

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: People Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 13 September 2021

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PART I **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

PETITION – “ABANDON PLANNED CLOSURE OF DAY CENTRES”

1 **Purpose of Report**

To advise the People Scrutiny Panel of a Petition titled “Abandon Planned Closure of Day Centres” that has been received under the Council’s Petitions Scheme. The Petition contains 804 signatures, all of which were submitted online via the e-petition facility on the Council’s website.

2. **Recommendation**

The Panel is requested to resolve:

- a) That the petition be received and considered in scrutinising the Provider Services Review elsewhere on the agenda.
- b) That, following consideration of the petition, the Panel decides whether to refer any comments on the Provider Services Review to Cabinet, which will take decisions on this matter at the meeting on 20th September 2021.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

The Petitions Scheme is an important part of the governance arrangements of the Council which is a cross cutting issue supporting all Joint Wellbeing Strategy and Five Year Plan outcomes. The strategic implications relating to the specifics of this petition are set out in the Provider Services Review report.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation in section 2 of this report. The financial implications of the Provider Services Review are set out in that report.

(b) Risk Management

In relation to the petition, there are reputational and governance risks if the petition is not processed in accordance with the Council’s Petitions Scheme, set out in Article 17

of the Constitution. The risks relating to the specifics of this petition are set out in the Provider Services Review report.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

This report complies with the SBC Constitutional requirement that a petition received with between 750 and 1,499 signatures be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for an Equalities Impact Assessment in the issues directly related to the petition.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Under the Council's published Petitions Scheme a Petition that contains between 750 and 1,499 signatures is discussed in a public meeting of the Council as part of the overview and scrutiny process. In this case the appropriate body is the People Scrutiny Panel which is reviewing the proposals of the Provider Services Review that directly relates to this petition.

5.2 The following e-petition was live on the Council website from 22nd July 2021 to 19th August 2021. The petition received 804 online signatures during this period. The specific wording of the petition was as follows:

“Abandon planned closure of day centres”

“We the undersigned petition the council to abandon the plans of closing down the day centres and short break service for people with learning disability and/or autism.

The day service and short break service centres are vital for people with learning disabilities and autism. They provide social interactions, fun, learning, SAFETY and STABILITY in a way which cannot be replaced by the alternative arrangements the council proposes.

There is no other adequate place in Slough for people with learning disabilities and autism.

The parents and carers of service users care for the disadvantaged people with disabilities often for their entire life. Closing down the reliable day care offered by the day centres and replacing it with often inadequate alternatives will simply create massive problems for people who are already on the edge of mental breakdown following the long period of closure due to Covid.

The people with learning disabilities/autism are some of the most vulnerable members of the community. They and their parents/carers need help. Please sign this petition to request the council to abandon the closure plans and to reopen the day centres and the short break service. We request that

the council restores the service to the level offered before the Covid related closures.”

Petitions Scheme

- 5.3 By virtue of the fact that there were 804 signatories the petition must be considered by overview and scrutiny, in this case the Place Scrutiny Panel. The Petition Organiser has been invited to the meeting to speak on the Petition.
- 5.4 The Panel can take the issues raised in the petition into account in its scrutiny of the Provider Services Review and make any comments to Cabinet which will take decisions in relation to the review at its meeting on 20th September 2021.
- 5.5 The Petitions Scheme indicates that the Council's response to a Petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it but may include one or more of the following;
- Taking the action requested in the Petition
 - considering the Petition at a Council Meeting
 - Holding an Inquiry
 - Commissioning relevant research
 - Organising a public meeting
 - Mounting a wider public consultation
 - Meeting with the Petition Organiser or representatives of signatories
 - Providing a written response outlining the Council's views on the subject
 - Referring the issue to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee **OR**
 - Referring the issue to the relevant Committee/Cabinet
 - Consulting statutory partners and local service providers
 - Instigating discussions with the voluntary and community sectors
 - Making representations to Commercial or other Interests
- 5.6 However, in this case, the action the Panel can take is clear in that the Panel is able refer any comments on the Provider Services Review to Cabinet on 20th September 2021. The Cabinet decision will in effect be the formal response to the petition and will be informed by scrutiny process.

6. **Conclusion**

Members are requested to consider what action to take with regard to the petition.

7. **Appendices Attached**

None.

8. **Background Papers**

Petition