

Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 3 December 2015

Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy and Service Charter

Item number	7.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval of the Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy and Service Charter. This forms the basis of how the Planning and Building Standards Service will communicate and consult with customers and the level of service that it will provide.

The proposals have been developed to be compatible with the Council's overarching approach to transformational change and particularly 'channel shift'. The Planning and Building Standards Service is a frontline service and streamlining our delivery of services, whilst still prioritising those customers who need them, is our priority.

The draft strategy and charter were on the Council's Consultation Hub for six weeks and additional consultation events were used to discuss the changes. This report sets out the changes to the draft strategy and charter as a result of this consultation.

Links

Coalition pledges	P15, P28, P40
Council outcomes	CO23, CO24, CO25, CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy and Service Charter

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves:
- (a) the Customer Engagement Strategy; and
 - (b) the Customer Service Charter.

Background

- 2.1 The Planning and Building Standards Service is a frontline service and interaction with a diverse range of customers is part of its core business. However, this interaction is currently delivered in the context of a service under pressure, in terms of financial resources, and the need to maintain and improve performance to meet Council and Scottish Government targets. The level of demand for non-statutory services, such as pre-application advice, challenges the service's ability to meet customer expectations and the increase in the number of planning applications and building warrants leads to conflicting priorities. The statutory work must take precedence, but the non-statutory work can also have direct benefits that aid service delivery. This report sets out how it is intended to address these challenges and proposes a number of changes to service standards and levels.
- 2.2 The Council's Transformational Change programme has been established as the overarching approach to change. The [Channel Shift business case](#) was set out in a report to the Finance and Resources Committee on 15 January 2015 and this is the approach that the Planning and Building Standards service is now seeking to implement. The aim is to encourage customers to move from direct contact to online transactions for many Planning and Building Standards services. Coupled with an improvement in online information, this shift will free up resources to improve performance on statutory functions such as processing planning and building warrant applications.
- 2.3 The draft Engagement Strategy and Service Charter was approved for consultation by the Committee on 15 June 2015. The consultation set out how Channel Shift could be achieved in the service and what level of customer service could be provided.

Consultation Process and Results

- 3.1 The draft strategy and charter were placed on the Council's Consultation Hub from 17 August to 28 September 2015, a period of six weeks. It was opened up for a further 10 days to allow professional agents more time to comment, as the response rate had been quite low from them.
- 3.2 To make the consultation documents easier to understand, the consultation focused on the key messages from the two documents and asked for comments on these key points. Over 1000 emails were sent to agents and community councils telling them about the consultation and a Planning Blog article was posted on 19 August 2015 to publicise it. Tweets were sent out at regular intervals.
- 3.3 The strategy and charter were also discussed at the Edinburgh Civic Forum and the Edinburgh Development Forum and two drop in events for agents were held, although attendance was low. Finally, staff events allowed Planning and Building Standards staff, and consultees, an opportunity to comment on the proposals.
- 3.4 71 consultation responses were received via the Consultation Hub, 40 on the engagement strategy and 31 on the charter. The details of these and the responses are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 At the forums and drop in events, the main issues raised were as follows:
- pre-application advice should be available for all types of development and more resources should be put into this;
 - officers should be freely available to take phone calls from agents to assist with planning proposals;
 - online forms would be supported as they would weed out the spurious enquiries;
 - delays are common at both pre-application and application stage in both Planning and Building Standards;
 - concern that the knowledge base of experienced officers is being lost;
 - concerns about lack of consistency in advice given and concentration on minor points;
 - focus groups to discuss areas of concern would be useful;
 - civic Forum members want to be called citizens not customers;
 - more transparency of decision-making at Committee is needed; and

- major applications are a key area and changes are supported as they prioritise these applications.

3.6 At the staff consultation events, the main issues raised were as follows:

- the response times proposed for emails and phone calls are unrealistic in current context;
- councillor and other VIP enquiries cause delays in customer enquiries as they have to be prioritised;
- the standards of application submissions are declining and this causes delays; and
- support for reducing the Planning and Building Standards help desks.

Response to comments received

3.7 The comments largely relate to six main themes and the proposed responses are set out below:

- Pre-application advice. It is clear that agents and others expect a full pre-application advice service for all application types down to the smaller cases. Currently the advice is being given by the use of staff overtime but this is no longer sustainable and, in line, with the Council's transformational change strategy, there is a need to reduce the service to make better use of resources. It is therefore proposed that pre-application advice is only given on large scale proposals or unusual or contentious cases. Unusual cases may include smaller complex cases where the policy, guidance or regulations are open to interpretation. Ultimately, it will be for the team manager to decide whether the proposal should be subject to pre-application advice. There will be a requirement that all requests for pre-application advice should be made on an online form so that the necessary information can be collected.
- Planning and Building Standards Help Desks. It is recognised that customers often need to speak to a planner or a building surveyor before forming their proposals and there was general concern at the loss of the help desks. Advice given on the help desk should be general and non-site specific and it is accepted that having this service will take pressure off the teams. However, Edinburgh is one of the few Councils in Scotland to still have an all-day service providing advice and officers report that much of their time is taking messages for other members of staff rather than answering genuine enquiries. It is therefore proposed to keep the service but reduce it to 9am to 1pm every weekday. There is no need for a such a service between Christmas and New Year. It is proposed that these changes also apply to the Plan Store where paper drawings can be viewed and copied. Officers will still be available to answer enquiries on their own cases.

- Online Information. It is accepted that the current information on the Council website is difficult to find and not always easy to understand. There will be a delay in getting the new interactive website called the Knowledge Base up and running as this is dependent on discussions with the new ICT provider. In the meantime, the current information on the Council website will be reviewed to see if it can be made more accessible.
- Self-serve culture. It is accepted that not everyone is online although the majority of citizens and agents are. For those that are unable to go online, it is important that they still have full access to the advice service. The customer will firstly be advised to go to the local library or neighbourhood office to use the online facilities. If this is not possible, a paper based advice service will be provided.
- Community Engagement. The Edinburgh Planning Concordat is currently being reviewed to address concerns expressed about the pre-application consultation process. A joint meeting of the Edinburgh Development Forum and the Edinburgh Civic Forum has been arranged for December 2015 to review how the Concordat is working. The review would be reported to Planning Committee at its meeting in February 2016.
- Customer Service and Performance. It is recognised that this needs to be improved and the proposed strategy moves the customer to self-serve so that the service can rationalise and improve what is provided. By reducing the amount of pre-application advice given, a greater focus can be put on application processing and the improvement of statutory performance. This is deemed to be good customer service.

Proposed Changes to the Draft Engagement Strategy

3.8 Following the consultation, it is proposed to make the following changes to the draft engagement strategy:

- it is proposed that the Planning and Building Standards help desks will be retained but with a reduced service. The service will be available from 9am to 1pm every week day apart from public holidays and between Christmas and New Year. The help desks give general advice face to face, by phone and by email. Officers will still be available to respond to their own cases or give specific pre-application advice on some cases;
- the pre-application advice service will be restricted to major, unusual or contentious cases. On smaller complex cases where policies, guidance and regulations are open to interpretation, advice will be given. Pre-application advice will generally not be given for householders, advert, window, driveway and straightforward change of use proposals. Detailed published advice and guidance is available on these topics. All requests for pre-application advice will have to be made on online request forms;

- general telephone numbers will be removed from the website to encourage more use of online resources. Individual officers will still be available to discuss their cases with agents;
- customers unable to access online systems will be asked to visit their local library or neighbourhood office and if this is not possible, paper based advice will be offered;
- the timetable for implementing the strategy has changed as the online Knowledge Hub cannot be started till the Council's new ICT provider is in place from April 2016.

3.9 The final strategy for approval can be found in Appendix 2

Proposed Changes to the Draft Service Charter

3.10 Following the consultation, it is proposed to make the following changes to the draft service charter:

- a revision to the email contact response time to bring it into line with the Council standard. Staff felt the two day response time for first contact was not realistic. Better auto-responses will be set up to inform customers how they can find the information online.
- deletion of the service standard that the phone will be answered in five rings. The service is not a call centre and officers are answering phones at the same time as they are dealing with applications and other work. The standard cannot be guaranteed unless calls are moved to the Customer Contact Centre and this is not currently proposed.
- amendments to the registration times from four working days to five working days to take account of the neighbour notification requirements introduced in 2009 which have increased registration periods.
- Building Standards performance targets have been clarified to ensure they comply with the National Customer Charter.
- the section on seeking advice has been changed to make it clear what pre-application advice will be given on and to add in the times the Planning and Building Standards Help Desks will be available. This section also states what service can be provided for those unable to go online.
- the section on information requests makes it clear when the Plan Store will be open.

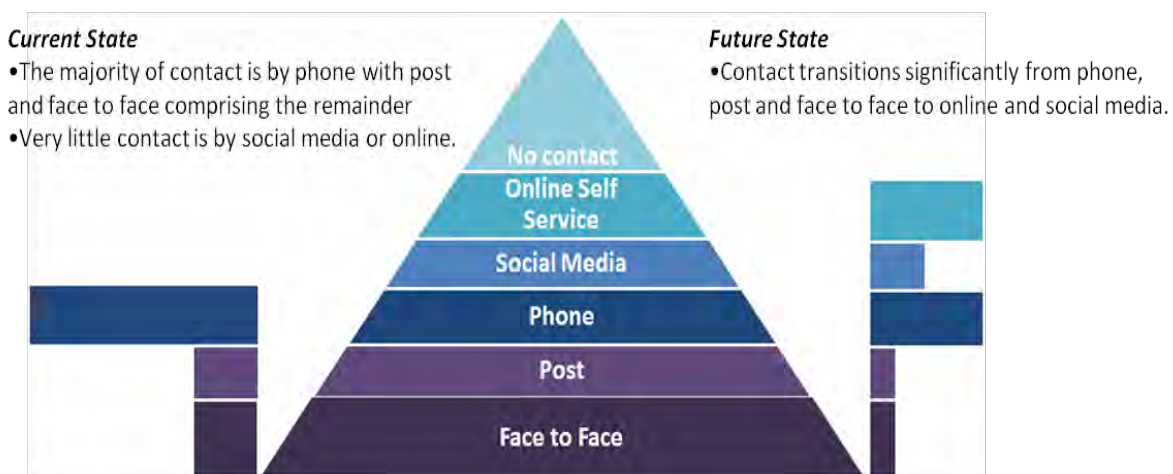
3.11 The final charter for approval can be found in Appendix 3. The Customer Service Charter now also includes the service standards from the current Tree Protection Charter. As such, it is no longer required.

