

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Environment Directorate

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND TRADING STANDARDS

ENFORCEMENT POLICY

REVISED DATE: APRIL 2018

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND TRADING STANDARDS

ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to guide efficient compliance with legislation that is enforced by the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service, whilst minimising the burden to the Council, individuals, businesses and other organisations.

In performing their enforcement functions, the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service will pursue their objectives of protecting the health, safety and economic well being of residents, visitors and businesses within the County Borough.

To achieve these objectives the Service is committed to providing advice, information and education to both consumers and businesses and to ensuring that non-compliance is dealt with in a manner which is open, consistent, proportionate and fair. This Enforcement Policy sets out the principles and procedure adopted by the Service in cases of non-compliance and/or unlawful activity by businesses or individuals.

This Policy is intended to provide guidance for officers, businesses and consumers rather than to set down a prescriptive set of rules. Nothing in this Policy should be construed as restricting the discretion of the Council to take legal proceedings or other enforcement action in cases where it is considered to be in the public interest.

A specific Enforcement policy guidance note (appendix 1) relates to Local Authority Pollution Prevention and Control (LAPPC) and Local Authority Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (LA-IPPC). This relates to the protection of the Environment and prevention of harm to human health, in particular by preventing or minimising the release of polluting substances to air (for LAPPC regulated installations) and to air, land, water (for LA-IPPC instalations) from certain activities prescribed by Schedule 1 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

Reference material

The Service has had regard to the following reference material in implementing this Enforcement Policy:

- a) The Ministry of Justice guidance for Simple Cautions for Adult Offenders (November 2013).
- b) The Code for Crown Prosecutors 2013
- c) The former LACORS Home Authority Scheme and the Better Regulation Delivery Office's Primary Authority Scheme.
- d) The Regulators' Code 2014
- e) Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, as amended
- f) Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006
- g) Food and Feed Law Codes of Practice
- h) Health and Safety Executive's Enforcement Policy Statement
- i) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing, Health and Safety Rating System Enforcement Guidance
- J) Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Policy 2017

Basic Principles

The Service, as a law enforcement body, has a duty to ensure that there is compliance with the wide range of laws relating to trading activity, public health, housing, health & safety and food safety, with the protection of public health and the promotion of good business practice being fundamental to the implementation of their enforcement and regulatory roles.

Regulators' Code

We will follow the provisions of the Regulators' Code, in that we will:-

- Conduct our activities to support businesses to comply and grow
- Provide simple and straightforward ways to engage with businesses and we will listen to their views
- Base our regulatory activities on risk
- Share information about compliance and risk
- Provide clear information, guidance and advice to aid business compliance
- Ensure that our regulatory approach is transparent

Additionally our policy is underpinned by certain other basic principles as detailed below:

Consistency

In order to ensure the equitable implementation of enforcement action, the Service is committed to ensuring that the policy is operated consistently at all levels within the Service from investigating officers to senior management. Consistency is not to be equated with uniformity and this does not mean that all cases will be treated identically, as circumstances vary in each matter. The principle of consistency means that we will take a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends.

Accountability

The Service is responsible to the public for their actions and will ensure that this Enforcement Policy is accessible. Further, it operates a fair and efficient complaints process within the overall Corporate Compliments, Complaints and Comments process. Details of the Corporate Compliments, Complaints and Comments procedure can be accessed via:- <http://www.npt.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2777> ; by email – contactus@npt.gov.uk or by telephone on 01639 686868.

Proportionality

Proportionality means that any enforcement action is proportionate to the risk and will be related to the seriousness of any breach of the law. In considering

seriousness, various factors will be taken into account, which include, among other considerations, the following: the number of people affected by any breach and their vulnerability, the economic impact, the detriment to the safety of others and the degree of intent. Any statutory defences will also be considered.

Transparency

We are committed to the implementation of clear and open procedures. Ensuring that individuals and business proprietors are aware of, and understand, their obligations and rights under the law is an integral part of the activities of the Service. In the event that the Service takes any enforcement action in relation to an individual or business, detailed information will be given as to what action is being taken, what is required of the individual or business and what the next steps will be. Any questions in relation to what is happening will be answered fairly and accurately having regard to the need for confidentiality in some cases. The Enforcement Policy is published on our website.

