

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

PETITIONS SCHEME

GUIDANCE



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on a Principal Council to make and publish a Petitions Scheme setting out how the Council intends to handle and respond to Petitions (including Electronic Petitions).

In accordance with the legislation the Council's Petition scheme will provide you with details on

- i. how a petition may be submitted to the council;
- ii. how and by when the council will acknowledge receipt of a petition;
- iii. the steps the council may take in response to a petition received by it;
- iv. the circumstances (if any) in which the council may take no further action in response to a petition;
- v. how and by when the council will make available its response to a petition to the person who submitted the petition and to the public.

The Council's Petition Scheme was approved by Council on 25TH [October 2023](#) and will be reviewed by Council as and when appropriate to ensure it remains fit for purpose .

Please note that a petition relating to regulatory decisions, such as planning or licensing committee decisions, will be received and considered through a separate process.

In addition any petition received in relation to a matter which is subject to a statutory consultation, or a public consultation process to inform a future decision, will be received and presented to the decision maker, as part of those arrangements. An example would be a school reorganisation proposal, where consultation arrangements are set out in the School Reorganisation Code, or a public consultation to inform a future decision of Cabinet in respect of a service change.

If you have any queries on the Council's Petition Scheme, please address them to: RCTCBC Council Headquarters, 2 Llys Cadwyn, Taff Street, Pontypridd or alternatively by email: Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk

GUIDANCE TO ASSIST YOU WITH SUBMITTING A PETITION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL.

Before submitting a Petition, residents are encouraged to:

- a) Contact the Council to see whether an ordinary service request would resolve the issue.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/Resident.aspx>

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Contactus/Reportit.aspx>

- b) Contact a relevant ward Councillor(s) to see whether they can help.

[Your Councillors - Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](http://www.moderngov.co.uk)

WHAT IS A PETITION

Petitions are documents (whether electronic or physical) that contain details of issues that are important to communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf, signed by local electors who are in support of the proposed action. Electronic Petitions are referred to in this guidance as ePetitions.

It is essential that any petition in any form received by the Council, relates to something for which the Council is responsible for or over which the Council has some direct influence. If the Council receives a Petition that does not relate to something under the Council's control or direct influence, it will be returned with an explanation as to why the Council cannot progress the matter further.

You'll have the opportunity to amend and resubmit your petition; otherwise, a summary of the Petition and the reason for rejection will be published under 'Rejected Petitions' on the website.

Petitions must be presented in good faith, with honesty and respect. During politically sensitive periods, such as before elections, politically controversial content may be restricted. The Council bears no responsibility for the content of the petitions on its website, and views expressed therein do not necessarily align with those of the Council.

WHO CAN RAISE A PETITION?

Anybody within the County Borough can create a petition and a step by step guide as to the creation of a petition can be found in the below sections of this guidance document.

A valid petition **must have** the following criteria:

- **A lead petitioner** (the person who creates the petition in the first instance)
- Include a clear and concise **statement of the concern**. The wording must be set out in full on each page where signatures are asked for. The Petition will be returned if the wording is unclear.
- Provide detail of any **resulting action** that is wished to be required by the Council upon receipt of the petition;
- **Signatories** - Petitions may be signed by people of all ages but signatories **must live within** the County Borough. Therefore the petition should include the Petitioners' Name, Address, Postcode & valid e-mail if appropriate.
- In line with standard practice, a petition created through the Council petitions platform will remain open for 42days. If an alternative timescale is required, then please contact the Council on the details provided above.

LEAD PETITIONER

The name and contact details of the person that started the Petition (Lead Petitioner) is required, to allow contact between the Council and the Lead Petitioner. Only the Lead Petitioner will be contacted in relation to the Petition. The contact details of the Lead Petitioner will not be placed on the website.

If a Lead Petitioner is not identified from a paper petition that is received then contact will be made (where possible) with signatories to the Petition to agree who should act as the Lead Petitioner.

PAPER PETITIONS

Appendix 1 of this document provides a bilingual Petitions template for any paper petition.

Alternatively, copies of templates can be made available on request from the Council Headquarters at a small charge for printing.

The Council will accept hybrid versions of a petition – the exact same petition in both paper and electronic form to allow a petition to be as accessible to all.

Completed Paper petitions can be received by the Council, either through post or handed into the Council Headquarters at the address provided on page 2 of this document.

Alternatively, petitions can be handed to your local Elected Member for them to present to a Council meeting on your behalf.

Petitions can be created in the language choice of the Lead Petitioner. In respect of petitions created online through the Council website, a version of the petition will be presented on both the English and Welsh version of the website, in line with the Council's Welsh Language standards. The availability of the translated petition will not delay the publishing of your petition on the Council webpage.

If a hybrid petition is received (electronic and paper based) a pdf document outlining the number of signatories received on the papers version will be attached to the electronic petition, to provide a clear and transparent view of the petition.


E-PETITIONS

The Council website provides an area for Lead Petitioners to create a petition in the format required by the Council. This page is bilingual and can be accessed via both the English and Welsh version of the website.

A link to the pages can be found [here](#).

Or can be found on the 'Council' section of the website / Committees and Meetings. A tab marked 'ePetitions' can be found in the list to the right.

Once on the Petitions page a number of options are available:

- [Submit a new ePetition](#)
- [Browse all current and completed e-petitions](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS feed](#) 

Please note that to submit / create a petition, the Lead Petitioner must first create an account on the Council website or sign into the account if they have already registered. This registration purely allows you access to the system to create a petition. It also allows us to validate details for those creating and signing a petition, such as ensuring residents live within the County Borough. Further functionality in using the Council website (such as receiving notifications and updates is available once registered, but only ***if you choose*** to select such notifications)

Further details in respect of registration can be found through this [link](#).

If you have previously registered, please enter your username and password:

- username would be your email address
- Password - You would have been asked to submit a password during original registration. If you have forgotten please click on forgotten password to select a new password.

REGISTERING AN ACCOUNT ON THE COUNCIL WEBSITE

If you haven't already registered please click the link above the log on boxes entitled **'Register as a new User'**.

Here you will be asked to complete a short registration, providing detail such as a valid name and email address

[Logon](#) > [Register](#)

Register as a new user

To register please fill in this form and click Register

Fields marked with an ' * ' are mandatory.

*First name:

*Last name:

*Your email:

Your password must contain eight or more characters, including at least one digit and at least one upper case character.

*Your password:

*Confirm password:

*Address line 1:

Address line 2:

*Town:

*County:

*Postcode:

Please tick any that apply to you:

- ☐ I live in the local area
- ☐ I work in the local area
- ☐ I study in the local area

Tick here if you would like to receive emails in plain text. ☐

[Register](#)

Calendar
Committees
Decisions
Petitions
Meetings
Outside bodies
Search documents
Councillors
Community Councils
MPs
What's New
Statistics
Work to do
Logon

TO CREATE A PETITION

The page will ask you to **'Log on to submit an e-petition'**.

Once you have entered these details please click **'Log On'**.

- E petition Submission - The Lead Petition will be asked to enter a title for the petition (There is no maximum number of characters for the title).

ePetition Submission

Please enter a title for your epetition. This should be a short descriptive title, for example: High street footpath condition. You will be able to enter more details in the next step.

Title:

Once you are happy with your title choice please click **'continue'**.

Matching Petitions - Please note that if a petition of a similar title is already in existence then the system will highlight these petitions, asking you to check that you are not submitting a duplicate petition. If you believe that your petition is a new item then please press continue and proceed to the next steps of creation.

Matching Petitions

The following ePetition have been identified as possibly dealing with the same issues as your proposed one. Please review them and only continue if your ePetition covers a new area.

[Pedestrian Crossing Request](#)

If your ePetition is not covered by any of the above please click Continue, otherwise please Cancel.

Request an Epetition - This page allows the Lead petitioner to enter more detail regarding the petition. This is where the statement of concern should be provided as well as the resulting action required. (There is no maximum number of characters within this text box).

* Rhagor o fanylion am eich e-ddeiseb: / More details about your ePetition:



Finish

Once you have finalised your content please press

Once finished you will be provided with an email to confirm your submission.

ePetitions created through websites other than the Councils' can be submitted provided they meet the Council's ePetitions criteria.

NEXT STEPS

APPROVING YOUR EPETITION

Upon receipt of your request to submit an ePetition, the Council's Democratic Services team will consider the following requirements:

- That the petition does not duplicate a current live petition submitted in relation to the same matter.
- That it does not repeat a Petition received within the previous six months, whether the Lead Petitioner is the same in each instance
- That the Petitions contains a clear statement of action.
- That the statement and required actions are within the control / responsibility of the Council
- It does not contains language which is offensive, intemperate, or provocative. This not only includes obvious profanities, swear words and insults, but any language which a reasonable person would regard as offensive;
- It does not contain potentially false or potentially defamatory statements;
- It does not refer to a case that's active in the UK courts;
- It does not contain material that is prohibited from being published by an order of a court or a body or person with similar power;
- It does not accuse an identifiable person or organisation of a crime;
- It does not contain material that could be confidential or commercially sensitive;
- It could not cause personal distress or loss;
- It does not name individual Officers or Members of the Council;
- It would not require the expenditure of a disproportionate amount of time, money, or effort to prepare the answer
- It does not name family members of elected representatives or Officers of the Council;
- It's is not an advert, spam, or promotes a specific product or service;
- It's content is not nonsense or a joke;
- It does not concern an issue for which a petition is not the appropriate channel. That includes: correspondence about a personal issue and petitions which ask for someone to be given a job, lose their job or resign, or which call for a vote of no confidence.
- That the petition does not relate to a statutory consultation process or a decision subject to a public consultation process (Petition relating to such matters will be

received and considered as part of those arrangements and presented to the decision makers to inform such decisions)

- That the petition is essentially freedom of information requests, observations, complaints or compliments. Such “petitions” will be forwarded to the appropriate service for a suitable response.

If any amendments are necessary (due to accuracy of the statements provided in the context or the naming of an individual), then the Democratic Services Team will contact the Lead petitioner to discuss any potential amendments.

Once approved the petition will be published on the Council website under the petitions page.

If your petition is rejected, 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. Unless the rejected petition is:

- defamatory, libellous or illegal in another way;
- about a case that is active in the UK courts or about something that a court has issued an injunction over;
- offensive or extreme;
- confidential or likely to cause personal distress; or
- a joke, an advert or nonsense.

Notification of the rejection will also be provided to the Lead petitioner.

If the Council rejects your Petition or you feel that the Council has not dealt with your Petition properly, please contact Democratic Services on the contact details listed on 2.

The decision by Democratic Services in respect of the status of a petition is final.

PROMOTING YOUR EPETITION:

While the Council hosts ePetitions on its website, it's the responsibility of the lead petitioner to promote their ePetition. This can be done through sharing of the Council website [link](#).

SIGNING OF YOUR EPETITION

Anyone who lives in the County Borough can sign the petition.

Your petition can be found on the Council's petitions page – a link to the page can be found [here](#).

To sign a petition, signatories must register on the Council website, as detailed about to allow for verification purposes. Details of registration can be found on page 7 of this document.

Signatories can choose to sign either the Welsh or English version of the e-petition.

Signatories will need to click on the link '***Browse all current and completed e-petitions***'

Any live petitions will be made available on this page.

Current ePetitions

An e-Petition is a petition which collects signatures online. This allows petitions and supporting information to be made available to a potentially much wider audience than a traditional paper based petition.


E-Petitions are part of the Council's ongoing commitment to listening to and acting on the views of the public.

For assistance in submitting or signing an e-Petition, please view Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's guidance [here](#)

Alternatively, completed paper petitions can be received by the Council, either through post or handed into the Council Headquarters.

[Click here](#) to download a paper petition template.

Select an earlier date range below to find completed e-Petitions and responses from the Council.

- [Submit a new ePetition](#)
- [Browse all current and completed e-petitions](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS feed](#) 

ePetitions				
Title	✦ Respondents	✦ Deadline to sign by	✦ Signed?	✦

Signatories should click on the Petition relevant to them.

