

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Petitions to Council – Assessment Form

On receipt of a Petition from the requisite number of people appealing to the Authority (more than 200 for it to be debated at the next ordinary Full Council), the Governance Team will ensure an assessment is made as to its contents to establish whether there are likely to be significant consequences to the Council should the request(s) in the Petition be approved at the subsequent Full Council meeting.

There are Excluded Matters which are matters that are excluded from the scope of the petitions duty and these are:

- a) Any matter relating to a planning decision, including about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy;
- b) Any matter relating to an alcohol, gambling or sex establishment licensing decision;
- c) Any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment;
- d) Any matter which the Chair of the Council or relevant Committee believes to be scurrilous, offensive, improper, repetitious, capricious, irrelevant or otherwise objectionable.

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- a) A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take;
- b) The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition;
- c) The name and address of the petition organiser

If valid, the first question to be addressed when assessing the Petition will be:-

“Can the request of the petitioner, if approved, be implemented without the need for any resource (financial and otherwise) to be identified outside existing budgets or staffing capacity?”

If the answer is ‘yes’, then the Petition can proceed towards discussion and potential resolution.

An example of a Petition which would fall into the above category would be where the Council is being asked to lobby the Government, Somerset County Council or other body on a particular issue. If the Petition is carried, the action required will usually involve no more than a letter being prepared and sent to the intended recipient.

However, as in the case of the recent Petitions on The Brewhouse and Extinction Rebellion, the answer to the above question would clearly be 'no'.

In such circumstances, detailed analysis of the wording of the Petition will be required to identify what will be needed if the Petition – when it comes before Full Council – is carried.

Such analysis will include:-

- What additional resource would be required to ensure the Petition (if approved) could be implemented?
- What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?
- Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?
- Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

If such analysis is required, the Governance Team will arrange for the attached pro-forma to be completed and this will accompany the relevant Petition onto the agenda of the Full Council meeting so all Members are aware that further investigation will be required before the Petition – even if it is carried – can be implemented.

The Council will decide how to respond to the petition which may include;

- a) To take the action requested.
- b) Not to take the action requested for the reasons given in the debate.
- c) Refer the matter for further investigation.
- d) Refer the matter to the Council's Executive for final decision.

A petitioner has the right to request a review of the steps taken in response to the petition if they are unhappy and that request shall be made to the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

Petitions to Council – Assessment Proforma

(To be used in circumstances where it appears the wording of a proposed Petition will commit the Council to providing further financial or staffing resources which cannot be met from existing budgets)

Details of the Petition -

Petition

The Petition demands;

My name is Jack Collins and I am 11 years old and I live in Galmington. I love scooting, riding my BMX and skating with my friends, we don't have any skate parks near us and have to go to Hamilton and other places to skate. I would really love it if we could have some ramps put into one of the parks in Galmington so we don't have to travel.

All of my friends, all of their friends and people who live in Galmington have signed the petition and would really love to have a skate park here too, lots of people have also said they would be happy to help with looking after it and keeping it clean and tidy. Some people have also said they would sponsor it too, if we needed the money.

There are lots of parks here where we can play football but not much else, there is lots of space in the Gill Crescent Park and the Galmington playing fields. Please help us to get some ramps, we will look after it and it will help us practise and it will get used lots.

Questions to be addressed

- ***What additional resource would be required to ensure the Petition (if approved) could be implemented?***

A link to the document is here: <https://www.skateboard-england.org/skateboard-facilities-guide>

To summarise some relevant passages from the document:

Most UK skateparks are situated outdoors and are constructed from a variety of materials including concrete, metal, composite and timber. It is generally recommended that outdoor skateparks should be constructed in concrete because the material boasts a better and safer riding surface, significant durability with minimal maintenance, lower noise pollution and customisability of design.

Skate parks are broadly categorised by size, ranging from 'micro' to 'international'. As a ballpark figure, an outdoor concrete skatepark costs approximately £400 per m².

A 'small' skatepark (150m² – 500m²) will typically feature a minimal amount of ramps, bowls or street obstacles to skate, dependent on budget, design and requirements of local users, catering for limited styles of skateboarding. 5 to 20 users at any one time. Approximate cost £100,000 - £175,000.

A 'medium' skatepark (500m² – 1000m²) will typically feature a small selection of ramps, bowls or obstacles to skate, dependent on budget, design and requirements of local users, catering for several styles of skateboarding. 20 to 50 users at any one time. Approximate cost £175,000 - £300,000.

For comparison, the Council installed a concrete skate park in Hamilton Park some years ago, at a cost of approximately £300k.

At Hudson Way, which is 2 miles from Galmington Rec, the Council has a smaller, metal and wood constructed skate facility, which cost approximately £100k.

- ***What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?***

It would be likely that a feasibility study would be required.

Skateboard England recommend a period of consultation with local communities and potential users of the facility to understand need and key design features, as well as other issues such as local residents' concerns, access issues, safety, conflict of activities etc.

Planning permission would also have to be obtained, and a formal tender process.

Skateboard England recommend flipping the procurement process, so that a contractor is secured up front:

Rather than employing a skatepark company to just design and build a skatepark, councils or community groups now typically work with contractors much earlier on in the skatepark process and tender for projects up front. This model allows the skatepark company to work closely with the council or community group, providing support in project consultation, design, planning and fundraising as required.

This support has proved invaluable and is a fast-track route to success. The council or community group commits to the contractor, while the contractor in turn has a responsibility to make the project happen. In short, the contractor works as a speculative partner, helping to both develop the project and to build it once planning and funding are in place. This is a mutually beneficial relationship working towards a common goal.

Other resource and liability issues that would need to be considered. With the skate park being built on council-owned land, the council that will ultimately take ownership of the facility with responsibility for and insurance and maintenance. This includes weekly safety checks undertaken by trained staff.

| |
|---|
| |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?</i> |
| <p>Yes – Executive approval would be required due to the costs involved.</p> <p>If a site was proposed at Galmington Playing Fields it would be required to go to Full Council as the trustees of the charity who would need to be sure that the build is in the best interests of the Galmington Fields Charity and its stated charitable objects. The land is held by the charitable trust which is where the decision relating to the land sits and not the Council.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.</i> |
| |
| <p>Yes</p> |
| |

Likely timescale involved –

Subject to design, planning consent and securing a budget.