

PETITIONS UPDATE

1. Introduction

1.1 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 imposed a duty on local authorities to respond to petitions and to tell local people what action was going to be taken.

1.2 This duty came into effect on 15 June 2010.

1.3 The Council approved a new petition scheme on 18 May 2010

2. Petitions Scheme

2.1 The petitions Scheme has been finalised and is available for members of the public online.

2.2 In adopting the scheme councillors were keen that the new statutory requirements would supplement the existing provisions, rather than replace them, and that significant flexibility and discretion would be applied to petitions which failed to reach the required level of signatures, or which fell between categories.

2.3 In these instances discussions would take place with the relevant cabinet member or the appropriate area board chairman to determine the most appropriate way of dealing with the petition. The options may include referring the matter to the cabinet or the appropriate area board.

2.4 In all cases the petition will be acknowledged and to ensure maximum transparency a short report will be submitted to each meeting of the council detailing what petitions had been received and how they were being managed. This information will also be publicly available on the petitions website.

3. Petitions Received

3.1 As of 1 July, four petitions have been received by Wiltshire Council under the new scheme. Further details are shown at Appendix 1 to this report.

4. e-Petitions

3.1 A new e-Petitions facility is under development by Democratic Services using the Modern.gov system, and will be piloted in mid September, in advance of the statutory deadline of 15 December 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

- 1) Note the report, the petitions received and the actions being taken, as set out in the Appendix to this report.**
- 2) Note the proposed piloting of the E-Petitions Scheme with effect from mid September.**

**John Quinton
Head of Democratic Services**