



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

**Approved: October 2025
Review Date: October 2027**

Policy Purpose

1. The Town Council provides many services to community groups, companies, and individuals. We try to get our service delivery right every time, but there are occasions when users of our services may be dissatisfied with our performance, for any number of reasons. This policy sets out how to raise a complaint with Ledbury Town Council.
2. This procedure should be used to address complaints about Ledbury Town Council administration and procedures and may include the way employees have dealt with your concerns. It is not appropriate to deal with all complaints using this procedure. For example, complaints about financial irregularity, criminal activity, Councillor or Clerk conduct require special consideration or may be subject to other Council or third-party procedures. If your complaint does not fall within the scope of this procedure please contact either the Clerk to the Council or the Chair of the Council for further advice.

Information

3. **The following is a definition of Complaint offered by the Local Government Ombudsman**

3.1 "A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of the service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council".

4. **Informal Resolution**

4.1 It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route. Concerns can be raised by telephone, email or a visit to the Council offices and should always be directed through the Council offices and addressed to the Clerk

4.2 The complaint will be handled by the Clerk who will acknowledge its receipt, undertake any necessary enquiries, seek its resolution and provide feedback to the complainant.

5. **Formal Resolution**

5.1 In the event that an informal approach has not resolved the complaint, or the complaint is considered to be serious, then the formal resolution process shall be followed.

5.2 The Clerk to the Council is responsible for managing the formal complaints process.

- 5.3 A formal complaint must be submitted in writing/email to the Council, it should be addressed to the Clerk, marked "Confidential – Formal Complaint". If a formal complaint is being raised against the Clerk, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of the Council. The complaint should cover as much details as possible and enclose relevant supporting documentation.
- 5.4 The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days.
- 5.5 The Clerk will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will, within ten working days, provide the complainant with a suggested resolution or an update on progress and likely completion date.
- 5.6 If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint is closed.
- 5.7 The Clerk will report to the Council summary details of the complaint and a brief summary of its resolution.
- 5.8 This summary report will exclude names(s) of the complainant.
- 5.9 If the Clerk is unable to resolve the complaint, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution then the matter will be referred to a meeting of the Resources Committee.

5.9.1 Procedure prior to any meeting

- 5.9.1.1 The complainant shall be invited to a meeting and may bring someone with them to act as support.
- 5.9.1.2 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of all documentation and/or other evidence to be relied upon.
- 5.9.1.3 In response, the Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any unrestricted documentation upon which it intends to rely at least two clear working days in advance of the meeting.

5.9.2 Procedure at the meeting

- 5.9.2.1 The Resources Committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the press and public.
- 5.9.2.2 The Chair shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

- 5.9.2.3 The complainant (or their representative) shall outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk and Committee Members.
- 5.9.2.4 The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and Committee Members.
- 5.9.2.5 The complainant and then the Clerk shall be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
- 5.9.2.6 The Clerk and the complainant shall be asked to leave the room while Members consider the matter.
 - 5.9.2.6.1 If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
- 5.9.2.7 A decision on the matter will usually be made by the Committee in the meeting. If the decision is not able to be made immediately, the Clerk and the complainant shall be advised when the decision is likely to be finalised and how it will be communicated to them.
- 5.9.2.8 The announcement of any decision will be made in public at the meeting, and/or confirmed at the next Council meeting.

5.9.3 Post meeting procedure

- 5.9.3.1 The decision should be confirmed In writing to the complainant within seven working days of it having been made, together with details of any action to be taken.

6. Complaints against individual employees

- 6.1 If a complaint is made in respect of the actions/non-actions of an individual member of Ledbury Town Council staff the decision of the Council is final.
- 6.2 A complaint made about a member of staff will be handled by the Clerk, unless it is made regarding the Clerk, in which case the complaint will then be handled by the Chair of the Council.
- 6.3 A complaint against a member of staff could result in disciplinary action; or in cases of gross misconduct dismissal from the Council's employment.

- 6.4 The Council will not, under any circumstances, enter into any correspondence, or discussion, with a complainant about any action taken, formally or informally against any member of its staff following the determination of such a complaint. This is expressly to protect the employee rights under employment law.

7. Formal Complaint Regarding a Councillor's Conduct

- 7.1. If a complaint is regarding a Councillor's Conduct it must be directed to the Monitoring Officer at Herefordshire Council.

The procedure to be followed and guidance on the process can be found on the Herefordshire Council website:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council/get-involved/8>