



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE Revised October 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

Haslemere Town Council is committed to acting with professionalism and integrity at all times. Complaints are valuable to us because they provide a chance to put things right if there has been an error, and to make sure that mistakes are not repeated.

2. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

The Local Government Ombudsman defines a complaint as “any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff, which affects the individual resident or group of residents”.

3. WHAT DOES THE PROCEDURE NOT DEAL WITH?

Type of Conduct	Refer to
Alleged financial irregularity	Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council’s audit of accounts (s. 16 Audit Commission Act 1998). Details of the Council’s external auditor can be found on its website, or on request from the Town Clerk
Alleged criminal activity	The police.
Members’ breach of code of conduct	Complaints should be referred to Waverly Borough Council’s Monitoring Officer. Details on WBC website www.waverley.gov.uk
Complaints against Town Hall officers	Complaints against staff will be forwarded to the Chair of Staffing for consideration by the Staffing committee.

4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Informal resolution

It is possible that minor complaints can be resolved without the need for the formal complaints procedure and residents are encouraged to initially speak to the Town Clerk or, if the issue involves the Town Clerk, the Town Mayor. The Town Clerk and/or Town Mayor will consider the complaint and work with the complainant to see if an agreeable solution can be found.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the suggested informal solution or does not wish to have the matter considered informally they should make a formal complaint.

2. Formal complaint procedure:

- I. All formal complaints should be made in writing to the Town Clerk, clearly stating that this is to be considered as a formal complaint, giving as much detail as possible regarding the nature of the complaint and whether or not the complainant would like the Council to treat the complaint confidentially. Contact details are at the bottom of this document.
- II. If the complaint concerns the actions of the Town Clerk, the complaint should be made to the Town Mayor.

- III. Within 5 working days of receipt of a formal complaint the Town Clerk (or Mayor) shall:
- acknowledge it
 - confirm whether or not the matter will be dealt with confidentially
 - specify who is dealing with the complaint
 - provide the complainant with a copy of this procedure document.
- IV. The Town Clerk (or Mayor) will consider the case along with the Chair of the Committee to which the complaint most closely relates having, where appropriate, asked the complainant and other parties for further information.
- V. The complainant should be notified of whether or not their complaint has been upheld, the reasons for the decision, and any action to be taken, within 20 working days. If this is not practically possible this term may be extended and the complainant notified of the reason.
- VI. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision regarding their formal complaint they may follow the appeals process below.

3. Appeals

- I. If a complainant wishes to appeal a decision regarding a formal complaint they should write to the Town Clerk within 7 days of receiving the original decision stating the on which they wish to appeal.
- II. A panel consisting of the Town Clerk, Town Mayor Mayor and Chair of Finance and Governance will be formed to agree a response to the complainant. If the complaint involves any of those people, their deputies should deputise for them, or, if this is not possible, three other councillors will be asked to step in to form the panel.
- III. The complainant should be notified of whether or not their complaint has been upheld, the reasons for the decision, and any action to be taken, within 20 working days. If this is not practically possible this term may be extended and the complainant notified of the reason.
- IV. The decision of the complaints panel is final and the Council is under no obligation to enter into further correspondence on the matter.

5. CONTACT DETAILS

Town Clerk	Town Hall High St Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2HG 01428 658828 town.clerk@haslemeretc.org
Town Mayor	Address and telephone as above mayor@haslemeretc.org
Waverley Borough Council	www.waverley.gov.uk 01483 523333

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