

# LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL



## **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

Liskeard Town Council recognises that from time to time there will be concerns expressed by members of the public over the activities of the Council or one of its members or employees. To address these issues the Council has adopted a procedure for the handling of complaints. This procedure allows people to have a form of address to the Council if they feel they have a complaint, or have been unfairly treated in their dealings with the Council staff, Councillors, the Council or its Committees.

### **VERBAL COMPLAINTS**

1. On receipt of a complaint by telephone, letter, fax or email the Town Clerk will try to satisfy the complainant immediately or as soon as is practicable.
2. If the Town Clerk is unable to answer the complaint immediately, then full details of the complaint together with the complainant's telephone number etc. will be recorded so that a further verbal response can be made as soon as possible.
3. If a verbal response is unable to satisfy, then the Town Clerk/member will ask that the complaint be put in writing in order that it can be investigated more fully.

### **WRITTEN COMPLAINTS**

1. On receiving a written complaint, the Town Clerk shall try to settle the complaint directly.
2. If the complaint is about the behaviour of a member or employee of the Council, the Town Clerk must also notify the person and offer the opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to try and settle the complaint.
3. If necessary, the Town Clerk will send a holding letter to the complainant to allow further time to address the issues raised.
4. The Town Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the relevant Committee or Council and the Town Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date of the meeting. The Complainant will be offered the opportunity to explain the nature of the complaint to the meeting.
5. The Town Clerk shall consult with the Mayor/Deputy Mayor to consider whether the written complaint warrants discussion at a meeting of the relevant Committee or Council in the absence of the press and public, with the decision

Adopted Town Council Meeting 15 September

on the complaint shall be announced at the relevant Committee or Council meeting in public.

6. The Town Clerk will communicate in writing the decision that has been made by the relevant Committee or Council and the nature of any action taken by the relevant Committee or Council.

### **COMPLAINTS AGAINST AN OFFICER OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Any complaint against a member or officer must be submitted in writing.
2. If the complaint is against the actions of the Town Clerk, it should be submitted in writing to the Mayor.
3. If the complaint is made against the actions of an employee, it will be considered as an employment issue and the Town Clerk will present the complaint to the Staff Committee of the Council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press or public.
4. If the complaint is made against the actions of the Town Clerk, it will be considered as an employment issue and the Mayor will present the complaint to the Staff Committee of the Council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press or public.
5. The Complainant may be invited to attend part of the meeting to explain the nature of their complaint, in the absence of the public and press.
6. Persons mentioned in the complaint will have the opportunity to will explain the nature of their actions to the meeting, in the absence of the public and press.
7. The result of any council consideration of a complaint will be announced at a Council meeting in public.

### **COMPLAINTS AGAINST A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL**

Town Councillors sign up to a Code of Conduct on taking office. The Council is unable to investigate complaints against any of its members. If you wish to submit a complaint for breach of this code should do so to the Monitoring Officer at Cornwall Council.

Mr S Mansell  
Governance and Information Manager  
Cornwall Council  
Treyew Road  
TRURO  
Cornwall

Tel: (01872) 322704

E-mail [simon.mansell@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:simon.mansell@cornwall.gov.uk)

Further information can be accessed from [www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

### **VEXATIOUS OR PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS**

The Town Council receives very few complaints about the services that it provides and about the property that it manages. Where it does receive a complaint these are examined quickly and in accordance with the approved policy as outlined above. However, there will be rare occasions when a complainant will not be satisfied with the

decision of a Committee or the Council itself. They might attempt to continue to pursue the issue in a way that the manner that is vexatious or persistent, for example:

- Complaining to a different person to see if they can obtain the response they wish.
- Modifying the complaint slightly to make it appear a new issue whereas it is really the original complainant.

Given the limited resources available to the Town Council it is important not to spend large amounts of time dealing with vexatious or persistent complainants. Hence, upon the decision of a Committee or Council that the complaint has been considered and found to be vexatious or persistent that the Town Clerk and appropriate staff need not spend further time dealing with the issue.

Adopted by Liskeard Town Council – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
To be reviewed - September 2017