

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 6 October 2014

Report to Cabinet 8 October 2014

Petitions Scheme

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services LDS/088

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider whether any changes should be made to the Petitions Scheme following the repeal of the Localism Act 2011 of the requirement (under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009) to have a Petitions Scheme (including an e-petitions facility).
- 1.2 The Council's Petitions Scheme approved by Full Council on 21 July 2010 was based on a model scheme since withdrawn by the Government. It enables anyone who lives, works or studies within Crawley, including under 18s, to organise or sign a petition on any matters for which the Council has responsibility or is able to influence other than those matters specifically excluded under the scheme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider the report and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

- 2.2 To the Cabinet

The Cabinet is asked to recommend to Full Council to:

- a) endorse the retention of a Petition Scheme and e-petition facility and consider and approve the changes proposed to the Council's Petition Scheme (including e-petitions facility).
- b) instruct the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to amend the Council's Constitution to reflect any changes to the Petition Scheme, including the e-petition facility.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 The statutory duty to have a petitions scheme (including an e-petition facility) and the Statutory Guidance has been repealed by The Localism Act 2011. Retention of both is now at the discretion of the Council.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Council retains a Petitions Scheme as it sends a clear message to the general public that the Council takes their views seriously. It is an important part of the democratic process. It also clarifies for the public what the Council will do and the steps that Officers have to take when it receives a petition.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Local Democracy and Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 introduced a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities to have a Petitions Scheme including an e-petition facility for handling petitions. The duty to have a Petitions Scheme was effective from June 2010 and the duty to have an Electronic Petition facility was effective from December 2010.
- 4.2 The Council's Petitions Scheme was approved by Full Council on 21 July 2010 following consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet in June 2010.
- 4.3 The Council's scheme was based on a Model Scheme and the requirements in the 2009 Act have since been repealed. It enables anyone who lives, works or studies within Crawley, including under 18s, to organise or sign a petition on any matters for which the Council has responsibility or is able to influence other than those matters specifically excluded under the Scheme.
- 4.4 The Council welcomes petitions, which can help to inform debate and result in changes which can have a positive impact on local people, for example, by:
- bringing an issue to the attention of the Council for it to consider
 - providing another way for local people to let us know their views and demonstrate their strong support for or opposition to something that the Council is doing.
- 4.5 The Council's current scheme covers 3 types of petitions;
- 'ordinary petitions' – those which must be signed by at least 50 people. Depending on action taken these will be reported to the next convenient meeting of the Cabinet, Council, Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, referred to the Cabinet Member or a response sought from an Officer.
 - 'petitions requiring debate' – petitions which contain 1,000 signatures or more will be debated at Full Council
 - 'petitions to hold Council Officers to account' – petitions which call for evidence from a senior Council Officer and have at least 500 signatures
- There are excluded matters on which petitions are not accepted, for example Planning and Licensing applications. Furthermore, it should be noted that whilst a petition will be debated at Full Council, the petition will be referred elsewhere i.e. the Council will decide which decision maker the Petition be referred to.
- 4.6 In June 2010, when recommending the Council to approve the new Petitions Scheme, the Cabinet also agreed that the operation of the Petitions Scheme be kept under review and be reported back to the General Purposes Committee. An update

report to General Purposes Committee was submitted to its meeting on 29 September 2014.

