

# Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service



## Compliance Policy

**To: Planning Committee 7 December 2022**

Cllr Katie Thornburrow

**Report by:**

Stephen Kelly

**Wards affected:**

All

### **1. Introduction / Executive Summary**

Members will be aware that a review of planning enforcement activities of the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) has been undertaken.

The aim is to create a unified approach to handling planning enforcement by both partner Councils with an emphasis on early intervention and compliance.

The objectives are to create an effective and efficient planning compliance service which is valued by Members, communities and the public, with clear performance indicators for responses and resolution of issues.

### **2. Recommendations**

Cambridge City Council Planning Committee to note the updated Compliance Policy for Greater Cambridge Shared Planning to be submitted for public consultation in December 2022.

### **3. Background**

Members will be aware that a review of planning enforcement of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) has been undertaken. This has included a review of processes, use of IT to improve workflow and an update of the website, including updated guidance and a video.

Enforcement is discretionary and National Guidance provides that Councils should enforce planning law in a proportionate manner and where it is expedient to do so.

The Uniform IT system has been utilised by GCSP for a number of years, the use of the Uniform enforcement module, recently introduced, enables improved reporting mechanisms for all parties, including members, and allows the use of automated replies, update reminders and related features. This creates efficiencies and is more effective.

The website for GCSP Planning Compliance has been updated to improve access, following a general review of the “customer journey.” This is to ensure the public can more easily navigate and find the information they require, with a target to enable 80% of interactions to be self-service. This also aligns both councils to the same online form.

Planning Compliance information and advice has now been moved to the GCSPS website which enables complaints to be submitted via an e-form, including the ability to upload multiple documents and photographs. Providing clarity on the issues that can be dealt with by the compliance team, will also help other services, history indicates complaints are often initially directed to the wrong service, e.g., environmental health and vice versa. An explanatory video has been included on the website for further information and to be more inclusive in medium of communication. The e-form used for complaints links directly into the back-office system and prevents matters being lost or misdirected, thereby improving efficiency.

### **Enforcement Register**

Councils are obliged to provide a register of Enforcement Action and keep this up to date. Separate registers are currently published on the websites by each Council, in different formats. In the past this has been a manual process however the service is currently reviewing with the intention to publish this information via the Public Access system, which will be automated.

Government guidance also advises that Councils should consider publishing a local compliance policy to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This sets out how officers will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development, and how they will take action, if appropriate. This policy document has been created to update and align the two Council areas in one single document.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, introduced to Parliament in May 2022 includes several changes to the planning system, including planning enforcement. There will be a need to review this Plan once this Bill is passed and the primary and secondary legislative changes are known. Regular review of our approach should be undertaken in any case.

The draft compliance policy is being reported to the Planning Committee of each Council prior to proceeding through the formal process of approval by the relevant Cabinet/Portfolio Holder.

## **4. Implications**

### **a) Financial Implications**

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None

### **b) Staffing Implications**

None

### **c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

Attached in Appendix B

### **d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

None

### **e) Procurement Implications**

None

### **f) Community Safety Implications**

None

## **5. Consultation and communication considerations**

No public consultation has currently been undertaken. A public consultation process will be implemented for a minimum of 4 weeks once the report has been presented to Cambridge City Council Planning Committee. The consultation period is expected to run during December and January 2023.

## **6. Background papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

## **7. Appendices**

Appendix A: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Compliance Policy V2.1 Final Draft

Appendix B: Cambridge City Council EqIA

## **8. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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