



# Big Lottery Fund Energy Efficient Venues Programme

## Planning Permission and Building Control for Community Buildings

### Introduction

This factsheet on planning permission and building control has been produced by Community Places to assist community and voluntary groups who are planning to undertake work to improve the energy efficiency of their building. It is not a comprehensive guide to planning and building control but covers the key issues that you should consider right at the start of your project. The table at the end of this factsheet gives examples of the types of works that will require planning permission and building control approval.

### Planning Permission for Extensions and Alterations (including alterations to improve the energy efficiency of your building)

Some improvements and building works require planning permission while others do not. If you plan to extend your premises or make external alterations you are likely to require planning permission. If you are only altering the internal layout of your building, you will not normally need planning permission (unless the work that you carry out involves a change of use of the building).

### Listed Building and Advertisement Consent

If your building is listed you will need to apply to the Planning Service for Listed Building Consent even when you do not need planning permission for the works involved. Listed Building Consent is normally required if the work that you intend to undertake will affect the building's special historic or architectural character.

If you intend placing a new sign on your building or outside your building you will need to get Advertisement Consent from the Planning Service.

### Making a Planning Application

If you need planning permission, you will need to obtain a planning application pack from the Planning Service. It contains a checklist explaining what you need to send with the application, the relevant forms and information on application fees. A pack can be obtained online at [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk) and from your local planning office. You can contact your local planning offices by dialling the NI Direct number - 101. Ask to speak to a planner in your local office and they will return your call. Application forms for Listed Building Consent and Advertisement Consent can also be obtained from Planning Service.

As a community or voluntary organisation, you may be eligible for reduced fees of half the normal planning application fee.

You must submit scale drawings with your planning application showing the changes that you intend to make. You should seek the help of an architect or some other experienced person in applying for planning permission.

The time that Planning Service takes to process your application can range from approximately two months to much longer depending on the application type and on the workload of the Divisional Planning Office. You should check with your local Divisional Planning Office what the likely timescale will be.

When preparing your project budget, you should include an estimate for **planning fees** if planning permission is required for the work that you propose to undertake. For most works the fee will be £230 but you should check with your local planning office when preparing your budget.

## **Building Control**

Even if planning permission is not required, you may require Building Control approval which is a separate consent. Building Control is based at your local council offices and is responsible for ensuring that building regulations are enforced. The regulations include requirements on health, structural stability, fire safety, energy conservation and accessibility. Building Control communicates with other bodies such as the Fire and Rescue Service. Examples of works that require building control approval are provided in the table at the end of this factsheet.

Building regulations require that you consider the energy usage and heat loss from your building when extending it or making alterations. Full details of these performance standards are set out in Technical Booklet F2 - "Conservation of Fuel Power in Buildings other than Dwellings."

If your building is listed, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency publication, "NIEA Guidance Booklet on Building Regulations and Energy Efficiency" provides useful information in relation to the Building Regulations for listed buildings. This is available on the Northern Ireland Environment Agency website, [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk).

## **Building Control Exemptions**

Some works do not require Building Control approval, such as replacement windows and replacement sanitary fittings. Before proceeding with any work you should contact your local council Building Control office or consult a competent building professional to check that your proposed works are exempt. If Building Control approval is not required, you will need to provide written evidence of this with your application to Big Lottery Fund.

## **Making an Application for Building Control Approval**

If building control approval is required, you must lodge an application along with full plans to your local Building Control office prior to starting any work. You can be prosecuted for failing to do this. A full plans application requires you or your agent (e.g. your architect) to complete an application form and to provide the following:

- Two copies of plans, sections, construction details and a further two sets of plans showing compliance with fire safety regulations (these will be forwarded to the Fire and Rescue Service by Building Control);
- A site location plan and a block plan showing boundaries and adjacent buildings; and
- A plan fee accompanied by an itemised and realistic estimate of cost.

You should ensure that you get assistance from an experienced person who has a good working knowledge of building regulations.

### **Building Control Fees**

A fee calculator can be found on the Building Control website, you need to know the estimated cost of the works in order to work out the fees. For example the full fee for building works costing £30,000.00 excluding VAT is currently £380.00 and the full fee for building works costing £60,000.00 excluding VAT is currently £620.00. The fee is paid in two stages to Building Control:

- a Plan Fee (25% of the full fee) - this is deposited with your application form and drawings; and
- an Inspection Fee (75% of the full fee) - this is payable after the initial inspection by Building Control when work has started. It is a one-off payment and covers all inspections carried out until completion.

### **Timescale for Building Control Applications**

When you lodge the application Building Control will assess it for compliance with the regulations within 28 days and either issue a Plan Stage approval or notify you of any required amendments. It will assess your amendments within 14 days. You will then receive a Plan Stage Approval Notice and a set of stamped approved drawings.

### **Completion Certificate**

Once works have started on site Building Control surveyors carry out on-site inspections at various stages of construction. Upon satisfactory completion of the works a Completion Certificate is issued. This Certificate gives the date of the final inspection carried out and states that, as far as can be reasonably ascertained, the work carried out conforms to the Building Regulations. As the final part of the process, a Completion Certificate is forwarded to you following a satisfactory final inspection. The Completion Certificate verifies that a property complies with legal guidelines and has been subject to Building Regulations inspections carried out by independent and impartial professionals and thus reassures all those with interests in the building such as owners, funders, insurance companies, solicitors, banks etc.

### **Further Information about Building Control**

Further information (contact details of your local council Building Control office, application forms and the fee calculator) can be found on Building Control's website [www.buildingcontrol-ni.com](http://www.buildingcontrol-ni.com).

## Summary Table - Are Planning Permission and Building Control Approval required?

Type of Work	Planning permission required?	Building Control Approval required?
<b>Change of use to community facility?</b>	Yes, in most cases	Yes
<b>Extension to premises</b>	Yes	Yes
New external porch or lobby	Yes	Yes, in most cases
<b>External alterations</b>	Yes	Yes, in most cases
Installing solar panels	Yes	Yes
New external boiler house	Yes	Yes
Creating a new window or door	Yes	Yes
Changing the slope of the roof as a result of internal alterations	Yes	Yes
Installing an accessibility ramp	Yes	Yes
Installing a wind turbine attached to your building	Yes	Yes
Installing a free standing wind turbine on your land	Yes	No
<b>Alterations to internal layout of building</b>	Not normally required	Yes, in most cases
Replacing windows	No	No
Rewiring	No	Yes
Installing or upgrading cavity wall insulation	No	Yes
Installing or upgrading roof insulation	No	Yes
Dry lining walls	No	Yes
Replacing boiler with a "like for like" boiler	No, unless external alterations are required	No
Installing central heating	No, unless external alterations are required	Yes
Installing a new boiler (not like for like)	No, unless external alterations are required	Yes
Installing timers, thermostats or other controls for heat and light systems	No	Yes
Creating additional floorspace, e.g. a mezzanine floor	May be required	Yes
<b>Placing a new sign on your building or land</b>	Advertisement Consent may be required	No

## Contact Details

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*Big Lottery Fund has appointed Community Places and partners to provide technical information, support and advice to potential applicants on energy efficiency measures, planning permission and building control processes, tendering and contracting for small scale capital projects, accessibility issues and sustainable development. Guidance notes and application forms for the Energy Efficient Venues Programme are available on [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)*