

Councillor Call for Action Task and Finish Group

Overview and Scrutiny Committee One		
Final Report		May 2008
Version control	FINAL v4	16/05/2008
Author 1	BB 16/4/08	
Author 2	AS 29/4/08, PV 13/5/08	
Owner	AS	
Reviewers	AS, PDV, KR, DP, SW, NM	

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1 Foreword

Overview and Scrutiny 1 (Partnerships, Regeneration, Community Engagement and Community Safety) decided to set up a Task & Finish Group to look at the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) proposals contained within the Government's Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) and establish what this will mean for Northampton Borough Council. At the time the work commenced it was thought the Government would introduce CCfA in April 2008 but this now seems to have been delayed. Either way members of the Task & Finish Group thought that CCfA was a good opportunity for Northampton Borough Council to be 'ahead of the game' in developing a process before it was formally introduced by legislation. The Task & Finish Group attended a seminar on the subject held by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) and looked at the experience of pilot schemes in Kirklees, Tunbridge Wells and the London Borough of Merton. Northamptonshire County Council were also invited and attended one meeting of the Task & Finish Group and have been keen to develop the process jointly where possible.

Whilst undertaking this work the Task & Finish Group also looked at the Government's Consultation over CCfA and Local Petitions. The impact of any legislation regarding Local Petitions will need further consideration by the Council in due course.

This has been a real opportunity for Overview & Scrutiny to be involved in policy development for the Council and our proposed Pilot scheme for CCfA sets Northampton Borough Council at the forefront of establishing this new initiative. There will be further work required as the Pilot is tested and the Task & Finish group hopes that all Councillors will use the opportunity to be involved in this. There are challenges to bring Partner Organisations into this process as well as informing the public how this enhances the role of their elected representatives and provides a clear route for some issues to be tackled.

So this is perhaps the start of an exciting development for the Council - not the end of the process!

I would like to thank all members of the Task & Finish Group who helped in the development of this proposal, Councillors Kevin Reeve, David Palethorpe and Paul Varnserry, and Northampton Borough Council Officer support; in particular Scrutiny Officer Ben Bix.

Councillor Andrew Simpson



Councillor Andrew Simpson (Chair)



Councillor Paul Varnserry



Councillor Kevin Reeve



Councillor David Palethorpe

2 Resolutions and Recommendations

This Working Party recommends that Overview and Scrutiny Committee One

1. Receives this report, comments on it and agrees that subject to amendments, the report be forwarded to Cabinet.

It is proposed that Overview and Scrutiny Committee One Recommends to Cabinet:

1. That the draft procedure and guidelines for the Councillor Call for Action at Appendix A be adopted for implementation as a Pilot scheme.
2. That following the Pilot any further revisions are made to the scheme and brought back for final approval.
3. That should the relevant legislation come into force during the Pilot that the Policy and Governance Manager is authorised (a) to make any minor modifications that may be required once guidance has been issued and (b) to recommend to Council the necessary amendments the council's constitution.
4. That cabinet makes available sufficient resources to set up and test a Pilot Councilor Call for Action process (including support for publicity, training and team briefing where applicable)
5. That in relation to the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act, further consideration be given to (a) the external scrutiny of LAA partners' delivery of local improvement targets and (b) scrutiny of crime and disorder matters, together with the overview and scrutiny committee structure most appropriate to exercising these powers (c) The handling of Local Petitions as defined in the LGPIH Act within Northampton Borough Council.
6. That the additional scrutiny powers contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 be included in the council's constitution once brought into force.

3 Background

The Councillor Call for Action procedure is designed as a formal means whereby Councillors can raise issues within the ward they represent that are of significant community concern, where the usual channels for doing so (for instance by raising issues with Council Officers) have so far been unsuccessful. It is generally seen as a measure of last resort, once other approaches have been exhausted.

During most of 2007, the Council had been expecting the Government to introduce two different forms of “calls for action” under two separate pieces of legislation. The first related to crime and disorder matters and would have enabled a local resident to initiate a “community call for action” which required their Ward Councillor to bring it before an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with a right of appeal to the Executive if the matter was not resolved. The second related to council functions and was to be initiated by a Ward Councillor on behalf of their community, but with no specific rights for individual residents, nor any right of appeal.

Regulations and guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on implementing Calls for Action and other aspects of the strengthened overview and scrutiny powers were initially expected by the end of 2007, in anticipation of the new powers coming into force in April 2008. These are now unlikely to be issued before April, however, and the timing of the Orders implementing the new powers has still to be confirmed.

4 Key Findings

4.1 Task and Finish Group

While the method is described elsewhere in this document, the Group noted that the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) is generally seen as a measure of last resort. In some respects an informal process already takes place where an issue of concern can be raised by a Councillor at an Overview & Scrutiny Committee. What the proposed CCfA does is set out a more formal process which can ensure due consideration is given to the issue.

The CCfA puts more emphasis on the Councillor in being clear about why they are using this approach to an issue. As such the referring Councillor will be expected to explain why they have raised the matter and what actions they or others have already taken to try and reach a solution. This will help the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee decide what further action if any is appropriate, and whether a specific piece of work is required.

CCfA will be an opportunity to highlight genuine ward or community issues.

The Councillor Call for Action is not considered an appropriate route for:

- raising individual complaints, for which the Council's corporate complaints procedure should be followed;
- scrutinising matters of wider Council policy, which a member of an Overview and Scrutiny committee can ask that committee to agree to include in its annual work programme;

- questioning decisions which have been taken but not yet implemented by the Executive, for which the call-in procedure may be used; or
- seeking to resolve urgent matters, (the reason being the time which may be needed for the committee to assess the initial referral and then investigate the matter if it agrees to do so)

4.2 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act

In addition to Councillor Call for Action the LGPIH Act provides for a number of additional powers for Overview & Scrutiny as follows:

The Act will provide that, when an Overview and Scrutiny Committee makes a report or recommendations, it may publish the report and must, by written notice, require the Executive or Full Council (as appropriate) to consider and respond to it within two months, saying what action it proposes to take. The Executive or Council will have a duty to comply.

More significantly the 2007 Act will, subject to Government regulations, empower the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of county and unitary authorities to scrutinise how LAA partner organisations are achieving their local improvement targets, to require information from them and to require them to have regard to any report or recommendation the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may make. LAA partners will include police and fire authorities, primary care and NHS trusts, waste disposal authorities, probation service, youth offending teams, learning and skills councils, regional development agencies and various central government agencies such as Jobcentre Plus, Environment Agency and Highways Agency.

All these provisions will need to be included in the Council's constitution, once the provisions have been brought into force and guidance has been issued.

4.3 Proposed approach

The Task and Finish Group were satisfied that, despite the delay in issuing formal guidance, preparations could be made on the basis of the provisions in the Act and any minor amendments being made once the guidance is issued. We have therefore proposed a draft procedure and guidelines attached at Appendix A.

The Group considered that progress on the scrutiny of LAA partners was unlikely until (a) the necessary regulations and/or guidance had been issued; (b) a new LAA was agreed (timetabled for June 2008); and (c) current issues arising from the local government review had been substantially resolved.

District and county councils will also have specific power under the Police and Justice Act 2006, once brought into force, to scrutinise and make recommendations on the delivery of crime and disorder strategies by members of the local community safety partnership. This power will be exercised by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee designated as the "crime and disorder committee". The task and finish group felt that the existing Terms of Reference for Overview and Scrutiny Committee One should be strengthened as this committee already has crime and disorder issues within its remit.

4.4 Councillor Call for Action

In the model proposed by the Task and Finish Group, the Council's existing Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee are empowered to decide whether issues are to be considered as CCfA. All referrals will be made in writing to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. The referral must include; the Councillor's name, the ward, a summary of the matter being raised and why. The Councillor will be able to supply supporting information or evidence indicating:

- the degree of local concern or support for the Call for Action (e.g. from local constituents, Neighbourhood Partnership/Neighbourhood Management board, the parish or town council or local community groups); and
- what previous action has already been taken by the Councillor or local people to try to resolve the matter, for example, by raising it with the relevant officers, members or authority or by seeking a solution within the ward.

Some potential criteria that might be used when considering a CCfA referral by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee include;

- is the committee satisfied that reasonable attempts at resolution have been made by the Ward Councillor or executive?
- has any committee considered a similar issue recently?
- are there projects, reviews, audits or inspections already under way that are already considering the concern?
- in the case of a crime & disorder issue, has the matter has been referred to the CDRP?
- have relevant neighbourhood structures been exhausted?
- have relevant partners or council service areas been informed, but not responded?
- is there a more complex/strategic issue at the heart of it, that could not be resolved at a lower level?
- Is it an individual case or a wider service or policy matter?

4.5 Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Once the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee forwards a Councillor Call for Action to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee it is required to discuss the matter and decide what further action, if any, it wishes to take. For instance, it may request further information from an officer or member, launch a task and finish investigation and/or make recommendations on how the matter might be resolved.

The committee shall have regard to any representations made by the referring Councillor as to why it should investigate the matter or make recommendations on it. In deciding what action to take, the committee should also take account of any written information or evidence supplied.