5. Summary of Paper Petitions and E-Petitions Received Since the Introduction of the Petitions Scheme

5.1 Of the 14 petitions received:

- a) 7 petitions (6 of these had 1,000+ signatures) triggered debates at Full Council. Of these:
 - 1 was referred to a Working Group (Three Bridges Development)
 - 1 was referred to the Cabinet Member (Three Bridges Multi Use Games Area (MUGA))
 - 3 were referred to the Cabinet (Cemetery Site at Ewhurst Playing Fields, futures use of 'Leacroft' 117 lfield Road, 'Save our Market')
 - 1 petition was noted but the action requested within that Petition not taken (Bedroom Tax) and
 - 1 was considered at Cabinet and a further Full Council meeting as it was also part of the Submission Draft Local Plan (Bewbush West and Breezehurst Drive Playing Fields) although it only had 284 signatures.
- b) The 4 petitions with 50-500 signatures were dealt with as follows:
 - Ely Close Affordable Housing Development was considered by the Cabinet
 - Opposition to a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) was referred to WSCC & dealt with under their Petitions Scheme
 - 2 (both on Tilgate Affordable Housing Developments) were passed to service departments to be dealt with as part of consultation arrangements ongoing at the time
- c) The 3 petitions submitted with less than the minimum threshold of 50 signatures were passed to service departments to look into (2 as part of the consultations on The Hawth, and 1 on private land maintenance).

5.3 E-petitions potentially will enable the petition and supporting information to be made available to a much wider audience which may help get more people to sign the petition. The Council previously had an e-petition facility provided by Inovem which went live in March 2011. However, Crawley has since withdrawn from this facility essentially for the following reasons:

- i) the legal requirement to have an e-petitions scheme had been repealed;
- ii) to save an annual maintenance cost of £1,450;
- iii) our e-forms provider, Firmstep, could provide an e-petitions scheme free of charge.

5.4 Furthermore, since the introduction of the scheme, only 3 e-petitions had been submitted via Inovem, but none of these went live to invite on-line signatures. 1 was rejected and the Principal Petitioner referred to WSCC's e-petition scheme because it was a highways matter, 1 was withdrawn by the Principal Practitioner after the service officer provided a response and 1 was withdrawn by the Petitions Officer after the Principal Petitioner failed to provide their full contact details and to respond to further requests to correct their petitions statement which gave misleading information on the Council's proposals for Tilgate Park.

- 5.5 Some petitioners have sought to use an independent e-petitions facility such as 'Change.org'. This is a website offering a large, open petition platform. However, such facilities are sometimes not consistent with the Council's Petitions Scheme and we cannot always easily verify that the signatories live, work or study within Crawley.
- 5.6 Nevertheless, 4 e-petitions directed at the Council have been registered on Change.org although only 2 have been submitted to the Council to date. The two e-petitions actually received (Ewhurst Playing Fields Cemetery and 117 Ifield Road) were also received in paper format and subsequently considered at Full Council and referred to Cabinet for consideration. Community Services and Democratic Services are currently liaising with the Principal Petitioner on their request for streetboarding facilities. The fourth e-petition, seeking to save Lowfield Heath Church, currently has less than 50 signatures.
- 5.7 The Council has been working with its e-forms provider (Firmstep) to implement a new e-petitions facility providing an active system for creating, signing and viewing petitions online will shortly. This e-petitions facility can be reconfigured/redesigned to accommodate and be consistent with the Council's Petitions scheme and any changes thereto can be made available fairly quickly. The new e-petitions facility had not gone live before this report was finalised. However, it will be live before the OSC & Cabinet consider this item on 6 & 8 October 2014 respectively. The new e-petitions facility will be clearly visible and easily accessible on the Council's website.

