

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Corporate Support Manager

REPORT NUMBER E159

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

DATE OF MEETING 27 September 2005

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 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 improvements are sought to reduce the number of premature complaints to the Ombudsman, and to reduce the time taken to reply to the Ombudsman's enquiries.
- 2.3 That a link from the Council's website to the Local Government Ombudsman's website be investigated.
- 2.4 That the Ombudsman is invited to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee at the appropriate time to comment on the 2005/06 annual letter.
- 2.5 That, subject to quality assurance, appropriate officers participate in the complaints handling training courses provided by the Local Government Ombudsman.

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 cost can be met from existing training budgets.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 The annual letter (Appendix 1) reports that in 2004/05 the Ombudsman received 21 complaints against the Council. In 2003/04 it received only 12, and in 2002/03 it received 25. The Ombudsman would expect to see some fluctuation in the number of complaints from year to year.
- 4.2 No maladministration decisions have been made by the Ombudsman against the Council, and no local settlements have been made.

- 4.3 The number of complaints is relatively small in view of the considerable number of decisions the Council takes on behalf of its citizens each year. Much of the increase was in planning complaints, up from four to 11, and planning was a service area involving half of all complaints. However, the 2003/04 figure for planning complaints would seem to have been abnormally low.
- 4.4 The Ombudsman classified seven decisions as premature complaints, where the complaint was referred back to the Council to address. The Ombudsman has asked that the Council consider exploring reasons for the relatively high number of premature complaints made against the Council.
- 4.5 The Ombudsman asks councils to respond to his initial enquiries within 21 days. This Council's average was 28.3 days. Only 22% of all district councils manage to respond within 21 days, whilst 58% responded within 28 days. From 1 July 2005, the Ombudsman has revised his target to 28 days. Some consideration should be given to improving the Council's response times.
- 4.6 The Ombudsman has also requested that councils provide links to his services from their website. This should be investigated further to ensure that such a link would be of benefit and would not have an adverse effect on the number of premature complaints made.
- 4.7 The Ombudsman has also given the Council the opportunity to invite him to visit and discuss the annual letter. This committee may wish to take up that offer, but tentative enquiries have shown that a visit wouldn't be possible until the new year. It is proposed that the Ombudsman is invited to a meeting of this committee at the appropriate time to comment on the 2005/06 annual letter.
- 4.8 As part of its deliberation of the 2003/04 annual letter, this committee resolved that the Ombudsman be informed that the Council may wish to participate in its proposed training courses depending on cost. These training courses have now been developed for staff who handle complaints in the higher stages of an authority's complaints procedure, and for frontline staff. These one day courses for a group of up to 15 cost £750, and it is proposed that, subject to officers satisfying themselves on the quality of the courses, one of each type is arranged.
- 4.9 Appendix 2 sets out a summary of complaints received in Mike Hammond's and Geoff Kistner's directorates for 2004/05. The Chief Executive's Directorate did not receive any complaints in 2004/05.
- 4.10 In 2003/04, Mike Hammond's Directorate dealt with 35 complaints. This rose to 40 in 2004/05. All have been resolved satisfactorily.
- 4.11 In 2003/04, Geoff Kistner's Directorate dealt with 3 complaints. This rose to 12 in 2004/05. Again, all have been resolved satisfactorily.

5. **APPENDICES**

- (a) Appendix 1 – annual letter 2004/05.
(b) Appendix 2 – complaints received by Mike Hammond's and Geoff Kistner's Directorates.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO**

None.

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21 June 2005

FIRST CLASS

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



**The Commission for
Local Administration in England**

Tony Redmond
Local Government Ombudsman

Peter MacMahon
Deputy Ombudsman

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

Dear Ms Rockall

Annual Letter 2004/05

I wrote to you in January 2005 to explain our proposals for annual letters for 2005 and to invite your comments on the format of statistics and plans to make the letters more widely available in the future. We are grateful to all those councils who replied.

As a result of the comments received, we have decided not to include the proposed simplified heading of 'complaints upheld in full or part' above the figures for reports finding maladministration and local settlements. We agree with those who say this would misrepresent those cases where a local settlement is offered by a council before I, or one of my colleagues, have decided whether to uphold a complaint; and that it could undermine this practice, which would not be to the benefit of complainants.

