

TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
5 MARCH 2019

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT
Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Panel of performance on Planning Enforcement following the introduction of the Local Enforcement Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Panel notes the performance on Planning Enforcement.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

3.1 The report advises the Panel of progress being made on delivering improved performance and follows a request for a report on Planning Enforcement from members.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Local Enforcement Plan

5.1 The Local Enforcement Plan was approved by the Executive on 20 October 2015.

Performance overall

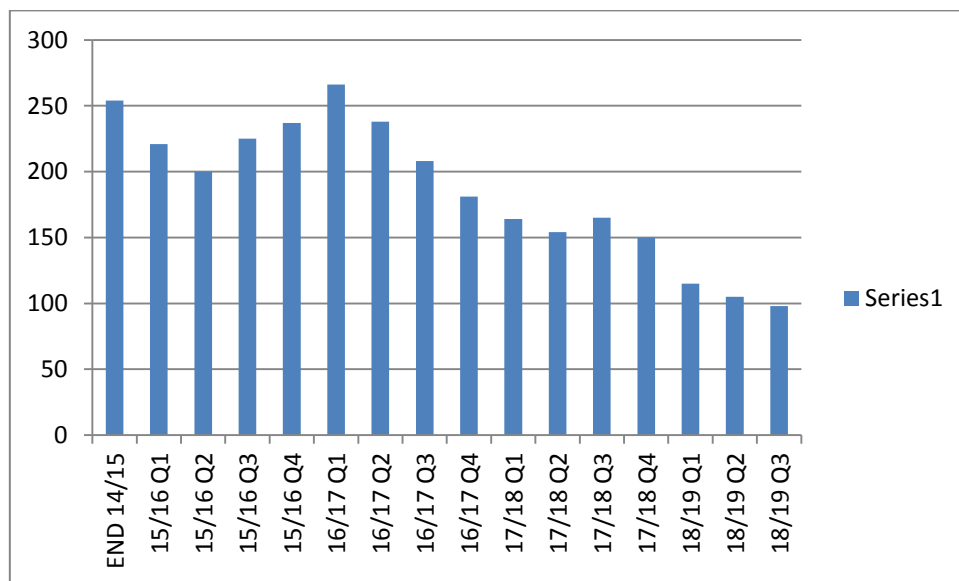
5.2 Table 1 below shows the number of cases opened and closed for each of the past 4 financial years, with the current year running to 25th February. Year on year there has been a net closure of on average 39 cases in excess of the incoming cases.

Table 1 – Cases Opened and Closed 2015 - 2019

	Opened	Closed	Net Difference
Cases 2015/2016	318	329	-11
Cases 2016/2017	352	414	-62
Cases 2017/2018	453	483	-30
Cases 2018/2019	331	383	-52

5.3 Planning Enforcement has been reported on a quarterly basis since the first quarter of 2016/17 as part of the Quarterly Planning Performance Reports.

5.4 Inserted below is a quarter by quarter breakdown of cases on hand at end of each quarter since the end of the 14/15 financial year. As can be seen over the past four years there has been a steady reduction in caseload with the current open caseload figures being below one hundred for the first time in memory.



Graph 1 – Number of Cases on Hand by Quarter

5.5 As can be seen from the above chart since the end of the 2014/15 financial year there was a decline in caseload initially as new officers joined the Council. There was then a brief increase in number of total caseload for around three quarters until a steady decline in caseload began in 16/17 Q2/Q3. These figures coincided with the third member of the Enforcement Team beginning in June 2016. Thereafter it can be seen that with the exception of one quarter (17/18 Q3) there has been a decline in open cases in each quarter.

Performance on Older Cases

5.6 Taken from the first quarterly reports beginning in financial year 2016/17 it can be seen that there were a significant number of older cases – 123 over a year old - at this time which represented 42% of open cases. Older cases also take a greater amount of work to resolve, as there is a greater amount of paperwork and previous involvement in each case as opposed to a newly investigated case. As such they represent a greater burden on the Officer's time to try to resolve.

5.7 As stated above the Enforcement Team has been at full strength since June 2016 which has enabled progress to be made on older cases while keeping on top of new cases coming in.

Table 2 – Q1 Annual figures on older cases for 2016-2018 (*Q1 2016/17 provides first quarterly available data):

	16/17 Q1	17/18 Q1	Change	17/18 Q1	18/19 Q1	Change
Cases over 6 months	178	99	-79	99	55	-44
Cases over 12 months	123	78	-45	78	45	-33
Cases over 18 months	94	64	-30	64	40	-24

5.8 As can be seen from the above table, the number of cases is steadily falling with 45 fewer cases remaining open after 12 months at the same time the previous year. When comparing the data for 17/18 with 18/19 it can be seen that there are 33 fewer open cases in excess of 12 months which is equal to 42%. The above reduction in older cases between 2017/18 occurred despite an extensive mobile home project which ran from November 2017 to April 2018, which is also reflected in a higher number of cases opened in that year shown in Table 1.

Table 3 - Most Recent Quarter Compared with Q1 2016/17:

	16/17 Q1	18/19 Q3	Change	Change %
Current cases over 6 months old	178	42	-136	-76%
Current cases over 12 months old	123	25	-98	-79%
Current cases over 18 months old	94	24	-70	-74%

5.9 The most recent quarter's figures in the above table show that very few of the open cases are older cases and there has been significant progress on older cases when compared to Q1 of 2016/17. Cases in excess of 12 months old are now around a fifth of what they were at end of first quarter 2016/17.

5.10 It should perhaps be added at this point that whilst these figures show that for each of the past four financial years there has been a steady reduction in open cases there will come a point in the very near future that there may be no or significantly fewer further reductions in open cases. The team are fast arriving at the point where there is natural progression of all open cases with

the team vigilantly ensuring that cases are taken further with formal notices served where appropriate without delay.

Background Papers

Bracknell Forest Borough Local Enforcement Plan:

<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/planning-local-enforcement-plan.pdf>

Contact for Further Information

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