

Part 5G

Wirral Council Petitions Scheme

Types of petition

Petitions can relate to any issue which the Council has powers, or shared delivery responsibilities with our partners. In addition they can relate to an improvement in economic, social or environmental well-being of the authority's area to which any of its partner authorities could contribute.

In order not to duplicate procedures where established processes exist for communities to have their say the following are excluded:

- any matter relating to a planning decision, including about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy applications under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005;
- Petitions received in response to statutory consultation such as school closures, traffic orders, Compulsory Orders etc;
- any 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.

In this scheme there are 2 types of petitions:

- Petitions that must be considered by the Council – these must be signed by at least 3,000 people who live in the Borough.
- Ordinary petitions (that just ask for action to be taken) -100 people who live in the Borough.

Submitting a petition

Petitions submitted to the council 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;
- the contact details of the petition organiser

All petitions whether paper or electronic, will be monitored by the Director: Governance and Assurance, in consultation with the Mayor (in the case of a petition to be discussed at the Council) and with the Leader (in the case of the others) and if considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will be rejected.

Issues such as data protection, libel and the statutory requirement as a public body to comply with equalities and anti-discrimination legislation will also be taken into consideration at this time. If a petition is rejected the petition organiser will be informed of the reasons why it's been rejected.

E- petitions

The petition organiser will need to provide us with their name, postal address and email address. You will also need to decide how long you would like your petition to be open for signatures. Most petitions run for six months, but you can choose a shorter or longer timeframe, up to a maximum of 12 months.

When you create an e-petition, it may take five working days before it is published online. This is because we have to check that the content of your petition is suitable before it is made available for signature.

If we feel we cannot publish your petition for some reason, we will contact you within this time to explain. You will be able to change and resubmit your petition if you wish. If you do not do this within 14 days, a summary of the petition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'rejected petitions' section of the website.

When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to Member Services. In the same way as a paper petition, you will receive an acknowledgement within 14 days.

A petition acknowledgement and response will be emailed to everyone who has signed the e-petition and elected to receive this information. The acknowledgment and response will also be published on this website.

When you sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide your name, your postcode and a valid email address. When you have submitted this information you will be sent an email to the email address you have provided. This email will include a link which you must click on in order to confirm the email address is valid. Once this step is complete your 'signature' will be added to the petition. People visiting the e-petition will be able to see your name in the list of those who have signed it but your contact details will not be visible.

Procedure for dealing with a petition

Once a petition has been received either electronically or in paper format under this scheme it must be acknowledged within 14 days to the organiser.

This will explain what action is being taken.

In response to the petition the Authority can take the following steps –

- take the action requested in the petition;
- consider the petition at a meeting of the Council ;
- refer the petition to the Cabinet, the Co-ordinating Committee or such other meeting as is appropriate;
- provide a written response to the petition organiser setting out the authority's views on the request in the petition;

In the case of those to be considered by the Council, the Co-ordinating Committee, the petitioner will be advised of the date and time of the meeting. In the case of the Council the petitioner will be given the opportunity to address the meeting for 5 minutes and the petition will be discussed for a maximum of 15 minutes.

The petitioner will be advised of the action to be taken.

After the appropriate action has been taken the petitioner must be advised of the response and if it was submitted via the website the response must also be published there.