

Monitoring Report

Portfolio:	Regulatory
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Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards
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Purpose: As an information item providing an overview of function and performance of the Corporate Enforcement Service for the period 1 May 2021 – 31 August 2021

1. Key Issues

1.1 This report provides clarification over the performance of the Corporate Enforcement Team over the period spanning from 01 May 2021 to 31 August 2021. The previous monitoring update to the Planning Applications Committee was in August 2021 as a verbal update on the highest priority urgent investigations.

1.2 The following matters will be discussed within the report:

- 1) Enforcement Performance
- 2) Uniform
- 3) Enforcement Register
- 4) High Priority Investigations
- 5) Resource Update

2. Enforcement Performance

2.1 The Corporate Enforcement Team (the Team) has continued reviewing their internal procedures in order to put emphasis on customer service for both internal and external customers. Extensive work has now been undertaken alongside the IT Department to improve Uniform, the Team's operating system. This has led to the commencement of the larger procedural review of the Team's internal procedures and this will remain on-going until after Uniform with Enterprise (sub-system to Uniform) has been completed, which is explained later in this report. It should be noted that this review is having a direct impact on officers' availability to working through the remaining historical backlog and the Enforcement Register that is currently under review. Consequently, the Team has closed down 67 investigations overall during the period of 01 May 2021 to 31 August 2021, 5 of which are historical investigations.

3. Uniform

3.1 Uniform is one of the IT systems the Corporate Enforcement team uses. As part of the Uniform package, the Council has obtained access to Enterprise which is a managing tool for Uniform that allows more complex reports to be drawn from. Consultants of Enterprise will be assisting the IT Department and the team in setting this sub-system up in January 2022. Unfortunately, a significant amount of work needs to be undertaken before Enterprise can be installed which will impact workloads of all officers in the Corporate Enforcement team. The reason being that the current data review of Uniform will need to have been completed by then, including the finalisation of all Planning Enforcement internal processes (this includes mapping all of those procedures) and template writing (this includes the installation of all templates into Uniform).

- 3.2 As part of the above process, the Team has managed to-date to close a significant number of open historical investigations (an update in May 2021 clarified the extent of historical cases closed at that time, and this remains ongoing), create a number of new internal processes (this included expanding on current internal processes) and templates for ease of the usage of the Uniform system (the IT Department has advised that numerous templates have now been uploaded, but the main templates for expediency reports and formal Notices still needs to be finalised and then uploaded).

4. Enforcement Register

- 4.1 The Council by law has to provide an Enforcement Register that contains all Enforcement Notices, Stop Notices and Breach of Condition Notices issued by the Council since records began. The reviewing of the current Register remains ongoing with a large part of the existing Notices already scanned. Once all Notices have been scanned and uploaded then a full review of the status of each Notice needs to be undertaken before the Register can be signed off by Legal. This is an extensive exercise that will remain ongoing alongside the current caseload of officers.

5. High Priority Investigations

- 5.1 An appendix has been attached to this report providing a list of the highest priority investigations the team are currently dealing with. As part of this list, a traffic-light system has been introduced showing the current progress on those investigations. The red-light system works as follows:

Red: The investigation requires urgent attention;

Orange: The investigation is progressed on an ad-hoc basis;

Green: The investigation is held in abeyance pending consideration of other decisions; such as a planning appeals, planning applications, etc.

6. Resource Update

- 6.1 The Council has appointed Jina Parker as an Assistance Corporate Enforcement Officer who started on 7th June 2021. In addition to her day-to-day job, she has also been tasked to assist Corporate Enforcement officers in their day-to-day activities, including accompanying officers during site inspections. Jina has settled in and is an invaluable member to the Team.

- 6.2 Furthermore, the Council has also appointed Rebecca Green as a Planning Enforcement Officer (Compliance) whom will start on Monday 13 September 2021. She has an extensive planning enforcement background having worked 12 years for a local Surrey Borough Council. She has worked in the private sector for the last 3 years and her overall experience will provide the Team with a wide range of additional skills.

7. Summary

- 7.1 The Corporate Enforcement Team has now added two additional resources. As a consequence, the Team aims to increase performance by reviewing the overall number of open investigations, resolve the highest priority investigations at the earliest opportunity and thus increasing officer availability to tackle new cases in a more expedient manner.

- 7.2 The challenge for the current year is to complete the reviewing of the Team's internal processes, review and update Uniform and finalise all templates, including the

completion of the Enforcement Register and make it available in a more convenient electronic form whilst maintaining the reduction in open enforcement investigations.

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