

Overview and Scrutiny - Call-In

What is a Call-In?

Call-In is the term used for a specific function of local authority scrutiny arrangements. This function relates to the scrutiny of decisions after they are made but before they have been implemented.

In Sandwell call-ins may be made by either:

- Three members of a scrutiny board (this includes co-opted members with voting rights relevant to the subject matter); or
- Six members of the Council.

These members must provide reasons for the call-in.

What can be called-in?

Executive key decisions can be called in – the power to make these decisions rests with the Leader and is exercised through the Cabinet, or by individual Cabinet Members and Directors under delegated authority.

What can't be called-in?

Non-executive decisions are not able to be called in – so things like Planning or Licensing matters are not eligible.

In addition, executive decisions which have been taken under urgency arrangements may not be called-in. In these cases, the Scrutiny Chair will have been consulted to agree that the reasons for urgency are legitimate.

There is a clear and specified process for dealing with a Call-In. This will be followed in relation to all such requests.

What happens when a decision is called-in?

Where a decision is called-in it is 'paused' and cannot be implemented. The relevant scrutiny board will consider the call-in at a meeting – this may result in the matter being referred back to the decision maker with recommendations to reconsider. If the scrutiny board does not refer the decision back, then it will take effect at the end of that meeting.

Source Documents

[Local Government Act 2000 \(as amended\)](#)

[The use of call-in: guidance for English authorities](#) (Centre for Governance and Scrutiny)

Call-In - Process

1. Three members of a scrutiny board (including co-opted members with voting rights relevant to the subject matter), or six members of the Council, determine that they wish to call-in an executive decision for scrutiny. The members should complete and sign the Notice of Call-In Form and send the completed document to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Democratic_Services@sandwell.gov.uk). This must be done no later than the fifth working day after the decision is published.
2. The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Chief Executive, will examine the request to determine if it meets any of the grounds for rejection. If so, the Call-In will be rejected and reported to the next meeting of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board.
3. Where a Call-In progresses, the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board will determine which board will consider the referral.
4. In the event of multiple Call-Ins for the same decision, these will be considered at the same scrutiny board meeting. In the event that different Call-Ins on the same decision relate to different scrutiny board terms of reference, the matter will be considered by the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board.
5. The scrutiny board will meet within 15 working days of the receipt of the Notice of Call-In, unless the relevant Director agrees to a longer period that would avoid the need to call an additional meeting of the board. This may be in situations where a scheduled meeting may fall just outside the 15-day window, and a slight delay would not prejudice the Council in anyway.

