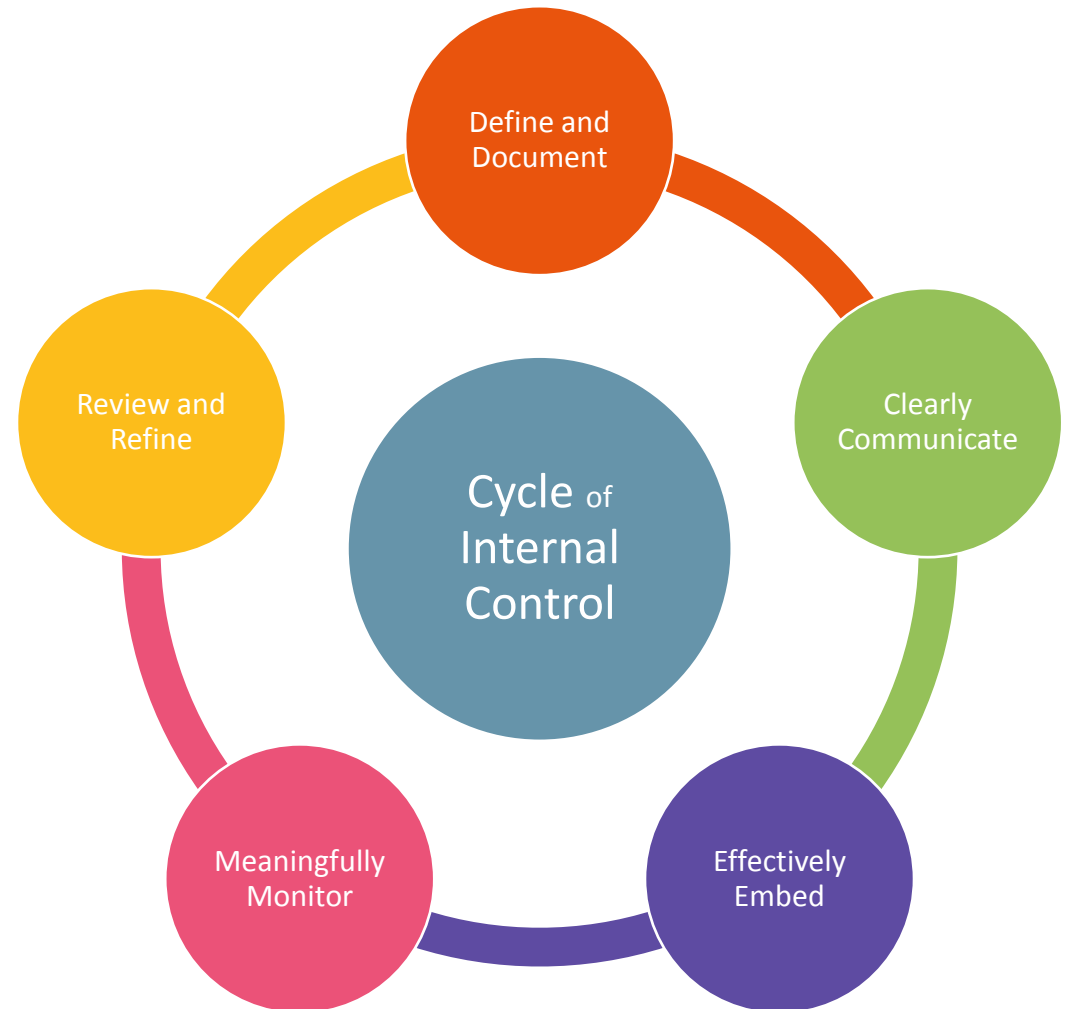


# Introduction

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 principles and commitments set out in the Local Code of Corporate Governance and the Council's values and behaviours, 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 2023 to March 2024, and includes reference to changes that will take place over the 2024/25 year, and other opportunities that have been identified to improve these arrangements.
5. The assurance contained in this statement is summarised in the final section, together with an indication of the next steps to be taken. A statement of assurance is provided at the final page.



## 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. The rules and requirements to ensure 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.
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 in the 'library' the Council's website.
10. The table below sets out details of the formal documentation to establish and support the decision-making framework.

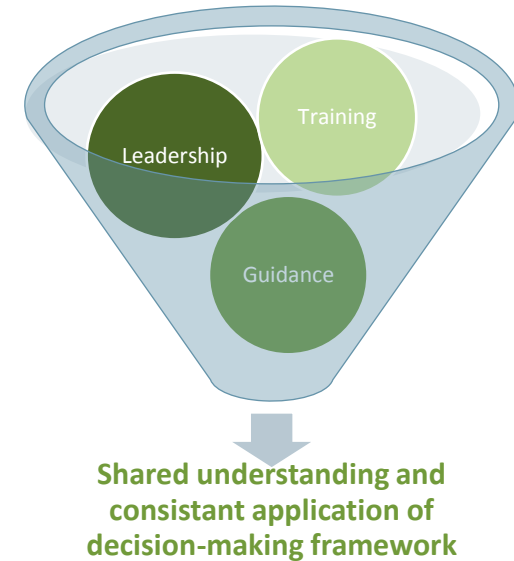
Document in place	Amendments made during reporting period.
<p><b>Decision-making Framework:</b></p> <p><b>Documents which together establish the Council's decision-making framework, providing for open and transparent decision-making by Members and Officers.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Article 4 The Full Council</a> - defines the Council's budget and policy framework.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Article 13 Decision-making</a> - defines each category of decision and sets out the principles of decision-making.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Executive and decision-making Procedure Rules</a> - provide for open, transparent, and accountable decision-making in relation to Executive functions.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Access to Information Procedure Rules</a> - provide for open, transparent, and accountable decision-making in relation to Council functions.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules</a> - provide for open and inclusive development of budget and policy framework, setting parameters for executive decision-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 4 – amended 11/03/2024 - <a href="#">control sheet 7</a></li> <li>• EDMPR – amended 7/5/2024 – <a href="#">control sheet 8</a></li> </ul>

Document in place	Amendments made during reporting period.
<p><b>Rules of Procedure:</b></p> <p><b>Documents which set out rules of procedure for democratic decision-making bodies, and those with oversight of decision-making.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Council Procedure Rules</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Committee Procedure Rules</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Licensing Procedure Rules</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Protocol for Public Speaking at Plans Panels</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community committee procedure rules – amended 25/05/2023 – <a href="#">control sheet 2</a></li> <li>• Protocol for public speaking at Plans Panels – amended 23/11/2023 – <a href="#">control sheet 4</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Ethical Framework for Decision-making:</b></p> <p><b>Codes and Protocols which together establish the ethical framework within which decisions are taken.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Members’ Code of Conduct</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Employee Code of Conduct</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Roles of Members and Officers in decision-making</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Planning Code of Good Practice</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Code of Practice for the Determination of Licensing matters</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning code of good practice – amended 23/11/2023 <a href="#">control sheet 4</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Democratic Oversight:</b></p> <p><b>Arrangements for Member’s oversight of decision-making.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Portfolios - executive portfolios described and aligned to Officer delegations at <a href="#">Part 3</a>, Section 3B (a and b) supported by Deputy and Support Executive Members.</li> <li>• Community Committee Champions - to provide local lead and facilitate local democratic accountability - defined at <a href="#">Part 3</a>, Section 3D(b)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Scrutiny Board alignment</a> - 5 overview and scrutiny committees aligned to Officer delegations in Part 2, Article 6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 Executive portfolios were approved at Full Council for the municipal year 2023-24 <a href="#">Control sheet 1</a></li> <li>• Article 6 amended 7/5/25 <a href="#">Control sheet 8</a></li> </ul>

Document in place	Amendments made during reporting period.
<p><b>Democratic Decision-making:</b>  <b>Arrangements for decision-making by elected Members in committee.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functions reserved to Full Council - defined in Functions of the Full Council at <a href="#">Part 3, Section 2A</a></li> <li>• Council Committee Membership and terms of reference - set out at Part 3, <a href="#">Section 2B (a) &amp; Section 2B (b)</a></li> <li>• Terms of reference for Committees appointed / delegated to by Executive Board - set out at <a href="#">Part 3, Section 3C</a></li> <li>• Community Committee Executive Delegations - set out at <a href="#">Part 3, Section 3D(a)</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Committees were appointed at the Annual Council meeting in May 2023 <a href="#">Control sheet 1</a></li> <li>• Community committee terms of reference – amended 25/05/2023 <a href="#">control sheet 2</a></li> <li>• Independent Panel terms of reference – amended 7/5/24 <a href="#">Control sheet 8</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>External Delegations and Joint Working Arrangements:</b>  <b>Arrangements with other authorities for the discharge of functions.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegations to and from other authorities in respect of Council functions - set out at <a href="#">Part 3, Section 2D</a></li> <li>• Joint Arrangements in respect of Council and Executive functions - set out at <a href="#">Part 2, article 11</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegations to other authorities approved at the Annual Council meeting in May 2023. <a href="#">Control sheet 1</a></li> <li>• Delegations to and from other authorities - amended 7/5/24 <a href="#">Control sheet 8</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Officer Delegations:</b>  <b>Arrangements for the discharge of functions by Officers.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegations from Council to Directors include general delegations shared by all Directors and functions delegated specifically to each Director - set out at <a href="#">Part 3 Section 2C</a></li> <li>• 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 <a href="#">Part 3, Section 3E</a>. 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Delegations appointed at Annual Council meeting in May 2023.</li> <li>• Executive delegations from Leader reported to Council May 2023</li> <li>• Officer delegation schemes – amended 7/5/24 <a href="#">Control sheet 8</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Sub-delegations:</b>  <b>Arrangements for the delegation of functions from Directors to Officers of suitable experience and seniority.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each Director is responsible for making maintaining their own scheme of delegation which is published on the <a href="#">Council's website</a>. 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sub-schemes of delegation were reviewed and refreshed where appropriate for 2023-24.</li> </ul>

## Clearly Communicate

11. 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.
12. The table below sets out the variety of communication techniques used to share the decision-making framework with Officers and Members.



	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Members</b>
<b>Training</b>	The decision-making toolkit provides a selection of tools and information to support self-help. Practical arrangements to embed the framework are set out in explanatory notes, guidance documents, training tools and templates accessible from the Decision-making Toolkit on Insite.	A written “Introduction to exercising the democratic mandate” was shared with newly elected Members in May 2023. This provides a short (at a glance) guide to the role of elected Members in decision-making. It introduces Members to the ways in which they can exercise democratic oversight of decision-making in addition to any direct contribution they may make as an appointed Member of a relevant committee.

DECISION-MAKING – STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Members</b>
<b>Training</b>	A variety of video training sessions have been developed which split the decision-making framework into bitesize sections for Officers to learn or refresh their knowledge on individual areas.	A further, more detailed, “Members guide to decision-making authority, categories and controls” has been developed and was made available for all Members.
<b>Training</b>	In addition to the generalised training offer, 1-2-1 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.	In November 2022, a remote presentation on decision-making was offered as part of the Member development programme but received minimal interest (3 Members responded) and was therefore cancelled.
<b>Guidance</b>	<p>The Decision-Making Toolkit, available to Officers on <a href="#">Insite</a>, is regularly updated with advice and guidance which can be accessed at Officers’ convenience, including guidance in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Principles of Decision-making.</li> <li>• How to take a decision.</li> <li>• How to record a delegated decision.</li> <li>• Decision-making in climate emergency.</li> <li>• Guidance for writing reports for committee and Officer decisions.</li> </ul>	Written material circulated to Members was supported with the offer of further advice or assistance should those be required.
<b>Guidance</b>	<p>Governance Support Managers act as gatekeepers for governance arrangements in directorates and can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide advice and guidance in relation to practice and procedure for Officer decision-making both corporately and within directorates.</li> <li>• arrange for the publication of relevant notices and documents in line with statutory and Constitutional requirements.</li> <li>• maintain the directorate record of administrative Officer decisions.</li> <li>• liaise with staff in Democratic Services in relation to Committee agendas, reports, and minutes.</li> <li>• provide check and challenge in relation to the use of corporate templates and sufficiency of information.</li> </ul>	N/A

DECISION-MAKING – STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Members</b>
<b>Guidance</b>	<p>Colleagues with expertise from legal, human resources, finance and procurement and commercial services provide a further network of support and can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• give advice and guidance; and</li> <li>• provide timely check and challenge in relation to matters within their remit.</li> </ul> <p>The value 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. 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 etc...) as well as being incorporated into the routine sign-off of reports for Committee or Officer decision-making.</p>	N/A
<b>Leadership</b>	<p>Officers with delegated authority can review decisions prior to approval to ensure appropriate controls are met. Arrangements for Officer decision-making are established by each Director accountable for decision-making. Some directorates use decision-making panels to support the Officer with delegated authority sharing ownership of decisions in this way; in others the Officer with authority takes the decisions alone. In all cases the Officer taking the decision can seek further information if not satisfied that the report provides sufficient detail.</p>	<p>Consultation arrangements enable Members to provide leadership in their prospective roles as decision takers, portfolio holders, ward Members, community committee champions etc...</p>

## Effectively Embed

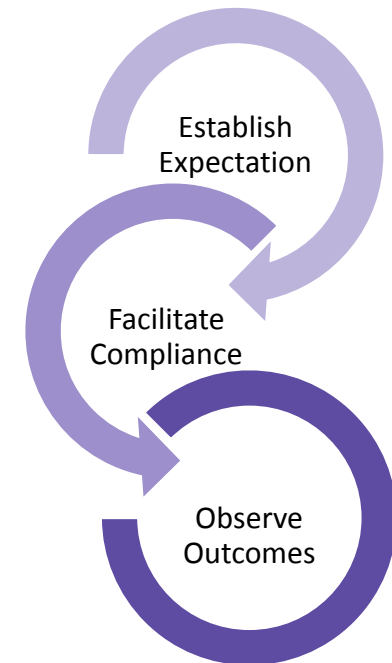
13. To ensure that arrangements are embedded in the values led culture, and meet the requirements of any decision-making framework in local government the following are Key drivers:

- The democratic mandate – enabling Members to have oversight of Officer decision-making and to be satisfied that decisions taken are proportionate, provide value for money, and are in the public interest.
- The appropriate use of public money and response to the financial challenge – ensuring full account is taken of relevant income, cost, and savings to the Council, and how these will be funded.
- Openness and engagement with the public – balancing the need for openness and accountability with agile and responsive decision-making in a framework that does not inhibit the Council's ability to act in the public interest.

14. Regular reviews take place to ensure that the arrangements for recording and publication for Officer decisions are proportionate, practicable and compliant with relevant legislation and constitutional provision. These ensure that the Council is agile and responsive in its decision-making whilst also remaining open and transparent.

