

# **A Councillor's Guide to Councillor Call for Action**

**What is it and what does it mean for you,  
as a Redditch Borough Councillor?**

## **What is a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)?**

The “Councillor Call for Action” was introduced under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act), and came into force on 1 April 2009. The statutory requirement to implement CCfA by 1 April 2009 applies to all councils in England (with the exception of parish councils) regardless of their Executive arrangements.

The Act enables any Member of the Council to refer to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee any local government matter or any crime and disorder matter which affects their ward or division.

The power to refer a matter is available only where the matter is of direct concern to the ward or division which the councillor represents. A councillor can refer a matter even if no citizen has asked him/her to consider it, and there is no requirement for councillors in multi-member wards to agree – any of them can refer a matter.

CCfA is therefore a process which puts you, as local councillors, at the forefront of dealing with issues of concern in your local communities. It gives you a central role in calling to account the work of Council services and other agencies at a local level. When concerns are identified (either as a result of information from individuals, community groups or your own observations), councillors should be able to trigger a response from service providers and help ensure the concerns are dealt with. As a last resort, when a problem cannot be solved, the CCfA can enable you to trigger a local scrutiny review.

The CCfA is intended to provide greater emphasis to the vital work undertaken by you in your communities as community advocates and champions, and to further increase the accountability of public service providers to local communities.

## **How is CCfA different from general scrutiny requests?**

What distinguishes the CCfA from a more general request for scrutiny is:

- 1) The focus of the CCfA is on neighbourhood or locality issues and specifically the quality of public service provision at a locality level;
- 2) The CCfA represents a genuine local community concern (based on local councillors’ judgements); and
- 3) It is a persistent problem which the local councillor has been unable to resolve through local action and discussion with the Executive Committee or relevant services and agencies.

Scrutiny reviews resulting from CCfAs will be undertaken by scrutiny Task and Finish Groups composed largely of councillors from the affected locality. There is an expectation that the locality-based scrutiny reviews will be ‘short

and sharp', focused reviews - it is important that the public see this as a responsive and un-bureaucratic process which delivers tangible outcomes.

## **What are the limitations?**

It is important to recognise that CCfA is not guaranteed to solve a given problem. CCfA can provide a method for discussing such problems and, through discussion, trying to overcome them.

## **What issues are excluded from referral as a CCfA?**

The Overview and Scrutiny (Reference by Councillors) (Excluded Matters) (England) Order 2008 excludes the following matters from referral as a CCfA:

- 1) Individual complaints concerning personal grievances or commercial issues;
- 2) Any matter relating to an individual or entity where there is already a statutory right to a review or appeal (other than the right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman), for example:
  - a) planning and licensing applications and appeals;
  - b) Council Tax/Housing Benefits complaints; and queries or issues currently under dispute in a court of law; and
  - c) Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included on the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of its Task and Finish Groups.

A referral, provided it is not an excluded matter will ensure that the matter is included on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is then up to the members of the Committee to decide whether or not to take the matter further.

A referral made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is seen as being at the end of the CCfA process (the last resort) and not the first step.

## **Championing a CCfA**

It is a matter of judgement which requests you agree to champion and as a local councillor you are accountable to your local community for these judgements. Championing a request will mean taking the issue up on behalf of the resident(s) concerned and trying to resolve the problem by liaising with council services, the Executive and/or outside agencies.

You may wish to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers about a request for a potential CCfA at quite an early stage, particularly if support and advice from the Officers would be helpful. Certainly at the point you agree to champion a CCfA it would be helpful to formally log this with the Overview and

Scrutiny Officers. Some requests will come to the Overview and Scrutiny Officers directly, and in those cases we will log the request and forward the information to the appropriate ward councillors.

## **What steps must a Councillor take before making a CCfA referral?**

Prior to a councillor referring a matter as a CCfA to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, a councillor must have tried to resolve the issue/problem themselves using all mechanisms and resources available to them at ward level. Councillors should:

- 1) If it's a local crime and disorder matter, raise the issue through the Community Safety Partnership to find a way to resolve the issue;
- 2) Ensure that all relevant partner organisations have been informed of the issue and given enough time to resolve the issue, (for example through formal letters written on behalf of constituents, discussion at public meetings, petitions, communication with local MPs and councillors in other authorities etc.);
- 3) Ensure that all relevant internal potential routes to solution have been followed, for example informal discussions with officers and/or members, questions at committees etc.;
- 4) Ensure that this is not an issue that is currently being or should be pursued via the Council's complaints procedure; and
- 5) Ascertain whether or not any other form of local scrutiny is investigating the issue (e.g. Worcestershire County Council).

There are therefore a number of basic levels of response to a CCfA:

- 1) Councillor Call for Action (CCfA):** Local residents have concerns about persistent or serious problems in their area or want to influence policies.
- 2) First level of response:** Councillor takes up community's concerns. (Councillors may also initiate a CCfA and gather support from the local community.)
- 3) Second level of response:** Councillor asks Executive Committee to take action.
- 4) Third level of response:** Councillor asks Overview and Scrutiny to investigate.
- 5) Fourth level of response:** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers, rejects or makes recommendations – which may be accepted or rejected by the Executive Committee and/or local partners.

## What is the process for a CCfA referral?

If the issue/problem is still not resolved the councillor can refer it to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a “Councillor Call for Action”. To do this the councillor should:

- 1) Complete a CCFA Request Form (as set out at Appendix 1 to this Guide) by hand or electronically, outlining what the issue is and what steps have been taken towards a resolution. The request for a CCfA should include:

- a) Your name and the ward you represent;
- b) The title of the CCfA;
- c) Why you think the issue should be looked at by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- d) A brief summary of what the main areas of concern are;
- e) What evidence you have in support of your CCfA;
- f) Which areas or community groups are affected by the CCfA;
- g) What you have done to try and resolve the issue prior to requesting a CCfA; and
- h) Whether the CCfA is currently the subject of legal action by any party (to your knowledge) or is being examined by a formal complaints process?

- 2) The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers will receive the referral form either by post or electronically, log it to track its progress and assess the issue to ensure that it is not a matter excluded from referral to Overview and Scrutiny; and
- 3) The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers will inform the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the item will be included on the Committee agenda. The Councillor will be informed whether or not their referral has been successful.

A successful referral will ensure that the CCfA will be placed on the next agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is then up to the members of the Committee to decide whether or not to take the matter further.

## What will the Overview and Scrutiny Committee do with CCfA referrals?

In deciding whether or not to take the matter further the Committee will consider:

- 1) Anything that the councillor has done in relation to this matter; and
- 2) Representations made by the councillor as to why the Committee should take the matter up. (Councillors have the option of either presenting their CCfA form without supporting papers or by preparing a report setting out their views. Any reports prepared by councillors would be circulated, along with the agenda and other reports for the meeting). *This information will need to take account of the disclosures of exempt information as prescribed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.*

The criteria the Committee will use to decide whether or not to take the matter further include:

- a) Is the Committee satisfied that all reasonable attempts have been made to resolve the issue by the ward councillor? And do the responses received by the referring councillor demonstrate that the matter is not being progressed?
- b) Has the Committee considered a similar issue recently – if yes, have the circumstances or evidence changed?
- c) Is there a similar or related issue which is the subject of a review on the current work programme? It may be more appropriate to link the new issue to an existing review, rather than hold a separate CCfA hearing. Relevant time pressures on resolving the CCfA should be taken into account.
- d) Have all relevant service areas or partner organisations been informed and been given enough time to resolve the issue? What response has the councillor received?
- e) Is this a case that is being or should be pursued via the Council's corporate complaints procedure?
- f) Does it relate to a "quasi-judicial" matter or decision such as planning or licensing?
- g) Is the issue part of an individual's own personal agenda (an issue of genuine local concern should have an impact on the local community).
- h) Is this an issue currently being looked at by another form of local scrutiny (e.g. Worcestershire County Council)?

- i) And, as with all scrutiny, does the matter referred have the potential for scrutiny to produce recommendations which could realistically be implemented and lead to improvements for anyone living or working in the referring Member's ward?

In considering the CCfA, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may invite the relevant Member Champion, Chief Executive, Head of Service or external organisation to discuss the issue with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and answer any questions, if the Committee considers this relevant.

If the committee decides not to accept the CCfA referral it must inform the councillor and provide reasons.

If the Committee decides to accept the CCfA referral, it must decide how it intends to take the matter forward and include the CCfA in its work programme. This could include:

**1) Before holding a formal hearing:**

- a) Asking the service area(s)/partner organisation(s) to respond to the CCfA; and / or
- b) Setting up a research group to undertake a more in depth review.

**2) At formal hearing:**

Asking for further evidence and/or witnesses to be brought to a future meeting then making recommendations to the relevant Committee/partner organisation.

### **What are the potential outcomes of a CCfA referral?**

Following a formal hearing, there could be a number of potential outcomes from the Committee meeting:

- 1) The Committee could determine not to make a report (perhaps because it is not considered the right time to consider a particular issue), with the ward councillor notified in writing;
- 2) The Committee could determine that it is a complex issue that requires further investigation and commission a scrutiny review of the issue; and / or
- 3) The Committee could write a report and make recommendations on the CCfA to the relevant Committee/partner(s).

Once the Committee has completed its work on the CCfA referral the member who made the CCfA referral will receive a copy of any report or recommendations made. The reply will also be printed on the Council's website [www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk) (unless there are reasons why the Committee

treats the matter as an exempt item and as a result the report cannot be made public).

## **What are the Timescales for CCfAs?**

Once a CCfA has been referred to Overview and Scrutiny, the item will be included on the next available Committee agenda.

If the Committee agrees to take the matter forward, the hearing will usually be held as an item on the next available agenda. In exceptional circumstances, for example where there are unavoidable time constraints, a separate meeting may be convened.

Should a CCfA hearing result in recommendations to another Committee being made, the other Committee must respond to the recommendations, setting out any action it intends to take, within 28 days of the recommendations being placed on the relevant Committee's agenda.

Should a CCfA hearing result in recommendations to partner organisations, such organisations will also be requested to make a response to the recommendations, although they are under no legal obligation to do so.

The CCfA process is summarised in the flow chart at Appendix 2.

## **Case Studies and Further Guidance**

Case Studies and further guidance on:

- 1) What to do with an initial issue;
- 2) Assessing when something is a genuine community concern;
- 3) Agreeing to champion; and
- 4) Knowing when to refer to scrutiny

is contained in Appendix 3.

For further information contact:

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Tel: 01527 64252 Ext. 3268  
Email: [jess.bayley@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:jess.bayley@redditchbc.gov.uk)

Or

Helen Saunders, Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer  
Tel: 01527 64252 Ext. 3267  
E-mail: [helen.saunders@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:helen.saunders@redditchbc.gov.uk)



# APPENDIX 1

## Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) Request

**To: Overview and Scrutiny Team  
Democratic Services  
Town Hall**

This form should be used by any Councillor at Redditch Borough Council who would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a Councillor Call for Action in their ward.

