

Petitions Scheme

1.1 Summary of citizens' rights

Citizens have the right to:

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- ~~have petitions considered by full Council or to call officers to account, in each case depending upon the number of signatures the petition contains— 1,500 to trigger consideration by full Council and 750 to call officers to account (see 11.13)~~
- submit petitions to the Council either electronically or in paper and have officers consider what actions may be taken in response
- have petitions containing at least 1,500 signatures considered by a meeting of Council if the petition organiser makes a request for such a debate in writing to the Head of Law and Governance

11.14 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 at that next ordinary meeting.~~

~~If a Member wishes to put a substantive motion/recommendation on a petition then they must let the Head of Law and Governance have that motion/recommendation by 10am on the working day before the full Council meeting. These would then be published in the Council briefing note. Any amendments to these would have to be with Committee and Members' Services by 11.00am on the day of the meeting.~~

~~A substantive motion is anything other than deferring, referring or noting the issues raised by 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

A petition containing at least 1,500 signatures will be debated at full Council if the petition organiser makes a request for a debate in writing directly to the Head of Law and Governance.

Requests must be sent in writing, accompanied by the petition, to Head of Law and Governance at least 3 weeks prior to the Council meeting. 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.

Council will receive a report setting out the petition and the steps Council can take.

The petition organiser may address full Council upon the petition for up to five minutes before the debate upon the petition at that next ordinary meeting.

If a Member wishes to put a substantive motion/recommendation on a petition they must let the Head of Law and Governance have that motion/recommendation by 10am on the working day before the full Council meeting. These would then be published in the Council briefing note. Any amendments to these would have to be with Committee and Members' Services by 11.00am on the day of the meeting.

Annex to Section 11 of the Constitution to be replaced with:-

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL PETITIONS SCHEME

We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition and if it is formally submitted to the relevant Head of Service or the Head of Law and Governance.

A petition containing at least 1,500 signatures will be debated at full Council if the petition organiser makes a request for a debate in writing directly to Head of Law and Governance, accompanied by the text of the petition and the list of signatures, and a link to the petition if relevant.

Petitions run through epetition sites must be formally submitted by the organiser at the end of the signature gathering period: simply setting the petition up on such a site does not constitute formal submission.

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. If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, we will not be able to respond to the petition.
- Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted and we will not take any action on these.

- 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.

The Council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition and may take such action as is appropriate.

If we can do what your petition asks for, we may confirm what action we have taken.

- 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.
- If we are not able to take action (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with council policy; involves other partners or parties; is not within our control; is unaffordable, impractical or not legal; or conflicts with other priorities of the community), then we will tell you this. 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 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 or where possible will work with our partners to respond to your petition.
- If your petition is about something that a different Council or body or agency is responsible for we will tell you and ask you to send the petition to them.

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