

## How will I be kept informed?

If you have written to the Council, you will be notified if the case reaches the following stages:-

- The submission of a planning application
- The issue of an enforcement notice
- The lodging of an appeal against the Council's decision

You may ask the Case Officer for the current position at any stage and will be notified of the outcome.

## Further guidance

The Council has adopted a policy to act as a guide in making decisions about unauthorised development. A copy of this policy can be obtained on request.

You should feel able to discuss the investigation with one of the Council's Enforcement Officers at any stage of the process. If you have any concerns about the conduct of an investigation, you should contact the Planning Appeals and Enforcement Manager in the first instance.

The Council has adopted the Government's Enforcement Concordat which defines best practice in the consideration of enforcement matters. A copy of the Concordat may also be obtained from the Appeals and Enforcement Team.

Town Planning is administered nationally by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Tel: 0207 944 4400). A full list of Government publications may be obtained from HMSO. Further contact details are available from the Council Offices.

**Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. These include large print, braille, audio cassette, computer disk and email. Please contact the Press and Publicity Officer on 01491 823748 or email [press@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:press@southoxon.gov.uk)**



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# Planning enforcement

How investigations are handled



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# Introduction

The Council receives various reports from the public about development which may not have the necessary planning permission or which does not accord with approved plans.

Several hundred investigations are undertaken each year and many result from information submitted by the general public, Parish Councils and local organisations.

This leaflet helps you understand how the Council deals with an enforcement investigation.

## How to raise your concern

If you are concerned that development has not been given the proper consent you may raise your concern with the Council in writing. If you prefer to telephone or to visit the Council Offices your concern will still be investigated. Explaining your concern in writing, however, helps to avoid misunderstanding. A standard form is also available if you wish.

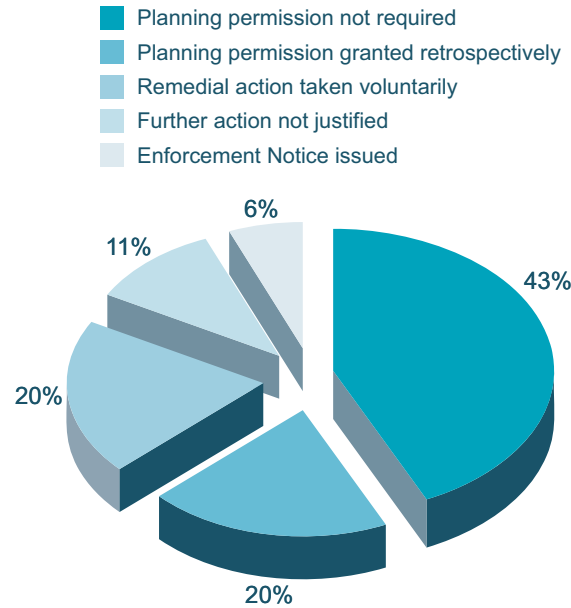
Concerns raised by members of the public are treated in strict confidence. Any information you provide will not be disclosed without your agreement.

## What happens first?

All letters are acknowledged straight away. An Enforcement Officer will usually visit the site and may visit your property. If you have put your concerns in writing you can expect to receive a letter advising you on the progress of the investigation in about four weeks.

## What can I expect to happen next?

Investigations are normally resolved in the following ways.



The Planning Acts are complex and it often transpires that planning permission was not required for the development. Many investigations are also resolved through discussion and remedial action.

Where it is clear that planning permission should have been obtained, the Council will usually offer an opportunity for the submission of a planning application. This does not necessarily mean that the Council are likely to grant permission. If an application is submitted a decision about whether the development is acceptable can be taken with the benefit of comment from all interested parties following proper consultation.

If it is decided that the development is harmful in planning terms an enforcement notice may be issued. This may require development to be removed or a use of land to cease.

## How long can each investigation take?

The Council is obliged to abide by the requirements of the Planning Acts and other relevant legislation. It must also take account of Government guidance. The time taken to progress an investigation will vary depending on the nature of the development.

The chart below shows some of the stages which might be involved in an enforcement investigation.



Some matters may take several months to resolve, particularly if an appeal is lodged against an enforcement notice.

The Council tries to prioritise enforcement work so that proper time can be given to investigations which are of the greatest planning significance.