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DRIFFIELD TOWN COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

‘A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction of one or more members of the public about the council’s action or lack of action or about the standard of service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body action on behalf of the Council.’

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines how Driffield Town Council (the Council) will deal with complaints made by residents, businesses, allotment tenants, users of venues and other stakeholders, in respect of the administration of its council duties and all procedural systems in place.

Complaints specifically regarding policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to the Council (note Section 7 of the Council’s Standing Orders which says that issues shall not be re-opened for six months).

Our goal is to ensure that all complaints are addressed efficiently and in a timely manner. The procedure will be a transparent process for resolving issues.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all complaints related to the services, functions and activities of the Council, its officers, or its contractors.

The Council will try wherever possible, to settle the complaint directly with the complainant.

3. Who to Contact

- If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally by phone or in person, to a Councillor or the Town Clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully, the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing by email or post to the Clerk, and they will be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
- If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to or it is in relation to the Town Clerk, they shall be advised to put it to the Chair of the Council’s Personnel Committee or to the Chair of the Council.
- If the complaint is about an individual councillor, the complainant shall be referred to the local Standards Committee.
- Any internal complaints about staff members, will be dealt with using the Council’s employment policies and procedures.

The Clerk/Councillor assigned to deal with the complaint, shall acknowledge receipt of and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether notice

of it will be given in the usual way (if, for example, the complaint is to be heard by a committee).

4. Complaint Form

A Complaint form is available on request by contacting the Town Clerk, or the Council's Chair of the Personnel Committee, or the Chair of the Council.

Complaints must include your name and contact details, a clear description of the issue and any relevant dates. Also, where possible include any relevant documents, photos or other evidence that supports the complaint.

Complaints should be submitted within 14 days of the incident or issue.

5. Stages of the Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Initial Investigation

- The Council will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 14 working days.
- The assigned person/committee will investigate the complaint and gather relevant information.
- The Council will aim to resolve the complaint within a further 10 working days or add it to the next relevant committee agenda for resolution.

Stage 2 – Review

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, they can request a review by the Council's Appeals Committee who will review the complaint and make a decision within a further 10 working days.
- Seven clear days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The complainant will be given the opportunity, if they wish, to summarise their position orally to the Committee. They may be asked questions following this to clarify details.

Stage 3 – Escalation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

- If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, then they can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) on telephone 0300 061 0614 or by post to PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH.

5. Timeframes:

The Council aim to resolve all complaints within 8 weeks of receipt.

The Town Clerk will provide regular updates to the complainant on the progress of their complaint.

6. Confidentiality:

The Council will keep the complainant's personal information confidential.

The Council will only share information with relevant parties involved in the investigation.

7. Review of Procedure:

This procedure was adopted in the full council meeting dated 3rd June 2025, minute number 046/25 and will be reviewed to ensure it remains effective and relevant.