

Petitions Scheme (DRAFT)

Bromsgrove District Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. Petitions submitted should be clearly identified as a petition and should use the petitions form available here (www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/petitions) or available upon request.

Petition organisers are also requested to send, with the petition, a written statement saying what the petition is about.

If you wish to send a petition to the Council, it must be sent in writing to:

The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer),
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1AA.

Petitions can also be created, signed and submitted online by following this link (www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/petitions).

Petitions which have received 1,250 signatures or more will be presented to a meeting of the Council and can be scheduled for a Council debate and if this is the case we will let you know whether this will happen at the next meeting or a later meeting of the Council. The dates and times of Council meetings can be found here (www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/meetings).

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.

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 01527 881407 at least 10 working days before the meeting and they will talk you through the process.

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 printed 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 can either request that the Council support a particular course of action or can request that a Member of the Council or senior officer of the Council be required to give evidence before a committee. The petition should relate to matters within the jurisdiction of the Council. Please note that petitions which relate to a regulatory matter such as a planning or licensing decision will not be eligible for consideration under this Petitions Scheme. Petitions received on regulatory matters will be forwarded by the Monitoring Officer to the relevant Council department or committee and be considered as part of the regulatory application to which they relate.

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 the Council Will Do

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 the petition has enough signatures to trigger a Council debate, or calling a senior officer to give evidence, then the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition requires further investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.

If the petition has less than 1,250 signatures, the Monitoring Officer will determine how the petition will be dealt with.

We will not take action on any petition which we consider to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and will explain the reasons 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 website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate.

Responding 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
- considering the petition at a Council meeting
- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the matter for consideration by the Cabinet
- referring the matter for consideration by the Council's Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board¹
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition.

If your petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control (for example the local railway or hospital) it may consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The Council works with a large number of local partners 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 [here](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk) (www.bromsgrove.gov.uk).

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.

¹ *The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board is a committee of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the Council – in other words, the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board has the power to hold the Council's decision makers to account.*

Full Council Debates

If a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures it will be debated by the full Council, unless it is a petition asking for a Member of the Council or senior Council officer to give evidence at a public meeting. 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 at 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 5 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. They 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. Where the issue is one on which the Cabinet 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.

Requesting Attendance Before a Public Meeting

Your petition may ask for a Member of the Council or senior Council officer to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which is responsible. 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 1,250 signatures, the relevant elected Member or senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of the Council's Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board. You should be aware that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board may decide that it would be more appropriate for another officer to give evidence instead of any officer named in the petition. The Board may also decide to call relevant councillors to attend the meeting. Board members will ask the questions at this meeting, but you will be able to suggest questions to the Chairman of the Board by contacting scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk up to 5 working days before the meeting.

E-Petitions

The Council welcomes e-petitions which are created and submitted through our website [\[link\] \(www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/petitions\)](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/petitions). E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions [\[link to guidelines\(www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/petitions\)\]](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/petitions).

The petition organiser will need to provide us with their name, postal address and email address. You will also need to decide how long you would like your petition to be open for signatures. Most petitions run for six months, but you can choose a shorter or longer timeframe, up to a maximum of 12 months.

When you create an e-petition, it may take 5 working days before it is published online. This is because we have to check that the content of your petition is suitable before it is made available for signature.

If we feel we cannot publish your petition for some reason, we will contact you within this time to explain. You will be able to change and resubmit your 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 petitions' section of the website.

When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the Monitoring Officer. In the same way as a paper petition, you will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days. If it contains the qualifying number of signatures, it may be presented to full Council. If you would like to present your e-petition to a meeting of the Council, please contact scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk within 10 working days of receipt of the acknowledgement.

'Signing' an e-Petition

You can see all the e-petitions currently available for signature [here](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/petitions)(www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/petitions). When you sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide your name, your postcode and a valid email address. When you have submitted this information you will be sent an email to the email address you have provided. This email will include a link which you must click on in order to confirm the email address is valid. Once this step is complete 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 it but your contact details will not be visible.

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 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board 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 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board 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 Board determine that your petition has not been dealt with adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to the Cabinet and or 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.

Petition to Bromsgrove District Council

Statement to be completed by the petition organisers (Lead Petitioners) when the petition is submitted to the Monitoring Officer.

Name and address of the petition organiser(s):

Name: _____	Name: _____
Address _____ _____ _____	Address _____ _____ _____
Postal Code: _____	Postal Code: _____
Telephone: _____	Telephone: _____
E Mail: _____	E Mail: _____

Please describe, briefly, what the petition is about.

Date petition started: _____

Date petition submitted: _____

Please return to:

Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

For further information about petitioning **Bromsgrove District Council** please contact 01527 881407.