

11. FULL COUNCIL PROCEDURES

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Note: The expression 'clear working days' for the purposes of this section of the Constitution does not include the day on which notice is given or the day of the meeting. So, to use 11.9(b) (Councillor Questions on Notice) as an example, if the meeting at which the question is to be taken is on a Monday, the question must be received by 1.00 p.m. on the previous Monday, with the four clear working days being the intervening Tuesday to Friday.

11.1 Order of business at annual meeting of full Council

The order of business will be:

- (a) elect the lord mayor
- (b) appoint the deputy lord mayor
- (c) appoint the sheriff

- (d) receive any announcements from the lord mayor or the head of paid service
- (e) elect the leader (in the year in which this is required)
- (f) receive a report from the leader on the appointment of the deputy leader, Board members and the executive scheme of delegation
- (g) appoint any committees required by law
- (h) appoint any other committees
- (i) agree how Council responsibilities will be carried out (see section 5)
- (j) deal with any other business on the agenda

11.2 Order of business at ordinary meetings of full Council

The order of business will be:

Part 1 –Public Business

- (a) election of chair (if the lord mayor and deputy lord mayor are absent)
- (b) approval of minutes as a correct record
- (c) declarations of interests from councillors
- (d) appointments to committees
- (e) announcements from the lord mayor, sheriff, leader, head of paid service, chief finance officer and monitoring officer
- (f) any unfinished business from the last meeting
- (g) recommendations from the Board
- (h) reports for decision by the meeting
- (i) decision sheets from the Board
- (j) questions by councillors (see 11.9 (b))

Part 2 – Public Involvement and Scrutiny

- (k) addresses by the public (see 11.10)
- (l) questions by the public (see 11.11)
- (m) consideration of petitions (see 11.13)
- (n) reports and questions about organisations the Council is represented on (see 11.14)
- (o) reports by chairs of scrutiny committees (see 11.15)
- (p) recommendations and reports from scrutiny committees

Part 3 – Proclamations – Representing the City

- (q) motions on notice (see 11.16)
- (r) anything else on the agenda.

11.3 Special meetings of full Council

The chief executive can be required to call a special meeting by full Council, the lord mayor, the monitoring officer, the chief finance officer or any twelve councillors.

The chief executive may also call a special meeting at her or his discretion.

Special meetings will only deal with the business they have been called for but they may receive addresses (see 11.10 (d))

11.4 Time and place of full Council meeting

Ordinary meetings usually start at 5.00 p.m. The annual meeting will usually start at 4.00 p.m. The times of special meetings are decided by the chief executive. Meetings are usually held in the council chamber in the town hall.

For ordinary meetings, Part 2 of the order of business as set out in 11.2 shall not commence before 7.00 p.m.

11.5 Quorum for full Council

The quorum will be a quarter of all councillors.

If a quorum is not present at the time the meeting is due to start, the start time of the meeting will be put back by 15 minutes. If there is still no quorum, the business will be deferred until a quorate meeting can be arranged. If a meeting becomes inquorate part of the way through, business will halt for five minutes. If there is still no quorum, the business will be deferred until a quorate meeting can be arranged.

11.6 Changing the order of business

The lord mayor can ask full Council to agree to change the order of business (see 11.1 and 11.2), except for the first two items at annual meetings.

11.7 Minutes

(a) Signing the minutes

At the first ordinary meeting when the minutes are available, the lord mayor will move that the minutes are correct and sign them. Full Council will not discuss the minutes.

(b) No minutes at annual or special meetings

Minutes are not signed at annual meetings or special meetings. They are signed at the next ordinary meeting instead.

11.8 Reports to full Council

- (a) Officers can be asked to introduce reports.
- (b) Reports and recommendations from the Board will be moved by the leader or one of the Board members. Reports and recommendations from committees will be moved by the chair (or another member of the committee they have nominated). Reports from officers may be moved by any member.
- (c) The person moving a report can withdraw all or part of it, correct mistakes or make minor changes.
- (d) After any questions, statements and amendments to recommendations to Council have been acted upon, the Board or committee or officer recommendation will be voted upon and adopted subject to any agreed amendments.

11.9 Questions and statements by Councillors

(a) Questions and statements without notice

- A Councillor can ask a question without notice to anyone making an announcement under 11.2 (e).

A Councillor can ask a question or make a statement without notice to:

- the leader or a Board member about a recommendation, report or action of the Board
- the leader or a Board member about a decision of the Board
- the chair of a scrutiny committee about a recommendation, report or action of the committee

Questions on Board decisions (11.2 (i)) are limited to 15 minutes in total.

(b) Questions on notice

Questions on notice must be about something the Council is responsible for or something that directly affects people in the city.

The full wording of these questions must be emailed to fullCouncil@oxford.gov.uk or received by the head of law and governance by 1.00 p.m. at least four clear working days before the full Council meeting.

Questions must be directed to the lord mayor, a Board member or a committee chair. A Board member can nominate another Board member to reply.

(c) Supplementary questions

One supplementary question can be asked without notice. This must be addressed to the councillor who replied to the first question and must arise directly from the first question or the reply. No further supplementary questions are allowed.

11.10 Addresses by the public

(a) Addressing full Council

Members of the public may address full Council for up to five minutes. This can be about anything the Council is responsible for or something that directly affects people in the city or something for decision at the meeting. An address can also be put in writing. A member of the public making an address may be accompanied by up to three other members of the public.

Addresses will be taken in the order in which they are received by the head of law and governance.

(b) Number of addresses to full Council

There shall be no more than four addresses to any full Council meeting. No more than two addresses may be made where notice has been given under 11.10 (e) and no more than two addresses may be made where notice has been given under 10.10 (f).

(c) Annual meeting

There will not be any addresses to the annual meeting.

(d) Special meetings

Addresses will only be taken at a special meeting if they are about a topic the special meeting is discussing.

(e) Notice – matters that affect people in the city

Where an address is about something the Council is responsible for or that directly affects people in the city the full wording of the address must be received by the head of law and governance by 1.00 p.m. at least seven clear working days before the full Council meeting.

(f) Notice – matters for decision at the meeting

Where an address is about something that is for decision at the meeting the full wording of the address must be received by the head of law and governance by 1.00 p.m. at least four clear working days before the full Council meeting.

(g) Number of addresses

Normally full Council will hear just one spoken address on each topic. If there is more than one request to speak on

a topic, the five minute limit for the address shall be shared by those wishing to speak.

On issues where there are arguments for and against, full Council can hear one speaker for and one against.

(h) Addresses that are about something for decision at the meeting

If an address is about something that is for decision at the meeting it will be considered with that recommendation or report or motion.

(i) Addresses that are not about something that is for decision at the meeting

If an address is about something that is for decision at the meeting, it will be referred to the chief executive without discussion. The chief executive will send a written reply after having it investigated by an officer or discussed by the Board or a committee

(j) Personal attacks

Addresses must not contain personal attacks. If an address contains a personal attack, the lord mayor will ask the speaker to stop. If the personal attack continues, the lord mayor will ask the speaker to leave. If the speaker refuses to leave straight away, the lord mayor can halt the meeting until they do.

11.11 Questions by the public

(a) Asking questions at full Council

Members of the public can ask questions at ordinary meetings. These can be addressed to the leader or other Board member. Questions must be about something the Council is responsible for, something that directly affects people in the city or something for decision at the meeting.

Members of the public cannot ask questions at an annual or special meeting.

Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received by the head of law and governance.

(b) Notice – matters that affect people in the city

Where a question is about something the Council is responsible for or that directly affects people in the city the full wording of the question must be given to the head of law and governance by 1 pm at least seven clear working days before the full Council meeting.

(c) Notice – matters for decision at the meeting

Where a question is about something that is for decision at the meeting the full wording of the question must be given to the head of law and governance by 1.00 p.m. at least four clear working days before the full Council meeting.

(d) Number of questions

Members of the public cannot ask more than one question per meeting. Supplementary questions are not allowed.

No more than two questions may be asked where notice has been given under 11.11 (b) and no more than two questions may be asked where notice has been given under 11.11 (c)

(e) Asking the question

The lord mayor will ask the questioner to ask their question. The member asked the question will answer it either orally at the meeting or by referring to the availability of the answer at the meeting. If the questioner or the councillor to whom the question is addressed is not present, the chief executive will have a reply sent with 10 working days. This will be copied to the councillor who would have been asked the question.

(f) Length of questions and answers

Questions and answers to questions cannot take longer than three minutes unless the lord mayor agrees.

(g) Referring questions to the Board or to committee

After a question has been answered, there will be no discussion.

Any councillor can propose that a matter raised by a question is referred to the Board or to a committee. If the

proposal is seconded, it will be voted on without discussion.

(h) Total length of addresses and questions

Full Council will not spend more than 45 minutes taking addresses (11.10) and questions (11.11). If it cannot take all the addresses and questions, it will take them in the order that notice was given of them until there is no time left.

(i) Written answers

If a question is not taken because there is no time left, the chief executive will have a reply sent within 10 working days.

