



**Odiham**  
Parish Council

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Adopted on 24 February 2014**

**Reviewed on 18 May 2015**

**Reviewed on 9 May 2016**

**Reviewed and Adopted on 8 May 2017**

**Reviewed and Adopted on 14 May 2018**

**Reviewed and Adopted 11 June 2019**

# **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

## **1. Introduction**

Odiham Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live and work in the parish or are visitors to the locality. However, like all organisations, we can make mistakes.

Odiham Parish Council makes a commitment to you, to listen to your complaint and respond to it quickly and fairly. We will do everything we can to put matters right.

This procedure covers complaints about the Council's administration, operations and procedures.

It does not cover complaints about the conduct of individual members of the Council. Complaints of this nature should be directed to the Monitoring Officer at Hart District Council, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet, GU51 4AE.

Complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as an employer should be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance procedure.

The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by contacting the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed or raising your concerns in the public session of the Council meetings.

## **2. Complaints Procedure**

Informal route: we would ask you to see if you can resolve the complaint with the officer or member concerned before proceeding further. The officer will take your name, address and the details of your complaint.

Formal route: to make a formal complaint you are requested to submit your complaint in writing to the Executive Officer.

## **3. Where to forward your complaint**

Please forward your complaint by the following methods:-

- Personally at the Parish Office during office hours which are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 9.00am to 2.00pm.
- Or by post – Odiham Parish Council, The Bridewell, The Bury, Odiham. RG29 1NB.
- Or by email – [eo@odiham.org.uk](mailto:eo@odiham.org.uk)

## **4. Code of Practice**

4.1 If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Cllr or the Executive Officer and it is not possible to remedy the complaint immediately, the complainant will be asked to put his/her

complaint in writing to the Executive Officer and will receive assurance on receipt that the matter will be dealt with quickly.

4.2 If a complainant indicates that he/she would prefer not to put the complaint to the Executive Officer then he/she should be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.

4.3 Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged and assurances given that it will be dealt with quickly.

4.4 On receipt of a written complaint, the Executive Officer (or the Chairman) will (except when the complaint is about his/her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant, but not without first notifying the person to whom the complaint refers and giving him/her the opportunity to comment. If the complaint is about the Executive Officer and the Chairman, it will be dealt with by the Vice-Chairman.

4.5 The Executive Officer or the Chairman of the Council will report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

4.6 The Executive Officer or the Chairman of the Council shall bring any written complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Executive Officer shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered.

4.7 The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and the public.

4.8 Seven working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied upon and the Council will similarly provide the complainant with copies of its documentation.

4.9 Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's relevant procedures and with the press and public excluded.

4.10 At the meeting the complainant should outline the grounds for complaint and answer questions from the Council. The Council's nominated officer will then explain the Council's position and answer questions accordingly.

4.11 As soon as possible after the decision has been made the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

4.12 The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it believes further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered, and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received. The complainant will be notified of any delay.

## **5. Dissatisfied with the Complaint Decision?**

If you are dissatisfied with the Council's decision, you are advised to seek advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) has no jurisdiction over Parish and Town Councils unless it is working jointly with a principal authority through a joint committee which includes representatives of the principal authority or it is exercising the functions of a principal authority.

## **6. Important Notes**

Some complaints are covered by specific laws or Council Regulations and may be dealt with through different procedures. Advice on these procedures will be given to you if necessary.

## **7. Assurances**

All complaints will be dealt with confidentially within the Council's offices. The Council will not reveal your personal details to an outside party without your permission.

This complaints procedure ensures that your complaint will be dealt with as quickly and as fairly as possible.

The Council will use your complaint to help improve our services and to avoid similar problems in the future.

The service you receive from the Council will not be affected because you have complained.

Your complaint will be investigated by the Executive Officer personally or by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council if the complaint is about the Executive Officer.

Complaints relating to an individual officer will be dealt with by the Executive Officer in consultation with two Cllrs which will usually be the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

## **8. OPC's Complaints Code**

The Council will make sure that its staff are aware of the entitlement of customers to make a complaint and to be guided positively and efficiently through the complaints procedure.

The overall aim of the complaints system is to deal with complaints: swiftly, fairly and with understanding.

Remember these are your rights and every effort will be taken to resolve complaints satisfactorily.

## **9. Log of Complaints**

A log of complaints containing details only of the subject matter will be kept and stored by the parish office and reviewed by the Council every two years.