

PART 3.3 – BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES

3.3.1 The framework for decisions

The Council will be responsible for the adoption of its budget and policy framework. Once a budget or a policy framework is in place, it will be the responsibility of the Committees to implement it within the Financial Regulations.

3.3.2 The policy framework

The policy framework means the relevant plans and strategies which Full Council has determined must be approved by it. Some plans and strategies are required by law to be part of the policy framework, where others are for the Council to decide whether they should form part of the policy framework.

The Council has resolved to include the following policies in the authority's policy framework:

- i. Community Safety Strategy (Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy)
- ii. Licensing Authority Policy Statement
- iii. Approval of the Authority's budget strategy and supporting documents
- iv. Any plan or strategy relating to borrowing, investment or capital expenditure
- v. Plans and strategies which together comprise the Development Plan Documents (LDF)
- vi. Corporate Plan and supporting strategies
- vii. Equalities Strategy or Scheme

3.3.3 Process for developing the budget and policy framework

The Policy and Resources Committee will oversee the process of developing the framework for recommendation to Council. Relevant Service Committees will be involved within the development process, and the Policy and Resources Committee will conduct appropriate public consultation. In reaching a decision, the Council may adopt the Policy and Resources Committee's proposals, amend them, refer them back to the Policy and Resources Committee for further consideration, or substitute its own proposals in their place. In approving the policy framework, the Council may also specify the degree of in-year changes to the framework which may be undertaken by Committees. Any other changes to the budget and policy framework are reserved to the Council.

3.3.4 Decisions outside the budget or policy framework

(a) Subject to the financial procedure rules (Part 3.5 of this constitution, and particularly Section A3 on virements,) any committees and any officers, or Joint Arrangements discharging Council functions cannot take decisions which are contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not in accordance with the Budget. If any of these bodies or persons wishes to make a decision which is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance

with the budget approved by Full Council, then that decision may only be taken by the Council, subject to paragraph 3.3.5 below (urgent decisions outside of the budget and policy framework).

(b) If the Policy and Resources Committee or any Service Committee and any officers, or Joint Arrangements discharging Council functions want to make such a decision, they shall take advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Director of Resources as to whether the decision they want to make would be contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget. If the advice of either of those officers is that the decision would not be in line with the existing budget and/or policy framework, then the decision must be referred by that body or person to the Council for decision, unless the decision is a matter of urgency, in which case the provisions in paragraph 3.3.5 (urgent decisions outside the budget and policy framework) shall apply.

3.3.5 Urgent decisions outside the budget or policy framework

(a) The Policy and Resources Committee, or the Chief Executive if that Committee is unable to meet, may take a decision which is contrary to the Council's policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget approved by Full Council if the decision is a matter of urgency. However, the decision may only be taken:

(i) If it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Full Council or the Urgent Decisions Committee; and

(ii) In the case of a decision by the Chief Executive, if it is not practical to convene a meeting of the Full Council, the Urgent Decisions Committee or the Policy and Resources Committee, and the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee (or in their absence the Vice-Chair) agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.

The record of the decision must include the reasons it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Full Council, the Urgent Decisions Committee or the Policy and Resources Committee, and in the case of an urgent decision by the Chief Executive, the consent of the Chair (or Vice-Chair) of the Policy and Resources Committee to the decision being taken as a matter of urgency.

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

3.3.6 In-year changes to the budget and policy framework

The responsibility for agreeing the budget and policy framework lies with the Council, and decisions by the Committees or officers discharging functions must be in line with it. No changes to any policy and strategy which forms part of the policy framework may be made by those bodies or individuals except changes which:

- (i) will result in the closure or discontinuance of a service or part of service to meet a budgetary constraint;
- (ii) are necessary to ensure compliance with the law, ministerial direction or government guidance;
- (iii) would normally be agreed annually by the Council following consultation, but where the existing policy document is silent on the matter under consideration.