



DEVON BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE 16 JULY 2021

Report Title	Operational Report Part 1
Purpose of Report	To provide an update on the operational performance of the Partnership between 1 April and 30 June 2021.
Recommendation(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to: (1) Note the report
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications highlighted in the report Tel 01626 215248 clare.moors@teignbridge.gov.uk
Legal Implications	“No direct legal implications” Karen Trickey Karen.Trickey@Teignbridge.gov.uk
Risk Assessment	The risks to the Partnership, listed in 2.3 below, are currently being managed. Nigel Hunt Tel: 01626 215721 Email: nigel.hunt@devonbuildingcontrol.gov.uk
Environmental/ Climate Change Implications	Building control bodies will need to ensure they work within the limits of their “professional skill and care” whilst conducting virtual inspections, as highlighted in sections 2.1. This should act to prevent under-compliance in development energy efficiency standards, where relevant. Environmental benefits associated with working from home, as identified in section 2.4 will depend on individual homeworking arrangements, commuting distances and use of energy within unoccupied office spaces. William Elliott Climate Change Officer William.elliott@teignbridge.gov.uk
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Appendices	
Background Papers	None

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1. PURPOSE

The Partnership operates under the Devon Building Control Partnership Agreement 2017.

2. REPORT DETAIL

2.1 Operation

2.1.1 Performance

The Partnership has continued to meet all PI's throughout the period. Despite a lockdown in November and ongoing Covid restrictions, the construction industry has continued and as a result workloads have remained high.

2.1.2 General

A new Head of Partnership started work in April and instigated a full service review to determine the current position of the service with regard to workload, staffing and resilience which will provide recommendations to ensure that the partnership is well placed to cope with future demands and is 'fit for purpose'. The Partnership continued to operate against the background of the Covid-19 pandemic which, whilst having a negative effect on the majority of industries, saw no significant impact on construction. In fact most Local Authority Building Control Providers have reported that the last quarter of 2020/21 saw the largest number of building control submissions during the last ten years. This trend is continuing, and shows no sign of abating.

2.1.3 Staff

Graham Waldron retired in May 2021. A new surveyor Giles Dawes took up his employment with the Partnership in May 2021.

2.1.4 Covid 19

The arrangements that were put in place during Spring 2020 to enable staff to work from home have continued successfully. Forde House is fully Covid compliant and is therefore able to be used if needed, however the majority of

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staff are able to work from home. One surveyor remains working from the office and occasionally up to two others, together with Tech Support at least once a week.

Site inspections have been risk assessed and carried out where appropriate. Where practical and after consultation with the surveyor some virtual inspections have continued to be made. During the recent lockdown site inspections have only been carried out if absolutely necessary and in most cases avoiding entering occupied buildings. The following Government advice for building control is being followed:

Building Control Bodies should continue to undertake normal, regular on-site inspection activity where this can be done safely, in line with Public Health England guidance. Building Control Bodies may wish to consider the use of alternative methods of checking compliance to supplement physical inspections, for example using digital photographs and video or other remote means of checking compliance.

Building Control Bodies should satisfy themselves within the limits of their professional skill and care that these remote inspections are used appropriately. Remote inspections should not normally be used as the sole method of assessing compliance.

2.1.5 Marketing and events

All events continue have been either cancelled or postponed until further notice due to Covid 19 restrictions and ongoing uncertainty over how long these may continue. The possibility of arranging some online events, such as webinars is being considered.

2.2 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

2.3 Risks

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

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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 break even financially

Withdrawal of a Partner council

2.3.1 Currently these risks are successfully managed.

2.4 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

There are no direct carbon/environmental implications arising from the recommendations in the report. It is noted that reduced travel as a result of Covid restrictions has contributed to some positive environmental impact.

3. 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.