



Petitions Criteria

INTRODUCTION

Fife Council welcomes the use of its petitions procedure for the residents of Fife however, the Council can only accept petitions that relate to something that it is responsible for or is part of a service it provides.

This guidance sets out how petitions are submitted and the process for submitting a valid petition.

WHO CAN SUBMIT A PETITION?

You can submit a petition if you are aged 16 or over and are a resident in Fife listed on the Electoral Register, or if you own a business that operates and employs people within Fife.

SUBMITTING A VALID PETITION

For a petition to be valid it must contain the following information:

- The petition topic must be about something the Council is responsible for or relates to something the Council does or a service it provides;
- Name, address, email and/or contact telephone number of the person submitting the petition (lead petitioner);
- An appropriate title;
- A statement detailing the reason for the petition, describing the issue, why the Council should consider the petition, and detailing what actions you would like the Council to consider (Please note the petition statement is limited to 250 words);
- Any action already taken to try and resolve the issue, including any responses and/or organisations consulted;
- Any further background information that you feel is relevant to the petition.
- Signed by the lead petitioner and contain at least 21 signatures of Fife residents.

The Council **WILL NOT** accept a petition that relates to:

- Matters that are not within the remit of Fife Council;
- Matters that are already being considered or scheduled to be considered by the Council or a committee;
- A decision that has been made at the Council or a committee within the past six months;
- Any subject that refers to the same or a broadly similar petition considered within the past twenty four months;
- Matters which are subject to any planning, licensing or regulatory process;
- Freedom of Information requests.
- Information already handled through Fife Council's formal complaints process, including those raised with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman;
- Matters regarding allegations pertaining to people or organisations breaking the law or codes of practice;

- Matters that are commercially sensitive, confidential or could cause personal distress or loss or in response to a matter already open to public consultation.

The Council **WILL NOT** accept a petition that contains:

- Any false or defamatory statements;
- Offensive or inappropriate use of language;
- Information that could damage a person's reputation or discriminate against them;
- Names of people or details that can be used to identify an individual;
- Information that relates to any current court proceedings;
- Information concerning individual employees or elected members and relates to any terms and conditions of employment;
- Support designed to gain or reduce support for one or more political party;
- Personal or business interests; or
- Material which is confidential.

Please note that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services may decide to refuse to accept a petition where the desired outcome is not achievable.

SUBMITTING A PETITION

Petitions should be completed using the Fife Council template which can be found here [Consultations and petitions | Fife Council](#), or a hard copy can be obtained by contacting Legal and Democratic Services by emailing enquiry.petitions@fife.gov.uk. Where a petition has been compiled and is being submitted electronically, it will not be necessary to include signatures but names and addresses of those supporting the petition must be included.

Upon receipt of the petition, an acknowledgement in writing will be sent to the lead petitioner, within five working days.

An individual can only sign a petition once. Any duplicate signatures will be removed and will not count towards the overall total. Officers will check the petition for competency and may contact the lead petitioner to discuss the petition. If the petition is valid, it will be discussed at the next available scheduled meeting of the most appropriate committee.

If the petition is not valid, we will write to the lead petitioner explaining why it has been rejected. Where requested, any paper copies of the petition can be returned to the lead petitioner.

Please note that the final decision on whether the petition is valid (competent) and to which committee, if any, it will be submitted, will be taken by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the relevant committee convener.

Valid petitions will be passed to a relevant council officer for consideration. They may contact the lead petitioner directly to discuss the issues before preparing a report for consideration at committee.

Following consideration by the relevant council officer, the lead petitioner will be notified in writing, within twenty working days of submission, what action will be taken on the petition. This will include details of the committee where the petition will be considered

CONSIDERATION OF A PETITION AT COMMITTEE

If the petition is valid, a hearing will be held at the next appropriate meeting of the relevant committee. The lead petitioner will be invited to attend the committee meeting and may be accompanied by up to two others. The lead petitioner may also nominate a substitute to attend the meeting on their behalf.

The relevant service will prepare a preliminary service response to the issues raised in the petition and a copy of the report will be included with the agenda papers for the meeting. A copy of the agenda papers will be sent to the lead petitioner, in advance of the hearing.

At the appropriate item, the convener will ask the lead petitioner (or substitute) to come forward to introduce their petition with a time limit of five minutes (or longer at the convener's discretion). If the lead petitioner or a substitute is unable to attend or does not wish to introduce the petition, the committee's convener will briefly introduce the item.

The committee members will then be given an opportunity to ask questions of the lead petitioner for a maximum of five minutes, or longer at the convener's discretion.

The relevant council officer/service representative will then be invited to respond to the issues raised in the petition, also with a time limit of five minutes (or longer at the convener's discretion).

The committee members will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the council officer/service representative for a maximum of five minutes, or longer at the convener's discretion.

Following the hearing of the petition, the outcome of the committee consideration will be reported to the lead petitioner within ten working days of the meeting.

SCRUTINY AND REVIEW OF PETITIONS

The petitions process and handling of petitions may be scrutinised by elected members from time to time, at their request.

All aspects of the petitions process will be subject to periodic review by Legal and Democratic Services.

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information and advice or to discuss a potential petition, please contact: enquiry.petitions@fife.gov.uk.