

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 MARCH 2016

PETITIONS

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director, Regeneration, Community and Culture

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Summary

To advise the Committee of any petitions received by the Council which fall within the remit of this Committee including a summary of the response sent to the lead 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 Committees 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.
- 2.3 For petitions where the petitioner organiser is not satisfied with the response provided by the Director there is provision for the petition organiser to request that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the steps the Council has taken, or is proposing to take, in response to the petition.

3 Completed petitions

- 3.1 A summary of the response to a petition relevant to this Committee that has been accepted by the petition organiser is set out below.

Subject of petition	Response
A petition seeking action by the Council on parking by non-residents; cleanliness and anti-social behaviour at the car park at Andrew Manor, Britton Street, Gillingham	Options are being explored as to how best to prevent non-residents using the car park. In addition, the Council is looking to improve the estate by installing knee high fencing and carry out works to the entrance ramps and railings before April 2016. Cyclical decorations would also take place during the 2016-17 financial year. The Council has a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour and any resident experiencing such behaviour should report it to Kent Police if it is criminal in nature, and also to Housing Officers. The local Community Safety Partnership will target the area with patrols. The Council's Estate Service is managed by Norse who should be contacted with any concerns about the standard of cleaning.

4. Petitions not yet concluded

- 4.1 Responses have been sent to the lead petitioners for the following petitions. If a request to refer any of these petitions to this Committee is received in line with the Council's petitions scheme, it will be referred back to the next meeting.

Subject of petition	Response
Two petitions requesting that measures be taken to improve road safety on Capstone Road, Hempstead.	The Director's initial response advised the petition organisers that the Council was undertaking a speed limit review of the road which would take into account the local environmental characteristics, user type and safety history, along with current national guidance. Following the conclusion of the review, the Director advised the petition organisers that the recommendation was a reduction of the current

Subject of petition	Response
	national speed limit to 30mph and 40mph for the northern and southern sections respectively. A project proposal to lower the speed limit would be put forward for consideration for funding during the 2016/17 financial year. It was highlighted that the project was conceptual at present and that funding was not yet agreed.
A further petition requesting road safety improvements on Capstone Road, Hempstead	The Director's response advised the petition organisers of the recommendation of the speed limit review, as outlined above.

5. Petition referred to this Committee

5.1 The following petition has been referred to this Committee because the petitioner organiser has indicated that they were dissatisfied with the response received from the directorate.

5.2 A petition to remove double yellow lines in Roosevelt Avenue, Chatham and replace with a single yellow line.

5.2.1 This petition was received by the Council on 22 February 2016. The petition states:

“We the undersigned request that Medway Council remove the recently introduced double yellow lines between 37 Roosevelt and 41 Roosevelt and 79 Roosevelt and 85 Roosevelt and replace them with a single yellow line restriction as per the rest of the street.”

5.2.2 The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture responded to the petition organiser on 4 March 2016 as follows:

“We carried out public consultation in Roosevelt Avenue during 2013. The scheme was implemented following meetings with ward Members and residents, following concerns of vehicles parking at the weekends during the football season. Consultation results at the time indicated 76% support for the scheme (we have noticed from your recent petition that there appears to be addresses of residents who supported the scheme three years ago).

Our Highways officers have visited the location and confirm that the double yellow lines are strategically placed to allow vehicles to pass, on an otherwise long, straight, constrained road. Taking the road layout into consideration, and the initial support for the scheme, I am very sorry but we are unable to recommend progressing your request for removal of the double yellow lines.”

- 5.2.3 On 7 March 2016, the petition organiser requested that the matter be reviewed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The referral letter stated as follows:

“We don’t believe that the petition referenced above has been given the weight that it deserves.

We also don’t believe that sufficient consideration has been given to the extremely low traffic flow that this road experiences, the absence of any motor related incidences of any kind, the custom over many decades of parking in these bays and the inconvenience that has been caused since the restrictions have been imposed.”

6. Risk Management

- 6.1 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.

7. Financial and Legal Implications

- 7.1 Any financial implications arising from the issues raised by the petitions are set out in the comments on the petitions.

- 7.2 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.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 The Committee is requested to note the petition responses and appropriate officer actions in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.
- 8.2 The Committee is requested to consider the petition referral request and the Director’s comments at paragraph 5 of the report.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices:

None

Background papers:

None