

## **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PLAN REVIEW**

### **Item HP 26/11 referred from Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee of 17 March 2026**

A number of proposed changes to the Planning Enforcement Plan (attached at Annex 1) and associated activities were presented for consideration. In addition, options for a pro-active approach were outlined.

Members were advised that the Planning Enforcement Plan (PEP) would be updated to reflect the current National Planning Policy Framework. This would ensure it was up to date, correct and that Members and the public were clear on the changes to national policy and submission requirements for retrospective applications.

In addition, to streamline the submission of a complaint of a breach of planning control, it was proposed that a link be inserted into the PEP directing to the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (technical guidance). This would ensure that stakeholders understood the planning process and what was considered to be a breach of planning control.

Following stakeholder feedback, consideration had been given to a more pro-active approach to enforcement within legislative and capacity constraints. The proposed approach included the issuing of letters outlining the breach and offences requiring immediate cessation without the invitation of a retrospective planning application. New letters had been drafted (attached at Annexes 2-5) to ensure clear messaging was given to contraveners as to whether enforcement action was initiated, a retrospective planning was invited, no further action was required.

Whilst Members welcomed the proposed improvements to planning enforcement, concern was expressed about the timeliness of enforcement, communication with complainants and the lack of regular updates. In response, ongoing efforts to improve responsiveness and transparency were outlined.

Finally, it was confirmed that third-party evidence, such as photographs, was accepted for enforcement cases. However, it was clarified that for legal proceedings, the Borough Council must gather its own evidence to avoid relying on untrained individuals in court.

In recognition that having an effective Planning Enforcement Plan in place ensured that there was a framework of prioritisation and decision making that reduced the risk of legal challenge, Cllr King proposed, Cllr Palmer seconded and it was

**\*RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the proposed changes to the Planning Enforcement Plan and the associated activity and timescales, set out in section 5 of the report, be agreed; and
- (2) the pro-active approach, proposed letter templates and direct action against s215 notices being issued and resourcing options, set out in section 7 of the report, be agreed.

**\*Recommended to Cabinet**