

'Council website information on: Corporate Complaints Procedure'

We aim to provide all our customers with a good, prompt and courteous service. However there maybe times when things go wrong and you do not feel that you have received the service you expected or required. We want to know when this happens so that we can do our best to put things right. In order to do this we have a standard complaints procedure. Our complaints procedure is designed to make sure:

- It is easy for you to make your complaint
- It gets to the right person
- It is dealt with promptly
- If something is wrong, it gets put right

There are a number of ways you can make your complaint

- You can write to us South Hams District Council, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, TQ9 5NE
- You can come into the Council's reception and complete a form
- You can telephone us: 01823 861234
- You can email us: complaints@southhams.gov.uk
- You can download the complaints form

Is it a complaint?

You need to make it clear that you are making a complaint and not just passing on information or making a comment. The Complaints procedure will only cover certain complaints- see list below of what we will and those we cannot investigate under the procedure.

Is it an enquiry or general feedback?

If you want to contact us regarding an enquiry or with general feedback please visit, email or write in and clearly state that you are passing on information or making a comment.

How to provide information on your complaint:

You can (i) print a complaints form off the Councils website, (ii) write a letter, (iii) visit us in reception or (iv) telephone us. You will need to supply your name, address and telephone number so that we can reply to you.

You will need to provide details of your complaint (see information describing what is and is not covered by the Corporate Complaints Procedure).

We have a policy for recording, monitoring and investigating racist incidents. If you feel your complaint means that you are receiving a different level of service based on your race, or that you are the victim of a racist incident, please tick the box on the form or say so in your complaint.

We also record basic details about the person making the complaint to ensure that our complaints system is applied equally. You will find a tear off panel on the complaints form you fill in.

What we will do:

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and provide a response in 10 working days or let you know if it will take longer to investigate.

How does the complaint process work?

Stage 1: An Officer from the relevant service will respond to your complaint, this will also be looked at and signed off by the Head of Service. They will try to resolve your complaint by providing relevant information or by taking appropriate action.

Stage 2: If you are unhappy with the department's response please contact the Head of Service who will investigate whether an independent review needs to take place or confirm the Councils first response in stage 1 is still accurate and appropriate. The Strategic Director will also look at the response and sign the letter to confirm response.

Stage 2 is the final stage of the internal complaints procedure. If you remain unhappy with the response you are entitled to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman:

Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks
No. 2 Westwood Way
Westwood Business park
Coventry CV4 8JB
Contact Number: **02476 820 000**
Advice Line: **0845 0788181**
Web: www.lgo.org.uk

What we INVESTIGATE:

- (a) Failure to follow the Councils: procedures, policies, systems or rules
- (b) Delays in providing any Council service
- (c) Failing to provide any Council service
- (d) Failing to meet published or advertised Council service standards
- (e) Failing to meet statutory obligations
- (f) Complaints against employees– attitudes and/or actions (either by employees or members of the public. Including racist incidents- **but** extreme racial incidents to be reported to Police)
- (g) Failing to provide all relevant information when required to inform a decision

What is NOT covered by the Complaints Procedure?

- (a) If you wish to appeal against a **decision** which has been made about **(i)** Planning Application then you should contact the Planning Inspectorate. Please note that apart from limited legal challenges only

the person(s) who has/have actually made the application has the right to appeal against a decision. All representations from interested parties are taken into account before the decision is made.

The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square, Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Tel: 0177 3726372

Email: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.gsi.gov.uk

(ii) If you wish to appeal against a **decision** which has been made about a Benefits Application you should contact the Revenue and Benefits Service to make an appeal. There is a separate process for this

- (b) If you are complaining with a view to claiming compensation because of something the Council has not done, e.g. motor accidents, slip/trip injuries, you should contact Support Service- Finance who deal with insurance claims
- (c) If you are a tenant of a Council owned property and wish to make a claim for physical damage to the property, again you should contact Support Service- Finance
- (d) Complaints about Council Policy
- (e) Initial requests for work to be carried out
- (f) Decisions or actions which are associated with regulatory powers, such as inspections of food premises by Environmental Health
- (g) Complaints where the appeal should be made to a court or tribunal, such as complaints about Council Tax banding. However, if you wish to complain about your Council Tax Banding or the Rateable Value of your business premises in the first instance, then you should contact the Valuation Office Agency. The contact details are:
Plymouth Valuation Office
190 Armada Way
Plymouth, Devon
PL1 1EG
Tel: 01752 614100
Fax: 01752 614199
- (h) Complaints about District, Parish or Town Councillors with reference to breaches of their Code of Conduct will need to be referred to the:
Standards Board for England
4th Floor, Griffin House
40 Lever, Street, Manchester, M1 1BB
Web: www.standardsboard.gov.uk

While these are not covered by the Corporate Complaints Procedure, we can still give you advice on what course of action you should take next to resolve the issue. If you require further information please call us on: **01803 861234**.