

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	25 September 2019

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 over 8,000 signatures and of those 2,700 are listed with an FY postcode area. The petition is called 'Joint Petition to Save Stanley Park Golf Course'.

The Petition statement used is as follows:

"Blackpool Council propose to lease off the land and management of Blackpool Park Golf Club in Stanley Park, the only municipal golf resource in the area offering affordable golf to all residents across the Fylde. The proposal is to reduce the course to 9 holes on the west side and build yet another tourist attraction on the east side of the course, between Victoria Hospital and Salisbury Woodland Garden.

Our aim, as was Blackpool Council's in their Blackpool Local Plan (2001-2016, section 8.5), is *"to maintain and improve open land and natural environments within the Borough through protecting and enhancing landscape quality and nature conservation value"*. This historic golf course has been cherished by thousands of Blackpool residents, golfers and non-golfers alike. To develop and build on this landscape would be sacrilege. It would have a devastating environmental impact and be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the community it serves.

EVERYONE should care about this. Please sign up".

- 5.3 Ms Christine Parker is listed as the petition organiser and she 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 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 five minutes, other speakers three minutes, 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.

5.6 This petition was started following the decision of the Executive on 15 July 2019, titled 'Contracts for the Provision of Stanley Park Golf Course Concession' decision number EX31/ 2019. If as a result of the debate Council wished to change the decision of the Executive then it would need to pass a resolution to recommend the Executive accordingly. If the Council did not wish to change the decision of the Executive then it could pass a resolution to that effect, or if no resolution was passed at the end of the debate, then the Executive decision would still stand.

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.

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.