1. Islington's electorate has increased by 30,000 electors over the last 10 years. As at December 2018, 150,778 of the borough's residents were registered to vote which equates to 63% of the total population. There are an additional 12,324 pending electors who have not completed their registration which could increase the electorate to 163,102.
- 6.2. Electorate numbers peaked in 2016 to a high of 161,871 as a result of the European Union (EU) referendum. During the 6 months leading up to referendum our electorate spiked by 6.1%. This is consistent with other London boroughs.
- 6.3. The impact of the referendum in 2016 was significant. Islington added 40,585 people to the register and deleted 34,261. When a parliamentary election is called there is normally an increase of around 7,000-7500 electors which represents a 4% to 5% increase in the overall electorate. Similar experiences are received by other London boroughs.
- 6.4. Generally, Islington has a significant churn of electorate, around 30% each year. On average we add and delete between 50,000-60,000 electors annually half of which are identified through our annual canvass.
- 6.5. Outreach work is ongoing to encourage registration rates to grow further to increase democratic engagement. Our current and future programmes will include:
 - Ongoing student registrations; partnership agreements with the 2 major universities within the borough to provide student information. Future campaigns include attending freshers' week events and fresher fayres.
 - Young people aged 16-18; Countrywide there has been a drop in the number of attainer electors. In the UK you can go on the electoral roll as an 'attainer' at 16; by registering in advance it means that you are already on the electoral roll when you turn 18. A fall in the number of attainers means that the flow of young voters into democracy is slowing down. To raise awareness of the democratic process we at Islington hold bi-annual youth Council elections to encourage young people to engage in democracy from the ages of 11-17. Islington needs to increase its share of attainers. All the evidence shows that voting is habitual – if you start young, you'll vote for life. Campaigns within local schools will target this demographic.
 - Underrepresented groups: Since the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in 2014, there has been a fall-in citizens from BAME groups registering to vote especially young people where parents/guardians stopped signing them up. Thirty-two per cent of Islington residents are from non-white backgrounds. Work will be carried out through our locality working programme and through engagement with voluntary and community sector development programme with community groups to encourage registration.
 - Resident care homes: Islington has 16 care homes. Annual site visits are to be adopted to increase the number of residents who are registered to vote. Training of

the homes staff will be essential so that when new residents move in part of the induction process includes registering the new person to vote.

- Declaration of local connection: A campaign to increase awareness of people with no fixed abode on their right to vote. This will involve attending homeless forum meetings, visits to patients in a mental health hospital, traveller communities, people living on boats or people remanded in custody. The outreach work will also engage with local charities supporting homeless people.

- 6.6. Turnout for elections fluctuates according to the type of election. General elections consistently see the highest turnout. Numbers have been steadily increasing in recent years from 66% in 2010 to 73% in 2017. The 2016 EU referendum similarly saw a high turnout in the borough at 70.39%.
- 6.7. Borough Council elections do not historically see as high a turnout. The May 2018 elections saw a turnout of 38.4%. Turnout fluctuated amongst the wards, with three having notably higher rates than the borough average; Highbury East achieved 48.9%, St Georges 44.7% and Hillrise achieved 43.3%. Conversely, Bunhill achieved a turnout of 32.7%.

Future Electorate Projections

- 6.8. LGBCE forecast tool has been considered and upon reviewing the data we have prepared alternative forecasts. We have taken this approach because there are numerous housing developments planned across Islington between 2018 and 2024, and we feel that the forecast generated by the LGBCE's method does not accurately represent the changes that we expect to see in Islington between now and 2024.
- 6.9. Our Alternative Forecasts are based on the 2016-based Demographic Projections, London Ward population projections Housing-led Model, published by the Greater London Authority (GLA). We have used these forecasts because we believe that the GLA's Housing-Led model is a better representation of the changes expected in the Islington population. This is consistent with other London boroughs, most of whom also use the GLA Housing-led projections as their source for population estimates. Our choice to use the GLA's ward-level population estimates was informed by the level of detail they provide, as they reflect the expected growth in each ward, and the relative ease of mapping these to the polling districts.
- 6.10. We have supplemented these forecasts with information from the Council's Planning department on the number of housing units expected to be completed in each polling district by 2024. It is anticipated that 4,889 new housing units will be developed and inhabited by 2024.
- 6.11. Finally, we have also used the local electoral registers, to inform the number of people in each polling district that are expected to be registered in 2024.

6.12. Our forecast has led us to believe that the Islington electorate will stand at 168,366 in 2024. Please refer to appendix 1 for more detail on the methodology.

6.13. The forecast data suggests that by 2024 there will be 3,508 electorate per Councillor if the numbers of Councillors are maintained. Taking into consideration the significant levels of complex case work that Councillors have in Islington, as a result of the borough’s social and economic inequalities, this increase in Councillor to electorate ratio will make workloads increasingly unsustainable. Members have indicated that they are already working at capacity. Increasing the number of elected Member by 3 to 51, will help to mitigate unmanageable workloads in the future and ensuring Councillor resilience.

6.14. Councillor to elector ration is set out in the below table, showing 2018 figures compared to the projections for 2024, including our proposed Council size option.

Number of Councillors	Electorate Per Councillor (2018)	Electorate Per Councillor (2024)	
45	3351	3741	
46	3278	3660	
47	3208	3582	
48	3141	3508	Current
49	3077	3436	
50	3016	3367	
51	2956	3301	Proposed

Table 1: Councillors per electorate 2018 / 2024

7. Governance and Decision Making

- 7.1. Islington is made up of 16 wards, with 48 elected Councillors leading the Council, with a ratio of 3 Councillors per ward. Councillors are elected every four years, with the most recent election being in May 2018. Currently, the political balance of the Council is 47 Labour and 1 Green party Member.
- 7.2. The number of Councillors in Islington is low by comparison with our 15 nearest neighbour boroughs, as determined by CIPFA. Only two Councils, within our 15 nearest neighbours, have fewer Councillors than Islington and one of these, Hammersmith and Fulham, has a significantly lower population, with almost 100,000 fewer electors. In comparison with our three geographic neighbours, Islington also has notably fewer Councillors; Camden has 54 Councillors, Hackney has 55 Councillors and Haringey has 57 Councillors.
- 7.3. The most recent data for the number of electors in Islington stands at 150,778 (December 2018). Available comparative data (2016) finds that Islington has a higher ratio of electors (3,139) to Councillors compared to geographic neighbours Camden and Haringey, who had 2,823 and 3,401 electorate respectively.

Borough	Number of Councillors	Number of electors (2016)	Electors per Councillor	Percentage of population claiming out of work benefits ⁵	Population in local authority housing
Islington	48	151,613	3,159	2.3%	25,290 (24.7%)
Camden	54	152,464	2,823	1.6%	23,080 (22.2%)
Haringey	57	173,359	3,041	2.4%	15,420 (14.3%)
Hammersmith and Fulham	46	128,131	2,785	3.5%	12,300 (14.2%)

Table 2: Councillor / elector comparison (2016 data)

- 7.4. The high population density, significant pockets of deprivation in the borough and the comparatively high number of out of work benefit claimants, mean that the demand for services is high and the volume and complexity of casework that Councillors manage is significant. Of our 15 CIPFA nearest neighbours, only Tower Hamlets and Hackney have higher levels of deprivation than Islington, based on the 2015 English Indices of Deprivation.
- 7.5. Islington also has a large proportion of its residents in local authority housing compared to its nearest neighbours. This generates a significant amount of casework for

⁵ https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157251/subreports/cc_compared/report.aspx [October 2018]

Councillors, particularly on housing shortages, overcrowding and repair issues. Residents in local authority housing will escalate housing management issues to their local Councillors if they are not satisfied with the service they have received.

- 7.6. If the number of Councillors in Islington were to increase to 51, Islington would still have fewer Councillors than 11 of our CIPFA 15 nearest neighbours and the ratio of electors to each Councillor would be 3,301 (taking projections into account). If the number of Councillors remains at 48, Islington will remain out of step with its nearest neighbours and geographic neighbours, despite facing similar, if not greater, challenges.

Leadership

- 7.7. Islington operates an Executive system with a Strong Leader model. The Leader's and Executive Members positions are full-time roles. The Leader provides political and strategic leadership and works together with Executive Members to set out a vision for Islington and the strategic plans that will help the Council to achieve it.

Within the role, the Leader has specific duties including:

- Political leadership: chairing the Executive and sharing collective responsibility for Executive decisions; acting as the principal political spokesperson for the Council; supporting, developing and managing members of the Executive.
 - Corporate leadership: giving political direction to the Chief Executive, Directors and other officers; providing political leadership to the development and implementation of the Council's Corporate Plan and Budget; working with officers to formulate and implement policy proposals.
 - Partnership and community leadership: acting as an advocate for the local community and a spokesperson for residents; promoting Council priorities; building cross-borough links that progress the Council's objectives; representing the Council and contributing to London-wide, national and international bodies/forums to promote Islington's interests.
 - Reporting and accountability: reporting to full Council, Executive, scrutiny, regulatory bodies and stakeholders as appropriate.
 - Governance, ethical standards and relationships: promoting and supporting good governance of the Council, open and transparent government, respectful and effective relationships with officers, and adhering to the code of conduct.
- 7.8. In addition to expected duties of a Local Government Council Leader, in Islington the Leader is responsible for several other areas, including;
- Resilience and civil emergencies
 - Communication and Consultation
 - Devolution

- Prevent

7.9. In addition to the Leader, there is one Deputy leader.

The Executive

7.10. Islington has 7 full-time Executive Members, in addition to the Leader the Council, which is the smallest number of any of our CIPFA 15 nearest neighbours.

7.11. Members of the Executive have responsibility for setting the direction and are publicly accountable for the operation of services comprised within their respective portfolios and for bring forward proposals to the Executive in respect of them. The Fairness Commission, the Employment Commission and the Fair Futures Commission and the adoption of the London Living Wage and Hate Crime campaign were all conceived and strongly supported by Members of the Executive.

7.12. Each Member of the Executive holds a portfolio, which they are expected to provide political direction, leadership and development over. Portfolio responsibilities are determined by the Leader. Current portfolios include;



<p>Health & Social Care</p>	<p>Adult Social Services Public Health Integration of Health and Social Care Sport and Leisure</p>	<p>Inclusive Economy and Jobs</p>	<p>Employment and Employment Service Lifelong Learning, Skills and Libraries Apprenticeships Economic Regeneration and Inclusive Economy Small Business support and business relationships Heritage</p>
<p>Children, Young People & Families</p>	<p>Early Years and Children's Centres Schools Play and Youth Services Children's Social Service and Child Protection Tackling Child Poverty Youth Offending Service and Youth Crime</p>	<p>Housing and Development</p>	<p>Housing management and Maintenance Delivering new genuinely affordable homes Private Sector Housing Strategic Planning and Development Control Tenant and Resident engagement and representation Tenant Management Organisations Homelessness</p>
<p>Finance, Performance and Community safety</p>	<p>Community Safety and policing Hate crime Tackling Domestic Violence & Abuse, & supporting survivors Public Protection Finance, Property, Revenues & Benefits and Pensions Performance, Contract Management and Risk Management Contact Islington and Complaints ICT, Procurement, Legal and Human Resources Democratic Services, Registrars & Electoral Registration Council Transformation</p>	<p>Environment and Transport</p>	<p>Energy, fuel poverty and climate change Refuse, waste reduction and recycling Street scene, roads and highways Sustainability Parks, open spaces and cemeteries Traffic and parking Major transport infrastructure, road safety and transportation Improved Air Quality Promoting Liveable Neighbourhoods – promoting walking and cycling</p>
<p>Community Development</p>	<p>Community development and Resilience Voluntary and Community Sector Ward Partnerships and local Initiative Funding Arts and Culture Equalities and Community Cohesion No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Support Services Licensing Tackling Social Isolation and Loneliness</p>		

7.13. The 8 Executive Members are also responsible for:

- Setting strategic direction of the Council, including the 7 objectives in the Corporate Plan
- budget setting and monitoring; providing challenge to officers on savings, budget management and income generation
- leading on culture change and
- supporting transformation projects.

7.14. In addition to leadership within the Council, the Executive Members also have a very important role in community leadership and have led on work to:

- Promote community cohesion
- Ensure wide support amongst local organisations for the Hate Crime campaign
- Respond to the Finsbury Park terror attack
- Encourage a more inclusive economy
- Achieve and if possible, exceed the Mayor of London's affordable housing targets
- Support private renters and victims of rogue landlords
- Prevent Knife crime and to divert young people away from gangs

7.15. The Executive meets on average 9 times a year and they make the majority of the authority's Key Decisions and all the Key Decisions above certain financial thresholds, in public, at these meetings.

7.16. The Executive made in excess of 80 formal decisions in the 2017/18 municipal year. There are no Key Decisions made by individual Executive Members, although Corporate Directors do have delegated authority to make Key Decisions up to certain financial thresholds. Islington's Key Decision criteria includes financial thresholds, which are on a par with the majority of London Local Authorities that use financial thresholds as a determining factor.

7.17. Part 3 of the Council's constitution sets out in detail matters reserved for Executive decision⁶.

7.18. In addition to meetings of the Executive and Council and attending the scrutiny committee meetings relevant to their portfolios, the Executive Members are members of over 100 other boards, including, for example, Safeguarding boards, Health Trusts, Town Centre Management Boards, Grants Committees, Prevent bodies, the Safer Islington Partnership Board, Affordable Energy Board and the New Homes Board. Each Executive Member is, on average, a member of at least 14 boards of this nature, where they bring together health organisations, other public bodies, charities and businesses to work in partnership with the Council and each other.

⁶ <https://www.islington.gov.uk/-/media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/democracy/democraticdecisionmaking/constitution/20182019/20181023constitutionpart3october2018.pdf>

7.19. There is an active voluntary sector in the borough, which the Council works in partnership with, distributing funding through the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee, a Sub-Committee of the Executive, and the Islington Community Chest partnership with the Cripplegate Foundation.

Full Council

7.20. Full Council, the meeting of all the 48 Members of the Council, meets approximately 6 times per year. It is chaired by the Mayor and is held in public meeting.

7.21. In addition to determining those decisions which are reserved for full Council in legislation, such as setting the Council's budget, at ordinary meetings of the Council there is always an opportunity for members of the public and backbench Councillors, to ask questions of the Members of the Executive and to present Petitions. At every other meeting of full Council, the Members of the Executive also answer a range of questions from the Islington Youth Council.

7.22. Full Council also considers Motions, the majority of which are proposed and seconded by backbench Councillors.

Non-Executive Councillors

7.23. There are 40 non-executive Councillors. They are all expected to attend full Council and in addition sit on the various committees of the Council in accordance with the Council's constitution which sets out details of the role of a Councillor.

7.24. In addition to the Executive and full Council, Islington has established committees in order to discharge its functions. In total Islington has 24 Committees and Sub-Committees. Membership of these committees is predominantly comprised of the 40 backbench Councillors who attend approximately 140 committee meetings in total each year.

7.25. In addition to full Council, every Councillor sits on at least one committee. Over half the Councillors sit on three or more committees, over a quarter of Councillors sit on four or more committees and seven Councillors sit on more than five committees. On average every backbench Councillor is expected to attend 26 Council and committee meetings each year. One Councillor attended 31 meetings in the last municipal year. Fifteen backbench Councillors chair one or more committees.

Planning Committees

7.26. The Council has one planning committee and two planning sub-committees. The main planning committee is made up of ten locally elected Councillors who make decisions on major planning applications across the borough. The remaining applications are either

determined by one of the two sub-committees, each of which is comprised of five members from the main planning committee.

7.27. The main Planning Committee met 11 times during 2017 and determined 35 'major' applications. The two sub-committees combined met a total of 12 times during 2017 and determined 89 applications. This means that, on average, each of the ten Members that the planning committees are comprised of attended 17 planning related committee meetings and participated in determining approximately 80 applications.

Licensing Committees

7.28. The licensing committee deals with all matters under the Licensing Act 2003, making decisions on the sale of alcohol, public entertainment, cinemas, theatres, late night refreshment houses and night cafes.

7.29. Licensing the sale of alcohol is a new responsibility, following the 2003 Licensing Act; it was not part of local authorities' responsibilities when the last Boundary Commission Review was undertaken in 1999.

7.30. Islington has one main Licensing Committee, made up of 15 elected Members and a further 4 sub-committees, each consisting of 3 elected Members from the main licensing committee. The main Licensing Committee meets occasionally to make decisions on Licensing and Gambling policies and recommend these to Council for adoption. In 2017 the main committee met three times. The four sub-committees determine Licensing Applications and met in total 23 times during 2017 and determined 69 applications.

7.31. In addition, there is the Licensing Regulatory Committee, which considers special licenses, such as licenses for special treatments and met twice in 2017.

7.32. Islington is a very densely populated borough, which has a very vibrant night time economy. In the south of the borough particularly, there is a high density of drinking venues, including some relatively famous night clubs. Balancing the negative impact this can have on residents, whilst supporting the contribution these venues make to the local economy can be challenging and some licensing applications and reviews can be very controversial and have to be determined in the public eye. Occasionally, Licensing reviews have attracted sufficient public interest to be covered by television news stations in London. The documentation that Councillors must consider for some applications, particularly those with numerous representations, can run into hundreds of pages each.

7.33. The borough has a cumulative impact policy and the majority of applicants are accompanied by legal representation. The risk that applicants will appeal decisions, at significant cost to the Council, is relatively high. Membership of Licensing Committee therefore carries with it a considerable burden of work and responsibility.

