

Cockermouth Town Council

Complaints Policy & Procedure

Adopted by the Council on 16th July 2025 Minute 070/25

POLICY

Cockermouth Town Council is committed to providing a high level of service to its residents and anyone who deals with the Council. We are committed to conducting our business fairly and equitably. The aim of this policy is to enable investigation of complaints in a timely and impartial manner and seek a solution that satisfies the complainant and the Council. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted, but the complaint will be treated confidentially unless you advise us that you are happy for your identity to be released.

Parish and town councils as corporate bodies are not subject to the jurisdiction of the local government ombudsmen, so there are no provisions for another body to which a complaint can be referred.

A complaint can be made to Cockermouth Town Council by residents or people who are directly affected by the Council's decisions or services. This procedure is for when a person thinks that the actions or lack of action, or the standard of one of the services provided by the Council is unsatisfactory.

PROCEDURE

The following are excluded from this procedure:

- **Financial irregularity.**

Complaints about financial irregularity should be referred to the council's auditors. Their name and address can be obtained from the clerk.

- **Criminal activity.**

Allegations of criminal activity should be referred to the police.

- **Councillor Conduct.**

Complaints about a councillor's conduct should be referred to the Monitoring officer. monitoring.officer@cumberland.gov.uk

Making an initial complaint

If you wish to complain about one of our services, please contact the Town Clerk, Jane Ollerenshaw, in the first instance. You can email the Town Clerk on clerk@cockermouth.org or write to her at Cockermouth Town Council, Town Hall, Market Street, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 9NP.

If, after dealing with Jane, you still have a complaint about a council service or feel that you have been unjustly treated, then you can let Cockermouth Town Council know via our formal complaints procedure.

Making a formal complaint

All formal complaints must be made in writing to the Clerk. If the complaint is

about the Clerk, it must be sent to the Chair of the Staffing Committee by mail or email and marked "Private and Confidential". Complaints circulated to other people or multiple recipients, will be considered vexatious.

The complaint must contain the following:

- Name, address, email address (if applicable) and telephone number of the complainant.
- Details of the complaint.
- How the issue has affected the complainant.
- Copies of any evidence relating to the complaint or photographic evidence.
- Details of any third-party involvement.
- What action the Complainant thinks would resolve the matter.

How your complaint will be handled.

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days.
- We will tell you who is to investigate, how to get in touch with them and when you may expect our response to your complaint.
- We will try to resolve your complaint within 10 working days. If this is not possible, we will tell you when you might expect our formal answer. We will stay in touch with you until we have answered your complaint.
- Your complaint will be investigated in the first instance by The Town Clerk, or the Staffing Committee if the complaint is about the Clerk.
- When we investigate, we may find that Cockermouth Town Council has acted properly. We shall explain the details.
- If we have made a mistake or acted wrongly, we shall tell you. We will try to put matters right and we will work to ensure others do not have the same experience.

Appeal

If you remain dissatisfied you must let us know within three weeks of receiving a response and your complaint will be escalated to Cockermouth Town Council for review and response.

The Council's decision on the matter of the outcome of the complaint shall be final.