

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**5 DECEMBER 2017**  
**PETITIONS**

Report from: Ian Sutherland, Director, Children and Adults Services

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 petition 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 petition 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 is set out below. The petition organiser has not requested that the matter be considered by this Committee under the Petition Scheme.

Subject of petition	Response
<p>Reverse the decision to close Kingfisher Sure Start.</p> <p>68 signatures</p>	<p>Following a consultation, the business case for rationalising the Early Years' service was approved by the Cabinet. A new model of integrated Early Help service would be delivered through four Children and Family hubs, nine Children and Family Wellbeing Centres, and local community outreach points. Options had been considered to offer services as widely as possible with limited resources. Kingfisher Children's Centre has boundaries with a number of centres that will remain open, these being All Saints and Wayfield Hubs and Lordswood and Oaklands Wellbeing Centres. The catchment areas will cover all the residential areas served by Kingfisher. If Kingfisher were used instead of one of these, a considerable area would not be covered within a reasonable proximity. Officers will be meeting with the head teachers of schools where a Hub or Wellbeing Centre will not be located, such as Kingfisher, and it is hoped that some community and health services may be able to take place at these centres.</p>

- 3.2 In addition, a petition was received objecting to the decision to close All Saints Nursery in Magpie Hall Road, Chatham. Having considered the Director's response, the petition organiser requested that the petition be referred to this Committee. This matter will be dealt with under agenda item 5 - Member's item: Closure of All Saints Nursery.

#### **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 response and appropriate officer actions in paragraph 3 of the report.

#### **Lead officer contact**

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#### **Appendices:**

None

#### **Background papers:**

None