ADOPTED BY COUNCIL 25 JULY 2022

The Council receives queries, problems and comments as part of its day to day running and they should not all be regarded as complaints. These are routine and expected and are generally resolved quickly and satisfactorily. If someone is dissatisfied with the original service or response they receive and wishes to take the matter further then the issue should be recognised as a complaint.

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. If a complainant indicates that he/she would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk, he/she shall be advised to put it to the Chair Person.
3. On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk or Chair Person, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his/her 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 first notifying the person complained of and giving him/her an opportunity to comment on the matter. Where the Clerk or Chair Person receives a written complaint about his/her own actions he/she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Council.
4. Complaints of a general nature relating to the Council as a body should be addressed to the Clerk as Proper Officer or to the Chair Person. If these complaints are not disposed of directly with the complainant and where deemed justified as a serious complaint, they will be dealt with at a meeting of the full Council. The complainant would then be notified of the date when the complaint is to be heard.
5. The Clerk or Chair Person shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of directly with the complainant.
6. 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.
7. The decision and any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant as soon as may be.
8. Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints: There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to pursue a complaint when it clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should or has been taken. If the Council decides that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant, the complainant should be so informed, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.
9. Anonymous Complaints: Anonymous complaints should be referred to the Clerk and may be acted on at his/her discretion, according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.
10. The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary.