

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023 - 2024

High Level Theme	Improvements Identified	Actions	Expected Outcomes	Due date	Status	Outcomes delivered
Policy/Process	Manage customer expectations at first point of contact when handling Council Tax enquiries.	Review current processes and information that is provided to customers at the first point of contact.	Improved communication with customers, setting expectations at the first point of contact. Reduce repeat contact. Visible reduction in the number of complaints of this nature.	June 2024	Complete - Regular meetings now in place with Service Managers.	An exercise was undertaken to review the end-to-end process. Following the process review and actions taken we have seen a visible reduction in the number of complaints of this nature. This area remains under review as business as usual.
	Improve the handling time for Right to Buy applications.	Review the Right to Buy process to identify improvements to service delivery. Implement improvement recommendations. Implement Service Delivery meetings with all key service stakeholders.	Reduction in current handling timescales Improve the customer experience. Improve communications between the key service areas involved across the organisation to ensure applications are handled timely.	February 2023	Completed. Completed – Regular meetings now in place.	Effective management of cases is in place. All service areas involved in the process are working together to closely monitor cases, reduce handling times and manage customer expectations.

	<p>Improve the award process in relation to Council Tax discounts to ensure customer expectations are met.</p>	<p>Review current processes and officer work instructions.</p> <p>Review of existing accounts with discounts applied.</p>	<p>Updated guidance to support colleagues when assessing and making discount decisions.</p> <p>Improved communication with customers, setting expectations.</p> <p>Reduce repeat contact</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Work Instructions were reviewed and updated to provide officers with clear instructions and all existing discounted accounts were reviewed and updated accordingly. This has supported staff in reviewing customers current entitlement. This has also improved communications issued to customers by outlining clear entitlement to any reduction.</p> <p>As a result, discounted decisions have been recorded as expected and accounts will continue to be monitored through the quality process, to ensure accuracy in accounts being administered correctly.</p>
	<p>Improve communication between tenants and the Council in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases and decisions made, to ensure tenants understand the reasons for decisions in line</p>	<p>Provide training and guidance to ensure officers understand the importance of keeping tenants updated on actions/decisions being made in line with the Council's ASB policy.</p>	<p>Decisions are communicated effectively to tenants, ensuring they understand the reasons for the decisions made.</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>The Council have worked with Tenants to review and update the policy.</p> <p>An ASB leaflet is in draft and awaiting tenant approval.</p>	

	with the policy and process.					
Communication	Assess how we communicate our intended activity in relation to tree maintenance to residents.	Implement a programme of pro-active tree maintenance.	Visible programme of works will be developed. This should prevent avoidable contact to the Council.	March 2025	Tree stock survey to be completed. Contract has now been awarded to consultant. Awaiting reports	Customer engagement is now a key feature for intended work. We provide more information to customers via their online account including timescale for inspections and details of our tree policy. In addition, where necessary, signage is put on trees advising work will be carried out. Introduction of the Tree policy ensures we are providing clear guidance and transparency for residents, setting clear expectations. Clear expectations are now set with each request. Customers are provided with response
		The team has been restructured enabling capacity, to ensure that we engage with our customers ahead of the intended work programme for tree maintenance to set their expectations.	Preventing avoidable contact because of the proactive approach in communicating with customers ensuring visibility of schedules	November 2023	Completed.	
		Develop a tree policy.		November 2023	Completed	
		Provide clear expectations to customers in relation to the work that can be undertaken and response	Visible programme of works	November 2023	Completed	

