



Glasgow City Council

**Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and
Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee**

**Report by the Strategic Adviser to the Chief Executive
Contact: Anne Connolly Ext: 75678**

PUBLIC PETITIONS REVIEW 2019

Purpose of Report:

This report provides details of the findings and proposals from the Public Petitions Review Working Group.

Recommendations:

The Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee is asked to:

- i. consider this report;
- ii. note the updated guidance, and
- iii. continue to support the petitions process and its ongoing promotion.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No ✓

consulted: Yes No ✓

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This briefing provides details of the findings and proposals from the Public Petitions Review Working Group.

2. Background

- 2.1 Glasgow City Council introduced a public petitions process in 2012, to give members of the public more opportunities to raise issues directly which affected them and their local communities. A process was designed and implemented which allowed the public to set up a petition and gather signatures from other Glasgow residents, which after reaching a set number (25 signatures), would be put forward for consideration by the Petitions Committee.
- 2.2 Until 2017, all public petitions which had met the minimum requirements were heard by the Public Petitions and General Purposes Policy Development Committee. Since the new committee structure was introduced petitions are now heard by the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee.
- 2.3 Since its introduction there have been two internal reviews undertaken to identify how the process could be improved. In both cases, the process and guidance were simplified to help the public submit petitions.
- 2.4 Both reviews included talking with previous petitioners to learn about their experience of the process and what, if anything, could be done to make it easier. The reviews also included a search of other processes across government and local authorities to identify examples of good practice.
- 2.5 In May 2018, an report was presented to this committee, updating members of the number and types of petitions received over the last 6 years. At that meeting members requested that a proposal be brought forward to undertake a review of the current petitions process. That proposal was brought to this committee in September 2018 and a working group was formed to undertake the review.

3.0 Public Petitions Review Working Group

- 3.1 The working group was made up of both elected members, community council representative and officers. Members included:
 - Cllr Andrews (Chair)
 - Cllr Rhodes
 - Cllr Kerr
 - Cllr Molyneux
 - Veronica Low (Community Council Representative)

- Officers from Strategic Policy and Planning, Committee Services and Community Empowerment.

3.2 The working group agreed to look at three main areas, including;

- Consider approaches adopted by other Councils (Local and National)
- Review of the current process and guidance for public petitions
- Identify scope to allow petitions hosted on other platforms to be heard formally by the council

3.3 As part of the review the working group engaged with community councils through an initial online survey and then a presentation and Q and A session at the monthly Community Council Development Forum.

3.4 The response from community councils identified a need for greater awareness of the Public Petitions process as well as improved communications. They also suggested that there should be limited restrictions on petitions.

4.0 Working Group Approach

4.1 A desk based review of the approaches adopted by other Councils was undertaken, this also included third party websites that provide petitions (i.e. Change.org, 38 Degrees, etc.). This exercise identified additional supportive information provided by other, particularly commercial sites. It was also clear that social media was the main channel used to promote and market the petitions process of other organisations.

4.2 The working group identified a number of elements of the current petitions guidance which could be looked at specifically, including tone, existing restrictions and what additional support could be provided to potential users.

4.3 Officers investigated if the technology would allow the Council's and third party petitions systems could directly linked. It was established that ultimately, it is not possible to directly and seamlessly link with each of the third party providers.

5.0 Updated Guidance

5.1 The updated guidance (at Appendix 1) addresses the issues raised by the working group regarding the tone, restrictions and further support and information required to assist petitioners.

5.2 In terms of tone, the guidance has been changed to reflect a more positive and supportive approach. The focus of the guidance is now on submitting and promoting your petition with clearer information on what a petition should look like, including examples (guidance section 2.3 – 2.5) and

details of how best to gather signatures with the help of social media (guidance section 4.0).

- 5.3 Additional guidance has also been added to better explain the process if petitioners want their third party petition to be heard by the Committee (guidance section 3.0).
- 5.4 The number of restrictions previously placed on petitions has been significantly reduced (guidance section 2.6), which should help simplify the process for petitioners and reduce the number of petitions which are deemed invalid.
- 5.5 The working group has also agreed to increase the length of time a petitioner can have to gather the required number of signatures, from four to six weeks. This should again improve the chances of petitions being successful (guidance section 6.2).

6.0 Social Media Promotion

- 6.1 Further work will be carried out with the Council's Social Media Team to identify opportunities to promote public petitions through the councils various social media platforms. This will help raise awareness of the system among followers and residents.

7.0 Community Council Awareness and Communications

- 7.1 To address the issue of awareness we have offered to return to the Community Council Development Forum, in the future, to present the new guidance and give a demonstration on how to start and sign a petition. Work will be carried out with the Resource Team to investigate the most appropriate communications channels so we can keep community councils regularly up to date with new petitions.

8.0 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Financial:</i> | There are no new financial implications from this report. |
| <i>Legal:</i> | There are no new legal issues from this report. |
| <i>Personnel:</i> | There are no new personnel implications from this report. |
| <i>Procurement:</i> | There are no new procurement issues with this report. |

Council Strategic Plan: Specify which theme(s) and outcome(s) the proposal supports

Public Petitions supports one of the outcomes of the Resilient and Empowered Neighbourhood theme; that citizens and neighbourhoods can influence how services are developed and budgets spent.

It also supports specific priorities under the Well Governed City that listens and responds theme:

99 – Work to deliver a fairer, more equal Glasgow through all that we do,

105 – Improve the Councils communication with residents

Equality Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22

Yes, in particular, outcomes 8 and 10:
8. Service users with protected characteristics are provided with targeted, improved and more accessible information about the services provided by the Council Family

10. People with protected characteristics are more regularly and systematically involved in service delivery design by the Council Family.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

It will be important for the Council to ensure that all citizens are able to access the process easily.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental:

None

Social:

Public Petitions has a positive impact on local communities by providing greater opportunity for community empowerment.

Economic:

None

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:

All information collected is currently covered by the existing GCC Privacy Statement but will be updated to ensure it is GDPR compliant by 25th May.

9.0 Recommendations

9.1 The Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee is asked to:

- i. consider this report;
- ii. note the updated guidance, and
- iii. continue to support the petitions process and its ongoing promotion

Appendix 1: New Public Petitions Guidance

City Council Guidance on Sending a Public Petition

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Glasgow City Council aims to provide you with good quality services which are easy to access and meet your needs as a citizen of Glasgow.
- 1.2 The public petitions' process plays a key part in these aims by encouraging you to participate fully in the decision making process, either by yourself or as part of a group.
- 1.3 If you would like to submit a petition to the Council, please read the following guidance and instructions carefully before preparing and submitting a petition.
- 1.4 Before submitting a petition, you should have:
 - Raised the issue with the Council, in the first instance, i.e. as a comment/complaint/email to the relevant services.
 - Raised the issue with the relevant [Local Elected Members](#). You may have also contacted a Member of Parliament, Member of the Scottish Parliament, [Community Council](#) and Area Partnership.
 - Checked whether the Council is running a current related [consultation exercise or engagement process](#) and, if it is, raise your issues directly through that process first.
- 1.5 Please ensure copies of your correspondence on the above are attached with your petition.

2.0 Submitting your Petition

- 2.1 Your petition should refer to services provided by Glasgow City Council or issues that affect your community that the council is involved in.
- 2.2 It is important that both the purpose of your petition and what you are looking to achieve is clear and concise. Your title should aim to grab people's attention, and indicate clearly the area/issue your petition covers. The title will probably be what you will use to promote your petition on social media so it should make sense on its own.
- 2.3 Your petition statement should be well structured and tell a story. It should:
 - describe the situation/problem/issue
 - indicate why it is important to you and others; and,
 - suggest what is needed and why

Petition Example 1

Glasgow City Council should prioritise 5G as part of the growing investment in mobile technology.

Over the last 20 years technology has become a part of everyday life from communicating with friends and family to paying bills and ordering your shopping. With the introduction of 5G a number of new applications will become available including artificial intelligence (AI), automation and health and it is essential that Glasgow is ready and its citizens are not disadvantaged.

The Council should develop a strategy or plan detailing how Glasgow will prepare for the roll out of 5G technology when it becomes available.

Petition Example 2

Smith Street is a residential street but is being used as a short cut and a way to avoid surrounding congested through roads.

As a result of the increased traffic there has been a number of incidents including traffic accidents and damage to parked cars. This has also impacted on the feeling of safety among residents, particularly those with young children.

The Council should put in place measures to prevent Smith Street from being used as a short cut and introduce traffic calming to make the area safer for residents and pedestrians.

- 2.4 Although we will accept petitions about most issues, unfortunately there are some which we will be unable to consider. Before you submit your petition please check that it:
- does not refer to any current court, legislative or regulatory proceedings, for example planning or licensing applications.
 - is not the same or very similar to petitions the council has already considered within the previous twelve months (www.glasgow.gov.uk/petitions).
- 2.5 If your petition is a comment or a complaint or is related to individual or personal issues you should send it to us through the Council's [Comments, Compliments and Complaints](#) process.

