

## **REIGHTON AND SPEETON PARISH COUNCIL** **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Aim of the Complaints Procedure**

The Council aims to learn from complaints and, where they are found to be justified, to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to improve services. It will:

- ensure that anyone who wishes to make a complaint know how to go about it;
- respond to a complaint efficiently and within a reasonable time;
- ensure that service users are satisfied that the complaint has been taken seriously and where possible, reasonable measures have been taken to improve services.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence, and the name of the complainant will not be revealed by the Parish Council, except where it is the wish of the complainant, or necessary to deal with the complaint.

### **What is a Complaint**

The Parish Council will investigate a complaint from a person, or their nominated representative, if it is one of the following:

- An expression of dissatisfaction about the failure to provide or meet the expected standard of a service.
- Neglect or delay in responding to a contact with the Council.
- Failure to observe the Parish council's policies or procedures.
- Discourteous or dishonest conduct by a member of the staffing.
- Harassment, bias or discrimination.

### **The Complaints Procedure does not cover:**

- Complaints about the conduct of councillors. These should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at North Yorkshire Council
- Where a person wishes to disagree with a Council's decision or policy or makes a request under the freedom of Information Act, whereby there are alternative processes for representation in place.
- Anonymous complaints.
- Vexatious person who have been previously informed not to have any further contact with the council.

### **To make a Complaints**

A formal written letter of complaint must be sent to the Clerk, if the complaint involves the Clerk, the letter should be sent to the Chairman of the Parish Council. Any complaint relating to members of staff will be dealt with through the Staffing committee.

### **Complaint handling**

Within five working days of receipt of the complaint (there may be a time delay should the Clerk be on annual or sick leave), the Clerk/Chairman will give written acknowledgment of it.

For non-staffing complaint, the complaint will be considered at the next meeting of the Council. If more than twenty one days is to lapse between receipt of the complaint and the next meeting of the Council, the Chairman will convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council to receive and hear the complaint.

Should the complaint be deemed "sensitive" the Parish Council can resolve to exclude members of the Public and Press.

The Council may appoint an independent person to the meeting if it resolves to do so, as an independent impartial arbitrator.

After the meeting, the Clerk will write to the complainant explaining the outcome of the Council's consideration of the complaint and explaining how to take matters further if they believe this is necessary.

If the complainant wishes to pursue the matter, he/she must notify the Council in writing with his/her reasons for wanting to do so.

Notice of the Parish Council meeting with the complaint itemized, will be advertised in the usual way to members, a summons and with three clear days notice. An agenda will also be displayed in the usual way.

Complainants will be asked by formal letter to attend the meeting and will be informed that they may be accompanied by another person.

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman will explain how the meeting will proceed. Complainants will be asked to provide any new information or supporting evidence to the Council and will be invited to make a verbal representation to the members.

Members of the Parish Council will be invited by the Chairman to ask questions of the complainant. The Chairman of the meeting and then the complainant will summarise their respective positions. The complainant will then leave the meeting if under section B of the agenda and the Council will consider the further findings.

The complainant will be informed by formal letter of the conclusions of the process within seven working days of the meeting.

The Chairman will report the outcome of the process to the next meeting of the Parish Council.