

14. DEALING WITH PETITIONS AND REQUESTS FOR COUNCIL SUPPORT

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services inviting the Council Executive to adopt a standard process for handling requests received by the council from individuals or organisations for support or endorsement for a particular issue or campaign.

The report recalled that, on 3 April 2012, the Council Executive had considered a request which had been submitted by members of the community for the council to support a petition calling on the UK Government to increase sentencing for knife crime. As part of its decision, the Council Executive had noted that there was no standard procedure in place for dealing with such requests and remitted the matter to the Panel.

The report set out a recommended approach which would involve a distinction being drawn between subjects on which the council had statutory powers to take some effective action, and those where there the Council had no such statutory powers.

1. The report recommended that the Council Executive agree the following, or such other procedures as was thought appropriate, as the procedure to be applied where requests or petitions were received by council officers from anyone other than another local authority seeking support for particular issues or campaigns:-
 - a) Where the request or petition concerned a subject which was outwith the scope of the statutory powers held by the council to take effective action, a copy of the communication concerned would be sent to all elected members through Members' Services.
 - b) Where the request or petition concerned a subject which was within the scope of the statutory powers held by the council to take effective action, the communication would be placed on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Council or Education Executive for consideration of any appropriate decision or action to be taken by the council in response.
 - c) In all cases, a standard response letter would be sent to the person making the request or submitting the petition explaining the procedure applied to their communication.
 - d) In the event that any action was instructed to be taken, that action, once taken, would be reported back to the next available meeting of the Council or Education Executive.
2. To delegate to the Chief Executive as Clerk to the Council the power to determine whether a request for support or a petition concerned a subject which was within or without the scope of the statutory powers of the council to take effective action, and to amend the Scheme of Delegations accordingly.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.