

**The Corporation of the  
Town of Arnprior**

**By-law Number 6766-17**

A by-law to adopt a policy for municipal Complaint Management and Resolution.

**Whereas** Section 8 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25 provides broad authority to enable municipalities to govern their affairs as considered appropriate and to enhance the municipality's ability to respond to municipal issues; and

**Whereas** Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, amended the Ombudsman Act, to expand the jurisdiction of the Provincial Ombudsman, in regards to receiving complaints about municipalities; and

**Whereas** it is necessary to have clearly established complaint management and resolution processes, when handling and resolving complaints brought forward by members of the public.

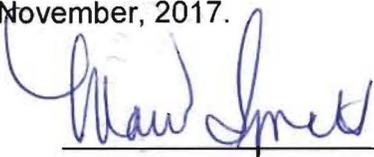
**Whereas** the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Arnprior deems it advisable and necessary to establish a Complaint Management and Resolution Policy for the municipality, to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public.

**Therefore** the Council of the Town of Arnprior enacts as follows:

1. **That** Council adopt the Complaint Management and Resolution Policy (AS-CO-14) attached hereto and forming part of this by-law; and
2. **That** the Chief Administrative Officer is authorized to create and amend the form noted in the policy, as deemed necessary, from time to time; and
3. **That** this By-law shall come into force and effect on the day of its passing.

**Enacted and Passed** this 27th day of November, 2017.

  
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Tom Burnette, Deputy Mayor

  
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Maureen Spratt, Clerk

	<b>The Corporation of the Town of Arnprior Corporate Policies and Procedures Manual</b>	
	<b>Section: Administrative Standards – Clerks Office (AS-CO)</b>	<b>Policy #: AS-CO-14</b>
<b>Policy Name: Complaint Management &amp; Resolution Policy</b>		
<b>Effective Date:</b> November 27, 2017 <b>By-law No:</b> 6766-17	<b>Revised Date:</b> <b>By-law No:</b>	<b>Coverage: All Staff</b>

### 1.0 Policy Statement

The Town of Arnprior is committed to continuous improvement in order to succeed at our strategic vision of providing effective service delivery led by a responsive, collaborative Town administration. Effective service delivery requires providing services in a fair, timely, respectful, and transparent fashion. This policy provides a mechanism to receive complaints, and resolve issues relating to these complaints, about the Town’s programs, facilities, services and staff.

### 2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the importance of public input and welcome complaints as valuable forms of feedback from the public. The information gained from resident complaints and feedback helps improve the quality of services provided by the Town of Arnprior. This policy provides the public with an avenue for submitting complaints and provides Town staff with consistent practices for handling complaints about Town programs, facilities, services and staff.

### 3.0 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Town staff, services, programs, and facilities; and
- Contractors and consultants working on behalf of the Town of Arnprior.

This policy does not apply to:

- Members of Council, Committees, or Local Boards (as they are governed by the Council Code of Conduct and Integrity Commissioner);
- Decisions made by Council, Committees, or Local Boards
- Matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.;

- Issues that have statutory review and appeal processes (including but not limited to Municipal Freedom of Information Requests, Development Charges, Land Use Planning, By-law Notices, etc.);
- Civil Matters
- Requests for Accommodation (governed by the Town's Accessible Customer Service/ IASR Policies)
- Complaints by employees about other employees and/or working conditions (alternative internal processes are available to employees, depending on the nature of the issue);
- Anonymous, Frivolous or Vexatious complaints
- Claims
- Inquiries, Compliments, Requests for Service, Suggestions

Other forms of feedback, such as inquiries, compliments, requests for service, and suggestions are distinct from a complaint, and shall be handled by Town staff through internal operating processes and procedures. Staff will make every effort, organization-wide, to handle all forms of feedback in a consistent and respectful manner.

#### **4.0 Responsibility**

Responsibilities are as follows:

- **Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)** – The CAO is responsible for ensuring this policy is applied organization-wide, and adhered to by all employees of the municipality. The CAO is also responsible for clarifying and resolving any ambiguity which may exist within this policy.
- **Clerk's Office** – The Clerk's Office is responsible for assisting in the ongoing administration and training of this policy.
- **Senior Management** – Department Heads and Managers are responsible for ensuring that the proper procedures are available to members of the public, and followed by employees. They are responsible for ensuring receipt and response of all complaints and compliance to this policy is achieved by their respective department and staff.
- **Employees** – All employees are responsible for having knowledge and awareness of the Town of Arnprior's requirement to receive and document complaints and comply with this policy.

## 5.0 Definitions

**Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)** – The person appointed as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town within the meaning of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001 c.25 and also referred to herein as CAO.

**Claim** – Request for compensation where the Town may be legally responsible for damages (i.e. property or bodily harm) experienced. Typical claims include, but are not limited to:

- Damage to vehicles due to poor road conditions
- Injuries due to insufficient road/sidewalk maintenance
- Damage due to Town owned trees
- Etc.

**Complainant** – A member of the public who is dissatisfied/ requires a resolution, and is filing the complaint. Anyone who uses or is affected by Town services can be a complainant.

**Complaint** – Expression of dissatisfaction with a Town service, program, facility, or staff member, where a member of the public feels the Town has not provided sufficient service delivery.

- **Formal Complaint** – a complaint that sets out the facts and reasons that the complainant believes are sufficient to support the complaint being filed against the Town, which follows a formal process, outlined herein.
- **Frivolous Complaint** – a complaint that has no serious purpose or value, which may have little merit and be trivial; investigating would be out of proportion to the seriousness of the issues complained about.
- **Informal Complaint** – a complaint expressed verbally to an employee, which is not dealt with through a formal process.
- **Vexatious Complaint** – a complaint without merit, which intends to cause inconvenience, harassment or expense to the Town.

**Senior Management** – Those managers and department heads which are appointed by the CAO as members of the Town of Arnprior Senior Management Team.

**Employee** – Any employee of the Town of Arnprior, part-time, full-time, contract, or otherwise, as defined in the Town's Employee Definitions Policy.

**Feedback** – An opinion provided by a member of the public on a specific service or program, which can be in the form of a compliment, enquiry, suggestion or otherwise.

**Ontario Ombudsman** - an independent officer of the Legislature who investigates complaints from the public about Ontario government services, recommending improvements for governance and resolving individual issues. Contact information: Phone: 1-800-263-1830; E-mail: [info@ombudsman.on.ca](mailto:info@ombudsman.on.ca).

**Request for Service** – Request for a specific service to be completed by the Town, or to notify the Town that a scheduled service was not provided. Samples of Requests for Service may include, but are not limited to:

- Repair of a street surface
- Reporting of an inoperative streetlight
- Notification of missed garbage/ recycling collection
- Notification of water/sewer service interruption
- Reporting a by-law or parking infraction
- Reporting an inoperative piece of equipment/ area at a Town Facility – such as the Nick Smith Centre, Park, etc.

## **6.0 Procedures**

The following procedures are to be followed when dealing with complaints. Staff will make every effort, organization-wide, to handle all forms of feedback in a consistent and respectful manner. It is important to note that the Town of Arnprior has zero tolerance for violent and aggressive behaviour. Therefore, staff will only respond to bona fide complaints which are presented by the complainant(s) in a non-violent or non-aggressive manner. Should a complainant become violent or aggressive, the complainant will be asked to leave Town premises, and staff will report any such incidents to authorities as may be needed.

These procedures are to encourage complaint resolution, and form an organized, consistent, and respectful process for handling and responding to complaints.

### **6.1 Resolution Attempt**

Whenever possible, staff are encouraged to work with complainants at the first point of contact to have issues addressed. Staff are responsible for listening to the complainant, with an open mind and make efforts to resolve any concerns raised in a timely manner.

Should a resolution not be made at the first point of contact, a formal complaint can be submitted by a complainant, by following the process outlined in Section 6.2.

## 6.2 Submitting a Formal Complaint

A formal complaint may be submitted by a complainant through any of the following channels:

- Online at [www.arnprior.ca/complaint](http://www.arnprior.ca/complaint)
- By telephone at 613-623-4231
- By email at [kzamojski@arnprior.ca](mailto:kzamojski@arnprior.ca)
- By mail to Town of Arnprior Clerk's Office, 105 Elgin Street West, Arnprior ON. K7S 0A8
- By fax to 613-623-9960
- In person at the Town of Arnprior at any of the following Town Facilities:
  - Town Hall – 105 Elgin Street West, Arnprior, ON.
  - Nick Smith Centre – 77 James Street, Arnprior, ON.
  - Stanley Tourangeau Fire/Police Services Centre – 67-A Meehan Street, Arnprior, ON.
  - Arnprior & District Museum – 35 Madawaska Street, Arnprior, ON.

