Annexe 4

Lessons learned from complaints received about Waverley's services in 2008/09

The following paragraphs give examples of lessons learned from the complaints received in 2008/09.

Communication between Waverley and its customers

A number of complaints received about development control matters have highlighted the need to keep planning applicants updated on any delays in processing their applications, and complainants informed about progress in investigating planning enforcement matters.

Other communications issues have included the importance of keeping housing tenants updated about progress in planned maintenance work at their home, and ensuring that tenants are given clear and accurate information at the start of their tenancy, for example on the way in which gardens are allocated at properties that are divided into flats.

Complaints about parking enforcement have highlighted the importance of parking attendants communicating clearly with members of the public in order to avoid confusion about the parking regulations.

Internal communications

Development control complaints have revealed that there is not always effective communication between the administrative team and case officers.

A number of complaints have emphasised the need for improved communication between Service Areas, eg liaison between Environmental Health and Housing on noise complaints. There have also been problems in ensuring that customer enquiries passed from one service to another are responded to. The investigation of a planning complaint revealed that although a customer's request for information on disabled facilities grants was passed to Environmental Health, no action was taken to deal with the enquiry.

Improvements/changes to administrative procedures

The investigation of complaints in 2008/09 has highlighted the following general administrative issues:

- The need to ensure effective hand-over/reallocation of work when staff leave or retire.

- The importance of ensuring that sufficient information is recorded on complaints received over the telephone.

- Staff should take care not to over promise and under deliver when dealing with customers complaints/enquiries.

Issues raised in relation to the delivery of specific services include:

- Should receipts be issues for all keys returned by Waverley's tenants?

- Case officers need to address all points raised by objectors to planning applications.

- The Planning Admin Team should make sure that all customers who have asked to be informed of the outcome of a planning application and who have provided a stamped addressed envelope for this purpose, are sent a copy of the appropriate decision notice.

- Case officers should check that all comments received from statutory consultees, including parish councils, are included in delegated reports.

- Recorded delivery should be compulsory when serving legal documents that take effect on the day of delivery