

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

This Code of Practice is aimed at dealing with those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Council or about its procedures. Complaints against staff are dealt with as employment matters and against Councillors by the Standards Board of England.

The aim is to deal with complaints efficiently and to preserve the good reputation of the Council through a transparent process. The procedure deals with complaints that have not been capable of resolution on a less formal basis, or by explanations from the Clerk or Mayor. It gives the complainant the assurance that their grievance has been properly and fully considered.

It is recommended that the Council appoints a committee of three members to constitute the Complaints Committee who will receive all complaints.

PROCEDURE

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant will be asked to put in writing to the Clerk the details of their complaint. They may direct it to the Mayor if they are unwilling to submit it to the Clerk.
2. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged by the Clerk or Chairman and the complainant will be advised of the date when the Committee will hear the complaint.
3. The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting and to bring such representatives as they wish.
4. Seven working days prior to the meeting, the complainant and Council shall exchange any relevant documentation on which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the meeting

5. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
6. The Chair of the Complaints Committee is to introduce everyone and to explain the procedure.
7. Complainant (or representatives) outline grounds for complaint.
8. Members ask questions of complainant.
9. If relevant, Clerk or other proper officer, explains the Council's position.
10. Members ask questions of Clerk/proper officer.
11. Clerk/proper officer and complainant are offered opportunity of last words (in this order).
12. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Council considers whether or not the grounds for complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is required, both parties are to be invited back).
13. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision or to be advised when a decision will be made.

After the Meeting

14. Decision is confirmed in writing within seven working days, together with details of any action to be taken.