

Regeneration, Culture and Environment

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 October 2025

Petitions Report

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.
- 1.2. The Committee is requested to consider the petition referrals requested at section 6 of the report and the Deputy 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 has 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
Lower Stoke Car Park, Lower Stoke	<p>Medway Council is in an extremely difficult financial position and has undertaken a property review to identify surplus non-operational property assets, which can be disposed of to reduce debt, and contribute to Medway's longer- term financial sustainability.</p> <p>The Council's Cabinet on 11 March 2025 agreed that the Lower Stoke car park was declared surplus and delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Corporate Landlord Board (CLB), to dispose of the property, to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable thereby complying with its obligations under s123 of the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>Medway Council has made it clear that it needs to sell the property for its market value, but that the Parish Council will be given the first opportunity to acquire the property before Medway Council even considers any wider marketing of the property. It was also agreed that if the Parish Council were to acquire the property, that the payments could be phased over a reasonable period, so that the Parish Council could raise the required funding.</p>

	<p>The Council intends to have the property valued by the Council's agent and valuer, before they open negotiations with the Parish Council.</p> <p>In the meantime, as the current lease of the car park expires in September, the Council has written to the parish council to set out the terms on which it is prepared to offer a new lease. The Council is awaiting a response, so a new lease can be in place September so the car park can continue to be used.</p> <p>It is hoped that a price and payment plan which is acceptable to both parties can be agreed, which will then allow the Parish Council to acquire the property, thus enabling the Parish Council to safeguard the car park in perpetuity, whilst generating a capital receipt for Medway Council, which will help to make the Council more financially sustainable.</p>
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5. Petition not yet concluded

- 5.1. A holding response has been sent to the petition organiser for the following petitions. The relevant Council service will investigate and provide a full response to the lead petitioner in due course.

Subject of petition	Summary of Medway Council's response
Road Safety Stoke Road, the Ratcliffe Highway, and Avery Way, Allhallows	<p>The Council receives a significant number of requests for changes to the highway. The Transport Engineering Manager will; consider the request and this may include investigations into the area in question, an examination of accident data, site visits, amongst other things. An investigation process can take some time.</p> <p>The Transport and Parking Team will look into this in more detail and will contact the lead petitioner in due course.</p>

6. Petitions referred to the Committee

- 6.1. The following petitions have been referred to this Committee because the petition organisers indicated that they were dissatisfied with the responses received from the Deputy Director of Place.
- 6.2. Opposition to the removal of the Wall at Lordswood Lane, Chatham
- 6.2.1. A petition was received by the Council on 24 April 2025 as follows: We oppose the removal of the protective wall separating the green in front of our

homes from the busy main road. The council's plan to replace the wall with a steel barrier will:

- Leave young children-especially those with special needs-exposed to traffic dangers, as some may not
- recognize the risk of running into the road to retrieve a ball or toy.
- Increase the risk of accidents, as the road is extremely busy, with vehicles moving at high speeds.
- Remove an important safety boundary that currently protects children and prevents strangers from, easily accessing the play area.
- Undo an essential safety feature that has already proven necessary in the past when vehicle went through the wall.

We call on the council to reconsider this decision and implement a safer alternative, such as:

- Repairing and reinforcing the existing wall
- Installing a secure fence with gated access
- Introducing traffic calming measures, such as speed bumps or additional road safety signs.
- Conducting a full safety assessment before making any changes.

6.2.2. The council responded on 8 May 2025 as follows:

The properties situated behind the wall are uniquely positioned; separated from the adjacent highway and benefitting from an enclosed open space which has been utilised by the properties surrounding it. Unfortunately, we can find no specific reason for the wall's construction in this location having searched our records, therefore can only assume it was constructed by the developer of the properties at the time they were built for aesthetic purposes. We acknowledge that children and residents have enjoyed using the open greenspace area as a safety barrier and acknowledge concerns about toys such as footballs rolling onto the road; a challenge faced by many parents living adjacent to roads who have children outside their properties. We have listened to those concerns and to mitigate this, we can explore installing a mesh at the base of the proposed replacement system to prevent items from entering the road.

