

# Planning enforcement policy



Listening Learning Leading

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### Adopted policy

This policy was amended following public consultation during the autumn 2006 and adopted by the Council's Cabinet on 11 January 2007 as working practice.

South Oxfordshire District Council  
Planning Enforcement Team  
Council Offices  
Crowmarsh Gifford  
WALLINGFORD  
Oxon OX10 8NJ

Tel: 01491 823270

Fax: 01491 823269

Email: [planning.appeals-enforcement@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.appeals-enforcement@southoxon.gov.uk)

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# Planning enforcement policy at South Oxfordshire District Council

## 1 Introduction

At the Council, we have the responsibility and power to enforce breaches of planning control.

Although the decision to enforce in each case is at our discretion, there is no legal requirement for us to provide a planning enforcement service at all, however we take planning enforcement very seriously. The power to correct breaches of planning law allows us to protect the quality of life for the people who live, work and visit South Oxfordshire; and the quality of the district's built and natural environment.

This planning enforcement policy sets out how we will run the planning enforcement service and what you can expect from it.

Specifically it covers:

- what is a breach of planning control;
- how you can request an investigation;
- how we prioritise investigations;
- how we will carry out an investigation, including keeping you informed and service standards;
- what you can do if a request for an investigation is made about your development;
- a list of enforcement actions we can consider; and
- a list of contacts for further information.

Trees that are subject to a tree preservation order or are within a conservation area are included within this policy, however there is separate legislation and an application process to deal with issues concerning the impact of high hedges on neighbours. This enforcement policy **does not** relate to high hedges. If you have a query concerning high hedges please read our documents: '*High Hedges – A guide to the new High Hedges Legislation*' and '*High Hedges – Criteria for resolving disputes*'. These are available on our website.

### The principles of good enforcement

We have signed up to the government's concordat on the principles of good enforcement practice as outlined below.

**Standards:** to publish clear standards of service and performance through this enforcement policy.

**Openness:** to provide information and advice in plain language on the rules, and discuss problems with anyone experiencing difficulties either because of a breach of planning or as the result of an investigation. We will not normally make personal details available, such as a name, telephone number or address, but our decision making processes will be transparent to make sure that everyone has confidence in the service.

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**Helpfulness:** to work with all parties to resolve investigations without formal action if possible. We will tell you everyone who is dealing with the investigation, and how you can contact them. We will give explanations for the actions we take and any rights of appeal.

**Consistency:** to carry out duties in a fair, just and consistent manner. However, this does not mean simple uniformity, as this would ultimately detract from the variety and character of different areas within South Oxfordshire. When we decide whether to take enforcement action, we must always consider meeting the objectives and policies of the development plan. This seeks to make sure that development does not take place in inappropriate locations. Each decision will also take into account the particular circumstances of the site and surrounding area; the level of harm being caused; and any relevant planning history, such as previous refusals of planning permission or appeals for similar developments which have been dismissed by the Secretary of State.

**Proportionality:** to take action, when it is necessary, in relation to the risks posed and how serious the breach is. However, our resources are limited, and it is essential to use available resources to maximum effect. In planning terms, this means where there is the most harm to amenity or the environment. Our decisions are not based on who is complaining or how loudly.

**Complaints about the Service:** to provide well-publicised, effective and timely procedures, and explain our complaints procedure.

## 2 What is breach of planning control?

On average we receive requests for around 600 planning enforcement investigations a year. Some 40% of these result in a finding of no breach of planning control at all; others range from small scale breaches to very serious incidents. We have undertaken seven prosecutions over the last three years following breaches of planning control.

In the end, the test of a breach is the amount of harm it causes. Harm from breaches of planning control takes many different forms. It includes the impact on visual or residential amenity, on highway safety, on the amenity of the public in general, the occupiers and users of surrounding land and buildings or the environment in general.

Harm may occur through damage to the area's historic buildings and environment. For example, unauthorised work to listed buildings, or if the conditions attached to the consent are not properly complied with. The demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area can also cause harm.

Harm can also occur even if a development does not have any of the characteristics outlined previously. If unauthorised development undermines the policies of our Development Plan, or could set a precedent which, if repeated, would undermine the policies of the Development Plan, then planning harm is caused. An example could be a new house in the green belt.

The local environment can also be harmed by not taking action, just as much as actively undertaking unauthorised works. Where land or buildings are neglected their condition can adversely affect the amenity of the area.

There are certain breaches of planning control that constitute criminal acts from the outset and can be subject to high penalties. Such breaches include:

- unauthorised work to a listed building;
- unauthorised advertisements;

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- unauthorised demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area; or
  - unauthorised works to “protected” trees (see appendix 1).

Because planning enforcement operates to protect the public interest rather than the interest of one particular individual, there are certain issues that we cannot take into account. For example;

- loss of value to property;
- competition with other businesses;
- rights to a view;
- trespass; or
- breaches of covenant.

These are not planning matters and therefore we do not include them in any assessment of harm.

### **3 How you can report a potential breach**

We prefer you to report potential breaches in writing to our Planning and Building Control Service. This can be via email or using the unauthorised development form that is on our website. You can find details at the end of this policy document. Sometimes, for example, where someone is doing unauthorised tree works that may be detrimental to the life of the tree, it may be necessary for you to telephone us during office hours.

We will ask you to identify yourself and give contact details so that we can keep you informed in writing at key stages. We will consider oral and anonymous requests for investigations. However, anonymous reports often don't give us enough information. Therefore looking into anonymous requests for investigations will be at the Council manager's discretion.

You can speak to your local district councillor or parish council. However, speaking to them or advising them about your concerns is not a formal enforcement request for an investigation. Councillors and parish councils will decide whether they raise a matter with our planning enforcement team, but this will not be logged as a complaint from a member of the public. The priority we give to an investigation does not change because we receive it from a councillor or parish council.

Through whatever route you request your investigation, it helps enforcement officers if you provide us with as much information as possible about your concerns, particularly:

- the name and address of the alleged contravener;
- the location of the site;
- what has happened; the length of time it has been happening and an indication of whether it is still continuing;
- an explanation of the harm that it is causing to you specifically, your neighbours or the area generally; and
- what you consider would be a satisfactory outcome.

It is our policy not to reveal the identity of the requester, or information which is likely to reveal the identity of a requester to an alleged offender. We may be asked to reveal the identity of a requester under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information

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Regulations 2004. However, any decision we make to reveal this information would need to show that there is a public interest in doing so.

## **4 How we prioritise complaints**

Since our resources are limited and it is essential to use available resources to maximum effect, we categorise breaches in order to assess the priority of each case.

### **Priority 1: (high)**

- Development/activity that results in serious harm to policies in the development plan and where failure to remedy may set an undesirable precedent for the future (e.g. permanent residential accommodation in green belt).
- Permanent damage to the environment e.g. demolition or significant alteration to a listed building, or loss of protected trees.

### **Priority 2: (medium)**

- Development/activity that results in widespread harm to local amenity (e.g. noise and disturbance that is beyond the control of other legislation).
- Unauthorised development where the time-limit for taking action will run out within the next six months.
- Demolition or works we are unlikely to approve without substantial modification (e.g. over large extensions or significant alterations to an unlisted building in Conservation Area).

### **Priority 3: (low)**

- Development/activity that has a local impact (e.g. impact on no more than one neighbour).
- Other development not falling within the above priorities (e.g. unauthorised advertisements, minor departures from approved plans, small scale domestic alterations like walls, gates outbuildings and satellite dishes).
- Pro-active condition monitoring/plan checking.
- Untidy land.

