

To: Council

Date: 8th October 2012

Item No:

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Title of Report: PETITIONS SCHEME – LABOUR MUST LISTEN TO 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 'Labour Must Listen to 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 "Labour Must Listen to Oxford" and to then debate the petition and decide how to advise the Executive.

1. A petition entitled "Labour Must Listen to Oxford" was handed in at the full Council meeting on 16th July 2012. The petition contains 1,911 signatures. The petition reads as follows:-

"In the local elections in May, Labour received 14,321 votes, 12.8% of the electorate. The Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign has over 17,500 signatures on the petitions it has submitted to the Oxford City Council that Labour still controls. As a result, we the undersigned do not believe that Labour has an electoral moral mandate to build a new 25m non-Olympic swimming pool in Blackbird Leys for over £13m, one third of this year's building budget affecting all Oxford Council taxpayers, when £3m will refurbish and improve the existing leisure facilities in East Oxford. I call on Labour to stop the scheme now, keep the green in Blackbird Leys for the estate to enjoy and

ensure that both the existing Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool and Temple Cowley Leisure Centre remain open”.

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.

Name and contact details of author:

Mathew Metcalfe
Democratic and Electoral Services Officer
Oxford City Council
Town Hall
Oxford
OX1 4BX
Tel 01865 252214
Email address mmetcalfe@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers: None

Version number: 1