Targeting

We aim to focus enforcement activity on those areas which: indicate the greatest risk to public health or safety; impact most significantly on the economic well-being of the community; disproportionately affect vulnerable groups; taking into account both local and national priorities. We also aim to adopt a lighter touch for compliant businesses or individuals, and in some cases may opt not to take enforcement action where the infringement is minor or where a suitable alternative course of action is available. In all cases, we aim to target those who are primarily responsible for the non-compliance.

Enforcement Action

In dealing with non-compliance with environmental health, consumer and trading legislation, various factors are considered when assessing the most appropriate course of action. Action should be both necessary and proportionate with the objective of protecting the public, employees, consumers and the environment and

where relevant be in the interests of compliant businesses. A graduated enforcement approach will be considered where the circumstances in each case merit such an approach. Evidence gathering will be subject to the relevant laws and codes of practice which may cover topics such as PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence); RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers); Powers of arrest; and linking with other enforcement agencies.

Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Principle

In respect of Home Authority and Primary Authority businesses the Service will, prior to undertaking any work that may affect a business that may be assisted by a Home Authority or Primary Authority:-

- Consult the Home Authority or Primary Authority Registers prior to undertaking the proposed work.
- Liaise with those authorities that have entered into Home Authority or Primary Authority relationships with businesses.
- Follow and adhere to any inspection plans produced by Primary Authorities.
- Feed back to Home Authorities or Primary Authorities on the work that has been subsequently undertaken.
- Publish the inspection plans for any business for whom we act as a Primary Authority on the Primary Authority Register.
- Contribute to the Primary Authority Register by adding information or responding to Statutory Notifications when necessary or required.

Graduated Enforcement Approach

The graduated approach that we employ often starts at informal advice and verbal warnings and may escalate through to serving of notices, issuing of written warnings and simple cautions and potentially lead to prosecutions. Some matters may involve less significant breaches of the legislation that we enforce and proportionality and fairness may dictate that advice and lesser scale enforcement action is taken. Some matters however, will be so serious, perhaps involving negligence, dishonesty,

deception, deliberate actions or vulnerable persons and these by their nature should be considered as appropriate for prosecution, without the graduated approach being followed.

The main options available to us are outlined below.

Informal action and advice

This can take the form of a verbal warning, with guidance and advice on how to avoid future breaches, or a written warning setting out the infringement and giving advice as appropriate. A written warning is likely to be accompanied by verbal guidance and advice. In both instances the advice given will be clear and simple and, if appropriate, legal requirements will be clearly distinguished from best practice advice.

Statutory Notices

Certain provisions of the legislation administered by the service relate to the issuing of a Statutory Notice for breaches of law. The notice requires the recipient to take steps in order to return to legal compliance. Such steps may include; refraining from doing something such as making excessive noise or undertaking works such as restoring a commercial kitchen to compliance with food hygiene laws. The decision to serve a statutory notice will depend upon all the circumstances of the case. In some instances, the service may be under a legal duty to issue a notice once a contravention has been identified.

The person receiving the notice may not agree with it and has the right to appeal.

Failure to comply with a valid notice is an offence and the Council may take one of the following actions in response.

- Offer the offender a simple caution;
- Take legal proceedings, usually in the Magistrate's Court;
- Seize and detain materials or equipment
- Undertake any work required by the notice and recover costs

The service makes a charge when statutory notices are issued under housing legislation. The charge, which is made at the end of the notice appeal period, includes: the cost of inspection; the cost of deciding the most satisfactory course of action and the cost associated with the service of the notice. An administrative

charge is also made. The amount of charge is agreed annually by the Director of Environment and our Cabinet Member in consultation with the Head of Planning and Public Protection and the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager.

Emergency or Immediate Actions/Prohibitions

Emergency or immediate action is sometimes needed to deal with the most serious risks and they will be subject to specific procedures, some of which may involve the Magistrates Court. Details of the appeals procedures are routinely included with the relevant Notices and information provided at the time of action.

Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices.

Where an authorised Officer has evidence of an imminent risk of injury to health relating to a Food Business, a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice (HEPN) may be served to prohibit a premise, equipment or a process.

The notice must state the reasons why the premises pose an imminent risk to health and the works which are required to remove the imminent risk, such as “ Rid the premise of rodents / cockroaches. Pest proof the premise. Thoroughly disinfect all surfaces and equipment.”

