

# SILSDEN TOWN COUNCIL



## Complaints Procedure

A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE TOWN COUNCIL - This Code is based on nationally recommended guidelines

### Everyday problems, queries and comments

The Council receives queries, problems and comments as part of its day to day running, and they should not all be regarded as complaints. These are routine and expected and are generally resolved quickly to the customer's satisfaction.

If someone is dissatisfied with the original service or response they received and wishes to take the matter further then the issue should be recognised as a complaint.

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put his complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. If a complainant indicates that he would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk he shall be advised to put it to the Chairman.
3. On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the Clerk or a Councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving him/her an opportunity to comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint. Where the Clerk or Chairman receives a written complaint about his/her own actions he/she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Council.

Complaints of a general nature relating to the Council as a body should be addressed to the clerk as Proper Officer or the Chairman. If these complaints are not disposed of by direct action with the complainant and where deemed justified as a serious complaint, they will be dealt with by either the appropriate committee or a meeting of the full council. The complainant would then be notified of the date when the complaint is to be heard.

4. The Clerk or Chairman shall report either to the next meeting of the appropriate Committee or the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
5. The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered.
6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public *BUT* any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
7. As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
8. **Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints**  
There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to pursue a complaint when it clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should or has been taken.  
  
These matters should be referred to the Parish Clerk with a summary of the issues and of the attempts made to resolve the complaint. They may, in such circumstances, decide that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant, and inform the complainant so, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.
9. **Anonymous Complaints**  
Anonymous complaints should be referred to the Parish Clerk, and may be acted on at his/her discretion, according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.
10. The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary from the Association or other such organisations.

Approved by the Council on 3rd July 2008

Signed..... Chairman

Signed..... Clerk

