



# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The following procedure has been 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 Parish Council. Such complaints should be made through Cornwall Council.

## **2. BEFORE THE MEETING**

- a. Where a councillor or the Clerk is notified orally of a complaint about procedures or administration and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully forthwith, the complainant shall be referred to this Code of Practice.
- b. The complainant shall be requested to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk or other nominated proper officer.
- c. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other proper officer, they may be advised to put it in writing to the Chairman of the council.
- d. Where the Clerk or Chairman receives a written complaint about his or her own actions, he or she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the council.
- e. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
- f. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
- g. Seven (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.

## **3. AT THE MEETING**

- a. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press following the procedures in the Council's Standing Orders. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
- b. The Chairman will introduce the complainant, complainant's representative, where applicable and the members.

- c. The Chairman shall then explain the complaints procedure.
- d. The Complainant (or representative) will then be invited to outline grounds for complaint.
- e. Members may then ask any question of the complainant.
- f. If relevant, the Clerk or other proper officer shall explain the council's position.
- g. Members may ask any question of the Clerk or other proper officer.
- b) The Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
- c) The Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, the parties to be invited back).
- d) Clerk or other proper officer and complainant shall return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

#### **4. AFTER THE MEETING**

The decision made at the meeting will be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.