



Feedback Policy and Complaints Procedure

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Policy Maker Assistant Town Clerk

Responsibility Full Council

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This information pack contains:

Feedback Policy and Complaints Procedure
Introduction and objectives
Procedure
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Panel
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Littlehampton Town Council

Feedback Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Littlehampton Town Council is committed to providing an excellent standard of service to its Customers.

1.2 Positive and negative feedback play a role in maintaining and improving standards and the quality of service provided. When feedback is received, this is viewed as a way of understanding how services are delivered and importantly, how the Town Council can improve.

1.3 This policy details the way in which feedback will be managed, investigated, and acted upon. It covers all activities of the Town Council and may be used by members of the public who have specific feedback about the conduct, administration, or operation of the Council.

1.4 Feedback is information about a Customer's reaction or opinion as a result of the actions or behaviour undertaken by the Council. It can be either positive or negative and is used as a basis for service improvement. All feedback is recorded, and a copy is sent to the relevant service manager to review and feed into their work plans accordingly.

1.5 A complaint can be defined as "An expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of the Town Council's service, actions or lack of action by staff, particularly where a problem has not been remedied to the satisfaction of the Customer".

1.6 This Policy does not cover:

- i. Complaints against services or actions for which the Town Council is not responsible such as those provided by District, County or Central Government, to whom the feedback must be made direct;
- ii. Complaints about elected Town Council Members – Councillors – must be made direct to the Monitoring Officer, at Arun District Council. The address is Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 5LF. The telephone number is 01903 737500.

2. Objectives of the Feedback Policy

2.1 The objectives of the Policy are:

- a. To provide the public with a formalised system for positive and negative feedback to the Town Council and a mechanism for resolving complaints if made.
- b. To fix the timescales during which a complaint must be investigated.
- c. To state how the complaint will be investigated.
- d. To state who will investigate the complaint.
- e. To formalise how the response to the Customer will be made.
- f. To allow the Town Council to review its procedures to prevent a further

occurrence of this nature.

3. Procedure For Giving Feedback

3.1 Members of the public may give feedback about Town Council services and administration in the following ways:

- a. To a Town Councillor.
- b. In person at the Town Council offices.
- c. By writing to the Town Clerk at the Council offices.
- d. Via the 'contact us' page of the Council's website.
- e. By email.
- f. By telephone.
- g. Through a representative, e.g., friend, advocate, or solicitor.

Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

3.2 There may be times when feedback is negative and constituting a complaint. In giving this feedback the Customer is encouraged to provide as much detail as possible, for example:

- a. What service, policy, person, or aspect of the Council the feedback is about.
- b. If appropriate, the date, time, and location where an incident may have taken place and who may have been affected.
- c. The expectations held of Council services, particularly as a result of information provided or that staff or Councillors may have given.
- d. Name, address, and contact details so that the Council can respond.
- e. Details of what they consider is a satisfactory resolution, e.g., acknowledgment, change in policy or practice, apology, refund.
- f. Anything else which would help to make the point and guide the subsequent investigation.

3.3 Littlehampton Town Council recognises that it is frustrating when expectations are not met and will endeavour to resolve all feedback. In return:

- Our staff must be treated with respect;
- Abusive language or behaviour will not be tolerated when communicating with us;
- Please engage with all reasonable requests made in an effort to resolve concerns.

3.4 Complaints specifically about the conduct of the Town Clerk this should be sent to either the Town Mayor or Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer who will conduct the investigation.

3.5 The Town Council will not usually consider complaints about issues which took place more than 12 months before the date of the complaint. Where there is a long delay, it is unlikely that any investigation would be effective. The Council

will also not consider complaints which are substantially about issues which have already completed our complaints procedure – see Appendix 1 – or from customers who may be persistent, habitual and vexatious complainants.

4. Contact Details

Address:

Littlehampton Town Council
Manor House
Church Street
Littlehampton
West Sussex BN17 5EW

Telephone: 01903 732063

Fax: 01903 731690

Email: lrc@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk

Website: www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk

Appendix 1

1. Complaints Procedure

- 1.1 Upon receiving a complaint, the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer will acknowledge this in writing to the Customer.
- 1.2 The information will be kept on file and logged in a spreadsheet specifically kept for this purpose.
- 1.3 The complaint should be resolved and answered within ten working days. If this is not possible, the Town Council will provide regular updates at least every ten working days. These will detail the reason for the delay and when a response can be expected. Our response can be provided by letter, email, face to face or telephone. Where a response is given by telephone or in person, the Town Council will offer to provide written confirmation of the discussion.
- 1.4 The Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer should investigate the complaint, record the result in the Feedback spreadsheet and when resolved, write to the Customer with the results. If the issue involves one of these Officers, then another should deal with the investigation.
- 1.5 If the issue cannot satisfactorily be resolved in this way, a panel will be convened comprising three of the following Councillors:
 - Mayor
 - Deputy Mayor
 - Committee Chair
 - Committee Vice-Chairs.
- 1.6 The Customer should be informed of the date of the panel and should be invited to attend either personally or with a friend.
- 1.7 The Panel should be conducted in accordance with the National Association of Local Council's guidance as set out in Legal Topic note 9, as set out in paragraph 5 of this policy.
- 1.8 A summary report on the Panel's judgement must be reported to the next meeting of the appropriate Committee or Full Council.
- 1.9 The Panel hearing is the final stage of the Complaints Procedure. The Panel and Town Council are not covered by the Local Government Ombudsman.

2. The Panel Hearing

- 2.1 The public and press are not permitted at Panel hearings. However, the Town Mayor will report on the hearing at the next appropriate Council meeting. The order of business for the Panel meeting is in accordance with the National Association of Local Council's guidance as set out in Legal Topic note 9 as follows:
 - a. Chair to introduce everyone.
 - b. Chair to explain procedure.
 - c. Customer or representative to outline grounds for complaint.
 - d. Members to ask any question of the Customer.
 - e. If the Panel believe that the matter has legal or technical complexities, support – in the form of advice and guidance – from a Senior Officer of the Council, who has not been involved, or in exceptional circumstances from

another Council, will be sought.

- f. If relevant, the Town Clerk or other proper Officer in attendance will explain the Council's position.
- g. Members to ask any question of the Town Clerk or other proper Officer.
- h. The Town Clerk or other proper Officer and the Customer to be offered opportunity of last word, in this order.
- i. The Town Clerk or other proper Officer and the Customer to be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back.
- j. Clerk or other proper Officer and Customer return to hear the decision or to be advised when the decision will be made.
- k. Following the conclusion of the meeting the Customer will be advised of the decision of the Panel, which is final with no right of further appeal. This will be confirmed in writing within seven days with details of any action to be taken.