Your contact details: Name (print):
Address:
Contact number:
Email address:

The Ward you represent:
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Title of your Councillor Call for Action:
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Date of Submission:
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**Some areas are statutorily excluded from the CCfA process. Please answer the following questions to help ascertain whether or not your request falls within an excluded area.**

Does the issue relate to a problem in your electoral division?	<b>Yes/No</b>
Does it relate to a complaint made by an individual or organisation?	<b>Yes/No</b>

**Guidance suggests that a CCfA should be made only when all other avenues have been exhausted. Please answer the following questions to show the action previously taken to resolve the issue:**

1. Has the issue been discussed at a meeting of any of the following?

Executive	Yes/No	Date:
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Yes/No	Date:
Local Neighbourhood or other Forum (Please specify)	Yes/No	Date:

2. Have you discussed the issue with any of the following:-

		Date	Contact Name/Tel No.
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Yes/No		
Borough Council Director	Yes/No		
Borough Council Head of Service	Yes/No		
Other Borough Council employee	Yes/No		
<b>Partner or other Organisations</b> Please give details of Partner or other organisations (NHS, Police, Fire and Rescue) with whom you have discussed the matter.			

3. Please give brief details of the outcome of the discussions you have had.  
(Please continue on an additional sheet if necessary)

4. Has there been a petition about the issue?

**Yes/No**

If Yes, when and where was it heard?

Would you like the opportunity to speak to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee?

Yes  No

Would you like your response by:

Email  Letter

Why should your CCfA be raised with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee?  
(Please give a brief outline of the issue)

What evidence do you have in support of your CCfA?

Which areas or community groups are affected by the CCfA?

What do you want to be the outcome of your CCfA?

Signature:

For Official use:

Date and time of receipt.....

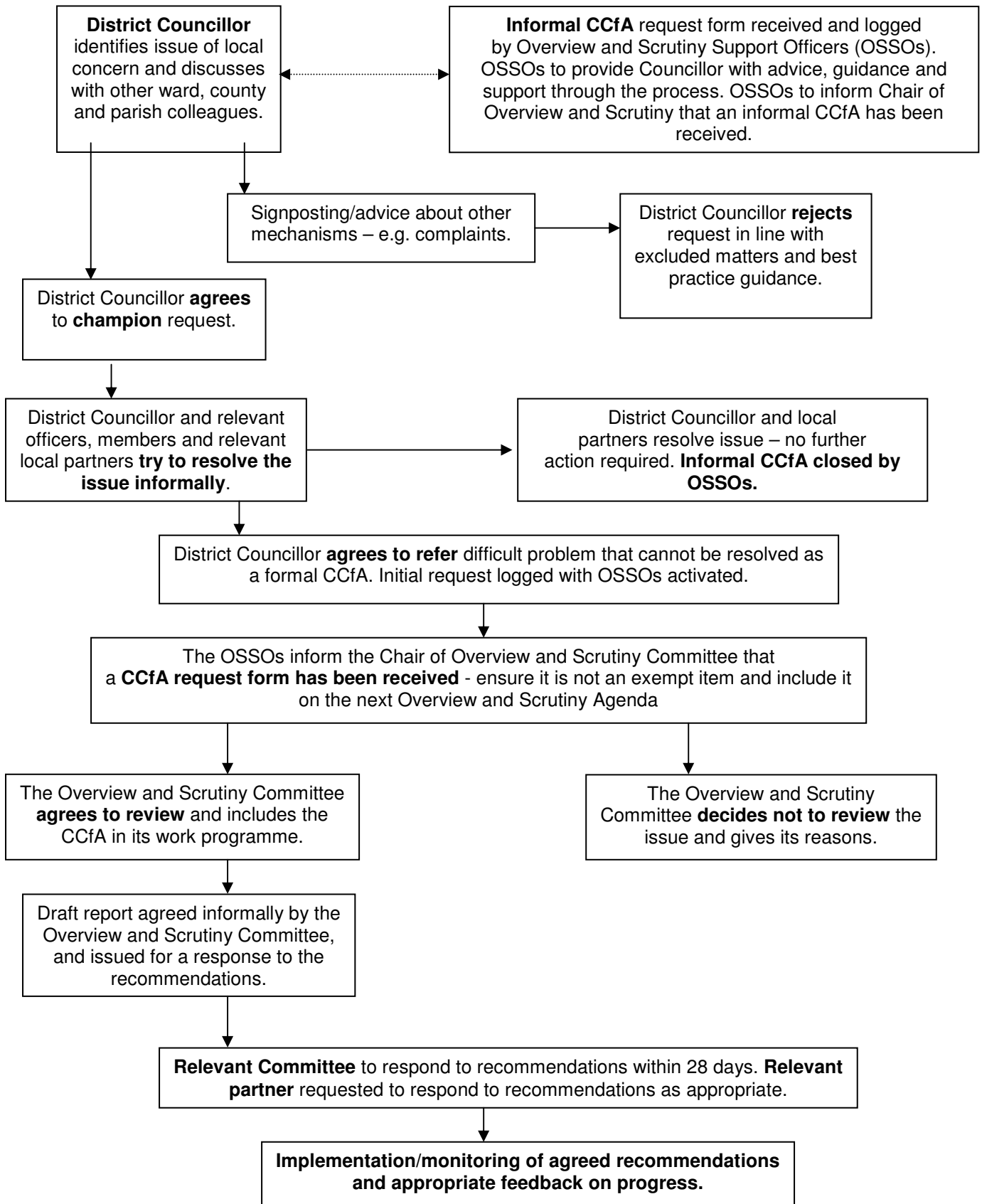
Officer Receiving .....

