

HAZLERIGG PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Policy and Procedure

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

“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 a 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’.

If you have a complaint please write to the Clerk of the Council – Ms Ali Lamb at:-

43 Bruce Gardens
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE5 2EA

Or Email: Hazleriggparishcouncil@gmail.com

Or Phone: 07507675547

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

It is not appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under the formal Complaints Procedure. It is hoped that less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk will resolve most issues raised by a member of the public. Any informal complaint will be reported to the Council for information. Confidentiality of the complainant will be maintained unless the complainant waives their right to confidentiality, or the Council is required by law to disclose.

Dependent on the category of complaint it may be necessary to direct the complainant to another body as follows:-

Complaint Category	
<i>Financial Irregularity</i>	The Clerk should endeavour to provide an explanation of the item. The Clerk may need to consult the auditor/Audit Commission. If the complaint is not satisfied the Clerk should advise the complainant of the local elector’s statutory right to object to the Council’s audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998.
<i>Criminal Activity</i>	The Clerk should refer the complainant to the police.
<i>Member Conduct</i>	A complaint relating to a member’s failure to comply with the Code of Conduct must be submitted to the Local Standards Committee (Newcastle City Council)
<i>Employee Conduct</i>	As an internal disciplinary matter this should be dealt with under the Council’s disciplinary procedure.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

If a member of the public is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint dealt with under the Informal Complaints Procedure then the complainant should put the complaint about the Council’s procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk, Ms Ali Lamb at 43 Bruce Gardens, Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 2EA.

If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk, they should address it, marked ‘Strictly Private and Confidential’ to the Chairman of the Council, c/o 43 Bruce Gardens, Newcastle upon Tye NE5 2EA

The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within seven workings days and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Complaints Committee of three councillors established for the purpose of hearing complaints. The complainant will be advised that the Clerk will also attend the meeting.

The complainant will be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.

Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant must provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The Council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the complainant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

AT THE MEETING

- The Chairman of the Committee will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
- The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk and then (ii) members of the Committee.
- The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) members of the Committee.
- The clerk and the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
- The Clerk 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 a point of clarification is necessary, both parties will be invited back.
- The Clerk and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

AFTER THE MEETING

The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken. The complainant will be advised that they have the right to appeal against the decision to the Council within fourteen days.

The result of the proceedings will be reported at the next full Council meeting after the appeal period has ended, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained.