

**AGENDA ITEM: 8** Page nos. 1 – 5

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Meeting	Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	11 July 2011
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Hampstead Garden Suburb Library Petition</b>
Report of	Scrutiny Office
Summary	This report provides Members with information relating to a petition signed by 2,125 residents submitted to the Council in relation to Hampstead Garden Suburb Library.

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Officer Contributors	Andrew Charlwood, Overview & Scrutiny Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	None
For decision by	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the Committee consider the petition received by the Council in relation to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Library and make appropriate comments/recommendations to the Cabinet in respect of the issues raised.**

## **2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.**
- 2.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2011-13 Corporate Plan are: –**
- Better services with less money**
  - Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities**
  - A successful London suburb**

## **3. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- 3.1 Cabinet, 6 September 2010, Strategic Library Review
- 3.2 Special Committee (Constitution Review), 13 October 2010, Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 – Requirement for a Petition Scheme
- 3.3 Council, 2 November 2010, Report of the Special Committee (Constitution Review) – 13 October 2010
- 3.4 Cabinet, 29 March 2011, Strategic Library Review

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 4.1 Failure to deal with petitions received from members of the public in a timely way and in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution carries a reputational risk for the authority.

## **5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 5.1 In addition to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, and in so far as relating to matters within its remit, the role of the Committee is to perform the Overview and Scrutiny role in relation to:
- The Council's leadership role in relation to diversity and inclusiveness; and
  - The fulfilment of the Council's duties as employer including recruitment and retention, personnel, pensions and payroll services, staff development, equalities and health and safety.

## **6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

6.1 None in the context of this report.

## **7. LEGAL ISSUES**

7.1 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 requires local authorities to publicise and comply with a scheme for handling petitions and also provide a facility for electronic petitions on their websites.

## **8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS**

8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.

8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).

8.3 Section 4, Public Participation Procedure Rules, paragraphs 3.10 and 3.11 provide that, where the Council receives a petition that contains 2,000 or more signatures, the relevant officer shall attend before an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to answer questions and give account to matters raised in the petition.

## **9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

9.1 In September 2010, Cabinet agreed that a Strategic Library Review should commence. The objectives of the review were to identify and meet local needs, identify options to modernise the service, provide a sustainable foundation for coming years, and to provide better services for less money. The aspiration for the review was to identify options to improve service provision, meet local needs and reduce cost.

9.2 In March 2011, the Strategic Library Review was presented to Cabinet, who agreed the following:

- Consultation commence on the proposed strategy and financial plan for a ten week period, with a final report outlining recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet for consideration thereafter.
- That the extensive consultation and review activity that underpins the proposed strategy and financial plan be noted.
- That the Equality Impact Assessment related to the proposed library strategy and financial plan be noted.
- That development of a high-level implementation plan incorporating all key changes, aligned with the outcome of consultation activities be approved.

- That the proposed strategy and financial plan would require additional capital expenditure outlined in this report be noted.
  - That discussions commence with the Arts Depot Trust regarding the potential co-location and development of a new Landmark Library with arts, cultural, and children's specialism within the Arts Depot site.
  - That the initiation of negotiations with a neighbouring borough to develop a shared services approach, with recommendations to be reported to Cabinet be approved.
- 9.3 Cabinet are due to consider the Libraries Strategy on 26 July 2011. At the meeting, Cabinet will consider the outcome of the ten week consultation process and present alternative options in light of the consultation findings.
- 9.4 The petition was submitted to the Council as part of the consultation process, the findings of which will be included in the Libraries Strategy report.
- 9.5 The Committee are requested to consider the petition received by the Council in relation to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Library (in accordance with the constitutional provisions outlined at paragraph 8.3 above) and make appropriate comments/recommendations to the Cabinet in respect of the issues raised. The Assistant Director Customer Services and Libraries and Head of Libraries have been invited to give account to the Committee.
- 9.6 The Chairman has agreed that the following format will be followed at the meeting:
- Lead Petitioner has three minutes to present the petition to the Committee;
  - Committee Members have the opportunity to ask questions of the Lead Petitioner;
  - Relevant Officers (Assistant Director Customer Services and Libraries and Head of Libraries) respond to the issues raised by the Lead Petitioner and Committee Members;
  - Committee Members to ask any further questions of the relevant officers;
  - Committee to agree any comments/recommendations to be made to Cabinet on 26 July 2011 to be considered alongside the Libraries Strategy.
- 9.6 The text submitted with the 2,215 signature petition is attached at Appendix A.

## **10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None

**Legal: CH**  
**CFO: MC/JH**

# SAVE OUR SUBURB LIBRARY !

**Petition to :**

## **Save Hampstead Garden Suburb Library**

" We the residents and schoolchildren of Hampstead Garden Suburb, are petitioning Barnet Council in order to prevent them from closing this much needed amenity for our area. Our library in Marketplace, which has been in its current location for some 60 years, is the only one in the borough which is set to shut down completely. This, despite the fact that it provides a very valuable service to the community, particularly to young children and the elderly.

The " alternative " proposal, currently under discussion, would involve a move of the stock from our library to The Institute premises ( next to East Finchley tube station ) and the installation of a self-service machine - presumably dispensing with the librarians. The Institute is nearly a mile away from Marketplace and one has to ask how many of our library's users would be willing or able to make the journey - particularly the elderly or mums with pushchairs - and where parking is a nightmare. When Barnet published their " cost saving " plans for the libraries they said that there would be a ten week period of consultation. This finishes on June 13, so please make your feelings known by signing our petition today.

Deborah Warland  
Suburb Library Action Group