Please complete and return the form to:

Redditch Borough Council  
Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers  
Town Hall  
Walter Stranz Square  
Redditch  
Worcestershire  
B98 8AH

## APPENDIX 2

### SUMMARY OF THE CCfA MECHANISM



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Councillor Call for Action**

#### **Additional Guidance for Councillors**

- 1) What to do with an initial issue;**
- 2) Assessing when something is a genuine community concern;**
- 3) Agreeing to champion; and**
- 4) Knowing when to refer to scrutiny.**

## **Introduction**

Using Case Studies and a checklist approach we can look at the different stages of the Community Call for Action in more detail, most importantly understanding:

- 1) What to do with the initial issue and how to signpost accordingly.
- 2) How to assess whether an issue is a genuine concern.
- 3) What happens once you agree to champion a request.
- 4) When to refer to scrutiny.

## **The Initial Issue Checklist**

### **1) Are the concerns individual complaints?**

Scrutiny is not appropriate for individual complaints. If it is a complaint of this nature, advice can be given about the Redditch Borough Council Corporate Complaints procedure.

### **2) Do the concerns relate to individual ‘quasi judicial’ decisions (e.g. planning licensing) or to council and non domestic rates?**

Scrutiny is not appropriate for dealing with these kinds of concerns as they are subject to their own statutory appeals process. However, patterns of issues may be appropriate to consider as a concern under CCfA – e.g. community concerns about the proliferation of licensed premises in a local neighbourhood.

### **3) Are the concerns to do with the quality of public service provision at a local level?**

Community Call for Action not only looks at issues of concern relating to council services, but also issues relating to other public services and service areas, such as: concerns about anti-social behaviour, community safety, health services and issues relating to local schools.

## **The Genuine Local Community Concern Checklist**

### **1) Is the focus of concern on a neighbourhood or locality issue?**

Community Call for Action focuses on neighbourhood or locality issues, where you as ward councillors can help resolve issues of concern in your wards. If the concern is of a more general nature – e.g. about policy across Redditch – you can still make a request for scrutiny in the usual way.

### **2) Is the issue a genuine local concern?**

You will want to be sure that the concerns in your ward are genuine and not just an individual ‘hobby horse.’ Finding out the views of other community members will help clarify this.

## **The Championing a Request Checklist.**

### **1) An apology, explanation or an assurance about a particular problem is not enough to satisfy a community concern.**

Research has shown that an apology, explanation or an assurance that a problem will not be repeated can help to address concerns. Some community concerns can be satisfied by public explanation and do not require service change or a scrutiny review.

