



Development Control Committee	Wednesday, 17 February 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: **Current Justification for Development Control
Sub-Committee (Enforcement)**

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1. Introduction

At the meeting of the Development Control Sub-Committee (Enforcement) on Monday 11 January 2016, the Chair of the Committee raised the issue of whether or not the Sub-Committee continues to serve the purpose for which it was originally set up.

2. Recommendations

That meetings of the Development Control Sub-Committee (Enforcement) be suspended for the foreseeable future.

3. Information

The Development Control Sub-Committee (Enforcement) was originally set-up at a time when Planning Enforcement had no full-time staffing and cases were being dealt with by Planning Officers as and when time permitted between the normal planning application processes. The result of that situation was a large backlog of cases which had built up and a means of trying to keep track of any progress was needed by persons outside the planning team. It was also to be used as a means of keeping Members up to date on the current state of cases under enquiry.

Currently, there are still some older cases that have not been cleared but the backlog is now substantially less with a part-time dedicated Enforcement Officer in place. Whereas the total number of cases on hand was well over 200, it is now down to just over 100 and decreasing. As far as the author is aware, the enforcement staffing level will not be changing either up or down for the foreseeable future and the current downward trend in cases should continue albeit at a slower rate as the aged 'easy wins' have now been dealt with.

As with planning applications, enforcement enquiries are closed by means of a delegated report to the Planning Control Manager who then either approves the recommendation of the Officer or suggests a further course of action to be undertaken. In any event, it is a delegated system of closure. Similarly there is no reason why cases, where it is deemed necessary, cannot be put before the full Development Control Committee for authority to close after hearing the reasons for the recommendation from the Officer. It is not anticipated that this would be an often used/necessary course of action and, as such, will not add substantially to the workload of the Development Control Committee. Officers, therefore, see no current/continuing need for a separate Committee to carry out this function.

With regard to keeping Members informed of progress with cases, it would be a simple enough task for the Officer to prepare a report of progress on:

- The oldest cases;
- Cases closed in the period from one report to the next; and
- Those deemed to be of particular importance and requiring Member input.

If the function of the current Sub-Committee on enforcement were to be suspended, it would have no effect on cases requiring urgent input from Members as Officers could contact the Ward Members for the specific case and arrange for discussions to take place on any recommendations or requests for authority to take certain specified courses of action such as High Court Injunctions etc.

Officers are of the opinion that in the current climate, the need for the Development Control Sub-Committee (Enforcement) no longer exists but would not wish to pre-empt Members thoughts and wishes.

The Officer's proposal is that for the foreseeable future, the functions of the Development Control Sub-Committee (Enforcement) be suspended for the above reasons.

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Implications	
Financial	No significant implications.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	No significant implications.
Equalities	No significant implications.