SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

One Voice Wales has previously recommended that each Council develop a complaints-handling procedure that suits its particular circumstances. It should be well publicised in materials about the Council's services, such as the Council's website. Any procedure should include the basic elements of record-keeping; staff receiving it should be empowered to resolve it, if possible, or know when to pass it on if more serious; it should cover all services provided, be easily understood, set manageable time constraints, and keep the complainant informed of progress.

The advice envisages a three-stage system: Stage 1: attempted resolution by frontline staff; Stage 2: attempted resolution by the Clerk; Stage 3: the complaint is considered by a panel of Councillors (or possibly full Council). In Councils where the Clerk is the sole employee, then Stage 1 is redundant. The Council is recommended to approve the following procedure.

Since 1st April 2006, the Ombudsman has had responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration against Town and Community Councils in Wales. This is separate to the role of investigating allegations of misconduct against individual Councillors and focuses on the standards of service provided by the Council. The collation, analysis and resolution of complaints should be an essential element of the efficient administration of all Councils.

The definition used by the Ombudsman for a complaint is as follows:

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's lack of action or about the standard of a 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"

In the advice issued by OVW, the following are not to be regarded as a complaint;

- An initial request for a service.
- Complaints about third parties: e.g. a community group for which the Council is not responsible
- A request for an explanation of a decision
- A representation about a major policy decision, e.g. setting the precept

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1. All complaints about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service whether provided itself or on its behalf should be sent in writing to the Clerk either by post to Ashley Griffiths, Clerk to Sealand Community Council, 3 Bridge View, Garden City, Deeside, Flintshire, CH5 2HY or by E-mail to sealandcommunitycouncil@gmail.com

2. The Clerk will acknowledge a complaint within three working days of receipt by the manner received (post or E-mail), forward a copy of the Council's Complaints procedure and enter the complaint in a register kept for the purpose, numbering in the order received.

3. The Clerk will advise the Chairperson (or in their absence the Vice-Chairperson) as soon as possible of the receipt of a complaint and will forward a copy of the response to the complaint unless the Chairperson (or the Vice Chairperson as appropriate) in consultation with the Clerk is of the view that it is of such a serious nature that it should be fast-tracked to a Panel of Councillors as referred to in paragraph 5.

4. The response referred to in paragraph 3 above (unless to be dealt with by a Panel of Councillors) will be sent in writing by the Clerk within ten working days by the manner in which it was received.

5. If the complainant is not satisfied by the response from the Clerk (or if referred direct as indicated in paragraph 3) then it will be referred to a Panel of Councillors known as the Complaints Panel who will consist of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and the immediate past Chairperson.

6. A meeting of the Complaints Panel, which will be convened by the Clerk in consultation with the three Members concerned, will be convened as soon as practical and,complaintscomplaintscomplaints unless there are exceptional circumstances, within 21 working days of receipt in writing of the original complaint if deemed to be of such a serious nature (paragraph 3) or further response from the complainant in the event of dissatisfaction with the reply from the Clerk (paragraph 5).

7. The Clerk will ensure that the complainant is kept informed of the progress and will advise that he or she has the right to make a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. A copy of the Council's Complaints procedure will be forwarded to any member of the public on request.

8. The Council will normally only consider complaints under the above procedure if they are received within six months of the complainant becoming aware of the problem, but it is prepared to be flexible if there are exceptional circumstances.

This Procedure will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required by legislation.

This Policy was reviewed and approved by Council at its meeting held on 19th October 2026.

Ashley Griffiths - Clerk of the Council – October 2026