

PETITIONS SCHEME

To: **Constitution and Ethics Committee**

Meeting Date: **1st October 2019**

From: **Director of Governance and Legal Services and
Monitoring Officer**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Purpose: **To consider revisions to the Council's Petitions Scheme.**

Recommendation: **The Constitution and Ethics Committee is asked to
consider amendments to the Constitution, as set out in
Appendix 1, and recommend any changes to full Council,
if appropriate.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council adopted its current Petition Scheme on 18 May 2010 in line with the requirements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The Localism Act 2011 (Chapter 10, Section 46) repealed the requirements in the 2009 Act regarding Petition Schemes. However, many local authorities have kept their petition schemes in place or replaced them with more general guidance and it is considered best practice to do so.
- 1.2 The Scheme can be revised at any time, but it must be approved by full Council, and published on the Council's website and by any other method appropriate for bringing it to the attention of those who live, work, or study in its area.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 It is felt that the current scheme does not provide sufficient clarity and could be made more succinct. Officers have reviewed the schemes of other authorities to identify good practice. The revised scheme is set out in **Appendix 1** (Additions in bold and deletions shown in strikethrough). In proposing revisions to the scheme, the following are highlighted:
- The need to list first electronic petitions, as most petitions are now submitted in this form. The focus is on using the Council's free ePetitions facility which will ensure that petitions are submitted in the correct format in order to meet the requirements of the Scheme.
 - The Council's response to a petition has been moved to after the submission of a petition.
 - The need to record business, school or college addresses if a person signing a petition does not live within the Council's area has been highlighted. Officers often have to disallow signatures because this information has not been provided.
 - The need to clarify that petitions with fewer than 50 signatures will still be considered but without the right to speak.
 - The need to provide an opportunity for the petitioner to seek an informal review by the Monitoring Officer if he/she believes the petition has not been dealt with in accordance with this scheme.
 - The need to clarify how long petitions will be kept and the arrangements for storage.

Source Documents	Location
Council – 18 May 2010	https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/councillors-&-meetings/council-meetings/
Constitution	https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/council-structure/council-s-constitution/