

Bolton Council

Report to:	Corporate and External Issues Scrutiny Committee		
Date of meeting:	17 April 2023		
Report of:	Borough Solicitor	Report Number:	
Reporting Officer:	Helen Gorman	Telephone Number:	X1101
Contact Officer:	Helen Gorman	Telephone Number:	X1101
Report title:	Decision making		
Not confidential			
This report does not contain information which means it should be considered without the press or members of the public being present.			
Purpose:	To inform the committee about decision making.		
Recommendations:	The Committee is recommended to note the report.		
Decision:			
Background documents:			

Consultation with other officers			
Finance	No		
Legal	Yes	27 03 23	Helen Gorman
HR	No		
Procurement	No		
Climate Change	No		
Information Governance	No		
Equality Impact Assessment	No		
Vision outcomes		1. Start Well	
Please identify the appropriate Vision outcome(s) that this report relates or contributes to by putting a cross in the relevant box.		2. Live Well	
		3. Age Well	
		4. Prosperous	
		5. Clean and Green	

	6. Strong and Distinctive	
--	---------------------------	--

1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

A written report was requested by Cllr Jiva and the Committee agreed for a report to be presented regarding decision making by the Leader generally and specifically regarding a bid for City status:

- The decision made in private by the Leader of the Council not to make a bid for City status last year.
- How this decision was made and why the Leader believed that there was no mechanism for him to report this decision to Council.
- Were our strategic and key partners in the Borough informed or consulted such as the University, Octagon Theatre, Bolton Wanderers, The Bolton News?
- What other decisions has the Leader of the Council taken in private?
- Why did Bolton not make a bid for City of Culture for instance?
- Is Bolton Council in a worse position than the 38 other Council's around the UK who did make City Status bids with its officer base?
- Bolton had submitted four previous City status bids so the process should have been well worn.

2 ISSUES

2.1 Unfortunately, the officers who were involved in discussing the City status opportunity are no longer with the council and so a written report providing information about this issue is not possible. This report sets out the decision making process.

3 DECISION MAKING

3.1 Executive Cabinet Members (ECM)

There are informal briefings with each ECM and relevant officers to discuss future projects and decisions which the ECM may be asked to make which are within that ECM's portfolio. No agenda needs to be published as these are not decision-making meetings. They are used to canvass views and provide officers with a "direction of travel" where options are available in terms of decision making. Decision making meetings are scheduled in for every 4 weeks. An agenda and reports must be published 5 clear days before the meeting. These meetings are held in private and continue to take place using Microsoft Teams as a result. Statutory regulations require that all business to be transacted at the meeting is published in an agenda and all reports, except those containing exempt information which need to be considered in private, are also published and made available to the public. Opposition spokespersons are invited to attend. The decision maker is the ECM.

3.2 Cabinet

There are informal briefings with the Cabinet most weeks. As set out at 3.1 above no agenda needs to be published as these are not decision-making meetings either. They are an opportunity to brief the Cabinet on more cross-cutting issues. Decision making meetings are scheduled for every 4 weeks. An agenda must be published 5 clear days before the meeting, but reports may be published after the agenda has been published. These meetings are open to the press and public except where a report contains exempt information, and the report needs to be considered in private at which point the press and public will be asked to leave the meeting will be held in private. Opposition spokespersons are invited to attend. The decision makers are the 10 ECMs who form the Cabinet.

3.3 Scrutiny

Decisions made by an ECM or Cabinet may be called-in and referred to Scrutiny Committee by any member who is present when the decision is made or by any six members no later than 5pm on the second full working day after the decision was made. The Scrutiny Committee can note the decision, refer the decision back to the original decision maker, with or without comment, or refer the decision to the Council, with or without comment.

3.4 Regulatory Committees

The Planning Committee and Licensing and Environmental Regulatory Committee are meetings which are held in public, except where the rules regarding exempt information apply. The same rules apply to the agendas and reports for these committees as for the Cabinet apart from their decisions cannot be called in.

3.5 Full Council

A summons is published 5 clear days before the meeting takes place which contains the business to be considered. An order paper is published on the day of full council which sets out business to be transacted that day as petitions and questions may be submitted after the summons is issued.

3.6 Officer decision making

The Scheme of Delegation sets out powers for officers to make decisions.

4 IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 Financial – none.
- 4.2 Legal – as set out in the report.
- 4.3 HR - none
- 4.4 Climate Change – none.
- 4.5 Information Governance – none.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Committee is recommended to note the report.