

Peterborough City Council

Petitions Scheme

Peterborough City Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement within five working days which will set out what we plan to do with the petition. We set out below how the Council will respond to petitions which you send us. The principle behind this Scheme is to enable public access to the decision-making processes of the Council and as such contribute towards open and inclusive governance.

The Council maintains a petitions website at www.peterborough.gov.uk.

What is a petition?

We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition. For practical purposes, we normally set a requirement for at least 25 signatories before we treat it as a petition. However some specific petitions will require a higher level of signatories (see below).

All petitions must relate to a function provided directly by the Council or to an improvement in the economic, social or environmental well-being of Peterborough where we would work with one of our partners to respond to your petition.

What should a petition contain?

A petition must include –

- A clear and concise statement of your concerns and what you want the Council to do;
- The names, addresses and signatures of the required number of petitioners who live, work or study in Peterborough. Addresses must be a Peterborough address where the signatory lives, works or studies and proof of address may be sought to verify a signature.
- The name and contact details of the petition organiser or someone to whom you would like any correspondence about the petition to be sent to.

Petitions will not be accepted if in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, they are rude, offensive, defamatory, scurrilous or time-wasting, or do not relate to something which is the responsibility of the Council, or over which the Council has some influence.

Petitions for Debate

If you want your petition to be reported to and debated at a meeting of the Full Council, it must contain at least 500 signatories.

Petitions to Hold an Officer to Account

If you want your petition to be considered at a public meeting of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where a senior council officer will be required to give evidence about something for which they are responsible as part of their job, your petition must contain at least 250 signatories. The Council has determined that such petitions must relate to the Chief Executive, a Director or a Head of Service. The full list of officers is attached at Annex A.

Where the petition raises issues of competence or misconduct, the petition will be referred to the Chief Executive (or to the Head of Human Resources in respect of the Chief Executive) and will be considered under the Council's other procedures, and not under this petitions procedure.

Who should you send a petition to?

The Corporate Governance Manager is responsible for receiving, managing and reporting the petitions sent to the Council. Please address petitions to –

Corporate Governance Manager
Democratic Services
Peterborough City Council
Town Hall
Bridge Street
Peterborough
PE1 1HG

Or to petitions@peterborough.gov.uk

Petitions can also be presented to a meeting of the Council. These meetings take place throughout the year and dates and times can be found on the Council's website at www.peterborough.gov.uk. If you would like to present your petition to the Council, or would like your councillor or someone else to present it on your behalf, please contact the Corporate Governance Manager on (01733) 747474 at least 10 working days before the meeting and they will talk you through the process.

At a later date, it will be possible to create, sign and submit petitions online by following a link from this Scheme.

What happens when a petition is received?

For all petitions –

- (i) Within five working days of the petition being received, the Corporate Governance Manager will acknowledge receipt of the petition to the petition organiser and relevant ward councillors, setting out who the petition will be reported to for consideration.
- (ii) The Corporate Governance Manager will put details of the subject matter of the petition, its date of receipt and the number of signatories on to the petitions website. The petition organiser's name and contact details will only be included on the website if s/he agrees.
- (iii) As soon as it is decided who the petition will be considered by within the Council, this information will be entered on the website at the same time as it is sent to the petition organiser. Once the petition has been considered, the Council's decision will be notified to the petition organiser and put on the website within five working days of that consideration.
- (iv) Our response to a petition will depend on what the petition asks for but may include one or more of the following:
 - taking the action requested in the petition
 - considering the petition at a council meeting
 - holding an inquiry into the matter
 - undertaking research into the matter
 - holding a public meeting
 - holding a consultation
 - holding a meeting with petitioners
 - referring the petition for consideration by one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees
 - calling a referendum
 - writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition
- (v) If the petition is to be considered at a public meeting of one of the Council's committees, the petition organiser will be notified when and where that meeting will take place and will be invited to address the meeting for up to 3 minutes on the issues covered by the petition. The invitation to the petition organiser to address the meeting is in addition to any other public speaking rights at that meeting.
- (vi) At each stage of the consideration of the petition, within five working days of any decision, the Corporate Governance Manager will ensure that the petitions website is updated to ensure that petitioners can track the progress of their petition.

Petitions for Debate

These petitions will be reported to the next convenient meeting of the Full Council. Petitions will not be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Council or at Extraordinary Meetings of the Council which are not convened to consider the subject matter of the petition.

The petition organiser will be invited to address the meeting for up to 3 minutes on the subject of the petition and then the Council's usual rules of debate will apply.

At the end of the debate, the Full Council can only make a decision on those matters which have been reserved to it. On all other matters, the Full Council will submit any appropriate recommendations to the Executive or to the relevant decision making committee for them to consider.

Petition to Hold an Officer to Account

These petitions will be reported to the next convenient meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In advance of the Committee meeting, the petition organiser will be invited to submit a list of questions which s/he would like the Committee to put to the officer at the meeting. These questions will be provided to the Chairman of the Committee, who will decide whether they are appropriate, and to the officer concerned, in advance of the meeting.

