



## **Horwich Town Council – Our Complaints Procedure**

### **1. Introduction**

The Town Council aims to provide the best possible service to the people and organisations that make up the community of Horwich. If you have been in contact with the Town Council but you feel that your particular query has not been given proper attention or has been mishandled then please let us know. We acknowledge that it will not be possible to satisfy everybody but your complaint will be dealt with properly and our response will be helpful, positive and efficient.

This procedure outlines the aims of the Town Council in dealing with complaints sets out what you can expect when making a complaint to us.

### **2. Our Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is a way of letting the Town Council know that you are not happy with a particular aspect of its service. A complaint may be about delay, lack of response, discourtesy or about the standard of service you have received.

### **3. How can you complain?**

- By email to [townclerk@horwich.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@horwich.gov.uk)
- By calling us on 01204 691090
- By letter to either the Town Clerk or confidentially the Chair of Council, at Horwich Town Council, Room 1, Horwich Community Centre, Beaumont Road, Horwich, Bolton BL6 7BG

All complaints are dealt with in the strictest of confidence and any information we hold fully complies with our Information Security Policy.

### **4. Anonymous Complaints**

Please be assured that we treat all complaints to the Town Council in strictest confidence and that it is your right to complain. If you do not provide us with a name and address we will still investigate your complaint but it will not be possible for us to get back to you with the outcome of the investigation.

### **5. If you find it difficult to complain yourself**

You may wish to ask someone to help you in making a complaint. This could be a friend, relative, someone you trust, however in these cases you must supply written consent to this person having access to any of your personal information.

## **6. How we aim to deal with your complaint**

Your complaint will be dealt with properly by means of our Complaints Procedure which is regularly reviewed and monitored.

## **7. The Complaints Procedure**

The procedure is a three stage process. If the complaint relates to the Town Clerk then it will be dealt with by the Chair of the Council.

### **Stage 1 – Informal**

The Town Clerk will try to resolve any concern you may have quickly and informally without you having to make a formal complaint. If we cannot resolve your concern quickly and if you wish it at any stage we will record your concern as a formal complaint (Stage 2)

### **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint**

Your complaint will be acknowledged by the Town Clerk within 5 working days of receipt and will provide details of the time scale for replying to your complaint. The Town Clerk will advise you when the matter is to be considered by a committee established for the purpose of hearing complaints. If we are unable to reply to your complaint within 10 working days i.e. if the complaint is very complex, we will let you know the progress we have made in the investigation of your complaint and when you can expect to receive a final response. Complaints made to our email address or via our website will be acknowledged within 2 working days. The complaint will then be investigated and responded to within 10 working days by email unless you request otherwise.

### **Stage 3 – Appeal**

If you are unhappy with the response that you have been provided with under Stage 2 of the procedure you may ask the Chairperson of the Town Council to review how your complaint was handled within 28 days.

## **8. Unreasonable persistent complaints**

Where the Council considers a complaint to be deliberately repetitious or vexatious we may at any stage of the Complaints Procedure review a complaint and give a decision without a formal investigation. You will be informed in writing of this.

Again if a complaint is substantially the same complaint as has been made by the same complainant within the previous six months the Council may chose not to investigate. You will be informed in writing of this.

## **9. Misconduct by Town Council Staff**

Any complaint relating to the misconduct of staff may be investigated using the Town Council's Staff Disciplinary Procedure. If this is the case your complaint will be progressed and we will advise you that an investigation is being undertaken.

(December 2014)

