

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

19 July 2016

Petition for debate at Council

Sandwell Leisure Trust

1. Summary Statement

- 1.1 To advise the Council of the receipt of a petition containing 3,000 signatures or more which, in accordance with the provisions of the Council's statutory petitions scheme, is being brought to the full Council for debate.
- 1.2 In accordance with the provisions of the petitions scheme, the petition organiser has been invited to attend the Council meeting and is entitled to be given five minutes to present the petition. The petition scheme and the Council's procedural standing orders then provide for the petition to be discussed by councillors. The petition organiser may, with the agreement of the person presiding, respond to requests from members for clarification or information about the matters raised in the petition. Standing Orders limit the total duration of the debate on the petition to 15 minutes, but the Council can extend the time allowed for the discussion if it sees fit.
- 1.3 The Council may decide as follows at the conclusion of the debate:
- To take the action the petition requests; or
 - Not to take the action requested for the reasons put forward in the debate; or
 - To commission further investigation into the matter, for instance, by a relevant committee or scrutiny panel; or
 - Where the issue is one on which the Council's executive is required to make the final decision, decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision
- 1.4 A petition bearing over 5,000 signatures has been received from the joint Trades Unions in relation to Sandwell Leisure Trust. The petition is headed as follows:

Save Sandwell Leisure Trust and states that “We the undersigned are concerned that a Sandwell Council proposal is placing the future of Sandwell Leisure Trust at risk. We call upon Sandwell Councillors to recognise the great service provided by staff at Sandwell Leisure Trust and do all they can to ensure the service continues to be operated by this award winning organisation”.

Further details are attached for your information

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the petition be received.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet and the Director - Neighbourhood Services be recommended to have regard to the issues raised by the petition and any views expressed by the Council arising from this report, in the continuing detailed negotiations with Sandwell Leisure Trust.

Adrian Scarrott
Director - Neighbourhood Services

Jim Wells
Service Leader for Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning

Contact Officer
Phil Coughlan
0121 569 4120

3. **Resource Implications**

- 3.1 The council is seeking to ensure that the future of Leisure services is affordable and self-sustaining and this is central to the continued detailed negotiations with Sandwell Leisure Trust.

4. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 4.1 Section 46 of the Localism Act 2011 removes the requirements for principal local authorities in England and Wales to make, publish and comply with a scheme for the handling of petitions made to the authority, with effect from 1 April 2012.

At its meeting on 22 May 2012, the Council decided to retain a petitions scheme, although there was no longer a statutory requirement to have such a scheme. The petition scheme sets out the number of signatures required to trigger a debate at full Council.

5. **Implications for Council's Scorecard Priorities**

5.1 The council's formal partnership with Sandwell Leisure Trust makes a positive contribution to the following Sandwell Scorecard priorities:-

GREAT PEOPLE – Healthy Lifestyles

GREAT PLACE - Regeneration

GREAT PROSPECTS – Something for everyone

GREAT PERFORMANCE –Getting the resources right.

6. **Background Details**

6.1 A petition bearing over 5,000 signatures has been received from the joint Trades Union in relation to Sandwell Leisure Trust. The petition is headed as follows: **Save Sandwell Leisure Trust.**

6.2 The petition states that “We the undersigned are concerned that a Sandwell Council proposal is placing the future of Sandwell Leisure Trust at risk. We call upon Sandwell Councillors to recognise the great service provided by staff at Sandwell leisure Trust and do all they can to ensure the service continues to be operated by this award winning organisation.”

6.3 The petition is in response to a Cabinet report and subsequent decision taken on 9 March 2016, where the Cabinet were unable to agree the annual business plan submitted by Sandwell Leisure Trust. The proposed three year plan covers the period 2016 -17 to 2018-19.

6.4 Formally submitting an annual business plan for approval by the Council, is a key requirement of the Management Funding Agreement between the Council and Sandwell Leisure Trust.

6.5 Since the cabinet decision on 9 March 2016, the council and Sandwell Leisure Trust have been undertaking thorough negotiations regarding the development of an approved business plan. The council has stated its commitment to ensuring that it continues to be able to commission high quality leisure services which meet the needs of the communities it serves and will be self-sustaining financially.

- 6.6 The council's commitment to providing quality leisure facilities is clearly apparent. Since the creation of Sandwell Leisure Trust in 2004 and up until the end of the year 2015/16, the council's investment in leisure services has exceeded £80million.
- 6.7 The council fully recognises the excellent work that Sandwell Leisure Trust does on behalf of the council in operating its facilities and would specifically like to acknowledge the continued efforts of frontline staff in providing quality services.

Source Documents

Joint Trades Union petition, to Sandwell Council (Exempt information)