

**REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2 DECEMBER 2009**

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
Request that something is done about the anti-social behaviour in and around bedsits in Institute Road, Chatham	10 September 2009 Councillor Esterson	The particular problems experienced at this location have been passed on to the Neighbourhood Policing Unit and the Safer Communities Team, so that they can be targeted and actioned appropriately. The Safer Communities Team has also been asked to provide a presence in the area where possible.
Request for an alley-gate between 30-72 Blenheim Avenue and 2-46 Central Park Avenue and to the small alleyways adjoining the main alley to stop burglaries, vandalism, graffiti and dumping of rubbish.	10 September 2009 Councillor Godwin	The request has been passed on to the Alley-gating Officer who will contact the petitioners shortly about the consultation process. For the scheme to go ahead, the Council will require the majority of residents concerned to be in favour of the proposed scheme.
Request for traffic calming and speed restrictions in Station Road, Strood	10 September 2009 Councillor Hubbard	Personal injury data is continually monitored and improvement schemes are prioritised on their ability to prevent further casualties. The Road Safety Team has reviewed the history for Station Road to establish any accident patterns and, at the current time, there are other locations in Strood with poorer accident records. Therefore it is not possible to introduce traffic calming at Station Road at the current time. A traffic survey has been carried out to investigate road user speeds, the findings of which suggest the average speed on the road here is a general 30mph.
Petition to keep attendants, toilets, bowls and tennis at Jacksons Recreation Ground, Rochester	10 September 2009 Councillor Murray	There are no plans to remove the attendants, toilets, bowls or tennis from Jackson Recreation Ground.

Request for traffic calming in Berengrave Lane, Rainham	10 September 2009 Councillor Hewett	The Road Safety Team has reviewed the personal injury accident history for the past 3 years and at the current time, there are other locations suffering poorer safety records and therefore have a higher priority for action.
Request that the Council fully resurfaces Pattens Lane between City Way and the Chatham Maidstone Road	10 September 2009 Councillor Stephen Kearney	The Council advised that Pattens Lane is on the forward plan to be resurfaced in 2010.

4 Petitions referred to this committee

4.1 The following two petitions have been referred to the Committee for consideration as the lead petitioners have indicated that they are dissatisfied with the responses received.

4.2.1 Request for traffic calming and speed restrictions in Station Road, Rainham and inappropriate late night driving in the car park.

This petition was presented to Council on 30 July 2009 by Councillor Hewett. The petition stated:

”We the undersigned request the Council to implement traffic calming to curb the reckless driving on Station Road Rainham, north of the railway line and inappropriate late night driving in the adjacent car park before someone is seriously injured.”

4.2.2 The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture responded to the petition and the letter is attached at Appendix A.

4.2.3 The letter requesting referral to the Committee is attached at Appendix B.

4.2.4 Director’s Comments

All road safety schemes are prioritised on their ability to reduce casualties on our roads, in the latest three years of available data (01/07/2006 to 30/06/2009) there have been 7 ‘slight’ injury collisions recorded on Station Road, Rainham. Five of the collisions in question have been recorded on the northern section of Station Road, one of which could have been considered speed related.