15. The arrangements set out below ensure that the decision-making framework is effectively embedded.

16. Amendments to the framework, adopted by Full Council in May 2024, were designed to strike a reasonable balance between speeding up decision-making, reducing bureaucracy and resource required, retaining openness and engagement with the public and being in line with the statutory requirements. It is anticipated that the amendments to the decision-making categories will result in fewer published decisions, although information will remain available to the public when required through other mechanisms<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> E.g., YORtender – contracts over £10K; Data Mill North – non contract expenditure over £500.



Arrangements in place during the reporting period 2023 to 2024

**Establish arrangements that are proportionate, practicable and compliant.**

- Arrangements have focussed both on the need to meet statutory and local controls and to engage in open and transparent decision-making.
- ‘Tone from the top’ is set to develop a culture of compliance.
- Guidance is provided to establish proportionate implementation of controls. Decision makers are encouraged to discuss projects and programmes with governance specialists to ensure decision-making framework is applied proportionately to allow agile decision-making.
- Regular monitoring seeks to correct mistakes in real time so providing support and learning.

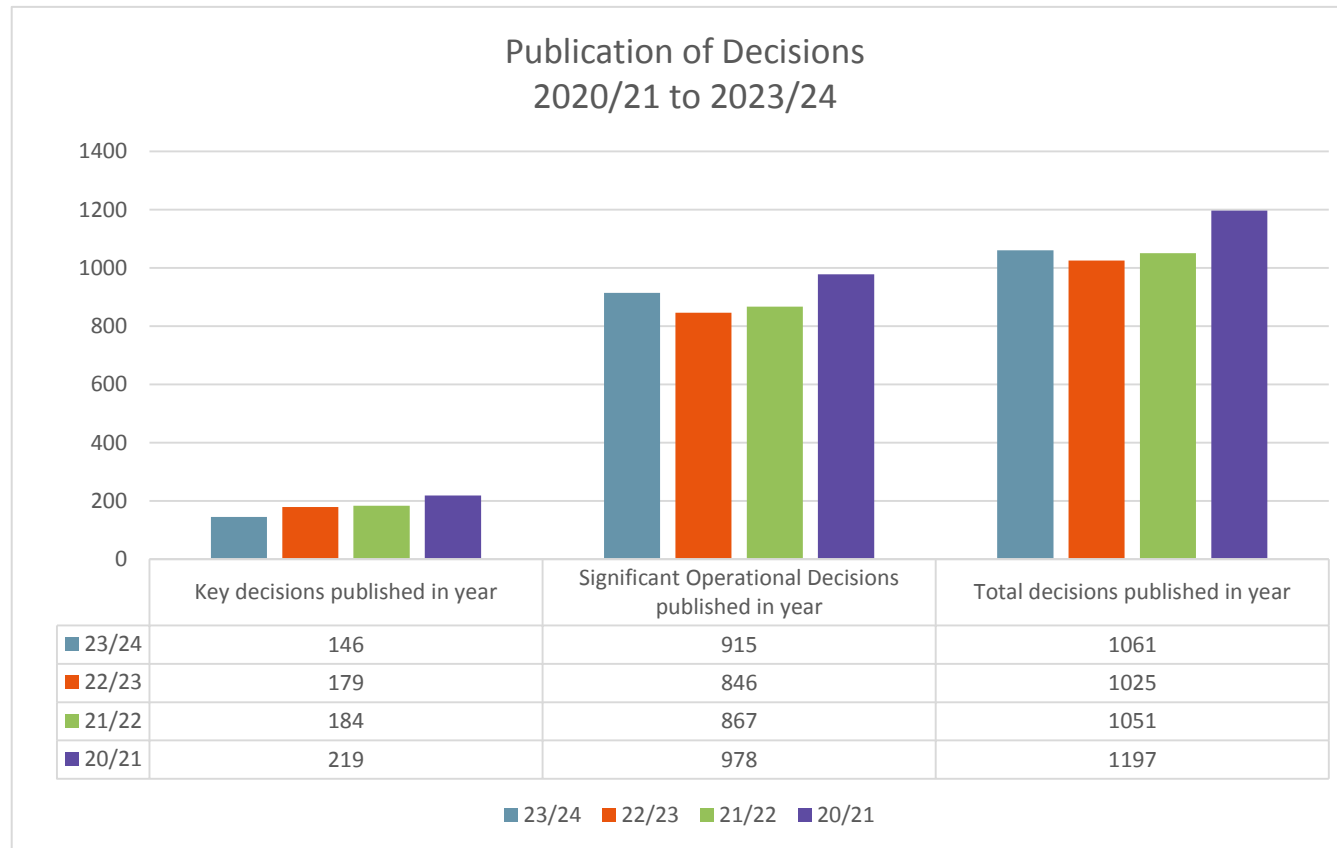
**Ensure appropriate tools and sufficient resource to enable compliance.**

- Arrangements are set out in clear, accessible guidance, and published to the decision-making toolkit on Insite so that Officers can self-serve.
- The decision-making framework requires that all Key and significant operational decisions be published on the Council’s website as soon as reasonably practicable after the decision is taken.
- 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:
  - Request to add a Key Decision to the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions.
  - Corporate Report Template (to support clear articulation of the information necessary to take relevant decisions and provides focus on the strategic objectives of the Council while avoiding duplication), and
  - Delegated Decision Notice (for recording that delegated decisions will be or have been taken by Officers)
- 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.

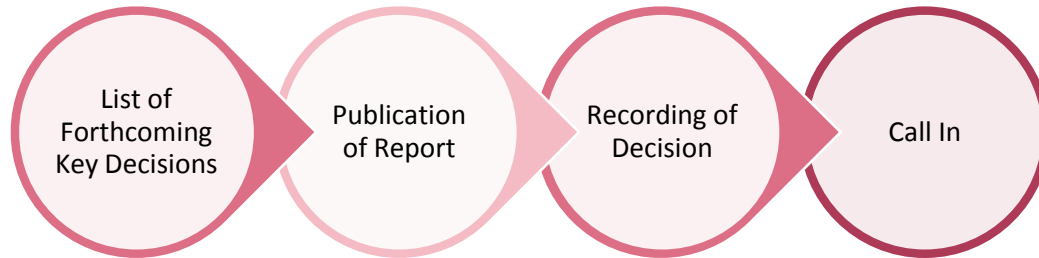
**Provide ongoing assurance that practice and procedure reflect expectation.**

- 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 can respond quickly to ensure compliance with relevant procedures or to correct administrative errors where these arise.
- In addition, an ongoing 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.
- 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.

17. A headline indicator that arrangements continue to be embedded effectively, and are used as intended, is in the headline number of decisions published annually. Whilst there were more Significant Operational decisions and fewer Key the total published in the 23/24 year are within the anticipated range. More detailed information is provided in the charts below.



## Meaningfully Monitor



18. 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.

