

Report to Environmental and Planning Services Standing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 30 October 2006



Portfolio: Planning and Economic Development
Subject: Enforcement Statistics

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Recommendations:

That for a trial period of six months, a monthly report be provided within the Members Bulletin indicating:

- (a) The numbers of enforcement investigations started, processed and “in hand” each month; and**
- (b) That in respect of those cases where an enforcement notice has become effective and the compliance date has passed, but has not yet been complied with; a brief progress report is given.**

Report:

1. The Panel’s work programme has included a requirement to introduce greater reporting of statistics concerning Planning Enforcement.
2. Planning enforcement information has been entered into the new Building Control /Planning and Local Land Charges Computer system as from 3 January 2006. That information, together with other spread sheets and manual systems operated has now been considered carefully to see what “Management Information” could and should be produced, and which might address the broad concerns of Members.
3. The essence of Members concerns appears to be that they are not provided with regular, timely and accurate information about;
 - (a) The general volume of work received, processed and outstanding; Recommendation a seeks to give this information, using definitions used in connection with the way the computer system operates.
 - (b) Progress on particular cases. There appear to be concerns that some cases take a long time to deal with, even when some action has been authorised. The information presently given in the Members Bulletin is not able to provide a clear picture about what is happening. Recommendation b seeks to address this issue.

4. Members have been given reports about statistics when staffing issues have been considered, and have been aware of problems when the team is not staffed to the establishment level. In addition, Enforcement procedures have been covered in Member training, and any Member can ask for specific information about individual case at any time. Members have been provided with information about Development Control performance over the last six months in the Members Bulletin, and the agreed information will be provided in the same report.
5. A recent audit recommends that the manual and spread sheet based systems are closed down to concentrate on one recording system. Whilst it is recognised that in the long term a full single system should be operated, there are advantages in keeping a restricted manual reminder system. The audit has been done in advance of the implementation of the Anite at Work system; this is being implemented in Planning Services at present. Anite involves the scanning and management of records including correspondence, which will assist the provision of case management.
6. Other options. The recommendations made seek to introduce a simple system, which does not take large resources to operate, but will provide information that Members would find useful. Part of the point of a six month trial is to ensure that time is not being spent on the provision of unnecessary information. The two types of information suggested are to seek to show an overall picture, and the picture where cases have become more complex, and action has been necessary. It would be possible to give more information, particularly as more information is added to the electronic record.
7. It should be clear that Members may have different requirements, and that it is not proposed to treat the above as a formal Local Performance Indicator at this stage.
8. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.