### **2) Resolving an issue.**

Once you have agreed to champion a CCfA you will be aware of a variety of ways in which you might seek to resolve a concern including:

- a) Discussing the issue with officers from relevant council service or agency;
- b) Facilitating an informal discussion at an appropriate local forum such as a Neighbourhood Group; and / or
- c) Formally raising the issue with partnerships or partner agencies such as the Police or Primary Care Trust, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership or Local Strategic Partnership.

## **The Referring to Scrutiny Checklist.**

### **1) The issue is persistent and unresolved by ward councillor(s)**

When you feel you have done everything within your power to remedy a community concern, you have exhausted all mechanisms and have tried to resolve the problem(s) with the aid of other agencies and partnerships, but have been unsuccessful in finding an adequate solution. Then you are able to refer the issues(s) to scrutiny, but this should always be a last resort.

## **Case Studies**

By applying Case Studies to the above checklists, we can begin to see how the Councillor Call for Action process might work in practice. The checklists and case studies have been developed to help you decide whether an issue has the potential to be a Councillor Call for Action. The guidance is not meant to be prescriptive and doesn't need to be followed rigidly.

Due to the unknown nature of potential community concern, the checklist should be thought of as highly flexible. When you are still unsure about a concern, you can contact the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers for further guidance.



## Case Study One

### Mr White – Church Hill

I am writing on behalf of local residents in the area who want the problems at the recreation ground to be sorted out. Local residents have made numerous petitions and complaints about this. We have raised the issue with our local councillors and the Neighbourhood Group who want to help but the problem is still not being solved.

The shelter at the recreation ground encourages teenage drinking, sex and drugs. I have had mud and eggs thrown at my window and recently bricks that have smashed my window and unsettled me for my safety. This behaviour seems to happen after the youths spend a night in the shelter drinking and doing drugs.

The police do not patrol this area (although they know of the problems) as they “do not have the man-power”. I am a widower and pensioner and live on my own and I am finding this too much to cope with.

I would like to know what can be done about this. I know the situation is only going to get worse as the children break up from school soon.

### The Initial Issue Checklist

Mr White has written to the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers stating his concerns about various problems occurring in his local community. The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers would log Mr White’s concerns and contact you directly regarding this matter. If Mr White had contacted you first it is important that the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers are informed so that if at a later time you agree to champion the request, Officers are already aware of the concerns. If you are unsure whether a request is a potential CCfA you can contact the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers for further guidance

#### **1) Are the concerns of Mr White individual complaints?**

Scrutiny is not appropriate for individual complaints; however Mr White’s concerns are clearly the views of the community and local residents.

#### **2) Do the concerns of Mr White relate to ‘quasi judicial’ decisions (e.g. planning, licensing) or to council and non domestic rates?**

No - the concerns of Mr White are not to do with ‘quasi judicial’ decisions or to council and non domestic rates. However if they were, Scrutiny would not be appropriate for dealing with these kinds of concerns as they are subject to their own statutory appeals process.

### **3) Are Mr White's concerns to do with the quality of public service provision at a local level?**

Mr White has a variety of cross-cutting concerns including: problems with the use of recreational ground, anti social behaviour and the lack of police presence in the community.

## **The Genuine Local Community Concern Checklist**

### **1) Is the focus of the concern on a neighbourhood or locality issue?**

From the information Mr White has provided us with it is very clear that this is neighbourhood/locality issue.

### **2) Is the issue a genuine local concern?**

The issues raised by Mr White on the surface seem like issues of genuine local concern, including underage drinking, drug taking, anti-social behaviour and the lack of police presence. However, you will need to be sure that the concerns of the ward are genuine and not just the views of an individual 'hobby horse'. Finding out the views of other community members will help clarify this.

As ward councillor, you will have to decide whether a concern raised constitutes a genuine community concern. The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers can offer guidance if needed. Once you have established whether it is a genuine community concern, you can either reject the request and signpost to more appropriate mechanisms for dealing with the problem, or agree to champion the request and try to resolve the issue by liaising with other council services, the Executive and other agencies/partnerships. By using the genuine concern checklist you can assess whether Mr White's concerns would warrant further assistance for a CCfA.