Joint Committees

- 7.34. Councillors are also members of a number of Joint Committees whose role is to consider service provision in a larger geographic area. These include the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Health and the Haringey and Islington Health and Wellbeing Boards Joint Sub-Committee.
- 7.35. Since the last boundary commission review in 1999, local authorities now have the additional responsibility for Public Health, which has created significant additional work for some elected Members. Following the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, we have established both a Health and Wellbeing Board in Islington to facilitate joint working with the CCG, the NHS, the voluntary sector and the Camden and Islington joint Public Health service and a Joint Health and Wellbeing Board with Haringey Council to encourage wider partnership working.
- 7.36. The Islington Health and Wellbeing Board has 14 members, three of which are elected Members and it met six times during 2017. The Joint Haringey and Islington Health and Wellbeing Board was only established recently, it has 25 members, three of whom are elected Members.

Other Committees of the Council and Panels

- 7.37. In addition, 18 Councillors are members of the Audit Committee, Audit Advisory Committee, Pensions Sub-Committee, Pensions Board, Personnel Sub-Committee and Standards Committee and the members of these committees also receive special training to undertake their duties.
- 7.38. The Audit Committee and its sub-committees deal with a range of matters including Council accounts and audit functions, managing the pension scheme, personnel functions including agreeing significant policies and senior officer recruitment, hearing complaints about elected Councillors and electoral functions.
- 7.39. The Audit and Pensions-Sub Committee meet regularly throughout the year, the Standards and Personnel-Sub Committees are only convened when there is relevant business to determine. In total these committees met 16 times during 2017.
- 7.40. Refer to appendix 2 for the Islington Committee Structure.

Outside Bodies

- 7.41. In addition to membership of the Council's committees, many Councillors are also members of approximately 40 Outside Bodies, which include other authorities, such as the North London Waste Authority and London Council's Committees and more local

organisations, such as the Angel Business Improvement District and charitable trusts and foundations.

Summary of Governance Arrangements

- 7.42. The number of Councillors in Islington is low in comparison with the boroughs 15 nearest neighbours, as determined by CIPFA. In comparison with the boroughs three geographic neighbours, Islington's current 48 Councillors is notably lower: Camden has 54 Councillors, Hackney has 55 Councillors and Haringey has 57 Councillors.
- 7.43. Islington Council is strongly Member lead, with the Executive having responsibility for setting the direction of the Council and being publicly accountable for the operation of services within their portfolios.
- 7.44. Every Councillor sits on at least one committee of the Council, with over half of Councillors sitting on 3 or more. This is a significant time contribution for Councillors; who attend an average of 26 Council and committee meetings a year.
- 7.45. Islington has 24 Committees and Sub-Committees. Membership of these committees is predominantly comprised of the 40 backbench Councillors who attend approximately 140 committee meetings in total each year. Thirty-five of the Councillors (73%) have a special responsibility or other role.
- 7.46. Members are sometimes required to attend two meetings on the same evening or may have personal or professional responsibilities which means that they are absent from committee meetings. For this reason, it is occasionally challenging to achieve a quorum at committee meetings. Increasing the council size to 51 would help to ensure that member responsibilities are more evenly balanced and would improve the resilience of the council's committees.
- 7.47. Islington has a high number of planning and licensing decisions due to its central London location, vibrant night time economy and the borough's commitment to build more homes and protect local employment. This results in a high workload and level of responsibility for members on the Planning and Licensing committees. The papers for these meetings are comprehensive and it is essential that committee members can thoroughly read and digest the papers prior to each meeting and membership of these committees is therefore a considerable time commitment.
- 7.48. Islington would struggle to meet its governance standards with fewer Members. Although currently Islington is fulfilling requirements with 48 Councillors, an increase in 3 Members, to a total of 51, would ensure standards continue to be met in the future.

8. Scrutiny Functions

- 8.1. The overview and scrutiny function are a statutory power and duty. The Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee is the Council's statutory and primary scrutiny committee. This committee is responsible for the oversight of key decision making and budget monitoring, as well as supporting the work of the Executive and Council considering and making recommendations on policy.
- 8.2. In addition to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee, there are four other scrutiny committees. These are responsible for reviewing and making proposals on their area of focus, contributing to policy development, as well as monitoring and challenging service performance:
- Health and Care Scrutiny Committee [also a statutory committee]
 - Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
 - Housing Scrutiny Committee
 - Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
- 8.3. The Council also participates in the North Central London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a joint committee between five London boroughs, and in occasional Joint Committee meetings with Camden Council, where proposals only affect two of the boroughs, but are sufficiently significant for the Health Service to require formal consultation.

Refer to appendix 2 for the committee structure

- 8.4. Each scrutiny committee meets at least seven times a year. In addition to committee meetings, Members are expected to participate in evidence gathering sessions. This may be a visit to a particular service or facility or may take the form of a focus group with service users or staff. The number and frequency of additional sessions will depend on the particular topic being scrutinised and the capacity of committee Members to attend such sessions. Evidence gathering sessions are important as they allow members to experience first-hand the challenges that service users and council staff face. It is sometimes challenging for members to make time to attend these sessions, in addition to managing casework and other meeting commitments. An increase in the council size would ensure that there continues to be sufficient councillors with the capacity to fully engage with scrutiny.
- 8.5. Since the last boundary review was undertaken, local authorities have been given responsibility for public health and health scrutiny, which has led to an increase in work for both the Executive Members and backbench Councillors, through the creation of addition committees and in increased partnership working both with the health sector organisations and with neighbouring boroughs.

- 8.6. Thirty Councillors sit on at least one scrutiny committee. For this reason, no two scrutiny committees are able to meet on the same evening as there is often an overlap in membership. This places pressure on the annual Programme of Meetings, and it can be very challenging to arrange additional meetings at a time that members are free to attend. Increasing the council size would assist in meeting this challenge.
- 8.7. Committees are expected to undertake at least one scrutiny review per year, with a total of six reviews completed in 2017/18. Scrutiny reviews are lengthy, detailed pieces of work, with work carried out both during and outside of committee meetings.

A list of the scrutiny reviews being undertaken in 2018/19 is set out below:

SCRUTINY REVIEW	COMMITTEE
Responsive Repairs	Housing Scrutiny Committee
Homelessness	Housing Scrutiny Committee
GP Surgeries	Health and Care Scrutiny Committee
Volunteers and Resident engagement with Parks and Open Spaces	Environment and Regeneration
Permanent and fixed period exclusions from school	Children's Services
Universal Credit	Policy and Performance

- 8.8. Recent reviews have included the review a review of fire safety in RSL properties and a review of Thames Water's response to burst water mains, which led a significant number of additional meetings as a result of joint working with neighbouring boroughs and the Greater London Authority and ultimately to improvements in Thames Water's response to burst mains.
- 8.9. Once the committee has decided on a review topic, a scrutiny initialisation document will be drawn up through discussion with the relevant officers. The scrutiny initialisation document will clarify the purpose and objectives of the review and outline what evidence will be sought. The committee clerk will organise a work programme for the scrutiny committee that year, including any witness evidence submissions at meetings and site visits. Following completion of evidence gathering the committee clerk will draft a report summarising the evidence received and, in consultation with the committee members, will draft a series of recommendations, which will be formally agreed by the committee

in the final review report. Undertaking scrutiny reviews can therefore involve Members in a number of additional informal meetings to discuss progress and site visits.

- 8.10. In addition to carrying out reviews, the scrutiny committees also scrutinise other matters throughout the year which relate to their area of focus. The Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee also considers annual reports on educational attainment, child protection, the Council’s response to the government’s Prevent strategy, and the work of the Islington Safeguarding Children Board. The Housing Scrutiny Committee regularly invites housing associations operating in the borough to present on their performance. The Health and Care Scrutiny Committee receives annual performance updates from five NHS bodies serving the borough, as well as the Ambulance Service and the Adult Safeguarding Board. The Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the Council’s financial position and considers annual reports on crime and disorder, budget proposals, and the performance of the Council’s commercial trading company. The Committee also receives twice-yearly reports on procurement, staff sickness, and the use of agency workers
- 8.11. Each committee also receives annual presentations from the Executive Members relevant to their area of focus and monitors overall service performance on a quarterly basis.
- 8.12. The resource available to support the scrutiny committee reviews within democratic services is limited and Scrutiny Committee Chairs playing an active role in engaging with officers in the services and service users during the development of each review.
- 8.13. The scrutiny committees have a demanding work programme, but also require capacity to scrutinise new issues as they arise. Following the Grenfell Tower Fire, the Housing Scrutiny Committee considered an urgent item on the safety of Islington Council’s housing stock and Islington Council’s response to the fire.
- 8.14. A reduction in the number of Councillors would impact Members’ ability to thoroughly and successfully scrutinise Council services and the performance of partner organisations. One questionnaire response, from a Scrutiny Committee Chair, commented on how a reduction in the number of Councillors would impact on scrutiny:
- ‘It would mean more meetings (and preparation). I would find this difficult to fit in but also more tiring. I believe it would also lead to less scrutiny of Council and other decisions as I, and the other Councillors, would have less time available to do this. In such a diverse borough as Islington it is important to have Councillors from diverse backgrounds to reflect the experiences to the residents and to scrutinise Council decisions and policies. A reduction in numbers would have a detrimental impact on that’.*
- 8.15. Increasing the number of Councillors would help to absorb the increase in casework likely to arise from an increase in the population and meet the rising demand for immediate responses, ensuring that councillors can continue to be members of numerous committees and continue to play an active role in governance and scrutiny, thereby ensuring the continuing effectiveness of the Council’s scrutiny arrangements.

