

Planning Enforcement Internal Review

Summary of findings based on discussions with Enforcement Officers

This is a summary of the findings based on discussions held with the enforcement officers involved in our review, and does not include any issues identified by others e.g. line managers etc as yet.

They have expressed concern that the review is by no means complete and it has not reached an in-depth level as yet, such that Members should be made aware of this, if the intention is to use the feedback to help inform their consideration of recommendations.

Issues raised by Enforcement as affecting performance and the delivery of the enforcement service:-

- Comments and Issues emerging from Enforcement Review: Enforcement staff's comments:-
- Dispersal of staff within St Leonard's. The Enforcement Officers (EOs) are in different rooms of the building, and the east team EOs do not sit with their Team Leader. This leads to inconsistencies in terms of approaches and procedure, and there are some differences of opinion as to the better process to follow. Inconsistencies in Management decisions and approaches to enforcement have also been raised as an issue.
- Shortage of procedure notes for enforcement processes, particularly in relation to formal action (which is becoming more relevant).
- Administrative support varies, again partly due to dispersal and also due to changeovers in support staff, the lack of full time employees in these posts and different approaches to dealing with enforcement tasks, and pressure to perform other duties and priorities. A lack of coordination of administrative support or attention to Enforcement support requirements
- Team leaders have not had the time to allocate sufficient resource to supporting and managing the enforcement officers, due to other Development Control pressures.
- On site, the inability to refer to information stored on the system can inhibit urgent action required. e.g. to require a cessation of works to a listed building, need to be sure no permission exists for the works.
- Training in appropriate areas has not always been available, e.g. PACE interviews

- The current Scheme of Delegation for enforcement can lead to delays in the authorisation of action e.g. need for Chair, Vice Chair and Assistant Director's consideration and signatures for each Notice
- History of lack of prosecutions leading to service being held in lower regard by developers, and less inclination to comply with for example, conditions of approval.
- Difficulties with obtaining views from Directorate and inter-Directorate consultees, due to their lack of availability or low priority given in their work programmes to contributing to planning enforcement, resulting in a perceived lack of cooperation e.g. in relation to specialist area such as conservation or landscape tree advice
- Concerns over the enforceability of conditions used to secure financial contributions, say for example open space payments