

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

27 May 2009

Councillor Calls for Action (CCfAs) - Procedure

(Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services)

1. Purpose of Report

To inform members about the Councillor Calls for Action procedures that have been introduced at other local authorities and to consider what Redditch Borough Council's CCfA procedures should be.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND

A procedure for Councillor Calls for Action (CCfA) at Redditch Borough Council; and

To RESOLVE that

The report be noted.

Report

3. Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 In October 2006, the Government published a white paper called "Strong and Prosperous Communities". One of the proposals in the white paper was for the introduction of a Community Call for Action covering all local government matters. The original proposals separated out community safety matters from all other matters but these have been unified under the scheme set out in the legislation and are now called "Councillor Calls for Action" (CCfAs).
- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the subject of CCfAs at a meeting of the Committee on Thursday 30 April. Members were informed that CCfAs had come into force on 1 April 2009. They were also provided with copies of guidance on the CCfA which had been produced by the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) and the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS).
- 3.3 The Guidance states that the purpose of CCfA *"is about helping councillors to resolve issues and problems on behalf of their residents"* and "should not be regarded as merely a 'scrutiny process'. The guidance specifically states that CCfA will be a means of **"last resort"** in a broad sense, with issues being raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after other avenues have been exhausted. It is therefore important to ensure that the process makes

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

27 May 2009

it easier to identify those issues that would benefit from scrutiny and separate out those issues which are best dealt with through other means.

- 3.4 At their meeting on 30 April the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested further information about the CCfA policies and procedures that had been adopted at other local authorities. They agreed that this information about arrangements at other local authorities would inform their recommendations regarding a CCfA process at Redditch Borough Council. Information about the CCfA policies and procedures which have been adopted at seven local authorities are therefore provided in the appendices to this report.

4. **Conclusion**

The information about CCfA policy and procedures at other local authorities should be used to inform recommendations for a suitable CCfA policy and procedure at Redditch Borough Council.

5. **Background Papers**

Relevant legislation.

Councillor call for Action: Best Practice Guidance (I&DeA and CfPS Feb 2009).

Councillor Call for Action: A New Voice for Members (I&DeA and CfPS, Feb 2009).

Birmingham City Council Gateway Approach.

Councillor Call for Action – Report before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 30 April 2009.

6. **Consultation**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was previously consulted about CCfAs at a meeting of the Committee on Thursday 30 April.

7. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Jess Bayley (Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer), who can be contacted on extension 3268 (e-mail: jess.bayley@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

8. **Appendices**

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| Appendix A | - | 'Councillor Call for Action: Guidance for Councillors in Cumbria', Joint Scrutiny and Overview Group. |
| Appendix B | - | 'Councillor Call for Action: Summary Report', Darlington Borough Council. |

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

27 May 2009

- Appendix C - 'Councillor Call for Action Protocol', Forest Heath District Council.
- Appendix D - 'A Councillor's Guide to Community Call for Action' and 'Community Call for Action: Additional Guidance for Councillors', Kirklees District Council.
- Appendix E - 'Councillor Call for Action: Guidance for Members', City of Lincoln Council.
- Appendix F - 'Councillor Call for Action: Guidance for Councillors', Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- Appendix G - 'Overview and Scrutiny: Tuesday 21 April 2009', Wychavon District Council.