



2 March 2026

DEVON BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Devon Building Control Partnership Committee will be held on **Monday, 9th March, 2026** in the Council Chamber, Forde House, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 4XX at **10.00 am**

Membership:

Councillor John Birch (Chair)	South Hams District Council
Councillor Ric Cheadle (Vice-Chair)	West Devon Borough Council
Councillor John McKay	South Hams District Council
Councillor Terry Southcott	West Devon Borough Council
Councillor Gary Taylor	Teignbridge District Council
Councillor Suzanne Sanders	Teignbridge District Council

Please Note: Filming is permitted during Committee meeting with the exception where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public. By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being filmed.

AGENDA

Part I (Open to the public)

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)
3. Declarations of interest.

If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination or interests in items on this Agenda, please contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

4. Part 1 Operational Report Q3 2025/26 (Pages 7 - 18)

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public
RECOMMENDED that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Part II (Private)

Items which may be taken in the absence of the Public and Press on grounds that Exempt Information may be disclosed.

6. Part 2 DBCP Operational Plan Q3 2025-2026 (Pages 19 - 30)
7. Part 2 Financial Report March 2026 (Pages 31 - 36)

DEVON BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**28 NOVEMBER 2025**Present:

Councillors Birch (Chair), Cheadle (Vice-Chair), Southcott, G Taylor and Sanders

Apologies:

Councillors McKay

Officers in Attendance:

Drew Powell, Corporate Director – Strategy and Governance

Christopher Morgan, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

Nigel Hunt, Head of Devon Building Control Partnership

Neil Blaney, Director of Place

David Bealing, Building Control Group Manager

Nicola Denton, Business Development and Support Manager

Matt Long, Accountant

1. MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr G Taylor and seconded by Cllr Cheadle that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None.

3. PART 1 OPERATIONAL REPORT Q2 2025-2026

The Head of the Partnership introduced the item to the Committee.

Additional information was available in the part 1 report at the request of a member of the Committee. Over 50 KPIs were to be reported to Central Government but these had not yet been announced. The Partnership would continue with internal KPIs which were measuring well. The number of applications had remained stable.

The Committee heard from the Head of Partnership that Devon Building Control was in the top quartile for performance. The Committee discussed the need for close ties between Development Management and Building Control. Planning documentation included information on necessary building control work. Officers would consider proposals on how to increase awareness for the need for Building Control and bring them to the next Committee.

The Committee noted the Part 1 Operational Report Q2 2025-2026.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Cllr Birch and seconded by Cllr Cheadle that the press and public be excluded as per the resolution below.

A vote was taken; all were in favour, and it was

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

5. PART 2 OPERATIONAL REPORT Q2 2025

The Head of the Partnership introduced the item to the Committee.

The discussion included staffing, training, marketing, approved inspectors, and the Building Control Audit results. The Chair requested additional information on one of the audit results.

The Committee also discussed the burden placed on local authority inspectors as a result of the failures of private/approved inspectors. It was agreed that this was an issue that should be taken up with the local MPs. The Head of the Partnership was asked to prepare a briefing note for the Committee Chair to circulate to the MPs.

The Committee noted the Part 2 Operational Report Q2 2025.

6. PART 2 OPERATIONAL PLAN Q2 2025-2026

The Head of the Partnership introduced the item to the Committee.

The discussion included operational priorities, the risk register, the recently announced Central Government budget, provision of IT to the Partnership, staffing, and the effects of Local Government reorganisation.

The Committee noted the Part 2 Operational Plan 2025-2026.

7. PART 2 FINANCIAL REPORT 2025-2026

The Head of the Partnership introduced the item to the Committee.

The discussion included staffing, finances, and the Partnership budget.

Devon Building Control Partnership Committee (28.11.2025)

The Committee noted the Part 2 Financial Report 2025-2026, but with the request that following this meeting an additional budget figure table is circulated to the Committee.

The meeting started at 10:09 and finished at 11:47.

