

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
Audit and Scrutiny Committee

18 June 2015

PUBLIC PETITIONS

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development

Agenda Item	8
Report No	AS/12/15

Summary

This report updates Members on the public petitions received by the Council since introduction of the Council's petition procedure in August 2013.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 27 June 2013 the Council agreed to the introduction of a procedure for the consideration of public petitions in implementation of Commitment Four of the Council's Programme to Work Together to Empower our Communities which provided that 'the Council will allow public petitions to be considered by the Council and relevant strategic committees.'
- 1.2 The petitions procedure was launched on 1 August 2013 and accompanying guidance together with a template petition were made available on the Council's website.

2. Public Petitions – 2013-15

- 2.1 Following introduction of the procedure the Council has considered a total of fourteen petitions in accordance with the petitions procedure. Details of the petitions are set out in Appendix 1 below.
- 2.2 In many instances petitions have not been accepted because the petition was submitted following the Council's consideration of an issue such as the request for a 20mph zone on Castle Road and South Lodge, Invergordon or in respect of a regulatory matter which has its own appeal mechanism for example the granting of consent for a wind turbine.
- 2.3 The Council has been made aware of individuals promoting online petitions through social media to campaign in respect of issues such as study leave. However those involved have chosen not to take advantage of the Council's procedure to bring the issue to the attention formally to the attention of Members. It is therefore proposed that a review is undertaken with the Corporate Communications Team to consider more effective promotion of the petitions process including links to the Council's social media sites.

3. Implications

- 3.1 There are no resource, legal, equalities, Gaelic, climate change/Carbon Clever, rural or risk implications to be highlighted.

4. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:-

- i. Note that fourteen public petitions have been considered since the introduction of the procedure in August 2013; and
- ii. Agree that a review is undertaken to promote the greater use of the petitions procedure.

Designation: Depute Chief Executive
Date 2 June 2015

Appendix One

Petition Ref	Subject	Outcome
1/13	To rescind the decision to choose Option 6 for Inverness West Link Road and approve Option 7.	Not accepted – the matter had been considered and decided upon by the Council within the previous six months – Ground 5(f)
2/13	To challenge the removal of 63 parking places from Huntly Street and Greig street, Inverness	Not accepted – the matter involved determination of a Planning, Licensing or other matter which has its own procedure for objection or appeal, namely a road traffic order – Ground 5(a)
3/13	Portmahomack Stop the Wind Turbine at North Tarrel	Not accepted - the matter involved determination of a Planning, Licensing or other matter which has its own procedure for objection or appeal, namely a road traffic order – Ground 5(a)
4/13	Supporting Tree Preservation Order assessments being undertaken on Swordale amenity trees	Accepted. Officers undertook the requested action and secured satisfactory outcome without the need for consideration by Committee.
5/13	To make Castle Road and South Lodge, Invergordon safe and enforce a 20mph speed limit	Not accepted - the matter had been considered and decided upon by the TECS Committee within the previous six months –Ground 5(f)
1/14	Save our Service Points - Think again on Service Point Closures of Dornoch, Brora and Bonar Bridge	All of the petitions were presented to the Convener at the start of the Council meeting on 13 th March 2014. The petitions were taken into account by the Council in its deliberations and following consideration Council agreed to establish, for the next 15 months, a cross-group Customer Services Board of 10 Members with delegated powers to - (a) Undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point network; (b) Consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and (c) Agree a future service delivery model for each such community on the basis of a business case which takes
2/14	Save our Service Points - Think again on Service Point Closure of Fort Augustus	
3/14	Save our Service Points - Think again on Service Point Closures of Kinlochleven	
4/14	Save our Service Points - Think again on Service Point Closures of Muir of Ord	
5/14	Save our Service Points - Think again on Service Point Closures of Broadford	
6/14	Save our Service Points - Think again on Service Point Closures of Broadford and Kyle	
7/14	Save our Service Points - Think again on Service Point Closures of Kyle	

8/14	Save our Service Points - Think again on Service Point Closures of Gairloch	into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.
9/14	Improve the welfare of animals and birds at Black Isle Wildlife Park	Not accepted – the matter involved a regulatory matter – Ground 5(a)