



Petitions in Nottinghamshire

Petitions Scheme

The County Council welcomes petitions and recognises that they are one way in which people can let us know their concerns.

Our commitment to you is that every petition presented to the County Council will receive an acknowledgement from the Council within 14 days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition.

To send us a paper petition you should contact the local County Councillor to act as your representative to present the petition to a meeting of the full County Council. These meetings take place on a regular basis, dates and times can be found here on the [County Council website](#).

The County Councillor will talk you through the process for submitting the petition. The petition should be handed over to the County Councillor at least 2 working days before the meeting that you would like it presenting to.

If your petition is too urgent to wait until the next meeting of County Councillors or you prefer, you can send it to the Chief Executive at County Hall, who will ensure it is directed to the most appropriate Corporate Director for consideration. Receipt of the petition will be acknowledged by the Chief Executive's Office to the petition organiser and to the relevant County Councillor.

What are the guidelines for submitting a petition?

Petitions submitted to the Council must include a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. The petition should **state**:

- **what action the petitioners wish the Council to take**
- **the name, post code and signature of any person supporting the petition**

We've included a sample of what a petition could look like at the end of this guidance.

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. Petitions relating to the annual budget consultation will be considered as part of that consultation process and will be reported to County Council in response to that exercise rather than under the provisions of this Scheme.

Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out in this scheme, the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

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.

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.



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Petitions should be about issues that affect the communities of Nottinghamshire and can be resolved within Nottinghamshire. People signing a petition should be affected by the subject matter of the petition.

E-petitions

You can also use to the County Council website to design an online petition. Once this has been moderated and approved you can collect signatures via the web and submit the petition online.

The Council welcomes e-petitions which are created and submitted through our website. E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions.

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.

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 signature.

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.

When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the local Councillor unless you specify otherwise. In the same way as a paper petition, you will receive an acknowledgement within 14 days.



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A petition acknowledgement and response will be emailed to everyone who has signed the e-petition and elected to receive this information. The acknowledgment and response will also be published on the Council's website.

Signing an e-petition

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.

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?

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 person to provide a response.

So that you know how this is progressing we will send an acknowledgement to the petition organiser within 14 days of receiving the petition. It will let them know what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again. When you sign an e-petition you can elect to receive this information by email. We will not send you anything which is not relevant to the e-petition you have signed, unless you choose to receive other emails from us.

After the petition has been presented to the County Council, the County Councillor will be able to request a meeting to discuss how the petition will be acted on. This provides the Councillor acting on your behalf an opportunity to discuss the petition in more detail with the person expected to respond. You may wish to talk to the Councillor about this meeting and could ask to attend.

To ensure that people know what we are doing in response to the petitions we receive, the details of all the petitions submitted to us will be published on our website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate. Whenever possible we will also publish all correspondence relating to the petition (personal details except for names of petitioners will be removed).

How will the Council respond to petitions?

Our response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for (and how many people have signed it). 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. For every petition the response will be made public and reported to a meeting of the full County Council – You will also be able to find it on our website.

In responding we may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition
- considering the petition at a Council meeting
- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- referring the petition for consideration by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee*
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition

*Overview and Scrutiny Committees are committees of Councillors who are responsible for scrutinising public services in Nottinghamshire and making recommendations for improvement – in other words, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to hold the Council's decision makers (and our partners) to account.

In addition to these steps, the Council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition. This could include raising the matter with our partners and asking them to act on the petition.

Because a petition could be signed by thousands of people we will respond to the petition organiser and we would invite them to share the response with

those signing the petition. We will also place the response on the internet for all to see.

Where the person providing a response does not think that they will be able to take the action requested in the petition they will share their response with all of the County Councillors for the area through a Members Forum. The County Councillors will have the opportunity to explore other possible actions before the response is finalised. Where a petition is of importance across the whole of Nottinghamshire a special Member Forum may be called to undertake this role.

There are also two special actions that the County Council will undertake if your petition has enough signatures: - triggering a Council debate or a senior officer giving evidence on a matter. In these circumstances the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.

Full Council debates

If a petition contains the signatures of more than 5% of the population of Nottinghamshire it will be debated by the Full Council - unless it is a petition asking for a senior Council officer to give evidence at a public meeting. This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all Councillors can attend. The petition organiser will be given up to five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by Councillors. This will usually be for a maximum of 15 minutes, however this may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman.

The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, ask the appropriate body to take the action requested, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee. The petition organiser will receive

written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on our website.

Officer evidence

Your petition may ask for a senior Council officer to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which they are responsible. For example, your petition may ask a senior Council officer to explain progress on an issue or why a service is delivered in a particular way