## **5 How we will investigate a complaint**

We will acknowledge all requests for planning enforcement investigations in writing within three working days of receiving it, and we will give the requester the name and contact details of the enforcement officer who will be involved. We will visit all sites within five working days of acknowledging an investigation, although it is our policy to visit all high priority investigations within one working day of receiving the request. Wherever possible we will visit a high priority investigation on the same day that we receive the request.

The time it takes to resolve each enforcement investigation will vary depending on:

- the nature of the concerns;
- the extent of investigations that need to be carried out;
- the harm which is being caused; and
- the resources that are available.

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With regard to protected trees, further details on the process involved is outlined in appendix 1. Unauthorised works to protected trees is a criminal offence.

Where we serve an enforcement notice there is a right of appeal, which will add several months to the timescale. Therefore, it is not possible to give an average time for dealing with an investigation.

However, in order to introduce a level of certainty into the process you can expect the following levels of performance from the enforcement team:

- Within eight weeks of receiving a request for an investigation we will close 80% of all cases where there is no breach of planning control.
- Within eight weeks of receiving a request for an investigation we will close 80% of all cases where there is a breach of planning control but it is not expedient to take action.
- Within twelve weeks of receiving a request for an investigation we will decide what further action to take in 80% of cases if a retrospective application is sought but not submitted or rectification has not occurred.
- Within eight weeks of receiving a request for an investigation we will determine what enforcement action to take in 80% of cases where formal action beyond seeking a retrospective application is necessary.

We will keep requesters informed throughout the process both in writing at key stages and via our website where we record progress for each investigation.

To help in meeting these targets our planning committee has delegated certain powers – including whether to close a case or pursue action - to senior officers. This allows them to make decisions on behalf of the Council without having to refer back to the committee. We will make the reasons for taking any decision clear to all parties and available for inspection.

### **No breach and no further action**

After undertaking an investigation we may decide not to take any further action. This might be because the breach is too minor, or because there is no breach of planning control. Alternatively, the works might be within the amount of development which can be done without planning permission. (The exact details of what is 'permitted development' are set out by Central Government in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.).

Similarly, we may decide not to pursue an enforcement investigation, even if there is a clear breach of planning control, because it is 'not expedient' to take action. This might be because although the breach is more than just a minor or technical breach, the harm it causes is not significant, and in our opinion formal action would not be in the public interest. In reaching such a decision we must balance the harm being caused against the likely success of any formal action, the availability of resources, and other cases that might be causing a greater level of harm but whose progress might be delayed as a result. In both these circumstances we will close the case file and notify in writing everyone who has been involved in the investigation. We will also, without prejudice to the outcome, notify the owner that they can make an application to seek regularisation.

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## **6 Enforcement actions we can use**

After we have received and undertaken an investigation and established that there is a breach of planning control, we have a number of options available to assist in resolving the breach. Not all options will be suitable in each case.

### **Breach of Condition Notice**

We can serve this on the developer or occupier when they do not comply with conditions imposed on a planning permission. If they do not comply with this, we can take legal action. It can only be used to secure complete compliance. It does not apply to breaches of control related to listed building, advertisement or protected trees. There are no rights of appeal to the Secretary of State against a Breach of Condition Notice. We will use this procedure in preference to the service of Enforcement Notices where appropriate. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with a Breach of Condition Notice within the period for compliance specified.

### **Enforcement Notice**

We will serve this when we are satisfied that there has been a breach of planning control and that it is appropriate to take action. With an enforcement notice the recipient(s) must take the specified steps within a set time period. Failure to comply with a notice is a criminal offence. The recipient(s) of a notice have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate. An appeal suspends the effect of the notice until it is determined. If the recipient(s) lodge an appeal, we will tell all requesters and neighbours of the appeal and how they can make representations to the Planning Inspectorate. Any representations are available for public inspection. Once an Enforcement Notice has come into effect it will become a criminal offence if the Notice is not complied with within the period specified.

