

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 DECEMBER 2012

PETITIONS AND OUTCOME OF PUBLIC MEETING HELD IN ALL SAINTS AREA OF CHATHAM

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Summary

This report advises the Committee of the petitions presented at Council meetings, received by the council or sent via the e-petition facility, including a summary of officer's response to the petitioners.

The report also informs the Committee of the outcome of a public meeting held in the All Saints area of Chatham, which was requested at the previous meeting following consideration of a petition for a CCTV camera to be installed in an alleyway in Hartington Street, Chatham.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The constitution provides that petitions received by the council 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 The Director is asked to respond to the petition request within 10 working days. 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 If the petition contains at least the number of signatures equating to 5% of Medway's population (currently 12,675 signatures) it will be debated by Full Council unless it is a petition asking for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting.

- 2.3 If the petition contains at least the number of signatures equating to 2% of Medway's population (currently 5,070 signatures) the relevant senior officer may give evidence at a public meeting of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee.
- 2.4 A petition may also be submitted through the e-petition facility on the council's website. E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions. A petition acknowledgement and response will be emailed to everyone who has signed the e-petition and elected to receive this information.
- 2.5 A summary of the response to all petitions will also be published on the council's website.

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	Date of receipt and whether paper or e-petition	Response
Request for a skate park in Wainscott	21 August 2012 Paper	Support in principle is given to this proposal, further work is needed to determine feasibility on a practical level and a budget secured for delivery
Request for extra facilities at Hamilton Road park	Council meeting on 18 October 2012 Councillor Price	Replacement and upgrading of the equipment is currently taking place but the site is thought more suitable as a play area for young children from local houses, rather than a large busy area with a skate park, which might cause problems for local residents. If the council was able to build a skate park, it would probably be sited at The Strand but unfortunately the council currently has no budget for this project.

Request for Medway Council to re-negotiate with Arriva Bus Company the bus service from Darland Estate to and from the Hempstead Valley and to reinstate a Saturday service	Council meeting on 18 October 2012 Councillor Purdy	Unfortunately this service was not well used and received financial support from the council to maintain it. The criteria for providing socially necessary services are to give access to education, employment, shopping and healthcare facilities. The changes that have been made and the alternative services to Darland Estate still meet these criteria and, for the first time, the estate is now linked to Medway Maritime Hospital. (The response letter also listed the remaining services to Hempstead Valley and also those to Tesco in Rainham, together with the usage figures of the old service.)
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4 Petition referred to this committee – Hartington Street, Chatham

- 4.1 A petition was referred to the Committee for consideration on 4 October 2012, as the petitioners had indicated that they were dissatisfied with the response received.
- 4.2 The petition stated: "We the undersigned, following regular gatherings and continual anti-social behaviour, call upon Medway Council to introduce a surveillance camera to the alleyway that leads up to the park on Hartington Street, Chatham."
- 4.3 The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the petition referral and asked that a report was submitted to the next meeting of the committee setting out the outcome of the public meeting to be held in the All Saints area of Chatham on 9 October 2012 before responding to the petitioner's request. The 'Director's Comments' section of the report on 4 October 2012 is attached to this report for Members' information at Appendix A.
- 4.4 A public meeting was held at All Saints Church on 9 October 2012. The panel was made up of Robin Cooper and Andy McGrath representing the Council, Chief Superintendent Neil Jerome from Kent Police and was chaired by Councillor O'Brien. Community Officers delivered leaflets advertising the event to all properties in All Saints, resulting in 36 members of the public attending the meeting.
- 4.5 Chief Superintendent Jerome answered questions on cycling on the pavement, people drinking in public, drug dealing in public and drug use in public, a dispersal zone for the area, how to set up a Neighbourhood Watch group, untaxed vehicles, vehicles driving the wrong way in Chatham High Street, youth related Anti-Social Behaviour and prostitution.

- 4.6 Robin Cooper and Andy McGrath took questions around dumped rubbish and litter, fly-tipping in alleyways (most of which were private ones), refuse put out early for collection, speeding vehicles, garage blocks, the council's policy on 'bulky waste' collections, noise nuisance, the state of a wall by All Saints and a property in Cromwell Terrace that is boarded up.
- 4.7 Since this meeting, service requests have been raised within Medway Council and Kent Police to investigate the issues raised and resolve the problems.
- 4.8 There was a specific question requesting Medway Council to introduce a surveillance camera in the alleyway that leads up to Chalkpit Hill park on Hartington Street; specifically to address concerns that drug related activity occurs regularly in this area. A subsequent site visit has taken place with one of Kent Police's Crime Prevention Design Advisors to discuss lighting and CCTV options. There is an existing CCTV camera in the play area of the park, which has direct line of sight to the area of concern. However, this area is too dark for clear images to be acquired with the existing camera at night. Officers have identified funding for installing lighting. The technical assessment is on-going.

5 Risk Management

- 5.1 The Council has a clear scheme for handling petitions set out in its Constitution. This ensures consistency and clarity of process, minimising the risk of complaints about the administration of petitions.

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 referral and outcome of the public meeting held in the All Saints area of Chatham as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.

Background papers

None.

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