

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JUNE 2017

PETITIONS

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

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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 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 petitioner organiser 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 for the Arriva 116 Bus Service to be reinstated</p> <p>48 signatures</p>	<p>As bus services are operated commercially, it is ultimately Arriva's decision to see if the level of provision for an area is right for the level of demand, and whether it is commercially viable. Under the rules which all bus companies have to adhere to, there is no requirement for consultation and all any operator is required to give is 56 days' notice to the Traffic Commissioner for England. Medway Council can continue the dialogue with Arriva to see if they will review their decision on the 116, but since the deregulation of the bus industry, bus companies will only run commercially profitable services. The Council has a limited input to support services, mainly in the evenings and weekends or on certain routes when the bus companies have deemed it not commercially viable to run or where there is a social need.</p> <p>A copy of this petition will be forwarded to Arriva's local Commercial and Planning team to make them aware of the local residents' views.</p> <p>There are other bus services which run along the A2 past Guardian Court which serve Medway Maritime Hospital directly, including the Arriva 121 which runs 5 times a day Monday to Friday and the Chalkwell 326/327 which has 13 journeys a day Monday to Friday, and runs 9 times on a Saturday. Any Older Persons' bus passes can be used on these services. The 132 bus service also runs along the A2 by Guardian Court, which can then be used to interchange on to the 116/176/177 at Chatham Bus Station or en route at bus stops along the A2 from Tesco's roundabout. If information is required about timetables for these other services please visit the Rainham Contact Point, or Chatham Waterfront Bus Station for timetables, visit www.medway.gov.uk/buses or contact Traveline on</p>

Subject of petition	Response
	<p>0871 200 2233. (Calls cost 10 pence a minute from a BT line).</p> <p>Medway Council also operates the Medway Mobility service which is designed for people who are elderly, or have a disability. This can pick up from as close as possible to a passenger's front door, and serves Chatham, Hempstead Valley, and Medway Maritime Hospital. Please contact 01634 333333 for more details should you feel this is appropriate to your needs.</p>
<p>Petition to stop the huge hikes in car parking charges across Medway Council</p> <p>1,047 signatures (e-petition)</p> <p>18 signatures (paper petition)</p>	<p>Parking fees in Council car parks and on street pay and display facilities have been frozen for the past five years, following a commitment made in the 2011 budget setting process. Following several years of very low prices, it was agreed to reassess the charges and bring the fees in line with those of neighbouring authority areas, while still remaining competitively priced to avoid deterring shoppers and visitors. This will enable the Council to continue to provide high-quality parking facilities and carry out necessary repairs and maintenance work to the car parks and roads across Medway. The increases seek to reflect that balance and were agreed as part of this year's budget setting process.</p>

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 implications arising from the issues raised by the petitions are set out in the comments on the petitions.
- 5.2 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.

6. Recommendation

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

Lead officer contact

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Appendices:

None

Background papers:

None