

Powys County Council – Petition scheme

1. Introduction

Powys County Council welcomes petitions and recognises that they are one way in which individuals, community groups and organisations can express their views and concerns about something for which the Council is responsible. The Council's Public Participation Strategy [currently under development] explains the other ways you can get involved in the democratic process.

Before considering whether or not to raise a petition, you may want to discuss your issue with your local Ward Councillor. They may be able to help you with it or explain how to make representations on a particular subject to the right person at the Council. Details on how to contact your local Councillor are available on the Council's website: [Your Councillors](#).

2. What is a petition?

Petitions are one of the most direct ways to suggest how something could change. Petitions can:

- Raise awareness of an issue;
- Bring about a change in Council policy or a different way of delivering services;
- Lead to, or influence, a debate in the Council;
- Prompt a Committee or individual Members of the Council to take further action themselves, for instance by asking questions.

3. Who can raise a petition?

Anyone aged 10 or above who lives, works or studies in the Powys County Council area can submit or sign a petition.

4. How do I submit my petition?

Petitions can be submitted in one of the following ways:

- e-petition facility—on the Powys County Council website – where you can create, sign and submit online. Use the following link [Petition Scheme](#)
- email – to the email address democraticservicesandscrutiny@powys.gov.uk
- paper petitions can be sent to the Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5LG.

The requirements of this Petition Scheme will apply to whichever of the above is used. Please ensure you follow the information below and the more detailed information provided in Appendix A. By following this you will provide the information we need to consider your petition under this scheme.

Petitions will not be accepted from other on-line petition systems.

5. What can petitions be about?

A petition should include a clear statement of your concerns and exactly what you would like the Council to do. It must relate to something the Council has responsibility for or can reasonably and proportionately influence to create an improvement in the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the local area.

Where the subject matter of a petition affects particular wards, the councillors representing those wards will be notified of the receipt of the petition.

6. Can petitions be submitted to specific Committees?

Petitions can be submitted to Full Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and other Committees [excluding Regulatory Committees in respect of specific applications, such as planning, licensing or rights of way].

7. Do petitions need to have a minimum number of signatures and how will the petition be considered?

The minimum number of valid signatures should be at least 50 (including the petition organiser) for a petition to be accepted as valid. The petition will be considered as follows:

- 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.

Signatories from outside Powys will be taken into consideration in respect of the issue being raised but will not count towards the numbers required for formal debates under the scheme.

8. What could be the possible outcome of my petition?

Your petition could result in one or a combination of the following:

- raising publicity for and awareness of an issue
- implementing the action requested in the petition
- considering the petition at a Full Council meeting
- undertaking research into the matter
- referring the matter to Cabinet, a Scrutiny Committee or other Committees
- responding to the petition organiser setting out the council's view on the request set out in the petition
- some other appropriate response.

9. Are there reasons for not accepting a petition?

Your petition may be rejected if the Council's Monitoring Officer 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 past six months, particularly where further action has been taken as a result of receiving the petition.
- Discloses confidential or exempt information, including information protected by a court order or government department or discloses information that could be considered commercially sensitive
- Names individuals or provides information where they may be easily identified and is contradictory to GDPR regulations.
- Contains advertising statements or is nonsense.
- Refers to an issue that is currently the subject of a formal Council complaint, consultation, public services ombudsman for Wales complaint or any legal proceedings
- Does not relate to an issue upon which the Council has powers or duties or on which it has shared deliver responsibilities
- Relates to planning or licensing decisions and where there is an appeals procedure in place.
- Refers to a complaint about the conduct of a councillor – complaints need to be made to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales [PSOW] [How to complain](#)
- Relates to employee matters, as they will be addressed via existing internal frameworks.
- Is either a Freedom of Information [FOI] request, or comments, compliments or complaints. Information is available on the Council's website as follows:
 - Freedom of Information Requests [Make a Freedom of Information request \[or EIR\]](#)
 - Submitting comments, compliments and complaints: [Comments, compliments and complaints](#)
- Refers to matters that have already been through a public consultation process (statutory or otherwise)

If a petition is considered unacceptable the petition organiser will be advised and provided with the reasons for its rejection.

10. Are there any times when no petitions will be considered?

In the period immediately before an election or referendum the Council may need to deal with petitions in a different way – if this is the case an explanation of the reasons will be provided with a revised timescale which will apply.

11. 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, please contact the Monitoring Officer who will review your complaint. You will need to provide a short explanation of the reasons why you do not feel your petition has been dealt with properly. The Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5LG.

12. Review

The terms and conditions of the Council's Petition Scheme will be reviewed once every Council term.

Guidelines regarding petitions

- How do I create and submit an e-petition?
- How do I sign an e-petition?
- How do I submit petitions by email or in paper format?
- What will the Council do when an e-petition closes or when it receives my petition submitted by email or in paper format?
- What happens if a petition is to be debated at Full council?

