



Glasgow City Council

City Administration Committee

Report by Councillor Ruairi Kelly, City Convener for Housing, Development, Built Heritage and Land Use

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Item 2

12th February 2024

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT CHARTER – STATUTORY REVIEW

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is:

- To seek approval for Glasgow's Planning Enforcement Charter 2026-2028; and;
- Agree its submission to the Scottish Government.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee:

1. Approves the Planning Enforcement Charter 2026-2028
2. Agrees its submission to the Scottish Government.
3. Notes that subject to acceptance by the Scottish Government, the Planning Enforcement Charter 2026-2028 shall be published on the Council's website thereafter.

Ward No(s): All

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes No

consulted: Yes No

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The power to take Planning Enforcement Action is discretionary. In order to guide the public on how Councils set out their approach to dealing with breaches of planning control, the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 requires a publicly available document setting out how the planning enforcement system works, the role of the planning authority and the service standards it sets itself.
- 1.2 As part of this process, the revised Planning Enforcement Charter 2026–28 was considered by the Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration City Policy Committee at its meeting on 27 January 2026, where the Committee agreed that the Charter should be put forward to the City Administration Committee for approval [EHTR Committee 27th January 2026](#)
- 1.3 To support this statutory requirement, the Council must prepare a clear statement of its policy towards taking enforcement action, explaining how the public can raise complaints about alleged breaches of planning control and what level of service they can expect when doing so. This statement is known as an Enforcement Charter. Once approved by the Council, the Charter will be submitted to the Scottish Government to ensure it meets the requirements of legislation. Legislation and Scottish Government guidance requires the Charter to be reviewed and re-published every two years.
- 1.4 In achieving the above timescale, it should therefore be noted that the current Glasgow City Council Planning Enforcement Charter needs to be approved by the Scottish Government and made available to the public by 1st April 2026.

2 AMENDMENTS TO THE CURRENT ENFORCEMENT CHARTER 2024-2026

- 2.1 The revised Charter (attached as Appendix A to this report) focuses on providing users of the service with a simplified document to enable them to see what it is that Planning Enforcement deals with; what the process of making a complaint entails, and what they should expect from the service thereafter.
- 2.2 The incidence of complaints being wrongly sent to planning enforcement when there is no remit in the content submitted remains high and therefore extra emphasis is placed upon the triaging of submitted (mainly online) complaints at an early stage to ensure that complaints are directed properly to avoid unnecessary frustration and further complaint about delays.
- 2.3 As well as ensuring that complaints are relevant to planning and that there is sufficient information to log a case, the triaging stage also entails assigning a priority of High, Medium and Low to complaints within 5 days of successful completion of the online form (and receipt of automated reply). This will ensure that actions are proportionate to the impact of the breach and resources are distributed accordingly.

3. PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF THE CURRENT CHARTER

- 3.1 The revised Charter reflects operational experience, performance monitoring, and resource capacity during the life of the 2024 Charter. A range of factors have informed proactive changes to the Charter that will improve flexibility, prioritisation, and accountability going forward.
- 3.2 The table below outlines the evolution of performance on the principal Service Standards through the iterations of the Charter. This shows improved performance through process adjustments and improvements.

3.3 Table 1: COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE ACROSS CHARTERS

Service Standard	2020–22 Charter	2022–24 Charter	2024–26 Charter (Current)	Key Notes
SS1 – Validation/Acknowledgement	73.9%	48%	95%	<i>Automated receipt and officer-led triage improved case intake by confirming relevance and ensuring sufficient evidence for validation.</i>
SS2 – Site Visit (20 days)	59.5%	50%	86%	<i>Remote assessment reduced site visit dependency</i>
SS3 – High Priority Visit	100%	100%	100%	<i>Standard now within 3 working days (flex for immediate)</i>
SS4 – PIR Delivery (Planning Impact Reports)	76%	51%	88% (High/Med), 86% (Low)	<i>Priority-based timelines increased delivery performance</i>
SS5 – Follow-Up Updates	N/A	~25%	60%	<i>Refocused on CAT E with 2/4 month deadlines</i>

Key observations:

- **Validation and PIR delivery** have rebounded strongly under the 2024 Charter, supported by automation, triage, and priority-based timelines. Planning Impact Reports (PIR) provide an outcome letter for complainants.
- **High Priority response** remains consistently strong, the standard is now framed as “within 3 working days” for realism.
- **Follow-up updates** improved from ~25% to 60%, but remain challenging—justifying the 2026 Charter’s targeted approach for Category E cases.

3.4 Explanation of Case Categorisation:

Category A: Enforcement Action Necessary – Serious planning harm requiring formal action.

Category B: Submission of an Application Required – Development may be acceptable subject to conditions; retrospective application needed.

Category C: Not Expedient to Pursue – Breach exists but public interest does not justify action.

Category D: No Breach – No planning permission required; case closed.

Category E: Interim Response – Investigation ongoing; reasons for delay and likely timescale provided. Requirement for further PIR

4 CHARTER IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE STANDARDS

4.1 **Service Standard 1: Acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days (Retained unchanged)**

- 4.1.1 Performance in relation to formal acknowledgement within 5 working days dropped from **73.9% under the 2020 Charter** to **48% during the 2022 Charter**, largely due to operational pressures. However, since the introduction of automation and officer-led triage under the 2024 Charter, performance has **improved significantly to 95%**, demonstrating that the standard is now being met consistently and effectively.
- 4.1.2 This improvement reflects the success of combining automated receipt with a structured triage process carried out by qualified officers. The approach ensures that complaints are acknowledged promptly, checked for relevance to planning, and allocated a priority within the same 5-day window. This has delivered greater certainty for customers and improved efficiency by reducing time spent on non-planning matters.

4.2 **Service Standard 2: Preliminary Investigation and Site Visit within 20 Working Days (Retained unchanged)**

- 4.2.1 Performance in relation to site visits within 20 working days improved significantly under the 2024 Charter, rising to **86% compliance** compared to 50% during the 2022 Charter. This improvement is notable given recent resource challenges, and it reflects the success of introducing remote assessment as a core part of the process. Remote assessment has enabled officers to validate and progress many cases without the need for a physical visit, freeing time for situations where a site inspection is genuinely necessary.
- 4.2.2 In supporting remote assessment the Charter now advocates a stronger emphasis on **mandatory evidence**—such as photographs and measurements—

being provided at the point of complaint submission. This requirement ensures that cases can be triaged effectively, reducing delays and improving prioritisation. However, the standard recognises that not all complainants will be able or willing to provide such evidence for understandable reasons. In these circumstances, the ability to carry out a site visit remains essential.

4.3 Service Standard 3: High Priority Cases (*changed to “with 3 working days” in new Charter*)

- 4.3.1 Performance in relation to High Priority cases has remained consistently strong across all Charter periods, with a 100% compliance rate under both the 2020 and 2022 Charters and continuing under the 2024 Charter. This reflects the service’s commitment to responding quickly to cases where there is significant planning harm or risk.
- 4.3.2 However, the previous standard of “same day/next day” attendance is no longer considered realistic in the context of the need to balance resources across a growing caseload. While immediate attendance will still occur where there is demonstrable and urgent harm, the revised standard sets a target of within 3 working days for High Priority cases. This change introduces flexibility without compromising responsiveness.
- 4.3.3 High Priority cases cover a wide spectrum—from urgent safety concerns and serious structural risks to the loss of irreplaceable heritage features, or protected trees. The service recognises that certain situations demand immediate attention. Where there is a clear and imminent risk to safety or significant heritage loss, officers will aim to visit as soon as practicable, ideally on the same day. Other High Priority cases, while still important, may reasonably fall within the revised 3-day timeframe.

4.4 Service Standard 4: To provide the complainant with a Planning Impact Report for High and Medium Priority Cases within 2 months; and for Low priority cases within 6 months, from the date at which the case is logged (service standard retained unchanged)

- 4.4.1 Planning Impact Reports are unique to Glasgow and have proven to be successful in providing customers with a formalised, detailed assessment of the breach and plan of action proposed by the Planning Enforcement Team.
- 4.4.2 The priority system was introduced by the 2024 Planning Enforcement Charter and entails that there will be a longer timescale for providing Planning Impact Reports for low priority cases which will be six months; whereas with High and Medium Priority cases this will be the normal two-month period.
- 4.4.3 Most cases where enforcement action is necessary or where it is appropriate to encourage a retrospective application, will be within the category of High or Medium Priority cases. Relaxing the timescale for providing a Planning Impact Report in relation to lower-level impact cases shifts more attention onto

developments where there is a significant negative impact, where resources applied may be proportionate to the level of the harm caused.

- 4.4.4 Performance in relation to Planning Impact Reports has varied across successive Charters. Under the 2020 Charter, delivery stood at 76%, but this fell to 51% during the 2022 Charter, reflecting operational pressures and the absence of a prioritisation framework. Since the introduction of priority-based timelines under the 2024 Charter, performance has improved significantly to 88% for High and Medium Priority cases and 86% for Low Priority cases, demonstrating that the revised approach works well.