19. The table below sets out the Key controls, their provenance, and the way in which they are interpreted locally.

	<b>Statutory</b>	<b>Local</b>
<b>List of Forthcoming Key Decisions (LOFKD)</b>	<p>Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions</p> <p>This is a statutory control set out in Regulations 9 to 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. (“The Executive Arrangements Regulations”)</p> <p>It requires that prior notice be given of the intention to take a key decision. In doing so it gives Members and the public opportunity to find out more about proposals and to engage with the decision maker prior to the decision being taken.</p>	<p>The List of Forthcoming Key Decisions</p> <p>In line with regulations 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The decision fits the 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</li> <li>• The decision fits the 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.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Publication of Report</b></p>	<p>Legislation (Paragraph 4(2) of Schedule 12 and Section 100B (3) of Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972) require that reports be published with the agenda pack five clear days before a committee meets.</p>	<p>There is no statutory requirement to publish reports in relation to Officer decisions in advance of those decisions being taken. However, in accordance with Council’s Constitution, the Executive and Decision-Making Procedure Rules provide a requirement that a report in support of a key decision to be taken by an Officer is published five clear working days before that decision is taken.</p> <p>In 2018, the rules were amended by Council to allow for the late publication of reports in relation to Key decisions with the approval of the relevant Executive Member.</p>
<p><b>Recording of Decision</b></p>	<p>Legislation (The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings &amp; Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012) require that a written record of specified decisions be made available as soon as reasonably practicable.</p>	<p>The delegated decision notice together with supporting report provide a record of each relevant decision.</p> <p>Administrative decisions are subject to a proportionate written record but are not required to be published.</p>
<p><b>Call In</b></p>	<p>Legislation (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, power to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive.</p> <p>This includes the power to review or scrutinise a decision made but not implemented and to recommend that the decision be reconsidered by the person who made it, or to arrange for its function under subsection (2)(a), as far as it relates to the decision, to be exercised by the authority.</p>	<p>In line with the legislation Part 8 of the Executive and Decision-Making Procedure Rules sets out the “call-in” arrangements adopted by Leeds City Council.</p> <p>Subject to limited exceptions, all decisions of executive board and Key decisions taken by Officers are eligible for call in.</p> <p>In addition, the rules provide for the exemption of eligible decisions from call in where the decision is urgent because any delay would seriously prejudice the Council’s or the public’s interests.</p>

### The List of Forthcoming Key Decisions (LOFKD)

20. The statutory GE and SU provisions acknowledge that it is not always possible to give 28 days' notice prior to taking a key decision and to expect that all decisions were included in the LOFKD for this time would be unrealistic. Reflecting this, a performance indicator has been set asking that 95% of all Key decisions should be published to the LOFKD not less than 28 clear calendar days before the decision is taken.
21. 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%. It was acknowledged at the time that the requirement for urgent and agile decision-making in response to the Covid-19 pandemic would impact on the inclusion of decisions on the list for the full 28 days, but non the less Members felt it appropriate to aim for the higher target. There has been consistent improvement against the performance indicator since the pandemic - from 83% in 2020-21, 93% in 2021-22 and 94% for 2022-23. As the performance indicator for the current year shows further improvement and exceeds the performance indicator for the first time since the pandemic, 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.

**During the reporting period 144 of 149 or 97% of all Key decisions were included in the LOFKD.**

22. 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 have been detailed in quarterly update reports provided to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee
23. The charts below show how use of the general exception and special urgency provisions are split between decisions taken by Officers and those taken by executive board. They also demonstrate visibly that most Key decisions are included in the LOFKD for 28- clear days as required by the rules.

DECISION-MAKING – STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

	Included in LOFKD	General Exception	Special Urgency	
Officer Key decisions	112	2	2	<p><b>Executive Board Key Decisions</b></p> <p>1 0</p> <p>32</p> <p>■ Included in LOFKD ■ General Exception ■ Special Urgency</p>
Executive board Key decisions	32	1	0	<p><b>Officer Key Decisions</b></p> <p>2 2</p> <p>112</p> <p>■ Included in LOFKD ■ General Exception ■ Special Urgency</p>
All Key decisions	144	3	2	

### Publication of Report

24. 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. It therefore supports both transparency and engagement with the decision-making process. Use of a corporate report template ensures that all relevant matters are considered.
25. Rule 5.4 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.

**During the reporting period 116 of 116 (100%) of Key decisions taken by Officers were supported by reports which were published five clear working days in advance of the decision being taken. No reports were published late.**

### Recording of Decision

26. Recording of decisions ensures that those decisions are open and transparent, and that the decision maker can be held to account.
27. Regulations<sup>2</sup> 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.

**During the reporting period, 149 Key and 915 Significant Operational Decisions were published.**

### Call In

28. Again, recognising the need for agile and responsive decision-making in matters of urgency, 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 175 of 182 (96%) of eligible decisions were available for Call In.**

29. 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 have been detailed in quarterly decision-making update reports included with the Internal Audit Update reports.

<sup>2</sup> 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

DECISION-MAKING – STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

	Eligible and Available for call in	Exempt from call in	Not eligible for call in	
Officer Key decisions	113	2	1	<p><b>Officer Key Decisions</b></p> <p>2 1</p> <p>113</p> <p>■ Eligible and Available for Call In ■ Exempt from call in ■ Not eligible for call in</p>
Executive board Key and other decisions	62	5	10	<p><b>Executive Board Decisions</b></p> <p>10</p> <p>5</p> <p>62</p> <p>■ Eligible and Available for Call In ■ Exempt from call in ■ Not eligible for call in</p>
Totals	175	7	11	



30. Monitoring undertaken indicates that use of the exemption has returned to pre-pandemic levels and that the performance indicator is realistic and proportionate whilst being appropriate challenging. It is not therefore recommended that there is any need to consider variation of the performance indicator currently.

### Use of Call In

31. Three decisions were subject to Call In proceedings during the reporting period as detailed in the table below.

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Scrutiny Board</b>	<b>Call In Meeting</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<a href="#">Delegated Decision D56747</a>	Active Travel Tranche 3 - A660 Corridor	Infrastructure, Investment, and Inclusive Growth	<a href="#">27th September 2023</a>	Released for implementation
<a href="#">Executive Board Minute 49</a>	Future of six high rise and resident rehousing - Bailey and Brooklands Towers, Ramshead Heights, Leafield Towers, Raynville Court and Grange.	Environment, Housing and Communities	<a href="#">6th November 2023</a>	Released for implementation
<a href="#">Delegated Decision D56971</a>	Lawnswood Roundabout Improvement Scheme - Approval to Proceed with Further Development and Delivery.	Infrastructure, Investment, and Inclusive Growth	<a href="#">3rd January 2024</a>	Released for implementation

### Decisions Taken Under Urgency Provisions

32. 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.

33. 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)<sup>3</sup>. This requirement has been satisfied by the provision of regular updates in relation to urgent decision-making included within Internal Audit update reports: [June 2023](#); [September 2023](#); [February 2024](#); and [June 2024](#).
34. In summary, of the decisions treated as urgent (General exception; special urgency or exemption from call in):
- 1 decision was published one day late as the result of administrative error.
  - 3 decisions were subject to timelines imposed by external agencies / statutory processes.
  - 3 decisions were taken using urgency procedures to help meet the Council's financial challenge.
  - 4 were taken using urgency procedures to avoid impact on Council's strategic objectives.

### **Decisions Not Treated as Key**

35. 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.**

### **Comparative Data**

36. The table set out below shows comparative data for the last four reporting periods in relation to each of the relevant controls for executive decision-making.
37. Members will note the consistent improvement in percentage compliance with substantive control and reduction in reliance on urgency provisions.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

DECISION-MAKING – STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

<b>Reporting Period</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Number of Key decisions on LOFKD	N/A	181	173	167	144
Percentage Key decisions on LOFKD	95%	83%	94%	94%	97%
Number of Key decisions taken under general exception	N/A	13	6	5	3
Number of Key decisions taken under special urgency	N/A	25	7	6	2
Percentage reports for Officer decisions published in time	N/A	99%	100%	99%	100
Number of executive decisions eligible for call in	N/A	282	229	233	182
Number of executive decisions available for call in	N/A	235	209	221	175
Percentage eligible executive decisions available for call in	95%	83%	91%	95%	96%
Number of executive decisions called in	N/A	4	0	1	3
Decisions released for implementation following call in	N/A	4	0	1	3
Recommendations made following call in	N/A	0	0	0	0

### Decision-making by Committees.

#### Publication of Agendas

38. 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 be published alongside the agenda for five clear days before relevant business is considered by a meeting of the committee.
39. Both provisions make allowance for lawful late publication of agendas in circumstances where the meeting is convened at late notice.
40. 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.

171 of 171 (100%) agendas were published five clear working days in advance of the meeting.

#### Publication of Minutes

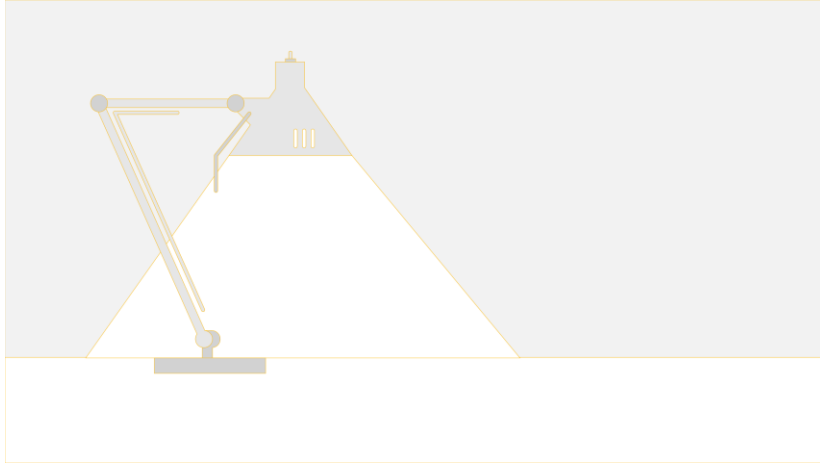
41. Schedule 12 Local Government Act 1972 requires that minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of a local authority must be prepared and signed at the same or next suitable meeting of the authority by the person presiding at the meeting. Section 100C of the Act requires that minutes be available for inspection for a period of six years following the meeting, although there is no statutory provision as to the 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.
42. 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.

198 of 208 (96%) minutes were published within ten clear working days of the meeting.

43. 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.

10 of 10 (100%) Executive Board minutes were published within two working days of the meeting.

## Review and Refine



44. The opportunity to review and refine the internal control environment ensures that the Council strives for continuous improvement. In the case of the decision-making framework this requires

- A control environment which delivers open and accountable decision-making, which takes all relevant matters into consideration to deliver sustainable decisions to give effect to the Council's ambitions.
- Robust application of the democratic mandate
- Realistic and agile controls to make proportionate use of Officer resource to comply.

### Adequacy and Resilience of Internal Controls

45. The documents, systems and processes which together form the Council's decision-making framework have been under continuous review during this reporting period. Much of the outcome of this monitoring is reported in the previous section.

46. In addition, a sample testing regime has been in place to examine the adequacy of reporting in relation to Key Officer decisions. The testing strategy developed supports consideration of:

- categorisation of decisions - to ensure that they are subject to appropriate controls.
- authority – to ensure that decisions are taken by authorised Officers under relevant delegations from accountable directors.
- transparency – to ensure that any restriction of access to information is appropriately recorded.
- supporting information – to ensure that decision makers have appropriate, proportionate, and timely information.

47. Decisions are sampled quarterly with sampling weighted in accordance with decisions taken. Review ensures that report templates are correctly completed, and information provided to support the decision taken (including aims and objectives, impact, alternative options, consultation and engagement, legal and resource implications, risks, and how the decision supports the Council's strategic pillars.) Each decision is then categorised as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. To date all decisions sampled over the reporting period have been satisfactory. Should a decision be found to be unsatisfactory there are appropriate escalation measures in place.

### Peer Review

48. During 2022/23 the Council welcomed the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge which included within its report the following relating to governance and decision-making.

*“The overall impression given in the Council’s approach to governance is that Leeds is a self-aware, reflective organisation which is open to challenge and learning. It could improve further by exploring in more detail and tackling some of the concerns of middle managers about the speed of delegated decision-making, which at times feels too slow for the ambition of the Council and causes frustration at this level, particularly for those working in corporate and support functions. Whilst the peer team gained a small insight into concerns of middle managers, taking some more time to research and understand those concerns would be a step in reducing what some perceive to be as unnecessary bureaucracy and an opportunity to improve user satisfaction.”*

49. A review of the constitution was undertaken during the reporting period. In addition to the Peer Review, the drivers for the review included:

- The need for the constitution to remain fit for purpose so that it reflects our values and how we work with partners as well as supporting and complementing the Council’s governance framework; complying with legislative requirements; supporting the democratic oversight of decisions; continue to provide appropriate check and challenge around the use of public money and to ensure openness and engagement whilst remaining agile and responsive.
- The need to reduce duplication, maximise efficiencies and minimise bureaucracy with a view to increasing workforce capacity in response to financial challenge, staff survey results around work pressures and the Organisational Plan objectives.

50. The review resulted in amendments to the constitutional provisions at the heart of the decision-making framework and were considered by General Purposes Committee before being recommended to Council where they were approved.

**Survey of Internal Control**

51. The Survey of Internal Control<sup>4</sup> has again been conducted 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 Local Code of Corporate Governance Code are embedded on the ground.
52. The decision-making framework supports three of the seven principles in the Local Code of Corporate Governance and the commitments made to give effect to these principles.

Principle	Commitments
<p><b>Principle 2: Ensuring openness and engagement:</b></p> <p>We will ensure openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p>	<p>We are committed to a culture of openness and will be transparent in our decision-making.</p> <p>We will use appropriate means to consult and engage with service users, local communities, and stakeholders to inform our activity.</p> <p>We will develop formal and informal partnerships to ensure efficient use of resources and sustainable achievement of outcomes.</p>
<p><b>Principle 4: Determining effective interventions:</b></p> <p>We will determine the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p>	<p>We will ensure that decision makers are provided with relevant, timely information to support decisions which are proportionate, sustainable, and realistic to meet identified aims and outcomes.</p> <p>We will ensure that our financial planning, and budgeting processes inform, reflect, and support our decision-making.</p> <p>We will consider best value in respect of all strategic objectives through the delivery of service specific outcomes.</p>
<p><b>Principle 6: Developing Capacity:</b></p> <p>We will develop the Council’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</p>	<p>We will continually review how we use our assets and information to achieve outcomes efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>We will develop, maintain, and implement arrangements which support and develop the capacity of Members and Officers.</p> <p>We will ensure that leadership roles are clear and defined and that relationships between elected Members and Officers work effectively to set and implement our strategic goals.</p>

<sup>4</sup> A MS Form survey conducted amongst Senior Officers to support the review of internal control underpinning the Council’s Annual Governance Statement

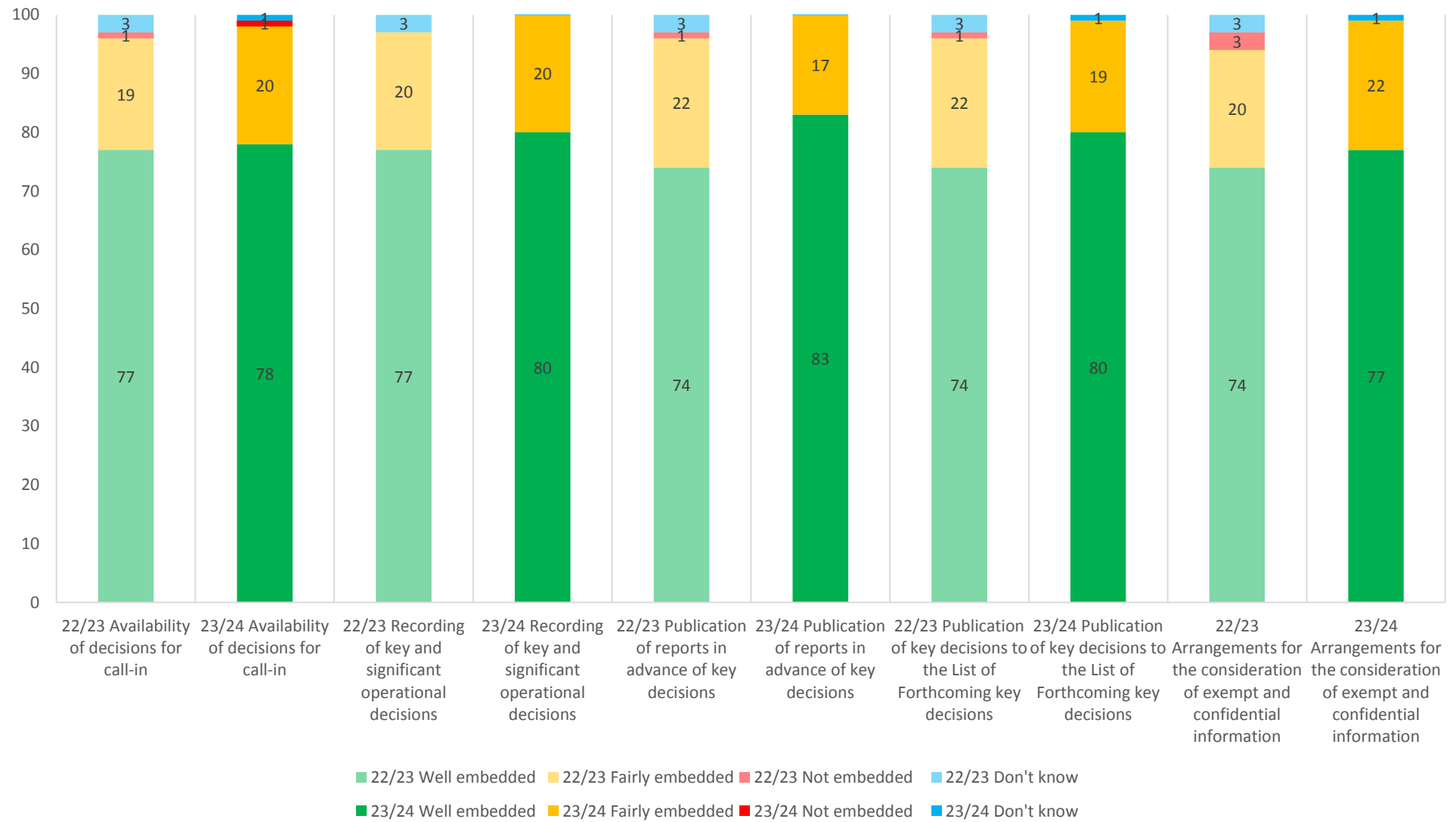
53. 138 of 176 (78%) invited participants provided their view as to whether controls are embedded and applied in their service. In addition, they were invited to identify any weaknesses in the governance arrangements, and how those could be improved.
54. Quantitative responses are set out in the graphs below for each of the three principles with controls which relate to the decision-making framework.

Questions asked	Survey outcomes
<p><b>Principle 2:</b> Questions asked about arrangements in place to support a culture of openness and transparency in decision-making. The controls in place are designed to underpin the way we enable Members, stakeholders, and the public to engage with the decision taker when taking decisions, from the planning stages through to implementation.</p>	<p>We were pleased to note that good results have improved still further across the range of controls.</p>
<p><b>Principle 4:</b> Questions asked about arrangements to support proportionate, sustainable, and realistic decisions. The controls in place ensure that decision makers have the appropriate information to be able to take decisions that direct resources to sustainably deliver the Best City Ambition, the three strategic pillars and the strategic objectives within those.</p>	<p>The principles of decision-making have been further embedded into the Executive and Decision-Making Procedure Rules as part of the constitutional review. This is intended to underscore the importance of these principles of good governance, in conjunction with our values, to shape our behaviours and underpin the way in which we work to achieve our ambitions.</p>
<p><b>Principle 6:</b> Questions asked about arrangements for delegated decision-making including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delegation of functions to Officers</li> <li>• internal governance arrangements</li> <li>• arrangements for exercising the democratic mandate through Member consultation and decision-making; and</li> <li>• The codes and protocols supporting the roles of Members and Officers in decision-making</li> </ul>	<p>We were pleased to note that good results have improved still further across the range of controls.</p>

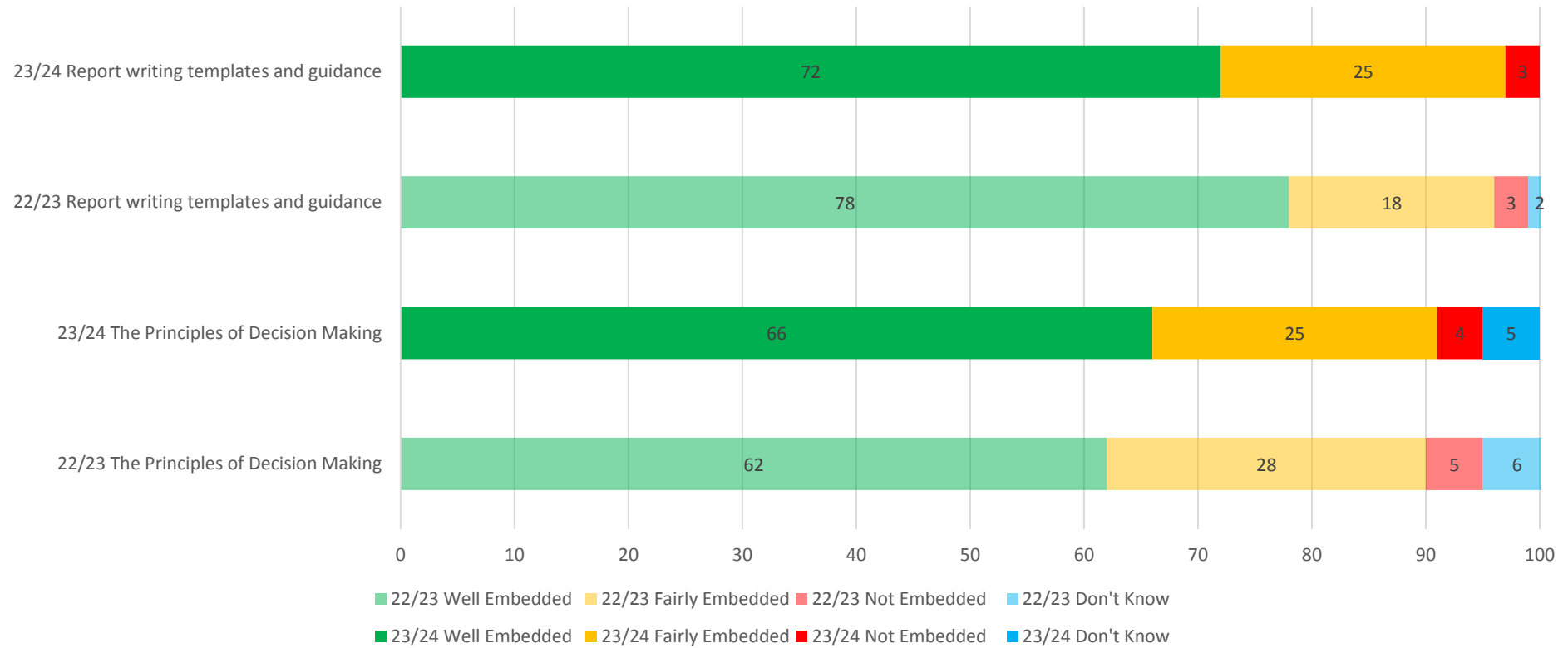
55. Overall results show that arrangements are substantially embedded with less than 5% of respondents indicating that arrangements are not embedded or that they do not know in relation to all but one control. It will be noted that the outlier response relates to the principles of decision-making and action has been taken to address this within the review of the constitution.



