

Community Governance Review

Overview of Parish Data

Parish Councils in Herefordshire

Parishes fall into one of five types in Herefordshire:

- City council (Hereford)- large numbers of electors, few councillors
- Town council (the five market towns)- large numbers of electors, more councillors than in the city council.
- Parish councils- varying in size but representing clear indefinable areas.
- Group parish council- Two or more neighbouring parishes act as a single council. (These are examined further in the next slide.)
- Parish meetings – do not hold elections or precept.

Numbers of Parishes

- There are 239 parishes within Herefordshire
- Representing these parishes there are 133 Parish Councils and 4 Parish Meetings.
- There are 76 non-grouped Parish Councils and 51 Group Parish Councils.
- There are 259 electoral Parish Wards in Herefordshire. There are also the four parish meetings.
- There are 184 Polling Stations in operation for local elections in Herefordshire, this includes parish elections. Larger parishes may be serviced by more than one polling station.

Types of Group Parish Council

There are a number of common types of group parish council in Herefordshire.

Groups made of a several very small parishes, e.g. Kilpeck

PARISH COUNCIL	PARISHES (PARISH WARDS)	Councillors	Vacant Seats from 07/05/2015	Co-options	Electors	Electors Per councillor	2001-2011 Census Population Change %	Band D Equivelant(£)
Kilpeck Group Parish Council	Kilpeck	3	0	0	145	48.33	7.50	51.22
	Kenderchurch	2	0	0	63	31.50	-2.00	51.22
	St Devereux	2	0	0	84	42.00	1.80	51.22
	Treville	1	0	0	35	35.00	-16.70	51.22
	Wormbridge	1	0	0	35	35.00	-15.30	51.22

Groups made up of one large parish council with one or more, much smaller parishes, e.g. Kingstone and Thrupton; Bosbury & Coddington

PARISH COUNCIL	PARISHES (PARISH WARDS)	Councillors	Vacant Seats from 07/05/2015	Co-options	Electors	Electors Per councillor	2001-2011 Census Population Change %	Band D Equivelant(£)
Kingstone & Thrupton Group Parish Council	Kingstone	11	1	3	959	87.18	5.10	23.35
	Thrupton	1	0	0	30	30.00	-75.80	23.35

PARISH COUNCIL	PARISHES (PARISH WARDS)	Councillors	Vacant Seats from 07/05/2015	Co-options	Electors	Electors Per councillor	2001-2011 Census Population Change %	Band D Equivelant(£)
Bosbury and Coddington Parish Council	Bosbury	11	2	1	550	50.00	0.40	25.76
	Coddington	2	0	0	91	45.50	-72.20	25.76

Numbers of councillors

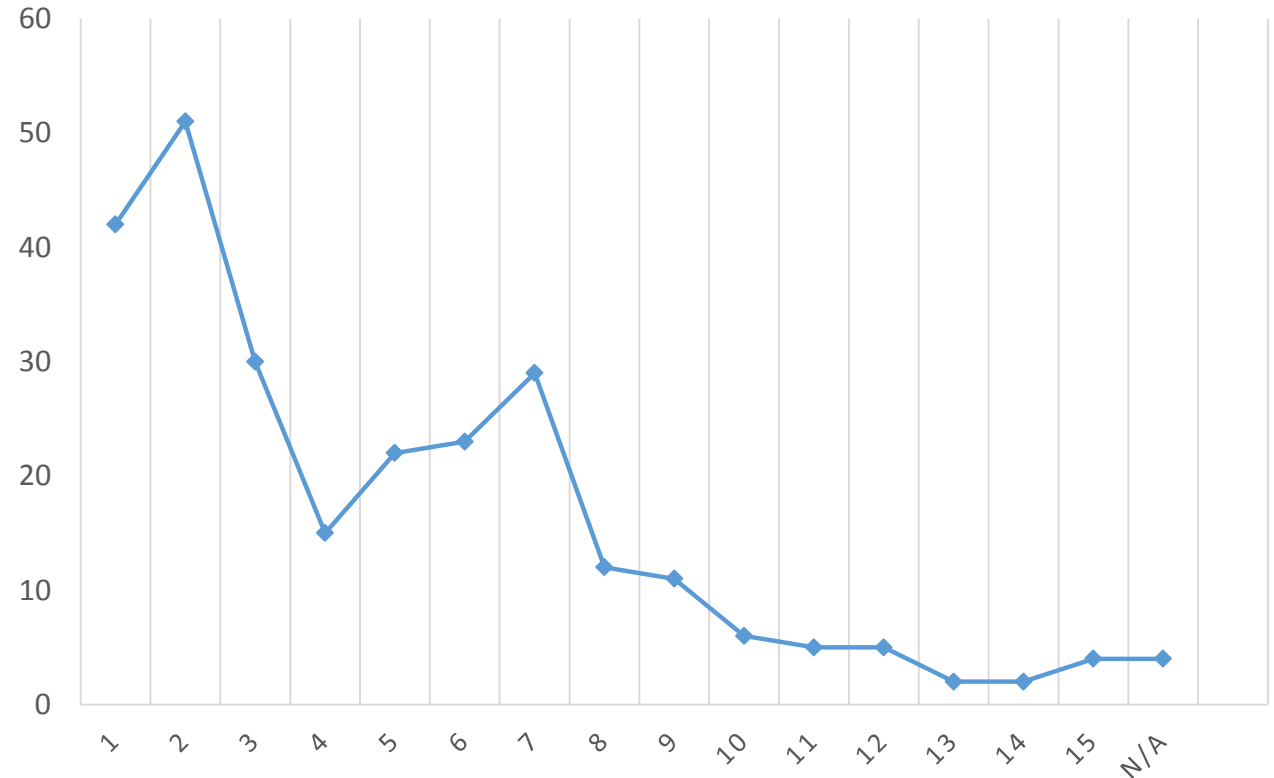
Due to the high number of grouped parish councils, a significant number of parishes have a small number of seats with only one or two councillors representing a parish.

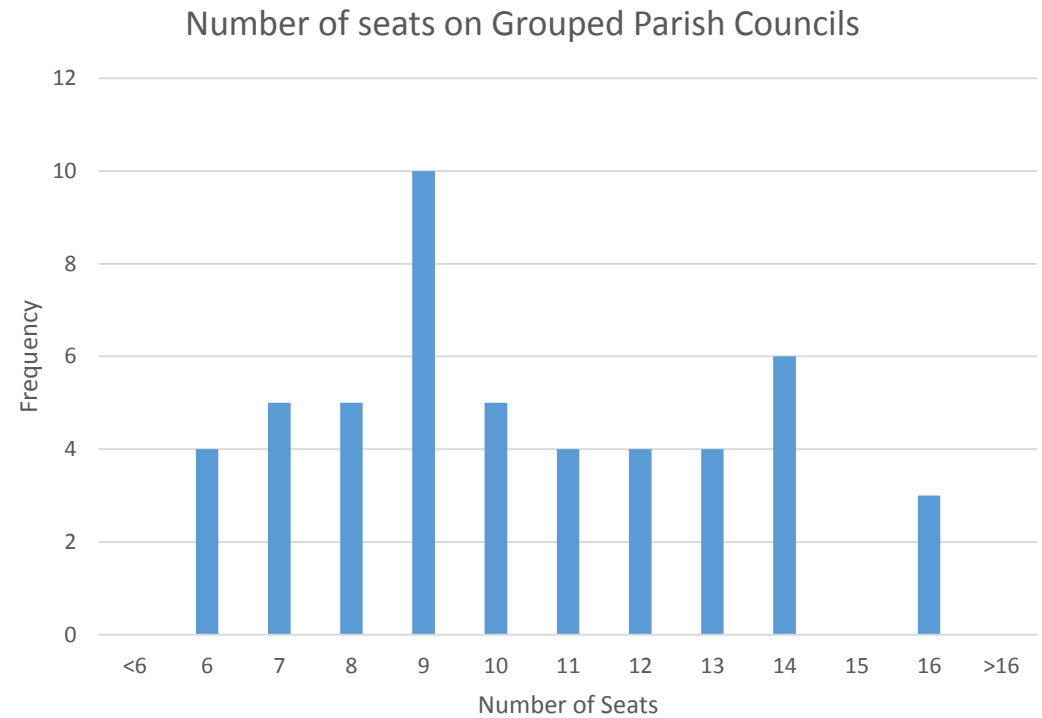
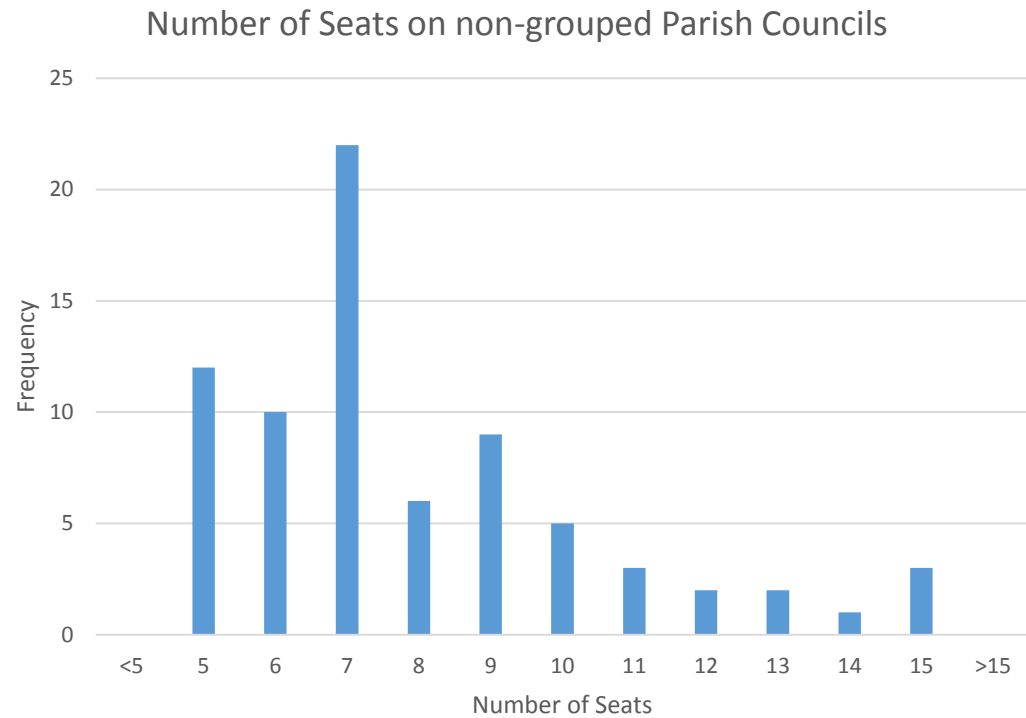
The average number of seats on a group parish council is 10

The average number of seats on a non-grouped parish council is 8

A further breakdown of the difference between grouped and non-grouped parishes is included on the next page.

NUMBER OF SEATS ON PARISH COUNCILS





There are clear differences in the characteristics of Group and normal (non-grouped) Parish Councils. Non-grouped Parish Councils typically have a smaller number of seats. Group Parish Councils are made of small councils with few seats, which when combined have a generally larger number of seats than on normal parish councils.

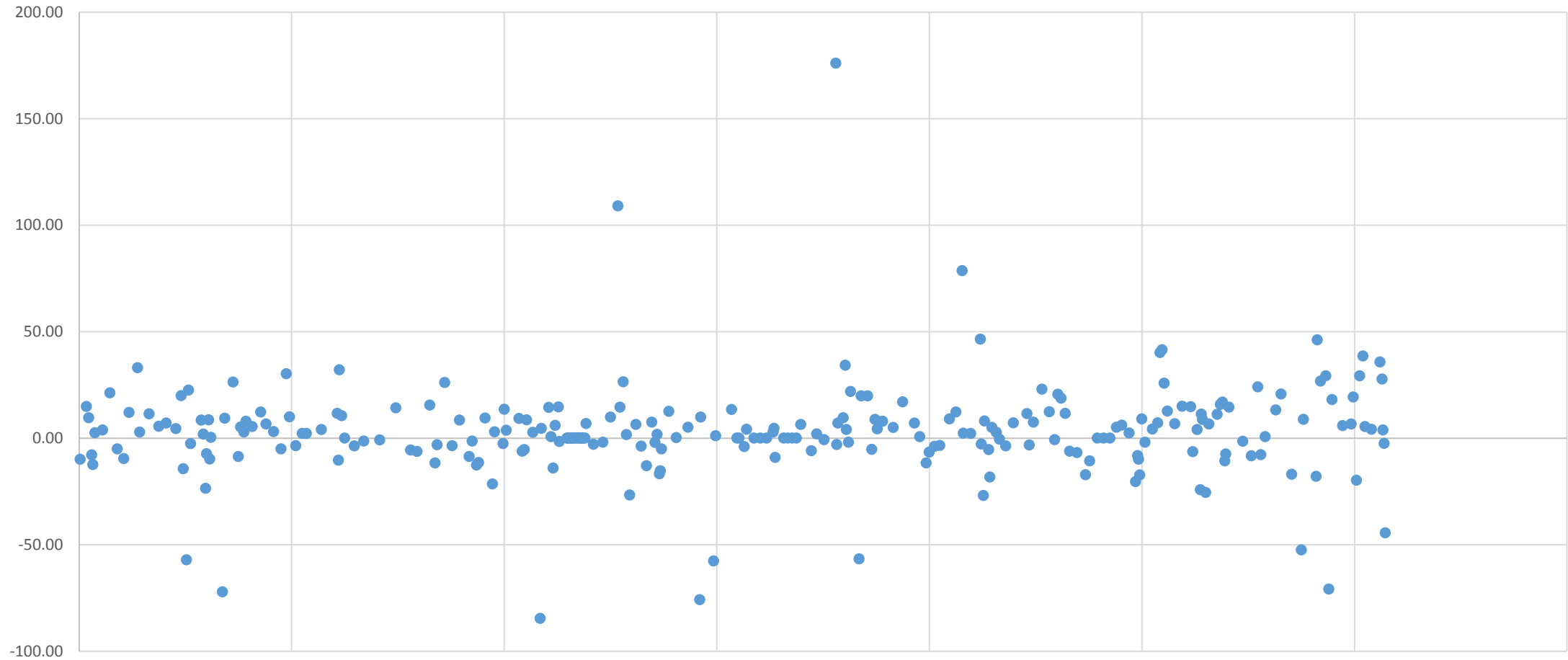
*City and Town Councils excluded from data

Parish Population Sizes

Parish population sizes

- One of the main reasons to conduct a CGR is to update electoral arrangements with changes in population.
- Trends in census data and the number of registered electors in parish have been considered.
- Key trends identified include:
 - There has been a small general increase in population in recent years. This change has been significant in individual parishes.
 - The number of electors per councillor varies depending on whether a Parish has a grouped or non-grouped parish council.
 - Data includes a number of anomalous results which could be addressed through a CGR. Broadly however, most parishes are at a level of relative consistency.
 - There is a distinct difference in representation and council size between rural parish councils and city or town councils

2001-2011 Census Population Change per Parish %

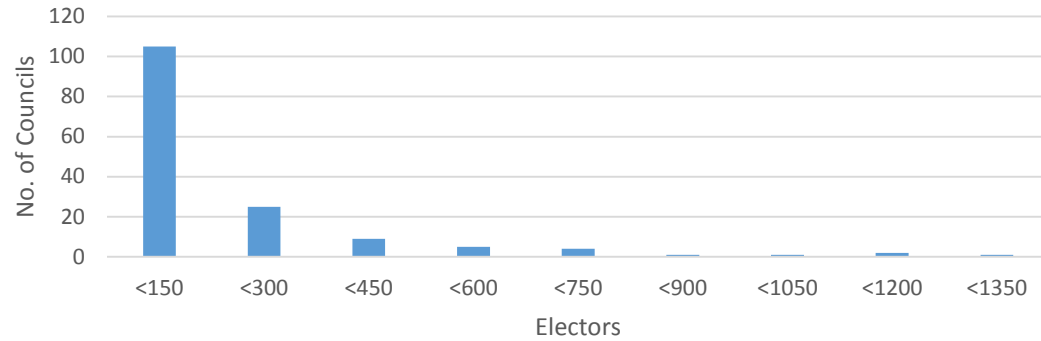


The data demonstrates reasonable variation in population since 2001 with a general increase in population at an average increase of 3.3% for the county as whole. However, individual parishes have fluctuated in population size outside of this trend. The rate of change, while generally within a 10% variation includes a number of outliers where population change has been more significant.

