

West Lindsey District Council Petition Scheme

1. Petitions

- 1.1 The Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement from the Council within 10 working days of receipt.

This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition. We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition.

- 1.2 Petitions can be sent to:

Democratic Services Team
West Lindsey District Council
Guildhall
Marshall's Yard
Gainsborough
Lincolnshire
DN21 2NA

- 1.3 Petitions can also be presented to a meeting of the Council. These meetings take place on an approximately six weekly basis, dates and times can be found at www.west-lindsey.gov.uk.

- 1.4 If you would like to present your petition to the Council, or would like your Councillor or someone else to present it on your behalf, please contact Democratic Services on 01427 676676, at least 10 working days before the meeting and they will talk you through the process. If your petition has received 300 signatures or more it will also be scheduled for a Council debate and if this is the case, we will let you know whether this will happen at the same meeting or a later meeting of the Council.

2. What are the guidelines for submitting a petition?

- 2.1 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; and

- The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Petitions, which are considered 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, the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

3. What will the Council do when it receives my petition?

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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. Further information on all these procedures is available from the Democratic Services Team on 01427 676594/5.
- 3.4 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.

4. Next Steps / Action to be taken

- 4.1 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
 - Holding a public meeting
 - Holding a consultation
 - Holding a meeting with petitioners
 - Referring the petition for consideration by the Council's Scrutiny Committee
 - Calling a referendum
 - Writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition
- 4.2 If your petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control (for example local railway or hospital) we will consider making 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. You can find more information on the services for which the Council is responsible here (www.west-lindsey.gov.uk).
- 4.3 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. This 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.
- 4.4 Petitions with less than 100 signatures do not meet the relevant criteria, but will be passed to the relevant service area.

5. Full Council debates

- 5.1 If a petition contains more than 300 signatures, it will be debated by the full Council.
- 5.2 This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all Councillors can attend. The Council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. 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.

6. Consideration by the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive

- 6.1 A meeting with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive will take place if a petition contains 100 signatures or more.
- 6.2 A Head of Service will attend to present a short report setting out the Council's position. Up to three representatives of the petitioners are invited to attend with one nominated as spokesperson.

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

- 7.1 If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, the petition organiser has the right to request that the Council's Challenge and Improvement Committee review the steps that the Council has taken in response to your petition. It is helpful to everyone, and can improve the prospects for a review if the petition organiser gives a short explanation of the reasons why the Council's response is not considered to be adequate.
- 7.2 The Committee will endeavour to consider your request at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will take place at the following 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 and arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the full Council.
- 7.3 Once the appeal has been considered, the petition organiser will be informed of the results within five working days. The results of the review will also be published on our website.

8. Information and Advice

For further information or advice, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01427 676595.