



THORNABY TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. Thornaby Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in Thornaby on Tees or are visitors to the locality, within both the limits of time and budget. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this Council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about the Town Council's administration and procedures. *It is not appropriate for complaints regarding the conduct of individual employees of the Council or for complaints regarding the conduct of individual Members. Such complaints will be addressed within other measures put in place by the Town Council.*
3. A complaint is defined by the Town Council as **'an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council'**.
4. All complaints will be:
 - Dealt with promptly and in accordance with the 'Complaints Procedure'
 - Recorded and kept in a 'Register of Complaints'.
 - Investigated to the level required.
5. **Confidentiality:** The Local Government Ombudsman advises that the identity of a complainant will only be made known to those who need to consider a complaint. The Town Council will take care to maintain confidentiality where circumstances demand (e.g. where matters concern financial or sensitive information or where third parties are concerned).
6. This complaints procedure does not apply to:
 - Complaints by one council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under separate procedures.
 - Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Town Council on Monday 25th June 2012 and, if a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Town Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Stockton Tees Borough Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
7. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on the matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy

with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

Procedure

Stage 1 - Making a complaint

8. The complainant can make their complaint about the Town Council's administration or procedures to the Clerk. They may do this by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The Clerk's contact details are set out below.
9. If they do not wish to report their complaint to the Clerk, they may make their complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council, in writing or by email, who will report their complaint to the Clerk and to the Town Council. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of their complaint. The Chairman's contact details are set out below.
10. Initially, complaints will be dealt with by the Clerk who wherever possible, will try to resolve the complaint immediately or within 7 working days. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised when the matter will be considered by the Town Council or by a committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way (if for example, the complaint is to be heard by a committee)
11. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
12. Seven clear 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 on at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

Stage 2 – At the meeting

13. The Town Council/Committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announce at the Council meeting in public.
14. The Chairman of the meeting shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
15. The complainant (or representative) shall outline the grounds for the complaint and thereafter questions may be asked by the Clerk and Members.
16. If relevant, the Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and Members.
17. The Clerk (if relevant) and the complainant will be offered to make any final comments.
18. The Clerk (if relevant) and the complainant will 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.
19. The Clerk 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 will be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

Stage 3 – After the meeting

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

Contact Details:

Town Clerk
Thornaby Town Council
Town Hall
Mandale Road
Thornaby on Tees
Yorkshire
TS17 6AW

Email: townclerk@thornabytowncouncil.gov.uk

Chairman of Thornaby Town Council
Councillor Sylvia Walmsley
94 Chadderton Drive
Thornaby on Tees
Yorkshire
TS17 9QB

Email: sylvia.walmsley@stockton.gov.uk

Adopted by Thornaby Town Council on October 29th 2012
Reviewed and approved on: Tuesday 20th May 2014

Email: townclerk@thornabytowncouncil.gov.uk