If the committee decides that further action should be taken, it may either:

- make immediate recommendations to the Executive or Council;
- request further information or evidence from the Ward Councillor;
- ask officers to look into the matter and report back;

- invite the relevant portfolio holder to a meeting;
- invite other local stakeholders to a meeting; or
- set up a task and finish group of, say, four members for more detailed investigation and report back by a defined date.

An overview and scrutiny committee already has powers to require members of the Executive and officers to attend to answer questions, and to invite other people to attend its meetings.

In the case of a local crime and disorder matter, the crime and disorder committee (proposed to be Overview and Scrutiny One) may make a report or recommendations to the Council, the Chief Officer of Police, the Police and Fire Authorities, the Probation Board and the Primary Care Trust. Those bodies will be required to consider the report or recommendations; to respond to the committee indicating what action, if any, they propose to take; and to have regard to the report or recommendations in exercising their functions. In practice this procedure is expected to be coordinated through a local community safety partnership.

4.6 The Councillor Contact Centre

During desktop research of other authorities, it is understood that Northampton is relatively unique in having a dedicated Councillor Contact Centre in place. The Group worked with officers from the Contact Centre and came to the following conclusions.

- The Councillor Contact Centre has an existing call logging and monitoring system which could sufficiently cope with those items initially proposed by Councillors as potential CCfAs
- That simple advice and guidance on councillor call for action could be provided via the contact centre (a simple leaflet)
- That Councillors should continue to be encouraged to use the Councillor Contact Centre
- The Councillor Contact Centre would be able to advise on appropriate complaints procedures when requested

Breakdown of Councillor Enquiries by Subject Area Jan to Dec 2007 (CRM from 1st June 2007)												
Service Area	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Property Maintenance (Inc. Major Works, Voids)	8	6	9	19	5	11	8	6	5	5	1	6
Street Scene (Inc. Waste, Recycling, Landscapes, Trees, Neighbourhood Wardens)	28	18	22	39	21	36	31	22	21	33	11	14
Housing (Inc. Tenancy Management, HNAT, Homelessness)	11	12	13	27	15	16	18	17	12	15	11	4
Revenue and Benefits	4	4	3	4	5	0	6	2	2	3	1	0
Environmental Health	4	7	5	6	2	4	2	7	1	3	2	0
Planning	4	4	1	3	9	4	1	7	1	1	3	1
Customer Services (Inc. Contact Centre)	0	1	8	14	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Other Services	8	11	14	8	10	19	12	11	10	11	11	0
Total	67	63	75	120	69	91	78	72	71	72	41	26
												845

The Group noted the level of enquiries made through the Councillor Contact Centre and noted the majority are predictably, within the Street Scene and Housing services area. As such, the Group understood that these are the areas most likely to be dealt with

before a CCfA or by the complaints process. Supporting this, other councils have reported that they expect the amount of CCfAs to be very small.

Councillor Contact Centre Jan 2007 – Nov 2007

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Calls Rec	37	26	37	41	36	48	33	19	39	22	32
% Calls Ans	81.1%	92.3%	97.3%	92.7%	97.2%	100%	100%	94.7%	100%	90.9%	90.6%

4.7 Engaging with Partners

The Group met with representatives of Northamptonshire County Council at the Local Government East Midlands Scrutiny Network and by invitation to the Group in January. The focus has been on the County Council and not on other partners. The Overview and Scrutiny team have engaged fully with the County Council and are working together to realise the opportunities offered by the CCfA process. Engaging with partners is key to the success of Councillor Call for Action. This will be ongoing work while councils await guidance.

4.8 Response to government consultation

In its consultation paper (March 2008) “Local Petitions and Calls for Action”, DCLG asked what matters should be excluded from the CCfA and what guidance the Government should provide on its operation. The response of the Task and Finish Group, agreed by Overview & Scrutiny One and presented to the Borough Solicitor to consider while preparing the Councils formal response is attached as Appendix X.

5 Summary

- While the Council awaits firm guidance, other pilot schemes are running at Kirklees and Tunbridge Wells. Northampton should take this opportunity to be at the forefront of implementing this part of the LGPIH Act.
- A trial (pilot) of the suggested process should be delivered during the summer of 2008
- That the process devised by the Task and Finish Group, based on best practice elsewhere, will ensure that the levels of Councillor Call for Action requests do not become burdensome.
- A key part of delivering this is communication – with Councillors, partners and residents. A trial is proposed and a leaflet/briefing/presentation approach is suggested. A draft leaflet has been prepared with this report.

Acknowledgments

- Councillor Call for Action Community of Practice IDEA
- Centre for Public Scrutiny forum and presentation to LGEM Scrutiny Network
- Kirklees Council proposed guidance
- Tunbridge Wells Council proposed guidance
- Rob Mills, Scrutiny Manager, South Bedfordshire District Council

Councillor Call for Action Task and Finish Group – project plan and meeting record 14 February 2008. v4.1: November – February

Councillor Call for Action Task and Finish Group	Meeting 1, 15 November 2007	Meeting 2, 21 December 2007	Meeting 3, 15 January 2008	Meeting 4, 18 February 2008
Purpose/Objectives of the Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify what ‘councillor call for action’ will mean to Northampton Borough Council • Identify the approach that Northampton Borough Council should take to implement the CCfA • Identify how to communicate the process of using CCfA to members, officers and the public. 			
Exclusions and Constraints	The group acknowledge the wider issues around the LGPIH Act and agreed that the focus of this group will be only on the CCfA strand. O&S Management Committee is asked to look at the rest of the implications of the Act.	Ensure that the wider implications of the LGPIH Act are included on the agenda for O&S Management Committee.	The member survey has been excluded.	A formal response from the Task and Finish Group to the Call for Action/Petitions consultation is unnecessary. Comments from the T&F will be forwarded to the CEO who will be making the councils response.
Outcomes Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understandable clear policy for how the council will deal with the issue • That Northampton Borough Council’s approach to the CCfA is an effective means of community engagement • That Northampton Borough Council meets its statutory requirements 			
Information Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charts ✓ • Budgets ✗ • Services ✓ • Evidence from users/service employees ✓ • Information from partners ✓ • Relevant BVPIs ✗ • Best Practice Councils ✓ • Experts ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar feedback – meet with other councils • Survey feedback • Information from pilot schemes identified by LGiU- Kirklees and Tunbridge Wells • Information from the Councillor contact centre 	<p>Overview information on contact centre provided.</p> <p>Agreed More information required on contact centre ways of working & what changes may be necessary to undertake this project</p>	<p>Example of Protocol between NCC and PCT</p> <p>Agreed no appropriate protocol available but officers to meet 11 February</p> <p>Information on Contact Centre/Councillor Contact Centre</p> <p>Agreed to feedback on feasibility of using Councillor Contact Centre at next meeting</p>	<p>Agree future meeting dates and identify suitable deadline</p> <p>Agreed 5 March & 2 April</p> <p>Feedback by officers on NCC/NBC meeting</p> <p>Feedback on feasibility of using Councillor Contact Centre at next meeting</p> <p>Agreed – that proposals are feasible as a trial once report is complete & a trial is agreed</p>

				Agreed – to work out indicative timescales to run the CCfA process. Proposing a timescale for when OSMC meets in response to potential CCfA
Format of Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer briefings ✓ • Officer reports ✓ • Portfolio holder reports ✗ • Councillor reports ✓ • Published reviews by other organisations ✓ • Case studies ✓ • Expert advice ✓ • Surveys ✓ • Witnesses verbal/ written evidence ✓ • Commissioned research • Presentations ✓ • Local/regional/national data ✓ 	Written Reports and Verbal updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Reports and Verbal updates • Case Study from Kirklees • Regional and expert information from seminar – feedback to this meeting. Gareth Wall from CfPS. <p>Agreed Scrutiny officer to prepare a Northampton version of the guidance building on the Kirklees model.</p>	<p>Review new Northampton version of CCfA guidance</p> <p>Agreed Members to review and amend as appropriate and forward amendments to BB</p> <p>Review Local Petitions and Calls for Action Consultation document</p> <p>Agreed to prepare outline issues and suggestions summary at next meeting</p>	<p>Local Petitions and Calls for Action Consultation document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to prepare outline issues and suggestions summary to forward to CEO <p>Agreed – to forward the comments to O&S 1 13th March</p> <p>Agreed- Chair (AS) to raise CCfA with Chief Executive at planned meeting – re: engaging partners and scoping ways of working</p>
Methods used to Gather Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews in committee/community ✓ • Focus Groups/User Groups in the Community ✗ • Public Meetings ✗ • Working Groups ✗ • Structured Visits to Other Organisations ✓ • Site Visits ✓ • Advertisements ✗ • Media ✓ • Questionnaires ✓ 	<p>A simple survey of how members currently process information from the community</p> <p>Desktop research on current guidance and other councils approach</p> <p>One or two case studies of an issue working its way through to an O&S committee</p>	<p>Ideas for survey, and agree questions</p> <p>Agreed</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not to undertake the survey. 2. All Group members to attend 4th February LGIU Seminar 	Members will attend LGiU Seminar 4 th February 2008	Councillors feedback from LGiU Seminar 4 th February 2008.
Co-Options to the Review Committee	It was proposed that an Officer from the County Council be invited to attend the meetings as they would	<p>Invitation to County Council Officer to attend meetings</p> <p>Breda Carter (NCC</p>	Cllr Robin Brown and Breda Carter (NCC) to be invited to attend this meeting. Robin Parr NCC- Committee	

	be likely to be doing the same work at the same time.	Committee Manager) Identified. NCC have not started work on this yet Agreed To request that any protocols on information sharing/how to make recommendations to partner organisations are brought forward from NCC – particularly between NCC and PCT.	Operations Manager will attend. Discuss protocol between NBC and NCC on information sharing and making recommendations to partner organisations. Agreed Robin Parr to be invited to the remaining meetings of the Group	
Evidence gathering timetable	Attendance at seminars on CCfA – LGiU in December (unavailable) and January. LGEM seminar December 14 th Derby. Cllrs Simpson, Varnserry and Reeve to attend. Move the 13 December meeting of the Group to 14 December (now 21 st December 10 am). All meetings of the Group will start at 6pm	LGEM Seminar scheduled 14 th December, Derby. Test survey on Group members. Run simple survey for members and prepare results for January meeting Suggest ‘buddy’ system – each group member to ask 2 other councillors to fill in questionnaire and feedback. Agreed 1. Not to undertake the survey. 2. That all members of the Group and O&S officers attend the LGIU Seminar 4 th February.		Agreed – delay the final report to May meeting of O&S 1
Responsible Officers	Members identified; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicci Marzec, Corporate Manager as the senior lead. Thomas Hall to attend 	Nicci Marzec to attend meetings where appropriate (on leave today – Invite to next 2)	NM and TH receive agenda	NM and TH receive agenda

	when available • Overview and Scrutiny Officer			
Resources and Budgets	Resources to attend seminars when and where appropriate	Identified budget requirement to promote the scheme and train members and officers		Issue logged: proposed move to running the project (moving away from scope)
Final Report presented by	Chairman, Cllr Andrew Simpson			
Final report submitted to	Overview and Scrutiny 1, 13 March 2008			Consider items for draft report
Monitoring procedure	To be agreed in final report			Develop monitoring procedure

Last update, 3 March 2008

Issues Log

21/12/2007 The Group decided not to undertake the member survey. It was felt that the survey would not be required for the final report. A copy of the proposed questions will be kept for the future. Additionally;

- NBC draft process should be a slimmed down version of Kirklees model
- O&S Management Committee would only be allowed to reject on grounds of process
- O&S Management Committee allocate issue to relevant O&S Committee according to Terms of Reference
- Creation of local performance indicator to measure success of CCfA
- Partners need to be engaged with the process and protocols agreed
- Requires a robust complaints process to deal with non-CCfA issues
- There will be budgetary implications for the launch – communication to councillors, partners, public
- Training for councillors and officers required
- Will government make funding available for launch

7/1/2008 Local Petitions and Calls for Action Consultation document published – placed on agenda for 15th January.

15/1/2008 It was noted that there would be no appeals process

14/2/2008 Chief Executive will be preparing Councils response to CCfA and Petitions consultation

Councillor Call for Action Task and Finish Group – project plan and meeting record 3 March 2008. v5: March - May - BROUGHT FORWARD

