

## Most business plans approved

During 2011-12 the council's planning department considered 35 applications for business and industrial development, three of which were for major developments and 32 for local ones.

Thirty two of the applications were granted - two major and 30 local - an overall approval rate of 91.4%.

While the high approval rate demonstrates that economic development in East Lothian is a priority for the Council, only 78.1% of the applications in 2011-2012 were decided in less than two months and improvement is needed. However, this was better than the 68.1% rate for 2009 to 2011.

Improvements to the planning service being considered are:

- a 'one-stop shop' for pre-application advice
- a customer feedback system
- more planning pages on the website

If you are considering any type of business or industrial development in East Lothian, please contact the duty planner for advice on whether your project would need planning permission:

**Environment Reception, John Muir House,  
Haddington, EH41 3HA  
Telephone: 01620 827216  
Email: [environment@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:environment@eastlothian.gov.uk)**

## Firm scales down marine noise

Ocean Science Consulting (OSC) of Dunbar is a marine environmental consultancy that provides advice on the effects of man-made noise on marine life such as whales, dolphins, porpoises and seals.

A key role for OSC is implementing guidelines from environmental regulators about the impact of noise on marine mammals by detecting their presence prior to the start of offshore operations such as oil and gas exploration or marine piling for wind turbines.

Recent research carried out by OSC scientists, Dr Victoria Todd and Ian Todd, revealed that predators such as harbour porpoises are frequently seen near offshore oil and gas platforms. The main findings indicate that porpoises use these "artificial reefs" as feeding stations.

OSC has recently expanded into new premises in Dunbar. As well as providing new office and warehouse space, an acre will be turned into a nature reserve for local wildlife. The firm has also bought a new vessel to enable it to expand its marine research.

**For more information on OSC research or services please contact the office on [info@osc.co.uk](mailto:info@osc.co.uk) or refer to the main website ([www.osc.co.uk](http://www.osc.co.uk)).**

## Free business consultancy available

East Lothian Council has secured funding to provide free consultancy support for businesses in the county. In conjunction with the Business Gateway, the council offers the opportunity for businesses to benefit from free consultancy in the following areas:

- the use of social media as a marketing tool
- search engine optimisation
- one-to-one support for businesses intending to apply for public sector contracts through the Procurement Scotland website.
- advice on energy efficiency, energy feed in tariffs and cutting waste for companies working out of commercial premises.



This service is available to businesses in East Lothian who have an ambition to grow and expand. However, please note that places are going fast as many businesses are keen to benefit from the program.

**To apply for any of these free services, or for more information, please call Fiona Edgar 01620 827176 or 827177.**