

From: Joel Cook – Democratic Services Manager

To: County Council – 7 November 2024

Subject: **Petition Scheme Debate – Seashells
Commissioned Family Hub**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Details of a petition received which will be the subject of a debate and formal consideration by the Council, in accordance with the Petition Scheme.

For Decision

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Petition Scheme set out at sections 14.34-14.39 of the Constitution, any petition on a County Council matter which has 5000 signatures or more will trigger a debate at a meeting of the Full Council.
- 1.2 The process for the petition debate is that the lead petitioner, or their named representative, will be invited to speak to the petition for a total of 5 minutes. Members will then be invited to debate the issues for no more than 45 minutes. Before any resolution is made by the Council, the relevant portfolio holder will be invited to respond to the debate for a maximum of 5 minutes.
- 1.3 As the subject matter of this petition relates to a matter which is the responsibility of the Council's Executive, the Council may decide whether to make any recommendation to the relevant Cabinet Member to inform the decision-making process.

2. Petition – Save our Seashells

- 2.1 A petition was received objecting to the proposal to end the funding KCC provides to Seashells Family Hub in Sheerness. This petition had a total of 6,100 signatures, thus triggering a debate at this County Council meeting.

- 2.2 The petition was hosted on Change.org and also as a paper petition, with the following wording:

“Services at Seashells in Sheerness are under threat because Kent County Council is proposing to end the funding it provides. Seashells will no longer be a Kent Family Hub from the 1st April 2025 if this goes ahead.

This will affect many services and jobs and threatens the future sustainability of Seashells as a community hub, helping thousands of local families.

If you would like to support us, then please sign our petition and help us to #saveourseashells”

- 2.3 A statement from the lead petitioner, Kate Townsend-Brazier, is attached at Appendix 1. Ms Townsend-Brazier and her colleague Amy Watkins have confirmed that they will be attending the meeting to address the committee about the petition.
- 2.4 A position statement prepared by the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services is attached at Appendix 2.

Recommendation:

The County Council is invited to debate the petition and consider making recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services on relevant Executive Decisions.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Statement from the Lead Petitioner
Appendix 2 - Position Statement from the Directorate

Background Documents

[Constitution of Kent County Council](#)

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