At the meeting, the Chairman will invite the petition organiser to address the Committee for a maximum of 3 minutes on the issue raised, and the relevant officer will then be required to respond on the subject matter of the petition. The Chairman will then put any submitted questions to the officer.

Other Petitions

Any other type of petitions will be reported to the person or body who has the power to take a decision on the matter. The progress made in response to these petitions will be reported to the Council's Cabinet.

If the petition is to be considered by a Cabinet Member or officer –

- (i) Where the matter is to be determined by a Cabinet Member or officer, s/he will take a decision on the matter. That decision may be a determination of the matter, or may be a decision to refer the matter for investigation and report back, or to refer it up to a meeting of Council, Cabinet or a Committee of the Council for determination.
- (ii) Within five working days of the consideration of the petition by the relevant Cabinet Member or officer, the Corporate Governance Manager will notify the petition organiser of the Cabinet Member or officer's decision and advise him/her that if s/he is not satisfied with the outcome, s/he may require the matter to be reported to the next convenient meeting of the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.
- (iii) At each stage, the Corporate Governance Manager will enter the relevant information on the website at the same time as it is sent to the petition organiser.

If the petition is to be considered at a meeting within the Council –

- (i) Petitions which do not relate to an ordinary item of business will be considered before the normal business of the meeting, and will be considered in the order in which they were received, unless the Chairman at the meeting determines otherwise. A maximum of 30 minutes will be allowed at each meeting for considering such petitions and any petitions not reached in the time allowed will be referred to the relevant Cabinet Member for consideration or deferred until the next meeting.
- (ii) Any petitions relevant to particular items of business, such as petitions relating to planning applications, will be taken together with that item of business, in the normal order of business.
- (iii) The Chairman of the meeting may invite the petition organiser to address the meeting for up to 3 minutes. The Chairman may then ask questions of the petition organiser, and will then invite any

relevant Ward Councillors present to address the meeting on the matter for up to 3 minutes (each). The Chairman will then invite a relevant officer(s) to advise the meeting, after which the matter will be open for debate among members of the meeting, in accordance with any rules of debate for that meeting.

Appeal to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

If the petition organiser is not satisfied with the outcome of the Council's consideration of their petition, s/he may appeal to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the steps that the Council has taken in dealing with the petition.

The petition organiser is required to notify the Scrutiny Manager of his/her intention to appeal within 20 working days of being notified of the Council's decision on the petition.

Within five working days of the receipt of the intention to appeal, the Scrutiny Manager will determine which is the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will notify the petition organiser of the time, date and place of the next convenient meeting of that Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will invite the petition organiser to attend the meeting and to address the Committee for up to 3 minutes on why s/he considers that the Council's decision on the petition is inadequate.

At that meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will invite the petition organiser to make their representations and to explain why s/he considers that the Council's response was insufficient.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot over-ride the decision made on the petition, but they can submit any appropriate recommendations to the decision taker for them to reconsider.

Petitions which will not be reported

Duplicate Petitions

Where more than one petition is received each supporting the same outcome on one issue, each petition organiser will be treated as an independent petition organiser, but only the petition organiser of the first petition to be received will be invited to address any meeting.

Repeat Petitions

A petition will not normally be considered when it is received within six months of another petition being considered by the Council on the same matter.

Excluded Matters

Petitions will not be reported if they relate to:

- Any matter relating to a planning decision;
- Any matter relating to a licensing decision;
- Any other matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment

When a petition on an excluded matter has been received, the Corporate Governance Manager will acknowledge receipt of the petition and explain why the matter will not be reported. If the petition can be taken into account as part of another procedure, we will explain how this will happen.

OFFICERS WHO CAN BE PETITIONED TO GIVE EVIDENCE AT A PUBLIC MEETING OF AN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEETING

Under the Local Government, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 certain senior officers of the Council can be petitioned to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which they are responsible for as part of their job.

At Peterborough, the following officers are able to be petitioned:

Post	Name
Chief Executive	Gillian Beasley
Solicitor to the Council	Helen Edwards
Director of Communications	Sue Appleby
Head of Delivery	Andrew Edwards
Head of Human Resources	Mike Kealey
Head of Strategic Improvement and Partnerships	Robert Hardy
Executive Director of Children's Services	John Richards
Assistant Director – Children's Community Health	Janet Dullaghan
Assistant Director – Learning and Skills	Mel Collins
Assistant Director – Resources, Commissioning and Performance	Jonathan Lewis
Assistant Director – Safeguarding, Families and Communities	Andrew Brunt
Executive Director of Operations	Paul Phillipson
Head of Neighbourhood Services	Adrian Chapman
Head of Planning, Environment, Transport and Engineering Services	Simon Machen
Head of City Operations	Annette Joyce
Executive Director of Strategic Resources	John Harrison
Head of Business Transformation	Paul Tonks
Head of Corporate Services	Steven Pilsworth
Head of Shared Transactional Services	Shirley Pleszkan
Commercial Services Director	Mike Heath
Head of Operations	David Denson
Head of Business Support	Steve Ward
Executive Director of Adult Social Services	Denise Radley

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