

Petitions Scheme

Introduction

Derby City Council recognises that petitions are a useful way in which the public can make their views or concerns known. This scheme details

- What makes a petition
- Who can receive a petition
- What the council will do with the petition
- Who will consider the petition.

Petitions are managed through the council's Democratic Services team. For more information on this scheme or petitions generally, please call 01332 643643, email committee@derby.gov.uk or write to: Democratic Services, Derby City Council, Council House, Corporation Street, Derby, DE1 2DW.

What makes a petition?

Any submission with a minimum of five signatures from at least five different addresses can be considered as a petition.

Petitioners may wish to submit a hard-copy petition that has been signed by people supporting their cause, or an e-petition.

A hard-copy petition will:

- Be an original and not a copy. The council is unable to accept photocopied pages.
- Contain a clear statement detailing what action(s) the petitioners wish the council to take. The statement must be replicated on the top of **every** page of the petition to demonstrate that the signatories are signing for the same cause.
- Contain a name, signature and address for each signatory.

For an e-petition, signatories can be validated by any of the following being included:

- A valid address
- A valid telephone number
- A valid email address.

Any online e-petition facility can be used provided that it requires electronic validation of signatories and includes the location of signatories.

Who can receive a petition?

A petition can be formally received by:

- A relevant councillor
- A Council Cabinet member prior to a meeting of the Council Cabinet
- A chief officer of the council
- Any appropriate senior officer of the council

If petitioners would prefer not to present the petition formally, it can be handed over at the Council House reception or emailed. For details of the most appropriate recipient or to arrange for a petition to be submitted, please call Democratic Services on 01332 643643.

In addition, an e-petition can be submitted by a link to the petition being emailed to committee@derby.gov.uk

What will the council do with the petition?

The council will identify a lead petitioner. In some cases this is obvious because there is a covering letter with the petition or there has been communication prior to the petition being submitted. Where it is not known, the lead petitioner will be considered to be the first name on the first page of the petition.

The council will acknowledge receipt of the petition within two weeks of its submission, informing the lead petitioner the route that is being used to consider the petition.

Who will consider the petition?

There are a number of ways in which a petition can be considered.

- 1) Where the petition relates to a planning or licensing application, it will be referred to the appropriate department within the council so it can be taken into account as part of the decision-making relating to the application.
- 2) Where the petition relates to an issue which is due to be considered by a committee of the council, including the Council Cabinet, then it can be considered as part of the consultation in making that decision.
- 3) Where it relates to a local issue, affecting only one ward, then the matter will be communicated to all ward councillors before being referred to the relevant council department to respond.

- 4) Where it relates to an issue affecting more than one ward, as determined by the Head of Democracy, then the matter will be considered by the relevant Council Cabinet Member alongside a report and recommendations from the relevant council department.
- 5) Where the petition contains 4,000 signatures or more from Derby residents, the matter will be considered by a meeting of Council, provided it has not previously been submitted and dealt with. If appropriate, the petition will be considered alongside an officer's report making recommendations arising from the petition. The lead petitioner will have an opportunity to speak at the Council meeting for a maximum of five minutes and the matter will then be debated by councillors for a maximum of 30 minutes, subject to the usual rules of debate within the Council Constitution.

Where a petition is considered under the provisions explained in paragraphs 3-5 above, a response will then be provided by the appropriate council department explaining the outcome of the petition to the lead petitioner.

Why might my petition not be considered?

The council can consider only petitions seeking an action or actions it is empowered to take. If the council receives a petition that would be better considered by a different authority or organisation, advice will be offered to the lead petitioner.

Specific rules within the Council Constitution determine what decisions can be taken by councillors and what decisions must be taken by officers. Management of employees is a matter for the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service. For this reason, petitions relating to employee grievances cannot be considered by members.

The council engages in a lengthy consultation process before setting its budget, and welcomes submissions relating to this including petitions. However, petitions relating to budgetary decisions made after the budget has been set will not be considered.

Where the council receives multiple petitions seeking similar actions, the council can consider the petitions together.

The council will not consider a petition which is vexatious or abusive, including any petition which relates to an identifiable individual rather than to an issue.