



SHIFNAL TOWN COUNCIL

Complaints Procedure

The Shifnal Town Council complaints procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration.

This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Town Council.

Complaints Handling Procedure

1. If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to the Mayor, a Councillor, or to the Town Clerk, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.
2. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter/e-mail/standard form) to the Town Clerk, for delivery to:- Shifnal Town Council, Shifnal Community Hub, Tudor Way, Shifnal, TF11 8DJ or via email to: info@shifnaltowncouncil.gov.uk. The complaint will be dealt with within 21 days of receipt.
3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Town Clerk (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example), he or she should be advised to write to the Mayor/Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council.
4.
 - a) On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk to the Council (except where the complainant is about his or her own actions) or Chair/Vice-Chair of Council (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.
 - b) Where the Town Clerk or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's action, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Mayor/Chair of Council or the Vice-Chair. The Clerk to the Council will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.
5. The Clerk to the Council (Mayor/Chair or Vice Chair) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the Council.

When complaints cannot be resolved via Steps 1 to 5 above.

6. The Clerk to the Council (Mayor/Chair or Vice-Chair) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered (either by full Council or a Committee established for the purpose of hearing complaints) and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally. At this meeting the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence to be relied on as the basis for the complaint (this to be received by the Clerk no later than 7 clear working days prior to the meeting).
7. Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place, should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's grievance and disciplinary procedures.
8. The Council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the Council meeting in public.

At the Meeting

9. The Mayor/Chair should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
10. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for the complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Town Clerk and then (ii) members.
11. The Town Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant, and (ii) members.
12. The Town Clerk and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
13. The Town Clerk and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, *both* parties shall be invited back.
14. The Town Clerk and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision, but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day, they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.
15. The Council may consider in the circumstances of any particular complaint whether to make any without liability payment or provide other reasonable benefit to any person who has suffered loss as a result of the Council's maladministration. Any payment may only be authorised by the Council after obtaining legal advice and advice from the Council's auditor on the propriety of such a payment.
16. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting), the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.
17. The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.