

Finalised Agenda Items

Building Control

Cuts (BC Joint work with GM) – Implications (PWS/NH)
Coal Authority – Changes (PWS/NH)
CSE – Thanks to Agents (PWS)
Marketing Strategy (Leaflets etc) (PWS)
Accredited Contractors (PWS)
Quality Awards (PWS)
Part F, L and J – Changes Oct 10 (PWS)
Fees (PWS)
Future of Building Control (PWS)
BC Performance

Development Control

Development Control stats (NH)
Government Change - RSS Housing Targets (NH)
- Localism Bill (NH)
- PPS3 Garden Grabbing (NH)
Local Validation List – Design and Access Changes (MB)
Flood and Water Management Bill (NH)
Review of Committee Procedures (NH)
PD for Commercial changes (NH)
LDF Update (NH)
Householder SPD (NH)

Please note, potential additional items that have been requested by forum attendees.

Expected Attendees

Neil Higson	Wigan Council
Paul Swift	Wigan Council
Roy Collier	Wigan Council
Mark Barry	Wigan Council
Arthur Bayley	Bayley Design
David Groves	Architectural Services
Anthony Rigby	Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust
George Broomes	Building Design Services
Harry Tonge	Steven Abbott Associates
Geoff Makin	G G Makin Plan Drawing Services
Tim Smith	ALG Investments (Wigan) Ltd
Derek Gee	NPS North West
John Copeland	Architectural Services
Dale Melling	PAB Architects
Brian Greenall	Brian Greenall Structural Engineering Ltd
Gordon Nash	Nash Building Consultants Ltd
Paul Smith	Acland Bracewell Surveyors Limited
Rob Rawlinson	Acland Bracewell Surveyors Limited
Helen Telfer	Environment Agency
Bill Wadeson	W Wadeson
Cheryl Foster	Wigan and Leigh Housing
John Birchall	DJB Building and Design

Attendance:

Neil Higson	Wigan Council
Paul Swift	Wigan Council
Roy Collier	Wigan Council
Mark Barry	Wigan Council
David Groves	Architectural Services
Harry Tonge	Steven Abbott Associates
Tim Smith	ALG Investments (Wigan) Ltd
John Copeland	Architectural Services
George Broomes	Building Design Services
Arthur Bayley	Bayley Design
Derek Gee	NPS North West
Gordon Nash	Nash building Consultants Ltd
Bill Wadeson	Architectural Services
Geoff Makin	Architectural Services

Action

1. Notes of previous meeting:

Notes of the previous meeting had been circulated with the agenda. Notes discussed, agreed as being accurate. Issue of Condition discharge raised that verbal agreement is being given but taking far too long to get written confirmation.

PWS advised the forum that St Helens BC/DC will not join us today as they have now decided to form their own forum exclusive to St Helens.

Building Control Items

2. BC/DC Service efficiencies

Paul Swift outlined the current position regarding council finances and the need to make savings. Council is looking at 25% cuts, and has suggested between 670 – 820 jobs may go to achieve the desired savings. Eight members of the BC surveyors team (including PWS) have expressed an interest in ER/VR as have two people in the DC team. Two senior members of our technical support team have also requested details. A decision on who will be allowed to go and when, is expected to be made in mid October. If this is followed through it will have a significant impact on service delivery.

PWS

It is likely that BC will concentrate on approval of plans but that site inspection services may have to be reduced. This is an area where traditionally local authority BC has a tendency to provide too much help and assistance- a matter raised by CLG during the future of Building Control Review in 2009. Responsibility for compliance with the regulations lies firmly with *‘the person carrying out the work’* not with building control.

Barrie Latham has now been seconded to engineers to undertake RASWRA work while Mike Jones has crossed the office to deal with East area planning applications. The ER in BC is intended to be phased with PWS, Steve Gaskell and John Mann expected to stay till March the rest hoping to see out their notice by mid/end November.

