

# London Borough of Harrow

## Petition Scheme

# 1. Petitions

- 1.1 Harrow Council recognises that petitions can be a good way to highlight issues that people feel strongly about. A petition may be used by people who live, work or study in the borough to formally register a collective request or concern about the Council or its services. We will consider and respond to all petitions we receive.
- 1.2 We will treat as a petition anything that is identified as a petition or seems to us intended to be a petition.
- 1.3 Paper petitions can be sent to the address below for the attention of the relevant corporate director as follows:

Post	Functions and areas of responsibility
Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing	Community Care, Mental Health, Health Partnerships, Adults and Elderly People, Housing and Libraries .
Corporate Director, Children and Families	Safeguarding & Family Support, Young People's Services, Special Needs and Education Support, Schools and Colleges
Corporate Director, Environment and Enterprise	Leisure & Cultural Services, Environment Services, Planning, Parking, Traffic, Parks and Open Spaces, Street Cleaning, Conservation, Licensing, Rubbish and Recycling.
Corporate Director, Resources	Finance, Access Harrow, Council Tax, Electoral Registration, Marriages and Civil Partnerships, Council and democracy.

**Address:**

Harrow Council  
Civic Centre  
Station Road  
Harrow HA1 2XY

- 1.4 Alternatively, petitions may be presented at a meeting of the Council, Executive or a committee. Please follow <http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=1092&Info=1&bcr=1> to the Council's Constitution which contains Procedure Rules for the Council, the Executive and the committees. These rules explain the procedure for

presenting petitions at meetings of the different bodies and what will happen to the petitions.

## 2. What must a petition include?

- 2.1 Petitions submitted to the Council **must** include
- a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition, including the action the petitioners wish to take; and
  - the names addresses and signatures of people who support the petition and who live, work or study in the Borough of Harrow. The address given must be a home, work or study address in the Borough.
- 2.2 Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including an address and telephone number, for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition.
- 2.3 If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out above we may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case we will write to you to explain this.
- 2.4 In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case we will explain the reasons and discuss any revised timescale which will apply.

## 3. What will the Council do when it receives a petition?

- 3.1 The relevant department will send an acknowledgement to the petition organiser within 15 working days of receiving the petition. The acknowledgement will explain what will happen next and when they can expect to hear from the department again.
- 3.2 If the department think it is appropriate to take the action requested immediately, the acknowledgement will explain this, and the petition will be closed.
- 3.3 If another procedure is more suitable for dealing with the petition the petition organiser will be informed of this.
- 3.4 No action will be taken on a petition which the relevant Corporate Director considers is vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate, and the reasons for this will be explained in their acknowledgement of the petition.
- 3.5 If the petition concerns a particular area of Council business, it will usually be referred to a committee or sub-committee or other body that deals with that area and may be considered at a meeting. Alternatively, the relevant Corporate Director or Portfolio Holder may respond to the petition. Committee meetings are usually held in public, so people who are interested in the petition will be able to observe any discussion that takes place. If the petition

has over 2000 signatures it will be presented at a meeting of full Council (see section 5 below).

#### **4. Petitions involving partners / other authorities**

- 4.1 If the petition is about an issue over which we have no direct control (for example the local hospital) we will consider referring the matter to the Executive to take up the matter on behalf of the community with the relevant body. We work with a large number of official partners and where possible will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are unable to do this then we will explain why.
- 4.2 If the petition is about something that is the responsibility of a different Council we will forward the petition to that Council, or take other appropriate action, and will notify the petition organiser about what we have done.

#### **5. Petitions with over 2000 signatures**

- 5.1 If a petition contains more than 2000 signatures of people who live, work or study in the Borough (the address in the Borough at which they live, work or study must be provided), it will be considered / debated at a meeting of full Council. The Council will try to consider the petition at its next meeting, although in some circumstances this may not be possible - for example, when the petition is submitted too close to the meeting date, in which case consideration will take place at the following meeting. The petition organiser will be invited to the meeting to read the terms of the petition to the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by Councillors. The presentation must last no longer than one minute and the discussion by councillors will last a maximum of 10 minutes.
- 5.2 Following consideration / discussion full Council may refer the petition to the Cabinet, a committee or a Corporate Director to determine the matter, taking into account the views expressed by full Council.
- 5.3 The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This decision will also be published on our website as part of the minutes of full council.

#### **6. E-petitions**

- 6.1 We welcome e-petitions which are created and submitted through a website which offers this facility. E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions set out above.
- 6.2 It is possible to have the same petition in paper form and e-petition form at the same time, although signatories should only sign one copy of the petition.

#### **7. Alternatives to a petition**

- 7.1 There are other ways in which you can let us know what you think about our actions and decisions that may be more appropriate than a petition. Follow [http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/353/complaints-procedure/1794/complaining\\_about\\_the\\_council](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/353/complaints-procedure/1794/complaining_about_the_council) to see how else you can have your say.