PETITION SCHEME

1. Overview

Petitioning is one way that individuals, community groups and organisations can

participate in the democratic process, by raising issues of public concern with the CJC and allowing Members to consider the need for change. It is acknowledged

that petitions can have positive outcomes that lead to change or inform debate. This petition scheme is made under s42 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Petitions may be submitted in Welsh or English, and the Petition Scheme is published bilingually.

2. Who Can Raise a Petition?

Anyone who lives, works, owns a business or studies in the CJC area can sign or submit a petition, including those under the age of 18. Anyone who lives in the area of a neighbouring Council may also sign or submit a petition IF they could reasonably be expected to be affected by the subject matter of the petition.

Petitions may be submitted on paper or electronically using an online petition system which meets the requirements of a valid petition, or a combination of the two.

3. Consideration of a Petition

3.1 A petition may be considered at a meeting of the CJC or by a sub-committee if the topic of the petition relates to the specific role of that sub-committee.

3.2 The Monitoring Officer or a person authorised by them will consider any petition submitted and determine if it is admissible based on the criteria for a valid petition set out in section 4 below. Any disputed or legal issues will also be referred to the Monitoring Officer.

3.3 In considering the petition, the CJC will consider the statutory and non-statutory guidance on democracy for principal councils, made under s44 of the Local Government and elections (Wales) Act 2021, in particular the Statutory Guidance on Petitions. The CJC is not required to comply with this guidance but will use it as a relevant benchmark.

4. Requirements of a Valid Petition

Lead Petitioner

4.1 All petitions require a lead petitioner who will act as the contact point

for the petition. The following are the requirements necessary for a lead petitioner:

4.1.1 The lead petitioner must be an individual who lives, works or studies within the CJC's area or an organisation based in the CJC area.

4.1.2 The lead petitioner's full home, work, or study postal address or the organisation's postal address, must be included and an email address or contact information to which any communications concerning the petition can be sent.

The Petition

4.2 The CJC will consider all petitions with at least 10 signatories that fall within the scope of this Scheme. Petitions can be submitted to the CJC either on paper or electronically, with the general requirements of the Scheme applying to both paper and e-petitions. The petition must:

4.2.1 contain a clear, short statement covering the subject of the petition. The petition will be returned if it is unclear;

4.2.2 call for CJC to take some specific action, for example: "We call on the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee to…." This must be repeated on every page of a paper petition;

4.2.3 provide the names and postal addresses of those signing the petition, including postcodes;

4.3 A suggested petition template is shown at Annex A to this Petitions Scheme.

4.4 Petitions must not contain:

4.4.1 Language which is offensive, intemperate or provocative. This not only includes obvious profanities, and insults, but any language which a reasonable person would regard as offensive;

4.4.2 Potentially false or potentially defamatory statements;

4.4.3 Information which is prohibited from being published by an order of a court or a body or person with similar power;

4.4.4 Material which is potentially confidential, commercially sensitive, or which may cause personal distress or loss;

4.4.5 Any commercial endorsement, promotion of any product, service or publication or statements that amount to advertisements;

4.4.6 The names of officials of public bodies, unless they are part of the senior management of those organisations;

4.4.7 The names of family members of elected representatives or officials of public bodies;

4.4.8 The names of individuals, or information where they may be identified, in relation to criminal charges; or

4.4.9 Issues for which a petition is not the appropriate channel (for example, correspondence about a personal issue or an issue subject to court proceedings).

Petitions that are Not Admissible under Scheme

4.5 The following are not admissible:

4.5.1 Petitions relating to anything the CJC is not responsible for;

4.5.2 Statutory petitions, or petitions relating to Local Authority Referendums which fall under the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions and Directions) (Wales) Regulations 2001, for which separate arrangements apply within relevant local authorities;

4.5.3 Petitions asking the CJC to adjudicate, arbitrate or mediate personal or staffing issues or commercial interests where this is the role of a court or tribunal;

4.5.4 Petitions on matters that are subject to legal proceedings in the courts;

4.5.5 Petitions on matters that are already subject to determination by an Ombudsman (or person with similar powers);

4.5.6 Petitions that are essentially freedom of information (FOI) requests, comments, compliments or complaints, which will be passed to the appropriate officer for a suitable response; or

4.5.7 Petitions which raise issues of possible CJC Member or employee misconduct. These need to be directed to their respective procedures. Complaints against CJC members should be directed to the Public Services Ombudsman, 1 Ffordd Yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, CF35 5LJ. Complaints against CJC employees should be directed to feedback@ambitionnorth.wales.