### **Injunction**

We can apply to the County Court or High Court for an injunction to stop an actual or imminent breach of planning or listed building control, even when the identity of the person is unknown. We can seek an injunction whether or not other enforcement action(s) have been taken. Failure to comply with an injunction can lead to an unlimited fine and/or imprisonment.

### **Planning Contravention Notice**

This is the main method for local councils to get information on a suspected unauthorised development. It will usually set out a list of questions about the site/development. We can offer a formal meeting to allow additional oral information to be given. It is an offence to fail to comply with the requirements of the notice within the period set for its return, or to make false or misleading statements in reply.

### **Section 16 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976**

This is primarily intended to establish information about the ownership and other interests in the land. It is an offence to fail to comply with the requirements of the notice within the period set for its return, or to make false or misleading statements in reply.

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## **Section 215 Notices**

We can serve these in relation to untidy land or buildings when the condition of land or buildings negatively affects the amenity of an area. This requires the owners and occupiers of the land to take specific steps to secure an improvement in its appearance. Recipient(s) have a right to appeal to a magistrates' court if they consider the serving of the notice is unjustified. Failure to comply with the notice is an offence. We may also do the works ourselves and charge the owners (see appendix 2).

## **Section 330 Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

We use this power to get information, usually at an early stage of the enforcement process. It involves serving a Notice on occupiers of premises and/or person receiving rent. It is an offence to fail to comply with the requirements of the Notice within the period set for its return, or to make false or misleading statements in reply.

## **Stop Notice**

We can serve these with an Enforcement Notice, or after we have served an Enforcement Notice if we consider that continuing unauthorised development is causing irreparable and immediate significant harm. The Stop Notice continues to take effect even if an appeal is lodged against the Enforcement Notice. The Stop Notice does not usually come into effect until three days after we have served it, although we can reduce this period if necessary. Work must stop immediately the Notice comes into effect. There are compensation liabilities if the Enforcement Notice is quashed, but these are not related to the planning merits of the case. There is no right of appeal; failure to comply with the notice is an offence.

## **Temporary Stop Notice**

We can serve these where we consider that there has been a breach of planning control, and it is necessary to stop the activity or development in question immediately to safeguard the amenity of the area. This differs from the normal Stop Notice powers as it is immediate and does not have to be accompanied by an Enforcement Notice. There is no right of appeal to the Secretary of State. A judicial review can challenge the validity and propriety of our decision.

## **Prosecution**

We can commence Court proceedings where you have breached a formal notice. In addition, in some instances we can commence legal proceedings for unauthorised works without the need to serve any formal Notices, e.g. unauthorised works to a listed building or a protected tree, or an unauthorised advertisement.

These proceedings can include:

- a prosecution; and
- a formal caution - this is a formal process where you formally admit the offence. It may be referred to at the sentencing stage if you are ever found guilty of a subsequent offence. We may also take it into consideration when we decide whether or not to prosecute at a later stage for another similar offence.

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In order to bring a successful prosecution, we must be able to prove that:

- you have breached a formal notice;
- you have carried out, caused, or permitted the works;
- the building or tree was protected;
- the works were carried out without our consent; or
- the works were not exempt works.

We will apply two tests in cases where a prosecution appears likely, consideration of which will be done in consultation with our legal advisors:

- **The evidential test.** We will not start a prosecution unless there is sufficient, admissible and reliable evidence that the offence has been committed, and that there is a reasonable prospect of conviction.
- **The public interest test.** We will only bring a prosecution where this is in the public interest.

We may apply cautioning in cases where a prosecution can properly be brought, but where we do not consider such action is appropriate in the circumstances of the case. We will use cautions in accordance with Home Office Guidance. People who have previously received a formal caution will normally be dealt with by prosecution.

### **Direct Action**

We do have the power, in special circumstances and as a last resort, to make sure an enforcement notice is complied with by carrying out the required steps ourselves in default of the owner or occupier's action. We can recover all the costs incurred from the owner. Where we cannot immediately recover costs we will register a charge on the property with the Land Registry, thus assuring full cost recovery plus base-rate interest.

## **7 What you can do if a complaint is made about your development**

We understand that in many cases a breach of planning control is not intentional and can be the result of a misunderstanding or a person being unaware of the planning requirements. Therefore, if you receive a letter from us or a visit from an enforcement officer, we encourage you to respond positively and provide the information which we need to resolve the matter. It is beneficial to all parties if any breach is addressed at an early stage.

In some cases a request to investigate may be made against your property. If it is possible to investigate the concerns without disturbing you and establish that there is no breach of planning control, we will not contact you.

Depending upon the level of harm being caused we will be prepared to discuss with you what alternative solutions might be acceptable, rather than the complete removal or rebuilding of the development. However, this approach will not mean that you can delay any response or action that you have agreed to do. We expect you to respond within the stated timescales and we will pursue prosecutions for non-responses to formal notices. We will not allow long drawn out negotiations to hold back the taking of action.

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In many cases, particularly where the works are likely to be acceptable, perhaps with some minor changes, we will give an opportunity to submit a retrospective application. This is so that we can consider the development in more detail and, if appropriate, control it through planning conditions.

You should be aware that development which requires but does not have planning permission is unauthorised, and remains subject to potential enforcement action for a set number of years. In the case of building works, or the use of a building as living accommodation, the time period is four years after completing the works or occupying the accommodation. Where the breach is an unauthorised change in the use of land or buildings, or is the breach of a planning condition, the time period is ten years.

If you subsequently wish to sell a property which has been subject to unauthorised works or a change of use, you may find the sale is delayed or lost as a result. You should also be aware that we usually make mortgage providers aware of breaches of planning permission and we will send them a copy of any formal notice or decision about planning enforcement.

Within the Council, the Planning and Building Control Service advises the Land Charges section of those sites where formal notices have been served, decisions have been made and where potential enforcement action remains outstanding.

The enforcement officer will make themselves known to the landowner/developer when they enter a site, but it is not always appropriate or possible to give advance warning of a site visit. Enforcement officers are legally entitled to enter land and property. You do not have to be there for an enforcement officer to enter onto your land and make a site visit. If it is necessary to enter your house, (as opposed to just the garden) you are entitled to 24 hours notice.

If you actively prevent an enforcement officer from entering onto your land we will get a warrant to enter the site. Once we have secured a warrant, any obstruction to access the site will be considered a criminal offence.

We will use the information we get from a site visit to help assess the harm being caused and what further action we may need to take. Allowing the enforcement officer to make a site visit and take photographs will help to reduce time delays and any potential inconvenience.

A senior officer makes all the decisions to serve a formal notice with the involvement of the enforcement officer.

Enforcement officers will be happy to explain the different notices, and to help you understand the implications. However, enforcement officers will not act as your advisor and cannot make decisions on your behalf. You should consider whether you wish to get your own independent advice from a qualified planning consultant or another appropriate property professional. If you cannot afford to employ a consultant you can contact Planning Aid. Planning Aid is a voluntary service which offers free independent, professional advice (see contacts).

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## 8 Enforcement of protected trees

### Background

Trees that are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order or trees that are within a conservation area are protected by planning legislation. In general, you need to get authorisation from us before you do any work. This includes cutting down, uprooting, lopping or topping. It is a criminal offence to wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a protected tree.

There are two offences which apply when a protected tree is damaged or destroyed:

- Anyone who cuts down, uproots or wilfully destroys a tree, or who lops, tops or wilfully damages it in a way that is likely to destroy it, is liable, if convicted in the Magistrates Court, to a fine of up to £20,000 (the fine is unlimited if there is a trial in the Crown Court). The Courts have decided that it is not necessary for a tree to be obliterated for it to be “destroyed”, it is sufficient for the tree to have been rendered useless as an amenity.
- Anyone who does unauthorised works on a tree that are not likely to destroy it is liable, if convicted in the Magistrates Court, to a fine of up to £2,500.

