

**Title: Annual Planning performance report in resolving
planning enforcement cases – March 2026**

Committee: Planning Committee

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1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 This report details the Council's performance in resolving planning enforcement cases and its development monitoring caseload between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The meeting is recommended to note the content of the report.

3.0 Introduction

3.1 This is an annual report to the Planning Committee on the Council's performance in respect of planning enforcement and development monitoring.

4.0 Report Details

4.1 The table below sets out a range of statistical information relating to the number of planning enforcement and development monitoring cases between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2026 with details of formal action taken.

Year	2024/2025	2025/2026
Planning enforcement reports received (including high hedges, trees & hedgerows)	200	236
Proactive cases opened	17	21
Development monitoring cases opened	0	4
Total cases received/opened	217	261
Planning enforcement reported cases closed (including high hedges, trees & hedgerows)	199	276
Proactive cases closed	13	14
Development monitoring cases closed	2	8
Total planning enforcement reported cases on hand at end of year (as of 31st March)	163	120
Total proactive cases on hand at end of year (as of 31 st March)	17	25
Total development monitoring cases on hand at end of year (as of 31st March)	8	5
Total planning enforcement/proactive/monitoring caseload at end of year (as of 31st March)	188	150
Enforcement Notices & Listed Building Enforcement Notices served (excluding any issued by Cambs County Council within the district)	6	5
Breach of Condition Notices served	0	0
Section 215 Untidy Land Notices served	0	0
Temporary Stop Notices served	0	1
Advert related Notices served	0	0
Planning Contravention Notices served	23	22
Section 330 Notices (requisition for information) served	0	0
High Hedge Notices served	1	0
Total Notices Served	30	28

4.2 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 2025 to 31 March 2026 with details of formal action taken.

Quarter	Quarter 1 (1 Apr – 30 Jun 2025)	Quarter 2 (1 Jul – 30 Sept 2025)	Quarter 3 (1 Oct – 31 Dec 2025)	Quarter 4 (1 Jan – 31 Mar 2026)
Planning enforcement reports received	62	59	48	67
Proactive cases opened	2	7	2	10
Development Monitoring cases opened	0	0	2	2
Planning enforcement reported cases resolved	69	85	65	57
Proactive cases resolved	4	4	6	0
Development Monitoring cases resolved	3	2	2	1
Planning enforcement cases on hand at end of quarter	154	125	111	120
Proactive cases on hand at end of quarter	16	19	15	25
Development Monitoring cases on hand at end of quarter	6	4	4	5
Total case load on hand at end of quarter	176	148	130	150
Enforcement Notices & Listed Building Enforcement Notices (excluding any issued by Cambs County Council within the district)	2	0	2	1
Breach of Condition Notices	0	0	0	0
Section 215 Untidy Land Notices	0	0	0	0
Temporary Stop Notices	0	0	0	1
Advert related Notices	0	0	0	0
Planning Contravention Notices	6	6	8	2
Section 330 Notices (requisition for information)	0	0	0	0
High Hedge Notices	0	0	0	0

- 4.3 The number of new reports recorded over the past 12 months is higher than the previous year which reflects that the team now formally records more of the work we undertake. In the past when dealing with some contacts/requests passed to enforcement, although action had been taken it was not considered necessary to open a case which would take up further officer time in both enforcement and the technical support team. However in order to provide a truer reflection of the volume of work we handle any contact/request which results in the enforcement team undertaking research/visiting a site for a photo/responding to a customer/taking an action to try and prevent a breach taking place is now formally recorded so there is an audit trail and a record of the work completed.
- 4.4 In the second quarter of 2025 one of the team members left and a review of open cases was undertaken. Where cases were not considered to be expedient to pursue or had been left open for monitoring purposes, these were closed to enable officers to focus on progressing their other cases. With the team comprising of 2.6 FTE this has resulted in an average of 40 cases per officer as at year end. Although this is low in comparison with previous years, some of these cases are extremely complex and/or relate to potential legal proceedings so are taking up a lot of officer time.
- 4.5 The Enforcement review which commenced at the end of February 2025 continues and we currently have information leaflets for those who make a report to us and for those who are reported as well as an enforcement handbook for staff in the final stages of production. Our letter templates have been updated as well as the report templates that we complete when we take action or close a case, and the recording of high hedges complaints has been streamlined. We are also working on improved reporting accuracy and functionality and improvements to the customer experience for those accessing the enforcement register and reporting potential breaches to enforcement, the latter of which should result in savings in officer time in both enforcement and the technical support team as well as more accurate information being received at the outset enabling a swifter investigation.
- 4.6 The team no longer has a hard copy file for each enforcement case and is working as paperless as possible. We tested using a mobile application on a tablet on site visits to record information and take photographs. The app testing was unsuccessful, but we intend to return to further testing in the future with the assistance of ICT with a view of using a tablet to access information on site and for officers to make notes on an online form.
- 4.7 A Development Monitoring Officer is currently being recruited to the enforcement team who will focus solely on the proactive monitoring of developments. When they identify a breach, a case will be opened for the planning enforcement officers to pursue a resolution so this additional workstream will impact planning enforcement officer caseload moving forward.
- 4.8 Officers continue to be committed to taking a firm and consistent approach for breaches of planning control where material harm has taken place. We are progressing some long-standing and difficult cases and have sought external legal assistance when it has been considered appropriate to do so in order to facilitate this.

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 Control 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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Document Information

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