

Petition scheme

Introduction

The council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. While residents are free to gather signatures for a petition and send them directly to a particular department the petition scheme detailed here shows how you can get a wider audience for your petition by creating an electronic petition on our website or presenting it to a Council meeting. Alternatively you can give the petition to one of your ward councillors and they can present it to Council on your behalf.

Sign a petition

Pages in Petition scheme

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Petition scheme

Guidelines for submitting a petition

Petitions submitted to the Council meeting (under Council and Committee Procedure Rules paragraph 9) must include:

- a clear, concise statement covering the subject of the petition. This must relate to something which is the responsibility of the council, or over which the council has some influence and should state what action the petitioners want the council to take
- the name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition
- the name and contact details of the "petition-organiser" or someone to whom you would like any correspondence about the petition to be sent. Contact details may be either a postal address or an email address. These details will not be placed on our website

If a petition does not follow the above guidelines the council may decide to take no action. If this is the case we will write to confirm the reasons.

Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive, repetitive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted.

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 may apply.

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 other procedures apply.

Petitions which raise issues of possible councillor misconduct will be taken as complaints arising under the Local Government Act 2000 and will be reported to the Standards Committee rather than considered under this petitions scheme.

Where the petition raises issues of possible competence or misconduct by an officer, the petition will be considered under the council's complaints and/or disciplinary procedures, and not under this petitions scheme.

Petition scheme

What different types of petitions are there?

Ealing Council's petition scheme includes five different types of petition. How we deal with a petition depends on which type of petition you submit:

- **Simple petitions**

These are petitions which do not come within any of the following specific types mentioned below and are presented, by the petition organiser, directly to the relevant councillor at a meeting of full council.

- **Consultation petitions**

These are petitions submitted in response to an invitation from the council for representations on a particular proposal or application, for example on planning or licensing applications or proposals for parking restrictions or speed limits. Consultation petitions which are received by the response date in the consultation will be reported to the person or committee which will be taking the decision on the application or proposal.

- **Statutory petitions**

Legislation sometimes requires the council to consider petitions, for example, a petition for a directly-elected Mayor. Where you submit a petition under such legislation it will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements.

- **Petitions for debate**

If you want your petition to be reported to and debated at a meeting of the full council, it must contain at least 1,500 signatories (750 for purely local matters, affecting no more than one ward). More information on this type of petition is set out on page 6 below.

- **Petitions to hold a cabinet portfolio holder to account**

If your petition contains more than 500 signatures it will be considered at a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The relevant cabinet portfolio holder, will be required to answer questions from the committee members.

The council's response to a petition will depend on what type of petition it is and how many people have signed it, but may include the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition (either under officer delegated powers or otherwise as appropriate in all the circumstance)
- considering the petition at a full council meeting in accordance with the Council and Cabinet Procedure Rules
- treating the petition as a complaint under the council's complaints procedure
- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation

- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the matter to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee*
- calling a referendum
- responding to the petition organiser setting out the council's view on the request set out in the petition
- some other appropriate response.

*Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a committee of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the council.

All petition organisers will receive in due course a letter in response to their petition. That letter will let the petition organisers know what action the council will be taking in response to their petition.

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Sending your petition in response to a consultation

Where you submit a petition in response to a consultation by the authority, please address it to the return address set out in the consultation invitation. This will ensure that it is considered at the same time as the matter to which it relates.

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Petitions for debate

If a petition meets the criteria for acceptance and contains more than 1,500 signatures it will be debated by a meeting of the full Council (750 for purely local matters, affecting no more than one ward). This means that the issue raised will be discussed at a meeting which all councillors can attend. The council will try to consider the petition as its next meeting, although this may not always be possible.

The petition must be handed to the Petitions Officer at least 10 clear working days before the Council meeting. This is to ensure that it is a valid petition and that is put on the agenda for the meeting. Petitions for debate will not be considered at the Council meetings which agree the corporate plan or the budget (usually the July and February meetings) neither can it be presented to the Council AGM (usually in May)

The petition organiser (or someone speaking on his/her behalf) will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed for a maximum of 20 minutes. The council will usually decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting. Where the issue is one on which the council's cabinet are required to make the final decision the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.

Petitions which are either consultation petitions, statutory petitions or petitions to hold an officer to account will not qualify to be petitions for debate

Sending in a petition for debate

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services is the petitions officer, who is responsible for receiving, managing and reporting all other petitions sent to the council. Please send petitions to:

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Ealing Council, 5th Floor, Perceval House, 14/16 Uxbridge Road, Ealing
W5 2HL.

If you want to discuss your petition contact the clerk to full council, Keith Fraser:

Tel: (020) 8825 7497

Email: fraserk@ealing.gov.uk

Alternatively, contact democratic services:

Tel: (020) 8825 7946

Email: democraticservices@ealing.gov.uk

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Simple petitions

To have a petition presented to a Council meeting notice must be given by noon on the Thursday before the meeting on the Tuesday.

It is always best to contact the clerk to the meeting - Keith Fraser, tel: (020) 8825 7497, email: fraserk@ealing.gov.uk or contact democratic services - tel: (020) 8825 7946, email: democraticservices@ealing.gov.uk. They can help you with the process and send you guidance and a form to complete.

On the day you will present your petition, can make a short (max three minutes) speech and will get a response from the appropriate portfolio holder. You can then respond briefly to them.

Details will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

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Petitions holding a cabinet portfolio holder to account

Your petition may ask for a cabinet portfolio holder to give evidence at a public meeting about something which he/she is responsible as part of his/her cabinet role. If your petition contains at least 500 signatures, the relevant cabinet portfolio holder will give evidence at a public meeting of the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The committee may consider that it would be more appropriate for another cabinet portfolio holder to give evidence. The Committee members will ask questions at this meeting but you will be able to suggest questions to the Chair of the Committee by contacting the Head of Scrutiny and Committees (or the committee administrator named on the agenda) up to two working days before the meeting. You will also have three minutes to present your petition to the committee.

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E-Petitions

You can sign, create and submit e-petitions through our [petitions website](#).

A response to your petition will be published once the petition has closed (we usually allow a petition to be open for four weeks).

You might like to present the e-petition to a council meeting; if you are interested in doing this or want to know more about e-petitions contact:

Keith Fraser

Tel: (020) 8825 7497

Email: fraserk@ealing.gov.uk

Alternately, contact democratic services:

Tel: (020) 8825 7946

Email: democraticservices@ealing.gov.uk

Petition scheme

What will the council do when it receives my petition?

If your petition is to a council department they will acknowledge it within four working days of receipt.

If your petition has been handed in at a Council meeting, either by you or a councillor on your behalf it will be acknowledged within four working days of being handed in.

The response to e-petitions will be published on the [petitions website](#).

The petitions officer can also provide you with advice about how to petition the council or the progress of your petition, at the above address or by telephone on (020) 8825 7497

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What you can do if you feel your petition has not been dealt with properly

If you feel we have not dealt with your petition properly the petition organiser has the right to request that the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) review the steps that the council has taken in response to your petition. It is helpful to everyone if such a request is accompanied by a short explanation of the reasons as to why the council's response is not considered to be adequate. The request must be received at least 10 working days before the date of the next meeting of OSC.

OSC will try to consider your request at its next meeting although this may not always be possible. Should OSC determine that we have not dealt with your petition adequately it may make recommendations for a different response.