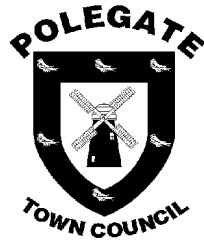


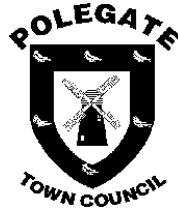
Approved at Full Council Meeting
25th November 2013
Polegate Town Council



Complaints Procedure

Policy Number 17		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	25 th November 2013	Adopted at Full Council Meeting
2	23 rd May 2016	Header added, adopted Annual Stat Meeting 2016
3	22.05.17	Adopted at Annual Stat Meeting

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Councils administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council or relevant Committee as appropriate, for consideration.

This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a member of the Town Council. Any complaint that a Councillor may have breached the Councils adopted code of conduct should be referred to The Monitoring Officer, Wealden District Council, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham BN27 2AX

If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Councils employees is notified orally to a Councillor, or to the Clerk to the Council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.

STAGE ONE

1. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing, by letter or email, to the Town Clerk at the Council Offices, stating: What the complaint is about, when it happened (or should have happened), what should have been done differently and what should be done to put things right.
2. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated but it is easier to deal with if it is.
3. The aim is to respond fully to the complainant within 10 working days of issue of the acknowledgement.
4. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example) he or she should be advised to write to the Mayor.
5. On receipt of a written complaint, the Town Clerk (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) or Mayor (if the complaint relates to the Clerk) will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving them an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.
6. Where the Town Clerk or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerks actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Mayor. The Town Clerk will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.

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7. The Town Clerk or Mayor will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the Council.

STAGE TWO

1. The Town Clerk or Mayor will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council and 3 Councillors will be nominated to form a complaints panel.
2. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered by the complaints panel and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally.
3. Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place should be dealt with in accordance with the Councils grievance and disciplinary procedures.
4. The Council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the Council meeting in public.
5. The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after advice has been received.

STAGE THREE

1. As soon as possible after the Council meeting (and in any event not later than 15 working days after the meeting) the complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
2. 5 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting. This may exclude confidential documentation which may be exempt from inspection.
3. At the meeting of the complaints panel, the Chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
4. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) The Town Clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii) members.
5. The Town Clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the Councils position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) members.
6. The Town Clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
7. The Town Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the

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grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.

8. The Town clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.
9. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 5 working days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

IN BRIEF

Stage one	Written complaint received by Clerk	Day 1
	Complaint is acknowledged within 5 days of receipt	Day 5
	The Clerk and Mayor will try and resolve the complaint. A response to be sent to complainant within 10 days of acknowledgment sent	Day 15
Stage two	If complaint not resolved by Mayor and/or clerk the letter will be taken to Council to set a Complaints Panel.	
Stage three	Complaints panel to sit 15 days after Council meeting	3 Councillors
	5 days before Complaints panel information is transferred between Clerk and Complainant.	
	5 days after complaints panel decision should be sent to complainant.	