

## Minute of Meeting Petitions Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 04 June 2018	14:00	Corporate Meeting Room 2, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

### Present

Councillor Jennifer Marion Adam-McGregor, Councillor Bill Brown, Councillor Stephen Burns, Councillor Michelle Campbell, Councillor Neill Graham, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Scott Kerr, Councillor Jim Sharkey, Councillor Andy Steel

### Chair

Councillor Adam-McGregor, Convener, presided.

### In Attendance

K Graham, Head of Corporate Governance and P Shiach, Committee Services Officer (both Finance and Resources) and J Mackie, Placemaking Team Leader (Development and Housing).

### Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated by members prior to the commencement of the meeting.

## 1 Petition: Elderslie Golf Course - Access

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to a petition which had been received which related to access to Elderslie Golf Course and the application by Renfrewshire Council of the terms of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to access land being closed off within the Council area.

The report intimated that the Head of Corporate Governance considered that the petition was not valid in terms of paragraph 3(b)(x) of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions, namely "petitions about any decisions we have made as a Council, or decisions a board, committee, joint committee or officer has made in the last six months". The report intimated that following consideration of a number of options, Council officers had decided that the existing access at Laxwell Avenue, provided the most appropriate, safe and reasonable access to the golf course and the associated path network. The petitioner was advised of the decision on 30 March 2018.

The report advised that notwithstanding the Head of Corporate Governance's view, it was for the Board to determine the validity of the petition and whether they wished to hear it.

**DECIDED:** That the petition was not valid in terms of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions and that it be not heard.

## 2 Review of the Petitions Process

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to a review of the Petitions Process.

The report indicated that the Council at its meeting held on 13 September, 2007 agreed a procedure in relation to the submission of petitions, including parameters for determining valid petitions. The petitions procedure was part of the Council's commitment to give people a more formal and direct involvement in decision making and to allow them to raise issues with the Council and potentially influence policy on issues which matter to their communities.

The report indicated that the Council originally agreed that the procedure for submission of petitions be reviewed on an annual basis. Following these reviews action plans were developed and implemented and a number of changes made to improve engagement with and participation of the public in the petitions process. The former Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board subsequently agreed that the petitions process be reviewed biennially.

As part of the current review, consultation was undertaken with elected members, senior officers within the Council, community council representatives and members of the public via 'survey monkey' questionnaires to obtain feedback to further improve awareness of, access to and participation in the petitions process.

The report advised that in total 26 responses were received compared with 17 in the previous survey. While generally it was the same group of people who were asked each time, there were a number of councillors elected to the Council for the first time in 2017 which could possibly have had an effect on the number of responses. The majority of those who responded were community council members, (7) members of the public (7), employees (3) and elected members (5). There were four respondents who could not be categorised from their responses.

As a result of the current consultation an action plan had been developed, which formed the Appendix to the report, to address some of the issues raised.

**DECIDED:**

- (a) That the consultation responses be noted;
- (b) That the suggestions for improvement, in particular with regard to publicising the process in a variety of media, be noted;
- (c) That the action plan which formed the Appendix to the report be approved; and
- (d) That it be noted that the next review of the Petitions process was scheduled to take place during 2019/20.