

COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION SCHEME

1. The councillor call for action (CCfA) process provides ward members with a means of escalating matters of ward concern to an overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee, for possible onwards recommendations to the council's cabinet and/or other agencies. It is very important to note that a CCfA is intended to be a measure of "last resort" and may not be used until all other avenues have been exhausted. The CCfA may not be used in relation to individual planning and licensing decisions or where other avenues of appeal exist.
2. A ward member requesting a call for action will be asked to demonstrate that they have sought to address the issue through all existing means and the call will not be considered unless the overview and scrutiny committee or relevant sub-committee is satisfied that:
 - the councillor has made all reasonable efforts to resolve the matter via dialogue with council officers and or relevant partners; and,
 - the issue of concern is a matter in respect of which the council has a statutory power or duty to deal with which is not precluded by legislation; and,
 - the issue of concern has a demonstrable impact on a part of or the whole of a councillor's ward.
3. Before a CCfA can be progressed to scrutiny, the member must provide documentation to show that they have taken the following steps:
 - made the relevant service request/members' enquiry/letter to relevant other agency
 - raised the issue with cabinet member or senior representative of partner agency
 - raised the issue of concern at Safer Neighbourhood Panel (for relevant crime and disorder matters) or
 - raised the issue of concern at area level.

Procedure for CCfA to be considered at scrutiny

4. The councillor must submit a written signed referral pro forma to the head of overview and scrutiny. It will set out:
 - which ward councillor is sponsoring (if more than one councillor supporting)
 - agency responsible for the service(s)
 - background – including details of attempts to resolve the matter via other means

- issues for consideration
 - desired outcomes.
5. All such written requests will first be submitted by the head of overview and scrutiny to the first appropriate overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee for their consideration in a reasonable timescale. The decision on which is the first appropriate committee or sub-committee is at the discretion of the head of overview and scrutiny.
 6. The committee or sub-committee will consider the referral pro forma and supporting documentation. The sponsoring councillor will attend the committee or sub-committee to present the call for action and answer any questions from members.
 7. The overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee may reject any call for action if it:
 - is not a matter for which the local authority or its partners has a responsibility, or which affects the borough
 - is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
 - is substantially the same as a CCfA which has been put to any meeting of the council in the past 6 months
 - is a matter relating to a planning decision
 - is a matter relating to a licensing decision
 - is a matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or appeal conferred by or under any enactment.
 8. The head of overview and scrutiny will within three working days of overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee notify the sponsoring councillor whether or not the CCfA is considered valid. If the CCfA is rejected, the overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee may give advice and or signposts on other appropriate ways forward to help resolve the issue. The lead councillors and relevant cabinet member will be advised accordingly.
 9. If the CCfA is considered valid it will be referred by the head of overview and scrutiny, in consultation with the chair of the overview and scrutiny committee, to the overview and scrutiny committee or a sub-committee. The detailed arrangements for consideration of the item will be determined in liaison with the chair and vice-chair of the overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee.
 10. A valid CCfA will be considered at the committee or appropriate sub-committee's next available meeting in public session unless the consideration of the issues involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information as defined by the access to information procedure rules.
 11. The ward councillor's role in the consideration of the CCfA, as with any formal council business, is subject to compliance with the members' code of conduct.