

Easingwold Town Council

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Easingwold Town Council has adopted a standard procedure to provide a transparent process for dealing with complaints made about the administration of the council or its procedures, either directly to the council or referred on by another body.

Every effort should first be made by the Clerk or Chairman to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant by less formal measures or explanations provided before resorting to the formal complaints procedure.

Under the formal complaints procedure the Confidential Matters Committee (comprising the Council and Committee Chairmen) will meet with the complainant in an attempt to resolve the matter to mutual satisfaction and will report its conclusions to the next full council meeting.

The Code of Practice below will be employed to ensure that any complaint is properly and fully considered.

It should be noted that the procedure is not appropriate for a complaint made against an individual.

Complaints about a member of the Town Council's staff will be dealt with as an employment matter. The matter will be dealt with internally and appropriate action taken as required.

Complaints regarding Town Councillors are now subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board for England. In the first instance complaints should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer, Hambleton District Council, Civic Centre, Stone Cross, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 2UU.

Code of practice for dealing with complaints about the administration of the council or its procedures

Before the Meeting

1. The person making the complaint (complainant) should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Town Clerk.

2. The Town Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant that the matter will be brought to the attention of the full council, which will determine when the matter will be considered by the Confidential Matters Committee.
3. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
4. 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation of other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Town Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely on at the meeting.

At the Meeting

5. The Confidential Matters Committee must consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. However, any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Town Council meeting in public.
6. Chairman to introduce everyone.
7. Chairman to explain procedure.
8. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
9. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
10. If relevant, the Town Clerk to explain the council's position.
11. Members to ask any question of the Town Clerk.
12. Town Clerk and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
13. Town Clerk and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).
14. Town Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the meeting

15. Confidential Matters Committee to report its conclusions and any action recommended to the next full meeting of the Town Council.

16. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days of the Council meeting together with details of any action to be taken.

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