



WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR USE IN COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COUNCIL

Adopted by Wellington Town Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Wellington Town Council recognises that from time to time there will be concerns expressed by members of the public over the activities of the Council or one of its councillors or employees. This is the Council's procedure for the handling of complaints which allows people to have a form of address to the Council if they feel they have a complaint; or have been unfairly treated in their dealings with the Council staff, Councillors, the Council or its Committees.
- 1.2 The following procedure has been adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration.
- 1.3 This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Town Council. Such complaints should be made through the district council, Somerset West and Taunton Council (see para 5 below).

2. Process

- 2.1 The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated officer. If the complaint is only notified orally to a councillor, or to the Town Clerk or other member of staff, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.
- 2.2 If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Town Clerk or other nominated officer, he or she should be advised to address it to the Mayor as Chair of the Council.
- 2.3 The Town Clerk or other nominated officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by a committee established for the purposes of hearing the complaint. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way (if, for example, the complaint is to be heard by a committee).
- 2.4 The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.

2.5 Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

3. The Meeting

3.1 The council, or committee established for the purpose of hearing the complaint, shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.

3.2 The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

3.3 The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Town Clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii) members.

3.4 The Town Clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) members.

3.5 The Town Clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

3.6 The Town Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.

3.7 The Town Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision, but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

4. After the Meeting

4.1 The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

5. COMPLAINTS AGAINST A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

5.1 Town Councillors sign up to a Code of Conduct on taking office. A member of the public who wishes to submit a complaint for breach of this Code should do so to the Monitoring Officer at Somerset West and Taunton Council:-

The Monitoring Officer
Somerset West and Taunton Council
Deane House
Taunton
TA1 1HE

Telephone: 0300 304 8000