3 Approved Documents F, J, and L

The new Approved Documents will be implemented in October. Doc L makes further progress towards Zero carbon. SAP 2009 is now mandatory. Cavity party walls will require insulation and overall improvements to dwellings will be in line with level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Requirements will increase again in 2013 and seek to achieve Zero by 2016. PWS will be arranging a training session for designers.

4 Customer Service Excellence

Several Forum members had kindly attended our offices in May to speak with the CE+SE assessor during our annual assessment. PWS thanked everybody who had taken part. WE now satisfy all 57 criteria in the standard, an achievement we are particularly proud of. There is a cost allied to this award and we will review whether Wigan would be continuing with this process next year as part of our cost saving exercise.

5 Marketing

Our marketing efforts continue, and residents will see an article on BC in Borough Life. We have produced a new information leaflet and this is being circulated. The BC website is to be redesigned.

PWS

New fees will be in place from 1st October and will introduce consistency of charging across GM. The figures will be quite different and will relate to the level and complexity of the work to be undertaken. They will need to be justifiable and audited.

6 Building Excellence

The second North West regional awards were held at the Reebok Stadium in April. Five Wigan schemes made it through to the final and two of these received highly commended certificates. Nominations for our sixth annual Wigan Awards are now being collected. It is intended that the awards will take place in Nov/Dec.

PWS

7 Future of Building Control

There are likely to be further changes in the regulations under the new Government. CLG are continuing with the review, the new Building Regulation minister Andrew Stunell has requested comments and ideas on what should be considered for change. PWS has replied on behalf of the council. They have indicated an intention to consider a complete review of the BC process including

looking at European models for building control such as those in Norway and France where there is little direct municipal control. Instead the system relies on self certification by developer or on insurance schemes!! PWS has just compiled a report on self certification in Europe for the CEBC and there is considerable interest in this at CLG.

Government still want to reduce the burden and have said there should be no new regulations without first removing an existing requirement.

Forum Members Questions

- A) When will a BC online plan submission be available? – Paul advised that we now have the depositplans@wigan.gov.uk email address and can accept applications this way. We also have an application form which can be completed on line.
- B) Clarification regarding the requirements for surface water discharge? – NH explained that where applicant/agent is suggesting that soakaway is to be the preferred method then planning will ask for a percolation test to be carried out to prove that this method will work. Problems have occurred where in the past where it was left to a condition and this was not complied with prior to commencement resulting in flooding, and long drawn out enforcement legal battle. NH said proposed introduction of the Flood and Water Management Act later on in agenda may help with this issue. G Nash commented that he always found United Utilities helpful, particularly David Hardman.
- C) Process of validation too long? – Validation process being looked at and revised. Seems been a problem in that applications submitted through portal which are invalidated for fee reasons only receive letter from Wigan several days later when though application ok and up and running.
- D) Why not communicate more by E-mail instead snail mail? – this should be being done already. Will take back to officers to reiterate need to do this.
- E) John Copeland asked whether building on the site of a previously demolished dwelling, would be affected by garden grabbing changes? - This will not be affected, NH referred to item coming up on agenda, address in more detail. **NH**
- F) D Groves asked why a flood risk assessment had been requested for a first floor extension (in a flood risk area) NH said he would follow it up. Following the close of the Forum the EA have been contacted and they state that while technically development in a flood zone should require a FRA they would not insist for 1st floor extensions. However, may be advisable to inform the applicant they are in flood risk area so that they can look into this issue in their own time should they wish to do so (i.e whether or not they want to be signed up to flood warning from the EA, flood

- proofing/resilience etc).
- G) A Bayley asked about Breach of condition notices served on a client. NH explained that he didn't know the in depth details of the case raised but outlined the general principles in considering whether to take Enforcement Action or serve a Breach of Condition Notice

Development Control Items

8. Validation update

MB gave a presentation of the proposed changes to Validation requirements and checklist. Explained the consultation process and outlined the key changes to the requirements. Also gave a short overview of the changes to the instances when a Design and Access Statement is needed – explained that Wigan had used this as an opportunity to revise the D&A statement templates and provided the Agents with sources of further information.

