

Proposed amendments to the Council's petition scheme – Petitions seeking a full Council debate

What are the guidelines for submitting a petition requiring a full Council debate?

Petitions submitted to the council requiring a full Council debate must include:

- a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the council to take;
- the name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition.

Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including an address, for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. The contact details of the petition organiser will not be placed on the website. If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, we will contact signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.

Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which will apply. If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

If a qualifying petition contains more than 1340 signatures ¹ (1% of the electorate) it will be debated by the full council. This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all councillors can attend. The council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at a following meeting. Petitions will not be considered at the Council's budget meeting or the Annual General meeting.

The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors. The council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee. Where the issue is one on which the cabinet are required to make the final decision, the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on our website.

¹ This figure may change as electorate numbers change

A qualifying petition is one that

1. Contains the name, address on the electoral roll or business address of sufficient numbers of persons;
2. Does not relate to a planning, licensing or other matter where there are existing avenues of appeal;
3. Is not already the subject of current debate or consideration within the Council or the subject of an existing or future consultation; and
4. Seeks one or more specific actions from the Council