Please note that a person cannot sign the same petition twice using the same registered account/email address.

Click 'sign ePetition':

[Current ePetitions](#) > [Petition](#)

ePetition details

Test 08.10.24

- [Sign ePetition](#)
- [Browse all current ePetitions](#)

Tick the box to consent to the Council contacting you regarding the petition and then click 'sign'.

Please note that the Council will only send you an email to update you on the next steps regarding the e-Petition.

ePetition

Test 08.10.24

Rydym ni sydd wedi llofnodi isod yn deisebu'r cyngor i | We the undersigned petition the council to

Test

I, agree with the above statement.

with the above statement.

I consent to the council contacting me regarding this petition:



Cancel

Sign

Test 08.10.24

Thank you for signing the petition.

One person has signed this ePetition.

[Continue](#)

You will not receive notification that you have signed an e-Petition but the system will advise if you have already signed by checking the list of open e-Petitions:

ePetitions				
Title	✚ Respondents ✚	Deadline to sign by ✚	Signed?	✚
Test 08.10.24	1	19/11/2024	Already signed	

The website will not divulge the names and address of the signatories to the petition, it will simply show a running total of signatories, in compliance with the Council's GDPR and data protection requirements. The councils policy in relation to these matters are linked on the Petitions page.

COMPLETION OF YOUR EPETITION:

When the ePetition concludes, online signing will cease, and the list of signatories will be compiled by Democratic Services.

The Council reserves the right to verify signatories as required. Petitioners should ensure that a valid address and postcode is included for all Petitioners that relates to a home address. These details will be considered when identifying if there are enough signatories from people who live in RCT Council area to trigger the various threshold responses as indicated below.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO A PETITION ONCE SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL?

Once the Council has received a petition it will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.

The Council's response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it, but may include one or more of the following:

Threshold information:

- **Tier 1** = For those petitions that include 1-500 signatures the Council's petitions scheme provides that a Response from the relevant Director / Head of Service is provided to the Lead Petitioner.
- **Tier 2** = For those petitions that include over 500+ signatures the Council's petition scheme provides that a response from the relevant Cabinet Member is provided and that and publication of this response is made available on the dedicated Council webpage.
- **Tier 3** = For those petitions that include over 1000 signatures (whether hybrid or in a standalone format) . The Council's petition scheme provides the same as tier 2, but with a petition being referenced for information only on a Council agenda. When noting petitions, Council may determine the referral of the matter to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

If a petition exceeds 1000 signatures but does not capture all of the petition's requirements (i.e address information is not provided to confirm that the signatory is a resident of RCTCBC) then such a petition would automatically receive a tier 2 response.

The Council will provide clear direction to the Lead Petitioner as to the threshold the completed petition has achieved and the next course of action.

Further guidance in respect of petitions noted at Council or referred to Scrutiny (Tier 3 responses) is available [here](#).

[Petition Scheme](#)

[Public Participation Strategy](#)

Petitions relating to live planning applications will continue to be dealt with under the current planning petitions process and will not be included in the process identified above.

Any Petition that is a duplicate or near duplicate of another petition that the Council has already received will not normally be considered within a 6-month period although Officers will exercise their discretion in individual cases. It is advised that details of previous Petitions are checked on the website at the start of your Petition.

Petitions received during a public consultation will be included within the consultation process and will not be subject to the process contained within the petitions scheme.

WHAT CAN MY PETITION ACHIEVE?

When you submit a Petition to the Council it can have positive outcomes that lead to change and inform debate. It can bring an issue to the attention of the Council and show strong public approval or disapproval of something which the Council is doing. Consequently, 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.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER WAYS FOR THE PUBLIC'S VIEWS TO BE HEARD?

The Council are committed to involving residents and other stakeholders in the democratic process, which is echoed through the Council's public participating strategy. We welcome any engagement and feedback regarding the work, aims and objectives of the Council.

