

Breckland Petitions Scheme – Terms and Conditions

Petitioners may freely disagree with the Council or call for changes of policy. We will not attempt to exclude critical views and decisions to accept or reject will not be made on a party political basis.

However, to protect this service from abuse, petitions should meet the following basic criteria:

- A title or subject of the petition
- A short statement saying what the petition is about and stating the action you wish the council to take
- It must have a minimum of 20 (twenty) signatures of people who live, work or study in the Breckland district, otherwise the Council reserves the right not to respond to it in accordance with our petition scheme
- To trigger a debate at Council your petition must contain at least 1500 signatures
- If you want a senior council officer to answer questions about matters raised in your petition at a meeting of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Commission then it must contain at least 750 signatures and give grounds for the request
- The name of the person submitting the petition (known as the petition organiser)
- The contact address of the petition organiser (which will be used by us for any communications over the petition)
- It must have a name and address for any person signing the petition
- An e-petition must use the Council's online petition tool and each signatory must supply an e-mail address in addition to a postal address
- The start and end dates for collecting signatures to the petition must also be specified in advance for e-petitions.

We will not deal with petitions that:

- Include a matter which in our view is vexatious, abusive, is the subject of ongoing legal action or contains otherwise inappropriate comments i.e. profanity or other insults
- Do not comply with data protection, libel, equalities and anti-discrimination legislation
- Concern employment matters for Breckland staff

We reserve the right not to take action on:

- Party political material
- Information which may be protected by an injunction or court order
- Material which is potentially confidential, commercially sensitive or which may cause personal distress or loss

- Any commercial endorsement, promotion of any product, service or publication
- The names of individual officers of public bodies, unless they are part of the senior management of those organisations
- The names of family members of elected representatives or officials of public bodies
- The names of individuals, or information where they may be identified, in relation to criminal accusations
- Language which is intemperate or provocative. This is language to which people reading it could reasonably take offence because we believe it is possible to petition for anything politely
- Petitions that are very similar to and/or overlap with an existing petition
- Statements that don't actually request any action
- Wording that is impossible to understand
- Statements that amount to advertisements
- Petitions which are solely intended to be jocular
- Issues for which a petition is not the appropriate channel (e.g. correspondence about a personal issue)
- Freedom of Information or Environmental Information requests. This is not the right channel for FOI requests; information about the appropriate procedure can be found at [\[insert link\]](#)
- During politically sensitive periods, such as just before an election, we have to be extra careful to ensure that all political parties enjoy a level playing field. At such times, if your petition contains politically controversial material we may decide not to accept it or defer consideration of it until after the election. If this is the case we will explain the reasons and the revised timescale which will apply