

LEIGHTON & EATON CONSTANTINE PARISH COUNCIL

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Introduction

This policy sets out how to raise a formal complaint against the Parish Council. A formal complaint is defined as an accusation against the council. The following procedure is for dealing with complaints about the council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the council will be referred back to council. This policy does not cover complaints against individual councillors or staff as these are the subject of separate procedures.

Procedure for handling a Formal Complaint

The clerk is responsible for managing the formal complaints process. A formal complaint can only be submitted in writing to the council offices. A written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint. Should the complaint relate to the clerk, the complaint will be referred to the Chair of the Council and will be dealt with by procedures outside the scope of this policy. The complaint should cover as much detail as possible and enclose any relevant supporting documentation. The clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 14 working days.

The clerk will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will within 28 working days provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution. The aim will be to seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage. If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution, the complaint is closed. The clerk will report to the council, at its next meeting, summary details of complaints dealt with by her directly and a brief summary of its resolution.

If the clerk is unable to resolve the complaint, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution then the matter will be referred to a meeting of the council. The clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the council orally at that meeting the complaint is considered at. Should the complainant wish to submit any details, such as a summary of complaint, this must be received seven clear working days before the council meeting. The parish council will provide the same to the complainant. The council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the council meeting in public.

As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 working days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

Timings

The parish council will try to adhere to the timings outlined in this policy, but in the case of a complex complaint, the timings may have to vary. The council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of

the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received. The complainant will be kept advised of the revised timescales.

Policy Adoption:

This policy was adopted by Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council on 3rd July 2018.