4.5 Service Standard 5: To update complainants within 8 months of the date of confirmation of the investigation where Category “A”, Category “B” and Category “E” Planning Impact Reports have been provided within 8 months of the date of the case being confirmed.

(Changed to: “Update complainants with a definitive PIR 4 months following the issue of a Category “E” Interim Planning Impact Report”)

- 4.5.1 Performance in relation to follow-up updates has improved under the 2024 Charter but remains challenging, rising from **25% under the 2022 Charter** to **60% currently**. While this represents progress, it highlights the need for a more targeted and realistic approach to communication milestones.
- 4.5.2 Under the previous standard, updates were required for all cases within a fixed timeframe, regardless of context. This was not proportionate and often unnecessary for Categories A and B, where a formal decision to take enforcement action or require a planning application already provides momentum and clarity.
- 4.5.3 By contrast, **Category E cases**, where the initial response was interim and inconclusive, require a stronger safeguard to ensure timely progression. For these cases, the Charter introduces a specific requirement for a **follow-up Planning Impact Report within 4 months of the original Category “E” Interim report**, ensuring that a clear decision is made regarding the impact of the development.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Following approval by Committee, the Charter will be submitted to the Scottish Government for confirmation that the statutory obligation to provide an updated Charter by 1st April 2026 has been met. Thereafter, the Charter will be uploaded to the Council’s Planning Enforcement Webpage.

6 POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	No direct financial impacts as a result of this report.
<i>Legal:</i>	Compliance with Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the Planning Etc., (Scotland) Act 2006 and other relevant planning legislation
<i>Personnel:</i>	The Charter is based upon prioritising the use of existing staff resource. There are no direct personnel implications.
<i>Procurement:</i>	No relevant procurement issues.
Council Strategic Plan:	The work of the Planning Enforcement Team contributes to a variety of areas across the Council Strategic Plan The Planning Enforcement Charter in particular contributes towards the following Grand Challenge and Missions:

Grand Challenge 4:

Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities:

Mission 1

Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods

Mission 2

Run an open, well governed council in partnership with all our communities

Mission 3

Enable staff to deliver a sustainable and innovative council structure that delivers value for money

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25</i>	Yes. The proposed improvement plan actions are in line with the City Development Plan and NPF4. An EQIA Screening report was prepared for the City Development Plan in 2017 and no significant negative impacts were identified.
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<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a</i>	The report supports equality by ensuring that planning enforcement processes are accessible and applied consistently. While digital submissions improve efficiency, alternative non-digital routes remain available
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<i>result of this report?</i>	so individuals who cannot provide online forms or photographs are not disadvantaged. Where such information cannot be provided, this will be considered at the triage stage and a site visit will be carried out where appropriate. The Charter also promotes clarity and transparency, supporting fair treatment for all service users.
	The Planning Enforcement Charter, through its alignment with the City Development Plan and NPF4, is intended to deliver an overall positive contribution to equality.
<i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage.</i>	
	The report helps address socioeconomic inequality by ensuring that residents with limited digital access are still able to engage with the enforcement process. Retaining flexible reporting and evidence options ensures that no one is excluded from accessing the Council's planning enforcement services.
Climate impacts:	
<i>Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:</i>	<p>The Planning Service supports the following Climate Plan themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication and Community Engagement 2. Just and Inclusive Place 3. Well Connected and Thriving City 4. Health & Wellbeing 5. Green Recovery
<i>Environmental:</i>	
<i>What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?</i>	The work of the NRS Planning Enforcement Team/Planning Service has a positive impact on climate change and delivers outcomes of the Climate Plan.
<i>Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?</i>	Alignment of the work of the NRS Planning Enforcement Team/ Planning Service with the existing City Development Plan (CDP) and work on the new CDP, and application of National Planning Framework 4, contributes towards achieving Glasgow's Net Zero Carbon Target
<i>Economic:</i>	The Charter allows for protection of the built environment which supports sustainable economic activity.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts: Where a valid enforcement complaint is received from a member of the public, wherever possible the Council will treat personal details pertaining to the complaint as confidential.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Approves the Planning Enforcement Charter 2026-2028
2. Agrees its submission to the Scottish Government.
3. Notes that subject to acceptance by the Scottish Government, the Planning Enforcement Charter 2026-2028 shall be published on the Council's Planning Enforcement webpage, thereafter.