There was widespread support for our proposals to put annual letters on our website and to share the letters with the Audit Commission, so we will go ahead with this from 2006. We will wait for four weeks after sending you the letter before making it more widely available in these ways to give you an opportunity to consider and review the letter first. If a letter is found to contain any factual inaccuracy we will reissue it.

I am writing now 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.

In addition to this narrative 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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Complaints received

In 2004/2005 I received 21 complaints against your Council, up from 12 the year before (though this may have been unusually low: there were 25 complaints in 2002/2003, albeit a number of these concerned a single planning decision). Much of this increase was in planning complaints, up from 4 to 11, and planning was the service area involving half of all complaints. Of course, the nature of the area and the Council's services might mean that a high proportion of such complaints is expected. Housing, local taxation, drainage and refuse collection/waste disposal were the subject areas of the 10 remaining complaints.

Decisions on complaints

Almost half my decisions last year were to refer the complaint back to the Council to address, because it had not been given a reasonable opportunity to consider and respond to the matter before I became involved. The national average is that a quarter of complaints are premature, so you may wish to explore any reasons for the relatively high number of premature complaints against the Council. In four cases the complainant later re-submitted their complaint to me, because they were not satisfied with the Council's response. I did not consider it necessary to issue a report or conclude a local settlement of the complaint in any case.

Your Council's complaints procedure and handling of complaints

I ask councils to reply to enquiries within 21 days. Your Council was a week over this target figure. We recognise that it can be difficult for some councils to meet the current target and provide good quality, comprehensive responses to our enquiries. So, from 1 July 2005, we are revising the target to 28 days.

Links and references to my office

As part of our response to the national e-government and joined-up working initiatives, we ask councils to provide links to our service from their websites. While the Council's website does say that it will provide details, no direct contacts for our service are provided. We should be happy to provide some standard text and a static banner which can be used for the link to our website.

Training

Last year, we told you about the training we were developing for local authorities on complaints handling as part of our role in promoting good administrative practice and asked for your views. Our pilot programme has been extremely successful with very positive feedback from the local authorities involved, so we are now increasing the amount of training that we can provide.

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A key element of the training is our Effective Complaint Handling course, specifically developed for council staff who deal with complaints as a significant part of their job. This one-day course is aimed at those who handle complaints in the higher stages of the authority's complaints procedure, up to the point of deciding the complaint. A further course has been developed on Complaint Handling for Front-line Staff and other specialist areas are also being considered to meet the needs of local authorities and further promote good practice.

All courses are presented by an experienced investigator, so participants benefit from their knowledge and expertise of complaint handling. Courses can be delivered to a single local authority or to staff from a group of authorities at a regional centre. We do have to charge for the

training, just to cover our costs, but the feedback has shown that councils consider it good value for money.

I have enclosed some further information about our complaints handling training courses including contact details.

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.

I visit councils in the area covered by my Office – as does my Deputy – on a continuing basis. We have already visited several councils over the last year or two and have programmed several further visits throughout 2005. During these visits we explain our work, and how our service is changing, but we also use the opportunity to discuss the annual letter with senior officers and councillors. You may not yet have had a visit from us but we are hoping to have visited all councils in the area before too long. We hope you will take the opportunity at that time to comment on the annual letters you receive from me, so that we can learn how to improve them.

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 that reads "Tony Redmond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'T' and 'R'.

Tony Redmond

Complaints received by subject area	Highways	Housing (not incl. HB)	Local Taxation	Other	Planning	Total
01/04/2004 - 31/03/2005	0	3	4	3	11	21
2003 / 2004	2	1	0	5	4	12
2002 / 2003	1	4	0	3	17	25

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
01/04/2004 - 31/03/2005	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	7	8	15
2003 / 2004	0	2	0	0	5	3	4	2	14	16
2002 / 2003	0	1	0	0	7	6	3	8	17	25

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
01/04/2004 - 31/03/2005	7	28.3
2003 / 2004	3	22.0
2002 / 2003	9	27.9

Average local authority response times 01/04/2004 to 31/03/2005

Types of authority	<= 21 days %	22 - 28 days %	>= 29 days %
District Councils	22	38	40
Unitary Authorities	11	24	65
Metropolitan Authorities	17	44	39
County Councils	12	59	29
London Boroughs	9	21	70
National Park Authorities	60	20	20

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 which we refer back to the council for consideration. The figures may include some complaints which 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. (The figures for the year 2002/3 may include reports which had a finding of 'local settlement'. For legal reasons, the LGO no longer issues reports with this finding.)