Councillor Call for Action Task and Finish Group	Meeting 5, 5 March 2008	Meeting 6, 2 April 2008	Meeting 7	Meeting 8
Purpose/Objectives of the Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify what ‘councillor call for action’ will mean to Northampton Borough Council • Identify the approach that Northampton Borough Council should take to implement the CCfA • Identify how to communicate the process of using CCfA to members, officers and the public. 			
Exclusions and Constraints	<p>The group acknowledge the wider issues around the LGPIH Act and agreed that the focus of this group will be only on the CCfA strand. O&S Management Committee is asked to look at the rest of the implications of the Act.</p>			
Outcomes Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understandable clear policy for how the council will deal with the issue • That Northampton Borough Council’s approach to the CCfA is an effective means of community engagement • That Northampton Borough Council meets its statutory requirements 			
Information Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charts ✓ • Budgets ✗ • Services ✓ • Evidence from users/service employees ✓ • Information from partners ✓ • Relevant BVPIs ✗ • Best Practice Councils ✓ • Experts ✓ 	Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and Advice –This is trialled with this Group in response to OSMC decision. Agenda cleared down accordingly	<p>To work out indicative timescales to run the CCfA process. Proposing a timescale for when OSMC meets in response to potential CCfA. Suggestion of 28 day turnaround</p> <p>Re- draft process diagram to include Cllr comments, timescales and elements on what committees do from Kirklees</p> <p>Work through Issues Log and resolve outstanding</p> <p>Prepare draft final report</p>		
Format of Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer briefings ✓ • Officer reports ✓ • Portfolio holder reports ✗ • Councillor reports ✓ • Published reviews by other organisations ✓ 	Presentation, documents and verbal outline of requirements	Officer reports		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies ✓ • Expert advice ✓ • Surveys ✓ • Witnesses verbal/ written evidence ✓ • Commissioned research • Presentations ✓ • Local/regional/national data ✓ 				
Methods used to Gather Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews in committee/community ✓ • Focus Groups/User Groups in the Community ✗ • Public Meetings ✗ • Working Groups ✗ • Structured Visits to Other Organisations ✓ • Site Visits ✓ • Advertisements ✗ • Media ✓ • Questionnaires ✓ 	<p>To understand what information is needed as part of the EIA</p> <p>Decide how to take forward</p>	<p>Consider requirements of EIA process on gathering community needs requirements</p>		
Co-Options to the Review Committee	-	-		
Evidence gathering timetable	-	<p>Set timetable for final report – to be completed by early May 2008</p>	<p>Consider items for draft report</p>	<p>Consider items for draft report</p>
Responsible Officers	<p>Members identified;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicci Marzec, Corporate Manager as the senior lead. • Thomas Hall to attend when available • Overview and Scrutiny Officer 	<p>Nicci Marzec to attend meetings where appropriate</p>	<p>NM and TH receive agenda</p>	<p>NM and TH receive agenda</p>
Resources and Budgets	<p>If a trial is to take place then resources and budget implications must be taken into account.</p>	<p>If a trial is to take place then resources and budget implications must be taken into account.</p>	<p>If a trial is to take place then resources and budget implications must be taken into account.</p>	<p>If a trial is to take place then resources and budget implications must be taken into account.</p>
Final Report presented by	<p>Chair, Cllr Andrew Simpson</p>			
Final report submitted to	<p>Overview and Scrutiny 1, 13 March 2008.</p> <p>Amended – Final report to O&S 1, May 15 2008</p>	<p>Final report to O&S 1, May 15 2008</p> <p>Consider items for draft report</p>	<p>Final report to O&S 1, May 15 2008</p> <p>Consider items for draft report</p>	<p>Agreed – Final report to O&S 1, May 15 2008</p>

Monitoring procedure	To be agreed in final report			Develop monitoring procedure
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Last update, 3 March 2008

Issues Log

21/12/2007 The Group decided not to undertake the member survey. It was felt that the survey would not be required for the final report. A copy of the proposed questions will be kept for the future. Additionally; ✓

- NBC draft process should be a slimmed down version of Kirklees model ✓
- O&S Management Committee would only be allowed to reject on grounds of process ✓
- O&S Management Committee allocate issue to relevant O&S Committee according to Terms of Reference ✓
- Creation of local performance indicator to measure success of CCfA
- Partners need to be engaged with the process and protocols agreed
- Requires a robust complaints process to deal with non-CCfA issues
- There will be budgetary implications for the launch – communication to councillors, partners, public
- Training for councillors and officers required
- Will government make funding available for launch

7/1/2008 Local Petitions and Calls for Action Consultation document published – placed on agenda for 15th January. ✓

15/1/2008 It was noted that there would be no appeals process ✓

14/2/2008 Chief Executive will be preparing Councils response to CCfA and Petitions consultation ✓

14-27/2/2008 Issue of moving away from scope to trial/do the CCfA process – will have resource/time implications

18/2/2008 – Issues logged around Government money to do CCfA with regard to joining together contact centres etc – example of 101 non emergency number at Leicester

27/2/2008 Management Committee agree that all Task and Finish Groups/Reports are subject to Equality Impact Assessment – meeting 5 set aside to understand/work through ✓

