Development Control Review;
Enforcement and Support Services

Vision

- A more clearly defined effective and efficient Planning Enforcement service with an improved public and Member perception.

- The provision of cost effective and efficient support services to Development Control (DC) and Enforcement.

Background and Reasons For Review

The focus of the 2006 restructure was in DC (which introduced DC Assistant posts, Assistant Team Leader posts Admin Assistant posts and increased training budget for the section), was to maintain improvements in performance and create a career ladder to establish a grow your own culture and retention of planning staff. The intention was for the restructure to be reviewed.

Government published a series of recommendations on Planning Enforcement November 2006. The Section needs to be ready to implement the requirements stemming from these recommendations.

A Council Scrutiny Panel review was commenced in October 2008 to understand the Council's approach in relation to planning enforcement processes, court action and Section 106 Agreements, and to look at ways of improving the processes and procedures to improve the handling of cases. The Panel will issue recommendations for changes to the Enforcement service once it has concluded its review (March 2009)

The 2006 restructure created 3 new support posts for the electronic scanning and indexing of planning applications and to deal with personal searches. Whilst the number of DC case workers was increased as part of that review, the level of support to cover the increased application and appeal work as well as enforcement work was not reviewed. The national changes to validation, condition discharging and appeals procedures have also increased the complexity of the support services workload.

The scanning process has experienced issues of staff retention, and inefficiencies caused by the 'add-on' status of the scanning service. The supervision and management of support posts within the area teams and of the current scanning posts is not clearly defined

A review is proposed to consider how these issues can be addressed and how new processes can be best integrated into the workload of the support staff to provide more efficient ways of working.

Objectives

- To define the optimum level of enforcement and support services that can be achieved within the resources allocated

- To provide a clear set of guidelines to work within, with necessary tools available (documentation/authorisation and physical equipment)

- To ensure clearly defined and appropriate management of the Enforcement and Support Services

- To improve the perception of the services amongst staff, Members and the public

- To provide flexibility of technical support by ensuring a training regime is embedded into the operation of Support Services

Scope

The review will focus largely on the services themselves and the processes and allocation of resources within the Section. Staff within the services will undertake the review, and the process will necessitate involvement from colleagues within the Council upon which the Enforcement Service in particular relies.

Provisional Timetable

Tasks	Start Date	Done By
Initial Meeting		19.12.08
Identify Current Processes	22.12.08	16.1.09
Process Review Workshops	19.1.09	23.1.09
The Way Forward	2.1.09	13.2.09
Round up meeting		16.2.09
Report published		28.2.09
Start changes	9.03.09	
Track/measure benefits	1.06.09	