CLLR JOHN BIRCH
Chair

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DEVON BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE 9TH MARCH 2026

Report Title	Part 1 Operational Report Q3 2025/26
Purpose of Report	To provide an update on the operational performance of the Partnership for the period above.
Recommendation(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to: (1) Note the report
Financial Implications	Finances covered in Part 2 report
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications associated with this paper Maxine Valentine Senior Legal Officer (interim Team Leader) Maxine.valentine@teignbridge.gov.uk
Risk Assessment	The risks to the Partnership are currently being managed. Nigel Hunt Tel: 01626 215721 Email: nigel.hunt@devonbuildingcontrol.gov.uk
Environmental/ Climate Change Implications	The ability of Building Control to deliver services during times of increased workloads on physical site inspections may have implications on the energy and carbon performance of buildings, however, from experience gained the increase in agile working helps to mitigate any significant negative effects. Nigel Hunt Tel: 01626 215721 Email: nigel.hunt@devonbuildingcontrol.gov.uk
Report Author	Nigel Hunt Tel: 01626 215721 Email: nigel.hunt@devonbuildingcontrol.gov.uk
Partnership Chairman	Cllr John Birch cllr.john.birch@southhams.gov.uk
Appendices	Attached Business/Operational Plan
Background Papers	None

PURPOSE

To provide reports as requested under the Devon Building Control Partnership Agreement 2017.

REPORT DETAIL

The reports presented to the Joint Committee meetings are underpinned by the Partnership's Operational/Business Plan, which serves as the primary source of information and discussion. Additional sensitive material, including detailed financial data, is provided separately as a Part 2 report. In accordance with Cipfa guidelines and relevant Local Government Legislation relating to Building Control is treated as confidential. As a result, the Partnership is required to publish only a summary of its end of year accounts.

2.1 Operation

The Partnership has operated for 18 years and is hosted by Teignbridge District Council. It continues to deliver building control services effectively across the three Authorities, maintaining the highest standards while operating within agreed budgets.

Performance

The Partnership meets the majority of its service KPIs, as outlined in the Operational Plan, and receives consistently positive customer feedback.

Further performance information is provided in the Plan and accompanying appendices.

Staff

The Partnership currently has 3.6 FTE vacancies, including two that arose in the previous financial year. The Partnership has operated with a level of vacancy for several years due to financial constraints.

One of the Inspectors will be leaving in April, and recruitment will begin before the end of March to minimise service disruption and ensure continuity of operations.

The new LABC apprentice, who brings prior construction experience, has formally started on a three-year fully funded contract, resulting in no additional cost to the Partnership.

Audit & Assurance Update

The Internal Audit & Assurance Service focuses on the key risk areas associated with the Council's core systems. The outcome of these corporate wide audits, extracted from the published audit reports, are presented below. It is considered appropriate to provide the most up-to-date audit findings to the Committee, recognising that some reports may appear across multiple meeting cycles.

It has been agreed that these will be incorporated as a standing appendix.

The areas reviewed and corresponding assurance ratings are as follows:

- **Main Accounting Systems – Good**
- **Payroll – Good**
- **Debtors/Income – Good**
- **Treasury Management – Excellent**
- **Creditors - Good**

The full audit report for the Building Control Service is shown in Appendix 1 and a recent follow up from July 2024 is also provided in Appendix 2.

The Committee is advised that the two outstanding items identified within the audit remain dependant on the host authority and therefore fall outside the direct control of the Partnership.

Finance

The partnership has several key statutory requirements, under the Building Act and the Local Authority Building Regulations which for the purposes of financial arrangements are governed by the CIPFA Code of Practice.ve.

The 2025/26 budget has been assessed against actual performance up to the end of January 2026. A summary of the income and expenditure position, along with the effect on the Partnership reserve is provided in the finance paper. The report is operationally sensitive and is therefore considered as a Part 2 paper for which the public will be excluded.

2.2 General

As part of the Partnerships ongoing commitment to service improvement, several projects have commenced with support from the host Council and STRATA, the Council's IT provider. These initiatives include enhancing data access and retrieval capabilities and developing a more streamlined application submission process. Once completed, these improvements will strengthen customer interaction and service delivery, ensuring the Partnership remains fit for purpose and able to operate effectively in accordance with Government and regulatory requirements.

