

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Corporate Services

REPORT NUMBER **F127**

**TO: **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(STEWARDSHIP) COMMITTEE****

DATE OF MEETING: 28 November 2006

ANNUAL MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has received its annual letter from the Local Government Ombudsman. The letter includes information on the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman about the Council, decisions made broken down by decision reason, and the time it takes for the Council to respond to initial enquiries made by the Ombudsman.
- 1.2 Following last year's letter, this Committee agreed a number of recommendations to improve the handling of Ombudsman complaints, and progress against these is reported. One of the recommendations asked that the Ombudsman be invited to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee at the appropriate time to comment on the 2005/06 annual letter. Richard Shaw of the Local Government Ombudsman Office will be in attendance and will give a short presentation.
- 1.3 This report also provides information on all formal complaints made to the Council, whether or not referred to the Ombudsman.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the report be noted.
- 2.2 That further work be undertaken to investigate what causes delays to Ombudsman enquiries and whether these can be alleviated.

The Committee is able to resolve these matters.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Complaints Handling Training Courses cost £750 for up to 15 officers. Two such courses would be adequate for the Council's needs and the costs can be met from existing training budgets.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 The annual letter (Appendix 1) reports that in 2005/06 the Ombudsman received 10 complaints against the Council. Past year's figures are:-

| | |
|---------|----|
| 2004/05 | 21 |
| 2003/04 | 12 |
| 2002/03 | 25 |

- 4.2 The Ombudsman would expect to see some fluctuation in the number of complaints from year to year.

- 4.3 No maladministration decisions have been made against the Council and only one local settlement has been made.
- 4.4 Of the 10 complaints, three concerned housing, one drainage and one land. The remaining five concerned planning matters. The Ombudsman reported that the predominance of planning complaints is not unusual for District Councils and reflects previous years and the nature of the Council's area. Last year 11 complaints concerned planning matters.
- 4.5 Following last year's letter, this Committee agreed a number of recommendations to improve the handling of Ombudsman complaints. That:
- improvements be sought to reduce the number of premature complaints to the Ombudsman and to reduce the time taken to reply to the Ombudsman's enquiries to within 21 days.
 - a link from the Council's website to the Local Government Ombudsman's website be investigated.
 - the Ombudsman be invited to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee at the appropriate time to comment on the 2005/06 annual letter.
 - subject to quality assurance, appropriate officers participate in the Complaints Handling training courses provided by the Local Government Ombudsman.
 - Ward Members be advised of complaints reaching the Ombudsman and of official complaints to Babergh.
- 4.6 The Complaints Procedure has been clarified and published more widely, and this seems to have had an effect on the number of premature complaints to the Ombudsman with only one being reported for 2005/06.
- 4.7 For 2004/05 the Ombudsman's time limit for responding to his enquiries was 21 calendar days. Only 22% of all District Councils managed to respond within 21 days whilst 58% responded within 28 days. This Council's average was 28.3 days.
- 4.8 From 1 July 2005 the Ombudsman revised his target to 28 days, but this Committee recommended that the Council should endeavour to achieve the Ombudsman's original time limit of 21 days.
- 4.9 For 2005/06 the Council's average response time was 27.7 days, a modest improvement on the 2004/05 time. This is within the Ombudsman's current time limit but there is some way to go to achieve this Council's limit of 21 days. It is proposed that further work is undertaken to investigate what causes the delays and whether these can be alleviated.
- 4.10 The link from the Council's website to the Local Government Ombudsman's website has been investigated and created.
- 4.11 The Ombudsman has been invited to this meeting and Richard Shaw will give a short presentation.
- 4.12 The Complaints Handling Training Courses offered by the Local Government Ombudsman have been investigated and the Suffolk Performance Management Group is determining a Suffolk wide approach to these so that best practice can be shared.
- 4.13 Through the work undertaken to clarify the Complaints Procedure, the need to involve Ward Members was emphasised, and they should now be advised of complaints reaching the Ombudsman, and of official complaints to Babergh. However, this needs to be tested and will be through the review being carried out on informing Members of issues arising in their wards and dealing with Member complaints.

- 4.14 Appendix 2 sets out a summary of complaints received in Mike Hammond's and Helen Style's Directorates for 2005/06.
- 4.15 Mike Hammond's Directorate dealt with 31 complaints, compared to 40 last year. All have been resolved.
- 4.16 Helen Style's Directorate dealt with six complaints, compared with 12 last year. Again all have been resolved.

5. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Annual letter 2005/06.

Appendix 2 – Complaints received by Mike Hammond's and Helen Style's directorates.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

None.

CONTACT: ANDREW HUNKIN

DIRECT LINE: 01473 825820

21 June 2006



**The Commission for
Local Administration in England**

FIRST CLASS

Ms Patricia Rockall
Chief Executive
Babergh District Council
Corks Lane
Hadleigh
Ipswich IP7 6SJ

Tony Redmond
Local Government Ombudsman

Peter MacMahon
Deputy Ombudsman

Our ref: TR/ annual letter/AH
(Please quote our reference when contacting us)

If telephoning contact: Richard Shaw on 020 7217 4669
Email address: r.shaw@lgo.org.uk

Dear Ms Rockall

Annual Letter 2005/06

I am writing to give you my reflections on the complaints received against your authority and dealt with by my office over the last year. I hope that in reviewing your own performance you will find this letter a useful addition to other information you hold highlighting how people experience or perceive your services.

This year we will publish all our annual letters on our website (www.lgo.org.uk) and share them with the Audit Commission. There is widespread support from authorities for us to do this. We will wait for four weeks after this letter before doing so, to give you an opportunity to consider the letter first. If a letter is found to contain any factual inaccuracy we will reissue it.

I am pleased to see that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee considered my 2004/05 annual letter in its meeting of 27 September 2005 and made various recommendations. I shall return to these recommendations later in the letter.

In addition to the narrative below there are two attachments which form an integral part of this letter: statistical data covering a three year period and a note to help the interpretation of the statistics.

/...

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DX 2376 Victoria 1
www.lgo.org.uk

Complaints received

In 2005/06 I received 10 complaints against your Council, compared to the last three years figures which have fluctuated between 21, 12 and 25.

Of last year's complaints, three concerned housing, one drainage and one land. The remaining five concerned planning matters. The predominance of planning complaints is not unusual for District Councils and reflects previous years and the nature of the Council's area.

Decisions on complaints

I made decisions on 11 complaints in 2005/06. One complaint was outside my jurisdiction. A further complaint was referred back to the Council because it had not been given a reasonable opportunity to consider and respond to the matter before I became involved. This compares with 7 the year before. The Council has sought improvements to reduce the number of such 'premature' complaints to me and this aim appears to have been achieved.

When we complete an investigation we must issue a report. There is a significant proportion of investigations that do not reach this stage. This is because we settle the complaint during the course of our investigation. We call these decisions "local settlements". As in previous years I issued no reports against your Council. I only found fault requiring a local settlement in one case. This concerned planning: the Council delayed in dealing with a landscaping scheme required by a grant of planning permission and then delayed again in taking enforcement action when the scheme was not implemented. The file had been closed without checking that action had been taken. The Council reviewed its procedure to ensure that files are not closed until confirmation that necessary action has been taken has been received, and paid £100 to the complainant as compensation for the delay in taking action.

In five other cases I found no fault with what the Council had done and in three cases I decided that my involvement was not warranted.

Your council's complaints procedure and handling of complaints

I ask councils to reply to enquiries within 28 calendar days. Your Council's average response time was just within my time limit and a marginal improvement on 2004/05.

Links and references to my office

In last year's annual letter I suggested that the Council should have a direct link to our services from its website. The Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee resolved that a link from the Council's website to the Local Government Ombudsman's website be investigated. There is still no such link, although I note there is a direct link to the Independent Housing Ombudsman's site in your "Babergh Links" section. I would be grateful if you could consider adding a direct link from your website.

/...

Training in complaint handling

Our training in complaint handling is proving very popular with authorities and we continue to receive very positive feedback from participants. Over the last year we have delivered more than 100 courses from the range of three courses that we now offer as part of our role in promoting good administrative practice.

Effective Complaint Handling was the first course we developed, aimed at staff who deal with complaints as a significant part of their job. Since then we have introduced courses in complaint handling for front line staff and in handling social services complaints.

All courses are presented by an experienced investigator so participants benefit from their knowledge and expertise of complaint handling. Your Council has resolved that appropriate officers participate in the complaints handling training courses provided by the Local Government Ombudsman. None of your staff have yet taken part in this training and I have enclosed some information on the range of courses available together with contact details for enquiries and bookings.

Conclusions/general observations

I welcome this opportunity to give you my reflections about the complaints my office has dealt with over the past year. I hope that you find the information and assessment provided useful when seeking improvements to your Council's services. I would again very much welcome any comments you may have on the form and content of the letter.

Your Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee resolved that the Ombudsman be invited to a meeting of the Committee at the appropriate time to comment on the 2005/06 annual letter. If you could propose a date or dates I should be happy to come myself, or to send a senior colleague to discuss the letter with councillors or staff.

I am also arranging for a copy of this letter and its attachments to be sent to you electronically so that you can distribute it easily within the council and post it on your website should you decide to do this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Redmond', written in a cursive style.

Tony Redmond

| Complaints received by subject area | Highways | Housing (not incl. HB) | Local Taxation | Other | Planning | Total |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 01/04/2005 - 31/03/2006 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 10 |
| 2004 / 2005 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 11 | 21 |
| 2003 / 2004 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 12 |

Note: these figures will include complaints that were made prematurely to the Ombudsman and which we referred back to the authority for consideration.

| Decisions | MI reps | LS | M reps | NM reps | No mal | Omb disc | Outside jurisdiction | Premature complaints | Total excl premature | Total |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 01/04/2005 - 31/03/2006 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 11 |
| 2004 / 2005 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 15 |
| 2003 / 2004 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 14 | 16 |

See attached notes for an explanation of the headings in this table.

| Response times | FIRST ENQUIRIES | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | No. of First Enquiries | Avg no. of days to respond |
| 01/04/2005 - 31/03/2006 | 3 | 27.7 |
| 2004 / 2005 | 7 | 28.3 |
| 2003 / 2004 | 3 | 22.0 |

Average local authority response times 01/04/2005 to 31/03/2006

| Types of authority | <= 28 days % | 29 - 35 days % | >= 36 days % |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| District Councils | 53.2 | 25.3 | 21.5 |
| Unitary Authorities | 41.3 | 34.8 | 23.9 |
| Metropolitan Authorities | 41.7 | 30.5 | 27.8 |
| County Councils | 55.9 | 26.5 | 17.6 |
| London Boroughs | 39.4 | 39.4 | 21.2 |
| National Park Authorities | 100.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Notes to assist interpretation of the Commission's local authority statistics

1. Complaints received

This information shows the number of complaints received by the LGO, broken down by service area and in total within the periods given. These figures include complaints that are made prematurely to the LGO (see below for more explanation) and that we refer back to the council for consideration. The figures may include some complaints that we have received but where we have not yet contacted the council.

2. Decisions

This information records the number of decisions made by the LGO, broken down by outcome, within the periods given. **This number will not be the same as the number of complaints received**, because some complaints are made in one year and decided in the next. Below we set out a key explaining the outcome categories.

MI reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding maladministration causing injustice.

LS (local settlements): decisions by letter discontinuing our investigation because action has been agreed by the authority and accepted by the Ombudsman as a satisfactory outcome for the complainant.

M reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding maladministration but causing no injustice to the complainant.

NM reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding no maladministration by the council.

No mal: decisions by letter discontinuing an investigation because we have found no, or insufficient, evidence of maladministration.

Omb disc: decisions by letter discontinuing an investigation in which we have exercised the Ombudsman's general discretion not to pursue the complaint. This can be for a variety of reasons, but the most common is that we have found no or insufficient injustice to warrant pursuing the matter further.

Outside jurisdiction: these are cases which were outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

Premature complaints: decisions that the complaint is premature. The LGO does not normally consider a complaint unless a council has first had an opportunity to deal with that complaint itself. So if someone complains to the LGO without having taken the matter up with a council, the LGO will usually refer it back to the council as a 'premature complaint' to see if the council can itself resolve the matter.

Total excl premature: all decisions excluding those where we referred the complaint back to the council as 'premature'.

3. Response times

These figures record the average time the council takes to respond to our first enquiries on a complaint. We measure this in calendar days from the date we send our letter/fax/email to the date that we receive a substantive response from the council. The council's figures may differ somewhat, since they are likely to be recorded from the date the council receives our letter until the despatch of its response.

4. Average local authority response times 2005/06

This table gives comparative figures for average response times by authorities in England, by type of authority, within three time bands.

MIKE HAMMOND'S DIRECTORATEUPDATE ON COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING PERIOD APRIL 2004 TO MARCH 2005(updated information in bold)

| Date Received | Summary of Complaint | Outcome of Complaint |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| PLANNING (CONTROL) | | |
| 4 February 2005 | Window on new building opposite her property affects her privacy and light. Subsequent complaint to the Ombudsman | New building acceptable when judged against guidelines on light. Loss of privacy not a planning consideration. Overhanging trees to be pruned. Ombudsman declined to pursue – no or insufficient evidence of maladministration (without report). |

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING THE PERIOD APRIL 2005 TO MARCH 2006

| Date Received | Summary of Complaint | Outcome of Complaint |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | | |
| 1 June 2005 | Failure to ensure removal of sewage sludge stockpile. | Investigation reveals that no statutory nuisance being caused by stockpile. |
| 22 September 2005 | Unhelpful and bureaucratic process when dealing with stray dog. | Sympathy for stressful predicament but correct procedures followed. |
| 16 October 2005 | Alleges Cleanaway refuse vehicle driver used insulting and racially motivated language. | Driver refutes allegation. Complainant may pursue through Commission for Racial Equality. |
| HOUSING | | |
| 15 April 2005 | Council has failed to deal equitably with their request to be rehomed. | Council policies have been strictly observed. Subsequent complaint to the Ombudsman, who declined to investigate – no or insufficient evidence of maladministration (without report). |
| 27 January 2006 | Son and daughter-in-law homeless – incorrect advice from Housing Officer has prejudiced their position. | Allegation not substantiated – clear advice as to legal position provided. |

| Date Received | Summary of Complaint | Outcome of Complaint |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 17 February 2006 | Claim Council discriminating against them (disabled tenant) – failure to complete promised alterations to property and dedicated disabled parking bay. | Acknowledge some delays, but considerable efforts made to solve various problems. Unable to provide dedicated parking space. Do not believe there has been discrimination. Subsequent complaint to the Ombudsman – decision awaited. |
| LEISURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES | | |
| 4 January 2006 | Permission obtained for hedge reduction but after 11 months work still outstanding. | Unreserved apology. Work now completed and letter of thanks received from complainant. |
| PLANNING (CONTROL) | | |
| 25 April 2005 | Unacceptable delays in determining application. | Apology for delay and timetable given for future action. |
| 23 May 2005 | Handling of various planning applications for closure of footpaths on Anglia Estate “manipulated” to ensure approval. | Full explanation and assurance that all procedures were correctly followed. |
| June/July 2005 | Alleging various improprieties in handling of planning application for residential development at former HMS Ganges, Shotley. | Each complainant given individual response explaining precisely how application dealt with and refuting any allegations of mishandling. |
| 21 July 2005 | Alleges undeclared personal conflict of interest by Planning Officers considering a planning application. | Investigation by Solicitor to Council who concluded that no officers involved in the matter had a conflict of interest by reason of their professional relationship. |
| 26 July 2005 | Council has failed to take enforcement action against new dwelling built contrary to approved plan, and out of keeping with neighbouring properties. | Accept building is higher than submitted plan but within acceptable tolerance, so not felt to be expedient to take enforcement action. Subsequent complaint to Ombudsman who declined to pursue – no or insufficient evidence of maladministration. |
| 2 August 2005 | Planning permission granted for warehouse et al in opposition to views of local residents. | Objections were taken into account, but Members decided that expansion of employment site outweighed other considerations such as amenity, access, etc. |
| 10 August 2005 | Aggrieved that Planning Officers refused to negotiate and application was refused. | As previous advice had not been taken, the Planning Officers had no confidence that further advice would be heeded, so proper course was to issue a refusal. |
| 27 July 2005 | Alleges that inaccurate drawings led to incorrect decision being made. | Allegation refuted and explanation provided as to process carried out in determining application. |
| 22 September 2005 | Neighbouring extension overlooks complainants’ property, windows should have been removed and complaints not answered. | Acknowledge building may not be in accordance with plans – investigation underway. Apology offered for lack of response, due to period of illness in enforcement team. |

| Date Received | Summary of Complaint | Outcome of Complaint |
|---|--|--|
| 7 November 2005 | Seeking disabled accommodation for client in open countryside. Alleges discrimination under Disability Discrimination Act. | Site proposed is contrary to policy and this policy is applied equally and fairly to all applicants, so no discrimination. It is open to applicant to make a formal planning application. |
| 29 November 2005 | Complaint direct to Ombudsman – Council would not allow restoration of oak mullions. | Ombudsman declined to pursue – outside jurisdiction. |
| 19 December 2005 | Failure by Planning Officer to properly address concerns raised over this application. | Fundamental difference of opinion as to effect development will have, but correct procedures followed. |
| 27 January 2006 | Inaction following decision by Planning Committee led to unauthorised warehouse remaining in situ for over 2 years. | Timetable of events provided. Acknowledge delays due to necessary additional consultation. But enforcement appeal process is a very lengthy process over which BDC has little control. |
| 8 February 2006 | Planning permission granted for takeaway business has resulted in parking problems and blocked access. | Advised complainant that it is not possible to reserve a parking space on a public highway. However, contacting SCC to investigate ways of preventing access being blocked. |
| 21 February 2006 | Unhappy that his objections to a planning application were not taken into account. | No evidence to support this complaint. |
| 8 March 2006 | Inefficient handling of planning application (for site in Sudbury) resulted in refusal. | Refute allegation. Pre-submission advice was not taken and subsequent changes considered too significant to be considered as amending application. Due to Government targets, it was necessary to issue refusal. |
| 6 March 2006 | Complaints about Council Tax collection, actions by Building Control and contends that new dwelling in Hadleigh is an eyesore. | Council Tax payments dealt with as sensitively as possible. Building Control provided a great deal of support and advice – complainant's own engineers caused delays. Do not agree over comments about impact of new dwelling in Hadleigh. |
| 29 March 2006 | Alleges inconsistent and misleading advice given, resulting in delays and additional costs. | While contending that consistent advice has been given, pragmatic solution achieved to satisfaction of complainant. |
| PLANNING POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | | |
| 16 August 2005 | Officer displayed unhelpful and bureaucratic manner in dealing with their enquiry. | Apology given for failure to deliver the quality of service we strive to achieve. |
| 8 February 2006 | Inaccurate information given on Local Plan – accusation of deliberate withholding of information and deception | Open and transparent process throughout – complainant's objections taken fully into account by Inspector. |
| TECHNICAL SERVICES | | |
| 11 April 2005 | Time taken to effect repairs. | Repairs have been carried out within prescribed timescale – complaint unjustified. |

| Date Received | Summary of Complaint | Outcome of Complaint |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 24 June 2005 | Complaint referred by Ombudsman for local settlement – condensation problem in bungalow. | Investigations underway to determine cause of problem. |
| 10 July 2005 | Various issues – parking, flytipping, anti social behaviour | Full response setting out actions by the Council to deal with various issues raised. |
| MISCELLANEOUS | | |
| 16 December 2005 | Bins, drains, kitchen – electrical repairs/upgrade/compensation, dog mess, anti-social behaviour, street signs, lawns and hedges. | <p>Points answered in the order that they were raised, as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A further Works Instruction has been issued to the contractor reminding them that the complainant is on the ‘Collect & Return’ List. 2. Our records reveal that the drains have been blocked on a number of occasions over the past 5 years, but all blockages have been dealt with on a same day basis. 3. The Council offered the tenant a new kitchen in 2004, however, he had purchased and fitted his own units and wanted the Council to complete the works. It was explained that this would cost half the cost of our standard kitchen, but the projected life is likely to be only half of the 30 years projected life of our kitchen units. We do not generally offer compensation in these situations, but should he ever leave the property he may be entitled to some compensation. 4. No compensation would have been offered for any works carried out by the tenant as Council appointed contractors would carry out any electrical works necessary. Regarding the offer of accommodation; the application for re-housing was made at a time when the tenant was going to be made homeless, at that time the only property empty and available was the one offered. There was no indication by an Occupational Therapist or GP supporting the need for a 2 bedroomed ground floor property. |

| Date Received | Summary of Complaint | Outcome of Complaint |
|---------------|----------------------|---|
| | | <p>5. The Neighbourhood Warden has been passed details of the complaint about dog mess and the Parish Council, who is responsible for the provision of bins in the area, has been asked to consider installing another bin in the alleyway.</p> <p>6. Babergh's Anti-social Behaviour Network Officer has been asked to make contact with the tenant.</p> <p>7. The road signs are being replaced, repaired or installed as soon as possible.</p> <p>8. The tenant has been sent an application form for the Grass Cutting and Hedge Trimming Scheme.</p> |

HELEN STYLE'S DIRECTORATE

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING THE PERIOD APRIL 2005 TO MARCH 2006

| Date Received | Summary of Complaint | Outcome of Complaint |
|------------------|--|--|
| REVENUES | | |
| 17 February 2005 | Notification that full Council rent is due 4 days after her notifying the Council of her Mother-in-Law's death. | Apologised for insensitivity on our part and any stress that may have added to the overall situation. Confirmed that settlement of any outstanding bills fall upon a person's estate not their family or relatives. |
| 24 March 2005 | Unable to pay Council Tax over 10 months. | Explained that agreements are considered with taxpayers where they are finding it difficult to pay, but any agreement is for one year only, at the end of the financial year instalments change back to being due over 10 months. At this time the agreement can be reviewed. |
| 22 March 2005 | Feels he has been treated unfairly. The Council could have taken a more lenient view rather than the severe action of prosecution. | The CE responded and said she believed the case had been dealt with fairly by ourselves and the Magistrates, however, if the complainant felt that we had in some way been guilty of maladministration, it was suggested he put his case to the Local Government Ombudsman. The complainant did not refer the case to the Ombudsman. |

| Date Received | Summary of Complaint | Outcome of Complaint |
|--|--|---|
| 27 June 2005 | Actions of the Revenues staff in dealing with missing payment. | Apologised for the distress and inconvenience caused. The error should not have occurred and we will look again at our procedures to ensure the same mistake is not made again. |
| 7 February 2006 | The decision to suspend his Housing and Council Tax Benefit and decision to interview him under caution. | Apologised for the distress and inconvenience caused. Our internal procedures failed on this occasion and Benefit should not have been suspended or a visit made by the investigation team. More attention should have been given to the overall situation. |
| LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES | | |
| 5 April 2005 | Council's handling of application to purchase/lease land was improperly dealt with. | Full explanation given of procedure, plus apology for delays in dealing with enquiries. Subsequent complaint to Ombudsman who declined to pursue – Ombudsman's discretion. |

| Division | Number of Complaints | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2000/2001⁺ | 2001/2002 | 2002/2003 | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 |
| Environmental Services | 1 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Housing | 5 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 3 |
| Leisure & Community Services | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Planning (Control) | 8 | 16 | 15 | 17 | 22 | 18 |
| Planning (Policy & Economic Development) | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Technical Services | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 3 |
| Miscellaneous | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Revenues | 6 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 5 |
| Corporate Support | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 1 | 0 |
| Legal & Administrative Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total Number of Complaints | 23 | 40 | 32 | 38 | 52 | 37 |

+ = covers period from November 2000 to March 2001 (start of PA's taking responsibility for formal complaints)