## **The Championing a Request Checklist**

### **1. An apology, explanation or assurance about a particular problem is not enough to satisfy community concern.**

In the case of Mr White, an apology, explanation or assurance would not be sufficient. Especially considering that ward councillors have known about this concern for some time.

### **2. Resolving the issue.**

Since the issues in Mr White's letter are varied in nature no one solution is appropriate. Mr White states that the residents have signed petitions and raised the issues with the ward councillors and Neighbourhood Group but the concerns are still unresolved. You might use a variety of other ways to try and resolve this concern, such as:

- a) Discussing the issue with officers from the relevant council services or agencies; and
- b) Formally raising the issue with partnerships or partner agencies such as the Police or Primary Care Trust, Crime & Disorder partnership or Local Strategic Partnership.

### The Referring to Scrutiny Checklist

#### **1) The issue is persistent and unresolved by the ward councillor(s)**

When you feel you have done everything within your power to remedy Mr White's concern and you have exhausted all mechanisms and have tried to resolve the problems with the aid of other agencies and partnerships, but have been unsuccessful in finding an adequate solution. Then you are able to refer the issue to Scrutiny. This should always be a last resort.

#### **SUMMARY OF MR WHITE'S CONCERNS**

Mr White's concerns are not his individual complaints; they are the views of other community members. Mr White's concerns include a number of cross-cutting concerns. Such as, anti social behaviour, gang culture, the use of recreational grounds and lack of police presence.

The focus of Mr White's concerns are certainly neighbourhood/locality based issues and the information provided by Mr White suggests that the issues are a genuine local concern, with petitions, complaints, ward councillors and the Neighbourhood Group being unable to resolve the issues. You may wish to clarify this by finding out the views of the community members or you may already have adequate knowledge of these community concerns.

As the concerns are far reaching and have been unresolved for some time, an apology, explanation or an assurance may not be enough to address the concerns. If you agree to champion the request you will need to consider the different ways to help resolve the concern, such as discussing with officers, other agencies and partnerships such as the Police or Primary Care Trust, Crime and Disorder Partnership or Local Strategic Partnership.

Only when all other mechanisms have been unsuccessful should the CCfA be referred to Scrutiny.

## Case Study 2

### Mrs Green – Matchborough

Mrs Green writes: I have just read an article about Community Call for Action. I'm writing about the Sports Centre. It provides many great activities for children, but at night, the secluded location and the lack of lighting, brings some very worrying behaviour. A few weeks ago a car was set on fire in the car-park. Can anything be done to make this less threatening for residents after dark? Just some street lights and a few CCTV cameras would be a deterrent.

#### Initial Issue

**1) Are the concerns of Mrs Green individual complaints?**

This may be an individual complaint, but if Mrs Green's concerns are shared by the community, then CCfA may be more appropriate than trying to resolve the issue through the formal complaints procedure.

**2) Do the concerns of Mrs Green relate to 'quasi judicial' decisions (e.g. planning or licensing) or to council and non domestic rates?**

No.

**3) Are the concerns to do with quality of public service provision at a local level?**

Possibly.

#### Genuine Local Concern

**1) Is the focus of the concern on a neighbourhood or locality issue?**

Yes.

**2) Is the issue a genuine local concern?**

Yes - potentially a genuine local concern.

#### Championing a Request

**1) Has an apology, explanation or assurance been enough to satisfy a community concern?**

It would seem that the outcome Mrs Green is looking for is to resolve the anti-social behaviour issues at the sports centre, so an apology is unlikely to

satisfy her concerns. However, there are times when community concerns can be satisfied by public explanation – for example, the issues at the sports centre may have been recognised by the relevant public agencies but are not being addressed immediately, because other areas have higher priority.

