

**Birmingham City Council**  
**Council Business Management Committee**

21 December 2020



**Subject:** Petition Norman Laud Association  
**Report of:** Suzanne Dodd, City Solicitor  
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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:

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of a Petitions entitled 'Save and properly fund Norman Laud Association - Respite Care for People with Disabilities' that is just under the threshold of 5,000 signatures that allows them to be submitted to this Committee for consideration.
- 1.2 To seek the view of the Committee as to whether it determines that the petition is relevant to either City Council or an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and should be debated.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the report be noted;
- 2.2 That, the Committee determines whether the petition should be debated or not and if so, whether that should be at City Council or by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **3 Background**

3.1 At the Meeting of City Council on 3 November 2020 Councillor Alex Yip submitted a petition (a list of names from an external e-petition site) relating to the funding of the Norman Laud Association which provides respite care for people with disabilities. At the Meeting of City Council on 1 December 2020 Councillor Yip presented the same petition with a greater number of signatures. Following verification, the petition was found to contain 4,994 valid signatures from Birmingham residents; as a large number of the signatures on the e-petition were from outside Birmingham, these were not valid.

3.2 The wording of the petition is as follows:-

'We the undersigned are calling on Birmingham City Council to step in and secure the long term future of Norman Laud- a charity that has been providing respite care for people with profound learning difficulties, and/or complex physical needs since 1961.

For years Birmingham City Council have been considerably underfunding the cost of respite care, particularly for adults with severe disabilities from 18-65 years old by 50%, compared to children's services in the city for overnight respite.

We are calling on Birmingham City Council to properly fund the cost of respite care for children and adults with profound learning difficulties enabling families to have that vital support with their care, enabling positive social experiences, growing their independence, privacy, dignity and equality. We also call on the Cabinet Member and officers to work with families, the Norman Laud Management Team and supporters to urgently establish an emergency rescue package, especially following difficulties with COVID, to secure the future of this service for families across our city, the 40+ employees at the centre and the many users who have their lives enriched by the support.

Especially in these unprecedented times, the respite care provided by services like Norman Laud provide a vital lifeline for families already struggling with caring for loved ones with often profound and/or complex needs in very difficult times. Birmingham City Council must step up and commit to secure its long term for the most vulnerable and in need members of our society.'

### **4 Petition Guidance**

The relevant sections of the petition Guidance sets out the following:-

"If your petition achieves the threshold of 20,000 signatures (subject to verification) this will automatically trigger a debate of the petition at City Council. The lead petitioner will be notified of the date of the meeting.

The lead petitioner will also be offered the option of reading their petition at the beginning of the debate or they may choose to request a local Councillor to present it on their behalf.”

“If your petition achieves the threshold of 10,000 signatures (subject to verification) it will be referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a Senior Officer to attend and answer questions about the delivering of public services”.

“In addition, in event that the a petition with the number of signatures over 5,000 but below the above threshold trigger, is submitted, it will be considered by the Council Business Management Committee to determine whether an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or City Council should debate the petition, if relevant”

## **5 Matters for Consideration**

- 5.1 The petition from Councillor Yip had a number of signatures from people in other parts of the country and a number from around the world which could not be counted as valid. There are 10,280 signatures on the petition which is just over the threshold for consideration at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, the petition has 4,994 valid signatures which is just under the threshold for consideration at this Committee to determine whether it should be debated at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or City Council or not. The Association provides a service for adults and young people funded by their local authority from Birmingham, Sandwell, Walsall, Staffordshire and Solihull and as there were a number of signatures from people living in those local authority areas which would take the petition over the threshold for consideration by this Committee.

## **6 Appendices**

None