Any proceedings for these offences must be brought within six months of the date the offence being committed.

Trees that are not within a conservation area or not covered by a preservation order can sometimes be protected by a condition on a planning permission. If the condition is not being complied with, we can serve an enforcement notice or a breach of condition notice to secure compliance.

### Investigations

The initial investigation will be a check to establish:

- whether the tree is protected;
- whether any consent or permission has been granted; and
- who is doing the works.

We will also carry out a site visit.

The standard of service regarding an investigation by the enforcement team will accord with the details outlined in the policy. The enforcement team will work with the Council's Forestry Service who provide the expertise on trees.

We will contact requesters and any other witnesses as appropriate and may ask them to provide written statements to be used as evidence in court. Often these works take place in a very short space of time, and the only witness is the requester. If the case comes to court and it is necessary for witnesses to give evidence they would not normally be entitled to confidentiality.

### If you do unauthorised works

As with planning enforcement complaints, officers investigating unauthorised works to protected trees have a right to enter land to carry out investigations and will take photographs that may be used as evidence later.

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We will give you an opportunity to give your side of events during the investigation. However, if it appears that you did the works then we will caution you because you may have committed a criminal offence. We will issue the caution under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

If you remove a tree through unauthorised works (or because it is dead, dying or dangerous – remember that the onus is on those carrying out the work to prove that the tree was in such a condition as to warrant its removal), you have an automatic duty as the landowner to plant a replacement tree of a suitable size and species at the same place as soon as reasonably possible (unless we waive that requirement). The replacement tree is then subject to the same protection as the tree that was lost. We can serve a Tree Replacement Notice within a period of four years to make sure you comply. There are rights of appeal against Tree Replacement Notices.

### **Our considerations whether or not to take action**

We will make decisions as to what action to take in cases of unauthorised works on trees based on the public interest, with each case being dealt with on its own merits.

We would not normally bring a prosecution unless the unauthorised works have resulted in a loss of public amenity. In most cases, we will not bring a prosecution if we would have granted consent (or raised no objection) for the works done had you applied for it.

In considering whether to bring a prosecution, we will have regard to the likelihood of you repeating the offence and the degree to which a prosecution would act as an effective deterrent. We will also have regard to any financial advantage perceived to have been gained by carrying out the unauthorised works, and whether you have been prosecuted, cautioned or warned for similar offences in the past.

We can take into account any expression of regret, helpfulness and co-operation with the investigation and also any indication that you were acting in good faith.

We will normally require the planting of replacement trees irrespective of whether you have been prosecuted or cautioned. When we require replacement planting, we will monitor to make sure it is done.

We can serve a replanting notice to secure replacement planting, which can be invoked if the landowner does not voluntarily carry out replacement planting;

## **9 Untidy Land or Buildings (Section 215 Notices)**

Under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 we have the power to require an owner/occupier to carry out improvement works to their land or building if the condition of the land or building is causing serious harm to the amenity of an area.

It is our decision whether the extent of any harm to amenity of the area is serious enough to justify the service of a Notice requiring the site to be cleaned up. The Notice will specify exactly what steps the owner must carry out to improve the site.

In assessing the harm we will consider both the site and its surroundings.

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## **Where we will serve Notices**

As with all enforcement investigations, we will allocate resources where they can be most effective and where the greatest harm is being caused. We will not use these Notices where there are more specific powers available to address the concern. It is likely we will use a Section 215 Notice in connection with a prominent and derelict site, particularly if it has started to attract fly tipping, or an important town centre street frontage that has fallen into disrepair, particularly if it falls within a Conservation Area. We would also serve a Notice where the condition of a piece of land impacts upon the wider landscape, especially if it is in an area of countryside that is officially noted for its landscape value or beauty.

If a residential property is particularly rundown, or a garden is overgrown, or cars/domestic items are being left in the garden to rot, then we can serve a Section 215 Notice. However, our policy is that a garden which is merely untended, or a house that needs some cosmetic maintenance, for example, where a window or window frame needs to be replaced, would not qualify for a Section 215 Notice.

