

THANET LIFTS PETITION

Council	3rd June 2021
Report Author	Committee Services Manager
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Helen Whitehead, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Services
Status	For Recommendation
Classification:	Unrestricted
Ward:	Eastcliff and Viking

Executive Summary:

A petition containing 2180 valid signatures has been received requesting that the seaside lifts at Viking Bay and Ramsgate be reopened. This report sets out how the Council deals with petitions of this size; it explains that the petition organiser will present the petition to the meeting and sets out the next steps as to how the Council will deal with the petition.

Recommendation(s):

In accordance with the Council's petitions scheme, following presentation of the petition, Council refers the petition to Cabinet.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

There are no identified financial implications from this report.

Legal

This matter is dealt with under the Council's scheme for dealing with petitions from the public which is contained within the constitution

Corporate

Having a petition scheme allows members of the public to submit petitions to the Council on subjects of public interest and concern and allows Council to hear from those individuals and discuss their concerns.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity

between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Environment
- Communities

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 Under the Council's petition scheme if a petition has over 1500 signatories then the petition organiser will be offered five minutes to present the petition at a meeting of Council.

1.2 In addition, The Council's petition scheme states:

“if a petition has 1,500 or more signatures and relates to an issue for which the executive (Cabinet) has responsibility, we will let you know. Council is unable to take a decision on something that is the responsibility of the executive and may, therefore, decide, following presentation of the petition at the Council meeting, to refer the petition to Cabinet with or without debate. If the petition is referred to Cabinet without debate, you will be able to re-present the petition at the subsequent meeting of the Cabinet at which the petition is considered.”

1.3 Council may debate the petition at this meeting if it wishes, as it has received over 1500 signatories, however as this petition relates to a Cabinet function the only action that the Council can take at the conclusion of any debate is to refer it to Cabinet for a decision.

2.0 The Current Situation

2.1 An e-petition has been received by Mr Stickings MBE, which was validly signed by 2180 persons.

The petition prayer reads as follows:

“Thanet District Council have announced on 01/04/21 that the lifts at Viking Bay and Ramsgate will be closed this is their statement as detailed below.

On the Thanet council website a statement says: “Unfortunately our seaside lifts at Viking Bay and Ramsgate remain closed. Even if temporary repairs can be made to get the lifts open, contractors have advised there is no guarantee they will stay working during the season.

“A long-term strategy for both lifts will be formulated to consider their future. In the meantime, the council has measures in place to allow for alternative accessible routes to the beach, which include:

Matting installed at one side of the beach (Harbour Street, Broadstairs) to lengthen the boardwalk and allow for alternative accessible routes to the beach.”

This is not good enough and needs to be addressed ASAP, if they were working last year, how can it be that these lifts are now beyond repair. This impacts massively on our disabled community. I have a son who is blind the Lift is helpful for him on some occasions but more so for those who have other issues. This impacts severely on our disabled community and disabled visitors. The solution of matting is NOT good enough.

These lifts are part of Broadstairs and Ramsgate. Visitors flock to our beautiful towns and love the fact that its open to all to use ALL amenities. Sadly TDC have now taken this away. It will have an impact not only on them but our local shops and businesses who some will no longer be able to reach.

Spend the money, repair the lifts, and give our disabled people the same level of inclusion and access as their peers. Everybody needs access. Our disabled community and those who need these lifts including our visitors will lose access because of this action, please help and support this so TDC will reverse this decision.”

- 2.2 The petition organiser is entitled to present their petition to Council, and in accordance with the Council’s petition scheme has five minutes to present the petition. Mr Stickings MBE, has indicated that he will be in attendance to present the petition.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 The petition will be reported to the Cabinet and a report back on the result will be presented to the Council within three ordinary meetings.

Contact Officer: Nicholas Hughes, Committee Services Manager
Reporting to: Estelle Culligan, Director of Governance and Law.

Annex List

None

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell (Director of Finance)

Legal: Estelle Culligan (Director of Law and Democracy)