

Coronavirus

Building Control service changes

Coronavirus update

As we continue to deal with the coronavirus outbreak across the UK, we hope that you are coping under the challenging circumstances and that you, your colleagues and family are well. We will continue to provide you with a first-rate service, whilst also ensuring safety at all times.

National guidance

Following the publication of government advice on the provision of a building control service, guidance from RICS and CIC guidance on construction work activities, we have reviewed our current inspection regime.

The guidance states "Building control bodies should continue to undertake normal, regular on-site inspection activity where this can be done safely, in line with Public Health England guidance. Building control bodies may wish to consider the use of alternative methods of checking compliance to supplement physical inspections, for example using digital photographs and video or other remote means of checking compliance.

Building control bodies should satisfy themselves within the limits of their professional skill and care that these remote inspections are used appropriately. Remote inspections should not normally be used as the sole method of assessing compliance."

What this means is we will be increasing the instances of being able to attend site and to get back to the inspection regime you have become accustomed to whilst ensuring we adhere to the guidance issued to keep everyone safe.

Pre-visit safety

When booking a site inspection, we may require you to confirm the following:

- Can the inspection be carried out in a well ventilated or external environment?
- Is it possible to adhere to social distancing measures or are social distancing measures being enforced on site?
- If anyone at the site (property owner or builder) has been self-isolating, shielding, ill or displaying coronavirus symptoms: a new, continuous cough or a high temperature?
- If anyone at the site (property owner or builder) has travelled abroad within the last two weeks?
- Can the inspection be carried out in the absence of the builder or homeowner if necessary?
- Will there be vulnerable people on the premises?
- Are there hand washing facilities on site?

The surveyor carrying out the inspection will make contact on the day of the inspection to reconfirm any of the above, where appropriate, and will confirm arrangements for carrying out the inspection.

Where any of the above cannot be adhered to or confirmed the inspection is to either be attempted to be carried out remotely, either wholly or partly, or the inspection postponed until such time the above can be adhered to or confirmed.

Please also note that our surveyors may request that people on site either vacate the site or move to another area whilst the inspection is carried out. Where social distancing cannot be achieved our surveyors may terminate the inspection if they do not believe it is safe to continue.

Site inspections

We will endeavour to conduct as many site visits in person where possible although we recognise the need to balance service delivery with reduced personal contact. Where necessary we may need to be conducting some virtual/remote inspections subject to the guidance stated above.

Full details/instruction on whether this is required will be judged on a case by case basis. As a minimum we will be asking you to provide suitable photographic evidence and any other relevant details and information.

Reduce mail handling

Wherever possible, please email us in preference to sending paperwork (cheques, plans and so on) via post. This will reduce the risk to everyone, including postal workers.

Should the current guidance change, we will let you know as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact us by telephone on 01284 757387 or email us at building.control@westsuffolk.gov.uk should you wish to discuss any specific points raised.

We want to thank you for your patience during this challenging situation and wish you all the best.