

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

ATTENDANCE AT PETITIONS COMMITTEE

Inverclyde Council welcomes the public's use of its petitions procedure for local issues. The Council can only deal with petitions that relate to the Council's powers and remit for its areas of functional responsibility.

This guidance sets out the basic requirements for you to submit a valid petition. If you have any doubt about the procedure or if you would like to ask any questions please contact the Petition Team at telephone 01475 712147 or by email on petitions@inverclyde.gov.uk.

This note is to assist you in preparation for any attendance at the Petitions Committee in support of your petition.

Attending the Petitions Committee

1. As you are the responsible person taking the initiative with your petition, you will be invited to appear before the Petitions Committee to speak in support of your petition. It is entirely within the discretion of the Convener (the Chairman or Chairwoman of the Petitions Committee) to decide if you be heard in person at the Petitions Committee but it will ordinarily be the case that you will be requested to make a brief statement to explain your petition or to support your petition, and, subject to the above, you may speak for up to 10 minutes on this subject. If you wish to appoint a person to speak on your behalf, if necessary, this may be done with the permission of the Convener. The Petition's Committee might ask you questions in order to clarify the purpose or background to your petition.

You should state on your petition form whether or not you would like the opportunity to make such a statement before the Petitions Committee.

The Council will give you 10 days' notice of the date of the meeting at which your petition is likely to be considered. The Council will write to you with the meeting date and time. Please note that other petitions may be heard at the same meeting and for that reason the time that you are called to the meeting can only be indicative.

What to do when you arrive

2. Please report to the reception at the Customer Service Centre on the ground floor of the Municipal Buildings, Greenock PA15 1LX. Reception staff at the Customer Service Centre will take your name and petition details and will direct you to the meeting room.
3. Members of the Petitions Committee and Council staff will be in the meeting room. You will be given an agenda for the meeting. Everyone at the meeting will have a nameplate so that you know who is who.

Ward Councillor representation

4. Your petition may refer to a specific area of Inverclyde. If so, Councillors for this ward will be told of the petition meeting. Ward Councillors will have the opportunity to speak following your own comments to the Petitions Committee.
5. It may be that in terms of normal Committee representation your Ward Councillor is a member of the Petitions Committee, itself. If your Ward Councillor is already on the Petitions

Committee, it is essential that you note that your Ward Councilor may not make a decision on your petition if he or she has made it clear that he or she is either lending support for or is against any such petition that you have submitted. This is essential to ensure that your petition has a fair and proper hearing and will avoid any impression of bias in relation to the Council's decision-making processes.

6. Councillors are entirely entitled to discuss and debate matters affecting the subject of your petition but you must understand that they cannot participate in that process if they are identified as being for or against your petition and in those cases they may not speak as Ward Councillor if they are already a member of the Petitions Committee. These issues, if they arise, will be explained to you at the meeting.

Open public meetings

7. The Petitions Committee meetings are open to the public. If an item involves aspects of confidentiality or otherwise involves information that is exempt in terms of the Local Government Acts, you will be advised of this matter at the Petitions Committee meeting and members of the press and public may then be excluded. Again, this is a matter that will be explained to you if the occasion necessitates.

Outcomes

8. The Petitions Committee will decide what action may be taken. The Petitions Committee may decide that:
 - the issues raised merit further action and will refer the matter to the relevant decision-making body (which may be within the Council) and which may require further work, resolution or influence from the Council;
 - that issues raised do not merit any further action;
 - to take any other action, provided there is no financial impact for the Council's service committees as may be decided as appropriate.

You will be advised of the decision of the Petitions Committee in writing within 10 working days after the meeting.