The Partnership, in line with the wider profession building control profession, continues to experience a period of significant change. This is driven by the introduction of new legislation, audit and reporting obligations, and the forthcoming implementation of the Building Safety Levy.

There remains uncertainty regarding the Partnership's future operating model. This arises from wider considerations about the future of Local Government in Devon and from the implications of the Government's response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

The Government's response to the Inquiry, published on 26 February 2025, contains a number of recommendations with significant implications for the future of building control. Recommendation 22 is of particular relevance, as it proposes the establishment of an independent panel to consider whether it is in the public interest for building control functions to be carried out by bodies that may have a commercial interest in the process.

The Government accepted this recommendation and convened the panel, which is assessing which organisations should be responsible for specific functions and whether all building control activities should be delivered by a national authority.

The panel was expected to provide an interim report in Q3 of the current financial year; however, no update has been issued to date.

2.3 AOB

Requests to be made or covered during this section of the meeting.

2.4 Legal

The Partnership, currently hosted by Teignbridge District Council, meets quarterly to monitor its performance. Performance monitoring is required under the Partnership Agreement that came into operation on 1st April 2017.

2.5 Risks

Risks to the Partnership's business are documented and reviewed throughout the year.

The risks to the Partnership are:

Failure to deliver the service.

Staff resourcing.

Loss of Market share.

Lack of ability to react to changes in policy/legislation.

Changing workload.

Failure to adhere to financial protocols or follow Cipfa guidance.
Withdrawal of a Partner council.

2.6 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

There are no direct carbon/environmental implications arising from the recommendations in the report. However, it should be noted that the Partnership will be taking an active role in supporting the Southwest Energy Partnership (between Devon, Bristol and Plymouth Councils) on low carbon projects in the region, primarily retrofit.

CONCLUSION

The Partnership Account continues to be managed by the Host Council in accordance with the Partnership Agreement, maintaining cost effectiveness and in accordance with agreed budgets.

Appendix 1

Summary of Teignbridge DC Internal Audit Opinions Building Control Partnership and Core Financial Systems 2023-2024

Building Control	Overall assurance: Good
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Breakdown for individual risk areas:

Risk Areas Covered		Level of Assurance
1	Inadequate governance of partnership arrangements.	Excellent □□□□
2	The service is not compliant with current legislation including Building notifications are not on time or in line with legislation.	Good □□□
3	The service is not effectively managed to ensure all council costs are covered in the charges (and income) received.	Excellent □□□□
4	Payments are incorrect or missing, and controls are not effective to prevent the risk of fraud.	Good □□□
5	Building Control does not provide a good service to members of the public.	Good □□□

Main Accounting System	Overall Assurance: Good
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Breakdown for individual risk areas:

Risk Areas Covered		Level of Assurance
1	Poor system security leading to unauthorised access, compromised data quality and integrity.	Good
2	If budget monitoring arrangements are not robust, this may result in unanticipated overspends or in a failure to identify unusual financial activity.	Excellent
3	Errors and inaccuracies that remain undetected may reduce the reliability of financial data.	Good

Payroll	Overall Assurance: Good
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Breakdown for individual risk areas:

Risk Areas Covered		Level of Assurance
1	Inappropriate access to the payroll system and loss of data.	Good ☆☆☆
2	Inappropriate or inaccurate amendments to the payroll system or to the MAS.	Good ☆☆☆
3	Untimely, inappropriate, or inaccurate payments made or not recovered.	Good ☆☆☆

Debtors / Income	Overall Assurance: Good
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Breakdown for individual risk areas:

Risk Areas Covered		Level of Assurance
1	System not designed to prevent or detect errors, omissions or inappropriate amendments.	Good ☆☆☆
2	Inappropriate access to the system, and loss of data.	Good ☆☆☆
3	Inappropriate or inaccurate amendments to the debtors system or to the MAS.	Fair ☆☆
4	Untimely, inappropriate or inadequate recovery action or write-off undertaken.	Good ☆☆☆

Treasury Management	Overall Assurance: Excellent
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Breakdown for individual risk areas

