

Officer report to: Council
Date: 20 July 2017
Report of: Acting Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Petition submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules - Keep Florence Park Children's Centre open-access and community-owned

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To set before Council a petition meeting the criteria for debate under the Council's petitions scheme.
Decision required:	Yes
Corporate Priority:	Not applicable.
Policy Framework:	Not applicable.
Recommendation(s):That Council:	
1.	<p>In line with the procedure for large petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hears the head petitioner for the petition; • debates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the proposal to the Council contained within the petition; or ○ relevant motions submitted by councillors by the deadline ; and • decides the action it wishes to take.
<p>The petition proposes:</p> <p><i>We urge you, the City and County Council, to work together to keep Florence Park Children's Centre as a community asset and open to all. Florence Park Children's Centre is a much loved local resource for children and families in our beautiful local park. It is currently standing empty. We ask you to support the local initiative for The Oasis – a not-for-profit plan which includes a nature-orientated childcare nursery, healthy café and drop in space that is managed by local people. The vision is for 'A place where people can meet, work, eat, create, and play with nature in mind and wellbeing at heart'. This initiative will ensure that all profit from the Centre is ploughed back into the community.</i></p>	

Executive Board Member responsible :	Councillor Tidball, Board Member for Young People, Schools and Public Health; Councillor Sinclair, Board Member for Culture and Communities
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The petition

1. A pdf extract of an e-petition running on the website 38degrees.org.uk was received by the Acting Head of Law and Governance on 4 July 2017. The petition was signed by just over 1560 people at the time of sending.

2. The petition states:

We urge you, the City and County Council, to work together to keep Florence Park Children's Centre as a community asset and open to all.

Why is this important?

Florence Park Children's Centre is a much loved local resource for children and families in our beautiful local park. It is currently standing empty. We ask you to support the local initiative for The Oasis – a not-for-profit plan which includes a nature-orientated childcare nursery, healthy café and drop in space that is managed by local people. The vision is for 'A place where people can meet, work, eat, create, and play with nature in mind and wellbeing at heart'. This initiative will ensure that all profit from the Centre is ploughed back into the community.

3. The signatures have been validated as far as is possible for an e-petition and come from a range of postcodes, including a number from outside the city. Not all signatories will live, work or study in the city. The Council's petition scheme does not require any conditions to be met before accepting a signature as valid apart from the provision of a name and valid address (for e-petitions email addresses are accepted).

The petition therefore meets the criteria for debate at Council.

4. The organisers have been in contact with officers at this Council and Oxfordshire County Council about their proposal.

Constitution rules and procedure

5. The Council's scheme for handling petitions is set out in the Constitution. The scheme specifies that petitions requesting action within the Council's powers and containing over 1,500 signatures will be debated by Full Council. The scheme also specifies that the petition organiser can address Council for up to five minutes at the start of the debate in order to present the petition.
6. If a Councillor wishes to put a substantive motion/recommendation on a petition that differs from the proposal in the petition then they must send the Acting Head of Law and Governance their motion/recommendation by 10.00am on the working day before the full Council meeting. These are then published in the Council briefing note.

Any amendments to these must be sent to Committee and Members' Services by 11.00am on the day of the meeting.

7. A substantive motion in this case is anything other than adopting the actions suggested in the petition, not adopting the actions in the petition, or deferring, referring or noting the issues raised by the petition.

Actions for Council

8. The Constitution states that there is a limit of 15 minutes for dealing with each petition. On this occasion and should the head petitioner speak for 5 minutes the Council rules then allow 10 minutes for debate and decision.

9. The action proposed for Council in the petition is:

We urge you, the City and County Council, to work together to keep Florence Park Children's Centre as a community asset and open to all.

Why is this important?

Florence Park Children's Centre is a much loved local resource for children and families in our beautiful local park. It is currently standing empty. We ask you to support the local initiative for The Oasis – a not-for-profit plan which includes a nature-orientated childcare nursery, healthy café and drop in space that is managed by local people. The vision is for 'A place where people can meet, work, eat, create, and play with nature in mind and wellbeing at heart'. This initiative will ensure that all profit from the Centre is ploughed back into the community.

10. Actions open to Council include:

- note the petition
- take the action the petition requests
- not take the action the petition requests
- commission further investigation into the matter
- where the matter is one where the Executive is required to make the final decision, decide whether to make recommendations to the Executive to inform that decision.

11. The Head of Community Services and the Board Members have been invited to comment on this petition and their comments will be circulated in the briefing note.

Financial implications

12. The implications of this report will depend on Council's recommendations, if any, and Council should be mindful of the possible costs in formulating its recommendations. Any recommendations will be considered in detail by the City Executive Board before returning to Council, should this be necessary.

Legal issues

13. The implications will depend on Council's recommendations, if any. Any recommendations will be considered in detail by the City Executive Board before returning to Council, should this be necessary.

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Background Papers:	
1	Petition available on https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/support-the-proposal-for-the-oasis-at-florence-park-children-s-centre?time=1493246509