**Example Complaint Handling Policy for a UK Council**

**1. Introduction**

This policy outlines the process for handling complaints received by the [Council Name]. Our aim is to ensure all complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly, and consistently.

**2. Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the council’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of a service provided by or on behalf of the council.

**3. Common Types of Complaints and Handling Procedures**

**3.1 Road Issues**

* **Examples**: Potholes, broken pavement, street lighting faults.
* **Handling Procedure**:
  1. **Initial Receipt and Acknowledgement**: Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days.
  2. **Recording**: Log the complaint with a unique reference number.
  3. **Inspection**: Assign an inspector to assess the reported issue within 5 working days.
  4. **Action**: Schedule necessary repairs based on urgency and severity.
  5. **Resolution Notification**: Inform the complainant of the action taken within 10 working days.

**3.2 Planning Issues**

* **Examples**: Unauthorised structures, issues with planning applications, complaints about planning processes not being followed.
* **Handling Procedure**:
  1. **Initial Receipt and Acknowledgement**: Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days.
  2. **Recording**: Log the complaint with a unique reference number.
  3. **Investigation**: Review the planning application and any related documents, conduct site visits if necessary, and consult relevant planning officers.
  4. **Action**: Take appropriate action, which may include enforcement, issuing a notice, or rectifying procedural errors.
  5. **Resolution Notification**: Inform the complainant of the findings and actions taken within 15 working days.

**3.3 Rubbish Collection**

* **Examples**: Bins not being collected on time, bins being missed.
* **Handling Procedure**:
  1. **Initial Receipt and Acknowledgement**: Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days.
  2. **Recording**: Log the complaint with a unique reference number.
  3. **Investigation**: Check collection schedules, speak with waste collection teams, and verify the issue.
  4. **Action**: Arrange for missed collections to be rectified within 2 working days, and review collection routes and processes to prevent recurrence.
  5. **Resolution Notification**: Inform the complainant of the resolution within 5 working days.

**3.4 Flytipping**

* **Examples**: Waste blocking pavements/roads, waste dumped on council land.
* **Handling Procedure**:
  1. **Initial Receipt and Acknowledgement**: Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days.
  2. **Recording**: Log the complaint with a unique reference number.
  3. **Investigation**: Conduct a site visit to assess the extent and nature of the flytipping.
  4. **Action**: Arrange for the removal of the waste within 5 working days and investigate the source of the flytipping for potential enforcement actions.
  5. **Resolution Notification**: Inform the complainant of the action taken and any follow-up measures within 10 working days.

**4. Information Required to Handle a Complaint**

To handle a complaint effectively, the following information is required:

* Complainant’s name and contact details.
* Detailed description of the complaint.
* Date(s) when the issue occurred.
* Specific location of the issue (e.g., street name, property address).
* Any relevant reference numbers (e.g., planning application number, bin collection schedule).
* Copies of any relevant documents or correspondence.
* Desired resolution or outcome.

**5. Communication with the Customer**

1. **Initial Acknowledgement**: Confirm receipt of the complaint within 2 working days, providing the reference number and expected timeline for resolution.
2. **Investigation Update**: Provide updates if the investigation takes longer than the initial estimated timeframe.
3. **Resolution Notification**: Inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken, within the specified timeframe for each type of complaint.
4. **Further Action**: Advise the complainant of their right to escalate the complaint if they are dissatisfied with the outcome (e.g., to the Ombudsman).

**6. Escalation Process**

1. **Internal Review**: If the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response, they can request an internal review by a senior officer.
2. **External Review**: If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the internal review, they may escalate the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

**7. Continuous Improvement**

The council will review complaint handling performance regularly to identify trends and areas for improvement, ensuring high standards of service delivery and customer satisfaction.