

Louth Town Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

To determine whether a complaint procedure is appropriate:

- 1) It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under a complaints procedure. The Council will need to refer to or use other procedures / bodies in respect of the following types of complaint:

<i>Individual member's conduct alleged to breach the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council</i>	<i>The relevant principal authority Monitoring Officer should be contacted – East Lindsey District Council has responsibility for such matters</i>
<i>Alleged financial irregularity</i>	<i>Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council's audit of accounts (Audit Commission Act 1998 s.16)</i>
<i>Alleged criminal activity</i>	<i>The Police</i>

- 2) A member of the public may also consider a criticism about a service (e.g. an untidy park area or unclean public toilet) or a fee (e.g. the level of charge for an allotment) to be a complaint, but these do not fall within the formal complaints procedure unless the Council has acted improperly and should be treated as normal service requests.
- 3) It is to be noted that staff members are not responsible for any works or maintenance carried out by any Town Council appointed contractor(s); such complaints must be made in writing to the Council. Person(s) who make such complaints 'personal' against staff members may be subject to restrictions within other Town Council Policies.

Before the meeting

1. Any complaint about the Council's procedures or administration should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Council at The Sessions House, Eastgate, Louth, LN11 9AJ
2. If the complainant does not wish to make the complaint via the Clerk to the Council, it should be marked confidential and addressed to the Chairman (Mayor) of the Council.
3. The Clerk to the Council/Chairman will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise when the matter will be considered by either the Council or a nominated Committee working on behalf of the Council.
4. Please be aware that any complaint will be treated as confidential, and that the council is obliged to comply with its duties under the Data Protection Act 1998 at all times to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.
5. The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting at which the complaint will be considered, and be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a representative, if required.
6. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant is required to provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other items on which the complaint is based.
7. The Council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the opportunity to read all material in good time for the meeting.

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At the meeting

1. The council shall exclude the public and press whilst discussion of the matter takes place. Any decision on a complaint shall subsequently be announced at a meeting in public, whilst taking into account any duties to safeguard personal data as under (4) above.
2. The Chairman will introduce everyone at the meeting, and explain the procedure to be followed.
3. The complainant will be asked to outline the grounds for the complaint, and thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk and (ii) members of the Council.
4. The Clerk to the Council will then have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and then (ii) members.
5. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
6. The Clerk will be offered the opportunity to summarise the position on behalf of the Council.
7. The Clerk and complainant will both be asked to leave the room whilst members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
8. The complainant will be given the opportunity to await the outcome but if a decision is unlikely to be finalised quickly, will be advised when a decision is likely to be made and communicated to them.

After the meeting

1. Any decision will be confirmed to the complainant within seven working days, together with details of any further action to be taken.
2. The Council's decision on the matter will be final, and no further appeal process will be offered.