Skipton Town Council

Policy Name:	**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**
Date of Last Review:	**14 May 2026**
Version Number:	**V2**
Responsible Officer:	**Chief Officer**
File Location:	**Skipton Town Council\ADMINISTRATION\POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**
Next Review Due:	**May 2027**
Added to Policy Register:	**YES/NO**

1. Introduction and Context

1.1 This Policy is designed to ensure that Skipton Town Council ("the Council") is able to investigate all complaints and escalate them as is reasonably deemed necessary. All complaints will be taken seriously and in conjunction with this policy.

1.2 The Town Council does not consider formal complaints against councillors. These are dealt with in accordance with the Town Council's adopted Code of Conduct by North Yorkshire Council's Monitoring Officer.

1.3 All other complaints should be addressed to the Chief Officer and will be dealt with promptly to maintain public confidence.

1.4 Should the complaint be in regard to the Chief Officer, it should be addressed to the Management and Staffing Committee.

1.5 A fair and courteous response will be given in all cases, and a full and proper investigation may be undertaken to establish all the pertinent facts.

1.6 The Town Council will seek to resolve all complaints informally prior to a formal complaint being lodged.

1.7 An informal complaint is made to the Chief Officer who will liaise with the complainant and relevant members/officers to seek resolution. Should it not be possible to resolve a complaint informally the complainant may escalate the complaint to a formal complaint.

1.8 Should, in the opinion of the Chief Officer, the complaint be of a serious nature, the complaint shall be escalated to a formal complaint.

1.9 The Chief Officer shall maintain logs of informal complaints about staff and the council.

1.10 There is no defined process for an informal complaint; but full records must be kept of any communications and attempts at resolution.

2. Formal Complaints

2.1 Where possible, the Town Council would wish to solve any complaint informally prior to a formal complaint being lodged

2.2 All formal complaints shall be dealt with using the timescales outlined in section 7 below. Complainants shall be provided with routine updates on the progress of investigating ongoing complaints.

3. Formal Complaints about Councillors

3.1 The Town Council does not consider formal complaints about its members. Members are required to comply with an adopted Code of Conduct.

3.2 A formal complaint about a member should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer of North Yorkshire Council who will arrange the investigation of the complaint. North Yorkshire Council has its own policies for dealing with such complaints.

4. Formal Complaints about Officers/Employees

4.1 Formal complaints about an employee of the Town Council must be made in writing to the Chief officer setting out the reasons for the complaint and providing any supplementary information that will assist an investigation.

4.2 Complaints will be referred to the appropriate Line Manager and be processed in accordance with the council's disciplinary policy.

4.3 Complaints about the Chief Officer must be made in writing to the Management and Staffing Committee, setting out the reasons for the complaint and providing any supplementary information that will assist an investigation.

4.4 The complainant will be informed that the complaint will be progressed under the council's disciplinary policy and at the end of that process will receive a response to the complaint.

5. Formal Complaints about the Council, Committees or Decisions

5.1 Complaints about the activity or decisions of the council should be made to the Chief officer in writing, providing any additional information that will enable the complaint to be investigated.

5.2 The complaint shall first be considered by the Chief Officer. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response from the Chief officer, the complainant can request the complaint be referred to the associated Committee. The complainant will be invited to address the meeting if they would like to.

5.3 The Chairman of the associated Committee shall seek to resolve the issue or explain the background to the decision.

5.4 Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response from the committee, the committee may at its discretion refer the complaint to the Full Council where the complainant will be invited to address the meeting.

5.5 Records shall be kept detailing all complaints, actions undertaken and the outcome.

5.6 The decision of Full Council is final.

6. Vexatious complaints

6.1 A vexatious complainant is one who persists unreasonably with their complaints, or makes complaints in order to inconvenience the Council rather than genuinely resolve an issue. This may include making serial complaints about different issues or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly.

6.2 If such complaints affect the Council's ability to undertake its work and provide its services to others, it may alter the way it deals with complaints by not acknowledging or responding to vexatious complaints. Complaints will still be read in case they contain new information.

6.3 If a complainant is to be classified as vexatious they shall be informed so and given a timescale of how long this will remain the case.

6.4 Should a vexatious complainant make a new complaint about new issues these will be treated on their merits.

7. Time Limits for the Council's Response

7.1 We will always try to deal with complaints as quickly as possible, as we recognise that failure to respond can make a problem worse and harder to resolve. However, it is important that we are thorough in our investigation of a complaint and this can sometimes mean that we are unable to respond as quickly as we would like.

7.2 If this happens we will let the complainant know when the full response will be available and keep them informed of progress if the delay is going to be lengthy.

7.3 If the complaint is straightforward we will offer an assurance of remedial action, or advise the complainant that no action is required, within 5 working days.

7.4 Written complaints, or those which cannot be resolved immediately, will be acknowledged, either by telephone or letter, within 5 working days.

7.5 A full response will be provided by the Chief Officer within 10 working days of first receiving the complaint.

7.6 If we are unable to respond fully within 10 working days, we will contact the complainant, explaining the reason for the delay and providing an estimated date for provision of the full response.

7.7 Where possible, this should not be more than 21 working days of first receiving the complaint.

7.8 If the person making the complaint is dissatisfied with the response at any stage, a request can be made for an investigation under the terms of next stage. This should be made within one calendar month of receiving the Council's response, although complaints made outside this time may be accepted at the Councils discretion.

7.9 Town and Parish Councils do NOT come under the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman except in some very specific circumstances where the Council is providing statutory services on behalf of a principal authority. The Town Council's Chief Officer will advise you whether such a circumstance applies.

7.10 If you feel the Town Council, one or more of its Councillors, or one or more of its employees,has specifically broken the law, you should contact the Police immediately.

8. Related Documents (links to procedures etc)

Members' Code of Conduct
Contract of Employment
Data Protection Policy
Violent & Challenging Behaviour Policy
Disciplinary Policy