



THORPE ST ANDREW TOWN COUNCIL

Complaints Policy

Thorpe St Andrew
Town Council
6th June 2022

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all our services.

The objectives of our Complaints Policy are to:

1. Provide a framework which is simple for customers to use and is equally accessible to all.
2. Deal with problems as close to their source and as quickly as possible.
3. Give customers confidence that their comments are listened to and their complaints are being dealt with effectively.
4. Ensure action is taken to solve problems and generate a positive attitude to feedback.
5. Learn from feedback and prevent the recurrence of problems.
6. Generate a consistent approach to compliments and complaints throughout the Council.
7. Protect the reputation and resources of the Council.

Overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Chief Executive Officer.

2. How to make a complaint

The Council's aim is to resolve most complaints as close to their source as possible, preferably before they are accepted into the formal complaints process.

As a first step, please contact us for an informal discussion about your complaint by calling 01603 701048.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint it will need to be escalated to our formal complaints process by completing our complaints form and either emailing it to complaints@thorpestandrew-tc.gov.uk or posting it to Town Hall, Pound Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, NR7 0UL.

Our complaint form can be obtained by visiting our website or contacting us by phone on 01603 701048.

If you require assistance in completing the form please call 01603 701048 and we will organise for an officer to support you. If this is not possible, you may be signposted to an organisation which can assist you.

Final responses to complaints will be in writing (letter or email), unless this format is not appropriate for the complainant.

We will ask you to state your preferred way of us communicating with you as part of the complaints process.

3. What you can expect from us when you make a complaint

Once we receive your complaint, we will do all that we can to work with you to find a solution by:

- Acknowledging your complaint within 5 working days of the date we

received it.

- Aiming to resolve your complaint within 20 working days.

Where resolution requires longer, we will inform you as soon as possible of a revised date.

4. Confidentiality

Complaints made to the Council will be treated in confidence.

Details of the complaint will only be provided to the Council staff members and partner organisations who need to know in order to investigate it.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where a vulnerable person is considered to be at risk and safeguarding procedures apply. In these circumstances, the Council may have to share the information with Norfolk County Council whose statutory responsibility it is.

Customers who make their complaints public in the media may forfeit their right to anonymity and the right to confidentiality.

To read our privacy notice as to how your personal information will be dealt with go to our website or contact us on 01603 701048.

5. Outcome

Following investigation, we will let you know what we have found using your preferred form of communication.

6. Right to appeal

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, an appeal can be made in writing to the Town Mayor. A panel of Councillors will consider your appeal and notify you of the outcome using your preferred form of communication. The decision of this panel is final.

7. What we expect from you

The following people are eligible to complain:

- Any individual or group receiving or seeking a service from the Council.
- Anyone acting for an individual or group unable to complain personally.

People do not have to be a Norfolk resident to make a complaint.

A complaint should normally be made within one year of the service being received. This time limit may be extended at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer if the complainant has good reasons for not making the complaint within the time limit; and notwithstanding the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

The Council will not consider, or further consider complaints/representations under this policy where:

- Complainants have stated either orally or in writing to the Council that they are taking, or intend to take proceedings in any court or tribunal in

regard to any issue connected with the complaint.

- The Council has been notified that any person is conducting an investigation in contemplation of criminal proceedings in regard to any issue connected with the complaint.
- The Council has been informed that criminal proceedings are pending in regard to any issue connected with the complaint.
- The complainant is an employee who wishes to raise issues in relation to their employment.

However, the Council will consider complaints from members of the public who are seeking employment with the Council. In these circumstances, where the Council decides that consideration or further consideration of the complaint / representation would prejudice the conduct of any proceedings or investigation, the Chief Executive Officer or designated officer will give notice in writing to the complainant explaining the reasons for the decision and specify how the matter could be dealt with in the future, if appropriate.

The Council's policy on 'Unreasonably Persistent Complaints' will apply when appropriate. Copies of this policy can be found on our website or a copy can be provided by calling us on 01603 701048.

The Council reserve the right not to consider complaints that:

- Are malicious (that is, they are instituted without sufficient grounds and serving only to cause annoyance)
- Use obscenities, racist or homophobic language
- Contain personally offensive remarks about members of our staff
- Are repeatedly submitted with only minor differences after we have fully addressed the complaint

8. 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.