

BUSINESS SUPPORT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 OCTOBER 2009

PETITION

Report from: Deborah Upton, Assistant Director, Housing and Corporate Services

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Summary

This report advises the Committee of a petition presented to the Mayor at Council meetings including a summary of officer's response to the petitioner.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The constitution provides that petitions presented at Council meetings relating to matters within the remit of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be referred immediately to the relevant Director for consideration at officer level.

2. Background

2.1 Where the Director is able to fully meet the request of the petitioners a response is sent of the proposed action and timescales for implementation. The petition organiser may request to refer the matter to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee if s/he is not satisfied with the answer and has given reasons for their dissatisfaction.

2.2 For petitions where the Director is unable to meet the request of petitioners or where there are a range of alternative responses the petition will be referred to the next relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion.

2.3 The lead petitioner Mr Ratcliffe asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Jarrett a question relating to this matter at the Full Council meeting on 30 July 2009.

3 Petitions referred to this committee

- 3.1 The following petition has been referred to the Committee, as the officers were unable to meet the petitioner's request as set out below.

Subject of petition	Council Date Presented by	Response
Petition to Medway Council not to demolish the Aveling & Porter Building, Strood.	30 July 2009 Cllr. Mrs Haydock	Officers advised the lead petitioner that full Council had resolved to demolish the building and had allocated the necessary financial resources and were therefore unable to meet the petitioner's request.

4 Director's Comments

- 4.1 As stated above the Council has resolved to demolish the building, has allocated the necessary financial resources and added the scheme to the capital programme. As a result officers have commenced the necessary decommissioning works and specified and tendered the demolition works.

If the building were retained it would add to the Council's revenue costs due to the cost of business rates, insurance, utilities, essential maintenance and security. Together these costs are estimated to be up to £139,000 per annum. There would also be additional one-off costs to stabilise the building and retain services to the building once the remainder of the main civic centre building is demolished. These costs are estimated to be £135,000. Furthermore if the building were retained now only to be demolished by a purchaser of the site at a later date it would cost in the region of £200,000. This sum would effectively come off any premium the Council would receive for the site. Alternatively if the Council were to insist upon the buildings retention the impact on site's overall value would be a reduction of approximately £850,000, assuming values recover to pre-credit crunch levels.

For these reasons, together with the added difficulty of adequately flood defending the building, officers therefore recommend members to support the Council's decision to demolish the building.

5 Financial and Legal Implications

- 5.1 Any financial and/or legal implications arising from the issues raised by the petitions are set out in the comments on the petitions.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 Members are requested to support the Council's decision to demolish the building.

Background papers

None

Contact for further details:

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