

# EASTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL



## Complaints Policy

### AIM OF THE POLICY

To set down a procedure by which complaints will be dealt with by the Council. It should be noted that this does not affect the elector's statutory right to object Councils audit of accounts pursuant to section 16 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. Nor will it apply to criminal activity (which should be reported to the police), member conduct (which should be submitted in accordance with procedures within the Code of Conduct) or Employee conduct which will be dealt with under the Councils disciplinary procedure.

1. The complainant should raise the complaint informally with the Town Clerk.
2. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily then the complainant should put the complaint in writing to the Clerk or other nominated Officer.
3. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk he or she should be advised to address it to the Mayor of the council.
4. The Clerk or Mayor shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council. The complainant will be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or not.
5. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
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.

### **At the Meeting**

The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

The Mayor will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

### **After the Meeting**

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