

## What happens next?

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and give you the name and telephone number of the case officer.

We will inform you of the progress made throughout the investigation, and of any subsequent action that may result.

The time taken to complete the investigation will vary depending on the nature of the development and the action required.

The handling of the enforcement investigation is explained in a separate leaflet "Planning Enforcement – how we investigate your complaint".

## How can I find out more?

Information on the need for permission, how to apply and on Enforcement can be obtained from our web site or by contacting the Planning Division, as shown below.

The Government **Department of Communities and Local Government** has overall responsibility for planning. Their web site includes planning guidance and advice notes together with links to other relevant sites.  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk>

**To obtain a copy of this leaflet on tape or in large print please telephone (01296) 585679**

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**Planning Division**

**Planning  
Enforcement**

**How to  
make a  
complaint**

## Planning Enforcement

### How to make a complaint

*This leaflet explains what a planning breach is and how to make a complaint*

#### About enforcement

Effective enforcement is key to protecting the public interest from harmful development and in maintaining confidence in the planning system, by tackling those who ignore planning controls.

We rely to a large extent on members of the public and Town and Parish Councils bringing suspected breaches of planning control to our attention.

We investigate around 700 cases a year and in around a half there is no breach of planning control.

#### What is a Planning breach?

It is a breach to carry out without any necessary consent

- Building works & changes of use
- Works to protected trees
- Works to listed buildings
- Demolition in a conservation area
- External advertisements
- Works to countryside hedgerows

The following are also breaches

- Non compliance with conditions attached to a consent
- Departures from approved details
- Untidy land or buildings which seriously harm amenity

However, most breaches of planning control are not criminal offences.

You can see for yourself if consent has been granted and view the approved details and any conditions by visiting our web site.

#### What is not a Planning breach

- Disputes about land ownership
- The position of property boundaries
- Disputes over private rights of way
- Breaches of restrictive covenants on property deeds

These are private matters between the parties involved. If they cannot be resolved through agreement you should seek independent advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) or a solicitor.

#### How to raise your concern

This can be done by telephone, letter, e-mail or by using the form on our web site. We need the following information:

- Your name, address, telephone number/e-mail address
- Precise description of the suspected breach and address. Please give as much information as you can as this will assist our investigation.
- What are your concerns? It is important that you tell us the nature of your concerns, even if you are unsure whether they are planning related

- What action would you like us to take? You may wish to see nothing other than the complete removal of the development/activity. However, if there are lesser steps which would overcome your concerns please tell us

In some cases we may need to come back to you for further information or to view the breach from your property.

If your complaint is not planning related we will forward it to the relevant Council service or tell you who to contact.

#### Anonymous complaints

We accept anonymous complaints but, in the absence of a named contact, they carry less weight. Whilst we will visit the site, unless there is clear visible evidence to support the complaint we will not normally investigate further.

The absence of a named contact also means that we cannot come back to you for further information or let you know of the outcome of our investigation.

#### Confidentiality

Complainants' personal details are kept confidential. Although in some cases the source of the complaint may be obvious.

However, where a complaint leads to formal action we may ask a complainant to forgo their anonymity, and appear as a witness for the Council.