

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 AUGUST 2013

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

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 Medway Council to extend the double yellow lines on the corner of Mierscourt Road and Cherry Tree Road	23 May Paper	The request has been noted and will be added to the list of safety schemes to be included in the schemes to be submitted for approval.
Put in either a pelican or pedestrian crossing on Princes Avenue near Downland Walk	24 June E-petition	The Council is currently investigating Princes Avenue crossing points as part of its casualty reduction programme. It is too early at this stage to report what action may be taken in the future to address any patterns or common collision factors that may be identified during our investigations.
Request for residents permit parking to be established in front of our houses or in the cul-du-sac section of Suffolk Avenue going south from the junction with Brown Street	4 July Paper	The request has been noted and will be added to the Ward file to be included in the parking review of Rainham North Ward, when funds become available.

The proposed cancellation of the 197 bus route from Lower Stoke	4 July Paper	The decision was taken in order to improve the majority of the service by increasing the number of journeys to and from Upnor. For individuals who do not have access to the service they would be able to use the Medway Mobility Service, which is a weekly bus service for the elderly and those with disabilities. The service will take those registered to a number of locations in Medway.
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3.2. Say No to Rochester Airport Masterplan

3.2.1. On 25 July 2013, a petition containing 514 signatures (but no addresses) was presented to full Council by Mr McLellan in the following terms:

'We call upon Medway Council, Councillors and Officers NOT to sign or commit to a 25-year Rochester Airport lease until residents' safety is assured and confirmed through a full Community Impact Study and a public hearing

And

We ask that a COMPREHENSIVE study be undertaken to determine the best and most appropriate use of the airport site with respect to community benefit in health, environment, jobs creation and financial return, and that it be published and time be allowed for it to be read and considered by residents and business people not directly involved in the proposal before the public hearing mentioned above.

And

We also ask that NO financial investment of public money be made or committed to Rochester Airport's future until a comprehensive and INDEPENDENT Fiscal Due Diligence is completed.

And

Finally we ask that ANY investment be fully endorsed by an independent auditor and the Medway community (the undersigned) prior to a legally binding commitment to ensure value for money and to avoid infringement of European Court of Justice rulings'

3.2.2. A copy of the Director's response is attached at Appendix A. In order to align discussion of the petition with consideration by this Committee of the agenda item on the Rochester Airport Masterplan consultation, the lead petitioner has been asked to provide notice of referral to this meeting as permitted under the Council's petition scheme if the petitioners consider the issues raised in the petition have not been fully addressed by the officer response. (Note: the lead petitioner has been asked to supply addresses for each signatory so that the petition is in the required format under the Council's petition scheme).

4 Risk Management

- 4.1 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.

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 note the petition responses and appropriate officer action in paragraph 3 of the report and to
- 6.2 Either note or review the response provided to the petition on Rochester Airport, depending on whether the lead petitioner has given notice of a request for a review by this Committee.

Background papers

None.

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