Key Decisions (KD) - London Borough comparison research

IWG, 21st July 2020

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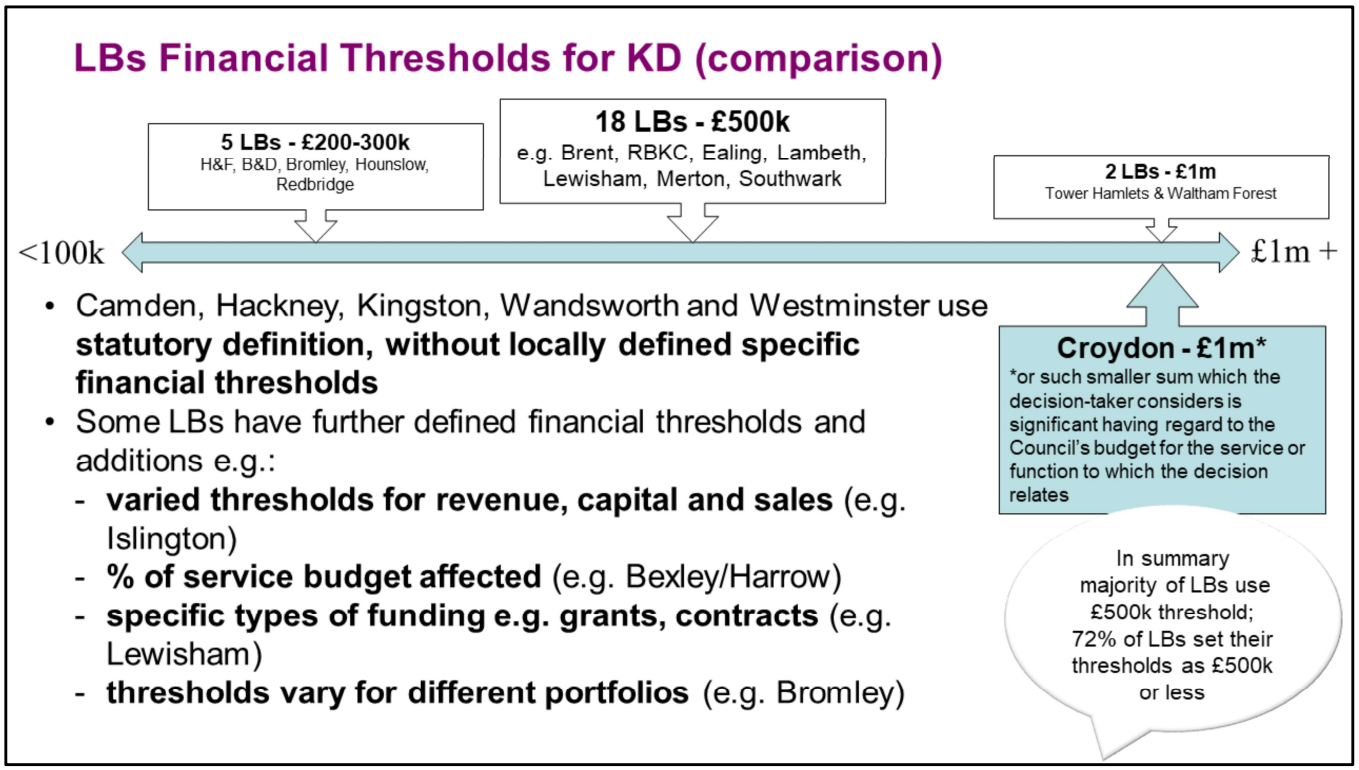
Based on desk top research (information found on LB websites, inc. local authorities' constitutions).



- **varied thresholds for revenue, capital and sales** (e.g. Islington - *£500k revenue; £1m capital; £1.5m estate sales*; Hillingdon - *variations to capital schemes on programmes in excess of £250,000 in any one year*)
- **% of service budget affected** (e.g. Bexley/Harrow - *more than 50% of budget*; Greenwich - *between £100,000 to £500,000 and is more than 10% of budget*)
- **specific types of funding** (e.g. Lewisham - *granting or withdrawing financial support to any voluntary sector organisation in excess of £10,000; writing off any bad debt in excess of £50,000; the award of a contract with a total value of £200,000 or more)*

• Bromley's **thresholds vary for different portfolios**: e.g. previously adult's services, children's services and environment - £500,000; other services - £250,000 or £50,000 for safety and recreation.

LBs Community Impact Thresholds for KD (comparison)

24 LBs	5 LBs	3 LBs
specified ***'two or more wards'*** in KD definition when describing community impact, in line with statutory definition **Croydon -** *"significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the Borough"*	specify ***'one or more wards'*** in their definitions of key decisions; B&D, Bromley, Merton, Southwark and Waltham Forest	use **'significant community impact'** without reference to no. of wards; Hounslow, Kingston and Newham

In summary majority of LBs (72%) use 'two or more wards' for community impact threshold;

- Some LBs **have clear-cut definitions based solely on geography**
- Others **use more flexible interpretations** or further specify what they mean e.g.:
  - **Define 'two or more wards' but allow flexibility for significant decisions affecting one ward** - e.g. H&F, Bexley / Redbridge
  - **Define impact in terms of 'wellbeing of community' or 'quality of service provided' or 'communities of interest' (e.g. young people) are affected'** e.g. Hillingdon / Lambeth
  - **Define direct (geography) and indirect (use) impacts** e.g. Lewisham
  - **% of community affected** e.g. Newham

- Some LBs **have clear-cut definitions based solely on geography** e.g. Croydon/Ealing - *an effect on the community will not be considered to be "significant" unless that significance is felt by people living or working in an area comprising not less than two wards in the borough*
- Others **use more flexible interpretations** or further specify what they mean:
  - **Define 'two or more wards' but allow flexibility for significant decisions affecting one ward** - e.g. H&F, Bexley / Redbridge - e.g. a school closure or the introduction or amendment of traffic calming measures affecting one ward given as example of KD
  - **Define impact in terms of 'wellbeing of community' or 'quality of service provided' or 'where COMMUNITIES OF INTERESTS (e.g. young people) are affected'** e.g. Hillingdon / Lambeth
  - **Define direct (geography) and indirect (use) impacts** e.g. Lewisham - communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards, whether the impact is direct (e.g. where the decision relates to a road which crosses a ward boundary) or indirect (e.g. where the decision relates to the provision or withdrawal of a service which is or would be used by people from two or more wards)
  - **% of community affected** e.g. Newham – where outcome will have a direct or indirect impact, for better or worse […] to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected (which will normally be at least 10%)

LBs defining specific matters to be always deemed KD

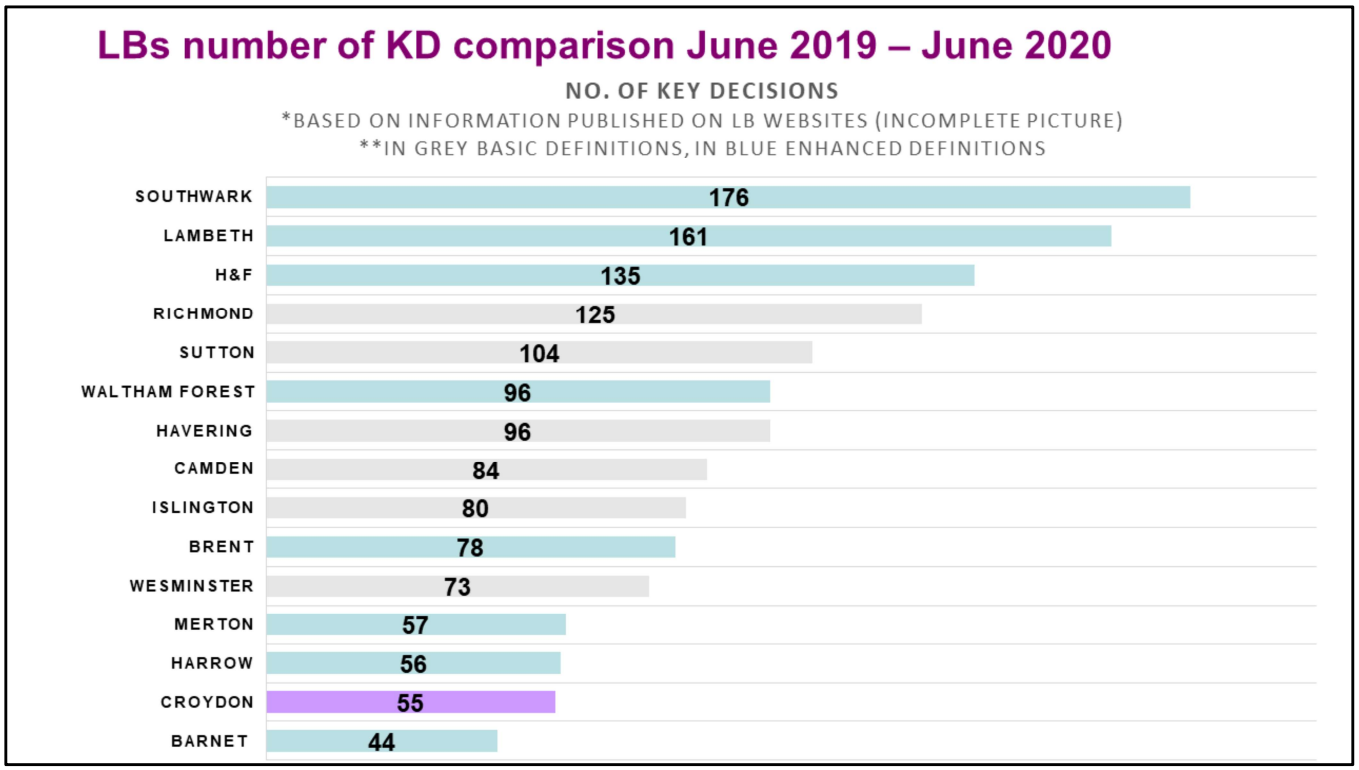
A few LBs also list specific subject matters or types of decisions that are always deemed KD regardless of financial and community impacts, e.g.:

