



Ilminster Town Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR USE IN COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COUNCIL

**Approved and Adopted By Town Council
on 12 December 2017**

**Reviewed and adopted by Town Council June 2025
Review: June 2028**

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 Town Council. Such complaints should be made through Somerset Council.

The Town Council will do its best to handle complaints as quickly as possible and as a guide it should take no longer than 12 weeks from the receipt of the complaint to the Complaints Panel advising its decision.

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Town Clerk at Town Council Office, Old Magistrates Court, East Street, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 0AJ or by email to town.clerk@ilminster.gov.uk If the complaint is only notified orally to a councillor, or to the clerk to the council, 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. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Town Clerk or if the complaint involves the Town Clerk, he or she should be advised to address it to the Mayor, current contact details will be available on the Ilminster Town Council website www.ilminster.gov.uk
3. In many cases, it will be possible for an issue to be dealt with straight away and the source of the complaint resolved immediately. The Town Clerk, other nominated officer or the Mayor shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 10 working days and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the complaints panel. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint is likely to be treated as confidential and how notice of it will be given on an agenda
4. There is not a standing membership for the complaints Panel, it will be convened by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor with the membership to be drawn from all Councillors (but to include at least 1 Committee Chair). If the complaint involves the Town Clerk, they will not form part of the panel and it will be convened by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
5. Town Councillors will be informed of the broad details of the complaint.
6. The complainant shall be invited to attend the Panel meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
7. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

At the Meeting

8. The complaints panel shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the panel meeting in public.
9. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
10. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the clerk, other nominated officer or the Mayor and then (ii) Members.
11. The clerk, other nominated officer or the Mayor will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) Members.
12. The clerk, other nominated officer or the Mayor and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
13. The clerk, other nominated officer or the Mayor 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 clerk, other nominated officer or the Mayor 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.

After the Meeting

15. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
16. If following the outcome of the complaint, the panel decides that there may be a need to take disciplinary action against an employee, this will be in accordance with the Town Council Grievance, Disciplinary and Capability procedures.
17. The decision of the Complaints Panel is final.
18. Any decision made by the Complaints Panel will be reported to Council for information.