



Skipton Town Council

Policy Name:	COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
Date of Last Review:	03 March 2022
Version Number:	v1
Responsible Officer:	Chief Officer
File Location:	Skipton Town Council\ADMINISTRATION\POLICIES AND PROCEDURES\Admin Team - Procedures
Next Review Due:	May 2023
Added to Policy Register:	YES/NO
Complaints Panel Members	The Council's Complaints Panel members 2021/22 are Councillors J Dawson, R Mahmood and C Nash

1.0 Introduction and Context

This Policy is designed to ensure that Skipton Town Council (“the Council”) is able to investigate all complaints and escalate them as is reasonably deemed necessary. All complaints will be taken seriously and in conjunction with this policy.

2.0 Scope

Members and Officers of the Council will utilise this policy to assist in being able to deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly and efficiently whilst attempting to minimise any discomfort to, and maintaining the dignity of, persons involved.

3.0 Aims & Objectives

3.1 Aims - General Statement of Intent

As with any organisation, from time to time, the Council may get things wrong, or you may feel that the Council hasn't acted in the correct manner.

The vast majority of problems or complaints can be resolved quickly and informally – and Skipton Town Council would always prefer to deal with any matter in this manner, rather than take a more formal route. You should contact the office with details of any issue and they will refer your problem to the most appropriate staff member.

3.2 Objectives –

If it proves not to be possible to resolve an issue informally, Skipton Town Council does have a formal Complaints Procedure which should be followed by both the complainant and the Council.

4.0 The Formal Complaints Procedure is set out below:

Complaints about Skipton Town Council are dealt with differently depending on the nature of the complaint. Check the list below and decide which area your complaint falls into. Then follow the procedure listed for that type of complaint.

Types of complaint:

- Service delivery
- Financial irregularity
- Procedural irregularity
- Councillor Member conduct
- Employee conduct
- Town Council acting unfairly

These complaints should be dealt with as follows.

4.1 Council Member conduct

Complaints about the conduct of individual Town Councillors should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer at Craven District Council who will refer the matter to the Standards Committee – an independent group of Councillors and other appointed officers and advisors formally tasked with reviewing Councillor conduct across local government locally.

4.2 Employee conduct

In the first instance, complaints about the conduct of Skipton Town Council employees should be directed to the Chief Officer at Skipton Town Council.

If your complaint is regarding the Chief Officer, it should be directed to the Mayor.

If you are unhappy with the Chief Officer's response, or the Mayor's response if the complaint is regarding the Chief Officer, you should ask for your complaint to be referred to the Council's Complaints Panel. This is made up of three elected Members of the Council who will sit independently of the remainder of the Council to consider the complaint. You should explain on what basis you are not satisfied with the response from the Chief Officer. You will be notified of when the Complaints Panel will meet and will be given the opportunity to meet with them and/or submit a written statement to them. The panel will notify you of its decision.

If you remain unhappy with the Panel's decision you should ask for your complaint to be referred to Full Council, you will be informed of when the meeting of Full Council will take place. The complaint will then be heard by all Members of the Council, except those who sat on the Complaints Panel. You should explain in detail on what basis you are not satisfied with the decision of the Panel.

The decision of Full Council is final.

4.3 Service delivery, Financial or Procedural Irregularity and the Council acting unfairly.

If your complaint is not covered by any of the above, you should contact the Council's Chief Officer, in the first instance, for guidance on how you can proceed.

In the first instance, complaints about the standard of service provided by Skipton Town Council should be directed to the Chief Officer at Skipton Town Council.

If you are unhappy with the Chief Officer's response you should ask for your complaint to be referred to the Council's Complaints Panel. This is made up of three elected Members of the Council who will sit independently of the remainder of the Council to consider the complaint.

You should explain on what basis you are not satisfied with the response from the Chief Officer. You will be notified of when the Complaints Panel will meet and will be given the opportunity to meet with them and/or submit a written statement to them. The panel will notify you of its decision.

If you remain unhappy with the Panel's decision you should ask for your complaint to be referred to Full Council, you will be informed of when the meeting of Full Council will take place. The complaint will then be heard by all Members of the Council, except those who sat on the Complaints Panel. You should explain in detail on what basis you are not satisfied with the decision of the Panel.

The decision of Full Council is final.

5.0 Time Limits for the Council's Response

We will always try to deal with complaints as quickly as possible, as we recognise that failure to respond can make a problem worse and harder to resolve. However, it is important that we are thorough in our investigation of a complaint and this can sometimes mean that we are unable to respond as quickly as we would like.

If this happens we will let the complainant know when the full response will be available and keep them informed of progress if the delay is going to be lengthy.

If the complaint is straightforward we will offer an assurance of remedial action, or advise the complainant that no action is required, within 5 working days.

Written complaints, or those which cannot be resolved immediately, will be acknowledged, either by telephone or letter, within 5 working days.

A full response will be provided by the Chief Officer within 10 working days of first receiving the complaint.

If we are unable to respond fully within 10 working days, we will contact the complainant, explaining the reason for the delay and providing an estimated date for provision of the full response.

Where possible, this should not be more than 21 working days of first receiving the complaint.

If the person making the complaint is dissatisfied with the response at any stage, a request can be made for an investigation under the terms of next stage. This should be made within

one calendar month of receiving the Council's response, although complaints made outside this time may be accepted at the Councils discretion.

Town and Parish Councils do NOT come under the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman except in some very specific circumstances where the Council is providing statutory services on behalf of a principal authority (i.e a District or County Council). The Town Council's Chief Officer will advise you whether such a circumstance applies. If you feel the Town Council, one or more of its Councillors, or one or more of its employees, has specifically broken the law, you should contact the Police immediately.

6.0 Definitions

the Council (Skipton Town Council)

7.0 Related Documents (links to procedures etc)

Members' Code of Conduct
Contract of Employment
Data Protection Policy
Violent & Challenging Behaviour Policy