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**Corporate & Scrutiny Management & Policy &  
Scrutiny Committee**

**9 November 2015**

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

**Schedule of Petitions**

**Summary**

1. Members of this Committee are now aware of their new 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 aimed 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 Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee 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 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.
4. This was agreed, in the knowledge that the full petitions schedule was publically available on the Council's website and that it was updated and republished after each meeting of the Committee.  
<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1956&ID=1956&RPID=10321482&sch=doc&cat=13020&path=13020>

## 5. Current Petitions Update

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

Petition Nos.

### **20. Anti-Social Behaviour, Clifton Moor Retail Park**

This petition requested the Council to use its powers to reduce anti-social behaviour taking place on privately owned land forming part of the Clifton Moor Retail Park. This matter was initially referred to Jane Mowat, Head of Community Safety and the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) in North Yorkshire Police (NYP).

Since then the Team have confirmed that things have quietened down in the area and that the following additional initiatives have been carried out in an effort to alleviate any future problems:

- the Security Company has been changed to ensure bollards are raised
- the owners have now installed barriers to the car park
- the car club no longer meet at the car park
- the Vehicle & Operator Services Agency, Traffic Police and SNT had a blitz one evening and targeted the area which proved was successful.

Officers' work and the initiatives undertaken have resulted in NYP not receiving the complaints they had prior to the summer.

### **30. Anti- Homeless Bars in Rougier Street Bus Stop**

This change.org e-petition received approximately 5400 signatures, of which approximately 3600 gave York as their location, the petition requested removal of the anti-homeless bars in the Rougier Street bus stop.

The petition was referred to the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods, and in consultation with the Executive Member for Transport and Planning he considered a report from

the Assistant Director of Housing & Community Safety at a Decision Session on 12 October.

The Officers report set out the background to the issues raised and confirmed that, whilst individuals may have slept on the benches in the Rougier Street bus stop, they were predominantly individuals who had access to accommodation, or had chosen not to access accommodation and fell into the category of 'street drinkers'. It was noted that the benches were used during the daytime or early evening by 'street drinkers' and were not being used by those they were intended for which had led to complaints being received about the anti-social behaviour of the street drinkers using the benches. Officers further reported that the Rougier Street bus stop was not a location highlighted as being used for 'rough sleeping' during the night.

Following consideration of the Officers report and the petition the Executive Members agreed to note the petitions content and to retain the bench arms to ensure that the city continued to take a proactive approach to supporting individuals who are homeless, street drinkers or those who found themselves in difficulty whilst at the same time ensuring that the benches were available for use by bus users and, where possible, be compliant with the guidance adopted by the council in the Streetscape Strategy & Guidance document.

**31. Make it York, Parliament Street and the Carousel**  
**35. Make it York, Save York Christmas Carousel in St Sampson's Square**

These two petitions were referred to Make it York, for their comments, the new body set up to provide a joined up approach to the promotion and development of the city and develop a more commercial approach to traditional public sector led activities e.g. festivals and events. Make it York confirmed that they had been working hard to try and improve the York Christmas offer this year and to freshen it up. They confirmed that many new things were planned, many of them for children, and that the new layout of attractions were considered both commercially sensible and in the best interests of the overall Festival.

Make it York had, however, expressed concern about some phrasing used in the e-petition as there were no plans to ban the Carousel from the city. The carousel operator had been invited to

use a “pitch” that he frequently used during the rest of the year, he had been offered what were felt to be very favourable terms and an offer had been made to work with him to ensure the new position would be heavily promoted.

Make it York were also concerned that the petition had stated that the carousel was being replaced by a licensed bar, when that would not be the case. They reported that there had been an unprecedented demand for market stalls at the St Nicholas Festival and that it would be market stalls sited on St Sampson’s Square. A food and drink offer was planned for the bottom end of Parliament Street.

Concerns were also raised, as part of the public participation session, at the 8 October Full Council meeting, by Mr John Warrington, as owner of the Carousel ride and Tom Hughes regarding the suggested alternative siting for the ride offered at the Eye of York over the Christmas period.

#### **34. Current Migrant Issue**

Since receipt of this petition, which requested the Council to set a positive example of national inclusion of the migrants, the Council’s Traveller and Ethnic Minority Support Service team leader has been appointed as Project Officer to co-ordinate the City of York Council’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

The Project Officer has contacted the lead petitioner to confirm that the Council is in the process of working with regional partners to determine how many refugees are likely to come to live in the city. The Council is also already working closely with partners to secure suitable housing, and critically to make sure that the right support is in place across a range of issues, including physical and mental health. She confirmed that school places would be determined by the location of housing and that children would be placed in local schools. Support would also be provided to help children and adults learn English as quickly as possible and a number of key organisations with a range of skills and experience had already agreed to be part of the city wide response.

**40. Stop the Closure of Grove House**

**41. Stop the Closure of Oakhaven**

These petitions were considered as part of the consultation exercise undertaken with residents, relatives and staff of Grove House and Oakhaven, two residential care homes in the city.

A report to the Executive on 29 October 2015 set out the results of the consultation, to enable Members to make an informed decision about whether to close Grove House and Oakhaven.

The Executive gave careful consideration to the petitions and outcome of the consultation undertaken with residents, family, carers and staff of Grove House and Oakhaven to explore the option to close each home with residents moving to alternative accommodation. The Executive also noted the need to increase the supply of good quality accommodation with care for independent living in the city together with new residential and nursing home provision to address the changing needs and aspirations amongst York's older population.

Following representations at the Executive's meeting from the two lead petitioner's consideration was given to the options available and Members took account of the effect any delay could have on staff, residents and the additional costs to the Older Persons' Accommodation Programme. After consideration of all the implications and the balancing of competing priorities the Executive agreed to the closure of both residential care homes subject to resident's moves to new homes being carefully planned and managed in line with the Moving Homes Safety Protocol.

**6. The Process**

There are a number of options available to the Committee as set out in paragraph 7 below. 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**

7. 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.

8. 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**

9. 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**

10. There are no known legal, financial, human resource 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**

11. 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

12. Members are asked to consider the petitions received and actions reported, as set out in paragraph 4 above and on the attached Schedule at Annex A, and agree an appropriate course of action in each case.

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

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty  
AD Governance & ICT

**Report  
Approved**



**Date**

30 October 2015

Wards Affected:

All



**Background Papers:** None

### Annexes:

Annex A - Schedule of new petitions received and action taken to date