



Complaints Procedure

Reviewed On the 25th of March 2025

The following procedure is for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures.

A complaint will first be answered by the Clerk, with necessary explanations. If a complainant is not satisfied, the matter will be discussed in an open or closed session of the Council depending on privacy and confidentiality considerations. The anonymity of the complainant will be respected if requested.

- Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council for consideration.
 - If a complaint is made by an employee to a member about a member, please refer to the council's Grievance Procedure.
 - If a complaint is about an individual member please contact the Monitoring Officer at East Lindsey District Council.
 - If a complaint is by a member about a member then the Clerk or Chairman should be informed and a closed session meeting held to try and resolve the issue.
1. **If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of the Clerk** is notified orally to a Councillor or to the Clerk, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant.
 - 1.1. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter/e-mail) to the Clerk c/o Chairman Birchwood House, The Walled Garden, Gautby, Lincolnshire LN8 5JP3. The complaint will be dealt with within 28 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.
 - 1.2. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example) he or she should be advised to write to the Chairman or Vice Chairman.
 - 1.2.1. On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk (except where the complaint is about her own actions) or Chairman (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will discuss with Personnel Committee Chairman to seek advice whether it is better to settle the complaint directly with the complainant or bring to full council. This will not be done without first notifying any person

complained about and giving them an opportunity to comment. If the complaint is a minor matter, efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.

1.2.2. Where the Clerk or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman of the Council. The matter will be referred to the Personnel committee and the Clerk will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment. If necessary the Personnel Committee may have to refer to Disciplinary Procedure.

1.2.3. The Clerk or Chairman or Chairman of the Personnel Committee will report any complaint disposed of, by direct action with the complainant, to the next meeting of the Council.

1.2.4. The Clerk or Chairman will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The clerk or other nominated officer shall acknowledge 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. All complaints will be held under closed session.

1.2.5. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.

1.2.6. 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.

1.3. At the Meeting:

1.3.1. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

1.3.2. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii), members.

1.3.3. The clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members.

1.3.4. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

1.3.5. The clerk or other nominated officer 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.

1.3.6. The clerk or other nominated officer 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.

1.4. After the Meeting The decision should be confirmed in writing to all parties within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.

2. 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.