

Full Council

12 December 2022



Report of: Tim O’Gara, Director Legal and Democratic Services

Title: Petition Debate – Loss of Confidence in Bristol’s Planning System

Recommendation

That Full Council debates the petition and refers it to the Mayor / relevant Cabinet member for a formal response.

Summary

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.

The Council has received a petition in relation to Loss of Confidence in Bristol’s Planning System.

The petition organisers have requested that Full Council debates the petition.



Details of the petition

1. The wording of the petition is as follows:

Petition title / subject: **Loss of Confidence in Bristol's Planning System.**

Petition wording:

We, the undersigned, have lost confidence in the effectiveness and impartiality of Bristol City Council's planning system and seek a Full Council debate on this matter.

Why is this important?

Our concern is that the Bristol City Council is currently failing to deliver an effective, impartial service; lacks consistency in the application of material planning considerations and policies, and; is being unduly influenced to 'get stuff done' by the elected Mayor's Office.

We are aware that, while a petition on an individual planning application cannot be taken for debate at Full Council, a petition about the Council's failure to deliver an effective service for planning applications is within the scope of the scheme.

There are examples across the city in which the following material planning considerations are given inadequate weight or where there is inconsistency in their application: loss of light, overshadowing, overlooking, privacy; design and appearance; residential amenity and living conditions; character of the local area; local planning policies; loss of trees and landscaping; impact on listed buildings and conservation areas.

We urge the Mayor, cabinet members, and councillors of all parties to consider the harm done when residents no longer have confidence in the impartiality of officers and members of planning committees, and when decisions are made that will cause long-term, if not irreparable, harm to Bristol's neighbourhoods and city centre.

2. The petition has been organised by Suzanne Audrey.
3. The petition has secured 3620 signatures to date, 3505 from Bristol residents. Verified as of 25 October 2023.
4. The Full Council is asked to debate the petition.
5. Under the petition scheme, the petition organiser is permitted up to 5 minutes to present and speak to the petition. The petition scheme allows a further period of up to 15 minutes for discussion of the petition by councillors at the Full Council meeting.
6. The Full Council has agreed the following in relation to dealing with petitions with over 3500 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Following the debate, the Full Council is recommended to refer the petition to the Mayor, in order that the Mayor can consider his response, in liaison with the relevant Cabinet member.