

Annex A – Revised Process

The new build/development process has been amended to the below.

Locate new build/developments/residential property splits via the following sources:

- Building Control monthly reports (include Initial Notice Report, Commencement Report and the Completion Report).
- Liaise with the Gazetteer department (Geographic Information System (GIS)) who provide information regarding new streets and developments.
- Planning department yearly housing trajectory local plan
- Street Naming & Numbering (SNN) decision letters
- Barnet Homes Development team
- Valuation Office Agency (VOA)
- Owner/tenant contact
- Benefit claimant contact
- Inspector local knowledge and investigations
- Local newspaper (new development stories and weekly planning announcements)
- Any properties that are identified by LLPG (Local Land and Property Gazetteer) matching are then added to the Tax base forecast and monitored by the inspectors. If the property is already in use it's referred immediately to the VOA. For incomplete properties, upon the issue of a completion notice these are then referred to the VOA.

Check SNN/Building Control system to obtain:

- The official naming/numbering, this could include the name of the road if a new development
- Confirm the number of new dwellings

Cross reference the information with the information held on the Planning Portal to confirm:

- Number of properties
- Developer/builder details

Once the new development/new build details have been established i.e., the number of flats/houses/owner/developers, these are then added to the Tax base report whereby they will be monitored until they are completed and referred to the VOA to allow them to be brought into the list.

If the property is to be demolished or is having major works to be split into flats or bring it back to one household, the VOA will be notified and if they are in agreement the property will be taken out of the Council Tax list from the agreed date.

The progress of the build will be monitored on a monthly basis by the inspectors. A completion notice can be served once it is deemed to be substantially complete up to 3 months before the completion of the development/new build.

Once the building works have been completed, whether established by customer contact, our inspectors visit or the completion notice, the Valuation team will notify the VOA, who will then band the property within 3 months.

Each hereditament will be set up on our database. If the owner details are not known, Land registry is used to confirm ownership details. The VOA will be issued with a Billing Authority Request (BAR) to set the banding.

Once the band has been set a demand notice will be issued to the customer.

- Planning applications – historically Inspectors would scan the Planning Portal, but the above enquiry has led to a change in the process and now Inspectors are sent the following information:
 - Planning List (weekly) – new applications/enquiries awaiting approval
 - Initial Notice Reports (INR) (monthly) - however this only covers 30% of the market inspected by RE, the rest are done by external approved building inspectors. Often RE don't hear anything from external inspectors following planning being granted until work starts, which can cause a delay to then being added to the report. This report has only just started in the past few months but is now sent to CT team.
 - Commencement Reports (monthly) - this is run off the first inspection that is carried out – this will capture any properties that are with external Building Inspectors not picked up in the INR above.
 - Completion Reports (monthly) – This report will detail all new builds, conversions and loft conversions, extensions. This will also include any retrospective applications.

The Initial Notice and Completion Reports should capture all building works undertaken. The Completion Reports are key for early identification of properties that need to be registered for Council Tax.

Whilst the room for errors has been significantly reduced the following risks remain in place:

- Time for property to be completed or for final inspection to take place, as there can be a lag between when works are completed and when the external inspectors notify the Council.
- Building Control's approved inspectors aren't chased regarding incomplete properties or those without completion reports – processes to be developed to ensure this is done proactively.
- Illegally converted houses into flats are harder to identify but often neighbours will notify council or if occupants wish to claim benefits or housing allowance claimants and the property doesn't exist in the system the benefits will ask Council Tax team to investigate. No claim or payment can be made without postcode and address. Currently there isn't an automated system for housing or benefits teams to send info to Council Tax, so done via email.
- Barnet Homes Development team – Council Tax office contacts them periodically for projections or what new developments are in the pipeline, also checks their website – not automatic, Council Tax team have to do the chasing

Currently LLPG match their list against VOA records however there is an outstanding issue with the files being corrupted which LLPG are working on with the VOA.

A quarterly matching exercise will be carried out between LLPG and CTAX/Business Rates records.

Property Bandings (Street Naming & Numbering):

Street naming and numbering applications bypass the CTAX process, Applications at the moment are sent to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), who then send them back to Street Naming and Numbering. Any properties brought into the list by the VOA following this process are added to the VOA schedule which is sent to the valuation team on a weekly basis. There is currently a page on the Barnet Website which explains this process.

* Valuation Office Agency (VOA) external govt dept - assess properties to bring onto the Council Tax list. Inspectors visit properties and once they are completed the Valuation Team sends a weekly Billing Authority Request via the CT system (OpenRevenues) of all new properties/CT requests, directly to their system. VOA then calculate what the banding should be. VOA applications are also logged in master spreadsheet –VOA recently changed their Service Level Agreement to 3 months for a response, which slows things down sometimes and can cause frustration with property owner/tenant contact.