

**To: Council**

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

**Item No:**

**Report of: Head of Law and Governance**

**Title of Report: PETITIONS SCHEME – DON'T CUT SERVICES IN EAST OXFORD**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To advise on the procedure that Council needs to follow under the Council's Petitions Scheme in respect of large petitions, and to provide information specifically on the petition entitled 'Don't Cut Services in East Oxford'.

**Report Approved by:**

**Legal:** Jeremy Thomas, Head of Law and Governance

**Policy Framework:** Not applicable

**Recommendation(s):** Council is RECOMMENDED to follow the procedure for large petitions in the Council's Petitions Scheme by hearing the head petitioner for the petition entitled "Don't Cut Services in East Oxford" and to then debate the petition and decide how to advise the Executive.

1. A petition entitled "Don't Cut Services in East Oxford" was handed in at the full Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011. The petition contains 1,924 signatures. The petition reads as follows:-

"As a resident of Oxford, the City Council has not convinced me of the business case for the proposed new swimming pool at Blackbird Leys. I call upon the Council to suspend all work on construction of the new pool, and keep Temple Cowley Pools and the existing Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool open. I call on the Council to publish a full, open transparent business case for the proposed new pool that I can review and that is not based on information that is a combination of misleading, inaccurate, incomplete and untrue. Further, I call on Oxford City council to reconsider and properly justify the reasons for closing Temple Cowley Pools and the existing Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool".

2. Council adopted a Petitions Scheme (as required by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009) in July 2010. The scheme says that petitions containing over 1,500 signatures will be debated by full Council. The 2009 Act says that in order for signatures on a petition to count they must give the signatories name and address and those people so signing must live, work or study in the authority's area. A sufficient number of signatures to achieve the 1,500 mark have accompanying names and addresses. It is not of course possible to check whether any signatories from outside Oxford work or study in the City.
3. Our Petitions Scheme says that the petition organiser will be given five minutes at Council to present the petition and that Council will then debate the petition. Where the issue is one on which the Council's Executive is responsible for reaching the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition, the subject of this report is not one for the Executive to consider.
4. Council is being recommended to follow the procedure for large petitions in the Council's Petitions Scheme and decide how it wishes to proceed.

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**Background papers: None**

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