



**Norfolk** County Council  
at your service

# **LOCAL MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOL**

**For the Extraction and Processing of  
Minerals, Waste Management Facilities and  
for County Council Development under  
Regulation 3 of the Town and Country  
Planning General Regulations 1992**

**in**

**Norfolk**

**October 2017**

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## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This document provides supplemental guidance to the County Council's Enforcement Policy (Community and Environmental Services) and is provided in the context of specific requirements arising from planning legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.2 The new National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012 (NPPF) replaces previous Planning Guidance from Central Government, including PPG18 on Planning Enforcement. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states, 'Effective enforcement is important as a means of maintaining public confidence in the planning system. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. Local Planning Authorities should consider publishing a local enforcement plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where it is appropriate to do so.' In conjunction with the overarching CES Enforcement Policy, this Annex represents Norfolk County Councils Local Enforcement Plan for planning.
- 1.3 Schedule 1 to The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended sets down the responsibilities for Town Planning within a two tier Planning Authority in England and Wales. Regulation 3 of The Town and Country Planning General Regulation 1992 authorises an authority to determine (subject to regulation 4), an application for planning permission by an interested planning authority to develop any land of that authority, or for development of any land by an interested planning authority or by an interested planning authority jointly with any other person, unless the application is referred to the Secretary of State under section 77 of the 1990 Act for determination by him.
- 1.4 The Development Plan for the County comprises the Norfolk Core Strategy and Minerals and Waste Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) 2010 -2016 (Adopted 2011), Norfolk Waste Site Specific

Allocations DPD, Norfolk Minerals Site Specific Allocations DPD (both adopted in 2011) and the adopted Borough and District wide Local Plans, including Development Plan Documents and Area Action Plans. Adopted Neighbourhood Plans which have been developed by local communities, also form part of the Development Plan. The County Council maintains an up-to-date list of local planning authority policy documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

## **2.0 GENERAL STATEMENT**

- 2.1 Section 19 of The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 makes it a duty that where a Planning Authority has planning functions in relation to establishments or undertakings carrying on disposal or recovery of waste, the Planning Authority must ensure that appropriate periodic inspections of those establishments or undertakings are made.
- 2.2 There are two elements within this plan. The first being periodic inspections (Section 3.0), the second being the investigation and enforcement of planning breaches (Sections 4-8).
- 2.3 Planning breaches are normally not criminal offences and no sanction can usually be imposed. However, failure to comply with a formal notice is a criminal offence and making the person committing the breach liable to prosecution.
- 2.4 Where a planning breach occurs a Local Planning Authority (LPA - 'the Authority') is required to consider the expediency of formal enforcement action. Formal enforcement notices may be issued, including a Breach of Condition Notice, Enforcement Notice, Temporary Stop Notice, Stop Notice, Injunction, or Direct Action (following failure to comply with an Enforcement Notice). Enforcement action may result from any of the above or a combination of the above.
- 2.5 The Service of a Planning Contravention Notice constitutes formal action but does not in itself constitute enforcement. Rather it is a request for information relating to interests in the land and the nature of the alleged planning breach, although failure to comply with notice may lead to enforcement action as may the information contained in the response.

- 2.6 Similarly the serving of a notice requesting information on land ownership and occupation under Section 16 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 is not considered to be enforcement.
- 2.7 The taking of formal enforcement action is discretionary. The Authority may choose to take no action, but will need to justify any decision not to enforce, and equally, any decision to take proportionate enforcement action. Any decision will be taken in line with the County Council's Environment, Transport and Development policy on enforcement.

### **3.0 MONITORING INSPECTIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure confidence in the planning control system it is essential that the public and operators are conscious of a fair and effective system of monitoring all authorised and unauthorised development.
- 3.2 Monitoring of permitted sites is an essential tool of controlling development and preventing problems from developing. It is this 'pro-active' approach that often enables officers to anticipate likely breaches of planning control arising before they occur. It enables them to take immediate action to ensure that deterioration in the situation does not arise. A 'pro-active' approach can only be pursued with a structured monitoring regime, with sufficient staff and the technical equipment to carry out these duties.
- 3.3 There are currently 220 operational and active mineral and waste sites in Norfolk. As there are no reserves of hard rock in Norfolk recycling of concrete and other rubble is a significant source of sub-base and fill material. The scale of an operation being undertaken at a site is not an accurate yardstick for allocating resources; experience will often show that small recycling and waste transfer sites will give rise to more complaints and the need for more officer time, in comparison with large sites.
- 3.4 Following an inspection of the site and relevant planning permissions, a report

shall be prepared and copied to the operator/owner usually within two weeks of such inspection taking place. The report shall amongst other matters detail any breaches identified and specify timescales for compliance with conditions that have been breached.

