



Denbigh Town Council



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Adopted: 29.06.2026

Review Date: June 2028

Responsible Officer: Clerk to the Council

1. Purpose

Denbigh Town Council is committed to providing high-quality services, acting fairly, and maintaining public confidence in local government.

This policy provides a clear process for dealing with complaints from members of the public about the administration, procedures, services, or actions of the Council and its employees.

The Council will:

- Treat complaints seriously.
- Deal with complaints fairly and consistently.
- Respond promptly.
- Learn from complaints and improve services where appropriate.
- Comply with relevant legislation and guidance.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is:

An expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's administration, procedures, services, decisions, actions, or failure to act, where a response is reasonably expected.

A complaint may be made verbally, in writing, by email, or through any reasonable communication method.

3. What This Policy Covers

This policy applies to complaints about:

- Administrative procedures.
- Service delivery.
- Staff conduct (excluding employment matters).
- Failure to follow Council policies.

- Communication failures.
- Delays or unreasonable actions.
- Decisions made by the Council where a complaint about process is being raised.

4. What This Policy Does Not Cover

This policy does not cover:

4.1 Complaints About Councillors

Complaints alleging a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct must be referred to:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

The Council has no authority to determine Code of Conduct complaints against councillors.

4.2 Employment Matters

Complaints by employees relating to:

- Pay
- Discipline
- Grievances
- Bullying or harassment
- Terms and conditions

will be dealt with through the Council's employment procedures.

4.3 Freedom of Information Requests

Requests for information are dealt with under:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004

4.4 Data Protection Matters

Complaints regarding personal data will be handled under:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018

Individuals may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

4.5 Complaints About Decisions Properly Made

The Council cannot overturn a decision simply because someone disagrees with it where:

- The decision was lawful.
- The correct procedure was followed.
- The Council acted within its powers.

5. Principles

The Council will:

- Be accessible and transparent.
- Treat complainants with courtesy and respect.
- Keep complainants informed.
- Protect confidentiality where appropriate.
- Comply with equality legislation.
- Maintain accurate records.

The Council expects complainants to behave respectfully towards councillors, staff and volunteers.

Abusive, threatening, discriminatory or vexatious behaviour will not be tolerated.

6. Informal Resolution

Most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

The Council encourages complainants to:

- Raise concerns with the Clerk in the first instance.
- Allow the Council an opportunity to explain or rectify the matter.

Where appropriate, an apology, explanation or corrective action may resolve the issue.

7. Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Formal Complaint

Complaints should normally be submitted:

By email: townclerk@denbightowncouncil.gov.uk

By post:

Town Clerk
Jo Davies
Denbigh Town Council,
Denbigh Town Hall,
Crown Lane
Denbigh
LL163TB

The complaint should include:

- Name and contact details.
- Details of the complaint.
- Relevant dates.
- Any supporting evidence.
- Desired outcome.

Anonymous complaints will normally not be investigated unless there is a compelling public interest.

Acknowledgement

The Council will acknowledge receipt within:

5 working days

Investigation

The Clerk (or nominated officer) will:

- Investigate the complaint.
- Gather relevant evidence.
- Speak with relevant individuals where necessary.
- Consider whether any remedy is appropriate.

A written response will normally be provided within:

20 working days

Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the reason and expected completion date.

8. Stage 2 – Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a review within:

20 working days of receiving the Stage 1 response.

The request must explain:

- Why the complainant believes the matter has not been properly addressed.
- Any additional information.

Review Panel

The review will normally be undertaken by:

- The Council Chair and two councillors not previously involved; or
- A committee delegated by the Council.

The review panel will consider:

- Whether the complaint was properly investigated.
- Whether procedures were followed.
- Whether the outcome was reasonable.

The review decision will normally be issued within:

20 working days

The review decision is the Council's final internal stage.

9. Referral to External Bodies

Where appropriate, complainants may refer matters to external organisations.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Ombudsman may consider complaints about maladministration or service failure after the Council's internal procedure has been completed.

Information Commissioner's Office

For data protection or information rights complaints.

Audit Wales

For concerns regarding financial governance where applicable.

The Council will provide contact details upon request.

10. Complaints About the Clerk

Where a complaint concerns the Clerk:

- The complaint should be submitted to the Chair of the Council.
- The Chair will determine the appropriate investigation arrangements.

Where the complaint concerns employment issues, the Council's employment procedures shall apply.

11. Complaints About the Chair

Where a complaint concerns the Chair:

- The complaint should be submitted to the Vice-Chair or Clerk.
- The matter will be referred to an appropriate independent review process within the Council.

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

The Council will process personal information in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018

Information will only be shared where necessary for investigating and resolving the complaint.

Complaint records will be retained in accordance with the Council's retention schedule.

13. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

The Council recognises the right to complain.

However, the Council may restrict contact where a complainant:

- Uses abusive language.
- Makes threats.
- Repeatedly raises the same matter after exhaustion of procedures.
- Makes unreasonable demands.
- Pursues complaints in a manner that places disproportionate demands on Council resources.

Any such decision will be reasonable, proportionate, and recorded.

14. Equality and Accessibility

The Council will make reasonable adjustments for individuals who:

- Have disabilities.
- Require translation services.
- Require information in alternative formats.
- Wish to communicate in Welsh or English.

The Council will treat Welsh and English equally in accordance with its Welsh Language obligations.

15. Monitoring and Learning

The Clerk will maintain a complaints register recording:

- Date received.
- Nature of complaint.
- Outcome.
- Lessons learned.

The Council will review complaint trends periodically to improve services and governance.

16. Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed every two years, or sooner if:

- Legislation changes.
- Guidance from One Voice Wales, PSOW, ICO or Welsh Government changes.
- The Council identifies a need for amendment.