LONG NEWTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

APPROVED BY LONGNEWTON PARISH COUNCILLORS ON
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Long Newton Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

1 **Introduction**
Long Newton parish Council endeavours to provide excellent services within its budgetary limits for the benefit of the people of Long Newton as a whole.

The Parish Council sees all customer comments/feedback as a good way of evaluating its service.

2. This procedure is to be followed for all complaints regarding the administration of the Council's services or its procedures. It is not appropriate for complaints regarding the conduct of individual employees of the Council or for complaints regarding the conduct of individual elected Members. Such complaints will be addressed within the measures put in place by the Council. (See below for more explanation).

3. A complaint is defined by the Council as any expression of dissatisfaction with services delivered or procedures adopted by the Council whether received in writing, by the complainant or a representative of their choice which cannot be resolved through the normal day to day operational processes of the service involved.

A complaint can only relate to a service that the Council already provides. It cannot relate to requests for new services provided by other local authorities.

First Stage

Initially all complaints should be addressed to and will be dealt with by the Clerk.

4. All complaints will be responded to in full within 14 working days. However if the complaint is particularly serious or complicated, or relates to any other matter other than the administration of the Council's services/procedures, an initial response acknowledging the complaint will be provided with 7 working days indicating when a full response is likely to be received.

Second Stage

Initially all complaints should be addressed to and will be dealt with by the Clerk.

5. If a complainant is unhappy with the first stage response a request may be made to the Clerk for the Complaints & Grievance Committee of the Council to review the complaint.

6. The Complainant will be invited to attend a meeting of the Complaints & Grievance Committee and to bring with them such representative as they wish.

7. The complainant will provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to at the meeting at least 14 working days prior to the meeting. Similarly the Council will, in the same period, provide the complainant with copies of any other documentation which is intended to be referred to at the meeting.

8. The Committee will, at the meeting, consider whether the circumstances of the complaint and the related documentation, warrant exclusion of the press and public from either the whole or any part of the meeting. However any decision on a complaint will be announced at a Council meeting in public.

9. The complainant will outline the grounds for the complaint.

10. Members will ask any question(s) of the complainant they deem necessary.

11. The Clerk will explain the Council's position.

12. Members will ask any question(s) of the Clerk they deem necessary.

13. The complainant will be offered an opportunity of any further comment.

14. The Complainant will be asked to leave the meeting room while the Committee decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been justified.

15. The decision will be confirmed in writing within 14 working days together with details of any action to be taken or which may be recommended.

16. In the case of a deferred decision written details of the decision will be given as soon as possible and in any event no later than 21 working days after the end of the meeting.

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Forms of complaint.

- Against a decision of the full Council meeting – this will be addressed within this procedure.
- Against a decision of a committee of the Council – this will be addressed within this procedure.
- Against the actions of the Council – this will be addressed within this procedure.
- Against an employee or employees of the Council – the Clerk/Staffing Committee in conjunction with the Council's employment policies will address this in the first instance.

If

- Against a Councillor or group of Councillors – such complaints would initially be addressed to the Clerk who will then advise the Council through the Code of Conduct procedures.