An application must be made to the Magistrates Court for a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order (HEPO) to replace the HEPN within three working days of the notice being served. Where an HEPO is granted by the Court, the HEPN should be removed and replaced by the HEPO that day. The food business operator must apply in writing to the Food Authority for a certificate lifting the Emergency Hygiene Prohibition Order / Notice, which on request, an Authorised Officer should re-inspect as soon as possible (within 14 days) to determine whether the notice or Order can be lifted.

Simple Caution

We have the discretion to offer a simple caution in circumstances where there is sufficient evidence to support a realistic prospect of a conviction and the offender admits the offence and gives informed consent to being cautioned.

A caution is a serious matter and it is kept on record for a period of 3 years after it has been given. The issuing of a Simple Caution will be considered by the Service when deciding on enforcement action, as an alternative to prosecution. Such decisions will be made on consideration of the facts of each case and the level of seriousness of the offence or offences being investigated. In the event of future breaches it can be cited in any subsequent court proceedings.

The Ministry of Justice guidance on Simple Cautions for Adult Offenders provides detailed information on the intended use and administration of the Simple Caution.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued as an alternative to legal proceedings for breaches of certain legislation, for example, smoke free laws, unlicensed or non-registered landlords and letting agents, or non-display of a food hygiene rating. If the person responsible does not accept the Fixed Penalty Notice or fails to pay the penalty within the required time period they may be liable to prosecution.

We may seek accreditation to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to those responsible for non-compliance with other legislation for example, relating to the prohibition on the sale of alcohol to under-age children etc or we may work in conjunction with partners such as the Police who may serve Fixed Penalty Notices for such matters.

Revocation, Review or Refusal of Licences

Where there is non-compliance with any conditions of a licence that a business or individual may hold, for example, to sell alcohol, we may take steps with the appropriate licensing body to undertake a review to determine if the Licensee, Designated Premises Supervisor, Premises or Personal Licence Holder or any person or persons having responsibility for or under the licence is/are still fit and proper to hold the licence and/or to impose further specific conditions.

The service also operates a Mandatory Licensing Scheme to regulate high risk houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), of 3 or more storeys occupied by 5 or more people not of the same family. Further powers are available should the authority decide to utilise them for the control of 2 storey HMOs.

The Enterprise Act 2002

Under the Enterprise Act 2002 the Service can take action against businesses or individuals where there has been a breach of community or domestic law with the effect of harming the collective interests of consumers. This action is civil rather than criminal and sanctions are injunctive.

The purpose of action under the Enterprise Act is to prevent future breaches of the law rather than to punish previous breaches. The penalties for a future breach can be severe including a fine or potentially imprisonment.

This type of enforcement action is most appropriate in situations where there have been persistent breaches of the law, although in some circumstances action may be considered for a small number of breaches, or even a sole breach, where there is significant detriment or potential detriment to the consumer.

There is a range of actions available under the Act including:

- Informal undertakings
- Formal undertakings
- Interim Court Enforcement Orders
- Court Enforcement Orders
- Proceedings for Contempt of Court

Community Protection Notices

The Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduces powers to tackle anti-social behaviour such as Community Protection notices where the conduct of an individual or body has detrimental effect of a persistent or continuing nature, on the quality of those in the locality and the conduct is unreasonable.

A community protection notice imposes any of the following requirements on the individual or body issued with it:

- a) A requirement to stop doing specified things
- b) A requirement to do specified things
- c) A requirement to take reasonable steps to achieve specified results.

They can only be issued if the offender has been given a written warning that the notice will be issued if their conduct doesn't change and that they have been given enough time to have reasonably made those changes, and yet have chosen not to do so.

A person issued with a community protection notice who fails to comply with it commits an offence.

Prosecution

Prosecution may have serious consequences for a business or individual: financial penalties, a criminal record, adverse publicity, an adverse effect upon a business' trading position and in some cases even loss of liberty. For these reasons the decision to prosecute is not taken lightly and is usually reserved for the more serious offences.

In deciding whether or not to instigate proceedings we have particular regard to the Crown Prosecution Service's (Code for Crown Prosecutors) which requires the assessment of two elements known as the evidential test and the public interest test.

The evidential test requires that the evidence to support a prosecution is deemed to be admissible in court, reliable and of sufficient quality and depth to give a realistic prospect of conviction. Integral to this process is consideration of any statutory defence which may be available and the likely success of such defence.