Implementation of the Strategy

- 3.12 If approved, the next step is to implement the Customer Engagement Strategy. A key component of this is an enhanced Knowledge Base website. It had been hoped that work could start on this quickly, but the Council's new ICT contract means that this will be delayed until the new service provider is in place. In the meantime, improvements will be made to the current website to make it easier to find information.
- 3.13 Forms for pre-application requests will be developed in a simple format until a full online form can be designed.
- 3.14 Work has already started on initiatives such as an interactive house which will allow customers to hover over part of the house and find out if they need consent.
- 3.15 It is important that the pace of change is measured so that customers do not feel overly burdened at the start of the process. Good communication is very important and a communication plan will be needed for every aspect of the strategy.

The Customer Journey

- 3.16 Once the strategy is implemented, the customer journey of the future will be very different to the current service provided. The service will be changed for general enquiries to encourage customer to self-serve online but a full service will be provided for the developments that bring sustainable economic growth to the City.
- 3.17 The diagram below sets out how the Council will change under Channel Shift. The Planning and Building Standards Service will develop this model in the future as the engagement strategy is implemented.



*Please note the bars represent contact volumes (illustrative)

Measures of success

- 4.1 A Customer Engagement Strategy that provides certainty for customers on how the Planning and Building Standards Service will consult and communicate.
- 4.2 The delivery of service standards set out in the Customer Service Charter.

Financial impact

- 5.1 There is no direct financial impact arising from this report. However, in line with the Council's Transformational Change programme there are opportunities to deliver an improved service and cost savings by focussing resources on core business.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no perceived risks associated with this report. The report has no impact on any policies of the Council.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 The Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment indicates the following:
- The proposals will enhance participation, influence and voice as they promote better online services available to all whilst still allowing scope for direct contact where still required. They also set out what service standards the customer can expect;
 - There are no infringements of Rights under these proposals;
 - There are no identified positive or negative impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
 - The proposals promote the duty to advance equality of opportunity as they promote better and more accessible information systems which would benefit all whilst still ensuring any groups who need bespoke advice still have access to this service;
 - The proposal to ask customers to self serve online may affect some groups such as those with disabilities and those of a different race. However, the strategy states that a direct service will still be provided for those who need it; and
 - The proposals promote the duty to foster good relations as they make clear the service standards that can be expected and so promote understanding.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impact of this report in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties has been considered, and the outcome is summarised below:

- The proposals in this report will have no impact on carbon emissions because the report deals with customer engagement in the planning system;
- The proposals in this report will have no effect on the city's resilience to climate change impacts because the report deals with customer engagement;
- The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because they promote they promote equality of opportunity by making services more easy to understand and accessible;
- The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because they will assist the economic well being of the City by concentrating our resources where they will facilitate major development.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The draft proposals were consulted on between 17 August and 18 October 2015. A total of 71 responses were received. The proposals were also presented at the Civic Forum and the Edinburgh Development Forum, drop in events were held for agents and two staff events were also held to get feedback.
- 9.2 The responses have been used to inform the final Customer Engagement Strategy and Customer Service Charter.

Background reading/external references

[Organise to Deliver: Next Steps](#), The City of Edinburgh Council, 11 December 2014.

[BOLD business cases: delivering a lean and agile Council](#), Finance and Resources Committee, 15 January 2015.

[Customer Engagement Strategy – Draft for Consultation](#). Planning Committee, 15 June 2015.

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Links

Coalition pledges	P15 Work with public organisations, the private sector and social enterprise to promote Edinburgh to investors P28 - Further strengthen our links with the business community by developing and implementing strategies to promote and
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protect the economic well being of the city
P40 – Work with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust and other stakeholders to conserve the city’s built heritage

Council Outcomes C023 – Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community.
CO24 – The Council communicates effectively internally and externally and has an excellent reputation for customer care
CO25 – The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver objectives
CO26 – The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver agreed objectives

Single Outcome Agreement SO1 Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all

Appendices Appendix 1 – Consultation Responses
Appendix 2 – Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy.
Appendix 3 – Planning and Building Standards Customer Service Charter.

Summary of Consultation Hub responses

Main Issues Raised in Draft Customer Engagement Strategy and Service Charter Consultation

- Concerns that the move to online information will adversely impact vulnerable people who do not have the resources to go online. No consideration appears to have been given to the elderly, computer illiterate or those without computers;
- Important that staff are available via e-mail or telephone at all times. Other Councils are operating an unsatisfactory system whereby you have to make an appointment to speak to a planner. When a professional seeks advice they should be entitled to the time of an officer. Less direct contact will lead to more problematic applications;
- The simplest way to resolve differences is by face to face contact regardless of project size. Short meetings to discuss issues can vastly reduce the time spent by agents/applicants and officers. Any application is important to the applicant regardless of size and should not be denied the same rights as a "major development";
- Better online information is required if the enquirer has to self-serve. The current website can be confusing and difficult to source the correct information. Online enquiry forms will lead to more delays;
- Concerns about the loss of the planning help desk. The quality and speed of response from duty officers has been vital;
- Generally agree with the revised approaches, subject to the Council meeting the deadlines / periods described therein;
- A mindset change is required by the Council (elected chamber and administration) on consultation processes, including publication of contrary views to the Council and these are given similar prominence/weight to those of administrators/planners;
- Comments at the PAN stage are not being reported to committee. Want to see processes improved and more recognition of the community view;

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- The new arrangements do not address problems with enforcement which is a very major issue for communities, particularly in conservation areas; and
- The current service gives a very poor response. We ring and get messages that the case officer is in the office but not taking calls. Calls are not returned. We suspect this is due to over-stretched staff and feel the proposals mask the lack of qualified staff.

Draft Customer Service Charter Consultation Detailed Responses (31)

Respondent	Summary of comment	Response / action
Community Council		
Gilmerton Inch Community Council	You say that you are led by your communities. What about the poor, the vulnerable, people who don't have the confidence to admit to not being able to go online; what about those who are so alienated from society that they take no interest in their community? Why aren't more resources being provided for the less confident?	Noted. The Council's channel shift programme will support those who are not online and other methods will be available for those who need this help.
Architects/agents		
Lindsay Buchan Architects	I like to e-mail people with informal queries and it is important that staff are available via e-mail or telephone at all times. Other Councils operate an unsatisfactory system whereby you have make appointment to speak to a planner.	Pre-application application advice will be focused on larger, more complex schemes due to a limit on resources.
T.M. Young Chartered Architect	As covered at the drop in session I fundamentally do not agree with the councils approach to handling planning and building control applications, disseminating information and giving advice. Reading the online guidance is not enough and requires interpretation. The simplest way to resolve differences is by face to face contact regardless of project size. I expect to discuss proposals with planning or building standards. Short meetings to discuss issues	Planning guidance is part of an ongoing review and with a reduction in resources not all requests for face to face meetings can be met. Officers allocated to cases will take a judgement as to whether a meeting is the most appropriate way to resolve any issues.

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<p>LSM architects</p>	<p>can vastly reduce the time spent by agents/applicants and officers.</p> <p>The fixation with determining projects within two months is laughable were it not so serious. Any application is important to the applicant regardless of size and should not be denied the same rights as a "major development".</p> <p>The "help desks" receive many spurious and ill informed calls from the public but I feel that when a professional seeks advice they should be entitled to the time of an officer. I am aware that the Council is under pressure to save money and improve performance but decisions made in haste are often wrong.</p> <p>Although this survey is about planning and building control there has also been a reduction in services in other departments.</p> <p>I also object to being asked my age.</p> <p>Face to face contact for smaller projects can vastly reduce time spent by both agents/applicants and officers. If there is a genuine requirement to meet a planner or building standards officer they should be available.</p> <p>Having more information online is great and I think will help. But my worry is that people will opt for the easy way out and simply refer everything to online sources, even if they aren't specific enough for the question being asked.</p>	<p>The timescales for processing applications are set by legislation and monitored by the Scottish Government. Failure to meet targets could lead to fee reductions.</p> <p>The move to the greater use of online services will allow officers time to focus on applications, improving this aspect of the service.</p> <p>This review focuses on the planning and building standards service.</p> <p>Providing your age was not obligatory.</p> <p>Pre-application application advice will be focussed on larger, more complex schemes due to a limit on resources.</p> <p>Planning guidance continues to be reviewed to address as many common enquiries as possible.</p>
<p>Bennett Associates</p>	<p>When banks closed branches and shifted customer service to online resources customers hated it and want to talk to a "real person". Not having a phone number for planning enquiries will</p>	<p>Although the helpdesk hours of operation will be reduced there will remain an opportunity to speak to a</p>

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<p>Oliver Chapman architects</p>	<p>cause consternation and frustration.</p> <p>Customers are being asked to make their own decisions such as ‘Do I require Planning approval’ and ‘What constitutes a major application’? Mistakes may be made based on online information with little comeback. Customers investing in proposals pre-application without guidance will see appeals increasing.</p> <p>We are greatly concerned about the proposed changes to the service especially the closure of the duty planner and building control officer service for informal pre application advice at the front desk both for face to face and phone conversions.</p> <p>The quality and speed of response from duty officers has been vital. Without it, we will be less productive and risk making ill-informed decisions and taking less risk which will make the application more fraught and open to challenge.</p>	<p>planner during the new opening times.</p> <p>Information on the definition of major developments and the requirement for planning permission are widely available online.</p> <p>It is not proposed to close the helpdesks. Pre-application advice will still be available for larger, more complex proposals.</p> <p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible.</p>
<p>Smith Scott Mullan</p>	<p>The increased use of online tools will only complicate matters for applicants and agents alike. The current website can be confusing and difficult to source the correct information. Much of our work is for medium to large scale projects and we must have the ability to discuss with somebody if there is a query. Generally, if we are asking, it probably isn't obvious and unlikely an online tool will be able to help. This is especially valid where the query and Council view is subjective.</p> <p>As a professional agent, I have no intention or desire to use social media to interact with the Council's personnel, although can see this may be appropriate for the general public to comment on issues.</p>	<p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible. This will include the use of ‘knowledge base’ which allows customers to get to the information they require.</p> <p>The use of social media will be aimed at general enquiries and promoting existing online information. This may also be expanded for public use during</p>

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<p>Hypostyle Architects</p>	<p>Generally agree with the revised approaches, subject to the Council meeting the deadlines / periods described therein.</p>	<p>public engagement events. Noted.</p>
<p>Lorn Macneal Architects</p>	<p>You need to ensure that any changes made to the system do not result in undue delays to applications.</p>	<p>Noted. The intention is that we make better use of officer time focussing in dealing with applications.</p>
<p>Archie MacAlister Chartered Architect</p>	<p>'Face to face' should be available to small (often complex) projects not just 'significant proposals. Using an on-line enquiry form will lead to more delays.</p>	<p>Officers allocated to cases will take a judgement as to whether a meeting is the most appropriate way to resolve any issues. The use of an online form will help to get the right level of information for these enquiries.</p>
<p>Studio dub Architects</p>	<p>Targets in respect of admin of Planning and Warrants are one thing but very rarely in my experience of 20 years plus in practice are they adhered to. Less direct contact will lead to more problematic applications. The main reason I would call is because I've had an unsatisfactory answer to a query i.e. referring me to a document I have already digested and have a query about.</p>	<p>Noted. We will continue to apply targets for processing applications and deal with specific complaints as they arise. Agents will still be able to contact officers allocated to cases.</p>
<p>Halvorsen Architects</p>	<p>I think what you propose is good but I also think that face to face meetings and telephone calls direct to a building control officer are vital services that should not go and should not necessitate pre-enquiry forms to be completed.</p>	<p>Agents will still be able to contact officers allocated to cases. Officers will make a judgement as to whether a meeting is the most appropriate way to resolve any issues.</p>
<p>Caroline Lawlor architect</p>	<p>I understand it is difficult to respond to all enquiries that come your way but I believe it is important to have thorough pre-</p>	<p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquiries these will</p>

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<p>Somner Macdonald Architects</p>	<p>application discussion as it saves time for all involved in the planning process.</p> <p>We look at the policies and information available online prior to making contact with the Council. We feel personal responses are more meaningful and provide better clarification to our queries.</p>	<p>focus on larger, more complex cases.</p> <p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquiries these will focus on larger, more complex cases.</p>
<p>MSP</p>		
<p>Sarah Boyack MSP</p>	<p>Ms Boyack wrote on behalf of a constituent (a local architect) about the removal of the duty planner/building control officer.</p> <p>Ms Boyack shared her constituents concerns that this would be retrograde step for the public and professionals and ask to think again. Advice from planning staff is invaluable to a range of constituents and local businesses and as this service is used by ‘thousands of constituents’ would urge a reversal on such a proposal.</p>	<p>It is not proposed to close the helpdesks. Pre-application advice will still be available for larger, more complex proposals.</p> <p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible.</p>
<p>Comments from individuals</p>		
	<p>Moving more parts of the planning depts work online is only a good idea if your website works which quite often it doesn't.</p> <p>A mindset change is required by the Council (elected chamber and administration) on to consultation processes, including publication of contrary views to the Council and these are given similar prominence/weight to those of administrators/planners.</p> <p>The online hub does not always work - outside office hours and telephoning is not an option if the site is down when the office is closed. The office needs to be accessible to walk-in customers to deal with planning issues.</p>	<p>We continue to make improvements to our online services and will be creating more online transactions as part of the Council's channel shift programme.</p> <p>Responses to consultations are presented to the relevant Council committees and given the same amount of weight where they raise material planning considerations.</p> <p>Noted. The planning online services (the portal) is due to be upgraded next year which will improve functionality and reliability.</p>

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	<p>I'm concerned about not having a helpdesk with a planner to speak to and need re-assured online information and systems work.</p> <p>We should be able to speak to a planner at pre-application stage for smaller work like extensions. It can speed up things and fewer refusals.</p> <p>Concerns about the PAN process – it is confusing that the developer does the consultation and you have to comment again on the planning application. I also feel that comments at the PAN stage are not being reported to committee. I'm not against change but want to see processed improved and more recognition of the community view.</p> <p>The new arrangements do not address problems with enforcement which is a very major issue for communities, particularly in conservation areas.</p> <p>I'm ok to use online forms but want better online information as it can be hard to find info about applications. Portal is clunky and is rubbish on a mobile phone.</p> <p>It is unclear how enforcement enquiries will be dealt with. This online service has a long time lag before responses are received, which normally require responses as not all factors are taken into account, especially conservation area regulations. This needs to be more efficient and right first time.</p> <p>Although some developments are small scale it is invaluable to speak with a planner before we submit the applications and get an informal view.</p>	<p>The helpdesk will still be available albeit over a shorter time period. Improvements are being made to ensure our systems are reliable.</p> <p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquires we receive we are having to reduce this service.</p> <p>The Pre-Application Notice process is set by statute and we have online information about how this operates.</p> <p>The planning enforcement charter has been reviewed. Any specific enquiries will be investigated and assessed.</p> <p>Planning online services (the portal) will be upgraded next year, improving functionality and reliability.</p> <p>The planning enforcement charter has been reviewed. Any specific enquiries will be investigated and assessed. Response times and levels of service are set in the charter.</p> <p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquires we receive we are having to reduce this service.</p>
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	<p>There must still be the option of speaking to a planning official about any application not just 'more complex, significant proposals'. One way might be to limit telephone discussion to say 3 minutes and offer a public counter discussion if agreement cannot be reached. Most people realising that they're not getting anywhere won't bother to make the journey. For lay people planning consent can be a minefield and often simple enquiries can be resolved by a quick look at a drawing etc - a 'stitch in time'. There must also be a good back-up of guidance documents so that the official can quickly draw attention to a paragraph to save time. If the case looks more complex, then a formal meeting should be granted.</p> <p>I don't find this to be particularly supportive of CEC's argument encouraging the use of electronic communication. At least if I send a letter, I can be reasonably certain that it will end up on someone's desk, though I am puzzled as to why it should take longer to process. I am sure you will agree that people who give up their evening and weekend hours to deal with planning business are unlikely to be very happy when they are told by the portal (as tonight) that it is <i>"Unable to perform this task because a remote exception has occurred"</i> or <i>"Unable to run your search at this time!"</i></p>	<p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquires we receive we are having to reduce this service. The proposed use of a 'knowledge base' is one way we will assist customers in getting to the information they require, reducing the need to contact the service. Officers will make a judgement as to whether a meeting is the most appropriate way to resolve any issues.</p> <p>Noted. There have be issues with the planning online services (the portal). The proposed upgrade next year will improve both functionality and reliability. Comments on applications can still be submitted in writing and by email.</p>
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Draft Customer Engagement Strategy Consultation Detailed Responses (40)

Respondent	Summary of comment	Response / action
Community Council		
Gilmerton Inch Community Council	By reducing the face to face service, you risk alienating the more vulnerable in society. Whilst you say that face to face contact will be provided if necessary, you are presuming that people have the ability and the confidence to ask for that service.	Noted. The Council's channel shift programme will support those who are not online and other methods will be available for those who need this help.
Cramond and Barnton Community Council	It is important that there remains ready access by phone to specific officers dealing with development management issues for information on specific cases, etc.	Officers allocated to cases will be contactable and although they will be unable to discuss the merits of a case they can provide general information about the case.
Ratho & District Community Council	We frequently raise matters about planning permission non-compliance and enforcement issues and find that your efforts to deal with raised matters are not diligent / satisfactory. It is disappointing that your draft Charter appears to be silent on such matters.	The planning enforcement charter has been reviewed. Any specific enquiries will be investigated and assessed. Response times and levels of service are set in the charter.
Architects/agents		
T.M. Young Chartered Architect	<p>Having using the Edinburgh planning system of 40 years the service generally has declined. Face to face contact is near essential. I am expected to establish quickly and effectively whether clients or my ideas are likely to be considered favourably.</p> <p>I understand that official cannot commit themselves without a formal application being made and that information is online however "guidelines" are open to interpretation which can be difficult.</p>	<p>Agents will still be able to contact officers allocated to cases. Officers will make a judgement as to whether a meeting is the most appropriate way to resolve any issues.</p> <p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquires we receive we are having to reduce this service.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

	<p>As an architect (not a planner) I make decisions on a regular basis which seem reasonable and then have my thoughts discussed and or modified by the planning system which in many instances is without any design training. These issues should be dealt with through discussion and agreement before a stand-off. It will be interesting to see what ECAN have to say about this survey.</p>	<p>Agents will still be able to contact officers allocated to cases. Officers will make a judgement as to whether a meeting is the most appropriate way to resolve any issues. In certain cases, officers with a design background provide advice to planning officers.</p>
<p>Lindsay Buchan Architects</p>	<p>Putting more information on websites is all very well if the websites are easy to use. The 'improvement' to the search facilities for planning applications made a mess of it, the mapping does not work properly/easily. Looking for information on the website sends you round in circles and never gives you the answer.</p>	<p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible. This will include the use of 'knowledge base' which allows customers to get to the information they require.</p>
<p>BPA architecture</p>	<p>The current service gives a very poor response. We ring and get messages that the case office is in the office but not taking calls. Calls are not returned. We suspect this is due to over stretched staff and feel the proposals mask the lack of qualified staff.</p>	<p>Noted. We will be changing how we handle calls to the service and will investigate any specific instances where calls are not be being answered or returned.</p>
<p>Oliver Chapman architects</p>	<p>This suggests that duty officers won't be available to respond to phone calls and have face to face meetings for anything other than major applications. We rely on the freely available pre app service for all applications and would resist this cut.</p>	<p>It is not proposed to close the helpdesks. Pre-application advice will still be available for larger, more complex proposals and officers will make a judgement as to whether a meeting is the most appropriate way to resolve any issues.</p>
<p>Zone architects</p>	<p>This all sounds awful and will lead to the decline of the quality of the planning service over the last five years. It may be getting more efficient for service targets but decisions too slowly, are the wrong decisions, or being over-ruled by committee too frequently.</p>	<p>Although the planning and building standards service will change, the quality of the customer experience will be improved by allowing officers</p>

APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

<p>Garden People Limited (landscaping company)</p>	<p>This results in worse buildings getting built in one of the greatest urban environments in the world. The lack of a strong and knowledgeable listed building team is evident. There is a breakdown of trust between planners and the committee and a lack of leadership and championing of good design/architecture.</p> <p>Removing access to phone advice for minor issues will cause upset for small contractors as I need to get answers quickly in terms of Tree Preservation Orders, Listed building adjacent works, etc.</p> <p>When on site, I use a laptop and phone, not always with internet connection. This causes problems for reading documents and a move away from verbal or paper information towards online documents that cannot be opened cannot be feasible.</p> <p>Utility companies and home office departments are ignoring communication, not allowing telephone contact, and have autoreply emails to check a website. This alienates, and causes delays. Where telephone contact is removed enquirers are pushed to the portal.</p>	<p>more time to focus on dealing with applications. The quality of new buildings is often the subject of debate and officers receive regular training on dealing with various application types.</p> <p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible. This will include the use of 'knowledge base' which allows customers to get to the information they require.</p> <p>Online documents can be printed off.</p> <p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible. Direct contact with officers allocated to specific cases will remain in place.</p>
<p>Leslie Howson architect</p>	<p>The current `Guidance for Householders` is badly in need of updating. It is far from clear on certain aspects.</p> <p>Where can I see the interactive house/has this been set up yet? When and where will the ongoing public consultation events be held?</p>	<p>Planning Guidance is reviewed regularly. The next review in early 2016 will consider how it is formatted for ease of use.</p> <p>The use of an interactive house will be developed in 2016. The engagement events were communicated by email.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

<p>Suzanne McIntosh planning consultant</p>	<p>Closure of the help desk needs to be well advertised, as this will be of concern to the general public not familiar with planning.</p> <p>The service varies from officer to officer. The number of part time staff means that it can be difficult to keep things moving where someone is only in certain days and lose traction. On the whole staff are professional, courteous and diligent however not all are. An awareness of the impact of delays, attitudes and actions need to be put in focus.</p>	<p>It is not the intention to close the helpdesk and any changes will be communicated to all customer groups.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
<p>Alistair McLaren, McLaren Associates</p>	<p>I tend not to get involved with pre-application consultation because most of my current workload is minor extensions and the like therefore I find it difficult to make a meaningful stab at this questionnaire. I have worked recently on new-build houses and on listed buildings but not in Edinburgh so my experience with these not relevant to this exercise.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>OiSA Architects</p>	<p>The historic records and other information / guidance being online is a good, and can be a good resource if it was easy to find. The search does not always yield appropriate results and the web "tree" is not always logical.</p> <p>The method of consultation however should not shift from face to face to online, this being that communication is always most effective face to face. It is also less frustrating and more direct to get some feedback. The idea that online/social media can replace face to face meetings is not sensible. Certain online / email facilities may reduce the need for post certainly, and</p>	<p>Noted. New web content will be created to make this information easier to access.</p> <p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible. Direct contact with officers allocated to specific cases will remain in place.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

	<p>sometimes telephone calls, but the public and professionals such as architects should not feel that they cannot seek direct face to face or telephone advice.</p> <p>It is not true that it saves time and resources to email rather than speak on the telephone/face to face. Speaking is faster than typing responses. Hours spent typing emails is not efficient for the Council by trying to replace face to face with email strategies. However small or large the development may be, it is sometimes worth face to face consultation. Proper preparation to any application is the best way to serve the built environment, to put planning central to ALL development, not only large developments. This is because some smaller sites are also tricky and pose issues that are not so simple to neighbours or conservation area etc. The public should be able to consult the planning department in whatever means suits.</p>	<p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquires we receive we are having to reduce this service. However, a judgement will be taken on whether applications of a more complex nature require more detailed pre-application advice.</p>
<p>Stephen Newsom Architect</p>	<p>As an architect providing clear advice to my clients is essential. It is therefore important that the local authority provides clear and specific advice to suit the many situations that may arise. Having direct access to planning and building control officials is important. The advice they give must be consistent and positive, rather than defensive or negative.</p>	<p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquires we receive we are having to reduce this service. However, a judgement will be taken on whether applications of a more complex nature require more detailed pre-application advice.</p>
<p>R Mayhew</p>	<p>It is disappointing that person to person contact is being eroded (presumably to save money) as this is bound to mean that I will miss information, and will have no ability to speak to someone for help. This will delay my ability to process planning and warrant applications on behalf of my clients, and waste a lot of time.</p>	<p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquires we receive we are having to reduce this service. Officers dealing with an application will be contactable.</p>
<p>Archie MacAlister Chartered Architect</p>	<p>A pre-application advice service should be available for domestic applications, which are often complex. Customer service 'face to face' should continue to be available and who would decide 'who need this contact'</p>	<p>Due to the unsustainable levels of pre-application enquires we receive we are having to reduce this service. However, a judgement will be taken</p>

APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

<p>Studio dub Architects</p> <p>Mark Anderson marchitects ltd</p> <p>Halvorsen Architects</p> <p>Somner Macdonald Architects</p>	<p>Is hard to agree or disagree as is dependent on the quality of information which hithertoo has had many gaps and / or hard to interpret.</p> <p>You state that there will still be direct contact with the relevant case officers whilst a planning or building warrant application is in progress. I prefer to do this by email and telephone. It is essential when moving to the web based contact system that this direct communication is maintained to check on status and to deal with any issues arising, keeping the applicant engaged and informed.</p> <p>I think what you propose is good but I also think that face to face meetings and telephone calls direct to a planning officer are vital services that should not go and should not necessitate pre-query forms to be completed.</p> <p>It's important to retain face to face contact. Archives access is very important. The current facility appears chaotic and unorganised. It also doesn't come over as very personable and this could be improved.</p>	<p>on whether applications of a more complex nature require more detailed pre-application advice.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. This direct contact with officers dealing with applications will remain.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. New web content will be created to make this information easier to access.</p>
<p>MSP</p>		
<p>Sarah Boyack MSP</p>	<p>Ms Boyack wrote on behalf of a constituent, a local architect, about removing the duty planner / building control officer.</p> <p>Ms Boyack shared her constituents concerns that this would be retrograde step for the public and professionals and ask to think again. Advice from planning staff is invaluable to a range of constituents and local businesses and as this service is used by 'thousands of constituents' would urge a reversal on such a proposal.</p>	<p>It is not proposed to close the helpdesks. Pre-application advice will still be available for larger, more complex proposals.</p> <p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Comments from individuals		
	<p>The wording of the questions is mostly jargon which does not generate a feeling of engagement with the general public.</p> <p>Keeping the website online outside office hours is a future priority for you, thanking you in advance for reading this and striving to keep Edinburgh beautiful.</p> <p>Forcing customers online who may not have or be unfamiliar with. If it means registering / having details stored then I will not do it and will resort to e-mail / telephone. No consideration appears to have been given to the elderly, computer illiterate or those without computers. People should not be forced to use this to save money at the expense of good existing customer relations.</p> <p>There is the need for greater transparency around decision-making to require the decisions taken by individual Councillors on planning applications to be recorded and displayed.</p> <p>I'm ok with more use of online but the information on the website needs to be easier to find/understand. The LDP is very technical and policies for my local area are open to interpretation.</p> <p>I'd like better web information on planning guidance. I don't find it very useful for the smaller applications I submit and it doesn't give certainty.</p>	<p>Noted. The questions were kept as short and simple as possible.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. The Council's channel shift programme will support those who are not online and other methods will be available for those who need this help.</p> <p>Noted. The Council takes transparency seriously and has introduced means such as webcasting to allow discussions to be help in an open forum. Decisions are also available online.</p> <p>Noted. The next LDP process will consider new and innovative ways of showing how the proposed plan will impact at a local level.</p> <p>Our online information will be improved to allow customers to self serve as much as possible. This will include the use of 'knowledge base' which allows customers to get to the information they require.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

	<p>There should be a greater emphasis on getting young people involved in planning, allowing them to say what they want in their area, how they'd like to see the city develop and what is important such as places to hang out, parks, safer streets to play and cycle.</p> <p>OK with more use of social media but would like use digital participation and making the local development plan easier to understand.</p> <p>Concerned about losing the helpdesk as it is good to discuss proposals with a planner before doing the drawings for clients.</p> <p>I understand you are trying to move more business onto electronic media, but the danger is fewer people will use the system and planning will increasingly become a matter for the experts.</p>	<p>Noted. Better ways to engage young people in the planning process will be developed in the coming year.</p> <p>Noted. We plan to consider the greater use of digital participation for projects such as the development plan.</p> <p>Noted. It is not proposed to close the helpdesk. This service is limited in the amount of pre-application advice we can offer.</p> <p>Noted. In most instances it is recommended that a professional agent/architect is employed.</p>
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Planning & Building Standards

Customer Engagement Strategy

December 2015



1. Introduction
1. Who are our customers?
2. What is engagement?
2. Consulting with our customers
4. Communicating with our customers
6. Planning information and records
7. Customer journey of the future
9. A Timetable for Action

Introduction

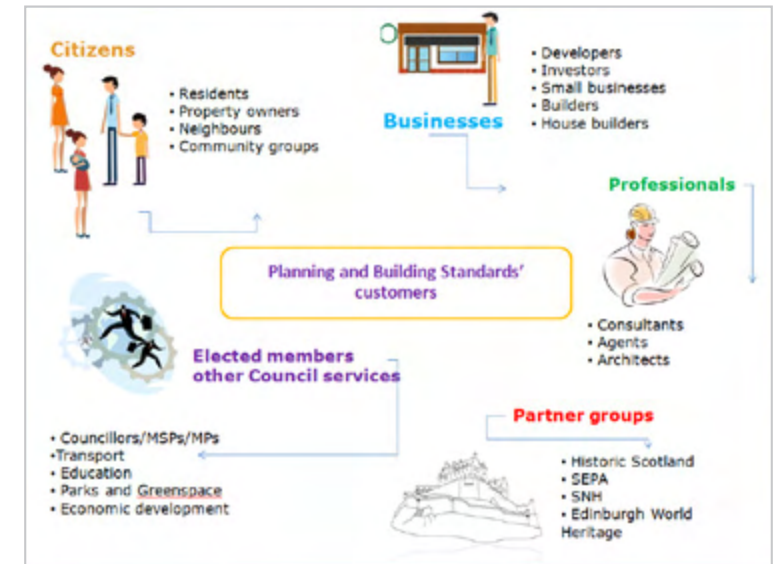
The Planning and Building Standards service is a frontline service with a diverse range of customers. The demand for our services has put pressure on our resources and we need to find ways of streamlining our delivery of these services whilst still ensuring we provide good customer service. We want to change the way we deliver our service and this Customer Engagement Strategy sets out how we will do this.

Who are our customers?

As a frontline public service, Planning and Building Standards has a wide range of customers. Some have direct contact with the service in terms of applying, commenting and engaging in a variety of planning and building warrant processes. Others experience the outcomes of these processes without formal contact. In other words, the buildings and spaces we help to create affect everyone.

Although we refer to those who come in contact with the service as 'customers', this has a broad meaning and is used to describe the various individuals, groups and organisations who interact with the service. It is recognised that many of these customers are citizens living and working in the city.

The range of customers reflects the great interest in how the City develops with all having varying needs.



Our customers can also be split into those with whom we have:

Direct customer contact:

- Applicants / agents/developers/landowners applying for a variety of planning and building warrant related permissions
- Neighbours
- Community councils and amenity groups
- Residents or agents requesting pre-application advice
- Anyone concerned that the works are unauthorised
- Councillors and their assistants
- Citizens affected by the local development plan
- Complainants about any aspect of our service
- Other professionals and consultants
- Other Council services
- Partners such as Edinburgh World Heritage and Fire Scotland
- Other Councils and Government agencies
- Solicitors
- Students and other researchers

Indirect customer contact:

- Those who live, work and visit the buildings and spaces created through the planning and building warrant process
- Investors and employers from the outcomes of the planning process
- Future generations and new residents/businesses, all of whom benefit from decisions – schools, new housing, conservation of historic buildings/areas, enhancing biodiversity and movement/transport changes.

KEY MESSAGE -**OUR CUSTOMER CONTACT CHANNELS ARE CHANGING**

We have a wide range of customers, often with competing demands, who put pressure on our resources. We need to prioritise our service delivery in line with the Council's Transformational Change programme. This will mean focussing our services to those most needing our advice and directing others to online services.

our customers to express an opinion on a proposed area of our work to inform and enhance that work. It is generally a time-limited exercise and is followed with further communication on the engagement outcome.

Communication = Engagement**Communication + Consultation + Communication = Engagement**

As part of our Customer Engagement Strategy, we want to improve how we engage with our customers so that they feel they have had a proper say in the development of the City even if they do not agree with the final outcomes.

Consulting our customers

Public participation is at the heart of the planning process and it is important that we have robust and clear systems in place to ensure effective consultation on a range of subjects. There is no provision whilst processing building warrant applications for public consultation.

The vision for Planning and Building Standards is to *'put our service at the heart of place-making in Edinburgh'*. A key component of good place making is involving the local communities in shaping the places they want to live, work and spend time in. Engaging with some groups can be challenging and we must reach beyond the usual 'stakeholders'.

A key aspect of effective consultation is getting the communication right at the beginning of the process to help raise awareness of the opportunity to comment and to respond to feedback.

What is Engagement?

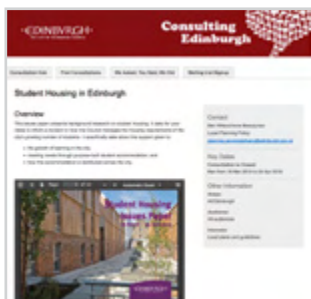
This document recognises that different approaches are appropriate in different situations. In all cases the **communication** of information is essential to inform our customers of any proposed change or issue. The provision of information is a valuable end in itself and may be the only suitable action in certain circumstances, for example communicating factual information on the planning application process.

In many cases effective engagement will also include **consultation**. This involves providing a specific opportunity for



Development Plans

In preparing planning policy, the [Scottish Government](#) asks us to take an innovative approach to consultation and communication. Preparation of the [Edinburgh Local Development Plan](#) also requires a Participation Statement within our Development Plan Scheme and notification to neighbours of any newly proposed Plan that the Council reaches a settled view upon. In the future we will take forward this innovative approach by the production of interactive Development Plans which are easier to read online. We will start bespoke and effective consultation early in the Plan process to ensure the key issues are understood and there is a chance to comment on them at an early stage.



Guidance

[Planning guidance](#), whether statutory or non-statutory, requires effective consultation to ensure acceptance of the basic principles of the guidance and adds weight to our decisions. The Council's [Consultation Hub](#) is the central point for all our consultations. Anyone can sign up for the Hub and be notified of new consultations and we can also use the Hub to consult selected customers on specific topics. Customers can respond via the Hub. We will make use of the Council's Consultation Hub and bespoke training events to ensure participation is as wide as possible.

THE EDINBURGH PLANNING CONCORDAT 2013



National and Major applications

Pre-application consultation is a mandatory aspect of national and major planning applications. One public event must be held, and advertised as per statutory requirements, and a Pre-Application Consultation report submitted with the planning application, detailing the level of engagement that has been undertaken.

We expect applicants to go beyond the legal requirements for consultation at pre-application consultation stage on national and major applications. The [Edinburgh Planning Concordat](#) sets out the process for collaborative consultation and this will be refreshed and kept under review to ensure effective consultation. In addition, we will put processes in place to analyse what difference the pre-application consultation has had in making the development better and post decision surveys will form a part of this.

Planning Applications

We notify neighbours next to the site of all planning applications and advertise certain applications via notices posted near the site and/ or in the local newspaper. This is in line with planning regulations and there is no intention to change this. There is no such legislative requirement for building warrants.

We also consult internal and external consultees to ensure that we have all the technical advice we need and working protocols will be updated to ensure that consultation requirements are clear.

How we will consult

We will consult our customers on planning policy and guidance using the [Consultation Hub](#) where customers can:

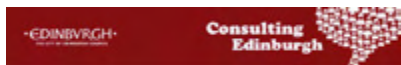
- Read an overview of what the consultation is about including contact details and links to relevant documents
 - Respond to consultations
 - Find out about any event linked with a consultation exercise
 - Read the next steps and actions to be taken when the consultation ends
 - Read the results from past consultations.
- We will use the Consultation Hub for the next Local Development Plan but we will also prepare a bespoke consultation strategy in line with the Participation Statement to ensure a structured and focused series of public events, particularly during the key consultation stages of the Main Issues Report. The strategy will include a Local Development Plan website with more helpful interactive digital information and the ability to comment easily online.
 - We will consult on other planning guidance on the Consultation Hub but we will also design any additional consultation to reflect each topic and its particular audience.
 - We will consult on national and major planning applications in line with the requirements of the Edinburgh Planning Concordat.
 - We will refresh our working protocols including that between Planning and Neighbourhood Partnerships to ensure effective consultation happens on planning proposals.

- We will prepare a youth engagement strategy to ensure we consult young people.
- We will look at ideas for consulting hard to reach groups and implement these on individual projects.

Communicating with our customers

Edinburgh has always been a forward thinking Council in terms of innovation in Information and Communication Technology. We were one of the first to introduce an [E-Planning](#) and [Building Warrants](#) system, allowing new ways of submitting applications and considerably greater access to information for the wider community. Our use of social media, ([Twitter](#) and the [Planning Blog](#)) identifies us as a leading authority in this respect. However, emails and phone calls remain the main ways our customers contact us. The volumes of contact have increased over the years, and, in the context of a Council seeking transformational change in service provision, we will implement different ways of serving our customers' needs, including a reduction in some face to face contact.

Currently we provide a number of ways where customers can communicate with us. Through the increasing use of digital technology such as mobile phones, tablets and computers, we are seeing significant changes to how people consume and interact with information. Whilst we already make good use of this change in the information we offer, there are greater opportunities to expand the use of digital communications, increasing participation and improving accessibility. Taking existing customers from more traditional communication means to new online means – channel shift.



**KEY MESSAGE -
HOW WE COMMUNICATE IS CHANGING**

Communication channels will change so that our customers are able to self serve to find the information they need. Information will be improved and online forms will be available if the customer has been unable to find the information and still needs advice from us. A full pre-application advice service will still be provided for major applications and other complex cases. We will make more use of digital technology to enhance the customer experience. We will review our email and phone contact channels to make them more efficient and customer friendly.

Changing our Communication Channels

Currently, the customer has a wide range of means to get advice on various aspects of the development process. Managing these different channels can be resource intensive and the demand for direct contact is oversubscribed. Promoting a self serve culture will encourage Channel Shift in line with the Council's transformational change programme. Moving customers to find the information online will allow planning and building standards officers to concentrate on priorities and core business. However, this has to be balanced with the customers' needs and our role in promoting the sustainable economic growth of the City.

Pre - Application Advice

Giving a full advice service on major developments is a top priority and there are complex building warrant, local developments and listed buildings cases where advice and guidance at face to face level is required. Advice on more straightforward cases will be dealt with on a case by case basis but the aim will be to direct the enquirer to the Council

website for the information. This includes householder enquiries and particularly where professional agents want us to confirm whether a proposal needs planning permission or a building warrant; in many cases, they can make the assessment themselves and make the appropriate applications. If help is still needed, the enquirer will be directed to an online form to provide the information we need for the enquiry.

A pre-application advice service will be provided for

- all major developments
- all large building warrant applications
- unusual or contentious cases
- smaller complex cases where polices, guidance and regulations are open to interpretation

Pre - application advice will not generally be given for

- householder applications
- adverts
- windows
- driveways
- straight forward changes of use

All requests for advice should be made on our online enquiry form.

How we will communicate



- An interactive, fully online development plan on a bespoke website – printing and posting of large documents will be restricted
- Consultation Hub for all consultations
- Focused consultation events based on a consultation plan depending on the subject matter
- Increased use of social media (Twitter and the Planning blog) to inform customers about current planning and building standards issues
- An online form for pre-application requests
- The planning & building standards help desk service will be retained but at a reduced level
- A front counter service where the caller will be helped on the spot if we can or directed to online resources
- An email response service which directs our customers to an enhanced website experience where they will be able to self serve to find the answers they need
- An improved website with interactive links to help the customer find the information
- A telephone service directing callers to information online
- General telephone numbers will be removed to encourage the use of online systems
- Direct contact with case officers or their managers on planning and building warrants applications that have been submitted will be available
- Direct contact with officers responsible for policies and plans will be available
- Webcasting, including training events

- Greater use of video (YouTube) to share information about the service
- Publication of easy read 'quick guides' for a variety of common enquiries
- The development of 'apps' for mobile devices
- The development of an 'interactive house' to help customers decide if they need consent
- Help for those who cannot find the information they want online - this may be an email response or a call back
- Help for those who do not have access to online systems.

Planning information and records

The service retains a large number of historic records which are regularly requested by customers for a variety of purposes such as buying and selling properties. Addresses of planning and building standards applications from the early 1990s are available through our [online services](#) with registers of planning information from the 1940s to 2000 also online. Detailed information on planning applications, including drawings and reports are available online from 2003. Historic drainage records for large parts of the city are also available online. Otherwise, searches must be done of paper records for information and the enquirer is usually asked to come in and view the files. There is a charge for building warrants searches and copying and for copies of planning documents.

The information we hold will be in line with legislative requirements, our retention schedules and records management policy. We will publish information online in accordance with this and the Scottish Government's guidance on Publishing Information Online.

Other information not online can be subject to Environmental Information requests which are co-ordinated by the Council's FOI team. The Council gathers and processes information about citizens so that services can be delivered effectively and efficiently. The Council's 'Privacy Notice' sets out what to expect when we collect information in line with the Data Protection Act, 1998 and other legislation and how we handle personal information.

Customer journey of the future

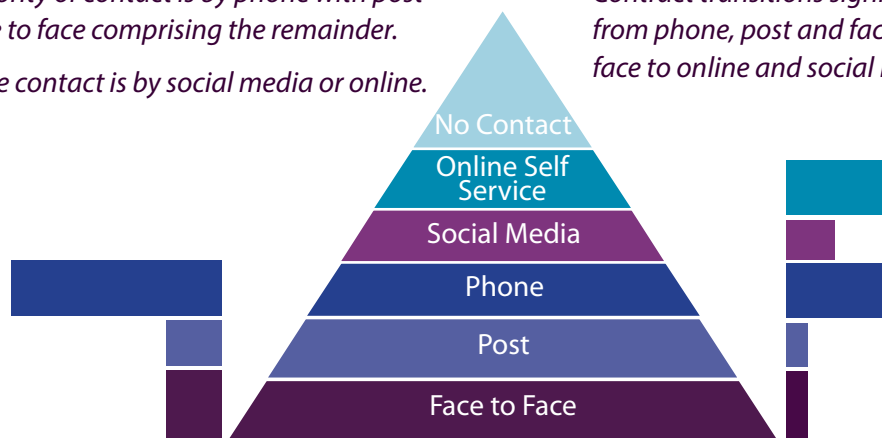
The customer has a number of ways they can contact the service to receive information and advice. The graphic below of the Council wide service shows how this will change as we implement 'Channel Shift'.

Current State

- The majority of contact is by phone with post and face to face comprising the remainder.
- Very little contact is by social media or online.

Future State

- Contact transitions significantly from phone, post and face to face to online and social media.



**Please note the bars represent contact volumes (illustrative)*

This means:

- The Planning and Building Standards telephone, email and face-to-face service will be given to those who need this contact, mainly for live planning and building warrant applications and major or complex cases.
- Other services will be largely based on online transactions and information with customers self serving to find what they need.
- Forms for pre application enquiries will be used.
- Pre-application advice will be restricted to large and more unusual or contentious cases.
- Social media such as Twitter and the Planning Blog will be used to keep customer up-to-date with Planning and Building Standards news.
- The Local Development Plan will be easier to view on an interactive website.
- Consultation events, such as on the Local Development Plan and Conservation Area Character Appraisals will continue to use drop in sessions and public events to ensure as many people as possible are engaged in these processes.
- Improved website information will be the top priority.
- Customers unable to access online systems will be offered a paper based advice service.

We will set out what our customer can expect in our Customer Service Charter.

The table below sets out number of scenarios before and after channel shift.

BEFORE CHANNEL SHIFT	AFTER CHANNEL SHIFT
Customers phone, email or arrive in reception to request basic information	Customers find this information themselves – improved online information Contact channels reduced so enquiries can be managed better Help given for those unable to go online
Pre-application enquiries made by telephone, email or face-to-face	Customers will complete online form for more complex proposals and these will go to teams for a response Small scale proposals - customers self serve online
Viewing and commenting on planning applications by email and in writing	Public access improved functionality to view and submit comments = more people using this method
Applying for various planning and building standards permissions	Increased use of planning submissions online Building Standards online submissions through eBuilding Standards
Online mapping – desktop based	Online mapping improved to allow access from mobile and table devices = more self serving

A Timetable for Action

The strategy will take time to deliver. The success of it depends on a cultural shift by all parties involved but crucially the online information systems of the Planning and Building Standards service needs to be better so the customer can find what they need. The action programme below sets out indicative dates to progress the strategy.

ACTION	INDICATIVE DATES
Approval of final strategy and charter	December 2015
Planning & Building Standards Help Desks changes	December 2015
Communication of changes	December 2015
Implementation of online forms	January 2016
Easy to read quick guides	January to March 2016
Interactive house	By July 2016
Interactive development plans	By March 2017
Mobile 'apps' on the need for planning permission	By March 2017

Contact Us

Phone the Council on 0131 200 2000

Planning Enquiries

planning@edinburgh.gov.uk

Building Standards Enquiries

buildingwarrant.applications@edinburgh.gov.uk



Planning & Building Standards

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

APPENDIX 3

Delivering a Customer 1st Service



Councillor Ian Perry
Convener of the Planning Committee



Councillor Denis Dixon
Vice-Convener of the Planning Committee

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What this Charter does

This Charter explains what the Council's Planning and Building Standards service does and what its customers can expect from us. It begins by setting out **what you can expect from us** when contacting the service and then more specific standards linked to our three main responsibilities which are:

Planning

- To prepare a [policy framework](#) that sets out how land should be developed and our natural and built places protected;
- To consider and make decisions on applications for [planning permission](#), listed building consent and other types of application and investigate breaches of planning control to ensure the development of our City is properly managed; and

Building Standards

- To consider and make decisions on [building warrant](#) applications, completion certificates and property inspections to secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of users and achieve sustainable development.

What you can expect from us

If you contact us by telephone:

- We will help you with your query on the spot if we can
- We will direct you to further information online, including online forms to request pre-application advice

- *If you leave us a comment on [Twitter](#) or the [Planning Blog](#):*
- We will respond within 2 working days if needed
- Consider whether we need to make service improvements to address concerns
- We will direct you to further information online.

If you email or write to us:

- will respond to you within 10 working days or tell you if we need longer
- ensure our response is free from jargon and easy to understand
- direct you to further information online, including online forms to request pre-application advice
- translate information into large print, other languages or Braille if needed.

If you visit us:

- we will advise you when the Planning & Building Standards help desks are available for general enquiries
- one of our staff will give you information that meets your needs or direct you to where you can find it online, including online forms
- see you within five minutes of your appointment time
- have friendly public offices, with clean and tidy waiting areas.



Policy Framework

What the Planning System does is set out by the Scottish Government in legislation, guidance and advice. Further information is available at www.gov.scot/planning

Scottish Government legislation requires that all Councils prepare a document setting out principles for where development of land will be allowed and where buildings and green spaces will be protected. These are called **Development Plans**. In Edinburgh, the Scottish Government requires that this Development Plan be made up of two documents: the Strategic Development Plan and the Local Development Plan.

The Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland sets out broad principles for the future use of land over a 20 year period on matters that cross Council boundaries. This includes key topics such as how many new houses are required, how they should be spread across the area and whether green belt land should remain as green belt. This document is not prepared by City of Edinburgh Council but by a partnership of the six Councils in the area called SESplan. It must accord with the Government's Scottish Planning Policy.

The Strategic Development Plan - what you can expect from us

The Strategic Development Plan is prepared, and consulted upon, by SESplan (see above). We will advise you to contact them directly if we cannot answer your questions about it.

