

DEVAUDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Devauden Community Council levies a precept on the local government electors in the area, and spends it in the performance of its statutory powers and functions. As a consequence the Council believes it appropriate to provide a means of seeking redress for electors with any complaints regarding its decisions and activities.

The aim of this policy is to provide a means by which a complaint is treated as fairly and expeditiously as possible in an attempt to resolve a complainant's concerns. In this respect a complaint can be defined as: "an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more of the public about the Council's action or about the standard of service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or by a person or body acting on behalf of the Council".

The following however would not be regarded as complaints and therefore dealt with under this policy:

- a. An initial request for a service
- b. Complaints about third parties eg about a community group for which the Council is not responsible
- c. A request for an explanation of a decision
- d. A representation about a major policy decision eg setting the precept Complaints about the conduct of Councillors should always be reported to the Monitoring Officer of Monmouthshire County Council in the first instance, who will then advise the complainant about making a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Procedure:

Once a member of the public forwards a complaint to the Council it will in the first instance be considered by the Clerk to the Council.

The Clerk is to:

- a. Acknowledge the complaint in writing within seven days

b. Attempt to resolve the issue with the complainant within a further seven days

If after these 14 days the Clerk has been unable to resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction he/she should forward the complaint to the Chair of the Council.

At this stage the Clerk should advise the complainant that the matter is being forwarded to the Chair and that he/she has the right to refer their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales if they are dissatisfied with the outcome at this stage.

The Chair of the Council is then to decide whether the complaint should be considered by a panel of councillors or the full Council. However, the complaint should not in any circumstances be considered by a councillor who has had any involvement in the action or decision about which the complaint was raised.

In serious cases any complaint should be fast tracked for consideration by the full Council at the earliest opportunity.

All complainants should be kept fully informed of progress in dealing with their complaint but in any event the Council should aim to resolve and respond formally to the complainant within 28 days of receipt of the complaint from the Clerk.

If there are exceptional circumstances why this timescale cannot be met the complainant is to be advised in writing of the reasons for the delay, and given a timescale in which the Council will be able to resolve the issue.

Unless in exceptional circumstances, the Council will only deal with a complaint under this policy which is brought to them within six months of the date that the event/decision, which is the subject of the complaint, was made.

A record of all complaints will be held by the Clerk and retained for a period of 3 years.

Anyone who has any queries on this policy should contact the Clerk to Devauden Community Council, either via Email clerk@devaudencc.org.uk or Mobile : 07410 272079