

L Procedural Guidance – Petitions

Definition

1. For the purposes of this procedural guidance, a petition is defined as a document embodying a formal written request for some form of action or the consideration of some matter by the Council.

Scope

2. Petitions must be relevant to some matter relating to which the District Council has powers or duties, or is of general concern affecting the district or part of the district, its Council Tax or National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) payers.
3. Petitions relating to applications for a permission, consent or licence yet to be determined will be reported to the relevant regulatory committee with other responses to consultation.

Eligibility

4. The District Council will not accept petitions that are abusive or libellous; frivolous, vague or ambiguous; require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information or are otherwise considered to abuse the Council's powers, duties or obligations. It will not accept a petition, which is substantially the same as a petition, or public question, which has been put to a meeting during the preceding six months.
5. Petitions will not be admissible where the matter involves a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or a Government Minister. Employees should use existing grievance / appeal procedures on matters relating to terms and conditions of employment.
6. To be accepted by the District Council, a petition must bear at least twenty signatures of people who either live or work in the District unless the law otherwise provides.
7. The interpretation of the eligibility criteria by the Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee shall be final.

Form

8. The petition shall clearly state the purpose for which it is submitted and shall be addressed to the District Council.
9. It shall contain the name, address and signature of each person who signed it. The name and address shall be in a legible format. It shall also specify a contact name and address.

Procedure

10. The petition, save those referred to at paragraph 3, shall be sent to the Chief Executive. If relevant, it may be copied to the local District councillor(s).
11. The Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee will consider the content and determine the proper forum for its presentation. If the subject matter relates to a particular locality, a copy of the petition will be sent to the local councillor(s), and if to a particular service, to the relevant Director
12. Acknowledgement of receipt of the petition will be sent no later than the working day following its receipt. Notice of the forum for presentation will be sent within five working days of its receipt.
13. A petition may be considered by full Council, Cabinet, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, depending on the subject matter and the timing of relevant meetings. The meeting considering the petition may refer it to any other body of the Council for action.

14. Agenda for full Council will include a formal announcement of all petitions received under this procedural guidance since the last Council meeting.
15. The lead petitioner or nominee as identified on the petition will be invited to speak at the meeting at which it is presented for no more than five minutes and may be questioned by councillors for no more than five minutes. The period for questions may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman. The petitioner is not entitled to take part in any debate on the matter but will be given the opportunity to give a two-minute summation speech.
16. If it is intended that the petition will form supporting evidence to a public question to a meeting in accordance with the Constitution, rather than being presented in its own right, the rules and guidelines for public questions as set out in the Council Rules of Procedure shall be followed.
17. Following the relevant meeting, the lead petitioner will be advised of the Council's decision on the petition.