



Complaints Procedure

Policy Number	Version	Owner	Doc No.	PDF No.	Date Published	Review Due	Review Team
CS006	3	CSM	40832	73598	Reviewed Sep 19	Sep 2022	Manager
CS006	2	CSM	40832	50765	Reviewed May '15	1 May '18	Manager
CS005	1	CSM	40832	45970	March '13	1 Mar '15	Manager

Distribution

Internal: All SCC Staff

External: Website/Councillors/Partners

Salisbury City Council - Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This complaints procedure is for all complaints to the Council, whether these are minor, serious, informal or formal and apply to all services provided by the Council.
- 1.2. Separate arrangements as prescribed by law are in place in respect of Councillors. These arrangements are referred to at paragraph 7 below.
- 1.3. The Council believes that complaints can provide useful information and feedback on the quality of our services, procedures and practices. The effective handling of complaints will help us to improve the services provided on behalf of residents, visitors and those working within the City.

2. Aim

- 2.1. The aim of this complaints procedure is to swiftly investigate all complaints in an impartial manner and to find a solution locally, whenever possible, to the satisfaction of both the complainant and the Council.

3. Definition Of Complaints

- 3.1. People's perceptions differ widely. It is therefore very difficult to give a precise definition of a complaint. However, for our purposes, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a service undertaken by Salisbury City Council or any of its employees' or contractors.
- 3.2. More specifically, a complaint is where:-
 - 3.2.1. The Council has not done something it has a duty to do or normally does
 - 3.2.2. The Council has done something it has no right to do or does not normally do as a matter of established practice
 - 3.2.3. The conduct or behaviour of an employee or contractor is unsatisfactory
 - 3.2.4. The established levels of service delivery are not reached
 - 3.2.5. A person does not understand or is not informed of why or how a situation arose or exists
 - 3.2.6. An adopted and known procedure is not followed
 - 3.2.7. Maladministration is alleged.
- 3.3. This complaints procedure will not apply to complaints made anonymously.

4. What To Do If You Have A Complaint

- 4.1. The first priority is to raise the issue with the City Council. To do this, please contact the Council. Your complaint can be made by telephone, email, in person or in writing, giving names and addresses and relevant dates with as much information as possible. The appropriate details for contacting the City Council are:-
 - 4.1.1. By telephone on 01722 342860;
 - 4.1.2. By email info@salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk;
 - 4.1.3. In person or by letter to The Guildhall, Market Place, Salisbury, SP1 1JH
 - 4.1.4. Via the 'contact us' page of our website www.salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk

- 4.2. In many cases, it will be possible for an issue to be dealt with straight away and the source of the complaint resolved immediately.
- 4.3. For more complex issues, it is much better to put these in writing so that a thorough investigation can be undertaken. Investigations will be dealt with as quickly as possible. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your complaint within 5 working days and a full response to your complaint will be provided as soon as possible.
- 4.4. The City Council maintains a register of complaints showing dates, details of the complaint, complainant and the action taken to resolve the issue. This is available for all members of the Council to inspect. Serious complaints will be reported to Councillors.
- 4.5. If the complaint involves the City Clerk personally, the complainant should address the complaint direct to the Mayor.

5. Putting Things Right

- 5.1. If following the investigation into the complaint the Council is found to be at fault, every effort will be made to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant.
- 5.2. Where subsequent actions or simply the passage of time prevents restitution, other actions may be appropriate which may include a local settlement. A local settlement is defined as action taken to restore a complainant to a situation he or she would have been in if the fault had not occurred.
- 5.3. When considering a local settlement, the remedy will need to be appropriate to the injustice and may be reduced where a complainant has contributed to the injustice suffered.

6. What If You Are Not Satisfied

- 6.1. Unlike for District or County Councils, there is currently no external agency or government body which can investigate a complaint if you are not satisfied with the initial consideration of your complaint. However, if you are not satisfied with action taken by the City Clerk, you should write to the Mayor via our address or website. The Mayor will review the complaint, and all of the paperwork relating thereto, and if he/she believes it appropriate will submit the complaint to a Committee of the Council for consideration.
- 6.2. In order to preserve any confidentiality issues, the Committee of the Council will normally deal with your complaint in private session and your details will not therefore be released publicly.

7. What If I Have a Complaint About the Behaviour of a Particular Councillor (or Councillors)

- 7.1. Councillors are required to observe a 'Code of Conduct'. If you think that a unitary, town, parish or city councillor has not followed the Code, you can complain and Wiltshire Council will look into the matter.
- 7.2. Wiltshire Council (WC) has a special committee, called the Standards Committee, which is responsible for doing this.

8. How to Complain

- 8.1. If you want to complain about the conduct of a Council Member, please use the Members Complaints Form, available on Wiltshire Council's website, and either email it to governance@wiltshire.gov.uk or print it off and post it to:

The Monitoring Officer
Wiltshire Council
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

- 8.2. When WC receives your complaint they will arrange for members of the Standards Committee to meet and decide if they can deal with your complaint. This is called the assessment sub-committee.
- 8.3. The assessment sub-committee can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Member. It is not allowed to deal with complaints about things that are not covered by the Members' Code of Conduct. If you make a complaint to the assessment sub-committee it must be about why you think a Member has not followed the Code of Conduct.
- 8.4. After the assessment sub-committee has considered whether your complaint appears to relate to the behaviour of a Member that may breach the Code of Conduct, they will contact you to let you know what action, if any, will be taken.
- 8.5. You can view the Local Assessment Criteria to find out more about the approach taken by the assessment sub-committee in the assessment of complaints on Wiltshire Council's website, www.wiltshire.gov.uk

9. What Type Of Behaviour Is Covered By The Code Of Conduct

- 9.1. The Code of Conduct for SCC Councillors says:-

- 9.1.1. You are a member or co-opted member of Salisbury City Council and hence you shall have regard to the following principles - selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 9.1.2. You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the following requirements, by leadership and example.

Accordingly, when acting in your capacity as a member or co-opted member.

- 9.1.3. You must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.
- 9.1.4. You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
- 9.1.5. When carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit.
- 9.1.6. You are accountable for your decisions to the public and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

- 9.1.7. You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions.
- 9.1.8. You must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, that relate to your public duties, and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out below.
- 9.1.9. You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

9.2. A full copy of the Code of Conduct is available from the Council's offices.

10. Assistance or Advice Relating to Procedures or a Complaint

10.1. If you need any specific help or general guidance about the Council's procedures or about any specific complaint, please contact the

10.1.1. City Clerk, The Guildhall, Market Place, Salisbury, SP1 1JH or

10.1.2. By telephone 01722 342860 or

10.1.3. Email info@salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk or

10.1.4. Via our website at www.salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk