



DEVON BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE 6TH JULY 2026

Report Title	Part 1 Operational Report 2025/26 & Q1 2026 -2027
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	
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
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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

Reports to Joint Committee meetings are based on the Partnership's Operational/Business Plan, which provides the main basis for information and discussion. Sensitive material, including detailed financial information, is presented separately in a Part 2 report and is treated as confidential in line with CIPFA guidance and relevant local government legislation relating to Building Control. Consequently, the Partnership is only required to publish a summary of its year-end accounts.

2.1 Operation

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

Performance

The Partnership meets much 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 has experienced several staffing changes in recent months. Following the departure of a qualified RBCI in April, one Area Manager chose to move into that role. The resulting manager vacancy has since been filled by an internal candidate, and recruitment has begun for the remaining vacant post. The Partnership also continues to carry 3.6 FTE additional vacancies, which have remained unfilled for several years due to financial constraints.

The remaining Inspector undertaking a formal degree qualification completed their course in June 2026 and will now progress to assessment to become a fully licensed and registered Inspector.

A LABC apprentice with previous construction experience has also started a three-year, fully funded contract at no additional cost to the Partnership.

Audit & Assurance

The Internal Audit & Assurance Service reviews key risk areas within the Council's core systems. The relevant findings from published corporate audit reports are summarised below to provide the Committee with the latest available assurance information, noting that some reports may span more than one meeting cycle.

The areas reviewed, and their assurance ratings, are:

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

The two outstanding audit items remain dependent on action by the host authority and are therefore outside the Partnership's direct control.

The Partnership also operates and adheres to the LABC ISO 9001:2015 accredited Quality Management System. The framework sets internationally recognised, standardised procedures for public service building control and covers four primary pillars:

- Systems and Controls
- Competency
- Building Control Functions
- Enforcement & Interventions

The Partnership successfully completed an external Audit by the British Standards Institute (BSI) in 2025 in order to maintain certification.

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.

The 2025/26 budget has been assessed against actual performance. 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, and contained a number of recommendations with significant implications for the future of building control. Recommendation 22 led to 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 panel published their report on the 20th of May 2026. The document is wide ranging and covered the significant issues affecting the Building Control profession. The full report can be found here [Building Control Independent Panel report - GOV.UK](#)

It does have over 20 recommendations which include the following which could directly impact Local Authority Building Control.

- 1. Establish a single, independent statutory building control system.**
Legislate for a unified statutory system for all non HRB work, built on independence, national consistency, clear duties and transparent public accountability.
- 2. Remove duty holder choice from statutory building control.**
End client selection of regulator and move to independent allocation model based on risk, competence and capacity. In transition to this, enable preference of BCB to be established.
- 3. Create consolidated Building Control Bodies (BCBs).**
Establish fewer, larger building control bodies to take on statutory functions from LA BCAs, to deliver consistent decisions, risk-based inspections and enforcement.
- 4. Define the role and powers of the Single Construction Regulator (SCR).**
Set out the SCR's remit across oversight, registration, performance monitoring, HRB decisions and enforcement.

5. Strengthen national enforcement capability.

Provide the SCR with specialist legal, investigatory and technical capacity to support robust and consistent enforcement across England.

6. Create one statutory process for applications, notices and approvals.

Align requirements across all providers so the statutory function operates to the same clear and modernised rules.

7. Complete reform of the 2010 Fees and Charges Regulations.

Enable full cost recovery for all statutory activities and remove outdated constraints on how services fund essential functions.

8. Protect building control income.

In designing the new model of delivery, ensure income is guaranteed for the long term by ringfencing it to ensure BCBs can deliver their functions effectively.

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.