6. Review of the Petition Scheme

- 6.1 The original Petitions Scheme was based on the Model Scheme and following repeal, a review has been undertaken of the petitions received to date and how they were dealt with (as outlined in paragraphs 5.1 & 5.4 above). Based on this review to be considered by the General Purposes Committee on 29 September 2014, various changes to the Petitions Scheme are now put to the Cabinet to recommend to Full Council and, subject thereto, the Constitution will need to be amended accordingly.
- 6.2 The proposed changes to the Petitions Scheme are outlined below. The views of the General Purposes Committee will be reported at the OSC and Cabinet meetings on 6 & 8 October respectively.
- 6.3 Petitions with over 500 signatures seeking to hold Senior Council Officers to account will no longer automatically trigger debate at the Overview & Scrutiny Commission (OSC) alone. Instead, the threshold for petitions seeking to hold officers to account will be reduced from 500 to 50 signatures and all such petitions will trigger debate at whichever or with whoever has the authority to take decisions on the matter i.e. either with the Cabinet, Committee or Sub-Committee or referred to the Cabinet Member. This change is proposed for the following reasons:
- i) the OSC has no decision making powers as such and will only be able to make recommendations. This can cause delays in resolving the matter and also can be confusing to and frustrating for petitioners;
 - ii) petitions can still be referred to the OSC for further consideration following the initial debate by the Cabinet or appropriate decision-maker;
 - iii) no petitions seeking to hold Senior Council Officers to account have been received to date;
 - iv) the reduction in the threshold for petitions seeking to hold officers to account from 500 to 50 signatures will simplify the scheme by having 2 main thresholds (50-999; 1,000+) rather than 3.

- 6.3 Petitions requiring debate (with 1000 signatures or more) will continue to be debated at the next Full Council (unless senior officer to give evidence or less than 10 days notice given). As under the current scheme, potentially the Full Council may continue to consider some petitions with 50-999 signatures where it has the authority to take decisions on the matter.
- 6.4 The Council's Petition Scheme includes a right to request a review of the steps taken in response to a petition if the Principal Petitioner believes that the petition has not been dealt with properly. The review is currently to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission which has considered just 1 review since 2010 (on the Three Bridges Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)). It is not a right of appeal as such and, in effect, the petition could be considered to be an appeal against a Council decision to do or not do something. Therefore it is officers' recommendation that the opportunity to request a review of the steps taken in response to a petition be removed and if the Principal Petitioner considers that the Council failed to act adequately in its response to the petition they should submit a complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.
- 6.5 The now repealed legislation contained an obligation to have a debate at Full Council meetings in response to a petition that contained the required number of signatures. However, the Council could be restricted in its ability to debate in order not to compromise ongoing consultations. Therefore there is a risk of disappointment from petitioners who were expecting to witness a robust debate and resolution of their concerns. It is recommended that petitions relating to a public consultation will be dealt with as part of the consultation and this guidance be included within the scheme.
- 6.6 It is usually preferred that petitions be received either in paper or electronic form as hybrid petitions can be more difficult to administer, check and verify. However, it is proposed that hybrid petitions should now be accepted although this provision may need to be reviewed if it causes significant difficulties.
- 6.7 A copy of the Council's current Petitions Scheme showing the proposed amendments (i.e. deleted wording is shown as crossed through; additional wording is shown in bold) are set out in **Appendix A**. It is proposed that the additional flowcharts containing the key points for the petition (**Appendix B**) and e-petition facility (**Appendix C**) be incorporated into the petitions scheme and replace the flowchart currently appended to the Petitions Scheme.

7. Implications

- 7.1 The Petitions Scheme and E-petition Scheme have been delivered with existing staff resources and it is expected that this can continue. However, it will be reviewed if there is a significant increase in petitions received.

8. Background Papers

Report [LDS/21](#) on the Petitions Scheme considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission (and [minutes](#) - 14 June 2010) and Cabinet (and [minutes](#) - 16 June 2010) [Minutes](#) of meeting of Full Council held on 21 July 2010
Report [LDS/090](#) on the Petitions Scheme to 29 September 2014 General Purposes Committee
[Crawley BC's Petitions webpage](#)

Contact Officer: Steve Lappage, *Democratic Services Manager*
Direct Line: 01293 438549

CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL PETITIONS SCHEME

Introduction

The Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns, Members of the public can submit petitions on the following:-

- Issues relating to the Borough Council's responsibilities
- Anything relating to an improvement in the economic, social or environmental well being of the Council's area to which any of the partner authorities could contribute

The Council will respond to all petitions it receives. We will be as flexible as we can when handling your petition so that it is considered quickly and in the most appropriate way.

Essentially there are ~~32~~ types of petitions:

1. "Ordinary petitions"
Petitions which contain ~~These must be signed by at least 50-999 signatures~~ people, they are petitions which do not come within any of the following specific types. and also all petitions with over 50 signatures to hold officers to account which call for evidence from a senior Council officer will be reported to whoever or whichever has the authority to take a decision on the matter e.g. the Cabinet; Cabinet Member; Officer; Committee or Sub-Committee.
2. "Petitions requiring debate **at Full Council**"
 Petitions which contain 1,000 signatures or more will be debated by Full Council **unless it is a petition to hold officers to account which calls for evidence from a senior Council officer in which case it will be reported to whoever or whichever has the authority to take a decision on the matter e.g. the Cabinet; Cabinet Member; Officer; Committee or Sub-Committee.**
- ~~3. "Petitions to hold Council Officers to account"
 Petitions which call for evidence from a senior Council officer and have at least 500 signatures will trigger that response.~~

How do I Submit a Petition?

- Petitions can be paper and/or electronic

All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement from the Council within 10 working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition. We will treat something as a petition if it is a communication which is signed by or sent to us on behalf of a number of people, **if it is identified as being a petition** or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition **but which we consider is not as part of an ongoing or statutory consultation process.** A petition is defined as a communication in writing or using an electronic facility which is signed by the appropriate number of qualifying persons.

Paper petitions can be sent to:

Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Petitions Officer)
 Crawley Borough Council
 Town Hall

The Boulevard
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 1UZ

Or be created, signed and submitted [online](#).

Petitions can also be presented to a meeting of the Council. These meetings take place on a 9 weekly basis, dates and times can be found on our website. If you would like to present your petition to the Council, or would like your Councillor or someone else to present it on your behalf please contact Steve Lappage, Democratic Services Manager on 01293 438549 at least 10 working days before the meeting and they will talk you through the process.

What are the Guidelines for Submitting a Petition?

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take.
- The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition (the address can be an address where the signatory lives, works or studies).

Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including an address, for the Principal Petitioner. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. The contact details of the Principal Petitioner will not be placed on the website. If the petition does not identify a Principal Petitioner, we will contact signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the Principal Petitioner.

Paper petitions must include a signature and the signatory's name and address this can be the 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](#).

Petitions which we consider to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate, **part of a consultation process or repeat petition which is substantially the same as one presented within the last 6 months** will not be accepted.

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 which will apply.

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

Who Can Submit a Petition?

Anyone who lives, works or studies in the Borough of Crawley including under 18s may sign, organise and submit a petition.

What Will The Council Do When It Receives My Petition?

An acknowledgement will be sent to the Principal Petitioner within 10 working days of receiving the petition. It will let them know what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again. It will also be published on our website.

If we can do what your petition asks for, the petition will be closed. If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a Council debate, or a senior officer giving evidence, then the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.

~~Depending on the subject matter your petition will be submitted either to the Council, the Cabinet, one of the Council's Regulatory Committees (excluding planning and licensing) or the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission.~~

If a petition applies to a consultation process which is being carried out by the Council, an acknowledgement will confirm that the petition will need to be considered as part of the consultation process and details of the department or lead officer will be provided.

~~There are two exceptions to this:~~

- ~~▪ If your petition contains more than 1,000 signatories then it must be debated by Full Council~~
- ~~▪ If your petition is asking for a senior officer to give evidence then it will be at a meeting of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission provided it contains at least 500 signatures.~~

If the petition applies to a planning or licensing application, is a statutory petition (for example requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor), or on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal or a separate complaints process. These petitions will not be accepted. If you require information on any of these matters you should in the first instance contact the:

Council's Democratic Services Manager:
Crawley Borough Council
Town Hall
The Boulevard
Crawley,
West Sussex,
RH10 1UZ

Tel: 01293 438549

E-mail: steve.lappage@crawley.gov.uk.

