



**STREET PARISH COUNCIL**  
**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR USE IN COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COUNCIL**

Adopted on: 23 July 2024

Next Review: Annual Council Meeting May 2025

The following procedure has been adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration.

This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Parish Council. Such complaints should be made through Somerset Council.

A complaint against the Council that involves a complaint about the conduct of its employees will be handled in accordance with the Council's complaints procedure. If following the outcome of the complaint, the Council decides that there may be a need to take disciplinary action, this will be in accordance with its internal disciplinary procedure.

Street Parish Council is committed to providing a high quality service and welcomes feedback from its community. Complaints are viewed as a valuable source of information to enable the Council to develop and improve its services. Wherever possible the Council will strive to resolve a complaint informally, through usual channels of communication, rather than deferring to the Council's formal complaints procedure outlined below.

No aspect of the Council's complaints procedure will discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

**When is the Council's complaints procedure not appropriate?**

<b>Type of conduct</b>	<b>Refer to</b>
Alleged financial irregularity	Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council's audit of accounts (s.27 (1) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014).
Alleged criminal activity	The police.
Members' conduct alleged to breach the code of conduct adopted by the Council	Somerset Council is responsible for handling complaints that relate to a member's failure to comply with the Council's code of conduct

## **Formal Complaints procedure**

### **Stage 1**

Any formal complaint must be submitted in writing to the Clerk of the Parish Council at [street.parish@street-pc.gov.uk](mailto:street.parish@street-pc.gov.uk). If the complaint concerns the Clerk the communication should be addressed to the Chair of Street Parish Council and sent to Street Parish Council, 6 Leigh Road, Street, Somerset, BA16 0HA.

All formal written complaints must contain the following information:

- i. details of the complaint, including relevant events, dates, names of relevant members, staff, or contractors of the Council;
- ii. whether this is the first complaint raised on the specific matter;
- iii. contact details of the complainant - to enable the complainant to be informed of the progress of the complaint;
- iv. if the complainant wishes the complaint to be treated confidentially or waives their right to confidentiality - note that the Council at all times will comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.

### **Receipt of the complaint**

The Clerk (or other nominated officer), or if the complaint concerns the Clerk - the chair of the Council, shall within 10 working days acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant of who is dealing with the complaint and give a timeframe for investigating and determining the complaint and when the outcome is likely to be communicated to the complainant. The Council aims to resolve all complaints within a 12-week period. The Council will keep the complainant informed if the investigation needs to take longer or be dealt with in a different way.

### **Investigating the complaint**

Complaints about the Council's administration and procedures should be made to the Clerk to the Council, and will be dealt with initially by the Clerk. If the complainant is unwilling to approach the Clerk a complaint may be made to the Chair of Council who will refer the complaint either to the Clerk or to a specific panel set up to investigate the complaint. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded automatically.

The complainant will have an opportunity to attend a meeting to make verbal representations about their complaint and bring with them a representative if they wish. The complainant should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk (or other nominated officer) or by Members if a panel has been established. The Clerk (or other nominated officer), or Panel Members will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant.

### **After the complaint has been decided**

The complainant will be informed in writing whether the complaint has been upheld and reasons for the decision together with details of any action to be taken by the Council if this is appropriate. The complainant will be notified of their right to appeal the decision.

### **Stage 2 - Appeal outcome of complaint.**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, upon written request to the Council, the complaint will be passed to an Appeals Panel which will consist of Members who have not been involved in the complaint at stage 1. The Appeals Panel will check that everything has been investigated and review the evidence and decide whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint.

This is the final stage in the process. The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction in respect of parish and town councils except where the council is working jointly with a principal council through a joint committee or is carrying out a function of a principal council.