

# **Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**15 November 2023**

## **Petitions**

Report from: Adam Bryan, Director of Place

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### **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. Recommendations**

1.1. The Committee is requested to note the petition responses and appropriate officer actions in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

#### **2. Budget and policy framework**

2.1. 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.

2.2. The petition scheme is set out in full in the Council's Constitution at [Council rules](#).

2.3. Any budget or policy framework implications will be set out in the specific petition response.

### 3. Background

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.

### 4. Completed Petitions

The response to petitions relevant to this Committee that has been accepted by the petition organiser are set out below.

<b>Subject of petition</b>	<b>Medway Council's response</b>
Petition the council to take action immediately to secure Beechings Park from Travellers entering.	<p>The Council has spent over £20,000 on securing the park, including the installation of metal hoops and a height barrier to make egress more difficult.</p> <p>Additionally, the council has recently installed metal hoops behind wooden posts following an occasion when access to the site was achieved by the removal of such a post.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this statement, the area like all Greenspaces remains vulnerable to unauthorised encampments with physical damage being used to gain access.</p> <p>An approach that could be explored by the Authority in high-risk areas is naturalising sites by strategically planting more trees to create small woodland areas creating natural barriers. This would, however, possibly require the partial change of use of large, grassed areas. Officers will raise this possibility with the relevant Portfolio Holder.</p>
Medway Council to support a pelican crossing outside All Saints CofE Primary School to ensure the safe road crossing	The location in question has previously served as a School Crossing Patrol (SCP) site which continues to be the most appropriate form of

<p>of children, parents and the local residents.</p>	<p>crossing provision in meeting the needs of the school community.</p> <p>When the site became vacant last year, officers undertook an assessment in line with the morning school drop-off and afternoon collection times. The assessment considered driver and pedestrian behaviour, including vehicle speed, and pedestrian crossing waiting times.</p> <p>The Council were able to appoint an SCP to serve outside the school on Magpie Hall Road. Regrettably, the patrol withdrew from the position within the first week, the SCP vacancy has been re-advertised.</p> <p>The Council's Sustainable Transport Team will continue to liaise closely with All Saints C.E. Primary School and the Parking Enforcement Team.</p> <p>Officers will also approach the neighbourhood policing team to serve as an additional presence at school drop-off and collection times and to help deter inconsiderate parking behaviour within the school vicinity.</p>
<p>Medway Council to change parking restrictions in Carpeaux Close, Chatham to residents parking only at all times.</p>	<p>The Council will review the current restrictions and undertake an informal survey to establish the views of residents.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Parking Team will be able to update the lead petitioner within the next six months.</p>
<p>Medway Council to remove the bottom gate at Bligh Way Park and replace it with a fixed barrier such as a fence or bollards to stop travellers from gaining access to the park.</p>	<p>The area, like all Greenspaces remains vulnerable to unauthorised encampments with physical damage being used to gain access.</p> <p>As an interim measure the Council has requested NORSE to explore the possibility of placing concrete blocks near the site entrance to substantially restrict access of caravans to the site.</p> <p>An approach that could be explored by the Authority in high-risk areas is naturalising sites by strategically planting more trees to create small woodland areas creating natural barriers. This would, however, possibly require the partial</p>

	<p>change of use of large, grassed areas. Officers will raise this possibility with the relevant Portfolio Holder.</p>
<p>Medway Council to put up a speed camera along the Lower Rainham Road near the Three Mariners' car park/traffic lights or at the bottom of Pump Lane.</p>	<p>The approach is to tackle those locations with the poorest safety records first. During the most recent three years of available Police records, there had been one collision reported.</p> <p>Medway Council works in partnership with Kent Police in relation to the deployment of fixed speed cameras. Cameras are targeted to those locations with poor safety records in terms of road casualties.</p> <p>There are other locations within Medway that are suffering poorer ongoing road safety problems and unfortunately, the Council is therefore unable to progress the requested road alterations in this area at this time. The safety record of this location will continue to be monitored.</p>
<p>Medway Council to make Laburnum Park more secure against the travellers encampment.</p>	<p>All greenspaces remain vulnerable to unauthorised encampments with physical damage being used to gain access.</p> <p>The Council has requested NORSE to arrange the installation of new height barriers/gates at the three entrances on Knights Place and one at Laburnum Road to substantially width restrict access to deter the admittance of caravans.</p>
<p>Medway Council to urgently review the need for 30mph fixed traffic speed cameras in on the blind bend in both directions at the junction of Shakespeare Farm Road Junction with Ratcliffe Highway ME3 8RN.</p>	<p>The Council recognises the importance of making our roads as safe as possible and works to help support everyone travelling safely.</p> <p>The Council's safety engineers and officers will undertake a review of this location which will include investigation of the local collision history.</p> <p>It is anticipated that that the Transport and Parking team will be able to update the lead petitioner within the next six months.</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 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 which are not within existing budgets, and any further activity, would require Cabinet and Council approval for budgetary additions if funding was available.

## 7. Legal implication

- 7.1. 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.

## Lead officer contact

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## Appendices

None

## Background papers

None