Complaints Procedure

(Based on the template recommended by the National Association of Local Councils)

Note:

If the complaint received by the Council **is in respect of the Clerk**, the complaint should be dealt with as an employment matter.

If the complaint received **is in respect of a Councillor**, the complainant is to be advised to contact the Monitoring Officer at West Northants Council (email: monitoringofficer@westnorthants.gov.uk) for further advice.

The following procedure is to be used on receipt of **a complaint about the administration of the Council or about its procedures.**

The Clerk or Chairman must report the receipt of any written complaint to the next meeting of the Council for consideration.

Before the meeting to consider the complaint

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they are to be advised to put the complaint to the Chairman of the Council
3. The Clerk or the Chairman shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such friend or representatives as they wish
5. Seven 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. Not less than 3 clear working days prior to 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 even if the public and press were excluded from that part of the meeting dealing with the complaint

7. The Chairman shall introduce everyone

8. The Chairman shall explain the procedure

9. The Complainant (or representative) is to outline the grounds for the complaint

10. The members may ask any questions of the complainant

11. If relevant, the Clerk is to explain the Council's position

12. The members may ask any questions of the Clerk

13. The Clerk and the complainant are to be offered the opportunity of last word (in this order)

14. The Clerk and complainant are to be asked to leave the room while the members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made out. If clarification of any point is necessary, both parties must be invited back

15. The Clerk and complainant shall be asked to return to hear the decision of the meeting or to be advised when the Council decision will be made

After the meeting

16. The decision is to be confirmed in writing by the Clerk within seven working days, together with details of any action taken and/or to be taken

Reviewed, updated and re-adopted 1 July 2024