

SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENFORCEMENT POLICY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Enforcement Policy sets out how Spelthorne Borough Council carries out its regulatory and enforcement functions across the Environmental Health Service including Licensing. It works in conjunction with two additional policies; the Housing Enforcement Policy 2026 which specifically addresses the Council's principles for enforcing its duties as a Housing Authority under relevant housing law, and a Civil Penalties Policy under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation which applies once a decision has been made to commence civil penalty proceedings.
- 1.2 The Council's primary aim is to protect the health, safety, welfare and overall quality of life of residents, visitors, workers and communities within the borough. The Council also aims to achieve a level playing field of regulatory compliance within the Borough of Spelthorne. In doing so, the Council ensures that enforcement activity is fair, proportionate, accountable, targeted and consistent; that duty-holders clearly understand what is required of them; that serious, persistent or deliberate breaches of legislation are addressed firmly and effectively; and that vulnerable residents are safeguarded from harm, unsafe practices and unlawful housing conditions.
- 1.3 This policy will be reviewed at least every five years or sooner if legislation or national guidance changes.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Spelthorne Borough Council aims to secure regulatory compliance.
- 1.2 Fair and effective enforcement is essential to protect the health, safety, and welfare interests of the residents, visitors, businesses, and employees in the district of Spelthorne.
- 1.3 The Council recognises that most individuals, businesses, and other groups want to comply with the law. Its aim is to deliver regulatory enforcement functions in an enabling and supportive style, helping businesses and others meet their legal duty without unnecessary expense. However, the Authority will take firm action, including prosecution where appropriate.
- 1.4 The Environmental Health Service's principal focus will be on those activities that give rise to the most serious risks to the safety and health of the public and/or the environment, or where the duty-holder seeks a commercial advantage by breaking the law.
- 1.5 This policy outlines the Environmental Health Service's (EH Service) = approach to securing regulatory compliance, along with the options available within the legislation covered by the remit of the services for achieving this.
- 1.6 Decisions about enforcement action can have serious implications for all involved. By applying the same principles, everyone involved in the process is helping to treat stakeholders fairly but effectively. This policy and the Housing Enforcement Policy will be applied so that decisions about enforcement action will be transparent, accountable, proportionate, and consistent.

2.0 Approval

- 2.1 This policy was adopted by the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee of Spelthorne Borough Council on the 2 June 2026.

Minor changes to this policy can be made with the approval of the Group Head for Place, Protection and Prosperity.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all legislation enforced by the EH Service with the exception of housing law which is covered by a separate policy.
- 3.2 In relation to most areas of Environmental Health legislation, the choice of action will be based on an assessment of the risk that the contravention poses to the health, safety, or welfare of the public, and/or employees, and/or the environment.
- 3.3 Enforcement, in the context of this policy includes action carried out in the exercise of or against the background of statutory enforcement powers. This is not limited to formal enforcement action such as prosecution and civil financial penalties but includes for example the inspection of premises to check compliance with relevant Acts and Regulations, and the provision of advice to help duty-holders achieve compliance.

The term "duty-holder" has a wide meaning and applies to those persons on whom the law places duties (e.g. employers, self-employed, employees, and others).

- 3.4 Enforcement action will consider the full range of enforcement options available under the relevant legislation.
- 3.5 The Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 (section 22) requires regulators to have regard to the 'Code of Practice' when developing policies and operational procedures that guide their regulatory activities. The Code seeks to promote the above through the development of transparent effective dialogue, and understanding between regulators and those they regulate.
- 3.6 The Act (Section 21) imposes a duty on regulators to have regard to the five principles of good regulation so that regulatory activities are carried out in a way that is transparent, accountable, proportionate, consistent, and should be targeted at cases where action is needed.
- 3.7 The EH Service believes that prevention is better than cure and that they should actively work with businesses, consumers, and other groups to advise and assist with compliance.
- 3.8 The EH Service undertakes their regulatory and enforcement activities fairly and without bias. The EH Service look to minimise bureaucracy and red tape, provide help to those who need it, but take firm action against people who flout the law.

4.0 The Regulators' Code - General Principles of Enforcement

- 4.1 Carry out enforcement work so that it supports economic growth for compliant businesses. The Service will:
 - Avoid imposing unnecessary burdens through their regulatory activities and choose proportionate approaches to those we regulate.
 - Support or enable economic growth for compliant businesses.
 - Ensure their officers have the necessary knowledge and skills to support those they regulate.
 - Ensure their officers understand the legal principles of good regulation.
- 4.2 Provide simple and straightforward ways to engage with those the EH Service regulate and hear their views. The EH Service will: -
 - Consider the impact on business and engage with business representatives.
 - In responding to non-compliance, officers will clearly explain: -
 - what the non-compliant item/activity is
 - what actions are required to achieve compliance
 - what advice is being given
 - the decisions taken and reasons for these.
 - officers will also provide an opportunity for dialogue, ensuring that they are acting in a way that is proportionate and consistent.

This paragraph does not apply where the officer can show that immediate enforcement action is required.

- Provide an independent and clearly explained route to appeal against a regulatory decision, or a failure to act in accordance with this policy.
- Provide a timely explanation in writing of any right to representation or right to appeal. This will be in plain language and include practical information on the process involved.
- Make available a clearly explained complaints procedure, so that complaints can easily be made about the conduct of an officer.
- Use a range of methods to receive and take on board customer feedback (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys).

4.3 Base regulatory activities on risk. The Service will:

- Take an evidence-based approach to determine priorities and allocate resources where they would be most effective in addressing priorities.
- Consider risk at every stage of our decision-making processes.
- Consider the compliance record of businesses, including earned recognition and external verification approaches when assessing risk.
- Periodically review the effectiveness of our chosen activities in delivering the desired outcomes and make any necessary changes.

