

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2017

PETITIONS

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director, Regeneration, Culture, Environment
and Transformation

Author: Steve Platt, Democratic Services Officer

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 petition organisers 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/pdf/4.01%20-Council%20rules.pdf>
- 1.3 Any budget or policy 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 responses to petitions relevant to this Committee that have been accepted by the petition organisers is set out below.

Subject of petition	Response
<p>Petition regarding the new controlled parking zone in Maidstone Road, Rochester.</p> <p>38 signatures</p>	<p>Officers from the Integrated Transport Service were due to attend a meeting with the petition organiser's local Ward Councillor to discuss the issues that residents have raised. Once these discussions had taken place, a representative from Integrated Transport would contact the petition organiser with a final decision.</p> <p>A letter was subsequently sent to residents to inform them that Controlled Parking Zone R1, including Maidstone Road (from the junction with East Row to the junction with Queen Street) will not be implemented. Instead, it is intended that Zone R will be extended up Maidstone Road to Queen Street and this scheme would be subject to further public consultation. Until this new scheme is consulted on, parking will remain unchanged and residents will not be required to purchase new R1 permits.</p>
<p>Petition asking the Council to erect a road sign for a cul de sac with 'no through road' added on the corner of Oak Road and Cedar Road, Stood.</p> <p>18 signatures</p>	<p>Officers are working to identify the best location to place the new sign, with a view to installing this as soon as possible. The aim is to have the sign in place within eight weeks, but this will depend on whether a new post is required and what impact this will have on the street scene.</p>
<p>Petition opposed to begging in Rochester.</p>	<p>The Council is aware that there is a small, but persistent cohort of people, who from time to time beg in Medway, and in particular Rochester. These people have complex problems, including homelessness, multiple</p>

Subject of petition	Response
53 signatures	substance abuse and mental health issues, and have no means of support other than to resort to begging. While their presence is not generally welcome, the Council has been working with partner agencies to tackle this issue. The petition organiser and his co-petitioners were invited to attend a multi-agency meeting, including local Councillors, to let them know what the Council is doing, what powers the Council has and to jointly explore a constructive way forward.

4. Petition not yet concluded

- 4.1 A response has been sent to the lead petitioner for the following petition. If a request to refer the petition 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
Objection to the proposed plan to implement double yellow lines at the junction of Birch Grove and Plumtree Grove, Hempstead. 26 signatures	The petition will be included in the formal report collating all of the comments received during the public consultation period, and this will be considered as part of the wider process. A member of the Integrated Transport Team will follow this up with the lead petitioner in due course.

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 implications arising from the issues raised by the petitions are set out in the comments on the petitions.
- 6.2 Overview and Scrutiny Rule 21.1 (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.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 The Committee is requested to note the petition responses and appropriate officer actions in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.

Lead officer contact

Steve Platt, Democratic Services Officer, (01634) 332011
stephen.platt@medway.gov.uk

Appendices:

None

Background papers:

None