

New rules make it easier to install double glazing in West Lothian

Householders may soon be able to save money on replacing faulty windows thanks to new planning rules in West Lothian.

Local planning bosses will no longer demand “like for like” replacement for new double-glazed windows in the county’s ten conservation areas.

The costs had discouraged many householders from installing new windows in historic properties under the old rules.

But now they’ll be able to install modern, energy-efficient glazing if they wish – and can shop around for the best bargain.

The council’s executive agreed to back also backed new guidance which ends the need to apply for planning permission.

Linlithgow councillor Sally Pattle said it was an end to the “No you can’t” rules.

For many people it will mean an end to massive bills to install heat efficient windows, as well as the costs and complexity of applying for planning permission.

Linlithgow councillors said they had received several complaints over costs of window replacement in the town – as well as in other conservation areas in Broxburn, Uphall,

Torphichen and Mid Calder.

A report to the council's Executive confirmed a lifting of the ban on materials such as uPVC and metal in window replacement.

It also removes the need to apply for planning permission to replace windows to the rear of buildings. Permission will still be needed for changes to the front of buildings and separate consent in the case of listed buildings.

Councillor Sally Pattle said: "As somebody who represents a ward where there are a lot of historic and listed buildings this is something that comes into my mailbox a lot. The frustrations [which face people] around trying to mitigate heating costs as well as trying to get to net zero, as well as trying to preserve and cherish the historic buildings in which they reside.

Labour's Kirsteen Sullivan said: "I think the planning system can be difficult for lay people to navigate. This is a common sense and pragmatic way to make the planning process easier. It's a simple change that will make a huge difference for people."

The council's own guidelines on window replacement had been relaxed and refreshed to reflect the national changes to planning policies, while still aiming to protect the ten conservation areas in West Lothian.

By Stuart Sommerville Local Democracy Reporter