In response to the wall preventing strangers from accessing the play area, this is not the case as the wall is open ended with a public footpath running through it from Dargets Road to the end of the houses on Lordswood Lane, which any member of the public has a right to pass through.

We would like to reassure you that in proposing to remove the wall, we have carried out a full safety assessment of it, along with a Local Roads Risk assessment. The safety assessment of the wall has deemed it beyond economic repair and the Local Roads Risk Assessment classifies the area as a low priority; in accordance with the Design & Maintenance for Local Authority Roads – Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Local Authority Roads. 3/2025.

The wall does not meet the specification to be classed as a Vehicle Restraint System (VRS), which means it is incapable of preventing a vehicle passing through it in the event of an incident. This is evidenced by the 2 rebuilt sections where cars have crashed through the wall. When this occurs, this puts anyone in the area at risk from being hit by a section of wall or bricks that become missiles at the time of impact. With the correct VRS, any vehicle that would strike it will not be able to pass through or send any debris into passing pedestrians or anyone using the greenspace area fronting the properties behind the wall.

Our priority is to ensure the safety of the community. Previous requests for fencing with gated access or traffic calming measures like speed humps have been rejected, as they would not prevent a vehicle from accessing the grassed area if out of control.

Removing the wall and installing a VRS system will provide better protection for everyone, and we remain committed to maintaining community safety and ensuring that the greenspace remains a safe and enjoyable area for all residents.

6.2.3. The lead petitioner requested a referral to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee on 19 May with the following reasons.

- When I moved into my home it was a state but the whole reason I chose to move into the house is because how enclosed the close was with the wall there and knew my kids would be able to play safely and securely
- Taking down the wall opens our close up for everyone to see everything going on. In the summer the kids always play on the field. Riding bikes playing on the bouncy castle or even playing in a swimming pool. Our gardens aren't the biggest to play in that's why they play on the field. If there is no wall and the kids play on the field stones could flick up off the road from passing drivers. The roads not in the best condition. At night the lights from the cars headlights will end up being directed into the homes. Anyone could pull up along the VRS and take a kid whilst there playing. My 5 year old daughter likes to walk up and down the path pushing her baby in a pushchair.
- Kids like to play football and the ball will end up going over the VRS and my autistic son would easily climb over the barrier to get it.

6.2.4. The referral to the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Committee was held in abeyance whilst the Council and lead petitioner discussed a potential accommodation which would be agreeable to both parties. The Council provided a final response on 22 September.

As Lead Petitioner, I am writing to share the quotations we have received for the removal of the wall and additional measures, as follows:

- Option 1 – Full removal of the wall with no replacement: £21,167.60
- Option 2 – Full removal and installation of a replacement fence: £92,614.24
- Option 3 – Full removal and installation of a vehicle restraint system: £121,225.11

- Option 4 – Partial removal with localised replacement where required: £150,186.23

Following a thorough review, the Council has decided to proceed with Option 1, the full removal of the wall without replacement.

We would like to reassure you that all concerns raised by yourself, residents, and Members; particularly those regarding the safety of children playing on the greenspace have been carefully considered. The Local Roads Risk Assessment deemed Lordswood Lane to be of low priority and therefore concerns about the green becoming an open space following the wall's removal are not considered valid from a safety perspective, with the assessment concluding that the area would remain safe and suitable for recreational use with no additional risks being identified. We fully acknowledge that this will be disappointing news, particularly as the wall has provided a degree of privacy to nearby residents for many years.

The Council is currently operating under significant financial constraints, and we must make difficult decisions about how limited resources are allocated. With increasing pressure on budgets and rising costs across essential services, we are required to prioritise investment in infrastructure that delivers clear public benefit and addresses higher-risk concerns. The wall in question is unregistered and sits adjacent to land owned by MHS Homes. It does not form part of the Council's asset base, nor does it serve a wider public function. In comparison to other structures across Medway that require urgent maintenance and directly impact public safety or accessibility, this wall does not warrant further expenditure beyond removing it.

The decision to remove the wall is based on the need to prevent future safety issues should the structure deteriorate and fall. While this does involve some expenditure, it is a necessary precaution.

