

## REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 AUGUST 2014

### PETITIONS

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director Regeneration, Community & Culture

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#### Summary

To advise the Committee of the petitions received by the Council or presented to the Mayor at the Council meeting on 24 July 2014 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 or received via the council's e-petition facility relating to matters within the remit of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be referred immediately to the relevant Director for consideration at officer level, unless a stated amount of signatures have been collected to trigger the calling of an officer to give evidence (5,070 signatures) or a debate at Full Council (12, 675 signatures).
- 1.2 The petition scheme is set out in full in the council's constitution at: <http://www.medway.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy/council/petitions.aspx>
- 1.3 Any budget framework implications will be set out in the specific petition response.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1.1 The revised constitution provides that eligible petitions presented at Council meetings or received via the council's e-petition facility 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.
- 2.2 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.

- 2.3 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 Completed petitions

- 3.1 A summary of responses relevant to this Committee that have been accepted by the petitioners are set out below.

Subject of petition	Response
Installation of CCTV and street lighting in Green Street, Gillingham	Medway's Community Safety Partnership has carried out an analysis of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area requested for CCTV. The analysis showed that a siting of a camera may be warranted and suggests a location. The Partnership confirms that a rapid deployment camera may be useful in this area and will be installed within 4 weeks. The response also made some suggestions of measures the premises owners could take to deter crime.

### 4 Petitions referred to this Committee

- 4.1 The following petitions have been referred to the Committee, as the lead petitioner has indicated that s/he is dissatisfied with the response received from the directorate.

#### 4.2 Flooding In Rochester High Street

This petition was presented to Council on 24 April 2014 by Councillor Murray.

The petition stated:

“We the undersigned are greatly concerned about flooding on the public highway near the junction of Star Hill/Rochester High Street – adjacent to Magee’s Café, 208 Rochester High Street – during heavy rain, brought about by poor drainage. These drainage problems have caused water incursion/ damage to nearby properties, as well as flooding onto this busy junction and bus route, which is a potential hazard to motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. And we call upon Medway Council to ensure the local drainage system is fit for purpose.”

- 4.2.1 The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture responded to the petition and the lead petitioner originally requested that the matter be referred to this Committee. However, following a date for the works to this area of Star Hill/High Street Rochester being set of 5/6 July 2014, the lead petitioner agreed to delay the referral of the petition until this meeting of the Committee.
- 4.2.2 The lead petitioner has since been contacted and has confirmed that the works appear to have resolved the flooding problem and therefore he no longer wishes this matter to be referred to this Committee.

#### 4.3 Improved Bus Services for Lower Rainham

4.3.1 This petition was presented by Councillor Hewett on 30 May 2014.

4.3.2 The petition stated:

“We the undersigned request an improvement in bus services in lower Rainham especially covering lower Station Road and services at the weekend. Please see the list of suggestions attached and a supporting letter from our local Councillor Vaughan Hewett. We represent many elderly residents in Lower Rainham who rely on buses, and find the walk up hill to the A2 where many buses run, a great difficulty.”

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

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

#### 5 **Director's comments**

5.1 Following the petitioner's request Officers have been in discussion with Arriva and Cllr Hewett regarding a number of options. Responses on the individual services are set out below:

**Reroute Service 132 in Otterham Park.** As this is a commercial Arriva service, the Council has no control over it, and Arriva has indicated that it has no intention of diverting this service as they feel that it will undermine the existing service pattern and could impact on current usage.

#### **Reroute Service 121 via Station Road/Lower Rainham Road/Berengrave Lane/Childscroft Road - Monday to Friday and Saturday**

Officers have had discussions with Arriva regarding this potential rerouting. Arriva has reservations which are shared by the Council's Integrated Transport Team that by extending the loop in Rainham from William Street northwards around Station Road, Lower Rainham Road, Berengrave and Childscroft Road before heading south again is likely to make Service 121 less attractive for Rainham residents especially from the Otterham Park area, as the additional journey time and routing would dissuade people from using it. This may put the service at risk and could lead to more financial support required in the future. There is also a risk of confusion as passengers waiting for Chatham bound services would have to wait on the western side of Station Road for Service 121 and on the eastern side for Service 327.

