

DEVON BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2019

Present:

Councillors Pearce (Chairman), Smith (Deputy Chairman), Kimber, Clemens and Steer

Apologies:

Councillor Bastone
Darren Arulvasagam, Business Development Group Manager (South Hams)

Officers in Attendance:

Andrew Carpenter - Business Manager - Head of Building Control Partnership
David Bealing - Operational Group Leader
Nicola Denton - Business Development and Support Manager
Richard Sampson - Area Building Control Surveyor
Clare Moors - Accountant
Sharon Sissons - Democratic Services Officer (Exeter City Council)

18. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were made.

20. OPERATIONAL REPORT

The Operational Group Leader presented the detail of the Operational report, which monitored the performance, service delivery, development and action plans of the Partnership, which covered the building control service across South Hams and Teignbridge District Councils and West Devon Borough Council, for the period up to the 30 December 2018.

Following a successful new mobile software trial, he advised that seven surveyors were now able to access the software through their iPads, with obvious benefits, particularly in relation to their record keeping and improved ability to link into the back office systems. The roll-out to the remaining surveyors would continue over the coming months. There had been an update to the Review of the Building Regulations and Fire Safety, namely Approved Document B and Regulation 7, which came into force on 21 December and set out the changes, which were also detailed in the report. It had been beneficial to have the detail in respect of combustible materials formalised. The Chairman made

reference to the independent review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety following the Grenfell Tower fire and commented on the final Hackitt Report which had been published. The Head of Devon Building Control Partnership welcomed the opportunity for greater simplification of the regulations in respect of buildings over 18m.

A very successful Builders Recognition Event had been held in November, with over 70 builders attending, and the opportunity for local builders to be acknowledged for their good work was much appreciated. The 2019 Building Control Partnership Awards were also due to be held on 21 February, at the Dartmoor Lodge Ashburton. The event was already oversubscribed, with 18 categories involving over 33 projects from all over the Partnership area, with architects as well as builders and developers invited in recognition of their work.

Members were advised that a member of staff was currently awaiting confirmation that they had achieved registration as a National Level 6 Surveyor, and the Partnership had been successful in achieving the LABC Quality Management System, UKAS Accredited ISO 9001 Certification. Details of this would be used on their dedicated web site. The Chairman thanked the Head of Building Control Partnership and the Business development and Support Manager and the team for their hard work in achieving this.

Resolved – The report be noted.

21. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman moved the following resolution:

Resolved – That under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

22. OPERATIONAL REPORT

The Operational Group Leader presented the detail of the Operational report, which monitored the performance, service delivery, development and action plans of the Partnership for the period up to the 30 December 2018. It was noted that every opportunity was taken to identify and generate new income opportunities as well as gain valuable experience for staff in a very reactive environment.

He also referred to the efforts made to develop their market share which included expansion of their armoury of social media tools, as well as regular technical training events being held throughout the year by Devon Building Control Partnership and Plymouth City Council, which provided an opportunity for learning as well as sharing good practice. The Devon Building Control Partnership Awards would be held on 21 February 2019 and plans were also being drawn up for an event in October under the Building Together Banner.

Members discussed the observed protocol for Building Control inspections. The Chairman was aware of the many comments received by Building Control and suggested that a letter be written to the Housing Minister seeking his support to uphold the expected building standards, particularly by volume house builders.

Resolved - The report be noted, and the Head of Building Control Partnership agreed to draft a letter of behalf of the Chairman to the Housing Minister with regards to building standards.

23. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Head of Building Control Partnership presented an update on the financial performance of the Partnership.

The importance of succession planning in relation to staffing within the Partnership was discussed, and Members agreed that ensuring the support of staff through structured training and guidance was an important element of the future of their business planning. The Chairman welcomed any opportunity to ensure that staff were able to progress their careers within the Building Control Partnership.

Councillor Steer proposed and Councillor Kimber seconded that a report on a number of aspects of recruitment be presented to include a definitive progression pathway for apprentices to a future meeting of this Committee.

Resolved – The report be noted and a report on staffing matters be presented to a future meeting.

Chairman