If we decide that a petition is not acceptable then we will let the Principal Petitioner know our reasons. If the petition relates to the responsibilities of one of our partner authorities then the petition will be forwarded to that body for them to deal with within 10 working days of its receipt unless the petition relates to an improvement in the economic social or environmental well being of the Borough. In those cases the petitions will be considered under the Council's scheme.

~~We will not take action on any petition which we consider to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and will explain the reason for this in our acknowledgement of the petition.~~

To ensure that people know what we are doing in response to the petitions we receive, the details of all the petitions submitted to us will be published on our website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate. Whenever possible we will also publish all correspondence relating to the petition (all personal details will be removed). When you sign an e-petition you can elect to receive this information by email. We will not send you anything which is not relevant to the e-petition you have signed.

How Will The Council Respond To Petitions?

Our 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:

- Taking the action requested in the petition
- Considering the petition at a Council meeting
- Holding an inquiry into the matter
- Undertaking research into the matter
- Holding a public meeting
- Carrying out a consultation
- Holding a meeting with petitioners
- Referring the petition for consideration by the Council's **Cabinet**, Overview and Scrutiny Commission* **or relevant Committee**
- Writing to the Principal Petitioner setting out our views about the request in the petition.

*The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is a Committee of Councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the Council – in other words, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has the power to hold the Council's decision makers to account.

In addition to these steps, the Council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition. ~~The table below gives some examples:~~

Petition Subject	Appropriate steps
Alcohol related crime and disorder	If your petition is about crime or disorder linked to alcohol consumption, the Council will, among other measures, consider the case for placing restrictions on public drinking in the area by establishing a designated public place order or, as a last resort, imposing an alcohol disorder zone. When an alcohol disorder zone is established the licensed premises in the area where alcohol related trouble is being caused are required to contribute to the costs of extra policing in that area. The Council's response to your petition will set out the steps we intend to take and the reasons for taking this approach.
Anti-social behaviour (ASB)	As the elected representative of your local area, as social landlord and licensing authority, the Council plays a significant role to play in tackling anti-social behaviour. The Council, in conjunction with our partners in the Safer Crawley Partnership have set out minimum services standards for responding to issues of anti-social behaviour, you can find more details about these standards here . When responding to petitions on ASB, we will consider in consultation with our local partners, all the options available to us including the wide range of powers and mechanisms we have to intervene as part of our role as a social landlord and licensing authority. For example, we will work with the neighbourhood policing team in the affected area to identify what action might be taken including what role CCTV might play, consider identifying a dedicated contact within the Council to liaise with the community and neighbourhood partners on issues of ASB in the area in question and, where appropriate, we will alert the Safer Crawley Partnership and Overview and Scrutiny Commission on the issues highlighted in the petition.
Under-performing health services	We will work with local health partners to consider the matter raised in the petition including, where appropriate, exploring what role the Clinical Commissioning Group Local Involvement Network might have in reviewing and feeding back on the issue (the LINK is run by local individuals and community groups and

Petition Subject	Appropriate steps
	independently supported – their role to find out what people want in terms of local health services, monitor those services and to use their powers to hold them to account). The West Sussex Health and Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also be alerted to the petition and where the matter is sufficiently or potentially serious, the issue will be referred to them to consider for review.

If your petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control (for example the local railway or hospital) we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The Council works with a large number of local partners and where possible will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with Council policy), then we will set out the reasons for this to you. You can find more information on the services for which the Council is responsible [here](#).

If your petition is about something that a different Council is responsible for we will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. This might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other Council, but could involve other steps. In any event we will always notify you of the action we have taken.

Full Council Debates

If a petition contains more than 1,000 signatures it will be debated by the Full Council unless it is a petition asking for a senior Council officer to give evidence at a public meeting. This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all Councillors can attend. The Council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. Petitions will not be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Council or at Extraordinary meetings of the Council. The Principal Petitioner will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 10 minutes, a maximum of 30 minutes will be allowed at each meeting for considering petitions. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant Committee. Where the issue is one on which the Cabinet are required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The Principal Petitioner will receive written confirmation of this decision. The confirmation will also be published on our website.

