

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Lynn Williams, Acting Leader of the Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	20 July 2020

## **PUBLIC REPRESENTATION - PETITION SCHEME**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 To consider a petition submitted as part of the Council’s Petition Scheme.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To consider the submission of the petition and whether to take a view as a Council and/ or make a recommendation to the Executive.

### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

3.1 The submitted petition has reached the threshold of 1,500 signatures (from the Fylde coast area) which triggers a debate at Council.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

The options available to Council are set out in paragraph 5.4 of this report.

### **4.0 Council Priority:**

4.1 The relevant Council priorities are “The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool” and “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

### **5.0 Background Information**

5.1 On 22 September 2010, the Council approved a Petition Scheme, in line with its then requirements under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. One part of the scheme relates to petition to be reported to and debated

at Council and those that would qualify for this option must contain at least 1,500 signatures.

- 5.2 The Council's Petitions Officer has received a petition with 8,125 signatures and of those 1,618 are listed with an FY postcode area. The petition is called 'Re-open Blackpool Airport for commercial passenger flights'.

The Petition statement used is as follows:

"A recent poll of over 7,800 Blackpool residents showed that a whopping 96% supported re-opening Blackpool Airport for commercial passenger flights. Are you part of the 96%?

If so, we need your support. Please sign this petition, and then share it. So that we can show Blackpool Council how important this issue is to us.

It's 2 years since Labour-run Blackpool Council bought back the airport but in that time the Council have failed to produce a plan for the airport and have sent out mixed messages about its future. The airport is a key strategic asset for Blackpool and could be a major driver for tourism and economic growth.

Did you enjoy the convenience of flying from Blackpool to destinations in the UK and Europe? Do you live elsewhere but used the airport to travel to Blackpool for a holiday? Do you agree that re-opening the airport is vital for the future of Blackpool?

If so, sign our petition and then share it. We'll share the results with Blackpool Council and ask them to clearly set out their strategy for restoring commercial passenger flights to Blackpool Airport".

- 5.3 Mr Scott Benton MP is listed as the petition organiser and he has been invited to the Council meeting to address Council with regards to the petition statement.

- 5.4 In line with the procedure for petitions and public representations generally:
- the petition speaker will address the Council up to a maximum of five minutes
  - the relevant Cabinet Member will be invited to address the petition on behalf of the Council first
  - other Councillors will then be able to debate the issue up to a maximum of 20 minutes. Normal rules of debate will apply, in accordance with Procedural Standing Order 14 (e.g. mover of a motion has five minutes, other speakers three minutes, members only speak once, any mover of motion has the right of reply etc).
  - Only one motion to be debated at once.

5.5 In line with the above Procedural Standing Order 9.9, if as a result of the debate Council wished to pass a resolution in line with the petition statement to agree to the request to set out a strategy then this would not be something the Council could agree at the meeting and would need to ask for example the Executive and/ or another committee to do this. Therefore any motion moved should reflect that.

5.6 If the Council did not wish to agree to the petition statement then it would need to pass a motion at the meeting to that effect, or not pass a motion at all and no action would be taken.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**6.0 List of Appendices:**

6.1 None.

**7.0 Legal considerations:**

7.1 The Council's Petition Scheme and consequently its Constitution state that any petition received with over 1,500 signatures must be put forward for debate at Council. As the petition statement and the debate around it could affect the financial position of the Airport then all three Council-appointed non-executive directors should consider that they have a prejudicial interest in this item and would need to leave the meeting whilst the matter is debated and voted upon.

**8.0 Human Resources considerations:**

8.1 None

**9.0 Equalities considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Financial considerations:**

10.1 None by way of this report although if the petition question was supported, it would be the responsibility of the Executive to consider and evaluate any financial implications.

**11.0 Risk management considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Ethical considerations:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

13.1 None

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None.