

Action Taken on Petitions

ACTION TAKEN ON PETITIONS

Council Members are asked to note the action taken in relation to the under-mentioned petitions which were presented to Council: -

1. Petition to introduce waiting restrictions, signage and remove the bus link at Barmston Village Centre

A petition signed by 319 residents, was presented to Council on 23 March 2022 by Councillor Fiona Miller and referred to the Executive Director of City Development. The Petition read as follows:

“Requests that the council places a traffic regulation order, at the village centre shops (double yellow lines). The shop has large delivery vehicles delivering to the mini mart and chippy at all times of the day. The HGVs have obscured lines of vision for safe crossings to the shops and inconsiderate parking stopping the vehicles being able to park safely, to deliver. The residents request that there is signage to highlight for visitors to the shops, that there is a parking area just directly across the road, to enable safe parking for the shops and community pub. The residents would like bus link removed, over the years there have been several near misses and one child injured, with drivers trying to speed through, regardless.”

Council Officers have considered the petition and advised as follows.

The location suggested has a shop, chip shop, pub and primary school within a close proximity. There are car parks clearly available for vehicles to utilise when visiting the shops, or the school. The petition was declined on the basis that the implementation of waiting restrictions at this location would not prevent the parking and loading at this location (due to observation periods for parking and loading); the car parks are clearly visible from the highway (The Department for Transport have issued a directive to reduce street clutter, such as unnecessary signage); the removal of the bus link cannot be facilitated as this was installed to remove the volume of traffic from Barmston Village Centre.

Councillor F. Miller has been advised of the response.

2. Petition to install a traffic signal pedestrian crossing on Silksworth Lane

A petition signed by more than 200 residents was presented to Council on 23 March 2022 by Councillor Phil Tye requesting the installation of a traffic signal pedestrian crossing on Silksworth Lane between St Christopher’s and Nursery Road. The Petition read as follows:

“Request the installation of a traffic signal pedestrian crossing on Silksworth Lane between St Christopher’s and Nursery Road, to allow the safe passage of pedestrians across the road.”

Council Officers have considered the petition and advised as follows.

The location suggested has three pedestrian refuges within close proximity that residents can utilise to cross the highway.

A Road Safety Assessment was conducted using the cabinet approved criteria. The petition was declined as this location did not meet the threshold using the Road Safety Assessment criteria for interventions and inclusion within the programme of traffic works.

Councillor Tye has been advised of the response.

3. Petition calling for the closure of Sterling Care Solutions, West Lodge

A petition signed by 71 residents, was presented to Council on 13 September 2023 by Cllr Adele Graham-King. The petition read as follows:

“Petition for the Closure of Sterling Care Solutions West Lodge. This Petition is being presented to halt the ongoing issues at this establishment that houses people with alcohol and substance abuse and there was no community consultation.”

Council Officers have considered the petition and advised as follows:

The provider confirmed that all appropriate staff training had taken place and supervision processes were in place to support staff. Adult Social Care have confirmed that any customers requiring additional support, do have this in place as part of their formal care and support plan. All customers have regular unplanned visits from their allocated Social Worker. Any new referrals are considered alongside the mix of current customers to ensure they are compatible. Adult Social Care ensure there is a balance of customers with complex and low-level needs.

The provider confirmed they will make a retrospective planning application as this was an oversight on their behalf. However, Sterling Care had gained approval from the planning department to change the use from student accommodation into Housing of Multiple Occupation (HMO). The provider confirmed that there are ongoing issues with one resident for whom they are seeking an alternative placement alongside Adult Social Care colleagues. Confirmation was given that there is no drug dealing or injecting taking place in the property and there has been no record of any of the current residents at West Lodge being involved in any form of violence against local residents. The provider has reported that they have had threats made to staff and residents with people coming to the establishment which have been reported to the police. A good working relationship is in place with the local area police officers who visit regularly and not just to respond to incidents. The provider had confirmed that contact had been made with local Ward Councillors and that a meeting is to be arranged.

Councillor Graham-King has been advised of the response.

4. Petition – Request that the Council urgently review the short break respite provision delivered at Grace House

A petition signed by 6,694 residents, was presented to Council on 13 September 2023 by Councillor Anthony Mullen. The petition read as follows:

“We the undersigned residents of the City of Sunderland, petition Sunderland City Council and Together for Children, to urgently review the Short Break Respite provision which has been delivered at Grace House since 2016/17. Following a breakdown of communication between Together for Children and Grace House, families with disabled children, many with severe and complex needs, will be left bereft of assessed respite care following an announcement to parents that provision will cease in November. We fully support the Give us a Break! Campaign, and ask that negotiations are recommenced to provide this essential care with continuation of service, whilst an alternative building is sourced.”

Council Officers have considered the petition and advised as follows.

There have been two presentations to the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee (7 September and 2 November) to update Members and residents on progress in securing alternative care packages of support for children, and on identifying an alternative building through which the Council would now commission Together for Children to run the service, as the provision from Sunderland Care and Support comes to an end. It has been made clear in those presentations and in communication with parents and carers, that the decision to remain in the building is a matter for the Grace House charity and not solely a Council decision. The charity confirmed to the Chief Executive of the Council in September that they were not in a position to agree an extension and that the service would need to exit the building as planned.

At the Cabinet meeting on 12 October 2023 the Council agreed to purchase a building in Sunderland that has been identified for the provision of overnight short breaks and as soon as the relevant legal processes have been cleared, further details will be shared with parent/carers. Parents/carers and children will be invited to contribute to the look and feel of the new home as soon as possible.

The priority has been to ensure that all children have alternative support packages and at the time of preparation of this report, these were available for all families. A further progress update will be provided to the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee in January 2024.

Councillor Mullen has been advised of the response.