

Sway Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Complaints about an employee of the Council (i.e. the Clerk) should be dealt with as an employment matter. The complainant can be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally, and appropriate action taken as required under its own Disciplinary Procedures.

Complaints about a Councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Monitoring Officer at New Forest District Council. Complainants should be advised to contact the Monitoring Officer for further information.

This guidance is therefore aimed at those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the council or about its procedures. It is not an appropriate forum for a complaint against individuals, as the provisions available above should cover these situations.

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they may put it to the Chairman of the Council or, in the event of a complaint being made about the Chairman, to the Vice Chairman.
3. The Clerk/Chairman shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint within 7 working days and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by a committee of 3 Councillors, whichever the Council feels is more appropriate.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation they wish to refer to at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The Council or the Committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
7. The Chairman of the meeting to introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
8. The complainant (or their representative) to outline grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk and Councillors.
9. The Clerk will explain the Council's position and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk and Councillors.
10. The Clerk and the complainant to be offered opportunity to summarise their position.

11. The Clerk and the complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back.

12. The Clerk and the complainant return to the meeting to hear the decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the Meeting

13. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.