

## LICHFIELD CITY COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The City Council, as a parish council, is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman, but for the benefit of good local administration it has adopted this formal Complaints Procedure. The aim is to ensure that the complainant can feel satisfied that, at the very least, their complaint has been fully and properly considered. It should be noted that this Complaints Procedure does not apply in respect of the following types of complaint:

Financial irregularity:	electors have statutory rights to object to the Council's auditors
Criminal activity:	a complaint of alleged criminal activity should be made to the Police
Member conduct:	a complaint of an alleged breach of the Council's Code of Conduct should be directed to the District Council
Employee conduct:	will be dealt with under the Council's internal disciplinary procedures

1. If a complaint about the Council's procedures or administration is notified to a councillor or the Town Clerk, then the Town Clerk shall in the first instance speak to or write to the complainant to endeavour to resolve the complaint by informal means.
2. If it is not possible to satisfy the complainant by such means, and the complainant wishes to pursue the complaint further, the complainant shall be given a copy of the Council's Complaints Procedure (this document) and informed that they should write to the Town Clerk setting out the details of their complaint, together with any documentation or other evidence they wish to refer to, and requesting that the complaint be referred to the Council's Complaints Panel.
3. On receipt of such written request the Town Clerk, shall summon a meeting of the Council's Complaints Panel, and shall notify the complainant of the place, time and date (not more than one calendar month from the date of receipt of the complainant's request) at which the Complaints Panel will meet to consider the complaint. The complainant shall be invited to attend the Panel meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
4. Not less than seven clear days before the meeting of the Complaints Panel, the Town Clerk shall provide the complainant and the members of the Panel, with copies of the documentation provided by the Complainant, and any documents provided on behalf of the Council, which will be considered by the Panel.
5. The Complaints Panel will meet with the press and public excluded.
6. At the Panel Meeting:
  - a. The Panel chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure
  - b. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Town Clerk and members
  - c. The Town Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members
  - d. The Town Clerk and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position
  - e. The Town Clerk and the complainant should 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 shall be invited back
  - f. The Town Clerk or other nominated officer 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.
7. After the Meeting, the decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.