



## DEVON BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

### MEETING DATE 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026

<b>Report Title</b>	Part 1 Operational Report Q3 2025/26
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide an update on the operational performance of the Partnership for the period above.
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to:</b>  <b>(1) Note the report</b>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	Finances covered in Part 2 report
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no legal implications associated with this paper Maxine Valentine Senior Legal Officer (interim Team Leader) <a href="mailto:Maxine.valentine@teignbridge.gov.uk">Maxine.valentine@teignbridge.gov.uk</a>
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	The risks to the Partnership are currently being managed. Nigel Hunt Tel: 01626 215721 Email: <a href="mailto:nigel.hunt@devonbuildingcontrol.gov.uk">nigel.hunt@devonbuildingcontrol.gov.uk</a>
<b>Environmental/ Climate Change Implications</b>	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: <a href="mailto:nigel.hunt@devonbuildingcontrol.gov.uk">nigel.hunt@devonbuildingcontrol.gov.uk</a>
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<b>Partnership Chairman</b>	Cllr John Birch <a href="mailto:cllr.john.birch@southhams.gov.uk">cllr.john.birch@southhams.gov.uk</a>
<b>Appendices</b>	Attached Business/Operational Plan
<b>Background Papers</b>	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.