4.6 When a petition has been presented to the CJC, no further petition on a similar topic and seeking a similar outcome, shall be considered within six months of the date on which the petition was first considered or the petitioner heard.

Petition Signatories

4.7 An appropriate signatory is an individual who lives, works, owns a business or studies in the CJC area, or who lives in the area of a neighbouring Council and could reasonably be expected to be affected by the subject matter of the petition.

4.8 An individual can only sign a petition once. People must not sign both an online and a paper petition, and duplications may be removed if it is found that a petitioner has signed twice.

5. Submitting a Petition

5.1 Paper or electronic petitions which are to be considered by the CJC are to be submitted to the CJC's Monitoring Officer:

- By email to: Pwyllgorau@uchelgaisgogledd.cymru; or
- By post to: Democratic Services, Ambition North Wales, Government Buildings, Sarn Mynach, Llandudno Junction LL31 9RZ

6. How and when the CJC will Acknowledge Receipt of a Petition

6.1 Receipt of a paper petition or submission of an electronic petition will be acknowledged within 5 working days provided that the contact details of the lead petitioner are provided at the same time.

7. Confirming a Valid Petition

7.1 The Monitoring Officer or a person authorised by them will undertake initial checks to confirm that a submitted petition meets the requirements of the Scheme.

7.2 If a number of petitions are received on a similar topic with similar desired outcomes, only one lead petitioner will be able to present their petition to the CJC. The lead petitioner for each petition will be notified by the Monitoring Officer and requested to liaise with each other to consider options to amalgamate petitions and determine which lead petitioner will present the petition to the CJC. If agreement is not reached the petitioner with the largest number of signatures will have the right to present the petition to the CJC.

7.3 Any concerns regarding the validity of the petition will be raised with the Monitoring Officer.

7.4 If a petition is invalid the lead petitioner will be informed within 10 working days of receipt of the petition, why it cannot be progressed.

8. The Steps the CJC may take in Response to a Petition

8.1 A petition with 10 – 100 signatures will be referred to the Chief Executive to respond. A response will be provided to the lead petitioner within 20 working days of receipt.

8.2 A petition with 101 – 500 signatures will be referred to the Chair of the CJC to respond. A response will be provided to the lead petitioner within 20 working days of receipt.

8.3 A petition with more than 500 signatures will be referred to a meeting of the CJC.

8.4 Where a petition is considered at a meeting the petition presenter may outline the request of the petitioners, the reason for the request and the number of the signatories. The lead petitioner may not speak under this rule for more than one minute.

8.5 The meeting may decide to:

- Take the action the petition requests;
- Take no further action;
- Refer the matter to the relevant sub-committee, , a working group or an officer;
- Request an officer to take any other step in relation to the matter.

8.6 The decision of the meeting will be recorded in the minutes and provided in writing to the lead petitioner.

8.7 The CJC's response to a petition will be published on its website within 30 days of the date on which the response is provided to the lead petitioner.

9. Exceptions

In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with petitions differently. If so, we will explain the reasons and discuss any revised timescale which may apply.

10. Alternatives to Petitions

After reading the Petition Scheme an individual or organisation may consider that a petition is not the most appropriate avenue to achieve the desired outcome. Alternative options to enable members of the public to have their say include:

- Writing to the appropriate CJC Member or the CJC's Chief Executive;
- Responding to a Consultation;
- Making a suggestion through the CJC's website.

11. Data Protection and GDPR

All personal data will be handled in compliance with data protection laws and the CJC's Privacy Notice. Hard copy and electronic petition information will be kept for 12 months and after that time it will be safely and securely destroyed.

12. Review

This petition scheme will be kept under review from time to time, and if the CJC considers it appropriate the scheme will be revised. Any revised scheme will be published on the CJC's website.

ANNEX A – SUGGESTED PAPER PETITION TEMPLATE

Lead Petitioner details

Name	
Full postal address	
E mail address	
Telephone number (optional)	

Petition details

A clear short statement covering the subject of the petition. The petition will be returned if it is unclear.	
Call for the CJC to take some specific action.	We call on the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (Ambition North Wales) to …….. Note: to be repeated on every page of a paper petition

Petition signatories

We call on Ambition North Wales [insert call for specific action copied from petition details]

No.	Name	Full postal address	Postcode	Signature
1				
2				
3				
4				