

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 AUGUST 2018

PETITIONS

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

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:
<https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/2657/401 - council rules>
- 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 that has been accepted by the petition organiser is set out below.

Subject of petition	Response
<p>Petition the Council to install CCTV Cameras in Strood to prevent and control crime in the area and make our streets safe.</p> <p>21 signatories (e-petition)</p>	<p>All local authorities are given guidance around CCTV, this includes carrying out regular evaluation to ensure they remain necessary and proportionate. Medway Council is currently carrying out a comprehensive review of all fixed CCTV cameras to identify cameras that may no longer be required, as well as identifying any areas that need to be considered for CCTV.</p> <p>We need to carefully consider whether or not to install a CCTV camera to address a particular issue. The fact that it is possible, affordable or has public support should not be the justification for processing personal data. We need to take into account the nature of the problem we are seeking to address; whether a surveillance system would be a justified and an effective solution, whether better solutions exist, what effect its use may have on individuals, and whether in the light of this, its use is a proportionate response to the problem.</p> <p>We will contact you again once the review has been undertaken, and let you know the outcome.</p>

4. Petition referred to this Committee

- 4.1 The following petition has been referred to this Committee because the petitioner organiser, has indicated that he is dissatisfied with the response received.

4.2 **Petition against the removal of secure motorcycle parking from Commercial Road (Strood)**

4.3 This petition was received at the Council meeting held on 19 July 2018. The petition statement stated:

“We the undersigned protest against the removal of secure motorcycle parking from the Commercial Road (Strood) vehicle park and request the immediate re-establishment of this facility.”

4.4 On 31 July 2018, the Director, Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive responded as follows:

“I understand that you have met with the Strood Local Growth Fund Project Manager, Mike Francis, to discuss your concerns.

The provision of appropriate and secure parking facilities for non- car road users is a key element to the successful uptake of alternative, sustainable travel methods and the subsequent reduction in congestion.

Following your meeting, our Engineers are investigating how best to meet the needs of motorcyclists and are reviewing the secure motorcycle parking provision, with a view to implementing alterations principally in line with those as discussed and submitted with your correspondence.”

4.5 On 2 August 2018, the petition organiser requested that the matter be reviewed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The request stated:

“I note that your engineers are investigating how best motorcyclists needs may be met. However, I do feel that the matter should be reviewed by the relevant Overview & Scrutiny committee. I wouldn't want this issue discussed and then have the wrong solution applied. This would be to the financial detriment of the department and leave motorcyclists with substandard parking.

I have measured the vehicle park again today and attach 2 x plans.

1/ The vehicle park as it is with insecure m/c parking and dangerous car parking access.

2/ The vehicle park as it could be with secure and adequate m/c parking AND safe entry and exits for cars.

You will see from plan # 1 that the space available is being wastefully used with a 'dead' unused area, very little space for m/c's, no protection or locking facilities for m/c's and dangerous access for cars. I would like to be involved in the discussion so that a solution acceptable to all may be obtained.”

4.6 The two plans referred to by the petition organiser are attached as Appendices 1 and 2.

- 4.7 In response , the Director, Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive has further commented as follows:

“The additional comments and plans submitted by the petition organiser are acknowledged and will be fully considered by our engineers as they continue to review the options for re-establishing secure parking for motorcycles in the Commercial Road car park. At this stage, we are confident that suitable adjustments can be made and officers would be happy to contact the petition organiser as the plans are developed.”

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 will be taken into account as part of the review of these matters.
- 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. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Committee is requested to note the petition response and appropriate officer action in paragraph 3 of the report.
- 7.2 The Committee is requested to consider the petition referral request and the Director’s comments at paragraph 4 of the report.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Commercial Road motorcycle parking existing layout – submitted by the petition organiser

Appendix 2 – Commercial Road motorcycle parking proposed layout – submitted by the petition organiser

Background papers:

None