We would not serve a Section 215 Notice on a site which is untidy as a result of building works that have planning permission.

## **Scope of the Notice**

The scope of works that can be required in Section 215 Notices is wide and includes planting, clearance, tidying, enclosure, demolition, re-building, external repairs and repainting.

If it is necessary for the improvements to involve work which would normally require planning permission, for example the re-building of a garage, then we will not be able to cover these works in a Section 215 Notice. In such cases, we would require a separate planning permission and therefore the use of other enforcement powers may be more appropriate.

## **Action available to us**

We will write to the owner before serving a Section 215 Notice advising that it will be served unless the site is tidied up.

Where a Notice becomes effective but it is not complied with, we will explain the action it can take which could involve:

- direct action where we will carry out the works ourselves and charge the owner for all costs incurred; or
- prosecution in the Magistrates Court. A successful prosecution may result in a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record.

The course of action will vary from site to site, and in some cases we can pursue both direct action and a prosecution.

Where we cannot immediately recover costs we will register a charge on the property with the Land Registry, thus assuring full cost recovery plus base-rate interest.

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## 10 Glossary of enforcement terminology

### Amenity

This is not defined in legislation but in planning terms is commonly considered to refer to the overall quality and character of the area. This itself is made up from different factors such as:

- how well the area has been looked after;
- the types of land uses;
- the quality of the buildings;
- the provision of open land or trees; and
- the inter-relationship between all the different elements in the environment.

For example, an area with well maintained houses that give occupants space and privacy would be said to have a better amenity than houses that are overlooked by their neighbours or are located next to a noisy factory.

### Expedient/Not Expedient

The Council does not have to take enforcement action even if there is a breach of planning control, as enforcement action is discretionary. In deciding whether or not to take enforcement action the Council will balance the seriousness of a breach of planning control; the level of any harm that it causes; and the likely chances of success in pursuing enforcement action against the seriousness of other enforcement complaints and the available resources. Having weighed up these factors we will make a decision as to whether we will take action i.e. it is expedient to take action.

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## 11 Contacts and further information

You can contact our enforcement team at the following address:

■ **Planning Appeals and Enforcement Manager,**

South Oxfordshire District Council,  
Benson Lane,  
Crowmarsh Gifford,  
Wallingford, OX10 8NJ.  
Phone: 01491 823270  
Fax no: 01491 823269  
Email: [planning.appeals-enforcement@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.appeals-enforcement@southoxon.gov.uk)

The following are useful contact details that will offer further advice and information on planning enforcement.

■ **Department for Communities and Local Government**

(The Government Department with overall responsibility for planning)

Eland House,  
Bressenden Place,  
London, SW1E 5DU  
<http://www.dclg.gov.uk/>

■ **Office of Public Sector Information**

(Official government website offering online access to legislation and circulars)

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>

■ **Planning Aid**

(Provides free, independent, and professional town planning advice to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay planning consultant fees.)

PO Box 37,  
Freshwater,  
Isle of Wight, PO40 9ZR  
Phone: 0870 240 7552  
<http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk/>

■ **Planning Inspectorate**

(The independent body responsible for the processing of planning and enforcement appeals.)

Registry/Scanning,  
Room 3/01, Kite Wing,  
Temple Quay House,  
2 The Square,  
Temple Quay,  
Bristol, BS1 6PN.  
<http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/index.htm>

■ **Planning Portal**

(The Government's online planning resource where you can learn about the planning system and research the latest government policy.)

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/>



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press@southoxon.gov.uk**



Listening Learning Leading

**Planning Enforcement Team**

Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford

Wallingford OX10 8NJ

Tel: 01491 823270

Fax: 01491 823269

Email: [planning.appeals-enforcement@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.appeals-enforcement@southoxon.gov.uk)