



## Scaffold Protocol

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) issued a Scaffold Protocol on Merseyside last year and they have approached Wigan's Building Control section to see if we would adopt the principals of the protocol here too. Among the more significant aspects of the protocol is a requirement that building owners rather than scaffolding companies should submit the application to the local council for permission to erect a scaffold on the public highway. The document also includes details of safety of scaffolds, fixings and bracing and the like. It is hoped that this will raise awareness of the risks and responsibilities associated with a scaffold. We are keen to adopt the protocol as it represents best practise and we have recommended that the rest of Greater Manchester join in as well.

## I APP - The Standard Application Form

From 6 April 2008, all planning applications will need to be presented on a standard application form (known as IAPP), which will be available for electronic submissions via the Planning Portal at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk).

The Planning Portal accepts the following file formats:

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| For images      | JPG, TIF, GIF, BMP and PNG file formats. |
| For CAD files   | PDF, TIF and PLT file formats.           |
| For text files  | DOC, PDF, TXT and XLS file formats.      |
| For video files | MPG, AVI and WMV file formats.           |

The maximum combined size of all files that can be uploaded is currently 25MB and no individual file should be larger than 5MB. Please endeavour to use file formats that keep file sizes as small as possible.

Following your successful submission, the Planning Portal automatically notifies the Council of your application. We download all the details and begin processing the application in the traditional way.

If paper versions of the form are submitted four copies of the completed standard application form and any plans need to be submitted. An applicant may be requested to submit more copies by the council.

## Legislation: Energy Performance Certificates

Government are phasing in new European energy performance legislation. Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) will be required for all newly created dwellings from 6th April. They will also be necessary for the construction, sale or rent of non dwellings with a floor area greater than 10,000m<sup>2</sup>.

From 1st July EPC's will be required for non dwellings greater than 2500m<sup>2</sup> and from 1st October this year the requirement will apply on the sale or rent of all remaining dwellings and all other buildings.

EPC's provide important information on the typical energy performance and carbon emissions from the building. It is important that building owners or their agents obtain these certificates in good time as Building Control will not be permitted to issue a completion certificate on any such work until a copy of the EPC has been provided to us. Further details are available on our website.

## Permitted Development Rights for Householders

Following a consultation process, the government set out its proposals for householder PD rights in November 2007. Secondary legislation to implement the changes is expected later this year. The main change to house extensions is the removal of volume limits (except for roof alterations). The proposed limits include :

- No extension forward of principal elevation or side elevation facing onto and visible from a highway,
- Maximum depth of rear extensions of one or more storeys to be 3 metres (4 metres for single storey on a detached house),
- Maximum eaves height of 3 metres within 2 metres of a boundary,
- Eaves or ridge to be no higher than existing house, and roof pitches above single storey to match original house,
- Side extensions to have a maximum height of 4 metres and width no more than half the original house,
- Two storey extensions no closer than 7 metres to rear boundary,
- Maximum 50% garden coverage,
- No raised terraces, verandas or balconies,
- Need for matching materials, and obscured glazing of side windows above ground floor,
- Additional controls in designated areas.

Volume limits on roof extensions are retained, with an additional requirement that the extension starts a minimum of 0.2 metre above the eaves. Other roof alterations will be permitted on both front and rear subject to a maximum projection of 150mm.

Further details are available at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

