

BUILDING CONTROL POLICY

Note: This should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes, which follow.

It is considered that the Building Regulation function can be effectively administered in accordance with the Building Control Performance Standards on the under mentioned basis. Operation within this is to be managed by the Chief Building Control Surveyor and exercised by suitably qualified Building Control Staff using their professional skill and judgement; these items are not necessarily in priority order.

- (i) Fees to be checked on all Full Plans applications and Building Notices when submitted.
 - (ii) All Full Plans submitted (other than those submitted and expedited under a Partnership scheme, Type or System Approval schemes, e.g., as operated by LANTAC) to be examined and decisions issued within the relevant period, (as agreed with the applicant) and all Building Notices to be examined and verified as soon as possible and in any case no later than two working days after receipt. Applications for a Regularisation Certificate to be verified, a site inspection carried out, a schedule of works prepared and a decision issued.
 - (iii) All Notices and Certificates given under the Building (Approved Inspectors etc.) Regulations 1985 to be examined and either accepted or rejected within the appropriate period and recorded in a register, as set out in those Regulations.
 - (iv) Works in progress to be inspected by a building control surveyor from time to time to determine compliance with the Building Regulations.
 - (v) Subject to the professional judgement referred to in the first paragraph, inspection should be made taking account of the relevant factors such as
 - The degree of detail in the design assessment process
 - The nature of the work
 - Experience of the builder
 - Complexity and rate of build
 - Unusual or high risk features
 - Notification arrangements
 - Key construction stages.-
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- (a) work which is subject to statutory notifications (Building Regulation 15) which are required to be given to a Local Authority and within the period so specified;
 - (b) structural elements and components, the failure of which would, in the opinion of the enforcing body, be significant;
 - (c) all works which, in the opinion of the enforcing body, would constitute unusual designs or methods of construction;
 - (d) work relating to fire safety;

- (e) any type of work, construction or material which could, if not verified, cause defects which would, in the opinion of the enforcing body, be seriously detrimental to public health or safety;
 - (f) work affecting access and facilities for people with disabilities;
 - (g) work affecting energy conservation;
 - (h) any additional areas of work necessary for the subsequent issue of a Completion Certificate.
- (vi) The Service will be provided equitably and transparently to all users regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, HIV status, sexuality and religious beliefs.
 - (vii) Shall undertake all statutory consultation within the application time limits. Consult users of the service via the Building Control Customer Panel and consumer surveys.
 - (viii) Upon satisfactory completion of relevant work shall give, where requested, an appropriate certificate to the applicant and any other appropriate person.
 - (ix) To retain all records relating to individual projects in a suitable format.
 - (x) Shall carry out regular appraisal of Building Control staff to determine their requirements for continuing professional development and in-service training.
 - (xi) Will collect and monitor evidence of performance, in terms of service delivery and compliance or non-compliance of building work with the Building Regulations. Have in place procedures to learn from its findings as a process of continuous improvement.
 - (xii) Have a Quality Policy Statement and Quality System registered in accordance with BS EN ISO 9001:2000.
 - (xiii) Will observe normal professional and business ethics expected of service providers
 - (xiv) Will comply with the Enforcement Policy of the Department of Environment and Regeneration and the Concordat on Good Enforcement Practice.
 - (xv) Complaints concerning the service provided will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's complaints procedure.

The Chief Building Control Surveyor will ensure that the professional staff are kept conversant with legislative changes and procedures and are given the training opportunities (and financial provision) necessary to ensure appropriate continuing professional development to keep abreast with such changes and developments in new technology. The Building Control Policy is to be reviewed in the light of major changes in building control legislation and/or developments in case law.

The establishment considered necessary to achieve the requirements of this policy should be determined through a recorded and justifiable method of assessment, and should be reviewed at intervals not exceeding two years.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

The following notes contain some performance targets, or aims, against which locally agreed, customer led service delivery targets or acceptable levels of achievement, should be determined.

A - Fees

1. As an aid to the checking of fees, it is recommended that use be made of the relevant RICS Building Cost Information Service Tables.

B - Deposited Plans

1. For larger projects applicants will be encouraged to consult with Building Control prior to the formal submission of a deposited plan.
2. So far as is practicable all deposited plans, Type or Systems Approvals, Partnership scheme applications, notices, fees, calculations and certificates will be examined or processed within one unit under the Chief Building Control Surveyor: this is not to preclude the CBCS from obtaining additional expertise from elsewhere as and when necessary.
3. Wherever possible Defects Letters, or the Decision should, normally, be sent out within three weeks and amendments should, wherever possible, be dealt with within the original relevant period.
4. Plans submitted under a Type or Systems Approval or Partnership scheme should be examined only so far as is necessary to determine any outstanding matters not included within the original Approval.
5. Plans should be looked at to identify that they are not defective and that there are no contraventions shown. Work on site has to comply with the Regulations, but not necessarily with the deposited plans. There is, thus, little to be gained from being unduly pedantic, i.e., it would be unproductive to raise points which do not generally cause problems, or could be readily resolved on site. In determining the level of plan examination required, this must be considered in conjunction with the expected level (quantity and quality) of subsequent site inspection.
6. Defects listed could, wherever possible, draw attention to the contents of the Approved Documents.
7. Within any agreed or set procedures, reasonable deadlines will be set for responses within the relevant period from consultees, e.g., the Fire Brigade.

8. When conditional and/or stage approvals are issued, after agreement in writing with the person by whom or one whose behalf the plans are deposited, a schedule will be compiled of:
 - (a) The modifications specified by the Council and/or;
 - (b) The further plans required to be deposited and so specified by the Council

C - Building Notices

1. For larger projects applicants will be encouraged consultation and/or the submission of informal plans prior to the actual submission of a Building Notice.
2. In order to fulfil the statutory function, it is considered that all Building Notice work must be inspected on a more frequent basis than would otherwise be necessary under the Full Plans procedure; it may also be necessary for such inspections to be carried out by personnel with greater expertise.
3. Where it is clearly indicated, Notice of Commencement will be acceptable where provided on the Building Notice form.
4. In acknowledging receipt and acceptance of a Building Notice, where no commencement date is given the Authority will issue an inspection request card.
5. To ensure consistency in the handling of Building Notices, further plans or details will only be requested where it is not possible to ascertain on site that the work will comply.
6. Where any plans, calculations, or other details show any obvious and significant contraventions, these will be communicated to the client/customer.

D - Inspections In General

1. Not every item of site work to which the Building Regulations relate can be examined. Building Control staff must be allowed to use their professional skill and judgement in their selection of priorities for inspections within the stated policy: the generality of the workload and the resources available at the time must be considered in any challenge of such judgement. It is, however, of paramount importance that records are kept which show beyond doubt, what works were inspected, the results of inspection, any limitations governing an inspection and the works not inspected.
2.
 - (a) The Building Regulations requirement that notice be given to a local authority by a builder at certain stages of the work is not to be taken as an indication that inspection is not necessary between these stages.
 - (b) The level of inspection considered necessary will be dependent upon many factors including -
 - how complicated or relatively straightforward the method of construction;

- whether recent experience indicates current problems in interpreting and/or achieving compliance with certain requirements;
 - whether the builder is in need of greater supervision, requested or otherwise;
 - how serious the consequences of a particular contravention might be;
 - the impracticability or impossibility of subsequent inspection of hidden work.
- (c) For the purposes of subsequent enforcement action, e.g., in cases where work has lapsed, it is considered that the period between inspections should not exceed three months.
3. It is considered that where, in the opinion of the inspecting body, work is substantially completed and there are no contraventions, i.e., there are no contraventions which will have an adverse effect on Health or Safety, and site progress has ceased, management may decide that, for administrative purposes only, such jobs could be filed away: this would not preclude the subsequent issue of a Completion Certificate, following a satisfactory final inspection.
 4. Where appropriate, Completion Certificates should be issued within 48 hours of a completion inspection.

E - Records

1. The need for adequate and permanent records cannot be overstressed. In respect of work carried out under procedures other than those requiring Full Plans approval (e.g. Building Notices) in most cases there will be few plans forming part of the record of building work; it is thus necessary to maintain more detailed records of such schemes.
2. Details of work which is subsequently hidden, e.g., foundations, reinforced concrete and work hidden by ducts, walls or suspended ceilings, should have a higher priority in the records than work which is subsequently visible and forms its own record.
3. Records should be kept (as required by law) of all Initial Notices and Final Certificates submitted by Approved Inspectors; this should be indicated on any subsequent Land Search Inquiry.
4. On satisfactory completion of building work a Completion Certificate will be issued as standard practice.

F - Contraventions

Building Control staff should be ever vigilant to observe work for which approval has not been sought. Any detected contravention of the Building Regulations must be clearly recorded and followed up and where dealings are predominantly with a builder, the owner should be appraised of the situation and matters involved. The appropriate course of action should be taken to remedy the situation and details of such action will be notified to the department responsible for Local Land Charges.

G - Complaints

If a person is dissatisfied with the Building Control service they receive, their complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's complaints procedure.