

Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 31 January 2018

Report Title

Request for Review of Response to Petition - Truthfulness in Communications with Representatives and Advocates of Victims & Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

A request has been received for Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to review the response provided by the Council to a petition calling for the Chief Executive to remind staff of the importance of truthfulness in communications with representatives and advocates of Victims & Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Under the petition scheme, Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will determine the request for the review and may take various actions depending on the information provided to it. This report is submitted to enable the Board to discharge its responsibilities in accordance with the scheme.

Recommendations

1. That consideration be given to the request to review the Council's response to the petition on 'Truthfulness in Communications with Representatives and Advocates of Victims & Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)'.
2. That the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board write to the lead petitioner to outline the outcome of the board's consideration.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A – Petition Scheme

Appendix B – Request for Review by OSMB from the Lead Petitioner and Response to the Lead Petitioner from the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Background Papers

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 September 2017

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Request for Review of Response to Petition - Truthfulness in Communications with Representatives and Advocates of Victims & Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That consideration be given to the request to review the Council's response to the petition on 'Truthfulness in Communications with Representatives and Advocates of Victims & Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)'.
- 1.2 That the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board write to the lead petitioner to outline the outcome of the board's consideration.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Petition Scheme was amended in May 2017 to provide the public with a clear route to call for action on particular issues of concern and to register support or opposition in respect of any proposal. The current Petition Scheme is appended to this report (Appendix A).
- 2.2 Under the petition scheme, a lead petitioner may request a review of the Council's response by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. In doing so, the lead petitioner must set out in writing why the Council's response is considered to be inadequate.
- 2.3 On 13 September 2017, the Council received a petition containing 22 signatures requesting the Chief Executive to write a letter to all employees of RMBC about the importance of truthfulness in their communications with representatives and advocates of victims and survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. As the petition had more than 20 signatures, the lead petitioner addressed the Council meeting and, in accordance with the scheme, the petition was referred to the relevant officer for response.
- 2.4 On 29 September 2017, a response was sent by the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services on behalf of the Chief Executive to the lead petitioner. The response is enclosed within Appendix B.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The lead petitioner has submitted a request for Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to review the response received to the petition. A copy of the request is enclosed within Appendix B.
- 3.2 The lead petitioner has been invited to attend the Board and may make verbal representations for up to five minutes. The Board then has the opportunity to seek further information from the lead petitioner through questions.
- 3.3 In considering the request to review the response to the petition, Members may seek and have regard to additional information to inform the review.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Should the Board determine that the petition has not been dealt with adequately it may instigate an investigation and make recommendations to the relevant officer or the Council's Cabinet.
- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board may also decide that the authority's response to the petition should be discussed at a meeting of the Council.
- 4.3 Once the review request has been considered the lead petitioner will be informed of the result in writing by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board within 10 working days of the meeting.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is responsible for considering the request to review the petition and communicating the outcome of the review within ten working days to the lead petitioner.
- 5.2 If Members determine that the request is valid and requires further investigation then Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will provide direction on whether it requires further consideration by an officer, the Cabinet or whether the response should be considered by the Council. The petition scheme does not provide a timescale for this to be completed, but where consideration is required by either Cabinet or Council this will be listed on the agenda for the next available meeting.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial or procurement implications associated with this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly associated with this report.

8. Human Resources Implications

- 8.1 The subject of the petition which the Board has been asked to review has human resources implications in that the 'call for action' was for the Chief Executive to write to all staff to remind them of the importance of truthfulness in communications with representatives and advocates of victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The petition itself was concerned with ensuring truthfulness in communications with representatives and advocates of victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation. The Council has commissioned other service providers to signpost and support the victims and survivors of CSE.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

10.1 There are no equalities or human rights implications associated with this report.

11. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

11.1 There are no implications for partners or other directorates arising directly from this report.

12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 There are no identified risks associated with this report.

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