Further information is available at www.sesplan.gov.uk

The Local Development Plan for Edinburgh contains detailed policies and proposals that must follow the principles set out in the Strategic Development Plan. The document sets out policies and proposals for the future use of land and the protection of the natural and built environment over a 10 year period. This includes key topics such as identifying sites for housing to meet the requirements set out in the Strategic Development Plan discussed above. Preparation of the document begins with the main consultation stage where the Council produce a **Main Issues Report** presenting options, and asking for your input on how they meet the requirements that have already been set by both Scottish Government policy and the Strategic Development Plan.

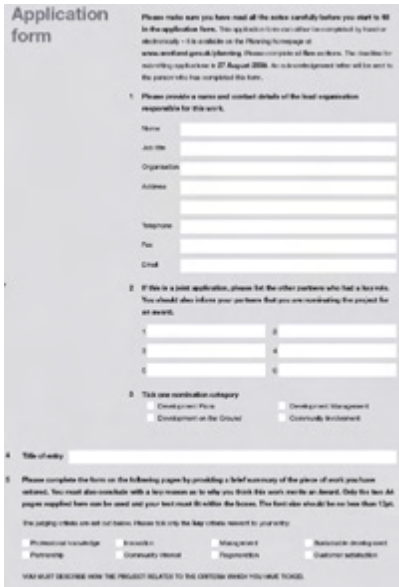
The Planning and Building Standards Service can also prepare more detailed guidance, for example on design, which forms part of the Local Development Plan but is prepared at a later time. This is called Supplementary Guidance and must meet Scottish Government requirements on preparation, participation and adoption.

The Local Development Plan - what you can expect from us

The programme for preparing the Edinburgh Local Development Plan and details of all opportunities to comment on it can be found in a document called the Development Plan Scheme at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan.

We will update this document annually.

We will use a range of ways of making sure there are opportunities to comment on future plans including using the Council's Consultation Hub, drop in sessions, interactive website information and workshops. We are led by what communities find most informative.



As stated above, the “Development Plan” for the city consists of the Strategic Development Plan and the Local Development Plan. Planning applications must be decided in line with the content of the Development Plan unless there are important planning reasons for an alternative decision.

Planning Applications

This charter explains what you can expect to happen when you [want to make an application for planning permission or other planning consents](#) and when you want to comment on someone else’s application. It then explains what happens when making a [decision on a planning application](#).

All applications for planning permission are grouped in terms of size and importance of the type of development that is being proposed. National developments are proposed by Scottish Government, are of Scotland-wide significance, and are the top tier in the hierarchy. An example is the new Forth Crossing. Below national developments are major developments which are of a size and scale to be considered of major importance. Examples might be a new shopping centre, a business park or a large scale housing development. All development proposals which are not national or major are classed as local developments. Examples are house extensions, small scale housing development of less than 50 houses and changes to the use of a property.

Anyone proposing a national or major development must carry out [pre-application consultation](#) with the local community to allow them to be better informed and to have an opportunity to contribute their views to the developer prior to the submission of a planning application. Developers must submit a [Proposal of Application Notice](#) with details of consultation at least 12 weeks before they want to submit a planning application.

Further information is available on our [major applications web page](#)

Pre-Application Consultation - what you can expect from us

We will assess Proposal of Application Notices in accordance with the *Edinburgh Planning Concordat*, a document that sets out how the Council, communities and developers work together on major developments.

We will expect developers to carry out more than the minimum consultation for more complex and contentious cases and we will encourage developers to set up websites to allow communities to access information and make comment more easily.

Making an application for planning permission, and all types of applications, is quicker when done online and it helps to avoid many of the reasons for applications not being valid on receipt.

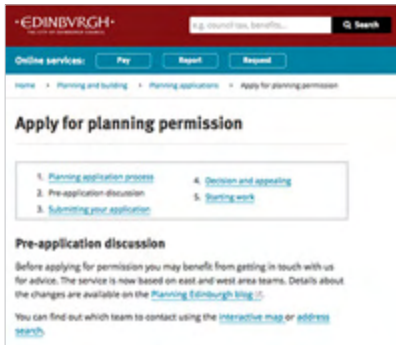
- Online applications are submitted via the Scottish Government E-planning website at www.eplanning.scotland.gov.uk
- Should you wish to submit your application on paper, all types of form can be downloaded from the E-Planning website.

As well as applications for planning permission, there are many other types of application depending on what it is you are proposing. Further information is available in the Council’s guide to [Validation of Applications](#).

If you are unsure what type of application to apply for, visit our webpage on [Permissions for Development](#).

If you are unsure whether you need planning permission or other consents, read our [online information](#) and you can then decide whether to make an application.

The completion and submission of planning application forms, and all other types of application, can be submitted by applicants themselves or using a professional agent, such as an architect.



Making an application for planning permission – what you can expect from us

Within 5 working days, we will check your application and advise you of any problems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is submitted correctly. Further information on the process and what should be submitted is available in the Council's guide to *Validation of Applications*

Within 10 working days of a valid application being received, we will send you an acknowledgement letter and inform you of the planning officer who will be dealing with it and the timescale for making a decision.

If a professional agent is used to submit a planning application, we will deal with the agent rather than the applicant in all discussions and negotiations. It is the responsibility of the agent to keep their client informed of progress and of any requirements of, or delays to, the process.

Within 15 working days of a valid application being received, we will carry out neighbour notification and consult on the application, where it applies. Notification involves sending a letter to all postal properties within 20 metres of the application site giving details of the proposal and highlighting that comments must be made to the planning service within 21 days from the date of the notification letter. Some applications are also advertised in the Evening News and a site notice is put up nearby.

Within 20 working days of a valid application being received, we will visit the site where appropriate.

The case officer will advise if changes are needed to make the proposals acceptable. In some cases, where substantial changes are needed, we will refuse the application or advise the applicant to withdraw their application and re-apply. If we do accept amendments during the application process we will only arrange for neighbours to be re-notified if the changes raise new planning matters.

Applications can be tracked on the *Planning and Building Standards Portal* for any amendments.

Planning Performance Targets

90% of approved major developments within the year to show added value quality improvements

90% of householder applications determined within 2 months

75% of non-householder applications determined within 2 months

75% of listed building consent applications determined within 2 months

Commenting on someone else's planning application

If you wish to look at a planning application or decision, or on an application, you can do so via the Planning and Building Standards Portal. Your comments cannot be treated as confidential for a number of reasons:

- if the application is refused, the applicant needs to know about objections if deciding to appeal;
- the closeness of an objector to the application site may be an important factor in the decision
- comments on an application are part of the background papers and have to be available under Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Acts.

Only comments relevant to planning issues can be considered as part of the assessment of the planning application. Relevant planning issues include:

- traffic and parking - appearance of the area - impact on a conservation area - setting or character of a listed building - loss of significant landscape features - noise and disturbance - effect of cooking odours - loss of sunlight or daylight – overshadowing - privacy - economic benefits.

We cannot consider comments on non relevant planning issues, such as:

- loss of private view - effect of the development on property values - building regulation matters.

Racist remarks may be forwarded to Police Scotland.

Our guide to [Commenting on Planning Proposals](#) outlines how to ensure you make a valid comment.

Comments must be received within 21 days of the date of registration, neighbour notification letter, or advertisement in the press, whichever is later. Extra time is given for public holidays and if the application has an Environmental Impact Assessment.

There is no statutory provision for the public to make comments on some application types eg. tree applications and certificates of lawfulness.

Community Councils should contact the case officer if they need more time to comment.

Commenting on someone else's planning application what you can expect from us

You will have the opportunity to receive an automatic email acknowledgement when commenting online using the Planning and Building Standards Portal.

We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt if you comment by letter or email.

We will consider all comments on applications provided they are submitted on time and the comments are relevant to planning issues. We will only consider late comments if they raise important planning matters that were not previously considered. We do not accept anonymous comments.

We will make your comments known to the agent but we will not make your personal details available at that time.

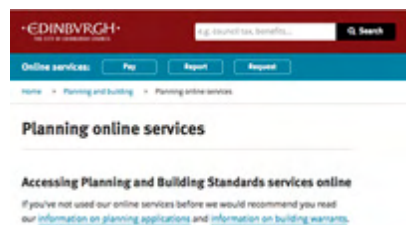
We will only re-notify you of changes to the application if they raise new planning issues: changes can be tracked on the *Planning and Building Standards Portal*.

We are unable to discuss the merits or demerits of a case with objectors or other third parties when an application is being considered as this may affect the objective assessment of the proposal.

We will inform you of the decision on the planning application.

Comments on Committee items will be publicly available online but we will redact personal information such as email addresses, phone numbers and signatures. Comments will be taken offline 6 months after the decision is issued.

We will deal with requests for comments to be taken offline before 6 months as sympathetically as possible.





Making a decision on a planning application

Once the application, including the responses from consultees, and public comments has been assessed by the planning officer, a report of handling is prepared. Decisions on planning applications are taken in one of two ways. In some cases, the decision can be made by planning officers and is referred to as a “delegated decision”. Delegated decisions make up the vast majority of all decisions and enable quicker decisions on simpler cases. They are usually the less contentious, smaller applications, but can include cases with objections or which are being recommended for refusal.

In other cases the planning officer makes a recommendation to the Development Management Sub-Committee or a full Council meeting in some circumstances and the decision is then taken by the City’s councillors.

Making a decision on a planning application – what can you expect from us

We will notify you or your agent within 4 working days of the decision being made.

We will notify all those who have made comments on the application within 4 working days of the decision being made.

We will place a copy of the decision notice and the report of handling on Planning and Building Standards Online Services

If a scheme needs to be changed after the decision, we will assess the proposals to see if they raise any new planning issues which might change the substance of the consent. If so, we will ask for a new planning application. If the changes do not raise any new planning issues which change the substance of the consent, we will vary the consent; neighbours and other interested parties will not be notified of these changes but they can be tracked on *Planning and Building Standards Online Services*.

Planning permission lasts for 3 years although we can make a Direction for it to be longer or shorter.

If an applicant is unhappy about a delegated decision taken on a local development, or the application has taken longer than the legal time limit, they can request a review by the *Planning Local Review Body*.

In cases that cannot be decided by a Local Review Body, the applicant has the right to appeal to Scottish Ministers.

Further information is available at www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk

There is no 3rd party right of appeal in Scotland. This means that if anyone commenting on an application is unhappy about the decision, they cannot ask for a review and they cannot appeal to Scottish Ministers. We will direct any aggrieved parties to our Report of Handling which explains the reasons for our decision. We are unable to respond if you think the decision was wrong. However, you can complain if you thought our processes or procedures were wrong in coming to the decision.

Building Warrants



What the Building Standards System does is set out by the Scottish Government in legislation, guidance and advice. Further information is available at

www.gov.scot/buildingstandards.

There is a separate *National Customer Charter*.

You should be aware that to carry out work which requires a Building Warrant, without first having obtained this type of approval, is an offence in terms of Section 8(2) of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003.

A screenshot of the 'Application for Building Warrant' form. The form is titled 'BUILDING STANDARDS APPROVAL' and 'Application for Building Warrant'. It contains several sections with checkboxes and text boxes, including 'Application', 'Location of building or site to which the application relates', 'Type of building', 'Proposed work', and 'Owner of proposed work'. The form is designed for online completion.

Making a Building Warrant Application

Before you carry out any building work to your building, you should check if you need a building warrant. Most work needs a building warrant which you must get before starting work otherwise there will be legal complications if you want to sell your property.

If your work is going to cost less than £70,000, you can apply for a building warrant online. You will need to register in order to submit an application including plans. This is free and only takes a couple of minutes. Applications for work costing more than £70,000 must be submitted by post or delivered in person to the Department. This will change in summer 2016 when the new e-Building Standards Portal is available.

You can download our *guidance on making a Building Warrant application*, along with our Building Warrant fees list showing how much your application will cost.

Making a Building Warrant Application – what you can expect from us

Within 4 working days, we will carry out an administrative check on your application and advise you of any problems after this check. Alternatively, we will let you know your application is valid and is being progressed.

Building Standards Performance Targets

90% of first reports on building warrant applications, telling you if you need to make changes to your proposals to comply with current building regulations to be issued within 20 working days

Making a Decision on a Building Warrant Application

The City of Edinburgh Council will grant a building warrant if they are satisfied that the building will be constructed in accordance with the building operations regulations and the building standards regulations. A warrant for demolition will be granted if the requirements of the building operations regulations will be met.

Making a Decision on a Building Warrant – what you can expect from us

We will seek to minimise the overall average time taken to grant a building warrant measured from the date of lodging to the date of granting the warrant.



Building Standards

NATIONAL CUSTOMER CHARTER



Building Standards Performance Targets

80% of building warrants, if the final revised drawings are altered to the Council's satisfaction, to be issued within 10 working days

90% of completion certificates to be issued within 5 working days after final inspection

90% of requests for a site inspection in relation to a completion certificate to be responded to within 5 working days



Seeking Advice

The Council is committed to giving advice on a range of planning and building warrant proposals. If you are unable to go online to seek advice, please visit your nearest library or neighbourhood office where staff will be able to help. A paper based system will be available if this is not possible.

Seeking Advice – what you can expect from us

If you have a general enquiry about a planning or building warrant matter, we will aim to respond within 10 working days. As part of this process, we will advise you to where you can find the information online.

The Planning and Building Standards Help Desks will be open from 9am to 1pm for general enquiries every week day other than between Xmas and New Year.

If you are seeking advice on a particular proposal, we will ask you to complete a pre-application advice form so that we can ensure we have all the information we need to be able to give advice. As part of this process, we will advise you to where you can find information online.

We will then send the enquiry to the team for the area.

We aim to respond within 10 working days.

We will not generally give advice on the following types of development as the information can be found online - *householder development - windows - driveways - straight forward change of uses - adverts.*

Pre-application advice will normally be restricted to large, unusual or contentious cases or on smaller complex cases where policies or guidance and regulations are open to interpretation.

We will arrange a more formal response for these more complex proposals.

Requests for meetings will be handled by team managers and these will be decided based on the complexity and/or size of the proposals.

Professional agents will normally be advised to do their own assessment of whether permission is needed and make the appropriate applications.

Works where there is no Record of Permission

We understand that sometimes work is carried out and there is no record of permission. This is called retrospective works. This can be particularly frustrating when you are trying to sell your house.

In relation to Planning:

If the works were done more than 4 years ago to your house, they are then legal under planning law but if you need a formal letter to confirm this, you will need to apply for a *certificate of lawfulness*. Other types of development such as a change of use, other than to a house, have a longer period (10years) before they become legal.

It may be that the works did not need planning permission but again you need to apply for a certificate of lawfulness if you want legal confirmation.

If you have a listed building and have done work to it without consent or confirmation that you do not need consent, you should read our guidance note on *Selling Your Home* or apply for listed building consent if this is insufficient. We do not issue letters of comfort.

You can check online whether work has consent using our online services or [historic planning records](#)

Finally, if you are concerned that work has been carried out without permission, please fill in an *enforcement breach form* so we can investigate. *You can find out more about Enforcement standards in our [Enforcement Charter](#).*

In relation to Building Standards

If you do not have a building warrant or a certificate of completion, there are various ways you can get this sorted. See our service standards below.

Retrospective works – what you can expect from us

In all cases, the target response time is 10 working days.

We will direct you to our online systems if you want to check whether work has permission.

We will direct you to our *enforcement breach form* if you think work has been carried out without either Planning or Building Warrant consent.

In relation to Planning

We will advise you to apply for a *certificate of lawfulness* if you need a legal decision on whether planning permission is needed.

We will direct you to our guidance on *Selling Your Home* if work has been done to your listed building without consent. Alternatively you can apply for *listed building consent* as we do not issue letters of comfort.

In relation to Building Standards

We will ask you to apply for a *property inspection* if the work is of a minor non-structural nature and was carried out and completed before 1st May 2005 and you do not have a building warrant for the works. There is a charge for this.

We will ask you to submit a *Completion Certificate Where No Warrant Was Obtained* if the work was carried out and completed on or after 1st May 2005, together with plans and the relevant fee.

We will ask you to apply retrospectively using our *confirmation of completion service* if you have a building warrant but do not have a completion certificate.

Information Requests

The Planning and Building Standards Service holds a great deal of information. Some has to be kept in perpetuity, but other information is only kept in accordance with a records retention schedule. Under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 the Council is obliged to keep schedules of what records we keep and for how long we keep them. You can check if we've already published the information that you want on our [Access to Information webpage](#).

Anyone has a right to request information from a public authority. Many planning applications and certain data relating to building warrants are available online on our [Public Access](#) system and you may find the information you want there. Paper records are also available to view and copy.

If you cannot find the information you want online, you can make an Environmental Information Request (EIR). Please ask us in writing using the [online form](#) on our website or by email or post. EIR requests are dealt with centrally within the Council and Planning and Building Standards will send any information requests to that unit for processing.

Copies of Tree Preservation Orders are available for inspection at the Planning and Building Standards Reception area during office hours.

Information Requests – what you can expect from us

We will hold information in accordance with our records retention schedule.

We will make information available online in accordance with the *Council's publication scheme*.

The Plan Store where you can view and copy paper records, when authorised to do so, will be open from 9am to 1pm every weekday other than between xmas and New Year.

We will send any environmental information requests to the FOI team for processing and you will receive a response within 20 working days.

Complaints



We will consider all complaints made about the way in which your planning application, building warrant, enquiry or comment was dealt with. However, disagreement with a decision of the Council will not, in itself, be a ground for complaint and in many situations there is a separate procedure for an applicant to appeal against such decisions. As such we will not discuss the merits or de-merits of a decision and we will direct you to the Report of Handling which sets out the reasons for the decision.

The quickest way to sort things out is to talk to the officer concerned. However, if this does not work our formal complaints procedure has two stages:

- frontline resolution
- investigation

Frontline resolution

We will respond to your complaint within five working days. We aim to resolve your concerns within this timescale. If we need more time, we'll let you know. If you are not satisfied with our response you can ask us to review your complaint.

Investigation

We will appoint a senior Council officer to review your complaint. We will tell you who the Council officer is and respond within 20 working days. If your complaint is complex, we may be unable to resolve your concerns within this timescale. Instead we'll contact you to agree a different date.

If you are still not satisfied, you can then contact the [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman \(SPSO\)](#)

Complaints – what you can expect from us

If you make a complaint:

We will aim to resolve it on the spot

We will respond to you within five working days if we can't resolve it straight away

We will investigate your complaint if you are still not satisfied, and give you a final response within 20 working days unless we need longer.

Data Protection

When handling personal data the Council must do so fairly and lawfully in accordance with the Data Protection Act. There is a requirement for us to provide public information on how planning decisions were taken. If you are thinking of lodging a planning application, or commenting on a planning application, but do not wish your contact details to be placed in the public domain then you should consider asking your architect, or a solicitor, to lodge the application or representations on your behalf. Their contact details would then be shown in place of yours.

Personal signatures, e-mail addresses and telephone details will be removed from our online records. Where appropriate other “sensitive” personal information within documents will also be removed prior to publication online. However, all other information relating to a planning application may be publicly available. In relation to Building Standards only those people with a defined interest are able to have copies of Building Warrant approved plans.



If you are unhappy that information about you is published in connection with a planning application please contact the Council at planning@edinburgh.gov.uk and, depending on the nature of your concern, we will consider what we can do about the matter.

Data Protection – what you can expect from us

We will comply with the Data Protection Act when we publish information.

We will redact any personal email addresses, phone numbers, signatures and other personal information from our online records

We will consider whether we can remove information from our website if you are not happy about its publication.

Contact Us

Phone the Council on 0131 200 2000

Planning Enquiries

planning@edinburgh.gov.uk

Building Standards Enquiries

buildingwarrant.applications@edinburgh.gov.uk

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/building warrants](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/building-warrants)

