**Read and Understood**

**Officers**

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| **Name** | **Initial** | **Date** |  | **Name** | **Initial** | **Date** |
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**Councillors**

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| **Name** | **Initial** | **Date** |  | **Name** | **Initial** | **Date** |
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| **Date created**3rd March 2025 | **Date adopted**19th March 2025 | **Date last reviewed**19th March 2025 | **Next review date** |
| **Meeting and Minute**Full Council 19th March 2025Minute 389 | **Chair Signature** |

**1. Introduction**
Rugeley Town Council is committed to providing high-quality services to the community. We welcome feedback, including comments, compliments, and complaints, as an opportunity to improve our services. This policy sets out how individuals can provide feedback and how the Council will respond.

**2. Scope of the Policy**
This policy applies to feedback regarding the services provided by Rugeley Town Council, its staff, its councillors and including the Rose Theatre. It does not cover complaints about other organisations, which should be directed to the relevant body.

**3. Definitions**

* **Comment**: A statement about a Council service that does not necessarily require a response but is recorded and reviewed for service improvement.
* **Compliment**: Positive feedback about a service, staff member, or project, which is forwarded to the relevant person or department.
* **Complaint**: An expression of dissatisfaction about the Council’s actions, decisions, or lack thereof, which requires a response and possible resolution.

**4. Complaints Procedure**
We aim to resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, and transparently. Complaints should be submitted as follows:

**Stage 1: Informal Complaint**

* Where possible, concerns should be raised informally with the relevant officer or staff member.
* If the issue is not resolved, the complainant may proceed to a formal complaint.

**Stage 2: Formal Complaint**

* Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Clerk. If the complaint is about the Clerk, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Staffing Committee.
* The complaint should include relevant details, including dates, times, and any supporting evidence.
* An acknowledgement will be sent within five working days.
* The complaint will be investigated, and a written response will be provided within 20 working days. If further time is required, the complainant will be informed.

**Stage 3: Escalation**

* If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, they may request a review by the Council’s Complaints Panel.
* The Panel will consider the complaint, and a final response will be issued within 30 working days.

**5. Complaints Not Covered by This Policy**

* Complaints against councillors (these should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Cannock Chase District Council). The Monitoring Officer can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Councillor. It will not deal with complaints about matters that are not covered by the Council’s Code of Conduct.
* Employment-related complaints, which will be handled through internal HR procedures. A complaint against a member of the Council’s employees could result in disciplinary action, or in cases of gross misconduct dismissal from the Council’s employment. The Council will not under any circumstances enter into any correspondence, or discussion, with any complainant about any action taken, formally or informally against any employee.
* Financial irregularities, which are subject to external audit procedures.
* Criminal matters, which should be reported to the police.
* The Town Council will not acknowledge or consider, under any circumstances complaints that submitted anonymously.

Note: Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1974, the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) has no jurisdiction over Town and Parish Councils in England.

**6. Vexatious or Unreasonable Complaints**

* The Council may refuse to investigate complaints that are malicious, repetitive, or intended to cause disruption.
* Sanctions may include restricting communication to a designated officer or declining further responses if no new evidence is presented.

**7. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

* All complaints will be handled confidentially in line with data protection laws.
* Information will only be shared with those necessary to investigate and resolve the complaint.

**8. Monitoring and Reporting**

* A record of complaints, comments, and compliments will be maintained and reviewed annually to identify areas for improvement.
* A summary of complaints and outcomes will be reported to Full Council, excluding personal details.