



CHEPTOW TOWN COUNCIL COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Chepstow Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or those who are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service received from this council or unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

2.0 THE PROCEDURE

- 2.1 This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how the council has dealt with concerns.
- 2.2 This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
 - complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between the council as employer and a council employee. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures. If your complaint relates to an individual employee, it will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.
 - complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Town Council. If a complaint against a councillor is received by the Town Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of Monmouthshire County Council.
- 2.3 The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.
- 2.4 You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Town Clerk. This can be done in person, by phone, or by writing to, or emailing the Town Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.

- 2.5 Wherever possible the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible the Clerk will normally acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
- 2.6 The Clerk will try to resolve your complaint within a further 10 working days. If the matter cannot be dealt with within these specified timescales there will be an explanation and an indicative time by which a response will be made.
- 2.7 If your complaint is about the Town Clerk it will be made directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Complaints Committee. If appropriate, the Chairman of the Council may arrange for the complaint to be investigated by a senior officer from another council or will appoint an independent investigating officer.
- 2.8 The Town Clerk or investigating officer (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, contacting you to obtain further information as necessary as well as obtaining information from employees or members of the council and seeking advice from MCC Monitoring Officer as appropriate.
- 2.9 The Town Clerk or investigating officer will normally notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of the complaint and of what action (if any) the council proposes to take as a result. In exceptional cases the 20 working days' timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept fully informed of the reasons for the delay.
- 2.10 If you remain dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for the complaint to be referred to the Chairman of the Council for review. When reviewing your complaint, the Chairman will convene a Complaints Panel.
- 2.11 When a Complaints Panel is convened, you will be invited to attend, explain the complaint and ask questions. The Town Clerk or investigating officer will respond and explain the reasons for reaching the decision taken and may also ask additional questions of you. Members of the Complaints Panel may ask questions of both the Town Clerk/investigating officer and of you, the complainant. Both parties will be asked to withdraw while the Panel makes a decision.
- 2.12 A decision will be made by the Complaints Panel and the outcome of the review and of what action (if any) the council proposes to take as a result of your complaint will be notified to you by the Chairman of the Council in writing within seven working days.
- 2.13 The Complaints Panel will consist of the Mayor, another councillor and an independent person. The councillor will be appointed at the Annual Meeting.
- 2.14 Where a complaint is upheld the Town Clerk should report, to a subsequent meeting of Council, the action taken to ensure that the same mistake does not recur.

In the first instance, all complaints should be directed to the Town Clerk who is the council's proper officer at the address below.

The Gatehouse
High Street
Chepstow
NP16 5LG

Email: clerk@chepstow.co.uk
Telephone number 01291 626370