

Petitions Scheme

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has appointed a petitions officer, who will receive petitions and from whom further information and advice can be obtained. You can contact the petitions officer by e-mail: governance@lbhf.gov.uk, or by post at: Petitions Officer, Governance & Scrutiny, Hammersmith Town Hall, King Street, London, W6 9JU.
- 1.2 The Council welcomes petitions, either in paper form or submitted via e-mail or through our e-petitions online facility. We have agreed special procedures to ensure that all valid petitions are reported to an appropriate body within the Council.
- 1.3 A petition can be open for signature up to a maximum of 90 days; most will be responded to much sooner.

2. WHO CAN SUBMIT A PETITION?

- 2.1 Anybody who lives, works or studies in the borough may organise, submit or sign a petition.

3. WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING A PETITION?

- 3.1 A valid petition submitted to the Council must:
 - Relate to something which is the Council's responsibility, or which the Council has some influence over – the Council has close working relationships and, often, partnership agreements, with a wide range of public organisations operating in the borough and across London. These organisations include the Hammersmith and Fulham Primary Care Trust, the local emergency services, the West London Waste Authority, and Transport for London as it operates in the borough.
 - Be a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take.
 - Have the names, addresses and signatures of the people who support the petition (name, address and valid e-mail address if the petition is submitted via e-mail or via the E-petition facility). The address might be a residential, workplace or study location within the borough, with a valid postcode.
 - Meet defined thresholds for numbers of signatures of people who live, work or study in the borough.
 - Contain contact details, including an address, of 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 our 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.
 - Not, in the Council's opinion, be vexatious, abusive or otherwise

inappropriate.

- Not relate to planning or licensing decisions or to any other matter where people have a statutory right to make comments, or to request a review or to appeal.

4. HOW TO SUBMIT A PETITION

- 4.1 Petitions may be submitted by e-mail, post, in person at the Town Hall, or through our e-petitions website. All petitions currently available for signature will be shown on our website. We reserve the right to check the validity of the addresses of anyone who signs a petition to ensure that they have a real interest in the borough.
- 4.2 Organisers of petitions can [visit our website to submit a petition online or download the petition form](#). The Petitions Officer can be contacted in the following ways:

Email: governance@lbhf.gov.uk

Post:

Petitions Officer,
Governance & Scrutiny,
Hammersmith Town Hall,
King Street,
W6 9JU

5. WHAT WILL THE COUNCIL DO WHEN IT RECEIVES A PETITION?

- 5.1 The Petitions Officer will send a valid petition to a Responding Officer in the relevant Council department. The Responding Officer will be responsible for investigating the issue and advising on the action to be taken by the Council. An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent to the person organising the petition within 5 working days of the petition having been made. Where the petition has been submitted via the E-petitions facility, the acknowledgment will also be sent to everyone who provides a valid e-mail address. The acknowledgement will say what we have done or intend to do in response to the petition. It will also be published on our website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate. The petition will be copied to the relevant Ward Councillor(s).
- 5.2 We want to ensure that petitions are clearly and effectively worded. We will therefore offer help to petition organisers to enable them to make their petitions as focused as possible, in the interests of getting a response from the Council which addresses petitioners' concerns. If we feel there are other ways of getting a quicker and more satisfactory response to the subject of the petition, we will suggest them. We may therefore contact the petition organiser about these issues before the acknowledgment is sent or afterwards.
- 5.3 If the Council can do what the petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that the requested action has been taken (or will be taken by a

specified date) and the petition organiser will be asked to agree to the closure of the petition, either immediately or after the specified date.

- 5.4 If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a Council debate then the acknowledgement will confirm this and state when and where the meeting will take place. If the subject of the petition needs more investigation, the petition organiser will be informed of the steps the Council plans to take.

6. TYPES OF PETITION

Petitions for debate at Council

- 6.1 If a petition attracts a minimum of **5,000 valid signatures** this will usually trigger a debate at a Full Council meeting.
- 6.2 The petition organiser (or someone they nominate) may address the Council for no longer than five minutes on the subject of the petition. The Petitions Officer will contact the petition organiser in advance of the meeting to arrange this. Councillors may question all parties on the subject of the petition.

Petitions to Cabinet

- 6.5 A petition with a minimum of **250 valid signatures** will be considered at the nearest possible meeting of the Cabinet.
- 6.6 The petition organiser (or someone they nominate) may address the Cabinet for no longer than five minutes on the subject of the petition. The Petition Officer will contact the petition organiser in advance of the meeting to arrange this. Cabinet Members will question all parties on the subject of the petition.

Petitions to a Cabinet Member

- 6.7 Petitions with a minimum of **100 signatures** will be considered by the relevant Cabinet Member(s). Each member of the Council's Cabinet holds Executive responsibility for a specific portfolio of Council functions. A Cabinet Member may refer a petition to the full Cabinet for consideration if they are of the view that the matters raised are sufficiently significant.
- 6.8 The Cabinet Member may request a meeting with the petition organiser (or someone they nominate) to discuss the subject of the petition. The Petitions Officer will contact the petition organiser in advance to arrange this.

6.9 Summary of Petition Types, Requirements and Decision Maker.

Type of Petition	Threshold (minimum number of signatories)	Decision Maker
Council Debate	5,000	Full Council
Petitions to Cabinet	250	Cabinet

Petitions to Cabinet Members	100	Relevant Cabinet Member(s)

7. NOTIFYING THE DECISION TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO A PETITION

- 7.1 All petition organisers will be notified of the Council's response to their petition within 5 working days of the decision being made.
- 7.2 If the petition is about something which the Council has no power to influence, we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. In such cases, the Petitions Officer will ask the petition organiser whether they wish the Council to send the petition to the relevant authority if this is possible or may refer the matter to a Policy and Accountability Committee.

8. ATTENDING A MEETING WHERE A PETITION IS BEING CONSIDERED

- 8.1 A petition may be considered at a formal meeting of the full Council, Cabinet or Policy and Accountability Committee.
- 8.2 Receiving of petitioners at a formal meeting
- (a) People who have signed a petition may attend a meeting where the petition is being considered. The petition organiser will be given adequate notice of the date and time of the meeting.
 - (b) The petition organiser (or one person nominated by them) may address the meeting for a period not exceeding 5 minutes.
 - (c) Members may during a period not exceeding 10 minutes ask questions of a petition organiser (or nominee) if required.
 - (d) Members may then invite officers of the Council and/or representatives of other relevant authorities to comment on the subject of the petition.
 - (e) The Committee will then debate the subject of the petition for a maximum of 30 minutes, taking into account the issues raised by the petitioners, officers and representatives of other relevant authorities. Petitioners may remain for the duration of the debate if they so wish.
- 8.3 Limitation on the number of petitioners attending a formal meeting
The Chair of the meeting reserves the right to limit the number of petitioners present at a meeting to maintain order and/or to allow sufficient time for other business specified on the agenda.

9. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE OPERATION OF THE SCHEME

- 9.1 The Council will receive an annual report detailing the subject matter of all petitions received during the year, the number of signatures to each petition and a summary of the Council's response to each. Changes to the Scheme will be recommended as necessary in the light of experience with its operation.