

**Building Control Services
Slough Borough Council**

Service Charter



Slough Borough Council
BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES
SERVICE CHARTER

Our Service Charter outlines the commitments, responsibilities and standards of service that we provide to our customers.

The Building Control Service provides a range of professional based services around the protection of people in and around buildings, environmental protection through the conservation of fuel and power and access to and facilities within buildings. All of this work is based on the discharge of statutory requirements and ensuring regulatory compliance. In addition the Building Control service covers Dangerous Structures, Demolitions and Licensing for Hoarding and Scaffolding.

In exercising its statutory duty to enforce the Building Regulations, the Service will adopt where possible the main principals laid down in the National Building Control Performance Standards.

Local Authority Building Control provides regulatory control within a competitive environment and is required to recover, from the charges it sets, the relevant costs of running its building regulations function. The Service Charter is therefore established to ensure we always aim to deliver an excellent service in terms of consistency, professionalism and cost to both the residents of the borough and the other customers of the service.

1.0 **Processing, consultation and checking of Building Regulations Full Plans Applications.**

We aim to:

- Examine all full plans and issue either approval or letter of amendment within 3 weeks (15 working days) of formal deposit.
- Issue decisions on all full plans within statutory period.

2.0 **Processing, consultation and checking of Building Notices.**

We aim to:

- Examine all Building Notices and issue acceptance or defects schedule within 10 days of deposit.

3.0 **Site Inspections.**

Not every item of work to which the Building Regulations relate can be examined and Building Control Staff will use their professional skill and judgement in their selection of priorities for inspection within this stated policy. The generality of workload and resources available at the time can be one of the judgements.

The Building Regulations require that notice be given to the local authority by the builder at certain stages of the work but this is not taken as an indication that inspection is not necessary between these stages. The level of inspection considered necessary will be dependent upon many factors including:

- How complicated or straightforward the method of construction is.
- Whether the builder is in need of greater inspection, requested or otherwise.
- How serious the consequences of a particular contravention might be.

For the purposes of subsequent enforcement action, we will recommend to builders that the period between their requests for inspections should not exceed 1 month for highly active sites and not more than 3 months on others.

Where the work is substantially complete and there are no apparent serious contraventions that will have an adverse effect on Health and Safety and site progress has ceased, management may decide for

administrative purposes that such jobs may be filed away. This would not preclude the subsequent issue of a completion certificate, following a satisfactory final inspection and completion.

An individual Inspection Plan will be issued to the applicant and their agent upon acknowledgement of the receipt of an application, which will contain the framework under which site inspections are to be carried out and will indicate information such as:

- Stages that require inspection
- Contact details for arranging an inspection
- Access for Inspections
- Procedures for communicating the results of an inspection to the builder and applicant
- Scope of periodic inspections and unannounced inspections
- Scope of remote inspections
- Tests on completion of work
- Completion Certificates

The following represents both statutory notification stages and other common stages of work that the Building Control Surveyor would intend to inspect on request:

- Inspect all foundation excavations and oversite floor constructions.
- Inspect all damp proof courses and membranes.
- Inspect all floor constructions and principal structural beams.
- Inspect all roof constructions
- Inspect all foul drains and principal surface water drains before covering over
- Inspect key work relating to access and facilities for disabled people.
- Inspect key fire safety works
- Inspect works on completion
- Carry out other inspections whenever possible after making judgement on the perceived competency of builder and complexity of work.
- All inspections are carried out in respect of notifications of statutory stages, other requests for advice and as necessary unprompted inspections.

4.0 **Enforcement.**

We aim to:

- Be vigilant and respond to complaints about work for which approval has not been sought and deal with detected contraventions in line with Councils Building Control Enforcement Concordat.

5.0 **Unauthorised Work.**

We aim to:

- Identify unauthorised work whenever possible and instigate necessary action to assist in Compliance.

6.0 **Control of scaffolding and hoarding over highways under the Highways Act 1980.**

- Anyone wishing to erect scaffolding or hoarding on a public highway will require a licence. As this operation is normally associated with some or other form of building work we have become the Council service that evaluate the safety precautions necessary for its erection. We also consult other departments and services to ensure that the erection of a scaffold or hoarding will not affect other activities such as the highway.

7.0 **Control of demolition work under the Building Act 1984.**

- Anyone who intends to demolish a building that is not exempt should give notice to the Building Control team. When we receive the notification we will respond by serving a counter notice (a Section 81 notice), setting out conditions that must be complied with during the course of demolition. Demolition work should only start after either the Council has served a counter notice on the person intending to carry out the demolition work or a period of six weeks has expired since written notification of the intended demolition.

8.0 **Control of dangerous structures and buildings under the Building Act 1984.**

We aim to:

- Carry out inspections of all notifications in respect of dangerous structures and buildings.
- Inspections to be carried out within 24 hours (1 full working day) of receiving a complaint
- Provide an out of hours response to the Emergency services
- Take appropriate actions under sections 77 and/or sections 78 Building Act 1984 against the Owner and Occupier of the building.
- Arrange for the Council to undertake emergency work where necessary to remove danger to public, and seek to recover the Council's costs in doing so.

9.0 **Administration of Approved Inspectors under the Building Act 1984.**

We aim to:

- Examine all Initial Notices and Plans certificates received and issue decisions within the statutory period.
- File all final certificates received within the approved inspector ledger.

10.0 **Ensuring continual training of Building Control Staff.**

In order to secure compliance with relevant legislation as far as possible within reasonable cost and taking into account the possible incidents of defects, the Council will continue to monitor the amount of resources allocated to the Building Control function to ensure it is appropriate for the service to be effectively performed in accordance with this policy, allowing operation within this basis to be exercised by Building Control staff using their professional skill and judgement. We will also provide additional training to enable Building Control Surveyors to carry out their duties effectively in accordance with this policy.

11.0 **Maximising Income and monitoring expenditure.**

- Periodically monitor sites where there is a likelihood of lack of notification of work.

- Check all fees received for compliance with the Charges Regulations.
- Assist the Council in chasing bad debts.
- Regularly monitor and review all expenditure.

12.0 **Keeping written records.**

We aim to:

- Maintain permanent and accurate records and decisions for no less than the 15 year minimum period as set out in the National Building Control Performance Standards. These Records may be stored in hardcopy, electronically or in microfiche. All records will be subject to copyright, release of information rights and data protection restrictions.

13.0 **Performance Reviews & Quality Management**

The service will have a documented quality management system to ISO 9001:2008 to ensure standards are consistently being met. The system will include an auditing capability that will serve to establish, to external scrutiny, the extent of achievement of performance levels and mechanisms for continual improvement of the Building Control Service.

Regular internal reviews are undertaken as part of the quality management system and they include action taken to remedy any matters found outstanding. There will also be regular reviews with other agencies such as Fire Service, Consultant Engineers and Planning to ensure liaison and consultation optimise best interest of Building Control customers and building users.

14.0 **Review of this policy.**

- The Head of Building Control Services can amend this policy in the event of significant changes in Building Control Legislation and/or changes required to ensure the service remains competitive.