

**REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 OCTOBER 2008**

PETITIONS

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

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Summary

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

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.

3. Petitions

3.1 A summary of responses relevant to this Committee that have passed the ten day deadline for a request for referral to the Committee and are therefore seen as acceptable to the petitioners are set out below.

Subject of petition	Council Date Presented by	Response
Objection to Rochester's Chartered Market being closed on a weekly basis and being held once a month instead.	12 June 2008 Cllr. Baker	The market has been carefully reviewed over the last few months. However, following a substantial period of financial monitoring, it was considered no longer viable to operate it on a weekly basis with an average of 5 to 6 stallholders per week. Officers are keen to help traders affected by the market's closure and are taking steps to merge the weekly market with the monthly Farmers Market.
Opposition to store Ammonium Nitrate at Chatham Docks	12 June 2008 Cllr. Esterson	This petition was registered against the planning application being considered at that time.
Request the relocation of the bus stop from the White Horse pub, Rainham to the new medical centre and to include a bus shelter.	12 June 2008 Cllr Harriott	Arrangements have already been made for this to take place.
Request to resurface Arethusa Road in Rochester.	12 June 2008 Cllr Murray	This road features in a priority list of roads maintenance. However, it stands at 46 th in the list and is very unlikely to be resurfaced in this financial year as the resources will be spent on schemes higher in the priority list. Officers are exploring alternative ways of funding highway repairs.
Request for a permit solution to allow cars to park legally outside residents' homes when necessity arises for visiting. The 8-10am Mon-Fri. restriction is necessary but request for 1 permit per household so as not to penalise residents living in close proximity to the station.	31 July 2008 Cllr. Hewett	Although previous consultation has been carried out in this ward, this request has been noted and will be added to the ward file and included in the review of the controlled parking zone of Rainham North ward when that takes place. The Council's policy is currently to allow any number of resident permits to be purchased as long as the vehicles are registered to the address. There is a limit set on visitor permits which is one per household.

Subject of petition	Council Date Presented by	Response
Request to provide a public bus service to cover route of Nu-Venture 120 & 121 when withdrawn in August 2008 – Otterham Quay Lane, Wakeley Rd, William St. taking passengers to hospital and Chatham.	31 July 2008 Cllr. Hewett	An agreement has been reached for the Council to fund a bus service to replace the service which Nu-Venture are withdrawing and this will begin on Monday, 11 August 2008.
Request Council to repair and resurface the popular and well used footpath from Pepys Way to Brompton Lane and that lighting be installed along the full length of the said Council-owned footpath.	31 July 2008 Cllr. Hubbard	<p>The footpath has been inspected and whilst the surface is a bit uneven in places, it is generally in a sound condition and does not urgently require surfacing. Under the Council's duty of care, the two or three areas that have subsided will be repaired. The estimated cost for resurfacing the path is £13,000 and the installation of lighting is £15,000 and at the current time the finance is not available to undertake this work.</p> <p><i>(Update:finance has now been allocated from the Members' Priority Fund for the work to proceed this financial year.)</i></p>
Request urgently that CCTV cameras are installed in Beatty Avenue,	31 July 2008 Cllr. Gilry	Officers have contacted Kent Police to request their records of antisocial behaviour and criminal activity in the area over the last twelve months. As soon as this information has been received, officers will contact the petitioners to advise on a way forward to resolve the problems at this location.

Subject of petition	Council Date Presented by	Response
Oppose erection of a 12m high telegraph pole mast containing 3 antenna with adjacent equipment cabinet in the Dewdrop Inn car park, Hawthorne Avenue, Gillingham .	18 September 2008 Cllr. Harriott	This petition was received post-decision (the application was refused) and the petition has been added to the file for future reference in the event an appeal is lodged against the decision or a further application for the site.
Request extension to parking permit zone in Tufton Road, Rainham, westward from station car park exit so that all residents can park their cars in road during Mon-Fri restrictions.	18 September 2008 Cllr. Hewett	Although previous consultation has been carried out in this ward, the request to extend the existing permit parking has been added to the ward file and included in the review of Rainham North ward. The ward reviews are currently on hold but as soon as resources are found the review will take place.
Request an alleygate system on the alley between Rochester Street (bottom end), New Street and Ordinance Street due to problems with prostitutes and drug users. Other alleys gated off and therefore problems have worsened here.	18 September 2008 Cllr. Godwin	The Safer Communities Team are liaising with the Police and investigating whether the powers afforded by the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act can be used to justify the temporary closure of the alleyway due to anti-social behaviour. The alley gating co-ordinator will be in contact as part of the consultation process within the next few weeks.
Request council to undertake the water power hosing and disinfecting of the alley way from St Margaret's Bank to Hawkwood Close, to include the ground, walls of adjacent houses and garden walls on a regular basis.	18 September 2008 Cllr. Esterson	This alley is on a daily scheduled cleanse and has a daily visit from officers. The contract monitoring officer has visited to check compliance and has reported an issue with graffiti which will be removed. They are however happy with the general condition of cleanliness. (Officer contact details were supplied for any future queries.)
Support idea to create a pedestrian crossing in St William's Way, Rochester, close to Beaulieu Rise.	18 September 2008 Cllr. Sylvia Griffin	The road safety team will undertake a feasibility study in order to ascertain whether a crossing is required or feasible and once completed will contact the petitioners with the outcome.

<p>Opposing the one-way system on Watling Avenue, the road behind Rainham Road and be changed to one way in other direction to allow traffic on Ash Tree Lane to flow. Also oppose: - bus stop that's moved from outside Ash Tree Pub - dangerous large path put in - limited amount of parking outside shops at Rainham Road.</p>	<p>18 September 2008 Cllr. Hewett</p>	<p>The alterations were carried out on grounds of casualty reduction. In the 3 years since its introduction there has been a 50% reduction at Ash Tree Lane and over 30% at junction of Star Mill Lane. Officers also gave reasons for the removal of the bus stop, the loss of one parking space to allow pedestrians to cross and a response that the reversing of the one-way restriction on Watling Avenue would mean an unacceptable increase in traffic levels for local residents.</p>
<p>Installing CCTV into taxis.</p>	<p>18 September 2008 Cllr. Godwin</p>	<p>Officers will contact Gravesham Council (regarding the EU funding used last year in connection with the installation of CCTV cameras in taxis in that area) to establish whether this funding is still applicable. The Licensing Manager will respond again in due course.</p>

4 Petitions referred to this committee

- 4.1 The following petition was referred to the Committee for consideration as petitioners were dis-satisfied with the response they received. However, the Assistant Director, Frontline Services, re-considered the matter and agreed that the current collection services should remain in place, as requested by the petitioners. Therefore the petitioners have withdrawn their referral to this committee.

Subject of petition	Council Date Presented by	Response
<p>Do not agree with Council's decision for rubbish to be collected at the front of properties in the Maidstone Road and prefer the previous system to be reinstated.</p>	<p>31 July 2008 Cllr. Bowler</p>	<p>Officers have agreed to continue the current collection service arrangements.</p>

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 to note the response and appropriate officer action.

Background papers

None

Contact for further details:

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