



## **Cumberland Council**

### **Scheme for submission of Petitions**

Cumberland Council welcomes petitions and recognises that they are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement from the Council within 10 working days of receipt.

This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition. We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition.

Paper petitions can be sent to:

**Monitoring Officer**  
**Civic Centre**  
**Carlisle**  
**CA3 8QG**

#### **Guidelines for submitting a petition.**

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take. This statement should appear at the top of each and every page of the petition.
- the full name, full address and signature of any person supporting the petition.

Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including an address, for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. The contact details of the petition organiser will not be placed on the website, however, their name will. If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, we will contact signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.

The Petition Scheme Privacy Notice, which explains what personal information is collected, what it is used for and who it is provided to may be viewed via the attached link:

[Democratic Services Petition Scheme Privacy Statement \(carlisle.gov.uk\)](https://www.carlisle.gov.uk/DEMOCRATIC%20SERVICES/Petition%20Scheme/Privacy%20Statement)

Please note that the Council will take steps to verify the signatures to a petition, by checking to see if the postcode which has been provided, is valid. If this information has

not been provided, or is incomplete, the Council will decide whether it will take account of that signature or not.

The Council will always take account of signatures of people who provide valid postcodes where they live, work or study within the Cumberland District. Where someone supplies information which shows that they do not live, work or study in the District, the Council may still decide to take account of their signature depending on the nature and subject of the petition.

Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. 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 the revised timescale which will apply. If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

### **What will the Council do when it receives my petition?**

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of receiving the petition. It will let them know what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again.

If we can do what your petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that we have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed. If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a council debate then the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take. If the petition applies to [planning-&-building-control](#) or [licences-and-permits](#), is a statutory petition (for example requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor), or on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal, such as council tax banding and non-domestic rates, other procedures apply.

### **How will the Council respond to petitions?**

Our response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it, but may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition
- arranging for the petition organiser to discuss the matter with the relevant Portfolio Holder\*
- considering the petition at a Council meeting
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the petition for consideration by one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees\*\*
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition

*(\*A Portfolio Holder is a member of the Council's Executive; \*\*Overview and Scrutiny Committees are committees of Councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the Council)*

In addition to these steps, the Council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition.

If your petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control (for example the local railway) we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The Council works with a large number of local partners and where possible will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with council policy), then we will set out the reasons for this to you.

If your petition is about something that a different council is responsible for we will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. This might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other council, but could involve other steps. In any event, we will always notify you of the action we have taken.

## **Full Council debates**

Petitions can also be presented to a meeting of the Cumberland Council. These meetings take place on a 8 weekly basis, dates and times can be found here [Committee structure | Cumberland Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/committees/committees.aspx)

If your petition has received 1,000 signatures or more it will be scheduled for debate by the full Council and if this is the case we will let you know whether this will happen at the same meeting or a later meeting of the Council. (Petition may be presented to the Council if provided to the Monitoring Officer no later than noon on the ninth **working day** before the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair.)

This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all Councillors can attend. The Council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible, and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. If more than one petition is received they will be considered in the order they were received.

The petition organiser will be given three minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will, if the matter appears as a separate report, then be discussed by Councillors. Otherwise, the matter may be reported to the next meeting of the Council for debate as a separate agenda item. The Council will then decide how to respond to the petition. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee. Where the issue is one on which the Council's Executive are required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This decision will also be published on our website.

## **What can I do if I feel my petition has not been dealt with properly?**

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, the petition organiser has the right to request that one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees reviews the steps that the Council has taken in response to your petition. It is helpful to everyone and

can improve the prospects for a review if the petition organiser gives a short explanation of the reasons why the Council's response is not considered to be adequate.

The Committee will endeavour to consider your request at its next meeting where possible.

Should the Committee determine that the Council has not dealt with your petition adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to the Council's Executive and arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the full Council.

Once the appeal has been considered the petition organiser will be informed of the results within 5 working days.