



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND RESOURCES**

to
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 DECEMBER 2023

SCRUTINY WORKPLAN ITEM – PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's agreement to delete this item from its scrutiny workplan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Planning Enforcement be deleted from the scrutiny workplan but kept on a watching brief for periodic review by the Working Group including initial consideration of the review of the Planning Enforcement Policy.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Planning Enforcement has been included on the scrutiny workplan since March of this year, with a focus on policy review, staffing resource and other ongoing performance review issues. This followed Member scrutiny requests that raised concern around the historic backlog of open enforcement cases and the scope for monitoring compliance with planning conditions.
- 3.2 The Committee and the Working Group has continued to receive regular updates and briefings from Officers that have shown that with an improved and more focused resource, a significant reduction in the backlog of open cases has been achieved and continues to receive attention. Added to this, the availability to Members of information on enforcement matters has been improved through the introduction of a mapping application, and the importance of good communication with the public and Parish/Town Councils has been recognised. Further training particularly to help the newer Members gain a greater understanding of enforcement within the context of the wider Planning function will be considered.
- 3.3 Looking ahead, a review of the Planning Enforcement Policy will be undertaken, with a need to reflect realistic expectations and priorities based on what the Authority is able to do given the resources available to support this area of work. It is acknowledged that Members wish to work closely with Officers on this review. In addition, improved process mapping of the various enforcement actions will be pursued to ensure greater clarity and efficiency within the Service Directorate.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Given the significant information provided over a period, Members of the Working Group now have greater assurance that the management and resourcing of this function has improved and is on the right path. That being the case, and no specific

area for detailed scrutiny having been identified, the Working Group recommends to the Committee that this item is no longer included in the scrutiny workplan. It feels however that the item should remain on a watching brief for periodic review by the Working Group to include initial consideration of the review of the Planning Enforcement Policy.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

5.1 Provide good quality services.

5.1.1 Thorough scrutiny processes support improved performance and efficiency which in turn will contribute to the quality of services provided, and functions undertaken by the Council.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – None directly, but individual scrutiny reviews will enable the impact on customers to be assessed.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Equalities are considered as part of the reporting on review work undertaken by Officers.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Scrutiny reviews enable potential Corporate Risks to the organisation and their mitigation to be identified.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Scrutiny reviews offer the potential for an assessment of financial impact to the organisation.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Scrutiny reviews offer the potential for an assessment of any resource impact to the organisation.

Background Papers:

None

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