- 8.16. Scrutiny Reviews have led to improvements in individual services and made recommendations that have unpinned developments in Council policy, such as the early intervention agenda. The Committees also have an important role in holding other organisations and public sector bodies to account.
- 8.17. Councillors and members of the public value the role of scrutiny; meetings are attended by members of the public who regularly ask questions at meetings. Members of the public are able to ask questions without prior notice, which allows them to participate in local democracy and hold council services and others to account inside of a formal meeting. Meetings of the Housing Scrutiny Committee are particularly well attended when the Committee is scrutinising the performance of local housing providers.

Summary Scrutiny Arrangements

- 8.18. Thirty Members out of the 40 councillors who are eligible to do so, sit on at least one scrutiny committee.
- 8.19. The Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee is the Council's primary scrutiny committee. This committee is responsible for the oversight of key decision making and budget monitoring. In addition, there are four other scrutiny committees, each responsible for reviewing and making proposals on areas of Council work.
- 8.20. Committees are expected to undertake at least one scrutiny review per year, with a total of six reviews completed in 2017/18. Formal committee meetings are supplemented by informal evidence gathering sessions which are very valuable and enhance the quality of the scrutiny review. However, it is already challenging for members to commit to attend these sessions.
- 8.21. An increase in the number of councillors will allow the council to continue to have non-statutory scrutiny committees, that provide a real platform for active resident engagement, scrutinise the performance of partners and council departments and undertake in depth reviews that have a proven record of encouraging improved performance and innovation in service delivery and therefore have very positive outcomes for residents.
- 8.22. Maintaining the current number of councillors, or a reduction in the number of Councillors is likely to detrimentally impact the number of scrutiny committees in future years and the ability of the Council to maintain good standards of governance and engagement in scrutiny.

9. Representational Role

- 9.1. Members' role is set out within the Council's constitution and all Members are required to adhere to the Members' code of conduct. General principles require that Members should be selfless and have integrity and objectivity. They should also be accountable to the public and be open and honest. Lastly, Members should promote and support the general principles by leadership and example.⁷
- 9.2. Following each election all newly appointed Members undertake a weekend induction, which leads into a comprehensive induction and development programme, that is run throughout the year. This ensures that the councillors understand their statutory duties and responsibilities, in respect of declaring interests, safeguarding, data management and equalities. It also covers themes such as financial management, budget setting, case management, the housing allocation policy, universal credit and section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Ward Improvement Plan (WIP) funding to ensure that councillors are equipped to undertake their duties.
- 9.3. There is also a limited budget for external training and each year a number of members attend LGA development courses, conferences and other training to assist them in their roles.
- 9.4. Members who sit on the planning, licensing and audit committees attend specific training so that they have an understanding on legal requirements of those committees and the meeting procedures.
- 9.5. The current pressure on Members' time and the lack of evenings when there are not already committee meetings or ward surgeries makes it very challenging to schedule member development briefings. If, in response to the increase in demands on councillor's time from increased volumes of casework, they are unable to attend these briefings, the risk that members will fail to undertake a statutory duty properly will increase and members will be less able to undertake their roles effectively. An increase in the number of councillors will reduce the impact on their workloads of rising demand and rising volumes of casework, allowing us to continue to ensure that they are adequately equipped to undertake their roles.

Representation Role

- 9.6. Islington Councillors are spending extended periods of time working with the local community attending a range of meetings / community events or responding to communications such as emails and social media.

⁷ <https://www.islington.gov.uk/-/media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/democracy/democraticdecisionmaking/constitution/20182019/20181029constitutionpart6october2018.pdf>

- 9.7. Several backbench Councillors also act as Champions, encouraging colleagues across the Council and the wider community to actively engage with their area of special responsibility. Backbench Councillors are currently acting as Champions for;
- equalities,
 - reading,
 - recycling,
 - carers,
 - private renters,
 - migrants,
 - women and girls,
 - the armed forces,
 - social enterprise and
 - mental health.
- 9.8. All Councillors manage high levels of casework, some as a result of surgeries, but more frequently resulting from emails from residents requesting assistance. The Member Support team at the Council is very small, so the backbench Members must be self-sufficient, personally managing most of the casework and their diaries of local meetings, events and Council commitments themselves.
- 9.9. All Councillors actively participate in community engagement. Councillors hold regular surgeries in their wards, where local residents can speak to one of the ward Councillors and raise their concerns in person. Each Councillor holds one surgery per month, with the exception of August, totalling over 500 surgeries across the borough each year.
- 9.10. Every Councillor is also a member of a Ward Partnership. Most Ward Partnerships meet regularly throughout the year to engage with and consult local residents and businesses about issues affecting their local area.
- 9.11. In addition to Council and committee meetings, Ward Surgeries, Ward Partnership meetings and Outside Body meetings, on average Councillors attend approximately five further events and meetings in their wards each month, including:
- Safer Neighbourhood meetings
 - Police Ward Panel meetings
 - Residents and Tenants Association meetings
 - Action Group meetings
 - Gardening group meetings
 - Events at Community Centres, parks, libraries and in schools
 - Community events, fun days and festivals
- 9.12. Backbench Councillors advise that they spend on average 43 hours per month in Council and community meetings.
- 9.13. The Leader of the Council also holds regular public Leader's Question Time events, in local community venues, where members of the public can attend and ask questions.

Political responsibilities

9.14. In addition to their roles on Council committees, external bodies and other positions, Labour Group Councillors, who total 47 or the 48 Councillors, also participate in a large number of additional internal meetings relating to the Council. The Labour Group holds approximately 8 Labour Group Meetings each Council year, and also organises further non-compulsory private meetings for Members on policy matters throughout the year. In order to effectively participate as a Member of the Labour Group, a Labour Councillor will be expected to attend approximately one additional meeting a week, which are usually around two hours long and take place in the evenings.

Ward Improvement Plans

9.15. Islington ward Members take a lead and key role in ensuring valuable new projects are being implemented in their wards from developer funding. Ward Members take the lead in keeping Ward Improvement Plans (WIPs) up to date which set out a range of projects they would like to support with developer contribution funding. This is the main tool they use for allocating S106 and local (15%) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding collected from developments. The ward Councillor's responsibilities around Ward Improvement Plans and allocation of S106 and CIL funding include:

- Engaging with their Ward Partnership, constituents and other stakeholders on the priorities for their wards and what schemes should be included within the WIPs.
- Having the final decision on what projects are included on the WIPs.
- Agreeing what projects will be allocated funding (Our constitution sets out that at least 2 of the 3 ward members must agree to the allocation before it can be confirmed).
- Working with officers in keeping the WIPs up-to-date and monitoring the implementation of projects including withdrawing allocations where reasonable progress on a project is not being demonstrated.

9.16. Executive Members and senior officers are currently producing a new Borough Investment Plan which will set out a range of projects of a more strategic nature including cross ward boundary schemes. Local ward Members from April 2019 will be asked to allocate a further 35% of CIL funding to schemes on the Borough Investment Plan. Whilst the process of allocating funding to Borough Investment Panel schemes should remain similar to the current mechanism, there will likely be more requirements for meetings between neighbouring ward Members to agree on cross boundary priorities.

Civic Mayor

9.17. One of the backbench Members is elected to be Mayor each year. The role includes chairing full Council meetings but is largely ceremonial. The Mayor plays an important

role in the civic life of the borough, raising money for local charities and attending approximately 400 civic and community events each year.

9.18. Islington also has a Deputy Mayor. This role supports the current Mayor and undertakes some of the roles of the Mayor, who may not be able to attend all functions and events.

Time Commitment

9.19. Councillors were surveyed as part of the electoral review process to better understand the demands on their time, how they communicate with residents and the impact of changes over time for those Members who have been Councillors for a number of years.

9.20. According to the survey findings, the average Councillor is attending around 27 meetings per month, taking up to an average of 50.4 hours. This includes borough wide meetings, ward partnership and community meetings, tenant and resident meetings and ward surgeries

9.21. Members indicated that they were also spending extended periods of time communicating with residents, each spending on average 36 hours a month communicating by email and 20 hours a month on telephone calls. Letters and social media also featured frequently as methods Members and residents used to communicate with each other, both averaging around 5 hours a month per Councillor.

9.22. The increased use of email and social media has significantly increased Councillors' workloads and pressure for immediate action, with residents now expecting responses in hours opposed to days. Email has resulted in multiple exchanges taking place which may have previously been resolved by a single reply by letter. Additionally, social media and email can be sent 24 / 7 creating greater and greater accessibility to Councillors for residents and making it more challenging for councillors to manage the demand effectively.

9.23. The huge amount of time that Councillors are spending communicating with residents is in part a result of the need to deal with complex issues that affect the community. Many Councillors indicated that they were spending significant proportions of their time as a Councillor on complex issues opposed to dealing with straight forward issues. Seventy-four per cent of Members who responded to the survey, stated that they spent more time on Council business than they had expected.

