



# Complaints

## Policy 25

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## **1.0 Aims**

- 1.1 Cuckfield Parish Council is committed to the provision of quality services in accordance with the needs and expectations of its customers.
- 1.2 The Council recognises the value of customer opinion and its contribution to the processes of policy formulation and service delivery.
- 1.3 In support of this principle, the Council will implement and maintain a customer complaints system.

## **2.0 Objectives**

1. To provide the Council's customers with the best possible service.
2. To resolve complaints immediately.
3. To provide the Council's customers with an effective and efficient means of resolving dissatisfaction with the services provided by the Council.
4. To provide a clear procedure for dealing with complaints.
5. To communicate effectively with a complainant throughout the complaints procedures.
6. To review complaints procedures with a view to learning from our mistakes and ascertaining ways to improve our services to meet the needs of the customers.
7. To provide a way of monitoring information on customer complaints and ways of reviewing the services.
8. To ensure that customers are aware of how to complain and to whom.

## **3.0 How to make a complaint:**

- 3.1 **Informal**  
If members of the public have any queries or concerns they should be encouraged to speak to Council staff at the time. Council staff will take full details of the complainant and their complaint and do their best to assist the individual and resolve the complaint.
- 3.2 **Formal**  
If the customer/individual is still unhappy they may submit a formal complaint in writing, by email, by telephone, by fax or in person to the Clerk.
- 3.3 The Clerk will acknowledge the receipt of a complaint within 2 working days and will respond to the complaint in full within 10 working days. Where it is not possible to respond in full within this period, due to the need to conduct internal enquiries, the complainant will be informed of that situation within 10 days and every 5 days thereafter.
- 3.4 Should it be necessary, a meeting with the complainant will be set up to further discuss the complaint and gain fuller information in relation to the complaint. The Clerk will aim to resolve 90% of complaints received within 10 days.

## **4.0 Review panel**

- 4.1 If a complainant continues to be dissatisfied with the response, they can request a review by a panel. The panel will comprise of three Councillors from the appropriate Service Committee. The complaint should again be investigated within 10 days and a response given.

## **5.0 Full council review**

- 5.1 If after this stage the complainant is still unhappy, they can request a further and final review by the Full Council. The complainant should be informed of the date of the next Full Council meeting and be advised that their complaint will be discussed at that meeting. Depending on the circumstances of the complaint it may be necessary to consider the complaint in confidential session. The decision of the Full Council will be final.

## **6.0 Further guidance notes**

- 6.1 In the event that a complaint is made against the Clerk, the complainant should be advised to put their complaint in writing to the Chairman of the Council.
- 6.2 In the event that a complaint is made against a Councillor, the complainant should be directed to the Council's adopted Code of Conduct and the District Council's Monitoring Officer.