

# Hull City Council Petition Scheme

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hull City Council welcomes petitions as it feels that petitions are an important way people can express their views and concerns about something for which the Council is responsible.

## 2. What is a Petition?

- 2.1 A petition can be defined as **a formal collective request to take action**. 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. If a petition is in the format that the signatories are 'against' some action the council can influence, we will take this to be an underlying request that the council reconsiders the action they are 'against' - and will seek to confirm this with the petition organiser (or 'lead petitioner').

## 3. Where should I send a Petition?

- 3.1 Petitions may be submitted to Hull City Council in the following ways:

- Electronically through the Council's own e-petition facility – accessed through the Hull City Council Website. They can be created, signed and submitted online. Please visit [www.hull.gov.uk](http://www.hull.gov.uk) and use the search box to find 'Petitions'.
- Paper petitions can be sent to the Customer Feedback Team at the following address –

FREEPOST RSJC-KKBE-ABXZ

Customer Feedback

Hull City Council

PO Box 15

HULL

HU1 2AB

- Paper petitions can also be delivered by hand to the Guildhall reception or to your local Customer Service Centre or information point (Details are available on the website)
- By email to [CCFT@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:CCFT@hullcc.gov.uk)

- 3.2 For emailed paper format petitions, please scan each sheet of signatures, including names and addresses in full. When emailing petitions collected through an external website, please ensure the names and addresses are included showing that the people who have 'signed' your petition 'live, work or study within the Hull City Council boundary.'
- 3.3 Electronic petitions can be accepted from all websites. However, officers will consider them in line with the validation of signatures criteria – so far as the petition format offers easy to check validation (addresses) that the petition organiser or 'lead petitioner' and all the people who have 'signed' the petition live, work or study within the within the boundary of Kingston upon Hull. The Council may ask for additional evidence, where required, to validate that the signatures have come from people who live, work or study within the boundary of Kingston Upon Hull. Online petitions must be closed on the external website on submission of your petition to the Council so that the final number of valid signatures can be counted.

#### 4. What are the rules for Petitions?

4.1 Petitions submitted to the Council must include the following:

- i. A request that says what action the petitioners wish the council to take or not to take. **Please be aware that some petition subjects may be excluded – see point 12 below for details)**
- ii. A clear and concise statement covering the subject and background context of the petition. A Petitions Background Information is required for all petitions submitted to the Council. If you submit your petition using the Council's online facility, you will be prompted to provide this information. If you submit your petition by any other means, a proforma produced by the Customer Feedback Team will be issued for completion by the petition organiser (or 'lead petitioner') to give background information to their petition, such as history and previous actions relating to the petition issue. In order to ensure standardisation of the petitions process this must be completed at the time of petition submission or within five days of submission of the petition. A petition may not be able to continue through the petitions process if not accompanied by sufficient background information documentation.
- iii. The name and contact details of the petition organiser (or 'lead petitioner'), who is the person we can contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, we will contact the first available signatory to the petition to agree who should act as the 'lead petitioner'.
- iv. Confirmation that the petition organiser or 'lead petitioner' lives, works, or studies at an address that lies within the boundary of Kingston upon Hull.
- v. Address details that show the individuals who have signed the petition live, work or study within the boundary of Kingston upon Hull must be provided for each signature to be accepted as valid.

- vi. Paper petitions must contain actual signatures from each petitioner who has signed to support the petition - not just a name. (Those printed or emailed to us that have originated solely from an on-line petition are not subject to this provision.)
- vii. Petitions must be submitted at the earliest opportunity to allow sufficient time for validation and administration procedures to be completed. This will normally need to be a minimum of three weeks in advance of the relevant meeting date. If the petition is received too close to the meeting date it may be postponed to a later meeting.

## **5. Signature Threshold Guidelines**

- 5.1 The minimum number of valid signatures must be at least **50** (which can include the petition organiser) for a petition to be accepted as valid into the petitions scheme.
  - i. For issues limited to one area of the city, the minimum number of signatures must be at least **50** for the petition to be valid. If there are less than 1500 valid signatures, the petition will be referred to the relevant local Area Committee meeting.
  - ii. For issues that affect multiple areas or the whole of the city, the minimum number of signatures must be at least 50 for the petition to be valid. If there are less than 1500 valid signatures, the petition will be referred to Council without debate.
  - iii. A petition must have at least **1500 valid signatures** for it to be debated at a meeting of the Council.

