



AGENDA ITEM: 6

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

28 August 2007

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PETITIONS

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present to the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) information relating to the procedures for dealing with petitions.

BACKGROUND

2. OSB has requested information on the procedures for dealing with petitions from the public.
3. Attached to this report are two documents plus a statistical summary as follows:-
 - Appendix 1 : The office procedures for dealing with petitions.
 - Appendix 2 : The relevant extract from the Members' Handbook explaining how petitions are dealt with, and giving guidance to Members on how to advise their constituents who wish to present a petition to the Council.
 - Appendix 3: Petitions received 2004 - 2007
4. The procedures for dealing with Petitions were developed several years ago. However, they are being continually updated. For example, in 2002 the procedures were amended to include the elected Mayor. In 2005 the procedures were amended following the review of Council Meetings, which allowed the opportunity for petitions containing more than 100 signatures to be presented to Council by the lead petitioner(s). In 2003 a section was included in the new Members' Handbook advising Members how to deal with Petitions. In 2007 this advice was re-written and expanded for the new version of the Members Handbook. We are currently working with IT to develop a Petitions Database that will enable the tracking of Petitions, and the recording of any actions taken as a result of receiving a Petition.

PETITIONS RECEIVED

5. Over the past 3 years the Council has received 155 Petitions – on average 1 per week. By far, the largest single subject of Petitions is planning matters: these account for approximately 40% of all Petitions received. The next largest subject of Petitions has been highways matters, accounting for 17% of Petitions. Planning and highways have also been the most consistent subject of Petitions in each of the three years. A summary of Petitions received over the past three years, by subject area, is attached at Appendix 3.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

6. No background papers, other than those attached, were used in the preparation of this report.

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