

PETITION SCHEME

1. Petitions

We welcome petitions as one way in which you can let us know your concerns. We set out below how the authority will respond to petitions.

2. What is a petition and whom may send them?

Anyone who lives, works or studies in the area of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council can sign or organise a petition. For practical purposes, we normally set a requirement for at least 10 signatories or petitioners before we treat it as a petition.

3. What should a petition contain?

A petition should include –

- A clear statement of your concerns and what you want the Council to do. This must relate to something which is the responsibility of the Council, or over which the Council has some influence. Where a petition relates to a matter which is within the responsibility of another public authority, we will ask the petition organiser whether s/he would like us to redirect the petition to that other authority. Where a petition relates to a matter over which the Council has no responsibility or influence, we will return the petition to the petition organiser with an explanation for that decision.
- The name, address and contact details of the “petition-organiser” or someone to whom you would like any correspondence about the petition to be sent. Contact details should be a postal address and an Email address if you have one;
- The names and addresses of at least 10 petitioners (which can include the petition organiser). Where the petition is in paper form, this should include a signature and an address from each petitioner. If you want your petition to be debated at a meeting of the Council (“A Petition for Debate”), your petition will need to contain at least 3,000 of signatories or petitioners (see below);

4. Who should you send a petition to?

Where you submit a petition in response to a specific consultation by the authority, please address it to the return address set out in the consultation invitation. This will ensure that it is reported at the same time when the matter to which it relates is considered.

You can hand in petitions at meetings of your local Community Forum. These will be passed on to the relevant officers for a response.

The Director of Corporate Resources is otherwise responsible for receiving petitions sent to the authority. Please address those petitions to –

The Director of Corporate Resources,
c/o Democratic Services
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council,
The Council House, Priory Road,
Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 1HF

On receipt, your petition will be acknowledged and you will be advised that the matter has been referred to the relevant Director for attention. Group Leaders, the relevant Cabinet Member and Ward Members will also be notified that a petition has been received.

5. Types of Petition

There are different types of petition, as set out below. How the Council deals with a petition depends on which type of petition you submit –

Consultation Petitions

These are petitions in response to an invitation from the Council for the public to make representations on a particular proposal or application, for example on planning or licensing applications or proposals for parking restrictions or speed limits. Consultation petitions which are received by the response date will be reported to the appropriate Committee, Sub-Committee, Cabinet Member or Officer with delegated power to act, as defined in the Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution.

Where the petition relates to a matter, which is within the delegated powers of an individual Cabinet Member, s/he may decide not to exercise those delegated powers but to refer the matter to Cabinet for decision. Similarly, an officer may choose to refer a matter to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Ordinary Petitions

Ordinary petitions will be referred to the relevant Director for consideration and attention.

The relevant Director is responsible for keeping the Petition Organiser, the appropriate Cabinet Member(s) and Ward Councillors informed of any action that is taken or proposed by the Council.

It should be noted that Petition Organisers may pursue the Council's complaints procedures should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the consideration of a petition.

Statutory Petitions

Particular Acts of Parliament may require the Council to consider petitions and other representations. Petitions that are to be considered under a statutory process will be referred to the appropriate Director for consideration in accordance with that process.

Petitions for Debate at Full Council

If you want your petition to be reported to and debated at a meeting of the full Council, it must contain at least 3,000 petitioners. Your petition should state that you wish the matter to be debated at full Council.

For practical reasons, petitions for Debate must be submitted no later than 14 days before the meeting of the Council at which you want the Petition debated.

Any Petitions for Debate will be reported to the next convenient ordinary meeting of the Council. Petitions will not be considered at the Annual Meeting of Council or at Extraordinary Meetings of the Council.

Petitions for debate shall be considered at meetings of the Council in the order prescribed in the Council's Procedure Rules or otherwise as may be determined by the Mayor. A maximum of 30 minutes will be allowed at each meeting for considering all petitions for debate. Petitions not dealt with in the time allowed will normally be deferred until the next ordinary meeting of the Council unless the Mayor determines otherwise.

The Mayor will invite the petition organiser to address the Council for up to 3 minutes immediately before the matter is debated. The Council's Procedure Rules shall then apply to the debate on petitions at the Council meeting.

6. Public Speaking Rights at Meetings

Unless the Constitution provides otherwise, the right of any person to speak at any meeting and the manner in which petitions are dealt with shall be at the discretion of the person presiding at the meeting concerned.

7. Duplicate, Repeat or Rejected Petitions

Duplicate Petitions

Where more than one petition is received in time for a particular meeting, each supporting the same outcome on one matter, each petition organiser will be treated as an independent petition organiser. However, only the petition organiser of the first petition to be received will be afforded speaking rights if these apply at the relevant meeting to which the petition is reported.

Repeat Petitions

A petition will not normally be considered where they are received within 6 months of another petition being considered by the authority on the same matter.

Rejected Petitions

Petitions will not be reported if in the opinion of the Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and the Chairman of the relevant Scrutiny Committee, they are vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate, or do not relate to something which is the responsibility of the authority, or over which the authority has some influence.