

Petitions - Guidance

1. Plymouth City Council's Petition Scheme

- 1.1. Plymouth City Council welcomes petitions and understands that they are one way in which people's concerns can be expressed.
- 1.2. Within 10 working days of receiving your petition, we'll let you know how we plan to deal with the petition and when we will respond to you. We'll also say as much as we can about what we have done, or plan to do, with the petition.
- 1.3. Petitions may be sent, either on paper or via email, to Democratic Support, Plymouth City Council, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth PL1 3BJ
democratic.support@plymouth.gov.uk
- 1.4. Plymouth City Council will consider all petitions received. (We will treat it as a petition if you say it is a petition, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition.) The minimum number of signatures required on a petition is 25.

2. What are the guidelines for submitting a petition?

2.1. Petitions must include:

- 2.1.1. a clear statement covering the subject matter
- 2.1.2. what the petitioners want the Council to do and
- 2.1.3. the name, address and signature of everyone supporting the petition

- 2.2. Petitions should be accompanied by contact details (address [and email if available]) for the petition organiser (this is the person the Council will contact to give a response to the petition). Anyone who lives, works or studies in the city of Plymouth may sign a petition.

3. When will a petition not be accepted?

3.1. A petition will not be accepted or dealt with:

- 3.1.1. if it is considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate
- 3.1.2. it relates to matters where there are ongoing legal proceedings
- 3.1.3. it targets individuals
- 3.1.4. it applies to a matter where there is already a right of appeal (e.g. planning or licensing)
- 3.1.5. applications or statutory petitions (such as that for requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor) as these will be dealt with under separate arrangements

- 3.2. If your petition is about something over which the City Council has no direct control we may consider making representations to the relevant organisation and, where possible, ask partners to respond to you. If your petition is about something that another Council is responsible for, we will forward it to that Council, and let you know that we have done so.

4. How will the Council respond?

- 4.1. The response to a petition will necessarily depend on what it is asking for and how many people have signed it, but the response may be to:
 - 4.1.1. take the action requested
 - 4.1.2. consider the petition at a Council meeting
 - 4.1.3. hold an inquiry or researching the matter
 - 4.1.4. hold a public meeting or a meeting with petitioners
 - 4.1.5. hold a consultation
 - 4.1.6. refer the petition to the relevant Scrutiny Committee
 - 4.1.7. call a referendum
 - 4.1.8. write to the petition organiser giving our views about the request and / or letting you know what the city Council has already decided to do or proposes to do on the issue

5. Exclusions

- 5.1. If the petition applies to a planning or licensing application, is a statutory petition (for example requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor), or on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal, such as Council tax banding and non-domestic rates, other procedures apply.

6. Debate at city Council meetings (over 5,000 signatures)

- 6.1. If the petition has received 5,000 signatures it will automatically trigger a debate at the next ordinary [City Council meeting](#). In this case, we will confirm the date of the next meeting and the petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition and put forward his / her case for the action requested.
- 6.2. At the meeting, the city Councillors will decide how to respond to the petition and the petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision, which will also be published on the Council's website as part of the [minutes for that meeting](#).

7. Officer evidence (over 2,500 signatures)

- 7.1. If your petition contains at least 2,500 signatures, you may ask for a senior Council officer (Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive, Directors and Service Directors) to give evidence at one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees (e.g. to explain progress or to explain the advice given to Councillors to assist their decision making). The Committee may also require the relevant Cabinet Member to attend the meeting. Committee members will ask the questions at this meeting, but you can suggest questions to the Chair of the Committee by contacting the Democratic Support team (democratic.support@plymouth.gov.uk) at least seven working days before the meeting.

8. What can I do if I feel my petition has not been dealt with properly?

- 8.1. If you feel that the Council has not dealt with your petition properly, the petition organiser has the right to ask the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the Council's response. The petition organiser should give a short explanation as to why the Council's response is not felt to be adequate.
- 8.2. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee will try to consider your request at its next meeting. Once the appeal has been considered the petition organiser will be informed of

the results within 5 working days and they will be published on the [Council's website](#) as part of the minutes for that meeting.

9. *Please note:*

- 9.1. In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which will apply.