## **6. What can petitions be about?**

- 6.1 A petition should include a clear statement of your concerns and exactly what you want the Council to do. It must relate to something the Council has responsibility for or can reasonably and proportionately influence to create an improvement in the economic, social or environmental well-being of the local area.

**Please note as below - not all topics are suitable for a petition to the council:**

- 6.2 A petition may not be accepted where it is excluded from the petitions scheme as set out below or excluded by a legal restriction:
  - i. From the Local Authorities (Petitions) Order 2010: the petition matter relates to a decision about a planning or licensing application or any matter where an individual or organisation has a statutory or established recourse to a review or right of appeal. This includes where the matter of the petition:
    - ii. Refers to a development plan, specific planning issue or a right of way
    - iii. Refers to a decision for which there is an existing right of appeal, for example (but not limited to) the courts, a tribunal or a minister of Government, industrial dispute.

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- iv. Refers to a dispute or matter where there is a clear, established and more suitable alternative process for determination of the issue – which the Petition Scheme cannot duplicate or replace
- v. The petition is considered to be vexatious, abusive or an abuse of process or otherwise inappropriate
- vi. The petition contains language that is offensive, intemperate or provocative or contains potentially libellous, false or defamatory statements
- vii. The petition appears to be a commercial endorsement or promotion of a product, service or publication
- viii. The petition contains material which is potentially confidential or reveals the identity of someone who may be protected by an injunction or court order (for example (but not limited to), the identities of children in care proceedings)
- ix. The petition is in furtherance of or pertains to an identifiable individual's or group's particular circumstances or personal interests – (for example, the Petition Scheme is inappropriate for use by employees of the Council or their representatives to further their own employment or contractual interests where suitable alternative processes have been established and made available for bringing internal issues or disputes to the Council's attention) (*See iii, iv and v above*)
- x. The petition is concerning or relating to the terms and conditions of service under which any person is employed or appointed by the council or any dispute related thereto.
- xi. The petition is concerning or relates to a tender process undertaken or being undertaken by the Council
- xii. The business with which the petition is concerned has been the subject of a matter raised by a similar petition received or submitted within the last six months
- xiii. Where the petition is specifically concerned with a decision made at a meeting of the Council in the last six months or is about an issue arising directly from that decision.

### **7. What happens when the Council receives my petition?**

- 7.1 Once the petition is submitted and received by the Customer Feedback Team the Council will treat the petition as closed to any further signatures being added. The number of signatures it contains will be counted and validated against the signatures criteria. Once this step is completed no additional signatures will be accepted. This will be confirmed with the petition organiser or 'lead petitioner' who will then be informed of the number of valid signatures their closed petition contains.
- 7.2 For petitions that are submitted via any means other than the Council's online facility, a Petitions Background Information proforma will be issued for immediate completion by the petition organiser or 'lead petitioner'.
- 7.3 The Lead Petitioner can also submit the Petition Background Information proforma at the same time as the petition
- 7.4 The Customer Feedback Team will check the petition against the petitions criteria and guidelines to establish if it is able to be accepted into the Council's petitions procedure. Local ward councillors and appropriate Council Officers will be notified.
- 7.5 To ensure the council understands the context and the level of local support for a petition, it reserves the right to seek to verify the details attached to a petition. This can be significant when establishing whether a petition has obtained the minimum

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number of signatures required to enter the petitions process or for triggering the debate procedures.

- 7.6 An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser (or 'lead petitioner'), at the contact address they have provided, within 10 working days of receiving the petition. Where possible, the acknowledgment will provide information regarding what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again. It will confirm the number of valid signatures the petition has collected and that the petition is treated as closed.
- 7.7 The Council may publish details of valid petitions on the Council's website.
- 7.8 Any personal data that is submitted to us under the petitions process is protected under the GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018 and will only be used by us for the purposes of administration and correspondence of the petition.

