

# **LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY**

## **PETITION SCHEME**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

The Council welcomes petitions as a way in which local people can bring issues to the attention of decision-makers within the Council, and show the degree of public approval or disapproval for something which the Council is doing or planning to do.

As such, submitting a petition to the Council could trigger positive outcomes by informing debate and leading to change or review of policies.

#### **The Scheme**

1. The Petition Scheme, drawn up by the Constitution Improvement Working Group, was adopted by Full Council on 28 June 2010. It covers the criteria for what constitutes a valid petition (including nature of the topics that can be covered, the terms in which a petition is couched, those eligible to sign it, number of eligible signatories, etc).
2. It specifically covers the process of e-petitioning; there was a statutory requirement for the Council to provide facilities for e-petitioning from 15 December 2010, which was met.
3. There are certain thresholds that have to be met to entitle petitioners who are not satisfied with the initial response they receive from the relevant Portfolio Holder to request a hearing at the relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee (250 valid signatories on a paper petition or 2000 for an e-petition) or Full Council (500 valid signatories on paper or 4000 for an e-petition).
4. The Portfolio Holder responses to any valid petitions are not only sent to the head petitioner, but also published on the Council web-site, to increase transparency.

#### **Petitions Received**

5. In the period during which the Scheme has been in force, fourteen petitions have been received, broken down as follows:

## Summary of petitions received 2010-11

| <b>Portfolio</b>           | <b>Number received</b> | <b>Of which referred on to PDS committee</b> | <b>Of which referred on to Council</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Adult & Community Services | 2                      |  | 1                                      |
| Children & Young People    | 3                      |  | 1                                      |
| Environment                | 6                      | 2  |  |
| Public Protection & Safety |                        |  |  |
| Renewal & Recreation       | 3                      |  |  |
| Resources                  |                        |  |  |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>14</b>              | <b>2</b>                                     | <b>2</b>                               |

In addition, five 'quasi-petitions' have been received which have been processed as general correspondence.

6. To date, the majority of petitions have been received on paper; although three electronic petitions have been submitted, in all cases linked with a paper version. None have been submitted via the Council's in-house e-petition facility, nor have they so far crossed the threshold to make them a valid petition on a stand-alone basis, nor approached the thresholds to trigger consideration by councillors at a formal meeting.
7. In all but one case, initial responses have been provided to petitioners within the 10 days specified by the Scheme.

### **Future Work**

8. Over the next year the Council will need to consider what arrangements will need to be put into place once the Localism Bill passes into law. Whilst certain statutory requirements currently in force may be removed, for example the requirement for the Council to provide e-petition facilities itself, the Bill does contain provisions for petitions to trigger local referenda on certain issues, which may require even more rigorous checking of signatories' eligibility.

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