Officer Evidence

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. For example, your petition may ask a senior Council officer to explain progress on an issue, or to explain the advice given to elected members to enable them to make a particular decision.

If your petition contains at least 500 signatures, the senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of the Council's ~~Overview and Scrutiny Commission~~ **Cabinet, Full Council, Committee or Sub-Committee or referred to the Cabinet Member - whichever has the power/authority to take decisions on the matter**. Senior Council staff who can be called to give evidence are:

- Chief Executive (Lee Harris)
- Director of Transformation and Housing (Peter Browning)

- Director of Community and Partnership Services (Phil Rogers)
- Director of Development and Resources (David Covill)
- Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Ann-Maria Brown)
- Transformation Manager (Carrie Burton)
- Head of People and Technology (Lucasta Grayson)
- Strategic Projects Co-ordinator (Peter Allen)
- (Interim) Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits (Karen Hayes)
- Head of Strategic Housing and Planning (Diana Maughan)
- Head of Planning and Environmental Services (Angela Tanner)
- Head of Crawley Homes (Karen Dodds)
- ~~Strategic Planning Co-ordinator (Ted Beresford-Knox)~~
- Head of Community Services (Chris Harris)
- Head of Partnership Services (Nigel Sheehan)
- Community Development Manager (Lindsay Adams)

Petitions to hold an officer to account will be reported to the next convenient meeting of the ~~Overview and Scrutiny Commission~~, **Cabinet, relevant Committee or Sub-Committee or to the Cabinet Member or another more senior officer - whichever or whoever has the authority to take a decision on the matter.**

In advance of the Committee meeting, the Principal Petitioner will be invited to submit a list of questions which s/he would like put to the officer at the meeting. These questions will be provided to the Chair of the ~~Overview and Scrutiny Commission~~ **Cabinet or relevant Committee or Cabinet Member**, who will decide whether they are appropriate, and to the officer concerned, in advance of the meeting (5 working days before the meeting). Please contact Steve Lappage, Democratic Services Manager on 01293 438549 or ~~Chris Pedlow, Scrutiny Support Officer on 01293 438697~~ in advance of the meeting. You should be aware that the **Cabinet or relevant Committee** ~~Overview and Scrutiny Commission~~ 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 ~~Commission~~ **Cabinet or Committee** may also decide to call the relevant Councillor to attend the meeting. Committee members will ask the question at this meeting.

At the meeting of the ~~Overview and Scrutiny Commission~~ **Cabinet or Committee** the Chair will invite the Principal Petitioner to address the ~~Commission~~ **Cabinet or Committee** for a maximum of 3 minutes on the issue.

E-petitions

The Council welcomes e-petitions which are created and submitted through our [website](#). E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions. The Principal Petitioner will need to register and provide us with their name, postal address and email address. You should also indicate how long you would like your petition to be open for signatures. Most petitions run for six months, but you can suggest a shorter or longer timeframe, up to a maximum of 12 months. Please contact Steve Lappage, Democratic Services Manager on 01293 438549 to agree a suitable period.

When you create an e-petition, it may take 10 working days before it is published online. This is because we have to check that the content of your petition is suitable before it is made available for signature.

If we feel we cannot publish your petition for some reason, we will contact you within this time to explain. You will be able to change and resubmit your petition if you wish. If you do not do this within 10 working days, a summary of the petition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published on the [website](#).

When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Petitions Officer). In the same way as a paper petition, you

will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days. If you would like to present your e-petition to a meeting of the Council, please contact Steve Lappage, Democratic Services Manager on 01293 438549 within ten working days of receipt of the acknowledgement.

How Do I 'Sign' an E-Petition?

Visit our [website](#) to view the e-petitions currently available for signature.

