

List of original 14 recommendations of the 2006 Enforcement Scrutiny Task Group Review

Recommendation 1

That one overarching enforcement policy should be developed in order to promote consistency and transparency across enforcement activity carried out by the council. The policy, which can be seen here http://www.merton.gov.uk/democratic_services/ds-agendas/dsfpreports/784.pdf was approved by Cabinet on 22 June 2009.

Recommendation 2

That Senior Officers and the responsible Cabinet Member accept that they are responsible for ensuring that enforcement policies are fit for purpose.

Recommendation 3

That an evaluation process should be established to evaluate the effectiveness of enforcement policies, including measuring the perception of members of the public with regard to how effective the council is in dealing with enforcement.

Recommendation 4

That there should be a presumption to enforce (in accordance with the principles of fairness, proportionality and the public interest test) for all breaches of council policy and that any enforcement action be undertaken in a timely way.

Recommendation 5

That Cabinet consider the desired approach of the council with regard to enforcement and then assess whether the resources currently allocated to enforcement activity are sufficient to achieve this.

Recommendation 6

That resources should be increased within the planning enforcement team in order to ensure that the team has the capacity to proactively enforce planning decisions and to publicise the message that the council will robustly enforce its planning decisions.

Recommendation 7

That greater efforts are made to make businesses aware of their part in ensuring that members of the public are able to move freely and safely on pavements and that action is taken against businesses that continue to place obstructions on pavements.

Recommendation 8

That information should be provided to ensure that members of the public have the information they need to report possible breaches/offences for the council to investigate and take action.

Recommendation 9

That representatives from all of the enforcement teams meet regularly to share knowledge and good practice between the teams and learn from their collective experience and that enforcement staff are supported with training and development opportunities to enable them to build strong cases.

Recommendation 10

That opportunities for joint working between Building Control and Planning Enforcement should be explored.

Recommendation 11

That enforcement teams and Legal Services should develop a service level agreement to ensure clarity over lines of responsibility in taking forward prosecution action.

Recommendation 12

That education/awareness campaigns should be run and that improved information sources should be developed in order to increase public awareness of rules/regulations and the corresponding enforcement policies to be applied in the event of non-compliance. This needs to be coupled with reminders that enforcement action is to be proportionate so that expectations of complainants are not raised too high.

Recommendation 13

That a positive approach should be applied to publicising good enforcement outcomes in order to build public confidence in council enforcement

Recommendation 14

That the Member Development Plan should incorporate training to ensure that members understand the council 's scope for action on enforcement and to equip councillors with the information they need at their fingertips to advise constituents without referring to officers.

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