

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 19 November 2013	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Petition – Old Rotherhithe Library and Civic Centre	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Rotherhithe Ward	
From:		Proper Constitutional Officer	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet consider a petition in respect of the Old Rotherhithe Library and Civic Centre.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. A petition containing 500 signatures or more maybe presented to the cabinet. A petition can be submitted by a person of any age who lives, works or studies in Southwark. Petitions must relate to matters which the council has powers or duties or which affects Southwark.
3. At the meeting, the spokesperson for the petition will be invited to speak up to five minutes on the subject matter. The cabinet will debate the petition for a period of up to 15 minutes and may decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting.
4. Any relevant resource or community impact issues will be contained in the comments of the strategic director.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Petition

5. An ePetition containing 593 signatures as at 11 November 2013 (ePetition deadline - 18 November 2013) has been received in respect of the Old Rotherhithe Library and Civic Centre. The petition states:

“We the undersigned petition the council to consider the regeneration and revitalization of the Old Rotherhithe Library and Civic Centre for community provision and services as an alternative to the demolition of the building.

The regeneration of Albion Street and reinvigoration of community life is urgently needed. What was once a thriving, bustling retail street at the heart of the Rotherhithe community – is today a mostly shabby, somewhat down at heel thoroughfare with struggling shops.

The Old Rotherhithe Library and Civic Centre assumes not only a pivotal position on the street, but is also intrinsic to regaining its former status as a desirable and useful place to visit, as a host for cultural / community activities,

and to become a major player in realizing the area's enormous arts, culture and visitor potential.

Southwark council are planning to demolish the old Library and Civic Centre in order to build a maximum of 20 homes on this site. However, this does not address a more crucial concern for the immediate vicinity, which is to bring life back to an otherwise neglected neighbourhood. Building affordable homes in London is paramount and the pressure the council faces in this respect is understandable, but would building social housing on this site contribute towards solving the main problems that the residents of Albion Street are currently facing? Would it make it a better street to live in and help the shops to thrive? Would it increase its footfall, necessary for its economic prosperity and development? Rather than see a both costly and inefficient demolition, we see more sense in working with what is a perfectly stable structure and bringing it immediately back to public function and value, whilst meeting the actual needs of the neighbours, as clearly outlined in the Café Conversations.

<http://www.canadawater.org/bulletins/AlbionStreetCafeConversations.pdf>

We ask the council that this proposal, which positively responds to the neighborhoods most urgent needs is given due consideration.

A proposal has been made, (please see link below) that provides the opportunity to see not only the building but also the whole street potentially transformed into a pioneering sustainable community neighbourhood; creating jobs, education, engagement with youth, and improving the appearance and perception of the area.

[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/2522892/Albion Street Sustainability Centre.pdf](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/2522892/Albion%20Street%20Sustainability%20Centre.pdf)

Procedure at meeting

6. A spokesperson for the petition may speak for up to five minutes on the subject matter of the petition. The cabinet will debate the petition for a period of up to 15 minutes. The cabinet should decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. A decision could be made to:
 - Take the action the petition requests
 - Not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or
 - To commission further investigation into the matter.

A summary of any petition which addresses an issue within the direct responsibility of the council will be referred to the relevant cabinet members of chief officer.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Comments of the Chief Executive

7. To follow.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
ePetition http://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/mgepetitionlistdisplay.aspx?bcr=1	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Beverley Olamijulo 020 7525 7234

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager	
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	8 November 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Chief Executive	Yes	To follow
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		8 November 2013