



SERVICE STANDARDS FOR PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

This document explains what you can expect of Cambridge City Councils Planning Enforcement team. Whether you run a business or are a member of the public, we are committed to providing you with an efficient, courteous and helpful service and this document tells you how we aim to do that and what standards we will meet.

Areas we regulate

We deliver services in a number of areas:

Planning Enforcement.

Listed Building Enforcement.

Control of Advertisements.

Protected Trees (TPO) and trees in Conservation Areas.

How we deliver our services

We make a fundamental contribution to the maintenance and improvement of the public realm, quality of life and wellbeing. Our aims are to:

- Remedy the undesirable effects of unauthorised development
- Strike a balance between protecting amenity and other interests of acknowledged importance throughout the Authority's area.
- Ensure that the credibility of the planning system is not undermined
- Carry out all compliance duties in accordance with the principles of the Planning Enforcement Policy and the Regulators Code, particularly with respect to openness, helpfulness, proportionality and consistency
- Be both reactive and pro-active in the investigation of complaints, particularly to ensure the compliance with conditions imposed on planning permissions.

We respond to complaints and consider the circumstances where complaints warrant further investigation. We do this through researching the history for the site and assessing the harm caused by unauthorised development/works. In this way we ensure our resources are targeted appropriately, in the light of these local needs, national priorities and priorities set out in the Councils Planning Enforcement Policy.

We carry out all our activities in a way that supports those we regulate:

- We ensure that information, guidance and advice is available to help you to meet legal requirements (see Helping you to get it right).
- We carry out inspections and other activities to check compliance with legal requirements, and we target these checks where we believe they are most needed (see Inspections and other compliance visits).
- We deal proportionately with breaches of the law as set out in our Enforcement Policy, including taking firm enforcement action when necessary (see Responding to non-compliance).

Our services will be delivered in accordance with the requirements of the [\[www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulators-code\]](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulators-code) and the Council's Enforcement Policy www.cambridge.gov.uk/enforcement-policy .

Working with you

In all your dealings with us you can expect, and will receive, an efficient and professional service. Our officers will:

- Be courteous and polite
- Always identify themselves by name, and provide you with contact details
- Provide details of how to discuss any concerns you may have
- Agree timescales, expectations and preferred methods of communication with you
- Ensure that you are kept informed of progress on any outstanding issues.

Helping you to get it right

We want to work with you to help you understand the requirements of the relevant planning legislation and it is important to us that you feel able to come to us for advice when you need it. There is information and guidance on planning matters available via the following link. www.planningportal.gov.uk

Where you need advice that is tailored to your particular needs and circumstances we will:

- Discuss with you what is required to achieve compliance
- Provide advice that supports compliance and that can be relied on
- Provide clear advice that can be easily understood and implemented
- Distinguish legal requirements from suggested good practice
- Ensure that any verbal advice you receive is confirmed in writing

Inspections and other compliance visits

We monitor and support compliance in a number of different ways including pro-active monitoring and complaint investigations. These visits will always be based on an assessment of risk – we won't visit without a reason.

Where possible, we will give you notice that we intend to visit. Sometimes it is not possible to establish who is responsible for a site prior to visiting and in these cases

visits will be unannounced. In certain circumstances we may have specific reasons to believe that an unannounced visit is more appropriate.

When we visit you our officers will:

- Carry their identification card at all times, and present it on request when visiting your premises.
- Explain the reason and purpose of the visit including if necessary, an outline of the reason(s) why the visit is unannounced.
- Exercise discretion in front of your customers and staff.
- Have regard to your approach to compliance, and use this information to inform future interactions with you.
- Provide information, guidance and advice to support you in meeting your statutory obligations, if required
- Provide a written record of the visit.

Responding to non-compliance

Where we identify a breach of planning control, we will respond proportionately, taking account of the circumstances, as set out in our Planning Enforcement Policy, www.cambridge.gov.uk/planning-enforcement including taking firm enforcement action when necessary

Where we require you to take action to remedy any failings we will:

- Explain the nature of the non-compliance
- Discuss what is required to achieve compliance
- Clearly explain any advice, actions required or decisions that we have taken
- Agree timescales that are acceptable to both you and us, in relation to any actions required
- Provide in writing details of statutory rights of appeal
- Explain what will happen next
- Keep in touch with you, until the matter is resolved

Requests for our services

We clearly explain the services that we offer, including details of any fees and charges that apply, this information can be found at: www.cambridge.gov.uk/planning-applications

In responding to requests for our services, including requests for advice and complaints about breaches of planning control we will:

- Acknowledge your request within 3 working days.
- Tell you when you can expect a substantive response.
- Seek to fully understand the nature of your request.
- Explain what we may or may not be able to do, so that you know what to expect.
- Keep you informed of progress throughout our involvement.
- Inform you of the outcome.

Please be aware that our officers will exercise their judgment to determine the appropriate speed of response in each case.

How to contact us

You can contact us by:

Telephone: (01223) 457163

Email: planningenforcement@cambridge.gov.uk

Web: www.cambridge.gov.uk/planning-enforcement

By post: Planning Enforcement, Environment Department, Cambridge City Council, PO Box 700, Cambridge, CB1 0JH

Or in person: by prior arrangement with the relevant case officer.

We will seek to work with you in the most appropriate way to meet your individual needs. We can make information available in different formats, and have access to translation and interpretation services.

If you contact us we will ask you for your name and contact details to enable us to keep in touch with you as the matter progresses. We treat all contact with the enforcement team in confidence unless there is an operational reason or legal reason why your details must be disclosed.

Anonymous, vexatious and repetitive complaints will not normally be investigated unless they allege a serious breach of planning control which can be substantiated.

Personal data will be managed in accordance with Cambridge City Council's Data Protection Policy. www.cambridge.gov.uk/data-protection-policy.

Our Team

We have a dedicated team of officers who have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to deliver the services provided. We have arrangements in place to ensure the ongoing professional competency of all officers.

Where specialist knowledge is required in an area outside of our expertise we liaise with other departments within Cambridge City Council (such as Environmental Health, Housing Standards and Building Control services). We also liaise with the County Council for specific advice as necessary e.g. in relation to Highway's matters.

Having your say

Complaints and appeals

Where we take enforcement action, there is often a statutory right to appeal. We will always tell you about this at the appropriate time.

We are always willing to discuss with you the reasons why we have acted in a particular way. You should contact Lisa Lamb, Principal Planning Officer in the first instance (01223) 457155 or e-mail: lisa.lamb@cambridge.gov.uk.

If you have concerns about why officers have acted in a particular way or wish to raise a complaint about the Enforcement Team you should complain in the first instance to Sarah Dyer, City Development Team Manager (01223) 457153 or e-mail: sarah.dyer@cambridge.gov.uk.

Further details about how we deal with complaints can be found at: www.cambridge.gov.uk/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions

Or by telephone (01223) 457000

Or you can e-mail complaints@cambridge.gov.uk

Feedback

We value input from you to help us ensure our service is meeting your needs. We would like to hear from you whether your experience of us has been good or in need of improvement. This helps us to ensure we keep doing the right things and make changes where we need to. We use customer satisfaction surveys from time to time but we would welcome your feedback at any time. You can provide feedback in the following ways:

Telephone: 01223 457000

Email: planningenforcement@cambridge.gov.uk

Web: www.cambridge.gov.uk/

By post: PO Box 700, Cambridge, CB1 0JH

In person: Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY

Any feedback that we receive will be acknowledged, considered and responded to.

Dated: January 2015

Name: Lisa Lamb

Job title: Principal Planning Officer

Review Due: January 2018