

# A Customer Care Charter for Development Control

## What is a Customer Care Charter?

A charter explains what standard of service you can expect. It also describes how you can help us to improve our planning service.

### We aim to provide:

- A helpful and courteous service and to accept responsibility for every enquiry we receive;
- An efficient and effective planning service for all our customers;
- A sustainable development that will improve the quality of the built environment for people to enjoy or use.

## The Development Control Process and You

We offer the following services:-

- We provide advice and information in respect of specific proposals and the planning system in general.
- We publicise all planning applications to find out what people think of the proposals that might affect them.
- We consider all planning applications in accordance with our unitary development plan, national planning policies and other material planning considerations.
- We investigate breaches of planning control and take enforcement action where it is in the public interest to do so.

## Before making a Planning Application

You can obtain informal general planning advice from our Planning Services helpdesk who will be able to give guidance and assistance as to whether or not you need planning permission. Please contact the Planning Department on 01874 624437.

For enquiries relating to minor alterations, improvements or extensions to a dwelling house we offer a planning surgery facility for members of the general public, these are held at the following locations and times:-

- BBNPA HQ Plas Y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way, Brecon – held every Wednesday between 9.30am and 2pm
- Abergavenny Town Hall - normally every second and fourth Tuesday of the month between 2.00pm and 3.00pm

***NB To attend one of our planning surgeries at either Brecon or Abergavenny please make an appointment by telephoning Planning Services on 01874 624437.***

Pre application advice will include:-

- whether or not you need permission
- point out any obvious pitfalls and, where possible, explain how they might be overcome;
- provide you with copies of appropriate guidance notes or leaflets or tell you how to access them on the website
- advise on the completion of application forms, online or otherwise, and the level of statutory fee payable

However, the advice given at planning surgeries is not legally binding upon the Authority. It is intended as general basic guidance and advice, given by Officers in good faith and based upon limited information available at the time and without the benefit of either site visit or any consideration of consultation responses as would be the case with a formal planning application. If you have any doubt as to whether formal planning permission is required you should make an application for a formal Certificate of a Lawful Proposed Use or Development.

### ***How can you help?***

- ***Read the relevant policies and advice notes published by the National park Authority – available from our Planning Office or via our web site.***
- ***Think about the likely effect of your proposal on your neighbours, discuss it with them and consider their views***
- ***Think about the likely impact of your proposal on the appearance of the area generally and whether it will fit in with its surroundings***
- ***Explain clearly what you propose to do and provide any sketches, photographs or plans to help officers give you the best possible advice.***
- ***Remember that advice from an officer is not a decision of the Authority; a decision can only be given after the submission and consideration of a formal application.***

## Making your application

Applications can be submitted online via the Planning Portal ([www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)). If you wish to submit your application on paper, copies of the forms are available from our office in Brecon, or can be downloaded from our website [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk)

On receipt of your application it will be checked to ensure that all the relevant information has been received in accordance with [Validation Best Practice](#)

**Within 3 working days of receipt we will aim to either:**

- send an acknowledgement stating that the application has been checked and found to be valid, setting out your statutory rights or;
- send you a letter, indicating why it is not valid and what you need to do before re-submitting.

**Within 5 working days of the receipt of a valid application, we will aim to:**

- Begin consultation with all the statutory bodies which are likely to wish to comment on the application, including the Community or Town Council.
- Notify neighbours (if required) that an application has been made
- Include the details of your application, which will be available for viewing on our planning website.

**Within 10 working days of the acknowledgement of a valid application we will aim to:**

- Ensure that all applications are advertised by a Site Notice displayed on or near the site, so that it can be clearly seen by the general public (some applications will also be advertised in the local press);
- Ensure that a planning officer will visit the site to assess the acceptability of the proposal and note whether any further neighbour notifications are required.

**Within 3 working days of the planning officer's site inspection he or she will aim to:**

- Send letters to any neighbours who, in the officer's opinion, should be specifically notified.

Certain types of applications are delegated to officers whilst others will be referred to the Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee for determination. Wherever possible we will aim to determine applications within 8 weeks from the date of validation of the application. However, Listed Building Consent Applications require a further 4 weeks as a minimum, to consult CADW before the Authority may determine an application.

If an application is referred to the Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee you will have the opportunity to attend the meeting (providing you have given the proper notice) and speak for up to three minutes about your application. (See [Planning Advice Note 4](#))

When a decision has been made, we will aim to issue the decision notice within 3 working days. In some cases the decision is subject to the receipt of additional information, the formulation of planning conditions, or the completion of a related legal agreement. In such cases the decision notice will not be issued until all the required information has been received or the agreement completed. You should not start work until you have received the formal decision notice.

