



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

COUNCIL

20 MAY 2015

**PETITIONS: ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Open Report**

**Classification** - For Decision

**Key Decision:** No

**Wards Affected:** None

**Accountable Director:** Nigel Pallace, Chief Executive

**Report Author:** Kayode Adewumi, Head of Governance and Scrutiny

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1. This report outlines the operation of the Council's Petitions Scheme over the past 12 months.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1. That Council agree to continue to operate the Petitions Scheme.

2.2. That the operation of the Council's Petitions Scheme be noted.

**3. REASONS FOR DECISION**

3.1. The Council has made a commitment to continue to operate a Petitions Scheme providing another avenue for residents to engage with the democratic process.

## **4. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

4.1. The Council on 30 June 2010 adopted a Petitions Scheme in accordance with the requirements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The Council's Scheme drew upon the model Petitions Scheme published by DCLG. The Scheme included a commitment to submit an annual report to the Council containing the following information:

- the subject matter of all petitions received during the year;
- the number of signatures to each petition;
- a summary of the Council's response to each petition;
- any recommendations for changes to the Scheme in the light of experience with its operation.

4.2. On 24 September 2010 DCLG wrote to all Local Authority Chief Executives to advise that with immediate effect the Government had withdrawn 'Listening to communities: Statutory guidance on the duty to respond to petitions'. Despite repealing the statutory guidance, local authorities were still legally bound to "provide a facility for making petitions in electronic form". The Council introduced an E-petitions facility late in 2010 in compliance with this requirement. From 1 April 2012, the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 related to petitions were repealed. The consequence is that the Council does not have to operate a petition scheme unless it wants to do so on a voluntary basis. It is recommended that the Council continue to operate the Petitions Scheme providing another avenue for residents to engage with the democratic process.

## **5. Annual Report 2014/15**

5.1. The Scheme has worked well over the past four years. In 2014/15, one petition was received regarding speed humps up Chancellors Road. The Scheme also allows people living, working or studying in the borough to petition a Policy and Accountability Committee but this did not happen during the period under review.

5.2. Council at its meeting on 30 June 2010, agreed the number of signatures required for each category of petition at levels outlined below. The limits were set at a level to encourage residents and other interested parties to access the democratic process. The threshold limits only relate to the decision making routes referred to below, all petitions received by the Council which falls below these thresholds will continue to be considered by officers in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member. Once an issue has been considered by a decision maker under the scheme, a subsequent petition on the same issue will not be reconsidered by another decision maker because it has exceeded the next signature threshold.

## Summary of Petition Types, Requirements and Decision Maker.

Type of Petition	Proposed Threshold (Number of Signatories)	Decision Maker
Council Debate	5000	Full Council
Call an Officer to give evidence	2000	Policy and Accountability Committee
Petitions to Cabinet	250	Cabinet
Petitions to Cabinet Members	100	Relevant Cabinet Member(s)

### 6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no financial implications to this report.

6.2. Implications verified/completed by: Kayode Adewumi, Head of Governance and Scrutiny 020 8753 2499.

### 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. The comments of the Director are within this report.

7.2 Implications verified by: Tasnim Shawkat, Director of Law 020 8753 2700

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000** **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No.	Description of Background Papers	Name/Ext of holder of file/copy	Department/ Location
	None		