

Sandwich Town Council

Complaints Procedure

Sandwich Town Council believes a complaints procedure demonstrates that the council:

- wishes to provide a good service;
- values feedback;
- undertakes its business in an open and honest manner;
- wishes to deal with complaints fairly.

The council believes that complaints and suggestions provide a valuable opportunity for improving its services and performance.

What is a complaint?

For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the council or its staff affecting an individual, group or organisation.

This definition covers most complaints – such as:

- dissatisfaction with administration of policy and decision;
- delays in responding to service requests;
- failure to achieve standards of service;
- failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities;
- employees' behaviour or attitude.

How we deal with complaints

Most complaints will be reviewed by the Clerk whose responsibility it is to investigate, as necessary, and respond as quickly as possible. In normal circumstances a response should be sent within 10 working days. Where this is not possible an interim response should be sent giving an indication of when a full reply can be expected. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the full response, this fact should be drawn to the attention of the Chairman of the Council. In consultation with other members, as necessary, and after obtaining any further relevant information, the Chairman will issue a further response.

Complaints about members of Sandwich Town Council

All councillors have signed an undertaking that they will observe the Council's Code of Conduct. The Code-which is the Model Code of Conduct for members, approved by Parliament-specifies a councillor's obligations. Alleged breaches of the Code must be reported in writing to the Standards Board for England.

Complaints about services provided by other public organisations

Given that some public services in Sandwich are provided by either Dover District Council or Kent County Council-and that the division of responsibilities between public bodies can often be confusing-Sandwich Town Council will advise and, if appropriate, assist those wishing to pursue complaints against other public organisations providing services in the town.