- 3.5 The Monitoring and Control Team will be consulted on all proposals to permit development by the Development Control Team in particular they will be consulted on the planning conditions intended to be attached to the planning permission.

### **MONITORING FEES**

- 3.6 On 6 April 2006 The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force. This amendment, together with subsequent updates, enables Mineral and Waste Planning Authorities (MWPAs) to charge operators, where sites have planning permissions for mineral extraction and/or waste landfill, for the re-imbursement of the average costs calculated over all MWPAs providing a monitoring service.
- 3.7 The Authority has agreed a guidance note with minerals and waste operators on the charging regime for minerals and waste site inspections. The guidance note sets out the categories of sites and associated fees, the methodology for agreeing the number of site visits and the monitoring regime.

## **4.0 INVESTIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

- 4.1 In seeking to secure the highest possible level of compliance with relevant legislation whilst conforming with The Human Rights Act 1998, The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (P.A.C.E.) the Enforcement Concordat, the Code for Crown Prosecutors and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (R.I.P.A.), the principal enforcement activities of the Authority are directed towards avoidance of infringements. It is nevertheless inevitable that breaches and offences will occur and the purpose of this protocol is to ensure that they are resolved in a consistent, transparent, balanced and fair manner.
- 4.2 Similarly, where an operator carries out development without complying with the conditions attached to a planning permission and this gives rise to problems

leading to an unacceptable injury to amenity, the County Council's approach will be to seek to remedy the injury in the first instance by negotiation and persuasion.

- 4.3 All enforcement action, be it verbal warnings, the issue of written warnings, statutory notices, or prosecution, is primarily based upon assessment of risk to public health, public safety, harm to amenity, economic well being or the environment.
- 4.4 Where appropriate, this Authority will endeavour to recover money under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
- 4.5 This Authority will ensure that all clients subject to any enforcement action are informed of what is expected and the procedures that will be followed. This is to aim to avoid any misunderstandings and ensure transparency of all enforcement action.
- 4.6 This Authority, in exercising its function of ensuring compliance with planning control will:
- where there is serious harm caused to the amenity, take immediate action against a breach of planning control to stop further damage;
  - in all other instances, seek to resolve any problems within a reasonable timescale by discussion and negotiation without the need to resort to legal action;
  - only take enforcement action where it is necessary to do so to protect the public interest or to protect the environment, people and transport systems and the amenity of the area in accordance with the provisions of the local development framework;
  - ensure that action is always commensurate with the breach of planning control;
  - Give due regard to current legislation, policy framework, instructions, appeal decisions and relevant judicial authority;
  - where appropriate take into account comments made by the general public and consultees;
  - enable acceptable development to take place, even though it may initially

have been unauthorised;

- maintain the integrity of sites having interests of acknowledged importance;
- where appropriate maintain liaison and contact with the general public, and mineral and waste operators.

## **5.0 THE RELEVANT ENFORCING AUTHORITY**

- 5.1 There is often an overlap of enforcement of activities involving waste disposal and recycling between the Authority, the District and Borough Councils' Environmental Health Departments (EHO) and the Environment Agency (EA). Where the unauthorised activity results in, or has the potential to result in, pollution, the EA will normally be the lead Authority. Where the activities involve a statutory nuisance the District Council EHO may be better placed to take action. In all cases that potentially involve the above bodies, consultations and discussions will take place to see which Authority is in the better position to lead the investigation and if necessary, take action.
- 5.2 The Authority will have regard to the fact that unauthorised development and some breaches of planning conditions involving wastes may be a criminal offence under legislation enforced by the EA and the Authority will liaise with the EA accordingly. The EA may be in a stronger position to ultimately remedy harm to amenity by way of prosecution and enforcing cessation of the harmful activities. In cases where unauthorised development causes or has the potential for serious harm to human health the Authority will have regard to the fact that it may be more appropriate for the HSE to be the lead Authority and will liaise with them accordingly.
- 5.3 Norfolk County Council is a two-tier Authority with seven District, Borough and City Councils; King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, Breckland District Council; North Norfolk District Council; South Norfolk District Council; Broadland District Council; Norwich City Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council.
- 5.4 It is the intention of the County Council to work closely with other regulatory bodies when investigating and remedying an alleged breach of planning control. The County Council in dealing with all complaints concerning an alleged breach of planning control will identify the authority responsible for taking action and redirect



complaints to other regulating bodies where necessary.

