

Issue H - Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

1. Councillor Call for Action (CCfA), previously know as 'Community Call for Action', stemmed from the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and prosperous Communities' and was enacted in statute on 30th October by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2007. Currently statutory guidance is awaited from DCLG concerning its implementation, prior to it's commencement date of April 2008.
2. CCfA formalises much of the role of a good frontline councillor, but goes that one step further to enable them to refer, on behalf of their constituents, local issues to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, concerning LA or partner functions. This will give a locality focus to Overview and Scrutiny with the potential for area-based reviews. The CCfA system is meant to deal with most matters 'informally' without the need for a scrutiny review, however, some issues will need to be referred. It is considered that only those issues which are a significant or genuine concern affecting a number of individuals within the wider community and those which concern the quality of service provision at a local level will be potential areas for scrutiny review as a CCfA.
3. It should be noted that this provision will not only apply to areas of delivery for which the council are responsible, but also to areas where we are responsible in conjunction with partners. It now also covers issues around Crime and Disorder which had previously been included in the provisions of Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, thus simplifying the process.
4. There are a number of other key issues with this provision:
 - The power to originate CCfA rests with the individual ward councillor.
 - The councillor decides which issues should go forward. If they decide it should not then no further action is needed.
 - Any local government matter can be subject to review.
 - Excludes quasi- judicial issues such as planning and licensing.
 - There is no right of appeal for the constituent to Executive etc.
 - Whilst members can refer the issue, it is the Overview and Scrutiny that decides whether to have a scrutiny review or not.
5. Appendix 1 to this Annex provides a draft CCfA flow chart describing the process over which an issue will take.
6. With the introduction of the CCfA requirement it is essential that this is not utilised as a 'complaint procedure'. Frontline councillors will need to act as the gatekeeper in deciding how to resolve matters of concern. In doing this they will inevitably need officer support in this above the level of support currently provided. A number of local authorities have been piloting this provision. The most advanced in this is Kirklees, who have put in an additional resource to assist members in using the

existing methods of resolving issues. From this experience it can be seen that it is likely that this resource will be needed within the NMU, as issues and concerns are likely to be raised with elected members via ward committee meetings or surgeries.

7. Further issues will become apparent with the introduction of CCfA and the issuing of the statutory guidance to assist local authorities with implementation. One such issue may concern the need to have a database to track issues raised by customers from the very point that the query is raised with the elected member. This would ensure that as existing mechanisms are used to resolve the issue raised by the constituent members can provide feedback. It would also ensure that an audit trail of action existed should the issue become a topic for Scrutiny Review. Such a system could be provided via the easy@york programme and the Customer Contact Centre, who are currently reviewing and developing the system in terms of member requests and queries.
8. In summary, members need to note the statutory introduction of the CCfA in April 2008. To recognise that ward members may need support in the handling of issues raised by constituents and that data handling may need to be reinforced to effectively support the process.

Indicative Financial Impacts

The implementation of the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) will be cost neutral. Following its introduction in April 2008 elected members may require additional support, this will need to be investigated at a later date.

Appendix 1 to Annex 7- Councillor Call For Action

