

Denbighshire County Council Petitions Scheme 2024-2027

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Denbighshire County Council Petitions Scheme 2024-2027 (DRAFT)

Changes to this document

This document is reviewed regularly to keep up with changes in policy or legislation. The latest versions of our publications can be found on our website. Before contacting us about the content of this document, we recommend that you refer to the most recent version on the website and any relevant guidance.

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Notes / changes
1.0	TBC	TBC	N/A

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Petitions Scheme 2024-2027 (DRAFT)

Introduction

This document sets out the Petitions Scheme for Denbighshire County Council.

We are required as part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to make and publish a scheme that sets out how we will handle petitions and e-petitions, with consideration given to the following:

- how a petition may be submitted to the council
- how and by when the council will acknowledge receipt of a petition
- the steps the council may take in response to a petition received by it
- the circumstances (if any) in which the council may take no further action in response to a petition
- 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

We are required to review the Petitions Scheme on a regular basis, and it is our intention to review this scheme at least once after every ordinary local (county council) election.

What is a petition?

A petition is a way of communicating with a person or organisation. Usually, the person or organisation receiving the petition will have decision-making powers.

A petition is usually set up by one person or organisation, and this person or organisation will collect signatures from other people or organisations who support for their proposal or campaign.

Petitions can be a good way of communicating the strength of feeling on a particular topic or encouraging people or organisations to make changes.

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Who can set up a petition?

Anybody can set up a petition, and it can be sent to anybody.

Every petition requires a lead petitioner to be noted, who will act as a contact point for the petition. Here are the requirements that are necessary for the main petitioner:

1. The name of the main petitioner could be an individual who lives, works or studies within Denbighshire, a landowner / taxpayer or organisation located in Denbighshire.
2. The main petitioner must note the home / work / organisation address in full, and an e-mail address (if you have one) or contact information where any correspondence relating to the petition can be sent.

For petitions targeted towards Denbighshire County Council, we have set up the following contact details to receive petitions:

Email: petitions@denbighshire.gov.uk

Post: Democratic Services, Denbighshire County Council, PO Box 162, Ruthin, LL15 1YN

What can a petition be about?

Petitions can be about anything, but they should generally:

1. Be about an issue that affects people who live in, work in or visit Denbighshire
2. Be about an issue for which the Council has decision-making powers, or which affects the County of Denbighshire, or communities within Denbighshire
3. Should be about a new topic (i.e. petitions should not be repeated continuously)

What can't be included in a petition?

We won't accept the following types of petitions:

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1. Petitions which the Council has no ability to respond to, or for which the Council is not the correct decision-making authority for the subject of the petition.
2. Petitions which ask the Council to take an action against a specific person. For complaints about Councillors or Council employees we already have a specific complaints procedure to deal with grievance issues, more detail can be found on our website: <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/contact-us/complaints-compliments-and-feedback.aspx>
3. Petitions which, if the decision or reason for the campaign was upheld, would force the Council to break international, UK or Welsh law. This could include petitions which could cause harm, discrimination or harassment to others.
4. Petitions which are in any other way defamatory, offensive, frivolous or improper
5. Petitions relating to Planning Committee decisions. There is already a process in place to search and respond to planning applications. Please visit the Council's website:
[Search and comment on Planning applications | Denbighshire County Council](#)
6. Petitions for which any other Council processes already exist to deal with the matter concerned, for example:
 - a. You can report missed bin collections to the Council here:
[Report a Missed Bin | Denbighshire County Council](#)
 - b. You can report a pothole in the road to the Council here:
[Report a pothole, damaged road or pavement | Denbighshire County Council](#)

How do I start a petition?

To start a petition, you will need to do one of the following:

1. Download a petition cover sheet and signature sheets from our website
2. You can use a third-party petitions website if you wish, however please make sure that anyone you are asking to sign your petition provides the following details:
 - a. Name of anyone signing the petition

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- b. Address of anyone signing the petition. At a minimum, this should be their town/city/village, and their postcode.

Please note: if you are using a third-party website to create and manage your petition, you **must** close the petition and submit it to the Council before we can acknowledge or respond to it. **Open petitions which have not been submitted to the Council cannot be discussed, nor responded to.**

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What needs to go in my petition?

All petitions, whether you are using the template document provided by Denbighshire County Council or a third party should contain:

1. The name and contact details of the petition organiser.
2. A clear and concise statement about the reason for making the petition.
3. A clear and concise statement explaining the actions that you wish the Council to take, or discuss

Petition Signatories

1. An appropriate signatory is an individual who lives, works, owns a business or studies in Denbighshire; a landowner / taxpayer or who lives in an area of a nearby county and where it can be reasonably expected for them to be affected by the subject of the petition.
2. An individual can only sign a petition once. People must not sign the same on-line and paper petition, and duplication can be removed if it is found that a petitioner has signed twice.

How do I submit a petition?

When you are happy with your petition, **you must close it**. This means you must stop accepting new signatures. You must submit a complete and finalised record of everyone who has signed your petition so that the Council can count and verify the data. This is because the number of signatories can affect the response a petition receives.

Once you have closed your petition, you can submit it in one of the following ways:

- **Online:** Petitions can be submitted via email to petitions@denbighshire.gov.uk
- **By post:** Petitions can be posted to Democratic Services, Denbighshire County Council, PO Box 62, LL15 1YN

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- **In person:** Petitions can be handed in to reception at County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN during usual opening hours

If you are using a third-party website to start an electronic petition, please make sure it is capable of allowing you to download your final set of responses/signatories to a PDF, CSV or similar file as you will need to send these in to us.

Open links (i.e. petitions which are still capable of collecting additional signatures) will be disregarded.

How will the Council respond to petitions?

The Council will consider every petition with more than 100 signatories that falls within the scope of this Scheme. The Council can use its discretion where fewer than 100 signatories are received in cases where there is clear local support for action (e.g., where the residents of a small community have petitioned for traffic calming measures).

All petitions that the Council receives will be acknowledged within **10 working days**.

The Council will then aim to respond further to the petition within **21 working days**.

How the Council responds will depend on what the petition is about, and who might be affected by it. When we respond we will do one of the following:

1. If the petition is not a matter the Council is responsible for, we will inform you. Where possible, we will try to signpost you to the responsible authority (e.g. Welsh Government, UK Government, North Wales Police, Natural Resources Wales etc). **We will not forward the petition on to another authority, this will be your responsibility as the petition organiser.**
2. If the petition is a matter the Council is responsible for, we will aim to take the action requested in the petition if we are in a position to do so. If we are unable to do this, we may consider the matter further, and you will get one of the following responses:

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- a. An officer responsible for dealing with the subject matter of your petition may respond
 - b. A Head of Service or a Lead Member (Councillor responsible) responsible for dealing with the subject matter of your petition may respond
 - c. A relevant Council committee meeting (e.g. Scrutiny) may discuss your petition
 - d. Cabinet or Full Council may discuss your petition
3. 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 17.00 at least 10 working days before that meeting to enable it to be submitted.
 4. The Monitoring Officer and the Democratic Services Manager will consider the petitions submitted, decide whether the petition is acceptable based on the following criteria for a valid petition, and will advise on which appropriate body will consider it.
 5. Confirmation will be needed regarding the validity of the petition before it is registered in the Council's Petition Scheme Register and published on the Council's website.

Response threshold guidelines for petitions affecting specific groups of people

If the petition is about something affecting a specific group of people, especially anything affecting people with protected characteristics, we will not set specific response thresholds for petitions.

Instead, we will discuss the impact of your request on the group or groups of people who might be affected by any actions taken by the Council, before deciding on an appropriate response.