

Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

28 February 2024

Petitions

Report from: Adam Bryan, Director of Place

Author: Steve Dickens, 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. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Committee is requested to note the petition responses and appropriate officer actions in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
- 1.2. The Committee is requested to consider the petition referral requested at section 5 of the report and the Director of Place's response.

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

- 4.1. The response to petitions relevant to this Committee that have been accepted by the petition organiser, with no request for referral to this Committee, are set out below.

Subject of petition	Summary of Medway Council's response
<p>We the undersigned petition the council to clear Medway's drains of blockages to solve drainage problems when it rains.</p>	<p>The Council has produced the Highway Drainage Management Plan which sets out its approach to the management of highway drainage, and maintenance for improving our highway drainage. The Council has a robust drainage cleaning programme in place to ensure that the drainage systems are well maintained and that the Council meets all its duties under government legislation.</p> <p>We appreciate that in recent months flooding has occurred not just in Medway but across the country and the cause of this is not due to the maintenance of drainage systems but to the amount of rainfall which has been experienced which has overwhelmed the drainage systems which are in place. Damaged, blocked, or flooding gullies can be reported on the Medway Council website which will be logged with the Council and actioned.</p> <p>New developments are designed to carry rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 30 year event plus an allowance for climate change. Legislatively, it is not necessary for sewers to be designed to contain a storm that exceeds this magnitude within existing built</p>

	<p>developments but unfortunately, we have seen storms in excess of the 1 in 30 year event this year.</p> <p>It should be noted that not all areas benefit from a formal surface water system which is owned and maintained by Southern Water. In some areas there are no systems other than highways drainage to collect surface water, which then generally goes into a soakaway or privately owned and maintained property specific soakaways. These areas may be more prone to surface water flooding depending on the location, capacity and maintenance frequency of soakaways.</p>
<p>We the undersigned petition the council to Medway Council to offer free bulky waste collections for residents.</p>	<p>One free bulky waste collection is available to every household in Medway and this service will continue for the next financial year 2024/25. This can consist of up to three eligible items. Details of this service are available on the Medway Council website.</p>
<p>Medway Council to stop the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders associated with Red Route proposals for Chatham, Rainham and Rochester, which we believe will be ineffective at improving traffic congestion and lead to none of the stated benefits and irreparably damage the character of Medway. We ask instead that Medway Council establish a Citizen's assembly on Road Traffic and congestion and work with residents to identify alternative approaches to improving traffic flow, air quality and increasing active travel.</p>	<p>The Red Routes proposals are part of the Safer, Healthier Streets Programme, which is a key initiative in helping to deliver our Medway Council Strategy 2023 to 2024 and Local Transport Plan. With the increased regeneration, housing and population growth in Medway vehicle numbers and traffic has continued and will continue to grow. To help us meet council policy and the aims set out in the Local Transport Plan it is vital that initiatives and programmes like red routes are implemented if we are to keep a safe and efficient highway network.</p> <p>As part of the Safer, Healthier Streets programme it is proposed to implement five red routes on key strategic transport links across the network. This involves replacing existing double yellow line restrictions with double red lines across the five routes. All formal parking bays on the routes are maintained,</p> <p>We are aware traffic congestion is created by multiple factors, including temporary problems like roadworks as well as longer-term issues like the growing number of vehicles on our roads. However, from the public consultation we were told by 804 respondents that they had experienced dangerous and inconvenient parking along these sections of carriageway despite the presence of double yellow line restrictions. Removing these occurrences from the network will aid towards improving road safety and the flow of traffic.</p>

	<p>Medway prioritises meaningful engagement to ensure our community is involved in the decisions that impact them. Following this feedback, we have redesigned the scheme to help provide better facilities including an additional 5 loading bays.</p> <p>The full response to the lead petitioner can be found at Appendix A.</p>
<p>Medway Council to provide a safe (zebra) crossing across pump lane outside Rainham Mark Grammar School.</p>	<p>The Council promotes walking and cycling and recognises the potential benefits for people’s health and well-being. Sustainable travel is a major part of our response to Climate Change.</p> <p>The Council will consider how it could make walking and cycling along Pump Lane easier and safer, including the potential for a Zebra crossing and respond to the lead petitioner with the result of this work in the new year. If a crossing on Pump Lane is feasible, it could form part of the Council’s work programme for the next financial year.</p>

5. Petition referred to this Committee

- 5.1. The following petition has been referred to this Committee because the petition organiser indicated that they were dissatisfied with the response received from the then Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive.
- 5.2. The petition, which initially dates back to 2022, has not yet been reviewed by this Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to this meeting at the request of the lead petitioner to allow for the completion of the traffic assessment. In addition to the petition and response from the council, there has also been some correspondence between the lead petitioner and officers, this correspondence is included in appendices B-J to this report.

5.3. **Lambourn Way and Knole Road**

5.4. A paper petition signed by 16 people was received by Democratic Services on 22 July 2022. The petition statement was as follows:

5.5. “Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition to improve residents environment and safety both road and environmental noise, noxious gas pollution from non-residential vehicles and nuisance parking.”

5.6. On 4 August 2022, the then Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive responded as follows:

“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.

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' (LTN) around Lambourn Way, with traffic generated mainly by residential dwellings, the local school and any businesses located within this area. The number of LTNs has increased in recent years, particularly in London, and many were trailed 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 LTNs on their ability to discharge their responsibilities under the traffic management Act and ensure that changes to road layout are subject to extensive 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.

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 we make those assessments, please visit the following webpage:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/5609/resurfacing_programme

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.

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 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/info200176/report_a_problem/392/report_a_problem_with_noise/4

I note your request to install double yellow lines on Lambourn Way to address the issues 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 of 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.

Thank you again for getting in touch to set out these traffic and parking issues; we will contact you again in relation to the suggestion you have put forward for managing traffic in Knole Road and Lambourn Way.”

- 5.7. On 15 August 2022 the lead petitioner indicated they wished to refer the petition to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, this being within the 10-working day limit. On 24 August 2022, officers wrote to the petition organiser to invite him to a meeting of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The petition organiser responded on 27 August 2022 and requested that a referral be deferred until such time as the assessment was completed. This was agreed by officers.
- 5.8. On 15 December 2023, Council officers wrote to the lead petitioner to inform him of the outcome of the assessment as follows:

“Petition – Lambourn Way, Chatham

I am writing to update you on the work that has been undertaken following the submission of your petition, which asked the Council to consider traffic restrictions and traffic calming; specifically, a severance of the vehicular link between Lambourn Way and Ballens Road (Knole Road).

We have now completed a study of traffic flow through the residential area that sits to the north of Albemarle Road, accessible only via Lambourn Way, Ballens Road, and Linton Drive. The aim of the study was to understand existing traffic movements in the area and the potential impacts that closing Knole Road to vehicular traffic would have on the local roads.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) data was collected to obtain vehicle journey information, and Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) data was captured at various locations in and around the residential area.

The study established that traffic travels the full length of Knole Road for three main reasons:

- To access the Lambourn Way and Aintree Road area (east of Knole Road)
- To access the Ballens Road area (west of Knole Road); and
- To bypass Albemarle Road and Lords Wood Lane (through movements)

The ANPR and ATC data was used to identify the proportion of vehicles using Knole Road for each of the above reasons. Vehicles travelling eastbound use Knole Road as follows:

- 61% (AM) and 65% (PM) travel from the Ballens Road Area and exit Lordswood estate via Lambourn Way.
- 11% (AM) and 8% (PM) travel to Aintree Road area, having entered Lordswood estate via Lynton Drive or Ballens Road.
- 28% (AM) and 28% (PM) exit via Lambourn Way, having entered Lordswood estate via Lynton Drive or Ballens Road (through movements)

Vehicles travelling westbound use Knole Road as follows:

- 73% (AM) and 72% (PM) travel from outside the estate via Lambourn Way and end their trip within the Ballens Road area.
- 10% (AM) and 11% (PM) travel from the Aintree Road Area and exit Lordswood estate via Lynton Drive or Ballens Road
- 17% (AM) and 18% (PM) exit via Lynton Drive or Ballens Road, having entered Lords Wood estate via Lambourn Way (through movements)

Overall, the surveys indicate that the number of vehicles using Knole Road to bypass Albemarle Road and Lords Wood Lane is low: 34 vehicles in the AM peak and 18 vehicles in the PM peak. Most of the traffic using Knole Road is local, accessing or leaving the Ballens Road area. Notwithstanding this, it was noted that the shortest route from the north of Lords Wood Lane and east of Albemarle Road is via the residential estate, and that some in-car navigation software packages suggest this as the most suitable route. We will be requesting that this routing is not suggested for vehicles that have not started or ended their route within the estate. This means road users unfamiliar with the area that are following their guidance systems will not be routed through the residential estate.

If Knole Road is closed to through (vehicular) traffic, the following outcomes are predicted:

- Traffic would increase on Ballens Road and Lynton Drive, Albemarle Road, Lords Wood Lane, and at the roundabout junction. This would mainly comprise local traffic.
- Traffic on Lambourn Way would, overall, be notably reduced, as it would serve only local residential roads and St Benedict's RC Primary School. An increased number of vehicles may use Lambourn Way at school peak times, however, as closing Knole Road to through traffic would mean access via Ballens Road is no longer possible.
- There may be an increase in vehicle speeds on some roads, due to lower volumes of traffic.

We have also considered whether it is necessary to introduce traffic calming measures. Such measures are typically introduced in areas where there have been road casualties, with the aim of reducing the likelihood of further collisions. There have been no collisions recorded in this area over the last five years, and the Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) surveys recorded no incidents of vehicles driving at speeds that would be considered sufficiently excessive to warrant enforcement by the police. On this basis, traffic calming measures are not considered appropriate.

In conclusion, the outcome of the traffic assessment provides a robust indication of how existing traffic behaviours and traffic volumes would change in the event of a vehicular point closure at Knole Road. Lambourn Way would experience lower traffic volumes generally, but a likely increase in vehicle movements associated with the school. We expect that other roads would experience increased traffic. Overall, we are not able to identify clear benefits in terms of traffic speeds, network capacity or road safety that would result from restricting the use of Knole Road. The benefit to pedestrians and cyclists is likely to be negligible, with the additional traffic on Lambourn Way during school peak periods potentially worsening the current situation for these road user groups. Lower levels of traffic on some roads may increase vehicle speeds. Overall, the outcome of the study suggests that Knole Road assists with distributing vehicle movements evenly across the residential area and preserving this link would maintain a sensible arrangement for managing traffic flow, in line with our statutory responsibilities. On this basis, we do not intend to take any further action in relation to this proposal.

Thank you for your patience whilst this traffic study has been undertaken.”

- 5.9. The lead petitioner indicated that they remained dissatisfied with the response received from the Director of Place and as a consequence the petition has been referred to this Committee for review.
6. Risk management
 - 6.1. 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.
7. Financial implications
 - 7.1. 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.
8. Legal implications
 - 8.1. 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

Appendix A Full officer response to the Red Routes petition

Appendix B Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition: Letter from the lead petitioner to the then Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive dated 8 August 2022

Appendix C Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition Response from the Head of Transport to the lead petitioner dated 18 August 2022

Appendix D Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition Letter from the lead to petition to Democratic Services 15 August 2022 to request a referral of the petition by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Appendix E Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition Response from Democratic Services to the Lead Petitioner dated 24 August 2022

Appendix F Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition Letter from the lead petitioner to Democratic Services requesting the referral be held in abeyance until the conclusion of the traffic assessment dated 27 August 2022

Appendix G Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition Letter from lead petitioner 21 November 2022

Appendix H Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition Response to lead petitioner

Appendix I Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition Letter from the lead petitioner: Complaint regarding the handling of the petition dated 19 October 2023

Appendix J Lambourn Way and Knole Road petition Response from Democratic Services to complaint 13 November 2023

Background papers

None