## Technical Seminars

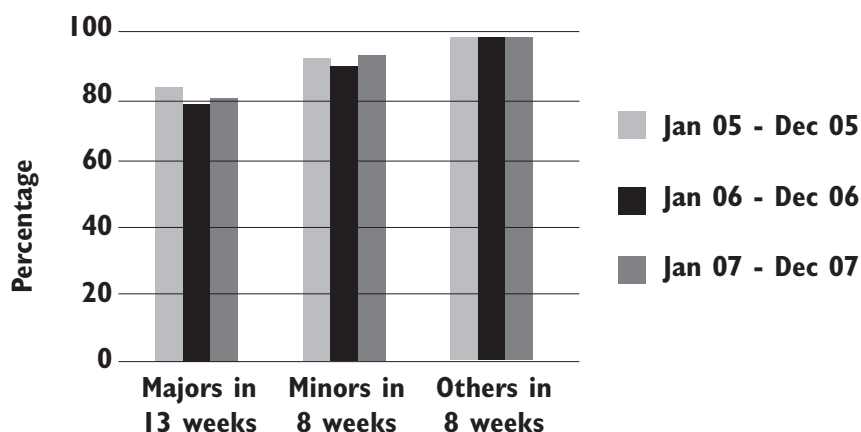
Our next Breakfast Seminar at the Cricket Club will take place at 9.30am on April 9th when the topic will be Aquamist Sprinklers. This revolutionary system developed for submarines but now being considered for use in a residential care home in the borough uses very little water. This reduces the need for tanks and large capacity mains supply. It also maintains good visibility during operation.

## Planning Performance Agreements – A New Way to manage Large - Scale Major Planning Application

Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) were proposed in the Planning White Paper as a means of speeding up the delivery of large scale planning applications. They are agreements made between applicants and councils about the time required to consider major applications.

PPA's should be used depending on the complexity, not size, of a scheme. All PPAs that stick to the timetable agreed with developers will be excluded from the 13 week decision target. Whilst penalty fees for delays should not be required as part of PPAs, developers and councils are free to agree them as voluntary agreements.

Percentage of Applications Determined within Statutory Time Periods



## Appeals

Some fundamental changes are proposed to the system, with the aim that it is more proportionate to the complexity of each appeal and is more efficient, customer focussed and better resourced. The most significant changes are that a fee is to be introduced and Local Member Review Bodies will be introduced. It is intended procedures will change to fast track householder and tree preservation order appeals and strengthen the powers to refuse to consider new material at appeal. The Statement of Common Ground is to move to earlier in the process. The time limits for appeals against refusals and enforcement notices are also to be brought in line, so the appeals can be linked

Most secondary legislation is intended to be in place by October 2008. Further consultation will be undertaken about appeal fees later this year so it can be introduced in April 2009. Local Member Review Bodies are proposed to be established across the country by 2010.

## Permitted Development for Householder Microgeneration Proposals

Following a consultation process the government set out its proposals for Permitted Development Rights for Householder Microgeneration in November 2007.

The Government is keen to encourage the widest possible take-up of microgeneration equipment whilst ensuring the reasonable interests of neighbours and the wider community are met. In light of the responses to the consultation the Government intends to provide permitted development rights for solar panels, wind turbines, heat pumps and biomass proposals.

These will be subject to specific limits in terms of heights and projections in a similar way the householder development. Standards in terms of noise and vibrations need to be set in order to ensure that neighbours are not disturbed by the development.

Local planning authorities will be given powers to provide additional freedom or to restrict development in areas that they consider necessary through Local Development Orders and Article 4 Directions.

The Government intend to bring forward secondary legislation to implement these changes in Spring 2008.

## Local Development Framework Update

### Development Plan Documents

Good progress is being made on the Local Development Framework. The first and perhaps most important Development Plan Document to be prepared, the Core Strategy, is well under way. We will be going out to consultation during February and March on the Issues and Options stage of the strategy.

The consultation process will be seeking views on how we have described the borough (the spatial portrait), on the key issues identified, on the vision of what we want the borough to be in 2026, on the objectives for how the vision will be achieved and with a series of spatial and thematic options for meeting the objectives.

We will also be seeking authority to abandon work on the Allocations and Infrastructure plan now that changes to the LDF system allow us to include the major site allocations in the Core Strategy. This change should speed up the process of bringing forward an up to date development plan to replace the UDP as well as simplifying the final document produced.

### Supplementary Planning Documents

The Supplementary Planning Documents on Development and Protected Species, Travel Plans and Development and Air Quality have now all been produced, adopted and are in operation.

