

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (“the **Council**”) welcomes petitions as a way in which our residents can make their concerns known and request that action be taken.
- 1.2 Petitions are documents (whether digital or physical) that contain details of issues that are important to communities and the County Borough as a whole, signed by local electors who are in support of the proposed action.
- 1.3 The Council is required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to make and publish a scheme setting out how the Council intends to handle and respond to petitions (including electronic petitions).
- 1.4 The petition scheme must set out:
- (a) how a petition may be submitted to the Council
 - (b) how and by and when the Council will acknowledge receipt of a petition
 - (c) the steps the Council may take in response to a petition received by it
 - (d) the circumstances (if any) in which the Council may take no further action in response to a petition
 - (e) how and by when the Council will make available its response to a petition to the person who submitted the petition and to the public
- 1.5 This petition scheme was approved by the Council on _____ and is now referenced as “the **Scheme**” for the purposes of this document.
- 1.6 The Council commits to reviewing the Scheme every two years.
- 1.7 A copy of the Privacy Statement relating to this Scheme is available at www.npt.gov.uk
- 1.8 Any queries on this petition scheme should be addressed to:
- Democratic Services**
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ
Email: democratic.services@npt.gov.uk
Tel: 01639 763194

2. Guidelines for submitting a petition

2.1 A petition for the purposes of this Scheme must include:

- (a) a clear and concise statement of the concern and what the petitioners would like the Council to do in response. Petitions, therefore, must relate to something for which the Council is responsible or over which the Council has some direct influence. If the Council receives a petition that does not relate to something under the Council's control or direct influence, it will be returned to the petition organiser with an explanation of the decision as to why we cannot progress the matter further.
- (b) the name and contact details of a petition organiser. For the purpose of taking a petition forward, a petition organiser must be nominated (this is usually the person who starts the petition).
- (c) the names and addresses of local electors (including the person(s) organising the petition). Where petitions are presented in paper form, they must include petitioners' actual signatures. Where an e-petition is submitted, a list of names and addresses will suffice. Only the person(s) organising the petition will be contacted in relation to the petition, but petitioners' addresses are needed for the purpose of verifying the number of petitioners.

Please note: where the term 'signatures' is used in this Scheme, read 'names, addresses and signatures of petitioners'.

2.2 Before submitting a petition, the Council would encourage residents to seek a resolution to any issue by:

- (a) contacting the Council to see whether an ordinary service request would resolve the issue
- (b) contacting a relevant ward Councillor(s) to see whether they can help.

2.3 If a petition is submitted in relation to a consultation or a matter which is under the Council's control but which is subject to a separate policy or procedure, this should be made clear in order that it can be progressed in accordance with the relevant procedures and included as part of the consultation responses being gathered.

2.4 Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including an address, for the petition organiser who must also live or work in the Neath Port Talbot local authority area. This is the person that will be contacted to explain how the Council will respond to the petition. ***The contact details of the petition organiser will not be placed on the website.***

2.5 If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, contact will be made with signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.

2.6 If your petition does not reach the minimum requirement signatures, particularly where the issue relates to a small locality, the Council will advise the petitioners of other ways in which these views could be considered.

2.7 A form is available as Appendix 1, which sets out the main summary information required when submitting a petition.

2.8 If you want to submit a petition to a specific meeting of the Council or Cabinet or

Cabinet Board or Committee then you need to ensure that we receive a completed petition with details of the petition subject matter, number of signatures and your contact details by no later than **5:00** on the **10** working days before that meeting to enable it to be submitted.

- 2.9 Please note petitions submitted by the petitioner to meetings of the Full Council or relevant Cabinet/Cabinet Board will not be discussed in detail at that point, unless there is an agenda item specifically relating to that issue.
- 2.10 If a petition does not follow the guidelines as set out, the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, you will receive a written explanation of the reasons.
- 2.11 Although petitions can run for the duration requested by the petition maker, the maximum period the Council will allow petitions to remain open on their website for the purposes of an e-petition will be 6 (six) calendar months.

3. What petitions will not be accepted by the Council?

3.1 The following petitions cannot be dealt with through this Scheme

- (a) Any matter relating to a planning decision, including about a development plan document or community infrastructure levy
- (b) Any matter relating to an alcohol, gambling, taxi licensing or sex establishment licensing decision
- (c) Any matter where there is an appeals procedure in place
- (d) Any matter relating to a matter that could be considered by the Council's Standards Committee relating to the standard of Town, Community and County Borough elected members

3.2 However a petition that alleged a systematic failure to deliver services in the above area is within the scope of this Scheme (e.g. while a petition on any individual planning application could be not taken, a petition about the Council's failure to deliver an effective service for planning applications would be within the scope of this Scheme)

3.3 A petition will not be accepted by the Council if:

- (a) it duplicates another, concurrent petition. In this case, signatures will be added to the first such petition to be received by the Council
- (b) it repeats a petition received within the previous six months, whether or not the petition organiser is the same in each instance
- (c) in the opinion of the Council's Chief Executive Officer or Monitoring Officer, it is personal, rude, defamatory or vexatious in nature
- (d) it becomes apparent that any local elector's name, address or signature has been added to the petition without their explicit consent
- (e) it is not in relation to a matter for which the Council has a responsibility and which affects the administrative area or citizens of the Council;
- (f) It would require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information in response;
- (g) It relates to the personal circumstances or conduct of any officer and Member or conditions of service of employees;
- (h) It relates to an individual, particular group or business or the questioner's own particular circumstances;
- (i) It would be ultra vires or illegal for the Council to consider;
- (j) It relates to a matter which is the subject of legal or enforcement proceedings or an appeal to a court or tribunal or to a Government Minister or the National Assembly or an investigation by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales;
- (k) It relates to the activities and aims of a political party or organisation;
- (l) It would require the expenditure of a disproportionate amount of time, money or effort to prepare the answer.
- (m) It falls within the criteria set out in paragraph 3.1 above.

3.4 If the Council reject your petition or you feel that the Council has not dealt with your petition properly, please contact the Council's Monitoring Officer who will review your complaint and will advise you of the action intended. Please provide a short explanation of your reasons in your communication with us:

Monitoring Officer
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Civic Centre

Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ
Email: democratic.services@npt.gov.uk

3.5 The decision of the Monitoring Officer or the appointed officer will be final and not subject to the internal complaints process though a complaint may be made to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales should you remain dissatisfied.

4. What will the Council do when it receives my petition?

4.1 An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within **3** working days of receiving the petition. It will let you know what the Council plans to do with the petition and when you can expect to hear from the Council again. A copy of your petition will also be forwarded to the Council's Leader, the Cabinet Member responsible for the area of concern, the Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, the Head of Service responsible for this area and the Chief Executive.

4.2 Where a petition is in respect of a particular local issue affecting a specific ward(s) then the Democratic Services will notify the appropriate elected members.

4.3 The petition will be published on the Council's Petitions Register on the Council's website (www.npt.gov.uk).

4.4 If the Council considers it can meet what the petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm what action has been taken on the request and the petition will be closed.

4.5 If some other action is proposed or intended, the acknowledgement will explain this. If the petition has enough signatories to trigger a debate at a meeting of the Full Council or Cabinet/Cabinet Board/Committee, then the acknowledgment will confirm this and advise when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, you will be advised of the Council's next steps.

4.6 The Council reserves the right to verify signatories as required. Petitioners should ensure that a valid address and postcode is included for all petitioners that relates to a home address (if living in Neath Port Talbot) or work address (if working or run a business in Neath Port Talbot). These details will be taken into account when identifying if there are enough signatories from people who live or work in Neath Port Talbot to trigger a debate.

4.7 Any petition that is a duplicate or near duplicate of another petition that the Council has already received will not normally be considered within a **6** month period although officers will exercise their discretion in individual cases. It is advised that details of previous petitions are checked on the website or contact Democratic Services for advice at the start of your petition.

