



Complaints Procedure

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FP006	1.	TC	Nov 2020	Feb 2021	Finance

Weymouth Town Council (WTC)

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction:

- 1.1. This complaints procedure is for all complaints to the Council, whether these are minor, serious, informal or formal and apply to all services provided by the Council.
- 1.2. Separate arrangements as prescribed by law are in place in respect of Councillors. These arrangements are referred to in paragraph 7 below.
- 1.3. The Council believes that complaints can provide useful information and feedback on the quality of our services, procedures and practices. The effective handling of complaints will help us to improve the services provided on behalf of residents, visitors and those working within the Town.
- 1.4 A log of compliments, comments and complaints regarding WTC services will be maintained by staff and used to facilitate service improvement and to inform Councillors of issues.

2. Aim

- 2.1. The aim of this complaints procedure is to swiftly investigate all complaints in an impartial manner and to find a solution locally, whenever possible, to the satisfaction of both the complainant and the Council.

3. Definition of Complaints

- 3.1. People's perceptions differ widely. It is therefore very difficult to give a precise definition of a complaint. However, for our purposes, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a service undertaken by Weymouth Town Council or any of its employees' or contractors.

- 3.2. More specifically, a complaint is where:

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 or contractor 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
- Maladministration is alleged.

- 3.3. This complaints procedure will not apply to complaints made anonymously.

4. What To Do If You Have A Complaint

4.1. The first priority is to raise the issue with the Town Council. To do this, please contact the Council. Your complaint can be made by telephone, email, in person or in writing, giving names and addresses and relevant dates with as much information as possible. Please clearly state that you wish to make a complaint. The appropriate details for contacting the Town Council are:

By telephone on 01305 239839

By email office@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk;

In person or by letter to Weymouth Town Council, The Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

Via the 'contact us' page of our website www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk

By Facebook or Twitter private/direct message @WeymouthWTC

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

4.3. For more complex issues, it is much better to put these in writing so that a thorough investigation can be undertaken. Investigations will be dealt with as quickly as possible. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your complaint within 5 working days and a full response to your complaint will be provided as soon as possible.

4.4. The Town Council will maintain a register of complaints showing dates, details of the complaint, complainant and the action taken to resolve the issue. This is available for all members of the Council to inspect. Serious complaints will be reported to Councillors.

4.5. If the complaint involves the Town Clerk personally, the complainant should address the complaint direct to the Mayor and/or Leader.

4.6 Complaints should be made within eight weeks of the incidents, or within eight weeks of the last instance for an ongoing complaint. IN exceptional circumstances the Council may investigate complaints notified outside of eight weeks. The exceptional circumstances should be clearly stated in the complaint.

5. Putting Things Right

5.1. 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.

5.2. Where subsequent actions or simply the passage of time prevents restitution, other actions may be appropriate which may include a local settlement. A local settlement is defined as action taken to restore a complainant to a situation he or she would have been in if the fault had not occurred.

5.3. When considering a local settlement, the remedy will need to be appropriate to the injustice and may be reduced where a complainant has contributed to the injustice suffered.

6. What If You Are Not Satisfied

- 6.1. Unlike for District, Unitary or County 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 action taken by the Town Clerk, you should write to the Mayor and/or The Leader via our address or website. The Mayor and/or The Leader will review the complaint, and all of the paperwork relating thereto, and if he/she believes it appropriate will submit the complaint to a Committee of the Council for consideration.
- 6.2. In order to preserve any confidentiality issues, the Committee of the Council will normally deal with your complaint in private session and your details will not therefore be released publicly.

7. What If I Have a Complaint About the Behaviour of a Particular Councillor (or Councillors)

- 7.1. Councillors are required to observe a 'Code of Conduct'. If you think that a unitary, town or parish councillor has not followed the Code, you can complain and Dorset Council will look into the matter.
- 7.2. Dorset Council (DC) has a special committee, called the Audit and Governance (Assessment) Sub Committee, which is responsible for doing this.

7.38.1. If you want to complain about the conduct of a Council Member, please contact:

The Monitoring Officer
Dorset Council
South Walks House
South Walks Road
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1UZ

7.4. DC can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Member. It is not allowed to deal with complaints about things that are not covered by the Members' Code of Conduct. If you make a complaint to DC it must be about why you think a Member has not followed the Code of Conduct.

7.5. A full copy of the Code of Conduct is available from the Council's offices and on the Council's website.

80. Assistance or Advice Relating to Procedures or a Complaint

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

The Town Clerk, Weymouth Town Council, The Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

By telephone 01305 239839

By Email: office@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Via our website at www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Date agreed:

Date for review: