



## **Halton Parish Council Complaints Procedure**

### **REVIEW AND AMENDMENT RECORD**

Full council 23 Jan 2024 Adopted

Fiona Richardson 10 Nov 2025 Amendments

### **Summary of Key Changes**

- Replaced Full Council complaint hearings with a Complaints Panel of three impartial councillors.
- Ensured clarity of exclusions (Code of Conduct, employment disputes, criminal allegations, financial irregularities).
- Confirmed timeframes for acknowledgement (5 working days) and response (28 working days).
- Confirmed mutual disclosure of documentation before hearings.
- Added clear procedure for identifying and communicating vexatious complaints.
- Reviewed language for clarity and consistency.

This document incorporates revisions to ensure compliance with SLCC, NALC, and BMKALC best practice guidance.

## INTRODUCTION

Halton Parish Council aims to provide high quality services to the public. However, we recognise that concerns or complaints may arise regarding the council's administration, decisions, or actions. This procedure sets out how members of the public may raise complaints and how they will be processed.

## SCOPE

This procedure applies to complaints about the Council's administration, decisions, or staff conduct relating to official duties.

This complaints procedure does NOT apply to:

- Complaints alleging breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct – referred to Buckinghamshire Council's Monitoring Officer.
- Employment-related complaints between staff and employer – dealt with under internal HR procedures.
- Allegations of criminal activity – referred directly to the Police.
- Allegations of financial fraud or corruption – reported to external auditors or the local authority fraud hotline.
- Anonymous complaints – these will not normally be considered.

## INITIAL COMPLAINT HANDLING

Where possible, complaints should be raised informally first. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Clerk.

If the complaint concerns the Clerk, it should be submitted to the Chair of the Council.

Written complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

## FORMAL COMPLAINTS PANEL PROCEDURE

Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally, a Complaints Panel will be convened. The Panel will consist of three councillors who are not involved in the matter and are not the Chair.

1. The complainant and the Council will exchange any documentation they intend to present at least 7 working days before the hearing.
2. The Panel may meet in private to ensure confidentiality.
3. The complainant will be invited to attend and may be accompanied by a representative.
4. Both the complainant and the Council will have the opportunity to present their case.
5. The Panel will determine the outcome and report its recommendation to Full Council

for ratification.

6. The complainant will be notified of the final decision in writing within 10 working days of ratification.

## **VEXATIOUS OR PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS**

If a complaint is considered vexatious, repetitive, or unreasonable, the Clerk may recommend that no further action be taken. The decision will be confirmed by the Chair (or Vice-Chair if applicable) and communicated in writing to the complainant.

## **REVIEW OF PROCEDURE**

This complaints procedure will be reviewed every two years or sooner if recommended by SLCC, NALC, BMKALC, or legislative change.