9. Review of Committee Procedures

NH repeated what GD had advised at last forum that consultants had been engaged to look at the planning committee procedures in Wigan in detail, including notifications, venue, room layout, speaking arrangements etc. The outcome of the review is likely to be reported in the autumn.

10. DC Performance

NH outlined the current performance figures that indicate Wigan is still performing in excess of Targets. Total numbers in the tables indicate that continuing overall decline in application numbers. Question was asked if this likely to suffer as no longer getting PDG and staff numbers decrease. NH explained that this may be the case. There is likely to be move from national to local targets and as less comes through the door the clearing up of older applications of the books has greater impact on percentages. As staff decreases obviously have some impact. Intention was still to achieve best performance possible.

11. DCLG documents

NH provided details of the wide range of recent documents.

- RSS housing targets

Following the government's announcement that the RSS has been revoked there are now no Housing Targets which the Council must formally achieve. However, as part of the LDF process this will be incorporated. 2009-based SHLAA is available on the Council's website with plans of all sites which is being updated this year. Core Strategy is being finalised to be published in January 2011 for six-week consultation and will include 2010 SHLAA, Affordable

Housing Viability, Key Sites Viability Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

- **PPS3 Garden Grabbing**

CLG has removed private gardens from the definition of PDL within annex B along with national minimum density. In Wigan R1B is already a 2 stage policy and while removing the in-principle support to redevelop gardens as brown field land the Greenfield sustainable location criteria will apply to all Greenfield sites including gardens. The changes are more directed at authorities in the South east who have little developable Brownfield areas and had in some cases felt pressured into granting planning permission in gardens to the detriment of the character of the area.

- **PD changes for commercial properties**

Further to the recent changes in householder permitted development rights, the government has introduced an extension to non-domestic permitted development, with the objective of reducing the number of applications required. This includes new allowances for shops and offices, and revised allowances for industrial concerns and institutions.

The changes were introduced on 6 April 2010.

- **Localism Bill**

Biggest immediate change has been the abolition of RSS. Philosophy is that there should be less direction from central government with decisions and responsibility being more appropriately made at local level which could go beyond the local authority level. Belief is that the current PPGs and PPSs cover a broad range of policy themes which are piecemeal in nature. Intention is to publish a simple and consolidated national planning framework covering all forms of development.

- **Flood and Water Management Act**

Introduced following Sir Michael Pitt's recommendation that the lead flood authority should bring together all relevant bodies to help manage local flood risk. Local flood risk includes surface runoff, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses. Lead local flood authority will investigate flooding incidents and maintain a register of structures or features likely to have a significant effect on flood risk. The Act provides lead local authority with powers to do works to manage flood risk from surface runoff and groundwater. Biggest changes for developers is the encouragement of the use of sustainable drainage in new and re-developments by requiring drainage systems to be approved against a set of National Standards before building can commence and connection to the sewer can be allowed (if needed). LA's to adopt and maintain the SuDS. Such drainage schemes will also need approval even if the development does not need planning permission

12. Wigan Householder SPD

NH confirmed that this document has been through the formal adoption process and is now being used for DC purposes.

AOB

Views were sought on whether the forum was considered to be providing a useful purpose and if so was the frequency of twice a year still appropriate. The general consensus was yes to both.

Development Control Performance in Wigan

Quarter Ending	Major (Target 60% in 13 weeks)			Minor (Target 65% in 8 weeks)			Other (Target 80% in 8 weeks)		
	Total Major Apps	Major Apps Determined in 13 weeks		Total Minor Apps	Minor Apps Determined in 8 weeks		Total Other Apps	Other Apps Determined in 8 weeks	
	Determined	Number	%	Determined	Number	%	Determined	Number	%
30/09/2009	6	4	66.67	117	108	92.31	227	214	94.27
31/12/2009	11	10	90.91	131	114	87.02	239	227	94.98
31/03/2010	7	5	71.43	101	86	85.15	167	157	94.01
30/06/2010	12	8	66.67	108	92	85.19	210	194	92.38
Total	36	27	75.00	457	400	87.53	843	792	93.95

