

## **E-Petition Guidance**

### **Introduction**

This guide provides some brief information for people wishing to use the e-petitions system on the Council website.

The full [Council Petition Scheme](#) contains additional guidance.

### **Who can sign an e-Petition?**

An e-Petition can be signed by any person of any age, who lives, works or studies in Cheltenham. You do not have to be a registered user to sign all e-Petitions but you will need to provide a few basic details, including a valid email address, for verification purposes.

You can only sign an e-Petition once. The list of signatories will be checked by officers and any duplicate signatures or frivolous responses removed.

### **How to create a new e-Petition?**

An e-Petition can be created by a person of any age who lives, works or studies in Cheltenham. To submit an e-Petition you will need to be a registered user. Registration is a simple process that just requires you to provide us with a few details in case we need to contact you about your e-Petition.

On the e-Petition homepage, select the ‘Submit a new e-Petition’ option and follow the prompted steps from there. Your online form will be submitted to Democratic Services who may contact you to discuss your e-Petition before it goes live.

### **What information should my e-Petition contain?**

Your e-Petition will need to include;

- A title
- A statement explicitly setting out what action you would like the Council to take.
- Any information which you feel is relevant to the e-Petition and reasons why you consider the action requested to be necessary. You may include links to other relevant websites.
- A date for when your e-Petition will stop collecting signatures. In order to achieve the maximum impact, you may want to set this dates so that the e-Petition will be submitted prior to a date on which a debate is to be held or a decision taken on an issue. We will host your e-Petition for up to 12 months but would expect most to be significantly shorter in length than this.

### **What issues can my e-Petition relate to?**

Your e-Petition should be relevant to some issue on which the Council has powers or duties or on which it has shared responsibilities, further suggestions

including how to have a petition debated at a Council meeting are in the petition scheme.

Your e-Petition should be submitted in good faith and be decent, honest and respectful. Your e-Petition may be rejected if it does not meet these criteria.

More information on subject areas and potential reasons for rejection are included in the Petition Scheme. In addition, during politically sensitive periods, such as prior to an election, politically controversial material may need to be restricted.

The Council accepts no liability for the petitions on these web pages. The views expressed in e-Petitions do not necessarily reflect those of the Council.

### **Promoting your e-Petition**

Whilst the Council will host the e-Petition on its website, it will not generally promote individual e-Petitions. Raising awareness of your e-Petition could be done in a number of ways such as promoting it on local community websites, discussions forums or newsletters. All it takes is to give people a brief explanation of the issue and then direct them to the site at [www.cheltenham.gov.uk](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk) to sign up.

### **What happens when the e-Petition is complete?**

When the e-Petition reaches its closing date, you will no longer be able to sign it online. An officer will submit the final e-Petition to the relevant Council department for action.

### **What will happen to the e-Petition once it is submitted?**

Once the e-Petition has been submitted, it will usually be referred to the appropriate Council officer for consideration. A councillor will be identified to oversee the Council's response. A response will be sent to you within 10 working days and will be posted on the Council's website.

If, unusually, the e-Petition is to be considered by a committee, you will be invited to attend the meeting.

If you feel that your e-Petition has not been dealt with properly, you have the right to request that the relevant scrutiny committee review the steps that have been taken in response to your petition.

If you feel that your e-Petition has not been dealt with properly, you have the right to appeal to a scrutiny committee. The Council Petition Scheme gives more details or contact Democratic Services (using the details below) for guidance.

### **What can e-petitions achieve?**

When you submit an e-Petition to the Council it can have positive outcomes that lead to change or inform debate. It can bring an issue to the attention of the Council and show how strong public approval or disapproval for something which the Council is doing. As a consequence, the Council may decide to, for example, change or review a policy, hold a public meeting or run a public consultation to gather more views on the issue.

### **Can I still submit a paper petition?**

Yes, you can still submit paper petition, the Petitions Scheme has more details. A petition may also gather names and addresses in both forms – you can have a paper version and an online version, although repeat names will be discounted. Both forms should run for the same period of time and must be submitted together. When submitting an e-Petition request, please let us know you are running a paper petition as well and this can be highlighted on the website.

Details about paper petitions and the responses they receive from the Council are published on the petitions web pages.

### **Privacy policy**

The details you give us are needed to validate your support and, beyond your name, will not be published on the website. This is generally the same information required for a paper petition. The Council may contact you in relation to any petitions you have signed, unless you have requested not to be contacted when signing the e-Petition. All petitions are a matter of public record and the public have the right to visit the town hall to view the details of those who have signed a particular petition.

### **Contact details**

For more information and advice, or to discuss a potential e-Petition please contact;

Democratic Services  
Cheltenham Borough Council  
Municipal Office  
The Promenade  
Cheltenham  
GL50 9SA

Tel: 01242 774937

Email: [democratic.service@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.service@cheltenham.gov.uk)

Cheltenham Borough Council reserves the right to vary these guidelines as and when necessary. However, any changes will not be applied retrospectively.