

WINSLOW TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Context

The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over Town Councils.

Complaints about an employee of the Council should be dealt with as an employment matter. The complainant can be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally as such and appropriate action taken as required.

Complaints about a Councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board, which delegates powers to a local level. Complainants should be advised to contact, in the first instance, the AVDC Monitoring Officer, based within the Legal Department, directly for further information.

These procedures are aimed at complaints about the administration of the Council or its procedures.

The adoption of a complaints procedure is an efficient way of dealing with complaints received and preserving the good reputation of the Council through a transparent process.

The Council may wish to establish a committee to deal with complaints, which will reports its conclusions to the next council meeting. It may be considered good practice to notify the Standards Committee of AVDC that a complaints procedure has been adopted.

The procedure is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided by the Clerk or Chairman.

At all times the rules of natural justice will apply, i.e. all parties should be treated fairly and the process should be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

Procedure

Before the meeting:

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the Committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish
5. 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the meeting:

1. 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.
2. Chairman to introduce everyone
3. Chairman to explain procedure
4. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint
5. Members to ask any question of the complainant
6. If relevant, employee to explain the Council's position
7. Members to ask any question of the Clerk
8. Employee and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order)
9. Employee and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made (if a point of clarification is necessary, BOTH parties to be invited back.)
10. Employee and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the meeting

Decision confirmed in writing within 7 working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Procedure adopted by Full Council at their meeting on 3rd July 2008

Signed:Chairman of Meeting