The public interest test is, broadly, a consideration of a number of factors which support the view that it is in the public interest to proceed. These relevant factors are outlined in the paragraph below. An additional factor which is particularly relevant to prosecution is whether the conviction will result in a significant sentence or penalty, including forfeiture of non-compliant goods, confiscation of the proceeds of the crime, disqualification of company directors and/or compensation for the victim. Consideration is also given to any impact a prosecution may have on a victim's physical or mental health, subject to the seriousness of the offence.

In applying the public interest test, it is not simply a case of adding up the factors on either side. We will decide in each individual case on the weight to be given to the relevant factors and assess the position overall, which is in line with the approach outlined in the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

In cases where legal proceedings are to be instigated, we have regard for the defendant's right to have the matter brought before the Courts without undue delay. What constitutes undue delay is determined by the date the offence came to light, the contribution by the defendant to the delay, the complexity of the offence and/or investigation and the seriousness of the offence.

Relevant Factors in considering Enforcement Action

The following factors are relevant in considering which of the above enforcement options is the most appropriate to take. In the decision making process, we will consider whether or not and /or the extent to which:

- The organisation or individual appears willing to speedily remedy the situation
- The offence was the result of a genuine mistake or misunderstanding
- There is a history of similar previous alleged breaches by the same organization or individual
- Previous advice has been heeded and acted upon
- There is a threat to public health, safety or the environment
- There is a threat of a significant economic disadvantage to consumers or other businesses
- The victim is part of a vulnerable group, for example, children, the disabled or the elderly
- The offence was motivated by some form of discrimination
- The offence is widespread with the potential to affect a number of individuals
- The organisation or individual has acted deliberately, negligently or with premeditation

- The organisation or individual has breached a position of authority or trust
- There are grounds for believing the offence is likely to be repeated
- As a matter of public policy it is desirable to proceed with enforcement action

Action under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

In the event of a criminal conviction, it is open to the authority in certain circumstances to apply for an order under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. This legislation provides for confiscation of property and assets if it can be demonstrated that a defendant has profited from crime. In appropriate cases we will consider if an investigation into the defendant's financial affairs is required with a view to pursuing a confiscation order. We **will not** consider the fact that Proceeds of Crime actions may or may not be available in determining whether to prosecute.

Enforcement of Our Functions at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Premises

As a Service we are also required to inspect premises managed by or owned by this Authority.

We will treat such inspections as we would inspections of any other business in the County Borough area, taking steps to ensure that where we find non-compliance that this is raised immediately post inspection, with the relevant Head of Service via our own Head of Service. We will work with those Sections to rectify non-compliance in an open and transparent manner, ensuring that the same level of compliance is met as we would expect from any other business within our area.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 deals with access to official information. In addition there are also regulations which provide access to environmental information i.e. the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

This legislation gives the public a general right of access to information held by public authorities. When responding to requests, there are procedural requirements set out in the legislation which an authority must follow including the time frame

within which the information must be supplied. There are also valid exemptions from supplying information that the authority can apply in certain, legally defined, circumstances.

Equal Opportunities

Implementation of this Policy will be carried out in accordance with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's policy on diversity. All decisions will be impartial and will not be influenced by race, politics, gender, sexual orientation or religious beliefs of the alleged offender.

APPENDIX A

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL **ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE** **LOCAL AUTHORITY POLLUTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL** **LAPPC AND LA-IPPC ENFORCEMENT POLICY GUIDANCE**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.01 The purpose of enforcement for Local Authority Pollution Prevention & Control (LAPPC) and Local Authority Integrated Pollution Prevention & Control (LA-IPPC) is to protect the environment and prevent harm to human health. In particular, by preventing or minimising the release of polluting substances to air (for LAPPC regulated installations) and to air, land and water (for LA-IPPC installations) from certain activities prescribed by Schedule 1 of the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2016 (EP Regulations). These regulations replace the Pollution Prevention & Control (England and Wales) Regulations 2000.

1.02 This is achieved by:

- (i) Carrying out pro-active inspections at a frequency in line with the government's risk assessment procedure to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements and permit conditions.
- (ii) Taking transparent and proportionate enforcement action (including prosecution where appropriate) for offences and/or breaches.

1.03 This LAPPC and LA-IPPC Enforcement Policy Guidance has been written taking into account the statutory Regulators' Code issued under Section 23 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006.

