



# DOVER TOWN COUNCIL

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

(Adopted by Dover Town Council on 27.03.2019)

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## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

*This complaints procedure document was adopted by the Town Council at its Meeting held*

We are sorry if the council, an officer of the council or a councillor has not met your expectations. We work hard to provide a high-quality service at all times. If you would like to informally talk through your issue with the person it concerns or with the Town Clerk, then please call in at Maison Dieu House in Dover, e-mail us on [council@dovertowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:council@dovertowncouncil.gov.uk) or telephone us on 01304 242625.

If this discussion does not resolve your dissatisfaction and you would like to make a complaint, this procedure explains how to do this; and what situations it applies to.

Dover Town Council operates according to law, statutory regulation and best practice.

- Policy and strategy are decided by Council at meetings open to the public. There are opportunities for members of the public to address meetings of the Council formally in addition to other informal opportunities to make their views known to Councillors.
- Council officers are responsible in law for advising the Council, and for taking action on the decisions of the Council. Officers have NO part in the decision-making process.
- The Council acts in an open and transparent manner. Independent external and internal auditors report publicly concerning the Council. Information is also available as required by law including under the Freedom of Information Act.
- The Council welcomes constructive contributions from members of the public concerning policy issues and matters of concern to the Town. Complaints and criticism concerning Town Council policies and action should relate only to the policy issues and actions themselves. Attempts to undermine the local democratic process by the publication of allegations and information which may be selective and inaccurate concerning the personal and private lives of Councillors or Officers is wholly condemned.
- If you believe that your complaint concerns a criminal matter then you **must** report it to Kent Police either in person, online or by calling 101. You can report a crime anonymously via Crimestoppers online or by telephone.
- Dover Town Council has a Whistleblowing Policy available online at [www.dovertowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.dovertowncouncil.gov.uk). That procedure is intended to cover serious concerns which fall outside the scope of this complaints' procedure. These include: -
  1. Conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of the law;
  2. Conduct that has occurred or is occurring or is likely to occur, as a result of which the Town Council fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example, unauthorised use of public funds, fraud and corruption or other unethical conduct or discrimination of any kind;
  3. Disclosures related to past, current or likely miscarriages of justice;
  4. Past, current or likely health and safety risks;
  5. Past, current or likely damage to the environment.
- What follows is the Council's formal complaints procedure. The standard of evidence is high as such evidence may need to be presented at a Court of Law. Hearsay, rumour and opinion are not admissible. Misusing the Council's complaints procedure to pursue a personal agenda will not be

tolerated and neither will trivial, vexatious, repeated or frivolous complaints. Anonymous complaints will not be considered. The details of all complaints and accompanying evidence will be shared with the person against whom the complaint has been made.

### **COMPLAINTS WITH REGARD TO OFFICERS**

Council officers are employees of the Council and have not chosen to enter public life. The Council takes seriously its duty of care towards them as an employer. The Council recognises that unwarranted criticism and intrusion into their private lives through any media may be considered bullying and will not be tolerated.

If you are a member of the public and you are submitting a complaint with regard to an officer of the Council other than the Town Clerk then you should supply full details of your formal complaint with evidence and including your name, address and telephone/email contact in writing to the Town Clerk, Dover Town Council, Maison Dieu House, Biggin St, Dover. CT16 1DW or by email to [council@dovertowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:council@dovertowncouncil.gov.uk)

If you are a member of the public and you are submitting a complaint with regard to the Town Clerk then you should supply full details of your formal complaint with evidence and including your name, address and telephone/email contact in writing to The Mayor, Dover Town Council, Maison Dieu House, Biggin St, Dover CT16 1 DW or by email to:- [mayoralty@dovertowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:mayoralty@dovertowncouncil.gov.uk)

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 7 working days.

Complaints against officers will be investigated and handled through the Council's internal disciplinary process as an employment matter. You will be informed that disciplinary proceedings have taken place but these proceedings will be confidential, respecting the legal rights of employees.

### **COMPLAINTS WITH REGARD TO COUNCILLORS OR THE COUNCIL**

Dover Town Council has its own Code of Conduct for councillors which is available on our website or from the office. If you believe that a councillor acting in his or her capacity as a councillor or acting on behalf of the council has breached that Code and you have been unable to resolve the matter through an informal discussion (see first paragraph of this Complaints Procedure) then you have the right to submit a formal complaint. If you are a member of the public or a councillor or an officer submitting a formal complaint with regard to the conduct of a councillor or the council then you should contact the Monitoring Officer at Dover District Council via the Complaints and Resilience Officer Ms. Sue Carr on 01304 872322 or [sue.carr@dover.gov.uk](mailto:sue.carr@dover.gov.uk).

The process for making a complaint to the Monitoring Officer is available via the link: -

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Council--Democracy/Complaints-about-Councillors.aspx>

**Address for Complaints or Correspondence:**

**Dover Town Council  
Maison Dieu House  
Biggin Street  
DOVER  
Kent CT16 1DW**