

(11A) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING ENFORCEMENT - UPDATE**1. Development Management****1.1 Staffing**

The team is currently at full establishment and comprises:-

- 1 no. part-time Planning and Development Manager
- 2 no. full-time Team Leaders
- 4 no. full-time Senior Planning Case Officers
- 3 no. part-time Senior Planning Case Officers
- 4 no. full-time Planning Case Officers
- 2 no. part-time Planning Case Officer
- 1 no. Senior Planning Case Officer currently on maternity leave (may return on a part-time basis)

1.2 Additional One-Off Funding

1.2.1 At its Meeting on 20th February 2018, the Council agreed that a one-off sum of £60,000 be provided (in 2018/19) for additional resources within Development Control to assist with the management of workloads.

1.2.2 Whilst the use of this sum has yet to be finalised, the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing (Philippa Lowe) has, in consultation with managers and mindful of feedback from Members, identified that there is a need to support the Development Management (DM) Team Leaders (Deborah Smith and Mike Napper) in taking on additional responsibilities for the management of the DM team now that the Planning and Development Manager (Kevin Field) has reduced his working hours.

1.3 Increase in Fees

In line with new Government Regulations, the Council introduced a 20% increase in the majority of planning fees from 17th January 2018.

The Regulations also introduced a new fee for 'Permission in Principle' applications; the ability for authorities to charge for applications for planning permission following the removal of permitted development rights (through Article 4 directions or by condition); and a fee for prior approval applications to permitted development rights that were introduced in April 2015 and April 2017.

The increases stated in the 2017 Fees Regulations resulted from consultation involving Government, the development industry and local planning authorities in respect of how best to improve the delivery of the planning service. All Councils signed up to the fee increases on the understanding that there would be a commitment to improving planning services, with the extra fee income to be invested in planning delivery.

The Council still has discretion to set its own fees in respect of pre-application advice.

2. Planning Enforcement

2.1 Staffing

The team is currently at full establishment and comprises:-

- 1 no. full-time Senior Planning Enforcement Officers
- 2 no. part-time Senior Planning Enforcement Officer
- 1 no. full-time Trainee Planning Enforcement Officer

2.2 Tasks Achieved in Recent Months

- (i) Appointed a full-time Senior Enforcement Officer. Scott Britnell has been in post since October.
- (ii) Appointed a Trainee Enforcement Officer to support the team and to 'grow' with appropriate mentoring and training (initially a temporary post for one year). Ed Leeson started on 5th February.
- (iii) Appointed to final vacant post within Enforcement/DM team - a full-time Case Officer who will have a 50% enforcement caseload and 50% DM caseload. Lisa-Marie Evans will start with us on 2nd April.
- (iv) Published an updated Local Enforcement Plan which we consider provides clearer information about the enforcement process and the likely timescales for investigating and resolving any reported breaches - with the aim/hope that we can better inform and manage customers' expectations of the service.
- (v) Amended the standard acknowledgement letter sent to complainants to better manage expectations and to provide a link back to the Enforcement Plan.
- (vi) Introduced new service targets including, but not limited to, timescales for the different types of cases: high, medium and low priority cases (e.g. high priority could be a report of unauthorised works to a listed building, medium could be a breach of condition where the condition was designed to protect residential amenity, and low could be small-scale or minor breaches such as an unauthorised advert).
- (vii) Introduced a monthly report to update Members on all enforcement cases currently under consideration (and to advise when cases have been closed).
- (viii) Invited all Members and Parish Councils to attend a training session on the enforcement process. The sessions will take place on 3rd and 4th April (all parties will receive an e-mail by the close of business on 7th March) - we have received a very positive response to this training, and currently expect approximately 50 Councillors at each event.
- (ix) Improved some internal processes, for example introduced new case number suffixes (to help monitor performance), introduced new categories for enforcement cases (they existed before but were not used previously), instigated a more robust sign-off procedure (cases are now signed off by Deborah Smith as the manager). These small adjustments/improvements will enable better performance management in the future.

2.3 Other Items/Issues Identified as Requiring Attention in the short-term

- (i) Improve cross departmental working, e.g. consistent approach to the procedure for dealing with breaches relating to trees and listed buildings.
- (ii) Monitor performance using the data collected from our new reporting procedures - the first quarter performance figures will be available in April.
- (iii) Improve the visibility of enforcement on the CDC web-site and also produce a more interactive application to encourage potential complainants to make certain basic checks before reporting a breach, e.g. check to see if planning permission has been granted or if planning permission is required for the works.
- (iv) Consider publishing a quarterly newsletter, to include performance and articles/cases of interest.
- (v) Consider and arrange appropriate training for all members of the enforcement team, e.g. PACE training, in-house training for those who may need to attend court, etc.

Deborah Smith
Team Leader (Development Management)

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