Great Coates Village Council
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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

To determine whether a complaint procedure is appropriate:

1. It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under a complaints procedure. The Council will need to refer or use procedures / bodies in respect of the following types of complaint:

Type of conduct	Refer to
Financial irregularity	Local electors' statutory right to object Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, the Councils may need to consult their appointed auditor or the Audit Commission.
Criminal activity	The Police
Member conduct	A complaint relating to a member's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer at North East Lincolnshire Council
Employee conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure

2. A member of the public may also consider a criticism about a service (e.g. an untidy park area) to be a complaint, but these do not fall within the formal complaints procedure unless the Council has acted improperly and should be treated as normal service requests.

Prior to a meeting where any complaint is to be heard

3. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk. The Village Council shall provide reasonable assistance to the complainant, to accurately record the complaint, where the complainant cannot or has difficulty in setting out a written complaint.

4. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Village Clerk, he or she will be advised to address it to the Chairman of the Council.

5. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way (if, for example, the complaint is to be heard by a committee).

6. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting. The Council shall provide reasonable assistance to the complainant in accessing any written documentation or materials.

At the Meeting

7. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.

8. The Chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

9. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk and then (ii), Members.

10. The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), Members.

11. The Clerk, and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

12. The Clerk and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, *both* parties shall be invited back.

13. The Clerk and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting

14. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days, together with details of any action to be taken.