

Examples of lessons learned recorded on the complaints database in 2013/14

Housing

- Need to keep customers informed of any delay that will impact on appointments.
- Need to be clear about which contractor/utility provider is responsible for repairs to a tenant's home.
- Improvements required in the quality of decorating work carried out by contractors.
- All staff to make sure that they adhere to the compensation policy.
- Contractors need to make sure they clean up properly after the completion of works to a tenant's home.
- All contractors and their operatives must be asbestos-aware and adhere to the Council's policy for dealing with asbestos.
- Tenancy and estates officers should ensure that they keep tenants informed of decant arrangements.
- More needs to be done to support the needs of vulnerable tenants with regard to repairs issues.
- Water and electricity services must be tested on completion of void works before property handed over to a tenant
- Transfer process needs to be reviewed to ensure that the tenants involved have all the information they need.
- Need to keep tenants updated on the proposed timescale for repairs to their home.
- Closer monitoring of contractors needed.
- There should be closer scrutiny of tenants' requests to carry out work in their home to ensure that only works approved by the Council are carried out.
- All tenants should be made aware that any contractors they engage should be asbestos awareness trained.
- Need to improve communications between contractors and tenants.

Development control

- Management of the discharge of conditions needs to be reviewed, and simpler cases dealt with more speedily.
- Advice in letters giving pre-application advice should be more direct and conclusive.
- Need to ensure when carrying out site visits and visiting neighbouring properties that neighbours are fully aware of the reasons for the visit and who is in attendance.
- Any officer taking phone messages should ensure these are passed on to the relevant officer.
- Important that the notes of site visits are completed promptly and that notes are kept of telephone conversations or informal meetings.
- Wording on the website should be checked for accuracy – should be easy to read but also legally correct.
- Requests for pre-application advice/information should be responded to within agreed timescales. Need for closer monitoring by the Area Team Managers and Case Officers.
- Website needs to make clear who is notified when an application is received.

- Officers should aim for improved management of their caseloads, making site visits at an early stage to identify potential problems/issues.
- Officers to be reminded of the importance of redacting personal information on representations prior to these being placed on the website.
- Consideration to be given to Case Officers leaving a card when they make an unannounced site visit confirming that they have visited and whether or not they have taken photographs.
- Officers need to make sure that they make their presence known when making a site visit – should always check to see if anyone is in the property.
- Need to be more pro-active in monitoring the discharge of conditions on major development sites – to be discussed at an Area Team Leaders meeting.
- Need to ensure that Development Control officers keep the Enforcement Team informed on the discharge of conditions at sites where there are enforcement concerns.

Environmental Services

- Need to improve information on the website.
- There should be closer monitoring of problem areas.
- Closer liaison with contractors needed in cases of repeat complaints.
- The scripts used by the Customer Advice Team need to be reviewed and the out of hours response procedure revisited.