Details Required for the Formal Complaint Process:

- The complainant must provide the following information in a respectful and transparent manner:
  - Details of what happened;
  - Where the issue being complained about occurred (location - is it within the Town's jurisdiction);
  - When the issue being complained about occurred (date and time);
  - Who may have been involved;
  - What may or may not have been said or done;
  - What kind of resolution is being sought;
  - Contact details of the complainant.
- Where appropriate the complaint submitted will be used by the Town to assist in improving services, operations, and procedures. All complaints will be reviewed by appropriate staff, as noted below, and responded to in a timely fashion, as per the investigation process outlined in Section 6.4 of this Policy.
- A complaint form will be developed pursuant section 3 (4) of By-law 6650-15, as amended, in accordance with the CAO's delegated authority and will be made available to complainants at all noted Town Facilities.

### **6.3 Documentation and Response to a Complaint**

- Once a complaint has been received, staff will document the complaint and the complaint will then be forwarded to the appropriate Senior Manager for investigation and action.
- The Town will strive to provide acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint, within three (3) business days. The acknowledgement will identify that the complaint has been forwarded to the appropriate manager for investigation and action.
- The investigation and any corrective action will take place in a timely manner. Acknowledging that every situation is different and may require more or less time to resolve, wherever possible, the Town will provide a final response within 20 business days. In exceptional circumstances, where this timeframe is not feasible, the complainant will be kept informed of the status of their complaint.

### **6.4 Complaint Investigation Process**

Investigations of complaints will take place internally. The appropriate investigating manager will:

- Document all notes within the Town's electronic records management system.
- Contact the complainant as soon as practicable, where a quick resolve is possible.
- Notify the complainant of an estimated timeframe, if the manager feels the investigation may result in a lengthy process.
- Review the issues identified by the complainant by:
  - Reviewing relevant legislation, where applicable;
  - Reviewing the relevant municipal policies and procedures;
  - Interviewing any employees who may have knowledge of the complaint, where applicable;
  - Identifying actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations;
- Consult with the CAO where appropriate to do so depending on the severity of the issues.
- Determine if a complaint is considered to be frivolous/vexatious.
  - In circumstances, where a complaint is considered frivolous/vexatious, the complainant will be notified of this decision, noting that no further action will be taken.

Decisions of an Investigation will be provided to the complainant and will consist of information such as:

- Overview of the complaint;
- Details of how the investigation was conducted;
- Summary of the facts;
- Outline the findings;
- Identification of next steps;
- Suggestions of an appropriate resolution along with the rationale supporting the proposed resolution.

### **6.5 Complaint Appeal Process**

Once the municipality has communicated its final decision to the complainant, there is no additional appeal process at the municipal level.

Complainants shall be provided the contact information for the Ontario Ombudsman (see Definition) and any other options available to them, in the event that they are dissatisfied with the process or outcome of a complaint. The Ontario Ombudsman has authority to look at how the issue was handled at the local level, the steps taken, and the outcome. The Ombudsman has authority to consider whether the process was fair, transparent, and in accordance with the applicable policies and by-laws of the municipality.

### **7.0 Monitoring**

Complaints, requests for service, and other forms of feedback will be monitored by the Clerk's Office to ensure timely resolution, appropriate documentation and overall compliance with this policy.

### **8.0 Training**

All employees of the Town of Arnprior will receive appropriate training on this policy as well as handling all other forms of feedback, such as inquiries, compliments, requests for service, and suggestions, in order to achieve an organization-wide, consistent process for documenting and responding to residents and complainants.

## **9.0 Privacy**

All complaints, brought forward to the Town of Arnprior will be dealt with in a confidential manner according to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Information will be collected, used and disclosed in accordance with MFIPPA. Personal information on the complainant/customer is treated as confidential information to protect their privacy, however, the complainant/customer should be aware that certain circumstances may indirectly identify them during an investigation.

## **10.0 Attachments**

None