

Standing Orders – Council Meetings – Petitions Scheme

Proposed amendments in **bold text**.

6. How will the Council respond to my petition?

All petitions received by the Governance Support Team will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt. The acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser and will explain what we plan to do with the petition and when you can expect to hear from us again. Your petition details will be provided to the Leader of the Council, the Civic Mayor, the Group Leaders and the Chief Executive. Details of any petitions that have not been accepted for the reasons cited in 3.1 will also be provided to those listed above for information purposes.

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 needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.

If the petition applies to a planning or licensing application, relates to a subject where consultation by the Council is currently being undertaken or is due to be undertaken in the next six months (e.g. Formal Budget/Savings Proposals consultation), or is a statutory petition on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal (such as Council tax banding and non-domestic rates) other procedures apply. In our acknowledgment to you, we will explain these procedures and how you can express your views. Where a petition is passed to another department it may then become subject to any conditions relating to representations for such matters i.e. a petition in respect of a planning representation may be published in full which includes names and address of those who have signed the petition.

Petitions containing less than **5025** signatures will not be presented to a Council meeting, but treated as general correspondence and forwarded directly to the relevant service department for response.

‘Ordinary’ petitions

For petitions containing at least **5025** valid signatures you can present your petition to a meeting of the Council (which all Councillors can attend).

Alternatively, you (as the petition organiser) and up to two other people who

have signed the petition, can choose to meet directly with the relevant decision-maker to present your petition.

Once an 'ordinary' petition is received the Governance Support Team will write to you to inform you which body/decision-maker will respond to your petition and confirm which of the above options you would like to proceed with.

Presentation to Council

If you wish for the petition to be presented to a meeting of the Council you can speak in support of the petition at the meeting for up to five minutes.

Confirmation of speaking in support of a petition must be received from the petition organiser by 4.00 p.m. the day before the Council meeting by registering with the Governance Support Team (by telephone on 01803 207087 or by e-mailing governance.support@torbay.gov.uk).

At each Council meeting, 30 minutes is allocated for the presentation of petitions received (except petitions with over 1,000 signatures – see further information below). To ensure sufficient time is allowed for presenting petitions a maximum of 5 petitions can be presented at a single Council meeting. The Civic Mayor may allow additional petitions in exceptional circumstances, those circumstances to be determined by the Civic Mayor. Petitions are included in the order that they have been received and once verified by the Governance Support Team. Subsequent petitions will be included on the agenda for the following Council meeting unless requested by the lead petitioner not to do so and request that it is referred directly to the decision-maker or they wish to withdraw the petition.

Please note the petition will not be debated by the Councillors at the Council meeting, it will be referred straight to the relevant decision maker following presentation of your petition at the meeting.

Also, if the subject of the petition is due to be considered by the decision-maker before the next meeting of the Council it will be referred to the decision-maker direct and you will not, therefore, have the opportunity to present the petition at a Council meeting.

Meeting with decision-maker

If you wish for the petition to be submitted directly to the decision-maker you will be informed of who will be contacting you to make the necessary arrangements for meeting with the decision maker. This meeting will normally be arranged within 28 days from notifying the Governance Support Team of your decision to proceed with this option.

The decision-maker may respond to the issues raised in your petition in one or more of the following ways:

- Taking the action requested in the petition;
- Holding an inquiry into the matter;
- Undertake research into the matter;
- Hold a public meeting; and/or
- Undertake consultation.

Full Council Debates

If a petition contains more than 1,000 valid signatures it will be debated by all Councillors at a meeting of the Council unless the matter is resolved before the meeting to the Petition Organiser's satisfaction. **Petitions with over 1,000 valid signatures will be listed as separate agenda items for debate and are not subject to the 30 minutes time allocation, to enable debate.**

You will receive notification from the Governance Support team with details of the Council meeting to which your petition will be submitted. 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. You will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by the 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;
- make recommendations to the Leader of the Council if the issue is one for him/her to make the decision; or
- 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.