

Devon Building Control Partnership

South Hams District Council
Teignbridge District Council
West Devon Borough Council

Chairman: Cllr Terry Pearce

DATE: November 2018

REPORT OF: Andrew Carpenter – Head of Partnership

SUBJECT: Half year Operational Report

PART I

Recommendation:

The Devon Building Control Partnership Committee is asked to note the report.

1. PURPOSE

To monitor the performance of the partnership.

2. BACKGROUND

The Partnership Agreement that came into operation on 1st April 2017 is hosted by Teignbridge District Council.

3. MAIN IMPLICATIONS

Performance:

Detailed performance information is provided in a separate Part 2 report.

The Partnership continues to maintain all levels of service relating to PIs and receives positive comments from customers.

Mobile working and ICT:

The BC Mobile software has been installed. Two surveyors are currently using the software, accessing it using i-pads. They have been trialling the software since September and working closely with the Technical Support Managers to develop the best and most efficient ways of using it. So far it is looking positive with particular benefits in working offline and uploading photographs. It is planned to purchase more i-pads and roll out their use with remaining surveyors over the coming months.

Review of Building Regulations:

The final Report of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety was published in May. The report recommended the following:

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- A new regulatory framework
- Improve the focus on building safety during design, construction and refurbishment
- Improve the focus on building safety during occupation
- Give residents a voice
- Demanding expectations around improved levels of confidence
- More effective balance between Government ownership of building standards and industry ownership of technical guidance
- Creating a more robust and transparent construction products regime
- Creating a golden thread of information about each higher risk residential building
- Tackling poor procurement practices
- Ensuring continuous improvement and best practice throughout

A new regulatory framework is recommended. Initially for Higher Risk Residential Buildings (over 10 storeys) but likely for all Higher risk Buildings. There will be a Joint Competent Authority (JCA), consisting of

- Local Authority Building Standards (note that building control to be renamed Building Standards)
- Fire & Rescue Authorities
- Health & Safety Executive

Mandatory incident reporting for duty holders with safety concerns.

Each recommendation is crucial, in isolation they will fail to achieve systemic change. Implementation will take time/primary legislation. The industry is acting to start the cultural shift now. It is generally believed that Government needs a joined-up implementation plan to provide a coherent approach to delivering the recommendations.

The implications for the Partnership, as for any local authority, will be to ensure it has staff who are formally qualified and with proven competencies to enable it to deliver in accordance with the new framework.

LABC has already set up an independently audited Quality Management System, to which the Partnership has signed up, with formal registration likely to be confirmed by 2019. It has also set up a competency matrix to record the different levels of competencies by surveyors. An assessment process has been set up for surveyors to be registered as those who can deal with High Risk Buildings and for those with Specialised skills and qualifications, such as Fire Engineering.

The Partnership is unlikely to have new buildings of 10 storeys or more in its area (there is just one existing one), but High Risk Buildings are likely from time to time. Definition of exactly what buildings will fall into this category is still to be determined, but likely to include large Schools, shopping centres, hospitals and large commercial developments.

Brexit

LABC advise the following in relation to how Brexit will affect the building control system in terms of regulations detailing our built environment standards.

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- European regulations that currently affect the UK will still be in force immediately after Britain leaves the EU
- Brexit White Paper clearly states that UK law on the day we leave the EU ‘would still be UK law the day after’.
- Leaving the EU will change nothing immediately in terms of legislation e.g. Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and Display Energy Certificates (DECs); minimum energy efficiency standards; the F-Gas Regulation; the Energy-related Products (ErP); Building Regulations; and the Climate Change Act.
- EU nationals represent about 5% of the UK population, but make up about 20-30% of the workforce in construction and design firms. We need to attract students to engineering degrees and develop apprenticeships if a future supply of EU workers cannot be relied upon.
- UK Government has also committed to carbon-reduction targets beyond 2032 and that the UK Climate Change Act remains in force, with the aim of a 57% reduction in emissions by 2030.

Andrew Carpenter
Devon Building Control Partnership

4. GROUPS CONSULTED

Teignbridge District Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council.

Wards affected	All
Contact for any more information	
Background Papers (For Part I reports only)	
Key Decision	
In Forward Plan	
In O&S Work Programme	
Community Impact Assessment attached:	
Appendices attached:	