GWYNEDD COUNCIL PLANNING CHARTER

The Purpose

The purpose of this charter is to set out standards of service that the Planning Service will aim to provide for you our customers.

The Planning Service

The duties of the Planning Service mainly include providing general planning advice, pre-application advice, dealing with planning applications, applications for listed building consent, investigating alleged unauthorised developments and dealing with planning and enforcement appeals. The service also has a trees officer and there are other specialist teams, dealing with the built environment, waste and minerals planning, and planning policy which are within the Environmental Service, which work closely with the Planning Service.

Our Aim

- To provide a friendly, courteous and prompt service
- To maintain high professional standards
- To make the best possible decisions to promote the economy and protect local communities
- To provide an efficient and effective service focussed on the needs of our customers

You Can Contacting Us By

- Making use of the electronic forms available on the Council's Website for general planning inquiries, including requests for whether planning permission is required or inquiries relating to alleged unauthorised developments or meeting requests, except for pre-application advice, relating to these issues
- Using the Planning Portal facility on the website for submission of planning applications
- Making use of the "track and trace" facility on the website to respond electronically to current planning applications
- Making use of the "track and trace" facility for details of recent planning permissions / consents and to submit concerns where a development may not be in accordance with the terms of the permission / consent
- Writing to our office at Planning Services, Ffordd y Cob, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 5AA in relation to any planning issues and issues relating to trees
- Writing to our Caernarfon Office at Council Offices, Shirehall Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH for Building Conservation, Minerals and Waste Planning and Planning Policy issues
- Phoning the Contact Centre ("Galw Gwynedd") on **01766 771000** for general planning inquiries, requests for forms, guidance notes, information, allegations relating to unauthorised developments and to make an appointment to meet a Planning Officer for pre-application advice

- Visiting Siop Gwynedd in our Pwllheli Office, Dolgellau Office and from 2011/12 our Caernarfon Office (Council Headquarters)

Our Service Standards

General inquiries (e.g. do I need planning permission)

The service will:

- Provide clear guidance notes on all relevant aspects of the planning system on the Council's website
- Provide electronic communication options for our customers through the Council's website and provide one point of contact for postal communications
- Acknowledge electronic communications within **3 working days** of receipt and letters within **5 working days** of receipt
- Respond to telephone calls transferred from the Contact Centre within **3 working days** of receipt
- Respond to electronic communications and letters with a full or interim reply within **15 working days** of receipt

Pre-application advice

In accordance with the Guidance Note on Pre-application Advice, the Planning Service welcomes discussions with customers prior to the submission of a planning application. The Service will therefore:

- Provide an appointments booking system for our customers seeking pre-application advice which will be administered through the Contact Centre "Galw Gwynedd".
- Ensure that appointments are given within a minimum of **5 working days** of the date of your call.
- Ensure that a Planning Officer is available to attend pre-application appointments and provide advice
- Instigate a development team approach to pre-application advice where possible, so that the views of all relevant organisations can be provided at an early stage.
- Provide written response to your proposal within **15 working days** of the date of the appointment

Processing applications

- Register valid planning applications within **5 working days** of receipt
- Contact applicants within **5 working days** if an application is incomplete and/or invalid, explaining (with reference to the Council's Protocol on Information submitted with an application) what is missing or how to correct any mistakes

- Within 24 hours, make copies of valid applications available on the "Track and Trace" facility on the Council's website
- Arrange for hard copy of the application and plans to be inspected through prior arrangement where access to "Track and Trace" is not possible or practical
- Notify those who made comments on an application of the final decision
- Aim to determine a minimum of **70%** of all planning applications **within 8 weeks** although major applications may take longer
- Inform applicants and give reasons if an extension of the **8 week** period is required
- Ensure that a site visit is made by the relevant case officer within **15 days** of the registration of the application
- Ensure that all site visits and telephone discussions are recorded within the electronic planning database.
- Aim to decide a minimum of **80%** of planning applications under delegated powers in accordance with the Council's Delegation Scheme (see Delegated Scheme on this website)

Publicity for planning applications

In addition to the statutory requirements relating to publicity we will:

- Maintain and improve the facility to view and respond to planning applications via the Council's 'Track & Trace' system on our website.
- Publicise a weekly list of planning applications received on the Council's website.
- Maximise opportunities to communicate / consult electronically

Planning Enforcement (Allegations of unauthorised development)

- Acknowledge enforcement related enquiries received electronically within **3 working days** and by letter within **5 working days**
- Investigate and conduct site visits on high priority case (as defined in the Gwynedd Planning Enforcement Policy) **immediately or within 24 hours (This includes high priority cases transferred from the Contact Centre)**
- Investigate enquiries and visit the site and provide an interim response to enquiries within **15 working days** giving priority to higher priority cases (see Gwynedd Council Planning Enforcement Policy)
- If formal enforcement action is to be instigated, notify the enquirer within **5 working days** of the decision and update as and when required thereafter
- Aim to resolve **70%** of enforcement complaints within **12 weeks** of receipt.
- Respect the wish of enquirers for their name and contact details to remain confidential

Building Conservation and Trees

- Ensure that planning officers seek the advice and where required include the Buildings Conservation Officer and or Trees Officers in meetings when giving

general advice, providing pre-application advice, dealing with planning applications and in dealing with enforcement cases where relevant

- Ensure that the tree officer and building conservation officer are available through prior arrangement during office hours to provide specialist conservation and historic building design advice. Meetings can also be arranged with the Planning Officers and the Trees / Building Conservation Officers, at discretion of the Planning Officer, through the Pre-application advice service

Planning Policy

- Maintain an up-to-date planning policy framework for the Gwynedd Council Local Planning Authority area
- Publicise emerging planning policies and proposals widely, including on the Council's website, giving opportunities for people to comment in accordance with the relevant planning regulations.
- Ensure that copies of the adopted Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan and related documents and any supplementary planning guidance available to view on the Council's website
- Ensure that Planning Policy Officers are available during office hours to provide advice and information on matters relating to planning policy. Prior arrangements should be made if you need to see a specific officer (See You Can Contacting Us By)
- Engage with consultees and the public and carefully consider representations made on emerging planning policy documents and inform respondents how the Council will deal with their concerns.

Continuous improvement

- The Council welcomes comments about the service provided and sends customer care questionnaires with every planning and enforcement decisions to applicants, agents, objectors and consultees and the responses are used to monitor its performance and to enable it to respond accordingly to improve the Planning Service

- The Council strives to improve the Service and reviews its targets and performance on an annual basis.

If you have any questions arising from these service targets, or want to comment on the targets or the service provided, please write to the Senior Planning Service Manager (see Contacting Us for details)

Complaints about the service

We will deal with complaints about the service, in accordance with the Council's Complaints Procedure, a copy of which can be obtained on request or by accessing the Councils Website.