



SANDOWN TOWN COUNCIL



Allocated Senior Planning Enforcement Officer: Mrs. Sarah Thorne, BA (Hons) MSC



Effectiveness



Quantify



Monitor

## INTRODUCTION

Sandown Town Council has requested the assistance of a senior planning enforcement officer for 1 day a week to proactively address breaches of planning control within the High Street, the Esplanade and Culver Parade, together with link though roads, such as Pier Street.

Since the start of this partnership, the investigating officer's caseload for Sandown has increased by 400%. This report seeks to identify the important and tangible improvements brought to the local area through this additional resource and how it plans to secure more success for the future of Sandown. All cases held by the investigating officer have been identified as those which cause the highest level of harm and therefore require priority attention. However, it should not be assumed that the cases currently held by the investigating officer are the only properties which require attention and intervention from the Planning Enforcement Team.

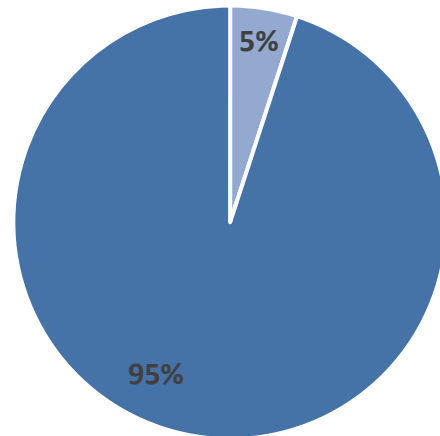
It is hoped that by addressing the condition of Sandown's commercial core area, this will improve residents and visitor's perceptions of the High Street, sustainably promoting the use of the town center as well as encouraging investment in the town.

## MONITORING

In May 2024, Sandown Town Council identified that the primary focus for the additional planning enforcement resource is to target land and buildings which are in poor external condition and that are adversely affecting the amenities of the local area. Within the past 6 months, this action plan remains unaltered and is reflective in the case load currently held by the investigating planning enforcement officer, with 95% of cases focused on seeking to enhance the visual amenity of the area in the interests of residents and visitors alike.

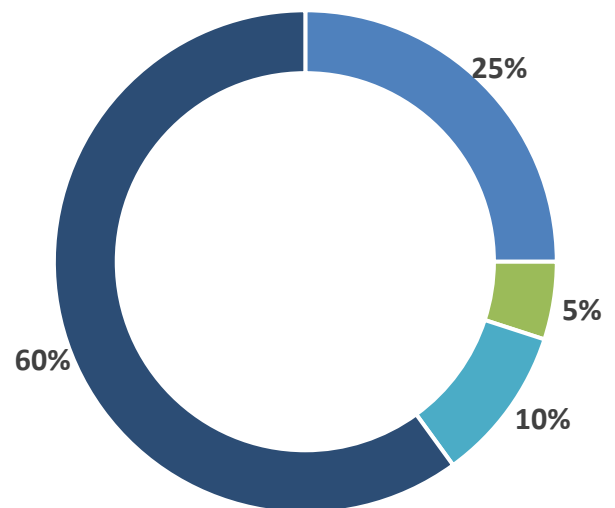
All cases have progressed through initial investigation with site visits and a list of remedial works itemised for every property. These remedial works have been communicated to all property owners. As demonstrated by the chart opposite, all cases are at various stages, some in their infancy, others have or progressing to formal enforcement action (10%). Positive responses have been received from some property owners and 25% of cases have been remedied. Further details follow.

**Nature of Planning Breach**



- Untidy Condition of Land
- Operational Development

**Case Status**



- Remedied / Closed
- Direct Action
- Legal Action Initiated
- Ongoing discussions

## CASE STUDIES

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### ENF/0071/19 – Ocean Hotel, High Street, Sandown

Having observed a significant rise in trespass, vandalism and arson attempts at the vacant Ocean Hotel, the IW Council exercised its emergency powers in accordance with Section 29 of The Local Government and Miscellaneous Provisions Act and commissioned contractors to secure the Ocean Hotel from unauthorised entry in the interest of public safety.

All doorways and windows across the vast ground floor of the double fronted property has now been secured with metal sheeting. As an additional deterrent, a heras barrier fencing has also been installed within the Hotels esplanade fronting gardens and perimeter/boundary hoarding has been installed, reinforced, and resecured where applicable.

Prior to the securing works, over 200 incidents were reported to Hampshire Constabulary, including the numerous arsons attempts in August 2024.

Since the securing works were completed 4 weeks ago, Hampshire Constabulary confirm that not a single incident has been raised and the premises remains secure.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Councils Housing Team, the homeless occupiers of the property are all now in receipt of alternative supported accommodation.

