

UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS POLICY

Introduction

1. **East Allington Parish Council** is committed to putting customers at the heart of service delivery. However, there are occasions when people can act in a way that is considered unacceptable.

2. The Policy

2.1 The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to councillors and employees on unacceptable people behaviour and how the Council would like to deal with it.

2.2 The types of action the Council considers to be unacceptable are:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour.
- Unreasonable demands.
- Unreasonable levels of contact.

2.3 Aggressive or abusive behaviour - The Council understands that people can become angry when they feel that matters about which they feel strongly are not being dealt with as they wish. If that anger escalates into aggression to councillors or employees, the Council considers that unacceptable.

2.4 Any aggression or abuse directed to councillors or employees will not be tolerated.

2.5 Aggressive or abusive behaviour includes language (whether verbal or written) that may make Councillors or employees feel afraid, threatened or abused and may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness.

2.6 The Council also considers inflammatory statements, remarks of a racial or discriminatory nature and unsubstantiated allegations, to be abusive behaviour.

2.7 Unreasonable demands - A demand becomes unacceptable when it starts to (or when complying with the demand would) impact excessively on the work of employees, or when dealing with the matter takes an excessive amount of staff time and in so doing, disadvantages other customers.

2.8 Examples are - repeatedly demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale, demanding responses from several employees at the same time, repeatedly changing the subject of an enquiry or complaint or repeatedly posing the same question time and again, when a response has been given.

2.9 Unreasonable levels of contact - Sometimes the volume and duration of contact made to employees or Councillors causes problems. The types of situations are, dealing with a large number of telephone calls or emails from the same person in one day, repeated long telephone calls or sending repeat copies of information. The level of contact becomes unacceptable when the time taken to deal with the contact impacts on the ability to deal with the matter or affects the responsibility for carrying out tasks to other members of the public.

3. Managing Unacceptable Actions

3.1 The behaviours outlined above are open to interpretation. The following staged process is to ensure that any action is considered and fair.

3.2 If the employee or Councillor feels that a person is behaving in a manner which they feel is unacceptable they can:

- Politely explain that the Parish Council expects its councillors and employees to be treated with respect and ask them to moderate their behaviour
- If the behaviour continues the Councillor or employee will give a warning of further action appropriate to the method of contact (e.g. a warning that the phone call will be terminated or being asked to leave the premise).
- If the customer does not moderate their behaviour after this warning then the threatened action should be taken.

3.3 If the person persists in their unacceptable actions it may be necessary to consider additional measures.

- The incident should be reported to the Clerk or Chairman and sanctions decided upon.

3.4 The possible sanctions may include:

- Restricting contact to a particular form (e.g. telephone) i.e. suspending all contact by other means;
- Limiting permissible contact to certain time and days;
- Specifying a named officer to be the sole point of contact with the customer in question;
- Asking the customer to enter into an agreement about their future conduct.

3.5 A copy of the unacceptable actions policy, where possible, should be sent to the person along with a letter informing them of the actions the Council will take. A copy of the Complaints Policy should also be sent.

3.6 If a person has behaved in a manner which is judged to be violent or aggressive towards a Councillor or employee the Councillor or employee should:

- Stop all interaction with the customer;
- If the safety of Councillor or employee is at risk the police should be informed;
- Complete an accident report form
- Report the incident to Town Clerk or Mayor

3.7 The Clerk or Chairman may decide to:

- Explore if further legal action is required;
- Require the person to provide a written declaration that they will not act in such a manner again;
- Apply any sanction as deemed appropriate.

This Council adopted this Policy for Unacceptable Actions at its Council meeting on 27th March 2024

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