

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 JUNE 2017

REPORT BY DIRECTOR, HELEN STANDEN

UPDATE ON PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

WARD(S) AFFECTED:

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- Provide an update on the current position in regard to the Council's Planning Enforcement Service

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Overview and Scrutiny:**

**That:**

<b>(A)</b>	<b>Members note the update and a full action plan be presented to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>
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1.0 Background

Following the raising of concerns expressed over the timeliness of enforcement action in some cases, the Portfolio holder and Director met with Planning Enforcement to review the current position.

2.0 Report

2.1 A task and finish group (set up in September 2015) considered and revised the Enforcement Plan, culminating in a report back to Environmental Scrutiny Committee in February 2016.

2.2 The Plan was adopted but not fully integrated within the service area and due to increasing workloads within the team, integration has halted.

2.3 The recommended 0.5FTE has not been recruited to with a number of capacity issues cited along with the subsequent restructure proposal for the whole Planning Service which

commenced in September 2016. There have been failings within the Council which have meant that the appropriate support has not been provided in order to progress matters as members would have expected.

- 2.4 As a result, the predicted improvements to the Planning Enforcement Service have not materialised. This is partly due to capacity issues but also due to the lack of drive and momentum to change ways of working and embrace the new Plan.
- 2.5 Following an initial evaluation by the Director, a clearer picture is emerging and a full review has commenced to determine how we drive the service forward, address capacity issues and relieve undue pressure on the team.
- 2.6 By 12 June 2017, it is anticipated that 1.5 FTE will have been recruited to the team. Consideration is being given and advice sought (due 16 June 2017) on outsourcing the Council's backlog to a specialist planning enforcement company. Further integration with Uniform IDOX computer system is anticipated.
- 2.7 Resources will be made available to ensure that the action plan is successful.
- 2.8 It is therefore proposed that this update is received and a full action plan to deal with the issues arising is presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2017. This will enable officers to develop and apply the robust action required.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers: none

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