

Petitions Scheme webpage wording - [Petitions information and advice | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Petitions information and advice

We welcome petitions and recognise that they are one way in which people can let us know their concerns.

Anyone who lives, works or studies in North Yorkshire, including people under 18, can sign or organise a petition and trigger a response.

Petitions can be submitted in paper form or online through our e-petitions scheme. [Petition signatories must be able to demonstrate a local connection through living, working or studying in North Yorkshire.](#)

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.

[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.](#) The determination of whether a petition is vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate for a response, will be carried out by the [chief executive officer in consultation with the chairman of the council](#) [Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services.](#)

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In the period immediately before an election or referendum, we may need to deal with a petition differently - if this is the case, we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which will apply.

[This petitions scheme does not apply where a petition that has been submitted relates to](#) ~~for the following:~~

- [a matter for which the Council has no responsibility;](#)
- [a matter which does not affect the Council's area;](#)
- [a planning application. Where a petition that has been submitted relates to a planning application, it will be treated as 'letters of representation' and be part of the 'letters of representation process'. It will no longer be treated as a petition under the Council's petitions scheme. Details of the petition will be made available on the council public access online database of planning applications;](#)
- [an application made under the Licensing Act or the Gambling Act. Where a petition relates to such an application, it will be treated as a representation as part of the process for consideration of the application;](#)
- [a matter where there is already an existing recourse to a review or right of appeal, such as council tax banding and non-domestic rates, where other procedures apply;](#)
- [parking restrictions. Where a petition relates to parking restrictions it will be dealt with under our parking petitions scheme which allows anyone to raise a petition about the parking restrictions in place for a specified location;](#)
- [a matter which is subject to public consultation by the Council. Where a petition relates to a live consultation it will be treated as a consultation response and dealt with as part](#)

~~of the consultation. Where a petition relates to a consultation which closed within the preceding six months / 12 months no action will be taken on the petition:~~

- ~~• Council policy or proposed changes to policy, and a public consultation is being undertaken: the petition will be treated as a consultation response and considered by the ultimate decision-making body. It will no longer be treated as a petition under the Council's petitions scheme;~~
- a Council policy approved within the last six months;
- matters subject to prescribed statutory requirements (for example requesting a referendum on having a directly elected mayor);
- confidential staffing matters;
- the same or similar subject as one that the Council has received and dealt with in the previous 6 months.

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~~Details of petitions affecting particular divisions that have been excluded will be sent to the Members representing those divisions.~~

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- ~~• Where a petition that has been submitted relates to a planning application, it will be treated as 'letters of representation' and be part of the 'letters of representation process'. It will no longer be treated as a petition under the council's petitions scheme. Details of the petition will be made available on the council public access online database of planning applications.~~
- Where a petition relates to an application made under the Licensing Act or the Gambling Act, it will be treated as a representation as part of the process for consideration of the application.
- ~~• Where a petition relates to a live consultation it will be treated as a consultation response and dealt with as part of the consultation. Where a petition relates to a consultation which closed within the preceding six / 12 months no action will be taken on the petition.~~

~~Where a petition that has been submitted relates to a planning application, it will be treated as 'letters of representation' and be part of the 'letters of representation process'. It will no longer be treated as a petition under the council's petitions scheme.~~

Submitting a paper petition

Paper petitions submitted must include:

- a clear and concise statement about the subject of the petition
- a statement of what action the petitioners wish us to take
- the name and address (including postcode) and signature of any person supporting the petition
- contact details, including an address **and postcode**, for the petition organiser

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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.

The details of the signatories to the petition will not be placed on the website. ~~Where a petition that has been submitted relates to a planning application and is being treated as 'letters of representation' it will be made available on the council public access online database of planning applications.~~

If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, we may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to the petition organiser to explain the reasons.

You can use our cover sheet and signature sheet documents as templates for your petition, if you wish. You can ask for copies of these documents at democraticservices.central@northyorks.gov.uk

Paper petitions of any size should be sent to:

Barry Khan

~~The Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)~~

North Yorkshire Council

County Hall

Northallerton

DL7 8AD

Alternatively, scanned copies may be sent by email to: democraticservices.central@northyorks.gov.uk

Submitting an ePetition

[The North Yorkshire Council website has the facility to create an electronic petition or ePetition. Further information on this is provided below.](#)

[We will also accept electronic petitions that have been created and managed through other websites such as change.org.](#)

An ePetition organiser will need to provide us with their name, postal address including postcode, email address and contact telephone number. The name of the petition organiser (but no other contact details) will be published alongside details of the petition.

[An ePetition must include the name and postcode of any person supporting the petition.](#)

The ePetition organiser will also need to decide how long their petition will be open for signatures. Most ePetitions run for six months, but it can be a shorter or longer timeframe, up to a maximum of 12 months.

An ePetition must also include a clear and concise statement about the subject of the petition, and a statement of what action the petitioners wish us to take.

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When an ePetition is created, it may take up to five working days before it is published online. This is because we have to check that the content of the ePetition meets the guidelines before it is made available for signature.

~~If an ePetition does not follow the guidelines set out above, or if we need clarification on any issues raised within an ePetition, we will contact the ePetition organiser within 5 working days of receipt to explain.~~

~~We will also contact the ePetition organiser if we feel we cannot publish an ePetition for any reason, and where possible, we will offer assistance to change and resubmit it.~~

~~If the required clarification is not provided, or if an ePetition that we cannot publish is not re-submitted within 14 days, a summary of the ePetition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'rejected petitions' section of the Council's ePetitions facility.~~

[Submit an ePetition](#)

How to 'sign' an ePetition

~~An individual wanting to sign an ePetition will be asked to provide their name, address and postcode, and confirmation that they work, live or study in North Yorkshire. Once this step is completed, their 'signature' will be added to the ePetition.~~

~~Anyone viewing an e-petition will only be able to see how many people have signed the petition.~~

All ePetitions currently available for signature on our website can be viewed [here](#).

