

Audit Committee Review 2016

Recommendation Title	Recommendation	Response	Priority	Estimated Implementation Date	Last Status Update
R9. Diarising compliance effective date	<p>Introduce a central process for diarising all compliance effective dates.</p> <p>Introducing a central process for diarising compliance effective dates will ensure that all key dates are flagged and that all cases are adequately monitored on or after the compliance effective date.</p>	Agreed. A process will be introduced monitor enforcement notice dates and compliance dates.	Priority 4 (Low)	01/12/2016	<p>Outlook team diary set up. Discussions ongoing with IT to set up a RAG listing on the IT system using Enterprise and to become operational on 25/1/17.</p> <p>COMPLETED.</p>

<p>R2. Evidence of enforcement action taken and compliance achieved</p>	<p>Follow-up the outcomes of enforcement notices issued and ensure evidence is maintained to demonstrate compliance action has been taken.</p> <p>Improving the evidence / records on planning enforcement case files of actions taken, visits completed and when compliance is achieved (or not) will ensure cases are managed more consistently in line with agreed procedures. This will also identify whether key stages of the process have not been completed. It will also provide more evidence that the Council is taking enforcement action where needed and that cases are being monitored to ensure that compliance is being achieved. It will also ensure that planning enforcement cases are only closed on final conclusion of the case.</p>	<p>Agreed. Management instruction will be sent to the Planning Enforcement Officers setting out expectations in terms of completing and evidencing follow ups on enforcement notices issued. These expectations will also be incorporated into the revised Planning Enforcement Procedures manual.</p>	<p>Priority 2 (High)</p>	<p>01/11/2016</p>	<p>Follow up testing has established that the Planning Enforcement Team has been given clear instructions on the recording and evidencing of follow ups on enforcement notices issued and that this expectation has been clearly described in the new Planning Enforcement procedures manual.</p> <p>The Development Manager is now completing monthly management checks on a sample of Planning Enforcement case files, including those where enforcement notices have been issued to ensure the expected standards of records are being maintained.</p> <p>However, follow up testing completed in July 2017, on a sample of enforcement notices issued since 01 March 2017, identified deficiencies in the information recorded on case files to evidence that follow up visits have been completed after the 'comply by' date or that further enforcement action</p>
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					<p>has been taken where needed.</p> <p>We do not currently consider this recommendation to be fully implemented and have therefore accepted a revised implementation date of 31 October 2017. This date allows for the new Planning Enforcement Team structure to be embedded and resourced.</p> <p>This is to be reported to Audit Committee.</p>
R10. Information to complainants	<p>Inform complainants of the 21 day response time from the date the Council receives the complaint.</p> <p>This will ensure that the complainant is informed of the Council's commitment to respond with 21 working days, and also act as a prompt to input the appropriate dates within the Uniform system.</p>	<p>Agreed. Instruction will be sent to Mid Kent Planning Support to request that the email notification template is updated to include reference to the 21 day working day response date.</p>	Priority 4 (Low)	21/10/2016	COMPLETED.

R3. Logging complaints on Uniform	<p>Log all planning enforcement complaints in Uniform.</p> <p>The introduction of checks will ensure that all planning enforcement complaints received are input to Uniform without exception, which will ensure that all planning enforcement complaints received are the subject of formal investigation by the Planning Enforcement Team.</p>	Agreed. A review of the allocation of cases process will be completed to identify ways of ensuring that all planning enforcement complaints received are logged onto Uniform. The review of the Planning Enforcement procedures manual will include expectations that all complaints received should be logged onto Uniform.	Priority 3 (Medium)	01/12/2016	COMPLETED.
R5. Performance Data	<p>Complete all date fields relevant to planning enforcement case files to ensure accurate and reliable performance information.</p> <p>Completing all relevant data fields within Uniform will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The actual response rate to each complainant is recorded in Uniform. - The 21 day response rate performance data extracted from Uniform is accurate and complete. 	Agreed. The 21 day response target was introduced part way through 2015-16 which may be why some fields had not been completed. However, the Planning Enforcement Officers have already introduced data quality checks to ensure the 21 day response field is now completed.	Priority 3 (Medium)	21/10/2016	COMPLETED.

R4. Planning enforcement performance indicators	<p>Review and rationalise service performance indicators and then monitor and report against them in accordance with the Strategy.</p> <p>A review of the monitoring and reporting of planning enforcement performance indicators in line with the Planning Enforcement Strategy will ensure that the correct performance indicators are being monitored and that periodic reports are being reported to Planning Committee.</p>	<p>Agreed. The key performance indicator for the Planning Enforcement service is the 21 day response time. A review of the Planning Enforcement performance indicators, as set out in the Planning Enforcement Strategy will be completed to determine which service standards and performance indicators should be recorded, monitored and reported in the future. If relevant the Planning Enforcement Strategy will be updated to reflect the outcome of this review.</p>	Priority 3 (Medium)	30/11/2016	<p>Planning Enforcement Strategy and Charter has been amended to reflect that the only formal corporate performance measure to be monitored is the 21 day response.</p> <p>Following consultation on the Strategy and ongoing discussions with Cabinet member and Planning Committee Chair a new set of Performance indicators have been included within the new Strategy and will be monitored from 1 October 2017 onwards, although in first instance will not form part of the corporate targets. This will be reviewed for the next financial year.</p>
R1. Planning enforcement complaint files	<p>Implement quality standards for planning enforcement case files to ensure consistency in the completeness and integrity of files and evidence.</p>	<p>Agreed. A quality standard for planning enforcement case files will be incorporated into the revised Planning Enforcement procedures manual. This will incorporate how long planning enforcement case files should be retained for.</p> <p>The Development Manager has previously spoken to Mid Kent Legal Services to request that the Council's Document</p>	Priority 2: High	01/04/17	COMPLETED.

		Retention Policy be updated to reflect that all Planning Enforcement case files should be retained for 10 years.			
R6: Management & reporting of aged cases	Address the backlog of historic 'open' planning enforcement cases and report the remaining cases in accordance with the Strategy.	<p>Agreed. An exercise to review all of the open historic / aged planning enforcement case files is now being completed by the Planning Enforcement Apprentice, under close supervision by the Planning Enforcement Officer. Approximately 1,000 aged cases have already been closed.</p> <p>The Planning Enforcement Team Leader has been tasked with producing a report from Uniform of aged cases, more than 6 months old. When available this information will be reported to the Cabinet Member</p> <p>The Development Manager has been tasked with diarising 4 monthly meetings with the</p>	Priority 3: Medium	01/04/17	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Report format agreed and regular meetings diarised.</p>

		Cabinet Member to enable aged cases to be reported, in accordance with the Planning Enforcement Strategy.			
R7: Quality Assurance	Implement a quality assurance process to ensure compliance with procedures and to check consistency and quality of enforcement decisions.	This recommendation will be considered with a view to introducing a proportionate and effective quality assurance methodology.	Priority 3: Medium	01/04/17	Development Manager checks through 3 case files every month.
R8: Procedures Manual	Update and circulate the planning enforcement procedures manual	Agreed. A systematic review of the Planning Enforcement Team's procedures manual will be completed to ensure that the manual is fully compliant with Uniform and to enable the further updates to be incorporated as necessary. The Head of Planning Services estimates this project will take in the region of 20-30 days to complete. This project has been assigned to the Business	Priority 4: Low	01/04/17	COMPLETED.

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