

Swaffham Town Council**GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE****1.1 Introduction**

Swaffham Town Council aims to ensure that any employee with a grievance or a complaint relating to their employment with the Council, can have the issue raised, and where possible resolved, quickly, efficiently and fairly.

1.2 Policy Objectives

In the event of a grievance, the purpose of the policy is to:

- allow any employee to use the procedure, doing so freely and without prejudice to their position in the Council;
- encourage free communication between employees and their managers to ensure that questions and problems arising during the course of employment can be aired and, where possible, resolved quickly, fairly and to the satisfaction of all concerned;
- try to resolve complaints/grievances as close as possible to their point of origin, with minimal disruption to the individuals involved, colleagues, and the Council.

1.3 Informal Discussions

Any grievance arising during employment should first be discussed **informally** with the employee's immediate **Line Manager**. It is hoped that the majority of grievances can be resolved at this stage.

Informal discussions should be encouraged, Line Manager's have the discretion to set a reasonable amount of time for these to be concluded. Liaison should also take place between the Line Manager and the Town Clerk as deemed appropriate.

The Personnel Committee should be made aware that informal discussions had taken place, but not necessarily the nature or full details.

1.4 Stage 1 – Written Statement of Grievance, Investigation and Meeting

If the matter cannot be resolved through informal discussions, the grievance should be put in writing to the employee's immediate **Line Manager**. The employee will be entitled to have a meeting with the manager to discuss the grievance.

On receipt of a grievance the **Line Manager** will acknowledge the grievance, conduct an investigation which will usually involve meeting with the employee concerned, reach a conclusion, and respond in writing to the employee of the decision made, with the reasons given. Wherever possible this process will not take more than ten working days from the date of receipt of the original grievance.

If the employee is dissatisfied with the conclusion they may appeal in writing within three working days to the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee.

1.5 Stage 2 – Appeal

The written appeal must detail the grounds for the appeal, and the management response to date. On receipt of a grievance the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee will acknowledge the appeal, conduct an investigation which will usually involve meeting with the employee concerned, reach a conclusion, and respond in writing to the employee of the decision made, with the reasons given. Wherever possible this process will not take more than ten working days from the date of receipt of the original grievance. The Chairperson's or their authorised **Vice Chair's** **deputy's** decision is final.

1.6 Meetings

Meetings will take place at a time and location that is reasonable for all parties. The employee must make all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

Meetings will be conducted in a manner that enables both employer and employee to explain their cases, ask and answer questions, and where necessary present relevant evidence.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or representative (normally internal to the Council) at all stages of the procedure and are expected to inform the employer in advance if a companion will be attending.

The employee's chosen companion has the right to address the hearing to put forward the employee's case, sum up the case and respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing. The companion may also confer with the employee during the hearing. However, the Council will not permit the companion to answer questions on behalf of the employee, or to address the hearing where the employee indicates that he/she does not wish this.

The Council reserves the right to engage an independent equivalent to conduct any of the stages above, where management are not able to do so for any reason.

1.7 Confidentiality

Proceedings in grievance interviews or meetings and appeal interviews or meetings shall remain strictly confidential.