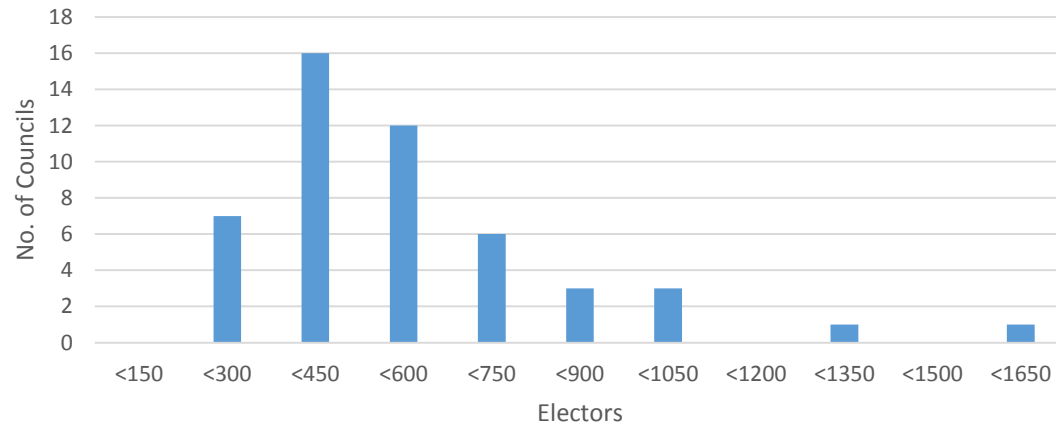
Parish Council Electorates

Group Parish Councils

Electorate of Individual Parishes within Groups

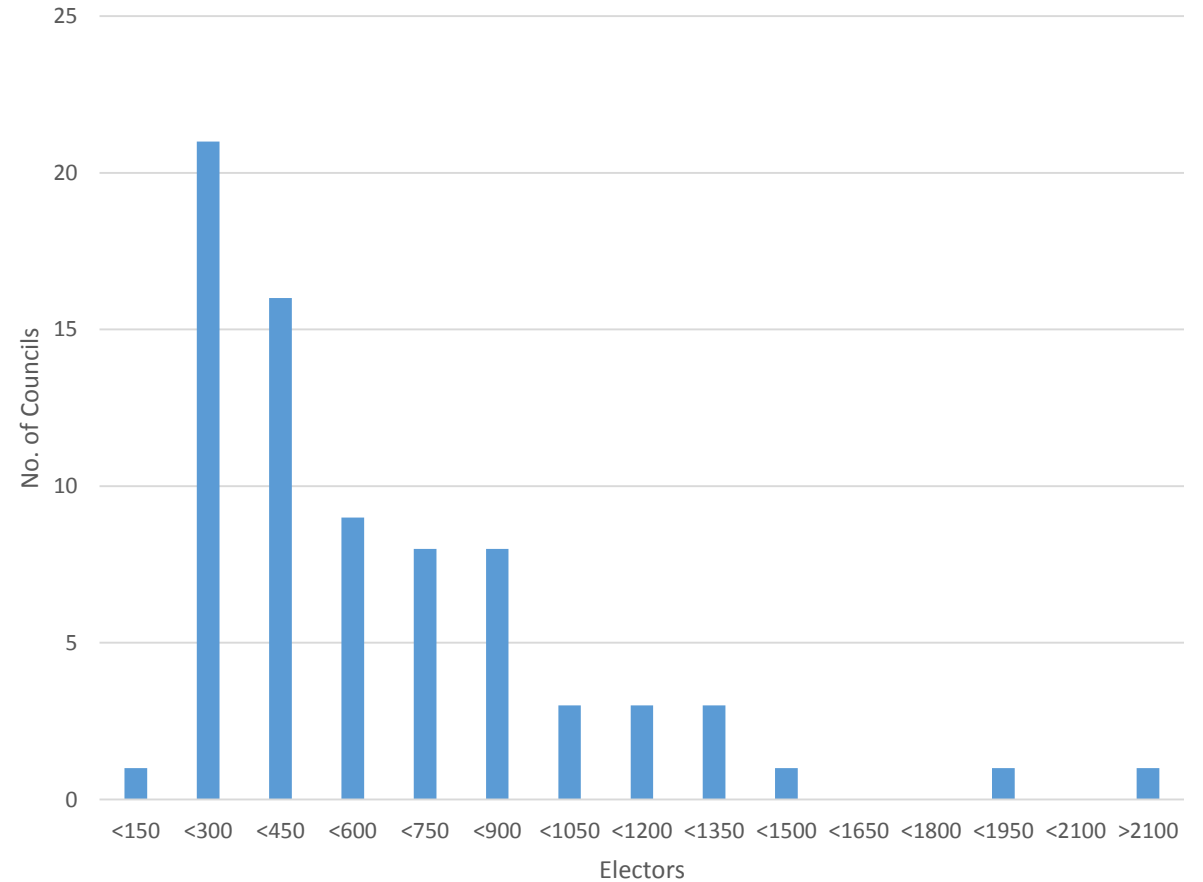


Total Electorate of Group Parish Councils



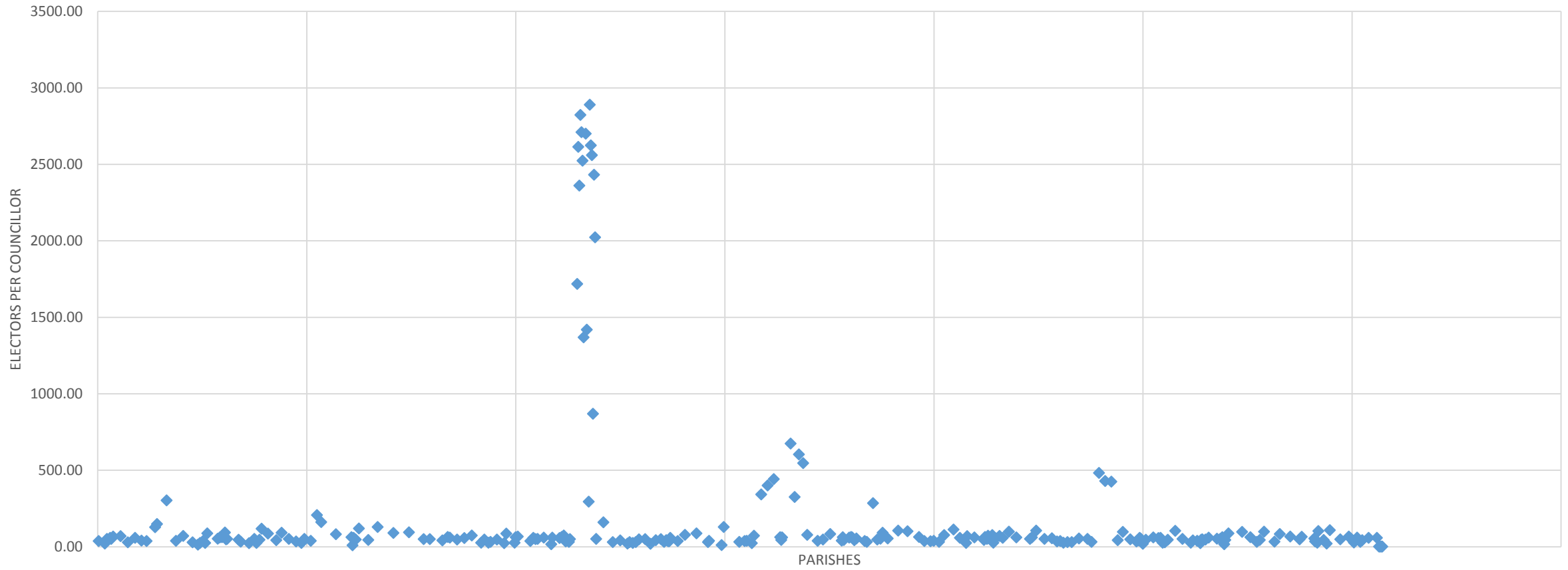
Non-Grouped Parish Councils

Non-Grouped Parish Council Electorate



*City and Town Councils excluded from data

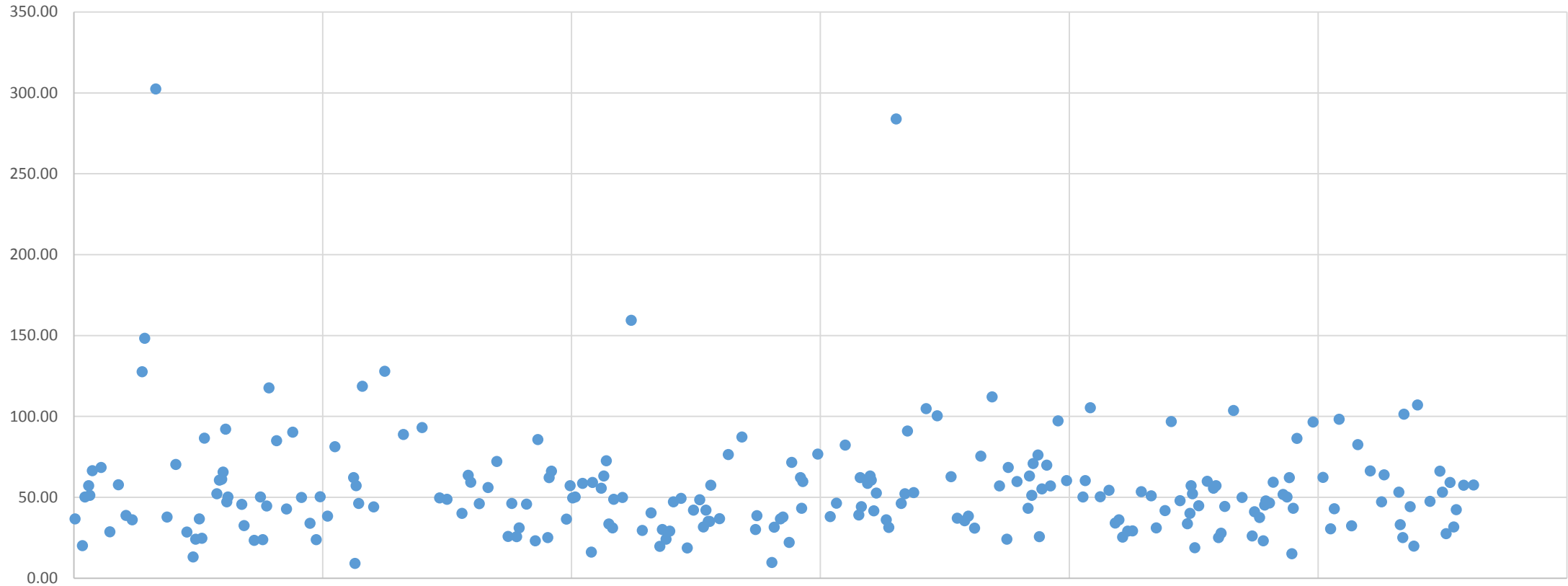
ELECTORS PER COUNCILLOR, URBAN AREAS INCLUDED



Higher values shown represent the urban parish wards of Hereford City Council and the five market towns Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, and Ross-on-Wye Town Councils. The extent of this variation is inconsistent. While the wards of individual market towns bear a close relation, the wards of Hereford City council are unevenly spread.

Higher values also include a small number of rural parishes with anomalously high numbers of electors per councillor.

