

Frinton & Walton Town Council Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

Frinton & Walton Town Council are committed to delivering a positive service and experience to its residents however, sometimes it might be considered that we have fallen short of that, and you might feel the need to tell us about it.

A complaint is essentially an expression of dissatisfaction or concern about a particular issue, service, or situation. This dissatisfaction can be based on a variety of reasons, and it doesn't necessarily have to be justified. Here are a few key points to understand:

- **Subjective Nature:** Complaints are often subjective, meaning they are based on personal feelings, experiences, or opinions. What one person finds unsatisfactory, another might not.
- **Variety of Reasons:** People can complain about many things, such as poor service, unmet expectations, or perceived unfair treatment.
- **Validity:** Whether the complaint is justified or not, we believe it is still important to acknowledge and address it. Our goal is to understand your perspective and find a resolution.

To help you in letting us know about where we have not met your expectations, this policy outlines the procedure for handling complaints about the Council as a corporate body, its administration, policies, procedures, and staff. It does not cover disputes between staff or councillors. We have a separate policy that our staff and councillors can use to address this.

2. Making a Complaint

- **Initial Contact:** Complaints should be made to the Town Clerk in the first instance. If the complaint concerns the Town Clerk, it should be directed to the Mayor.
- **Contact Methods:** Complaints can be submitted via email to the Clerk to clerk@fwtc.co.uk, in person at the Council House, Triangle Shopping Centre, Frinton on Sea CO13 0AU, or by telephone at 01255 676666.

3. Acknowledgement and Investigation

- **Acknowledgement:** The Council will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days.
- **Investigation:** The Council will investigate the complaint and provide a written response within twenty working days. If further time is required, the complainant will be informed in writing of the reason and the extended timescale.

4. Referral to Personnel Committee

- If deemed appropriate by the investigating officer (the Clerk or the Mayor), the complaint may be referred to the Personnel Committee for further consideration.

5. Appeals Process

- **Submission:** Appeals must be submitted in writing within twenty working days of the resolution date.

- **Addressing Appeals:** Appeals should be addressed to the Chair of the Personnel Committee, who will arrange for the Personnel Committee or the Personnel Sub-Committee, as appropriate to the case, to be convened. The Personnel Committee can only hear an appeal if it was not involved in the prior stage – in this case, the Personnel Sub-Committee would be convened to ensure neutrality.
- **Final Decision:** The decision of the committee hearing the appeal is final and will be considered to have exhausted the complaints process at that stage.

6. Complaints About Councillors

- Complaints about councillors should be directed to the Monitoring Officer at Tendring District Council, who oversees the Code of Conduct for elected members. The Town Clerk can assist in providing the contact details you will require for this.
- If the Town Council receives a complaint about a councillor, the complainant will be informed that the complaint has been passed to the Monitoring Officer, and the Town Council will no longer be involved in the process.

7. Information Required for Complaints

When making a complaint, it is helpful to provide:

- Details of the complaint (what happened, when it happened, and how it has affected you)
- Copies of any relevant supporting evidence
- Details of any third parties involved
- What action you believe would resolve your complaint

To enable the Town Council to communicate with you, your contact details will be required and in providing them you are giving permission for the Town Council to store your information in accordance with the Data Privacy Notice of the Town Council, and for the Town Council to use those details to contact you.

8. Delegation of Investigation

The Town Clerk may delegate the investigation of your complaint to one or more officers as appropriate. However, the Town Clerk retains overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to this policy.

Policy Review Frequency:	3 yearly unless a change in legislation dictates sooner
Policy agreed by:	Full Council
At its meeting of the:	31 st October 2024
Review Due Date:	October 2027