4.4 The EH Service will use discretion in deciding what issues will be investigated. To maintain a proportionate response, most resources available for investigation of incidents will be devoted to the more serious circumstances. It is neither possible nor necessary to investigate every instance of non-compliance with the law. In selecting which incidents to investigate and in deciding the level of resources to be used, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- the severity and scale of potential or actual harm/or nuisance
- the seriousness of any potential breach of the law
- knowledge of the duty holder's past performance
- the enforcement priorities
- the practicality of achieving results
- the wider relevance of the event, including serious public concern.

4.5 Sharing information about compliance and risk. The Service will:

- Follow the principle of “collect once, use many times” when requesting information.
- The requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 will be considered prior to the sharing of data.
- Where appropriate, the EH Service will share information, in a secure manner, with other regulators about those we regulate.
- As a public body the Council is subject to the regulations governing the provision of information under the ‘Freedom of Information Regulations’, the ‘General Data Protection Regulations’ and the ‘Environmental Information

Regulations'. This means that the Council must share information unless it is prohibited or exempt under other legislation.

- When providing information under the 'Environmental Information Regulations' permitted reasonable charges will be applied.

4.6 Clear information, guidance, and advice. The EH Service will:

- When providing advice and guidance, clearly distinguish between legal requirements and good practice.
- Produce guidance and information in a clear, accessible, concise format, written in plain language.
- Periodically review the guidance we produce to ensure it meets the needs of those we regulate.
- Provide reliable and sound advice to those they regulate.
- Where appropriate, work collaboratively with other regulators and have regard to their advice in reaching decisions.

4.7 Ensure transparency in our approach. The EH Service will:

- Set and publish clear service standards so those they regulate know what to expect.
- Service standards will include clear information on the following issues: -
 - a) How the service communicates with those they regulate and vice versa.
 - b) The approach to providing information, guidance, and advice.
 - c) The approach to checks on compliance (e.g. inspections, audits, monitoring and sampling visits and test purchases).
 - d) Their enforcement policy, explaining how they will respond to non-compliance.
 - e) The fees and charges and how they have been calculated.
 - f) How to comment or make a complaint against service provided and ways to appeal.

4.8 The EH Service's staff must be fair, independent, and objective. They must not let any personal views about the suspect, victim, witness, or offender influence their decisions. Such issues would include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, sex, religion or beliefs, political views, or sexual orientation.

4.9 The EH Service is a public authority for the purposes of the Human Rights Act 1998. Environmental Health Service's staff must apply the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights in accordance with the Act.

4.10 EH Service's staff must not be affected by improper or undue pressure from any source.

4.11 Each case is unique and must be considered on its own merits. However, there are general principles that apply in the way each case is approached; these are laid out in this Enforcement Policy.

4.12 The work the EH Service does must be carried out in ways that are **transparent, accountable, proportionate, and consistent**, and should be **targeted** at cases in which action is needed: -

- **Proportionality** means relating enforcement action to the risks (in this policy 'risk' is defined broadly to include a source of possible harm, the likelihood of that harm occurring, and the severity of any harm).

The action taken by the EH Service to achieve compliance with the law should be proportionate to any risks to health and safety, and to the seriousness of any breach, including actual or potential harm arising from the breach.

- **Consistency:** The consistency of approach does not mean uniformity. It means taking a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends.

- **Transparency:** Transparency means helping duty holders to understand what is expected of them and what they should expect from the enforcing authority.

It also means making clear to duty holders not only what they have to do, but also where relevant what they do not have to do. This means distinguishing between "statutory requirements" which are their legal obligations, and "recommendations" which is generally advice or guidance given in terms of what is desirable but not compulsory.

- **Targeting:** Targeting means making sure that visits/inspections carried out are targeted primarily on those activities or premises that give rise to the most serious risks or where hazards are least well controlled, and that action is focused on the duty holder.

- **Accountable:** Regulators are accountable to the public for their actions. This means that the Council must have policies and standards (such as the four enforcement principles above) against which we can be judged, and an effective and easily accessible mechanism for dealing with comments and handling complaints. The Council's procedure for handling complaints is available on the Council website and will be made available to any duty holder on request.

5.0 Training, Competency, and Authorisation

5.1 Only officers who are competent by training, qualification, and/or experience will be authorised to take enforcement action. Authorised officers will also have sufficient training and understanding of the departmental policies and procedures to ensure a consistent approach to service delivery. The Senior Environmental Health Manager (SEHM) will maintain a list of current authorisations for Environmental Health.

5.2 Officers who undertake criminal investigations will be conversant with the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996, and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

6.0 The Code for Crown Prosecutors - Deciding the action to take

- 6.1 Based upon the Code for Crown Prosecutors there are two issues to determine: -
- The first is what level of enforcement action to take, and where the decision is to take formal enforcement action, the second is whether that action is viable and appropriate.
- 6.2 There are two stages in determining whether formal enforcement action is viable and appropriate. These are: -
- Stage 1: the evidential test
 - Stage 2: the public interest test
- 6.3 If the case **does not** pass the evidential test, it must not go ahead, no matter how important or serious it may be. If the case **does** meet the evidential test, depending on the type of formal action being considered (e.g. prosecution, civil penalty) the Council's Legal Service will decide if formal enforcement action is needed in the public interest.
- 6.4 Paragraphs 6.5 to 6.7 below detail how this policy applies to the consideration of taking a prosecution. The principles outlined apply equally to the other types of formal enforcement action that are available.

6.5 The Evidential Test

- 6.5.1 The Council's SEHM and Legal Services must be satisfied that there is enough evidence to provide a 'realistic prospect of conviction' against each defendant on each charge.
- 6.5.2 A realistic prospect of conviction is an objective test. It means that a jury or bench of magistrates, properly directed in accordance with the law, is more likely than not to convict the defendant of the charge alleged. This is a separate test from the one that the criminal courts themselves must apply. A jury or magistrates' court should only convict if satisfied it is sure of a defendant's guilt.
- 6.5.3 When deciding whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute, SEHM and Legal Services must consider whether there is a realistic prospect of conviction. In doing so, they should have regard to any lines of defence which are open to, or have been indicated by, the accused, as well as any other factors likely to affect the prospects of conviction. This includes consideration of whether the evidence can be used, whether it is reliable, and whether it would be admissible in a court of law.

6.6 The Public Interest Test

- 6.6.1 The public interest test must be considered in each case where there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. The Council's Legal Services will balance factors for and against prosecution carefully and fairly. Public interest factors that can affect the decision to prosecute usually depend on the seriousness of the offence or the circumstances of the suspect or defendant. Some factors may increase the need to prosecute, whilst others may suggest that an alternative course of action would be more appropriate.

6.7 Some common public interest factors in favour of prosecution.

6.7.1 The more serious the offence, the more likely it is that a prosecution will be required if:

- A conviction is likely to result in a significant sentence.
- The offence was committed against a person serving the public, e.g. an officer was obstructed whilst attempting to carry out his/her duties.
- The defendant was in a position of authority or trust.
- The evidence shows that the defendant was a ringleader or an organiser in the offence.
- There is evidence that the offence was premeditated.
- There is evidence that the offence was carried out by a group.
- The victim of the offence was vulnerable, has been put in considerable fear, or suffered personal damage, or disturbance.
- The offence was motivated by any form of discrimination against the victim's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, or if the suspect demonstrates hostility towards the victim based on any of those characteristics.
- There is a marked difference between the actual or mental ages of the defendant and the victim, or if there is any element of corruption.
- The defendant's previous convictions or cautions are relevant to the present offence.
- The defendant is alleged to have committed the offence whilst under an order of the court.
- There are grounds for believing that the offence is likely to be continued or repeated, for example, by a history of recurring conduct.
- The offence, although not serious in itself is widespread in the area where it was committed.
- The extent to which the defendant has benefitted from the criminal conduct.
- The circumstances of and harm caused to the victim, and the impact on the community.

6.7.2 Where inspectors are assaulted, enforcing authorities will seek police assistance, with a view to seeking the prosecution of offenders.

7.0 What level of enforcement action to take

7.1 Aside from taking prosecution proceedings, and out of court disposal may take the place of a prosecution, if it is an appropriate response to the offender and or the seriousness and consequences of the offending. Regard will be had to any relevant guidance, when deciding whether an alternative disposal, such as a simple caution, civil penalty or other appropriate regulatory proceedings should be administered.

7.2 Enforcement action can be one or more of the following actions: -

- a. Prosecution
- b. Civil penalties
- c. Simple Caution
- d. Closure powers
- e. Banning Order
- f. Rent Repayment Orders
- g. Management Orders (Empty Dwelling Management Orders, Interim Management Orders, Final Management Orders)
- h. Refusal, review, variation, suspension and/or revocation of licences, permits, consents, approval, and penalty points.
- i. Seizure, Detention or Destruction
- j. Works in default
- k. Formal Enforcement Notices & Orders (e.g. Improvement, Prohibition and Compliance Notices)
- l. Fixed penalty notices
- m. Informal Notice (written warning and advice)
- n. Informal verbal warning and advice
- o. Revisit of premises
- p. No action

7.3 Not all regulatory provisions covered by EH Services have access to each of the above-mentioned enforcement actions. For example, there are no current powers available to officers under the Licensing Act 2003 to serve formal notices such as Improvement or Prohibition notices.

7.4 The enforcement options available in each area of Environmental Health's work are listed in appendices 3 to 8, these cover the environmental health areas of food hygiene; health and safety; licensing; statutory nuisance; public health, land contamination; pollution prevention and control. Housing enforcement options are included within the Housing Enforcement Policy.

7.5 A brief explanation of each enforcement action is given in **appendix 1**.

8.0 Liaison

8.1 The enforcement services (e.g.: noise, pollution, licensing etc) within the EH Service will co-ordinate their enforcement activity to maximise the effective enforcement of any matters that are related to more than one of the services.

8.2 Where an enforcement matter affects a wide geographical area beyond the Borough's boundaries or involves enforcement by one or more other local authorities or organisations (e.g. Fire Authority, Police, Trading Standards, etc); all relevant authorities and organisations will be informed of the matter as soon as possible and all enforcement activity co-ordinated with them.

8.3 Where appropriate, the matter will be first discussed with the relevant 'Primary Authority' (if the business has a relevant Primary Authority Partnership arrangement in place) or other regulatory body before proceeding.

8.4 The SEHM shall carry out monitoring (as appropriate) to ensure that appropriate and full liaison is being undertaken.

9.0 Death at Work

- 9.1 Where there has been a breach of the law leading to a work-related death, officers must consider whether the circumstances of the case might justify a charge of manslaughter.
- 9.2 To ensure that decisions on investigation and prosecution are closely co-ordinated following a work-related death, the Health and Safety Executive, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Local Government Association and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have jointly agreed and published "Work-related deaths: A protocol for liaison". The EH Service must therefore take account of the protocol when responding to work-related deaths.
- 9.3 In which case, officers shall liaise with the Police, Coroners Office and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and if they find evidence suggesting manslaughter, pass it on to the police. If the Police or the CPS decide not to pursue a manslaughter case, the officer will consider taking a health and safety prosecution in accordance with the HSE Enforcement Management Model (EMM).

10.0 Considering the best course of formal action

- 10.1 The best course of formal action to be taken will: -
- reflect the seriousness of the offence(s)
 - give the court adequate sentencing powers
 - pass the evidential and public interest tests, and
 - enable the offence(s) to be presented in a clear and simple way
- 10.2 The agreement of the Senior Environmental Health Manager must be obtained before cases are put forward for enforcement actions 7.2(a) to 7.2(j) as listed above.

11.0 Considering the views of those affected by offences

- 11.1 The EH Service undertake enforcement on behalf of the public at large and not just in the interests of any particular individual or group. However, when considering the public interest test, the consequences for those affected by the offence, the decision whether or not and how to take enforcement action, and any views expressed by those affected, will be taken into account.
- 11.2 Those people affected by the offence will be told about any decision that makes a significant difference to the case in which they are involved.

12.0 The interests of the Spelthorne's Communities

- 12.1 Where particular local circumstances dictate, enforcement activity will where practicable, take account of those circumstances to minimise any adverse effects of enforcement activity on legitimate businesses and individuals.

13.0 Re-starting a Prosecution

13.1 People should be able to rely on enforcement decisions taken by the Council. Normally, if a suspect or defendant is advised that there will not be a prosecution, or that the enforcement action has been stopped, that will normally be the end of the matter, and the case will not start again. Occasionally there are special reasons why enforcement action will re-start, particularly if the case is serious. These reasons include:

- Rare cases where a new look at the original decision shows that it was clearly wrong and should not be allowed to stand.
- Cases which are stopped so that more evidence that is likely to become available in the fairly near future can be collected and prepared. In these cases, the defendant will be told that the enforcement action may well start again.
- Cases that have been stopped because of a lack of evidence but where more significant evidence is discovered later.
- Cases involving a death in which a review following the findings of an inquest concludes that a prosecution should be brought, notwithstanding any earlier decision not to prosecute.

14 Power of Entry

14.1 Environmental Health staff are provided with specific powers of entry by a wide range of legislation. This gives them a right (usually in the form of delegated authority from the Council to named officer/s) to legally enter defined premises, such as businesses, vehicles, or land for specific purposes. Powers of entry include enabling officers to undertake inspections and investigations for a wide range of regulatory responsibilities including food safety, health and safety, licensing, environmental protection, and housing legislation, in addition to dealing with emergencies or searching for evidence during those investigations.

14.2 Often, the power to enter is accompanied by what are known as ‘associated powers’, which set out what the officers are allowed to do once they have entered the premises. This might include, for instance, conducting a search, seizing relevant items, or collecting samples.

14.3 In certain cases, where entry is required to a residential property, then a period of notice is usually required to be given to the owner or occupier of the property before entry can be gained.

14.4 Officers also have the option to obtain a warrant from a magistrate and enter, at any time by force if necessary to ascertain if an offence has been committed, to gather evidence or to undertake emergency remedial work or works in default.

14.5 Officers of Environmental Health will have regard to the Code of Practice - Powers of Entry (issued under section 48 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) when exercising any functions to which the Code relates. The purpose of the Code is to

ensure greater consistency in the exercise of powers of entry and greater clarity for those affected by them while upholding effective enforcement.

15 Enforcement Policy Implementation

- 15.1 Officers must abide by this enforcement policy and the Housing Enforcement Policy when making all enforcement decisions. Any departure from the policy must be exceptional, capable of justification, and be fully considered by the SEHM before a decision is taken, unless it is considered that there is sufficient risk in delaying the decision, under which circumstances the officer must take the most appropriate course of action, as they see fit.
- 15.2 Should any departure from the policy result in an officer considering taking enforcement action that may be inconsistent with action being taken by other authorities then this will be discussed with the SEHM. Where appropriate the matter will be discussed with relevant primary authority and/or another regulator, if necessary, before proceeding.
- 15.3 Scheduled internal performance review meetings will be undertaken to ensure that all enforcement activity is carried out in accordance with this policy.
- 15.4 Instances of non-compliance with this policy will be recorded and reported to the SEHM, who will instigate appropriate action.

16.0 Guidance Documents

- 16.1 This policy considers various Guidance and Approved Codes of Practice issued by Central Government departments, and national regulators such as the Health and Safety Executive and the Food Standards Agency.
- 16.2 The Council fully acknowledges and endorses the rights of individuals and will ensure that all enforcement action occurs in strict accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010, and other relevant legislation and guidance.
- 16.3 Directed covert surveillance will only be used in relation to the investigation of serious offences, defined as those with a penalty of six months imprisonment or more.
- 16.4 This policy has been written with regards to the Regulators' Code 2014 and all the relevant parts of the Code for Crown Prosecutors 2018; the Ministry of Justice's Simple Caution for Adult Offender guidance 2015; the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996; the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

17.0 Publicity

- 17.1 The Council may publicise cases of businesses, licensees, landlords, and individuals it successfully prosecutes for relevant offences as well as those it rewards for implementing very high standards. Names of companies and individuals convicted of offences may be published on the Council's website or through social media. Cases

subject to an active appeal will not usually be published until the applicable appeals process has elapsed.

- 17.2 Information related to enforcement notices issued by the Council may appear on the Council's website or social media outlets. Notices that are withdrawn or subject to an active appeal will not be published.

18.0 Further Information

- 18.1 The Code for Crown Prosecutors (The Code) is issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions under section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. It sets out the basic principles Crown Prosecutors should follow when they make case decisions. It is a public document, and although it's written for members of the Crown Prosecution Service it is widely used by others to understand the way in which Crown Prosecutors make decisions. The Code for Crown Prosecutors can be downloaded on the Crown Prosecution's website. www.cps.gov.uk
- 18.2 The Regulators' Code is available for download from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulators-code>
- 18.3 Ministry of Justice - Simple Caution for Adult Offender guidance is available for download from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simple-cautions-guidance-for-police-and-prosecutors>
- 18.4 Guidance Powers of entry: code of practice. The code provides guidance and sets out considerations that apply to the exercise of powers of entry including, where appropriate, the need to minimise disruption to business. It will ensure greater consistency in the exercise of powers of entry, and greater clarity for those affected by them, while upholding effective enforcement. Available for download from [Powers of entry: code of practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/powers-of-entry-code-of-practice)
- 18.5 This Enforcement Policy is available on the Council's website at: www.spelthorne.gov.uk, and can be viewed in hardcopy at the Council offices.
- 18.6 Leaflet entitled "Enforcement Policy - Advice to Businesses". Spelthorne Borough Council's Environmental Health Service has produced a leaflet that provides basic information about the enforcement policy, and the range of enforcement actions available to enforcement officers. This leaflet is available on the Council's web site at www.spelthorne.gov.uk and in hardcopy at the Council's offices. It can be ordered by telephoning 01784 446291, emailing eh.commercial@spelthorne.gov.uk, or by writing to the Environmental Health Service at Spelthorne Borough Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-Upon-Thames, TW18 1XB.
- 18.7 The Council's complaint procedure is available on the Council's web site at www.spelthorne.gov.uk. It can be ordered by telephoning 01784 446291, emailing eh.commercial@spelthorne.gov.uk, or by writing to the Environmental Health Service, at Spelthorne Borough Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-Upon-Thames, TW18 1XB.

APPENDIX 1 - ENFORCEMENT ACTION OPTIONS

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 requires certain decisions made to be available to the public. Such decisions include the issued licences, permits and enforcement notices. Information made available includes: -

- the date the decision was taken
- details of the decision taken along with the reasons for the decision
- details of alternative options, if any, considered and rejected
- where the decision falls in the paragraph 7(2)(a) of the Regulations, the names of any member of the relevant local government body who has declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision.

Environmental Health decision notices are available upon request by telephoning 01784 446291, emailing eh.commercial@spelthorne.gov.uk, or by writing to the Environmental Health Service, at Spelthorne Borough Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-Upon-Thames, TW18 1XB.

Enforcement officers must seek to secure compliance with the law. Most of their dealings with those on whom the law places duties (businesses, landlords, occupiers, and individuals) are informal – officers offer information, advice, and support, both verbally and in writing.

Enforcement officers may also use formal enforcement mechanisms as set out in law, including fixed penalty notices; enforcement notices where a contravention needs to be remedied; prohibition notices where there is a risk of serious personal injury, damage to the environment, or injury to health; revocation of authorisations; withdrawal of approvals; refusal of registration; variations of licences or conditions or of exemptions; or ultimately caution, prosecution, and injunction.

1. Prosecution

This involves offender(s) being summoned by Spelthorne Council to a criminal court to answer a charge(s) for a breach(es) of legislation enforced by this department.

When consideration is given to prosecute, regard shall be taken of the guidance contained within this Enforcement Policy, the Code for Crown Prosecutors, applicable Acts and Regulations, and relevant guidance produced by national regulators (such as the Health and Safety Executive, Food Standards Agency, Environment Agency, or specific government department).

Officers must exercise their discretion in deciding whether to initiate a prosecution. Prosecution without warning and recourse to alternative sanctions may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

In terms of the Public Interest Test, the list of factors stated in section 6.7 of this policy will be taken into account when making a decision.

For non-payment of certain licence fees, or where the Council has not received payment of costs for carrying out works to remove a serious imminent risk or remedy pollution, it will

pursue debts through the appropriate court, and where appropriate it will suspend/cancel the licence.

2. Civil Penalty Notices

Penalty notices for animal health and welfare offences can be issued under the Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022. A penalty notice under the act gives an individual or body corporate (such as a company or charity) the opportunity to avoid prosecution for a criminal offence by paying a fee. Payment of a penalty notice does not require an admission of guilt and will not result in a criminal record.

Penalty notices are not designed for serious offences or for minor breaches where advice and guidance in the first instance would be sufficient in rectifying the issue.

Advice and guidance should be the investigating officer's primary enforcement action to promote compliance in most cases followed by warning letters or statutory notices. Issuing a penalty notice could supplement these actions or be the next enforcement step if the officer thinks providing advice and guidance only would be insufficient in redirecting behaviour or previous advice and guidance has not been followed and the issue remains unresolved.

The officer should consider whether prosecution would be the most appropriate enforcement action in the first instance where there is evidence of:

- a serious animal welfare offence
- a significant threat to the human food chain or national biosecurity

An officer may only issue a penalty notice in relation to offences specified in regulations made under the act.

The Council must consider the following factors set out in section 4(2) of the act:

- the seriousness of the conduct to which the proposed notice relates (the 'relevant conduct')
- the duration of the relevant conduct
- any evidence of intention behind the relevant conduct
- any evidence of previous acts or omissions by the person similar to the relevant conduct
- any action taken by the person to eliminate or reduce any risk of harm resulting from the relevant conduct
- any action taken by the person to remedy or mitigate any harm resulting from the relevant conduct
- whether the person reported the relevant conduct to the enforcement authority or constable
- the conduct of the person after the relevant conduct is drawn to their attention by the enforcement authority or constable

The EH Service in conjunction with Legal Services may decide that other forms of sanctions, or advice and guidance in the first instance, may be more effective and proportionate.

