

General scrutiny committee: Protocol for call-in meeting

Purpose:

A call-in meeting will be convened once a request to for call-in has been determined as valid by the Monitoring Officer. The meeting gives scrutiny members a chance to test a decision taken by the cabinet, a cabinet member or an officer with delegated authority against the principles of good decision-making. Having considered the decision in light of the grounds and evidence for the call in, if the relevant scrutiny committee is still concerned about it, then it may refer the decision back to the decision-maker for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns.

Meeting procedure for called-in items:

It is the responsibility of the chairperson to manage the meeting and the timings below are given for guidance. The questioning and debate should focus only on the grounds stated in the call-in rather than be a wider exploration of the decision taken.

Meeting Itinerary		
1.	The chairperson will first address any questions received from members of the public or elected members.	
2.	The chairperson explains the purpose of the item, i.e. to review the decision that has been called-in in light of the stated grounds for call-in	
3.	The chairperson will outline the meeting procedure	
4.	The decision-maker provides a brief summary of the decision taken	3 mins
5.	The call-in members present the reasons for the call-in that have been accepted as valid by the Monitoring Officer as set out in appendix a. The lead call-in member may speak b. the remaining-call-in members may contribute to the lead call-in member's presentation	
		5 mins
		3 mins (each)
6.	The decision-maker (cabinet member) responds to all points raised, focussing principally on responding to points of accuracy and may ask relevant officers present to explain any technical issues or respond to specific questions.	10 mins
7.	Questions from committee members	30 mins
8.	The decision-maker may sum up	5 mins
9.	The lead call-in member may sum-up	5 mins
10.	<p>Scrutiny members may then consider the decision in light of the grounds and evidence for call-in and vote on recommendations:</p> <p>That: the committee determines either: a) not to refer the decision back to the cabinet member to reconsider; or b) to refer the decision back to the cabinet member to reconsider; and in doing so specifies the concerns that the cabinet member is asked to take into account.</p>	

11.	Any committee member may propose a recommendation on a specific concern to be referred to the cabinet member which, if seconded, will be voted on by the scrutiny committee – there can be debate prior to voting unless the chairperson feels that all arguments have been exhausted. Amendments can also be made.
12.	At the close of the meeting the chairperson summarises any recommendations agreed by the committee for the clarification of all present.

Possible outcomes:

Having considered the reasons for call in and the decision-maker's response to any questions, the committee may agree to:

- Make no referral to the cabinet member (in which case the decision will stand and may be implemented with immediate effect); or
- The decision maker shall reconsider any decision referred to them following call-in, take into account any views expressed by the relevant scrutiny committee and may either amend or confirm the original decision or require further specified work to be undertaken before making a final determination.
- If it is alleged that the decision appears to be contrary to or not in accordance with the budget and policy framework, the monitoring officer shall advise the cabinet on that or any other relevant legal issues raised by or in relation to the called in decision. The cabinet shall consider that advice and shall reconsider its decision. If the matter is outside the budget and policy framework the monitoring officer shall refer the matter to the next Council meeting for consideration or convene an extraordinary meeting of Council whichever may be sooner and in any event within ten working days of the meeting of cabinet, executive, director of resources and monitoring officer) who may refer the matter to Council.