

Domestic renewable energy and Development Control

London Borough of Hounslow is keen for people to take action to use renewable energy to reduce their 'carbon footprint', and recognises that the planning application fee can discourage people from installing renewable systems. Some changes can be made to domestic property without the need for planning permission to be submitted to the local planning authority. These changes are known as 'permitted development' and are set out in the 'GPDO' - The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, which is issued by the Government.

The GPDO is a long and complex document. It does not specifically make reference to microgeneration, but contains principles that need to be interpreted in relation to renewable technologies.

Central government is reviewing the GPDO to clarify the issue of micro renewables. In the meantime, the following information sets out London Borough of Hounslow's interpretation of the general position.

Please note: Not all houses have the same permitted development rights and you should therefore check with the Council before carrying out any work.

Whether or not you need to make a planning application we would suggest that as a matter of courtesy, you should discuss your proposals with your neighbours first. It would also be sensible to consider any implications which the Party Wall Act may have with regard to your proposed installation.

- It must be noted that works to an electrical system need to be carried out by a qualified and competent person who is capable of self-certifying their own work.

Please see the http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/index/business/building_control.htm#area on the London Borough of Hounslow website, which gives more details regarding the requirements of the Building Regulations, or contact the Building Control team on 020 8583 5403, or email them at buildingcontrol@hounslow.gov.uk

Solar Hot Water Panels and Solar Photo-voltaics (PVs) installed on roofs

- If you live in a Conservation Area, you will need planning permission
- In all other situations, a planning application is only required if the roofslope faces a highway (including a footpath) or if it projects above the highest part of the roof (not including any chimney)
- In exceptional cases where the proposal is a very small installation in a Conservation Area, or on roofslopes facing the highway, the Council may consider that permission is not needed
- If you live in a listed building, you will always need listed building consent. This is a separate consent to planning permission. You may also need planning permission, depending on the criteria set out above
- A solar panel on a roof may require Building Regulation approval depending on the size and the load that the unit will place on the existing roof. The applicant would also need to show how the unit is connected into the existing heating / hot water system
- A PV system on a roof may require Building Regulation approval depending on the extent to which they are used over the area of the roof and how the power they provide is integrated into the existing electrical system

Solar Hot Water Panels and Solar Photo-voltaics (PVs) installed as a free standing array

This rarely requires a planning application provided that:

- They are not attached to the house
- They are not between the house and the highway (as long as the house is 20m or less from the highway)
- The panels do not have a total volume exceeding 10 cubic metres and are not more than 3 metres high
- Solar panels may require Building Regulation approval depending on how the units are connected into the existing heating / hot water system
- Building Regulation approval would be required for work on the existing and new electrical system where PV units are installed. The Building Regulations would only apply to the electrical works

Wind Turbines

Planning permission is currently required for the installation of wind turbines of all sizes.

A wind turbine would require Building Regulation approval. Depending on the size, additional loading on the structure would need to be considered and also any modifications made to the electrical system to allow the use of the unit.

Ground Source Heat Pumps and Biomass Boilers

These do not normally require any visible external works, and if this is the case a planning application is not required provided that they are installed within the 'residential curtilage' of the house. In most situations, the residential curtilage is the house and its garden.

Heat pumps could require approval depending on how the system is linked to the existing heating / hot water system.

The provision of a new boiler of any type would be required to comply with the requirements of the Building Regulations. Items of main concern would be the efficiency of the boiler, the flue arrangements and the connection to heating units.