

To: East Area Planning Committee & West Area Planning Committee

Date: June 2011

Report of: Head of City Development

Title of Report: Planning Enforcement – Performance Update

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report:	Inform members of the performance of the Planning Enforcement function within City Development
Key decision:	No
Report Approved by	
Finance: N/A	
Legal: N/A	
Policy Framework:	Oxford City Council corporate priorities - Improve the local environment, economy and quality of life
Recommendation(s):	To note the workload and performance of the Planning Enforcement function within City Development

1: Background

In 2009/10 there were two reviews of planning enforcement. One was carried out by members of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee, officers reviewed the internal processes. A number of recommendations and a combined action plan followed and were agreed by the City Executive Board (CEB) in June 2010, with a further update in December 2010. One of the agreed actions was the reporting of quarterly performance updates.

This is the first performance update report and covers the January-March 2011 quarter. The content of the report will evolve over time.

2: Enforcement Performance

2.1: Open Investigations

Chart 1 shows that there has been a significant reduction in the number of open enforcement investigations over the period December 2009 to March 2011, from 815 to 360. This reduction was kickstarted by an extra officer funded through BPI money in the first quarter in 2010. The number of active cases stood at 360 at the end of March 2011.

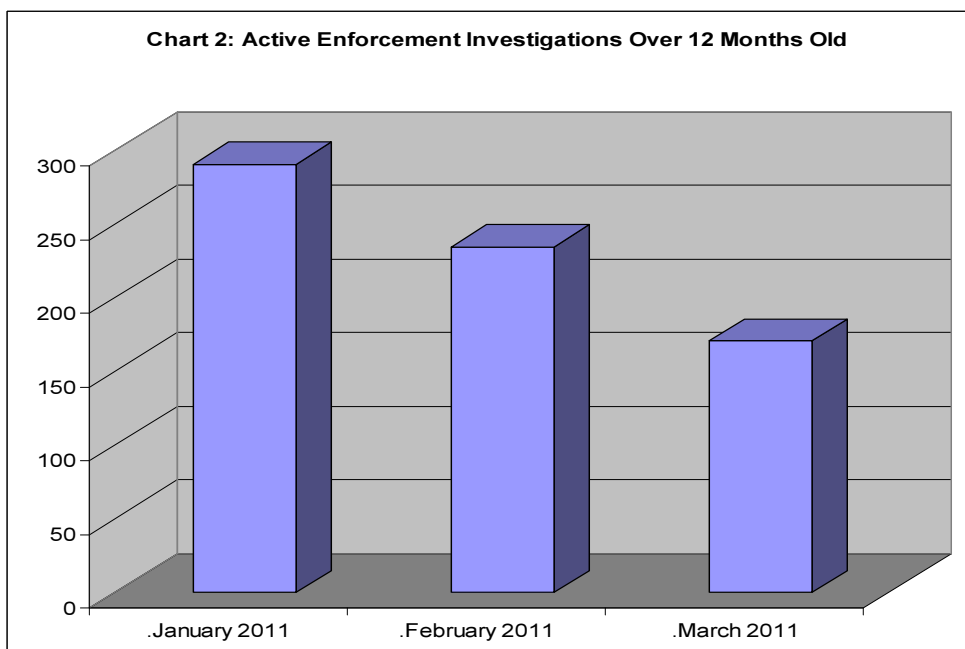
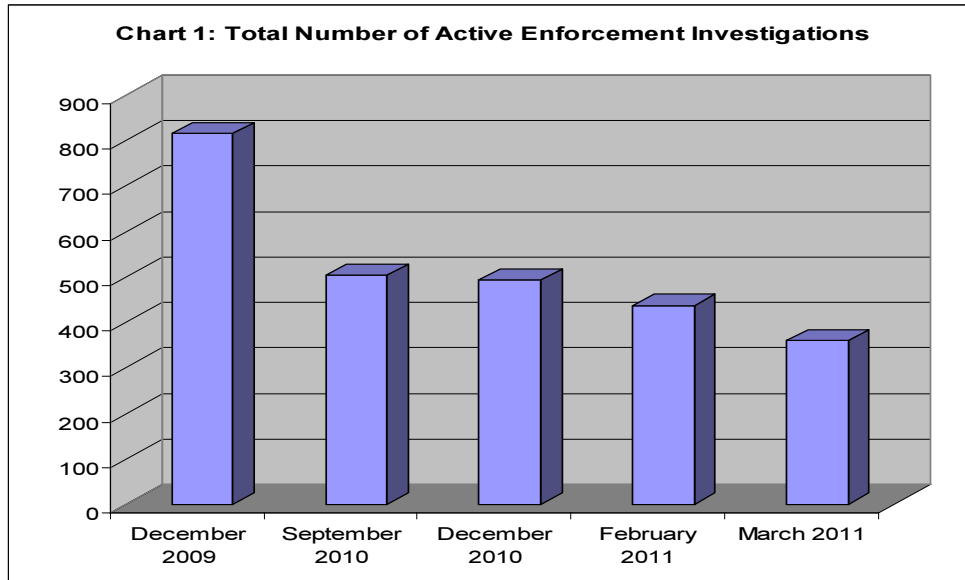


Chart 2 indicates the continued progress in tackling cases that have been open in excess of 12 months during the first quarter of 2011. This has seen a fall from 290 in January to 170 at the end March. Some of these older cases tend to be associated with outstanding enforcement notices. Historically there were problems with closing such cases once resolved, due to limitations of the It systems. However these are being progressively resolved and it is anticipated that the number of outstanding older cases will reduce further.

2.2: Quarterly Performance – January 2011- March 2011

Chart 3 shows that the enforcement team opened 194 new investigations in the quarter, while 202 were closed.

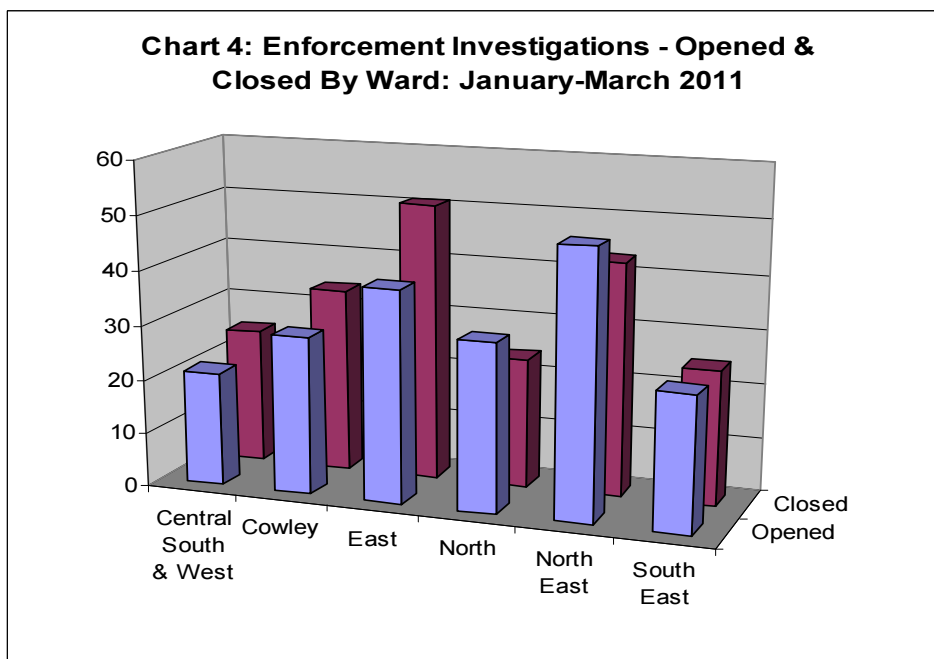
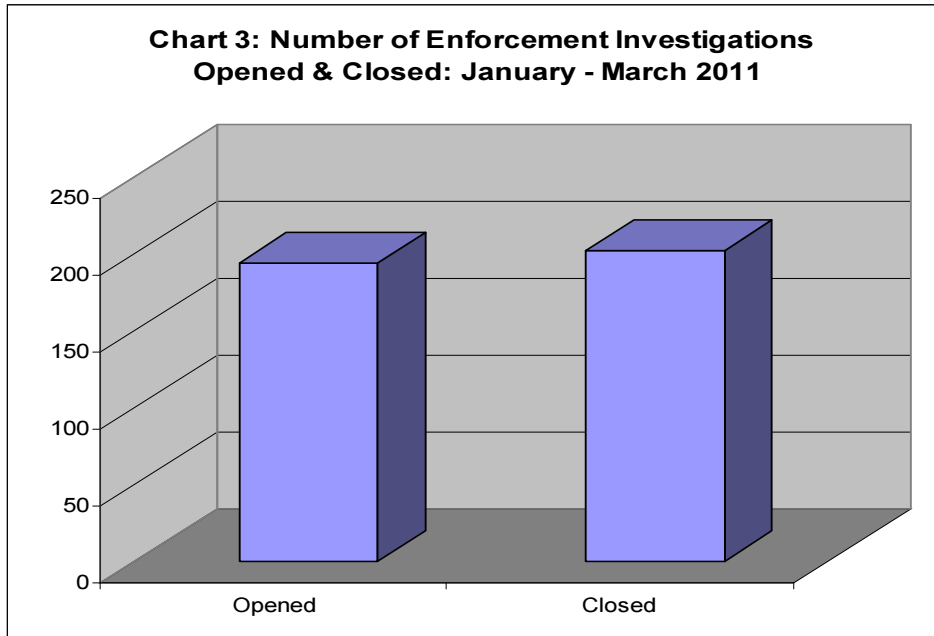
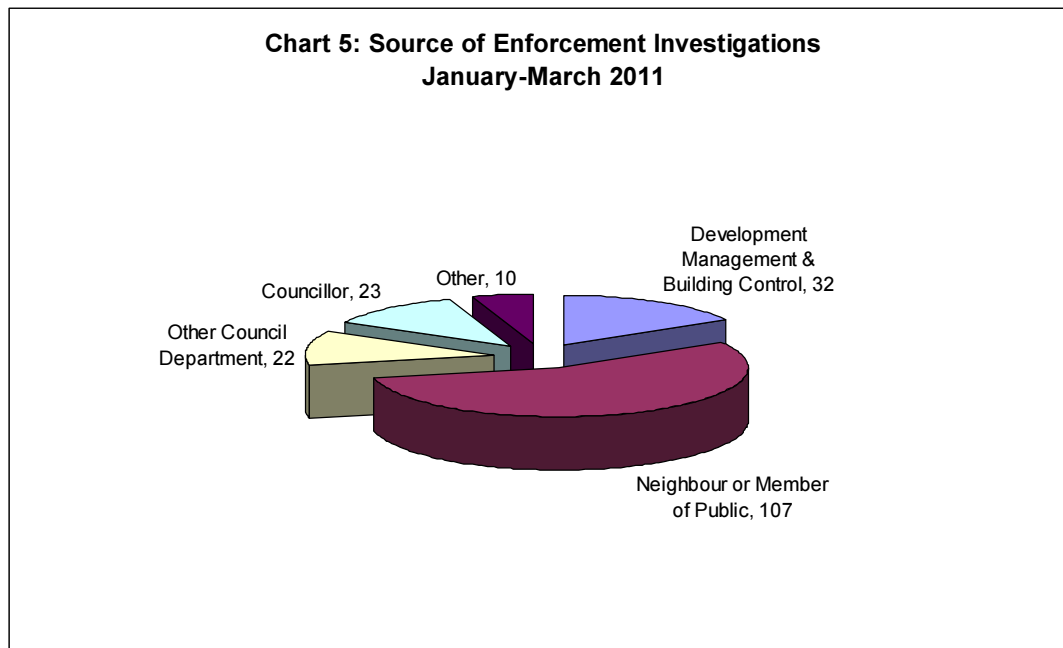


