

Development Control Customer Charter

(approved by Development Control Committee 10 February 2011)

Overview

Bridgend County Borough Council as the local planning authority is responsible for regulating and controlling new development throughout the County Borough. Its Officers and Councillors decide whether proposals for new development are acceptable or not. The Council must process and determine applications for planning permission, and regulate those schemes and development, which may be granted planning permission. Maintaining the balance between conserving the environment and managing development pressures provides a real challenge and to meet this need, Bridgend County Borough Council is committed to providing a high quality development control service for all its customers. This will be done in consultation with you to ensure that the interests of local people are protected.

This charter sets out our commitment for the development control service, and how you can help us to comply with these standards. You can expect us to:

- Provide a helpful, friendly and courteous service
- Consider applications as efficiently and quickly as possible whilst ensuring that new development does as much good and as little harm to the environment as possible
- Provide a range of development control guidance notes which are clear and which will be updated regularly
- Provide an effective service by reviewing and updating procedures to take account of your views

We aim to adhere to the following standards when delivering our service:-

Answering phone calls

- Greet you politely and clearly.
- Transfer calls directly to the right place if necessary or, where it is not possible to transfer, to either take a message or give you the correct number to phone.
- Return phone messages within one working day at a time convenient to you.

Replying to letters, faxes and emails

- Answer letters, faxes and emails within five working days. If it is not possible to give a full answer we will let you know what happens next and when.
- Give you details of who is dealing with your enquiry so that you know who to get back to and how.
- Use plain language and avoid using jargon.

Seeing you in person

- Make sure visitors are seen by a receptionist within five minutes of arriving.
- Be on time for pre-arranged appointments and let you know beforehand if we need to cancel a pre-arranged appointment.
- Ensure that staff wear official identification at all times so that you know who you are dealing with, both in council buildings and when visiting you at home.
- Make sure that the first person you deal with either answers your enquiry or passes you on to the right person.

If necessary, arrange a time and place in the Council Offices for you to discuss issues in private.

- Offer our service in Welsh and in English.
- Make other arrangements to see you if you cannot visit our office because of a long term illness or disability.

Processing Applications

- Encourage pre-application discussions to try and resolve any problems before you submit your application.
- Register 100% of all applications within three working days of their receipt.

- Consult adjoining neighbours and the relevant Town/Community Council in writing within five working days of accepting your application and publicise significant or major applications by way of site and/or press notices.
- Negotiate improvements to schemes wherever possible.
- Be prepared to keep you advised of progress on your application. (Information also available on "milestones" on the planning page)
- Decide at least 80% of all valid planning applications within eight weeks.
- Send out a decision notice within three working days of your application being decided.
- Inform you of the outcome of any applications you have made representations on within five working days of the decision being issued.

You can help by:

- Submitting applications for planning approval in line with the guidance notes provided with the application form and/or through the Planning Portal linked via Planning Applications on Bridgend County Borough Council website.
- Using our expert planning system on the planning page of the Council website to find out if planning permission is required for house extensions, conservatories and other domestic works.
- Submitting plans which clearly show both the existing situation and the proposal and ensuring that the application is supported by accurate site plans and a design statement.
- Stating clearly in writing your material planning objections to, concerns or support for a planning application.
- Being polite and courteous to staff who are dealing with you.
- Listening to your views
- Record complaints, comments and compliments and use them to review and improve our services.
- Deal with complaints within ten working days or, if this is not possible, contact you giving you an explanation and telling you when you can expect your complaint to be dealt with.

- Inform you how you can take your complaint further if you are not satisfied with our response, including how you can have your complaint reviewed by the Councils Monitoring Officer and/or by the Local Government Ombudsman.

- Treat complaints confidentially, while making sure we are fair to everyone concerned.

- Apologise when we are at fault and do our best to put things rights.

- How do you contact us?
 - By email: planning@bridgend.gov.uk
 - By phone 01656 643155 and 01656 643157, Monday to Thursday 8.30am-5.00pm and Friday 8.30am-4.30pm
 - By fax: 01656 643190
 - By post: Addressed to David Llewellyn, Group Manager, Development Department Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB.