

**Decision Maker:** COUNCIL

**Date:** Monday 19 October 2015

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** PETITIONS

**Contact Officer:** Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager  
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**Chief Officer:** Mark Bowen, Director of Corporate Services

**Ward:** All

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1. Reason for report

1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme, if petitioners are dissatisfied with the Council's response to a petition they have submitted they can request that the issue be brought before a meeting of the full Council for consideration, provided that the number of verified signature exceeds the threshold required (500 valid signatures from people who live, work or study in the borough.) The lead petitioner (or their nominee) can address the council for up to five minutes, after which Councillors debate what response to make.

1.2 A petition has been received from Ms Vicky Devaney headed "Save our Community Libraries" and asking the Council to continue to fund professionally staffed libraries at Burnt Ash, Mottingham, Shortlands, Southborough, Hayes and St Paul's Cray.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION**

**Council is requested to consider the case made by the petitioners.**

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Petitions are dealt with according to the Council's Petition Scheme.
  2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres:
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Not Applicable
  4. Total current budget for this head: £Not Applicable
  5. Source of funding: Not Applicable
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Not Applicable
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable: This report does not involve an executive decision.
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Not Applicable
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

### 3. COMMENTARY

3.1 The Council's Petition Scheme allows for petitioners to present their case to full Council if they are dissatisfied with the Council's response to a petition, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold of 500. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the Council for up to five minutes. Once the Council has considered the matter, it can choose whether or not to recommend that any action is taken.

3.2 The petition received from Vicky Devaney states –

“Save our Community Libraries

Our community libraries are under threat! The threatened libraries are Burnt Ash, Mottingham, Shortlands, Southborough, Hayes and St Paul's Cray.

The council want to stop funding the running of Bromley's community libraries, and have asked for volunteer groups to run and fund the libraries, threatening the loss of jobs for qualified library staff and the closure of the libraries.

Closing the libraries will save £300,000 but the Council has £175million in reserves! Some of these reserves should be used to maintain an efficient and comprehensive library service as required by law.

It is a vital community hub used by the most vulnerable members of society – children and the elderly and it cannot be lost.

**We, the undersigned want Bromley Council to continue to fund professionally staffed libraries at Burnt Ash, Mottingham, Shortlands, Southborough, Hayes and St Paul's Cray.”**

3.3 At the time of submission on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the petition had 1,702 verified paper signatures, plus over 1,200 signatures on an online petition. A formal response was sent by the Executive Director for Environment and Community Services on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 – a copy is attached as Appendix 1.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Policy/Financial/legal/Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Petition submitted on 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 by Ms Vicky Devaney