

## **REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**9 JUNE 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. One petition has been referred to the Committee for consideration at this meeting.

#### **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](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 Petitions

- 3.1 A summary of the responses to petitions relevant to this Committee that have been accepted by the petition organiser is set out below.

<b>Subject of petition</b>	<b>Summary of response</b>
<p>Consider road safety measures on Chalk Pit Hill to reduce speeding and number of incidents where there have been accidents.</p> <p>Paper petition signed by 32 people</p>	<p>We take all concerns for road safety seriously and work to promote and improve road safety wherever possible. 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.</p> <p>The safety history of the area in question has been investigated and during the most recent five years of available Police records, there have been no collisions reported involving road user injury. This will mean there are other locations within Medway that are suffering poorer ongoing road safety problems and our approach is to tackle those locations with the poorest safety records first. 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 this is a very important issue that is concerning for residents and the local community. We must, however, prioritise the use of the resources we have available for</p>

Subject of petition	Summary of response
	such alterations and future safety improvements are never ruled out.
<p>Register the Sunlight Centre as a Community Asset – For community access to be maintained at the Sunlight Centre and to include the Centre in its register of Community Assets.</p> <p>Paper petition signed by 33 people</p>	<p>In order for the Sunlight Centre to be considered for listing as an Asset of Community Value an application needs to be submitted to the Council which sets out how it meets the criteria. The application form can be found on the Council's website at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/2285/asset-community-value-nomination-form">https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/2285/asset community value nomination form</a></p> <p>There is also guidance to assist you in making the application which can also be found on the Council's website at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200150/planning-guidance/136/local-land-charges/6">https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200150/planning-guidance/136/local land charges/6</a></p> <p>Unfortunately, we are unable to consider whether or not it is appropriate to list the centre as an asset of community value without the correct process being followed.</p>

#### 4. Petitions Referred to this Committee

4.1 The following petitions have been referred to this Committee because the petition organisers indicated that they were dissatisfied with the response received from the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive.

#### 4.2 **Introduce Speed Calming Measures at Edwin Road, Rainham**

4.2.1 An e petition containing 66 signatures was received by the Council on 9 February 2022. The petition statement is as follows:

4.2.2 We the undersigned residents of Edwin Road Rainham petition Medway Council and its officers to implement speed calming measures. In order to slow the increasing speeding vehicles using Edwin Road. There is a school at the top of the road and the "slow down" light do nothing to slow the vehicles. Edwin Road is a long straight wide road enabling cars to reach high speed combined this with a tight bend at Sylvan Road and the considerable increase in traffic over the last couple of years makes this positively dangerous. This has been brought to the attention of the police at Neighbourhood watch meetings but due to no human fatalities has been disregarded. There have been near misses when residents try to leave their drives to join the road due to the speed of cars, they seem to appear from nowhere. We wish to avoid risk of collisions and injury. The noise and

vibration nuisance from speeding vehicles shake windows and residents close their windows because of the noise. Sadly, several beloved pets have been killed recently on this road. Please don't wait for a human fatality before action is taken.

- 4.3 On 22 February 2022, the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive responded as follows:
  - 4.3.1 "Thank you for your petition requesting that we introduce speed calming measures at Edwin Road, Rainham.
  - 4.3.2 We take all concerns for road safety seriously and work to promote and improve road safety wherever possible. 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.
  - 4.3.3 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.
  - 4.3.4 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.
  - 4.3.5 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.
  - 4.3.6 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.
  - 4.3.7 We do work to promote and enhance road safety wherever possible, and we have previously introduced vehicle activated signing, along with road markings aimed at raising road safety awareness at Edwin Road. Future safety improvements are never ruled out.
  - 4.3.8 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.

I hope my response helps to set out the basis for my decision.”

4.4 On 13 March 2022, the petition organiser requested that the matter be reviewed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The reasons for referral are that the lead petitioner, having spoken to residents of Edwin Road, felt that the same worries of Health and Safety still exist. On 3 March, she had emailed the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive as follows:

4.4.1 “As at the date of this e-mail, I would advise that the vehicle activating signing recently installed is not working and to my understanding has not been working for over a week. In my personal view these systems do little if anything to slow the speed of the traffic and speaking to residents who live further up the road, where there has been one installed for a period of time, they report that they have noticed drivers speed up to make the light come on. Obviously, there are always some thoughtless individuals who have no care for the welfare of the residents. However, this is what the residents have to tolerate daily.

4.4.2 I have spoken to residents who are interested in Kent’s Police’s Speedwatch initiative and would be pleased to receive further information on how to go about setting this up. Do I have to approach Kent Police directly?”

4.5 In response, the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive has further commented as follows:

4.5.1 Medway Council’s Transport and Parking Service responded by email to the lead petitioner, confirming that the sign in question was the Council’s Speed Indicating Device (SID). This is a battery powered vehicle activated sign that can be temporarily erected for short periods to help highlight speeds to road users. The Council has committed to place a SID at Edwin Road again in the near future.

4.5.2 The Transport and Parking Service also provided the relevant details for the Police’s Speedwatch initiative, and the Kent Police Speedwatch representative has been liaising with the lead petitioner.

4.6 Two further petition referrals have recently been received and these will be considered at the Committee’s next meeting, scheduled for 11 August 2022. The subject of the petitions are potholes on Granville Access Road and tree maintenance on Gillingham Green.

## 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. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Committee is requested to note the petition responses and appropriate officer action set out in paragraph 3 of the report.
- 7.2 The Committee is requested to consider the petition referral request set out in paragraph 4 of the report and the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive's response.

## Lead Officer Contact

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

## Appendices

None

## Background Papers

None