



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS - CODE OF PRACTICE POLICY

Adopted by the Full Council on 25th May 2016

Reviewed and approved by the Council on 31st October 2018

Reviewed and approved by the Council on 16th December 2020

CODE OF PRACTICE IN HANDLING COMPLAINTS

- 1 The complainant will be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures, processes, administration or staff response in writing to the Clerk at The Mountfitchet Exchange, Crafton Green, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted, Essex CM24 8AQ. Alternatively, this may be addressed to the Chairman at the same address.

Where a comment, informal complaint or issue can be dealt with to everyone's satisfaction the Clerk shall ensure this happens immediately. The action taken should be recorded for the Council and the complainant should receive confirmation of the outcome in writing and be asked to agree their satisfaction with the outcome.

Where a complaint is deemed by both the Clerk and Chairman to be vexatious, it will be dealt with under the Council's Vexatious Behaviour Policy.

- 2 The Clerk/Chairman shall acknowledge receipt of any formal complaint, advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the complaints committee and give a date by which they will be informed of the outcome.
- 3 The Council shall then establish its Complaints Committee and appoint an investigator.
- 4 The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
- 5 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

- 6 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 meeting in public.
- 7 Chairman of the meeting to introduce everyone and to explain the procedure to be followed.
- 8 Complainant, or their representative, to outline the grounds of their complaint.
- 9 Members to ask any question of the complainant.
- 10 Investigating officers to explain the Council's position.
- 11 Members to ask any question of the investigating officer or other proper officer.
- 12 Investigating officer or other proper officer and complainant to be offered the opportunity of last word (in this order).
- 13 Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to 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 are to be invited back into the meeting). If further legal advice is required, the meeting is to be adjourned to a date agreed by all parties.
- 14 Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to the meeting to hear the decision, or to be advised when a decision will be made.
- 15 Decision to be confirmed in writing within 7 working days, together with details of any action to be taken.

NOTE

Complaints about a member of the Council are to be directed to the Standards Board for England, St Christopher House, 98-104 Southwark Street, London SE1 0TE or to the Monitoring Officer at Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER.