

Pensions Committee

11am, Wednesday, 27 September 2017

‘We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture’ - referral from the Petitions Committee

Item number	5.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

Executive summary

The Petitions Committee on 30 March 2017 considered a report by the Chief Executive outlining the petition ‘We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture’. The Committee agreed to refer the petition to the Pensions Committee for consideration.

Terms of Referral

We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture

Terms of referral

- 1.1 On 30 March 2017 the Petitions Committee considered a report outlining the petition 'We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture'.
- 1.2 The Petitions Committee agreed:
 - 1.2.1 To refer the petition to the Pensions Committee for consideration.
 - 1.2.2 To agree to append an extract from the minute of the Petitions Committee meeting of 30 March 2017 to the referral report to the Pensions Committee.
 - 1.2.3 To send a link to the [webcast of the Petitions Committee meeting of 30 March 2017](#) to members of the Pensions Committee in advance of their next meeting on 28 June 2017.

For Decision/Action

- 2.1. The Pensions Committee is asked to consider the content of the petition 'We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture'.

Background reading / external references

The Petitions Committee 30 March 2017.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Petitions for Consideration Overview Report

Appendix 2 - Petitions Committee Minute - 30 March 2017

Petitions Committee

2.00pm, Thursday 30 March 2017

Petitions for Consideration: Overview Report

Item number	6.1
Report number	
Wards	Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart

Links

Coalition pledges	
Council outcomes	CO23 & CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Executive Summary

Petitions for Consideration: Overview Report

Summary

The Committee is asked to consider two petitions at this meeting.

Valid petitions -

Turn up street lights

A valid petition entitled 'Turn up street lights' has been received. The petition received 76 signatures.

We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture

A valid petition entitled 'We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture' has been received. The petition received 400 signatures.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the petitions:

- 1.1 Turn up street lights as set out in 6.1(a) of Appendix one.
- 1.2 We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture as set out in 6.1(b) of Appendix one.

Measures of success

There are no immediate measures of success applicable to this report.

Financial impact

There are no financial impacts arising from the consideration of the petition.

Equalities impact

There are no equalities impacts arising from the consideration of the petition.

Sustainability impact

There are no sustainability impacts arising from the consideration of the petition.

Consultation and engagement

There are no consultation or engagement requirements at this part of the process.

Background reading / external references

[Petitions webpages](#)

[Council Webcasting](#)

Links

Coalition pledges

Council outcomes

CO23 Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community

CO26 The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives

Single Outcome

Agreement

Appendices

Appendix one: Petitions for Consideration

Appendix 1 - Petitions for Consideration

Item Number	Date made available & Closed for signatures	Petitions Title and Petitions Statement	Wards affected	Total Number of Signatories
6.1(a)	<p>Open - 14 October 2016</p> <p>Closed – 16 January 2017</p>	<p>Turn up street lights</p> <p>The streets named below are dangerously dark we would ask the council to turn the street lights up. Watson Crescent; Fowler Terrace; Bryson Road; Dundee Terrace Ritchie Place.</p>	Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart	76
6.1(b)	<p>Open – 7 February 2017</p> <p>Closed – 23 March 2017</p>	<p>We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture</p> <p>The Lothian Pensions Trust currently has large investments in companies that are involved in the manufacture of weapons that are being used in conflicts across the world, often killing innocent civilians.</p> <p>We understand that the Lothian Pensions Trust has a fiduciary duty to invest its funds to maximise its returns for its pensions portfolio. However, there are other investments that could be made that would provide good long-term returns on the invested funds that would contribute to local and global sustainability, rather than destruction and death across the globe. These include investments in local renewable energy schemes (to mitigate climate change) and local social housing, meeting local needs.</p>	All	400

Minutes

Petitions Committee

2pm, Thursday, 30 March 2017

Present

Councillors Booth (Convener), Dixon, Donaldson, Gardner, and Keil and Key

1. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Petitions Committee meeting of 23 January 2017 as a correct record.

