



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Re-Adopted: 5th May 2026

Review Date: May 2027

1. Introduction

The Parish Council is committed to providing a fair, transparent and accessible process for dealing with complaints.

The Council is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and has therefore adopted this procedure to ensure that complaints are handled properly and consistently.

This procedure applies to complaints about the administration, procedures or actions of the Council and its employees.

Complaints will be handled in accordance with the Council's Data Protection and Information Governance policies.

2. What This Procedure Does Not Cover

This procedure does not apply to:

- Complaints about Parish Councillors, which are dealt with under the Code of Conduct by the Monitoring Officer at Chelmsford City Council
- Complaints by employees, which are dealt with under the Council's Grievance Procedure
- Matters subject to legal proceedings

3. Informal Complaints

The Council will seek to resolve complaints informally wherever possible.

- Informal complaints should be made to the Parish Clerk
- The Clerk will attempt to resolve the issue through discussion and clarification
- Records of informal complaints will be maintained
- If the matter cannot be resolved, or is of a serious nature, it will be escalated to the formal process

4. Formal Complaints

Formal complaints must be made in writing and should include:

- Details of the complaint
- Relevant dates and circumstances
- Any supporting evidence

Stage 1 – Initial Review

- Complaints will be acknowledged within **5 working days**
- The complaint will be considered by the Parish Clerk in consultation with the Chairman (and, where relevant, the Chairman of the appropriate committee)
- The Council will aim to provide a response within **20 working days**

The response will set out:

- The findings of the investigation
- Any action taken or proposed

Stage 2 – Review by Council

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 response:

- The complaint may be referred to Full Council or an appropriate Committee
- The complainant may be invited to address the meeting
- The Council will consider the matter and provide a final response

5. Complaints About Councillors

Complaints about Parish Councillors are dealt with under the adopted Code of Conduct.

Complaints should be made to:

Monitoring Officer

Chelmsford City Council

Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford CM1 1JE

Or via:

<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees-and-decision-making/councillors/complain-about-a-councillor/>

6. Complaints About Employees

- Complaints about employees must be made in writing to the Parish Clerk
- Complaints about the Parish Clerk must be made in writing to the Chairman
- These complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedures
- The complainant will be informed of the outcome, subject to employment confidentiality

7. Complaints About Council Decisions

The Council will not normally reconsider decisions unless:

- There is evidence of a procedural error; or
- Relevant information was not considered at the time of the decision

Complaints will be reviewed in accordance with the stages set out above.

8. Record Keeping

The Council will maintain a record of all complaints, including:

- The nature of the complaint
- Actions taken
- Outcomes

9. Vexatious Complaints

Persistent or vexatious complaints will be managed in accordance with the Council's Vexatious Complaints Policy.

10. Further Action

If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they may wish to seek independent advice or pursue other remedies available to them.

11. Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually.