



# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Adopted by Council January 2014

## 1. Introduction:

Baildon Town Council aims to provide the highest possible standards of service to the community in all aspects of the Council's work. It recognises that constructive feedback can help to lead to service improvement, and accordingly welcomes such feedback at all times and at all levels, and from all parties.

In most instances such feedback will be addressed and resolved informally. However there are occasions where a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached through informal means, and it is in these instances that this Complaints Procedure should be used.

*Please note: Complaints can be handled confidentially if requested (although this may limit the potential for a thorough investigation). We cannot accept and respond to anonymous complaints.*

The Town Clerk will be the main channel of communication with the complainant, unless the complaint relates to the conduct of the Clerk, throughout the period when the complaint is being dealt with by the Council and until the matter is concluded and will keep the complainant informed at every stage. Where the complaint relates to the conduct of the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk will be the main channel of communication.

### Complaints Process. Step 1:

- The complainant should contact the Town Clerk to indicate that s/he is dissatisfied and wishes to make a complaint. The complaint should be made in writing either by submission of a completed feedback form or by letter. If the complainant is unable or unwilling to complete a form or letter, the complaint may be made direct to the Clerk who will record the details of the complaint (for the complainant to sign).
- The Town Clerk will then make sure that appropriate efforts to reach an informal resolution of the concerns have taken place. It may still be possible, even at this stage, that an informal approach may resolve matters to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. However, the complainant has the right at any stage to choose that the matter is dealt with more formally through the Complaints Procedure.

- The Town Clerk will gather whatever additional background information will be needed in order for the complaint to be dealt with appropriately and will provide this information to the relevant Committee or to full Council as appropriate.

**Step 2.**

- **Where a complaint relates to the actions of an individual Councillor**, this will NOT be dealt with through this procedure but will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct.
- **Where a complaint relates to the actions of a member of staff**, this will be dealt with by the Staffing and Complaints Committee. The Staffing and Complaints Committee shall determine whether the complaint is of such seriousness as to warrant an immediate response under the Council's Discipline and Grievance Policies, or whether the complaint should continue to be dealt with through this Complaints Process.
- **Where a complaint relates to procedures, policies, or activities which are the responsibility of a Committee** of the Council, the complaint will initially be referred to that Committee for consideration and decision as to appropriate response in the first instance.
- Both the complainant and the person who made the initial response at the informal stage shall have the right to attend and to present their evidence to the relevant Committee.
- The relevant Committee, as appropriate, may take one of the following courses of action / decision:
  - uphold the complaint and take appropriate decisions / action (within their delegated remit), or
  - uphold the response already given through informal resolution measures, or
  - refer the matter to the full Council.

**Step 3.**

The complaint shall be referred for consideration and decision by the full Council if:

- the complainant is not satisfied with the decision / action of the relevant Committee;  
or
- the relevant Committee has decided for any other reason to refer the complaint to the full Council.

The full Town Council may:

- uphold the complaint and resolve to take appropriate action; or
- uphold the response already given by the relevant Committee at Stage 1 and 2 and resolve to take no further action; or
- resolve to take any action within its powers, which may help to resolve the issue.

The decision of the full Town Council will be final in respect of these complaints.

The complainant should be advised in writing of the outcome of the complaints process and of any further steps s/he can take if s/he is still not satisfied. (e.g. complaint to professional body or Local Government Ombudsman).