

HOW TO PETITION THE COUNCIL

Petitions

The Council welcomes anyone who lives, works or studies in Southampton to participate in the democratic process. Petitions are a way of bringing issues to the attention of city councillors and influence local decision making.

There are several ways in which you can present a petition to the Council. You can:-

- send or hand in a petition to Democratic Services, Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton SO14 7LY.
- submit an E-petition on Southampton Online.
- present a petition to a meeting of the Council by requesting a deputation or by asking a councillor to present the petition on your behalf.

All petitions submitted or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgment within 3 working days of receipt.

If you sign an e-Petition on this website, you will be required to provide us with basic personal information to enable us to verify the “signatures” collected are genuine. Your name (but no other details) will be published on the e-Petition website.

For further information or assistance on how to present your petition to the Council contact Democratic Services on 023 8083 3000 or email please democratic.services@southampton.gov.uk

- [Submit a new petition link](#)

Show ePetitions for date range: [◀ Earlier](#) - [Later ▶](#)

ePetitions

Title	Respondents	Deadline to sign by
The Compulsory Purchase of Anston House	127	30/11/2010
Eco-friendly lights for St Ann's Well Gardens	50	02/12/2010
Paddling Pool Preston Park	21	17/01/2011
Save Our Buses	13	26/01/2011
Keep the Level a green open space	88	07/07/2011

Links to

1. [Petition Guidance](#)
2. [E-petition Guidance](#)
3. **Submitting a new E-petition**

E-Petitions

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With a view to making the submissions of petitions easier and in compliance with The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 the City Council launched its e-petition scheme on 1st December 2010. Find out more about e-petitions by clicking on the links below or click on e-petition to take you the page to submit an e-petition.

- [What issues can my e-petition relate to?](#)
- [Who can submit an e-petition?](#)
- [How do I start an e-petition?](#)
- [What information should my e-petition contain?](#)
- [Who promotes e-petitions?](#)
- [Who can sign an e-petition?](#)
- [What happens when the e-petition is complete?](#)
- [What can e-petitions achieve?](#)
- [Can I still submit a paper petition?](#)

The Council welcomes e-petitions which are created and submitted through our website (link to submit an e-petition). E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions (link to guidelines). The petition organiser will need to provide us with their name, postal address and email address.

You will need to decide how long you would like your petition to be open for signatures. Most petitions run for three months but you can choose a longer or shorter timeframe, up to a maximum of six months.

When an e-petition is created it may take up to five working days before it is published online. This is because the content of the petition needs to be checked to ensure it is suitable before it is made available for signature.

If we feel we cannot publish your e-petition for some reason, we will contact you within this time frame to explain. You will be able to change and resubmit your petition if you wish. If you do not do this within 10 working days, a summary of the e-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, you will no longer be able to sign it. The list of signatories will be collated by Democratic Services. In the same way as a paper petition, the promoter will receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days.

Contact details

For more information and advice, or to discuss a potential e-petition contact us by any of the ways below.

Democratic Services, Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LY.

Telephone 023 8083 3000 / Email: democratic.services@southampton.gov.uk

What issues can my e-petition relate to?

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Any e-petition should be relevant to some issue on which the Council has powers or duties or on which it has shared delivery responsibilities. It should be submitted in good faith and be decent, honest and respectful.

An e-petition may be rejected if the Democratic Services Manager considers it:

- Contains intemperate, inflammatory, abusive or provocative language;
- Is defamatory, frivolous, vexatious, discriminatory or otherwise offensive, or contains false statements;
- Is too similar to another petition submitted within the last six months;
- Discloses confidential or exempt information, including information protected by a court order or government department;
- Discloses material which is otherwise commercially sensitive;
- Contains names of individuals, or provides information where they may be easily identified, e.g. officers or public bodies
- Contains advertising statements;
- Refers to an issue which is currently the subject of a formal Council complaint, Local Ombudsman complaint or any legal proceedings;
- Relates to the Council's Planning or Licensing functions as there are separate statutory processes in place for dealing with these matters;
- Does not relate to an issue upon which the Council has powers or duties or on which it has shared delivery responsibilities.

During politically sensitive periods, such as prior to an election, politically controversial material may need to be restricted.

The Council accepts no liability for the e-petitions on its web pages. The views expressed in the petitions do not necessarily reflect those of the Council.

Who can submit an e-petition?

An e-petition can be submitted by anyone of any age who lives, works or studies in the area of Southampton City Council.

To submit an e-petition you must be a registered user. In order to register you will need to provide us with a few details which including your name, address and a valid email address.

How do I start an e-petition?

Click on the "[submit an new e-petition](#)" link.

<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ielogon.aspx?lp=1&RPID=502519172&HPID=502519172&Forms=1>

Select a new e-petition' option. You will be asked to enter a title which the system will automatically check against existing e-petitions to allow you to see if a similar one has been considered recently.

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There will also be a drop down box which allows you to associate your e-petition with any existing issues on the City Council's Forward Plan, which details all the key decisions to be taken by the Council in the forthcoming months.

You will then be asked to complete an online form which will be submitted to Democratic Services. You may be contacted to discuss your e-petition before it goes live.

What information should my e-petition contain?

Your e-petition will need to include the following:

- a title;
- a statement setting out what action you would like the Council to take;
- any information that you feel is relevant to the e-petition and reasons why you consider the action requested to be necessary. You may include links to other relevant websites;
- you will need to choose a date for when your e-petition will go live on the website. Bearing in mind that it may take Democratic Services a couple of days to check your e-petition request and to contact you to discuss any issues arising please ensure that you submit your request a few days before you want the e-petition to go live;
- a date for when your e-petition will stop collecting signatures. In order to achieve the maximum impact, you may want to set this date to ensure that the e-petition will be submitted before a date on which a debate is to be held or a decision taken on the issue. We will host your e-petition for up to four months but would expect most to be shorter in length than this;
- as the lead petitioner/promoter, your name will be displayed with your e-petition on the Council's website.

Should you experience problems with submitting an e-petition or would like further advice, assistance and information then please contact Democratic Services and we will be happy to assist you.

Who can sign an e-petition?

An e-petition can be signed by a person of any age who lives, works or studies in the area of Southampton City Council.

When you sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide your name, address, including postcode and a valid email address. When you have submitted this information you will be sent an email to the email address 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 but it will not include your contact details.

You can only sign an e-petition once. The list of signatures will be checked by officers and any duplicate signatures or obvious inappropriate responses will be removed.

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Unless we can verify the addresses on your petition the Council cannot deal with your petition under the Council's Petition Scheme. In this case, the Council will pass the petition to the service area as a 'service request'.

Promoting e-petitions

Whilst the Council will host e-petitions on its website the Council will not promote individual e-petitions. It is for the lead petitioner to promote and publicise their e-petition in order to get as many people as possible to sign up. Raising awareness of a petition could be done in a number of ways such as promoting it on local community websites, discussion forums or newsletters. A brief explanation of the issue followed by directions to the Council's website to sign up would be sufficient detail to encourage people to take an interest in an issue. The Council will not promote or advertise paper petitions or allow copies to be left for signature on its premises although your Ward Councillor may be prepared to assist you to promote your petitions.

What happens when the e-petition is complete?

When the e-petition reaches its closing date, you will no longer be able to sign it online. The list of signatories will be collected and the Promoter will be contacted regarding the submission of the completed e-petition.

What can e-petitions achieve?

When you submit an e-petition to the Council it can have positive outcomes that lead to change and inform debate. It can bring an issue to the attention of the Council and show strong public approval or disapproval for something which the Council is doing, and local Councillors will always be informed about e-petitions which affect their Wards. As a consequence the Council may decide to, for example, change or review a policy, hold a public meeting or run a public consultation to gather further views on the issue.

Can I still submit a paper petition?

Yes. A petition may also gather names and address in both forms – you can have a paper version and an online version, although repeat names will be removed. Both forms should run for the same period of time and must be submitted together. When submitting an e-petition request, please let us know if you are running a paper petition as well as this can be highlighted on the website.

Petition Guidance

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. It should state what action the petitioners wish the council to take
- petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including an address, for the petition organiser.

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This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. The contact details of the petition organiser will not be placed on the website. If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, we will contact signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.

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 above, the council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

What will the council 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. It will also be published on our website.

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 has enough signatures to trigger a council debate, or a senior officer giving evidence, then the acknowledgement 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.

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.

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.

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 (all personal details 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, but 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

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- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the petition for consideration by the council's overview and scrutiny committee*
- calling a referendum
- 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 the work of the council - in other words, the overview and scrutiny committee has the power to hold the council's decision makers 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. The table below gives some examples.

If your petition is about something over which the council has no direct control (for example the local railway or hospital) we will aim to make representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The Council works with a large number of local partners and where possible will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with council policy), then we will set out the reasons for this to you.

If your petition is about something that a different council is responsible for we will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. It might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other council, but could involve other steps. In any event we will always notify you of the action we have taken.

Full council debates

If a petition contains more than 1,500 signatures 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 five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. The council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, 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

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Your petition may ask for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which the officer is responsible as part of their job. For example, your petition may ask a senior council officer to explain progress on an issue, or to explain the advice given to elected members to enable them to make a particular decision. If your petition contains at least 750 signatures, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of the council's overview and scrutiny committee. A list of the senior staff that can be called to give evidence can be found here

http://www.southampton.gov.uk/policies/Interim-Structure-250416-v2_tcm63-363595.pdf

You should be aware that the overview and scrutiny committee may decide that it would be more appropriate for another officer 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 [insert details] up to three working days before the meeting.

E-petitions

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. Most petitions run for three months, but you can choose a shorter or longer timeframe, up to a maximum of 12 months.

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 10 working 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.

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 committee will consider your request within 30 days of receiving it. 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.

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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.