

## ePetitions Guidelines

The Council welcomes ePetitions which are created and submitted through its website [www.dartford.gov.uk](http://www.dartford.gov.uk)

The Council will not respond to ePetitions which are submitted by other means e.g. email chain/pyramid. ePetitions will be rejected, if submitted by other means.

ePetitions are presented on the ePetitions website in the order in which they are received. All ePetitions (including the subject matter of paper based petitions), whether accepted or rejected, will be maintained on the Council's website for 3 months, from the date of receipt and then archived.

The Council's ePetitions website is compliant with web accessibility standards.

ePetitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions referred to in Part 1 of these Petitions Guidelines.

During politically sensitive periods, such as prior to an election, politically controversial material may need to be restricted.

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### 1. How do I sign an ePetition?

*You MUST register to use the Council's ePetitions facility, before you can provide a 'signature' in support of an ePetition*

The lead petitioner will need to provide us with their name, postal address, postcode and e-mail address before submitting their petition for review by Member Services. People visiting the ePetition website will be able to see the lead petitioner's name, but not their contact details.

Before you sign an ePetition, you will be asked to either register as a new user – you will need to provide your name, postal address, postcode and e-mail address or, if you are already registered as a user, you will be asked for your user name and password. When you have submitted this information, you will be sent an e-mail to the e-mail address you have provided. This e-mail will include a link which you must click on in order to confirm the e-mail address is valid. Once this step is complete, your 'signature' will be added to the petition. People visiting the ePetition website will be able to see your name in the list of those who have signed it, but your contact details will not be visible.

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### 2. What information should my ePetition contain?

Your ePetition will need to include:

- A title, which in as few words as possible, should identify what your petition is about e.g. antisocial behaviour in High Street Dartford;
- A statement (ideally limited to no more than five lines), explicitly setting out what action you would like the Council to take and reasons why you consider the action requested to be necessary e.g. 'calling on the Council to urge the Government to consider the need for new legislation to tackle anti-social behaviour';
- Any other information which you feel is relevant to your ePetition. DO NOT include links to other websites.

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### **3. How long does my ePetition remain open for signatures?**

We will decide when a request to host an ePetition is received by a lead petitioner, whether the petition is appropriate for publishing on our website. Please refer to the guidelines on what constitutes an invalid petition at section 7 of these Petitions Guidelines.

If we agree to host your ePetition, your ePetition will remain open for 'signatures' for a maximum period of 4 weeks, but you can choose a shorter time frame.

When the ePetition reaches its closing date, you will no longer be able to sign it online. The list of signatories will be collated by Member Services and the lead petitioner contacted regarding the submission of the completed ePetition.

Whilst the Council will host ePetitions on its website, it will not promote individual ePetitions. It is therefore down to the lead petitioner, to raise awareness about their ePetition.

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### **4. How long will it take to publish my ePetition on-line?**

When you create an ePetition, it may take up to 10 working days before it is published online. This is because we have to check that the content of your ePetition is suitable, before it is made available for 'signature'.

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### **5. Can I change and resubmit my ePetition if it is considered to be inappropriate for publication?**

If we decide not to host your ePetition, we will contact the lead petitioner within 10 working days of its receipt, to explain the reasons. You will be able to change and resubmit your ePetition if you wish. If you do not do this within 10 working days of our notification, a summary of the ePetition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'rejected petitions' section of the website.

The Council's Managing Director's decision not to host your ePetition is final. There is no right of review against this decision.

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### **6. What happens to my ePetition when the ePetition closes for signatures?**

When an ePetition has closed for 'signature', it will automatically be submitted to Member Services. In the same way as a paper petition, the lead petitioner will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days. An email acknowledgement will also be sent to the 'signatories' to the ePetition.

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### **7. Can I ask for a review of the Council's response/decision on my ePetition?**

There is no right to review of a decision.

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## **8. Can I still submit a paper petition in addition to my ePetition?**

You CANNOT run both an online and paper version of your petition.

## **9. Disclaimer**

The Council accepts no liability for the ePetitions on its web pages. The views expressed in ePetitions do not necessarily reflect those of the Council.

If you are having problems submitting an ePetition or would like further advice and information, please contact Member Services (contact details below) and we will be happy to assist you.

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