

DRAFT SEFTON COUNCIL PETITION SCHEME

The Council welcomes petitions and recognises that they are just one of many ways in which people can let us know about their concerns and participate in the democratic process. This scheme sets out how the Council will deal with petitions that meet the criteria set out in the scheme.

1. WHO CAN SUBMIT OR SIGN A PETITION?

Anyone who lives, works, or studies within the Borough of Sefton can organise a petition but you can only sign a petition if you live in the Borough.

2. WHAT CAN THE PETITION BE ABOUT?

Petitions should be relevant to a matter over which the Council has powers or duties. If the petition does not fall within the remit of the Council's powers, we will return your petition to you and where possible, try to identify the correct organisation for you to send the petition to.

3. WHAT INFORMATION MUST THE PETITION CONTAIN?

All petitions must contain:

- the title/subject of the petition and a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition and stating what action the petitioners wish the Council to take.
- the petition organiser's contact details.
- the name, address, and signature of the any person supporting the petition, who lives within the Borough of Sefton.

Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive, or otherwise inappropriate will not be considered.

4. TYPES OF PETITIONS

The type of petition determines how a petition will be responded to. There are different types of petitions:

1. Petition making representations to a Cabinet Member or a meeting of the Cabinet or Committee – these require 25 or more signatures. **See Section 6 below.**
2. Petition requesting a debate at a full Council meeting – these require 500 or more signatures. **See Section 7 below.**
3. Petition requesting the relevant senior officer to give evidence at a public meeting of the Council's appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - these require 1375 signatures. **See Section 8 below.**
4. Petition making representations on a planning application – these require 25 or more signatures and endorsed by a Councillor who is not a member of Planning

Committee, and the petition should be submitted to the **Chief Planning Officer**. - **See Section 9 below**.

5. Petition making representations on a licensing application. **See Section 10 below**.
6. Statutory petition requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor. This will require the signatures of more than 5% of the local electorate. Please contact elections@sefton.gov.uk
7. Petition on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal, such as council tax banding and non-domestic rates - Please see [Appeal a Council Tax bill or fine: Appeal a bill - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Petitions relating to points 1-3 as set out above can be submitted to the Democratic Services Manager in the following way:

- Paper petitions can be sent to: Democratic Services Manager, Town Hall, Trinity Road, Bootle L20 7AE
- Electronic petitions can be created, signed and submitted on-line through our website via this link: [Sefton Home](#) You will need to enter your name and address on-line.

The Council will consider all petitions that fall within the scope of this scheme. If you need any advice, please contact the Democratic Services Manager on 0151 934 2254 or by email at debbie.campbell@sefton.gov.uk

5. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days. This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition.

In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with your petition differently. If this is the case, we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale with you.

If the petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the Council may decide not to do anything with it. In that case we will write to you to explain why.

6. REPRESENTATIONS TO A CABINET MEMBER OR A MEETING OF THE CABINET OR COMMITTEE

When a written petition relating to the Borough, and containing the signatures of at least 25 residents of the Borough, is submitted with a request that a deputation in support of such petition be received, arrangements will be made for the deputation to attend the relevant [Cabinet /Committee meeting](#) concerned.

Where the petition relates to a matter already upon an Agenda issued for a Cabinet / Committee meeting, **provided that the petition is submitted by 12 noon three working days before the meeting** the deputation shall be invited to attend that meeting, and the matter concerned shall be dealt with in advance of other items on the Agenda.

Where the petition relates to a matter for which the Agenda has not yet been issued, the deputation shall be invited to attend the next appropriate meeting and the matter referred to in the petition shall be included as the first substantive item on the Agenda for such meeting.

When a deputation is to be received, only one of the deputation, who need not necessarily be a petitioner, shall speak, and such speech (inclusive of the reading of the petition) shall not exceed five minutes. The member of the deputation speaking shall address the Chair and no members of the deputation shall enter into discussion or debate. The member of the deputation speaking may be asked questions on presentation.

7. COUNCIL DEBATE

When a written petition relating to the Borough and containing the signatures of at least 500 residents of the Borough, is submitted with a request that a deputation in support of such petition be received, arrangements will be made for the deputation to attend a meeting of the full Council.

If the petition is submitted by 12 noon, three working days prior to a Council meeting, the Council will endeavour to consider the petition at that meeting. However, on some occasions this may not be possible, and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. A member of the delegation who need not necessarily be a petitioner, will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting. The member of the deputation speaking shall address the Chair. The petition will then be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. and no members of the deputation shall enter into discussion or debate.

