



THORPE ST ANDREW TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

THORPE ST ANDREW TOWN
COUNCIL

JANUARY 2022

1. Introduction

We are committed to dealing effectively with any complaints you have about our services and if you make a complaint it will not affect your right to Council services. If we have made a mistake we will apologise and endeavor to put things right. If we have failed to provide a service you are entitled to, let us know and we will provide it.

If you are asking us for a service for the first time - such as reporting a faulty street light - you should give us a chance to put things right. If you are not happy with our response and you let us know, we will then treat it as a complaint.

To register your complaint you can contact us by:

- filling in the complaint form and emailing it to complaints@thorpestandrew-tc.gov.uk.
- filling in the complaint form and returning it to Town Hall, Pound Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, NR7 0UL.
- You can initially talk to us informally about your complaint by calling 01603 701048

What can you expect from us when you make a complaint?

Once we receive a complaint from you, we will do all that we can to help you and we will endeavor to find a solution to any problems you have brought to our attention. We will ensure that your complaint is sent to the relevant person (who is not within the scope of your complaint) for a response and ask them to:

- acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of the date that they receive it
- aim to resolve the complaint within 20 working days - if your complaint is more complex they may need more time
- let you know within the 20 working day period if they think it may take longer to investigate your complaint and advise you how long they expect it to take, providing regular updates

We will respect your right to confidentiality and privacy and we will treat you fairly and in accordance with our commitment to equality.

The person who is investigating your concerns will firstly aim to establish the facts. In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

The extent of the investigation will depend on the seriousness and complexity of the issues you have raised and in more complicated cases we may have to draw up an investigation plan. We will ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping for. In some cases, we may appoint an independent member panel to investigate the complaint.

We will look at relevant evidence and this could include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails or whatever may be relevant to your particular complaint. If you do not want the person investigating the complaint to see the files that we hold in relation to your complaint, it is important for you to let us know about this. If necessary, we will also talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

2. Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found and we will use your preferred form of communication, such as letter or e-mail, when we contact you.

If we find that we have done something wrong, we will tell you this, explain what happened and apologise. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

3. Putting Things Right

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this. For example, where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it; we will offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.

If we did not do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

4. What we expect from you

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, our employees have the same rights and we will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour such as aggressive or abusive behaviour or unreasonable demands. We have separate guidelines to help us manage unacceptable behaviour.

5. The Local Government Ombudsman

Complaints received from members of the public about the administration or procedures of the Council are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman. There are few remedies available, aside from the four-yearly election cycle where Councillors may not be re-elected if the public are unhappy with the representation that they have had. The Government has taken the view that town and parish councils are accountable to their electorate, principally, through the ballot box.