

Rye Town Council

Town Hall Rye East Sussex TN31 7LA
01797 223902
townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk
www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk



Complaints Procedure

Rye Town Council believes a complaints procedure demonstrates to its customers that the Council:

- wishes to provide a good service;
- values feedback;
- undertakes its business in an open and honest manner;
- wishes to deal with complaints fairly.

The Council believes that complaints and suggestions provide a valuable opportunity for improving its services and performance.

A What is a complaint?

For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff affecting an individual customer or group of customers.

This definition covers most complaints - such as:

- dissatisfaction with the administration of policy and decisions;
- delays in responding to service requests;
- failure to achieve standards of service;
- failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities;
- employees' behaviour or attitude.

B How we deal with complaints

Stage 1

Many complaints can be dealt with quickly and satisfactorily by the 'front line' staff who provide the service. However, complainants will be told what they should do if they remain dissatisfied. This will normally be to ask that their complaint be considered by a senior member of staff.

Stage 2

A more senior member of staff will reconsider the complaint and inform the complainant of the

outcome. In the case of complaints relating to the Town Hall or the Council, the senior officer is the Town Clerk; complaints relating to Rye Heritage Centre will be referred to the managing agent, Rye Town Services.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this stage the complainant will be told that their complaint will move to stage 3.

Complaints about the Town Clerk will pass automatically to stage 3.

Stage 3

The complaint will be considered by a Complaints Panel comprising the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and another Member who, after obtaining any additional information necessary, will recommend a response to the full Council.

If, after being informed of the outcome of this stage, the complainant remains dissatisfied, the complainant will be advised how they can pursue the complaint in other ways.

C Complaints about Members of Rye Town Council

All Councillors have signed an undertaking that they will observe the Council's Code of Conduct. The Code - which is the Model Code of Conduct for Members approved by Parliament - specifies a Councillor's obligations. Alleged breaches of the Code must be reported in writing to the Standards Board for England.

E Complaints about services provided by other public organisations

Given that most public services in Rye are provided by either Rother District Council or East Sussex County Council - and that the division of responsibilities between public bodies can often be confusing - Rye Town Council will advise and, if appropriate, assist those wishing to pursue complaints against other public organisations providing services in the town.

Any queries about this procedure, or suggestions for how it might be improved, should be made to: The Town Clerk, Rye Town Council, Town Hall, Market Street, Rye TN31 7LA t 01797 223902 e townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk

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