		<p>times. Provide web links to the Tree Policy on the Council's website.</p> <p>Ongoing analysis of feedback to review service delivery and information provided to customers.</p>				<p>times and links to the Council's policy.</p> <p>The Tree Policy link is now accessible to residents via the website. The policy provides clear guidance and sets customer expectations. Working in line with our policy ensures we are consistent with our approach to tree management across the Borough.</p> <p>This area remains under review as business as usual.</p> <p>Completed – this work will be ongoing.</p>
	<p>Improve how we communicate refuse & recycling collection delays to our residents.</p>	<p>Review how the waste team monitor and follow up on collection delays.</p> <p>Work with the Council's Communications, Marketing & Engagement team to communicate collection delays to residents.</p> <p>Review the Council's "InCab" software system functionality to support the management & monitoring of collection</p>	<p>Improved proactive communication with residents.</p> <p>Improve the ability to report progress on rounds/delays real time.</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>October 2024</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>We will continue to proactively promote any delays to collections.</p> <p>A new "in cab" software system, has been purchased</p>

		rounds, to proactively understand any delays, which can then be communicated to residents.				
	<p>Ensure customer communication in relation to Environmental Health issues clearly explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The actions that the Council can undertake. ▪ The formal processes that the Council must follow as part of any investigation. ▪ Timeframes for resolution. ▪ The customer's role and responsibilities as part of an investigation. 	<p>Review of policy and standard letters</p> <p>Officers to undertake training in relation to managing expectations with customers.</p> <p>Review signposting information to ensure officers can signpost to other relevant agencies.</p>	<p>Customers have a better understanding of the process, timescales, and the services the Council provides.</p> <p>Improve the customer experience by managing expectations.</p>	April 2024	<p>Completed</p> <p>A review of the internal intranet pages and standard documents has been conducted and updated.</p> <p>New officers have received training, covering legal processes, internal practices, and procedures.</p>	As a result of the review and training there has been a visible reduction in complaints of this nature.
	<p>Improve communication with Applicants/Agents when making planning applications.</p>	<p>Undertake a review of the current process.</p> <p>Ensure communication with applicants is clear to</p>	<p>Clarity for applicants</p> <p>Improved customer satisfaction by</p>	May 2024	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>Cases are being monitored regularly and agents/applicants are being updated in a timely manner.</p> <p>Complaint processes have been reviewed to provide improved</p>

		<p>manage customer expectations.</p> <p>Ensure time extensions for applications are recorded and communicated to applicants/agents.</p> <p>Weekly monitoring in place to review individual cases and timescales.</p>	<p>ensuring customers receive correspondence in a timely manner.</p> <p>Improved relationships with applicants</p> <p>Reduction in complaints</p>		<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>resilience within the service. There has been an improvement in response times (particularly at stage 1) and a reduction in the number of complaints in relation to communication since Q4 23/24.</p>
Service Delivery - West Lancashire Borough Council	Review the quality/standard of the garden waste bins.	Review the products available from the existing provider.	Damaged bins monitored through budget allocation for 2022 – 2025.	March 2024	Completed	There has been a significant reduction in the number of damaged bins being reported.
		Identify whether an alternative provider can be sourced that offers a higher standard of quality.	Replacement lids provided by existing supplier.		Completed.	
		Provide advice and guidance to residents on how to care and store bins to avoid overfilling. Website to offer guidance on how to use the bins correctly.	Assessment of products available from other suppliers.		Completed – previous supplier no longer being used.	
		Refresher bin handling training for crews.	Customers have a better understanding on the correct use of bins.	September 2024	Completed – ongoing promotion/ training in this area.	
			Officers and residents aware			

			of how to handle/store bins effectively.		Ongoing training in place for officers.	
	Street cleaning schedules to improve	<p>Training to be undertaken to increase the number of Clean and Green Operatives to achieve HGV licence to improve resilience within the service.</p> <p>Improve mechanical cleansing schedules through effective scheduling and monitoring.</p> <p>Review of cleansing schedules to meet the needs of the community within resources available.</p> <p>Introduce effective monitoring of the Land Audit Management inspections for cleansing activities.</p>	<p>Increased resilience within the service and cleansing in busy locations/high footfall areas.</p> <p>Action plans in place for areas requiring improvements.</p>	June 2024	<p>Completed – further training being considered via the apprentice levy.</p> <p>Completed – Schedules continuously reviewed to achieve best results.</p> <p>Completed as above.</p> <p>Completed.</p>	<p>Three officers completed HGV training. This has built resilience within the team ensuring rounds across all wards are covered.</p> <p>Through effective scheduling and monitoring we are now able to deliver cleansing in all areas.</p> <p>Effective monitoring and reviewing of cleansing activities within the inspections is now providing a clearer guide to cleansing standards within the Borough.</p>

