TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Tavistock Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this Council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council services, administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.

3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

   i. complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

   ii. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members as adopted by the Council and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of West Devon Borough Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of West Devon Borough Council.

   iii. Complaints about democratic decisions taken by the Council decided by a vote.

   iv. situations where the Council has adopted specific other arrangements to address complaints, such as the Pannier Market Rules and Regulations, other than insofar as this Procedure is referenced in such other arrangements.

v. Complaints received after the expiry of 8 weeks (the 'permitted period') from the time of the incident or activity giving rise to the complaint (or if applicable, 8 weeks from the date the complainant first had notice of the matter).

4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed including as regards subsequent consideration by committee.

5. For complaints (other than those in para 3 above, to which separate arrangements apply) in the first instance you should draw the attention of the Manager responsible for the Service which is the subject of your complaint to the matter. Complaints should be submitted in writing and before the end of the permitted period by or on behalf of a person affected by the decision made.

6. If you are dissatisfied with the response/decision you receive from the Service Manager you may appeal your complaint about the Council's services, procedures or administration to the Clerk whose contact details are set out below.

7. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint promptly. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

8. If your complaint is about the Clerk you may make your complaint directly to the Mayor of the Council who will report your complaint to the Hearings Panel of the Council.

9. The Clerk or (where appropriate) the Hearings Panel of the Council will investigate each complaint/appeal, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.

10. The Clerk or Mayor of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint/appeal and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional

cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

11. If you are dissatisfied with a decision at first instance you may appeal. Any appeal should be submitted, in writing, within 14 calendar days of the date of the letter advising of the determination of the complaint setting out the point, or points on which the appeal is based.

12. In the interests of clarity an appeal is constituted by either
    - an appeal to the Town Clerk of a matter first determined by a Service Manager;
    - an appeal to the Hearings Panel of a matter first heard by the Town Clerk, or
    - an appeal to the Appeals Panel in those circumstances where a complaint about the Town Clerk has been first heard by the Hearings Panel.

13. In the event of vexatious, unreasonable or malicious complaints the Council reserves the right, having requested the complainant desist from the inappropriate action, to cease communication with the complainant.