9.24. Excluding full Council, there are 136 committee positions, plus a further 153 substitute positions, that Islington's 48 Councillors need to fill.

Summary of Representational Role

9.25. Thirty-five Councillors (73%) have a special responsibility or other role. Many Councillors are also members of external bodies.

- 9.26. On average Councillors are attending 27 meetings per month, taking up to an average of 2.5 hours per meeting. This includes borough wide meetings, ward partnership and community meetings, tenant and resident meetings and ward surgeries.
- 9.27. Councillors manage high levels of casework, some as a result of surgeries, but more frequently resulting from emails from residents requesting assistance. Case work is frequently complex, with Councillor dealing with residents with multiple needs.
- 9.28. All Councillors actively participate in community engagement. Each Councillor holds one surgery per month, with the exception of August, totalling over 500 surgeries across the borough each year.
- 9.29. Members have limited support; backbench Members must be self-sufficient, personally managing most of the casework and their diaries of local meetings, events and Council commitments themselves
- 9.30. Use of email and social media has significantly increased Councillors' workloads and pressure for immediate responses, with residents now expecting responses in hours opposed to days. Members on average spend 36 hours a month communicating by email.
- 9.31. Islington is a diverse borough that is led by people who represent a range of backgrounds. Any reduction in the number of Councillors from the current 48 would increase workloads and potentially reduce the numbers of quality candidates, particularly those who would find the role harder as a result of other responsibilities (i.e. child / carer's responsibilities and full-time work), which would lead to the elected members becoming less representative of the borough's population.
- 9.32. Ward Members take a lead and key role in ensuring valuable new projects are being implemented in their wards from developer funding. This Islington constitution sets out that at least 2 of the 3 ward Members must agree to the allocation before it can be confirmed.
- 9.33. The complex issues that Councillors face in Islington means that many Members are spending a lot more time on Council business than they had anticipated. An increase in the number of Councillors from 48 to 51 would enable Councillors to better fulfil different aspects of their role. Maintaining a council size of 48 would likely result in councillors having an unsustainable workload as population size and demand for services continues to grow.

10. Future Sustainability

- 10.1. The Council has experienced unprecedented cuts over the last few years, with £200 million savings made from the Council's budget since 2010. Over the next three years the Council will have to continue to make savings, closing a funding gap in the region of a further £50 million. In response, the Council has refocused its efforts around prevention and early intervention with the aim of making Islington a fair place for all. Members played a key role in establishing that vision and are working to ensure that the vision is realised, including provision of more affordable homes, whilst achieving saving and safeguarding the services that support vulnerable children, young people and adults. Not only does budget setting become more challenging each year, but many Councillors have reported that the impacts of austerity are driving an increasing volume of casework from residents in increasingly desperate circumstances.
- 10.2. It is likely that the Council will have to take increasingly challenging and ambitious measures to deliver savings and protect front line services in future and that the process for agreeing the budget will become more complex and demanding of Member's time. It is also likely, if the current trends continue, that the necessity of achieving savings will lead to changes in service provision that will result in an increase in enquiries and casework addressed to Members. This increased Member workload is likely to be exacerbated by the impacts of Brexit and the roll out of Universal Credit and further savings from Public Health budgets.
- 10.3. The Localities programme is an ambitious shared transformation programme to make Islington the best place in the country for prevention and early intervention on key social issues, through joined-up locality working. It will involve integrated, multi-disciplinary teams between the NHS and local government, joint working across services, a new partnership with the voluntary sector and a broader public sector locality partnership embracing all the public agencies working in Islington. The Council and Members believes that this will help to improve some of the deeper challenges that are found in Islington and improving local people's lives in the face of reduced budgets, although there is a lot of work to do.
- 10.4. It anticipated that both the numbers of electorate and residential population will grow over the next few years, with the total population of the borough rising to 247,800 by 2024. Members in Islington not only work for the voting electorate, they consider the whole residential population. This means that if 48 members are retained by 2024 Islington will have 5,163 residents per Councillor (4,859 with 51 Members) consequentially resulting in further increased workloads. If Member numbers were reduced to 45, this would result in 5,507 residents per Councillor, workloads would become extremely difficult to manage.
- 10.5. The survey of Members for this review found that Councillors reported that they have concerns about their current workloads and future sustainability if workloads continue to grow, as casework levels increase due to continuing cuts to services and Councillors become increasingly accessible via new technology. Sixty-two per cent of Councillors

who responded to the survey stated that they found it challenging or very challenging to balance demands on their time, with a further 6% stating they found it impossible.

- 10.6. Councillors expressed real concern that any reduction in the current number of elected Members would result in workloads becoming unmanageable and therefore making it increasingly hard to represent their constituents. Additionally, reaching decisions around matters such as budget setting, the Local Initiatives Fund and S106/CIF would prove difficult. Councillors indicated that the number of members needed to increase, rather than decrease, to ensure that committee meetings are quorate and that they have the capacity to properly engage with residents with complex issues and be of real assistance to people in need.

'It would be devastating to cope with the further increased pressure [if cllr number were reduced], casework, official duties and demands on the time. Because of government cuts, it is going to get worse and the demands will increase. We need to increase Councillors.'

- 10.7. Questionnaire responses made it clear that the high demand and the complex and diverse needs of constituents already meant that Councillors are at capacity, to the extent that one Councillor indicated that they had given up their job since becoming a Councillor, with others changing to part time hours in order to cope with the work load. There is a sense that for some Councillors personal lives have been put on hold.

'I currently feel that I work at capacity as a Councillor. I would end up having less time to prepare for meetings, and ultimately would do a poorer job at scrutinising the Council / making informed decisions.'

'There is a real danger that a point will be reached where the ever-increasing work-load will make it impossible for those with mortgages to pay and / or families to support to remain as councillors.'

- 10.8. Looking forward, Councillors anticipate that more time will be required responding to email and social media enquiries. As the use and reliance on technology is increasing and so too has residents' expectations regarding response. The most recent Islington Residents' survey (2018) highlighted that 9 in 10 Islington adults had access to online services through a home computer or use a smart device. Islington Council is utilising its digital infrastructure to make itself more accessible for its residents. However, the repercussions of this are that residents can now contact their Councillor 24 hours a day every day and expect prompt responses.

'People expect instant answers and something that used to take several days now usually has to be dealt with in a day'

- 10.9. Councillors have already seen an early indication that residents are facing problems following the introduction of Universal Credit (UC). By 2023, approximately 20,000

of Islington residents will be on UC. As a result of already raised issues, Councillors have begun a scrutiny review of UC. They have already spent in excess of 10 hours outside normal working hours, collecting evidence and witness information. It is anticipated that Councillors will see increasing issues relating to UC over the next few years.

10.10. The Localism Act 2011 poses opportunities for change as it redefines the relationship between central and local government. The Community Right to Challenge gives local community groups the chance to run local public services where they believe they can do so better. On-going budget cuts may result in unwelcomed changes to service delivery, which may encourage the communities right to challenge that would require us to work differently. Use of the Act in Islington could lead to a change in the role of Councillors in how they work and increasing the expectations of residents for getting their views heard even further.

10.11. It is not known yet what impact Brexit could have on the electorate in Islington. Currently the borough has 17,583 European electors (8,776 Islington North and 8606 Islington South and Finsbury). It is possible that Brexit will lead to a change in the number of electors from EU member states in Islington, affecting some wards more than others where there are greater numbers of Europeans. Many Councillors have acknowledged that the impact of Brexit will influence Islington communities and their workloads going forward, with the expectation that case work will increase.

'Brexit will have an impact on most, if not all of our residents, either directly or tangentially because we are a very diverse community. The impact will be on individuals and on private enterprise and the public sector as a whole as so many EU nationals live and work and contribute to the life and economy of our borough.'

Summary the Future

10.12. Over the years the Council has seen substantial cuts to funding whilst retaining services. In the next three years the Council will have to continue to make savings, closing a funding gap in the region of a further £50 million.

10.13. Projections of both population and electorate data indicate growth in both areas, putting further strain on high demand services.

10.14. Councillors anticipate that more time will be required responding to email and social media enquiries.

10.15. Councillors have concerns about their current workloads and future sustainability if workloads continue to grow. Levels of casework have continued to increase due to cuts to services and Councillors become increasingly accessible via new

technology. Any decrease in member numbers would have detrimental impact on their workloads.

10.16. Changes to the electorate as a result of Brexit cannot be anticipated, although it is believed that Islington communities will be affected.

10.17. Reducing or maintaining the council size would make it more difficult for the Council to meet all these challenges and sustain an appropriate level of engagement in governance and scrutiny. An increase in council size would support members in meeting the new demands associated with an increased workload and enable them to continue to fulfil their roles in relation to decision making, governance and scrutiny.

11. Conclusion and Recommendation

- 11.1. Taking into consideration all the above, it is recommended that the number of Councillors in Islington is increased from 48 to 51. This is to ensure that Islington can continue to meet its governance standards and meet scrutiny requirements and that Councillors can continue to play a full and active role as representatives of the local communities.
- 11.2. We have considered other council sizes in making this recommendation and believe that reducing councillor numbers would put intolerable pressure on Councillor workloads and it would become challenging for Councillors to effectively represent their communities. Reducing Councillor numbers to 45, would result in Members representing 3,741 electorate / 5,507 residents. Councillors already have high levels of complex case work, a reduction in Councillor numbers would make workloads very difficult to sustain.
- 11.3. The Councillor questionnaire strongly suggested that Members are already working to capacity, with returned councillors advising workloads are increasing and newly elected councillors advising that the demands on their time exceeding their expectations. Some Members have changed their working hours to accommodate this and many indicated that balancing duties with home life is difficult. To ensure that the borough continues to have a representative Council, which continues to fulfil its duties an increase in Member numbers is requested
- 11.4. The population of Islington has grown significantly since 1999, impacting on the density of the borough and therefore increasing demands on public services. This coupled with the deep social challenges within communities in Islington, as a result of deprivation and inequality, has significantly increased the volume of Councillor casework. Any reduction in the number of Councillor would not support good representation and would undermine councillor engagement in governance and scrutiny.
- 11.5. Many residents face both complex and multiple challenges, including social isolation, mental ill health, domestic violence, substance abuse, housing and employment and so have repeated contact with Islington services. Councillors spend significant amounts of their time working on more complex cases as a result of residents' complex and multiple needs
- 11.6. The dramatic increase in email and social media over the last 20 years, means that residents can contact their Councillors at ease anytime of the day. This has significantly impacted on workloads.
- 11.7. The new responsibilities for Public Health and Licensing have increased the responsibilities of elected members and caused an increase in councillors decision making role and increased the number of committees and meetings the councillors must attend.
- 11.8. The number of Councillors in Islington is low in comparison with the boroughs 15 nearest neighbours, as determined by CIPFA. An increase in 3 more Councillors to 51 will still

mean there are few Members than neighbouring boroughs Camden, Hackney and Haringey.

- 11.9. Members are under considerable pressure, with increasing and complex caseloads. It is currently challenging to programme committee meetings due to the number of councillors who are members of multiple committees and there is a concern regarding future sustainability. To ensure that Islington continues to have Councillors who effectively represent the community and a sufficient number of councillors to manage casework demand and serve on committees and play an active role in governance and scrutiny it is requested that councillor numbers are increased by 3 to 51.

12. Appendices

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Appendix 1

Islington Council's Alternative Electorate Forecasts

We have prepared alternative forecasts to those provided by the LGBCE. We have taken this approach because there are numerous housing developments planned across Islington between 2018 and 2024, and we feel that the forecast generated by the LGBCE's method does not accurately represent the changes that we expect to see in Islington between now and 2024.

Data sources

Our Alternative Forecasts are based on the 2016-based Demographic Projections, London Ward population projections Housing-led Model, published by the Greater London Authority (GLA). We have used these forecasts because we believe that the GLA's Housing-Led model is a better representation of the changes in the Islington population. This is consistent with other London boroughs, most of whom also use the GLA Housing-led projections as their source for population estimates. Our choice to use the GLA's ward-level population estimates was informed by the level of detail they provide, as they reflect the expected growth in each ward, and the relative ease of mapping these to the polling districts.

We have supplemented these forecasts with information from the Council's Planning department on the number of housing units expected to be completed in each polling district by 2024.

Finally, we have also used the local electoral registers, to inform the number of people in each polling district that are expected to be registered in 2024.

Methodology: Population change in polling districts

Our estimates have been calculated based on the GLA's housing-led population estimates, by ward. We have calculated 2018 polling district populations by keeping the same distribution as the 2018 electoral register, assuming that enrolment on the electoral register is uniform across the borough.

We have then created estimates of the number of adults per household in the new housing developments that will be completed by 2024. The estimated household sizes have been developed through an iterative process, and are different for each ward, so as to create a balance in the population growth in wards with housing developments and those without.

Two wards are expected to see more housing units built than their expected population increase. In these instances, we have assumed one-person households for the new properties, and have predicted a population decrease in the other polling districts in the ward.

The remainder of the forecast population increases in each ward have been shared proportionally across the polling districts. This part of the approach is similar to the LGBCE's

original approach – where a polling district has 2% of the borough’s 2018 population, we have assigned it 2% of the remaining forecast increase.

Methodology: Forecast electors

Our forecast of the number of residents who will be enrolled as electors have also been changed from the LGBCE model. This is because we feel that taking the average proportion of resident adults on the electoral roll is unrepresentative given the past three years in national politics.

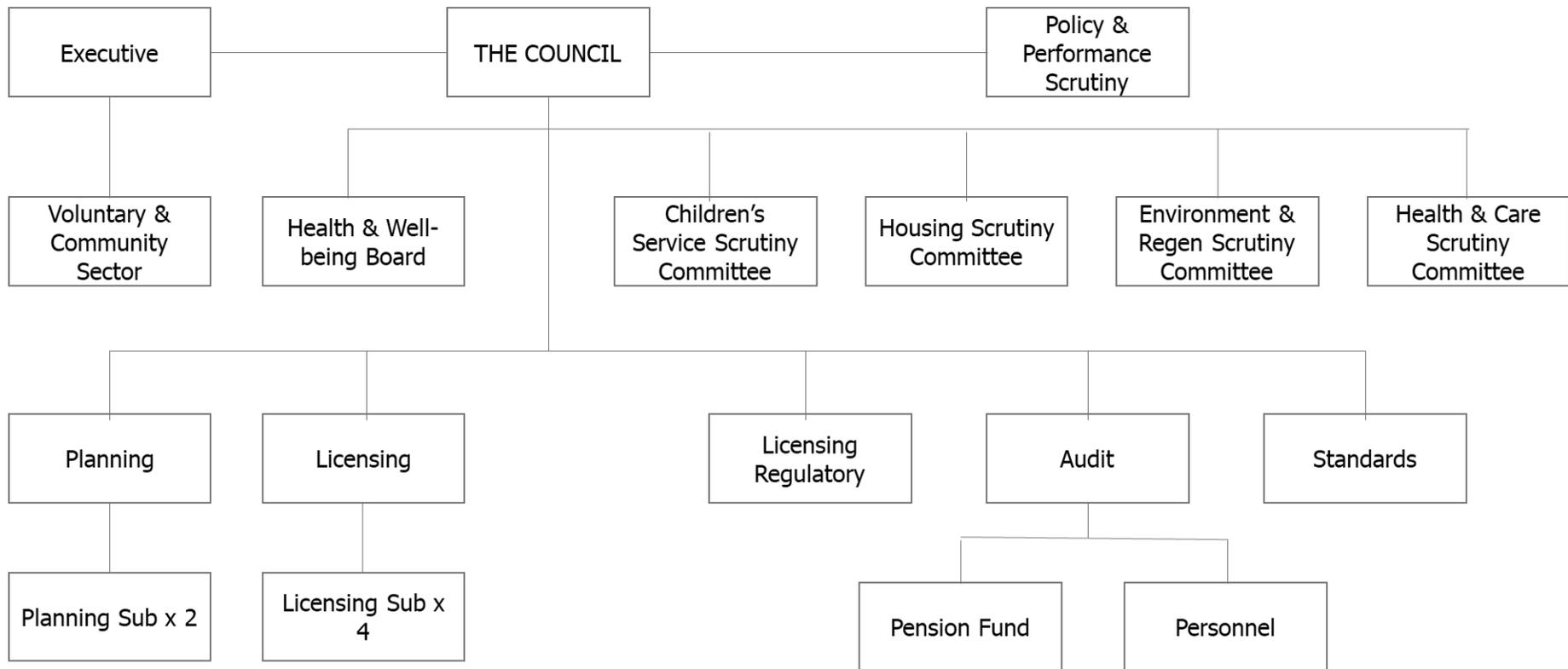
In 2016, 83.9% of the Islington population were on the electoral roll, and in 2017 81.3%, this dropped in 2018 to 75.4% which brings the average of the past three years down to 80.2%. However, given that there was a referendum and a national election in 2016 and 2017 we feel that these two years are a better model for the proportion of adults that will register as electors in 2024. Therefore, we have used the average of these two years, 82.6%, to determine the final estimate of the number of electors in 2024.

Conclusion

This has led us to our final calculations, which have been submitted to LGBCE using their workbook template as requested. We believe that these represent a better forecast of the changes that will happen in Islington over the next six years than the standard model.