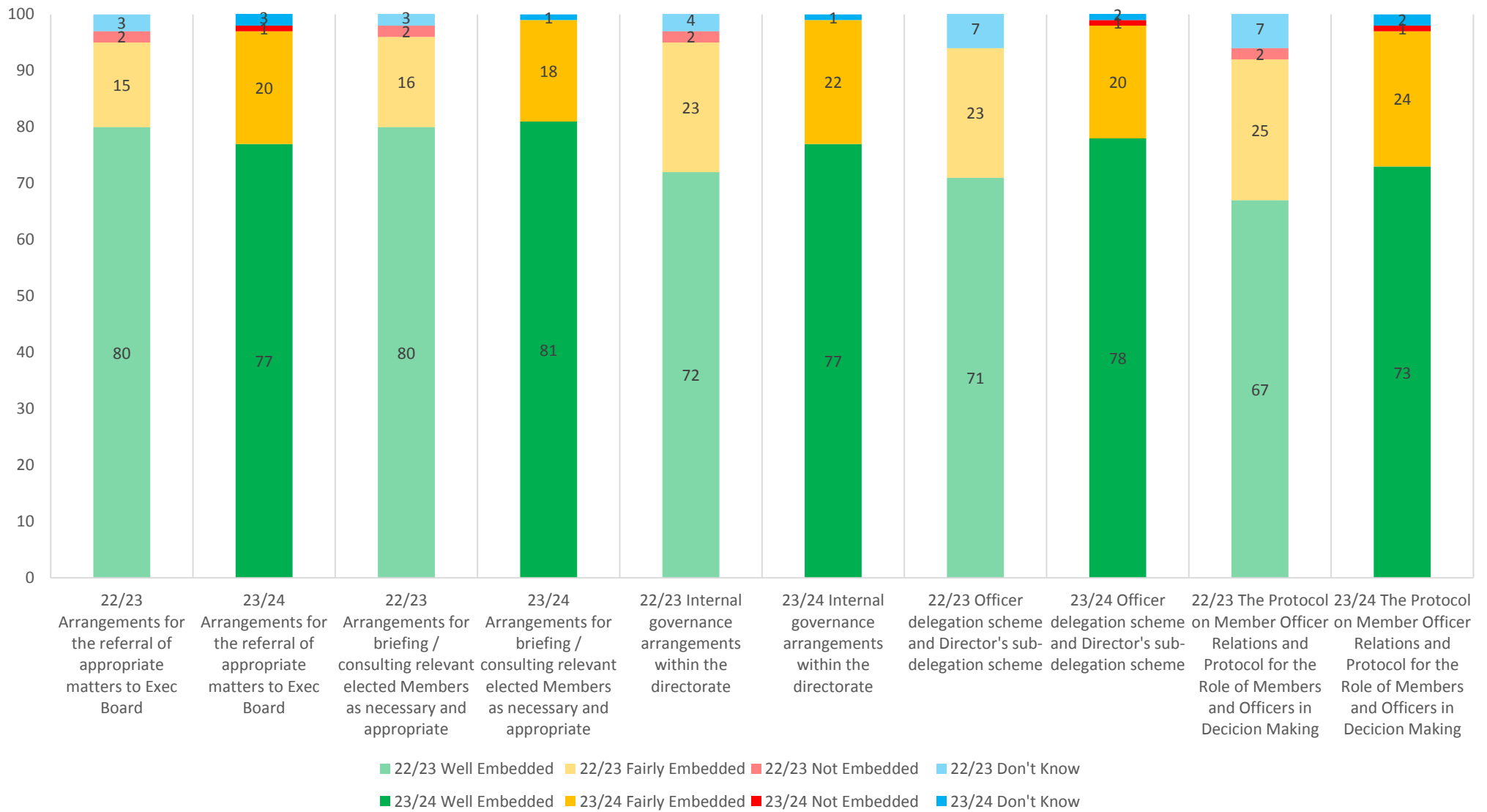
Comparative % - Arrangements for open and transparent decision-making.



Comparative % - Determining Effective Interventions.