## **6.0 GENERAL GUIDANCE**

- 6.1 The County Council will have regard to the provisions of the development framework and core strategies for Norfolk and any other material considerations in the enforcement of planning control.
- 6.2 This Authority remains committed to fostering business enterprise and prosperity, provided that the necessary development can take place without unacceptable harm to local amenity. The new regional 'Better Business for all' working group actively seeks to promote this aim. Whilst the Authority has a general discretion to take enforcement action when they regard it expedient, it does not condone wilful breaches of planning law. Moreover, in some cases effective enforcement action is likely to be the only appropriate remedy where a breach is causing unacceptable harm. The Authority will be guided by the following considerations:-
- (i) The Commissioner for Local Administration (the local ombudsman) has held, in a number of investigated cases, that there is "maladministration" if an Authority fails to take effective enforcement action which was plainly necessary or where an Authority fails to consider whether to take formal enforcement action or not and be able to show their reasoning for not initiating formal action, often resulting in an award of compensation payable to the complainant for the consequent injustice;
  - (ii) The planning regulatory provisions are to ensure proper land use and to resolve breaches of planning control by removing unacceptable impacts on the environment and the amenity of the area. This ensures a 'level playing field' for legitimate businesses to develop and prosper.
  - (iii) Enforcement action should always be commensurate with the breach of planning control to which it relates (for example, the Authority would usually consider it inappropriate to take formal enforcement action

against a trivial or technical breach of control which causes no harm to amenity in the locality of the site); and

- (iv) Where the Authority's initial attempt to persuade the owner or occupier of the site voluntarily to remedy the harmful effects of unauthorised development fails, negotiations will not be allowed to hamper or delay whatever formal enforcement action may be required to make the development acceptable on planning grounds, or to compel it to stop.

- 6.3 It is not an offence to carry out development without first obtaining planning permission for it. If the Authority's initial assessment indicates it is likely that unconditional planning permission would be granted for development which has already taken place, the person responsible will be asked to submit a retrospective planning application. However this initial assessment is not binding on the Authority's subsequent decision to grant or not grant planning permission.
- 6.4 While it is clearly unsatisfactory for anyone to carry out development without first obtaining the required planning permission, an enforcement notice will not normally be issued solely to "regularise" development which is acceptable on its planning merits, but for which permission has not been sought. This would only apply to development which would be granted without any planning conditions being attached to control the development.
- 6.5 The Authority will not normally invite an owner or operator to submit a planning application if the unauthorised development is contrary to development plan policies or if it appears that any actual or potential harm cannot be made acceptable by the imposition of planning conditions; however we cannot prevent a landowner who is determined to apply for permission retrospectively.
- 6.6 If an operator or owner submits a planning application that the Authority has requested, the Authority will not normally consider formal enforcement action whilst the application is being considered. If agreement can be reached between the operator and the Authority about the operation being reduced to an acceptable level (e.g. hours of operation, use of plant and equipment, routing of

vehicles etc) during any period between a planning application being submitted and its determination, and the person concerned honours the agreement, formal enforcement action may be avoided

- 6.7 Where the Authority considers that development has been carried out without the requisite planning permission, but the development could be made acceptable by the imposition of planning conditions the owner or occupier of the land will be invited to submit an application, and pay the appropriate application fee, voluntarily. However, if, after a formal invitation to do so, the owner or occupier of the land refuses or fails to submit a planning application in these circumstances within a reasonable timescale, the Authority will consider whether to take formal enforcement action.
- 6.8 Accordingly, where an owner or occupier of land refuses or fails to submit a planning application which would enable the LPA to grant conditional planning permission, the Authority will be justified in issuing an enforcement notice if, in their view, the unauthorised development has resulted in any harm, or has the potential to cause harm, which can only be satisfactorily removed or alleviated by imposing conditions on a grant of planning permission for the development.
- 6.9 If the location of the unauthorised development is unacceptable, but relocation is feasible, it is not the Authority's responsibility to seek out and suggest an alternative site to which the activity might be satisfactorily relocated. However, if an alternative site has been suggested, the Authority will make it clear to the owner or occupier of the site where unauthorised development has taken place that he is expected to relocate to the alternative site within a reasonable timescale. In such circumstances the Authority will usually agree a reasonable time-limit within which relocation should be completed.
- 6.10 What is reasonable will depend on the particular circumstances, including the nature and extent of the unauthorised development; the time needed to negotiate for, and secure an interest in, the alternative site; submit a planning application (if required) for the alternative site; consultation timescales; and the need to avoid unacceptable disruption during the relocation process. If the

owner or operator fails to provide justification for a suggested timescale, the Authority will set a timescale it considers reasonable. If a timetable for relocation is ignored, or it is evident that appropriate steps are not being taken to progress the relocation, the Authority will consider formal enforcement action. In that event, the compliance period in the notice will specify what the Authority regard as a reasonable period to complete the relocation.

