

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 JUNE 2019

PETITIONS

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

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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 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 petitions relevant to this Committee that have been accepted by the petition organisers are set out below.

Subject of petition	Summary of response
<p>Petition the Council to introduce a safe crossing on Ordnance Street, Chatham recognising particularly the number of schools on and around this busy road.</p> <p>42 signatures (e-petition)</p>	<p>The Road Safety Team have conducted pedestrian/ vehicle counts to coincide with the morning drop-off and the end of the main school day. In the vast majority of cases primary school children were accompanied by an adult and were able to safely cross Ordnance Street. In addition, pedestrians that chose to cross within the count area were able to do so with good visibility and within a relatively low wait time (up to one minute) between traffic. Ordnance Street is within a Controlled Parking Zone and vehicle speeds were not noted as presenting a concern to pedestrians travelling in the vicinity, where drivers adhered to the limit.</p> <p>The result of these assessments, which took into account the traffic flows, vehicle speeds, road user visibility, waiting time and the number of pedestrians crossing, concluded that a pedestrian crossing facility is unable to be considered at this time. The Safer Journeys Team will encourage the schools in the area to revisit their School Travel Plans, serving as a means for the school community to voice their feedback in relation to the school journey and form a series of objectives and action plan of measures to help address any issues put forward.</p>
<p>Petition the Council to review the parking restrictions in and around Middle Street, Brompton.</p> <p>20 signatures (paper petition)</p>	<p>The Parking Design Team will give the request consideration as part of the Brompton Controlled Parking Zone Review which will take place during the current financial year.</p>

Subject of petition	Summary of response
<p>Petition the Council to take immediate action to secure Beechings Playing fields, Gillingham to prevent access to unauthorised vehicles.</p> <p>193 signatures (paper petition)</p>	<p>Preventing traveller access onto the Council's open green spaces is a serious issue for the Council. All options for the site have been reviewed and metal hoop railings have been installed around the playing field. This will allow public use of the site, but prevent unauthorised vehicular access, whilst retaining a gateway for the cleaning and grounds maintenance crew to access the field. This method of prevention has proved successful in other green space areas, such as Jackson's Field, Rochester.</p>
<p>Petition the Council to extend the double yellow lines further down Mierscourt Road near junction of Oastview, Rainham</p> <p>146 signatures (paper petition)</p>	<p>The Parking Design Team has considered the reasons for the request, which are 'that one particular van is parking in a manner which is affecting visibility, and if this vehicle was a car the problem would not be as bad', and has had confirmation from the Road Safety Team that there have been no injury collisions recorded in this location during the last 5 years. Therefore, on this basis, the Council will not be progressing the request at this time.</p>

4. Petitions not yet concluded:

- 4.1 Initial responses have been sent to the petition organiser for the following petitions. If a request is received to refer either petition to this Committee for review, it may be referred to the next meeting.

Subject of petition	Summary of response
<p>Petition the Council to improve road safety around Lambourn Way, Knole Road and the surrounding roads in Chatham, in particular recognising the road safety pressures of the local school.</p> <p>17 signatures (paper petition)</p>	<p>During May the Road Safety Team will carry out traffic surveys and observations in the area, and will examine any police accident reports where someone has been injured. Consideration can then be given to the speed of traffic and any road safety issues. If appropriate, suitable options to reduce the problem will be examined and the team will provide feedback to the Lead Petitioner.</p>
<p>Petition the Council to implement traffic studies, due to a substantial increase in through traffic</p>	<p>During May the Road Safety Team will carry out traffic surveys and observations on Rochester Avenue, and will examine any police accident reports where someone has been injured.</p>

Subject of petition	Summary of response
<p>between Maidstone Road and Delce Road, which has made Rochester Avenue a 'rat run'. Introduce further traffic calming measures and signage to reduce traffic volumes and deter speeding, thus increasing pedestrian safety.</p> <p>205 signatures (paper petition)</p>	<p>Consideration will be given to the level of through traffic and any road safety issues. If appropriate, suitable options to reduce the problem will be examined and the team will provide feedback to the Lead Petitioner.</p>

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 responses and appropriate officer action in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices:

None

Background papers:

None