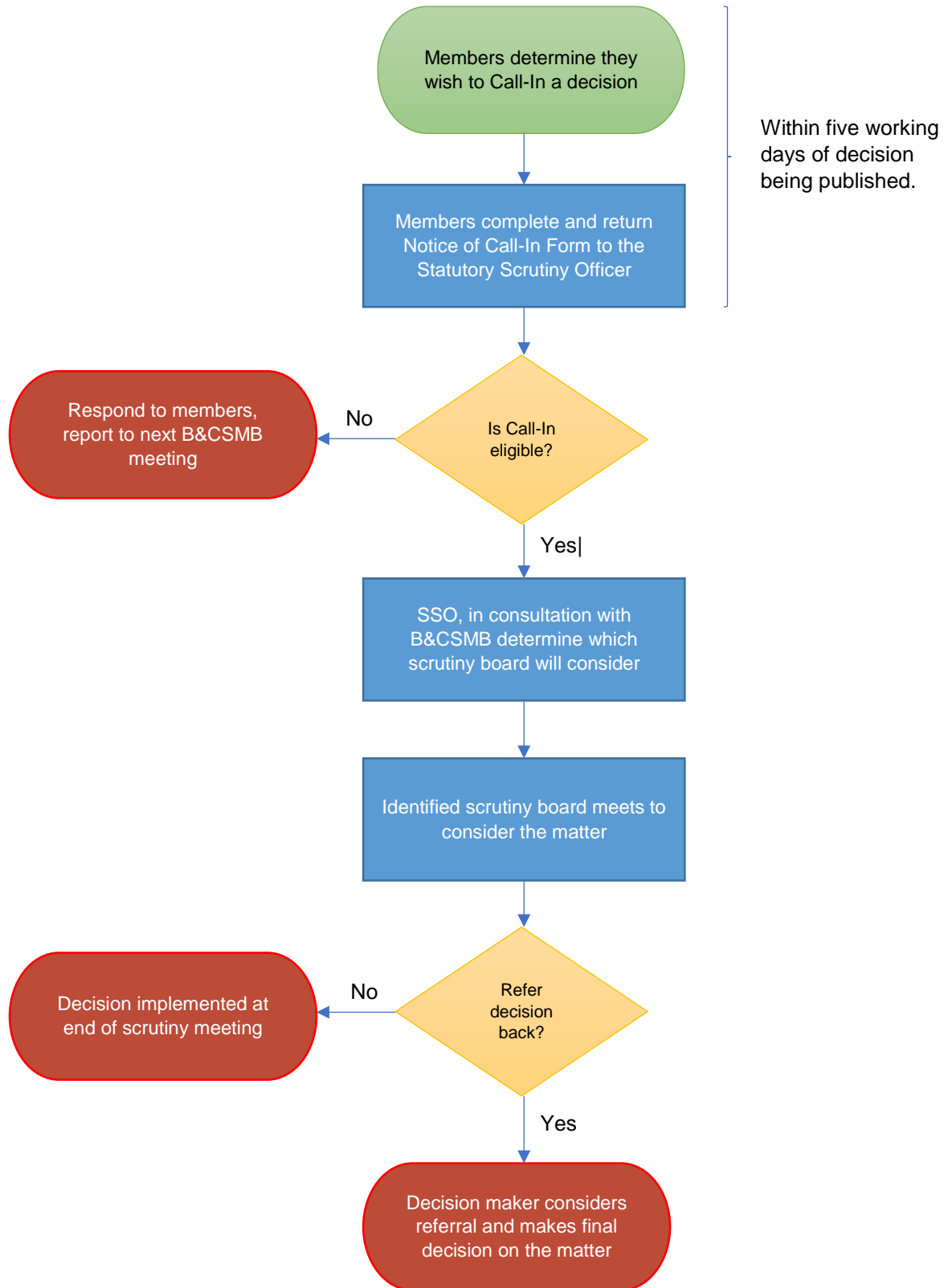
If the board doesn't meet then the decision will take effect at the end of the 15 working days.

6. The following people will be expected to attend the meeting:-
 - (a) At least one of the members who signed the Notice of Call-In;
 - (b) relevant cabinet member(s);

(c) relevant director(s), assistant director or service manager.

In the event of all of the referring members failing to attend the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair the item will be withdrawn without discussion and the decision will automatically take effect.

7. The scrutiny board may take various actions in relation to the Call-In. These include:-
 - Referring the decision back to the decision maker for further consideration – with recommendations on what the scrutiny board feels should be considered;
 - Take no further action – in which case the decision takes effect at the close of the meeting.
8. Once a decision has been subject to a Call-In it shall not be eligible to be called in again.



Glossary

B&CSMB – Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

SSO – Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Meeting Procedure

The process at a scrutiny board meeting convened to consider a Call-In will be as follows:

(Appointment of a person to preside at the meeting if both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent)

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. Disclosure of interests and the existence and nature of any political party whip.
3. Consideration of the call-in.
 - (a) Representative of the referring members to be invited to introduce the reasons for the call-in.
 - (b) Cabinet Member(s) to be invited to respond to the reasons for the call-in.
 - (c) Director(s) and other officers to be invited to speak.
 - (d) Members to ask questions on the reasons for call-in and the response from Cabinet Member(s) and/or officers.
 - (e) The Chair will facilitate debate and discussion of the topic. This may include inviting attendees to further address the meeting.
 - (f) Members to determine what action the board wishes to take in relation to the call-in:
 - No action;
 - Refer back to decision maker with recommendations for reconsideration.
 - (g) Close meeting.