2.0 **ENFORCEMENT POWERS**

The available enforcement powers for LAPPC and LA-IPPC fall into the following main categories:

2.01 For prevention:

- Suspension Notices
 - Enforcement Notices
 - Notices requiring information
 - Power to prevent/remedy pollution
 - Revocation of permits

2.02 For Criminal offences:

- Warning letter
- Formal caution
- Prosecution

2.03 Supplementary Powers

Supporting powers include:

- powers to enter and inspect premises
- take samples
- take copies of information
- require answers to questions etc.

3.0 **LEVEL OF ENFORCEMENT ACTION**

3.01 The seriousness of offences can vary greatly. At one end of the scale, an action could lead to severe pollution of air, threatening human health. At the other end, there can be breaches of administrative permit conditions e.g. failure to submit records in the correct format, where there are no direct consequences for the environment.

3.02 In reaching a decision on the most appropriate enforcement action, account will be taken of the following:

(i) **ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT**

The magnitude of the environmental effect is an indicator of the degree to which the offender has failed to put in place, maintain, adhere to and/or foresee the consequences of not having suitable procedures or systems to prevent the incident. In general, the greater the effect or potential effect, the greater the probability of prosecution.

(ii) **NATURE OF OFFENCE**

The type of offence may be so serious in its nature or impact on the Council's ability to regulate effectively that it will normally be dealt with by prosecution.

(iii) **INTENT**

Offences that are committed deliberately, recklessly, negligently or carelessly or for financial gain will normally be dealt with by prosecution. Lesser enforcement action may be appropriate where the Council is satisfied that the offence was committed unintentionally, or was the result of a genuine mistake or arose out of an emergency.

(iv) **PREVIOUS HISTORY**

Although the action to be taken will depend upon the circumstances of each case, consideration shall also be given to the type, seriousness, number and frequency of previous enforcement actions. Where the operator is responsible for a number of installations or activities, then the previous history of one site will be relevant to the decision-making process for the others if the circumstances are such that the operator should have learnt from previous enforcement action. For operators who have previously received a formal caution, subsequent offences will normally be dealt with by prosecution.

(v) **BEHAVIOUR OF THE OFFENDER**

Prosecution will normally be pursued, if the offender:

- refused to accept alternative enforcement action.
- made no attempt to minimise or rectify the effects or potential effects of the offence.
- Obstructed investigations
- Disregarded Council advice or formal guidance in the commission of the offence.
- Acted dishonestly in seeking to deter or delay enforcement action.

(vi) **DETERRENT EFFECT**

Prosecution will normally be pursued if it is likely to be a necessary or effective way of preventing repetition of the offence by the offender.

(vii) **FORSEEABILITY**

The importance of prevention is recognised by the legislation which places a duty on an operator to foresee the possible consequences of actions (or inaction), or the failure or deficiencies of an operator's systems and procedures. Where the offence and/or its environmental consequences were predictable, and no avoiding and/or preventive measure were taken and there was a failure to have regard to the conditions of the permit, prosecution will normally be pursued. Other enforcement action may be considered if the offence:

- Occurred in spite of preventive measures.
- Could not reasonably have been foreseen.
- Was the result of defective equipment which could not reasonably have been known or predicted.
- Was caused by third party intervention which could not be guarded against.

Co-operation with the Council, prompt reporting of the incident, prompt and effective works of mitigation and assistance in any investigation are all factors that will be taken into account when considering what level of enforcement action is appropriate for any particular incident.

The factors which apply and the weight to be attached to each of the above points will depend upon the particular circumstances of each case.

4.0 **RECORD KEEPING**

Records will be kept of all prosecutions, formal cautions, warnings and statutory notices.

5.1 **ENFORCEMENT NOTICE (EP REGULATION 36)**

A notice requiring steps to be taken to ensure compliance with the conditions of an enforcement notice will normally be served in the following situations:

- (i) Where one or more conditions of the permit have been, are being, or are likely to be breached, and the breach would be likely to lead to an incident of low environmental impact and/or there has been a history of relevant warnings.
- (ii) Where the conditions being breached, or likely to be breached, are preventing effective regulation and previous relevant warnings have been given e.g. failure to provide monitoring data, maintain equipment, maintain financial provision.

5.2 **SUSPENSION NOTICE (REGULATION 37)**

A Suspension Notice, suspending the Environmental Permit will be served where there is a risk of serious pollution. This applies whether or not the operator has breached a permit condition. The notice will be withdrawn once the Council is satisfied that the steps required by the notice to remove the imminent risk of serious pollution have been taken. A Suspension Notice may also be served where the operator has failed to pay the Annual Subsistence Fee for the Environmental Permit.

