

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
27 JULY 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Fiona McMillan, Director of Law and Governance	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities	
Contact Officer(s):	Pippa Turvey, Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager	Tel. 452460

PETITION FOR DEBATE ‘SAVE ST GEORGE'S COMMUNITY HYDROTHERAPY POOL’

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Director of Law and Governance</i>	Deadline date: <i>N/A</i>
<p>It is recommended that Council either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note and take no action for the reasons put forward in the debate; or 2. Refer the petition to either Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, or the relevant Scrutiny Committee for consideration having regard to the comments made in the course of debate. 	

1. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 A petition has been received by the Council with contains more than 500 valid signatures from people who live, work or study in the city. As such, the right to a debate of the petition by a meeting of the full Council has been triggered, according to the Petitions Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 As set out in the Council’s Petitions Scheme, if a petition contains more than 500 signatures from people who live, work or study in the city, it may trigger the right to be debated by a meeting of the full Council.

2.2 On 27 May 2022 a petition was received by the Council from Sue Jolly, which included eligible 769 signatures.

2.3 Ms Jolly requested that the petition be debated at a meeting of Full Council, as per the Petitions Scheme.

2.4 The petition is titled ‘Save St George’s Hydrotherapy Pool’ and calls upon the Council to:

“Continue with the sale of St George’s Community Hydrotherapy Pool. Do not ‘mothball’ this much-needed service.”

Further background to the petition included:

“St George’s has over 4,500 registered users. 250 people of all ages were accessing the pool each week before the pool was temporarily closed due to the pandemic. We, the Friends of St George’s and our service users and supporters, are extremely concerned to learn that the Council

has pulled out of the sale of the pool - where continued community access was agreed - to a local aquatic physiotherapist at the eleventh hour.

This sale appeared in Phase 1 of 22/23 Budget Proposals which were voted through at Full Council.

The Council has stated that it cannot afford to pay the preparation costs for the sale. However, the sale price would more than compensate for this. The refurbishment, re-opening and running costs would be at the buyer's expense, not the Council's.

Furthermore, the sale came with a guarantee of 20 hours of community pool use at affordable prices.

Therefore, we cannot understand and do not accept the Council's decision to 'mothball' the facility rather than sell it.

Not allowing the pool to re-open would have a negative impact on the pool's users. Everyone pays to use the pool to improve their health and wellbeing and for pain relief.

85% of St George's users have a disability or long-term health condition. 33% of these have a learning disability too. Others used the pool for rehabilitation, often after accidents or surgery. Anyone might have the need to self-refer to St George's at any time.

St George's delivers £1,525,000 value to Peterborough each year and there is no other facility like it in the area.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, urge Peterborough City Council to resume negotiations with a local purchaser so that St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool will be available for use by Peterborough residents in the months and years to come."

2.5 The initial response from the lead officer is set out at Appendix 1.

3. **COUNCIL MOTION**

3.1 At the Extraordinary Council meeting on 23 May 2022 a motion was passed as follows:

"Council calls upon the leader and the cabinet to urgently examine all possible options for re-opening the St George's Hydrotherapy pool either permanently or temporarily pending alternatives becoming available and to report back on progress to the next available meeting of Full Council."

3.2 A report was subsequently submitted to Cabinet on 11 July 2022, as set out in Appendix 2. At this meeting Cabinet resolved:

*"Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:*

- 1. Agree to the permanent closure of the St George's Hydrotherapy Pool based on the information set out in this report; and*
- 2. Acknowledge and support the work of officers to identify alternative hydrotherapy provision."*

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial, legal, equalities, or Carbon Impact implications arising from this report.

4.2 Governance Implications – This report will be debated following the presentation of the petition. The Leader Petitioner has five minutes to present this petition. Members will then be invited to debate the request contained therein. The usual rules of procedure will apply to this debate. Each Member may speak once for no longer than 3 minutes. A Member may not speak again, except on a point of order, by way of a personal explanation, or by way of a statement of accuracy. The

Mayor will invite a vote on the recommendations at the close of the debate.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.1 Peterborough City Council Petitions Scheme

6. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Officer Response

Appendix 2 – Cabinet Report ‘St George’s Hydrotherapy Pool’ 11 July 2022

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