Electors Per councillor, urban areas excluded

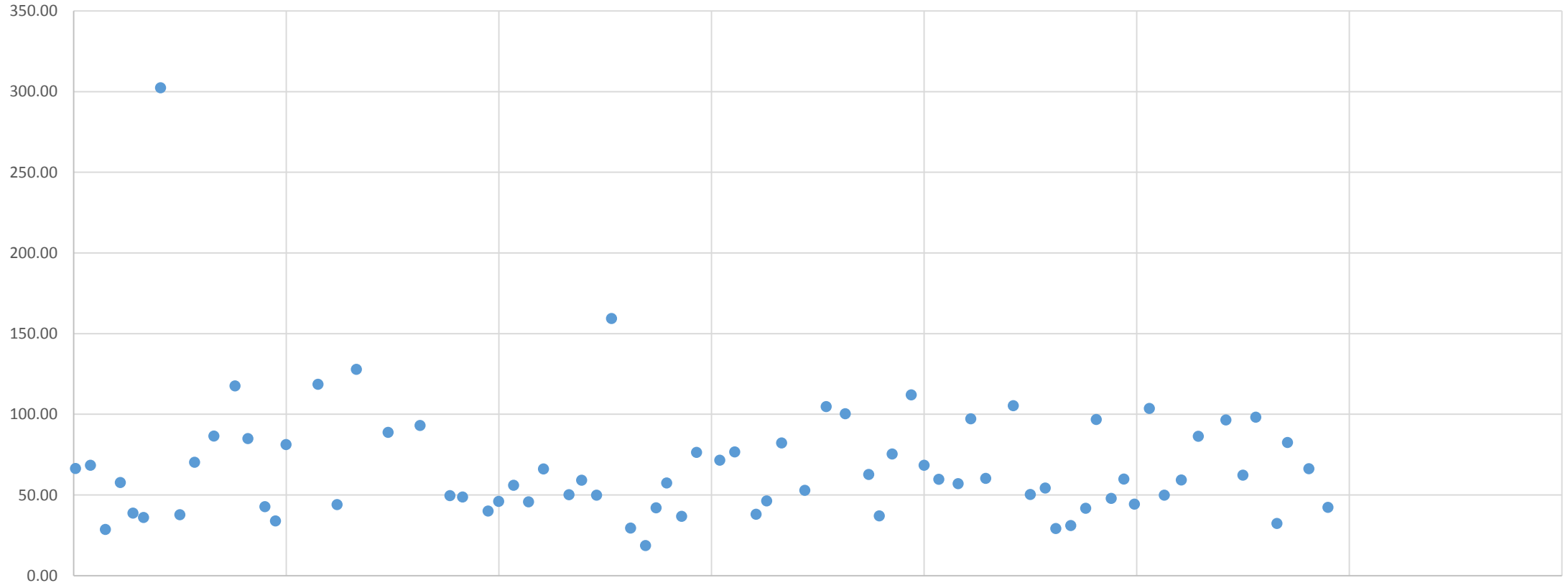


Excluding a number of parishes with anomalously high numbers of electors per councillor, the vast majority of parishes have numbers fluctuating between 30 and 80 EPC.

Beyond outlying results this does not highlight a significant issue in the variation between parishes. However there is little consistency in the numbers of electors for every seat on each parish council.

Electors Per Councillor, non-grouped parishes

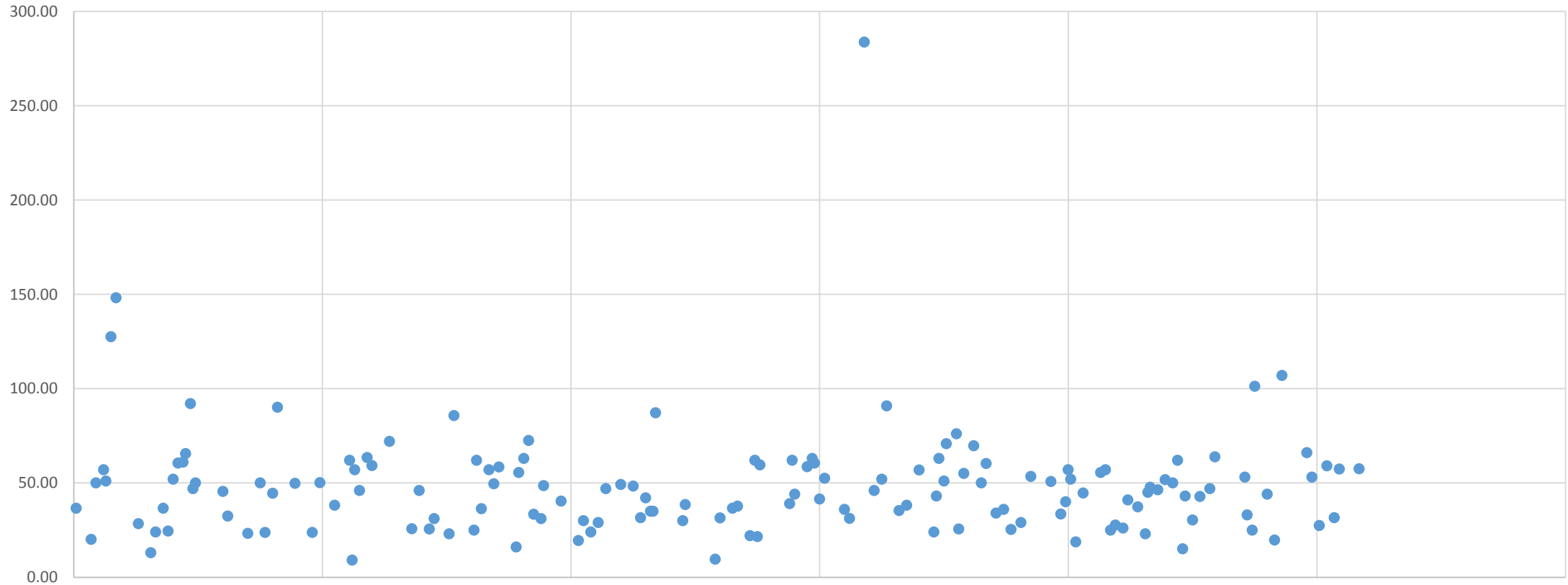
Electors Per councillor



The average number of electors per Councillor in non-grouped parishes is 67.90

Electors Per Councillor, Grouped Parishes

Electors Per councillor



The average number of electors per Councillor in grouped parishes is 47.85

Urban Area breakdowns

Hereford City Council

Wards	Seats	Electors	Electors Per Councillor
Aylestone Hill	1	1718	1718
Bobblestock	1	2613	2613
Central	1	2360	2360
College	1	2822	2822
Eign Hill	1	2709	2709
Greyfriars	1	2523	2523
Hinton & Hunderton	2	2736	1368
Kings Acre	1	2700	2700
Newton Farm	2	2836	1418
Racecourse	1	294	294
Red Hill	1	2889	2889
Saxon Gate	1	2623	2623
Tupsley	1	2559	2559
Victoria Park	1	869	869
Whitecross	1	2431	2431
Widemarsh	1	2022	2022

Hereford City Council

Hereford City Council is one of the largest parish councils in the United Kingdom.

Numbers of councillors per electors are much lower than in any other part of Herefordshire.

There is considerable variation between wards of the city council. This was in part intended by the Boundary Commission to account for proposed strategic housing sites.