Whilst the Council continues to work towards a longer-term solution for the property, the above demonstrates that dedicated planning enforcement resources in the town has resulted in a significant and positive change towards reducing anti-social behaviour in the area and ultimately improving the quality of lives for the towns community and visitors.



### ENF/0139/24 – Southern Water PPG, Avenue Road, Sandown

The area immediately surrounding the Southern Water pumping station has undergone recent refurbishment by STC. This has brought to light the poor condition of the pumping station building, which is highly visible by passing vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

On receipt of the Council's concerns, Southern Water engaged fully with the Council's requests for remedial works to the exterior of their pumping station building off Avenue Road. Repairing cracked and defective render before repainting all elevations and metal doors and replacing previously broken and decaying air vents and windows.

**OUTCOME: Breach of planning control remedied**



### ENF/0190/21 – Former Savoy Hotel, Victoria Road, Sandown

The site that occupies the now demolished Savoy Hotel has fallen into a state of overgrown vegetation with litter and redundant demolition material. Whilst redevelopment of the site is the most desirable outcome, the scope of powers under Section 215 (untidy land) of the Town and Country Planning Act do not permit requesting such, but rather remedial steps to improve the visual amenity of the land in the context of the neighbouring area. The site remains a demolition site with a vast void at its centre (formally the basement), it is therefore imperative the site remains secure from unauthorised entry.

On the request of the Council, vegetation has been cut back and the perimeter fencing has been replaced with privacy screening attached. Overall, the visual harm arising from the land has been reduced by the remedial works undertaken.

**OUTCOME: Breach of planning control remedied**





### ENF/0136/24 – 3 Pier Street, Sandown

The predominantly positioned property within the main thoroughfare of the seaside resort of Sandown results in vistas from numerous aspects, including the Pier Street and the Esplanade.

The first and second floor of the elevation of the building fronting Pier Street appeared unmaintained, compromising the architectural features of the buildings and general appearance and character of the designated Conservation Area.

Having communicated the Council's concerns to the responsible persons, the property has been fully restored, re-emphasizing the properties architectural features to now contribute positively to the designated area.

**OUTCOME: Breach of planning control remedied.**



## NEXT STEPS

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### **E/30942/B - Esplanade Hotel, High Street, Sandown**

The prominently located double fronted Esplanade Hotel has laid vacant for several years. Lacking general maintenance and repair the property, The Council is of the view that the property is significantly harming the visual amenity of the neighbouring area. A Section 215 Notice will be served imminently requiring over 100 remedial steps to be undertaken so to remedy the visual harm arising from the property.



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### **ENF/0186/24 – Fairlea, 52 High Street, Sandown**

In stark contrast to its well-maintained adjoining property, this double fronted villa is displaying significant lack of external maintenance and repair. A Section 215 Notice will be served imminently requiring almost 20 remedial steps to be undertaken so to remedy the visual harm arising from the property prior to the summer season of 2025.





In the longer term there are several other properties within the commercial heart of Sandown whose visual external appearance is unkempt, unmaintained, or untidy and therefore requires remediation in the interests of the neighbouring area.

Whilst it is always preferable that landowners cooperate with the authorities' requests for the undertaking of the remedial works, unfortunately this does not always take place. As such over the coming months the investigating officer will, if needed, increase legal notice output so to remedy the numerous breaches of planning controls identified to ultimately improve residents and visitors' perception of the town.



## SUMMARY – A COMMITMENT TO SANDOWN

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This report identifies that planning enforcement action in Sandown's commercial core has increased by 400% since Sandown Town Council commissioned a dedicated enforcement officer for 1 day a week in May 2024.

Dedicating an investigating officer to effectively address untidy buildings whose condition is adversely impacting on the area remains the primary focus.

Planning enforcement is often perceived to be protracted and lengthy process, however this is in part due to the complex and dynamic nature of a planning enforcement investigations which is a constantly changing progress. That said, this report demonstrates that effective and positive change is achievable even within a brief period. It has been demonstrated that within only 6 months, 25% of proactive planning enforcement cases have been remedied which has increased the standard of land and building within the area. Proactive planning enforcement has also been successfully implemented in significantly reducing anti-social behaviour and vandalism which was arising from a redundant building within the town centre. These works can only assist positively to the community and visitor experience of the town.

Moving forward, the investigating officer remains committed to bring about noticeable and tangible change to the visual appearance of the town centre. It will continue to reassess ongoing planning enforcement cases, negotiate, and work collaboratively with land and property owners whilst also working cross departmentally to address local issues and concerns which may intertwine with planning enforcement investigations for the best possible outcome.