When you sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide your name, address, postcode, a valid email address and confirm that you live, work or study within the Borough of Crawley. The details will only be visible to the Principal Petitioner and those Council officers administering the e-petitions facility.

What Can I Do If I Feel My Petition Has Not Been Dealt With Properly?

If you feel ~~consider~~ that ~~we the Council have~~ **has** not dealt with your petition properly **and failed to act adequately in its response to the petition**, the Principal Petitioner **should submit a complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure (as set out in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution)** ~~has the right to request that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission Review the steps that the Council has taken in response to your petition. Any request for a Review must be made by notifying the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services of your intention to seek a Review within 20 working days of being notified of the authority's decision on the petition. It is helpful to everyone, and can improve the prospects for a Review if the Principal Petitioner gives a short explanation of the reasons why the Council's response is not considered to be adequate.~~

~~The Commission will endeavour 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. The Principal Petitioner will be invited to attend the meeting and address the Commission for up to 3 minutes on why he/she considers that the Authority's decision on the petition is inadequate. Should the Commission determine we have not dealt with your petition adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to the Council's Cabinet and arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the Full Council.~~

~~Once the appeal has been considered the Principal Petitioner will be informed of the result within 10 working days. The results of the Review will also be published on our website.~~

Petitions Which Will Not Be Reported

- Duplicate Petitions
Where more than one petition is received in time for a particular meeting, each supporting the same outcome on one matter, each Principal Petitioner will be treated as an independent Principal Petitioner, but only the Principal Petitioner of the first petition to be received will be invited to address the relevant meeting.
- Repeat Petitions
A petition will not normally be considered where they are received within 6 months of another petition being considered by the authority on the same matter.
- Rejected Petitions
Petitions will not be reported if in the opinion of the Petitions Officer, they are rude, offensive, defamatory, scurrilous or time-wasting, or are not related to something which is the responsibility of the authority, or over which the authority has some influence.

