



## **Handling Complaints Policy**

1. The following policy and 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 for consideration.
2. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of Aldeburgh Town Council. These should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at East Suffolk Council.
3. If a complaint about procedures, administration, or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to 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.
4. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing, either in a letter or email, to the Town Clerk at the address given at the end of this document. The complaint will be dealt with within 14 days of receipt. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is in writing.
5. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Town Clerk (because the matter relates to the Town Clerk, for example) he or she should write to a member of the HR Committee.
6. On receipt of a written complaint, the Town Clerk (except where the complainant is about his or her own actions) or Mayor (if the complaint relates to the Town 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.
7. Where the Town Clerk or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Town Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Mayor. The Town Clerk to the Council will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.
8. The Town Clerk (or Mayor) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of Full Council.
9. The Town Clerk (or Mayor) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of Full Council. The Town Clerk will notify the complainant of the

- date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to Full Council orally.
10. Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking place, or are likely to take place, should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's grievance and disciplinary procedures.
  11. 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 Full Council meeting in public.
  12. 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.
  13. 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.
  14. 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.
  15. The Council reserves the right to vary any element of this policy if it is felt that it would be of benefit to the process.
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If you wish to make a complaint please write to the Town Clerk, as follows:

Kim Puttock  
Town Clerk  
Aldeburgh Town Council  
The Moot Hall  
Market Cross Place  
Aldeburgh  
IP15 5DS

Or email the complaint to [townclerk@aldeburghtowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:townclerk@aldeburghtowncouncil.co.uk)