If an application is refused, an amended application submitted within 12 months of the date of the refusal notice will not normally require the payment of a further fee. As of September 2008 Signed Decision Notices will be available to view on-line via our website, [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk)

**How can you help?**

- **Read the [Validation Best Practice Guidance to ensure that the forms are completed correctly and the correct plans and drawings are submitted](#);**
- **Ensure that the plans and drawings submitted with the application are clear, accurate and drawn to the appropriate scale;**
- **Ensure that you have submitted the correct fee;**
- **Answer letters promptly so that negotiations can be concluded well within the statutory period for dealing with the application;**
- **Consider other people's points of view and, if necessary, to compromise;**
- **Note where the site notice is displayed and remove it when 21 days, from the date of the notice, have elapsed.**

**Commenting on Planning Applications**

We will ensure that all applications are publicised by displaying a site notice, by notifying individual neighbours where we consider appropriate and by press advertisement where necessary. We also publish a [weekly list](#) of planning applications received on our website [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk) where you can also view individual [applications](#) and submit any comments you may have on line.

Planning applications are also available for inspection at BBNPA HQ office in Brecon during normal office hours. If you wish to view the working file, 7 days notice is required, please contact Planning Services tel. no. 01874 624437.

We will aim to acknowledge all written representations made within 3 working days of their receipt. If the application is considered at a meeting of the Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee you may attend the meeting (further information on [Committee Meetings](#) is given in [Planning Advice Note 4](#)). Anyone who has commented on an application will be notified of the decision within 3 working days of the decision notice being issued.

Once a decision is made only the person making the application has the right to appeal either against a refusal or any condition imposed on a permission. Neighbours and other interested parties cannot appeal against the decision.

If an appeal is made then an inspector nominated by the Planning Inspectorate will consider the matter, If you commented on the original application then you will be informed of the appeal and be invited to make representations to the Planning Inspectorate. Any comments you made on the original application will have already been forwarded to the Inspector. Further

information about the appeal process is available from the Planning Services helpdesk and contained in [Planning Advice Note 13](#).

### **If you wish to make a complaint**

BBNPA requires that all complaints relating to breaches of planning control be submitted in writing to the Planning Enforcement Officer at the address at the end of this document. If a complaint is reported via the telephone, officers will send a complaint form with a prepaid envelope. The complaint form will indicate what information is required by the complainant in order for an investigation to proceed. This will include the name, address and a contact telephone number of the complainant. BBNPA will not process anonymous complaints.

BBNPA will use enforcement powers against unauthorised development, if considered in the public interest to do so. **(For Further information please refer to our [Planning Enforcement Charter](#) or [Planning Advice Note 8](#) available on our website [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01874 624437).**

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Authority will:

- Keep all its development control procedures under review to ensure that the service responds to changing needs and circumstances as quickly as resources permit;
- Monitor its performance;
- Monitor public satisfaction with the service provided.

If you are unhappy with the way in which we have dealt with an application please contact the case officer as soon as possible to try and resolve matters. If you are not satisfied with the response from that officer then ask to speak to his or her Manager. If, after speaking to the Manager you remain unhappy then please put your complaint in writing addressed to our Chief Executive at the address below. **(For further information please refer to our [Customer Complaints & Feedback Form](#) available by telephoning 01874 624437 or from the our website [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk))**

### **Who else can I complain to?**

If you are unhappy with the way the Authority investigates your complaint you can ask the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate whether maladministration has occurred. The Ombudsman however cannot consider the planning merits of the proposal.

The Local Government Ombudsman is independent and can investigate complaints about most local authority matters. The Local Government Ombudsman has a leaflet called "How to complain about a public body" You can get a copy by telephoning or writing to the address below, or you can download it from the Ombudsman's website at [www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk) .

### **Contact details for the Ombudsman are:-**

Public Services Ombudsman For Wales,  
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae,  
Pencoed,  
CF35 5LJ

**Tel:** 03007 900 203

**Fax:** (01656) 641 199

**Email:** [ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk](mailto:ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk)

### **For further information contact:**

[www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk)

**Brecon Beacons National Park Authority**

**Plas y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way, Brecon, LD3 7HP**

**Tel: (01874) 624437**

**E-mail: [planning.enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk](mailto:planning.enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk)**