

Local decision-making and public scrutiny

Council policies and decisions need to be reviewed and scrutinised, therefore rigorous arrangements to do so are implemented in all new decision-making structures.

Some decisions, such as the acceptance of policies and the budget, are reserved for the full council, but most of those relating to the implementation of policy are for the executive.

The executive is also responsible for preparing the policies and budget to propose to the council. Decisions may be taken by:

- the executive collectively
- individual members of the executive
- committees of the executive
- officers of the authority

Executives and councils are accountable to their communities

The executive is also able to delegate decision-making to area committees and to enter into partnership arrangements with other authorities.

The new arrangements are designed to ensure that people know who in the council is responsible for taking decisions, how they can have an input into decision-making, and how they can hold decision-makers to account.

The public, including the press, is admitted to meetings of the executive when key decisions are being discussed. They also have access to agendas, reports and minutes of meetings and certain background papers. In addition, local authorities must publish a forward plan setting out the decisions that will be taken over the coming months. Local authorities may exclude the public from meetings and withhold papers only in limited circumstances.