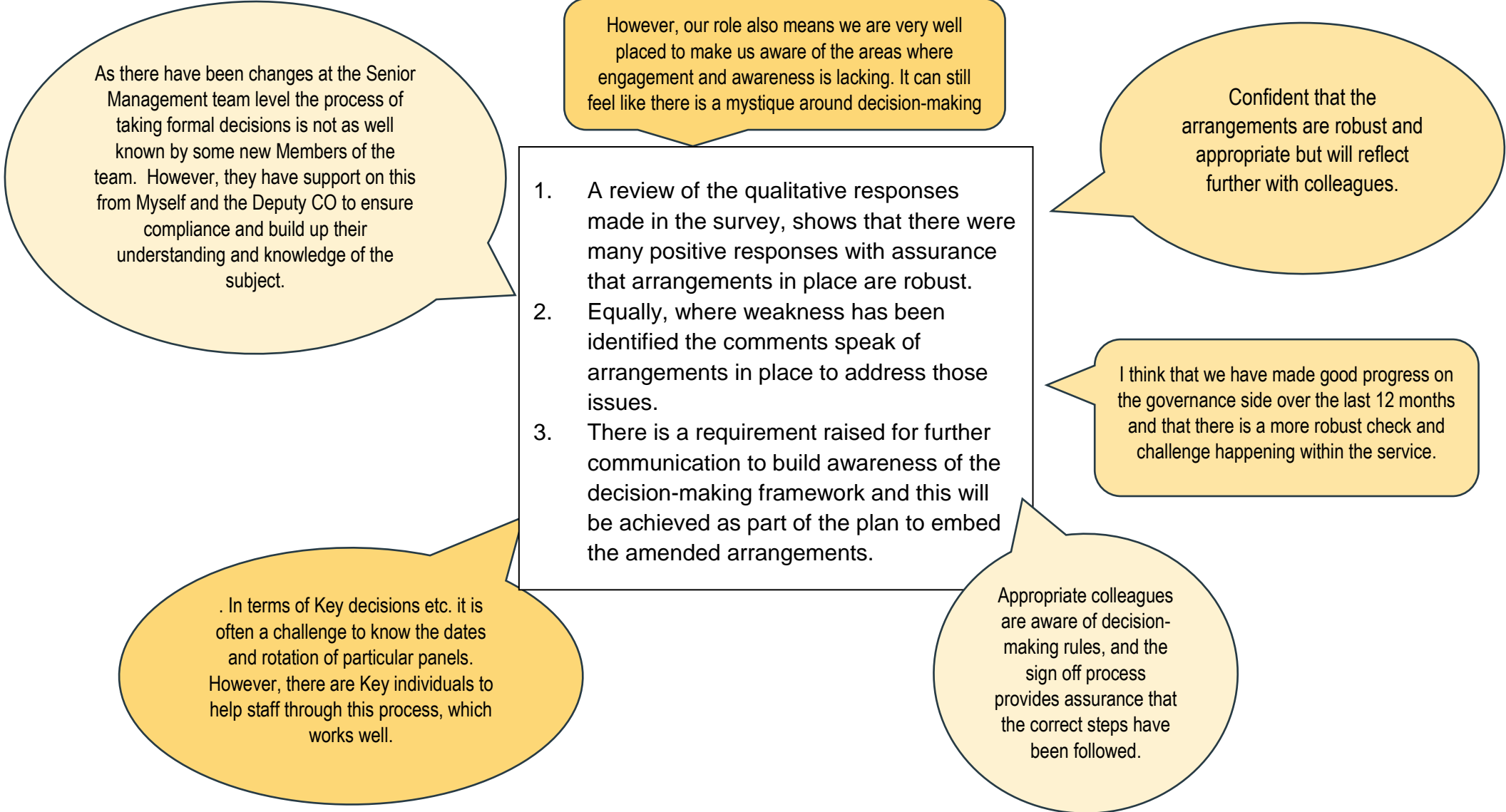


Comparative % - Arrangements for delegated decision-making



Learning from the survey

56. We have also considered the Key messages delivered in the qualitative responses to the survey.





# Decision Making

## KEY

- Over £500K or
- Significant impact in an area the size of one ward or more
- Not exempt

## ADMINISTRATIVE

### Publishable administrative

- Over £250K or
- Other reason to publish

### Administrative

- All other administrative

For further information go to InSite:  
[Decision making\\_\(leeds.gov.uk\)](http://Decision_making_(leeds.gov.uk))



## Things to do before decision taken

### KEY

1. List of Forthcoming Key Decisions (28 calendar days); and
2. Advance publication of DDN and DDR (5 working days)

### ADMINISTRATIVE

- No prior publicity required

## Things to do after decision taken

### KEY




1. Publish (if not already published)
2. Call In
3. Implement



### PUBLISHABLE ADMINISTRATIVE

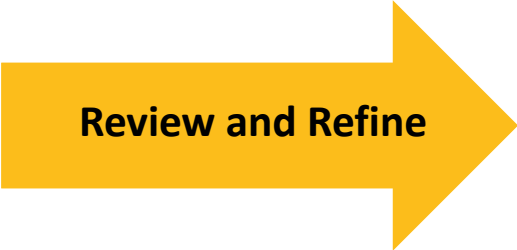
1. Implement
2. Publish DDN & DDR

### ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Implement
2. Keep proportionate written record

	Assurance Summary	Next Steps
 <p><b>Define and Document</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council’s decision-making framework is clearly defined and documented within the constitution.</li> <li>2. The rules and processes required in formal decision-making ensure that decisions are lawful and compliant with both statutory and local requirements.</li> <li>3. Roles and Responsibilities are delineated with clear terms of reference for Council and Executive Committees, and comprehensive arrangements for delegation of functions to Officers.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. A review of the decision-making framework, undertaken as part of a wider review of the constitution in accordance with the annual governance statement action plan. Amendments to Article 13 and the Executive and Decision-Making Procedure Rules were approved by Council at the annual meeting in May 2024, and have been published as part of the 24/25 constitution. These will be further reviewed as arrangements become operational to ensure that they are working as anticipated with no unintended.</li> </ol>
 <p><b>Clearly Communicate</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. The decision-making framework is communicated to Members and Officers through a combination of training, guidance, and leadership. Together these ensure the communication of the practical processes; and establish the culture of open and transparent decision-making, which is outcome focussed and based on quality and timely information.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. A communication plan has been put in place following the review of the decision-making framework. The plan uses a variety of communication techniques to raise awareness of the changes; provide details of the implications for decision-making; and support decision makers as the changes are embedded.</li> </ol>
 <p><b>Effectively Embed</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Arrangements have been established that are proportionate, practicable and compliant.</li> <li>8. Regular updates ensure that proportionate tools reflect available resource to enable compliance.</li> <li>9. Monitoring provides ongoing assurance that practice and procedure reflect expectation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. A one-page description of the new arrangements (see previous page) has been created to assist Officers identifying the category of a decision and the controls which apply.</li> <li>11. Significant work has been undertaken to review and refresh the decision-making toolkit to</li> </ol>

	Assurance Summary	Next Steps
 <p><b>Effectively Embed</b></p>		<p>reflect arrangements established during the review.</p> <p>12. A new delegated decision notice has been developed avoiding the duplication of the supporting report and ensuring equality, diversity, cohesion, and inclusion matters have been fully considered.</p> <p>13. Work is being undertaken to identify the way in which digital tools can be used to capture and record decision-making approvals together with a proportionate record of the reasons for them.</p>
 <p><b>Meaningfully Monitor</b></p>	<p>14. Detailed monitoring shows that controls are effectively communicated and meaningfully embedded.</p> <p>15. Although the Covid pandemic had a significant impact on performance indicators because of the need for a significant number of urgent decisions, performance indicators show a return to pre-pandemic levels of compliance, confirming that controls are effectively embedded and routinely applied.</p>	<p>16. There are no changes in relation to the decision-making framework for Key decisions taken by executive board or by Officers. These will continue to be monitored and urgent decisions reported to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in the regular internal audit update reports.</p> <p>17. Decision monitoring arrangements have been adjusted to reflect the cessation of the significant operational category of decisions, and the publication of some administrative decisions.</p> <p>18. Publishable administrative decisions will be subject to ongoing monitoring by the Corporate Governance team; and the maintenance of written records in relation to administrative decisions will be routinely considered as part of ongoing internal audit activity; enabling any</p>

	Assurance Summary	Next Steps
		<p>unanticipated consequences of the changes to be noted and responded to, as necessary.</p>
 <p><b>Review and Refine</b></p>	<p>19. Arrangements are under continuous review to ensure a control environment which delivers open and accountable decision-making, which takes all relevant matters into consideration to deliver sustainable decisions to give effect to the Council's ambitions. Particularly the control environment should ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust application of the democratic mandate, and</li> <li>• Realistic and agile controls to make proportionate use of Officer resource to comply.</li> </ul> <p>20. Positive, and improving, responses to the Survey of Internal Control indicate that arrangements balance robust control environment with proportionate use of resources.</p>	<p>21. We will continue to monitor decision-making and use the findings in a review of the constitutional changes in approximately twelve months' time.</p> <p>22. We will undertake some desk top benchmarking and use the findings to consider whether amendments to the process and template for the sub-delegation of functions could provide greater transparency and flexibility for decision makers.</p>



## Statement of Assurance

23. 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.
24. 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 2024/25 municipal year.

### Opportunities for improvement

<b>Define and Document</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will review new decision-making arrangements as they are embedded to ensure that there are no unintended consequences.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Communicate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will implement the communication plan for the new decision-making arrangements.</li> <li>We will review and update the e-learning modules to support Officers who are new to decision-making roles, or new to the Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Effectively Embed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to review the tools and templates available to ensure that they are fit for purpose within the amended decision-making control environment.</li> <li>We will explore the use of digital technology to support agile decision-making.</li> </ul>
<b>Meaningfully Monitor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to monitor arrangements for Key decisions.</li> <li>We will develop proportionate arrangements to monitor administrative decisions</li> </ul>
<b>Review and Refine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to monitor decision-making and use the findings in a review of the constitutional changes in approximately twelve months' time.</li> <li>We will undertake a review of the process and template for the sub-delegation of functions.</li> </ul>