

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

**8 DECEMBER 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 responses 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/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>We the undersigned petition the council to urgently reinstate the CCTV within Rainham Recreation Ground which will assist in the detection of anti-social behaviour, crime and/or the identification, apprehension or prosecution of offenders.</p> <p>Medway council have removed CCTV from the recreation ground and station road car park despite local residents being concerned the reckless driving of motor bikes on the playing field, serious assaults being afflicted on children, fly tipping in the car park, the use of illegal drugs as well as anti-social behaviour. The police are advising victims that they cannot follow up as there is no evidence and the perpetrators are free to continue subjecting residents to their vile behaviour.</p> <p>E-petition signed by 146 people.</p>	<p>We have reviewed our records from 22 February 2022 to 16 September 2022, covering calls made by members of the public requesting Police attendance to Rainham Recreation Ground in relation to anti-social behaviour and other similar activity. Following this review, and in response to concerns raised through the public petition, subject to a satisfactory feasibility survey, two rapid deployment cameras will be installed inside Rainham Recreation Ground for a period of twelve weeks.</p> <p>At the conclusion of this twelve-week monitoring period, a further review will be conducted as to whether CCTV has assisted in the apprehension of offenders, the detection of crime and a reduction in anti-social behaviour within Rainham Recreation Ground. A decision can then be made as to whether the permanent installation of CCTV within Rainham Recreation Ground is a proportionate and justifiable response in relation to the volume of anti-social behaviour occurring within this location.</p> <p>However, we would still encourage residents to report all incidents involving anti-social behaviour.</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	Response
<p>We the undersigned petition the council to Install some kind of deterrent or physical obstruction, to stop cars from mounting the pavement on St Margret's Street, Rochester. Specifically, the stretch of pavement between Watts Avenue and Gun Tower Mews.</p> <p>During the school 'commute' period there are many children walking along this narrow pavement, often heading to St. Andrews School/ nursery.</p> <p>There is parking allowed on one side of the street and impatient drivers are mounting the pavement, often driving with two wheels 2 feet onto the pedestrian area.</p> <p>This obviously represents a serious risk to children, many of whom are still very young and presume the pavement to be a safe area.</p> <p>I don't know what the available solutions include, but perhaps some physical obstructions or traffic enforcement cameras could be utilised.</p> <p>E-petition signed by 18 people</p>	<p>The Parking Design Team and Transport Engineering Team have now looked at the location in question, the crash / incident record for the area, and the issues you have raised.</p> <p>Unfortunately, there is not sufficient width of pavement here to install bollards and still maintain the required space for all users, specifically wheelchair users and pushchair users. The incident record for this area does not show a history of accidents here.</p> <p>Unfortunately, with a limited road safety budget we have to focus our spend on areas that have an existing record of accidents which need urgent intervention. We do appreciate that there might occasionally be issues with cars mounting the pavement because some drivers are not patient enough to observe the rules of the road at this location, however, with the financial limitations I set out above, we are unable to take the action requested in your petition.</p> <p>I appreciate this is not the response you were hoping for, but I hope I have clearly set out the basis for our decision.</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 set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.

## Lead Officer Contact

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## Appendices

None

## Background Papers

None