### **8. How will the Council respond to petitions?**

- 8.1 The Council's response to a qualifying petition under the Council's Petitions Scheme will depend on what a petition asks for and how many valid signatures it contains. The Council also has to take into account the financial position and whether there is a legal power which has to be considered.
- 8.2 If we can do what your petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that we have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.
- 8.3 If your petition concerns a local ward matter we will notify the local ward Councillor/s of the details regarding your petition.
- 8.4 Where the subject of the petition relates exclusively to one part of the City it may be submitted to the local Area Committee concerned unless it is considered that the issue could be resolved via other routes.
- 8.5 If the petition is about a wider issue, our response will depend on what the petition asks for and the petition may be submitted to an ordinary meeting of the Council.
- 8.6 If the qualifying petition achieves sufficient valid signatures to trigger a debate at a meeting of the Council the acknowledgement will confirm this and indicate when and where the meeting will take place.
- 8.7 If the petition applies to a planning or licensing application, or is a statutory (for example requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor); or is on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal, such as council tax banding and non-domestic rates; or is on a matter where other clear and established suitable alternative pathways exist to bring that issue; other procedures will apply. We shall write and tell you what those other procedures are and explain why your petition is not accepted.

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- 8.8 Where a petition relates to a matter which is within the responsibility of another council or public body and that public body has its own petitions procedure we will signpost the lead petitioner to the correct body.
- 8.9 If your petition is about something over which the council has no direct control it will not be accepted as part of the Petition scheme. However, we will consider whether we can still assist with the matter, depending on what the petition is asking us to do. This may include signposting to other alternative procedures.
- 8.10 If a petition does not follow the guidelines of the Council's Petitions Scheme (explained above), the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.
- 8.11 If a qualifying petition affects more than one Area Committee, but has not reached the 1500 valid signature threshold, then it will be recorded on the agenda of the next Council meeting for noting by the Council without a debate.
- 8.12 In addition to the above specific circumstances the Council will respond to a petition in its scheme by considering all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition, including the following steps:
- i. Taking action about the request in the petition
  - ii. Considering the petition at a meeting of the authority
  - iii. Holding an inquiry
  - iv. Holding a public meeting
  - v. Commissioning research
  - vi. Giving a written response to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition
  - vii. Consulting residents about the matter
  - viii. Holding a meeting with petitioners
  - ix. Referring the petition for consideration by the council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

## **9. Full Council Meetings**

- 9.1 Where a qualifying petition reaches the required threshold of valid signatures, the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all Councillors can attend. The Council will try to deal with the petition at its next available ordinary meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following ordinary meeting.
- 9.2 The Hull City Council Constitution, Part C1, regarding the Council Procedure Rules (available on the council's website) sets out that petitions shall not be considered at any meeting of the Council which is a meeting to set the Council Tax. Details of Council meetings are available on the Council's website.
- 9.3 Details will be given to the petition organiser or 'lead petitioner' when your petition is confirmed on the Agenda for a Council meeting.
- 9.4 Once the meeting has taken place, an officer will write to the petition organiser with a formal response This will normally be within 10 working days of the meeting taking place.

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## **10. Area Committees**

- 10.1 Where a qualifying petition reaches the required threshold of valid signatures – and is exclusively relating to one area of the City, it may be considered at a local Area Committee meeting. Details of Area Committee meetings across the city are shown on the Council's website.
- 10.2 An internal Officer Briefing paper must be produced for all petitions referred to Area Committees. This will be requested on behalf of the relevant senior manager and must be produced in time to be received by Committee Services prior to the five working days deadline for publication. Assistant Director's are responsible for ensuring that Officer Briefings meet the deadlines and that an appropriate officer attends the meeting (unless advised otherwise) to help answer any technical questions.
- 10.3 If a petition is exclusive to one Area Committee and is rejected because it does not meet the requirements of the Petitions Scheme, a notification will be sent to the Assistant Director and the relevant Ward Councillors.

## **11. Petition Procedure**

- 11.1 The Chair of the meeting will announce at the relevant agenda item that there is a petition for consideration
- 11.2 The Chair will invite the person or persons who will speak on the petition to address the meeting for a time of five minutes in total. Remark must relate to the subject matter of the petition only.
- 11.3 The Committee may also ask questions which may be answered without debate.
- 11.4 The Committee will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. Members may refer the petition to the Cabinet, an appropriate Committee, Sub-Committee or to another body, may simply note the petition - or might wish to take one of the other steps identified under the petitions scheme response options.
- 11.5 At the end of the process of considering the petition, a relevant officer will write to the petition organiser with a formal response. This communication will normally outline the steps taken by the Authority to consider the petition. This formal response will normally be sent within 10 days of the meeting.

