
Petition Scheme

Peterborough City Council

Part 5 Section 9 – The Petition Scheme

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Peterborough City Council is always interested in feedback on our services and ideas for improvement.
- 1.2 There are local public consultations into matters affecting our city and details can be found on our website <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/consultations/>.
- 1.3 Our public meetings are published on our website at <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/council-meetings/> and displayed in the noticeboards outside the Town Hall and Bayard Place. Please contact Democratic Services on 01733 747474 or email democratic.services@peterborough.gov.uk for further information.
- 1.4 Often a telephone call or email is all it takes to get a matter investigated and our Customer Services Team can be contacted on 01733 747474 or by email at customer.services@peterborough.gov.uk. Your enquiry will be directed to the relevant department. They will listen to your concerns or suggestions, try to resolve them and explain the current situation. This will achieve the fastest response.
- 1.5 A petition to the council should only be considered when all other avenues have been exhausted. This section of the constitution sets out what makes a valid petition, how to get the petition to the Council and what the Council will do once a petition is received.

2. Petitions that Cannot be Dealt with Through this Scheme – Planning and Licensing Decisions

- 2.1 The following matters are excluded from this petition scheme:
- Any matter relating to a planning decision, including a development plan document or community infrastructure levy (a new local levy that authorities can choose to introduce to help fund infrastructure in their area.)
 - Any matter relating to an alcohol, gambling or sex establishment licensing decision.*

* A 'Licensing Decision' is:

- Any decision in relation to an application for the grant, variation or review of any authorisation under Part 3 or 4 of the Licensing Act 2003 (premises licences and club premises licences) or any hearing or appeal in respect of any such application.
- Any decision in relation to the application for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence under Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (control of sex establishments), a request for the variation of any term, condition or restriction contained in such a licence or the revocation of such a licence.
- Any decision in relation to any application for a licence, permit or registration under the Gambling Act 2005, a request for a variation of any term, condition or restriction

associated with any such licence, permit or registration or the revocation of any such licence, permit or registration.

- 2.2 However, a petition that alleges a systematic failure to deliver services in the above areas is within the scope of this scheme (e.g. while a petition on an individual planning application could not be taken, a petition about the Council's failure to deliver an effective service for planning applications would be within the scope of this scheme).
- 2.3 Comments and inquiries on licensing and planning applications including appeals should be made to licensing@peterborough.gov.uk and planningcontrol@peterborough.gov.uk respectively or by telephone to 01733 747474 and asking for either the Licensing or Planning Department.

3. Guidelines for Preparing a Petition

- 3.1 To qualify as a petition the submission must meet certain criteria. The petition must:
- Clearly state the concern or problem to be addressed.
 - Clearly state what the Council is being asked to do.
 - State who the lead petitioner is and include their contact details.
 - Must not concern a planning or licensing application.
 - Must not be similar to, or a duplicate of a petition submitted within the previous 12 months. Past petitions can be viewed on our website <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/consultations/petitions/>.
 - Contain at least 20 names, address and signatures of people living, working or studying in the area.
- 3.2 If the petition does not contain 20 signatures it can still be considered if the issue relates to a small local area and is signed by the majority of people affected. Further information is available from Democratic Services, Town Hall, Bridge Street, Peterborough PE1 1HG 01733 747474 or by emailing petitions@peterborough.gov.uk
- 3.3 The address given by those signing the petition must be within the Peterborough City Council area. People who work or study in Peterborough and are affected by the subject of the petition must use the address of their place of work or study to be counted. Email address are also required for online petitions. More information on e-petitions submitted online via the Peterborough City Council website can be found in section 4.
- 3.4 Petitions will not be considered if they are:
- Abusive.
 - Vexatious (intending to cause only annoyance, frustration or worry)
 - Presented for the purpose of making mischief.
 - Otherwise inappropriate.
- 3.5 Reasons for rejection will be given to the lead petitioner in writing or by email where possible.
- 3.6 During the period before an election or referendum, known as Purdah, it could be necessary for a petition to be dealt with differently. Should this happen a full explanation will be given including any anticipated timescales.

4. E-petitions

- 4.1 Online petitions are the easiest way to submit a petition and can be created online via our website using the link:
<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/consultations/petitions/>.
- 4.2 The petition organiser will need to register using their own name, address and email address.
- 4.3 The petition must give a clear indication of the issue and the action required by the Council and comply with the petitions criteria set out in item 3.
- 4.4 The lead petitioner will decide how long the petition will remain open and available for signature.
- 4.5 The petition will be published on the Council website within five working days.
- 4.6 Should the petition not be suitable for publication the Council will contact the lead petitioner and will give advice on how the petition could be adapted and re-submitted. If the petition is not re-submitted within ten days the details will appear on our website and the status classified as “Rejected” or “Invalid”.
- 4.7 Once an e-petition has closed for signature Democratic Services will automatically be notified. There is no need for the lead petitioner to contact them separately.
- 4.8 E-petitions are signed by visiting our website www.peterborough.gov.uk/epetitions where current e-petitions are available to sign online. A name, postcode and email address will be required and an email will be sent to the email address given to complete the process. It is important the information given is accurate.

Caution: there are some online petitions which will not be accepted by this Council as they do not comply with the terms of our scheme. If you are in any doubt and require advice please contact us at petitions@peterborough.gov.uk or 01733 747474 and ask for Democratic Services and we will be happy to help.

5. Paper Petitions

- 5.1 Petitions can be collected on paper and a template is included at Appendix 1. Using the template will ensure all relevant information is included.