	Improved consistency of communication with our customers in relation to Planning Enforcement	Ensure complainants are kept up to date on enforcement investigation progress in line with the Planning Enforcement Policy Agenda item on weekly team meetings to discuss any delays or matters arising.	Improved customer satisfaction by ensuring customers are kept up to date with position of ongoing investigations.		Completed – this will be under continuous review Ongoing - meetings are progressing and well attended	Cases are being monitored and complainants updated in a timely manner.
	Additional street cleansing schedules required in some rural areas to conduct a deep cleanse, especially during the winter months.	Review current service in areas highlighted to identify improvements	Improve the general cleanliness of the rural roads. Improve customer satisfaction and build positive relationships with residents.	June 2024	Completed.	The rural areas highlighted in the complaints were reviewed and additional cleansing work undertaken to resolve.
Council Officer Behaviours	Improve the accuracy of returning refuse & recycling bins to the original presentation point.	Undertake site visits, to individual properties that have highlighted this as an issue, with the collection crews to demonstrate collection and return points. Reminders issued to crews.	Bins returned to presentation points after each collection. Reduction in the number of complaints from customers	December 2023	Completed - Reminders will be a continuous feature. Completed - this work will be continuous as above.	Since undertaking training, there has been a reduction in the number of complaints regarding Council Officer behaviours, relating to Refuse & Recycling during Q4 of 23/24 and Q1 24/25.

	Provide customer service training for all Refuse and Recycling Operatives & Street Cleansing Operatives.	Undertake Customer Service and Equality & Diversity Training	Staff working in line with the Councils behaviour framework. Improved customer satisfaction.	February 2024	Completed - Training has been delivered to all operatives. Ongoing review in place to ensure any refresher training is implemented. Refresher training will continue via toolbox talks	Refuse & Recycling operatives are now operating in line with the Council's behaviour framework.
Service Failure – WLBC	Improve the accuracy of information provided to the customer at the first point of contact when contacting Customer Services.	Use the feedback provided to provide refresher training to call handlers. Increase call recording monitoring where necessary to identify further training needs	Improve the customer experience by enhancing call handling skills and knowledge to ensure accurate information is provided. Reduce avoidable contact and repeat complaints.	April 2024	Completed.	Refresher training has been conducted with officers which has resulted in a reduction of repeat contact.
Service Delivery/Service Failure – 3rd Party/Contractors	Review the Council's existing contract for gritting to ensure all Council car parks are gritted correctly and the contractor fulfils the	Discussion with the contractor to ensure that Council car parks are gritted when both red and amber warnings are issued by the Met Office. Monitor the gritting of Council car parks	All Council car parks to be gritted where red and amber weather warnings have been issued.	October 2023	Completed	New contract procured for winter 2023 that includes both amber and red warnings for gritting within car parks.

	requirements of the contract.	throughout the winter period to ensure issues can be resolved timely with the contractor. Implementation of key performance indicators within the contract.	Effective contract management			
	Improve communication between the Council's Day to day repair contractor and our tenants. Improve communication between the Councils day-to-day contractor and the Council to ensure updates are provided to enable the queries to be resolved at the first point of contact.	Council's day to day repair contractor to employ a Divisional Customer Services Manager & a Repairs Liaison Officer.	To have dedicated officers to work with the Council and our tenants to improve communications Ensure the Councils systems/records are up to date in relation to repair cases.	May 2024	Completed	Officers appointed. The officers are monitoring communication to ensure improvements are made. The Repairs Liaison officer oversees complaints to ensure a "lessons learnt" approach is adopted. This is a new position and in the early stages of analysing complaints.
	Review the performance of the Council's Day to day repairs contractor in relation to the number of appointments attended/cancelled	Understand the current position in relation to the number and reasons for cancellations/rescheduled appointments. Work with the day-to-day repair contractor to proactively reduce the	Reduction in the number of appointments cancelled. Ongoing review of the contractor's performance.	October 2023	Completed	Ongoing review of the Contractors performance is in place. This provides an understanding of the reasons for the cancellations and enables the Council to put measures in place to reduce them. Weekly cancellation reports are reviewed at operational meetings.

		number of appointments cancelled				
	Improve responsive repair timescales for day-to-day repairs.	<p>Hold monthly operational meetings with the Council's day to day contractor to monitor and improve performance.</p> <p>Hold away days with the Council's Day to day repairs contractors to highlight issues.</p> <p>Review and revise repair response times</p> <p>Engage and consult with tenants on the proposed revised response times.</p> <p>Work with Councils day-to-day contractor to introduce revised response times.</p>	<p>Reduction in timescales for the completion of works.</p> <p>To provide a wider range of appointments for tenants and reduce the amount of time it takes for repairs to be completed.</p> <p>Improved completion rates and customer satisfaction.</p>	December 2024	<p>In progress - Monthly meetings ongoing.</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Revised repair timescales have been drafted and presented to Tenants along with revised appointment slots.</p> <p>The Council's day to day repair contractor is currently looking at data to understand the full effect of these revised timescales before implementation</p> <p>Further meetings will be held to agree and introduce realistic and</p>	

					effective timescales.	
	Improve communication between the Council and its day-to-day repairs contractor	<p>Surveyors to ensure photographs and detailed notes are taken during a property inspection and share these with the day-to-day repair's contractor as part of any works orders.</p> <p>Contractor to ensure they fully understand the work that is required in advance of visiting a property to complete works.</p>	To avoid delays in completing the repair, unnecessary appointments, and tenant dissatisfaction.	December 2023	Completed	This action is now in place and will be monitored as part of operational meetings to ensure its effectiveness.
	Improve tenant satisfaction in relation to the Council's programmed works contractors	<p>Alternative sub-contractor employed.</p> <p>Add specific agenda item during monthly performance meetings to discuss customer feedback and actions for improvements</p>	<p>Improved service delivery and quality.</p> <p>Address issues highlighted by tenants.</p>	<p>December 2023</p> <p>January 2024</p>	<p>Completed - Ongoing meetings in place and discussed as an agenda item on performance meetings.</p> <p>Completed - Customer satisfaction remains a topic on the agenda during monthly progress meetings.</p>	There have been no reported complaints during Q1 of 2024/25.
	Improve the number of Investment work jobs completed by the Council's appointed planned works contractor,	Investment works contractor to undertake asbestos surveys.	Reduction in the length of time to complete surveys and works to be undertaken.	August 2024	Completed	Contractors now undertake their own asbestos surveys.

	for Council properties.	Volume of work to be reviewed at monthly programmed works contractor performance meetings.	To highlight and mitigate risks in completing the work		Completed	
	Improve the quality of repairs completed in tenants' homes	<p>Appoint an interim Maintenance Contract Delivery Manager, to work with the Council's Day to day repairs contractor to monitor performance and review the quality of work.</p> <p>Weekly operations meetings to discuss quality of repairs.</p>	<p>Ensure repairs are completed to expected standards.</p> <p>Improved customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Reduce repeat contact.</p>	April 2024	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>	Officer is in post and is working closely with the contractor to monitor performance and review the quality of work.
	Ensure the Councils day-to-day repairs contractor has the relevant materials to complete the repair when they attend a tenant's home.	Ensure the Councils Day-to day repairs contractor obtain a facility to store materials/equipment locally	To improve completion rates and manage customers' expectations.	December 2024	In progress - additional suppliers are currently being onboarded.	