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**OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL**

Officer report to:	**Council**
Date:	**24 April 2017**
Report of:	**Acting Head of Law and Governance**
Title of Report:	**Petition submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules.**

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To set before Council a petition meeting the criteria for debate under the Council's petitions scheme.
Decision required:	Yes
Corporate Priority:	Not applicable.
Policy Framework:	Not applicable.
Recommendation(s):That Council:	

1.   in line with the procedure for large petitions:

- hears the head petitioner for the petition;

- debates:

    o   the proposal to the Council contained within the petition; or

    o   relevant motions submitted by councillors by the deadline ; and

- decides the action it wishes to take.

The petition proposes:

Can you support Iffley Open House in calling on Oxford City Council to do the right thing and to re-open Lucy Faithful House as a night shelter?

Executive Board Member responsible :	Councillor Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing

The petition

1. A paper petition signed by just over 1800 people was delivered to the Acting Head of Law and Governance at the Council meeting on 20 February 2017 as part of the speech by Neo about the Council's budget.

2. The petition states:

Can you support Iffley Open House in calling on Oxford City Council to do the right thing and to re-open Lucy Faithful House as a night shelter?

Last year Lucy Faithful House was forced to close after 30 years of operation as a night shelter serving the homeless of Oxford due to budget cuts. This year further planned closures will mean a total loss of 261 beds for the homeless over the next 12 months across the city.

Meanwhile homeless has doubled in the last year and cuts to housing support services are making it harder for people to find a safe, secure home in their city.

At the Oxford City Council Budget meeting on 20th February we are calling for a vote to save Lucy Faithful House and reinstate it as a vital social service for the homeless.

The residents of Iffley Open House, a group that occupied an empty garage in east Oxford on New Year's Eve, are being forced to leave by the 27th February. The building owned by Wadham College has been run as a shelter and social space for and by homeless and rough sleepers. With no alternative the residents will be thrown back on the street on the 27th February in freezing temperatures. We are appealing to the council and wider public to support us in helping to rehouse the residents.

The Council administration want to sell off the Lucy Faithfull House site, most probably for luxury housing BUT there is an opposition amendment which will save the building and restore it as much needed homeless accommodation. The decision will be made at the Oxford City Council meeting on Monday 20th February.

If this petition gets 1500 signatures before the Council meeting then City Councillors will have to debate saving Lucy Faithfull House at the next Council meeting in April.

3. The signatures are valid and come from a range of postcodes and include a number from outside the city. Not all signatories will live, work or study in the city. The Council's petition scheme does not require any conditions to be met before accepting a signature as valid.

The petition therefore meets the criteria for debate at Council.

Constitution rules and procedure

4. The Council's scheme for handling petitions is set out in the Constitution. The scheme specifies that petitions requesting action within the Council's powers and containing over 1,500 signatures will be debated by Full Council. The scheme also specifies that the petition organiser can address Council for up to five minutes at the start of the debate in order to present the petition.

5. If a Member wishes to put a substantive motion/recommendation on a petition that differs from the proposal in the petition then they must let the Acting Head of Law and Governance have that motion/recommendation by 10.00am on the working day before the full Council meeting. These would then be published in the Council briefing note.

Any amendments to these would have to be with Committee and Members' Services by 11.00am on the day of the meeting.

6. A substantive motion in this case is anything other than adopting the actions suggested in the petition, or deferring, referring or noting the issues raised by the petition.

Actions for Council

7. The Constitution states that there is a limit of 15 minutes for dealing with each petition. On this occasion and should the head petitioner speak for 5 minutes the Council rules then allow 10 minutes for debate and decision.

8. The action proposed for Council in the petition is:

Can you support Iffley Open House in calling on Oxford City Council to do the right thing and to re-open Lucy Faithful House as a night shelter?

9. Actions open to Council include:

- note the petition

- take the action the petition requests

- not take the action the petition requests

- commission further investigation into the matter

- where the matter is one where the Executive is required to make the final decision, decide whether to make recommendations to the Executive to inform that decision.

Financial implications

10. The implications of this report will depend on Council's recommendations, if any, and Council should be mindful of the possible costs in formulating its recommendations.

Legal issues

11. The implications will depend on Council's recommendations, if any.

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Background Papers:	
1	Petition available on
	Oxford city council website
	Change.org website

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