- 2.6 You can submit a petition on our dedicated webpage (www.glasgow.gov.uk/petitions), by email, by post or by hand.
- 2.7 We provide some specific guidance about how to complete your petition online at section 6. For those and all petitions submitted by email, post or by hand there are some basic requirements.
- 2.8 The petition **must** include the following.
- Your **name or the name of the principal petitioner** who **must** live within the **Glasgow City Council area**; we may check your eligibility. Or in the case of a local business or organisation, it should be on the Valuation Roll for the Glasgow City Council area.
 - Your or the principal petitioner's **address** to which all communications will be sent.
 - The **name, address and signature** of any person(s) supporting the petition, unless the petition is supported by a [community council](#).
- 2.9 Names and addresses can be gathered both online and by paper. If you are going to use both a paper and online version, we ask that you remove any repeat names before submitting it to the council.
- 2.10 For paper petitions, it would be helpful if your petition is typewritten or completed using a black pen. If you have any difficulty in filling in the form please contact the Clerk to the Committee.

3.0 Other Online Petition Sites

- 3.1 There are a number of other online petition sites which people can use to create a petition, including [Change.org](#), [38Degrees](#), [ThePetitionSite](#), [iPetitions](#), [GoPetition](#), etc. We understand that some residents may prefer to use these sites and we will look to do as much as we can to ensure that your petition can be considered as part of the Council's petitions process. Unfortunately, we cannot link directly to these sites and we need to ensure that we can verify that the lead petitioner and signatories are Glasgow residents. As a result of this, we will require that you still complete the attached form and collect 25 signatures from Glasgow residents.
- 3.2 We would suggest that anyone who also has a petition on another site includes a link to this as part of the evidence submitted to us.

4.0 Promoting your Petition

- 4.1 We would encourage you to promote your petition to help gather support and achieve the require signatures. You can promote your petition on both social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and through email. You can post the link from the address bar at the top of your petition to all your friends and followers and encourage them to support you. You can also post a link to your petition onto the social media pages of other relevant groups and organisations.

- 4.2 You can also inform local media (radio and newspaper) of your petition as a way of letting more people in your community and across Glasgow know about your petition.
- 4.3 If you require any additional support or training to help you get online you can contact [Glasgow Life](#) for further information.

5.0 Validation (Checking)

- 5.1 The council validates (or checks) each petition. Petitions must include a certain amount of support to be considered.
- 5.2 **As an individual or community group:**
- you must have a minimum of 25 signatures from people living in Glasgow; **or**
 - you should have the support of the relevant [community council](#).
- 5.3 **If you are sending a petition from a local business(es) or organisation(s):**
- you must have support from at least five other businesses or organisations on the Valuation Roll; **or**
 - you should have the support of the relevant [community council](#).
- 5.4 If your petition is supported by a community council, a [community council](#) office Bearer must countersign the petition at part two. Where relevant you should also attach a copy of the minutes of the [community council](#) meeting when the support was approved.
- 5.5 A form for petitions is included within these Guidance Notes. You can also download the form from the Council's [website](#). You can also request a paper copy by phoning 0141 287 3926 or in writing or in person at:

Clerk to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement
City Policy Committee
Glasgow City Council
City Chambers
Glasgow
G2 1DU

6.0 Online Petitions

- 6.1 The Council has a dedicated webpage where you can set up your petition and people can sign up to your petition (www.glasgow.gov.uk/petitions).
- 6.2 Online petitions can be hosted on the website, once approved, for six (6) weeks. During this time, people wishing to support the petition can do this online by registering the following details:

- Name
- Address
- Email address

6.3 At least 25 supporting signatories **must** live within the Glasgow City Council area.

6.4 You can also collect paper signatures alongside online signatures. Only the Principal Petitioner can submit paper signatures to the Committee Clerk to update the number on the website.

Online Petitions will display:

- Title/subject of the Petition
- Principal Petitioner's name
- Start and closing date

6.5 The Clerk to the committee will notify the person who registered the petition (the principal petitioner) once a petition has reached the required number of signatures.

6.6 Once submitted, Glasgow City Council will endeavour to validate online petitions within **10 working days**. This time will be used to ensure that petitions are valid and meet the eligibility criteria. Principal Petitioners are advised to take this into account before proceeding.

6.7 Once the petition has been accepted it will become a public document available to view on the Council's website.

7.0 Privacy Policy and Content of petitions

7.1 Information about any individual will not be used for any other purpose other than in relation to the petition. The Council is now required to process personal information in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For more information about this please visit <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=22066>.

7.2 For your part, you must make sure the information you send does not include:

- false or insulting statements,
- information that is protected by an interdict or court order,
- information that is commercially sensitive, confidential or that may cause personal distress or loss,
- the names of individual officers of public bodies,
- the names of other individuals or information whereby they may be easily identified,

- offensive language, for example swear words, insulting, sarcastic or provocative language or other terms that could reasonably be considered as offensive by the reader; and
- duplicate signatures.

