

NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Adopted by Northam Town Council on 22nd October 2025

	Name	Signature
Mayor	Cllr Louis Bach	
Town Clerk	Guy Langton	

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Version	Date	Note	Drafted by
V1.0	25 th September 2025	First draft for consideration, incorporating the previous Complaints Policy and Procedure and Vexatious Complaints policy	Town Clerk
V1.1	8 th October 2025	Amendments made at Review Committee 2nd October 2025	Town Clerk

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Northam Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this Council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council services, administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.

2.2 This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures,
- complaints against Councillors. Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members as adopted by the Council and, if a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of Torridge District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer,
- complaints about democratic decisions taken by the Council decided by a vote.

2.3 The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings.

2.4 If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council. Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed including about subsequent consideration by committee.

3. MAKING A COMPLAINT

3.1 For complaints (other than those in section 2.2 above, to which separate arrangements apply) in the first instance you should contact the Town Clerk, whose contact details are set out below.

3.2 A written acknowledgement will normally be sent within three working days.

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3.3 If your complaint is about the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Mayor of the Council who will report your complaint to the Finance & HR committee, which will establish a Review Panel.

3.4 The Clerk or (where appropriate) the Review Panel of the Council will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.

3.5. The Clerk or Mayor of the Council will notify you within twenty-eight working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take because of your complaint. If he/she considers that the complaint needs to be submitted to the Monitoring Officer, he/she will advise the complainant of the steps to be taken. (In exceptional cases the twenty-eight working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

4. APPEALS

4.1 If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Appeals Panel of the Town Council and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

4.2 In the event of habitual, unreasonable, malicious or vexatious complaints, the Council reserves the right, having requested the complainant desist from the inappropriate action, to cease communication with the complainant.

- Habitual: ‘done repeatedly or as a habit’.
- Unreasonable: it is the element of unreasonableness that means that complaints or complainants may be treated in accordance with this policy
- Malicious: a false accusation or grievance filed with the deliberate intention of causing harm to a person, their reputation, or an organization.
- Vexatious: a term recognised in law and means ‘denoting an action or the bringer of an action that is brought without sufficient grounds for winning, purely to cause annoyance to the defendant’.

5. CONTACTS

Town Clerk & RFO

Northam Town Council, Council Offices, Windmill Lane, Northam, Bideford, Devon.
EX39 1BY Telephone 01237 474 976 townclerk@northamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Mayor of Northam Town Council

c/o Northam Town Council, Council Offices, Windmill Lane, Northam, Bideford, Devon.
EX39 1BY (please mark envelopes as private and confidential).

Monitoring Officer

c/o Torridge District Council, Riverbank House, Bideford EX39 2QG (please mark envelopes as private and confidential).