

E Petition – General Terms and Conditions

The purpose of the e-petition service is to enable as many people as possible to make their views known. The specific aims of the scheme are to:

- Allow communities to have direct influence in the democratic process;
- Provide direct access to elected members and other key policy makers;
- Allow citizens to raise awareness of a particular campaign and put issues on the agenda which might not otherwise be considered by the accountable body
- Stimulate council debate;
- Result in policy changes;
- Give accountable bodies more access to opinion and feedback on policy decisions.

All petitions will be accepted and published on this website, providing they meet the criteria below. Petitioners may freely disagree with public service providers or call for changes of policy. There will be no attempt to exclude critical views and decisions to accept or reject will not be made on a party political basis.

To protect this service from abuse, petitions must satisfy some basic conditions. To submit a petition, you must use the online form to provide:

- The title or subject of the petition;
- The area(s) that the petition affects;
- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioner wishes the organisation to take. The petition will be returned to you to edit if it is unclear what action is being sought;
- Who you are wanting to petition and the category that your petition relates to;
- A duration for the petition.

The information in a petition must be submitted in good faith. In order for the petition service to comply with the law you must not include:

- Party political material;
- Inflammatory, abusive or provocative language;
- Language that could damage the reputation of an individual or group, comments that cause anger/ distress, discriminatory or otherwise offensive material, or contains a false statement;
- Content that is too similar to another petition submitted recently;
- Disclose confidential or exempt information, including information protected by a court order or government department;
- Disclose material which is otherwise commercially sensitive;
- Names individuals, or provides information where they may be easily identified, e.g. individual officers of public bodies, or makes criminal accusations;
- Advertising statements;
- Material that refers to an issue which is currently the subject of a formal council complaint, Local Ombudsman complaint or any legal proceeding;
- Covers a planning application or licensing issue (which are dealt with, and have their own consultation mechanisms, separately within the Council).

We reserve the right to reject:

- Petitions that are similar to and/or overlap with an existing petition or petitions;
- Petitions which ask for things outside the remit or powers of the organisation;
- Statements that don't actually request any action - ideally start the title of your petition with a verb (e.g. Build new facilities for young people, Increase the number of public toilets)
- Wording that is impossible to understand;
- Statements that amount to advertisements;
- Petitions which are intended to be humorous, or which have no relation to the delivery of local public services;
- Issues for which an e-petition is not the appropriate channel (for example, correspondence about a personal issue).

We will strive to ensure that petitions that do not meet our criteria are not accepted, but where a petition is accepted which contains misleading information we reserve the right to post an interim response to highlight this point to anyone visiting to sign the petition.

Petitions that do not follow these guidelines cannot be accepted. In these cases, you will be informed in writing of the reason(s) your petition has been refused. If this happens, you will have the option of altering and resubmitting the petition so it can be accepted.

Once accepted, petitions will be made available on this website for anyone to sign. Anyone signing the petition must provide their name, postcode and a verifiable email address. No personal details other than their name will be published on the site. Information about any individual will not be used for any other purpose than in relation to the petition, unless they choose to sign up for other services offered on this website.

It could take up to 5 working days from the time a petition proposal is received for it to appear on the website, although during busy periods it may take longer. Your petition will be available on this website until the specified closing date. If, however, during this time it becomes clear that your petition is not being run in accordance with the terms, we reserve the right to withdraw it. If this happens, we will contact you first to allow you to address the concerns we raise and we will only remove the petition as a last resort.

For the detailed petition guidance that relates to your Borough, please use the specific links provided in this section of the website.

We reserve the right to amend these terms and conditions at any time.