

## Scrutiny matters

**This leaflet gives guidance on the procedure for submitting petitions and for those attending a meeting of the Scrutiny & Petitions Board.**

### **1 What is the scrutiny and petitions board?**

We, the scrutiny and petitions board, are made up of elected members of the council. Part of our role is to consider petitions which raise issues of concern with the Council.

### **2 What should a petition be about?**

We will consider petitions which are concerned with the functions of the Council or issues which are of concern to some or all of the residents in Renfrewshire.

### **3 Can I submit a petition about another organisation?**

Yes, petitions should be about issues which are of concern to some or all of the residents in Renfrewshire. We may therefore consider petitions which relate to services provided by other bodies, for example police and health. However, you should note that the Board has limited influence over these bodies.

### **4 How do I submit a petition?**

Petitions should be submitted on the appropriate form. This is available from the Committee Services address on this leaflet, or from the Council's website [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk). Petitions must be from an individual or on behalf of an organisation, and should provide the following information. Additional information in support of the petition may be provided which should not be more than 4 sides of A4 paper.

- Principal petitioner's name, address and telephone and/or e-mail address
- The issue and what you want us to do
- What you have done to date to have the matter resolved
- Names of other petitioners, if any

### **5 Are there some issues about which petitions will not be accepted?**

Yes. The Board will not accept petitions about planning, licensing or other applications where there are already procedures in place to consider representations and/or objections and to appeal against decisions; personal or commercial interests; individual officers

or members; employees' terms and conditions of employment; breaches of the law or codes of practice; any decision of the Council or any board, committee, joint committee or officer within the previous 12 months; from petitioners who are, vexatious or frivolous; are the same or substantially similar to petitions considered within the previous 12 months; are designed to affect support for one or more political parties. Are potentially defamatory or discriminatory or contain offensive or inappropriate language.

### **6 Who decides if a petition is valid?**

The Director of Corporate Services whose decision will be final. Any petition which is not valid will be returned to the petitioner with an explanation as to why the petition has not been accepted

### **7 Will I be invited to the meeting at which the petition is considered?**

Yes. We will give you 5 working days notice of the date of the meeting which will consider your petition. The principal petitioner will be invited to attend the meeting, together with one supporter.

## 8 What happens when I arrive?

We will try to give an approximate time for when we are likely to consider your petition. An officer will meet you when you arrive. However there may be a short waiting time. You can wait in the room where the meeting is taking place, unless we are discussing confidential items when we will direct you to a waiting area. In the room will be members of the Scrutiny & Petitions Board and council officers. An officer will show you where to sit and help you if you have any difficulties. We will give you an agenda for the meeting. Everyone at the meeting will have a name plate so that you will know who is who.

## 9 Will I be asked to speak?

Yes. We will invite the principal petitioner to make a statement lasting no more than 5 minutes in support of the petition. The supporter may speak on the petitioner's behalf. We may ask you questions.

## 10 Are the meetings public?

Yes. However, if we consider any item to be confidential we will ask any members of the press and public who are at the meeting to leave while we consider them.

## 11 What will happen to my petition?

We will hear and ask questions of petitioners. We will take a decision on your petition at the meeting and will either,

- Take no action and you will be given the reason for this
- Refer the petition to a director of the Council and/or policy board for further investigation with or without any specific recommendation
- Refer the petition to another public body with or without any recommendation where the petition relates to that public body

## 12 Where can I see petitions which have been submitted?

Petitions will be issued with the agenda for the meeting of the Board at least 3 days before the meeting. Details of petitions received will be available on the Council's website and in addition, we will prepare an annual report in relation to the petitions we have considered and their outcomes.

For more information, please contact:

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# Corporate Services Department

## Scrutiny Matters

### Information for the submission of petitions to the Scrutiny & Petitions Board