4.8 To ensure that people know what the Council are doing in response to the petitions received, the details of all the petitions submitted, including those pending action will be published on the Council's website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate

- 4.9 Please note that in the period preceding an election or a referendum, the Council may need to treat any petitions received differently. Under such circumstances, the reasons for this will be explained to the organiser(s) of the petition.
- 4.10 The Council's response may also depend on the number of people who have signed the petition. The table below sets out the thresholds:

Number of Signatories	Response
20-100	Response from the relevant director/head of service (treated as standard correspondence)
101-500	Response from the Cabinet Member
500+	Referred for debate at a meeting of Full Council or the relevant Cabinet/Cabinet Board/Committee

- 4.11 Where the matter is placed before a meeting of Full Council or the relevant Cabinet/Cabinet Board/Committee (dependant on which meetings is the appropriate body), the organiser(s) of the petition will be invited to address, or nominate another person to address, the relevant committee when a petition is considered for the first time giving 5 minutes to present the petition.
- 4.12 Following this first hearing, it will be debated by Councillors up to a maximum of 15 minutes whereupon, it is likely that the Full Council or relevant Cabinet/Cabinet Board/Committee will request an investigation into the issue which will return for further consideration when the investigation has concluded. If a meeting agrees with the statement and request for change cited in a petition, it may seek to resolve the issue by making recommendations to relevant service areas or decision-making bodies within the Council or, where a petition relates to something over which the Council only has direct influence, by making recommendations to other organisations.
- 4.13 The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the discussion and of the Council's decision and any explanation in the event of Council not being able to take the action which had been requested. This information will also be published on the Council's website. The petition organiser will also be made of any future reports where the matter is to be considered unless they confirm otherwise that they do not wish to be informed.

5 E Petitions

- 5.1 The Council welcomes e-petitions being created and submitted through its website via the website page www.npt.gov.uk/petitions and www.npt.gov.uk/deisebau
- 5.2 E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as for paper petitions and in addition:
- (a) Petition organisers and subscribers must provide a valid email address as well as their name and address; and
 - (b) The period for which the petition shall be open to subscription must be determined at the outset.
- 5.3 The petition organiser will need to provide their name, postal address and email address, and will need to decide how long the petition is to be open for signatories. It maybe that the ending of the petition would coincide with a relevant meeting or decision. It may be helpful to discuss this with Democratic Services. If so, please contact us via email at democratic.services@npt.gov.uk
- 5.4 When an e-petition has been submitted on the Council's website, the petitions will be acknowledge within **3** working days and this will include a link to the petition. Upon the e-petition reaching its end date, it will be closed to further subscription and will then be dealt with as explained in Section 4.
- 5.5 When you create an e-petition, it may take **3** working days before it is published online. This is because we have to check that the content of your petition is suitable before it is made available for signature.
- 5.6 If it is considered that your petition cannot be published for any reason, the Council will contact you within this time to explain. You will be able to change and resubmit your petition if you wish. If you do not do this within **3** working days, a summary of the petition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'rejected petitions' section of the website.
- 5.7 When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to Democratic Services. In the same way as a paper petition, you will receive an acknowledgement within **3** working days.
- 5.8 E-petitions that have been created through websites other than the Councils' can be submitted to the Council but will still need to meet the criteria as set out.

Petition Template

Guidance Notes:

Please use this suggested template, additional pages should also include the petition subject at the top of the page.

The petition organiser must live, work or own a business in Neath Port Talbot.

If you wish to sign this petition, please put down your Neath Port Talbot address if you live, work or own a business in Neath Port Talbot area as this will count towards any threshold for debate at full Council meetings (where all Councillors attend).

Signatories from outside Neath Port Talbot will be taken into consideration in respect of the issue being raised, but will not count towards the numbers required for formal debates under the scheme.

Please also refer to the petitions scheme available at www.npt.gov.uk for further information about how we deal with petitions at the Council.

Contact Details of the Lead Petitioner

(the person the Council will contact with responses to the petition)

Full Name:	
Address for Correspondence:	1st Line: _____ 2nd Line: _____ 3rd Line: _____ Post code: _____
Home Telephone No:	
Mobile Number No; :	
Email address:	
Live/Work/Service user (please indicate all that apply)	
Signature	

