

DECISION NOTICE

Notice is given that the following decision has been taken under the Provisions set out in the Council's Constitution

Decision maker: Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

Date: 7 Oct 2013

Decision in the matter of: Review of Planning Enforcement - Task and Finish Group Final Report

Decision: That support be given to the recommendations laid down within Section 2 of the Environment and Prosperity Policy Development Group Planning Enforcement Review report, as shown below: -

1. That a revised planning enforcement policy/protocol be developed and implemented. This policy/protocol shall reduce the current 4 priorities to a more relevant 3 which shall include the following;
 - **High Priority cases**
Initial Assessment should be made the same day
 - **Medium Priority cases**
Initial Assessment should be made within 5 working days
 - **Low Priority cases**
Initial Assessment should be within 15 working days
2. The service should be encouraged and designed to operate as a single team working across the whole region, thereby creating a culture of case management within the enforcement team, bringing together the responsibility for enforcement with the professional officers of the team. A structure should be developed to provide clear decision making processes, with appropriate delegation to a single lead officer.
3. Relationships with other services should be further developed to enhance service delivery, with particular emphasis on the development of a service level agreement between the planning enforcement function and the legal services functions. To embrace this approach consideration should also be made to the facility of sharing database information directly between services and providing opportunities for members of the enforcement team to comment on the proposed planning conditions.

4. New performance reporting measures as detailed within the appendix shall be included within normal day to day practices, with a summary report provided to Council half yearly.
5. Improved customer interactions through the website as indicated within the appendix table reference per.005.
6. The provision of technical support staff to support the planning enforcement team should be made available.
7. The service should be encouraged to improve the use of technology, moving towards a paperless environment where possible and working to adopted operations procedures.
8. The inclusion within the corporate calendar for regular training and briefing sessions for all elected members relating to the planning enforcement function.
9. The service lead will require the development of a service culture, improving customer relationships.
10. The initial performance target of 8 weeks should be considered as a business ambition when dealing with complaints.
11. Progress of complaints should be reported or made available to members at key stages of the investigation.
12. Consideration to any ICT issues should be treated as a matter of priority.

Measures considered appropriate to the achievement of the above are highlighted within the table of the appendix to the Task and Finish Group report.

Background:

A report submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on 14 June 2012 recommended a number of management actions following the internal audit report into the "Waste Transfer Station" (Lyme Green). As part of the report action B7 recommended that a task and finish group on Planning Enforcement be established, with the Environment & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee subsequently agreeing the terms of reference for the group.

The recommendations put forward contribute to the provision of a clear, organised approach to the planning enforcement service, aiding all those involved in the making of accurate and effective decisions. They include the development of a new policy that will lead to the development of a suitable management framework providing transparency in the decision making process, allowing consistency and fairness whilst helping members to monitor decisions taken.

Tackling key issues of performance management, public relations and working practices will build a proactive enforcement service that is considered a key component in an effective planning function.

Background Documents:

The background documents can be inspected by contacting the report author.

Approved:

Signed
Councillor D Stockton
Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning Economic Development and
Regeneration

Date:

7 October 2013

Advising Officer:

Signed
Ian Bunn
Building Control Manager