

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CROMER TOWN COUNCIL COMPLAINTS &amp; DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY</b></p>
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If you have a complaint or a compliment about the Council, or you simply want to comment about our meetings, facilities, services or staff, we would like to hear from you. This form tells you how to complain, and what happens to your complaint on receipt. It also tells you who deals with the complaint, how you can be represented, when a decision is made and how you will be notified of this.

Feedback from our residents, whom we aim to serve efficiently and effectively, is the only way we can continually improve our services.

We aim:

- to make it easy for anyone to make a complaint
- to solve problems as quickly as possible
- to prevent problems from happening again, and
- to encourage good practice

## **How to contact us with your compliment or complaint**

You can contact Cromer Town Council by telephone, in writing, over the internet or by visiting us in person. A form is included with this leaflet which you can fill in and send back to us. A list of contact details is given on the back page of this leaflet.

## **What we will do when we hear from you**

We will deal with any comments about the Council as quickly as possible. We will make sure that your comments are directed to the right person. We may be able to give you an answer straight away, or we may need more time to investigate what you have told us. We will contact you within 15 working days of us hearing from you and either give you a full answer, or give you a progress report and explain why we need more time to investigate further. We will also tell you when you can expect a full answer.

## **Confidentiality**

We will treat your complaint in confidence. Details will only be given to those members of staff and councillors directly concerned and those Councillors and staff investigating the complaint. If you have a complaint, we hope we will be able to find out what went wrong and take steps to make sure it won't happen again.

## How to contact us

The Council's telephone number is:

(01263) 512254

If writing, please write to:

The Town Clerk  
Cromer Town Council  
North Lodge  
Overstrand Road  
Cromer  
Norfolk  
NR27 0AH

Our email address is:

[clerk@cromertown.org](mailto:clerk@cromertown.org)

The Council's website address is:

[www.cromertown.org](http://www.cromertown.org)

## Code of Practice for Complaints

1. If a complaint about the Town Council is notified orally to a Councillor or the Town Clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant, then the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Town Clerk on the form provided.
2. If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Town Clerk he or she shall be advised to put it to the Mayor.
3. Any written complaint will be acknowledged within 7 working days. Where it is not possible to give a full answer, an explanation of why more time is needed will be given. Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, a complaint form and copy of the code of practice will be sent within 7 days.
4. In the case of a complaint received about a member of staff or councillor, the person concerned will be notified and given an opportunity for comment on the matter. Complaints lodged about Council staff or councillors should be dealt with by the Clerk and will be passed to the Council's Personnel Sub-Committee for further investigation.
5. Where appropriate, the Clerk or Mayor or Chair of Personnel Sub-Committee shall report to the next meeting of the Town Council regarding any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant. If appropriate, this shall be dealt with in a part of the meeting which is closed to members of the public.
6. The Clerk shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Town Council after the complaint has been initially investigated and the Clerk (or Mayor/Chair of Personnel Sub-committee as appropriate) shall notify the complainant of the date by which the complaint will be considered. If necessary the Town Council will appoint a Complaints Panel to fully investigate the complaint. If for any reason that date becomes unachievable, a letter and explanation for this will be sent to the complainant with a revised date.
7. The complaints panel will be 4 members of the council of which one will be the Mayor and another will be the Chair of Personnel Sub-Committee. There should be a gender balance on the complaints panel if possible.
8. The Complaints Panel should investigate all the evidence surrounding the complaint. Where a complaint is considered about a person, this will be dealt with in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at a future Council meeting in public.
9. Complaints - Code of Conduct  
When a complaint is made relating to the Code of Conduct it should be sent direct to The Standards Board and then referred to the Monitoring Officer.
10. As soon as the decision has been made, it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
11. The Council shall defer investigating any written complaint *only* if it is of opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which legal advice is necessary. The complaint shall be considered at the next appropriate meeting after the advice has been received.

## 12. Complaints - Incident Book

A complaints incident book will be kept in the Council Offices. Staff involved in an incident or disagreement whether giving rise to complaint or not with a member of the public or councillor must enter the details of it in this book within twenty-four hours of the incident taking place. An incident is considered as a situation where voices are raised, strong language used or threatening or violent behaviour is experienced.

All complaints received in writing will be entered in this book.

13. All correspondence received by those defined as persistent complainers (see point 14 below) shall be filed in the complaints incident book and not responded to.

## 14. Persistent complaints policy

The Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any of their employees or councillors by others.

The Council is committed to the elimination of any form of intimidation in the workplace and also to the reduction of time wasting for staff members/councillors which such harassment can cause.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's policy on Grievance and Disciplinary Handling.

15. Bullying may be characterised by a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting and humiliating behaviour intended to undermine an individual or group gradually eroding their confidence and capability.

16. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity. Both bullying and harassment are behaviours which are unwanted by the recipient and examples of this are such things as spreading malicious rumours, ridiculing, invasion of privacy and deliberately undermining.

This may occur in public meetings, or through verbal communication or any form of correspondence.

17. Unreasonable persistent complainers. This means people who write repetitive letters or emails for which requested information/action has already been supplied. Persistence might also be through visits to the council office, other forms of correspondence or at public meetings. Persistence itself may be a form of harassment and bullying.

## 18. Procedure for dealing with persistent complainers.

This council will make every effort to answer complaints and correspondence from any individual, but where communication by those individuals is made which crosses the definitions outlined above, then the Council may decide by resolution to terminate contact with that person. If this is done, then the Council will write to that person to advise them of this; the reasons for doing so; and the duration of this action.

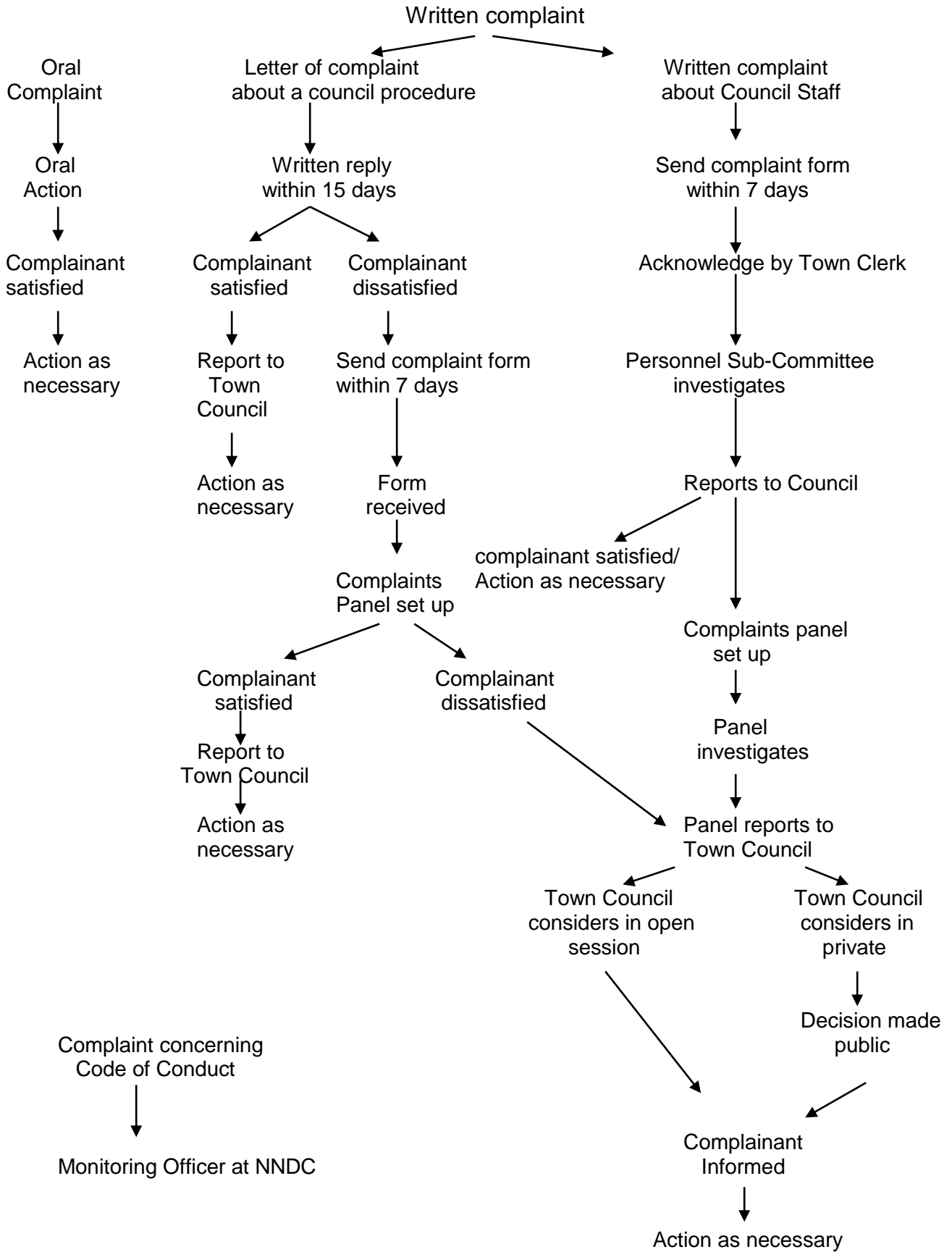
19. Any future correspondence received from that person shall be filed in the complaints incident book and not acknowledged or responded to.

20. In the event of that individual crossing the definitions outlined in paragraphs 15-17 above in a meeting, the council can by resolution request that person leaves the meeting.

## 21. Police

Where criminal action may have been committed, the police will always be informed.

# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS Sequence of Events



## Complaint Procedure

### Guidance to the Complaint Panel

When enquiring into a complaint the Panel must consider the following:

- That the person(s) subject of the complaint must be given the opportunity of responding in answer to the complaint verbally or in writing or both. The person(s) subject of the complaint is given the right to have a friend present at any hearing if they chose to do so.
- Where the complaint concerns a member of staff, then the Grievance & Disciplinary Policy Procedure should be followed.
- Any person(s) who may be able to provide information to substantiate the complaint or otherwise should be spoken to and asked for their recollection. Such information may be verbal or in writing.
- The Panel may wish to illicit further information from the complainant and may offer the complainant the opportunity of further discussing the content of the complaint.
- The members of the Panel must record the time and date when the complainant, the person(s) complained of or witnesses were asked to comment.



**Compliments and Complaints Form**

**Date Received** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ref No** \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name –

How do you want to be contacted?      Email       Letter       Telephone

Your contact details –

If you would prefer to be contacted by telephone, please tell us the best time to contact you -

Please give details of your compliment or complaint –

If necessary, please continue over the page

Have you spoken to, emailed or written to anyone at the Council?      Yes / No

If yes, please give their name -

What happened as a result of this contact?

What outcome are you looking for (i.e. what would be the best way for the Council to resolve your complaint)?

Please note that complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence. The names of those making a complaint and details of the complaint will only be disclosed to those members of staff needing to know for the purposes of the investigation. The Town Clerk may also inform the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor.

Please return this form to the Town Clerk, Cromer Town Council, North Lodge, Overstrand Road, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 0AH