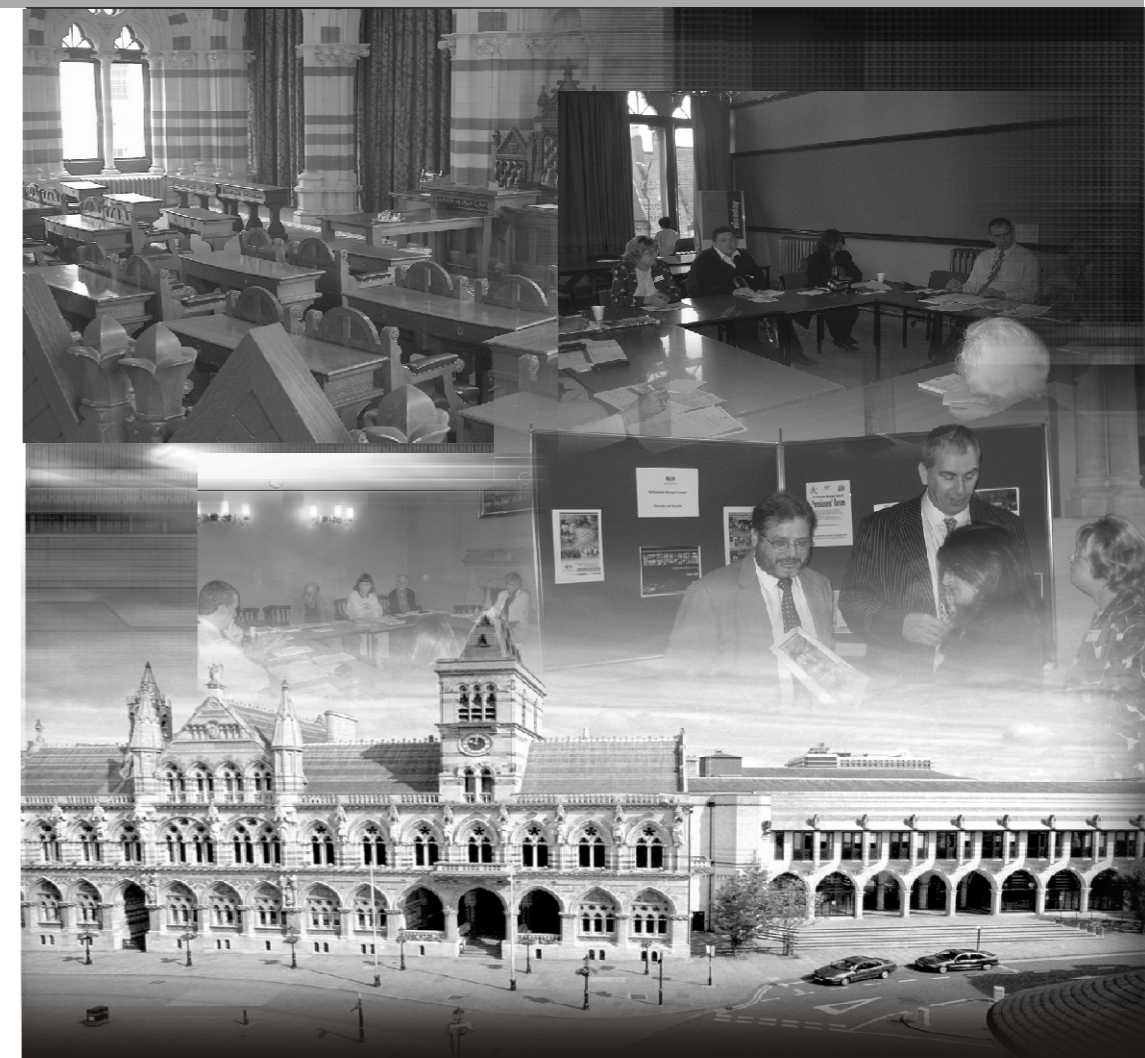
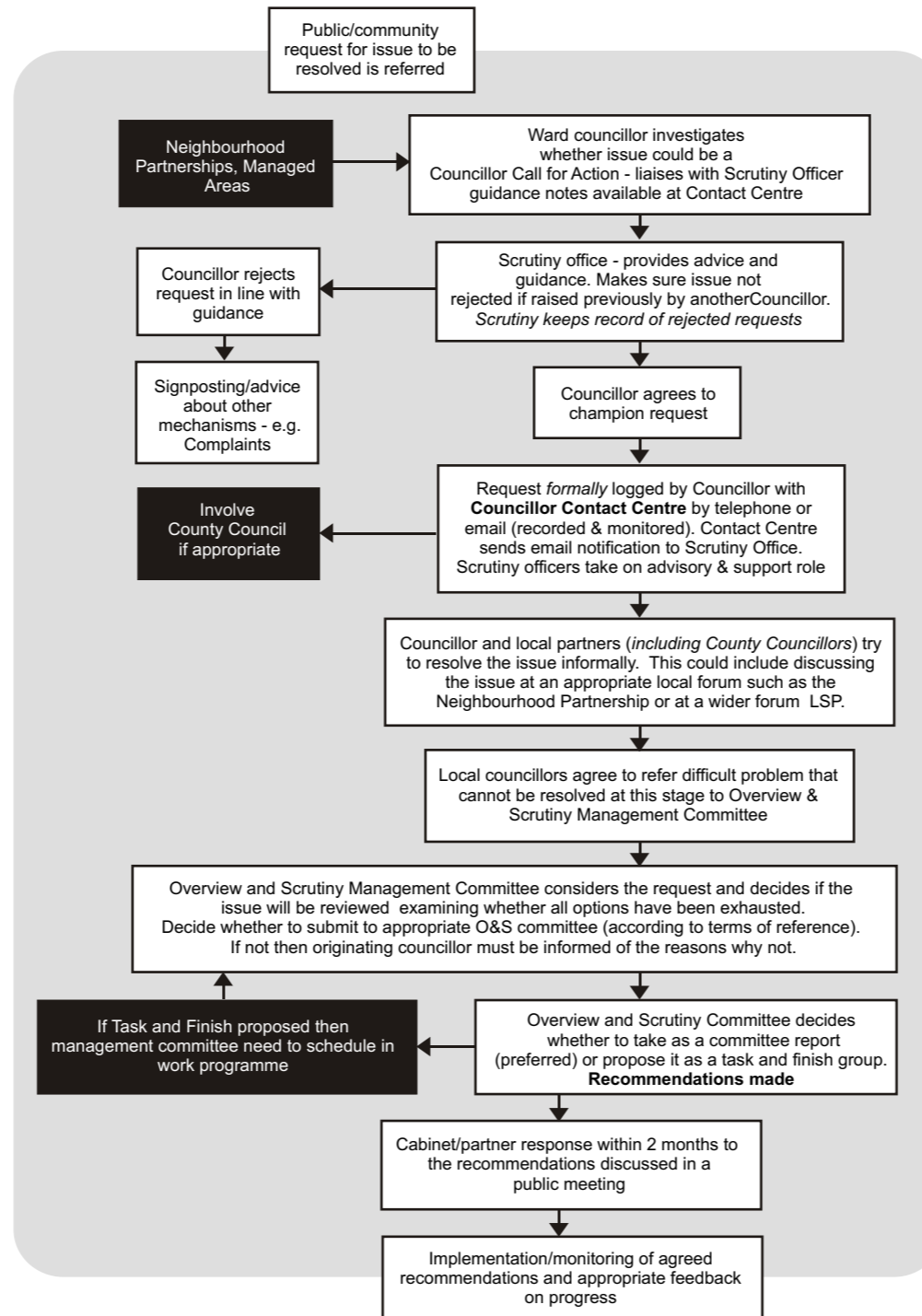
4/3/2007 – Issue raised of whether to move from existing scope to ‘do’ the project. Chair position is to report to Committee & Cabinet as normal and let Cabinet decide the resource implications of the next steps.

The Championing a Request Checklist.

1. 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:
 - Discussing the issue with officers from relevant council service or agency.
 - Facilitating an informal discussion at an appropriate local forum such as an area committee
 - Raising the issue with locality based arrangements such as the Neighbourhood Management Board.
 - Formally raising the issue with partnerships or partner agencies such as the Police or Primary Care Trust, Safer Communities partnership or Sports and Recreation 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.



CCFA

Councillor call for action

Draft v2 Councillor Call for Action Process March 3 2008

What is a Councillor Call for Action?

Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) is a process that 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.

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

- The focus of the CCfA is on **neighbourhood** or **locality** issues and specifically the **quality** of public service provision at a locality level.
- The CCfA represents a genuine local **community** concern (based on local councillors judgements) and
- It is a **persistent** problem which the local councillor has been **unable to resolve** through local action and discussion with the cabinet or relevant services and agencies. When introduced as a legal requirement (expected April 2008), councillors will be under a **legal duty** to consider requests from members of the public on certain issues.
- There is an expectation that the **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.

It is up to councillors to use this guidance to decide:

- Which issues to take forward as CCfAs and champion and which ones should be rejected
- Reject if it is any of the following:
 - An individual complaint
 - An issue relating to a 'quasi-judicial' matter like planning or licensing
 - An individual's own personal agenda, not of genuine local concern

The CCfA, alongside proposals which will require a much wider range of agencies to formally co-operate with scrutiny in the future, 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.

What the Councillor Call for Action is not

The Council has always emphasised that scrutiny is not appropriate for dealing with individual complaints. The council and partner agencies have well established complaints mechanisms for this purpose. In responding to public requests for CCfA, local councillors will need to make a judgement about whether the issue is a potential CCfA or should be dealt with in another way.

The Initial Issue Councillor 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 Northampton 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?**

Councillor 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?**
Councillor 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 Northampton
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.