The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not take the action requested for reasons put forward at the debate or refer the matter to another decision-making body of the Council. When the issue is one on which another decision-making body or Officer are required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform the decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of the decision.

8. OFFICER EVIDENCE AT AN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Your petition may ask for a senior Council officer to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which the officer is responsible as part of their job.

If your petition contains at least 1,375 signatures, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of the Council's appropriate Overview and Scrutiny

Committee.

You should be aware that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may decide that it would be more appropriate for another officer to give evidence instead of any officer named in the petition – for instance if the named officer has changed jobs.

The Committee may also decide to call the relevant Cabinet Member to attend the meeting. Committee Members will ask the questions, but you will be able to suggest questions to the Chair of the Committee by contacting the Democratic Services Manager.

A list of the senior staff who can be called to give evidence can be found at Appendix 1 below.

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

For some types of planning application (as determined by Chapter 7, Part B, Clause 21), you can present a petition which must contain the names, addresses and signatures of 25 or more Sefton residents. This will enable you or an appointed spokesperson to address the Planning Committee.

The Chief Planning Officer must receive the petition by the latest neighbour consultation date, which is shown on the 'important dates' tab within the planning application details at the following link: [Search and View Planning Applications and Appeals \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/search-and-view-planning-applications-and-appeals)

The petition can be submitted via email to the Planning Department:
planning.department@sefton.gov.uk

OR

By handing it in / post to: **The Chief Planning Officer, Sefton Council, Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle L20 3NJ.**

The Council's rules with regard to public speaking at Planning Committee are as follows:

- Where there is a petition objecting to or supporting a planning application and this contains the names of at least 25 residents of the Borough and which is endorsed by a Councillor (who is not a Member of the Planning Committee), the representative of the petitioners shall be allowed to address the Committee upon the subject of the petition for up to a maximum of five minutes.
- The Council has prepared a form for anyone wishing to submit a petition which can be accessed [here](#).
- When this occurs, the respondent (usually the applicant/agent for planning permission) will also be allowed to address the meeting for up to a maximum of five minutes. If the petition is in support of an application, the objectors (if any) will be permitted to respond for a period of five minutes.

- Where there is more than one such petition, the respondent shall have five minutes to reply to each petition.
- Where there is more than one such petition, the Council encourages the disparate petitions to address different points, where more than one such petition seeks to address the committee with the same points the petitions will be invited to agree and propose only one petition to the committee or share the same five minutes.
- Members of the Planning Committee may ask questions of the petitioner and respondent at the conclusion of their five-minute presentations. Members may not, however, enter into a dialogue with petitioners/respondents.
- A dialogue will not be permitted between the applicant/agent and representatives of the petitioners. Normally any questions or issues arising from representations will be responded to by officers and the Chair will identify those specific matters requiring a response.
- If, following notification, petitioners **choose not to address** the Committee the respondent will retain the right to address the Committee.

10. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

If you wish to make representations or submit a petition in respect of a licensing application which you have been notified about or which has been published on the Council's website: [Licensing Act public notices \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/licensing-act-public-notices)

You can make representations to the Licensing Section via email to: licensing@sefton.gov.uk

OR

By post to: **The Licensing Section, Sefton Council, Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle. L20 3NJ.**

11. HOW WILL THE COUNCIL RESPOND TO PETITIONS?

Once the petition has been considered the petition organiser will be informed of the decision taken within 5 working days.

12. WHAT IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE RESPONSE?

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition in the procedurally correct manner, the petition organiser has the right to request that the appropriate Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the steps that the Council has taken in response to your petition.

It is helpful to everyone and can improve the prospects for a review if the petition organiser gives a short explanation of the reasons why the Council's response is not considered to be adequate.

The Committee will aim to consider your request at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible, and consideration will take place at the following meeting.

Should the Committee determine that we have not dealt with your petition adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter.

If the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has already dealt with the matter, it will be referred to the Chief Executive and any appropriate action will be determined. Once the appeal has been considered the petition organiser will be informed of the results within 5 working days.

APPENDIX 1 - OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL THAT CAN BE CALLED TO ACCOUNT

- Chief Executive
- All Executive Directors
- All Assistant Directors
- Monitoring Officer
- Chief Planning Officer.