Penmaenmawr Town Council

Complaints Procedure

Policy Number PTC - 005

Version V1.0 31st July 2026

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure sets out how Penmaenmawr Town Council will receive, record, investigate and respond to complaints in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy. The Council aims to ensure that Complaints are handled fairly, consistently, proportionately and within reasonable timescales.

2. Informal Resolution

The Council encourages concerns to be raised informally wherever possible.

Step 1 – Raise Concern

A concern may be raised by:

- Speaking to a member of staff
- Speaking to a manager
- Telephone
- Email
- Letter
- Website contact form
- Social media message
- In person

Step 2 – Initial response

The officer receiving the concern will:

- Attempt to resolve the matter immediately where appropriate;
- Refer the matter to the relevant service manager if necessary;
- Record the concern where required; Target

Timescale

Informal concerns should normally be resolved within 10 working days (2 weeks).

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the complainant will be advised of the formal complaints process.

3. Stage 1: Formal Complaint

Step 1 – Submission of Complaint

A formal complaint should include:

- Name and address of the complainant;
- Details of the complaint (as the complainant sees it)

- Relevant dates and locations;
- Any supporting evidence;
- Desired outcome (of complainant).

Step 2 – Acknowledgement

Within 5 working days of receipt:

- The complaint will be acknowledged in writing;
- A reference number will be allocated;
- An investigating officer will be identified;
- Any additional information required will be requested.

Step 3 – Investigation

The investigating officer will:

- Review relevant records;
- Interview staff where necessary;
- Consider policies, procedures and legislation;
- Gather evidence relevant to the complaint;
- Determine whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

Step 4 – Response

A written response will normally be issued within 10 working days of acknowledgement.

Where the investigation cannot be completed within 10 working days, the complainant will be informed:

- Why additional time is required;
- What further actions are being undertaken;
- The revised timescales for response.

Stage 5 – Response

The response will include:

- Summary of complaint;
- Matters investigated;
- Findings;
- Outcome;
- Any corrective action proposed;
- Reasons for the decision;
- Details of the staff to review process.

4. Stage 2 – Complaint Review

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, they may request a review.

Step 1 – Request for Review

The request should:

- Be submitted within 10 working days of the Stage 1 response;
- Clearly explain why the complainant disagrees with the findings or outcome;
- Include any additional evidence that was not previously considered in the initial investigation.

Step 2 – Acknowledgement

The Council will acknowledge the review request within 5 working days.

Step 3 – Review Investigation

The review will be undertaken by:

- The Chief Officer, where they were not involved in Stage 1; or
- Another senior officer not previously involved; or
- The Policy and Resources Committee or panel where necessary.

The reviewer will examine:

- The original complaint;
- The stage 1 investigation;
- Evidence considered;
- The outcome reached;
- Any new information submitted;

The review is not intended to repeat the entire investigation unless necessary.

Step 4 – Review Decision

The review outcome will normally be provided within 20 working days or acknowledgement.

The reviewer may:

- Uphold the original decision;
- Amend the findings;

- Require further investigation;
- Recommend additional actions or remedies.

The decision will be communicated in writing and explain the reasons for the decision.

5. Stage 3 – Independent review

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 2, they may request that matters be considered by Members.

Step 1 – Request for Independent Review

The request should be submitted within 10 working days of the Stage 2 response.

Step 2 – Review by Complaints Panel

The complaint will be considered by a panel of three councillors who have had no previous involvement in the complaint.

The Panel will:

- Review the complaint file;
- Consider the investigation;
- Consider whether the procedure has been followed correctly;
- Consider whether the conclusions reached were reasonable. The

Panel may:

- Invite written submissions;
- Invite the complainant to attend;
- Invite relevant officers to attend.

Step 3 – Panel Meeting

The panel will normally meet within 30 Working Days of receiving the request.

Step 4 – Financial Decision

The decision will:

- Confirm the findings;
- Explain the reasons for the decision;
- Identify any actions required;
- Confirm that the Council's internal complaints process has concluded.

Stage 3 decision shall be final.

6. Data Protection, Data Processing & GDPR Complaints

Data Protection complaints will follow the same three stage process but will additionally:

- Be recorded within the Data Protection Complaints Register;
- Be referred to the Data Protection Lead;
- Be investigated with reference to UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

Timescales

- Acknowledgement – within 5 working days.
- Investigation response – normally within 30 calendar days.

Where additional time is required due to complexity, the complainant will be informed and provided with a revised timescale.

The complainant retains the right to refer concerns to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

7. Recording & Monitoring

For every formal complaint the Council will record:

- Date received;
- Complainant details;
- Nature of complaint;
- Investigating officer;
- Actions taken;
- Outcome;
- Dae closed;
- Lessons learned.

The Chief Officer will review complaint records annually and report trends, lessons learned and service improvements to the Policy and Resources Committee.

8. Unreasonable & Vexatious Complaints

Where a complaint is considered unreasonable, persistent or vexatious, the matter may be referred to by the Chief Officer to the Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with the Council's Vexatiousness Policy.

9. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may be investigated where:

- The allegations are serious;
- There is supporting evidence;
- The matter raises significant public interest concerns.

The Chief Officer shall determine whether an anonymous complaint warrants investigation.

As the complainant is anonymous no response will normally be provided.

10. Contact information

For further information or assistance, please contact:

Address: Penmaenmawr Town Council, Council Offices & Chamber, Penmaenmawr Community Centre, Conwy Road, Penmaenmawr LL34 6AB.

Landline: 01492 623 221

Email: clerk@penmaenmawr-tc.gov.wales

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V1.0	Emergency Extraordinary Meeting of the HR Committee	31.07.26		May 2027