Risk Areas Covered		Level of Assurance
1	Non compliance with Treasury Management statutory requirements, regulations and best practice.	Excellent ☆☆☆☆
2	Financial loss and undetected error or fraud	Excellent ☆☆☆☆
3	Loss of data	Excellent ☆☆☆☆

Creditors (2022)	Overall Assurance: Good
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Breakdown for individual risk areas:

Risk Areas Covered		Level of Assurance
1	Inappropriate or inaccurate amendments to the creditors system	Good ☆☆☆
2	Inappropriate or inaccurate payments made	Good ☆☆☆

Key to Assurance Ratings:

Key to Assurance Opinions:		
Excellent	☆☆☆☆	The areas reviewed were found to be well controlled, internal controls are in place and operating effectively. Risks against achieving objectives are well managed.
Good	☆☆☆	Most of the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled. Generally risks are well managed but some areas for improvement have been identified.
Fair	☆☆	Basic control framework in place, but most of the areas reviewed were not found to be adequately controlled. Generally risks are not well managed and require controls to be strengthened to achieve system objectives.
Poor	☆	Controls are seriously lacking or ineffective in their operation. No assurance can be given that the system's objectives will be achieved.

Appendix 2

Teignbridge District Council - Internal Audit Section AUDIT FOLLOW UP – CONTROL SHEET
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Original Audit:	DAP Building Control	Year:	2023/2024
Completed By:	Matthew Whale	Date:	18 Aug 2023
Followed Up By:	Jane Sanders	Date:	1 Mar 2024
Further Follow Up:	Jane Sanders	Date:	2 Jul 2024

Number of recommendations agreed in original Action Plan:	5	Original Assurance Rating:	Good
Number of recommendations implemented at date of follow up:	2	Revised Assurance Rating (if applicable):	N/A
Number of recommendations outstanding:	3		

<p>Details of any agreed recommendations not implemented with their risk rating: (These may be reported to CMT if they represent an unacceptable risk)</p> <p>There were no 'high' risk agreed recommendations.</p> <p>There were four 'medium' risk agreed recommendations and one 'low' risk. Two completed and three outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The known existence of historic personal data in the system requires prioritisation and action from the new software / functionality via Strata. Still waiting for installation. • Concerned that Card payments are still being taken by telephone without two-factor authentication, awaiting roll-out by Adelante of PSD (Payment Service Directive)2 compliant package. Card payments are still being read over the phone and input by DBCP staff via Virtual Terminal - Adelante to provide solution at earliest opportunity. Not yet implemented corporately. • Staff processing personal and secure data have currently not been vetted using DBS checks or similar. DBS checks are being carried out on staff who visit customers at home/site. These checks should be extended to include office-based staff. DBS checks will be implemented from April 2024 for new starters – no new starters as yet.

Signed (Auditor): Jane Sanders	Date: 3 Jul 2024
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Notes on Completion:

- Copy of original action plan to be attached to this sheet
- Any evidence in support of follow up also to be attached (eg: email confirmations etc)
- Original copy of this form and back up papers (as above) to be filed on subject file
- Photocopy of this form to be filed in Audit Reports file
- If a high risk item has not been implemented and there is no reasonable explanation from the auditee, arrange for Business Lead and CMT to be informed

Appendix 3



Certificate of Registration

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This is to certify that:

District Surveyors Association Ltd
T/A LABC
Devon Building Control Partnership
Forde House
Brunel Road
Newton Abbot
TQ12 4XX
United Kingdom

Is included as a location on Certificate number: **FS 776322**

And BSI location is: 0047870747-130

and operates a Quality Management System which complies with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 for the following scope:

The Provision of public sector building control and public protection services

For and on behalf of BSI:

Matt Page, Senior Vice President, EMEA Assurance

Original Registration Date: 2022-12-19

Expiry Date: 2027-06-20



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This certificate is not the legal certificate and is for presentation purposes only.
Refer to the legal certificate for full details of schemes and scopes.
This certificate remains the property of BSI and is bound by the conditions of the contract.

Information and Contact: BSI, Kitemark Court, Davy Avenue, Knowlhill, Milton Keynes MK5 8PP. Tel: + 44 345 080 9000
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