

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 AUGUST 2018
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:
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 to the Council to reconsider their decision to remove the £35k grant they have provided to the Royal Voluntary Service for the past few years as the removal will force the closure of this much needed facility.</p> <p>228 signatories (e-petition)</p>	<p>At the Full Council meeting held on 22 February 2018, the Leader, Councillor Alan Jarrett in his budget speech, outlined additional spending which included a grant of £17,500 to the Royal Volunteer Service. Assurances had been received from the RVS National Organisation that this sum would be matched by them to cover the 12 month period, up until March 2019.</p> <p>Following this, on 15 March the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that Cabinet “be asked to fund the RVS Older People Centre for the full year (2018/19), making up for the lost grant, thus giving time for RVS, the Centre, the users, the volunteers and Council officers to work together on a new model while still providing the services everyone attending the Committee meeting needs so badly. This time next year, progress will be reviewed and further support considered if things are going well.”</p> <p>On 10 April 2018, Cabinet noted the progress made with RVS in covering a matching grant to cover costs over the 12 month period 2018-19. It agreed that Medway Council officers and other interested parties work with RVS in the preparation of a sustainable programme for RVS Medway and that a progress report be prepared and presented to Cabinet within six months.</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 response and appropriate officer action in paragraph 3 of the report.

Lead officer contact

Steve Platt, Democratic Services Officer,
Telephone: 01634 332011 E-mail: stephen.platt@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None.