6. Delivering a Petition to the Council

- 6.1 E-petitions created through our website are automatically sent to us once the time limit set for the petition has expired and there is no need for you to take further action at this stage as we will contact you within 5 days of the petition closing.
- 6.2 A paper petition can be presented to the Council in several ways:
 - It could be delivered by post to Democratic Services, Town Hall, Bridge Street, Peterborough PE1 1HG.
 - It could be handed in at the Town Hall.
 - It could be handed to a Councillor.

The contact details of all Councillors can be found on our website at: <http://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/mqMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

- It could be emailed to petitions@peterborough.gov.uk.
- It could be delivered in person at a meeting of the Full Council or Cabinet. *Dates of the Council meetings are on the Council's website and displayed on the notice boards outside the Town Hall and Bayard Place. Council meetings take place approximately every six weeks. Details can be found at <http://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>. Democratic Services must be informed 10 working days before the meeting of your intention to present a petition. Full details must be received in writing or by email to petitions@peterborough.gov.uk by 12:00 noon on the working day before the meeting.*

6.3 If delivered a meeting the lead petitioner can present the petition themselves or ask someone else, such as a Councillor, to do so on their behalf. An officer in Democratic Services will be available to talk through the process beforehand.

6.4 The lead petitioner or their representative will have one minute to present the petition to the Council. The petition will be received without comment.

7. What Will the Council do when a Petition is Received?

7.1 An acknowledgment will be sent to the lead petitioner by letter or email within five working days of receipt. This will provide details of what we intend to do with the petition and when further information can be expected.

7.2 If the petition does not comply with the criteria set out in section 3 and the Council is unable to proceed, an explanation will be given in the acknowledgment letter. The petition will be published on the website with the status "Invalid" or "Rejected" together with a copy of the letter to the lead petitioner explaining why this decision has been taken.

7.3 The petition will be published on the Council's website unless it is inappropriate to do so.

7.4 A response will be provided to the lead petitioner within 15 working days of the acknowledgment being sent and a copy will be published on our website.

7.5 A petition containing over 50 validated signatures will be eligible for submission to the Cabinet or Scrutiny Committee alongside or in advance of the business the petition is seeking to influence. This option will be offered after the response letter is received as it might not be necessary if the Council is able to comply fully with the wishes of the petitioners.

7.6 A petition containing over 500 validated signatures will be eligible to be discussed at a meeting of the Full Council, Cabinet or Scrutiny Committee. This option will be offered after the response is received as it might not be necessary if the Council is able to comply fully with the wishes of the petitioners.

7.7 The lead petitioner will be contacted after the response has been sent and asked if they wish to take one of these options.

8. Full Council Debates

8.1 If a petition contains more than 500 signatures from people who live, work or study in the Peterborough area, it is eligible for debate at a meeting of the Full Council. If the lead petitioner chooses this option the petition will be discussed at the next Council meeting. The following protocol will apply:

8.2 The Mayor will lead the debate. There is a 45 minutes time limit on the discussion of an individual petition. At the end of this period Council will move immediately to the remaining votes without debate.

8.3 The lead petitioner, or their representative, will have five minutes to present their petition to the meeting to begin the debate. Times are strictly controlled and it is recommended to have a speech prepared in advance to ensure all relevant points are expressed.

8.4 The relevant Cabinet Member will be offered the opportunity to propose a course of action (propose a motion) which could be one of the following:

- To take the action requested in the petition if it is possible to do so.
- To refer the petition to either Cabinet, a Cabinet Member or the relevant Scrutiny Committee for consideration having regards to the comments made in the debate.
- To note the petition and comments but take no action for the reasons given in the debate.

8.5 The Mayor will ask for a seconder for the proposed motion.

8.6 The Mayor will then ask if there is an alternative course of action and each proposed alternative will need to be seconded.

8.7 All proposals must be provided in advance by Members to Democratic Services by 12noon on the day before the meeting.

8.8 Members will then debate the first proposal moved by the Cabinet Member, following the normal rules of debate.

8.9 When the debate has finished the Mayor will offer the lead petitioner, or their representative, the “right of reply”. They can respond to any matters raised, speaking for up to three minutes.

8.10 The Mayor will then offer the “right to reply” to the relevant Cabinet Member.

8.11 If only one motion has been proposed and seconded the Mayor will call for a vote on that motion which can be either carried or defeated.

8.12 When more than one motion has been proposed and seconded, the Mayor will only move on to the debate for subsequent motions if the first motion is defeated in the vote.

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Each subsequent motion will be debated in the format set out above and voted on in turn until a motion is carried and an outcome achieved.

- 8.13 If no proposals are agreed, the Mayor will move that the petition be noted.
- 8.14 The lead petitioner will be notified of the outcome of the debate in writing or by email within five working days.

9. Outcome

- 9.1 The lead petitioner will receive a written response by letter or email confirming the action the Council intends to take with a full explanation.
- 9.2 The Council's website will be updated to indicate that a decision has been taken and the petition status will be updated to reflect this.
- 9.3 A copy of the response will be published on the council website.

Further information about the Council, its services and meetings are available on our website at www.peterborough.gov.uk

Appendix 1
Peterborough City Council Petitions Scheme Template

Those signing this petition must live, work, or study in the Peterborough area to be validated as a signatory. Those living outside the area can also sign the petition and will be taken into consideration but will not be counted. Further details can be found on the Peterborough City Council website www.peterborough.gov.uk/epetitions

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| Petition Subject: |
| By signing this form we ask that the Council take the following action: |
| Lead petitioner (who must live, work or study in Peterborough) Name: Address: Telephone number: Email address: |

| | Name | Address | Signature |
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