

SUBJECT: RECIEPT OF PETITONS: Urge the Council to provide Bridges Centre with a Sustainable Long-term Lease Without Rebate Reviews

MEETING: Place Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 6th November 2025

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To advise the Place Scrutiny Committee that a petition has been received as follows:

- Urge the Council to provide Bridges Centre with a Sustainable Long-term Lease Without Rebate Reviews

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Place Scrutiny Committee receives the petition and agrees a suitable course of action, as per the options that are available to the Committee:

- a) Full Council for a debate on the matter
- b) The relevant Cabinet Member with a request to respond in writing to the Scrutiny Committee and the Lead Petitioner within 6 weeks.
- c) A relevant working group, committee, or joint committee with an appropriate term of reference to address the matter or incorporate the views into their work
- d) A relevant senior officer for inclusion in an ongoing piece of work, consultation or project.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Petitions can be submitted as e-petitions or as written documents. They are received by Democratic Services who ascertain their validity in accordance with the constitution. If the petition is deemed valid, it is 'made live' and if it is deemed invalid, the petitioner is notified, with reasons given for its rejection.

3.2 Valid petitions with over 25 signatories are tabled to the relevant Scrutiny Committee at its next available meeting. The Councillor who is the petition sponsor (usually the Local Ward Member) will be asked to outline the request within 3 minutes. Their role is to present it to the Scrutiny Committee for them to determine a course of action.

3.3 The Scrutiny Committee may decide to enhance the petition in their referral, by adding recommendations. They may also decide to scrutinise the topic in the future, by including it in their forward work programme. The Scrutiny Committee may also decide to take no further action.

3.4 Neither the Cabinet nor Chief Officers are expected to respond to the petition at the

Scrutiny Meeting at which the petition is presented ~ this would pre-empt the outcome of the Scrutiny Committee's consideration. The outcome of the committee's consideration will be formally conveyed to the Executive and Senior Officers and the Lead Petitioner following the meeting.

- 3.5 If option (b), 'Referral to the Cabinet Member' is agreed by the Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet Member is required to prepare a response for the Scrutiny Committee within 6 weeks. The Cabinet Member will be responsible for responding in writing to the Lead Petitioner on the actions, if any, they will be taking in response to the petition. The Cabinet Member will be assisted in doing the above by the relevant service area officers.
- 3.6 Petition - Urge Council to provide Bridges Centre with a Sustainable Long-term Lease Without Rebate Reviews.

The petition received 3121 signatories. The petitions are asking the Council to:

Petition: Urge Monmouthshire Council to Provide Bridges Centre with a Sustainable Long Term lease without rebate reviews

The terms of the proposed new lease set by Monmouthshire County Council is threatening the very existence of the Bridges Centre, a crucial resource in the heart of Monmouth, UK. For nearly three decades, Bridges Centre has been more than just a building; it has been a lifeline for the youth, elderly, isolated, and vulnerable residents of our community.

Bridges Centre is housed in Drybridge House, an integral part of our town's heritage. It stands as a beacon of stability and support, offering a safe space for countless community activities, services, and social support networks. The Council's decision to drastically raise the rent has put all of these essential services at risk, potentially closing doors on a wealth of assistance that the community has relied on for years.

The proposed lease agreement and associated 3 yearly rental rebate review is unsustainable, giving Bridges an uncertain future that threatens to dismantle the very framework of support that holds our community together. Monmouthshire County Council has a duty to protect community services, not jeopardize them. Removing the necessity of a three-year rebate review is an essential step in ensuring that Bridges Centre can continue its vital work without the constant looming threat of unsustainable financial burdens.

We must preserve this centrepiece of our community's identity and support system. We urge everyone in Monmouth and beyond who values keeping our local services alive and thriving to join us in demanding that the Council reduce the rent to a sustainable level whilst removing the cycle of rent reviews. Together, we can ensure that the Bridges Centre remains a cornerstone for years to come.

Sign the petition to protect the Bridges Centre and advocate for fair and sustainable rent in Monmouth. Let us hold Monmouthshire County Council accountable to safeguard the services that are the lifeline of our beloved community.

- 3.7 The Committee is requested to consider an appropriate course of action for the petition, in line with the options available to them, as outlined in the Recommendations section of the report (paragraph 2.1).
4. **EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**
- 4.1 There are no direct considerations for this report.
5. **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

5.1 Not applicable.

6. REASONS:

6.1 To fulfil the constitutional requirements of the Scrutiny Committee's consideration of a route for petitions (if deemed valid).

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTEES:

None.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Petitions received:

- Urge the Council to provide Bridges Centre with a Sustainable Long-term Lease Without Rebate Reviews

10. AUTHOR:

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644233

E-mail: hazelilett@monmouthshire.gov.uk