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Your heads up to Building and Planning

April 2015

Consent volumes on the rise



Christchurch City Council processed 917 consents in March, the highest monthly total since May last year.

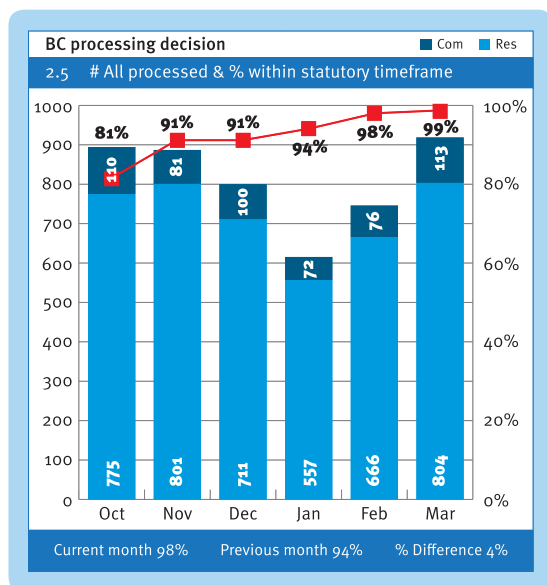
Of particular note is the 113 commercial consents processed, which is the highest total in at least a year, explains Commercial Consents Manager Leonie Rae.

Even with the increased volume, 99 per cent of residential and 97 per cent of commercial applications were processed within 20 days. Of those, 71 per cent were done within 10 days and 95 per cent were completed within 16 days.

Commercial consents can be more complex and the improvements in processing time reflects changes made in August last year. It is also helped by the willingness of the industry to work with the Council to improve the quality of applications.

The Commercial consents unit's three case managers are involved with more than 70 projects. Although the service is chargeable the applicants find that contacting the Council early and having a case manager to oversee the overall process saves money and time in the long term.

There were 804 residential consents processed in the month.



In this issue:

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- Development Contributions Policy consultation



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Crown Manager's final report released

The final report by Crown Manager Doug Martin covering the Council's building control activity confirms that no further Crown intervention is needed.

Mr Martin acknowledges the work staff have done to improve service. Mr Martin's term ended on 31 December 2014 after International Accreditation granted the Council accreditation as a Building Consent Authority.

While there is still work to do, it is very pleasing to note that all 11 recommendations made in the report are addressed by projects the Building Control Group has underway.

In releasing the report, Building and Housing Minister Nick Smith says, "The Crown Manager, the building consent team, the Mayor, Council and Chief Executive all deserve praise for the work that has gone into get this critical service back on track. New house consenting soared to 4400 homes in 2014, three times the normal rate, and that this is being achieved to a high standard bodes well for Christchurch's earthquake recovery."

You can read the full report on the Council's website at www.ccc.govt.nz/bcactionplan

Tips to ensure solid fuel heater consent success



At this time of year, the Council traditionally experiences an influx of applications for solid fuel heaters. Each year we plan so we have enough people to manage the volume.

In February this year, the Council processed 171 solid fuel heater applications (average processing time of 1.5 days). Last month we processed 215 applications (average processing of 1.8 days).

We can process good quality and complete applications more quickly than incomplete applications. We have provided some helpful tips to help ensure a quick turn-around with your application.

- Use the most up-to-date application form.
- Check the Clean Air Certification number matches with the ECAN website.
- Include complete floor plans with dimensions, doors to bedrooms, windows and location of the proposed fire.
- If installing a wetback, indicate the position of the hot water cylinder.
- Make sure any restraint is listed in the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Make sure the manufacturer's installation instructions are current and for the specific model.
- Provide a structural integrity report for inbuilt/insert models.
- Provide information for all levels of the dwelling (not just the floor the SFH is on) and indicate whether the flue goes through intermediate floor.
- Make it obvious if you are using existing flashings.
- Provide details of flue flashing / specify complete flue system.
- The distance of flue height above roof line should be indicated (to determine if flue bracing is required, i.e. if greater than 1.2 metres high).

Inspections – help us to help you



March has been our busiest month for inspections with 5428 completed, reports Residential Consents Unit Manager Mark Ulrich.

With the high levels of demand showing no signs of easing, the Council is looking at how it can improve its service and keep waiting times to a minimum.

There are things the industry can do as well which will help.

One thing that adds significantly to the wait times is the number of inspections that fail. This has been a focus of recent media coverage along with wait times and consistency of decisions by inspectors.

