

Appendix B

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GUIDANCE ON DEPUTATIONS AND PETITIONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance sets out the process to be followed by persons wishing to make a deputation or submit a petition to the Scrutiny and Petitions, Planning, or Licensing Committees.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 Every application for the reception of a deputation or petition must be in writing, duly signed and delivered or faxed or e-mailed to the Chief Executive no later than 5.00 p.m. on the Monday of the week preceding the meeting.
- 2.2 The application to address the Committee should give details of the matter to be raised. If you wish to address the meeting on particular issues of concern, then you should be able to demonstrate that you have taken steps to resolve the issues prior to submitting your application. Details of the services or officers approached, together with copies or summaries of the responses received should be submitted along with your application form.
- 2.3 Petitions will only be received if they relate to the delivery of Council services or to services which are provided by the Council in conjunction with other partner organisations, or if they relate to decisions that the Council has taken or is about to take. Your petition must contain a minimum of 10 signatures from different households. The petition should give details of the matter concerned. Again you should be able to demonstrate that you have taken steps to resolve the issue of concern prior to submitting your petition.
- 2.4 A petition will not be competent in the following circumstances:-
- If it relates to a case that is or has been subject to legal or court proceedings, ombudsman complaints, industrial tribunals, appeals procedures;
 - If it requests the Council to do something outwith its powers;
 - If it discloses information which is protected by an interdict or court order;
 - If it reveals commercially sensitive or confidential information;
 - If it would cause personal distress or loss; and
 - If it relates to an individual's circumstances or an individual's grievance
 - If it relates to any regulatory or quasi-judicial function of the Council where the opportunity of a hearing or deputation has previously been afforded to any person.
- 2.5 If 10 or more letters are received on one specific issue, these will be treated in the same way as petitions. If the individual leading the letter writing campaign can be identified, that person will be treated as the principal petitioner and the same procedures will apply as for petitions generally.

3. Determination

- 3.1 When an application for a deputation/petition is received the Chair of the Scrutiny and Petitions Committee will be advised of the issues raised and will decide whether the matter should be dealt with at the next Committee meeting.
- 3.2 If your request for a deputation or to submit a petition is refused, the reasons for this will be notified to you.
- 3.3 If your application is approved you will be invited to attend the Committee meeting. As many Members of your group as wish may attend the meeting, but the number of persons allowed to address the Committee will be limited to a maximum of 3. You will also be asked to identify the principal spokesperson beforehand.

4. Addressing the Committee

- 4.1 You should remain seated at all times during the meeting, until the spokespersons are invited to speak by the Chair.
- 4.2 You will be limited to ten minutes in total to present your case to the meeting. Once you have addressed the meeting, the Members present will be invited to put questions to you. Appropriate Members or officers of the Committee may also be invited to speak and to receive questions. If the officers are presenting a written report, you will be given a copy, if possible in advance of the meeting.
- 4.3 The Committee will then take a decision on the matter before it, if appropriate, or if it relates to an item elsewhere on the agenda of the meeting may wait until they reach that item before taking a decision. Once you have heard the decision you are free to leave, but are welcome to stay to listen to the rest of the meeting if you so wish.

5. Deputations and Petitions Relating to Planning Applications

- 5.1 The Council has approved separate procedures which apply to requests by objectors to planning applications who are seeking authority for a deputation to address the Planning Committee in support of their objections.