

Attendance by Executive Members At 'Call-In' meetings

Cabinet Members will normally be expected to attend any meeting of the Scrutiny Committees at which it is intended to consider a Call-In request in relation to his/her area of responsibility.

At Call-In meetings, the purpose of the Cabinet Member's attendance is to answer questions of fact and not to present the item. Cabinet Members need to be careful not to be drawn into the debate, so as to avoid any possible allegations of becoming involved in the scrutiny of their own decisions which may bring them into conflict with the Code of Conduct. It is therefore important to draw the distinction between answering questions of fact and becoming involved in the Committee debate into the issue in question.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the decision maker (or the relevant Cabinet Member if the decision maker is the Executive) should always attend a Call-In meeting. It is accepted however that Officers are often better placed to present greater detailed information that led up to the decision and this is deemed to be acceptable although it should always be the decision maker that is held to account.

The following procedure should take place at Call-In meetings:

1. The Member who called in the decision should speak first.
2. The Chairman will then invite the Cabinet Member (decision maker) to respond.
3. The Committee can then ask questions of the decision maker who may ask a relevant officer to supply further information if necessary.
4. The Committee debates the issue and votes on the outcome.

In the event of a situation where the decision maker cannot attend a Call-In meeting, the Leader of the Council or Deputy Leader should attend in their absence. In the event of both the Leader and Deputy Leader being unavailable, they should nominate another Cabinet Member to attend and be accountable for the decision.