11.12 Rejecting addresses and questions

The head of law and governance can reject a question or an address on notice by a member of the public or a question on notice by a councillor, and the lord mayor can reject a question or statement without notice, if:

- it is not about something the Council is responsible for or about something that directly affects people in the City or about a matter for decision at the meeting
- it is defamatory, frivolous, trivial or offensive
- it requires the Council to make public exempt or confidential information (see 15.4)

If a question or statement is rejected, reasons must be given.

11.13 Petitions to full Council

Under the Council's petitions scheme (annexed to this part of the Constitution), if a petition contains at least 1,500 signatures it will be debated at full Council. Any petition presented as part of an address (see 11.10) directly to full Council and that contains at least 1,500 signatures will not be debated at that meeting but at the next ordinary meeting. The petition organiser may address full Council upon the petition for up to five minutes before the debate upon the petition.

Following any address by the petition organiser full Council will debate the petition in any way that full Council chooses and decide one of the following:

- note the petition
- take the action the petition requests
- not take the action the petition requests
- commission further investigation into the matter
- where the matter is one which the executive is required to make the final decision, decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.

There is a limit of 15 minutes for dealing with each petition

11.14 Reports and questions about organisations on which the council is represented

A councillor who has been appointed to represent the council on another organisation may present an oral or written report to full Council on the work of that organisation. Notice of the presentation of such a report and, where a written report is to be presented, that report, shall be received by the head of law and governance by 1.00 pm at least seven clear working days before the meeting.

A councillor who wants to ask a question about an organisation on which the council is represented shall give the full wording of the question to the head of law and governance at least four clear working days before the meeting.

Questions must be directed to the councillor who represents the council on the organisation. The councillor may nominate another councillor to reply.

11.15 Reports by chairs of scrutiny committees

Each ordinary meeting of council shall receive a written report from at least one of the council's scrutiny committees on the work of the committee. That report shall be included in the agenda of the meeting. The chair of any other scrutiny committee may report orally if there are matters arising from the work of the committee that the chair considers Council should know about without delay.

11.16 Motions on notice

(a) Giving notice of motions

Some motions may be moved without notice. These are listed at 11.17. For all other motions, the full wording

must be emailed to fullcouncil@oxford.gov.uk or received by the head of law and governance by 1.00 pm at least seven clear working days before the meeting. These motions will be reproduced on the agenda for the meeting.

(b) Number of motions

No more than six motions may be included on the agenda of an ordinary meeting of Council. Up to three of those motions may be from members of the largest political group and up to three of those motions may be from members of all of the other political groups combined. If more than three motions from the largest political group or more than three motions from all of the other political groups combined are received by the head of law and governance before the deadline in 11.16 (a) the head of law and governance will ask the leader of the largest political group and the leaders of the other political groups which motions shall be included on the agenda. In the event that agreement cannot be reached as to the inclusion of motions, the head of law and governance shall include the first three motions received from the largest political group and the first three motions received from the other political groups combined but so that (if submitted) there is at least one motion from each of the other political groups and (if submitted) at least one motion from any member independent of a political group.

(c) Topic of motions

Motions must be about things the Council is responsible for or something that directly affects people in the city.

(d) Listing motions on the agenda

Motions will appear on the agenda in the order they were received by the head of law and governance

(e) Time limits

There is a time limit of 90 minutes for dealing with all motions and a time limit of 15 minutes for dealing with each motion.

(f) Motion to remove the leader

Any motion to remove the leader and replace her or him with another leader must be signed by no less than twelve members and received by the head of law and

governance by 1.00 pm must be emailed to fullcouncil@oxford.gov.uk or at least seven clear working days before the meeting. This motion will be reproduced on the agenda for the meeting.

The motion may be emailed to fullcouncil@oxford.gov.uk

11.17 Motions without notice

There is no need to give notice of motions to:

- appoint a chair of the meeting
- agree or correct the minutes
- change the order of business
- refer something somewhere else
- agree or amend recommendations of the Board, Council committees or officers
- withdraw a motion
- amend a motion during a debate on it – see 11.18 (g)
- got to next business
- move to a vote
- adjourn a debate or meeting
- suspend a full Council procedure – see 11.24 (a)
- hold a discussion in private (when allowed under the access to information and key decision procedures – see 15)
- hear a Councillor no further – see 11.22 ©
- exclude a Councillor from the meeting – see 11.22 (d)
- give full Council's agreement when it is required by the Constitution.

11.18 Rules of debate

(a) No speeches until motion moved and seconded

No speeches can be made on a motion until it has been moved and seconded.

(b) Seconder's speech

A councillor who formally seconds a motion or amendment can speak later in the debate.

(c) Contents and length of speeches

Speeches (except for points of order and personal explanations (see (m) and (n)) must be about the item being discussed.

(d) When a Councillor can speak again

A councillor who has already spoken in a debate cannot speak again except to:

- exercise their right of reply – see (j)
- make a point of order – see (m)
- make a point of personal explanation – see (n)

(e) Amendments to motions - relevance

An amendment must be relevant to the motion and must be a proposal:

- to refer a motion somewhere else
- to add, replace or leave out words.

Amendments to add, replace or leave out words must not negate the motion.

(f) Amendment to a motion on notice on the council agenda

An amendment to add, replace or leave out words on a motion included on the agenda for an ordinary meeting must be received by the head of law and governance by 1.00 pm on a day so that there are at least four clear working days before the Council meeting.

(g) Amendment arising during a debate on a motion

An amendment that a councillor wants to make in the course of a debate on a motion and that arises directly as a result of that debate must be written down and read or circulated at the meeting.

(h) Debate on amendments

The lord mayor can allow two or more amendments to be discussed together. But they must be voted on separately.

If any amendment is carried, the amended motion replaces the original motion. Any further amendments will be to the motion

If any amendment is not carried, any further amendments will be to the original motion.

The same amendment cannot be moved twice.

(i) Councillor changing their own motion

A councillor can change a motion they have moved without notice if both the meeting and the seconder agree. The meeting will accept or reject the change without discussion.

The councillor can only make changes that could have been made as an amendment.

(j) Right of reply

A councillor who moves a motion has a right to reply at the end of the debate, immediately before the vote.

If an amendment is moved, the councillor who moved the original motion has the right to reply at the end of the debate on the amendment but not before.

A councillor who moves an amendment has the right to reply immediately before the councillor who moved the original motion.

(k) Motions that can be moved during debate

When a motion is being debated, no other motions can be moved except for the following procedural motions:

- to withdraw a motion

- to go to next business
- to move to a vote
- to adjourn the meeting or debate
- to hold a meeting in private (when allowed under the access to information and key decision procedures – see 15)
- to hear a Councillor no further – see 11.22 (c)
- to exclude a Councillor from the meeting – see 11.22 (d)

(l) Motions to end or postpone the debate

After a speaker has finished speaking any councillor can move next business or propose to move to a vote or adjourn the debate or meeting. They must do this without comment.

If a motion to go to next business is seconded and the lord mayor thinks the meeting has discussed the item enough, the mover of the original motion will have the right of reply. Full Council will then vote on whether to go to next business. If full Council agrees to go to next business, the original motion will not be voted on and will not become a resolution of full Council.

If a motion to move to a vote is seconded and the lord mayor thinks the meeting has discussed the item enough, full Council will vote on whether to take the vote on the original motion. If full Council decides to take the vote, the mover of the original motion will have the right to reply. Then full Council will vote on the original motion without further debate.

If a motion to adjourn the debate or meeting is seconded and the lord mayor thinks it is not possible to give the item enough discussion at the current meeting, full Council will vote on whether to adjourn. The mover of the original motion will not have the right of reply before this vote.

(m) Points of order

A councillor can make a point of order at any time. The lord mayor will hear a point of order immediately. A point of order must be about the law or a full Council procedure

being broken. The councillor must say which law or procedure is being broken and how. The lord mayor will consider the monitoring officer's advice when deciding on a point of order and the lord mayor's decision will be final.

(n) Points of personal explanation

A councillor can give a personal explanation at any time. This must be about something they have said in the past that they feel is now being misunderstood or misrepresented. The lord mayor will have the final say over what counts as a personal explanation.

11.19 Voting

(a) Majority

Unless the Constitution says otherwise, votes will be decided by a simple majority of Councillors in their seats and voting.

(b) Lord mayor's second or casting vote

If there is the same number of votes for and against, the lord mayor will have a casting vote.

(c) Method of voting

Votes can be:

- by the general agreement of the meeting, if there is no one against
- by show of hands
- named or recorded – see (d) and (e).

(d) Named votes

Any ten councillors present at the meeting can ask for the minutes to name who voted for, who voted against and who abstained on a vote.

(e) Right to have individual vote recorded

Any councillor can ask for the minutes to record whether they voted for or against or abstained on a vote. The request must be made immediately after the vote.

(f) Voting on appointments

If there are three or more candidates for a position and none has more than half the votes, the candidate with the fewest votes will be eliminated and a new vote taken. This will continue until one candidate has more than half the votes.

