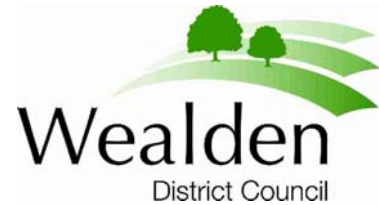


# Development and Building Control Service Plan 2009/10



## The role of the service

### Development Control

- To ensure that all decisions on planning and associated applications are made in line with the Development Plan, Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan, Government Guidance and other adopted policies, including affordable housing and sustainability.
- To maintain and improve, where possible, the Council's performance when determining all planning applications over and above the Government's national and Council's local Performance targets, with no loss of quality in decision making.
- To defend those planning applications which are taken to appeal.
- To ensure a high quality of professional planning advice and level of service to the Council and its customers, and to improve quality in the planning decision-making process and its outcomes.
- To provide a comprehensive approach to providing planning advice through the Development Team Approach
- To safeguard and enhance the environment, whilst delivering quality affordable housing and protecting the local economy.

### Building Control

- To provide a competitive and efficient plan vetting and site inspection service meeting all published timescales; with good levels of customer care.
- To provide a comprehensive access officer, dangerous structures and structural engineering service.
- To ensure an adequate level of health, safety and welfare is maintained when any construction work is undertaken within the District.

### Planning Enforcement

- To ensure, within the framework of the adopted Enforcement Strategy, that all development that takes place is carried out with the necessary approvals and in compliance with conditions imposed without undue demonstrable harm to the amenities of the District.
- To defend those enforcement cases which are taken to appeal.

### Land Charges

- To maintain the Local Land Charges Register for the Council and to continue to respond promptly and accurately to Search enquiries for registered information on land and property.

## The service is planning to achieve the following outcomes by March 2012:

- Maintain NI 157 performance in top quartile (determination of major, minor and other planning applications)
- The adoption and endorsement of the Development Team Approach (DTA) by Members
- Monitoring of the Planning Improvement Plan 2009/11
- Production of an Action Plan following Addisons Report 2009 on the Process Review of the Development Control Service
- Streamlining Consultation arrangements with specialist teams (Arboriculture/ Conservation) to meet reduced costings and savings
- Continue to monitor and work to ensure case load for Development Management officers is maintained below between 150 and 160 and for Building Control officers below between 135 and 145
- Reduce costings to ensure Land Charges and Building Control fee earning budgets are maintained within 10% of break even target for 2009/10

## What have we achieved in 2008/09?

### Corporate Objective 1 : Putting People First

Providing Quality Services  
Health, Prosperity and Community Safety

- Ensuring Development Control is still maintaining its performance in the top quartile of Planning Authorities for NI 157.
- Improvements in customer satisfaction levels
- Secured Charter Mark for the service
- Provided a full Development Team Approach
- Improved enforcement on Building Regulations in relation to compliance for sustainability.
- Greater encouragement for sustainable homes – code 3
- Improved design in relation to local distinctiveness.

### Corporate Objective 2 : Pride Of Place

Sustainability  
Place Shaping

- Maintained an appropriate level of Building Regulation inspections on building projects – maintained a 90% 24 hour request for site inspections.
- Maintained a Dangerous Structure call out service (24 hours on call) for inspection.
- Meet Planning Enforcement targets, WL1/DC01/2/3 (resolution of cases within 4/6/8 weeks)
- Developed a Development Team Approach for all major or significant planning schemes.
- Implemented new enforcement pointers for Building Regulations in relation to compliance with Energy Conservation measures for new buildings.
- Improved sustainability and design of construction of new buildings via planning process and improved use of sustainability check lists.
- Developed and improved the level and access to the Planning Service in pre-application discussions to achieve improved design and quality of development.
- Involved local Members and Parishes and Towns in significant planning schemes at an earlier stage, both in relation to the proposals and possible planning gain.

### Corporate Objective 3 : Purpose Through Partnership

Improving Performance and Efficiency  
Strong Community Leadership

- Developed 6 more Partnerships under the Building Control Local Authority Partnership scheme, to maintain income levels and critical mass for a quality Building Control Wealden Service.
- Developed a Development Team Approach charging to applicants in relation to new income for pre-application discussions.
- Implemented recommendations via Planning Improvement Plan from Addison Report. Maintain Parish/Agent's Panels and Forums.
- Undertook further training and ongoing working relationships with Parish and Town Councils.
- Maintained, where possible, agreed levels of income for the Planning Service.
- Worked to develop further streams of income via e.g. partnership, Development Team Approach, etc.
- Value for money efficiency savings year on year
- Improved value for money based on the opinions of our customers and when our performance is compared to other local authorities
- Working more efficiently, meeting agreed key priorities, and cutting 'red tape' wherever possible
- Independent assurance of the quality of our services ensuring that these are in line with the highest standards nationally

## What we plan to improve

Target for 2011/12	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10 Milestone	2010/11 Milestone
<b>Corporate Objective 1 : Putting People First</b> Providing Quality Services Health, Prosperity and Community Safety			
Improve customer satisfaction for Planning	70%	75%	
<b>Corporate Objective 2 : Pride Of Place</b> Sustainability Place Shaping			
Implement new planning legislation on Permitted Development/community levy	New PD guidance and regulations	Implement new community levy	
<b>Corporate Objective 3 : Purpose Through Partnership</b> Improving Performance and Efficiency Strong Community Leadership			
Joint working with developers ( partnerships ) Building Control	5	12	
Parish training	11 training sessions	11 training sessions	
Planning Improvement Plan 08/11	Implemented Process Engineering improvements	Implement further Process Engineering improvements	
Maintain Charter Mark and prepare for Move Towards Customer Service Excellence	Charter Mark Attained	Charter Mark Retained	Charter Mark Retained
Deliver 3% cashable efficiency savings year-on-year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subject to Development Team Approach being operational specialist advice availability</li> <li>• Building Regulations increase fee income</li> </ul>	£0k £0K	£20K £0K	

## Risk

Generally Planning and Building Control service areas have been affected by downturn in construction industry.

### Development Management:-

Applications have fallen by 19% in 08/09 but income has exceeded targets. Whilst staffing levels have been reduced to bring into line with falls in applications, current uncertainty in 09/10 continues.

### Building Control:-

Caseloads have not fallen as significantly as Development Management although staffing levels have been reduced by about 12%. However, income has fallen due to hesitation of applicants starting on site. Again 2009/10 is going to be a difficult year to predict. Enforcement activity is up.

#### Landcharges:-

The collapse of the housing market has had a significant affect on the number of land charge searches being received and as a result, staffing has been cut by half to compensate for this fall in workload. 2009/10 is going to be a difficult year to predict, given the uncertainty of the housing market.

#### Planning Enforcement:-

Cases reported is up, case load is high. The service is unable to react to all requests and is continuing to monitor workloads. Lack of budget provision will affect the services ability to respond effectively in some cases.

## Other Considerations

### Customer Satisfaction

Building Control and Landcharges satisfaction levels remain high. The National twice yearly review of satisfaction with planning services related only to applicant satisfaction levels. The Authority is monitoring all sectors of its customer base and is striving to introduce a range of improvements in the way it meets with its customer aspiration within its resources. Changes in pre application arrangements, reduced reliance on specialist inputs, streamlining and simplifying conditions along with maintaining quick turn rounds in decision making will all assist in improving satisfaction ratings.

### Customer Involvement

Customer Involvement is mainly provided via Parish Panel/ Agents Panel. Also by Parish and Agent seminars/conferences.

The introduction of a Development Manager for the Planning Service will also act as a strong feedback from our customers.

Regular programme of surveys of customers is also undertaken.

### Access to Services

The Planning and Building Control website provides extensive guidance and information and provides direct access for our customers for our services i.e. submission of online planning applications.

The website has recently been commended by SOCITM (Society of Information Technology Management) for its clear and helpful set up and accessibility.

### Value for Money

The service has for Planning Management (Development Control) been rated below average in terms of cost of dealing with planning applications.

### Workforce Priorities

Mechanisms have been introduced to balance workloads with staffing numbers inline with caseloads in Development Management, Building Control and Local Land Charges.

Reductions in support from specialist services are being considered to seek a reduced cost base for the Development Management service.

### Career Grad Approach & Staff Development

Regular CPD events are held internally and officers are encouraged to look at appropriate CPD events externally where appropriate.

## **Equalities and Diversity**

Equality is embedded in all aspects of the service. We strive to be fair and transparent in the way that we provide our services and ensure that they are accessible to all in our communities. This is reflected in our Customer Charter etc. We also have the councils Access Officer within Building Control and provide a full range of officer surgeries/Duty arrangements to assist all our customers.

## **Sustainability**

Improved enforcement for breaches in Conservation of Energy via Building Regulations.

## **Rural impact**

The Development Management Service is to undertake training for all of the (DC) planning officers to assist them further in understanding the needs of the rural economy. It also employs the services of qualified (specialist) Agricultural Estates Surveyors to advise of planning applications related to the Rural economy.

## **Communication**

The Development Planning and Building Control website is proving to be a significant tool in provided information to our customers.

## **Health and safety**

Health and safety is a key consideration and taken very seriously in the way we provide and run our service. Working practices take proper account of the health and safety of our employees and work in ways which minimise the risk to lone workers and of violent incidents associated with various roles in Development Management/Building Control and Planning Enforcement.

The Building Control Service provides in its own right an important health and safety service in the way buildings are designed and constructed particularly in relation to Fire and Structural safety.

This is also provided via the provision of the Dangerous Structure service which supports the Councils Emergency Planning Response and on a daily basis the safety of the residents of Wealden.