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 2004/05

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

Complaints received by Mike Hammond's and Geoff Kistner's Directorates

Mike Hammond's Directorate

Update on complaints received during period April 2003 to March 2004 (updated information in bold)

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
PLANNING (CONTROL)		
4 November 2003	Planning conditions being flouted – no action by officers. Subsequent complaint to Ombudsman.	Extensive explanation of how compliance with planning conditions is monitored and breaches dealt with. Full investigation by Ombudsman, who recommended payment of £150 as local settlement to compensate for inconvenience due to delays in enforcing planning conditions. Monitoring procedures now in place to avoid recurrence of similar situation.

Complaints received during the period April 2004 to March 2005

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES		
26 April 2004	Pest infestation caused by her tenant – claims Council advised her incorrectly causing her stress and wasted time, for which she seeks compensation.	Council followed correct procedures and full explanation provided to complainant. Compensation not considered appropriate.
6 May 2004	Request for additional bin refused without any logical reason given. Confidential information divulged.	Complainant provided with full explanation as to why an additional bin cannot be provided. Council refutes suggestion that confidential information passed to a third party.
5 July 2004	Time taken to process request for larger bin. Dissatisfied with fortnightly collection.	Apology for inconvenience caused and explanation as to why larger bin cannot be supplied.
3 August 2004	Noise nuisance from neighbours.	Explanation of steps taken by BDC to mediate. Diary sent for completion.
11 October 2004	Complaint direct from Ombudsman – brown bin scheme.	Ombudsman declined to pursue – outside jurisdiction.

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
26 October 2004	Refuse not collected from his property. Correspondence not answered.	Apology for poor service on both counts. Situation now rectified.
1 November 2004	Unhappy that disabled facilities grant not awarded.	Explanation as to why grant not forthcoming in these particular circumstances.
HOUSING		
21 May 2004	Problems of neighbour nuisance and harassment – alleged lack of support from Council.	Full explanation of housing allocations policy. Confirm that support given whenever problem brought to Council's attention.
21 June 2005	Complaint referred by Ombudsman for local settlement – continuing homelessness of daughter – BDC's failure to provide her with permanent accommodation.	Thorough investigation of complaint. All procedures correctly followed. Subsequently complained again to the Ombudsman who, following full investigation, declined to pursue the complaint – Ombudsman's discretion.
29 June 2004	Claim that member of staff was rude and unhelpful in dealing with housing application. General concerns about delays in rehousing.	No evidence to support the claim. Delays in rehousing due to construction problems on new build and beyond the Council's control.
9 July 2004	Smoke from neighbour's wood burning stove causing nuisance and is a health hazard.	Complainant advised that there is no health hazard associated with smoke from wood burner – it complies with Building Regulations and no other complaints have been received.
16 July 2004	Neighbour nuisance/harassment.	Complainant has refused mediation service and recording equipment. Without evidence and co-operation from complainant, no easy solution. Complainant is on transfer register.
21 October 2004	Complainant claims he was forced to leave his private tenancy because the Council carried out repairs to next door property without due regard to his amenities. He also felt he should have been given tenancy of the refurbished property.	Works to next door property carried out during day and with minimum disruption. Lettings policy strictly adhered to when property was re-let.
PLANNING (CONTROL)		
14 April 2004	Planning permission granted for development with unsafe vehicular access. Subsequent complaint to the Ombudsman.	Both SCC and the independent highway engineer commissioned by BDC advised there were no sustainable reasons to refuse planning permission. Ombudsman declined to pursue – no or insufficient evidence of maladministration.
21 April 2004	Council failed to enforce conditions attached to planning permission.	Apologised for not taking action sooner. Legal process underway to seek compliance with conditions.