2. Rolling Actions Log

The Petitions Committee Rolling Actions Log updated to 30 March 2017 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the rolling actions log.
- 2) To approve the closure of actions 1 and 2.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log 30 March 2017, submitted)

3. Petitions Committee Business Bulletin

The Petitions Committee Business Bulletin for 30 March 2017 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Petitions Committee Business Bulletin 30 March 2017, submitted.)

4. Petitions for Consideration: Overview Report

The Committee was asked to consider two valid petitions.

(a) Turn up street lights

Officers reported that since the petition was received they had met with ward councillors and replaced some of the existing lanterns with wide street comfort optic lanterns. Officers also identified other lanterns in the area that were misaligned which was having a detrimental impact on light distribution.

All lanterns within the area had been set to P4 level as per guidance for that type of street. There remained an outstanding issue in terms of some of the trees at various junctions encroaching on lighting columns which had impacted on light distribution. Officers planned to meet with colleague's in Forestry to examine the best approach to resolving this.

Councillor Corbett was heard as a local ward member. While welcoming the update from Officers, Councillor Corbett highlighted that the closeness of some trees to lighting columns required to be addressed.

Decision

- 1) To note the issues raised by the petition
- 2) To note the update from Officers concerning the work that had been undertaken to resolve the issues raised by the petition.
- 3) To ask that an update be included within a future Transport and Environment Committee Business Bulletin regarding future planned work to resolve the issues raised by the petition.

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Key declared a non-financial interest in the above item as the Principal Petitioner was known to him.

(b) We call on the City of Edinburgh Council to do everything within its powers and remit to require that Lothian Pensions Trust divest from all investments concerning arms manufacture.

Brian Larkin, on behalf of the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, asked that the Petitions Committee recommend to the Pensions Committee that they be permitted to speak to the Committee in order that they can recommend that the Lothian Pensions Fund divest from the arms trade.

Mr Larkin appreciated that Trustees of the pension fund had a fiduciary duty to maximise long term financial gains but stressed that any investment approach should also be based upon ethical principles that took into consideration environment and social governance.

Up to 115 counties would soon sign a commitment to ban nuclear weapons. While it remains uncertain that Scotland would become an independent country, an independent Scotland would make a commitment to banning nuclear weapons and by association a ban on investing in companies that develop nuclear weapons.

Nina Olakento, on behalf of the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), said that the UK's policy of not allowing the exportation of arms to countries that would use them for internal repression or external aggression was flawed as Saudi Arabia was using UK manufactured arms for both.

CAAT had submitted the UK Government for Judicial Review regarding arms exports. Miss Olakento reported that CAAT were confident the UK Government would be found in breach of export laws and as such any investments made in UK arms manufacturers would be impacted. Miss Olakento rejected the ongoing myth that the arms industry was good for jobs, stating that the arms industry only employs 0.2% of the total workforce yet it received a disproportionate amount of UK Government support and subsidies.

In bringing the submission to a close, Mr Larkin reported that there was a strong moral case for the divestment from arms manufacture and that Local Authority pension funds should take into consideration ethical issues when investing.

Decision

- 1) To refer the petition to the Pensions Committee for consideration.
- 2) To agree to attach an extract from the minute of the Petitions' Committee 30 March 2017 to the afore-mentioned referral report.
- 3) To send a link to the webcast of the Petitions Committee meeting of 30 March 2017 to members of the Pensions Committee in advance of their next meeting on 28 June 2017.

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Gardner declared a non-financial interest in the above item as a member of Campaign Against Arms Trade and of Friends of the Earth. Councillor Gardner also facilitated a meeting between the Principal Petitioner and the Clerks.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

5. Petitions for Consideration: Overview Report

The Committee was asked to note that there were no petitions open for signatures on the Council website and that two invalid petitions had been received.

Decision

- 1) To note that there are currently no open for signatures on the Council website.
- 2) To note that two invalid petitions 'Keep Portobello Powerleague for 5 a side pitches' and 'Save the WHEC Young Mum's Unit and Crèche' had been received.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)