

Officer report to: Council
Date: 6 February 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.	<p>In line with the procedure for large petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hears the head petitioner for the petition; • debates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the proposal to the Council contained within the petition; or ○ the motion proposed by Councillor Goddard ; and • decides the action it wishes to take.
<p>The petition proposes that: We the undersigned citizens of Oxford - Muslims originating from the States of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan - strongly urge our Local Council and councillors; national leaders – MP's and MEP's to act now to demand India stop the violent crackdown on innocent civilians in the Kashmir Valley</p> <p>Councillor Goddard has proposed a separate motion (appended separately) in accordance with the rules in 5.</p>	

Executive Board Member with responsibility for this area:	Councillor Bob Price, Leader of the Council
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The petition

1. A paper petition signed by just over 1800 people was delivered to the Acting Head of Law and Governance on 16 January 2017.

2. The petition states:

We the undersigned citizens of Oxford's – Muslims originated from the State of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan; we are very much worried, concern over atrocities committed in Kashmir; strongly urge our Local Council and councillors; national leaders – MP and MEP's to act now to demand India to stop violent crackdown of innocent civilians in Kashmir Valley; Kashmir region has been under military curfew for last five month July-Dec 2016 continuously, with loss of over 100s lives; 2000-4000 injured; 300-400 life threatening injuries and many left disabled-blind, disabled for rest of lives; God knows when it will stop.

Since July 2016; peaceful agitation for basic rights are suppressed by heavy handed force used by Indian military and police; innocently killing protesters daily; continues curfew; closure of schools, colleges, hospitals and Mosques for Friday congressional prayers – it was first time in last 150 years, Srinagar's main Mosque was closed to Eid Al-adah prayer; using live ammunition, pellet guns, tear gas, firing indiscriminately by military and police, targeting to kill rather than to disperse crowds.

3. The signatures are valid and come from a range of postcodes. Not all signatories live, work or study in the city. The Council's petition scheme does not require these 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 agreement
8. The action proposed for Council in the petition is:

petitioners strongly urge our Local Council and councillors; national leaders – MP’s and MEP’s to act now to demand India stop the violent crackdown of innocent civilians in Kashmir Valley.

9. Councillor Goddard has submitted a substantive motion to be debated.

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.

Level of risk

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Background Papers:
1 Petition

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