**2. Having agreed to champion Mrs Green’s concern** you may use a variety of ways to try and resolve a concern. In the case of Mrs Green, you may wish to formally raise the issue with partnerships or partner agencies such as the Crime and Disorder Partnership.

### **Referring to Scrutiny**

If all other mechanisms have been exhausted and the aid of other partnerships and agencies has been unsuccessful in finding an adequate solution, then you are able to refer the issue to Scrutiny.

#### **Summary of Mrs Green’s Concerns**

If Mrs Green’s concerns represent an individual complaint, this would not be appropriate for scrutiny. However you would want to be sure that the concerns are not shared by the wider community. On the face of it, Mrs Green’s concerns could be seen as a service request – for street lighting and CCTV. However the issue of concern is the problem of anti-social behaviour at the sports centre and while it may be that street lighting or CCTV could address the problem there may be other or better ways to resolve the concerns. These would need to be explored with the relevant agencies, should you agree to champion the request.

Whilst the concerns can be thought of as neighbourhood and locality issues, you will want to be sure that the concerns are genuine and not just an individual ‘hobby horse’, finding out the views of other community members will help clarify this.

An apology, explanation or an assurance may not be enough to allay Mrs Green’s concerns although she may be relieved that her concerns are being dealt with. If you agree to champion this request, this would involve exploring potential solutions to the problem, with relevant agencies.

If you have exhausted all mechanisms to resolve the problem, but have been unsuccessful in finding an adequate solution, you are able to refer the issue to scrutiny, but this should always be a last resort.

## Case Study 3

### Mr Blue – Lodge Park

Mr Blue has sent a letter to the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers. Mr Blue writes: I am writing regarding the bulky and garden waste collection service which, as a pensioner who doesn't own a car I find invaluable. I do want to complain though about the length of time it takes for them to take away my garden waste. It is supposed to be collected within 10 days but usually takes much, much longer and sometimes only after several phone calls to chase people up.

#### Initial Issue

**1. Are the concerns of Mr Blue an individual complaint?**

Yes, unless there are a pattern of complaints in this area.

**2 Do the concerns of Mr Blue relate to 'quasi judicial' decisions (e.g. planning or licensing) or to council and non domestic rates?**

No.

**3. Are the concerns to do with quality of public service?**

Yes.

#### Genuine Local Concern

**1) Is the focus of the concern on a neighbourhood or locality issue?**

Not if it is an individual complaint, but if there are a pattern of similar complaints in a particular estate or ward then it could be. In this case it could be appropriate for CCfA. It could also be an issue of more general concern, across Redditch, in which case a traditional referral to scrutiny might be appropriate

**2) Is the issue a genuine local concern?**

Yes, but again isolated to Mr Blue

#### Championing a Request

**1) Has an apology, explanation or assurance been enough to satisfy a community concern?**

Mr Blue may be satisfied with an apology.

**2) Resolving an Issue.**

If it is an individual complaint, Mr Blue should find a resolution under the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure.

### **Referring to Scrutiny**

#### **The issue is persistent and unresolved by local councillor(s)**

Mr Blue's concern should have been resolved via the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure and is not an issue adequate for scrutiny.

#### **Summary of Mr Blue's Concerns**

Mr Blue's concern is an individual complaint and is not appropriate for Scrutiny. Advice can be given about Redditch Borough Council's Corporate Complaints procedure. Whilst the issue is on the quality of public service at a local level, it is likely that the issue will be isolated to Mr Blue.

However, if you felt the lack of public service was affecting other residents within the community, then you may wish to gather support from your constituents.

Mr Blue may be happy with an apology, explanation or assurance that a problem has been dealt with and will not occur again. It is unlikely that you will have to liaise with their agencies and partnerships unless you believe the concern is affecting the wider community members.

It is likely that the issue will be successfully resolved by the ward councillor or Redditch Borough Council's Corporate Complaints procedure and unlikely to be referred to scrutiny.