

Approved & adopted on: 20/07/2026

1. Aim of the Complaints Procedure

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 The Council will:
- ensure that anyone who wishes to make a complaint knows 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.

2. What is a Complaint

- 2.1 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 of the Council to provide or meet the expected standard of a service.
 - Neglect or delay in responding to a contact with the Council.
 - Failure of the Council to observe its own policies or procedures.
 - Discourteous or dishonest conduct by a member of staff.
 - Harassment, bias or discrimination by a member of staff.
- 2.2 **The Complaints Procedure does not cover:**
- Matters that fall under the responsibility of other authorities or public bodies, including the principal authority, NHS, police, schools, highways, planning, housing, and social care.
 - Complaints about the conduct of Councillors, which must be referred to the Monitoring Officer at North Yorkshire Council.
 - Employment matters relating to council staff, which are dealt with under internal HR procedures.
 - Requests for information, service requests, or reports of faults.
 - Matters where there is a separate statutory or legal process, including FOI/EIR appeals, data protection issues, planning appeals, and standards complaints.
 - Disagreement with decisions lawfully taken by the Council.
 - Anonymous, vexatious, malicious, abusive, or repeated complaints.

- Issues subject to legal proceedings, insurance claims, or police investigation.
- Complaints submitted via social media or other unofficial channels.
- Anonymous complaints.

3. To make a Complaint

- 3.1 A formal written letter of complaint must be sent to the Clerk, by email, post or hand delivered. If the complaint involves the Clerk, the letter should be sent to the Chair of the Council and progress to Stage 2.

Complaints must include sufficient detail to allow investigation.

4. Stage 1 – Information Resolution

- 4.1 **Delegated Authority:** The Clerk has delegated authority to investigate and respond to Stage One complaints, at their discretion. Where appropriate, the Clerk may nominate a Councillor to assist. Alternatively, the Clerk will appoint a Councillor to act in their place.
- 4.2 **Acknowledgement:** The complaint will be acknowledged within seven working days.
- 4.3 **Investigation and Response:** The Council aims to provide a written response within 10 working days. Where further investigation is required, the Clerk or Chair may extend this timescale and will notify the complainant accordingly.
- 4.4 **Outcome:** The complainant will receive a written response setting out:
- The findings
 - Any action the Council proposes to take, if appropriate
 - Information on how to escalate the matter to Stage Two if they remain dissatisfied

5. Stage 2A – Council Meeting

- 5.1 **Request:** If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage One outcome, they may request escalation to Stage Two. This must be done in writing, stating the reasons for dissatisfaction.
- 5.2 **Route:** Upon receiving the request, the Chair will determine the most appropriate route for Stage Two. The Chair may either:
- refer the complaint directly to the Complaints Committee (Stage 2B) for expedited consideration, or
 - place the complaint on the agenda for the next suitable Council meeting (Stage 2A).

This decision will be based on the nature, complexity, and urgency of the complaint.

- 5.3 **Council Meeting:** The complaint will be placed on the agenda for the next suitable Council meeting. The Council may resolve to exclude the press and public if confidentiality is requested or appropriate.
- 5.4 **Consideration:** At the meeting, the Council will decide whether it is to deal with the complaint or refer it to a committee. The agenda shall also include the appointment of three members to a committee with delegated power to continue handling the complaint (if no conclusion is reached by the Council). The committee will have full delegated power to bring the complaint to a conclusion. The Council will also resolve which member will be the Chair of the Committee.
- 5.5 **Outcome:** After the meeting, the Clerk or Chair will write to the complainant explaining the outcome of the Council's consideration of the complaint. There is no further right of appeal.

6 . Stage 2B – Complaints Committee

- 5.8 **Notice:** If the complaint is being progressed to Committee, notice of the meeting will be advertised in the usual way to members of the committee, i.e. a summons and with three clear days' notice. A public notice will also be displayed in the usual way, i.e. posted in a conspicuous place in the parish and giving three clear days' notice.
- 5.9 **Notification:** Complainants will be asked by formal letter by email, post or hand delivered letter to inform them of the committee meeting.
- 5.10 **Proceedings:** At the commencement of the meeting, the Committee Chair will explain how the meeting will proceed.
- 5.11 **Any further information:** Complainants (if in attendance) will be asked to provide any new information or supporting evidence to the committee and will be invited to make a verbal representation to the meeting.
- 5.12 **Questions by the Committee:** Members of the committee will be invited by the Chair to ask questions of the complainant.
- 5.13 **Summary:** The Chair of the Complaints Committee and then the complainant will summarise their respective positions.
- 5.14 The complainant will then leave the meeting, and the committee will consider the further findings.
- 5.15 **Outcome:** The complainant will be informed by formal letter of the conclusions of the process within ten working days of the committee meeting.

- 5.16 The committee Chair will report the outcome of the process to the next meeting of the Council.
- 5.17 Minutes of the committee meeting will be kept and will be available to all parties involved in the complaint.
- 5.18 Following this process the matter will be closed and there will be no further opportunity for appeal.

Appendix A: Flow diagram

START

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Complaint submitted in writing

(to Clerk, or to Chair if complaint concerns Clerk)

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Stage 1 – Initial Resolution (Clerk / Chair)

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|—► Acknowledge within 7 working days

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|—► Investigate and respond within 10 working days

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(or notify if more time is required)

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Written outcome issued to complainant

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|—► If satisfied → END

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|—► If dissatisfied → Request Stage 2 escalation

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Stage 2A – Council Meeting

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└─► Complaint added to agenda

└─► Council considers complaint

└─► Council may:

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- Decide outcome, OR

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- Refer to Complaints Committee



Outcome letter issued

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└─► If Council concludes matter → END

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└─► If referred → Stage 2B

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Stage 2B – Complaints Committee

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└─► Meeting convened with 3 clear days' notice

└─► Complainant invited to attend (may bring companion)

└─► Committee hears representations and evidence

└─► Committee deliberates and decides outcome

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Written decision issued within 10 working days

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Committee reports outcome to next Council meeting

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END (No further right of appeal)

Version Control		
	Date	Comments
Adopted	20/07/2026	By Full Council
Reviewed		