

From: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services
Angela Slaven – Director of Improvement, Education and Young People’s Services

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 20 May 2015

Subject: Save our Public Libraries - Petition Scheme Debate

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Details of petition received which will be the subject of a debate in accordance with the County Council’s Petition Scheme.

For Decision

1. Introduction

(1) In accordance with the Petition Scheme agreed at the County Council on 13 September 2012, any petition on a County Council matter that has more than 2,500 signatures will trigger a debate at the appropriate Cabinet Committee.

(2) The process for the debate on each petition is that the Lead Petitioner(s) will be invited to speak to the petition for up to 5 minutes. There will then be a debate of up to 35 minutes (with each Member speaking for up to 3 minutes) before the Cabinet Member for Community Services is invited to respond for a maximum of 5 minutes at the end of the debate to advise the Cabinet Committee how he intends to respond to the petitioners’ concerns.

(3) As the subject matter of this petition relates to a matter that is the responsibility of the Council’s Executive, the Cabinet Committee may decide whether to make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Community Services to inform the decision-making process.

2. Petition – Save Our Public Libraries

(1) A petition prompted by Kent County Council's plans to handover the remaining Kent Libraries, Registration and Archive Service to a charitable trust has been received. The petition says

“We the undersigned petition the council to show pride in Kent's public libraries. We, as residents and/or people who work or study within the county, oppose cuts and closures to Kent’s Library Service. We demand that KCC councillors ensure that this integrated network of 99 libraries continues to be:

- free and open to all with current levels of local accessibility and opening hours maintained or improved;*
- run by professional librarians and appropriately remunerated staff - with volunteers providing additional support ; and*

- *democratically accountable to elected councilors (on operational and statutory matters) and bound by Freedom of Information.”*

(2) The petition has attracted 3,775 signatures from people who live, work or study in Kent and therefore has triggered a debate at this Cabinet Committee.

A statement from the Lead Petitioners, is attached (**Appendix 1**) and Mr Stainton will be attending the meeting and speaking to the petition.

3. Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is invited to consider whether to make any recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community Services in relation to the action taken by the petitioners.

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Background Documents: None