
Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee

14 January 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>

Current Petitions Update

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

Petition Number:

106. Residents of Strensall with Towthorpe PC petition in support of the “Traffic Study & Road Safety Improvement proposals report” prepared by PC and original submitted in August 2015.

This 80 name petition was sent via email by Cllr Doughty to the Director of Economy and Place and the CYC Head of Transport and Major Transport Projects. It was considered by the Executive Member for Transport and Planning on 20 December 2018 and the Executive Member resolved that the receipt of the petition be noted and that officers inform the Parish Council and York Golf Club of the procedures and policies currently in place to address the points made. This was to inform the Golf Club and Parish Council how road safety matters are assessed and prioritised across the city.

115. “We the undersigned ask the Government, City of York Council, MPs and other relevant bodies to listen to residents and oppose fracking now. Fracking poses unacceptable risks to people, the climate and the environment.”

This 2,750 name York Liberal Democrats ‘Stop Fracking in York Petition was presented to Full Council by Cllr Cuthbertson on 25 October 2018. It was considered by Council alongside a Motion to Council around fracking. Council resolved to lobby against the Government’s fracking proposals and to contact the Secretary of State for BEIS and local MPs outlining the Council’s objections to ‘permitted development’ and fracking and asking them to reconsider the Government’s proposals.

117. We call on City of York Council to complete the missing section of Green Lane pavement.

This petition from 501 residents in 340 households was emailed to Cllr Aspden on 8 November 2018 and forwarded to the Director of Economy and Place on 13 November 2018. Officers emailed the lead petitioner on

1 December 2018 explaining the work has been raised as a ward scheme and the highways design team are reviewing the feasibility for delivery in the new year.

118. We call on City of York Council to improve the Southolme Drive road surface.

This petition from 38 residents in 27 households was emailed to Cllr Aspden on 8 November 2018 and forwarded to the Director of Economy and Place on 13 November 2018. Officers emailed the lead petitioner on 1 December 2018 advising where the scheme is placed in respect of the Annual Condition Assessment survey.

122. Clementhorpe Flood Barrier Petition. We the undersigned express our dismay and frustration at the continued risk of flooding of our homes following yet another delay to flood defence works in the Clementhorpe area.

This 87-name petition was presented at Full Council. The Lead Petitioner attended the 10 December 2018 Executive Member for the Environment Decision Session and registered to speak on the issue. The Executive Member, CYC officers and the Environment Agency (EA) as lead on the flood schemes in this location responded to the key concerns and gave assurances that the scheme would progress within the desired timescales within the petition. The minutes of the Decision Session support this discussion and this will be further reinforced by the CYC Flood Risk Manager within the EA Programme Board for the flood scheme and by the Executive Member in the next quarterly update to the Decision Session.

The Process

6. 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 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

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 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.

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Report Approved

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Date

21 December 2018

Wards Affected:

All

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Background Papers: None

Annexes:

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