If you have any queries around petitions, you can contact us at democraticservices.central@northyorks.gov.uk

What happens next?

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser(s) within ten working days of a paper petition being received or an ePetition closing. It will confirm the appropriate course of action and tell you when and where, if appropriate, any meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take. We will also let them know when you can expect to hear from us again.

~~To ensure people know what we are doing in response to the paper petitions we receive, the details of all paper petitions submitted to us will be published on our website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate.~~

How we will respond to petitions

The 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:

- if we can do what the petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that we have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition
- undertaking research into the matter (options including meeting with lead petitioners or holding a public meeting)
- if the petition has enough signatures, it may trigger either
 - a debate at the relevant area committee or at council
 - a senior officer giving evidence at a meeting of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee
- dependent on how many signatures a petition has it will be dealt with in one of the following ways ~~if the petition has enough signatures, it may trigger either~~
 - ❖ Between 1 and 499 signatories – the matter is responded to by the relevant service/department
 - ❖ Between 500 and 30,774 – there is a debate at the appropriate Area Committee
 - ❖ Above 30,775 – there is a debate at Council (based on ONS 2021 census population figure)

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Overview and scrutiny committees are committees of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the council. The overview and scrutiny committees have the power to hold the council's decision makers to account.

Other procedures will apply if the petition:

- is a statutory petition (for example, requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor)
- is about a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal

Where a petition relates to a planning application, it will be treated as 'letters of representation' and be part of the 'letters of representation process'.

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.

In addition to these steps, we will consider all the specific actions we can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition.

If the petition is about something over which we have no direct control (for example the local railway or hospital), we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. We work 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.

If the petition is about something a different council is responsible for, we will consider the best method for responding to it. This might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the relevant council, but it could involve other steps. In any event, we will always notify you of the action we have taken.

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How a petition is debated

Petitions supported by a significant proportion of people from a local area, or the county area as a whole, will be presented to a meeting of the relevant area committee or to the **county Council** for debate. This depends on the number of signatories, and whether it relates to a matter of concern to a particular locality, or a matter of county-wide interest, as follows:

- if a petition contains 500 signatures or more, it will be scheduled for debate at the next meeting of the appropriate **Area Committee**
- if there is the equivalent of five percent (30,775,245) of the county-wide population as signatories, the petition will be scheduled for a **Council** debate (based upon the ONS [mid-2016/2021 census population estimate](#)).

Area committees usually take place four times a year, and **Council** takes place quarterly. [Dates and times may be found here.](#)

If a petition meets the threshold for debate at an **Area Committee** or **Council**, ~~then Democratic Services will contact the petitioner and invite them to introduce the petition at the meeting. the petition organiser should contact Democratic Services if they would like to introduce the petition at the meeting, or if they would like the local councillor or someone else to present it on their behalf. Contact should be made at least ten working days before the meeting and the process will be explained.~~

Following receipt, we will endeavour to consider the petition at the next appropriate meeting, although on some occasions, this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting.

At the meeting, the petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition and the petition will then be discussed by councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. A decision on how to respond to the petition will be agreed at the meeting. They may decide:

- to take the action the petition requests ~~if appropriate to so and they are able to do so under delegated powers~~
- not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate
- to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee
- where the issue is one on which the **Council Executive are/is** required to make the final decision, the ~~Area Committee/Council~~ will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision

The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of the decision and the decision will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, published on our website.

Further information

Council representatives at public meetings

A 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, a 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 the petition contains signatures from 0.5 per cent (2,996) or more of the county's population, the officer will be asked to appear at the next meeting of the appropriate overview and scrutiny committee.

The senior officers concerned will be limited to chief officers and statutory officers. The senior officers who may be called to give evidence are:

- ~~Chief Executive Officer~~
- ~~Corporate Director of business and environmental services Environment~~
- ~~Corporate Director of Health and Adult Services~~
- ~~Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service~~
- ~~Corporate Director of strategic Resources~~
- ~~Corporate Director of Community Development~~
- ~~Assistant Chief Executive (HR and Business Support)~~
- ~~Assistant Chief Executive (customer services) Local Engagement~~
- ~~Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)~~

Petition organisers should be aware that the overview and scrutiny committee may decide 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(s) to attend the meeting. Committee members will ask the questions at this meeting, but petition organisers are able to suggest questions to the chairman of the committee by contacting the assistant chief executive (legal and democratic services) up to three working days before the meeting via democratic.services@northyorks.gov.uk

Requesting a review of a petition

There is no right of review to the response of the Council in respect of petitions. Where a lead petitioner is dissatisfied with the response provided by the Council, they may submit a complaint and it will be considered under the Council's complaints procedures, and not under this petitions scheme.

If a petition organiser feels we have not dealt with a petition properly, they have the right to request that the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services undertakes a review. relevant council overview and scrutiny committee review the steps the council has taken in response:

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 committee will endeavour to consider such requests at their next meeting.

although on some occasions this may not be possible, and consideration will take place at the following meeting. Should the [Assistant Chief Executive legal and Democratic Services consider committee](#) determine that a petition has not been adequately dealt with [the request for a review](#) may be referred to an [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#), it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include:

- [instigating an investigation](#)
- [making recommendations to the council's executive or arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the council](#)

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

Parking petitions

[This scheme does not cover parking petitions.](#)

[Our parking petitions scheme](#) allows anyone to raise a petition about the parking restrictions in place for a specified location.

Data protection

To find out how we process your data in relation to petitions, [please see our privacy notice](#).

From <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/your-council/consultations/petitions/petitions-information-and-advice>