

**SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Report of the Director of Environment

**PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

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**1. Purpose of the report**

To consider whether the County Council's arrangements and procedures for enforcement of minerals and waste planning matters should be the subject of scrutiny by the Select Committee.

**2. Background**

2.1 In Spring 2000, management action was taken to commence a review of development control enforcement in order to ensure that the County Council's policy objectives, priorities and standards for service delivery accorded with members' aspirations. The brief for this management review was endorsed by the Development Control Committee spokespersons who have been overseeing its progress.

2.2 The objectives of this review are:

- a) to benchmark and compare the enforcement function of the unit with other similar organisations;
- b) to identify trends in enforcement issues and potential pressures for the future;
- c) to establish member expectations and priorities from the service both in terms of action in respect of unauthorised development and monitoring of planning permissions;
- d) to identify any areas of work which may overlap with other agencies (e.g. district environmental health, Environment Agency) which may lead to a more effective use of resources, and
- e) to develop proposals for change to meet the County Council's objectives for the next five years including resource allocation.

2.3 At the latest briefing, it was decided to undertake a detailed comparison of the resources being devoted to this activity in other similar authorities. That work is now being undertaken and the overall conclusions of the review should be completed at the end of March.

- 2.4 Preliminary outcomes to the review suggest that the County Council will need to formalise and publish standards to provide a more transparent and consistent enforcement framework and procedures. Further, it is likely that there may be resource implications if members wish to secure enhanced standards for our enforcement activities.
- 2.5 Following the publicity last year regarding the Bricket Wood site the County Council has offered to assist the government through its experiences with the site. Regrettably this offer has not so far been taken up.

### **3. Financial Summary**

Current resources for this activity are in the order of £100,000 per annum (including site monitoring) and the review may need to consider whether this is sufficient.

### **4. Conclusions**

Members are asked to consider whether the County Council's arrangements for planning enforcement should be the subject of scrutiny. If they consider that this is appropriate, then the Development Control Committee might be asked to comment upon the current officer review following its completion in March, prior to the Select Committee scrutinising this activity at its June meeting.