



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

This Code will not cover complaints about an employee; this is an employment matter, which is dealt with under Employment Contract Policies. Likewise, complaints about a Councillor are now subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board.

This Code of Practice is for those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Council or its procedures and is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk, other Proper Officer or the Chairman.

If the Clerk or other Proper Officer is putting forward the justification for the action or procedure complained of, s/he should not advise the Council or Committee.

CODE OF PRACTICE

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other Proper Officer, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Clerk shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

7. Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, Clerk or other Proper Officer to explain the Council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the Clerk or other Proper Officer.
13. Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in that order).
14. Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant to be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the complaint is justified. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back.)
15. Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when a decision will be made.

After the Meeting

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

Adopted under Min Ref FIN/58/09 and C/109/09 (09.09.2009) Reviewed 24.04.24

ⁱ The Council may wish to establish a Committee to deal with complaints. This avoids the need for full Council having to assemble and also makes the process less daunting for a complainant if they choose to attend a meeting in person. If a Committee is formed, it should report its conclusions to the next Council meeting.