

## **Petitions**

### **What are the guidelines for submitting a petition?**

Petitions can be submitted to the council either on paper or electronically. Petitions submitted to the council must include:

- a clear, short statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the council to take.
- the name and address and signature of those supporters

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.

Petitions which are considered by the council to be vexatious, abusive 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 will apply.

If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, we may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

### **What will the authority do when it receives my petition?**

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working 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. 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 the admission of a child to a particular school, other procedures apply, and petitions on these matters will not be accepted.. Further information on all these procedures and how you can express your views is available on our website

Where a petition is submitted in response to a public consultation being run by the council, the petition will be acknowledged as part of that process, and will be considered along with other consultation responses. The council will not necessarily respond to the petition separately in this case.

We will not take action on any petition which we consider to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and will explain the reasons for this in our acknowledgement

of the petition. We reserve the right to check the authenticity of names and addresses on all petitions received.

A copy of the petition will also be sent to any County Councillor who represents an area affected by the petition and to the relevant Cabinet Member.

### **How will the council respond to petitions?**

Our response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for. We will provide the petition organiser with a response to the petition within 28 days of receipt explaining what we've done or intend to do.

If your petition is about something over which the council has no direct control (for example the local railway or hospital), or if about something that is the responsibility of a different council we will advise you of that and pass the petition on to the relevant body.

### **E-petitions**

As mentioned earlier, petitions can also be set up electronically through the council's e-petition facility. An e-petition is a petition which collects signatures on-line. It is possible to create and sign and submit petitions on-line from the council's website via the following link.

<http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/mgepetitionlistdisplay.aspx>

The e-petition organiser will need to provide us with their name, full postal address and email address. An e-petition can be put on our website for any period the organiser wants, up to six 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 example if it is vexatious, abusive or contains a statement that is not factually correct), we will contact you within this time to explain. We will, where possible, suggest an amended form of words that are considered acceptable.

When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the council to go through the same procedure as a paper petition. A response will be emailed to the petition organiser within 28 days of the closure of the petition and

published on this website. Where a petition is submitted in connection with a public consultation exercise, the council will respond following the completion of the exercise.

### **Contact information**

A petition is one of many ways in which you can tell us about your concern. Before considering whether or not to raise a petition, you may want to discuss the issue by contacting Democratic Services on 01772 533380 or email us at: [petitions@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:petitions@lancashire.gov.uk).

Alternatively, you may wish to raise the matter with your local [county councillor](#).

### **The Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions) (England) Regulations 2011**

These Regulations cover the holding of a referendum on whether the local authority should change to a different form of governance where at least 5% of the local government electors in the authority's area petition the authority. In 2017/18 the 5% figure equates to 44,574 electors.