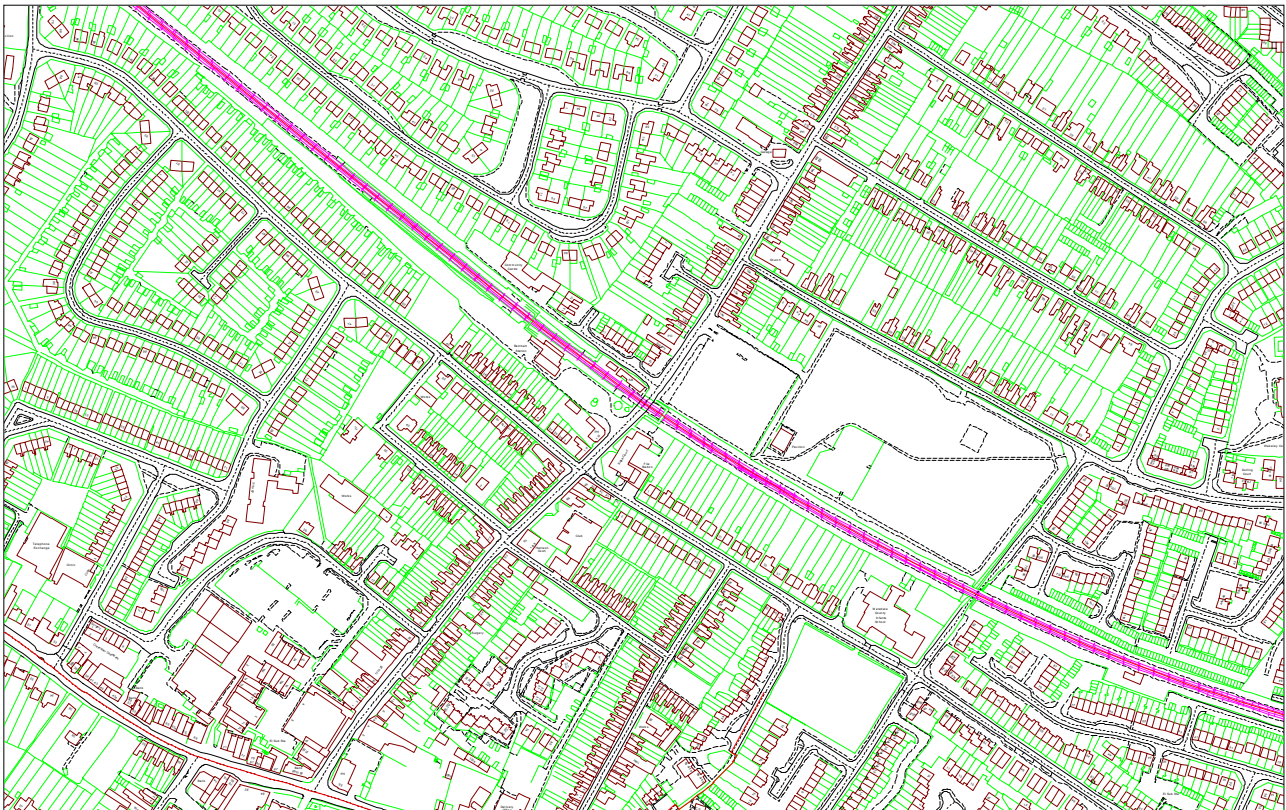
Medway Council has undertaken a traffic survey on Station Road (June 2009) to investigate driver speeds. The results of the survey summarise as follows:

- Northbound average speed 24.5mph, Northbound 85th percentile 30.6mph.
- Southbound average speed 25.1mph, Northbound 85th percentile 31.5mph.

The detailed findings of the survey have been passed to Kent police for their consideration for speed enforcement.

In order to establish priority for casualty reduction measures across Medway, personal injury records are considered and compared to identify the least safe areas. At the current time it remains that there are other locations within Medway that are suffering poorer road casualty histories and are therefore a higher priority for action.

Location Plan



4.3 Request for free car parking in specific car parks in Rochester between 7pm – 8am.

4.3.1 This petition was presented at Council on 10 September 2009 by Councillor Esterson. The petition stated:

”We ask Medway Council to allow free parking on the car park at the former Doust Shipyard and the two car parks (High Street Car Parks 1 and 2) on either side of ‘The Dragon’ Restaurant between 7.00pm and 8.00am the following morning. Current charges until 10.00pm.

This will free up the Residential Parking Spaces and also be beneficial to those running restaurants and bed and breakfast establishments

nearby. The lost revenue could be recouped by a more vigilant prosecution of those who illegally park on double yellow lines and on the footpaths of the residential area.”

4.3.2 The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture responded to the petition and the letter is attached at Appendix C.

4.3.3 Director’s Comments

In September 2007, Cabinet approved evening charging to be introduced in a number car parks to promote consistency by ensuring all Medway Council car parks operational times were in line with each other. It was also envisaged that this would enable regular patrols to be carried out by the Civil Enforcement Officers providing a Council presence, which has been an active deterrent and helps to promote a safer environment.

The changes were also intended to encourage more frequent vehicle turnover and hopefully attract new customers to commercial areas, as well as improve the prospect of finding available parking places.

Medway Council only charge for parking between 7am and 10pm therefore the car parks are currently free between the hours of 10pm to 7am. Officers have also recently reviewed other Kent District Council’s parking charges and it has been confirmed that Medway Council continue to remain one of the lowest charging authorities throughout Kent for on-street and off-street parking provisions.

The enforcement of footway parking remains with Kent Police and continues to be addressed as an obstruction issue rather than a parking contravention at this current time.

6 Financial and Legal Implications

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

7 Recommendation

7.1 Members are requested to:

- (a) note the petition responses and appropriate officer action in paragraph 3 of the report;
- (b) consider the petition referrals and Director’s comments in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the report.

Background papers

None

Contact for further details:

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