

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1 Scope

Bicester Town Council aims to provide the best possible service to the residents of Bicester. However, we recognise that from time to time, users of our services may feel that the quality or level of service is less than they could reasonably expect.

We greatly value your continued support and good will and, therefore, if you have a complaint, we would like to hear about it.

The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over Town, Parish and Community Councils. Therefore, this Complaints procedure has been adopted by the Council in order to allow members of the public the opportunity to submit a complaint regarding the administration of the Council or its procedures, and have the complaint dealt with in a fair and timely manner.

2 Purpose

This complaints procedure has been designed to do the following:

- **Listen** to you, ask for your views, find out what you need and agree a clear plan of action.
- **Respond** to your complaint, deal with complaints more effectively and provide support and advice when you complain
- **Improve** our services, use information to make our services better and improve training and learning for staff.

3 What can I complain about?

You may want to complain about any of the following:

- If we don't offer you a service that meets your needs.
- If we decide that you can't use one of our services.
- If we take too long to do our job or provide a service.
- If our staff do not behave in the way that you expect, for example if they are rude or you think you have been treated unfairly.
- If you do not agree with a decision we have made.
- If you think we have not involved you enough.

4 Your rights

You have the right to be treated fairly, with respect and dignity, whatever your ethnic group, sexuality, disability, age, culture, sex, religion or belief when you contact us about your views. Our staff have a responsibility to help people who use our services, and their carers, to tell us how they feel about the service they get.

5 What should I do if I want to make a complaint?

5.1 Informal Complaint

You may want to talk about your complaint informally with the staff member providing the service. We encourage you to do this, as you may be able to sort the problem out at this stage.

5.2 Formal Complaint - Stage 1

If you have already complained informally and are not satisfied with the outcome or wish to make a complaint directly to us, please fill in the form at the end of this policy.

We will confirm to you in writing that your complaint has been received within five working days and arrange for your complaint to be investigated. A full written response will be provided within a further 10 working days. If more time is needed we will contact you and provide reasons for the delay and advise of the amended date for the response.

5.3 Formal Complaint - Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the Council's response at Stage 1 you may request that your complaint progresses to Stage 2. You will have 21 days from receipt of the outcome letter to notify the Chief Officer of this. At Stage 2 the Mayor will arrange for a further independent investigation. The Mayor will acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days and provide a full written response within a further 15 working days. If more time is needed a letter will be sent giving reasons for the delay and a date by which you can expect the matter to be resolved.

5.4 Submitting your formal complaint

Complaints must be submitted in writing. This includes fax and electronic submissions. However, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you if you have a disability that prevents you from making your complaint in writing. We can also help if English is not your first language. If you need support in completing a complaint form please let us know.

6 Exceptions

The Council does not accept anonymous complaints. The Council does not accept the following type of complaints:-

- Something you knew about more than 12 months before you raised it with the council.
- Requests for information or explanation of council policy or practice.
- Complaint about a council policy.
- Matters for which you already have a right of appeal or you could have gone to a Court, Tribunal or Government Minister.
- Something which affects all or most of the people of Bicester.
- Personnel matters.
- Contracts for the supply of goods and services.

COMPLAINT FORM

Bicester Town Council hopes that the services you receive are of the quality you expect. However, there may be times when you feel unhappy with the service you receive. The more information you can provide, the easier it will be for us to investigate your complaint efficiently and effectively.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

STAGE 1/STAGE 2* *(Delete as applicable)*

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

(Data Protection Act 1998 - We will use your contact details to process your request and for administration and statistical purposes. We will only pass your contact details to a third party if it is legal and necessary to do so.)

Your Full Name	Your Correspondence Address
Your email Address	Your Contact Phone Number (s)

DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT

Please include as much information as you can, including the names of Council Officers you have been in contact with (if known) and relevant dates, events, location etc.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Please tell us what you would like us to do to rectify the issue(s) set out in your complaint.

Date of submission:

Your Signature:

**Please send your completed form to:
Mrs. Sue Mackrell, Chief Officer, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, BICESTER,
OXON OX26 6PS
email: enquiries@bicester.gov.uk**