

CASTLE MORPETH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 **ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2004** **DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998**

collectively known as “Access to Information” Policies

ACCESS TO INFORMATION COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

The Council has introduced this complaints procedure as part of its overall programme of customer care to cover complaints in relation to the access to information legislation above. It is hoped that most complaints will be dealt with informally to the satisfaction of the complainant. If this is not possible the procedure below sets out how the complaint will be investigated. The procedure does not prejudice the right of a complainant to refer the complaint to the Information Commissioner.

The complaints procedure is compliant with the Codes of Practice issued pursuant to section 45 of the Freedom Of Information Act 2000 and regulation 16 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Monitoring of complaints

The Monitoring Officer will record the number and type of complaints received including information about response times. He or she will take a report to the Corporate Management Team every three months and a report to the Scrutiny Committee every six months. These monitoring reports will be used to amend procedures if necessary. The target times for dealing with complaints shall be published on the Council's website.

The Aim of the Council

The members and staff of Castle Morpeth Borough Council wish to provide a high level of service to people in relation to their requests for information under the Act. Sorting out any complaints, which arise, is part of that service too.

The Complaints Procedure is seen as a very important part of the Council's continuous improvement programme.

Definition of a Complaint

Anyone who has made a request for information under the any of the above “access to information” legislation can appeal or complain to the Council.

This may be about

- handling procedures
- general right of access
- exemption or exception decision.

Anyone who perceives that the Council is not complying with the operation of it's Publication Scheme can complain to the Council.

How a complaint should be made

If you are not satisfied about how the Council operates under the any of the above access to information legislation you should write (or email) to the Council's Monitoring Officer detailing your complaint giving as much detail as possible.

The Monitoring Officer will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days and inform you of the likely date for determining the complaint. He or she will keep you informed of his or her progress and aim to give you a full response as soon as possible and in most cases within 20 working days.

Information Commissioner

If you are dissatisfied with the Monitoring Officer's decision you will be advised of your right to appeal to the Information Commissioner.

Contact Details

Monitoring Officer

Castle Morpeth Borough Council
Longhirst Hall
Longhirst
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 3LR

Telephone First Call: 01670 535000
Telephone Monitoring Officer: 01670 794750
Fax: 01670 794764

Email: sally.row@castlemorpeth.gov.uk

Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545700
Fax: 01625 524510
Website:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

