

How Decisions are Made

Cheshire West and Chester Council employs over 3200 people and spends over £800million a year on local services including social care, education, highways and waste. The Council is made up of locally elected Councillors who make decisions on how the Council works, its priorities and how to best provide local services on behalf of local people. Find more about your Councillors [here](#)

Decisions are made by democratic bodies, meetings of which are normally open to the public. Decision making is supported and informed by a [range of data and intelligence](#) about the Borough and the results of [ongoing public consultation and engagement](#)

The Council maintains a [Forward Plan](#) of key decisions that the Council plans to make in the coming months. Details of decisions that have been taken are posted in the [Decision Register](#). Webcasts of meetings where decisions have been taken [can be seen here](#)

Key decision-making bodies and processes include:

- [Council](#) - Full Council is a meeting of all 70 of Cheshire West and Chester's elected Councillors. Full Councils decides the Council's overall policies and sets the budget each year
- [Cabinet](#) - the Council appoints a Leader who, in turn appoints a Cabinet of up to nine portfolio holders. Cabinet's main task is developing and implementing policy on behalf of the Council. The Cabinet has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Full Council to decide
- [Portfolio Holders](#) – Members sitting on Cabinet will each have responsibility for maintain a forward work programme for, and for being a strong and persuasive spokesperson, their defined portfolio.
- [Individual Member Decisions](#) – Certain decisions can be delegated to a specific Cabinet Member rather than needing to go to a formal Cabinet meeting for a decision. Decisions taken by individual Cabinet Members do not have to be

taken in public but are subject to requirements to give notice of decisions, keep records and provide access to information. They are described in the Council's Constitution.

- [Health & Wellbeing Board](#) carries out functions including carrying out the statutory duties as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012, preparing Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies and encouraging integrated working between Health and Social Care commissioners
- [Audit & Governance Committee](#)- oversees the Council's audit and assurance arrangements, providing independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control frameworks.
 - [Standards Complaints Panel](#)- promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by councillors, co-opted members and representatives of organisations and parent governor representatives. It oversees the Members' Code of Conduct and Ethical Framework
 - [Standards Dispensation Panel](#) – determines requests for dispensations in respect of members' interests
- [Appeals Committee](#) – is responsible for hearing and determining appeals made against decisions taken in respect of various statutory functions including schools transport, education, social services and discretionary rate relief
- [Staffing Committee](#) - deals with human resources strategies and policies that apply to council employees and employment matters relating to senior officers
 - [Employment Appeals Committee](#) - hears employment appeals in accordance with the Council's policies
- [Community Governance Review Committee](#) – makes recommendations to the Council on the outcomes of Community Governance Reviews
- [Planning Committee](#) – is responsible for determining applications for planning permission that are not determined by the senior planning officer
- [Licensing Committee](#) - is responsible for determining licensing policy and applications aligned to the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005
 - [General Licensing Sub-Committee](#) is responsible for any licensing functions falling outside the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005.

- [Licensing Act Sub-Committee](#) sits as a panel to hold hearings and determine applications
- [Overview and Scrutiny](#) - Overview and scrutiny is a statutory function which helps to ensure that local public services are delivered effectively, efficiently and in the best interests of residents. The Council has established four overview and scrutiny committees; Cheshire West & Chester Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Places Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- [District Advisory Panels](#) – Are meetings of all the Ward Councillors for a specific area. They are not decision making bodies, but make recommendations to Cabinet. They are responsible for evaluating and assessing how the Council Plan is being achieved within its area.
- Commissions and Working Groups – Cabinet can set up commissions and working groups that undertake reviews of specific areas of work and submit their findings to Cabinet.
- [Officer delegated decisions](#) are clearly described in the Council's Constitution. Certain types of decision must by law be delegated to an officer rather than being determined by Members. These include the appointment and dismissal of officers below Deputy Chief Officer level, discharge of the duties of the Returning Officer in elections and the Proper Officer functions. For the great majority of local authority functions it is a matter of local choice for the Council whether they are exercised by Members or delegated to officers

The framework that lays out how the Council is governed is the [Council's Constitution](#) which describes how the Council makes decisions and the role of Full Council, Cabinet and various committees.