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
23 April 2004	Allege various incidents of mishandling application for planning permission.	Investigation reveals that procedures for dealing with this application were fully complied with.
11 June 2004	Complaint referred by Ombudsman for local settlement – alleges fault in the way the Council dealt with planning application, including giving misleading advice to Members about Government guidance and local planning policies.	Full explanation on how decision was arrived at quite properly by Members. Complainant subsequently wrote again to the Ombudsman who declined to pursue – no or insufficient evidence of maladministration.
15 June 2004	Exhaust vent and fumes from adjoining property causing problems – Council appear unable to offer constructive solutions.	Council powerless to help unless there is a public health hazard.
Undated	S106 Agreement covering use of garage.	Explanation given for action taken by Council.
23 June 2004	Alleges that planning application was mishandled and that new building not in accordance with approved plans.	Apology offered for any shortcomings in service provided and extensive explanation of Council's position in relation to this application.
19 July 2004	Referred by Ombudsman for local settlement –allege unauthorised development at Old Joe's Driving Range.	Full explanation concerning development on this site. Subsequently referred again to the Ombudsman, who, after full investigation, declined to pursue – no or insufficient evidence of maladministration.
20 July 2004	Neighbour operating limousine service and creating nuisance.	Enforcement proceedings underway, although hopeful that business will be removed shortly.
23 July 2004	Handling of application – in particular his objections not taken into account and lack of communication.	No evidence to support either complaint.
27 October 2004	Allege incorrect advice from planning officers led to making an application which had no chance of success.	Full explanation of procedures given – refute any irregularities. Subsequent complaint to Ombudsman, who declined to pursue – his discretion.
29 October 2004	Discrepancy in height of building.	Slight variation in ridge height from approved plan deemed to be acceptable.
11 November 2004	Complaint referred by Ombudsman for local settlement – extension to next door property has reduced light and privacy.	Complainant did not raise any objections when notified of planning application – too late now to rescind or modify the planning permission.
10 December 2004	Lack of action over alleged breach of planning condition at local airfield.	Council doing all it reasonably can to ensure planning conditions are complied with.
4 January 2005	Mishandling of application – no agricultural need for dwelling; occupier has no agricultural need and design of house unsuitable.	Full investigation reveals application dealt with appropriately – allegations unsubstantiated.

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
18 January 2005	Contravention of planning conditions.	Explanation of process and commitment to liaise with developers to ensure compliance.
25 January 2005	Aggrieved at decision to grant permission for erection of double garage opposite his house. Subsequent complaint to the Ombudsman.	Full investigation by Ombudsman, who declined to pursue complaint on the grounds of no or insufficient evidence of maladministration.
4 February 2005	Window on new building opposite her property affects her privacy and light.	New building acceptable when judged against guidelines on light. Loss of privacy not a planning consideration. Overhanging trees to be pruned.
14 February 2005	Inadequate consultation process and highway issues.	Explained procedures – no evidence of mishandling.
11 February 2005	Council's lack of concern about deteriorating condition of neighbouring property.	Apologised for not keeping complainant informed of position. Explained legal options available to the Council.
4 March 2005	Correct procedures were not followed, and misleading information provided when application was dealt with at Committee. Subsequent complaint to the Ombudsman.	Cannot agree with complainants' contentions – no evidence of misrepresentation. Ombudsman declined to pursue – no or insufficient evidence of maladministration (without report).
31 March 2005	New development inappropriate; views of local residents not taken into account.	Permission granted on appeal; however, confirm that development is not in accordance with approved plan – enforcement investigation underway.
TECHNICAL SERVICES		
21 May 2004	Dampness and mould in house – Council has been unable to rectify problems.	Arrangements made for joint inspection by Environmental and Technical Services in order to agree appropriate way forward.
4 August 2004)	Flood damage to flat – seeking compensation.	Council cannot accept liability for flood damage caused by obstruction placed in a ditch by a third party.
13 August 2004	Took possession of Council house in January 2004 but essential repairs not completed until July 2004. Unhappy with standard of service.	Apology offered for poor service – new procedures in place to prevent reoccurrence. Compensation of £100 offered for inconvenience caused.
16 February 2005	Complaint referred by Ombudsman for local settlement – repairs to roof not carried out satisfactorily.	Property was subject to a “Right to Buy” application so only minor roof repairs initially carried out, although more extensive repairs subsequently done.

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
12 March 2005	Complaint to Ombudsman – work undertaken by Council to alleviate surface water drainage problem unsuccessful, so charge levied on them is unwarranted.	Two separate, unconnected, flooding incidents occurred, but Council correctly sought to recover costs for work to soakaway, unrelated to second flooding incident. Ombudsman declined to pursue the complaint – his discretion.

