

Council Petition Scheme

Council

Date: 14th July 2016

Author:	Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To report on the receipt of the following Petition received “We the users of Highworth Library, call upon Swindon Borough Council to Save Highworth Library.” The petition contains 2,735 signatures. The wording of the Petition is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 At the Annual Council meeting held on 21st May 2010, the Council formally adopted a Petition Scheme in accordance with the requirements of Sections 10 to 22 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act) and subsequent statutory guidance.
- 1.3 Operating the Petition Scheme helps deliver the strategic corporate priority of working with people and families to help them fulfil their potential by developing public participation in decision-making.

2. Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- 2.1 To hear from the Lead Petitioner (or representative) presenting the Petition calling on Swindon Borough Council to Save Highworth Library.
- 2.2 To consider the petition, the response to the petition from the Cabinet Member for Communities and to determine any action to be taken in respect of that petition.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Council has received the following petition containing a sufficient number of signatures to satisfy the requirements for it to be presented to Full Council for debate:

““We the users of Highworth Library, call upon Swindon Borough Council to Save Highworth Library”.
- 3.2 At its meeting held on 14th April 2016 the Council considered a petition containing 2,841 signatures calling on Swindon Borough Council to guarantee the future of all libraries in Swindon by ensuring that they continue to be run by professionally trained Council staff and funded by the Council. Council resolved “Council

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Stephen Taylor on Direct Dial No. 463013 or Email staylor@swindon.gov.uk or Steve Jones, Committee and Member Services on Direct Dial No. 463602 or Email sjones@swindon.gov.uk

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thanks the petitioners for their submission. The Council is still in an engagement phase towards producing a draft strategy and these views will be taken into account as part of that. A draft strategy will be circulated in June and I invite all concerned residents to read and respond to it." (Minute 88 2015/16 refers.)

- 3.3 Also, in the last six months Council has considered 14 Public Questions (excluding supplemental questions) specifically relating to the provision of the Council's Library Service. Of these, five related directly to the Highworth Library, and the Public Questions and the replies are attached at Appendix 2.

Procedure

- 3.4 At the Annual Council meeting, the Council resolved to adopt a petition scheme to apply to all petitions received by the Council.

- 3.5 The Minute of Council is set out below:

"(1) That, subject to (2) below, the Swindon Borough Council Petitions Scheme, as set out in Appendix 1 of the joint report of the Leader of the Council and Director of Law and Democratic Services be adopted.

(2) That if a Petition is to be reported to and debated at a meeting of the Council it must contain at least 1,500 signatories or petitioners (this is to be reduced to 750 signatories or petitioners where the petition relates to a local issues affecting two or three wards or 350 signatories or petitioners for a single ward issue within the Council's area.)

(3) That the Director of Law and Democratic Services be appointed as the Council's Petitions Officer.

- 3.6 The Council's Petitions Officer has determined that the Petition set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report meets the requirements to be considered by the Council.

- 3.7 In accordance with the Scheme:

3.1.1 The petition organiser, or their appointed deputy, will be invited to address the meeting for up to 5 minutes on the subject of the petition.

3.1.2 The petition organiser will be notified of the outcome of the debate in writing and of any follow-up actions that are agreed by the meeting.

- 3.8 A copy of the petition is available for inspection by contacting Committee and Member Services.

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- 3.9 A Lead Petitioner has been nominated by the petition organisers and advised that the petition will be presented to the meeting of Council to be held on 14th July 2016 and has been invited to attend.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 No alternative options are proposed.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are none specific to this report. However, should the Council determine that action be taken in respect of this petition this will require a report to the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or relevant Committee and any Financial and Procurement Implications will need to be addressed in that report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and human rights implications have been taken into account in the body of the report. Sections 10 to 22 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and the Department for Communities and Local Government Statutory Guidance on Handling Petitions have been taken into account in the development of the Council's Petition Scheme.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No diversity impact assessments were undertaken.

Risk Management

- 5.5 None

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resource (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

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8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Heading of Petition

8.2 Appendix 2 - Public Questions and Responses relating to Highworth Public Library.