

Hay Town Council

Complaints Procedure

Version: 2.0

Adopted: 11th May 2026

Next Review: May 2028



1. Introduction

This procedure is based on the model guidance issued by One Voice Wales and sets out how Hay Town Council will handle complaints relating to its administration, procedures, and service delivery.

It aims to ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly, consistently, and promptly, and that lessons are learned where appropriate.

This procedure applies to complaints about the Council's administration and employees.

- Complaints about Councillor conduct are governed by the Code of Conduct and should be referred to the relevant standards authority.
- Complaints about Council policy or decisions made in an open democratic forum will not be treated as complaints under this procedure.

2. Principles

The Council will ensure that complaints are handled in line with the following principles:

- Fairness and impartiality
- Confidentiality where appropriate
- Transparency in decision-making
- Prompt acknowledgement and response
- Proportionality in handling and resolution
- A focus on early informal resolution where possible

3. Making a Complaint

Complaints should normally be made in writing (letter or email) to the Clerk to the Council.

Where a complaint is initially made verbally, the complainant will be asked to submit it in writing to ensure clarity and proper record-keeping.

- Complaints about the Clerk should be addressed to the Chair of Council.
 - An acknowledgement will be issued within **5 working days** of receipt.
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4. Informal Resolution (Stage 1)

Where appropriate, the Council will seek to resolve complaints informally at the earliest opportunity.

- The Clerk (or Chair, where appropriate) will consider the complaint and attempt informal resolution.
- The subject of the complaint will be informed and given an opportunity to respond.
- A member of the Council may assist in facilitating a resolution.

Many complaints can be resolved at this stage without the need for formal investigation.

5. Formal Investigation (Stage 2)

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, it will be referred for formal consideration.

- The complaint will be considered by the Council or a delegated panel of Members.
- An investigation may be carried out where necessary.
- The complainant may be invited to attend a meeting or provide further information.
- The subject of the complaint will have the right to respond.

The Council will ensure that decisions are based on relevant facts and evidence.

6. Council Consideration and Decision

Where a complaint reaches full Council:

- The matter may be considered in open or exempt session, depending on confidentiality requirements (for example, staffing matters).
 - Any resolution will be formally recorded in minutes.
 - The decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing.
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7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Information will only be shared with those who need it to investigate or respond to the complaint.

8. Vexatious or Repeated Complaints

Where complaints are persistent, unreasonable, or vexatious in nature, the Council may apply its separate policy on unreasonable complainant behaviour to manage communications appropriately.

9. Escalation

If a complainant remains dissatisfied following completion of this procedure, they may be advised to refer the matter to the appropriate external body, such as the Ombudsman or relevant standards authority, depending on the nature of the complaint.

10. Review of Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains consistent with best practice guidance from One Voice Wales and current legislation.