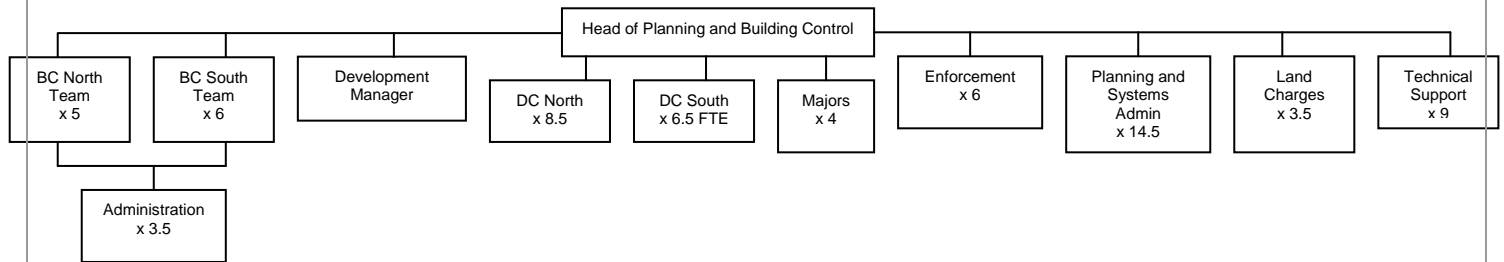
## **Standards**

Building Control Level of Service Guidance (CLG/LABC/AF) endorsed.

National indicator 157 Development Management now at top of CIPFA group.

## Resources and budget

### Staff Organisation Chart (68.5 FTE)



### Budget

2008/09 £(000)		2009/10 £(000)	2010/11 £(000)	2011/12 £(000)
226,830	Enforcement	218,450	215,710	215,710
(58,760)	Building Regulations	44,990	44,750	44,750
1,213,790	Development Control	1,132,730	1,070,520	1,025,510
(37,830)	Local Land Charges	(19,00)	(12,640)	(2,640)
<b>1,344,030</b>		<b>1,377,170</b>	<b>1,318,340</b>	<b>1,283,330</b>

### Performance indicator targets

The National Indicator Set was introduced from 1 April 2008. In 2008/09 we gathered baseline data which has been used to set targets for 2009/10 and beyond.

PI No.	Description	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
NI157	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major' 'minor' and 'other' application types a) Majors b) Minors c) Others	95% 86% 94%	75% 90% 95%	80% 90% 95%
WLI1104	% of planning applications registered within 5 working days	89%	95%	98%
WLI1105	Percentage of planning decisions delegated	94%	90%	90%
WLI 1106	Standard land Searches processed within 10 days	100%	100%	100%
WLI DC 04	% of Planning Appeals Allowed	27%	30%	25%
WLI DC05	Satisfaction with Planning Service	63%	70%	75%
WLI DCO1	% of planning Enforcement cases resolved in 4 wks	68%	45%	45%
WLI DCO2	% of planning Enforcement cases resolved in 6 Wks	72%	65%	65%
WLI DCO3	% of planning Enforcement f cases resolved in 8wks	78%	85%	85%
WLI BC01	% of Building Regulation Applications vetted in 3wks	93%	60%	65%
WLIBC0 2	% of Building Regulation Applications vetted in 5weeks	100%	95%	98%

## How this Service Plan will be monitored

The Council's performance management framework is critical to monitoring and reporting the achievements of the Service and as a catalyst for improvement when targets are not achieved.

In the same way that targets cascade down to individual appraisals, the achievement of those targets is managed at individual, team or service level. Day to day management is used to identify good performance and also those areas where delivery is slower or below the standard expected. The Environmental Services Directorate considers key performance indicators on a monthly basis. The service itself also holds a Planning Improvement Group meeting on a bi monthly basis to monitor performance and consider improvements to the service.

At the end of each quarter, performance against key targets is collated and reported to a directorate management meeting. Based on the above system, management should already be aware and have taken appropriate action to improve a situation subject to the availability of appropriate resources. This quarterly meeting and information review should allow the Corporate Director to balance the outcomes from each of the service areas for which they are responsible and take appropriate action within their directorate.

A quarterly report is prepared by each directorate which is then collated by the Policy Officer with responsibility for Performance Management. This report then forms an appendix to a Cabinet report, with Portfolio Holders commenting on performance for their respective portfolios and recommending any improvement to Cabinet. The Cabinet report is circulated to all Members. Cabinet recommendations are then implemented by officers.

In the Scrutiny cycle following Cabinet's consideration of performance, the three Scrutiny Committees review the decisions of Cabinet and scrutinise the actions taken to improve performance and whether these have been effective.

At the year end, provisional outturn figures are prepared and considered by Cabinet. These must then undergo a process of data quality checks internally and external validation by the Audit Commission prior to final publication around June 2010.

## **Other key reference documents for the service**

### **Planning Enforcement Strategy**

The document sets out the strategy by which the Planning Enforcement Team undertake planning enforcement work for the District.

### **Communication Strategy**

The document sets out the strategy for allowing the most effective and efficient way Members of the public can contact and gain advice from the Development Control services.

### **Planning Business Plan 2008/2011**

The document outlines the Planning Services strategy for improving its performance.

### **Building Control Folder**

Document outlines the service provided and Customer Charter.

### **Planning and Building Control Website**

Provides a full range of interactive information and guidance for the service.

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