

Introduction

1. This statement of internal control provides assurance in respect of the Council's decision making framework; that it is up to date, fit for purpose, embedded and routinely applied.
2. The decision making framework is comprised of the documents, systems and processes which guide and control the way in which decisions are taken by Members and officers in relation to both council and executive functions.
3. In accordance with the Council's values, the framework seeks to promote open, accountable decision making in addition to ensuring compliance with relevant statutory provision in respect of transparency.
4. The statement sets out the standing arrangements for the internal control of decision making and provides evidence of compliance over the reporting period from April 2020 to June 2021.
5. The statement includes opportunities that have been identified to improve these arrangements.



Define and Document

7. The Council's decision making framework is clearly defined and documented within the Constitution. The Constitution is published each municipal year and therefore available to Elected Members, and officers together with the press and public, in the '[library](#)' on the Council's website.
8. **Systems and Processes** through which the Council ensures that decision making is lawful and compliant, open and transparent, furthers the Council's strategic objectives, and takes account of available resources are set out in the Articles of the Constitution and further detailed in Rules of Procedure, and Codes and Protocols which guide and frame the culture in which decisions are taken.

Decision Making Framework: Documents which together establish the Council's decision making framework, providing for open and transparent decision making by Members and officers

- Article 4 The Full Council - defines the Council's budget and policy framework
- Article 13 Decision Making - defines each category of decision and sets out the principles of decision making
- Executive and Decision making Procedure Rules - provide for open, transparent and accountable decision making in relation to Executive functions
- Access to Information Procedure Rules - provide for open, transparent and accountable decision making in relation to Council functions.
- Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules - provide for open and inclusive development of budget and policy framework, setting parameters for executive decision making.

Rules of Procedure: Documents which set out rules of procedure for democratic decision making bodies, and those with oversight of decision making

- Council Procedure Rules
- Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules
- Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules
- Community Committee Procedure Rules
- Access to Information Procedure Rules
- Licensing Procedure Rules
- Protocol for Public Speaking at Plans Panels

Ethical Framework for Decision Making: Codes and Protocols which together establish the ethical framework within which decisions are taken

- Members Code of Conduct
- Officers Code of Conduct
- Roles of members and officers in decision making
- Planning Code of Good Practice
- Code of Practice for the Determination of Licensing matters

9. **Roles and Responsibilities** are delineated with clear terms of reference for Council and Executive Committees, and comprehensive arrangements for delegation of functions to officers as set out below. Full Council determine responsibility in respect of Council functions; the Leader of Council determines their Executive Arrangements and presents these to full Council. Again, all arrangements are published in the '[library](#)' on the Council's website.

Democratic Oversight: Arrangements for Member's oversight of decision making

- Executive Portfolios - 8 executive portfolios described and aligned to officer delegations at Part 3, Section 3B(a and b) supported by Deputy and Support Executive Members.
- Community Committee Champions - to provide local lead and facilitate local democratic accountability - defined at Part 3, Section 3D(b)
- Scrutiny Board alignment - 5 overview and scrutiny committees aligned to officer delegations in Part 2, Article 6, Annex 2

Democratic Decision Making: Arrangements for decision making by elected members in committee

- Functions reserved to full Council - defined in Functions of the Full Council at Part 3, Section 2A
- Council Committee membership and terms of reference - set out at Part 3, Section 2B
- Executive Committee terms of reference - set out at Part 3, Section 2C
- Community Committee Executive Delegations - set out at part 3, Section 2Da

External Delegations and Joint Working Arrangements: Arrangements with other authorities for the discharge of functions

- Delegations to and from other authorities in respect of Council functions - set out at Part 3, Section 2D
- Joint Arrangements in respect of Council and Executive functions - set out at Part 3, Section 4

Officer Delegations: Arrangements for the discharge of functions by officers

- Delegations from Council to Directors include general delegations shared by all Directors and functions delegated specifically to each Director - set out at Part 3 Section 2C
- Delegations to Directors from the Leader of Council in respect of the discharge of executive functions include general delegations shared by all Directors and functions specifically delegated to each Director - set out at Part 3, Section 3E Each delegation is made for all relevant matters within the Director's remit, subject to a saving that should the relevant Executive Member require it, or the Director consider it appropriate, the matter shall be referred to Executive Board for determination.

Sub-delegations: Arrangements for the delegation of functions from Directors to officers of suitable experience and seniority

- Each Director is responsible for making maintaining their own scheme of delegation which is published on the Council's website. Authority set out in sub-delegations is bounded by such terms and conditions as are necessary and appropriate in the view of the Director who remains accountable for each function.

10. In accordance with Article 15, the Constitution is maintained by the Monitoring Officer, who keeps it under continuous review to ensure that it remains clear, unambiguous, up to date and fit for purpose. In addition to ad hoc amendments, an annual review is undertaken culminating in the re-publication of the Constitution at the commencement of the Municipal Year.

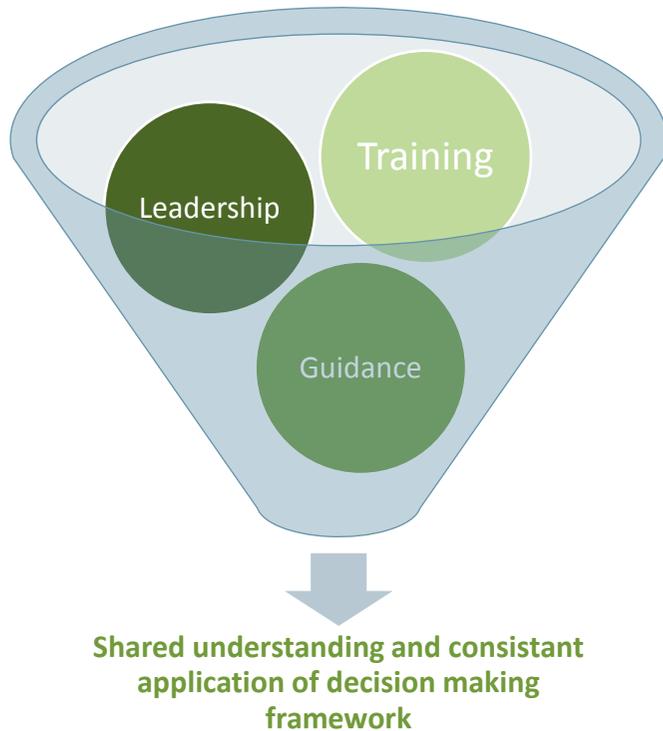
11. As a result of the cancellation of Council meetings at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Leader took a delegated decision confirming her Executive arrangements, and the Monitoring Officer took a further decision, noting cancellation of the Annual Council Meeting and confirming that all arrangements, as set out in the 19/20 Constitution would therefore continue into the new municipal year. The 2020/21 Constitution was published in June 2020 following these decisions. Further amendments were approved as follows:

Date	Decision Maker	Amendment
23/7/20	Leader's amendment to executive arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realignment of functions between Director of Resources and Housing, City Solicitor and Chief Officer Financial Services; • amendment for clarification in relation to highways and transportation delegations to Director of City Development • amendment for clarification in relation to land and highways searches delegations to Director of Communities and Environment
8/9/20	Leader's amendment to executive arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy and Support Executive members
1/10/20	Chief Officer Financial Services – delegated authority Article 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of Contracts procedure Rules
6/10/20	City Solicitor – Monitoring Officer's delegated authority Article 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members Allowances Scheme – annual uplift
22/10/20	City Solicitor – Monitoring Officer's delegated authority Article 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Officer Protocol – amendments consequential on realignment of responsibility for Access to information.
11/11/20	Full Council on recommendation of General Purposes Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to Article 6, Article 12 and Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules
29/1/21	Leader's amendment to executive arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive portfolios.
24/2/21	Leader's executive arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements approved by Councillor James Lewis in anticipation of appointment as Leader and presented to Council on appointment by Full Council.
24/3/21	Full Council on recommendation of General Purposes Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to Council Procedure Rules, and Procedure for Considering Complaints Alleging a Failure to Comply with Members' Code of Conduct with immediate effect, and Members' Code of Conduct with effect from Annual
31/3/21	Director of Resources and Housing – delegated authority Article 15, sub-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to Contracts Procedure Rules consequent upon Britain's exit from European Union.

	delegated to Chief Officer Financial Services	
31/3/21	Leader's amendment to executive arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to officer delegation scheme to reflect organisational changes • Director of Resources taking responsibility for telephone contact centre and digital access • Chief Officer Financial Services taking responsibility for administration of Council Tax • Director of Communities, Housing and Environment taking responsibility for housing • Director of City Development taking responsibility for Council Housing Growth • Amendments to executive oversight consequential on the above
6/5/21	City Solicitor – Monitoring Officer's delegated authority Article 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment for clarification to the Councillor Code of Conduct
14/5/21	City Solicitor – Monitoring Officer's delegated authority Article 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to documents consequential on Leader's executive arrangements
19/5/21	Leader's executive arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of executive arrangements for 21/22 municipal year

12. Following the election on 6th May 2021, the Leader revised and reviewed his executive arrangements and presented these to the Annual Council Meeting on 20th May 2021. Full Council also approved arrangements for the appointment of Committees and the delegation of council functions to officers for the 2021/22 municipal year at this meeting. Having approved minor amendments consequential upon decisions of the Council and the executive the Monitoring Officer made arrangements for the publication of the 2021/22 Constitution on 27th May 2021.

Clearly Communicate



14. In addition to publication of the Council's constitution the decision making framework is communicated to Members and officers through a combination of training, guidance and leadership. Together these ensure the communication of both the rules and processes required in formal decision making to ensure that decisions are lawful and compliant with both statutory and local processes; and establish the culture of open and transparent decision making, which is outcome focussed and based on quality and timely information.

Training

Officers:

15. Face to face training has been provided in previous years, but not possible under social distancing guidelines. A new training plan is being developed following the establishment of remote learning opportunities enabled by the roll out of MS Teams for conferencing.

16. In addition to the generalised training offer 121 briefing sessions are offered to all officers appointed to posts at Chief Officer level and above. These are tailored to the individual to reflect their public sector and local authority experience and have continued throughout the period of the

pandemic.

Members:

17. The induction material for newly elected Members of Council includes a short (at a glance) guide to the role of elected Members in decision making. This introduces Members to the ways in which they are able to exercise democratic oversight of decision making in addition to any direct contribution they may make as an appointed member of a relevant committee. This written material was supported with the offer of further advice or assistance should those Members require.

18. A further, more detailed, guide to decision making has been developed and is available for all Members.

Guidance

19. The Decision Making Toolkit, available to officers on Insite, is regularly updated with advice and guidance which can be accessed at officers' convenience, including guidance in relation to:
- How to take a decision
 - How to record a delegated decision
 - Decision making in climate emergency
 - Guidance for writing reports for committee and officer decisions
20. In addition, a matrix of officers provides advice and guidance to those engaged in operational decision making to ensure that our decision making arrangements are fully embedded and result in decisions which comply with statutory requirements and are both transparent and robust.
21. Governance Support Managers who act as gate-keeper for governance arrangements in directorates and are able to:
- provide advice and guidance in relation to practice and procedure for officer decision making both corporately and within directorates;
 - arrange for the publication of relevant notices and documents in line with statutory and Constitutional requirement;
 - maintain the directorate record of administrative officer decisions;
 - liaise with staff in Democratic Services in relation to Committee agendas, reports and minutes;
 - provide check and challenge in relation to the use of corporate templates and sufficiency of information.
22. Colleagues with expertise from legal, finance and procurement and commercial services provide a further network of support and are able to:
- give advice and guidance; and
 - provide timely check and challenge in relation to matters within their remit.
23. It is recognised that the value to be added to the governance of decision making through the provision of advice is dependent on report authors engaging with the relevant professionals in a timely manner. In order to best benefit from the expertise available, work continues to ensure a culture in which advice is sought early, with decision makers engaging during the development of ideas to ensure opportunities are not missed (e.g. in relation to consultation; equalities, climate emergency) as well as being incorporated into the routine sign off of reports for Committee or officer decision making.

Leadership

24. Corporate Leadership Team and General Purposes Committee have engaged with the review of arrangements for recording and publication of decisions; ensuring that they are practicable and proportionate whilst meeting legislative requirements.
25. During the course of the Covid 19 pandemic the Best Council Leadership Team has engaged in ensuring good governance of decision making by cascading information within their service and by assisting in the compilation of decision making records.
26. Arrangements for Executive Board allow for the detailed consideration of reports to ensure that they support and enable open, transparent and robust decisions to be taken in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in Article 13 of the Constitution, including due regard to the need for consultation; appropriate consideration of the impact of proposals on equalities; and implications for performance and risk. Similarly, officers with delegated authority are able to review decisions prior to approval to ensure appropriate controls are met.

Effectively Embed

Establish Expectation

Facilitate Compliance

Observe Outcomes

Establish Expectation: Establish arrangements that are proportionate, practicable and compliant

28. Regular reviews have taken place during the municipal year to ensure that the arrangements for recording and publication for officer decisions are proportionate, practicable and compliant with relevant legislation and constitutional provision. These arrangements have reflected the pace and scale of decision making at times during the course of the pandemic ensuring that the council is agile and responsive in its decision making whilst also remaining open and transparent.
29. The current arrangements were considered and approved by General Purposes Committee, who recommended a minor amendment to the Constitutional provision, following consultation with Corporate and Directorate Leadership Teams. This ensured top down engagement with the systems and processes in place.
30. Arrangements are set out in clear, accessible guidance, cascaded through Best Council Leadership Team and published to the Decision Making Toolkit.
31. Communications have focussed both on the need to meet both statutory and local controls and to engage in open and transparent decision making in order to develop a culture of compliance.

Facilitate Compliance: Ensure appropriate tools and sufficient resource to enable compliance

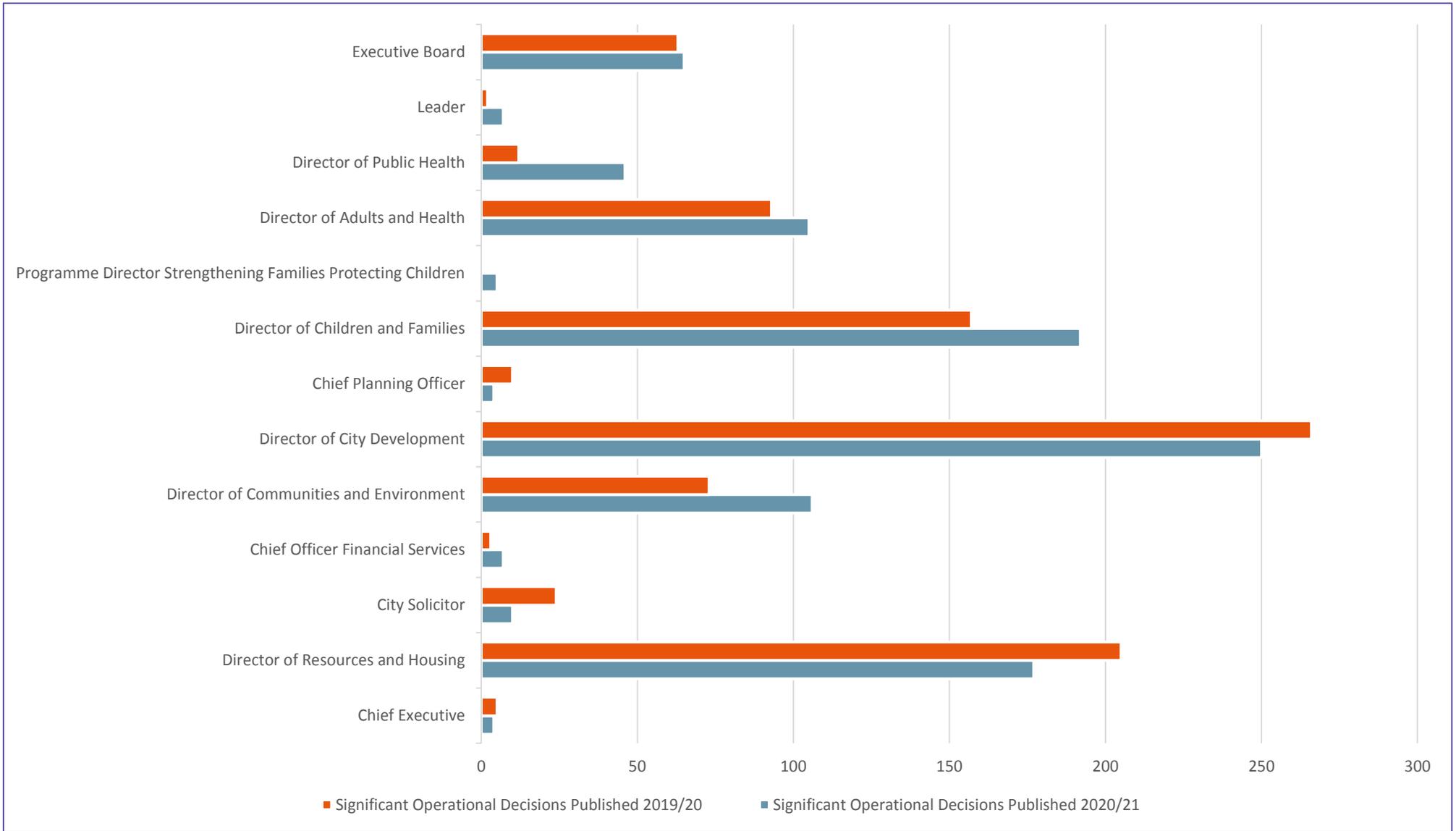
32. The decision making framework requires that all key and significant operational decisions are published on the Council's website as soon as reasonably practicable after the decision is taken.
33. In order to assist officers preparing information and to ensure consistency of information available to decision makers, the following templates are maintained on the Decision Making Toolkit, together with clear guides to assist completion:
 - a. requests to add a Key Decision to the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions;
 - b. reports (to support decisions taken by committees or officers), and
 - c. delegated decision notices (for the recording of key and significant operational decisions taken by officers)
34. The Corporate Report Template has been revised for the commencement of the 2021 Municipal Year. The revised template aims to support the clearer articulation of the information necessary to take relevant decisions; provide greater focus on the strategic objectives of the council (inclusive growth, health and wellbeing and the climate emergency), and to reduce unnecessary duplication.

35. The new template was introduced in April 2021, allowing officers opportunity to draft reports in preparation for decisions to be taken by officers to be recorded on the new template from the commencement of the municipal year. The template is available for committee use from May and will be compulsory from September 2021.
36. When completed and approved relevant documents are published to the Council's website through Governance Support for each directorate, enabling Governance Support Managers to provide advice, check and challenge in relation to compliance with decision making controls.

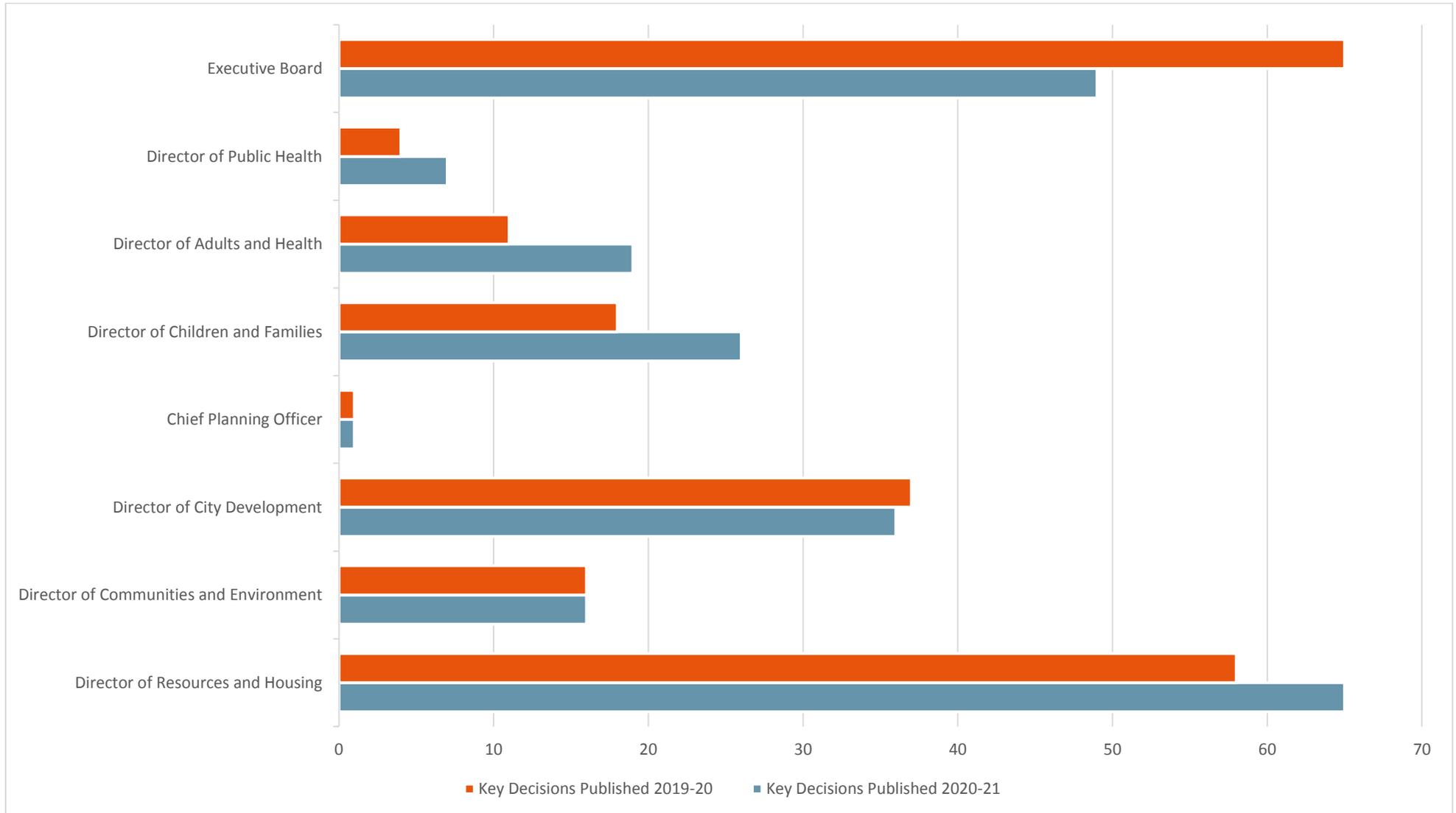
Observe Outcomes: Provide ongoing assurance that practice and procedure reflect expectation

37. All published key decisions taken by officers are monitored to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the decision making framework. Where anomalies are identified these are escalated through directorate Governance Support Managers who are able to respond quickly to ensure compliance with relevant procedures or to correct administrative errors where these arise.
38. In addition, a weekly review of decisions published is compiled and shared with colleagues in financial services, procurement and governance support, allowing a comparison of decisions taken against financial recording and procurement activity to ensure that arrangements are consistently embedded within Directorates.
39. Decision Monitoring enables the tracking of decisions published in each directorate to identify any emerging trends in the number or scale of decisions taken when compared year on year.
40. It can be seen from the data set out below that while there has been some variation in the quantity of decisions taken the distribution has remained in line with previous years. Members will note in particular that there has been:
- a. An increase in the number (and therefore proportion) of key decisions taken by the Directors of Resources and Housing, Adults and Health, Public Health and Children and Families reflecting the number of new key decisions necessary in these directorates in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - b. A reduction in the number of key decisions taken by Executive Board, reflecting the reduction in matters brought to Executive Board agendas at the outset of remote meeting arrangements, enabling Members to focus on the significant challenge of responding to the pandemic.

Effectively Embed: Comparison of Distribution of Significant Operational Decisions Published 19/20 v 20/21



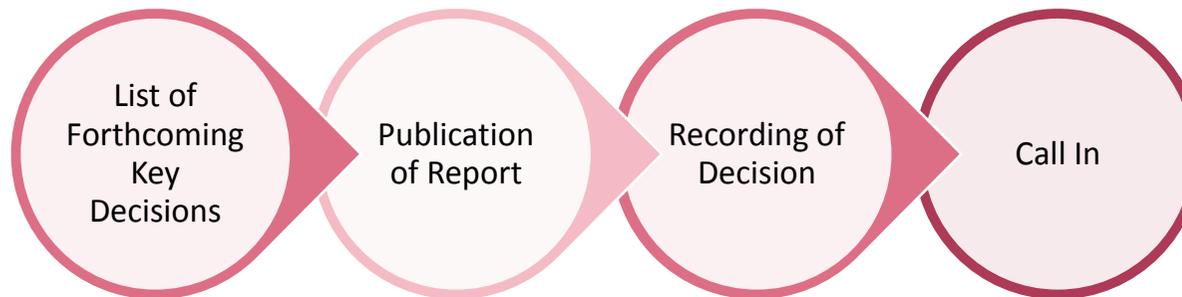
Effectively Embed: Comparison of Key Decisions Published 19/20 v 20/21



Effectively Embed – Table of Comparative Data for Key and Significant Operational Decisions Published Over Three Reporting Periods									
	Significant Operational Decisions published			Key Decisions published			Total Decisions published		
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Chief Executive	5	5	4	0	0	0	5	5	4
Director of Resources and Housing	151	205	177	65	58	65	216	263	242
City Solicitor	20	24	10	0	0	0	20	24	10
Chief Officer Financial Services	2	3	7	0	0	0	2	3	7
Director of Communities and Environment	89	73	106	11	16	16	100	89	122
Director of City Development	225	266	250	44	37	36	269	303	286
Chief Planning Officer	18	10	4	0	1	1	18	11	5
Director of Children and Families	165	157	192	24	18	26	189	175	218
Programme Director Strengthening Families Protecting Children			5			0			5
Director of Adults and Health	42	93	105	20	11	19	62	146	124
Director of Public Health	8	12	46	6	4	7	14	16	53
Leader of Council	2	2	7				2	2	7
Executive Board	81	63	65	73	65	49	154	128	114
total	808	913	978	244	210	219	1052	1123	1197

Meaningfully Monitor

41. There are a series of established controls in place to support open and transparent decision making in relation to both executive functions. These blend statutory requirements with local arrangements to ensure accountability and democratic oversight.



The List of Forthcoming Key Decisions (LOFKD)

42. This is the mechanism by which publicity is provided in connection with key decisions in accordance with the requirements set out in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. (“The Executive Arrangements Regulations”)
43. In line with requirements the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules provide that all potential key decisions must be published to the LOFKD (and a link circulated to all Members) not less than 28 days before the decision is taken unless:
- The decision fits the statutory General Exception (GE) – in which case notice will be published 5 clear days in advance of the decision being taken (and circulated to all Members); or
 - The decision fits the statutory criteria for Special Urgency (SU) – in which case the relevant Scrutiny Chair will be asked to agree that the decision is urgent and cannot be delayed.

45. Reflecting the statutory exemptions, a performance indicator of 95% of all key decisions should be published to the LOFKD not less than 28 clear calendar days before the decision is taken.

During the reporting period 181 of 219 or 83% of all key decisions were included in the LOFKD.

139 of 170 (82%) key decisions taken by officers in the reporting period were included in the LOFKD.

42 of 49 (86%) key decisions taken by Executive Board were included in the LOFKD.

Of the 38 decisions not included in the LOFKD, 13 were treated as a General Exception and 25 as Special Urgency.

46. The target for Key decisions included in the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions was increased from 89% to 95% by Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in June 2020, having considered performance over the preceding four reporting periods, which had not fallen below 95%. Members therefore considered that this target presented a reasonable measure of performance in normal working circumstances, although it was noted at the time that the Covid-19 pandemic response had led to a significant increase in the number of urgent decisions taken and that it was likely that in the 2020/21 reporting period this target would not be met. As anticipated, given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic there has been an increased requirement for use of the General Exception and Special Urgency provisions over this reporting period, however it is considered that the 95% target remains appropriate and achievable and it is not therefore proposed that this should be amended further at this time.

47. From the decision monitoring undertaken in the first quarter of the 21/22 year it can be seen that the inclusion of matters on the LOFKD appears to be returning to pre-pandemic levels, as fewer decisions are being taken in response to the emergency.

During the first quarter of 2021 (April to June) 50 of 52 or 96% of all key decisions have been included in the LOFKD.

32 of 34 (94%) key decisions taken by officers in the reporting period were included in the LOFKD.

18 of 18 (100%) key decisions taken by Executive Board were included in the LOFKD.

Both of the 2 decisions not included in the LOFKD were treated as a General Exception and none as Special Urgency.

48. Each key decision not included in the LOFKD for the required 28 day period, was taken under the appropriate conditions for either the general exception or special urgency. Reasons for treating each of these decisions as general exception or special urgency are set out in the tables below.

Publication of Report

49. Publication of a decision report enables both elected Members and the public to see and consider the rationale for a key decision before that decision is taken.
50. There is no statutory requirement to publish reports in relation to officer decisions in advance of those decisions being taken. However, the committee will recall that the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules provide for a local (non-statutory) requirement that a report in support of a key decision is published five clear working days before that decision is taken by an officer. In 2018 the rules were amended to allow for the late publication of reports in relation to key decisions with the approval of the relevant Executive Member.
51. Rule 3.1.4 of the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules requires an annual report to this Committee giving details of any key decisions taken in accordance with this provision which provides for the late publication of the report supporting an officer decision.

Of 170 key decisions taken by officers in the reporting period; 19 were published under special urgency provisions at short notice. Of the remaining 151 key decisions 150 (99%) were supported by reports which were published five clear working days in advance of the decision being taken.

All 34 key decisions taken by officers in the first quarter of 21/22 have been the subject of reports published five clear working days in advance of the decision being taken.

Recording of Decision

52. Recording of decisions ensures that those decisions are open and transparent and that the relevant decision maker can be held to account.
53. Regulation 13 of the Executive Arrangements Regulations, and (in relation to non-executive functions) Regulation 7 of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 require a written record to be published in respect of decisions taken by officers. Arrangements set out in the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules, and Access to Information Procedure Rules respectively, require publication of key and significant operational decisions as soon as reasonably practicable after those decisions are taken.

219 key and 978 significant operational decisions were published during the reporting period.

A further 52 key and 255 significant operational decisions have been published during the first quarter of 21/22.

Call In

54. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 requires that executive arrangements by a local authority include the provision for appointment of one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees with, inter alia, power to review or scrutinise decisions which have been taken by the executive but not yet implemented. These are known as Call In arrangements and are set locally.
55. Part 5 of the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules sets out the call in arrangements adopted by Leeds City Council. Rule 5.1.2 sets out details of those decisions which are eligible for call in¹. Rule 5.1.3 provides that eligible decisions may be exempted from call in where the decision is urgent because any delay would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.
56. A performance indicator has been set with a target of 95% of all eligible decisions to be available for Call In.

During the reporting period 83% of all eligible decisions were available for Call In.

170 of 170 key decisions taken by officers in the reporting period were eligible for call in; of which 35 (21%) were exempted from Call In. A total of 135 (79%) of eligible decisions taken by officers were available for Call In.

112 of 114 decisions (49 key and 65 significant operational decisions) taken by Executive Board in the reporting period were eligible for call in; of which 12 (11%) were exempted from Call In. A total of 100 (89%) of eligible decisions were available for Call In.

57. It was anticipated that given the need to respond quickly to the Covid-19 pandemic, there would be a need to exempt a greater than usual proportion of decisions from Call In. Again, monitoring undertaken during the first quarter of the 2021/22 year indicates that use of the exemption is returning to pre-pandemic levels.

During the first quarter of 21/22 93% of all eligible decisions were available for Call In.

34 of 34 key decisions taken by officers in the reporting period were eligible for call in; of which 2 (6%) were exempted from Call In. A total of 32 (94%) of eligible decisions taken by officers were available for Call In.

26 of 27 decisions (18 key and 9 significant operational decisions) taken by Executive Board in the reporting period were eligible for call in; of which 2 (8%) were exempted from Call In. A total of 100 (92%) of eligible decisions were available for Call In.

58. Each eligible decision not available for call in was subject to a decision to exempt it taken by the relevant decision maker. Reasons for exemption are set out in the tables below.

¹ In brief, and subject to limited exceptions – key decisions taken by officers; all decisions taken by Executive Board; and executive decisions taken by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Decisions Taken Under Urgency Provisions

59. Decisions taken under urgency provisions (general exception or special urgency; short notice reporting; and exemption from call in) are both lawful and constitutional providing they meet the requirements in relation to approvals and notice set out in the relevant Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule. Having reviewed each of the decisions taken under urgency provisions during the reporting period the Chief Officer Financial Services is satisfied that all decisions have been taken in accordance with the relevant requirements.
60. Regulation 19 of the Executive Arrangements Regulations require that the executive Leader reports to the local authority details of those decisions agreed as urgent in accordance with Regulation 11 (Special Urgency)². However, in the interests of transparency the tables below (Table 1 relates to officer decisions taken in response to the pandemic; Table 2 to officer decisions in relation to business as usual; and Table 3 to urgent decisions taken by Executive Board) set out details of each of those key decisions taken at short notice, or which have been exempted from Call In, together with a summary of the reason for urgency in each case.
61. It will be noted that there was a considerable increase in both the number and percentage of decisions taken under the relevant urgency procedures in relation to publication of advance notice and availability for call in during the 2020/21 year. However members will recall that this was anticipated when they received the last annual report given the scale and pace of decision making necessary to respond to the pandemic; and the impact of the pandemic on decisions required to provide 'business as usual' services.
62. The next section of this report provides further information as to the reasons given when using these urgency procedures. It will be noted that for each decision there are clear and cogent reasons for use of the relevant procedure to reduce notice, and that the relevant democratic oversight of each process has been given. Decisions are separated into those taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (Table 1 & 2), and those taken in pursuance of business as usual (table 3 & 4).

² As the Committee charged with reviewing the adequacy of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements (including matters such as internal control and risk management), Corporate Governance and Audit Committee receives this information within the reporting of arrangements for the control of decision making.

Meaningfully Monitor - Table 1: Officer Key decisions taken in relation to Covid-19 pandemic under urgency procedures

Month	DDN	Director	GE / SU	Call In	Title of decision Reason for urgency
April 2020	D50759	DRH	SU (Cllr Harland)	Exempt	Coronavirus expenditure The rapidly changing context and national guidance required the funding to be applied at pace, and decision implemented immediately, to ensure that the Council could respond quickly to the needs of our communities, staff and partners in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic
	D50773	DRH	SU (Cllr Harland)	Exempt	Expanded business rates relief Any delay would mean that relief could not be provided immediately to businesses affected by Covid-19, which would be prejudicial to all businesses eligible for relief under the scheme.
	D50774	DAH	SU (Cllr Hayden)	Exempt	Applying regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 for: Covid-19 - Securing additional 'step down' care home bed capacity through block purchasing arrangements Decision responded to urgent need to secure additional beds to enable people to be discharged from hospital in a safe and timely way during the COVID-19 crisis. Any delay could have resulted in delayed discharge, blocking hospital beds, and potential loss of life.
	D50783	DAH	SU (Cllr Hayden)	Exempt	Temporary funding for adult social care providers Payments necessary to sustain Social Care Providers who were incurring costs with a risk in terms of their cash flow. Timely payment to adult social care providers ensured continuity in the delivery of critical care services. Any provider failure could have had a significant and immediate adverse impact upon support to acute NHS services. Advice from the LGA and ADASS was that these extra costs should be recognised and acted upon without delay. .
May 2020	D50858	DRH	SU (Cllr Harland)	Exempt	Implementation of Covid-19 Business Support grant Funding Any delay would mean that grants could not be provided immediately to businesses affected by Covid-19
	D50938	DAH	SU (Cllr Hayden)	Exempt	Distribution of infection control fund to care homes in Leeds Immediate distribution of funds necessary in line with government expectation and necessary to help prevent the Coronavirus from spreading.
	D50935	DCD	SU (Cllr Truswell)	Exempt	Covid 19 - Top up to local business grants fund scheme - Leeds City Council discretionary fund to accommodate certain small businesses previously outside the scope of the business grants funds scheme Government request that grant payments made as quickly as possible to support struggling businesses. The decisions sought could not have been made earlier due to the need to design a scheme in accordance with Government guidance when issued.
June 2020	D50983	DRH	GE	Exempt	Award of contracts to numerous suppliers of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on an emergency basis. Any delay in implementing the decision could mean a lack of PPE supplies for Council staff.

