

**The Planning and Building Control Service  
Complaints about our service and how we responded – decisions to April 2008**

<b>WDC Complaint No.</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>The Complaint</b>	<b>How we responded and any improvements that resulted</b>
513	20/03/08	Mr B Complained that two planning officers requested and then met with Mr B's clients to discuss a planning application. Says this action was 'most improper and unprecedented'. Clients stated that during this meeting issues relating to his practice and himself were discussed, which lead to his appointment with the client being terminated.	This was the subject of a Stage 2 complaint (by the Director of another service and a Council Member). The investigation found there were no grounds to uphold the complaint. Mr B was informed of the procedure to take his complaint to the Ombudsman if he was still dissatisfied.
512	17/03/08	Mr C Complained regarding handling of affair of planning and building control issues, and attitude adopted in previous correspondence and the content of the letter.	This complaint was investigated as Stage 2 (by the Director of another service and a Council Member). They found the complaint was not justified bur did acknowledge some misunderstandings. <i>Further Action: Letters to WDC officers to be acknowledge by that officer even if subsequently dealt with by another officer</i>
507	07/03/08	Mr & Mrs F were not notified of a planning application despite living opposite the site. Also staff member was very abrupt when they phone to inquire	We explained to the complainant that although strictly their property would not be required to be consulted we did accept that given their proximity to the site direct consultation would be appropriate. We apologised for this omission. Unfortunately the complainant was unable to identify the officer they considered rude so we were unable to investigate that aspect of the complaint.
506	29/01/08	Mr & Mrs D complained that planning permission was granted for a garage on neighbours property and that they were not adequately consulted	The complainant had been consulted. No errors were apparent in process or assessment of case. Mr & Mrs D took their complaint to the Ombudsman who found no evidence of

			maladministration
500	07/02/08	Mr C Complained re problems and delays in registering an application. Specifically that *** has not returned calls	There were misunderstandings regarding the registration of this application and mis-interpretation of the fee regulations. We apologised to Mr C and accepted the fee already paid.
494	18/01/08	Mr C complained about the procedure of objecting to a planning app. Was not given sufficient time to speak at committee	A response was sent to Mr C confirming the arrangements for objecting to an application. Members of the public are allowed to speak for 2 minutes (to support or object to the application) Committee meeting. Mr C had used this opportunity in full
484	17/12/07	Neighbours complained that despite being told an application would go to Committee it was approved under delegation without notification	This complaint was investigated by the Ombudsman who found no evidence of maladministration. A letter to complainant 20/12/07 explaining correct procedures followed. The local Council Member and Parish Council had been informed.
481	07/12/07	Mr W complained regarding the approval, management and enforcement of a development in Crowborough	Letter sent explaining enforcement is discretionary. No action to be taken
477	29/11/07	Mr S expressed dissatisfaction with the conduct of a Planning officer regarding application	The complaint was not found to be justified but a meeting was arranged with the complainant to discuss the application.
474	27/11/07	Mr C complained that Planning permission was granted for a hay barn which was converted into a dwelling (without permission). This was reported to us in November 2006. WDC enforcement allegedly told the complainant that they did not have enough time to investigate before the 'four year rule could be applied' the 'barn' is now being lived in and the complainant alleges that a precedent has been set.	This complaint was investigated by the Ombudsman who found no evidence of maladministration. However the Enforcement officers will continue to monitor development on this site.
469	07/11/07	Mr T complained that his neighbours extension was	The height of the extension was inspected by

		higher than shown on the planning application	enforcement officers and found to be within limits of tolerance
467	25/10/07	Mr & Mrs S Complaint in respect of handling and outcome of planning application	Mr & Mrs S were unhappy with the granting of planning permission at a neighbouring property and took their complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman found no evidence of maladministration
464	10/10/07	Mr E complained that WDC failed to reply to email communications	After lengthy correspondence with the complainant it was felt that we were unable to add anything of value unless new points were raised. We informed Mr E of this decision.
462	18/10/07	Mrs B Further to previous LGO complaint stating that the council did not consult complainant as promised about the details of the landscaping scheme for the adjoining development and has not required the developer to provide appropriate screening to safeguard her privacy and amenity	The Ombudsman found no evidence of maladministration with this complaint. The Council were unable to assist in this dispute which was a matter between the resident and the developer
456	02/10/07	Mr J complained to the Ombudsman about lack of enforcement action at a neighbouring property	The Ombudsman found that there was no evidence of maladministration.
	16/10/07	Mrs B complained to the Ombudsman regarding a planning decision. The resulting development caused some overshadowing and loss of light.	The Ombudsman found that there had been failings in the evaluation of the planning application and a local settlement was reached with the complainant. <i>Further Action:</i> <i>Planning officers have been given further guidelines and training on overshadowing calculations</i>
454	01/10/07	Mr F complained that he did not receive timely or satisfactory answers to letters and emails seeking advice on making a planning application and that the guidance notes were inadequate for the type of application he was submitting.	<i>Response:</i> We have apologised for the delays in response times. <i>Further action:</i> i) <i>guidance notes improved</i> ii) <i>we are introducing a letter monitoring system</i>

447	14/08/07	Mr A complained that 'the Council acted recklessly and without due consideration to the effect that the Planning Application granted will have on our property and its future value'	This complaint was investigated by the Ombudsman who found no fault in the Council's handling of the planning application in question
437	23/07/07	Mr H Complained that a committee report to the Development Control Committee was written prematurely thereby denying him the right to object	<i>Response:</i> We responded to Mr H reassuring him that all consultation responses received before committee date are included for consideration. Matter resolved
438	23/07/07	Mr P complained that a planning application was not handled correctly and concerned that the application 'sailed through'	<i>Response:</i> Details of the procedure explained to Mr P assured him that this was not the case. Matter resolved
430	20/07/07	Inconsistencies in advice given by Planning Officers causing distress and delays	<i>Response:</i> Letter sent advising of options, the right to appeal against planning decision and an offer of a meeting to discuss. Matter resolved
424	30/05/07	Dispute re planning application	<i>Response:</i> Letter sent explaining Planning policy/procedures, complainant invited to view planning files
421	29/05/07	Mr C complained that he had not received replies to requests for confirmation of regulations from the Planning Department in due time.	<i>Response:</i> Legal advice on Agricultural Determination was unclear that our original response was unclear. Follow up letter sent answering all points. Matter resolved