

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This complaints procedure is concerned with the performance of the Town Council's systems and procedures. Complaints concerning Councillors should be made to the Chairman of the Assessment Sub-Committee via the local monitoring officer at Lewes District Council.

Chair of the Assessment Sub-Committee
The Standards Committee
Lewes District Council
Lewes House
32 High Street
Lewes
East Sussex BN7 2LX

E-mail complaints marked for the attention of the Chair of the Assessment Sub-Committee can be forwarded to the District Council's Monitoring Officer catherine.knight@lewes.gov.uk.

Why do we need a complaints procedure?

Benefits to the Citizen: It is a fundamental principle of citizens' rights; it demonstrates our commitment to act upon, and listen to, citizens' views; it ensures customers receive a fair, speedy, confidential and effective response.

Benefits to the Council: It enables us to improve our customer care and service delivery arrangements and, when appropriate action is taken, reduces the number of recurring complaints.

The Town Council's complaints' procedure is designed to be:

Accessible A well publicised procedure with information available at the Town Council reception and on the Web site

Simple A few simple, easy to understand stages which can be actioned by telephone, personal visit, or correspondence.

Speedy Making sure deadlines are kept and residents are kept informed.

Fair and confidential

Effective Addressing all the points at issue and providing appropriate remedies.

Informative By monitoring the process, we can help to ensure that we learn from our experiences.

The Role of Councillors

Complainants inevitably approach Councillors at different stages of the complaints process.

- a) As a rule Councillors should advise and encourage complainants to use the complaints system.
- b) Councillors should get directly involved primarily when the system appears not to be working satisfactorily.

In practice, if councillors wish to log complaints directly or to pursue the progress of particular complaints, they should contact the Town Clerk directly. In these cases Councillors should be kept informed.

Responses and Response Times

Our undertaking is the same as for all letters, see ‘answering telephones and letters’ in this section. An acknowledgement or answer should be sent on or before the 7th day after the complaint was received. Another letter should be sent on or before the 14th day after receipt; either informing the complainant of the outcome, or keeping the complainant informed.

Recording Complaints

All complaints must be logged in the complaints file.

Monitoring and Reviewing the System

Monitoring will be carried out to ensure that lessons are learned, improvements are made, and recurring problems addressed and resolved.

Training

The Town Council is committed to investing in the training of its staff.

Remedies

Where a complaint is found to be justified, consideration needs to be given to the appropriate remedy. The remedy should, as far as possible, put the complainant into the position they would have been in, had things not gone wrong.

The Formal Complaints Procedure

If you cannot resolve the complaint informally, there are 3 steps to the formal complaints procedure, any one of which may produce a satisfactory outcome.

Step 1: The appropriate officer should try to resolve the complaint. She should also ensure that the complainant is aware of their right to:

- contact the Town Clerk
- contact a councillor
- contact the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) (or The Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC))
- contact the Council’s Auditor

In practice, officers should discuss with the Town Clerk, any complaints which they cannot resolve, or forward the complaint to the Town Clerk at the complainant’s request. All responses to complaints investigated under Step 1 should be written, even if the complainant is also advised by a meeting telephone call. The written response must also advise of Step 2 option.

Step 2: The complainant has the right to appeal to the Town Clerk. The written response should advise the complainant of the outcome of the investigation and advise the complainant’s of Step 3.

Step 3: If appropriate, the complainant should be aware of the role of the Council's Auditors and their right to contact them.

NALC

National Association of Local Councils
109 Great Russell Street
London
WC1B 3LD

SALC

Sussex House
212 High Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2NH
Tel 01273 476342

Council Auditor

Mazars
37 Frederick Place
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 4EA

Further information

For:

- more information about the Council's complaints procedure;
- advice on how to deal with complaints.

Please contact the Town Clerk, who co-ordinates the complaints procedure:-

The Town Clerk
Telscombe Town Council
Telscombe Civic Centre
360 South Coast Road
Telscombe Cliffs
E Sussex
BN10 7ES