

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 JUNE 2011

PETITIONS

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

Author: Caroline Salisbury, Democratic Services Officer

Summary

This report advises the Committee of the petitions presented at Council meetings, received by the council or sent via the e-petition facility, including a summary of officer's response to the petitioners.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The 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. Background

2.1 The Director is asked to respond to the petition request within 10 working days. The petition organiser may request to refer the matter to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee if s/he is not satisfied with the answer and has given reasons for their dissatisfaction.

2.2 If the petition contains at least the number of signatures equating to 5% of Medway's population (currently 12,675 signatures) it will be debated by Full Council unless it is a petition asking for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting.

2.3 If the petition contains at least the number of signatures equating to 2% of Medway's population (currently 5,070 signatures) the relevant senior officer may give evidence at a public meeting of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee.

2.4 A petition may also be submitted through the e-petition facility on the council's website. E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper

petitions. A petition acknowledgement and response will be emailed to everyone who has signed the e-petition and elected to receive this information.

- 2.5 A summary of the response to all petitions will also be published on the council's website.

3. Petitions

- 3.1 A summary of responses relevant to this Committee that have passed the ten day deadline for a request for referral to the Committee and are therefore seen as acceptable to the petitioners are set out below.

Subject of petition	Date of receipt and whether paper or e-petition	Response
Request to extend the restricted parking of 8am-10am Monday to Friday from Station Road into the western end of Tilbury Road, Rainham as vehicles parked by commuters cause obstruction.	Council 24 February 2011	The request has been noted and added to the list of safety schemes (yellow lines) and included in the next published traffic order for safety schemes.
We would like to see traffic calming measures introduced in Rochester Avenue similar to those introduced in King Street	Council 3 March 2011	The council receives many requests for traffic calming and uses casualty figures, whereby locations with poor safety records are tackled first. In the last 3 years there is no record of injury collisions. With many other locations with poorer safety records, it is not possible to introduce traffic calming in this road, although details will be sent to the police for their consideration for speed enforcement.
The residents of Granville Road, Cavendish Avenue, Portland Road, Maple Avenue, Oak Avenue and Elm Road request the introduction of a local residents' parking scheme	Council 3 March 2011	The request is noted and will be added to the Gillingham North ward file and included in the next ward parking review. However, in October 2009, the council agreed to cease further reviews until external funding can be identified, usually from nearby developments.
The residents of Camden, Leslie, Shottenden, St Andrews, Baden and	Council	The request is noted and will be added to the Gillingham North

Milner Roads request the introduction of a local residents' parking scheme	3 March 2011	ward file and included in the next ward parking review. However, in October 2009, the council agreed to cease further reviews until external funding can be identified, usually from nearby developments.
Opposition to any plans by Medway Council to introduce a Residents Controlled Parking Zone along Knight Avenue, Gillingham	22 March 2011	The petition has been added to the file for Gillingham North ward and will be taken into account when consultation is carried out on a parking scheme for this area later this spring.
Request to prevent drivers turning right into Orchard Street, Rainham from the A2	29 March 2011	Engineers have checked the signage and found it correct and visible to motorists. It would appear that some drivers choose to ignore the 'no right turn' sign. As the issue is one of enforcement, the matter has been referred to Kent Police.
Request that Binnacle Road ME1 2XP be made into a one-way road	Council 14 April 2011	One-way systems are reserved for essential sites where there is persistent congestion to traffic flows and there is no data to support your request. However, the road safety team will continue to monitor the situation.
Request the Council to provide a public bus service to run along Childscroft Road, Berengrave Lane and Chalky Bank Road, Rainham	Council 14 April 2011	Officers have discussed this request with Arriva who will investigate the impact on the existing service. Officers will write to the petitioners with the outcome.
Request the Council to re-develop the dis-used play area on Otway Street into a communal garden that could be divided up into allotments	Council 14 April 2011	The Council's Greenspace Development Team will undertake a consultation with all properties in the catchment area to generate a consensus opinion and this will start in June 2011. The petitioner has since written to request that the committee considers the consultation response. Officers have replied and asked for the petitioners to await the consultation outcome and proposed decision before deciding whether to refer the matter to the committee.
Request for the 20p charge in the Pentagon toilets, scrapped, at least	Council	The inclusion of the charging policy is outside the scope of the

until the new free toilets are opened in the new bus station. Also, that the toilets that are in the bus station upstairs, re-opened	14 April 2011	Council's lease and the cost is above the £210,000 contribution paid by the Council to transfer the facility. It is not expected the 20p charge will cover the costs for operating the toilets but is seen as a contribution for upkeep and maintenance to deter anti-social behaviour, vandalism and theft.
Request for the Council to reduce the height of the humps in The Ridgeway	Council 14 April 2011	The humps were installed to prevent rat-running and at installation they complied with highway standards and are legal. Recorded injury accident data shows no personal injury accidents and the Council's limited funds will be aimed where the need is greatest, so these humps will not be altered.
Request for double yellow lines in Wainscott Walk both sides of Wainscott Road to outside Nos 1 and 22.	Council 14 April 2011	Following officer investigations, the council will consult on the introduction of parking restrictions in Wainscott Walk when it carries out the next round of consultations for such requests. However, this can only be progressed as and when resources allow.

4 Petitions referred to this committee

- 4.1 The following petitions have been referred to the Committee for consideration as the lead petitioners have indicated that they are dissatisfied with the responses received.

Petition 1

- 4.2 This petition was presented to Council on 3 March 2011 by Councillor Griffin which stated:

"We the undersigned would like to see the current parking restrictions between 8am and 6pm of a Saturday on the left side of Cecil Road lifted."

- 4.3 The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture responded to the petition and the letter is attached at Appendix A.
- 4.4 The letter requesting referral to the Committee is attached at Appendix B.

4.5 Director's comments

Cecil Road at this point is approximately 6 metres wide, currently parking takes place on one side of Cecil Road, the remainder of the carriageway width is not sufficient to allow on street parking, and allow the passage of traffic including larger vehicles that may need to gain access to premises on Cecil Road during the hours that the restriction operates.

The current situation of limited waiting provides a reasonable compromise between parking provision and allowing reasonable access, should the current restrictions be lifted then it is envisaged that the footways would be parked on to try and maintain a usable width of carriageway, which itself may provide mobility and safety issues, or that the carriageway would become obstructed.

Petition 2

- 4.6 This petition was presented to Council on 14 April 2011 by Councillor Hubbard which requested:

"a bus shelter at the bus stop (outbound from Strood) at the junction of Fulmar Road/Darnley Road."

- 4.7 The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture responded to the petition and the letter is attached at Appendix C.

- 4.8 The letter requesting referral to the Committee is attached at Appendix D.

4.9 Director's comments

As part of the recently completed Quality Public Transport Corridors Project, Medway Council has recently completed the installation of 60 new shelters across the area. The majority of the new units were installed on those routes that have the greatest usage, although a number of good quality 'second hand' shelters have been relocated to replace a number of old and damaged shelters in the rural area.

Regrettably, because of the current financial situation, there are no funds available to provide any more shelters and, inevitably, there are greater priorities elsewhere. In providing any additional infrastructure the council is also mindful of the additional on-going costs of maintaining each additional asset.

This position will of course be reviewed if and when the financial situation improves.

5 Risk Management

- 5.1 The Council's petition scheme has been drafted in compliance with the minimum requirements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 relating to petitions. This will minimise the risk of any challenge to the legitimacy of the Council's arrangements for handling petitions.

6 Financial and Legal Implications

- 6.1 Any financial and/or legal implications arising from the issues raised by the petitions are set out in the comments on the petitions.

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 Members are requested to:

- (a) note the petition response and appropriate officer action in paragraph 3 of the report;
- (b) consider the petition referrals and Director's comments in paragraph 4.5 and 4.6 of the report.

Background papers

Medway Council's Constitution
Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

Contact for further details:

Caroline Salisbury, Democratic Services Officer
Tel. No: 01634 332013 Email: caroline.salisbury@medway.gov.uk

Appendix A

Please contact: Leigh Ann Thurgood

Your ref:

Our ref: Lat/GE30

Date: 18 March 2011

Mr Brian Griffin



Director's office
Regeneration, Community and Culture
Medway Council
Gun Wharf, Dock Road
Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR
(DX56006 STROOD)
telephone: 01634 331022
facsimile: 01634 331729
Minicom (text) 01634 331300
email: leighann.thurgood@medway.gov.uk

Dear Mr Griffin

Petition to Lift the Parking Restrictions at Cecil Road

Thank you for your recent petition that was presented at Council on 3 March 2011 requesting removal of the current parking restrictions (8am-6pm Monday to Saturday), on the left side of Cecil Road on a Saturday.

Cecil Road, at the point of these restrictions, is approximately 6m wide and parking takes place on one side of Cecil Road. The remainder of the carriageway width is not sufficient to allow on street parking, whilst allowing the passage of traffic, including larger vehicles, which may need access to premises on Cecil Road during the hours that the restriction operates.

Should the restrictions be lifted, then it is envisaged that vehicles will park on the footpaths to try and maintain a usable width of carriageway, which itself may provide mobility and safety issues.

As a consequence of this, we consider that the current parking restrictions should remain in force to continue to allow access, and to keep the footways clear during times of greater demand.

If you require further information, please contact me at the above address.

This information is available in other formats and languages from Leigh Ann Thurgood on 01634-331022. If you wish to contact the Council through the Minicom (text) facility please ring 01634 333111.

If you do not consider that the issues raised in your petition have been addressed, please refer to the procedure sent with the acknowledgment letter for a possible further course of action.

Yours sincerely

Robin Cooper
Director of Regeneration, Community & Culture

This information is available in other formats and languages from Leigh Ann Thurgood on 01634-331022. If you wish to contact the Council through the Minicom (text) facility please ring 01634 333111.

Appendix B

B. J. GRIFFIN,



26th March 2011

Dear Caroline Salisbury,

Re your reference Council 03 March 2011 - Tracker 11
Petition: Lifting of parking restrictions Cecil Road, Rochester on
Saturdays.

Thank you for reply regarding the above petition, I would like to ask for
this to be reviewed for the following reasons.

You state that vehicles will park on the footpath causing mobility
problems for pedestrians, and restrict traffic flow.

On Sundays when no restrictions apply vehicles do park in this way
causing minimum difficulty to above mentioned.

Pedestrian and traffic flow are at a reduced rate during weekends so
surely the removal of this restriction could be extended to Saturdays.

Surrounding roads which carry through traffic have the same problem
with pavement parking and width difficulties, but do not suffer any
parking restrictions.

Yours sincerely.



Appendix C

Please contact: Leigh Ann Thurgood

Your ref:

Our ref: Lat/GE45

Date: 9 May 2011

Mrs Marion Hearn

Director's office
Regeneration, Community and Culture
Medway Council
Gun Wharf, Dock Road
Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR
(DX56006 STROOD)
telephone: 01634 331022
facsimile: 01634 331729
Minicom (text) 01634 331300
email: leighann.thurgood@medway.gov.uk

Dear Mrs Hearn

Petition for a Bus Shelter at the Junction of Fulmar Road and Darnley Road, Strood.

Thank for your recent petition requesting a new bus shelter at the above location.

Unfortunately, due to current budgetary pressures we do not currently have any funds for the installation of new bus shelters. This situation will be kept under review and looked at again should the position improve.

A number of shelters across Medway are supplied free of charge by a company called Clear Channel funded by advertising revenue. Our officers did approach them to see if they were willing to provide a new shelter. However, due to the current economic climate they do not consider that this location is commercially viable.

I understand that this information will be disappointing but please be assured that during these challenging times Medway Council will continue to look to improve bus stop accessibility and help increase bus patronage wherever possible.

If you do not consider that the issues raised in your petition have been addressed, please refer to the procedure sent with the acknowledgment letter for a possible further course of action.

Yours sincerely

Robin Cooper

Director of Regeneration, Community & Culture

This information is available in other formats and languages from Leigh Ann Thurgood on 01634-331022. If you wish to contact the Council through the Minicom (text) facility please ring 01634 333111.

15 May 2011

Refs: Lat/GE45 and Council 14 April 2011/Tracker 29



Head of Democratic Services
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
Kent
ME4 4TR

Dear Sir/Madam

PETITION FOR A BUS SHELTER AT THE JUNCTION OF FULMAR ROAD AND DARNLEY ROAD, STROOD

I yesterday received a negative response from Mr Robin Cooper (Director of Regeneration, Community & Culture) in his letter of 9 May, in relation to the above petition. We are extremely disappointed.

We do not consider that our request for a bus shelter has been properly addressed and hereby request please that the matter to be referred to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable them to review the steps the Council has taken.

The reasons for requesting this review include the following:

- Having been in regular contact with the Council's officers since December 2009, I am already aware that the advertising revenue pays for the shelters. We are not happy that the Council has made strong enough representation to Clear Channel
- We do not consider that the Council has done it's best in attempting to identify funding, especially so early in the financial year
- The Director of Regeneration, Community & Culture says in his letter "Medway Council will continue to look to improve bus stop accessibility and help increase bus patronage....". This is trite and inappropriate and causes us to think that the issue has not received the serious consideration that it merits. The petition has been brought by those who already use public transport and comes out of a fundamental human need for shelter. Access to the bus stop is not in question.

I am copying in Councillor Hubbard and, as my newly elected Councillor, Isaac Igwe.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Hearn', is written over the typed name.

Marion Hearn

Cc : Councillor Stephen Hubbard
Councillor Isaac Igwe