

4. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Scrutiny Review of Planning Enforcement.

The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) presenting a review of the Council's planning enforcement function.

Resolved:- to endorse the recommendations (***attached below***) of the Scrutiny Review Group as detailed in the report with the exception of recommendation 7 on which the Board requested a report back in October rather than July to assess the benefits of the proposed partnership working.

Recommendations of Review Group

Recommendation 1

To consider in detail the data required to support transparency, service scope, demand and the sound and robust management of performance. To ensure that systems are available to deliver on these requirements and the service uses them diligently

Recommendation 2

To set and publish performance targets for the service as a matter of urgency to include at least:

- **Criteria for immediate acknowledgement of complaints regardless of priority or source**
- **Timescales within which first inspection/contact should be made**
- **Criteria for communicating to all the result of first inspection/contact and the likely path to follow including target timescales**
- **Targets for case completion or case closure**
- **Minimum communication periods/points as cases progress to completion/closure**
- **Criteria for case closure**
- **Protocol for the information and communication of a closed case**

Recommendation 3

That the priorities set within the Planning Enforcement Policy be reconsidered to give clear high priority to issues of:

- **Substantial public or community concern**

Medium priority to issues:

- **Affecting local amenities or facilities (as opposed to the serious harm category already listed)**
- **Causing environmental damage**
- **Affecting the street scene**

Recommendation 4

Managers to ensure that access to and responses from the service are consistently good and transparently reported. With this in mind to provide a quarterly report to each planning committee showing performance against complaints received in their wards alongside performance across the Council as a whole

Recommendation 5

To consider now information giving and management by at least:

- **Producing clear and good quality leaflets giving advice on the extent and limitations of the service along with how to complain and the service that will be received. For these to be widely available**
- **Considering the information given to developers and those applying for planning consent to ensure that enforcement criteria are clear**
- **Appraising the service area web pages to provide the same information as above and to allow on line access to the service**
- **Providing training for staff at customer contact points (including call centres) on the service and customer expectations**
- **Including in the compulsory planning training for members a section on planning enforcement, the service extent and limitations and what they and their constituents can expect**

Recommendation 6

To give priority, within the reframing of the service, to clear and timely communication with service users using the most efficient means. To be able to demonstrate this through the quarterly reporting mentioned at recommendation 4

Recommendation 7

To give more detailed and systematic consideration to the benefits and difficulties of partnership working and form a judgement on the

possibilities of net gains to the Council or communities. To report on this by July 2010

Recommendation 8

Decision makers to consider with officers the possibilities of increasing outcomes either through efficiencies or increased investment to allow the service to consider an element of proactive enforcement and/or to respond to the steadily growing demands for service.

Recommendation 9

To ensure continued senior management focus on this service with the aim of keeping standards and quality high and providing timely solutions if service demands begin to outgrow resources