Appendix 2

Committee Structure Chart





Appendix 3 – Councillor Appointments to Outside Bodies

- London Council Committee
 - Leader’s Committee (1 x Councillor, 2 x deputies)
 - London Councils – Transport and Environment Committee (1 x Councillor, 2 x deputies)
 - London Councils – Grant Committee (1 x Councillor, 4 x deputies)
- London Councils Forums
 - Greater London Employment Forum
 - Pensions CIV Joint Committee (1 x Councillor, 1 x deputy)
- Local Government Association
 - LGA General Assembly (4 x Councillors)
- Other
 - Angel Business District Board (1 x Councillor)
 - Archway Town Centre Management Board (2 x Councillors)
 - Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Schemes Panel (2 x Councillors)
 - Crossrail High Level Forum (1 x Councillor, 1 x deputy)
 - Cross River Partnership (1 x Councillor)
 - Finsbury Park Town Centre Management Group (1 x Councillor)
 - Groundwork London’s Local Authority Strategic Board (1 x Councillor)
 - Islington Community Chest Panel (3 x Councillors, 1 x deputy)
 - London Road Safety Council (1 x Councillor)
 - Nags Head Town Management Group (2 x Councillors)
 - Newable – previously known as Greater London Enterprise (1 x Councillor)
 - North London Waste Authority (2 x Councillors)
 - Reserve Forces and Cadets (1 x Councillor)
 - SACRE (2 x Councillors)
 - Safer Neighbourhoods Boards (2 x Councillors)
 - Shared Digital Joint Committee (2 x Councillors, 1 x substitute)
 - Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust (1 x Councillor)
 - Central London Forward (1 x Councillor, 1x substitute)
 - City of London Academy (1 x Councillor)
 - City YMCA London (1 x Councillor)
 - Clerkenwell Charities (2 x Councillors)
 - Cloudesley Charity (4 x Councillors)
 - Cripplegate Foundation (2 x Councillors)
 - Dame Alice Owens School Foundation Advisory Committee (2 x Councillors)
 - Finsbury Park Trust (1 x Councillor, 1 x deputy)
 - Islington United Charities (4 x Councillors)
 - Joint Health, Overview and Scrutiny Committee (2 x Councillors)
 - Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (1 x Councillor)
 - LHC (2 x Councillors)
 - Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (1 x Councillor)
 - Pensions Board (1 x Councillor)
 - Richard Reeves Foundation (1 x Councillor)
 - Sadlers Wells Foundation (2 x Councillors)
 - Schools Forum (1 x Councillor)
 - St Luke’s Trustee Ltd (previously St Luke’s Parochial Trust) (3 x Councillors)
 - St Sepulchre United Charities (2 x Councillors)

- University College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (1 x Councillor)

Appendix 4 Member Questionnaire Results Summary

A questionnaire was conducted with Councillors to help inform first part of the Islington Electoral Arrangements and Boundary review on Council Size.

The questionnaire asked Councillors to focus on their own personal experience as a Councillor and respond to questions regarding their workload commitments and casework that they currently undertake.

Summary

In total 34 Councillors of 48 completed the questionnaire (71% response rate).

On average Councillors indicated that they had been elected members for 5.5 years. This ranged considerably; between 6 months – 17 years.

Councillors that responded covered all 16 wards of the borough.

1) Meeting and Events

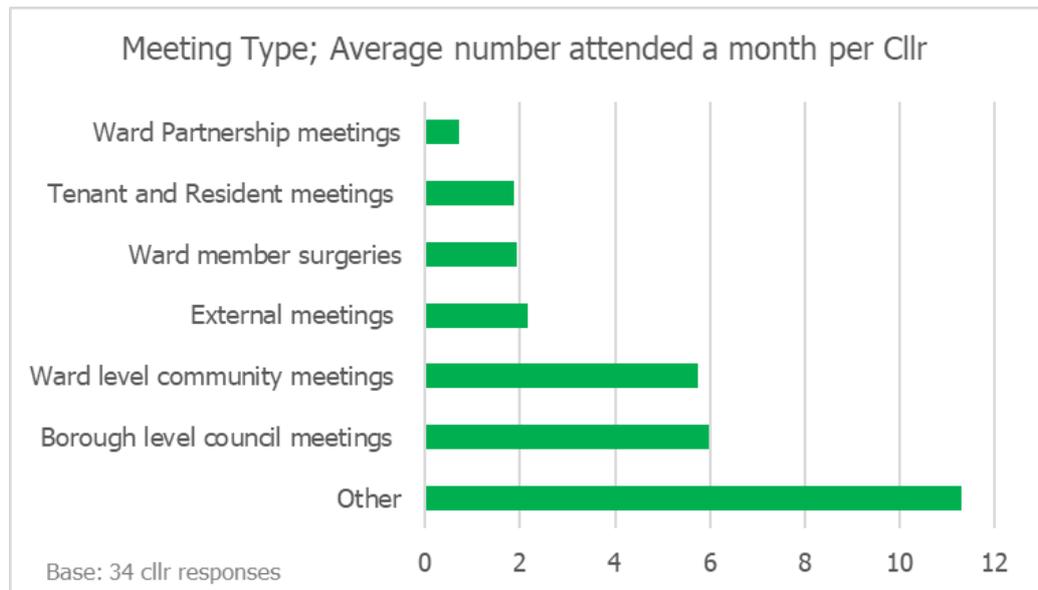
Qu - Which of the following meetings do you attend in your capacity as an Islington Councillor?

Councillors indicated that they attended the below meetings from a selected list. Many Councillors attended all.

Meeting	Responses
Borough level council meetings	34
Ward Partnership meetings	34
Ward level community meetings	34
Tenant and Resident meetings	32
Ward member surgeries	33
External meetings	27
Other	14

Responses where 'Other' was indicated included; Finance Policy Forum, Party meetings, portfolio and council officer meetings, Stop and Search, Reference groups, Voluntary and Community Sector and young people meetings.

On average Councillors attended 27 meetings per month, taking up to an average of 50.4 hours a month.



2) Events in the community

Qu - Do you attend events in your community? Approximately, how many events like these do you attend in a year?

All respondents indicated that they attended events in their community, with Councillors recording that they had attended over 800 events in the community over the last year.

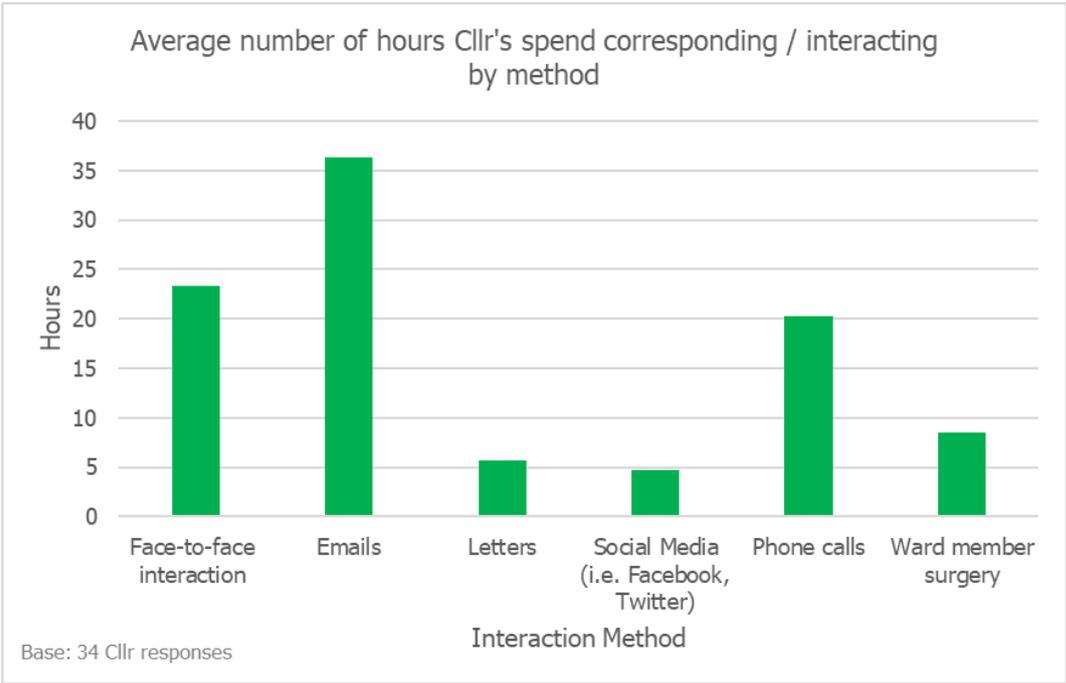
The range of community events that Councillors attended is significant, with examples including; Community Centre events, local area festivals, Tenant and Residents Association events, Schools, community sporting events, youth projects, library projects, church projects etc.

3) Communicating and interacting with local residents.

Qu - How much time do you spend corresponding / interacting with Islington residents on council business and dealing with casework? (please answer all that apply) [Hours spent on each activity a month noted]

Councillors indicated that they were spending significant amounts of time corresponding and interacting with Islington residents of council business and dealing with casework.

Most notably, Councillor responses found that on average they are spending 36 hours a month writing and responding to emails; 23 hours conducting face to face interactions with residents and 20 hours a month making or receiving phone calls.

