

North Marston Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

(Adopted at the Council meeting held on 9 May 2017; updated 9 September 2025)

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out how North Marston Parish Council will deal with complaints about its administration, services, or procedures.

Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council or the relevant Committee for consideration.

2. Scope

- This procedure covers complaints about the Council's administration, services, or staff conduct in a professional capacity.
 - It does **not** cover complaints about the personal conduct of an elected Member (Councillor). Such complaints should be made directly to the **Monitoring Officer** at Buckinghamshire Council under the Members' Code of Conduct.
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3. Recording a Complaint

- If a complaint is made orally to the Clerk, or to a Councillor, a written record will be created noting:
 - the complainant's name and contact details
 - the nature of the complaint
 - Personal data will be processed in accordance with the Council's **Privacy Notice** and the UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018.
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4. Submitting a Complaint

- Complainants are encouraged to put their complaint in writing to:

The Clerk to the Council

Email: northmarston@gmail.com

- Complaints will normally be acknowledged and dealt with within **14 days** of receipt.
- Refusal to put a complaint in writing does not prevent it being investigated, but written complaints are easier to manage.

5. If the Complaint Concerns the Clerk

If the complaint relates to the Clerk, it should be addressed in writing to the **Chair of the Council**. The Chair will handle the complaint or nominate another Councillor.

6. Initial Handling

(a) On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk (unless it concerns the Clerk) or the Chair (if it concerns the Clerk) will attempt to resolve the matter directly with the complainant.

- The person complained about will be informed and given an opportunity to comment before a resolution is reached.

(b) Where a written complaint concerns the Clerk's actions, it will be referred to the Chair of the Council. The Clerk will be formally advised of the matter and allowed to comment.

7. Reporting to the Council

Any complaint resolved directly with the complainant will be reported to the next meeting of the Council.

8. Unresolved Complaints

If the complaint cannot be resolved, it will be reported to the next Council meeting.

- The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date of the meeting.
 - The complainant may, if they wish, attend the meeting to explain their complaint orally.
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9. Employment-Related Matters

Matters relating to grievance or disciplinary proceedings will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's separate **Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures**.

10. Confidentiality

The Council may consider whether a complaint should be heard in the absence of the press and public under s.1(2) Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960. Any decision on the complaint will, however, be announced at the Council meeting in public.

11. Remedies

The Council may consider, on legal and auditor's advice, whether to offer an ex-gratia payment or other reasonable remedy to a person who has suffered loss as a result of maladministration. Any such payment must be authorised by resolution of the Council.

12. Notification of Decision

As soon as possible after the decision has been made — and no later than **10 working days** after the meeting — the complainant will be notified in writing of:

- the Council's decision
 - any action to be taken
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13. Deferral

The Council may defer consideration of a complaint if it considers further information or advice is necessary. The matter will then be considered at the next meeting after the advice is received.

14. Appeals

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the Council's decision, they may be advised of any external body to which they can appeal, such as the **Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman** (for administrative issues) or the **Monitoring Officer** (for conduct issues).

Date approved: September 2025

Date of review: May 2026