

London Borough of Bromley

How the Council works

Bromley Council consists of fifty eight councillors who are elected to represent people in twenty two wards across the borough. Elections are held every four years, most recently in May 2022.

The Mayor

Each year in May, the councillors elect one of their number as Mayor, who then appoints a Deputy Mayor. The Mayor is the civic figurehead and chairs Council meetings; he or she steps aside from party politics for their year in office.

Leader and Executive

Since May 2002, the Council has had a “Leader and Executive” structure. After the local elections, the Council appoints a Leader who then appoints other councillors to sit on the Executive. The Executive is like a central government cabinet, with individual councillors making decisions on behalf of the Council within their portfolio, or area of responsibility. By law, this can be up to nine other councillors, but currently the Leader has appointed seven other councillors to the Executive. The Executive provides political leadership and proposes policies and budgets - it meets regularly, taking decisions by majority vote.

The portfolios cover –

- Adult Care and Health
- Children, Education and Families
- Public Protection and Enforcement
- Renewal, Recreation and Housing
- Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management
- Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces
- Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Decision making

Key decisions are those above a financial threshold or which have a significant impact. When key decisions are to be made by the Executive, these are published in the Council's Forward Plan. Decisions made by the Executive in private meetings also have to be included in the Forward Plan.

Portfolio Holders can also take decisions on important issues. Usually, reports on their proposed decisions will be presented to PDS Committees for pre-decision

scrutiny, but Portfolio Holders can take non-controversial decisions outside meetings or can hold special meetings to take decisions.

Policy Development and Scrutiny Committees

There are six Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Committees, covering the seven executive portfolios. These have a major role in policy development and scrutinising the decisions of the Executive. They have no decision-making powers but make reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery. PDS Committees also monitor the decisions of the Executive and can challenge or 'call-in' a decision that has been made by the Executive. This enables them to consider whether the decision of the Executive was appropriate, and they may recommend that the Executive reconsider the decision.

They may also be consulted by the Executive or the Council on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy. The Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) committees are like the select committees at Westminster, holding the Executive to account by examining and questioning decisions made. The PDS committees are also able to research issues and suggest ideas for future policies.

General Purposes and Licensing Committee

Legislation prevents all the Council's powers being exercised by the Executive so there is a General Purposes and Licensing Committee which, along with various Sub-Committees, deals with issues such as licensing and with staffing, audit and pensions investment matters.

Development Control Committee

The Development Control Committee carries out the Council's planning functions. Plans Sub-Committees meet every fortnight to consider planning applications and related matters. Applicants and objectors can address the relevant Sub-Committee meeting for up to three minutes, provided that they register in advance to speak – further details are set out on each agenda.

Standards Committee

A Standards Committee has been set up to promote and maintain high standards of conduct in all the Council's activities. The Committee comprises councillors from all party Groups, with two or three "Independent Persons" who assist Councillors on conduct issues. The Committee's task is to maintain and monitor high standards of conduct in all the Council's activities.

Other Committees

The Council has a number of other Committees, including Audit and Risk Management Committee and Pension Committee, and works with other stakeholders in Partnership Boards.

Meetings

[Meeting dates](#) are scheduled more than a year in advance and are set out on the Council website. A [Forward Plan](#) of key decisions is published 28 days in advance of each scheduled meeting of the Executive, giving details of decisions to be made and who will be making them. [Agendas and reports](#) are published on the Council's website and available to members of the public at least five clear working days before any meeting.

Meetings of the Executive, Committees and Sub-Committees are usually held in the Council Chamber or Committee Rooms at the Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH. Members of the public are very welcome to attend (except in limited cases where personal or confidential matters are being discussed). If you wish to attend a particular meeting it is helpful if you let us know, before the day of the meeting if possible, using our web-form:

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/CouncilMeetingNoticeOfAttendanceForm>

Members of the public can ask questions at most scheduled Council, Executive and committee meetings – these must be submitted in advance. For further information, follow the link for [Question Time](#).

Councillors

Information about all of the Council's [councillors](#) is available on the "Council and Democracy" pages of the Council website. This includes party affiliation, contact details, ward, committee membership and declarations of interest.

For further information you can contact the Democratic Services team at committee.services@bromley.gov.uk