

CHIPPENHAM TOWN COUNCIL

PROTOCOL FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

1. The Town Council is committed to the operation of an effective complaints procedure as part of its policy of Good Corporate Governance covering all aspects of its operations.
2. The Town Council undertakes that all complaints will be carefully investigated in a transparent manner and that all complainants will feel satisfied that their comments have been properly and fairly considered.
3. All complaints must be by letter, fax or email, addressed to the Clerk & Chief Executive who is the “Proper Officer” nominated to deal with such matters and give the name and address of the sender. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded automatically.
4. On receipt of any complaint, meeting the above criteria, the Clerk & Chief Executive will within two working days appoint an “Investigating Officer” who will conduct any investigation needed.
5. The Investigating Officer will normally be the Internal Auditor, although not necessarily, but the person appointed will in any event be given authority to interview senior staff.
6. The Investigating Officer will undertake any and all investigations needed, make all necessary records of the progress of the investigation and report to the Clerk & Chief Executive in writing within ten working days of being instructed.
7. The Clerk & Chief Executive will review the submitted report within three working days of receiving it and may conduct further interviews if considered necessary or authorise further investigations, to be completed within the same time period.
8. The Clerk & Chief Executive will then determine the complaint and if upheld will authorise any relevant remedial action needed, including any change to procedure, or reject the complaint completely.

In either case the complainant will be informed of the decision in writing within five days of the complaint being determined.

9. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision they may within 10 working days submit a written request to the Clerk & Chief Executive for an appeal to be heard by a Panel of the Personnel Sub Committee.

The appointed Panel will review all the available written evidence, seek the advice of the Clerk & Chief Executive and either uphold the appeal or

dismiss it completely. No further investigations will be requested or authorised.

In either case the complainant will be informed of the decision in writing within five working days of the date of the meeting of the Panel.

10. No appeal will be considered in relation to the operation of this Protocol and there is no further appeal about the complaint to any other Panel, Sub Committee or Committee, or to the Town Council. Any rights or protection under statute are not affected by this.
11. Any complainant has the right to appoint a professional representative, or any other person, to act on their behalf or accompany them in which case all correspondence will be addressed to the representative and not directly to the complainant.
12. Town/Parish Councils are not included within the Local Government Ombudsman scheme and no submission is legally possible to him.
13. In the event of any complaint being made against the Clerk & Chief Executive the same procedure will apply, except that "Chairman of the Personnel Sub Committee" will be substituted for "Clerk & Chief Executive" in paragraphs 1 – 10 inclusive above.

In this case, the Chairman of the Personnel Sub Committee could seek external consultant's advise at their own discretion.

14. The terms of this Protocol are specifically deemed **not** to apply to any matters raised by employees of the Town Council, for whom alternative channels of communication and approved means of redress apply.
15. The terms of this Protocol are specifically deemed **not** to apply to any matters relating to Members of the Town Council which fall within the jurisdiction of the Standards Board.

Such matters must be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Wiltshire Council in accordance with specified procedures.

16. The terms of this Protocol are specifically deemed **not** to apply to any matters raised by Members of the Town Council, who would otherwise have a conflict of interest, and who have alternative channels of communication.
17. Approved by Personnel Sub Committee on 06 December 2007.

Town Hall, High Street
Chippenham, SN15 3ER

Revised 31/07/13