



GREAT DAWLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Great Dawley Town Council
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COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

Introduction: We welcome your feedback because it helps to improve the way we do things and to learn from things that have gone wrong. Should you wish to make a complaint about the Council, we request that you follow the procedures set out below. Complaints about councillors should be referred to the Monitoring Officer, Telford & Wrekin Council. The policy is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk, or other proper officer or chairman).

Aim: Our aim is to swiftly investigate all complaints in a problem solving manner and to find a solution locally, whenever possible, to the satisfaction of both the complainant and the Council.

Definition of Complaints: A complaint may be generally defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about a service which requires a response.

A complaint may arise about our services such as:-

- The Council has not done something it has a duty to do or normally does;
- The Council has done something it has no right to do or does not normally do as a matter of established practice;
- The conduct or behaviour of an employee is unsatisfactory;
- The established levels of service delivery are not reached;
- A person does not understand or is not informed of why or how a situation arose or exists;
- An adopted and known procedure is not followed

1. What to Do If You Have a Complaint

1.1. Complaints should be made to the Clerk at the contact details above and may be by telephone, email, in person or in writing, giving names and addresses and relevant dates with as much information as possible. If you do not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, or other officer, you may refer your complaint direct to the Chairman. This is normally where the complaint is about the Clerk.

1.2. In many cases, it will be possible for an issue to be dealt with straight away and the source of the complaint resolved immediately.

1.3. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, you should put your complaint in writing. In such cases, the complaint will normally be investigated by the clerk with an acknowledgement

within 5 working days. We will aim to provide a full response within 14 days where possible. If there is likely to be a delay we will let you know. Investigations will be dealt with as quickly as possible. If you are not satisfied with the outcome or if the matter is complex, the complaint may be referred to a meeting of the Council or its Committee established to hear complaints. In such cases, you will be informed of the date of the meeting.

1.4. You will be invited to attend the meeting and bring with you such representatives as you wish. Unless you state otherwise, the Council will consider whether the complaint will be held in private session in order to meet its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal information.

1.5. If you have any documentation or other evidence, which you wish to refer to at the meeting the Council will request you to provide this 3 clear working days before the meeting and similarly the Council will provide you with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting.

2. At the meeting

The Chairman will:

- Introduce everyone present
- Explain the procedure to be followed
- Outline the grounds for the complaint
- Members will have the opportunity to ask any questions of the complainant
- The Clerk, or other officer, will explain the position of the Council, if relevant.
- Members will have the opportunity to ask any questions of the Clerk, or other officer.
- The Clerk, and the complainant will be offered the opportunity of a final address to the meeting (in this order).
- The complainant shall be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If the complaint is against the Clerk or other officer, they will also be asked to leave the room. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties will be invited to return).
- The complainant (and Clerk or other officer) will be invited back to the meeting to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made.

3. After the Meeting

All decisions taken will be confirmed in writing within seven working days, together with details of any action to be taken and the Council's appeal process.

4. Putting Things Right

If following the investigation into the complaint the Council is found to be at fault, every effort will be made to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant.

5. What If You Are Not Satisfied

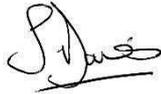
Unlike for District, County or Unitary Councils, there is currently no external agency or government body which can investigate a complaint if you are not satisfied with the initial consideration of your complaint. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may write to the Chairman at our address who will review the complaint, and all of the paperwork relating thereto, and if the Chairman believes it appropriate will submit the complaint to an Appeals

Committee of the Council for consideration. In order to preserve any confidentiality issues, the Committee of the Council may deal with your complaint in private session and your details will not therefore be released publicly.

Assistance or Advice relating to procedures or a complaint

If you need any specific help or general guidance about the Council's procedures or about any specific complaint, please contact the Town Clerk.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Davies', written over a horizontal line.

Councillor Shaun Davies, Chairman