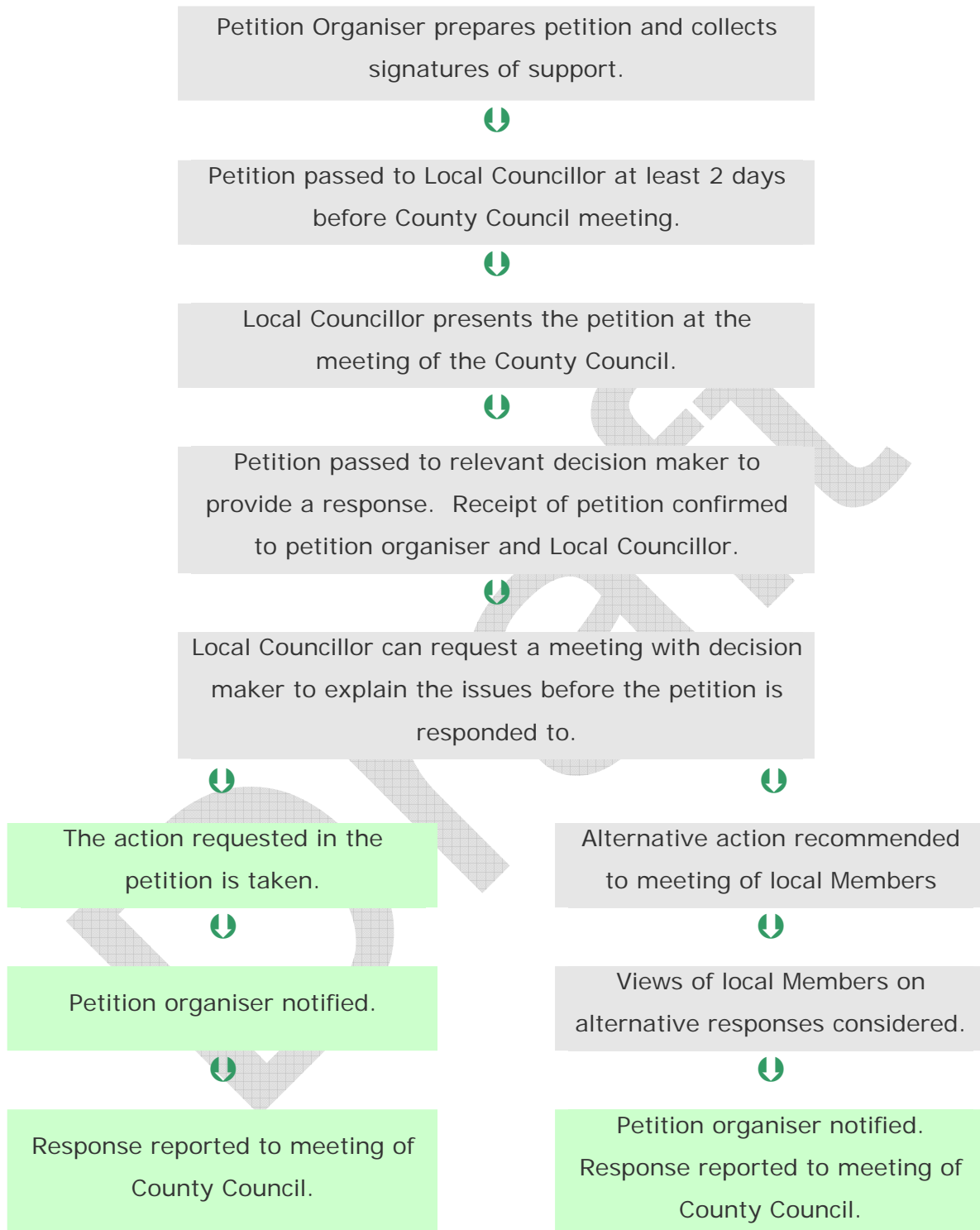
Your petition should contain at least 2,500 signatures - and identify the senior officer that you wish to give evidence. Upon receipt of your petition it will be passed to the Chair of the Overview Committee who will arrange for it to be considered by the most appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The County Council's Constitution identifies the level of officer that Overview and Scrutiny Committees can request to attend to provide evidence (unaccompanied) and the petition should identify one of these officers who manages services provided to the public. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee can also consider requests for senior officers from our Partners such as the Primary Care Trusts or Cabinet Members to give evidence.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may decide that it would be more appropriate for another individual to give evidence instead of any officer named in the petition – for instance if the named officer has changed jobs. Committee members will ask the questions at this meeting, but you will be able to suggest questions to the Chair of the Committee by contacting up to five working days before the meeting.

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The process for a typical petition presented to Council



If the petition organiser does not believe that the response has been obtained by following the correct process they may write to the Chair of the Overview Committee within 14 days setting out their concerns and requesting that Members review the process that has been followed.

The process set out does not apply to petitions submitted to the Chief Executive or those calling for a debate at Full Council or for an officer to attend an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give evidence.

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

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, the petition organiser has the right to request that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the steps that the Council has taken in response to your petition. The petition organiser should write to the Chair of the Overview Committee within 14 days setting out why they believe the process has not been followed correctly.

The Overview Committee will consider your request at the next appropriate meeting. Should the Committee determine we have not dealt with your petition adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to the Council Executive and arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the Full Council.

Once the appeal has been considered the petition organiser will be informed of the results within seven days. The results of the review will also be published on our website.

Contact

Further information or advice on this can be obtained from Chris Holmes, Service Manager, Governance & Scrutiny, Chief Executive's Department.

Petition to Nottinghamshire County Council

This petition should be submitted to the local County Councillor to present, two days before the next Full Council Meeting. Alternatively you can send it to the Chief Executive.

- What is the issue you would like to petition about?

- What do you think the Council or its partners should do?

Petition Organiser

Name	Full Address	Signature

Petitioners

Name	Post Code	Signature