Some of the other ways in which the public may have their say include:

Contacting a local County Councillor

Making a complaint through the [Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure](#)

[Addressing Council / Cabinet or a Scrutiny Committee](#)

[Contribute to statutory and non-statutory consultations.](#)

PRIVACY POLICY & GDPR

The details you give us are needed to validate your support but will not be published on the website. This is the same information required for a paper petition. The Council will keep this information for 5 years. After that time, it will be safely and securely destroyed.

Petitions Scheme - Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
<i>Cabinet Portfolio Holder</i>	Each Cabinet Member is allocated personal portfolios of responsibility, to act as corporate “champions” in pursuing major cross-cutting development themes across all Council services and areas of activity.
<i>Cease</i>	Come to an end
<i>Commercially Sensitive Information</i>	Data that is unique to the company and not already publicly accessible
<i>Confidential</i>	Meant to be kept secret and not told to or shared with other people
<i>Council Business Unit</i>	A team of Council Officers, who support the effective management of Council meetings
<i>Data Protection Act</i>	The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK’s implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
<i>Defamatory</i>	Intended to harm somebody by saying or writing bad or false things about them
<i>Discretion</i>	The freedom to decide what should be done in a situation
<i>Disproportionate</i>	Too large or too small when compared with something else
<i>Duplicate</i>	To make an exact copy of something
<i>Elected Member</i>	A Councillor who sits on, votes in, or is a Member of, a Council
<i>E-Petition</i>	An electronic petition which collects signatures online
<i>Exceed</i>	To be greater in number or size
<i>Expenditure</i>	The act of spending or using money; an amount of money spent
<i>Freedom of Information (FOI)</i>	The freedom of a person or people to publish and have access to information
<i>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</i>	A European Union regulation on information privacy in the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA).

<i>Hybrid</i>	A product of mixing two or more different things
<i>Injunction</i>	An official order given by a court that demands that something must or must not be done
<i>Intemperate</i>	Showing a lack of control
<i>Lead Petitioner</i>	A person who presents a petition to an authority in respect of a particular cause
<i>Libel / Libellous</i>	A false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation
<i>Member of the Executive</i>	The Cabinet, comprising the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Members. The Cabinet is responsible for policy making in Rhondda Cynon Taf and takes many of the major decisions on the way the Council serves its residents
<i>Motion</i>	Proposal for a business item to be discussed and voted upon at a Council meeting
<i>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</i>	This Committee co-ordinates the work of the four Scrutiny Committees and is responsible for approving the Work Programmes developed by the three thematic scrutiny committees to ensure a deliverable, co-ordinated and outcome focussed schedule of work programmes. Where there are matters that fall within the remit of more than one Scrutiny Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022 - 2027 Committee will determine which Committee has responsibility for its review.
<i>Petition</i>	A formal written request, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority in respect of a particular cause
<i>Politically Controversial Content</i>	Intense disagreement relating to politics
<i>Profanity</i>	Blasphemous or obscene language
<i>Proper Officer</i>	An Officer appointed by the Council to discharge a particular function as set out in section 270(3) of the Local Government Act 1972
<i>Provocative</i>	Causing anger or another strong reaction, especially deliberately
<i>Regulatory Committees</i>	The Council's Regulatory Committees are appointed by the Council and carry out specific functions given to them under delegated powers

<i>School Organisation Code</i>	The School Organisation Code is a set of requirements and statutory guidance that relevant bodies must follow in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code is issued by the Welsh Ministers and applies to relevant bodies such as the Welsh Ministers, local authorities, governing bodies, and other promoters
<i>Signatory</i>	A person, a country or an organization that has signed an official agreement
<i>Statutory Consultation</i>	The legal requirement to consult on a proposal
<i>Threshold</i>	The level at which something starts to happen or have an effect
<i>Validation</i>	The action of checking or proving the accuracy of something

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Contact Details For more information and advice, or to discuss
a potential Petition, please contact:

Democratic Services:

The Head of Democratic Services

Council Business Unit, Third Floor office

2 Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH

or email the Council Business Unit:

councilbusinessunit@rctcbc.gov.uk



RHONDDA CYNON TAF