- 6.11 Nevertheless if the unauthorised development is causing unacceptable harm to the environment or amenity, the Authority will consider issuing an Enforcement Notice and/or Stop Notice even if an alternative site has been identified and steps have been made towards relocation. The Authority considers that any difficulty or delay with relocation will not normally be a sufficient reason for delaying formal enforcement action to remedy unacceptable unauthorised development.
- 6.12 Where the Authority considers that unacceptable unauthorised development has been carried out, and there is no realistic prospect of its being relocated to a more suitable site, the owner or occupier of the land will be informed that the Authority is not prepared to allow the operation or activity to continue at its present level of activity, or (if this is the case) at all. If the development nevertheless provides valued local employment, the owner or occupier will be advised how long the Authority is prepared to allow before the operation or activity must stop, or be reduced to an acceptable level of intensity. If agreement can be reached between the operator and the Authority about the period to be allowed for the operation or activity to cease, or be reduced to an acceptable level, and the person concerned honours the agreement, formal enforcement action may be avoided. However the Authority will have regard to the possibility of intensification of the development after expiry of the statutory period for enforcement action. If no agreement can be reached, the issue of an enforcement notice will usually be justified, allowing a realistic compliance period for the unauthorised operation or activity to cease, or its scale to be acceptably reduced.

## **7.0 INVESTIGATION PRIORITIES**

- 7.1 It is recognised within the industry that the business of investigating and remedying alleged breaches of control is labour intensive and the quality of the service is directly proportional to the number of officers directly responsible for regulating planning control. The resources allocated both in terms of staff and equipment (including noise monitoring equipment, topographical survey systems, IT and GIS based recording systems) for this purpose will, therefore, need to be reviewed on a regular basis as local circumstances change to take account of a fluctuating workload, advances in technology etc.

### **COMPLAINTS**

- 7.2 A complaint/incident is an event or matter that is either brought to the Authority's attention or that monitoring and control officers may become aware of as part of their duty, and which may have a planning related impact. The type of complaints/incidents received by the Authority are split into 3 priorities:
- 7.3 Priority 1  
Immediate or irreparable harm to the environment or immediate and substantial harm to amenity. Harm would be assessed in relation to impact on the environment. E.g. the impact of mineral, waste and Regulation 3 development would often be greater in an area close to residential amenities than it would be in the open countryside. The Authority will respond to the complainant within 24 hours and investigate the complaint within 3 working days.
- 7.4 Priority 2  
On-going low-level harm to amenity or moderate and reparable impact on the environment. E.g. HGV's occasionally going in the wrong direction, and causing the road verge to break up. The Authority will respond to the complainant within 3 working days and investigate the complaint within 1 working week.
- 7.5 Priority 3  
Occasional harm to amenity or the raising of long-standing issues leading to low level impact on the environment e.g. concerns about the permitted type of material (sand or waste) stored on a site with permission, but in the wrong place

or slightly higher than the agreed height. The Authority will respond to the complainant within 3 working days and investigate the complaint when the relevant officer is next in the area, but no later than one month of the receipt of complaint.

#### INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS/INCIDENTS

- 7.6 A response to the complaint or incident will also require a record of the outcome of investigation. Where there is continued non-compliance and this results in further visits and investigation then these should additionally be recorded. (i.e. record as if they were new complaints/incidents). However, where the operator is taking known action to resolve the problem then this is classified as an ongoing event. It is not necessary to record this as a new complaint/incident.
- 7.7 Where separate members of the public report complaints/incidents about different issues relating to a site then these should be additionally recorded. Where multiple residents complain about the same incident then this is recorded as one complaint.
- 7.8 As part of our regular monitoring of planning permissions there are matters identified by officers that if reported to us separately would have been dealt with and recorded as a complaint/incident. These should now be recorded and information captured. The same applies as above in that, where there is continued non-compliance then this will be reported as a complaint/incident. However, where there is known action to resolve this then this would be considered an ongoing event and not separately recorded as a complaint/incident.
- 7.9 The Monitoring and Control Team will liaise with the Legal Services; Environment Agency; District Council or any other relevant Authority as necessary throughout the investigation.
- 7.10 When complaints about alleged breaches of planning control are received, they will be properly recorded and investigated. If the Authority decides to exercise its discretion not to take formal enforcement action it should be prepared to explain

its reasons to the complainant, including where complaints are attributable to repeated allegations from vexatious complainants and they have been previously proved unsubstantiated.