Meaningfully Monitor - Table 1: Officer Key decisions taken in relation to Covid-19 pandemic under urgency procedures

Month	DDN	Director	GE / SU	Call In	Title of decision Reason for urgency
	D50998	DAH	SU (Cllr Hayden)	Exempt	Proposed Sustainability Payments to Care Home Providers in Leeds to mitigate the impact of reduced occupancy in Care Homes as a result of Covid-19 Related Deaths Decision urgent to address any significant income losses and adverse cash flow for those affected homes risking their short term viability which may lead to closure and the significant impact this could have upon the response to the outbreak.
	D51018	DCE	GE	Exempt	Resumption of Parking Charges Any delay in implementing this decision would cause significant financial loss to the Council.
July 2020	D52071	DPH	SU (Cllr Hayden)	Exempt	Covid-19 - Infection Prevention and Control LCH Service Variation Contract Urgent need to provide support to the NHS Test and trace programme immediately.
Aug 2020	D52239	DCE	SU (Cllr Anderson)	Exempt	Resumption of full Parking Charges Any delay in resumption of parking charges would cause significant financial loss to the Council.
	D52242	DCD		Exempt	Emergency Active Travel Fund - Leeds City Council Tranche 1 Programme Delay in implementation could impact on the delivery timescales and result in schemes not being eligible for the funding.
Oct 2020	D52359	DAH	SU (Cllr H Hayden)	Exempt	COVID-19 - Approval to secure care home beds as part of Discharge to Assess provision to reduce Covid-19 winter pressures in acute hospital settings Delay would impact the city's ability to manage immediate pressures from a rising number of cases of COVID-19 and impending winter pressures which required a robust and sustainable solution to ensure those particularly vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 and winter flu season were protected from unnecessarily lengthy stays in acute settings. Failure to do so may have resulted in greater morbidity and mortality rates and insurmountable pressure on the city's hospitals and care homes.
Nov 2020	D52499	DCD	SU - (Cllr P Truswell)	Exempt	COVID-19 Local Restrictions Support Grant and Additional Restrictions Grant Schemes including Discretionary Grant Funds Government requested that local authorities make grant payments as quickly as possible to support struggling businesses. It was therefore vital to ensure that Covid-19 business grants monies were issued to Leeds businesses as quickly as possible to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 restrictions.
	D52501	DAH	SU (Cllr H Hayden)	Exempt	Approval to secure additional care home beds as part of Discharge to Assess provision to reduce Covid-19 winter pressures in acute hospital settings. Delay would impact the city's ability to manage immediate pressures from a rising number of cases of COVID-19 and impending winter pressures which required a robust and sustainable solution to ensure those particularly vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 and winter flu season were protected from unnecessarily lengthy stays in acute settings. Failure to do so may have resulted in greater morbidity and mortality rates and insurmountable pressure on the city's hospitals and care homes.
Dec 2020	D52534	DCF	SU (Cllr Lamb)	Exempt	COVID Winter Grants Fund Free School Meal Provision

Meaningfully Monitor - Table 1: Officer Key decisions taken in relation to Covid-19 pandemic under urgency procedures

Month	DDN	Director	GE / SU	Call In	Title of decision Reason for urgency
					Decision followed final scheme sign off by DWP on 24 th November, consultation with Head-teachers to ensure scheme adaptable to all schools. Decision therefore urgent to distribute funds to schools and Catering Leeds/ Asda. Central stock ordered to facilitate provision for Christmas.
January 2021	D52591	CPO	GE	Exempt	Statement of Community Involvement (This interim version sets out how consultation will occur safely during Covid-19 pandemic restrictions) Amendment necessary and urgent to allow consultation on main modifications to the Site Allocations Plan in line Covid-19 restrictions under amended Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). If SCI not amended there is a risk that the consultation and subsequent adoption of the Plan could be the subject of Legal Challenge.
	D52631	DCE	GE	Exempt	COVID Winter Grant Scheme: Fuel Support Payments Any delay in implementing the decision would mean a delay getting support to vulnerable households.
	D52654	DCD	SU	Exempt	Re-Opening High Streets Safely Allocated Funding MHCLG cut-off date, requiring acceptance of offer within 14 days, provided a short window of response, necessitating an urgent decision in order for the allocation to be legally valid and approved for claims.
March 2021	D52845	DCF	GE	Exempt	Department for Education Holiday Activity and Food funding for 2021 The first instalment of funding from DfE is due in March 2021, it would be detrimental to the Councils financial resources if the funding was not accepted.
	D52869	DCF	GE	Exempt	COVID Winter Grants Extension Funding Free School Meal Provision Decision followed scheme sign off by DWP and urgent implementation necessary to ensure provision in place by the Easter holidays. Failure to do so would significantly impact on children and families, who would not be able to access FSM provision over the holidays.

Meaningfully Monitor - Table 2: Executive Board decisions taken in relation to Covid-19 pandemic under urgency procedures

Month	Minute	Director	GE / SU	Call In	Title of decision Reason for urgency
April 2020	162	CS	GE	Exempt	Decision Making Arrangements During Coronavirus Pandemic Decisions taken included measures to promote and secure public health, to provide help and assistance to vulnerable citizens and to provide support to local business and industry. To delay or pause the implementation of these would have potential to seriously prejudice the interests of both the council and the public.

Meaningfully Monitor - Table 3: Officer Key decisions taken in relation to business as usual under urgency procedures

Month	DDN	Director	GE / SU	Call In	Title of decision Reason for urgency
May 2020	D50894	DCF	GE	Exempt	ATS bulge expansion Allerton Grange School Decision critical for the project and essential to ensure completion in accordance with requirement to meet delivery of places for September 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic has placed additional pressures in being able to deliver any construction works with limitations and restrictions on available resources and capacity. It was essential to begin works at the earliest possible time in order to mitigate the risk of not meeting September 2020 completion dates as any failure to deliver on this site impact on the authority's statutory duty to provide school places for September 2020 which are already under pressure.
July 2020	D52167	DCD	SU (Cllr Truswell)	Exempt	Leeds Adult Education Budget (AEB) Contract 2020/21 Signing deadline for contract imposed by ESFA. Failure to accept contract would result in loss of external funding available under the AEB and funding for 16-18 Education and delay the award of contracts to adult learning providers which may adversely impact the viability of providers and the provision of a broad and balanced programme offer to learners
Aug 2020	D52168	DCD		Exempt	Adult Learning call-off contract awards for provision in academic year 2020/21 The reason why call-in would prejudice the interests of the council or the public: To avoid further delays to the award of contracts prior to the commencement of the new academic year on 1 August to avoid adversely impacting the viability of providers and the provision of a broad and balanced programme offer to learners.
	D52214	DCF		Exempt	Request to vary the 2021 admission arrangements for Allerton High School Decision delayed in order to enable full consultation with parents and other stakeholders. Delay in implementation would impact admission round for applications to secondary school in September 2021 Implementation of decision required a request to vary arrangements via the Office of Schools Adjudicator (OSA).
Oct 2020	D52432	DRH	SU (Cllr M Harland)	Exempt	Approval to procure a new contract for the provision of postal goods and services. Planned approach to procurement arrangements changed at short notice due to Covid-19. Decision related to a collaborative procurement with 22 other Local Authorities led by Kirklees Council and being procured by the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) on our behalf. A number of the authorities needed to enter into a new contract as a matter of urgency as their current arrangements were ending. Failure to implement urgently would leave the council without any postal services provision.
Nov 2020	D52429	DRH	GE	Exempt	Approval to install renewable energy generation and other energy efficiency measures across the Council's corporate estate subject to receipt of Government grant funding Decision urgent to enable time critical engaging of suppliers to deliver schemes within the required funding deadlines.
Dec 2020	D52505	DCD		Exempt	Morley Towns Fund Accelerated Funding Extremely tight timescales in delivering the capital schemes within the current financial year as required by the MHCLG grant.
	D52519	DCE	GE		Tender for a City Wide Footway Weed Control Contract

Meaningfully Monitor - Table 3: Officer Key decisions taken in relation to business as usual under urgency procedures

