



Edenbridge Town Council

Town Clerk: Christine Lane CertHE Local Policy



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

(Adopted May 2016)

Introduction

Edenbridge Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this Council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

Scope

1. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.
2. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
 - 2.1. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
 - 2.2. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Sevenoaks District Council.
3. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

Council offices: Doggetts Barn, 72A High Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5AR

Office hours: Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm **Tel:** (01732) 865368 **Fax:** (01732) 866749

Email: townclerk@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk **Web:** www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk

4. In all cases, the Council will endeavour to deal with the matter in a proportionate and timely manner, usually within 12 weeks.

Procedures

5. You may make your complaint about the Council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. Edenbridge Town Council, Doggetts Barn, 72a High Street, Edenbridge, TN8 5AR, 01732 865368, townclerk@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk
6. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within 20 working days.
7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report it to the Council. It may chose to deal with the matter or to establish a Complaints Committee to deal with it (as appropriate).
8. The Clerk or the Complaints Committee of the Council or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.
9. The complainant may be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
10. If so, seven 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.

At the Meeting

11. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
12. The Chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
13. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii) members.

14. The Clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) members.
15. The Clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
16. The Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while 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.
17. The 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.

After the Meeting

18. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days, together with details of any action to be taken.

File/Admin/Policy/Complaints procedure 2016