

Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules

1. The Framework for Decisions

The Council will be responsible for the adoption of its budget and policy framework as set out in Article 4. Once a budget or a policy framework is in place, it will be the responsibility of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee to implement it.

2. Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee Leads Process

- (a) The Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee will publicise by including in the Forward Plan and on the Council's website a timetable for making proposals to the Council for the adoption of any plan, strategy or budget that forms part of the budget and Policy Framework, and its arrangements for consultation after publication of those initial proposals. The Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee will ensure that the consultation process is adequate and allows for meaningful dialogue with those involved.
- (b) At the end of that period, the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee will then draw up firm proposals having regard to the responses to that consultation. The Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee will take any response into account in drawing up firm proposals for submission to the Council. Its report to Council will reflect the comments made by consultees and the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee's response.
- (c) Once the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee has approved the firm proposals, the proper officer will refer them at the earliest opportunity to the Council for decision.
- (d) In reaching a decision, the Council may adopt the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee's proposals, amend them, refer them back to the committee for further consideration, or in principle, substitute its own proposals in their place.
- (e) If it accepts the recommendation of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee without amendment, the Council may make a decision which has immediate effect. Otherwise, it may only make an in-principle decision. In either case, the decision will be made on the basis of a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting.
- (f) The decision will be published within one working day in accordance with Article 4 and notified to the Chair of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee.

- (g) An in-principle decision will automatically become effective two working days from the date of the Council's decision.

3. Decisions Outside the Budget or Policy Framework

- (a) Subject to the virement provisions in the Financial and Contract Procedure Rules, committees of the Council and any officers, area committees or joint arrangements discharging Council functions may only take decisions which are in line with the budget and Policy Framework. If any of these bodies or persons wishes to make a decision which is contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with, the budget approved by Full Council, then that decision may only be taken by the Council, subject to paragraph 4 below.
- (b) If the committee and any officers, area committees or joint arrangements discharging Council functions want to make such a decision, they shall take advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Section 151 Officer as to whether the decision they want to make would be contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget. If the advice of either of those officers is that the decision would not be in line with the existing budget and/or Policy Framework, then the decision must be referred by that body or person to the Council for decision, unless the decision is a matter of urgency, in which case the provisions in paragraph 4 (Urgent Decisions Outside the Budget or Policy Framework) shall apply.

4. Urgent Decisions Outside the Budget or Policy Framework

- (a) The Committee of the Council, officers, area committees or joint arrangements discharging Council functions may take a decision which is contrary to the Council's Policy Framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget approved by Full Council if the decision is a matter of urgency. However, the decision may only be taken:
 - (i) If it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Full Council; and
 - (ii) If the Chair of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.

The reasons why it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of Full Council to the decision being taken as a matter of urgency must be noted on the record of the decision. In the absence of the Chair of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee the consent of the Chair of the Council and, in the absence of both, the Vice-Chair, will be sufficient.

- (b) Following the decision, the decision taker will provide a full report to the next available Council meeting explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

5. In-Year Changes to Policy Framework

The responsibility for agreeing the Budget and Policy Framework lies with the Council, and decisions by a committee of the Council, officers, area committees or joint arrangements discharging Council functions must be in line with it. No changes to any policy and strategy which make up the Policy Framework may be made by those bodies or individuals except those changes:

- (a) Which will result in the closure, discontinuance or restriction of a service or part of service to meet a budgetary constraint (and shall be reported to the next Council meeting).
- (b) Necessary to ensure compliance with the law, ministerial direction or government guidance (and shall be reported to the next Council meeting).
- (c) In relation to the Policy Framework in respect of a policy which would normally be agreed annually by the Council following consultation, but where the existing policy document is silent on the matter under consideration (and shall be reported to the next Council meeting).

6. Decision Review Procedure of Decisions Outside the Budget or Policy Framework

The Part 4.7 – Decision Review Procedure sets out the provisions that apply to review of decisions taken by committees.