Raising revenue should never be an objective of enforcement.

The Council must pay sums received from penalty notices into the Consolidated Fund, the government's general bank account at the Bank of England,

Before paying sums into the Consolidated Fund, the Council can deduct the costs of investigating the offence and issuing the penalty notice.

The maximum penalty notice amount will be whichever is the lower of:

- £5,000
- the maximum fine the offender could be liable to pay if convicted for the same offence

The factors set out in section 4(2) of the act must be considered in every case. This guidance sets out how to consider those factors, and other relevant factors.

Step 1: Assess culpability and harm

Assess the offender's culpability and the harm caused by the offence. Use the list of 'harm' factors to consider the seriousness of the offence for the purpose of section 4(2)(a). Use the list of 'culpability' factors to consider intention for the purpose of section 4(2)(c).

Factors indicating low culpability:

- well-intentioned but incompetent care
- momentary or brief lapse in judgement
- involved through coercion, intimidation or exploitation
- mental health disorder or learning disability

Factors indicating low to medium culpability:

- failure to follow good practice to ensure the needs of an animal has been met
- not followed statutory guidance to ensure that animal health rules have been met
- disregard for rules regarding responsible ownership
- not sought veterinary advice
- unaware of up-to-date statutory guidance
- operating without a licence

Factors indicating medium to high culpability:

- deliberate disregard for welfare of the animal (including by failure to seek treatment)
- deliberate attempt to avoid duty of care of animals
- deliberate breach of animal health rules
- deliberately avoiding operating under a licensing scheme
- prolonged or repeated incidents of animal health (breaches)
- deliberate disregard for the disease control principles including standstill requirements
- deliberately ignored requirements regarding responsible ownership and keepership of kept animals

- ignoring previously issued advice or guidance
- obstructive behaviour
- obstructing an inspector or investigator
- role in organised illegal activity
- level of planning
- involvement of others through coercion, intimidation or exploitation

Factors indicating greater harm:

- greater detriment to the physical or mental wellbeing of animals
- greater detriment to the health of the animals
- greater detriment to consumer
- greater impact to the food chain
- greater impact to public health
- greater impact to local or national biosecurity
- greater risk of spreading disease
- greater risk to public health
- greater risk to public safety
- no animal traceability or significant period lack of traceability
- prolonged period without microchipping

Factors indicating lesser harm:

- lesser detriment to the physical or mental wellbeing of animals
- lesser detriment to the health of the animals
- lesser detriment to consumer
- lesser impact to the food chain
- lesser impact to public health
- lesser impact to local or national biosecurity
- lesser risk of spreading disease
- lesser impact to public health
- lesser impact to public safety
- shorter period of lack of animal traceability
- shorter period without microchipping

Where an offence does not fall into a harm or culpability category, the EH Service may consider other factors, but you must provide justification for this decision.

When the culpability and harm levels have been identified, the officer should find the relevant starting point and range for the penalty amount.

If the maximum fine the offender could be liable to pay if convicted for the same offence is £5,000 or more, you should use these tables to determine the starting point and range of the penalty notice amount.

Low culpability

Harm factor	Starting point	Minimum amount	Maximum amount
Lesser harm	£400	£350	£1,000
Greater harm	£750	£600	£1,250

Low to medium culpability

Harm factor	Starting point	Minimum amount	Maximum amount
Lesser harm	30%	25%	40%
Greater harm	40%	30%	60%

Medium to high culpability

Harm factor	Starting point	Minimum amount	Maximum amount
Lesser harm	50%	40%	80%
Greater harm	70%	60%	100%

Step 2: Assess aggravating and mitigating factors

The EH Service may take any aggravating or mitigating factors into account to adjust the penalty notice amount from the relevant starting point. The amount must not go beyond the minimum or maximum for the range as set out in the relevant table. This will give the final penalty amount.

This list of aggravating and mitigating factors incorporates the factors in section 4(2)(b), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) of the act:

Aggravating factors

- evidence of previous acts or omissions by the person similar to the relevant conduct
- distress caused to others
- failure to comply with current court orders

- offence committed on licence or post sentence supervision
- publicised or promoted animal cruelty including via the use of technology
- ignored warning or professional advice on current offence
- declines to obtain professional advice
- animal required intervention to bring under control
- financial gain from the offence committed
- number of animals involved
- duration of the relevant conduct
- poor conduct by the person after the relevant conduct is drawn to their attention by the enforcement authority or constable
- threatening or abusive to staff or inspectors and investigators
- poor record keeping

Mitigating factors

- no evidence of previous acts or omissions by the person similar to the relevant conduct
- action taken to eliminate or reduce any risk of harm resulting from the relevant conduct
- action taken to remedy or mitigate any harm resulting from the relevant conduct
- offender reported relevant conduct to the enforcement authority or constable
- good conduct by the person after the relevant conduct is drawn to their attention by the enforcement authority or constable
- inability to pay
- offender has a mental health disorder or learning disability
- offender has been given an inappropriate level of trust or responsibility
- offender sought and implemented professional advice

Further guidance on the use of penalty notices can be found in - [Statutory guidance on the use of penalty notices for animal health and welfare offences - GOV.UK](#)

3. Closure powers

The powers to close certain premises, both commercial and domestic, or prohibit processes, are available to authorised officers under various legislation enforced by the Services. This

option is taken when there is a serious and imminent risk to health or safety to the occupants, neighbouring premises' occupants, employees, customers, or visitors.

