

**REPORT TO THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MEETING ON 24th SEPTEMBER 2020**

Status: For Discussion
Title: Planning Enforcement Report
Originators: Christine Zacharia, Team Leader Planning Enforcement and David Atkinson, Head of Planning and Regeneration
Where from: Scrutiny Commission, 6th June 2019
Where to next: N/A

Objective: To provide the Scrutiny Panel with information on;

- Ease of access to information insofar as it relates to Planning Enforcement
- How Members are updated of new enforcement complaints
- The interface of Members with the Planning Compliance Officer

1. Outcome sought from Panel

1.1 Consideration of the contents of this report.

2 Background

2.1 The Panel is presented with the report in order to provide information on how to access information regarding planning enforcement cases; how Members are notified of new planning enforcement cases, and how Members are able to liaise with the Planning Compliance Officer to seek information and be kept updated of major developments and contentious sites within their Ward.

3 Points for discussion

3.1 **Ease of access to information**

3.2 The Council's adopted Local Enforcement Plan 2018 (LEP) sets out in a clear, concise and transparent way, the procedures and practices which the Council's planning enforcement service currently adopt, when dealing with complaints of alleged breaches of planning control regardless of the source of complaint. The LEP sets out how any alleged planning breaches can be reported to the Council using the Council's website or by directly contacting the planning enforcement team on its generic email: planningenforcement@harborough.gov.uk.

3.3 The LEP can be found on the Council's website <https://www.harborough.gov.uk/enforcement>

- 3.4 Complainant details remain confidential and are not disclosed to members of the public, Parish Council's or Members.
- 3.5 Planning enforcement cases are registered on UNIFORM using the standard planning enforcement module, with each enforcement case allocated its own unique reference. Access to the enforcement database can be made via the Council's website at: <https://www.harborough.gov.uk/enforcement>, and clicking the link 'Search our enforcement database and notices'. Here, basic information can be found on a specific enforcement case in terms of the unique reference number; alleged breach; case status and the officer dealing with the complaint. Any further information can be sought by emailing the planning enforcement team directly using the generic planning enforcement email address and quoting where possible the unique case reference number.

3.6 **How Members are notified of new planning enforcement cases**

- 3.7 On a fortnightly basis, a list is generated and emailed to all Parish Council's and Members of new enforcement cases registered in the preceding two weeks. The cover email states:

'Just a reminder that when reporting a new complaint, complainants should complete where possible the attached planning enforcement complaint form and return to the generic email address : planningenforcement@harborough.gov.uk

The form can also be found on HDC's website at:
<https://www.harborough.gov.uk/enforcement>

Any new complaints should not be sent direct to officers. If you receive a message advising the officer, you wish to contact is out of the office and your matter is urgent please send a copy of your email to the generic enforcement email address.

In situations where a case is open and being investigated, correspondence should be sent to the officer dealing with the case (see officer contact details below). If in doubt, please send correspondence to the generic planning enforcement email address referred to above'.

- 3.8 The email gives clear guidance of steps to follow if a Member (or Parish Council) wishes to receive further information regarding a specific enforcement case or/and wishes to be kept updated on an investigation. An example of a 'new enforcement cases' list covering July 2020 is attached to this report for information (Appendix A).

3.9 **The interface of Members with the Planning Compliance Officer**

- 3.10 In April 2019, the Council appointed a full time Planning Compliance Officer. This is a new post which allows for a more pro-active approach for planning enforcement but is specifically concerned with monitoring developments for compliance with approved plans, and planning conditions. These cases, which are predominantly major development sites in the District are registered under the planning enforcement module with a 'DCM' prefix (Development Conditions Monitoring).

Members can access information with regard to DCM cases via the <https://www.harborough.gov.uk/enforcement> link or more directly by email to planningcompliance@harborough.gov.uk. In practice, the planning compliance officer will keep Members updated on any proactive work undertaken on key developments in their Ward insofar as this relates to conditions monitoring.

4 Equality Impact Assessment Implications/Outcomes

4.1 None directly arising from this report.

5 Impact on Communities

5.1 None directly arising from this report.

6 Legal Issues

6.1 None directly arising from this report.

7 Resource Issues

7.1 None directly arising from this report.

8 Community Safety Implications

8.1 None directly arising from this report.

9 Carbon Management Implications

9.1 None directly arising from this report.

10 Risk Management Implications

10.1 None directly arising from this report.

11 Consultation

11.1 No consultation required.

12 Background Papers

12.1 Not Applicable.

Previous report(s): *not applicable*

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: *None*

Appendices:

Appendix A - New enforcement cases opened July 2020 (current status)