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| Audit Committee | Agenda Item: 4 |
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| Meeting Date | 19 th December 2012 |
| Report Title | Internal Audit Report – Planning Enforcement |
| Portfolio Holder | Councillor Lewin. |
| SMT Lead | Pete Raine – Director of Regeneration. |
| Head of Service | James Freeman – Head of Planning. |
| Lead Officer | Andrew Jeffers – Development Control Officer. |
| Key Decision | No |
| Classification | Open |
| Forward Plan | Reference number: |

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| Recommendations | 1. To note the updated report on the internal audit action plan for Planning Enforcement. |
| | 2. |
| | 3. |

Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress with regards to the Planning Enforcement Audit Action Plan following on from earlier reports of the 8 March and 19 September 2012. (Copies of the respective agenda reports are attached at Appendix 1).

2 Background

- 2.1 At the Audit Committee held on the 19 September 2012, it was agreed that a progress report be presented to the Committee in December 2012. This report provides that update identifying the latest position on the matters previously raised.

3 Update on Main Actions in Relation to the Audit Action Plan.

- 3.1 The use of the ITC system, Headway, by the planning enforcement officers has now been implemented, and is currently on-going. A number of minor technical difficulties have been identified within the system which are being dealt with by the ICT section in conjunction with the Planning Co-Ordinator.
- 3.2 Of particular interest to Members was the ability of the system to generate Ward based reports updating members on the number of enforcement cases received, and their current enforcement status. A trial run of this report has been sent to all

Councillors for their consideration, and a copy of this confidential report has been circulated to all Members. It is hoped that Members will be able to use this information to support officers in the monitoring of cases in their own Wards. The Head of Planning Services would welcome any Member comments on the report. It is intended that such a report be produced on a regular monthly basis sent via email to all members (a hard copy can be made available to those members who request it). It is anticipated that further revisions to the monthly report will be needed during the first 3 months of operation with a view to having a finalised report meeting Councillors expectations in place by March 2013.

- 3.3 As was mentioned in the 8 March 2012 report by the Head of Planning Services, it remains a target for the system to be available to Members, and possibly to members of the general public, by remote access. Officers are having on-going discussions with ITC and the Headway software provider MIS, regarding the availability of such access to Swale House or external users with a view to ensuring the security of such a system
- 3.4 A Planning Enforcement Strategy and Service Charter has been agreed by the Cabinet and is available to view on the Council's website (a copy is attached at Appendix 2). This Charter sets out a number of performance indicators, and with the implementation of the Headway software, close monitoring of achieved levels of attainment can be recorded.
- 3.5 The internal Officer Procedure Manual for Enforcement Staff has been produced and is available for any new and existing staff within the section.
- 3.6 Members should note that a draft Service Level Agreement, between the Planning and Legal Services is in an advanced stage of being agreed and we are awaiting final confirmation from Legal Services. I anticipate that the agreement should be signed and agreed before the Committee meeting and I will verbally update members at the meeting on the current situation. This Agreement when signed should provide greater clarity for dealing with the legal implications and processing of enforcement cases (as well as planning applications).

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 This is an updating report for noting and no alternative options are presented at this stage.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 This report follows requests made at the meeting held on the 19th September 2012.

6 Implications

| Issue | Implications |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Corporate Plan | These proposals support the Council's priorities for being "Open for Business" and supporting a "healthy environment" |
| Financial, Resource and Property | There are no additional financial implications arising from this report. |
| Legal and Statutory | The report includes references to the drafting of a Service Level Agreement between Legal Services and the Planning Service in dealing with enforcement cases. |
| Crime and Disorder | None identified at this stage. |
| Risk Management and Health and Safety | Ineffective planning enforcement could undermine the planning process and damage the Council's reputation. |
| Equality and Diversity | None identified at this stage. |
| Sustainability | None identified at this stage. |

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

Appendix 1: Agenda Reports from Audit Committee meetings on 8 March and 19 September 2012

Appendix 2: Copy of Planning Enforcement Strategy and Service Charter

Appendix 3: SBC Service Level Agreement between Planning and Legal Services (To follow).

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 Monthly Enforcement report for November 2012 (confidential), previously circulated to all Members.