

In this newsletter

- [Christmas close down](#)
- [Approved consent plans on site](#)
- [Inspection bookings](#)
- [Consent processing timeframes](#)
- [Entering LBP and site contact details on AlphaOne](#)
- [Flood warning](#)
- [Roof line detail where there are unequal roof pitches](#)
- [Customer satisfaction survey response](#)

Christmas close down

It is that time again when the end of the year rushes us towards Christmas, and the annual closedown period for Council.

To help you with your planning – below we have listed our closing and reopening times:

Office closedown

- Office closes – midday Thursday 24 December 2020
- Office reopens – 8.30am Tuesday 5 January 2021

Inspection closedown

- Last full day of inspections – Tuesday 22 December 2020
- Limited inspections on a first come, first served basis – Wednesday 23 December 2020
- Inspections resume – Tuesday 5 January 2021

Also a reminder that the processing clock stops on 20 December 2020, and restarts again on 10 January 2021.

Approved consent plans on site

Since the Covid 19 level 4 lockdown we haven't handled physically printed plans on site. We've accepted approved plans presented in different electronic formats.

For our inspectors to do their job they need to be able to view the approved consent documents to ensure the building work is carried out in accordance with them.

What does this mean?

You will need to have your approved consent documents onsite either

- electronically on a device with a minimum screen size equivalent to an A4 piece of paper (not a mobile phone), OR
- as a clear readable printed copy (you will need to provide these yourself as we no longer print documents for customers).

If we arrive on site and the documentation is not available or doesn't meet the above conditions then we won't be able to carry out your inspection. We may however charge you for our visit.

For more information on our onsite inspection requirements visit our [website](#).

Inspection bookings

We understand that sometimes inspections don't always go in the order expected for any number of reasons.

To help keep things moving for you and avoid issues with booking inspections out of order, we will book what you ask for, even if it is slightly out of sequence.

What this means for you

You are responsible for ensuring

- that you are ready for the inspection that you have booked
- inspections are still booked in the appropriate sequence for your build
- that no inspections are missed

If the inspector gets to site and an inspection has been missed then your project will likely be put on hold, with no further inspections able to be booked until resolved.

Consent processing timeframes and inspections workload

We're still receiving a very [high volume of consent applications](#) and bookings for inspections. This means you may see some

- slippage in consent processing time frames
- a small number of days over the coming weeks where we have no choice but to limit inspection numbers to help us get through the workload.

We are doing our best to keep up with what is a very busy period for everyone and want to work with you to minimise the impact on your business. Please do contact us if you have major concerns or want to discuss ways that we can work together better to achieve good outcomes for everyone.

You can help us by

- loading documents correctly into AlphaOne
- prompt RFI responses with only relevant pages provided with changes clouded for identification
- ensuring sites are ready for inspection from 7.30am on the day of inspections - inspections will still be charged if the site is not ready for a booked inspection
- using the AlphaOne portal to check the status of your consent and inspections to help reduce call numbers
- letting us know early if you need help with your application
- paying for consents when they're issued or letting us know if your project is not going ahead
- ensuring all required documents are uploaded at least the day before the relevant inspection – this is particularly important for final inspections to streamline the code compliance process.

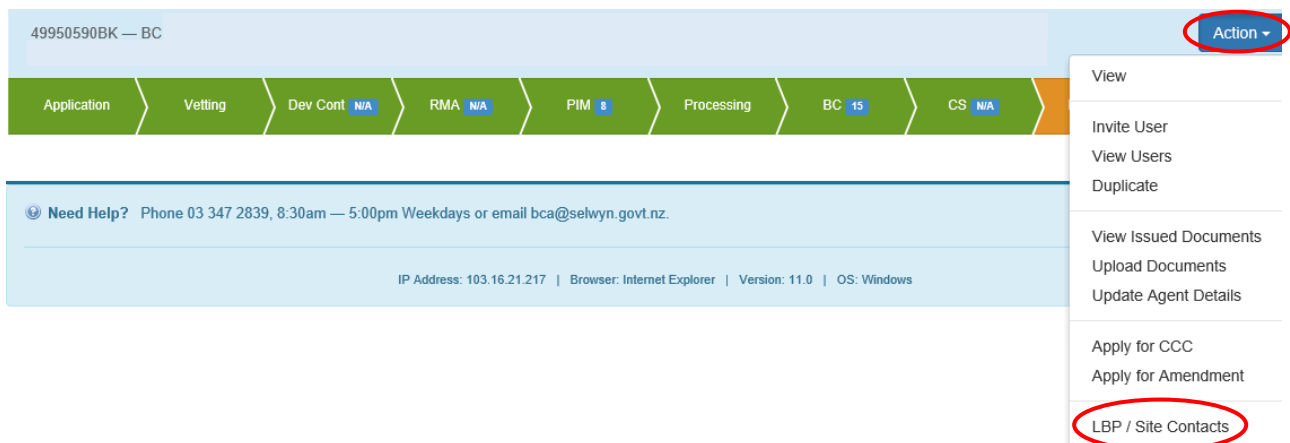
We are grateful to the support of our external contractors helping us with our current workload.

Entering LBP and site contact details on AlphaOne

You can now enter LBP and site contact details yourself on AlphaOne once you have these details available. No need to contact us to do this for you.

To access this feature

- click on the blue Action button to pull down the menu
- select LBP/Site Contacts to go to the screen to enter in details



Please make sure you enter site and LBP contact details before you book your first inspection. Providing this information up front will

- make your inspection bookings faster and more efficient
- help ensure inspections are not failed or stopped by an inspector due to not having these details available.



FLOOD WARNING

Not only are we inundated with work at present, but we are also getting our heads around some new information on inundation.

You may be aware that as part of the District Plan Review there has been extensive flood hazard modelling undertaken.

While this modeling has been developed to consider how natural hazards will be managed within the district; from the building teams perspective, as Council are now aware of this information we are required to address the flooding hazard under sections 71-73 under the Building Act 2004.

This is why you are likely to be receiving RFI questions in regard to your proposed floor level.

The building team are working with other council departments to ensure we understand when flooding risks have been mitigated by the subdivision process to ensure you don't receive any unnecessary RFI requests.

In the event that you do get a flood hazard question and you think this has already been address by the subdivision or other means, please do not hesitate to discuss this with us.

To find out if your site has been identified with a potential flood hazard go to [Selwyn Natural Hazards on Canterbury Maps](#) - and search for your property.

As part of the Proposed District Plan consultation affected property owners were also sent a letter in April advising them of the modelling and what this means for them.

If you want to know more check out the planning teams [video about flooding hazard](#).

Remember – public consultation on the Proposed District Plan is currently underway with the submission period extended to the 11 December. So if [have your say](#).

Roof line detail where there are unequal roof pitches

We're seeing roof valleys feature on more homes where there are unequal roof pitches – often with modular designs and designs where there are two steeper gable roofs connected with a very shallow pitch roof between.

Designers are often using standard detail of acceptable solution E2/AS1 Fig 51 – without considering different roof pitches.

On a standard equal pitch roof this detail is effective in the right zone and environment. No problem as the water comes down off each roof at a similar rate and volume if designed right. Used in the wrong situation however it can result in building failure through moisture and snow melt coming into the roof and ceiling space.

Where home designs with roofs at different pitches designers will need to take a close look at design of the valley. It's not always easy to see from simply looking at the elevations. You need to look closely at the roof plan and visualise how the roof lines will work in three dimensions and think about

- the velocity of the rain water pouring off the higher pitch roof, and
- how this will be captured in the valley without pushing up under the lower pitch roof and into the building.

This means considering an alternative solution.

For example (but not limited to)

- asymmetrical valleys as covered in the Metal and Wall Cladding Code of Practice V3.0
- valley flashing with secondary water channel to gutter
- E2/AS 1 Fig 52, with reference to the durability and functional requirements from the Metal and Wall Cladding Code of Practice.

Customer satisfaction survey

Thank you to everyone that took part in our customer satisfaction survey over July and August.

We received some great feedback. 75% of you were satisfied with the overall quality of service you receive, with a large number of you saying

- that no improvements were needed
- that we friendly and helpful, and
- we are timely and efficient.

You also provided us with some helpful comments on where we could improve, along with other general comments. Some of these we will take on board and out how to make it easier for you to do business with us.

Below we've shared some information that may help clarify and explain some of the why's that were raised in feedback.

Why is it taking so long to process applications/issue CCCs etc?

- We are experiencing a [20% increase on building consents](#) over what we have received in the past – even over and above what we had during the height of the earthquake rebuild
- The increased workload impacts our team right across all areas
- This is why you're seeing longer timeframes than you have may have been used to in the past

Why don't you triage to prioritise consents over the statutory timeframe?

- We have a higher number of staff able to process lower complexity buildings than higher complexities because the knowledge needed to process complex buildings takes years to develop
- This means sometimes we don't have enough people available that time to process the complex buildings currently in our queue – which sometimes pushes them over the 20 working days statutory timeframe
- And we're human, so on the odd occasion a consent slips through the gaps on timeframes unnoticed – but we get onto it as soon as we know

Why don't you employ more people to help with the workload?

- Employing new people takes time, we are working on this
- Finding qualified and experienced people with the relevant skills and knowledge on building control functions is even harder – particularly with the current shortage right across the country
- Training inexperienced people to a contributing level can take 12-24 months
- We are using experienced contractors to help fill the gap the best we can to help in the interim and juggle our resources to balance workload to our best ability

Why are you going over work provided by qualified people?

- Peer review is an important part of building control to help ensure we all keep buildings safe and healthy for people to live in and work from

Can we have regular updates on what processors look for in plans and the reason behind it?

- There is already a reasonable amount of information on our website under [processing of your consent](#) and our [previous newsletters](#)
- You can also [subscribe](#) to receive our Mail Chimp newsletters to receive updates which will cover this type of information
- Our website has lots of information specifically tailored for the public on what the building process involves – and we're always happy to answer any questions

Why isn't all RFI information asked for in one go and not always relevant?

- Our aim is to limit the number of RFI's you receive and ask for all RFI information at the same time
- However where your project is complex or needs a response from an external party that may take a while we may send out an earlier RFI to allow you to get this underway while processing continues on the remainder of your project

- And sometimes the information provided in response to an RFI isn't sufficient or clear, so another RFI may be needed to have something clarified

Why do you send RFI's and inspection reports to other parties too?

- Owners are copied in on all communications, because ultimately they are responsible under the Building Act and need to understand what is happening with their consent – see our [information on our website](#) for more details
- Inspection outcomes are sent to the site contact, project manager and owner – so that all parties are aware of the outcome
- Again – we are all responsible for educating owners about the journey they are going on

Why do inspection reports state a fail when all that is outstanding is documentation?

- We understand the limitations and frustrations of this, particularly for final inspections and the delays this can create for building owners
- The AlphaOne system gives us three options – pass, fail, incomplete
- It is up to everyone in the industry to educate building owners about what is covered on inspection reports and to read the information in full versus looking only at pass or fail

Why don't you take photos of construction statements onsite versus need to resupply and upload onto the AlphaOne portal?

- Photographs aren't always as clear or legible as they should be
- We need construction statements uploaded before the inspection so that the inspector can access these before they get to your site

Why don't you price inspections to the time and effort put into them?

- It is not quite that simple because even within the same inspection type there can be variance in the amount of time and effort needed to complete the inspection
- This would complicate the administration and create more cost

Why is there no clear fee and cost structure to take the guessing out of the cost of a building consent?

- On our website you will find our [current fee schedule](#)
- It is difficult to provide a standard building consent fee because of the variety and complexity of applications we receive

- Charging time and cost basis means that good quality applications that supply only what is needed will cost less than applications which are complex, provide unnecessary information, or are not well presented

Why can't we go direct through to the building department for our enquiries and inspection bookings?

- All customer enquiries are being triaged through the customer services centre to help ensure you get through to the right person the first time, and can book inspections for you
- You can also book your own inspections via the Builders App - check out our [guide on the app](#)

Can you have more people available at the counter that have better knowledge and are more consistent with their advice?

- Advice may vary sometimes because
 - builds vary
 - legislation is interpreted differently
 - the level of information you provide or have available at the time varies
- Our team are on call for customer enquiries via the front counter
- If our customer services team can't answer your enquiry they will contact our team to come to the counter to discuss your enquiry with you

Can we have only one person to deal with for our consent?

- In general you will deal with only one person at vetting and another person at processing but if someone is on leave or away sick then someone else will monitor your project
- We can't allocate the same inspector for every part of your build because we need to spread the variable inspection workload across our available inspectors for each day

Is there a way we can track to see what stage our application is at or what the next stage is?

- You can track where your application is at through all stages via AlphaOne
- Check out our [guide](#) to learn more about using all the AlphaOne features to track your application

Why can't the information on forms prepopulate for us between different applications for the same property?

- The information you need to supply varies

Can the forms be simplified and specific for different building types?

- The information that needs to be provided by on each form is stated in the Building (Forms) Regulations 2004
- Through AlphaOne we have tried to make it as easy as possible to fill out each form while still meeting the regulations
- If you have specific ideas on how we can make it easier then we're always open to suggestions for improvements

Why do you ask for information already on file for an existing property?

- Each building consent needs to be complete within its own documentation because of changes to the Building Act, Regulations and Building code over time
- Information that we have available on file is only as up to date as the information we received originally
- Asking you to provide information allows us to verify that the information we have is up to date

Will resource consents integrate into AlphaOne?

- There is currently no functionality for resource consents to be integrated into AlphaOne

Why do we need to apply for another separate driveway consent if the house plan and driveway are accepted for the building consent?

- A vehicle crossing is the transition from your property to the road corridor – so private to public land
- With this comes safety considerations and District Plan requirements
- Applications are assessed and granted by our Roads and Transport team – which is why they are a separate application
- We do not have a 'one stop shop' process for this but council are looking at ways to be 'Better together'