At present the Saturday Service 121 only goes as far as Darland. For an additional £5,100 per annum on the current contract price this service can be rerouted via the existing Monday to Friday Otterham Park route and would mean that the current 7 journeys on a Saturday to Darland in each direction (hourly) would be reduced to six at a frequency of every 90 minutes although this would however bring the number of journeys in line with the Monday to Friday Darland Service. This could be mitigated as there is the potential to introduce additional journeys on Service M1, operated by ASD coaches on behalf of Medway Council, between Darland and Hempstead Valley on a Saturday. However formal negotiations with ASD on the detail is still to be

undertaken and consultation would also be required with Darland Councillors on the overall changes.

Cllr Hewett's suggestion that £2,000 could be funded from Councillor's Ward Improvement Funds is not permitted as these funds cannot be used in this way. When and if Service 121 serves Otterham Park on a Saturday, the existing Service 327 can then be routed via Station Road to give a Saturday service to the residents of the northern end of Station Road, thus providing a Saturday service to that area. Subsequently Services 121 and 327 would have consistent Monday to Saturday routes which will help instill confidence with passengers, and have the potential to increase patronage on both services.

If agreed, as any bus service change is subject to a 56 days notice period with the Traffic Commissioner, the earliest that the change of service could be introduced would be early October.

### **Extending Service 130/131 to Will Adams Treatment Centre**

Nu Venture has responded that they are happy to extend the service to the Will Adams Treatment Centre at no extra cost with effect from 1 September 2014 and journeys will start and terminate at the Beechings Way Featherby Road stop, a short walk to/from the Health Centre. Nu Venture has also suggested that during 2015 they can review the 131 route to investigate whether this can be rerouted via the Will Adams Treatment Centre en route from Gillingham to Twydall. This would however mean that there would be no service along Lower Rainham Road and in the interim surveys will be undertaken to see established levels of patronage, although Nu Venture state that it is very lightly used at present.

### **Rerouting of Service 326/327**

This is a joint Kent County Council/Medway Council contract, operated by Chalkwell, with Kent being the lead Authority. Officers have had initial discussions on whether changes can be made and both Authorities have undertaken surveys on the 327 Saturday service in Otterham Park to establish usage levels. At this stage the Service 326 is unlikely to be rerouted as this acts as a faster service between Chatham, Medway Hospital and Sittingbourne. Service 327 could be rerouted following the outcome of the 121 service discussions. Chalkwell is keen to look at making this service commercial in the medium term, i.e. free of Council support, and to have a consistent Monday to Saturday routing is likely to help that objective.

### **In summary**

For an additional £5,100 per annum, for Service 121, the following improvements can be achieved:-

- Monday to Saturday Service 121 serving Otterham Park, rather than the present Monday to Friday route, date of introduction to be confirmed if agreed; this would result in a reduction in the service frequency to Darland

- Monday to Saturday Service 327 serving the northern end of Station Road instead of the present Monday to Friday route, date of introduction to be confirmed and depends on the agreed routeing of Service 121

- Service 130 to be extended to the Will Adams Treatment Centre from 1 September

- Potential for more Saturday M1 services between Darland and Hempstead Valley, subject to further discussions with ASD

- Potential for Service 131 to serve the Will Adams NHS Treatment Centre during 2015.

5.2 The above information was sent to the lead petitioner on 12 August 2014 and confirmation is currently awaited as to whether she still wishes this matter to be referred to the Committee for consideration. An update will be provided at the meeting.

## **6 Financial and legal implications**

6.1 Any financial implications arising from the issues raised by the petition is set out in the comments on the petition.

6.2 There are no legal implications arising out of this report

## **7 Recommendation**

7.1 Members are requested to:

- (a) Note the petition response and appropriate officer action in paragraph 3 of the report and action taken to resolve the issues relating to the petition referred to at paragraph 4.2 of the report;
- (b) Consider the petition referral and Director's comments in paragraph 5 of the report.

## **Background papers**

None

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