



STIRLING COUNCIL

Guidance on Submission of Public Petitions

1. Introduction

Stirling Council aims to make the Council as accessible as possible and to deliver quality and best value by providing good quality services, which meet the needs of communities. The public petitions process plays a key part in these aims by encouraging communities to fully participate in the decision making process, both in groups and as individuals. Councillors may not themselves submit petitions.

Petitioners (the people submitting a petition) are advised to read the following guidance and instructions carefully before preparing and submitting a petition to the Council.

2. Issues that can be considered

Petitions may be lodged in relation to services provided by Stirling Council and any of its Statutory Community Planning Partners, namely:

- **Central Scotland Police**
- **Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service**
- **NHS Forth Valley**
- **Scottish Enterprise East**
- **Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership**

In addition, the Council may agree to accept a petition, which refers to an external corporate body (for example, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park) and consider whether to submit a complaint on behalf of the petitioner.

3. Issues that may not be considered

The Council is unable to consider petitions that are sub-judice, that is, matters that are the subject of any current court proceedings.

Petitions will only be considered if the criteria outlined in this guidance note have been met.

4. Content of Petitions

Once a petition has been submitted and acknowledged, it will be made available for public access on the Council's website. Petitioners should therefore take care not to include any information or signatures that they would not wish to be made available to the public. In exceptional circumstances, the Petitions Panel may agree that the name and address of the petitioner is not made publicly available.

Petitioners must ensure that information is submitted in good faith and does not include:-

- false or defamatory statements
- information which is protected by an interdict or court order
- material which is commercially sensitive, confidential or which may cause personal distress or loss
- the names of individual officers of public bodies
- the names of other individuals or information whereby they may be easily identified

5. Action Before Submitting a Petition

Petitioners may wish to consider other steps before a petition is submitted. This may be by way of the Council's complaints procedure TALKBACK or by raising the issue and attempting to obtain the support of the relevant Local Elected Member, Member of Parliament, Member of the Scottish Parliament, Community Council or Area Community Planning Forum. If petitioners have explored these routes copies of any correspondence should be included as supporting information and submitted with the main petition.

6. Format of Petitions

A template for petitions is included as an Appendix to these Guidance Notes and the form can be downloaded from the Council's website http://www.stirling.gov.uk/index/council/petitions_panel.htm or completed online (prior to signature). Copies are also available from libraries and other public buildings.

The petition should be titled and include a short, clear and concise statement (no more than 250 words) which covers the main subject of the petition and details of action which the petitioner wishes the Council to take.

The petition **must** include the following:-

- (a) the **name** of the **Principal Petitioner** who **must** be on the Register of **Electors** for the **Stirling Council Area** or in the case of a Local Business Petitioner be on the Valuation Roll for the Stirling Council Area;
- (b) the **contact address** of the **Principal Petitioner** to which all communications should be sent;
- (c) the **name, address and signature** of any person(s) supporting the petition.

It would be helpful if petitions were typewritten or completed in black ink to facilitate checking, scanning and reproduction. If petitioners have any special requirements, they should contact the Clerk to the Petitions Panel.

Petitions must not contain language, which is offensive, for example swear words, inflammatory, sarcastic or provocative language or other terms that could reasonably be considered as offensive by the reader.

7. Validation of Petition

A petition **must** be supported by:-

- a. **Petition from Citizens** - at least 25 signatures from people living in the Stirling Council area and on the Register of Electors **OR** have the support of the relevant Community Council or one of the Local Elected Members by means of a Community Council Office Bearer or Local Elected Member countersigning the petition at the appropriate point and attaching a copy of the minutes of the Community Council meeting when the support was approved.
- b. **Petition from Local Business(es)** - support from at least 5 other businesses on the Valuation Roll **OR** have the support of the relevant Community Council or one of the Local Members by means of a Community Council Office Bearer or Local Elected Member countersigning the petition at the appropriate point and attaching a copy of the minutes of the Community Council meeting when the support was approved.

8. How to Submit a Petition

When the Principal Petitioner is satisfied that it meets the criteria outlined in this guidance, he/she should submit the petition to the Clerk to the Petitions Panel. Petitions can be submitted by post or handed in, clearly marked for the attention of the Clerk to the Petitions Panel, Stirling Council, Room 53, Old Viewforth, Stirling, FK8 2ET.

A written acknowledgement will be sent to the Principal Petitioner upon receipt of the petition.

9. Consideration of Petitions

Once the petition has been verified as having been correctly completed and submitted, it will be considered at the next available meeting of the Petitions Panel. The Chair of the Petitions Panel **may** invite petitioners to appear before the Panel to speak in support of their petition if it is considered this would be useful in assisting the Panel reach a decision. Petitioners should indicate on the form whether or not they wish to have the opportunity to make a statement before the Panel. Due to pressure of business, no guarantee can be given that petitioners will automatically be invited to address the Panel.

The Petitions Panel will take a decision on action to be taken. Actions may include:-

- (a) agreeing that the issues raised merit further action and formally agreeing to:-
 - (i) refer the petition to the relevant decision making body

- (ii) refer the petition to the relevant Community Planning Partner or other body
- (b) agreeing that the issues raised do not merit further action
- (c) agreeing to take any other action as appropriate.

The petitioner will be advised in writing of the Panel's decision.

10. Contact Information

All correspondence and enquiries should be directed to:-

Clerk to the Petitions Panel
Stirling Council
Room 53, Old Viewforth
Stirling, FK8 2ET

Tel: 01786 443216

e-mail: petitionspanel@stirling.gov.uk