



Report to Council

27 OCTOBER 2010

**CABINET MEMBER
FOR RESIDENTS
SERVICES**

Councillor Greg Smith

**PETITIONS: SANDS END COMMUNITY
CENTRE**

The Council has received a petition requesting it to “abandon its plans to sell the Sands End Community Centre which houses our library and community centre and reinvigorate the management of the centre to generate fuller use of its many facilities and thereby increase its value to the community and reduce its costs to the borough.”

WARDS

Sands End

CONTRIBUTORS

Petitions Officer
ADLDS

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council decide action to be taken in relation to the petition as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In June 2010, Council began a public consultation on the proposed sale of nine Council-owned buildings. Sand Ends Community Centre was one of the proposed disposals. A petition containing over 6,900 signatures from people living, working or studying in the borough was received against the proposed sale of Sands End Community Centre.

1.2 The Petition's prayer is as follows:-

"We the citizens of Sands End petition the Council to:-

- a. abandon its plans to sell the Sands End Community Centre which houses our library and community centre; and
- b. reinvigorate the management of the centre to generate fuller use of its many facilities and thereby increase its value to the community and reduce its costs to the borough."

1.3 The Petition also contained the following supporting statement:-

"London used to be a series of villages and some areas still have that feel and identity: Fulham still has some character and Sands End has that community feel despite the gentrification of parts of Fulham or little Chelsea as it is now known. The Sands End Community Centre, tucked away in the back streets, is well used by those who know it and those who need its facilities. An affordable gym, table tennis, badminton, a small library which runs reading/story telling sessions for local children, with computers and a place for pensioners to read the daily papers. There's a crèche, dance & fitness studios and craft workshops - a jewellery and stained glass studio and a well equipped pottery - Fulham used to be famous for its pottery (an old bottle kiln is preserved at the bottom of the New Kings Road). Age Well, NHS Rehab (uncertainty has forced the service to relocate), Sure Start and sports sessions for the disabled are run here. In proposing to close the library - on the grounds that few books are borrowed - the council is ignoring the broad use that is made of it by local people during the day and evening. Everyone is welcome at the Centre and people of all ages, cultures and means can mix together here; and for some less mobile or lonely people it is a lifeline. The community centre is within walking distance for all its many users. The centralisation of library facilities elsewhere in Fulham would mean a journey of more than a mile for local people on Fulham's crowded roads. Public transport is slow and cars mean parking charges and add to the congestion. If the council sells the building to developers they will destroy a COMMUNITY centre. We want to build up Sands End Community Centre (which has

been run down) and strengthen it as the social hub for the people of the Ward. The collocation of these sports, educational, health and welfare activities make the Centre in its present form a vital asset to our community. It contributes significantly to social cohesion in an area which is otherwise characterised by huge disparities in personal wealth. And it could be better managed to the benefit of the community and the borough. David Cameron wants us to build a Big Society but our council is threatening to take away the very building which would enable us to do that.

The wishes of the people of Sands End, as represented by this petition, are that the Council reconsiders its plan to sell the Sands End Centre and to engage with them to revive, revitalise and reinvigorate the Centre in order to establish this vital resource once more as the focal point of our community – not merely the Sands End Centre more the Centre of Sands End”.

- 1.4 In response to the general consultation, residents have asked for more information on the range of alternative sites for the relocation of services currently run in Sands End Community Centre. The Council has agreed to extend the consultation on the sale of Sands End Community Centre to allow more time for discussions on the relocation of services.
- 1.5 Under the Council’s Petitions Scheme, a petition attracting a minimum of 5000 valid signatures (of people who live, work or study in the borough) triggers consideration of the petition by Full Council.

2. COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE PETITION

- 2.1 In accordance with the Council’s Petitions Scheme, the petition organiser (or someone he/she nominates) may address the Council for up to 5 minutes on the subject of the petition. The Council may then decide to take one or more of the following courses of action:
 - a) take the action requested in the petition
 - b) hold an inquiry into the matter
 - c) undertake research into the matter
 - d) hold a public meeting
 - e) hold further consultation
 - f) hold a meeting with petitioners
 - g) refer the petition for consideration by the relevant Select Committee
 - h) write to the petition organiser setting out its views about the request in the petition.

3. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

3.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

4. COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES)

4.1 The petition is valid under the Council's statutory Petition Scheme under Part 1 of the Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and falls to be considered by Council.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

No.	Description of Background Papers	Name/Ext of holder of file/copy	Department/ Location
1.	Petitions and letters relating to saving the Sands end Community Centre.	Kayode Adewumi ext. 2499	Finance and Corporate Services, Head of Councillor Services
CONTACT OFFICER		NAME: David Viles EXT. 2063	