

Response to Northdown Park Petition

Meeting	12 October 2023
Report Author	Nicholas Hughes, Committee Services Manager
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Yates, Portfolio holder for Corporate Services
Status	For Information
Classification:	Unrestricted
Ward:	Cliftonville East

Executive Summary:

The report outlines a petition that was received by the Council. The petition requests that Thanet District Council facilitates allowing a private operator to fund, open and run a cafe operation, ideally with some covered space. This was proposed to be within or adjacent to a nearby TDC structure (the Pavilion) or nearer the main play area as a new structure. The proposed response notes that the Council was working on reopening the Pavillion at Northdown Park, and this would incorporate refurbished changing rooms and toilets, refreshments and a seating area available under a sheltered area.

Recommendation(s):

The report is for information only.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

Response to petition has no financial implications.

Legal

Response to petition has no legal implications.

Risk Management

Response to petition poses no considerable risk to the council.

Corporate

Petitions are an important way of the public engaging with the Council on matters of importance to them and responses should be timely and in accordance with the Council's agreed procedures.

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 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: -

- Communities and Community engagement.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Council has received a petition with 539 valid signatures relating to the Council facilitating and allowing a private operator to fund, open and run a cafe from local resident Scott Manclark.

2.0 The Current Situation

2.1 The petition contained the following petition prayer:

“Local people, especially parents, lack any real social hubs within Northdown Park where their children can play safely whilst they meet and chat with each other.

A cafe at the Northdown Park play area (or any other suitable locations within the park) would in my opinion help reduce antisocial behaviour and be a valuable community meeting space where parents could keep an eye on their children playing.

We want Thanet District Council to facilitate allowing a private operator to fund, open and run a cafe operation, ideally with some covered space. This could be within or adjacent to a nearby TDC structure (the Pavilion) or nearer the main play area as a new structure.”

2.2 **The Response**

The formal response to the petition that was sent to the petitioner is attached at Annex 1 to the report.

3.0 Decision Making Process

- 3.1 An official response should be provided for an ordinary petition that is signed by 50 or more petitioners, but fewer than 1500. The senior officer of the Council, after consulting with the relevant portfolio holder, should respond to the petition, and a report on the petition noting what action has been taken should be referred to the next meeting of Cabinet or Council for their information.
- 3.2 This response ensures that the petitioners are informed of the Council's actions and that the Council is held accountable for addressing the concerns raised in the petition. It also provides transparency and accountability to the public, which is an important aspect of democratic governance.

Contact Officer: Nicholas Hughes (Committee Services Manager)

Reporting to: Sameera Khan (Interim Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer)

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell (Director of Corporate Services - Section 151)

Legal: Sameera Khan - Interim Head of legal & Monitoring officer