- Greenwich - a decision which is likely to be either sensitive, have a material impact, or have a significant effect upon the manner in which the Council conducts it's business.
- Merton – decisions relating to amendment of the agreed budget and policy framework.
- Lewisham – lists 26 categories, inc. for example:
  - Consideration of any report prepared by an external organisation (e.g. OFSTED) into the performance of the Council;
- Southwark – lists 9 categories similar to Lewisham, and for example:
  - the exercise of the council's compulsory purchase order powers

- Lewisham – lists 26 categories, inc. for example:
  - Consideration of any report prepared by an external organisation (e.g. OFSTED) into the performance of the Council;
  - policies relating to special needs, attendance and exclusion, awards, charging and remission;
  - the fixing of fees and charges for Council services;
  - the disposal of any Council property for less than best consideration;
  - consideration of any matter which is to be the subject of a recommendation to full Council;
  - where there is evidence of significant local opposition to proposals made by the Council

  https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/how-council-is-run/our-constitution (p74-77 of Lewisham Constitution)
- Southwark – lists 9 categories similar to Lewisham, and for example:
  - the exercise of the council's compulsory purchase order powers
  - the strategic procurement strategy approval decisions (Gateway 1 reports)
  - reports on corporate budget monitoring and performance

  https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s63339/Protocol%20on%20Key%20decisions.pdf



*Some of the information published on LB websites may not be accurate, any only 15 LBs have KD numbers easily available
Important not to attach too much weight to the numbers, as this is incomplete information.

Key Decisions - How Croydon compares summary

- £1m is a relatively high financial threshold in comparison to most LBs, but flexibility exists within Croydon's definition for decision maker to deem decisions with lower threshold key
- Croydon falls within the majority of LBs in terms of its community impact definition, and new guidance specifies that this means geographical as well as community use impacts
- Croydon appears to make a smaller number of KDs compared with the other LBs where this information is easily available; there appears to be some correlation between how detailed the KD definition and/or guidance LB has and the number of decisions it deems key, but with limited information available it wouldn't be possible to state with confidence that detailed definitions or lower financial threshold equal more key decisions.
- Croydon's key decisions supplementary guidance could provide further examples to add more clarity when applying its definition (those could be added over time as new Forward Plan becomes available and discussions can take place on what additional decision types or matters the Council would like to consider KD)

Much more detailed and resource intensive analysis would need to be undertaken to understand the variables that contribute to number of KD made by different authorities e.g. which elements of definition and application contributes to increased numbers the most, whether there are other factors such as budget, political makeup or organisational culture

Such research wouldn't be practicable and wouldn't necessary help Croydon in determining if further changes to KD definition and/or guidance should be made