

# NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



### **Complaints about Council's procedures or Administration**

#### **Before the meeting:**

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Town Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Town Clerk they may be advised to put it to the Mayor.
3. The Town Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the Special Committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant Meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. 7 clear working days prior to the Meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the Meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the Meeting.

#### **At the Meeting:**

6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the Meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council Meeting in public.
7. Mayor or Committee Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. Mayor or Committee Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, Town Clerk to explain the Council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the Town Clerk.
13. Town Clerk and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order)

14. Town Clerk and complainant to be asked to leave the Council Chamber while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).

15. Town Clerk and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made. After the Meeting.

16. Decision confirmed in writing within 7 working days together with details of any action to be taken

### **How to Make a Complaint about a Councillor**

If a member of the public wishes to make a complaint about a Councillor's conduct, the complaint must relate to an alleged breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

1. Complaints about a Councillor should be made in writing to the Town Clerk.
2. The complaint should include:
  - The name of the Councillor concerned
  - Details of the alleged conduct
  - Dates, times, and locations (where possible)
  - Any supporting evidence or documentation

Anonymous complaints are not normally investigated.

### **What Happens Next**

4. The Town Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and assess whether it falls within the scope of the Code of Conduct.
5. The complaint may be:
  - Rejected if it does not disclose a potential breach
  - Resolved informally
  - Referred for formal investigation in accordance with statutory procedures
6. The complainant will be informed of the outcome once the assessment or investigation process has concluded.