

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

15 DECEMBER 2015

Report of: Interim Service Director – Legal & Democratic Services

Title: **Petition – The Bush centre – “Don’t cut the Bush – Keep it as it is”**

RECOMMENDATION

That Full Council debates the petition and decides how to respond to the petition, and the body to which the petition may be referred.

Summary

1. Under the Council’s petitions scheme, where a petition has 3,500 or more signatures from people who live, work or study in Bristol, the petition organiser can request a Full Council debate.
2. The Council has received a petition entitled “Don’t cut The Bush – Keep it as it is”
3. The petition organiser has requested that the Full Council debates the petition.

Details of the petition

1. The petition was opened on 2 August 2015.
2. The wording of the petition is as follows:

“We the undersigned appeal to the Mayor not to reduce the number of beds available for overnight respite at The Bush Residential Centre for disabled children due to take place in September. These beds are currently used by some of the most vulnerable disabled children and pressured families in our city. The Bush Residential Respite Centre for Disabled Children is a place where the children are safe, in the care of well-trained staff that gives parents peace of mind. In many cases the

children and parents have long established relationships with the staff, they can also have social interaction with other children. The building has excellent facilities the proposed 'alternatives' cannot cater to and all Bristol's children deserve to achieve their potential. Fostering, short breaks, befriending, direct payments, are no match to the resources and care at the Bush.”

3. The petition secured signatories as follows:

From Bristol electoral wards	-	3346 signatories
From Bath & North East Somerset*	-	112 signatories
From South Gloucestershire*	-	448 signatories
From North Somerset*	-	112 signatories
From Bristol & “travel to work” area	-	4018 signatories

** regarded as constituting the “travel to work” area.*

In addition there were 382 signatories from beyond the Bristol and “travel to work” area, and 44 names/signatures that were either indecipherable or where no address was supplied.

4. The Full Council is requested to debate the petition and decide how to respond to the petition.
5. Under the petition scheme, the petition organiser(s) (Caroline Stevenson / Dawn Jones) are permitted up to 5 minutes to present and speak to the petition. The petition scheme allows a period of up to 15 minutes for discussion by councillors at the Full Council meeting.
6. The Full Council has agreed the following in relation to dealing with petitions with over 3,500 signatures:

The topic of the debate should be referred to the Mayor / Cabinet, or other relevant body with the petitioner’s views and Full Council’s views.

The matters addressed by this petition are executive functions and therefore are ultimately for the Mayor to determine.

The Full Council is therefore recommended to refer the petition to the Mayor, together with the comments as expressed by members in the debate at this meeting, in order that he can consider his response (in liaison with the relevant Assistant Mayor as appropriate).