

Brief Definition of Councillor Call for Action

Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 amends the Local Government Act 2000 to provide members with the opportunity to ask for discussions at scrutiny committees on issues where local problems have arisen and where other methods of resolution have been exhausted.

Principles on which the successful operation of Councillor Call for Action should be based

- Recognising the role of scrutiny in ensuring transparency in decision-making, identifying mistakes and shortcomings in service delivery and resolving problems through discussion.
- An understanding, and a wish to support the role that ward councillors play as champions and leaders of their communities
- The emerging role of local authority scrutiny processes in providing governance for other statutory members of the Local Strategic Partnership

Establishing a 'Gateway' to CCfA

To ensure that 'other methods of resolution have been exhausted', the following should be considered:

Issues covered by statutory processes, such as licensing, planning and homelessness should be signposted to the appropriate part of the Council
A judgement should be made as to whether an issue is being raised vexatiously
Where issues are being dealt with through the complaints procedure, this process should be allowed to be completed
Ward Councillors should be given the opportunity to deal with the issue through all other appropriate avenues
Does the issue cover a statutory function, and does it affect all or part of a councillor's ward, or anyone living or working in it?

CCfA and Scrutiny

Scrutiny Management Board currently considers Call-ins of executive decisions, and approves work programmes for panels. The Board, or its Chair and Vice-Chair, could consider CCfA requests for action by the appropriate panel. The action could range from a work programme item to a task and finish group, and might result in resolution through officer or cabinet member agreement, or a formal recommendation through the Management Board to Cabinet.

CCfA and Localities

The current proposals for the implementation of locality working could significantly affect the use of the Councillor Call for Action. Locality teams could potentially provide an effective forum for the early resolution of issues that would otherwise become the subject of scrutiny work.