

## **E-Petition Guidance**

### **Who can submit an e-petition?**

An e-petition can be submitted by a person who lives in Aberdeen City and is on the Electoral Register. To submit an e-petition you will need to be a registered user.

Registration is a simple process that requires you to provide us with some details about you in case we need to contact you about the e-petition and so that we can check that you meet the criteria.

### **How do I start an e-petition?**

On the petitions homepage, select the 'Submit a new e-petition' option. You will be prompted to enter a title which the system will automatically check against existing e-petitions to allow you to see if a similar one has been considered recently. You will then need to fill in the on-line form. This will be submitted to the Committee Services Team who may contact you to discuss your e-petition before it goes live.

### **What issues can my e-petition relate to?**

Your e-petition should be relevant to some issue for which the Council has powers or duties or for which it has shared delivery responsibilities. It should also be submitted in good faith and be decent, honest and respectful. You cannot submit an e-petition on the following:

1. Matters that are sub judice, that is, matters that are the subject of any current court proceedings
2. Planning, licensing and other matters with their own procedures
3. Matters which should be dealt with through the Aberdeen City Council complaints procedure or through the Ombudsman
4. Matters concerning individual elected members or Council employees
5. Employees' terms and conditions
6. Housing allocations in respect of individuals
7. A decision taken by Aberdeen City Council in the previous 12 months
8. A matter which is very similar to, or the same as, a petition which the Committee has considered in the previous twelve months
9. A matter which is the subject of an outstanding committee remit
10. Matters designed to gain or reduce support for one or more political parties
11. Matters that could damage a person's reputation or discriminate against them
12. Personal or business interests
13. An allegation pertaining to people or organisations breaking the law or codes of practice
14. An allegation or matter which could be defamatory (contain information which is not true), discriminate against someone or contain offensive language, for example swear words, insulting, sarcastic or provocative language or other terms that could reasonably be considered as offensive by the reader.

During politically sensitive periods, such as prior to an election, politically controversial material may need to be restricted.

The Council accepts no liability for the e-petitions on the webpage and the views expressed in the petitions do not necessarily reflect those of the Council.

### **What information should my e-petition contain?**

Your e-petition will need to include:

- A title
- A statement explicitly setting out what action you would like the Council to take
- Any other information that you feel is relevant to the e-petition and reasons
- Why you consider the action requested to be necessary, you may include links to relevant websites.
- A date for when you wish the e-petition to be available for signature and for when it will close (this is set at twelve weeks and will automatically be completed for you. You can request a shorter period)

As lead petitioner, your name will be displayed with your e-petition on the website.

If you are having trouble submitting an e-petition or would like further advice and information then please contact the Clerk to the Petitions Committee and they would be happy to assist you.

### **Promoting your e-petition**

Whilst the Council will host e-petitions on its website, it will not generally promote individual e-petitions. It is therefore down to the lead petitioner to spread the word about their e-petition in order to get as many people as possible to sign. If this is not done then your e-petition may not receive any signatures. Raising awareness can be done in a number of ways such as promoting it on local community websites, discussion forums or newsletters. All it takes is to give people a brief explanation of the issue and then direct them to the site at <http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgepetitionlistdisplay.aspx>

### **Who can sign an e-petition?**

An e-petition can be signed by a person (other than a Councillor) who lives in Aberdeen City and is on the Electoral Register.

If you sign an e-petition on the website, you will be required to register as a user and provide us with basic personal information (name, address including postcode, email address and telephone number) to enable us to verify your data.

Your name will be published on the e-petition website. We will only use the information you provide for this purpose.

You can only sign an e-petition once. The list of signatories will be checked by officers and any duplicate signatures will be removed. Please note that if you are using a computer which is set up with a single log-in, the system will only allow one signature from that computer. If your computer has separate log-ins for different members of the same household, each person should be able to sign the e-petition individually.

### **Privacy Policy**

The details that you give on registration, are needed to validate your support but will not be published on the website. Only your name will appear under the list of signatories. This is the same information required for paper petitions. The Council may contact you in relation to any petitions that you have signed.

### **What happens when the e-petition is complete?**

When the e-petition reaches its closing date, it will no longer be available for people to sign online. The list of signatories will be collated and you will be contacted by Committee Services regarding the submission of the completed e-petition.

If the e-petition has reached the minimum of 100 valid signatures then it will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Petitions Committee.

### **How do I check the progress of an e-petition?**

You can check the progress of your e-petition at any time by going to the website to view the list of e-petitions. This will give you access to the number of signatures received. To see the names of people who have signed you can click on the title of the e-petition and the names are shown.

### **What happens if the petition does not reach the minimum number of signatures?**

If after a period of twelve weeks your e-petition has not reached the minimum of 100 valid signatures, the e-petition will be removed from the website. If this is likely, officers will contact you prior to the deadline.

### **What happens at the Petitions Committee?**

As lead petitioner, you and two supporters will be invited to attend the meeting which will be held in the Town House at which your petition is being considered.

You will be invited to speak for up to ten minutes in support of your petition, with a further ten minutes allowed for questions from the Committee.

The Petitions Committee will take one of the following decisions:

- (1) take no action and advise the lead petitioner of the Committee's reasoning; or
- (2) agree that the matter be subject of a report to the relevant Committee(s) – petitions can be referred with or without a recommendation; or
- (3) refer the matter to a relevant organisation with or without a recommendation.

### **What can a petition achieve?**

When you submit a petition (paper or electronic) to the Council it can have positive outcomes that lead to change and inform debate. It can bring an issue to the attention of the Council and show strong public approval or disapproval for something the Council is doing.

### **Can I submit a paper petition?**

Yes you can submit paper petitions. A petition may gather names and addresses in both forms, so you could have a paper version and an online version, although repeat names will be removed. Both forms should run for the same period of time and must be submitted together. If you are having both versions, please let us know when submitting the e-petition so that this can be highlighted on the website.

Petitions submitted from local businesses, voluntary organisations, social enterprise companies or Community Planning Partners can only be accepted in paper form. There are forms available to download for submitting paper petitions for both individuals and for local businesses on the petitions website.

### **Contact Details**

For more information and advice or to discuss a potential e-petition, please contact:

Clerk to the Petitions Committee

[petitions@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:petitions@aberdeencity.gov.uk)