

Appendix B – Complaint Form

What has gone wrong?

1. Quote from Fareham Borough Council (FBC) website Petitions page - 'E-Petitions are part of the Council's ongoing commitment to listening to and acting on the views of the public'. FBC has failed on this commitment. Residents have not been listened to and despite asking the Executive Leader Councillor Sean Woodward for even one example of where FBC has acted on our views, where our views have fed into a decision, or changed an outcome. He has failed to provide one.

2. An e-Petition can relate to any issue on which the Council has powers or duties or on which it has shared delivery responsibilities through the Local Area Agreement or other partnership arrangement. The petition relates to the over development in Warsash and the Western Wards. This fits perfectly with FBC's own description of their responsibility i.e. 'We are fortunate that the Borough is such a pleasant place in which to live and work. Making sure that continues is a careful balance between sensible development to meet our changing and diverse needs as residents and conserving the area's heritage and character. Effective planning – for now and for the future – is a key part of this. In this section of the website you can find out more about our work in this area and our services to help you'. Again FBC has failed in their duty to discharge their responsibilities

3. If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a council debate, or a senior officer giving evidence, then the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. Democratic Services confirmed our verified and crosschecked petition and with 2390 signatures that it surpassed the 1,500 figure, which is the required number to trigger a council debate. However we're told it would not be appropriate to debate as this would result in Councillors voicing their opinions publicly and risk being described as pre-determined. The petition was handed to Councillor Sean Woodward on 8th December 2017 but FBC still to this day has not told us when and where the meeting to debate the petition will be held. Another failure on FBC's part.

4. If a petition contains more than 1,500 valid signatures it will be debated by the full Council unless it is a petition asking for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting. This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting, which all councillors can attend. The Council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. The petition organiser will be given up to ten minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee. Where the issue is one on which the council Executive is required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make

recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. FBC has failed on all of these points. Namely, consideration did not take place at the next meeting, no date of meeting has been received to date therefore no ten minute presentation has been offered but most importantly, they have taken no action whatsoever. This despite their claims to do one or more of the following:-

How will the council respond to petitions? Our response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for, but may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition
- considering the petition at a council meeting
- referring the petition for consideration by an overview and scrutiny committee or by the Executive
- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- undertaking a consultation
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition

How has this affected you?

Residents are horrified that they are being ignored. The petition, which was presented in response to the Draft Local Plan, is sat in an FBC cupboard somewhere whilst at the same time many of the sites proposed in the plan are applying for and obtaining planning permission. There is growing frustration amongst residents throughout the western wards, those whose lives will be turned upside down through the sheer volume of unsustainable development proposed and in some cases, already permitted.

A protest march of almost 500 residents and hundreds and hundreds of submitted objection letters have similarly been ignored. There is a growing feeling that FBC no longer have any authority, with their behaviour being driven out of a fear of appeals, which FBC believe they will lose. There is also a question around the integrity of Council Officers and Planning Committee, as all of the decisions are in favour of developers with no consideration for the views of residents. All of the policies and guidelines are stacked in favour of applicants and stacked against residents. Where policies are designed to protect everyone including residents, they are applied in an inconsistent way and in favour of applicants and developers. This petition is just one example of that happening.

Others include the right to have planning applications decided within 13 weeks or applicants have the right to appeal. Whereas residents have nothing more than an open ended promise of scheduling the petition debate when the 'Local Plan comes forward for adoption' No time limit and no right of appeal for us but too late to take our views into account, that's for sure. The general feeling is that it is much easier for FBC to delay debating our petition until all of the individual planning applications are approved and by default, the Local Plan is a done deal. The wording of the petition

has incorrectly been interpreted to mean that we don't want any development, as it asks to STOP the development in Warsash and the Western Wards. The residents who are trying to get themselves heard want to be given the chance to explain that we accept there will be development in our area and understand the need to for it.

However, they want to engage and have discussions with Council Planning officers and the developers to consider how we can have a Plan that residents can live with but which also eases the enormous pressure on Planners to build as much as they can squeeze into our Greenfields. To give residents a say in the types of open spaces and properties would be a healthy and a much more satisfactory way forward for all concerned. Instead, at the moment residents feel they only have one decision that is completely within their control and that is their vote at the next local elections. As it stands, many residents intend to use their vote to overturn the very unpleasant situation that currently exists.

What do you think the Council should do to put things right?

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, the petition organiser has the right to request that the council's Scrutiny Board review the steps that the council has taken in response to your petition. It is helpful to everyone, and can improve the prospects for a review, if the petition organiser gives a short explanation of the reasons why the council's response is not considered to be adequate.

1. As Lead Petitioner and on behalf of those who signed the petition, the group known as Save Warsash & The Western Wards (SWWW), we request the council's Scrutiny Board review the way this petition has been handled. The outcomes we want from a review include:-
 - A date to be set for the debate of the petition
 - To recall all planning applications that have been granted outline planning permission since the petition was submitted, as this pre empts the outcome of that debate and cuts across the consultation process of the Draft Local Plan
 - At the very least delay granting full planning permission to those applications for the reasons given in the previous bullet point above
 - Residents want a say in the numbers and types of properties and open spaces that they will have to tolerate on a daily basis. They want fewer properties than proposed. To facilitate this, residents want dialogue, and collaboration between themselves and Planners and developers.
 - A full apology for the way we have been treated by Democratic Services, other Council officers and Planning Committee members.