

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL Complaints Procedure

Adopted on 31 August 2011, revised 10 September 2012, amended January 2013

Introduction

Loughton 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. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- A **Complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer.** These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

- B **Complaints against councillors.** These are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Town Council on 4 July 2012 and you may contact the Monitoring Officer of Epping Forest District Council which will decide if further action is necessary. The contact details are set out below.

- C **Allegations of financial irregularity.** Local electors may object to the Council's Annual Accounts under Section 16, Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, the Council may need to consult its internal auditor or the Audit Commission.

- D **Criminal Activity.** Please contact the police.

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 writing to the council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of council/committee meetings. If you are unhappy with a council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

How to complain to the Council

1. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Town Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or in writing, or by emailing the Town Council. The contact details are set out below.

2. **Making Your Complaint to the Town Clerk (option 1)**
Wherever possible, the Town Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, you will be asked to put it in writing and the Town Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within **five working days**.

The Town Clerk will notify you within **4 weeks** of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be informed.)

3. Other Avenues of Complaint (option 2)

If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Town Clerk, as it may concern that officer directly or if you are dissatisfied with the Town Clerk's response to your complaint, you may make your complaint directly to the Town Mayor and ask for your complaint to be referred to the Complaints Committee of the Town Council [*or whichever committee has this responsibility*] or to the full Council (as appropriate).

4. Investigation

If your complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the Town Clerk or the Complaints Committee of the Council or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council and (usually **within 8 weeks**) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

If it appears to the Complaints Committee of the Council that a complaint is:

- a trivial,
- b vexatious,
- c repetitive or
- d frivolous

it shall so report to the Resources and General Services Committee with a recommendation that no further correspondence related to it be entered into by members or officers.

Contacts:

The Town Clerk

Loughton Town Council
1 Buckingham Court
Rectory Lane
Loughton IG10 2QZ

020 8508 4200
contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk

The Town Mayor

Loughton Town Council
1 Buckingham Court
Rectory Lane
Loughton IG10 2QZ

020 8508 4200
contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk

The Monitoring Officer

c/o The Local Assessment Officer
Epping Forest District Council
Office of the Chief Executive
Civic Offices, High Street
Epping
CM16 4BZ

01992 564000
shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Paul Hopper – Partner

Littlejohn LLP
1 Westferry Circus
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4HD

020 7516 2200
kcutting@littlejohnllp.com

WHAT TO EXPECT

