



CAISTOR TOWN COUNCIL

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FROM SERVICE USERS OR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Council should always aim to deal with complaints as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

1. Action to be taken if a complaint is received regarding an employee of the Town Council, the administration of the Council or its procedures

- Complaints against an employee of Caistor Town Council should be dealt with as an employment matter. A Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees is currently being considered and, if introduced, this will become part of an employee's contract of employment.
- If a complaint is received by telephone or in person which cannot be rectified immediately, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk/RFO or the Chairman of the Council. The Clerk/RFO will record this in the list of correspondence received and it will be considered at the next full Council meeting.
- The Clerk/RFO will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant as to when the matter will be considered by the Council. The complainant will be invited to attend the relevant meeting.
- At the meeting the Council must first consider whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant the exclusion of the public and the press and whether it is necessary to hold a further, separate meeting to deal with the matter. It is essential that any decision reached must be announced in public at the Council meeting.
- If a further meeting is deemed necessary to deal with the complaint, the complainant will be asked to provide the Council with copies of any documentation, or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. This must be received seven clear working days prior to the meeting. Likewise, the Council must also provide the complainant with copies of any documentation which it will refer to at the meeting. The complainant should be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a representative at the meeting. The Council may agree to establish a committee to deal with the complaint, rather than full Council having to assemble.

Procedure to be followed at a Special Complaints Meeting

- The Chairman will introduce everyone and will explain the format of the meeting.
- The complainant (or representative) will be asked to outline the reasons for the complaint. Members will be given the opportunity to question the complainant.
- If relevant, the Clerk/RFO, or the Accounts Clerk will explain the Council's position. If the complaint is against another employee, he/she will be given the opportunity to speak. Members will then be given the chance to question the Clerk/RFO, the Accounts Clerk, or other employee.
- Following this, the Clerk/RFO, Accounts Clerk, or other employee, as well as the complainant, will all be offered the opportunity of a final word (in this order).
- The Clerk/RFO, Accounts Clerk, or other employee and the complainant will be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If anything needs to be clarified, they should all be invited back.
- The Clerk/RFO, Accounts Clerk, or other employee and the complainant will return to hear the decision, or to be advised as to when a decision will be made. If legal advice is required, the Council may defer making a decision.

Procedure to be followed after the meeting

- The decision reached should be confirmed in writing to the complainant within seven working days, together with details of any action which is to be taken.
- If a committee dealt with the complaint, it must report its conclusions to the next full Council meeting.

2. Action to be taken if a complaint is received against a councillor

The Standards Board for England is responsible for investigating complaints made about the conduct of councillors. Complainants should be advised to contact the Standards Board direct, on 0845 078 8181, or they may contact the Monitoring Officer at West Lindsey District Council, on 01427 676676. They should also be made aware of the Standards Board website (www.standardsboard.co.uk) which provides additional information, as well as offering various free leaflets.

3. Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over parish/town councils and complaints may not be made to him/her regarding Caistor Town Council.

Signed on behalf of the Council:- *A Lawrence* (Chairman/Mayor)

Signed by Administration Clerk:- *R A Dawson* **Date** 10th February 2005