

Enforcement and possible unauthorised development

1. Introduction

This report considers current matters of enforcement and possible unauthorised development. Authority to take planning enforcement action is delegated to the Executive Head of Property & Growth. Matters that require a Committee decision are reported, together with delegated decisions to take action.

It is not an offence to carry out works without planning permission and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that enforcement action is discretionary and that local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. Local authorities are also advised to take action only where it is appropriate to do so. The purpose of this report is therefore to report to Committee decisions with regard to enforcement action and/or to seek approval for further action.

2. Policy

The Council's Approach to Planning Enforcement is set out in the adopted Local Enforcement Plan. The essential thrust of the Plan is that we will not condone wilful breaches of planning law, but we will exercise our discretion regarding enforcement action if it is considered expedient to do so. Our priorities with regard to enforcement are:

- To focus our resources to ensure that the most pressing and harmful issues are addressed appropriately.
- In determining the expediency of enforcement action we will have regard to the seriousness of any harm which is evident as a result of a breach of planning control.
- Matters which can potentially have a serious impact on the safety or amenity of residents or occupiers of property or on the natural environment will take priority over minor infractions and matters of dispute between neighbours.

3. Items

Each item contains a full description, details of any investigation, and an assessment of the situation and concludes with a recommendation.

This report relates to:

Item 1 Updates on Enforcement Action

All information, recommendations and advice contained in this report are understood to be correct at the time of writing this report. Any change in circumstances will be updated verbally at the Committee meeting. Where a recommendation is either altered or substantially amended between preparing the report and the Committee meeting, a separate sheet will be circulated at the meeting to assist Members in following the modifications proposed.

4. Human rights

The Human Rights Act 1998 (the Act) has incorporated part of the European Convention on Human Rights into English law. Any recommendation either to take or not to take enforcement action has been assessed to make sure that the decision is compatible with the Act. If there is a potential conflict this will be highlighted in the individual report on the relevant item.

5. Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, in the event of an appeal, further resources will be put towards defending the Council's decision. Rarely, and in certain circumstances, decisions on planning enforcement cases result in the Council facing an application for costs arising from a planning appeal. Officers will aim to alert Members where this may be likely and provide appropriate advice in such circumstances.

6. Recommendation

That the report be **NOTED**

Tim Mills
Executive Head of Property & Growth

BACKGROUND PAPERS
Rushmoor Local Plan (2019)
Rushmoor Local Enforcement Plan (2016)
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Item 1 Updates on Enforcement Action

The following is reported for INFORMATION purposes only. It relates to decisions that have already been made by the Corporate Planning Manager in accordance with the Council's adopted Scheme of Delegation.

If Members wish to have more details about the case below, please contact John W Thorne (01252 398791) in advance of the Committee meeting.

Address 59 Field Way, Aldershot 14/00169/XPLANS

Ward North Town

Decision Case Closed

The house. When Building Control visited the site during construction the conversion had taken place, after which a second external front door was removed and a replacement 'concealed' within the front porch. The owners registered the address as two properties for council tax purposes and tenants were housed there, including some who submitted claims for housing benefit.

During the process of investigation, correspondence, including Planning Contravention Notices, was not responded to and planning and corporate enforcement officers were denied access to the premises by the occupiers. Inspection and the process of obtaining a warrant were further hampered by covid restrictions.

After further warnings and site inspections, Planning Enforcement and Breach of Condition (BCN) notices were served. The BCN was not complied with and prosecution proceedings instigated. After deferral of court proceedings to allow further time for compliance it was confirmed in February 2023 that the works were completed. The Council received £4000 towards its legal costs in pursuing the matter.

Address 32 Union Street, Aldershot 22/00161/XPLANS

Ward Wellington

Decision Case Closed

Partial construction of a first floor rear extension to a commercial property in Union Street without planning permission came to the attention of building control officers on inspection. Despite initially trying to submit a planning application to retain the structure the developer was advised that the potential visual impact on part of the Aldershot Union Street East regeneration scheme was such that permission was unlikely to be granted.

The structure has now been removed.