

Droitwich Spa Town Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

From time to time members of the public have complaints about the administration or procedures of a parish, town or community council. As councils are not subject to the jurisdiction of the local Ombudsman there is no independent body to which the complainant can turn for an independent formal assessment of the position. For the benefit of good local administration the Town Council should adopt a standard and formal procedure for considering complaints either made by complainants direct or referred back to the Council from other bodies to which they have been made. The code set out below is recommended as a way of ensuring that complainants can feel satisfied that at the very least their grievance has been properly and fully considered. Councils are urged to do their utmost to settle complaints and satisfy complainants, this is in the interests of the good reputation of the Town Council. If a complaint cannot be settled by the Council it cannot refer the complaint to any other body for settlement, but a complainant may well try to enlist the services of other bodies and provoke considerable expenditure of time and resources in bringing other pressures to bear.

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Background

Droitwich Spa Town Council welcomes all feedback, including complaints. It is one of the best ways to ensure excellent service provision. The aim of this procedure is to ensure that all complaints from members of the public are handled swiftly and courteously to a resolution acceptable to all parties.

Internal staff complaints are covered by the separate Employee Grievance Policy.

Complaints about Councillors, if they cannot be swiftly resolved through discussion, are to be referred to Wychavon District Council's Monitoring Officer.

Complaints may arrive through a variety of mechanisms, including for example: e-mail, letter, a verbal report to a Councillor or Officer, a question raised at a Council meeting, Ward Councillors' surgeries. Discretion must be used in complaints aired in public eg via the letters pages of the local paper (*please refer to the Town Council's Communications and Media Policy*) and each considered as to whether it requires a response.

Anonymous complaints will be filed but not responded to.

Repetitive complaints from the same individual may lead to the complainant being categorised as vexatious, with limitations on further responses.

Code of Practice

If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified, orally to a Councillor or to the Town Clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant, then the complainant shall be asked to put his/her complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

If a complainant indicates that they would prefer not to put the complaint to the Town Clerk then they shall be advised to put it to the Town Mayor.

On receipt of a written complaint, the Town Clerk or the Mayor, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about their own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant, but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the Clerk or a Councillor without notifying the person complained of and giving them an opportunity to comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint. Where the Clerk or Mayor receives written complaint about their own actions, he/she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Council.

The Clerk or Mayor shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

The Clerk or Mayor shall bring any written complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the Council, and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered.

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

As soon as may be after the decision has been made, it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

Contact details

If you do have a complaint you can contact us by letter to:

Town Clerk
Droitwich Spa Town Council
Victoria Square
DROITWICH SPA
Worcestershire
WR9 8DS

Email: pam.craney@droitwichspa.gov.uk

Telephone: 01905 774258