
**Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny
Management Committee**

11 November 2019

Report of the Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

Schedule of Petitions

Summary

1. Members of this Committee are aware of their role in the initial consideration of petitions received by the Authority. The current petitions process was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee on 2 October 2014 and endorsed by Council on 9 October 2014. This process aims to ensure scrutiny of the actions taken in relation to petitions received either by Members or Officers.

Background

2. Following agreement of the above petitions process, Members of the former Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) had been considering a full schedule of petitions received at each meeting, commenting on actions taken by the Executive Member or Officer, or awaiting decisions to be taken at future Executive Member Decision Sessions.
3. However, in order to simplify this process Members agreed, at their June 2015 meeting, that the petitions annex should in future be provided in a reduced format in order to make the information relevant and manageable. At that meeting it was agreed that future petitions reports should include an annex of current petitions and agreed actions, but only following consideration of the petitions by the Executive or relevant Executive Member or Officer.
4. This was agreed, in the knowledge that the full petitions schedule was publicly available on the Council's website and that it was updated and republished after each meeting of the Committee.
<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13020&path=0>

5. Further to deciding at the September meeting of this Committee that the Chair, in conjunction with the Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny, reviews the type of petition being received on the schedule by the Committee, it was reported at the October meeting that the Assistant Director Legal and Governance has recommended to the Chair that when the Constitution is reviewed it could be amended so that ResPark petitions no longer come to this Committee for monitoring. Instead they will be sent to either the Executive Member for Transport or the Highways Team depending on the content of the request.

Current Petitions Update

6. A copy of the reduced petitions schedule is now attached at Annex A of the report which provides a list of new petitions received to date together with details of those considered by the Executive or relevant Executive Member/Officer since the last report to the Committee in September. Further information relating to petitions which have been considered by the Executive Members/Officers since the last meeting are set out below:

Petition Number:

129. Junction Safety – Thanet Road.

This paper petition requesting that no additional utility boxes be placed on Thanet Road due to the safety problems with being unable to see traffic clearly when leaving sports club car parks, and further requesting that the Council works with utility companies to reduce the number of boxes here, was presented by Cllr Waller at an Executive Member for Transport and Planning Decision Session on 14 March 2019. The Executive member for Transport considered the matter on 24 October 2019 and resolved that the petition and the update on responses / action taken so far be noted.

131. York's Transport System

This 1,000+ name petition calling for a public inquiry into York's failing transport system was presented at Full Council on 21 March 2019 by Cllr Pavlovic on behalf of the University of York Student Union. It was considered by the Executive Member for Transport on 24 October 2019, who resolved that the request for a public inquiry be and the anticipated action following the adoption of the Local Plan be noted because a public inquiry would not be appropriate.

133. Call to reverse the proposed £10 Park and Ride parking charge at the York Community Stadium

This petition containing 555 signatures was presented at Full Council on 21 March 2019 by Cllr Cullwick. It was considered by the Executive member for Transport on 24 October 2019 when it was resolved that the current £5 charge for non-P&R parking at Monks Cross P&R site will be maintained and not increased, which reflects the Executive Member for Finance and Performance statement at Full Council, and will be subject to a joint decision by the Executive Members for Transport and Finance and Performance if any changes are proposed. This is because the impact of the stadium activities on the P&R operation cannot be accurately determined until the stadium has opened.

137. Speed Limit – Towthorpe Road

This 18-name petition calling to reduce the speed limit from 60mph to 40mph on Towthorpe Road, Towthorpe (on the section between the junction with Strensall Road and the end of the built up part of Towthorpe) was presented at Full Council on 21 March 2019 by Cllr Doughty. It was considered by the Executive Member for Transport on 24 October 2019 when it was resolved that the request for a revised speed limit on Towthorpe Road be added to the workload.

141. Junction Safety – Tudor Road

This 82-name petition requests that the Council reviews safety at the current junction of Tudor Road with Gale Lane and reintroduces the crossing island at this wide junction on a route to school and local shops and services; ensures that the new junction with the Lowfields Playing Fields housing estate does not result in the loss of parking provision in the area; and ensures that there is no worsening of surface water issues in the surrounding area resulting from the building on playing fields. It was presented at Full Council on 21 March 2019 by Cllr Waller. The petition was considered by the Executive member for Transport on 24 October 2019 when it was resolved that the petition and the update on responses / action taken so far be noted.

The Process

7. There are a number of options available to the Committee as set out in paragraph 8 below, however these are not exhaustive. Every petition is, of course, unique, and it may be that Members feel a different course of action from the standard is necessary.

Options

8. Having considered the reduced Schedule attached which provides details of petitions received and considered by the Executive/Executive Member since the last meeting of the Committee; Members have a number of options in relation to those petitions:
 - Request a fuller report, if applicable, for instance when a petition has received substantial support;
 - Note receipt of the petition and the proposed action;
 - Ask the relevant decision maker or the appropriate Executive Member to attend the Committee to answer questions in relation to it;
 - Undertake a detailed scrutiny review, gathering evidence and making recommendations to the decision maker;
 - Refer the matter to Full Council where its significance requires a debate;

If Members feel that appropriate action has already been taken or is planned, then no further consideration by scrutiny may be necessary.

9. Following this meeting, the lead petitioner in each case will be kept informed of this Committee's consideration of their petition, including any further action Members may decide to take.

Consultation

10. All Groups were consulted on the process of considering more appropriate ways in which the Council deal with and respond to petitions, resulting in the current process. Relevant Directorates are involved and have been consulted on the handling of the petitions outlined in Annex A.

Implications

11. There are no known legal, financial, human resources or other implications directly associated with the recommendations in this report. However, depending upon what, if any, further actions Members agree to there may, of course, be specific implications for resources which would need to be addressed.

Risk Management

12. There are no known risk implications associated with the recommendations in this report. Members should, however, assess the reputational risk by ensuring appropriate and detailed consideration is given to petitions from the public.

Recommendations

13. Members are asked to consider the petitions received on the attached Schedule at Annex A and as further outlined in this report, and agree an appropriate course of action in each case.

Reason: To ensure the Committee carries out its requirements in relation to petitions.

Contact Details:

Author:

Steve Entwistle
Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 01904 554279
steven.entwistle@york.gov.uk

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Dawn Steel,
Head of Democratic Services.
Tel: 01904 551030
dawn.steel@york.gov.uk

Report Approved Date 28/10/2019

Wards Affected:

All



Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A – Extract from schedule of petitions received and action taken to date