11.20 Officers

Full Council will consider whether to exclude the public before discussing the conditions, supervision, dismissal or conduct of any officer or former officer.

11.121 Excluding the public

The public can only be excluded if it is under the access to information rules (see 15) or if they are making a personal attack (see 11.10 (i)) or disrupting the meeting (see 11.23).

11.22 Councillors' behaviour

(a) Standing to speak

When they speak at full Council, councillors must address the lord mayor. Only one councillor may speak at any one time.

(b) Lord mayor standing

If the lord mayor stands during a debate, any councillor who is speaking must stop speaking. The meeting must be silent.

(c) Councillor not to be heard further

If a councillor keeps on disrupting the meeting, the lord mayor can move that the councillor is not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without being discussed.

(d) Councillor to leave the meeting

If full Council has voted not to hear a councillor further and the councillor continues to disrupt the meeting, the lord mayor can move that the councillor leaves the

meeting or that the meeting is adjourned. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without being discussed.

(e) General disturbance

If a group of councillors are making it impossible for full Council to do its business, the lord mayor can halt the meeting for as long as necessary.

11.23 Disruption by the public

(a) Disruption by an individual

If a member of the public is disrupting the meeting, the lord mayor will warn them. If they carry on disrupting the meeting, the lord mayor can halt the meeting until they leave.

Clearing part of the meeting room

If there is a general disturbance in a part of a meeting room open to the public, the lord mayor can have the area cleared.

11.24 Suspending and changing the procedures in this section

(a) Suspending the procedures in this section

All the full Council procedures in this section can be suspended except 11.6 (changing the order of business), 11.7 (b) (no minutes at annual or special meetings) and 11.19 (e) (right to have individual vote recorded). A procedure can be suspended if at least half of all councillors are present and there is a simple majority in favour. No notice is needed for a motion to suspend a procedure. Procedures can only be suspended until the end of the meeting.

(b) Changing the full Council procedures in this section

Any motion to change the procedures in this section must be proposed and seconded. After this, it will not be discussed until the next ordinary meeting of full Council.

Oxford City Council Petitions Scheme

Introduction

The City 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, and if it contains a minimum of 1000 signatures where it relates to a Citywide matter or 500 signatures where it relates to a matter that affects one Ward.

The Council encourages use of the e-petition feature of the website. An e-Petition is a petition which collects signatures online. This allows petitions and supporting information to be made available to a potentially much wider audience than a traditional paper based petition. Paper petitions are still accepted and should be sent to:-

Head of Law and Governance
Oxford City Council
Town Hall
St Aldate's
Oxford, OX1 1BX

Petitions can also be presented to a meeting of the council. Ordinary meetings take place four or five times a year. Dates, times and agenda can be found on our Council Meetings pages. 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 the Head of Law and Governance or telephone 01865 252214 at least 10 working days before the meeting and they will talk you through the process. If your petition has received 1500 signatures or more it will also be scheduled for a council debate.

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.

The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition. 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. 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. 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.

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 acknowledgment 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. Further information on all these procedures can be obtained from the Head of Law and Governance or by telephoning 01865 252230.

We will not take action on any petition which we consider to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and will explain the reason 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 Accepted Petitions page, 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

Not taking the action the petition requests

Considering the petition at a council meeting

Holding an inquiry into the matter

Undertaking research in to the matter

Holding a public meeting

Holding a consultation

Holding a meeting with petitioners

Referring the petition for consideration by a scrutiny committee*

Calling a referendum

Noting the petition

Writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition

(*Scrutiny committees are committees of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the council - in other words, the 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.

If your petition is about something over which the council has no direct control (for example the 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 partnerships 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 on our About Us page on our website.

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.

Full council debates

If a petition contains more than 1500 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 - see later in this Scheme for details on such requests). 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 as 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. The council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. It 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, or simply to note the petition.

Where the issue is one on which the Council's Executive is required to make the final decision, the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on our website.

Officer evidence

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 scrutiny committee. The following list of senior staff that can be called to give evidence:

Head of Paid Service

Monitoring Officer

Head of Human Resources and Facilities

Chief Finance Officer

Executive Director, City Regeneration

Executive Director, City Services

Executive Director, Finance and Efficiency

You should be aware that the 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.

The committee may also decide to call the relevant councillor to attend the meeting. 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 us on 01865 252230 up to three working days before the meeting.

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 scrutiny 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.

The scrutiny 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 decide 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.

Once the appeal has been considered the petition organiser will be informed of the results within 5 working days. The results of the review will also be published on our website.