

# **PORTISHEAD TOWN COUNCIL**

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

1. This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about Portishead Town Council's administration and procedures. It applies to the Council's employees. Complaints about Town Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct adopted by Portishead Town Council on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012. Any complaints about Town Councillors should be referred to North Somerset Council's Monitoring Officer.
2. Complaints about policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to the Town Council (but note the Town Council's Standing Orders which states that issues shall not be re-opened for six months except in certain circumstances).
3. If a complaint about procedures or administration practices by the Town Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly and in any event within 10 working days.
4. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk they should be advised to refer it to the Chairman of the Council.
5. On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman or Clerk (except where the complaint is about his/her own actions) shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving them the opportunity to comment. Every effort should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.
6. If it is not possible to settle the complaint the Chairman or Clerk (as appropriate) shall refer it to the Town Council's Staffing & Finance Committee. The person complained about will be notified and given an opportunity to comment direct to the Committee. Every effort will be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.
7. Where the Clerk receives a written complaint about his/her own actions, s/he shall immediately refer the complaint to the Staffing & Finance Committee. The Clerk will be given an opportunity to comment direct to the Committee. The Committee shall then proceed as at paragraph 6.
8. The Staffing & Finance Committee shall have delegated power to deal with any such complaints to a final conclusion and will invite the complainant to attend a meeting to discuss the matter, if considered necessary. The Committee will defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary or if they consider it necessary to invoke the Town Council's Disciplinary

Procedure. Such a decision and the reason for it will be communicated to the complainant at the earliest opportunity.

9. As soon as reasonably practicable after the decision has been made, it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
10. Any complaints received and the action taken will be reported to all members of the Town Council at the earliest convenient meeting. To ensure that any hearings under the Grievance or Disciplinary Procedures are not prejudiced this will not be until the matter has been concluded and will usually be under Exempt Business provisions.

*February 2007*  
*Reviewed April 2011*  
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