

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Woodley Town Council is committed to providing the best possible services in a courteous manner but we know there will be occasions when things go wrong. To help us improve our services we welcome feedback from our customers, and complaints can help us put matters right.

## DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

An expression of dissatisfaction by a customer about:

- the way we did something; or
- not doing something we should have done; or
- doing something we should not have done

## WHO CAN COMPLAIN

Anyone who –

- lives in Woodley
- receives or asks for a service from the Council

This includes people acting for someone else, such as parents for their children.

## INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLAINTS

The Council will display leaflets in the Town Council Offices and Leisure Centres, which will make clear to whom complaints should be addressed, the process, and who has overall responsibility for making sure that complaints are resolved.

## HOW COMPLAINTS CAN BE MADE:

It is important to make the process for the customer as simple and clear as possible. Each member of staff should be able to take details of a customer's complaint, give an appropriate response and ensure that it is progressed. Complaints can be made in person, by telephone, in writing or by e-mail.

## RECORDING A COMPLAINT

For complaints which are taken verbally - face to face or by telephone - the details can be recorded on the complaint record form by the member of staff taking the complaint, as well as the action taken and response given to the customer.

The complaint record form is also used for written complaints, which can be made by letter, email, or by using the suggestions/complaint leaflets or suggestions cards available at the leisure centres. The written complaint should be attached to the complaints form and details of the response and action taken recorded as above.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### STAGE ONE:

- Once a complaint has been received a letter of response should be sent within 7 working days. This will normally be from the appropriate Service Manager. If a full response is not possible within this time, the letter should confirm receipt of the complaint and explain what will happen next. The letter should include details of the person dealing with the complaint and how long it will take to respond. A full response should take no longer than 15 working days.

- If the complaint is dealt with satisfactorily at the first stage, the issue will be reviewed to see if any lessons can be learned, and to ensure that a similar situation does not arise. If procedures need to be changed or other alterations made to services, the person making the complaint will be informed.
- If the customer is not satisfied the complaint should progress to the second stage and be referred to the Town Clerk for investigation.

### **STAGE TWO:**

- The Town Clerk will investigate the complaint and will write to the customer within 7 working days of receiving the stage two complaint. The letter will tell the customer what will happen next and how long it will take to provide a full response, if it is not possible to do so at this stage. This should take no longer than 15 working days.
- At this stage the investigation will include a review of the original issue raised and also the stage one process of the investigation to resolve the complaint.
- If the customer is satisfied at this stage he or she will be informed of any lessons learned from the investigation or changes in procedures adopted.

### **MONITORING COMPLAINTS**

The Town Clerk will be the officer responsible for monitoring complaints, and providing information to the Council about the numbers and types of complaints received as well as the outcomes.

All complaints with related correspondence will be held at the Council offices at the Oakwood Centre.

### **Please note:**

Any complaint regarding a Councillor failing to follow the Council's Members Code of Conduct will not be dealt with by this procedure and should be made and addressed to the Standards Committee, Wokingham Borough Council, Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN.

If a complaint is about a member of staff's conduct the matter will be dealt with through the council's disciplinary procedure. A complaint of this nature should be addressed to the Town Clerk.