

Title: Annual performance in resolving enforcement cases

Committee: Planning Committee

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Purpose of report

This report details the Council's performance in resolving planning enforcement cases and its development monitoring caseload between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the content of the report.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This is an annual report to the Planning Committee on the Council's performance in respect of planning enforcement and development monitoring. As this is a new report some historic data is not available but will be captured in the future. The general availability of enforcement data is being reviewed as part of the Enforcement Review which is referred to later in this document.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The table below sets out a range of statistical information relating to the number of planning enforcement and development monitoring cases between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2025 with details of formal action taken.

Year	2023/2024	2024/2025
Planning enforcement complaints received (including high hedges, trees & hedgerows)	172	200
Proactive cases opened	5	17
Development monitoring cases opened	7	0
Total cases received/opened	184	217
Planning enforcement complaints closed (including high hedges, trees & hedgerows)	171	199
Proactive cases closed	13	13
Development monitoring cases closed	8	2
Total planning enforcement complaints on hand at end of year (as of 31st March)	Not available	163
Total proactive cases on hand at end of year (as of 31 st March)	Not available	17
Total development monitoring cases on hand at end of year (as of 31st March)	Not available	8
Total planning enforcement/proactive/monitoring caseload at end of year (as of 31st March)	Not available	188
Enforcement Notices & Listed Building Enforcement Notices served (excluding any issued by Cambs County Council within the district)	2	6
Breach of Condition Notices served	0	0
Section 215 Untidy Land Notices served	0	0
Temporary Stop Notices served	0	0
Advert related Notices served	0	0
Planning Contravention Notices served	5	23
Section 330 Notices (requisition for information) served	0	0
High Hedge Notices served	1	1
Total Notices Served	8	30

3.2 The table below sets out a range of statistical information relating to the number of planning enforcement and development monitoring cases for the past year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 with details of formal action taken.

Quarter	Quarter 1 (1 Apr – 30 Jun 2024)	Quarter 2 (1 Jul – 30 Sept 2024)	Quarter 3 (1 Oct – 31 Dec 2024)	Quarter 4 (1 Jan – 31 Mar 2025)
Planning enforcement complaints received	53	56	41	50
Proactive cases opened	7	6	1	3
Development Monitoring cases opened	0	0	0	0
Planning enforcement cases resolved	43	67	41	48
Proactive cases resolved	4	3	1	5
Development Monitoring cases resolved	1	0	1	0
Planning enforcement cases on hand at end of quarter	Not available	Not available	Not available	163
Proactive cases on hand at end of quarter	Not available	Not available	Not available	17
Development Monitoring cases on hand at end of quarter	Not available	Not available	Not available	8
Total case load on hand at end of quarter	Not available	Not available	Not available	188
Enforcement Notices & Listed Building Enforcement Notices (excluding any issued by Cambs County Council within the district)	1	1	1	3
Breach of Condition Notices	0	0	0	0
Section 215 Untidy Land Notices	0	0	0	0
Temporary Stop Notices	0	0	0	0
Advert related Notices	0	0	0	0
Planning Contravention Notices	7	7	2	7
Section 330 Notices (requisition for information)	0	0	0	0
High Hedge Notices	0	0	0	1

4.0 Conclusion and any recommendations

- 4.1 The number of new complaints received over the past 12 months is fairly consistent. With the team comprising of 2.6 FTE this means an average of 62 cases per officer as at year end.
- 4.2 In the third quarter of 2024 the team took over tree enforcement and now record and progress enforcement matters relating to unauthorised tree works in conservation areas, unauthorised works to TPO trees and breaches of the Hedgerow Regulations, as well as High Hedges which we already dealt with.
- 4.3 The Enforcement review commenced at the end of February 2025 and includes reviews on the following: tech (such as using tablets on site visits), templates, data storage, reporting, procedures, customer information, how we accept reports and development monitoring.
- 4.4 Officers are committed to taking a firm and consistent approach for breaches of planning control where material harm has taken place. Now that the team has guidance from a manager who has extensive experience in enforcement, this has enabled us to draw on that experience to review some complex and long-standing cases which has led to an increase in the numbers of planning contravention notices in particular which have been served over the past few months and the progression or closure of some of these cases.
- 4.5 You will note that there are some proactive cases which have been opened over the past two years. These include breaches identified by Planning Enforcement Officers, reviewing the use of public houses which were not trading, additional cases opened to hold notice and appeal information where there are multiple breaches on one site and cases where the team has been asked to monitor a specific situation by colleagues.
- 4.6 There are also some development monitoring cases which the team has undertaken. Some were a test sample of single dwellings to check condition compliance and some involved the monitoring of large developments. However, the team does not currently have the capacity to undertake development monitoring properly due to the reactive nature of our role and the additional tree and hedge related work recently taken on. The condition monitoring module on Uniform is therefore being explored as part of the Planning and Enforcement reviews to try and reduce the manual work required to undertake this monitoring.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 N/A

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 N/A

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 None.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

7.2 None.

Comments checked by:

David Morren Strategic Planning & Development Management Manager

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8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Corporate priorities of preserving what's special and protecting our quality of life.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Bill Hunt

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