

## **BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**3 FEBRUARY 2015**

### **PETITIONS**

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

Author: Michael Turner, Democratic Services Officer

#### **Summary**

To advise the Committee of any petitions (including e-petitions) received by the Council which fall within the remit of this Committee including a summary of the response sent to petitioners by officers.

#### **1. Budget and policy framework**

- 1.1 In summary, the Council's Petition Scheme requires the relevant Director to respond to the lead petitioner usually within 10 working days of the receipt of the petition by the Council. Overview and Scrutiny Committee are always advised of any petitions falling within their terms of reference together with the officer response. There is a right of referral of a petition for consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the petitioners if they consider the Director's response to be inadequate. Should the Committee determine that the petition has not been dealt with adequately it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to Cabinet and arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the Council.
- 1.2 The petition scheme is set out in full in the Council's Constitution at: <http://www.medway.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy/council/constitution.aspx>
- 1.3 Any budget framework implications will be set out in the specific petition response.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council's 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.

- 2.2 Where the Director is able to fully meet the request of the petitioners a response is sent setting out 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
Concern over decision to downgrade Esmonde House's scheme manager	The Council's response contained a summary of the intention to provide the scheme manager service across two schemes instead of one in relation to smaller independent living schemes and an explanation of the consultation process undertaken. As part of the formalisation of the new structure, the job descriptions of all Homes for Independent Living staff were reviewed and amended by the Council's Human Resources Team and there have been no redundancies for the staff.
Concern over decision to downgrade Mountevans House's scheme manager	The Council's response contained a summary of the intention to provide the scheme manager service across two schemes instead of one in relation to smaller independent living schemes and an explanation of the consultation process undertaken. As part of the formalisation of the new structure, the job descriptions of all Homes for Independent Living staff were reviewed and amended by the Council's Human Resources Team and there have been no redundancies for the staff.

### 4 Financial and Legal Implications

- 4.1 Any financial and/or legal implications arising from the issues raised by the petitions are set out in the comments on the petitions.
- 4.2 Overview and Scrutiny Rule 22.1 (xiv) in the Council's Constitution provides that the terms of reference of this Committee include the power to deal with petitions referred to the Committee under and in accordance with the Council's petition scheme. The consideration of this petition is therefore a proper matter for this Committee.

## **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 Recommendation**

- 6.1 The Committee is requested to note the petition responses and appropriate officer actions in paragraph 3 of the report.

### **Background papers**

None

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