



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE PETITIONS COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2014
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWNHOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Provost L Broun-Lindsay (Convenor)
Councillor S Currie
Councillor M Veitch

Council Officials Present:

Ms E Wilson, Service Manager – Economic Development & Strategic Investment
Mr S Baxter, Senior Area Officer – West, Transportation
Ms J McCabe, Legal Adviser

Petitioner(s) Present:

Mr M Ormiston
Mr J Wood

Clerk:

Ms F Currie, Committees Assistant

Others present:

Mrs S Colquhoun (re PET 1307)
Mrs T Leitch (re PET 1307)

Apologies:

None

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION

PET 1307: CALLING ON EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL TO PROVIDE SHELTERED HOUSING IN ORMISTON

Councillor Broun-Lindsay welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the Committee members and outlined the procedure that would be followed. He invited Mr Mark Ormiston to speak first regarding his petition.

Mr Ormiston informed Members that the petition had been signed by all but one village resident which showed the overwhelming level of local support for this issue. He also noted that there were currently two potential sites in the village which might suit a sheltered housing development. He cited the policies of the previous UK government and comments made by current Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, in support of sheltered housing. While initiatives such as Floating Wardens and assessments and adaptations to allow people to remain in their own homes for longer were welcome, the need for sheltered housing would continue to increase as the population grew older. Mr Ormiston reminded members of the Council's own policies in relation to new housing developments – that 25% of stock must be affordable housing – and suggested that this might be a way of providing new sheltered housing developments. He concluded that residents who had lived most or all of their lives in Ormiston should not have to leave their village to access housing appropriate to their changing needs.

Members asked about existing sheltered housing in the village. Mr Ormiston explained that currently there was no sheltered housing; only amenity housing – adapted to individual needs and mostly suitable for single people, not couples.

Ms Esther Wilson, Service Manager – Economic Development & Strategic Investment, outlined the Council's policy in relation to sheltered housing. She explained that such provision was considered as part of a wider strategic approach to services for older people throughout East Lothian. Any decisions on services had to be taken in the context of increased budget constraints and competing demands from other sectors. There had been just over 300 applications for sheltered housing – almost half of which came from owner/occupiers – compared with an overall housing waiting list of around 4500. In addition to sheltered housing, there was also demand for other types of accessible or amenity housing. Historically, sheltered housing developments had been built in larger population centres within the county, such as Tranent, as this was where demand was greatest. Ms Wilson indicated that, of the 86 housing applications received from residents in Ormiston, only 3 had been for sheltered housing and none had been received in the last 5 years. On that basis, there did not appear to be a priority need for sheltered accommodation in Ormiston at this time.

In response to questions, Ms Wilson confirmed that it was up to the Council to determine the make up of the 25% affordable housing in any new development and this could include sheltered or amenity housing. At present there was sufficient sheltered housing across the county as a whole but that may change depending on the needs of the population. She indicated that the sheltered housing complex in Tranent had 29 properties and quite a low turnover.

In their debate, Members acknowledged the evident strength of feeling within the local community. They accepted that, as places like Ormiston increased in size, the demand for appropriate services within the local area would also increase. While not directly endorsing the petition's statement, the Members supported the sentiment behind it. They concluded that it would be helpful to have further information on how affordable housing could be used to address sheltered housing needs within the county as a whole. They agreed that the

petition did have some merit and that the matter should be referred to the appropriate Cabinet Spokesperson for further consideration, with the possibility of a report being brought forward to Cabinet at a future date.

Decision

The Committee agreed that the petition did have some merit and referred the matter to the Cabinet Spokesperson for Housing for further consideration.

PET 1308: CALLING ON EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL TO INSTALL TRAFFIC-CALMING MEASURES ON WOODHALL ROAD, PENCAITLAND

Councillor Broun-Lindsay invited Mr John Wood to speak regarding his petition.

Mr Wood thanked the Members for the opportunity to speak on this matter. He explained that he had brought the petition as a result of concerns about the speed of some vehicles travelling on Woodhall Road, which sits within a residential area with many young families. He had gathered the petition signatures from his neighbours, most of who agreed that traffic calming measures would be a useful deterrent to speeding drivers.

Mr Stuart Baxter, Senior Area Officer – West, Transportation, presented the Council's position. He advised Members that he had considered the matter and was willing to accede to Mr Wood's request. Woodhall Road would be added to the list of traffic calming works to be undertaken throughout the county. However, Mr Baxter indicated that the road was not considered a priority, as there had been no recorded accidents involving pedestrians in the street, and it may be next year before the work would be carried out.

The Members asked whether any action could be taken in the interim and Mr Baxter indicated that appropriate signage could be looked at to try to encourage drivers to reduce their speeds.

Decision

The Committee agreed to discharge the petition on the grounds that Council officers had agreed to undertake the work requested by Mr Wood.

Signed

Provost Ludovic Broun-Lindsay
Convener of the Petitions Committee