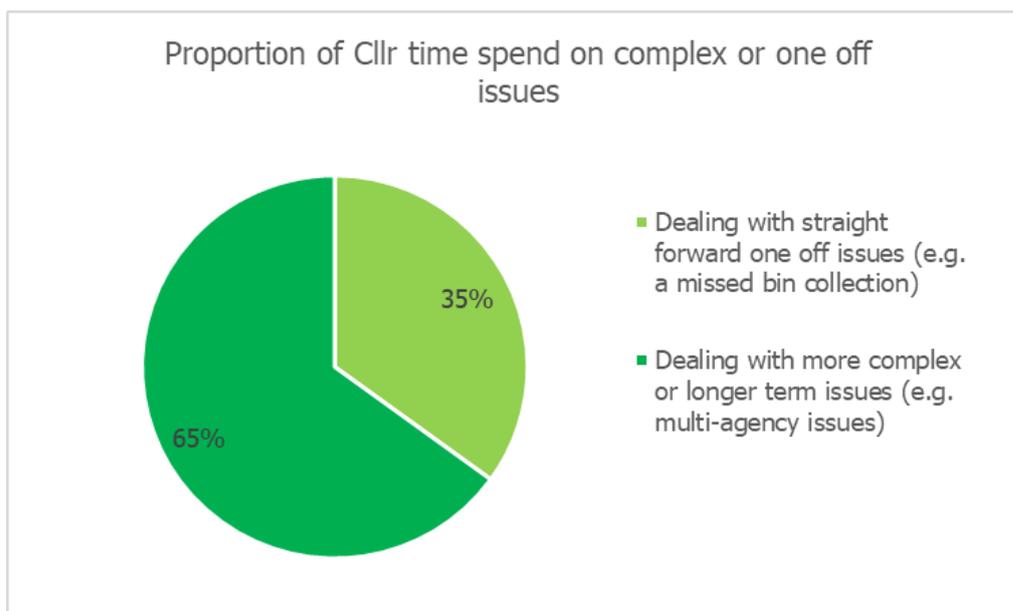


4) Proportion of time as a council spent on complex or one-off issues

Qu - What proportion of your time as a councillor do you spend on the following;

- *Dealing with straight forward one-off issues (e.g. a missed bin collection)*
- *Dealing with more complex or longer-term issues (e.g. multi-agency issues)*

Councillors indicated that they were spending significant amounts of time dealing with more complex issues that Islington residents have. On average, 65% of Cllr time is being spent on more long-term issues.



5) Time spend on council business

Qu - Is the amount of time you spend on council business what you expected?

- *No, it is more than I expected*
- *Yes, it is what I expected*

Seventy-five per cent of councillors who responded to the questionnaire indicated that the time commitment as a councillor was more than they had anticipated.

Many new councillors indicated that the volume of casework relating to complex issues was unexpected, with longer serving councillors indicating that as a result of austerity casework had increased.

Councillors who sit on planning and licensing committees indicated that the thorough nature of these committees, requires reading a significant amount of reports and conducting site visits. Likewise, those who sit on the Policy and Performance Committee highlighted that conducting reviews took substantial time, collecting evidence, including interviewing key people to ensure they conduct their investigation.

Several councillors indicated that as a result of funding cuts and austerity measures, they were spending more time on matters to do with the financial planning and budget status of the council, whilst trying to also ensure that local projects that support the vulnerable and disadvantaged are funded.

6) Changes in time commitments and work required

Qu - If you have been a councillor for a number of years, has the time commitment / work required of you increased or decreased over time? If it has changed, in your experience what change has been the most significant and has this been positive or negative?

Twenty-three of the 34 councillors (68%) that responded indicated that they had been a Councillor for a number of years. All of these respondents indicated that there had been an increase in their time commitment / workload.

The use of email was mentioned on multiple occasions by Councillors as one of the reasons their time commitment and workload had increased. Some saw the use of email as a positive medium for communicating with residents, highlighting that it was valuable that residents could contact their local Councillor with ease. However, this has resulted in a significant amount of time being committed to responding to queries and requests, with the expectation of a fast or immediate response.

Councillors also indicated that there had been an increase in the amount of complex casework over the years, with demand for support increasing. Respondents indicated that the need for housing had increased enormously, with residents requesting assistance with access to housing, private rentals and overcrowding. Councillors indicated that welfare issues were also increasing, with issues concerning Universal Credit noted.

Councillors are now required to make finance decisions regarding the Local Initiative Fund (LIF) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is a change from the way the Council operated at the time of the boundary review which has led to improved decision making and accountability, but it takes more elected member time.

Councillors are conducting significant amounts of work with partners on Anti-Social Behaviour, youth crime and public reassurance. This work has resulted in some Members having to respond to critical incidents and any time of the day (such as the Finsbury Park terror attack).

7) Expectations

Qu - To what extent do you feel the experience of being a councillor has matched your expectations? Please explain.

Councillors indicated that they found their role rewarding and fulfilling. Many indicated that they felt they were actively helping their communities and individuals and that casework could be enormously gratifying.

Respondents also indicated that the role as a Councillor was also challenging, with significant demands. Some indicated that they hadn't anticipated some of the more extreme situations that they had encountered, which left them feeling ill prepared.

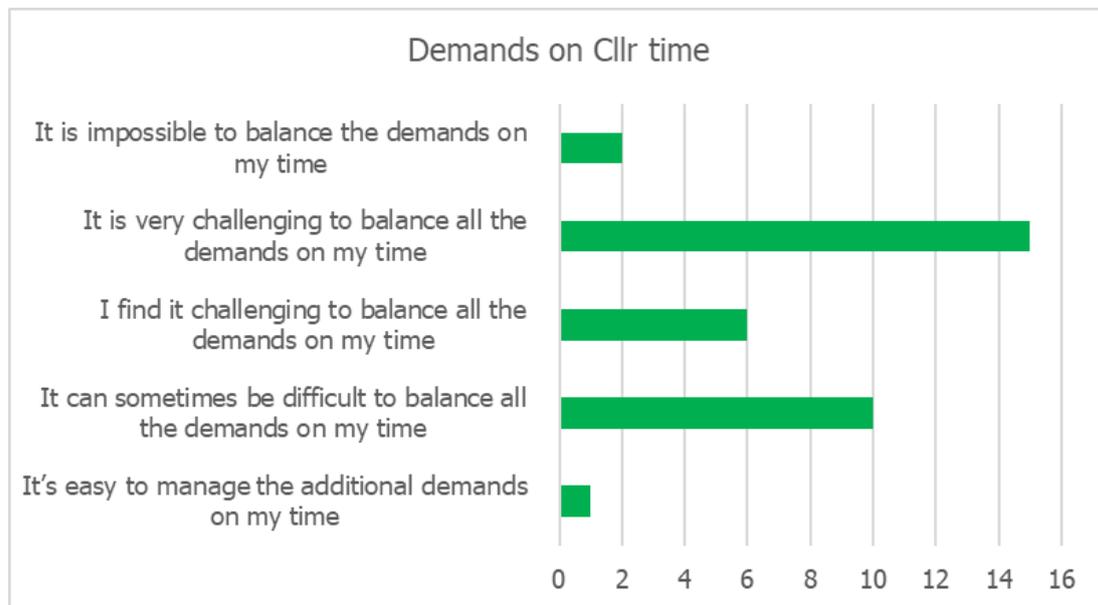
Councillors indicated that they were often helping people with complex issues who were stressed, frustrated, with poor mental or physical health which required significantly more time commitment that they had expected.

Many acknowledged that they were aware of the inequalities within Islington communities but not the extent and how negative the impact is on residents and their standard of living. With welfare changes and the continuing squeeze on public services, work is increasingly complex.

8) Managing demands on time

Qu – We know that many councillors have other commitments and that it can be a demanding role. Please select the sentence below which best describes how being a councillor has impacted on you:

Sixty-eight per cent of respondents indicated that they found the demands on their time as a Councillor challenging, with half of all respondents indicated that they found it very difficult or impossible to manage the demands on their time.



9) View on the changes of Cllr numbers

Qu - number of Councillors on the borough may change as a result of the Local Government Boundary Commission's review.

What impact would a decrease in the number of councillors have on your role as a councillor?

Councillors indicated that a reduction in the number of councillors would negatively impact the borough making it more difficult to adequately resource and deal with issues arising out of ward partnerships.

Reduction in councillor numbers would result in even greater workloads for Members, many of which already felt they were already at capacity. It would be harder to represent residents and support the levels of casework that Councillors currently undertake. A reduction would mean that cover of maternity leave, sickness or unforeseen absence would not be possible.

Members indicated that a reduction in Councillor numbers would result in less transparency, which is essential in decisions such as those related to the spend of the LIF and CIF funds.

It would be harder to achieve diversity of representation in wards based upon gender, race etc. and making it more difficult for those with other responsibilities/challenges to put themselves forward

There was an indication that it would be more beneficial to increase councillor numbers. This would greatly help with council business, council meetings and would provide more support for Islington's residents.

10) Future; changing role of Islington Councillors

Qu - looking to the future, how do you think your roles as a councillor is likely to change?

Councillors reported that they have concerns about their current workloads and future sustainability if workloads continue to grow, as casework levels increase due to continuing cuts to services and Councillors become increasingly accessible via new technology

Councillors anticipate that more time will be required responding to email and social media enquiries. As the use and reliance on technology is increasing and so too has residents' expectations regarding response.

Councillors indicated that they believed that workloads will increase with more complex issues as a result of ongoing austerity measures and cuts to funding. Issues concerning housing and social care are expected to increase.