Month	DDN	Director	GE / SU	Call In	Title of decision Reason for urgency
					Implementation required by mid December 2020 to enable mobilisation of a new contractor in time for spraying to commence spring 2021.
	D52529	DRH	GE	Exempt	Financial Management Review Service restructure urgent to accommodate retirement of service staff under measures to bridge the Council's budget gap.
Jan 2021	D52653	DRH		Exempt in part	Social Housing decarbonisation fund - Whole House Energy Efficiency Improvements on the Holtdale estate <i>This decision was subject to a report published at short notice with the approval of the Executive member for Communities as implementation was required by 15th January 2021 in order to access external funding.</i> Reasons for the exemption from call in were set out in a confidential appendix.
Feb 2021	D52731	DRH	GE		Approval to administer the Waking Watch Relief Fund in Leeds Funding announced at short notice by Government with a six week window for applications. In order to meet the deadlines officers need to develop the criteria for allocation funds and manage the budget. Delay could therefore impact on the funding.
	D52733	DRH		Exempt	Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 1b Short Government timescale for return of Memorandum of Understanding. Delay could therefore prejudice receipt of the funding.
March 2021	D52927	DCD	SU	Exempt	Land at Manston Lane, Leeds Urgent approval of the transaction was necessary to enable WYCA to complete the purchase within grant funding requirements and enabled the realisation of a capital receipt for the Council within the financial year.
June 2021	D54142	DR		Exempt	Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 Requirement to return the signed the MoU by 28th May 2021. Operation of call in could result in failure to return the MoU and result in the loss of grant funding.
	D54219		GE		One Adoption West Yorkshire agreement with and accept grant funding of £2m from the Department for Education (DfE) Requirement to spend money rapidly in accordance with grant conditions following formal decision to make funding available
	D54235		GE	Exempt	Funding for the Children's Services Stoke Improvement Partnership Decision to accept funding to be taken in accordance with tight DfE and central government timescales. Failure to accept in time could prejudice council by reducing funding available and damaging relationships for this and future projects.

Meaningfully Monitor - Table 4: Executive Board decisions taken in relation to business as usual under urgency procedures

Month	Minute	Director	GE / SU	Call In	Title of decision Reason for urgency
April 2020	162	CS	GE	Exempt	Decision Making Arrangements During Coronavirus Pandemic Decisions taken included measures to promote and secure public health, to provide help and assistance to vulnerable citizens and to provide support to local business and industry. To delay or pause the implementation of these would have potential to seriously prejudice the interests of both the council and the public.
May 2020	169	CX	SU	Exempt	Devolution Deal for West Yorkshire - Review, Scheme & Consultation Any delay to the start of the public consultation would in turn have a detrimental impact on the timeline which would need to be achieved for the successful implementation of a devolution deal for the region.
June 2020	11	DCF	SU	Exempt	Outcome of statutory notice on a proposal to permanently increase learning places at Allerton Grange School from September 2021 Proposals must be approved within 2 months of the end of the representation period following publication of the statutory notice or the proposal would be referred to the Schools Adjudicator for determination. The Scrutiny Board has had opportunity to consider objections received to the proposal.
Sept 2020	31	CX	SU	Exempt	Devolution Deal for West Yorkshire – Consultation Outcomes Any delay in the submission to the Secretary of State would in turn have a detrimental impact on the which would need to be achieved for the successful implementation of a devolution deal for the region. It was not possible for the decisions to be taken earlier due to the time required to undertake the public consultation, analyse its results and prepare the Summary of Consultation Responses.
Nov 2020	91	CX		Exempt	Devolution Deal for West Yorkshire: Consent to Draft Order Any delay to the consent to the draft Order would in turn have a significant detrimental impact on the timetable which would need to be achieved for the successful implementation of a devolution deal for the region. It was not possible for the decisions to be taken earlier due to the time required by the Secretary of State to approve the draft Order and share this with the combined authority.
Dec 2020	99	DCD	SU	Exempt	Lease Agreement for Leeds Media Centre Short timescales provided by the ESIF appraisal process require the decision to approve the lease in principle and the decision to delegate final terms of the lease to the Director of City Development as quickly as possible.
	103	DCD	SU	Exempt	Morley Town Deal The Town Investment Plan must be submitted to government within deadline or would miss opportunity to bid for and secure up to £25m in regeneration funds. The decision could not have been taken sooner within the constrained timescale for developing the Plan.

DECISION MAKING – STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

	106	DCD	SU	Exempt	<p>European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Programme 2014 - 2020: Enhanced Local Flexibility for the Unemployment Programme</p> <p>The timescales set by DWP/ESIF mean that if successful, delivery of the programme would need to commence before notice and call in period expire. Urgency necessary to meet contractual requirements for the funding.</p>
Feb 2021	115	DRH		Exempt	<p>Acquisition of premises at Kingsdale Court, Seacroft</p> <p>The opportunity to acquire the portfolio arose rapidly with a very time limited negotiation period. If the Council is not able to progress quickly the current owner will progress alternative plans which are unlikely to secure sustained and long term improvements on site. This would have a significant impact on the Council and partners' ability to realise the sustainable and positive changes required to alleviate anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood management and housing conditions at the site.</p>
	128	DCF		Exempt	<p>Permanently increase learning places at West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College from September 2021</p> <p>Proposals must be approved within 2 months of the end of the representation period following publication of the statutory notice or the proposal would be referred to the Schools Adjudicator for determination. The Scrutiny Board has had opportunity to consider objections received to the proposal.</p>
	129	DCF		Exempt	<p>Determination of School Admissions Arrangements for 2022/23</p> <p>Urgency required to meet statutory timetable for determination of admission arrangements.</p>
March 2021	140	DCF		Exempt	<p>Cockburn Laurence Calvert Free School Temporary Site Proposals for September 2021 and Design and Cost Report</p> <p>Decision could not be submitted until confirmation of the total projected cost and validation from the quantity surveyor that scheme value for money received. Urgent due to programme restrictions impacting on timetable to deliver for September 2021 so that the Council doesn't fail in its statutory duty to provide a school place for every child.</p>
April 2021	159	DCF		Exempt	<p>Establishment of Resource Provision at St Margaret's Church of England (C of E) Primary School from September 2021</p> <p>Proposals must be approved within 2 months of the end of the representation period following publication of the statutory notice or the proposal would be referred to the Schools Adjudicator for determination.</p>
June 8 th 2021	164	DCD		Exempt	<p>Levelling Up Fund (LUF) - Round 1 Response</p> <p>Operation of call in would risk that the 18th June 2021 deadline for submission of the bid could be missed.</p>

Use of Call In

63. Four decisions were subject to Call In proceedings during the reporting period as detailed in the table below. One further decision taken during the reporting period was called in in July. All of these decisions had been taken by Executive Board, and all five were released for implementation.

Minute	Meeting	Subject	Decision	Scrutiny Board	Call In Meeting
10	June 2020	Learning Places Design & Cost Report School Places Delivery	Key	Children and Families	8 th July 2020
57	Oct 2020	Merger of Groundwork Leeds with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire and Leeds City Council's Future Role in Groundwork Yorkshire	Key	Environment, Housing and Communities	9th Nov 2020
77	Nov 2020	Revenue budget Update 2021/2022 and Budget Saving Proposals	Other	Environment, Housing and Communities	2 nd Dec 2020
123	Feb 2021	Review of the Local Centres Programme	Other	Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth	1 st March 2021
25	June 2021	Adults & Health service review 6 -care delivery: care homes, post consultation recommendations report.	Key	Adults, Health & Active Lifestyles	9 th July 2021

Decisions Not Treated as Key

64. Regulation 18 of the Executive Arrangements Regulations requires that a relevant Scrutiny committee may require the executive to report to Council if a key decision has not been treated as key.

During the reporting period 0 decisions have been referred to a Scrutiny Board as wrongly treated.

65. The following table sets out comparative data for the last three reporting periods in relation to each of the relevant controls in relation to executive decision making.

Reporting Period	Target	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Q1 21/22
Number of key decisions on LOFKD		240	208	181	50
Percentage key decisions on LOFKD	95%	98%	98%	83%	96%
Number of key decisions taken under general exception		4	1	13	2
Number of key decisions taken under special urgency		0	2	25	0
Percentage reports for officer decisions published in time			98% ³	99%	100
Number of executive decisions eligible for call in		314	268	282	60
Number of executive decisions available for call in		295	257	235	56
Percentage eligible executive decisions available for call in	95%	94%	96%	83%	93
Number of executive decisions called in		2	0	4	1
Decisions released for implementation following call in		2	NA	4	1
Recommendations made following call in		0	NA	0	NA

³ Figure not including reports published late due to administrative error.

Decision making by Committees

Publication of Agendas

67. Section 100B of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of meetings of the Council and its committees, and Regulation 7 of the Executive Arrangements Regulations in respect of meetings of Executive board and its committees, require that reports are published alongside the agenda for five clear days before relevant business is considered by a meeting of the committee.
68. A performance indicator has been set with a target of 99% of agendas to be issued and published within the five day statutory deadline set out above. This target reflects the council's minimal use of the short notice provisions referred to above.

147 of 149 (99%) agendas were published five clear working days in advance of the meeting.

Publication of Minutes

69. Schedule 12 Local Government Act 1972 requires that minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of a local authority must be prepared and signed at the same or next suitable meeting of the authority by the person presiding at the meeting. Section 100C of the Act requires that minutes are available for inspection for a period of six years following the meeting, although there is no statutory provision as to the time period for the publication of Committee minutes. Regulation 12 of the Executive Arrangements Regulations requires that notice of executive decisions made at meetings of decision making bodies is published as soon as reasonably practicable after the meeting takes place.
70. In order to make decisions of Leeds City Council and its executive accessible and transparent a local target has been established of 90% of draft minutes to be published on the Council's internet site within ten working days.

183 of 184 (99%) minutes were published within ten clear working days of the meeting.

71. In addition, the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules require that minutes for all meetings of Executive Board are published within two working days of the meeting. This permits prompt availability of Executive Board decisions for call-in and minimises the delay to implementation necessary to allow for the call-in process.

12 of 12 (100%) Executive Board minutes were published within two working days of the meeting.

Review and Refine

Adequacy and Resilience of Internal Controls

73. The documents, systems and processes which together form the Council's decision making framework have been under continuous review during the course of this reporting period.
74. The Annual Assurance Report in Relation to Executive Decision Making received by Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in June 2020 detailed arrangements made at the outset of the pandemic to maintain openness and transparency.
75. Since this time, whilst the framework has proved adequate to ensure appropriate reporting of urgent decisions in response to and as a result of the pressures of the pandemic response; arrangements have been refined as described above in order to ensure that they provide an efficient and proportionate approach to the governance of decision making.

Survey of Internal Control

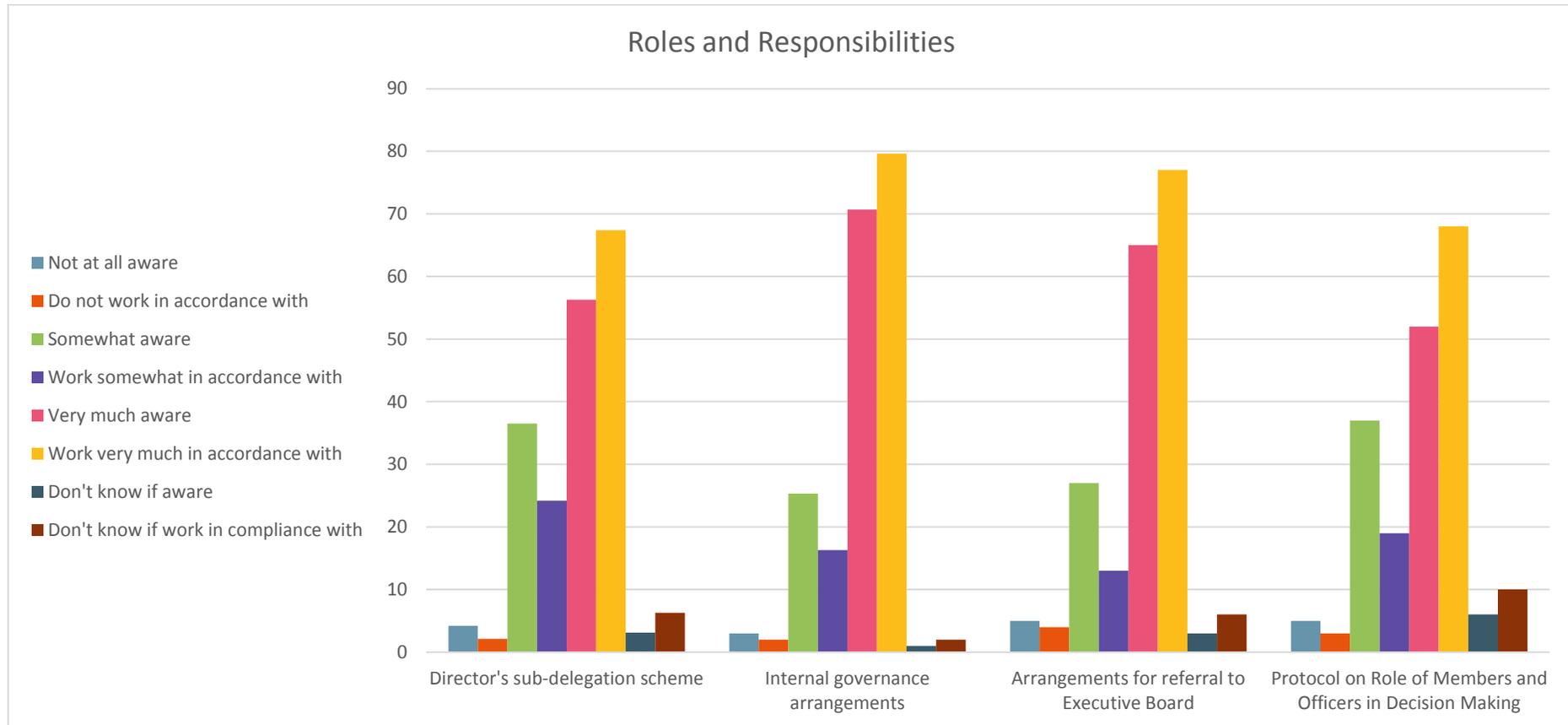
76. Previously all assurance in respect of the decision making framework has been provided by monitoring and oversight of arrangements as set out in this report, with additional assurance being provided through the risk based, thematic approach to internal audit which means all reviews consider relevant decision making controls.
77. In May 2021, the council undertook a new Survey of Internal Control⁴ in order to provide first line assurance in relation to all key systems of internal control by seeking an assessment from operational managers as to how the arrangements underpinning the Corporate Governance Code and Framework are working on the ground.
78. The Survey included questions relating to arrangements for the internal control of decision making as set out in this Statement of Internal Control.
79. The survey asked whether, in the view of respondents, officers in their service are aware of, and whether they work in compliance with a range of relevant systems and controls. Respondents were requested to say how they could give the assurances set out; whether the Covid-19 pandemic had any impact on relevant arrangements; whether there were weaknesses in arrangements and if so whether suggestions could be made to improve them. In this way the survey has provided both quantitative and qualitative assurance in respect of the arrangements.
80. Qualitative analysis of text responses indicate that where awareness is not high in relation to the areas tested, there is non-the-less confidence that the right people have the right level of knowledge; that those who are not undertaking relevant activity on a regular basis know how to access relevant guidance and advice; and that controls are in place across each directorate to ensure compliance with arrangements. Responses also indicate that the strength of the values lead approach means that officers act in accordance with controls, even where their knowledge of those controls may be less strong, because they act in accordance with the council's values.

⁴ A smart survey conducted amongst senior officers to support the review of internal control underpinning the Council's Annual Governance Statement

Roles and Responsibilities

81. As shown on the table below survey responses indicated that staff work in accordance with both formal and informal governance arrangements in place.

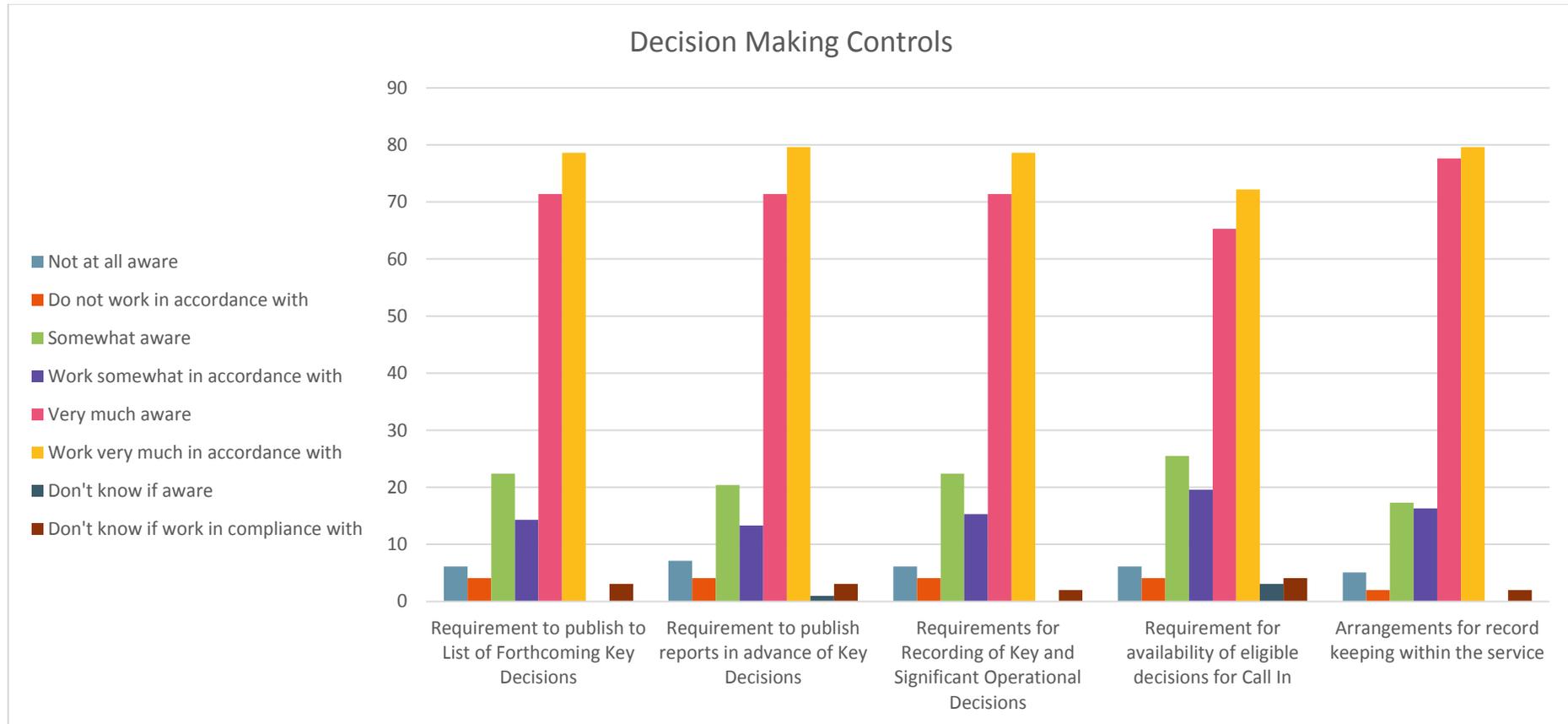
82. Analysis of text responses indicate that staff are aware of gaps in their knowledge and are able to seek guidance and advice appropriately to ensure compliance with the framework.



83. One respondent noted that “We are exploring whether further efficiencies are possible in respect of the scheme of delegation especially where we have high volume/low value transactions to deadlines”, and another that “the directors sub-delegation scheme could be designed and discussed more inclusively. There are potentially opportunities to capitalise on senior (Dir grad) managers in respect of accountability and decision making”.

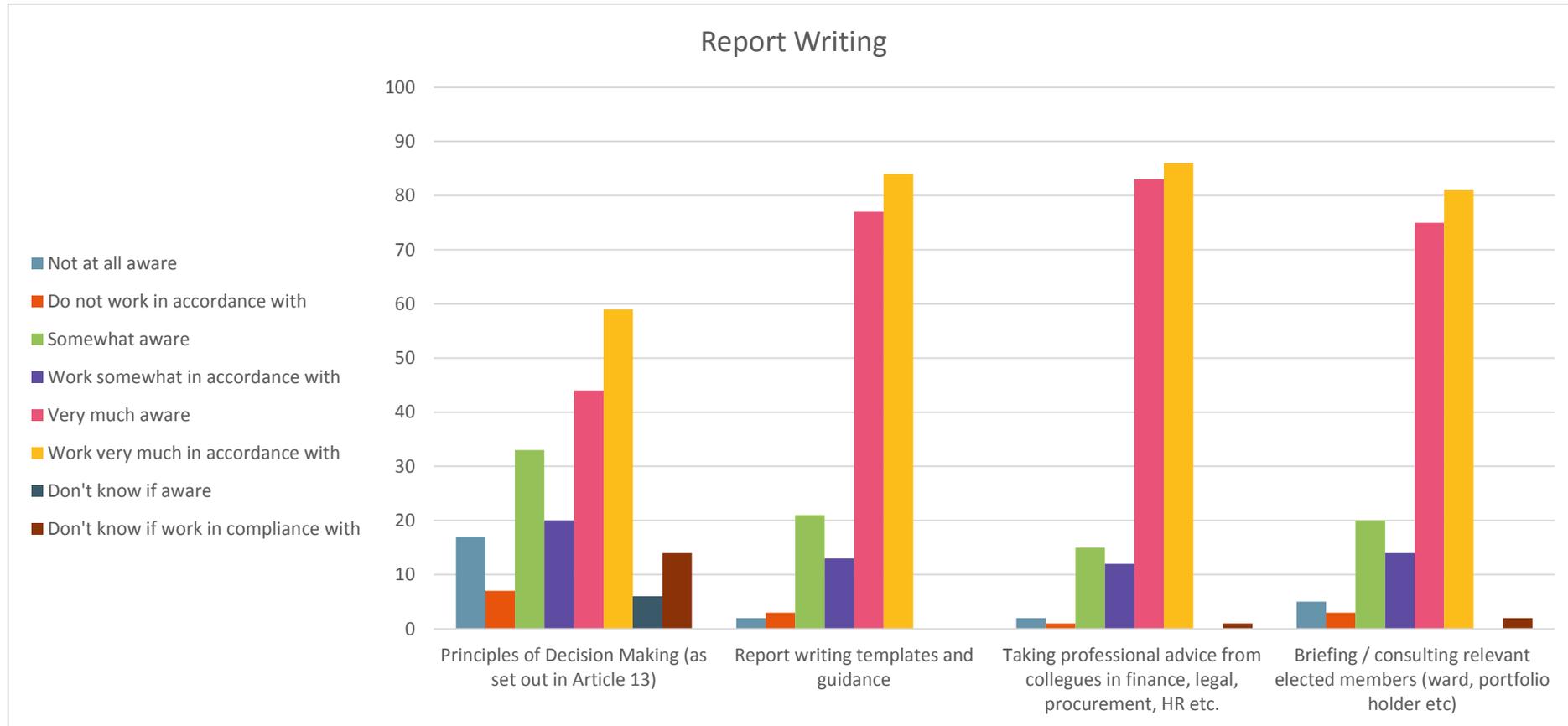
Decision Making Controls

85. As shown in the table below, responses showed even higher levels of awareness with the four controls set out in the ‘meaningfully monitor’ section of this report, with corresponding levels of compliance.



Report Writing

86. Responses in relation to arrangements for report writing are set out below. Questioning included use of appropriate templates; access to advice from colleagues with professional expertise; and arrangements for briefing / consultation with elected members. Again, each of these aspects show high levels of awareness and compliance.



87. One respondent noted that “ the new report format is sensible, cuts out duplication.”

88. It can be seen that survey responses indicate that there is less confidence that officers are aware of, and therefore working in accordance with. the principles of decision making set out in Article 13 of the constitution. As these principles were at the forefront of consideration during the recent revision of the corporate report template, decisions taken on the basis of any report should reflect these principles. However, steps will be taken to raise awareness of these principles through appropriate material in the decision making toolkit, and inclusion in training provided.

Opportunities for Improvement

89. Feedback received through the survey identified the need for ongoing awareness raising alongside the provision of advice, guidance and training. However, respondents also commented on the need for training to be targeted and proportionate. Suggestions made included:
- User friendly summaries of constitutional documents (quick guides)
 - More frequent communication
 - Targeted training
90. Officers will develop a communication plan to ensure that information, advice and guidance is readily accessible to all, and that appropriate training is targeted at officers engaged in decision making activity.

Benchmarking

91. In order to identify best practice and opportunities for improvement, The Chief Officer Financial Services undertook a benchmarking exercise in the Spring of 2021. The exercise used a questionnaire to assess the Council's decision making framework against core cities and West Yorkshire authorities as comparable bodies. Responses were received from four core cities and two South and West Yorkshire authorities.
92. Information was requested in relation to categorisation of decisions; delegation of decision making authority; controls in relation to decision making and relevant performance indicators.
93. Responses received indicate that arrangements in Leeds are broadly in line with comparable authorities with the exception of the following matters:
- a. A number of other authorities make specific provision for decisions to be taken by individual members but arrangements in Leeds do not.
 - b. A number of authorities place financial limits on the delegation of decision making powers to officers. In Leeds Directors are authorised to take any decision in relation to the functions within their remit with the saving that, should the executive member request it, or the Director consider it necessary, the matter be referred to Executive Board. Through this flexible saving to officer delegations matters of strategic significance or other importance are referred to executive board for decision and routine, albeit high value, spending can be dealt with by officers;
 - c. Of the responding authorities only one other had arrangements in place for prior publication of reports in relation to officer (or individual member) decisions. This is a local requirement and does not arise from statutory provision. However, it supports open and transparent decision making in respect of key decisions taken by officers;
 - d. Arrangements in Leeds result in the publication of significantly greater numbers of decisions across the spectrum of both key and significant operational decisions. This reflects the open, honest and trusted approach in Leeds and contributes to open and transparent decision making.
94. It is not therefore recommended that any amendments are made to the decision making framework as a result of this benchmarking exercise.

Statement of Assurance

95. Having undertaken the review of the system of internal control for Decision Making outlined in this statement the Chief Officer Financial Services is satisfied that the arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose, that they are communicated and embedded and that they are routinely complied with.

96. The Chief Officer Financial Services has identified the following opportunities for enhancement of the system of internal control for decision making and will implement these over the course of the 2021/22 municipal year.

Opportunities for improvement

Define and Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monitoring Officer will continue to ensure that the Constitution remains under continuous review. • Directors will be encouraged to review their sub-delegation arrangements on a regular basis to support efficient and effective decision making by officers of suitable experience and seniority
Clearly Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A communication plan will be developed to ensure that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ information, advice and guidance are readily accessible to all, and ○ appropriate training is targeted at officers engaged in decision making activity • New material will be developed to raise awareness of the principles of decision making, set out at Article 13.
Effectively Embed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a share point platform to support easy access to key information (including decision monitoring, and alignment of executive delegations to executive and scrutiny oversight) will assist in the provision of clear, up to date advice, and checking that arrangements are embedded.
Meaningfully Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting of urgent decisions through quarterly internal audit update reports could enable contemporaneous oversight of arrangements and the early identification of performance trends and concerns.
Review and Refine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further changes are proposed at this time.