

Castle Cary Town Council

Complaints Policy

Purpose: To define the Complaints Policy for Castle Cary Town Council, its Committees and Working Groups

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Complaints Policy

Castle Cary Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality.

Castle Cary Town Council recognises that from time to time there will be concerns expressed by members of the public over the activities of the Council or one of its Councillors, employees, contractors or volunteers** in relation to carrying out duties relating to the Council.

Procedure:

1. The formal procedures outlined below will ONLY be implemented where the complaint is in writing and signed by the complainant. It may be received by email with electronic signature, or by post or by hand to the Town Clerk's office and addressed to the Town Clerk, or in the case of a complaint against the Town Clerk, to the Chair of the Council.
2. The recipient of the complaint will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within two working days of receiving it.
3. Where the complaint involves activity which is, or appears to be, a safeguarding issue, the Clerk or chair of the Council will refer the matter immediately in confidence to the Council's safeguarding officer, who will implement the Council's safeguarding policy.
4. Where the complainant gives, or appears to give, evidence of criminal activity, the Clerk or Chair of the Council will contact the police for their advice and guidance in confidence.
5. Except in the case of complaints covered by clauses 3 & 4 above, the Clerk or Chair of the Council will immediately copy the written complaint to the Chair of Human resources in strict confidence. In complaints covered by Clauses 3 or 4 this will only be done if the Safeguarding Officer or police advise and authorise it.
6. Where the complaint is against a member of the Council for breach of Code of

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Conduct, the complainant will be advised to submit their complaint in writing to the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council.

7. In all cases, except those covered by clauses 3 and 4, the Chair of Human Resources will convene a specially selected complaints panel appropriate to the nature of the complaint. Members of the panel will resolve on the action to be taken.
8. The Clerk (or in the case of complaint against the Clerk, the Chair of Council) will prior to the meeting:
 - a) Notify the complaine of the complaint.
 - b) Investigate further the details of the complainant
 - c) If appropriate, invite complainant and one complaine to attend the meeting of the Human Resources Working Group where the complaint will be discussed.
9. Once they have been resolved, complaints will be acknowledged in full council meetings. The level of information divulged will depend on the nature of the complaint. It may be appropriate to share the action resulting from the complaint.
10. The same report will be sent in writing to the complainant and the person/people complained against.

[** Note: The term “Volunteers” means, for the purposes of this document, individuals, other than elected or co-opted councillors, who give help and support to the Town Council on a voluntary basis, either by serving on its working parties or subcommittees (e.g. MCHR, the Neighbourhood Planning group) or as volunteers staffing the information desk) or as appointees to specific tasks (e.g. cleaning the Horsepond, serving as Footpaths Officer etc).]