

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	27 June 2018

PUBLIC REPRESENTATION - PETITION SCHEME – RE-OPENING OF THE BLACKPOOL FOYER TO HELP THE HOMELESS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER LOCAL GROUPS

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 any recommendations to the Executive, or other Council committees.

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.

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| 3.2a | Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? | No |
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| 3.2b | Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? | Yes |
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- 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 1,941 signatures and of those 1,503 reside within the FY postcode area. The petition relates to the re-opening of the Blackpool Foyer to help the homeless in partnership with other local groups.

The Petition statement used is as follows:

"For three years now the Blackpool Foyer has been closed, which has 38 flats that can be used to accommodate young homeless people between the age of 16 to 24. Blackpool Council will you accommodate homeless people in the Blackpool Foyer over the winter period?

Why is this important?

Sign the petition to show Blackpool Council that they should allow homeless people to take shelter in Blackpool Foyer during the winter season. Homelessness in Blackpool is getting higher and higher and there are 38 empty flats that are clearly available.

The Blackpool Foyer can be very useful over the winter period rather than an empty building with no purpose. I seriously think Blackpool Council should be considering using the building to help the homeless in partnership with Great Places Housing Group and other organisations".

5.3 Mr Daniel Bennison 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 public representations generally, the relevant Cabinet Member Councillor Mrs Wright, will be invited to address the petition on behalf of the Council first. Other Councillors will then be able to debate the issue. Normal rules of debate will apply, in accordance with Procedural Standing Order 14 (e.g. mover of a motion has 5 mins, other speakers 3 mins, members only speak once etc).

- 5.5 The Council's Constitution states at Procedural Standing Order 9 (Representations, Petitions and Questions by the Public).

9.9 Petitions for debate at Council Meeting

9.9.1 Petitions which meet the requirements of the Council's Petitions scheme and as part of that have at least 1,500 signatures will be debated at an ordinary Council meeting. The following procedure will apply:

- (i) Petition organisers have the opportunity to present their petition and a maximum of five minutes will be allowed for that purpose.
- (ii) A maximum of 20 minutes will then be allowed for discussion of the matter by councillors. The time limit may be extended at the discretion of the Mayor, if considered appropriate.
- (iii) The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. It may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to request further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee. Where the issue is one on which the Council's Executive is required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to help inform that decision.

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.

8.0 Human Resources considerations:

- 8.1 None

9.0 Equalities considerations:

- 9.1 None

10.0 Financial considerations:

10.1 None – if the petition question was supported it would be down to the Executive to consider and assess the 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.