Chart 4 indicates the spread of newly opened and recently closed cases across the city.

During the second half of 2011 we will aim to make changes to the IT system that will allow a greater amount of performance data available. Hopefully with the anticipated update of the Council's computer system it may be possible to produce data on the type of breach of planning control identified by an investigation and performance figures for specific actions on enforcement investigations.

2.2 Source of Investigations.

This section deals with the source of the information that leads to the opening of the case. From chart 5 it is clear that neighbours and other members of the public represent the main source of queries leading to enforcement investigations. Other sources represent statutory bodies, Members of Parliament, tenants, landlords and agents.



2.4: Investigation Outcomes

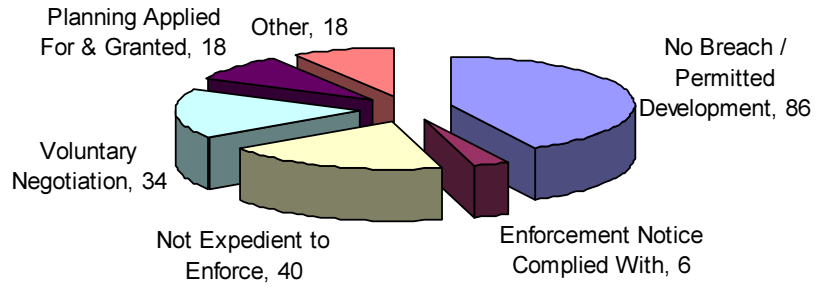
Chart 6 shows that, of those cases closed in the period, some 43% (86 cases) related to matters where no breach of planning control had taken place or the development was permitted development.

Some 20% (40 cases) were considered not expedient to enforce. In most instances this was because either the development was considered minor, or because development would have received a favourable officer recommendation had a planning application been submitted.

17% (34 cases) were resolved by voluntary actions to resolve the breach of planning control. In addition a further 9% (18 cases) progressed to retrospective planning applications that were deemed acceptable. 3% (6 cases) were resolved by compliance with a planning enforcement notice.

Other reasons include the compliance with planning conditions, the submission of amended plans or the result of appeals.

**Chart 6: Investigation Outcomes
January - March 2011**



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