

FEEDBACK: You Said, We Did

Actions taken by the Development Management Service in response to
2020/21 customer suggestions, complaints and responses to customer surveys

YOU SAID	WE DID
It should be made clear what will happen with comments and objections made to planning applications	<p>The council's Planning Portal contains information on <i>How can I object or comment</i> and <i>What happens next</i> on planning applications.</p> <p>We have highlighted a link in the comment submission section of the portal to that information.</p>
A standard acknowledgement and statement on what happens to objections should be sent out	<p>Acknowledgement letters are sent to all contributors. All officers have been reminded to do this timeously.</p> <p>A link to <i>What happens next</i> is contained in that letter.</p>
Better updates and communication should be given to objectors.	<p>The acknowledgement letter explains that, due to the volume of objections and comments we receive, it is not always possible to respond to individual objectors.</p> <p>We have made it clear on the Planning webpages that all officers are contactable by email and any interested party can email a planning case officer for an update.</p>

<p>Professional agents should be given more access to planning officers to obtain advice.</p>	<p>In line with the Scottish Government's Digital Planning Strategy and digital transformation proposals West Lothian Council has placed all its development plan and policy guidance on the council's Planning Portal which agents can readily access.</p> <p>All case officers are accessible by email and will call back application agents if requested.</p>
<p>It is difficult to access officers to talk to them on the phone.</p>	<p>The council has a one stop Customer Contact Centre which either logs and directs callers to the relevant online information or will request a call-back from a planning officer.</p> <p>All officers have been reminded to call back customers timeously.</p> <p>All case officers are accessible by email and will call back applicants or agents if requested.</p>
<p>It is difficult to access the system to lodge a planning application through the ePlanning portal. Once an application is registered the problem disappears</p>	<p>The first page of the council's Planning webpage signposts customers to advice on <i>How to submit a Planning Application.</i></p> <p>It is acknowledged that submission through the Scottish Government ePlanning website can be daunting. However, the Scottish Government have provided advice and assistance on that website and the council's web pages also highlight this to assist with this process.</p>