

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
28th JUNE 2007

Update of the Development Control Charter (2007)

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	A Better Environment
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Managing the Local Environment
KEY PRIORITY:	Development Assessment and Building Control
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Stephen Clee
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
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APPENDICES	Copy of the Development Control Charter (2007) <i>The Appendix to this report has been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details).</i>

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' approval for changes to the Development Control Charter. The Charter is an easy to understand guide to the development control and enforcement system which is aimed at members of the public. It also sets out the standards of performance and service which can be expected.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:**

to adopt the updated Development Control Charter 2007

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Development Control Charter is an A5 sized document which was previously published in 2001 and 2004. It provides a wealth of information about the

development control and enforcement processes and seeks to explain how customers, whether they be applicants or simply interested parties can interact with the system. It also directs customers to other sources of information which may be more specific to their enquiry and advises when and where customers can meet officers. Finally the Charter sets out the expected timescales with respect to a range of procedures which fall within the scope of the development control process such as validating and determining planning applications, acknowledging objections, investigating enforcement complaints and responding to pre-application enquiries.

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Charter covers the following topics:

- Service and Quality
- Information and Advice
- Submitting an Application
- Types of Planning Applications
- Dealing With an Application
- Consultation and Notification
- Commenting on a Planning Application
- The Planning Decision
- Development Monitoring
- Enforcement
- Complaints

4.2 Whilst many procedures have remained unchanged since the previous version, certain sections have been updated. These are as follows:

The Hub (Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre)

4.3 Previously customers were advised to call into Duke House to speak with a duty planning officer. Since the opening of the Hub last year customers are now advised that a duty planner is available at the Town Hall Monday to Friday (10:00am – 4:00 pm) when they can discuss a wide range of planning matters in person or by telephone.

The Website

4.4 The District Council's website offers a wide range of services which customers can access via their computer. Customers can now via the website:

- view a planning application
- comment on a planning application
- submit an online planning application
- report a breach of planning control
- download planning application forms
- view planning application fees
- view the weekly list of planning applications received
- view the monthly list of decisions made
- view the Development Control Charter, Practice Notes and advice leaflets

- 4.5 The revised Charter makes reference to the above services which are available through the website.

Current Scheme of Delegation

- 4.6 At the time of the previous Charter the former scheme of delegation for determining planning applications was in operation. This provided for Ward Councillor intervention where a total of five objections or less had been received and the planning officer was in favour of the proposal. Whilst the Charter does not explain the full extent of the current scheme of delegation which was introduced in June 2006 it advises that approximately 80% of applications are determined under delegated powers no matter if objections by members of the public have been raised. The Charter does however indicate that major and contentious planning applications are still decided by the Planning (Development Control) Committee.

Local Performance Targets

- 4.7 The Charter updates the current local performance targets which are as follows:
- to process 65% of major planning applications within 13 weeks;
 - to process 80% of minor applications within 8 weeks;
 - to process 90% of other applications (including householders) within 8 weeks.

Time Limits on Permissions

- 4.8 As a result of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 planning approvals are now only valid for 3 rather than the former 5 years.

Updating Advice Leaflets and Practice Notes

- 4.9 The Charter makes reference to the additional advice notes which are also available to view on the website.

Additional Advice Leaflets	Additional Practice Notes
A Planning Guide to Working From Home	Dealing With High Hedge Complaints
A Guide to the Development Team Approach	Guidance for Developers Submitting Major Planning Applications
A Guide to Locally Listed Buildings	Guidance for Producing Design and Access Statements
Inclusive Environments (making provision for disabled users of development)	
Guidance on Submitting Major Applications	
Guide to Sustainable Drainage Systems	

Updating Officer Contact Details

- 4.10 The contact names of those key officers within the division have been updated.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 It is not considered that there are any legal obstacles to changing the Charter.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 By publishing performance standards it is considered that there is a reduction in the risk of customers raising false expectations and dissatisfaction with the service.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 It is considered that the Charter provides an easy to understand guide to the development control and enforcement process. It provides up to date information about current district council procedures and points to other sources of information which may be of use. It also refers to when and where customers can meet officers in person and explains the standards of performance customers should expect.

9. CONSULTEES

9.1 None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Development Control Charter 2004

Recovery Plan to meet BV109 targets for determining planning applications – April 2006 Cabinet.

Supplementary Planning Document – Planning Obligations (adopted Feb 2007)

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004