

## **PETITIONS SCHEME**

1. The County Council welcomes petitions and recognises them as an important way people can let us know their concerns.
2. To send us a paper petition you should contact your local County Councillor to act as your representative to present the petition to a meeting of the County Council. These meetings take place on a regular basis. Dates and times can be found here <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/dms/Meetings.aspx>
3. Your County Councillor will talk you through the process for submitting a petition. The petition should be handed over to a County Councillor at least 2 working days before the meeting that you would like it presented to.
4. If you prefer, you can send your petition to Democratic Services at County Hall, who will ensure it is directed your local County Councillor. Receipt of the petition will be acknowledged to the petition organiser.

## **WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING A PETITION?**

5. Petitions submitted to the County Council should include a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. The petition should state:
  - a. what action the petitioners wish the Council to take
  - b. the name, post code and signature of any person supporting the petition
6. Other procedures apply if the petition is about:-
  - a. a planning, licensing or rights of way matter. You may be able to speak at the committee meeting which considers the matter. Democratic Services can advise you about this.
  - b. the Council's annual budget, when the petition would be considered as part of the budget consultation process
  - c. a statutory petition (for example requesting a referendum on the County Council's governance arrangements)
  - d. a matter where there is an existing right of appeal.
7. If a petition is judged by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant committee chairman, to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate, or if it does not follow the guidelines set out in this scheme, the County Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In such cases, we will write to you to explain the reasons.
8. Petitions should be accompanied by contact details - including an address - for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition.

9. Your petition must be signed by at least one other person from a different address and everyone signing the petition must provide their name, post code and signature. This information may be checked by the County Council.
10. Petitions should be about issues that affect Nottinghamshire.

## **E-PETITIONS**

11. You can also use the County Council website to set up an online petition. Once this has been moderated and approved you can collect signatures via the web and submit the petition online.
12. The County Council welcomes e-petitions which are created and submitted through our website. E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions.
13. The petition organiser will need to provide us with their name, postal address and email address. You will also need to decide how long you would like your petition to be open for signatures; this will usually be for 2 months, with a maximum of 6 months.
14. When you create an e-petition, it may take five working days before it is published online. This is because we have to check that the content of your petition is suitable before it is made available for others to sign.
15. If we feel we cannot publish your petition for some reason, we will contact you within this time to explain. You will be able to change and resubmit your petition if you wish. If you do not do this within 14 days, a summary of the petition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'rejected petitions' section of the website.
16. When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to your local Councillor. An acknowledgement and, in due course, a response will be emailed to everyone who has signed the e-petition and chosen to receive this information. The acknowledgment and response will also be published on the Council's website.

## **SIGNING AN E-PETITION**

17. When you sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide your name, your postcode and a valid email address. When you have submitted this information you will be sent an email to the email address you have provided. This email will include a link which you must click on in order to confirm the email address is valid. Once this step is complete your 'signature' will be added to the petition.
18. People visiting the e-petition will be able to see your name in the list of those who have signed it but your contact details will not be visible.

## **WHAT WILL THE COUNCIL DO WHEN IT RECEIVES MY PETITION?**

19. The local County Councillor will formally present the petition in public at a meeting of the County Council. The Vice-Chairman of the County Council may present the petition if it concerns more than one electoral ward. The petition will then be passed to the appropriate committee to provide a response. Members of the public are entitled to attend Committee meetings unless exempt information is being discussed. We will confirm the committee's response to the petition organiser. We will inform the organiser of the petition of the committee's response. We will also report the response to Full Council.

Agreed by Full Council – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012