

PETITION – RELOCATION OF TREASURE COVE CHILDRENS PLAY CENTRE

Woking Borough Council has received a petition which asks the Council to identify a suitable venue for the Treasure Cove Children’s Play Centre. The Centre closed on 5 October 2019 and was based at 15 Guildford Road, Woking.

In accordance with Woking Borough Council’s arrangements for petitions, the matter has been referred for consideration by the Council.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to consider the petition and determine accordingly.

Background Papers: Online Petition.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A petition has been received which asks the Council to identify a suitable venue for the Treasure Cove Children’s Play Centre. The petition has been received through the Council’s online e-petition scheme and contains 680 confirmed signatories and 132 unconfirmed signatories.
- 1.2 The number of signatures exceeds the threshold required for a petition to be referred to a meeting of Full Council and accordingly the Petitioner or their nominee has been invited to present the petition at Council.
- 1.3 The petition has been submitted in the following terms:

“Make every effort to assist and find a suitable, affordable premises for Treasure Cove to be relocated and remain open for the sake of Children in the local and surrounding area.

It’s come to our attention that Treasure Cove children’s play centre is being forced to close its doors to the public due to no suitable and affordable alternative sites being available for them to move to in the foreseeable future. Treasure Cove has become a much loved, one for all venue in this county. A safe haven suitable for children aged 1 to 6 and their parents alike. There is no other venue quite like it and we wish for it to remain open in a suitable premises within this ever progressing town.”

- 1.4 The on-line petition went live on 20 September 2019 for a six month period up to 20 March 2020. On 27 September 2019 the petitioner asked for the deadline to be brought forward to 20 November 2019; this change was made on 30 September.
- 1.5 The Centre, first established in November 2017, was based at 15 Guildford Road Woking and closed on 5 October 2019.

2.0 Petitions Scheme

- 2.1 As the number of signatories exceeds 400, the petition falls to be debated at full Council. In accordance with the Council’s scheme for dealing with petitions, the petitioner has been invited to attend the meeting and present the petition. The presentation of a petition is limited to not more than three minutes, and should be confined to reading out, or summarising, the purpose of the petition, indicating the number and description of signatories, and making supporting remarks relevant to the petition.
- 2.2 Following the presentation, Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the petitioner. Thereafter, the Council will discuss the petition and determine what action, if any, is to be taken.

3.0 Officer Comments

- 3.1 Treasure Cove was a tenant of the Council. Officers had engaged with the operator to explore opportunities to relocate due to the future redevelopment of the site. In those discussions it became clear that the financial position of the business was challenging and Officers put forward proposals for a managed shut down of the business by February 2020.
- 3.2 However, in light of the financial challenges facing the business, the operator decided to close on 5 October 2019
- 3.3 Having subsequently met the operator it is difficult to see anywhere in the town centre to which the operation could cost effectively be relocated. It has however been agreed that if

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an opportunity arises for lower cost accommodation elsewhere in the Borough that the operator would be given the opportunity to consider it.

- 3.4 It is suggested that the Council receives the Petition, notes the current position and takes no further action.

REPORT ENDS