8.0 Support and help with a petition

8.1 We will accept petitions in community languages and other formats. We will also arrange for interpretation and translation services, including British Sign Language if you need it. We will take account of your needs when making arrangements to hear petitions. If you need any support, you or your representative, should discuss these with the Clerk to the Committee.

9.0 How to send in your petition

9.1 If you complete your petition using our online petition system, we will confirm your petition is submitted once you reach the required level of signatures or support.

9.2 For petitions which are sent through email, post, or hand-delivery. When you are satisfied your petition meets the conditions outlined in this guidance, you should submit the petition to:

The Clerk to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen
Engagement City Policy Committee
Glasgow City Council
City Chambers
Glasgow
G2 1DU.

9.3 You can also email your petition to petitions@glasgow.gov.uk. The Clerk will let you know your petition has been received.

10.0 What Happens next

10.1 Once your petition has been checked (validated) that it meets the criteria set out at section 2 and 7 as being completed correctly, a committee date will be allocated. This will depend both on the workload of the committee and also the time taken to complete the validation process.

10.2 The Chair of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the committee to speak in support of their petition to help the committee reach a decision. As a petitioner you should indicate on the form if you want to make a statement to the committee. Your petition will be heard at the first available opportunity.

10.3 Subject to the discretion of the Chair of the Committee, you as a petitioner can speak for up to 10 minutes. You may bring up to two supporters to the Committee who may speak on your behalf.

- 10.4 Councillors on the committee may ask you questions relating to the issue or issues that have been raised in the petition.
- 10.5 If you as a petitioner need any help making a statement to the committee - for example translation and or interpretation - please contact the Clerk to the Committee.
- 10.6 Following the consideration of a petition, the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee will make a recommendation on action to be taken as follows (**it should be noted that the Committee does not have decision making powers**).
- (a) Agree the issue(s) raised deserves further action and agree to refer with recommendations, if appropriate, the petition to another council committee, officer or other organisation: or
- (b) Agree the issue(s) raised does not merit further action.
- 10.8 You, as the petitioner, will be advised of the committee's decision in writing.

11.0 Further information

- 11.1 All letters and enquiries should be sent to:

Clerk to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement
City Policy Committee
Glasgow City Council
City Chambers
Glasgow
G2 1DU

Telephone 0141 287 3926



Glasgow City Council Petitions Form

Please refer to the Guidance on Submission of Public Petitions before filling in this form. If you need more information or advice, please contact:

The Clerk to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement
City Policy Committee

Telephone: 0141 287 3926

Details of principal petitioner

Please enter the name of person and organisation (if this applies) raising the petition. Please include a contact address where correspondence will be sent, a phone number and email address if available.

Name:
Address:
Telephone Number:
Email:

Petition Statement

Title of Petition

Please write in approximately 250 words

- the purpose of your petition; and,
- the result you are looking to achieve from your petition

Action taken, if any, to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Please enter below details of any individuals or organisations approached. You should attach copies of correspondence, including any responses. This information will be made available to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee before it considers the petition.

Appearance before Committee

The Chair of the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below whether you would like to make a brief statement to the committee when it is considering your petition.

***I do** wish the opportunity to make a statement to the committee

***I do not** wish to make a statement to the committee

Signature of principal petitioner

When you are satisfied the petition meets all the conditions outlined in the Guidance on Submission of Petitions, you as the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below.

Signature **Date**

Form A

Petition submitted by Citizens

A petition must be supported by

- A minimum of 25 signatures from people living in the Glasgow Council area
- or have the support of the relevant Community Council

If gathering signatures please complete this part of the form.

No	Name	Address	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			

OR

Support by Community Council

Office Bearer

..... Community Council

*Please include the minutes of the Community Council meeting when the support was approved.

Submission

Please send this form and attachments, by mail or in person to:

The Clerk to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement
City Policy Committee
Glasgow City Council
City Chambers
Glasgow
G2 1DU

Telephone: 0141 287 3926

The Council is now required to process personal information in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For more information about this please visit <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=22066>.

Form B

Petition submitted by local Business(es) or Organisations

A petition must be supported by:

- at least five other businesses or organisations on the Valuation Roll
- or have the support of the relevant Community Council

No	Name and position held within business/organisation	Address of business/organisation	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

OR

Support by Community Council

Office Bearer

..... Community Council

*Please include the minutes of the Community Council meeting when the support was approved

Submission

Please submit this form and attachments by mail or in person to:

The Clerk to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement
City Policy Committee
Glasgow City Council
City Chambers
Glasgow
G2 1DU
Telephone: 0141 287 3926

The Council is now required to process personal information in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For more information about this please visit <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=22066>.