



Lawley & Overdale Parish Council is committed to providing high quality services on behalf of all who live in or visit the area. One of the ways in which the council can continue to improve its services is by listening and responding positively to any comments or complaints that are received and by putting right mistakes.

The Council has adopted a standard procedure to provide a transparent, fair and confidential process for dealing with complaints made about the administration of the council or its procedures.

What is a Complaint?

The complaint may fall into different categories: -

- The attitude of an employee of the council
- Failure to provide service to an acceptable standard
- Delay in responding to an enquiry or a request for service
- Failure to follow the Council's policies, rules or procedures
- Not making the best use of Council's resources
- A risk concerning health and safety issues

Complaints against Parish Councillors should be sent to the Monitoring Officer, Telford & Wrekin Council. Write to the Monitoring Officer, Telford & Wrekin Council, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT or alternatively by e-mail to jonathan.eatough@telford.gov.uk

What is Not a Complaint?

- The first request for action or a service
- A review request under the Freedom of Information or where a formal statutory process already exists
- A claim or contractual dispute with the Council

How Can Complaints be Made?

The Council encourages anybody who has a concern first to speak to a member of staff. If the problem can be solved in this way then there is no need for the issue to go through the formal process. However, if the complaint cannot be dealt with immediately or you wish to have a formal response then the complaint should be put in writing. This helps us to be clear about the problem and also allows us to keep a record of all the points raised. All comments by letter or email should be addressed to: -

The Clerk
Lawley & Overdale Parish Council
Leonard Smith House
Unit 2 West Centre Way
Lawley Telford TF3 5HT
clerk@lawleyoverdale.org.uk

When Can a Complaint be Made?

It is far easier to find out what happened and to put things right if a complaint is received close to the time that the problem occurred. As time passes it becomes more difficult to investigate events fully and fairly. Therefore the Council will normally only accept complaints made within twelve months of the incident or circumstances that led to the complaint being made.

Complaint Procedures

On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk will carry out an investigation and respond to the complainant within 10 working days.

We hope that the complaint will be resolved to everybody's satisfaction. However, if you are dissatisfied with the Clerk's findings and you wish to escalate the complaint to the next stage you should reply in writing within 20 days explaining why you are not satisfied and address your correspondence to the Chair of Lawley & Overdale Parish Council.

The Chair will carry out a further investigation and will give a written response within 10 working days. Should you still remain dissatisfied you have the right to have the complaint referred to a Complaints Panel, consisting of 3 Parish Councillors and will be offered the opportunity to present your case to the Panel. If the result is still not to your satisfaction other options are: -

- To contact your local Borough Councillor who can give advice or who may be able to handle the complaint on your behalf
- The Local Government Ombudsman acts as an independent referee in disputes between individuals and their local councils. The ombudsman is an independent national service that investigates complaints against councils. It can only deal with cases of possible maladministration and in general will only investigate a complaint after you have been through the Council's complaints procedure. For this reason it is helpful to keep copies of all correspondence regarding your complaint

Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints

There may be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to proceed when there is clearly no reasonable basis to do so, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response. The Council may decide that no further action can be taken and inform the complainant so, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may be dismissed at the discretion of the council according to the type and seriousness of the allegation. Complainant Rights Complainants have the right; -

- To be treated with courtesy and respect at all times - To have a friend or other representative help them with their complaint (a letter of authority may be required)
- To confidentiality (if an investigation cannot proceed without the complainant being identified they will be given the option whether or not to continue)
- To be kept informed of the progress of their complaints
- To receive an apology if the complaint is upheld
- To be informed of any changes to Council policy or procedures arising from a complaint.

Adopted at Council Meeting SEPTEMBER 2017

Chairman J Greenaway