Geoff Kistner's Directorate

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
REVENUES		
22 April 2004	Referred by Ombudsman for local settlement – Delay in dealing with application for Housing Benefit and falsely being accused and persecuted.	After several visits/meetings a letter was sent on 28 May explaining that the reluctance of the complainant's tenant to answer our enquiries at the time had delayed dealing with the application, but that we could now give formal notification of the benefit entitlement. Also, that a complete review of the sequence of events was being undertaken and a full response would be received by 7 June. On 3 June a letter was sent stating that we do not accept that the Council has wasted money and resources pursuing this issue. Fraudulent claims for Benefit are a serious matter and the Council is committed to eliminating that possibility.
18 May 2004	Whether a property is still a dwelling and therefore Council Tax is payable.	A response was sent on 19 May explaining that decisions on whether a property constitutes a dwelling and should or should not be included in the Valuation List is the responsibility of the Valuation Office Agency. Also, that current legislation allows the Council to amend or vary the discount previously granted for long-term empty properties.
12 July 2004	Claim of mistake with original Council Tax bill so now unreasonable to ask for payment. Subsequent complaint to Ombudsman.	A response was sent on 27 July explaining that after consideration of the Council Tax Regulations that prescribe the content that forms a bill it is believed that the bills sent comply with these regulations. Full investigation by Ombudsman, who found complaint unjustified.

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
19 August 2004	Not happy with tone and content of letter sent to mother.	A response was sent on 2 September apologising and assurances made that action would be taken to ensure that it would not happen again.
22 September 2004	Not being given required advice by Council Tax Division. Also, rudeness of member of staff when rang into office regarding Council Tax demand.	A response was sent on 1 October stating that improvements would be made to the form and our explanation of the process to be followed. From evidence held we do not share the complainant's description of rudeness of staff. Although it is understandable why tension may have existed, it should not lead to the use of expletives to staff.
11 October 2004	Wants an apology for officer's attitude.	A response was sent on 22 October explaining that the member of staff had felt she was being helpful and certainly did not intend to create any offence, but apologised for any distress and concern suffered.
15 October 2004	Could not pay Council Tax payment at Sudbury Office by Debit Card.	A response was sent on 21 October apologising for the unsatisfactory way in which staff dealt with the complainant.
18 October 2004	Referred by Ombudsman for local settlement – Council has wrongly instigated Bailiffs action against him for non-payment of Council Tax.	A response was sent on 22 October stating that investigations reveal that the correct process has been followed and therefore no action is required on behalf of the Council. Full investigation by Ombudsman, who found no or insufficient evidence of maladministration.
17 February 2005	Notification that full Council rent is due 4 days after her notifying the Council of her Mother-in-Law's death.	A response was sent on 25 February expressing condolences and apologies for that insensitivity.
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.	A response was sent on 4 April explaining that the seriousness of offences is determined by our prosecution policy, not on an arbitrary basis. All cases the Council considers for prosecution go through the test of public interest. Two independent solicitors considered the case in that context and recommended prosecution. In addition, had there been doubt on that issue this point could also have been picked up by the Magistrates during the course of the hearing.
24 March 2005	Unable to pay Council Tax over 10 months.	A response was sent on 30 March explaining that agreements are considered with taxpayers where they are finding it difficult to pay over 10 months, but this is for one year only, and at the end of the year the agreement is reviewed.

Date Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome of Complaint
CORPORATE SUPPORT		
15 November 2004	State of the District event clashing with Public Inquiry on Babergh Plan.	A response was sent on 18 November stating that the Public Inquiry has been taking place over a number of months, and it is necessary to progress other issues, such as the State of the District event, at the same time. We will do our best next year to try and ensure that there are no clashes of dates for significant issues.

Division	Number of Complaints				
	2000/2001⁺	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/04	2004/05
Environmental Services	1	4	3	6	7
Housing	5	7	9	9	6
Leisure & Community Services	0	1	0	2	0
Planning (Control)	8	16	15	17	22
Planning (Policy & Economic Development)	1	3	1	1	0
Technical Services	2	2	3	0	5
Revenues	6	7	1	3	11
Corporate Support	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Total Number of Complaints	23	41	33	38	52

+ = only covers 5 month period from November 2000 to March 2001 (start of PA's taking responsibility for formal complaints)

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