Work has commenced on the SPD on Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest but we have had to temporarily suspend further work on the SPD on House Extensions due to pending changes in the legislation affecting permitted development rights for such extensions. Once the changes have been made clear we will resume preparation of the SPD and a draft document will go out to consultation.



## Diversity & Equality

Planning and Building Control are working towards level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. We are keen to show that we are accessible to all who wish to use our service and that we treat people fairly according to their needs. If there are any areas where you think we might be able to improve in this respect we will be pleased to hear from you.

## Building Control Performance

Our speed of plan check has improved considerably in recent months and we have recently appointed a new chartered building control surveyor who will have specific responsibilities relating to plan checking. This should ensure that we continue to provide a fast, effective and professional service.

## Customer Satisfaction

Analysis of customer comments and our satisfaction survey to the end of December continues to be favourable with 100% of replies recording a positive impression of the service we offer. 89% felt we continue to provide value for money and 100% were happy with the competency, knowledge and helpfulness of our staff.

## Comments compliments and complaints

We welcome any comments you may have regarding our work, they help us to improve the service. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints. Please contact Paul Swift or Penny McGinty direct, or, use the corporate complaints process on the council website

## Wigan's Local Validation List

The Council has produced a draft Local Validation Checklist and consultation was undertaken on the list for 6 weeks up to 27th February 2008. All consultation responses and a final version of the Checklist will be considered by Planning Committee in April before being formally adopted.

The list has been produced in accordance with Government Guidance. Once adopted if the information that is required by the checklist is not included with an application, the council will be entitled to declare the application invalid and not register or process it. Conversely, applications which are validated are likely to contain sufficient information for a decision to be made.

Validation Checklists are specific to types of application and are in two parts. Part One sets out minimum National requirements for all applications including relevant forms and plans. Part Two provides a list of additional local requirements which will need to be met in certain circumstances, dependant on factors such as the location or characteristics of the site and the scale and nature of the development.

Notes are provided to clarify and indicate thresholds when requirements are likely to apply. However, our expectation is that applicants and their agents will want to take advantage of our pre-application advice service. Additional information requirements falling within Part Two of the Checklist will be identified through this service

## Planning & Reform Bill

The White Paper 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' was published in May 2007 and set out proposals for the reform of the Town and Country Planning System. Many of the proposals are now included in the Planning & Reform Bill which is presently going through parliament. The government hopes to implement all the bill's measures by October 2008. The Bill can be viewed at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

The bulk of the Bill is dedicated to the setting up of a Planning Infrastructure Commission which will deal with major infrastructure projects of national significance, such as power stations, airports and wind farms. The proposals will be considered in the light of National Policy Statements which are still to be prepared. The system is intended to speed up the decision making process for such projects.

Another major measure in the Bill is the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy. This is the government's preferred option 'to ensure that costs incurred in providing infrastructure to support the development of an area can be funded (wholly or partly) by owners of the land the value of which increases due to permission for development'. It replaces the anticipated Planning Gain Supplement.

The levy becomes payable when development commences, liability resting with the owner at that time. It will be payable whether value has increased or not, and the amount will be based on the time when permission is granted.

Other measures include amendments to the Local Development Framework process, the setting up of Local Member Review Bodies, whereby decisions frequently delegated to officers could be reviewed by local members, amendments to Tree Preservation Orders, and changes to planning fees. More details are available elsewhere in this newsletter.

## Built In Quality Awards

We held our third annual Built in Quality awards last November and the standard just keeps on improving. Awards were given to A& P Joinery for an exceptional domestic extension and loft conversion at Standish and to Harlor Homes for their development at Avondale Street. Stuart Milne Homes North West won an award for their timber framed apartments at Trencherfield Mill and Charter Build won one for the new Health Centre at Henry Street in Leigh. An award for refurbishment was made to Mr W Hetherington for his labour of love in converting Jolly Mill in Standish from a derelict 17th Century Mill to its present incarnation as a functional and attractive three storey home.