We hope this explanation provides clarity on the rationale behind the decision that has been taken, and we will, of course monitor the location to ensure it remains safe and should any concerns arise in future, proportionate interventions such as improved signage and road markings to enhance visibility and driver awareness, may be considered as appropriate.

- 6.2.5. The lead petitioner has confirmed that she is unhappy with the final response, as a consequence the referral to the Committee has been activated.

6.3. Road safety - Signage, Wayfield Road, Chatham

- 6.3.1. On 18 July the Council received a petition as follows: We the residents of Snodhurst House, Chatham, Wayfield Road, Chatham, call on Medway Council to provide a safe place to cross the busy Wayfield Road, to enable pedestrians to access the bus stop opposite.

- 6.3.2. The Council initially provided a holding response to enable officers to fully consider the request, a substantive response was sent 15 August 2025 as follows:

Thank you for your recent petition requesting that the Council install an additional crossing point in Wayfield Road.

The Council works to promote and improve road safety wherever possible, and we are committed to reducing and preventing casualties on our roads where we can. To do so we have to ensure that we focus our budget on the areas that are most in need of intervention. In order to do this one of the things we look at are accidents records for a particular location.

We have considered the request for an additional crossing here from a road safety perspective, but given its good pedestrian safety record, it would be difficult to give Wayfield Road, near Snodhurst House, a high priority for a new pedestrian crossing. The location itself also poses some problems. The double bend near Snodhurst House, and the on-street parking here, would make the safe siting of a crossing facility very difficult.

In terms of an uncontrolled crossing, our Accessibility Team have stated that they would not recommend encouraging pedestrians to cross Wayfield Road near the Cherbourg Crescent bus stop via such a crossing. The presence of two disabled parking bays and a bus stop clearway in this location presents significant constraints that would prohibit the installation of a such a crossing facility here.

As an alternative, a safer option is available a short distance away near Malta Avenue, where lowered kerbs provide a designated crossing point with improved visibility in both directions, offering a more suitable and accessible option for pedestrians.

In addition, we have reviewed the signage in Wayfield Road, and there are existing signs warning of elderly pedestrians, together with worded 'SLOW' road markings, on each approach to Snodhurst House. However, these signs are markings are badly faded, so arrangements will be made for these to be replaced at the earliest opportunity.

Whilst we appreciate that you might be disappointed that a new crossing here is not a viable option, I hope you find this suggested way forward acceptable.

- 6.3.3. The Lead Petitioner replied on 1 September to confirm that they wished to refer the petition to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee as follows:

- 6.3.4. I wish to request a review of the decision in the letter. ref petition for additional crossing point. I have spoken with residents at Snodhurst House and the Management team, and they are supportive of this request. We are in agreement with the signs and markings being replaced, the signs and markings need to be really visible. and the one removed from the conifer tree and placed in a more suitable position. However, this does not alleviate the

issue of actually being able to cross the road. The letter states that the dropped kerbs are a designated crossing place. These are not, they are dropped kerbs for the residents who live in the houses, and they are in the opposite direction of the bus stop on the other side of the road. If they are deemed as a designated crossing point why haven't they been marked out as such? Wayfield Road bus stops are tricky to get to on the other side. The one just past the mini roundabout on the other side is also very difficult to access with traffic negotiating the roundabout. I would therefore wish this Issue to be reviewed.

6.3.5. The Deputy Director, Place has provided additional comments as follows: We have looked over Mrs Cooper's follow-up comments. While we do appreciate the concerns raised, we believe our original response already addresses the key points:

- We have committed to replacing and repositioning the faded signage and markings to improve visibility.
- We have explained that a formal crossing near Snodhurst House isn't feasible due to the road layout, including the double bend and on-street parking.
- The location has a good pedestrian safety record, which means it doesn't meet the threshold for prioritising a new crossing.
- Also, we have highlighted the alternative crossing point near Malta Avenue, which offers better visibility and accessibility. While the dropped kerbs may not be formally marked, they do provide a safer option than the location near the bus stop, which presents several risks.

7. Risk management

7.1. 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.

8. Financial implications

8.1. 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.

9. Legal implications

9.1. 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.

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None