

Barnsley Council's Petitions Scheme

Information about Barnsley Council's Petitions Scheme and how we will deal with petitions

The council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. All petitions sent 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.

Paper petitions can be sent to:

The Governance and Member Support Unit Core Services Directorate Barnsley MBC
PO Box 634 Barnsley S70 9GG

You can also submit your petition by email to governance@barnsley.gov.uk

The Council doesn't have its own facility where you can also create, sign and submit petitions online (known as 'e-petitions'). However, there are many other websites where e-petitions can be created, and the Council will consider petitions created in this way, provided it meets the guidelines below.

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 do not have to have a certain number of signatures to be considered under this scheme. The relevance of the issue to local people is more important than the number of people signing the petition. Petitions do not have to follow a set format, provided they give the information set out above.

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. Petitions can be organised or signed by anyone who lives, works or studies in the Barnsley borough, including young people under 18 years old. They should relate to something that is of specific local concern and over which the council or its partners can exert influence.

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 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 website](#).

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 one or more of the signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.

Petitions which are considered by the Chief Executive 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.

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, 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. If the petition requests action against a specific individual its details might not be published if it might affect the council's ability to take action.

We will not take action on any petition which the Chief Executive considers to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and we will explain the reasons for this in our acknowledgement of the petition.

How will the council respond to petitions?

We will ask the relevant part of the council (“the service”) to investigate the issue raised in the petition. The service will make contact with the petition organiser to explain what will be done. This information will be included in a report to the [council's Cabinet](#) and discussed at a meeting. The Cabinet might ask for more or different action to be taken. This might include referring the petition to the relevant Area Council or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of all petitions will be sent to the Councillors representing the Ward(s) affected. The Councillors might contact the petition organiser to discuss the issue, or might raise the issue at the Area Council or Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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 mean 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.

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, you can make a complaint under the Complaint Procedure. More information on this is available on [the Council's website](#).

April 2018