



Complaints Procedure (adopted Jan 8th, 2013)

The following procedure is 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. If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or to the Clerk, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant.
 - 1.1. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter/e-mail) to the Clerk c/o Chairman Birchwood House, The Walled Garden, Gautby, Lincolnshire LN8 5JP3. The complaint will be dealt with within 28 days of receipt. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is.
 - 1.2. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example) he or she should be advised to write to the Chairman or Vice Chairman.
 - 1.2.1.1. On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk (except where the complaint is about her own actions) or Chairman (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving them an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage. b) Where the Clerk or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman of the Council. The Clerk will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.
 - 1.3. The Clerk or Chairman will report any complaint disposed of, by direct action with the complainant, to the next meeting of the Council.
 - 1.4. The Clerk or Chairman will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The 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 the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. 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).
 - 1.4.1. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if

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they wish.

1.4.2. 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.

1.5. At the Meeting: The council 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.

1.5.1. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

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

1.5.3. The 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.

1.5.4. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

1.5.5. The 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.

1.5.6. The 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.

1.6. After the Meeting The decision should be confirmed in writing to all parties within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

2. The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

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