

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Democratic Services Committee 21 February 2022

REPORT AUTHOR: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

SUBJECT: Petition Scheme

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report asks DSC to consider a Petition Scheme (see Appendix A) to enable individuals, community groups and organisations to express their views and concerns about something for which the Council is responsible, so enabling them to become involved in the democratic process.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 Section 42 states that the Council must publish a petition scheme that includes:
- (a) how a petition may be submitted to the Council;
 - (b) how and by when the Council will acknowledge receipt of a petition;
 - (c) the steps the Council may take in response to a petition received by it;
 - (d) the circumstances (if any) in which the Council may take no further action in response to a petition;
 - (e) how and by when the Council will make available its response to a petition to the person who submitted the petition and to the public

The petition scheme should be reviewed from time to time and if the Council considers it appropriate to revise or replaces the scheme any revised or new scheme must be published.

- 2.2 The Act states that the petition scheme should take effect in May 2022. Currently paper petitions can be received by council, but there is no publicised procedure for accepting or responding to such petitions. In addition, the Modern.Gov systems, used for publishing agendas and minutes etc. has a facility for e-petitions.

3. Proposed Petitions scheme

- 3.1 The draft petition scheme is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The Committee is asked to consider the draft petition scheme and in particular consider the following issues:
- i. The minimum age of an individual submitting or signing a petition – it is recommended that this is set at those aged 16 or above, persons over 16 have a vote in Welsh Elections.
 - ii. The minimum number of valid signatures for a valid petition and the thresholds for managing petitions – appendix 1 provides details of these proposed/used by a range of other local authorities.

3.3 The e-petition facility will be demonstrated to the Committee.

4. Recommendation

4.1 That the Committee considers and approves and recommends a Petition Scheme to Full Council, including a recommendation on the minimum age limits and signature thresholds;

4.2 That the Committee recommends a Petition Scheme to Full Council to take effect from May 2022 and

4.3 the Democratic Services Committee undertakes a review of the scheme after 12 months of operation.

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The minimum number of valid signatures for a valid petition and the thresholds for managing petitions proposed/used by other local authorities

The number of Powys Residents [September 2021] 16 and over is 111961.

| Council | Minimum number of signatures and other thresholds |
|-------------------|---|
| Blaenau Gwent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 10 people but the Council will use its discretion where there are fewer than 10 signatories in cases where there is clear local support for action (e.g. where the residents of a small community have petitioned for traffic calming measures). • at least 1,500 signatures, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee • signed by more than 5,000 people 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). |
| Bridgend | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 - 200 signatures - Response from the relevant Director / lead Member (treated as normal correspondence) • At least 200 signatures - Referred to the Leader / Executive for a response • At least 500 signatures - Referred for a debate at a meeting of the Full Council • At least 500 signatures - Senior Officers called to provide evidence at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee where such action is requested in the petition. |
| Cardiff | To be determined |
| Ceredigion | To be determined - referred to thresholds used by Manchester and Guildford – see below |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | <p>Petitions of 60 or more signatories, where the issue could reasonably be expected to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. affect the Communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions; or ii. result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant. |
| Hereford | If a petition is signed by 5% (approximately 7,000 residents) of the people on the electoral roll and has not been rejected, the lead petitioner can request that it is debated at the next ordinary meeting of full Council. |
| Telford | <p>Any petition must contain 100 or more valid signatures</p> <p>A petition with signatures of more than 5% of the population of the Borough will automatically be debated at a meeting of the Full Council.</p> |
| Hull | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 50 for a petition to be accepted as valid into the petitions |

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| | <p>procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 but less than 1500 signatures - for a referral of a petition to council without debate • At least 1500 signatures - for a petition to be debated at a meeting of the council. |
| Guilford | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer than 50 signatures - response from relevant director/ service leader [treated as standard correspondence] • 50 - 299 signatures - Response from the relevant councillor • At least 300 signatures - referred to Leader/ Executive for response • At least 500 signatures - Referred for a debate at a meeting of the Full Council • At least 500 signatures - Senior Officers called to provide evidence at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee where such action is requested in the petition. |
| Manchester | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 signature - any other, non excluded, petition, requesting action or response within six weeks • 1000 signatures - any petition above the threshold will trigger a debate at a scrutiny committee • 4000 - any petition above threshold will trigger a debate at a full council meeting. |
| Warwickshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 1000 signatures - the Monitoring Officer will decide whether the petition should be referred to a Cabinet member, Local Forum or Officer for response. • 1000 or more signatures - formal presentation of a petition to a meeting of the Council |