Failure rates can have a considerable impact on our ability to manage our workloads, and it adds costs to the build job if we have to redo an inspection.

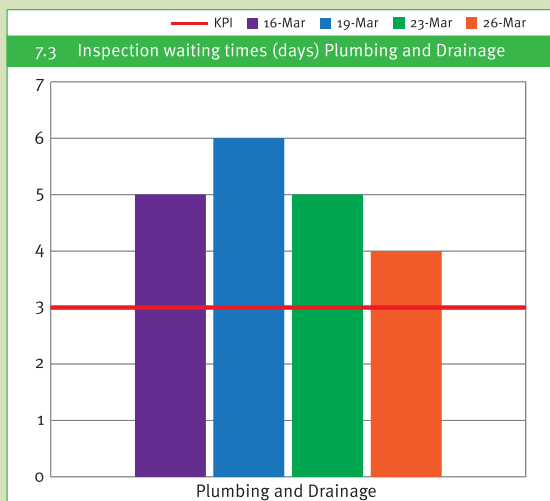
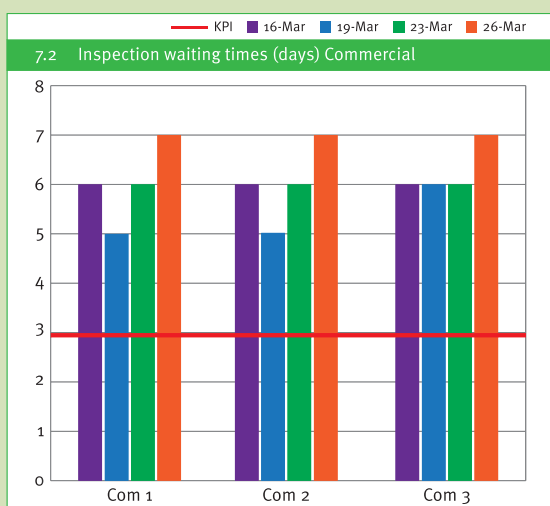
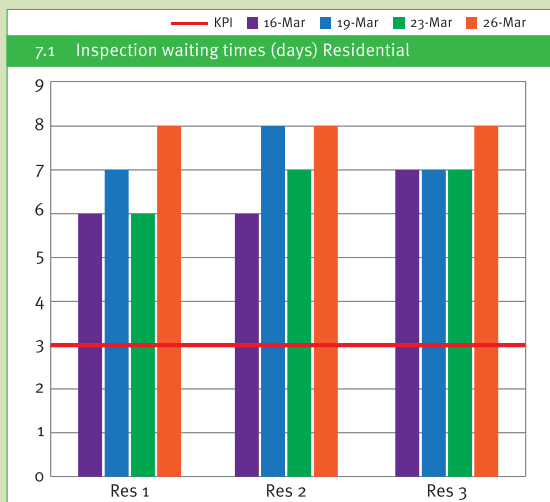
The most common reasons for failure are:

- The work is not ready to be inspected
- The appropriate required documents are not on site

To make sure everything is okay to proceed, our staff call or text the day before an inspection. It's not too late

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then to reschedule so we can reassign people to other areas, avoiding a failed inspection and the time and cost associated with rebooking.

For our part, we have adopted a code of practice for our inspectors. This document provides guidance and procedures for inspectors to follow and will help ensure consistency of decision making.

How much should developers pay?



Public consultation on the Council's draft Development Contributions Policy 2015 started last month.

We'd like to give you a heads up on what's happening.

The Council has reviewed the current policy and is proposing some changes. You may want to know what's proposed and you can let us know what you think by making a submission.

The draft Policy and the consultation document are available online on the Have Your Say page on the Council website. Go to www.ccc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

You can send us your comments until noon, Tuesday 28 April.

How to have your say

- To make a submission, go to www.ccc.govt.nz/haveyoursay
- Fill out a submission form. You can pick one up from Council libraries and service centres, or ask for one by phoning 03 941 8999 or 0800 800 169
- Come along to a public meeting – dates, venues and times are listed below
- Present your submission to councillors in person

Come to a public meeting

Workshop for residential developers

Tuesday 14 April 2.30-3.30pm Function Room, Level 1, Civic Offices 53 Hereford Street

Workshop for commercial developers

Wednesday 15 April 3.30-4.30pm Function Room, Level 1, Civic Offices 53 Hereford Street

Please note, comments made on Facebook and Twitter and at public meetings will be included in the feedback to the Council, but they will not be treated as formal submissions.

Councillors will consider all the submissions and comments before they adopt the final policy in June 2015.

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