

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

REPORT TO CITY CENTRE,
SOUTH AND EAST
PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS
COMMITTEE
26TH NOVEMBER 2012

QUARTERLY OVERVIEW OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This is the quarterly report to advise members of the work being undertaken by the Planning Enforcement Team. The period covered runs from 1st July to 1st October.

2. ACTIVITY DURING THE QUARTER

- A total of 198 enforcement complaints were received. Of these 58% concerned unauthorised development and 20% failure to comply with conditions or approved plans. The percentage of cases involving houses in multiple occupation remains low but Section 215 (untidy land/buildings) cases have increased markedly; 13% of the total, compared to the last quarter.
- Notices served in the period: -

Notice type	Quarter 2 Jul – Sep 2011	Quarter 3 Oct – Dec 2011	Quarter 4 Jan – Mar 2012	Quarter 1 Apr – Jun 2012	Quarter 2 Jul – Sep 2012
Breach of conditions	2	10	1	2	
Discontinuance (adverts)			1		2
Enforcement	6	10	2	8	6
Stop					1
Temporary Stop	1	1			
Section 215 (untidy land)	3	3	2	4	8
Section 225 (signs)	15	6	12	1	
Total	27	30	18	15	17
Prosecutions	5	1	6	5	1

- The number of cases resolved within the target of 6 months was only 46% of all the cases closed in the period. This appears to compare badly to the 58%, 68% and 63% achieved in the preceding three quarters. However, the actual number of cases less than 6 months old closed in the period was significantly up on the preceding two quarters in 2012.
The low figure of 46% is in fact due to the team making a concerted effort to close older cases in recent months, evidenced by the fact that 246 cases were closed in this quarter compared with 160 in the last quarter.
- Cases involving Section 215 of the Planning Act are a growing proportion of the whole and both the public and other departments have high expectations that the Planning Service will sort out the amenity problems resulting from unmaintained land or buildings. To an extent this has been a result of the economic downturn which has resulted in complaints about sites where construction has halted and buildings that are neglected instead of being redeveloped. In addition the Stuck Sites programme has actively targeted those poorly maintained sites that also have housing potential, with a budget for direct action if required.
 - Section 215 action, as part of the Stuck Sites initiative resulted in the owner demolishing a former working mens club at Dara Street, Wincobank. The developer is now having pre-application discussion with officers for a development of 12 houses.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 In terms of the statistics the number of complaints has increased to 198 from last quarters 179. The current purge of older cases has meant that a lot have been closed in the period giving the impression that the teams performance is well short of the Service Plan Target of resolving at least 70% of cases within 6 months. This is expected to be a temporary distortion of the statistics that will improve once the older cases have been closed, as far as possible.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members note the report.