



Yateley Town Council Complaints Procedure 2020

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A complaint is...

"An expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action taken or the service was provided by the Council itself or a body acting on behalf of the Council".

1.2 A complaint is not an initial request for a service to be delivered.

1.3 A complaint is a customer letting us know they are unhappy with:

- The quality and/or standard of service provided;
- The quality of information and/or advice given;
- The Council's failure to comply with procedures, rules, statutory obligation or published service standards.

1.4 A complaint will not be regarded as a formal complaint under the complaints procedure where an officer addresses the query within 48 hours, such as a report of fly-tipping or a telephone call not being returned immediately.

2.0 Complaints Procedure

2.1 The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration.

2.2 This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Town Council.

2.3 If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor, or to the Town Clerk, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.

2.4 The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter or email) to the Town Clerk at Yateley Town Council, Council Offices, Reading Road, Yateley, GU46 7RP or office@yateley-tc.gov.uk.

2.5 The complaint will be dealt with within 21 days of receipt. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is in writing.

2.6 If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Town Clerk (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example,) he or she should be advised to write to the Leader.

2.7 On receipt of a written complaint, the Town Clerk (except where the complainant is about his or her own actions) or Leader (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.

2.8 Where the Town Clerk or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Leader. The Town Clerk will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.

2.9 The Town Clerk (or Leader) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the Full Council.

2.10 The Town Clerk (or Leader) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Full Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally.

2.11 Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place, should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary procedures.

2.12 The Council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the Council meeting in public.

2.13 The Council may consider in the circumstances of any particular complaint whether to make any without liability payment or provide other reasonable benefit to any person who has suffered loss as a result of the Council's maladministration. Any payment may only be authorised by the Council after obtaining legal advice and advice from the Council's auditor on the propriety of such a payment.

2.14 As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

2.15 The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

2.16 Reply letters will include the following information:

If you are unhappy with our response you may be able to contact The Local Government Ombudsman at www.lgo.org.uk or call 0300 061 0614. The LGO can only consider a complaint about a Town Council if it is acting on behalf of another Council. So, for example, if a County Council has arranged that the Town Council should maintain the grass verges.

Amendment Record

Version 1: Agreed March 2016
Version 2: Agreed September 2018
Version 3: Agreed May 2020