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

25 July 2016

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

Schedule of Petitions

Summary

1. Members of this Committee are 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 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. Current Petitions Update

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 meeting of the Committee. Further information relating to petitions which have been considered by the Executive Members/Officers since the last meeting are set out below:

Petition Number

48. **Mill Lane, Heworth**

A copy of this petition, containing 29 signatories was emailed to Councillors Boyce and Funnell on 8 February 2016, on behalf of the lead petitioner, the petition requested 'a dramatic decrease in traffic on Mill Lane, Heworth'.

Consideration was given to the petition at the Executive Member for Transport and Planning Decision Session on 12 May 2016.

Officers confirmed that the street, for at least the past 30 to 40 years, had been a mixture of residential and retail properties. Over the past 2 to 3 years the street scene on Mill Lane had changed considerably as a petrol station / convenience store, newsagents, hair dresses and taxi private hire office had all closed. The majority of the closed retail properties had been replaced, or were due to be replaced, with residential properties. It was considered that this, in turn, should reduce some of the vehicle movements into the street.

The Executive Member noted that Mill Lane provided a link from Heworth Green to East Parade and Layerthorpe both of which contained retail and residential properties and that currently Mill Lane was one of three roads that could be used to access East Parade, Layerthorpe and beyond from Heworth Green, the others being Heworth Road and Foss Bank.

Officers had further highlighted that construction was due for commencement and completion this year as the final section of a link road which would provide a more direct route between Heworth Green, Layerthorpe, James Street and beyond. It was considered that this should significantly reduce any through traffic using Mill Lane.

Consideration was given to the following options:

- Option 1 – Carry out a vehicle count / speed survey and undertake diffusion tube monitoring prior to construction of the new link road and again 12 months after completion at a cost of £1250. Take no immediate action to restrict vehicles using Mill Lane.
- Option 2 – Design a scheme to introduce traffic calming and restrictions on vehicle movements.
- Option 3 – Take no action.

In view of the Officers comments, the Executive Member agreed Option 1 to carry out a vehicle count/speed survey and undertake diffusion tube monitoring prior to construction of the new link road and again within 12 months after completion at a cost of £1250.

This was agreed in order to gauge the current number and speed of vehicles using the highway and to obtain air quality information for Mill Lane. This information could then be used to identify any changes that may be required once the new link road was completed.

- 50. Proposed Cuts to Bus Services** – concern about the proposed cuts to the No 19 and No 20 buses that form a vital lifeline for many residents living along these routes. Urge the Council to reconsider its plans.

The Delivery of Reductions in the Subsidised Bus Service Budget was due to be considered by the Executive Member for Transport and Planning. The item was called in for Pre-Decision Scrutiny and was considered by the Economic Development Policy and Scrutiny Committee (Calling In) on 18 May 2016.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Economic Development Policy and Scrutiny Committee (Calling In), this item was considered by the Executive at their meeting on 30 June 2016. Executive approved Option B, to retain a reduced subsidy for evening bus services and a scaled back level of service on a proportion of route 20. This was agreed as, although it would not achieve the savings target agreed through the Council's budget process, it would potentially meet many of the needs identified through the public consultation.

- 51. Bishopthorpe Road near Campleshon Road junction** – Request for a safer pedestrian crossing point.

This issue was considered by the Executive Member for Transport and Planning at a Decision Session held on 14 July 2016. It was agreed that officers should continue developing proposals as part of this year's School Safety Programme with a view to implementing an appropriate scheme this financial year. This decision was taken in order to improve pedestrian crossing facilities on Bishopthorpe Road at its junction with Campleshon Road.

53. Buffer Zones for gas drilling sites

This petition requested that the Council includes in the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan the requirement for buffer zones around drilling sites. It is proposed that the issues raised will be addressed through the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan.

6. The Process

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

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 5 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

Author:

Jill Pickering
Democracy Officer
Tel No. 01904 552061
e: jill.pickering@york.gov.uk

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
AD Governance & ICT

**Report
Approved**



Date 15 July 2016

Wards Affected:

All



Background Papers: None

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