

Details of Operational Decision Taken [with reasons]:

The current Petitions Arrangements had been established in June 2010 in response to the Democracy, Economic Development and Construction 2009. The Act had also required the introduction of an E Petitions Procedure by December 2010.

Under the legislation, the Scheme had to define 3 categories of petition:

- Ordinary Petition – Set at 50 signatures;
- Petitions requiring Council debate – set at 2500
- Petitions holding Council employees to account – set at 1500

These requirements are no longer statutory following the introduction of the Localism Act and this, together with recent experiences with regard to on-line petitions, make it opportune to revisit the procedure and consider potential adjustments.

In line with recommendations made by the Democratic Arrangements Forum, the following changes be introduced to the Petitions Procedure:-

1. Delete the requirement to hold employees to account.
2. The provision to have a petition brought before Council be retained but with the proviso that the system enables the petition to be considered initially by the appropriate Cabinet Member; and to be referred to a Township Forum if it relates to a specific ward issue.
3. Where a petition is brought before Council for debate, the petition organiser be given five minutes to present the petition. Council is to agree a response that would best resolve the matter/s raised by the Petition and if there is no agreement, the Mayor will ask the Cabinet Member for a proposed response to the Petition; which is to be seconded and then put to the vote without debate.
4. If the petition organiser gives notice that he/she is unable to attend the meeting where the Petition is to be considered, an authorised representative, who is a signatory to the petition, may present the petition on their behalf. If the petition organiser does not turn up and does not nominate an authorised representative then consideration of the petition will not take place.
5. A time limit of a maximum of three months be introduced with regard to on-line petitions.
6. The verification figure in respect of petitions requiring debate at Council be set at 10%.
7. The following provision be introduced to the procedure:
***"Paper petitions must include a signature and a signatories name and address. This can be an address where the signatory lives, works or studies.
If the petition is in electronic form it must be made using the Council's e-petitions facility."***