

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

This procedure will be applied where a complaint cannot be satisfied by less formal means e.g. an explanation provided to the complainant by the Clerk or Chairman/Vice-Chairman.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the administration of the council or its procedures. This could relate to action/lack of action taken by the council or a failure to follow agreed procedures or standard of service (whether the action was taken or whether the service is provided by the council itself or on behalf of the council. It should be noted that the Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over parish councils.

Complaints against the council that relates to the conduct of its employees will be handled in accordance with this procedure and where disciplinary action is deemed necessary then in accordance with the council's disciplinary procedure.

It is not appropriate for all complaints from the public to be dealt with under this procedure.

Type of Complaint	Refer to
Financial Irregularity	Local elector's statutory right to object to Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. For other matters refer to Internal Auditor or Audit Commission.
Criminal Activity	The Police
Member Conduct	A complaint that relates to a parish councillor's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct must be submitted to the standards team of the relevant Principal Authority, in this case the Monitoring Officer at Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
Employees Conduct	Internal Disciplinary Procedures if deemed Necessary.

It should be noted that where the Clerk is putting forward the justification for the action or procedure complained of he/she should not advise the council or committee when the complaint is being considered.

The identity of the complainant will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint. At all times the rules of natural justice will apply and all parties will be treated fairly and the processes will be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

Any complaint to be dealt with in accordance with this procedure will be considered where possible within one month of receipt unless it is received after one week prior to the 2nd Wednesday in July in which case it will be considered within two months of receipt. Where the complaint is of a more complex nature every effort will be made to consider the matter within three months of receipt. The procedures that will be adopted for dealing with the