- **Consultations**

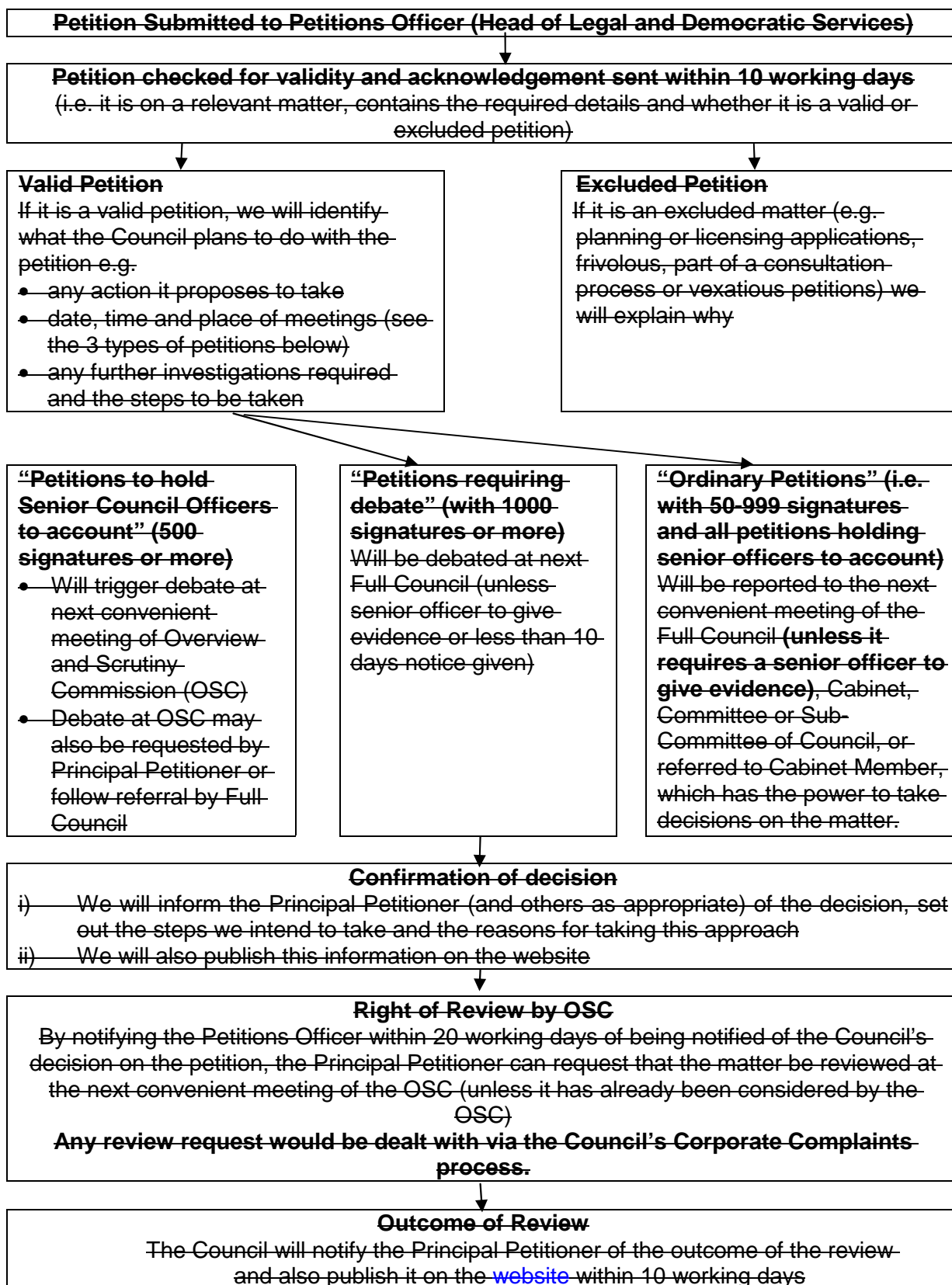
A petition will not be considered if it applies to a consultation process which is being carried out by the Council, an acknowledgement will confirm that the petition will need to be considered as part of the consultation process and details of the section or lead officer will be provided.

What Happens to an Ordinary Petition?

The Petitions Officer will arrange for each ordinary petition to be reported to the next convenient meeting of the Cabinet, Full Council or of a Committee or Sub-Committee of Council which has the power to take decisions on the matter.

Petitions Flowchart

Anyone who lives, works or studies within Crawley, including under 18s, can organise or sign a petition. The petition may be on any matters for which the Council has responsibility or which it is able to influence.



i) Follow guidance and use sample petitions & covering sheets on [petitions](#) webpage
 ii) Submit petition with signatures to Petitions Officer

i) Acknowledgement sent within 10 working days
 ii) Petition checked for validity
 iii) If we need to clarify any information we will contact you

Invalid
 If petition does not meet criteria, it will be returned to Principal Petitioner with an explanation why.

Valid
 i) We will identify what the Council plans to do with the petition and the steps to be taken
 e.g. which meeting it will be debated at.
 ii) We will publish details on the website.

“Petitions requiring debate” (with 1000 signatures or more) Will be debated at next Full Council (unless senior officer to give evidence or less than 10 days notice given)

“Ordinary Petitions” (at least 50 signatures)
 Depending on who has the authority to take decision on the matter, it will either
 i) be reported to the next convenient meeting of the Cabinet, Committee or Full Council
 ii) referred to the Cabinet Member
 ii) referred to an officer to respond

Confirmation of decision
 i) We will inform the Principal Petitioner of the decision, set out the steps we intend to take and the reasons for taking this approach
 ii) We will also publish this information on the website.

Right of Review
 If the Principal Petitioner considers that the Council has not dealt with their petition properly and failed to act adequately in its response to the petition, they should submit a complaint under the Council’s Complaints Procedure.

