

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**

**FULL COUNCIL**

**15 DECEMBER 2015**

**Report of:** Interim Service Director – Legal & Democratic Services

**Title:** **Petition – “Open empty buildings for the homeless this winter”**

**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 “Open empty buildings for the homeless this winter”
3. The petition organiser has requested that the Full Council debates the petition.

**Details of the petition**

1. The petition was initially presented at the 24 November Cabinet meeting. At that point, the petition had acquired 8312 signatures, 6846 of which were from Bristol and the “travel to work” area. The petition is still live and the petition organisers will advise any update at the Full Council meeting.
2. The wording of the petition is as follows:  
  
“Open empty buildings for the homeless this winter:  
Follow the lead of Manchester and open up empty buildings for homeless people this winter. To plead to the Council to open its empty

buildings to the homeless in winter. I cannot imagine sleeping rough in driving, biting winds, snow, ice and winter rain. It's inhumane. It's also inexcusable when we have so many empty buildings."

3. The Full Council is requested to debate the petition and decide how to respond to the petition
4. Under the petition scheme, the petition organiser(s) (Elisha Hindley-Cooper / Laura Hounsom) 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.
5. 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).**