- 7.11 The Authority will ensure that anyone who does complain about a breach of planning control is dealt with in a polite, efficient and responsive way. All complaints that are received although confidential will be recorded and stored on a complaints register, which is an electronic and paper based system. The complaints register will enable the receiving officer to detail both the nature of the complaint and the action the Authority has taken to resolve it. Keeping a record of complaints will enable the Authority to assess and improve its overall service.
- 7.12 It may not always be necessary to visit sites to satisfactorily resolve a complaint. However, in most cases it may be necessary to establish whether there has been a breach of planning control by visiting the site. Where, following the investigation of a complaint, the Authority decides not to take formal enforcement action to resolve a substantive issue, the matter being satisfactorily resolved by other methods, the reason for this decision will be explained to the complainant. If, however, the Authority elects to instigate enforcement proceedings against the offender the complainant will be notified of the progress of that action.
- 7.13 The County Council in dealing with all complaints concerning an alleged breach of planning control within their responsibility will:
- treat them confidentially as far as practical;
  - ensure that they are acknowledged and actioned within the timescales prescribed in the priority rating;
  - deal with them expeditiously in a professional and efficient manner;
  - visit the site where necessary, and establish whether there has been a breach of planning control;
  - notify the complainant upon request of the progress of any action taken to resolve substantive matters forming the basis of the complaint;  
notify the complainant if the authority elects to commence enforcement action against the alleged breach of planning control and be prepared to explain the

reason in the event formal enforcement action has not been taken.

## **8.0 PROSECUTIONS**

8.1 Persons who fail to comply with a formal notice will normally be prosecuted if the non-compliance meets both of the following criteria:

(i) Evidential test i.e. where the evidence is sufficient for a realistic prospect of successful prosecution; and

(ii) Public Interest test i.e. where the prosecution is in the public interest.

## **9.0 MONITORING OF REGULATION 3 DEVELOPMENT**

9.1 A procedure has been agreed between Norfolk County Council's Children's Services Department and the Monitoring and Control Team where by Schools development which falls within Regulation 3 of The Town and Country Planning General Regulation 1992 can be monitored and a fee levied.

9.2 The developments to be pro-actively monitored will fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Developments where planning permission was granted after 1 January 2009 and includes permanent external substantial building works.
- Major developments where planning permission was granted prior to 1 January 2009 and construction is still in progress.
- Developments where planning permission was granted prior to 1 January 2009, include permanent external substantial building works, and remain unlawful due to the failure to discharge pre-development conditions.

9.3 Prior to the inspection taking place, notification will be passed to the applicant informing them that an inspection will be scheduled for a given school. An initial list of developments has been agreed with Children's Services and notification of future inspections will be sent out to individual applicants.

9.4 Where a development has been permitted on an open school an appointment



will be made prior to inspection. This generally ensures that the school will allow the officer onto the site without issue and, if required, allocate a member of staff to accompany the officer. This will also allow the inspecting officer to check that work has begun prior to going on site.

- 9.5 Where a planning permission is found not to have been implemented it will be removed from the list and an invoice will not be raised. It is generally agreed that a single chargeable inspection will be required for smaller developments such as extensions, although a second non-chargeable visit may be required after completion of the development.
- 9.6 For major developments, such as new schools, two chargeable visits per year for the life of the construction phase will be required. A final chargeable visit to check completion and landscape implementation will also be required.
- 9.7 Failure to comply with all planning conditions could result in further chargeable visits being undertaken until full compliance is achieved. There will be a maximum of two chargeable visits per school in any one financial year.
- 9.8 Once the report has been completed, it will be sent to the applicant along with a copy of the planning permission and an invoice for payment.

## **10. MEMBER PROTOCOL**

- 10.1 Local Norfolk County Council members will be informed when an Enforcement Notice is served in their division.
- 10.2 Members of the Council will be presented on a regular basis of not less than once per year with a report detailing the decisions made under delegated authority, performance statistics and enforcement update for the work of the Monitoring and Control Team.