

Building Control Service Plan

Introduction

Douglas Borough Council has had the responsibility for controlling new building work since 1887. The authority provides a service to the public, the construction industry, elected members and the business community to ensure that people live, work and enjoy their leisure time in and around buildings which are safe, convenient for use by those with a disability, and are thermally efficient.

The primary function of the Building Control Service is the administration of the Building Regulations, which accounts for approximately 70% of the section's time. In addition, a number of both statutory and non-statutory functions are delivered, namely:

- The assessment and removal, where required, of dangerous structures;
- Seeking improvements to dilapidated and unsightly buildings and land;
- Providing planning advice to Members and Officers of the Council;
- Provide information for Advocate's Property Search enquiries;
- Providing pre-application submission advice;
- Providing fire safety advice;
- Maintaining the Housing (Flats) Register;
- The naming and numbering of new roads and streets, and the maintenance of street name plates;
- The invoicing of Drainage Communication Fees;

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Aims

The Building Control Service aims to contribute to the Council's Corporate Aims and Objectives, in particular the following stated aims

Sustainability and the Environment

- To preserve and improve the environment of the town for the benefit of all residents, workers, businesses and visitors;
- To undertake as far as practical to minimise energy use and carbon emissions whilst promoting and practising measures to recycle and conserve natural resources

Community Safety

- To ensure that the Council protects its employees, contractors and the public by meeting its obligations under all relevant health and safety legislation, regulations, and codes of practice

Customer Care

- To ensure fairness in the treatment of customers and employees, and in the delivery of services irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, race colour, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, marital status, age, or beliefs on matters such as religion and politics

Service Efficiency

- To provide cost effective services employing the resources of the Council in the most effective, efficient, and economic manner

Our Customers and their needs

As previously stated, the aim of the Council is to preserve and improve the environment of the town for the benefit of all residents, workers, businesses and visitors, and the Building Control Service is committed to achieving this important aim.

In order to achieve this aim the Building Control Service will undertake to:

- Be helpful, courteous, prompt, efficient and professional in all its responses;
- Make the process of applying for and obtaining a decision under the Building Regulations as straight forward as possible;
- Provide a dedicated Building Control Officer to your project;
- Treat everyone fairly and equally.
- Provide up to date information on the scale of charges, guidance notes and application forms on the Council's web-site.

Within the scope of the legislation associated with the Building Regulations the Building Control Service will:

- Provide a full technical appraisal of Building Regulation applications within set performance targets;
- Determine all applications within the statutory time period;
- Inspect relevant work on site for compliance with the Building Regulations and associated legislation;
- Given reasonable notice, carry out site inspections in line with the contractor's programme of works;
- Carry out other statutory duties and responsibilities under the Building Control Act 1991.

Processing your application

Pre-submission advice

We realise that it is important that your application is processed and approved quickly, as it is a legal requirement that an approval is obtained before work commences on site. The Council appreciates that the initial stages of planning a building project can be unfamiliar and sometimes daunting; therefore the members of the Building Control Team are happy to offer free pre-application advice prior to you making a formal application and have professional advice and guidance available to you at all reasonable hours. The team is also able to provide contact information for other statutory bodies that control building works, and will also liaise with other relevant sections of the Council.

Initial processing

The application process begins with the submission of the required details and appropriate fee. If you employ an agent any correspondence will be sent direct to them.

Following submission, experienced staff will acknowledge receipt of your application and assess the level of fees. You will also be advised of the name and contact details of the Building Control Officer dedicated to your project.

Plan appraisal

The plans and details submitted will be appraised by an experienced Building Control Officer against the requirements of the relevant regulations and, where necessary, we will notify you or your agent as soon as it becomes apparent if any additional information or amendments are necessary. The reason for examining the plans and details is to make sure that the building work when completed will achieve the standards required by national legislation. We will also liaise with other agencies to help ensure the work you propose complies.

Deciding the outcome of your application

Every effort is made to enable applications to be approved, however in a small number of cases applications may need to be rejected. Grounds for rejection may include the need to comply with statutory time limits for deciding the outcome of applications, or a failure to achieve the necessary technical standards. Where an application is approved, you will receive formal documentation together with information detailing the site inspection process.

Application processing performance targets

Following receipt of a Building Regulations application the Building Control Team will:

- Endeavour to validate, register and acknowledge your application within 3 working days;
- Aim to assess your application, including statutory liaison, and notify you or your agent where applicable, of any amendments that may be required within 15 working days of the deposit of a valid application;
- Process all applications and issue a decision within the statutory time period specified in the Building Control Act 1991;

Site inspections

It is a statutory requirement that persons intending to carry out building work under the Building Regulations must give notice in writing to the Council before commencing the work or before covering up certain elements of the construction and on completion of the works. The inspection stages and notice required varies, and will be detailed following approval of the application.

In addition to the notifiable inspections, Building Control will carry out where possible, site inspections upon request, and aim to inspect every active site at least every 30 days.

By using a properly resourced, pre-emptive and targeted site inspection regime it is expected that the following outcomes will be achieved:

- A reduction in the number of building defects resulting in a safe, healthy, and accessible built environment for the people of the Borough;
- Through the adoption of a proactive approach to site inspections, the need to resort to formal enforcement action will be negated, which will in turn lead to the efficient and economic use of resources for the Council and its customers;
- Promote effective public relations and customer satisfaction;
- The protection of the built environment for the benefit of all residents, workers, businesses and visitors to the Borough;
- The ability for the Council to certify that, so far as it has been able to ascertain and after taking all reasonable steps in that behalf, the substantive requirements of the Building Regulations have been met.

Site inspection performance targets

Following receipt of a request to carry out site inspections under the Building Regulations, the Building Control Team will:

- Carry out the inspection on the same day when the request is received before 10.00am and within 2 hours in special cases;
- Upon satisfactory completion of your scheme, aim to issue your Completion Certificate within 3 working days.

Enforcement

Sometimes building work is carried out that does not comply with the Building Regulations. The Building Control Team will, by adopting an effective system of inspecting and monitoring building work, together with a positive attitude to resolving breaches of the regulations at an early stage, seek to avoid the need for formal enforcement action.

Any enforcement action which is considered necessary, either formal or informal, will be fair and consistent while being mindful of the need for the Council to carry out its statutory duties under the regulations and allied legislation.

Co-ordinated approach to services

The Council seeks to provide a co-ordinated, effective and customer focused approach to service delivery. A member of the Building Control Team will, where possible, liaise with other relevant service providers within the Council in order to simplify the approvals process. By bringing together all the Council services that influence your project the objective is to provide you with the best and most co-ordinated service possible, and to help recognise problems before they arise.

In order to make sure you can always get in touch with the Building Control Officer assigned to your project we provide direct dial phone lines together with answer phone, e-mail and fax services for 24 hours a day message and inspection requests.

If you have any queries or comments on the contents of this Service Plan, please contact:

Nicholas Kaighin
Building Control Manager
Douglas Borough Council
Town Hall
Ridgeway Street
Douglas
ISLE OF MAN
IM99 1AD

Telephone 01624 696376
E-mail nkaighin@douglas.gov.im