Decisions of this nature will be based on the professional judgement of authorised officers and relevant legislation and government guidance. All cases are to be discussed with the SEHM.

4. Review, variation, suspension and/or revocation of licences or permits.

These powers are contained in legislation where local authorities issue licences or permits to businesses. Examples include the Licensing Act 2003, the Gambling Act 2005, the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 1999, and the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions) Acts 1982 and 1976.

Powers to review, suspend, or revoke licences or permits are contained in the Council's "Delegations to Officers". These are generally held by the Council's Licensing Sub-committees. In terms of deciding to review, vary, suspend, or revoke licences or permits, one or more of the following non-exhaustive criteria will be used:

- a) The operator or personal licence holder has been convicted of a relevant offence(s).
- b) The potential for considerable harm.
- c) The seriousness of the offence(s).
- d) The history of compliance of the offender(s), i.e. apparent reckless disregard to the law, persistent poor standards, repeated breaches, etc.
- e) A person/organisation has been engaged in fraudulent activity.
- f) The operation is no longer being managed by a technically competent person.
- g) Failure of the operator, licence holder, to pay the Council any annual or subsistence fee.
- h) Where a licensed premises has been temporarily closed by the Police or Council for related reasons.
- i) Where a successful prosecution has been obtained for a breach(es) of licence condition(s).

5. Seizure, detention, destruction powers

Authorised officers have powers to formally seize items, such as food, and equipment (including musical systems) which will or could cause an imminent risk to health, safety, or a nuisance to any person(s).

Decisions of this nature will be based on the professional judgement of authorised officers and relevant legislation and government guidance.

We will always give full details of our actions to the offender(s) when we exercise this power.

6. Works in default

This power exists where an authorised officer considers a relevant and serious issue requires urgent work to be carried out. This can occur in relation to statutory nuisances, actual or imminent risks of serious environmental pollution, public health issues or serious housing defects where non-compliance exists and persists.

7. Simple caution

This option is used as a formal warning and as an alternative to prosecution. Guidance has been issued by the Ministry of Justice entitled 'Simple Cautions or Adult Offenders' (April 2015). For a formal caution to be issued the following criteria must be satisfied: -

- a) Sufficient evidence must be available to prove the case.
- b) The offender must admit the offence.
- c) The offender must agree to be cautioned.
- d) The offence must not have been committed by the offender before.

If the offender commits a further offence within 3-years of receiving a formal caution, this may influence our decision to take a prosecution. If during the time the caution is in force the offender pleads guilty to, or is found guilty of, committing another offence anywhere in England or Wales, the caution may be cited in court, and this may influence the severity of the sentence that the court imposes.

8. Formal notices

Formal or legal notices are available to use in most Environmental Health legislation. They are served on the offenders requiring them to stop the contravention of their statutory duties.

Some notices allow an offender a reasonable length of time to remedy the contravention(s). Other notices may require a business, process, or state of affairs to cease immediately, or cease trading/operating immediately, where there is an imminent risk to health, safety, or environmental pollution to employees, members of the public, etc.

Where legislation permits (e.g. The Housing Act 2004) financial charges will be made for any formal enforcement action that the Council takes.

This may also include Notices of Intent under Schedule 1A of the Clean Air Act 1993 as amended by the Environmental Act 2021.

9. Community Protection Notices

Community protection notices (CPNs) are designed to stop a person aged 16 or over, business or organisation committing antisocial behaviour (ASB) which spoils the community's quality of life. This can include offences such as noise nuisance, eyesore rubbish on private land and antisocial behaviour. Grounds for issuing a CPN include instances in which an individual's behaviour: -

- has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality.
- is unreasonable and
- is of a persistent nature.

Before a CPN can be issued, the person, business or organisation suspected of causing the problem must be given a written warning (CPW) stating that a community protection notice will be issued unless their conduct changes and ceases to have a detrimental effect on the community. The warning must also detail that a breach of a CPN is a criminal offence. Failure to comply with the warning can lead to the issue of a community protection notice. The notice will list the following requirements: -

- to stop doing something specified and/or to do some specified action.
- to take reasonable steps to achieve a specified result - this will be aimed at either preventing the effect of the unacceptable conduct continuing or preventing the likelihood of it recurring.

An appeal against a CPN or its terms can be made to a magistrates' court within 21 days of issue.

If a recipient of a CPN fails to comply with the requirements, the Council may take action to ensure that the failure is remedied and may recover the cost of doing so from the person concerned.

Failure to comply with a CPN can lead to a court summons and, on conviction, can result in a fine of up to Level 4, currently £2,500 for individuals, or £20,000 for businesses. On conviction the Magistrates' have power to order forfeiture and destruction of any item used in the commission of the offence

10. Fixed penalty notices

Fixed penalty notices (FPNs) exist in Environmental Health enforcement areas including noise, smoke free legislation, and smoke control area enforcement (Clean Air Act 1993 as amended by the Environment Act 2021). They are legal notices served on a business or individual in relation to observed contraventions of legislation law. FPNs offer a person the opportunity to discharge any liability to conviction for the offence to which the notice relates by paying a fixed penalty charge within the time specified in the notice. If the penalty is paid in accordance with the penalty notice, then no proceedings for the offence can be brought.

