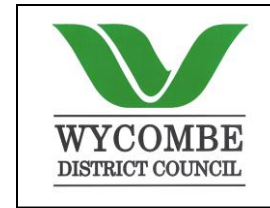


Planning & Sustainability Service Customer Charter



Our overall aim:

“To achieve sustainable development and improve the quality of the environment of the district”

To help us deliver this aim we have the following **service objectives**:

- to engage effectively with the community;
- to provide an accessible service;
- to provide an efficient and cost effective service;
- to work effectively through councillors and staff;
- to contribute to corporate aims; and
- to monitor the improvement of our service.

Our Customers

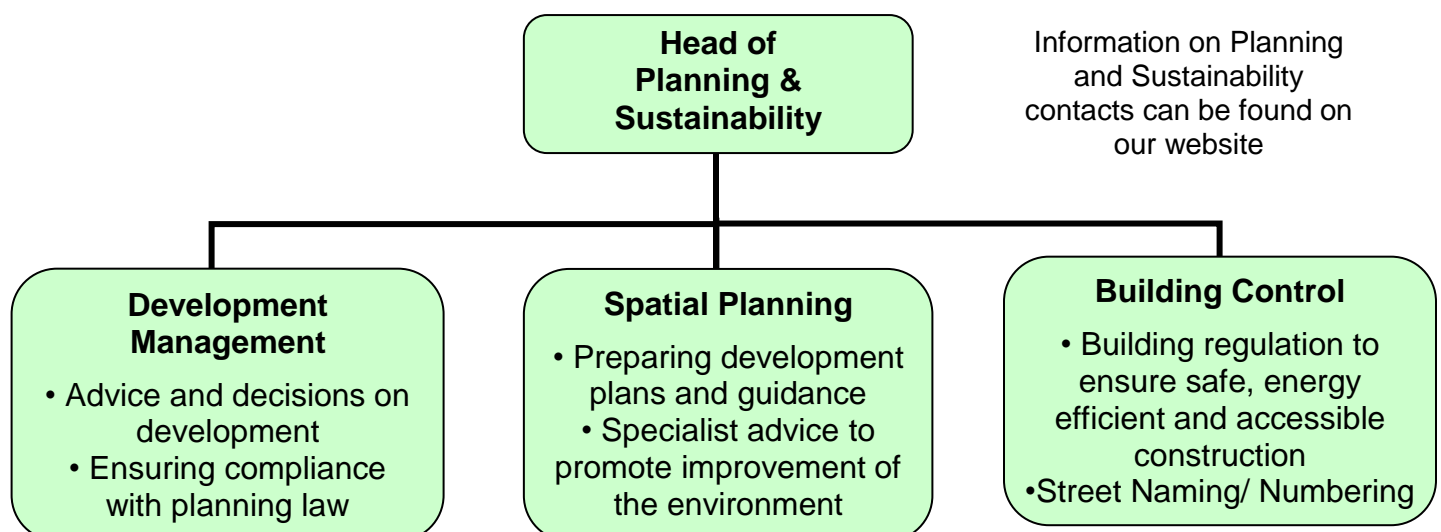
...are diverse, including:

- the general public
- developers, land owners and agents
- community and voluntary groups
- councillors and other WDC services
- local and regional partnerships
- businesses & potential investors
- infrastructure providers
- government departments/ agencies
- other local authorities

and have differing interests:

- some directly use our services
- some would like us to take a particular action on a planning issue
- some seek to influence the decisions we make
- some seek information, support and advice
- some work in partnership with us
....and
- all affected by the decisions we make

Our service is grouped in three teams:



Our Pledgesfor all areas of our Service

Acting professionally we will:

- Be helpful, courteous and treat you with fairness and respect.
- Act with integrity and honesty.
- Give accurate advice in a professional manner.
- Communicate clearly with you.
- Seek your views and use them to improve our service.
- Keep you informed about the progress of your enquiry.
- Deal with your complaints, admit any mistakes and put things right quickly.
- Prevent discrimination of any kind and promote Equality of Opportunities.

Sharing information we will:

- Publish a weekly Planning Bulletin (available free of charge by email) with updates on new documents, consultations and planning decisions.
- Include all key information and policy documents on our website.
- Provide general advice and information about Planning & Sustainability matters through the Customer Service Centre.

In return please:

- Treat our staff with respect.
- Provide us with accurate information and plans.
- Tell us when your circumstances change.
- Tell us what you think of our service.

When you contact the Council we aim to:

- Respond to correspondence (see Note below) within 10 working days unless it will take us more time to do so, in which case we will acknowledge the correspondence within 3 working days and say when we intend to respond and who the contact officer is.
- Return phone calls by the next working day.
- Acknowledge Freedom of Information (FOI) or Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests within 3 days and respond in 20 working days
- Acknowledge Data Protection Act Requests within 3 days. We endeavour to respond within 20 working days but our target is to respond to them within 40 working days.

Note: The reference to correspondence in the first bullet point covers letters and emails except for those submitted in response to consultations e.g. planning applications and draft development plans. In these cases correspondence will be summarised and reported as part of the decision making process.

Our Pledges for the Development Management Service

The team works to deliver an excellent service which is explained in more detail on the 'Planning and Buildings' pages of our website. This covers areas such as Planning Applications/ Decisions, Planning Enforcement and Planning Appeals: <http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-buildings.aspx>

Advice, Information and Planning Applications: We will:

- Provide general Planning Regulation Advice (by phone, letter, e-mail, website & through the customer service centre).
- Provide pre-application advice on development proposals in line with the scheme published on our website.
- Check all new applications submitted within 2 working days of receipt and either have passed them for registration or contacted the applicant/agent to resolve outstanding matters. Wherever possible we will resolve outstanding matters without returning the application.
- Acknowledge receipt of valid planning applications within 3 working days of registration and advise the applicant or agent of the name of the case officer.
- Publish planning application details on our website (PublicAccess) to make it easier to become involved in the planning process.
- Carry out public consultation on planning applications by means of neighbour letter, site notice and press advertisements as appropriate.
- Listen and take account of issues raised through neighbour notification on applications and other consultation procedures.
- Ensure public involvement at Planning Committee in accordance with our scheme of public speaking.
- Promote pre-application public consultation in line with our 'Statement of Community Involvement'.
- Provide weekly a list of applications received and decided on our website.
- Aim to determine planning applications within the Council's published targets whenever possible.

Planning Enforcement: We will:

- Provide a 'Planning enforcement investigation request form' on our web site to allow alleged breaches of planning control to be reported.
- Investigate all recorded breaches of planning control in line with our 'Statement of Service Provision: "The Enforcement Plan" for the Planning & Sustainability Service'.
- Clearly explain to the complainant the reason if we decide not to take action.
- Write to the offender (where a breach of planning regulations is identified) and state clearly what breach has occurred, the options/ timescale available to resolve it and what will happen if matters are not put right.

Planning Appeals: We will:

- Inform all who commented on a planning application when an appeal is lodged with the Planning Inspectorate.
- Defend our decisions at planning and related appeals (Public Inquiries, Hearings & Written Representations).

Our Pledges for the Building Control Service

The team strives to deliver an excellent service which is reflected in our Quality Management System accreditation. We will:

- Check 90% of your full plans Building Regulation Application within ten working days.
- Make a decision on 100% of full plans applications within five weeks or two months if you agree.
- Inspect 100% of building work that is in progress on the same working day if you contact us before 10:30 am.
- Issue 95% of completion certificates within two working days after satisfactory completion.
- Rename or renumber 100% of houses within ten working days.

When conducting site inspections Building Control staff will be helpful, courteous and give accurate advice in a professional manner.

Our Pledges for the Spatial Planning Service

Working to provide a robust framework for sustainable development and regeneration and promote good quality development and conservation we will:

- Meet our commitments as set out in the Local Development Scheme (work programme) to produce a sound Local Plan within a specified timetable.
- Publish any amendments to the Local Development Scheme and explain why these are being made.
- Meet or exceed the minimum statutory requirements to involve our residents and other stakeholders in the Local Plan(s) in line with our Statement of Community Involvement.
- Acknowledge written representations received in relation to Local Plans.
- Publish a Monitoring Report with information about development trends (including rates of house-building and future land supply), reports on output indicators and performance against targets.
- Provide information on a range of statistical and demographic information drawing on census information.
- Provide more detailed policy guidance about sites and specific policy issues through Supplementary Planning Documents.
- Provide a clear schedule of what planning policy guidance exists and how it can be obtained.
- Provide conservation area character appraisals, where available, to inform development proposals in our Conservation Areas.
- Provide information about developer contributions that have been collected and how these are used.
- Provide guidance on our website for communities regarding locally produced planning documents such as Neighbourhood Development Plans.

- Respond to concerns regarding significant trees facing imminent risk by way of a site visit to consider the appropriateness of a tree preservation order, within 2 working days.
- Deal with 85% of applications for tree works within 6 weeks for Conservation Area applications *and* 8 weeks for Tree Preservation Orders.

How will we monitor our pledges to you?

To monitor our pledges to you we will:

- Carry out a Planning Application user survey every five years and use the feedback to identify service improvements.
- Carry out a Building Control user survey each year and use the feedback to identify service improvements.
- Carry out consultation and training events on Planning and Sustainability service issues and seek customer feedback for key events which we will review and identify actions to address issues raised.
- Record our performance against key targets and publish it on our website
- Seek feedback through annual Planning Forum and 'Quality Counts' events
- Through continuing to seek accreditation under
 - 'Investors in People' - monitoring issues such as staff training and development - currently awarded (as at March 2011)
 - ISO 14001 - monitoring our environmental management systems - currently awarded (as at March 2011)
- Adhering to the Council's Equality & Diversity Framework and conducting Equality Impact Assessments on key documents we produce
- Periodically review our Service Customer Charter.

Compliments, comments and complaints

Have we got it right? If we have, we'd love to hear from you. If not, please tell us - your feedback is vital to ensure our services meet and exceed your expectations.

If you have any comments on our service we would encourage you to initially contact the officer dealing with the matter. Their name and direct dial telephone number should be on correspondence from us.

If you remain dissatisfied with our service you may pursue your concern using the Council's formal complaints procedure - full details can be obtained by telephoning 01494 461 000, from any Wycombe District Council office or by looking at our website: <http://www.wycombe.gov.uk> - go to the 'Contact Us' page

How to contact us

Write or email:

Penelope Tollitt
Head of Planning & Sustainability
Wycombe District Council
Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe
Bucks
HP11 1BB

Tel: 01494 421 502

Email: planning@wycombe.gov.uk

Web: www.wycombe.gov.uk/planning

In person:

Assistance with accessing planning information available electronically may be obtained from the:

Customer Service Centre:
Wycombe District Council Offices,
Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe
Bucks
HP11 1BB

General advice and signposting can also be obtained by phone:

Tel: 01494 421 539

Assistance with accessing planning information electronically may also be obtained from our area offices at Tower Court, Horns Lane, Princes Risborough, Tel: 01844 275 795 and 31 High St, Marlow, Tel: 01628 471 915