

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 MARCH 2022

PETITIONS

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive

Author: Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer

Summary

This report advises the Committee of petitions received by the Council which fall within the remit of this Committee including a summary of the response sent to the petition organiser 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/5702/401 - 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 Petition

- 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	Summary of response
<p>Install speed humps on Constitution Road, Chatham.</p> <p>E-petition signed by 46 people</p>	<p>We take all concerns for road safety seriously and undertake works to promote and improve road safety wherever possible.</p> <p>When looking at where road safety improvements should be made, we must consider Medway as a whole, along with any transport priorities such as reducing and preventing casualties on our roads. Our approach therefore is to tackle those locations with the poorest safety records first. To aid my consideration of your petition, the safety history of the area has been investigated and I can report that during the most recent three years of available Police records, there have been no collisions involving road user injury throughout Constitution Road. Whilst this may be of some comfort, regrettably, this will mean there are many other locations within Medway that are currently suffering poorer ongoing road safety problems. As I mentioned previously, our approach is to tackle those locations with the poorest safety records first.</p> <p>I do want to be clear that this does not mean we wait for collisions before action is taken. Rather, we target those locations that are already suffering safety problems as a priority. I am afraid, therefore, that we are unable to propose road alterations in this area at this time. Please rest assured the safety record of this location will continue to be monitored, and I would also say that future safety improvements are never ruled out.</p>

4. Petition not yet concluded:

4.1 A response has been sent to the petition organiser for the following petition. If a request is received to refer it this Committee for review, it may be referred to the next meeting.

Subject of petition	Summary of response
<p>Implement speed calming measures on Edwin Road, Gillingham.</p> <p>E-petition signed by 66 people</p>	<p>We take all concerns for road safety seriously and work to promote and improve road safety wherever possible.</p> <p>When looking at where road safety improvements should be made, we must consider Medway as a whole, along with any transport priorities such as reducing and preventing casualties on our roads. Our approach therefore, is to tackle those locations with the poorest safety records first. To aid my consideration of your petition, the safety history of the area in question has been investigated. It is typical for the recent safety history, usually a three-year period, to be reviewed when investigating such matters. I can report that during the most recent three years of available Police records, there has been one collision reported involving road user injury throughout Edwin Road. Whilst one collision is considered one too many, regrettably, this will mean there are other locations within Medway that are suffering poorer ongoing road safety problems. As I have set out, our approach is to tackle those locations with the poorest safety records first.</p> <p>I would like to be clear, this does not mean we wait for accidents before action is taken. Rather, we target those locations that are already suffering road safety problems as a priority. Unfortunately, we are therefore unable to propose road alterations in this area at this time. Please rest assured though, the safety record of this location will continue to be monitored. All road safety concerns are taken seriously, and I do not dispute that this is a very important issue that is concerning for residents and the local community. We must, however, prioritise the use of the resources available for such alterations. We do work to promote and enhance road safety wherever possible, and we have previously introduced vehicle activated signing, along with</p>

Subject of petition	Summary of response
	<p>road markings aimed at raising road safety awareness at Edwin Road. Future safety improvements are never ruled out.</p> <p>Lastly, I would also share details of Kent Police's Speedwatch initiative. Speedwatch allows residents to work with the Police to visibly monitor speeds locally. This is an approach that relies on willing volunteers, however, this may be something that local residents may wish to consider. Kent Police would be able to provide further information in relation to this Police-led initiative.</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. Actions referred to in the officer responses are within existing budgets, however any further activity would require Cabinet and Council approval for budgetary additions if funding was available.
- 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. Recommendation

- 7.1 The Committee is requested to note the petition responses and appropriate officer action in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

None