

# Birmingham City Council

## Council Business Management Committee

12 February 2024



**Subject:** Petitions Update  
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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential: N/A

### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To update the Committee on progress made in responding to petitions presented to full Council and to provide an update in relation to the continuing management of petitions.

### 2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress made in relation to the responding to and discharging of petitions.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the number of outstanding petitions attributed to each directorate as outlined at 4.3 of the report.
- 2.3 That the Committee determines if any additional measures are required to ensure the continuing progress relating to the responding and discharging of petitions is maintained.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 During recent meetings of the Committee, Members have expressed concern with regards to the amount of time taken to respond to and subsequently discharge petitions submitted by Councillors, especially in relation to City Operations. In addition, at the last meeting, Commissioners highlighted that “significant improvement in the management of petitions was urgently required and must be closely monitored and managed”.
- 3.2 At the meeting on 22 January 2024, Members noted that City Operations would aim to discharge all petitions attributed to the directorate by the end of February 2024. Members further noted that an aspirational target was for all City Operations petitions to have been responded to and discharged by 1 February 2024.
- 3.3 The Strategic Director of City Operations was invited to attend the meeting held on 22 January 2024 to explain why the number of petitions attributed to the directorate was significant and to provide assurance to Members in terms of how petitions would be managed, responded to and subsequently discharged moving forwards.
- 3.4 During his address to the Committee, the Strategic Director of City Operations made clear that he would brief the City Operations Department Management Team to emphasise the importance of responding to and discharging petitions within the agreed timescales outlined at 3.6.
- 3.5 The Interim City Solicitor also informed the Committee that following the 22 January meeting, she would be addressing the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) to emphasise the importance of all directorates responding to and subsequently discharging petitions submitted by Councillors within the agreed timeframes.
- 3.6 At a meeting of CLT held during the week commencing 22 January 2024, Strategic Directors acknowledged this address and committed to manage petitions according to the protocol (outlined below) that applies to all petitions submitted by Members<sup>1</sup>:

1. Petition presented at City Council.
2. Petition referred to the appropriate directorate for response within 3 working days.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the protocol applies only to petitions sent internally and not to those which are referred to outside bodies for action.

3. Directorate to write to the Councillor presenting the petition and the first named petitioner to acknowledge receipt within 14 days of the City Council.
4. Progress of investigation into petition to be notified by the relevant directorate to Committee Manger for inclusion in the monthly Petitions Update no later than 10 working days before the next City Council.
5. Final response to petition included in Petitions Update by Committee Manager.
6. Director to notify the Councillor who presented the petition and the first named petitioner of the outcome within 14 days of the relevant City Council meeting discharging the same.

#### 4. Current Position

- 4.1 Following the completion of the Council Business Management Committee which took place on 22 January 2024, approximately 32 petitions were responded to and subsequently discharged by the City Operations directorate.
- 4.2 In addition, a further 8 petitions were responded to and subsequently discharged by other directorates. As a result, 41 out of 50 outstanding petitions have been discharged from the schedule in total since the 22 January 2024.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 to this report outlines (in detail) the number of outstanding petitions as of 2 February 2024, this includes petitions presented to City Council on 9 January 2024. The table below outlines (in summary) the number of outstanding petitions by directorate.

Directorate	Number of Outstanding Petitions
Place, Prosperity and Sustainability	5
City Operations	1
Strategy, Equality and Partnerships	1
Inclusive Growth	1
City Housing	1
Total	9

- 4.4 Where a response, or responses, remain outstanding, the Committee may wish to invite the relevant Strategic Director to attend the next meeting, as was the case with the Strategic Director of City Operations on 22 January 2024.
- 4.5 To ensure agreed timescales are adhered to, the City Solicitor will continue to provide the Corporate Leadership Team with updates on outstanding petitions on a monthly basis. If such improvements are not sustained during February, this will include a review of the petitions protocol.
- 4.6 However, given the substantial number of petitions discharged since the 22 January 2024, and the commitment from CLT that each directorate will adhere at all times to the agreed timescales in relation to the responding to and discharging of petitions, it is hoped that such a review will no longer be required.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

## **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

## **7 Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 7.1 There are no immediate equality implications arising from this report.

## **8 Other Implications**

- 8.1 None.

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 None.

## **10 Appendices**

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Outstanding petitions as of the 2 February 2024.