

Essential Reference Paper 'D'

Summary of Complaints 2014/15

Customer Services and Community		
Department	Complaints Upheld	Outcome
Communications	False Statement made by EHDC Press Officer	Apology offered and acknowledgment of error.
	Stage 2 Unsatisfied with original outcome - False Statement made by EHDC Press	EHDC will issue a statement to the editor of the Herts and Essex Observer that clarifies the position and corrects the inaccuracy of our original statement.
Customer Services – Parking	Customer was informed that an email sent to the Council had been received but it turned out that the Council has not received the email. The customer incurred an increased PCN fee as a result and was seeking compensation and an apology for incorrect information.	PCN challenge was reviewed on the basis of the date that it should have sent and was found to be a legitimate appeal therefore all fine payment was returned and an apology was issued.
	Customer complained that CEO had littered on her car and claimed that photographs taken by the CEO prove this. The customer vowed to take court proceedings after the CEO denied this	The CEO's account of proceedings were challenged and it was agreed that in all likelihood,, the dropping of litter was unintentional but the CEO was reminded the importance of diligence when issuing PCN's.
Env Services – Grounds	East Herts Council have recently made changes to the children's park in the Bourne. They have changed the location and installed new play equipment but have decided to leave the area unfenced without	Council stood by its position with regard to not install fencing around a children's area park and attempted to outline the financial implications that would have occurred has a fence been installed.

	consultation	
	Stage 2 escalation of the above complaint.	Works on the children's area were suspended due to a large number of concerns from residents and complaints. Advised that a revised consultation process would occur.
	Customer had query about a tree Preservation Order. Despite several attempts, no reply was being given and felt there was a potential hiding of wrongdoing by the Council	Apology was given and there were assurances that system updates had led to delay but the situation and the preservation of the tree was clarified.
Env Services – Waste	Sticker was applied to the bin saying your bin 'has' been emptied but that it contained soft plastic which has been left, however the bin was 'not' emptied	Resident advised that the exclusion of soft plastics had been broadcasted in many ways. With regards to the sticker this was an error by the contractors who used an old version of the sticker.
	Lost inner box for the third time in as many months.	Delivery of a replacement inner box with numbers the day of complaint response. Waste Manager to investigate with contractors why this is happening .loss of box may be unconnected with council - but will be raised with contractor
	Customer moved into a new build and asked twice for a set of bins. They were given the wrong collection timetable, thus there recyclables were not collected. Asked for 4 week Council Tax compensation	Apology given and special arrangements made to collect the overdue waste and recyclables. There was no compensation given.

	Customer complained that blue bin was not emptied but the brown bin, situated next to the blue bin had been emptied	Matter was investigated but resolution suggestion was that bin position is moved more towards the property boundary in future as photograph seemed to show the bin situated quite a distance from boundary.
	Communal waste not collected	Apology offered and waste collected.

Financial and Support Services		
Department	Services Complaints Upheld	Outcome
Democratic Services	Refers to access to Apple Trees on land which had been under review	Understood that errors had been made and apology for their part in the process which is largely a County Council issue.
	Customer asked to be removed from open register but wasn't instructed how to despite asking	Removal of details from the open register and an apology given.
	Complaint made regarding an existing case and the difficulties faced addressing this, lead to a complaint against the handling of the case of the department	A further apology was given and their existing issues were resolved.
Revenues	Service provide by Revenues and Customer Support Team	Apology given, explaining that a new payment system recently introduced was having teething problems.
	Challenge of Council Tax due amount	Apology given to customer and retraction of associated costs of debt collection.
	Recovery of Council Tax	Apology given to customer and update and review of account lead to amendments of amounts.
	Business Rate summons	Address the letter was sent

sent to the wrong address	to was completely disassociated with the debts due.
Lack of response to a Council Tax enquiry and time taken for reply	Apology for the waiting time and records have been reviewed and clarified with customer.
Overpayment of Council Tax Ref and time taken to address	Other complaint dealt with the issue.
Overpayment of Council Tax Ref and time taken to address	Telephone call with customer where an apology was given and overpayments were sorted by giving a refund.
Customer believed Council Tax bill was being incorrectly assigned to him and non-payment has escalated to debt collection. Advised that EHDC had been advised multiple times of this	Apology offered and debt collection and associated debts were revoked.
Customer added details to a Council tax form to include son for reference but the existing customers were taken off the system leading to incorrect charges	Apology of mistake in deleting customer details and summons were dropped. No compensation to be issued.
Customer contacted twice to advise of moving address and to be added to the voting register but did not hear anything	Apology was given for the delay and requests were sorted.
Customer wanted a reimbursement of charges associated with credit card payment when he paid via debit card.	Bill was settled and balance was set to nil.
Court summons had proceeded with regard to an unpaid Council Tax	Address details were changed, apology offered and reimbursement of court

	payment but resident insisted that previous bills were being sent to the wrong address	summons.
Neighbourhood Services		
Department	Complaints Upheld	Outcome
Planning	Customer rang in to planning as was unable to find the information needed in the planning portal but the phone response was dismissive	Customer was issued an apology and was informed that the staff member in question was reminded of conduct.
Planning – Development Management	Attitude of Case Officer during site visit. Alleged that suitable precautions were not made upon entering	Apology offered, new case officer issued and case member reminded of need to maintain professional manner.
	Customer unhappy with the response time for pre planning advice. Was left more frustrated by the lack of communication and not being kept informed of any delays	Apology issued and it was agreed that service performance would be reviewed to identify improvements.
	Stage 2. Unsatisfied with original outcome. Refers to access to Apple Trees on land which had been under review	Understood that errors had been made and apology for their part in the process which is largely a County Council issue.
Planning – Development Management / Revenue	Complaint was two pronged, Council Tax DD had been incorrectly cancelled whilst at similar time period, had issue with planning decision, an appeal appointment had not been attended	Customer complained to planning regarding a decision on an application and costs incurred. Council apologised and customer received compensation as full and final settlement. He then went to the ombudsman to complain about the council who referred him back to follow our complaints system. This covered more details regarding a cancelled DD from his CT. Council

		dealt with the response before the full complaints notes had been received. Compensation for missed appointment given and apology for DD cancelation.
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