11. Penalty Points Scheme (taxi/hackney carriages)

A Penalty Points Scheme (PPS) has been in place since 2011 in relation to private hire (PH) and hackney carriage (HC) licensing enforcement issues. Penalty Points (PPs) are issued to PH and HC drivers, vehicle owners and PH operators for specified minor breaches of the Council's PH and HC licence conditions. Once a licensee has accumulated 12 PPs in any one calendar year he/she is referred to the Council's Licensing Sub-committee for a decision to be made whether to suspend or revoke their licence.

12. Informal notices (written warning)

For some contraventions, we will send the offender a firm but polite letter clearly identifying the contraventions, giving advice on how to put them right and including a deadline by which this must be done. Informal notices/letters are not part of the statutory procedure, and no offences are committed by not complying with them.

Although, failure to comply could result in a formal notice(s) being served or more severe enforcement action being taken, depending on the seriousness of the breach(es).

The time allowed must be reasonable but must also consider the implications of the contravention(s) in respect of the legislation being enforced.

13. Informal verbal warning

For minor breaches of legislation, we verbally advise the offender clearly identifying the contravention(s), giving advice on how to put them right and including a deadline by which this must be done. Failure to comply could result in more severe enforcement action being taken. The time allowed must be reasonable but must also take into account the implications of the contravention in respect of the legislation being enforced.

This course of action will only be appropriate where the breach is not serious; the history is good and/or the consequences of non-compliance do not pose a significant risk.

14. Revisits

Following the service of a Formal Notice, we may revisit the premises to check compliance has been achieved.

Following the service of an Informal Notice the investigating officer shall use their professional judgement to follow up the matter and depending upon the legislative implications of the contravention, and the perceived likely response of the offender, shall where necessary revisit the premises to check compliance has been achieved.

Following the provision of verbal warning and advice, the investigating officer shall use their professional judgement to follow up the matter, and depending upon the legislative implications of the contravention, and the perceived likely response of the offender, shall where necessary revisit the premises to check compliance has been achieved.

15. No action

In exceptional circumstances, contraventions may not warrant any action. This can be where the cost of compliance to the offender outweighs the detrimental impact of the contravention on the community, or the cost of the required enforcement action to the Council outweighs the detrimental impact of the contravention on the community.

A decision of no action may also be taken where formal enforcement is inappropriate in the circumstances, such as where a trader has ceased to trade, or the offender is elderly and frail and formal action would seriously damage their well-being.

A decision to take no action must be recorded in writing and must consider the legislative implications of the contravention.

APPENDIX 2 - FOOD HYGIENE ENFORCEMENT ACTION OPTIONS

The range of enforcement action options available includes:

- a) Prosecution
- b) Closure powers
- c) Seizure
- d) Simple cautions
- e) Formal notices
- f) Informal notices
- g) Informal verbal warnings
- h) Revisits
- i) No action

APPENDIX 3 - HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT ACTION OPTIONS

The range of enforcement action options available includes:

- a) Prosecution
- b) Closure powers
- c) Seizure
- d) simple cautions
- e) Formal notices
- f) Fixed penalty notices (under smoke free legislation)
- g) Informal notices
- h) Informal verbal warnings
- i) Revisits
- j) No action

APPENDIX 4 - LICENSING ENFORCEMENT ACTION OPTIONS

This Appendix relates to enforcement options available to authorised officers under the Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005, the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, and Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Acts of 1976 (taxi, and private hire driver and vehicle licences), and 1982 (“special treatment” licences), Street and House to House Collection licensing, and various animal welfare legislation.

The range of licensing enforcement action options available includes:

- a) Prosecution
- b) Civil Penalties (animal activities licensing)
- c) Closure powers
- d) Review, variation, suspension or revocation of licences and consents
- e) Simple cautions
- f) Penalty points
- g) Targeted and agreed Actions Plans with licensed premises
- h) Informal notices
- i) Informal verbal warnings
- j) Revisits

- k) No action

APPENDIX 5 - STATUTORY NUISANCE ENFORCEMENT ACTION OPTIONS

The range of enforcement action options available includes:

- a) Prosecution
- b) Seizure
- c) Works in default
- d) Simple cautions
- e) Formal notices
- f) Fixed penalty notices
- g) Informal notices
- h) Informal verbal warnings
- i) Revisits
- j) No action

APPENDIX 6 - LAND CONTAMINATION ENFORCEMENT ACTION OPTIONS

This appendix relates to enforcement options available to authorised officers under Sections 78A to 78YC (inclusive) of Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Regulations made under it; the Environment Act 1995; and the Law of Property Act 1925.

The range of enforcement action options available include:

- a) Prosecution
- b) simple cautions
- c) Formal notices
- d) Works in default
- e) Informal notices
- f) Informal verbal warnings
- g) Revisits
- h) No action

APPENDIX 7 - POLLUTION CONTROL ENFORCEMENT ACTION OPTIONS

This appendix relates to enforcement options available to authorised officers under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 and Regulations made under it, and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Regulations made under it. Provisions relating to enforcement options applicable to Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 are detailed within appendix 8.

The range of pollution control enforcement action options available includes:

- a) Prosecution
- b) Review, variation, suspension, and revocation of licence/permit
- c) Works in default
- d) Simple cautions
- e) Formal notices

- f) Informal notices
- g) Informal verbal warnings
- h) Revisits
- i) No action

APPENDIX 8 - SMOKE CONTROL AREA ENFORCEMENT ACTION OPTIONS

This appendix relates to enforcement options available to authorised officers under the Clean Air Act 1993 as amended by the Environment Act 2021 and regulations made under it.

The range of smoke control area enforcement action options available includes:

- a) Fixed penalty notices/final notices
- b) Simple notices
- c) Informal notices
- d) Informal verbal warnings
- e) Formal written warnings/notices of intent
- f) Revisits
- g) No action