

# Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

Democratic and Community Engagement

[www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

## two page briefing

The **Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007** (LGPIH Act) enables all councillors (in England) to **refer single ward issues**, or 'Local Government matters', to **Overview & Scrutiny Committees**. This section of the Act became law on **April 1<sup>st</sup> 2009**.

The aim of this new measure is to help **frontline councillors** raise matters on an authority's agenda on behalf of their constituents, and is a way for members to bring about **specific solutions to local problems**.



## Background

The legislation relating to Councillor Call for Action is an amalgamation of the previous 'Community Call for Action', which was included in the Police & Justice Act 2006, and the principles behind both the 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' (2006) and 'Communities in Control' (2008) White Papers. It is envisaged that the Councillor Call for Action **further highlights the role of the local councillor** in helping members of the public reach satisfactory outcomes with the Council. By assisting the public to navigate routes through the Council's decision-making structures, councillors can **help citizens to participate in local democracy**.

## Councillor Call for Action

The LGPIH Act gives councillors the **ability to call for debate** and discussion at overview & scrutiny committees on a **topic of neighbourhood concern** under section 119 of the Act. This power is designed to sit alongside existing mechanisms already at a frontline councillor's disposal to resolve local issues. The Council will also now have the **right to delegate** council functions to individual frontline members to exercise in their ward, under section 236 of the Act, **enhancing the role of ward members** and giving them the power to get things done without going through the council's executive decision-making process.

## How will it work?

Additional Guidance will be available to councillors on how to initiate a Councillor Call for Action. The main points to remember are:

- The power to instigate a CCfA rests with the local councillor, which further strengthens the role of members as the **centre-point** for resolving issues of local concern.
- Ward Councillor informs Democratic & Community Engagement of the potential CCFA and the request is logged. Once it has been established that all avenues have been explored and no exclusions apply, advice is available from the Scrutiny Team who will inform the relevant themed scrutiny chairman.
- If Scrutiny Panel accept CCFA (in consultation with Scrutiny Management Panel) they will undertake review and make recommendations to appropriate body and feedback to ward councillor on progress.
- Scrutiny reviews resulting from a CCfA will be undertaken by the assigned scrutiny panel, with the option of **co-opting the ward councillors** involved for the duration of the review. These will be predominantly 'short and sharp' focused **reviews** – as it is important that this is a responsive process, which delivers **tangible outcomes**.
- The matter referred must relate to a single ward issue, which represents a genuine **local community concern**. Members may wish to focus on issues that specifically relate to the quality of service provision at a local level.
- CCfA's should be seen as a last resort for members who have tried to resolve the issue using existing channels, or when all other attempts at resolution have failed. It is not designed to provide an immediate solution, but **high-profile public discussion** of an issue.
- There are certain exclusions in the statutory guidance: vexatious or persistent requests, problems that could be dealt with by a formal complaints or appeal process (unless systematic failure can be demonstrated), and individual complaints.
- Local Crime & Disorder matters are dealt with under the Police & Justice Act 2006. However the process will be the same, except all such calls will be dealt with via the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.

## Examples of why members might use CCfA

- Sustained poor performance at a local school;
- Poor maintenance of a park, leading to increased anti-social behaviour;
- A series of complaints about a Council provided service, which demonstrate a continuing trend of poor performance;
- Safety concerns over pavement/road management, which haven't been adequately addressed.

## What happens next and want to know more?

The Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, together with the Centre for Public Scrutiny/Improvement & Development Agency Councillor Call for Action summary paper can be found below:

LGPIH Act:: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga\\_20070028\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070028_en_1)

CfPS/I&DeA Paper: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/9526144>

**Further information** – email [scrutiny@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

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