

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

Date of Meeting: 7 October 2013
Report of: Chairman of Planning Enforcement Task & Finish Group
Subject/Title: Review of Planning Enforcement - Final Report
Portfolio Holder: Cllr D Stockton

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 This report highlights the work undertaken by the Planning Enforcement task and finish group.
- 1.2 The report seeks agreement and support from the portfolio holder to the recommendations made by the group in relation to service improvement measures when considering the terms of reference for the review.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Cabinet member for Housing, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration is requested to support the recommendations as laid down within section 2 of the Environment and Prosperity Policy Development Group, Planning enforcement review contained within the attached report (Appendix).

3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The recommendations, once implemented will address issues raised through the review process, providing a management focussed approach to service delivery including a transparent decision making process. Working practices will be aligned which will in turn, improve performance monitoring and allow for efficiencies. The adoption of a co-ordinated approach to the process,

whilst promoting cross working skills will provide a service fit for purpose, ensuring information will be readily available to those who need to it, when they need it.

- 3.2 Throughout the process considerations have been made to the original terms of reference set and agreed by the group, with the final recommendations considered to achieve a framework and vision on which the service can build to improve service delivery whilst providing clarity within the decision making process.
- 3.3 Whilst the current driving force for the enforcement function since the service was formed in 2009 has been to meet targets set within the "Planning Enforcement Protocol", the need for change has been recognised to ensure service delivery is considered fit for purpose.
- 3.4 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.

4 Ward Affected

- 4.1 All

5 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6 Policy Implications (including carbon reduction and health)

- 6.1 None at this time.

7 Financial Implications (authorised by Director of Finance and Business Services)

- 7.1 None at this time. Where recommendations are supported they will form part of the service business planning process.

8 Legal Implications (authorised by Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 None at this time. Legal consideration will be required through the development of the new policy.

9 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 A reviewed policy will ensure that a transparent and clear approach to planning enforcement matters is pursued by the Council.

10 Background and Options

10.1 A report submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on the 14th 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. These included;

- To review the current scope of service delivered through the planning enforcement function
- To review performance against service standards
- To review resources aligned to Planning Enforcement and recommend changes in service standards/scope of services and working practices to improve overall performance
- To review the relationship between Planning Enforcement and other Planning Functions to ensure structures do not compromise conflicting demands

10.1.1 The review has considered those aspects as highlighted within the agreed terms and conditions

11.0 Access to Information

The background information relating to this report can be inspected by contacting:

Name: Ian Bunn
Designation: Building Control Manager
Tel No: 01270 375224
Email: ian.bunn@cheshireeast.gov.uk