

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 OCTOBER 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 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>Medway Council to take seriously the issue of the entrance and exit from the car park at the bungalows onto Grange Road.</p> <p>Vehicles are causing an obstruction and we are concerned for the safety of our elderly and disabled residents. We need special signage to be assured that this will be managed within the local policy and guidance for registered car parks because unauthorised vehicles parking are adding to the risk.</p> <p>Paper petition signed by 20 people.</p>	<p>Thank you for your recent petition concerning parking at the bungalows located at the west end of Grange Road, Gillingham.</p> <p>I am sorry to hear you and your fellow residents have been experiencing these problems and having examined the road layout here I can confirm that the extent of the road owned by the Council is set out on the below diagram in dark grey.</p> <p>As you will note, the majority of the parking area and access to the bungalows is private (coloured white) and not owned by us. As such, as we would not be able to carry out parking enforcement on this area.</p> <p>However, to assist with access we may be able to investigate the possibility of placing double yellow lines on the section of the entrance junction that is owned by the Council (coloured dark grey) to prevent individuals parking here. We will refer this to our Parking Design Team to progress this, although we do already have a number of other projects underway and this work would need to be taken forward alongside those other priorities. If this is something you would like us to investigate further please contact the team on transportandparking@medway.gov.uk to confirm this.</p> <p>It might also be the case that we could extend the double yellow lines further into the entrance way on to the part not owned by the Council. It should be noted though that we</p>

Subject of petition	Response
	<p>would need the landowner's permission to do this, but we would not be able to carry out enforcement on this section of the double yellow lines as the lining would be on private land. If you are able to provide any additional information on who the owners of the entrance way and parking area are (a Housing Association perhaps?) this would greatly assist.</p> <p>Thank you again for contacting us and we look forward to hearing from you in reply; I hope you find this suggested way forward helpful.</p>

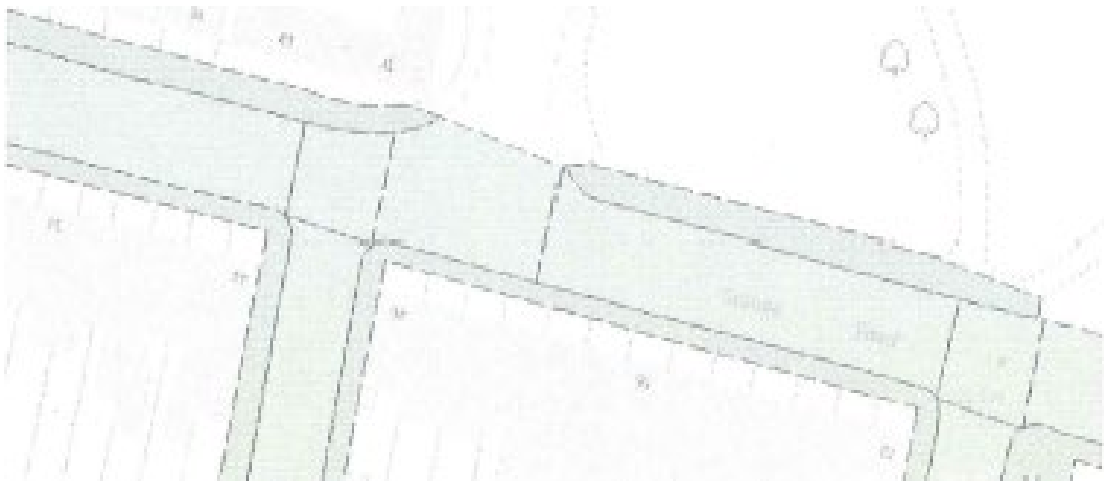


Figure 1 – Extent of Council ownership at the west end of Grange Road, Gillingham

4. Petitions not yet concluded:

- 4.1 A response was sent to the petition organiser for the following petition and they indicated that they wished to refer the petition to this Committee for review. Following further correspondence with the service, the petition organiser has decided to await the outcome of the traffic assessment referred to in the response from the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive, before proceeding with the referral to this Committee.

Subject of petition	Response
Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition to improve residents' environment and safety both road and	Thank you for your petition, which seeks to improve the environment for residents of Lambourn Way and Knole Road in relation to traffic noise and disturbance.

Subject of petition	Response
<p data-bbox="316 300 639 622">environmental noise, noxious gas pollution from non-residential vehicles and nuisance parking endorsed and encouraged by St Benedict's Primary school and the local authority.</p> <p data-bbox="316 663 667 730">Paper petition signed by 16 people</p>	<p data-bbox="710 300 1410 1727">We acknowledge your comments and observations regarding the traffic using Lambourn Way and Knole Road, how this affects residents and your suggestions for reducing this impact. In your letter, you propose the Council closes Knole Road to through traffic, disconnecting the areas to the east and west of Ballens Road. This would, in effect, create a 'Low Traffic Neighbourhood' (L TN) around Lambourn Way, with traffic generated mainly by residential dwellings, the local school and any businesses located within this area. The number of L TNs has increased in recent years, particularly in London, and many were trialled during the Pandemic. The Government remains supportive of measures to achieve a 'Gear Change' in terms of how roads and streets can operate, with an emphasis on improved safety, promoting active travel and creating pleasant environments that encourage people to walk and cycle. It has been recognised, however, that Local Authorities must consider the potential impacts of L TNs on their ability to discharge their responsibilities under the Traffic Management Act and ensure that changes to the road layout are subject to extensive community consultation and engagement. The proposal to change the way traffic is managed in this part of Lordswood requires careful consideration and analysis. I will ask my team to undertake this assessment to see if it could work from a technical perspective and how it would align with our statutory responsibilities under the Traffic Management Act. This work will take some time to complete, although it will be carried out within the current financial year. As part of this process, we would engage with the Portfolio Holder for Frontline Services and local Ward Councillors.</p> <p data-bbox="710 1767 1394 2018">We have a statutory duty to maintain the public highway, and we have an assessment process that ensures those parts of the highway in most need of maintenance are individually and fairly prioritised for resurfacing. For more information on how we make those assessments, please visit the following webpage:</p>

Subject of petition	Response
	<p data-bbox="710 297 1406 367">https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/5609/resurfacing_programme.</p> <p data-bbox="710 409 1398 658">Lambourn Way and Knole Road have been assessed for resurfacing within the last two years and are considered Priority 3 sites. Currently, we are only able to consider Priority 1 sites for resurfacing. Both roads have been added to our future assessment schedule and will be prioritised again thereafter.</p> <p data-bbox="710 701 1406 1209">As you are aware, Lambourn Way and Knole Road are of concrete construction, although sections are overlaid with asphalt. Due to this type of construction, there are regular joints which are there by design, however, these roads are typically noisier than a non-concrete road. Please note there is no legal limit to the amount of road noise for existing roads, although noise levels might be looked at when new roads or houses and offices near roads are planned. For more information on noise and vibrations from road traffic please visit the following webpage: https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200176/report_a_problem/392/report_a_problem_with_noise/4.</p> <p data-bbox="710 1252 1406 1939">I note your request to install double yellow lines on Lambourn Way to address the issue of parents parking to drop off and collect their children from the nearby school. Parking restrictions are generally installed for road safety reasons rather than issues of nuisance. The crash history of the road does not indicate the presence a road safety issue and therefore additional parking restrictions would not be considered. We do understand the frustration that may be caused by vehicles blocking driveways, and our Parking Enforcement Team can enforce parking across dropped kerbs if reported directly by residents. We will then do our best to attend the location as soon as possible. I will also discuss the issue you raise in relation to the School Crossing Patrol on Lambourn Way with our Sustainable Transport Team.</p> <p data-bbox="710 1982 1385 2049">Thank you again for getting in touch to set out these traffic and parking issues; we will contact</p>

Subject of petition	Response
	you again in relation to the suggestion you have put forward for managing traffic in Knole Road and Lambourn Way.

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

Subject of petition	Response
<p>Reinstate an evening and Sunday bus service for Borstal.</p> <p>We the undersigned petition the council to Reinstate an evening and Sunday bus service for Borstal by rerouting the subsidised out-of-hours 145 route to terminate in the village.</p> <p>Cuts to the 155 bus timetable by Arriva mean the route no longer serves commuters in the mornings or late afternoon Monday to Friday, but the service in the evening and on Sundays is non-existent. Medway Council currently subsidises non-commercial services on the adjacent 145 route to Warren Wood. A small change to that route would allow the subsidised 145 timetable to serve Borstal too.</p> <p>E- petition signed by 28 people.</p>	<p>Thank you for your petition seeking the reinstatement of an evening and Sunday bus service for Borstal.</p> <p>The evening and Sunday bus service for Borstal (number 155) was subsidised by Kent County Council, with the remainder of the service operated on a commercial basis by Arriva. Unfortunately, Kent County Council withdrew funding for the evening and Sunday services in May 2022. Since that time, Arriva has operated an hourly daytime service between Borstal and Chatham (Monday to Saturday).</p> <p>I note your suggestion to extend the 145 service from Warren Wood. The Sunday service is operated commercially by Arriva, and extending this service to Borstal would require significant additional resource that would need to be funded by the Council. Arriva advised that when the Sunday service to Borstal operated it carried, on average, only two passengers per journey over the section of the route within Medway. Our budget for subsidising local bus services is fully allocated and diverting resources away from other supported services would not be justifiable given the low number of passengers involved, I am afraid.</p> <p>We do provide a subsidy for the evening 145 service and following a discussion with Nu Venture, I can advise that it would be possible to extend the journey currently departing Chatham at 20.15 (Mondays to Saturdays) to serve Borstal. This bus would then return to Chatham via Warren Wood.</p>

Subject of petition	Response
	I hope my response is helpful and goes some way to addressing the concerns you have raised.

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 paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.

Lead Officer Contact

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

None