Parish councils surrounding Hereford City, namely Belmont Rural and Holmer and Shelwick are much larger than other parishes in Herefordshire.

Hereford Racecourse ward was created by the Boundary Commission as part of the district ward boundary review in 2014. This was created in response to speculative housing developments within the ward.

Market Town Breakdowns

Bromyard & Winslow Town Council				
Parish Council	Wards	Seats	Electors	Electors Per Councillor
Bromyard & Winslow Town Council	Bromyard East	4	826	206.5
	Bromyard West	14	2238	159.9

Kington Town Council				
Parish Council	Wards	Seats	Electors	Electors Per Councillor
Kington Town Council	Kington	15	1919	127.9

Ledbury Town Council				
Parish Council	Wards	Seats	Electors	Electors Per Councillor
Ledbury Town Council	Ledbury North	6	2051	341.8
	Ledbury South	6	2397	399.5
	Ledbury West	6	2651	411.8

Leominster Town Council				
Parish Council	Wards	Seats	Electors	Electors Per Councillor
Leominster Town Council	Leominster East	4	2696	674
	Leominster North	4	1296	324
	Leominster South	4	2413	603.3
	Leominster West	4	2185	546.3

Ross-on-Wye Town Council				
Parish Council	Wards	Seats	Electors	Electors Per Councillor
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	Ross-on-Wye East	6	2893	482.2
	Ross-on-Wye North	6	2576	429.3
	Ross-on-Wye South	6	2550	425

Parish Electoral Arrangements

Vacant Seats in the May 2015 Elections

- In May 2015, all parish councils held elections.
- Of 133 parish councils, 35 of these elections were contested (meaning that they received more candidates than seats available) and went to a private ballot.
- Of group parish councils, 54 seats of 518 available were left vacant at the time of election.
- Of non-grouped parish councils 45 seats of 595 available were left vacant at the time of election.
- In parish councils where an election was not held, this was largely due to a small number (one or two) seats not receiving a candidate.
- The extent to which this could be due to issues in public engagement with parish councils should be considered.
- Many parish councils received a large number of candidates for the seats available.
- 2 town council elections (Bromyard and Leominster) were uncontested.
- 1 city ward (Hereford Racecourse) was uncontested.

Trends in Data

- The data shows a clear difference in the characteristics of group and non-grouped parish councils.
- Group parish councils are largely made up of smaller parishes which when combined have a greater number of councillors representing fewer electors.
- Urban areas have a much higher number of electors per councillor, the rate of this variation is not consistent between each town and city council.
- All data sets show that there is reasonable consistency in most of the characteristics of parish councils. However every data set includes a number of anomalous results where individual parishes are different from most others in their arrangements and representation.

Parish Consultation Responses

- Of 133 parish councils and 4 parish meetings invited to respond to the consultation, 68 responses were received.
- 14 parish councils proposed a specific or significant change.
- 9 proposed non-specific changes or expressed an interest in taking part in a CGR.
- 44 parish councils stated that they were content with the status quo or that a CGR would not be cost effective in the case of their parish.
- No parish councils specifically referred to the impact of proposed housing development within their parish. However, a small number of parish councils identified for housing growth in the core strategy indicated that they would cooperate with a CGR in their area.
- Only one parish meeting responded to the consultation expressing satisfaction with the status quo.

Parish Council consultation responses cont.

- A small number of parish councils identified border anomalies. These anomalies affected a small number of properties in most cases. In a small number of cases these were more significant. For example, Belmont Rural proposed two significant changes which would also necessitate a ward boundary change.
- A small number of group parishes proposed merging as a single parish council, or swapping members of their group with surrounding parishes.
- The vast majority of group parish councils who responded indicated satisfaction with the status quo.
- A small number of parish councillors expressed an interest in amending the number of councillors. In some cases this was due to changes in population. In other cases this was due to difficulty in filling seats on the council.
- A number of Town Councils expressed an interest in reversing their warding arrangements put in place as the result of the Ward Boundary change in 2014. Any changes as the result of a Community Governance Review would need to be approved by the Boundary Commission. Un-warding Town Councils would be unlikely to be approved.

Ward Member Consultation Responses

- Of 53 ward members 13 responded.
- No ward members disagreed with proposals put forward by their parishes.
- Members noted variance in electors per councillor between wards of Hereford City Council.
- Members discussed merging parishes surrounding market towns with town councils to coordinate in a more strategic way.
- Members suggested a strategic review of parishes for fewer councils veering towards larger areas. It was suggested that such an arrangement would appeal to a new type of parish councillor.

Ward member consultation cont.

- Members expressed the need to be clear in communication with the parishes, in particular in regard to service provision delegated to them.
- Some members expressed disappointment at the low number of responses parishes had provided in some wards.
- Members noted that parishes with their wards had struggled to fill all vacant seats. This was noted as also being an issue with some town councils.
- It was suggested that a parish meeting should be incorporated with a neighbouring parish to be better represented.
- Many individual parish councils were described as functioning very well with their current arrangements.
- It was noted that where rural parishes were functioning well a CGR would not represent an effective use of taxpayer's money.