## **12. Minimum Number of 50 Signatures Not Reached**

- 12.1 If your qualifying petition has less than the minimum required 50 valid signatures, we will help you to consider an alternative procedure, for example -
- i. You can contact your local Area Committee and arrange to ask a question in a public meeting. It will help us to answer if you can do this as early as possible before the meeting.

- ii. You can arrange to ask a question in a Cabinet meeting, by post or email to the Town Clerk no later than mid-day two working days before the day of the meeting. You will need to provide your name, home address, the name of the organisation you represent (if applicable) and the member of the Cabinet the question is to be put to
- iii. You can contact your local ward councillor/s
- iv. You can have your petition subject dealt with within the Council's Customer Feedback Scheme. The details of the Customer Feedback Scheme are available on the council's website. Comments made this way are normally forwarded to the relevant service area managers to arrange a response.
- v. You may wish to make a Service Request directly to the service area that can deal with your issue.

### **13. E-Petitions**

- 13.1 The Council online petition facility (e-petitions) is the Council's recommended platform for submission of an e-petition.
- 13.2 Petitions can also be accepted from external websites, as long as the petition format offers easy to check validation (such as postcodes) that the people who have 'signed' the petition have shown that they live, work or study within the boundary of Kingston upon Hull.
- 13.3 E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as for other petitions. For example, the petition organiser will need to provide us with their name, email address and their contact (postal) address showing that they live, work or study within the boundary of Kingston upon Hull.
- 13.4 When you create an e-petition through the Council's petitions facility, it may take up to five working days before it is published online, although in most cases we will do it sooner. This is because we have to check that the content of your petition is suitable and meets the criteria before it is made available for signature.
- 13.5 You can decide how long you would like your petition to be open for on the Council's website to collect signatures. This can be for a maximum of 6 months.
- 13.6 Once your e-petition has been approved it will then be made visible on the Council's petitions facility for members of the public to sign.
- 13.7 When an e-petition has closed on the council's website, it will automatically be submitted to the Customer Feedback Team to process. We will send you an acknowledgement within 10 working days. We will confirm how many signatures it collected and what will happen next.
- 13.8 If your petition reaches the minimum number of valid signatures required for a Council debate or can be referred to a council or local Area Committee meeting please also see the relevant sections above.
- 13.9 Visitors to the council's website will be able to see all the e-petitions that are available.



**14. How do I 'sign' an e-petition?**

- 14.1 To sign an e-petition on the Councils' online facility you will require an email address and an address within the Hull Boundary. Please note, each signatory requires a separate unique email address.
- 14.2 Whilst signing a petition, the system will send a verification code to the email address entered. The signatory must input the verification code sent to their email in order for their signature to be added to the petition.
- 14.3 When you 'sign' an electronic petition (e-petition) through our website you will receive confirmation by email. When signing, each signatory will have the option to receive a further update once the petition has closed which will detail the number of valid signatures collected and the outcome.

**15. What can I do if I'm not happy with how my petition was dealt with?**

- 15.1 If a petition organiser (or 'lead petitioner') believes that the Council has not properly administered their petition under the petitions scheme they can contact the Customer Feedback Team Leader with their reasons and any additional information for a further consideration.
- 15.2 If a petition organiser (or 'lead petitioner') believes that the Council has not dealt with their qualifying petition properly they can request that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee review the adequacy of the steps that have been taken in response to the petition.
- 15.3 Review requests should be made in writing within 28 days of the date of the formal response to the petition organiser (or 'lead petitioner'). It is helpful to everyone if the petition organiser (or 'lead petitioner') gives a short explanation of the reasons why the steps that have been taken in the Council's response are not considered to be adequate.
- 15.4 The Committee will try to consider the review request at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will take place at the next available meeting. The Committee will consider the adequacy of the steps that have been taken. The Committee may recommend what different steps may be more appropriate. Once considered, the petition organiser will be informed of the result within 10 working days. The results of the review may be published on our website.
- 15.5 There is no further right of appeal through the Council. If the petition organiser remains unsatisfied they should contact the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

*The Petition Scheme will be reviewed annually  
MG March 2024*

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