



Farnham Town Council Complaints Procedure Adopted April 2019

1. Introduction

Farnham Town Council is committed to providing excellent customer service to Farnham residents, businesses and everyone who visits Farnham. Occasionally a complaint may arise. This procedure sets out Farnham Town Council's procedure to dealing with customers' complaints, ensuring that complaints are investigated as quickly and efficiently as possible and aiming to improve customer service where required.

This policy covers:

- Complaints about the service provided by the Council.
- Complaints about the action, or lack of action, taken by the Council or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

This policy does not cover:

- Complaints about a Councillor. If you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of a Town Councillor, please write to the Monitoring Officer, Robin Taylor, at Waverley Borough Council Offices, The Burys, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1HR.
Email: monitoringofficer@waverley.gov.uk, telephone: 01483 523108.
- Any matter which raises a suspicion of criminal wrongdoing should be referred to the Police.

2. Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received or the action, or lack of action, taken by Farnham Town Council or a body or person acting on behalf of the Council, you should submit your complaint in writing where your complaint will be handled in accordance with the following stages:

Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

The matter should be first reported to the Officer responsible for delivering that service, who will respond and attempt to find a resolution.

Please give your full name, address and telephone number to enable to Council to correspond in relation to your concerns. Please include as many details as possible including dates, times, the nature of the concerns.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

In the event that the matter cannot be resolved by the Officer at Stage 1, the matter will be passed to the Town Clerk or Officer appointed by the Town Clerk who will investigate further. An acknowledgement should be sent within 5 working days and a written response within 15 working days.

Stage 3 - Appeal

If the matter is not resolved by a decision taken by the Town Clerk or Officer nominated by the Town Clerk at Stage 2, you are entitled to appeal this decision. An appeal will be reported to the Strategy and Finance Working Group or an appointed panel of 3 Members or the Cemeteries Working Group, depending on the nature of the complaint. An appeal should be acknowledged within 5 working days and a written response of the outcome of the Appeal within 15 working days. The decision of the appointed group is final and will be reported to Full Council.

Complaints about the Town Clerk can be sent to the Town Mayor.

3. Unreasonable(Vexatious) or Persistent Complainants

In a minority of cases, some complainants pursue issues in an unreasonable way or with unreasonably persistent behaviour which can impede investigation of their complaint and can result in significant resource issues for the Council. Whilst Farnham Town Council endeavours to respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all complainants, there are times when there is nothing further that can reasonably be done to assist or to rectify a real or perceived problem.

Examples of unreasonable actions and behaviours:

- Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of help.
- Refusing to cooperate with the investigation process.
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeking to have them replaced.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Denying or changing statements he or she made at an earlier stage.
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information at a later stage.
- Raising many detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are all answered.
- Submitting falsified documents.
- Adopting a 'scatter gun' approach: pursuing parallel complaints on the same issue with various organisations.
- Making excessive demands on the time and resources of staff with lengthy phone calls, emails to numerous council staff, or detailed letters every few days, and expecting immediate responses.
- Submitting repeat complaints with minor additions/variations the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints.
- Refusing to accept the decision; repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence

Date of Adoption

This Complaints Policy was reviewed and adopted by Council in April 2019

Review Date – 2022