How do I create and submit an e-petition?

Your e-petition can be created and submitted through our website – [Petition Scheme](#)
To submit an e-petition you will need to register on the Council's petition page.

Your e-petition will need to include the following:

- A title
- A statement explicitly setting out what action you would like the Council to take
- Any information which 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.
- A date when you would like your e-petition to go “live” on the website. Please allow sufficient time for the Council to consider the suitability of the petition and discuss any issues with you. If your e-petition is accepted [see below] the Council will need 14 working days for the it to be translated into either Welsh or English and added to the online e-petition system.
- A date when your e-petition will stop collecting signatories. You may want to consider this date in line with the calendar of meetings to ensure the petition is submitted before the relevant meeting of the Council. We will automatically host your petition for one month.
- Your name – as petition organiser your name will be displayed with your e-petition on the Council website.
- Whether you are also running a paper petition, although repeat names will be removed. Both forms of petition should run for the same period of time and must be submitted together.

The Council accepts no liability for the petitions on the website.

When you have submitted your e-petition, you will receive an email confirming that it has been received. The Monitoring Officer will then consider it against the rules for petitioning the Council and will get in touch as soon as possible to let you know whether or not it has been accepted and be a “live” petition on the Council’s website. If it has not been accepted you will receive an email explaining the reasons. You will be able to change and resubmit your e-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 petition section of the website.

How do I sign an e-petition?

“Live” e-petitions will be listed on our website – [Petition scheme](#)

When you sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide your name, postcode and a valid email address. An email will then be sent to the email address you have provided and you will need to click on the link provided to confirm the email address is valid. Once you have done this 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 your contact details will not be visible.

When an e-petition reaches its closing date, people will no longer be able to sign it.

How to submit petitions by email or in paper format

Please use this suggested template. Additional pages should also include the petition subject at the top of the page and also the page number and total of pages for example page 7 of a 10 page petition would show the following: 7 of 10 pages.

Petition to Powys County Council

Contact details of the Petition organiser

Full Name	
Address for correspondence	1st Line: ----- 2nd Line: ----- 3rd Line: ----- Post code: -----
Home Telephone No	
Mobile No	
Email address	
Live/Work/Service user/ study (please indicate all that apply)	
Signature	

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PETITION

	Petition subject:
	We the undersigned petition the Council to:
	Summary of action already taken (if applicable):

Name	Address [including postcode]	Signature	Email address [if possible]	If you are not a Powys resident, please supply the name and address of your place of work or place of study

What will the Council do when an e-petition closes or when it receives my petition submitted by email or in paper format?

- An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of an e-petition closing or on receiving a petition by email or in paper format.
- The Council reserves the right to verify signatories as required. Petitioners should ensure that a valid address and postcode is included for all petitioners that relates to a home address (if living in Powys) or work address (if working or run a business in Powys). These details will be taken into account when identifying if there are enough signatories from people who live or work in Powys to trigger a Full Council debate.
- The Council will consider the petition and advise the petition organiser, if possible in the acknowledgement email how it will respond to the petition, which may be one of the following:
 - If the Council considers it can meet what the petition asks for, the Council may confirm what action has been taken on the request and the petition will be closed.
 - If some other action is proposed or intended
 - If the petition needs more investigation, this will be explained.
 - The minimum number of valid signatures should be at least 50 (including the petition organiser) for a petition to be accepted as valid. The petition will be considered as follows:
 - 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.
- To ensure that people know what the Council are doing in response to the petitions received, the details of all the petitions submitted in whatever format, including those pending action will be published on the Council's website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate.

What happens if a petition is to be debated at Full council?

If a petition contains more than 500 signatures from people who live or work in Powys it will be debated by the Full Council. This means the petition will be included on the agenda of a Full Council meeting.

If the petition organiser wishes to take up this opportunity, they will have three minutes to present the petition. The relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder will then be given a right of reply and the petition will then be discussed by Councillors. The petition organiser will have a right of reply of up to three minutes at the end of the

debate and before a final decision or vote is taken. The debate will be for a maximum of 30 minutes.

The petition organiser will receive written confirmation, within 10 working days of the outcome of the Full Council debate and of the Council's decision and any explanation in the event of Council not being able to take the action which had been requested. This information will also be published on the website.

Data protection and GDPR

If you create and submit an e-petition or sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide personal information. Personal information is also needed when you sign a paper petition.

The Council is the data controller for personal information collected for both e-petitions and paper petitions. The following is a link to the Council website regarding [Data Protection and Privacy](#)

Following a period of 21 days after the Council has responded formally, a paper petition will be destroyed and all e-signatories on an e-petition will be erased, unless during that period, the petition organiser has requested a review. However, should you wish your name to be removed before this time please contact the Data Protection Officer by email at Information.Compliance@powys.gov.uk and by phone at 01597 826400.