5.3 **POWER OF THE REGULATOR TO PREVENT OR REMEDY POLLUTION (EP REGULATION 57)**

- 5.3.1 If the Council is of the opinion that the operation of the installation or mobile plant, or the operation of it in a particular manner, involves risk of serious

pollution, the council may arrange for steps to be taken to remove that risk e.g. removing or making safe chemicals or ensuring safety works are carried out.

5.3.2 Where the Council suspects or is satisfied that an offence has been committed under regulation 38(1) , (2) or (3) causing or potentially causing pollution, the council may arrange for steps to be taken towards remedying the effects of the pollution and recover the cost of taking those steps from the operator. The operator will be informed of the steps to be taken to remedy the effects of the pollution.

5.3.3 Where council suspects that an offence as mentioned above is being or has been committed and pollution is being or has been caused as a result, the provisions of paragraph 5.3.2 will apply.

5.4 **REVOCACTION NOTICE (EP REGULATION 22 & 23)**

A Revocation Notice will normally be considered in cases where other enforcement measures have been used exhaustively to the point where the Council is satisfied as to one of the following:

- (i) the operator is unable to operate the installation in accordance with the conditions of the permit.
- (ii) the holder of the permit has ceased to be the operator of the installation covered by the permit.
- (iii) The permitted activity has ceased to operate, or the legislation no longer applies to that type, size or nature of activity.
- (iv) The operator has failed to pay annual subsistence fees.

6.0 **NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY RIGHTS OF APPEAL**

The statutory rights of appeal are set out in the notice.

7.0 **ENFORCEMENT ACTION - RELATING TO INVESTIGATIONS (S108-110 Environment Act 1995 and EP Regulation 38)**

7.1 In carrying out investigations into criminal offences, officers will comply with the relevant provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, the

Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Code of Practice made under them. Prosecution will normally be pursued in the following circumstances:

- (i) Obstructing an Authorised Person
- (ii) Impersonation of an authorised officer.
- (iii) Failing to answer questions.
- (iv) Failing to provide samples.
- (v) Failing to provide relevant information.
- (vi) Preventing another person from appearing before an authorised officer or answering any questions.
- (vii) Intentionally or recklessly making a false or misleading statement or record.

8.0 **ENFORCEMENT ACTION - SPECIFIC OFFENCES (EP REGULATION 38)**

8.1 **Operating Without A Permit (EP Regulation 38(1))**

8.1.1 Prosecution will normally be pursued for the offence of operating a process without a permit. However, for first offences involving no or low impact or potential impact, and where an application is submitted within a short time-scale, a formal warning or caution will normally be offered unless there are special reasons for prosecution e.g. poor co-operation.

8.2 **Non-Compliance with Permit Conditions (EP Regulation 38(2))**

8.2.1 Where a breach has caused or has potential to cause a serious environmental impact or the operator had wilful or reckless disregard for the conditions in a permit, including those implied by residual Best Available Techniques (e.g. operating in a reckless manner), then prosecution will normally be pursued.

8.2.2 Where the breach has caused or has potential to cause a significant impact, then the normal response will be prosecution or formal caution, the choice

depending on the weight of other factors, e.g. co-operation of the offender, post-remedial works, or history of offending. Prosecution will normally be pursued where a relevant previous warning or formal caution has been given.

8.2.3 Where the breach has resulted in no impact or has caused or has potential to cause relatively low environmental impact, then a warning letter or enforcement notice will be the normal response unless other circumstances make a firmer course of action necessary e.g. previous history, intent, attitude of offender etc.

8.3 **Non-Compliance with a Statutory Notice (EP Regulation 38(3))**

Prosecution will normally be pursued where an operator fails to comply with an Enforcement Notice, a Suspension Notice, Variation Notice, or Notices requiring information. In exceptional circumstances, an operator may be allowed an extension of time for compliance with an Enforcement Notice where there are circumstances outside their control.

9.0 **General**

9.1 This Policy Guidance should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Enforcement Policy.

9.2 Where required, this Policy Guidance shall be interpreted in accordance with the legislation in Paragraph 1.01 and any other relevant legislation in existence at the time.

10.0 **Future Revisions**

This Council will revise this policy guidance as required and in line with changes in legislation or Council policy.