

GWYNEDD COUNCIL



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council

Date of meeting:	1 December 2022
Title of Item:	Petitions Scheme
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Menna Jones
Contact Officer:	Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer and Ian Jones, Head of Democratic Services

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Full Council is asked to adopt the Petitions Scheme.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

Part 3 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 notes the need for Local Authorities to adopt a Petitions Scheme. The Cabinet is asked to approve it and recommend it to the full Council.

3. INTRODUCTION

A statutory requirement is placed on the Council to adopt a Petitions Scheme which notes how the Council will deal with petitions.

The Scheme must note:

- (a) How to submit a petition
- (b) How and by when the receipt of the petition will be acknowledged
- (c) Steps that can be taken in response
- (d) Circumstances when the Council can choose not to take any further steps in response
- (e) How and by when will the Council ensure that a response to the petition is available.

Petitions are one way for individuals, community groups and organisations to participate in the democratic process, by raising matters that are of concern to the public with the Council, and allowing Elected Members to consider the need for change.

This Scheme sets out the steps the Council will take when it receives a petition from individuals, community groups and organisations. It puts a process in place which addresses the requirement in the act, highlights how to proceed to submit

the petition and what can be expected in response.

The requirements in terms of submitting a valid petition is outlined and it is highlighted who may sign the petition and how the Council will confirm a valid petition. Valid petitions received will be published on the Council's website, including the subsequent actions.

It is highlighted that legal and statutory requirements of holding a consultation cycle or statutory response periods are operational in a few specific fields, such as Schools' Restructuring and the Planning fields and it is emphasised that no petition will be accepted outside those statutory arrangements.

4. Equality Act 2010

In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, due attention must be given to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) encourage good relations based on the protected characteristics. As a Petitions Scheme falls within the decisions that could be considered strategic, there is a duty to give due attention to act in a way that has been designed to reduce the inequalities that derive from "socio-economic" disadvantage. The attached impact assessment confirms that there are no specific impacts that would support any diversion from the recommendation.

5. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 involves improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at delivering the seven well-being goals, namely a prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal Wales with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language which is globally responsible. Given the context, the recommendations are in accordance with these duties.

6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

This Scheme was discussed by the Democratic Services Committee on the 15th of November, changes were made to the Scheme following their comments.

The Cabinet decided to recommend that the Full Council adopt this Petitions Scheme for the meeting that took place on the 22nd of November.

The Statutory Officers' observations

Monitoring Officer:

The recommendation is the outcome of the work of a Project Team of which I am a member. I am satisfied with the propriety of the recommendations and confirm the Legal context.

Head of Finance Department:

Introducing a Petition Scheme is one of the new requirements placed on the Council by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. I am satisfied that no financial commitment would directly arise from the decision sought and I have no objection to it.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Petitions Scheme

Appendix 2 – Equality Assessment