



**K. Miles**  
**Chief Executive**  
**North Devon Council**

**S. Walford**  
**Chief Executive and**  
**Director of Growth**  
**Mid Devon District**  
**Council**

### **BUILDING CONTROL JOINT COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Building Control Joint Committee will be held in the Barum Room - Brynsworthy on **THURSDAY, 25TH JANUARY, 2024 at 10.00 am.**

**(NOTE: A location plan for the Brynsworthy Environment Centre is attached to the agenda front pages. There are limited car parking spaces in the Visitors parking area. If no spaces are available, please find an alternative space. Please ensure that you enter your name and car registration details in the book in front of the entrance door).**

Members of the  
Committee:

Representing North Devon Council

Councillors Denton and Walker (Chair).

Representing Mid Devon District Council

Councillors Keable (Vice-Chair) and Clist.

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2023 (attached). (Pages 5 - 10).
3. Items brought forward which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered as a matter of urgency.
4. Declarations of Interest.

Please telephone the Corporate and Community Services team to prepare a form for your signature before the meeting. Interests must be re-declared when the item is called. A declaration of interest under the Code of Conduct will be a Disclosable

Pecuniary Interest, an Other Registrable Interest or a Non-Registrable Interest. If the item directly relates to your interest you must declare the interest and leave the room for the item, save in the case of Other Registrable Interests or Non-Registrable Interests where you may first speak on the item as a member of the public if provision has been made for the public to speak. If the matter does not directly relate to your interest but still affects it then you must consider whether you are affected to a greater extent than most people and whether a reasonable person would consider your judgement to be clouded, if you are then you must leave the room for the item (although you may speak as a member of the public if provision has been made for the public to speak) or, if you are not, then you can declare the interest but still take part).

5. To agree agenda between Part 'A' and Part 'B' (Confidential Restricted Information).

### **PART 'A'**

6. **2023/24 Building Control Partnership trading account Quarter 3.** (Pages 11 - 12).

Report by the Finance Manager, North Devon Council (attached).

7. **Building Control Partnership Update.** (Pages 13 - 22).

Report by the Building Control Manager (attached).

8. **Dates and locations of future meetings. To agree dates and locations of future meetings of the Committee for 2024/25.**

This is the last meeting of this Committee cycle for 2023/24.

(NOTE: Unless otherwise agreed the Joint Committee must meet at least on a quarterly basis with the meeting held at 10.00am and the offices of the Chairman's partner authority).

### **PART 'B' (CONFIDENTIAL RESTRICTED INFORMATION).**

**If you have any enquiries about this agenda, please contact Corporate and Community Services, telephone 01271 388253**



### **North Devon Council protocol on recording/filming at Council meetings**

The Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision-making. Recording is permitted at Council meetings that are open to the public. The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be recorded. The Chairman of the meeting will make sure any request not to be recorded is respected.

The rules that the Council will apply are:

1. The recording must be overt (clearly visible to anyone at the meeting) and must not disrupt proceedings. The Council will put signs up at any meeting where we know recording is taking place.
2. The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.
3. We will ask for recording to stop if the meeting goes into 'part B' where the public is excluded for confidentiality reasons. In such a case, the person filming should leave the room ensuring all recording equipment is switched off.
4. Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. We ensure that agendas for, and signage at, Council meetings make it clear that recording can take place – anyone not wishing to be recorded must advise the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.
5. The recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or in a way that ridicules or shows a lack of respect for those in the recording. The Council would expect any recording in breach of these rules to be removed from public view.

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For more information contact the Corporate and Community Services team on **01271 388253** or email **memberservices@northdevon.gov.uk** or the Communications Team on **01271 388278**, email **communications@northdevon.gov.uk**.

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Brynsworthy Environment Centre (BEC), Roundswell,  
Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 3NP.

Sat Nav postcode is EX31 3NS.

At the Roundswell roundabout take the exit onto the B3232, after about ½ mile take the first right, BEC is about ½ a mile on the right.

Drive into the site, visitors parking is in front of the main building on the left hand side.

On arrival at the main entrance, please dial 8253 for Corporate and Community Services.



## **NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Building Control Joint Committee held in the Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Thursday, 26th October, 2023 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Members:  
Representing North Devon Council:  
Councillor Walker (Chair)  
Representing Mid-Devon District Council:  
Councillors Keable and Clist

Officers:

Head of Planning, Health and Housing, Building Control Manager,  
and Accountancy Services Manager (NDC)

Also Present:

Councillor Haworth-Booth

### **9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Denton.

### **10. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH AUGUST 2023.**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023, (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest announced.

### **12. 2023/24 BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP TRADING ACCOUNT FOR QUARTER 2.**

The Joint Committee considered a report by the Finance Manager (NDC) (circulated previously) regarding the 2023/24 Q2 Forecast Building Control Partnership Trading Account.

The Finance Manager gave the Committee the following summary:

- Page 11 of the agenda showed the table detailing the figures for the Partnership Trading Account.

- The first set of columns of the trading account table, showed the yearly budget for each Authority.
- The second set of columns showed the forecasted outturn for the year 2023/24 based on the total variance as at quarter 2.
- At the bottom of these columns a percentage split was shown to work out the income for the two Authorities.
- Currently the split was 66.75% for North Devon and 33.25% for Mid-Devon.
- Referring back to the quarter one position, income for Mid-Devon had dropped off and so the split was 63.77% for North Devon and 36.23% for Mid-Devon.
- The split was important to know as the expenditure for the trading account for each Authority could then be worked out.
- The third set of columns showed the percentage split of trade income between the two Authorities.
- “The reconciliation – 12 month position compared to budget” box detailed that North Devon Council had a deficit of £47,492.40 and Mid-Devon District Council had a £6,026.60 deficit.
- The movement from quarter one showed the account was £13,000 better off.

The Head of Planning, Health and Housing advised the Committee that realistically it should be anticipated that there would be a reduction in business for both Authorities due to a drop in applications coming forward and this reduction of income should therefore, be accounted for in next year’s budget.

The Committee noted the report.

### **13. BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS UPDATE.**

The Committee considered a report by the Building Control Manager (circulated previously) regarding the Building Control Business update.

He advised that the lack of technical resource continued to hamper the service. Applications were taking much longer to reach surveyors due to the lack of technically qualified staff. Since writing this report have had a meeting with the Devon Audit team so would be interesting to see the outcome of their findings.

He outlined the main areas of the report, which were under the following headings:

- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2022/23.
- KPIs 2023/24.
- Resource Implications.
- Building Safety Act 2022 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 – Changes.
- Validation Process.
- Building Safety Regulator Registration.
- British Safety Regulator (BSR) Operational Standards.
- Partnership Priorities.

He drew the Joint Committee’s attention to the following key points within the report:

- The market share for number of applications was at 70% against a target of 75%.
- The performance in relation to decisions taken within two months was at 98% against a target of 95%. Plan examination response times with applications being examined within 3 weeks was at 93% against a target of 95% and average time to first response was 18 days against a target 10 days.
- The partnership was currently trading with only one part-time Building Control Technical Support Team Member.
- The improvements to the processing times through decision making were as a result of additional support, which had been provided by the Mid-Devon District Council Planning Technical team through the months of July and August 2023. However, the service still had some way to go in terms of achieving their target in relation to first response time.
- The general market share was reported at 70% in Q2 2022/23 and appeared to have continued to stabilise at the current time, with the last three quarters reporting an average of approximately 71% share.
- The number of applications were on a par with numbers received in Q2 in the last financial year. However, total application numbers were at significantly lower levels than the total number received by the end of Q2 in previous years.
- As reported previously, the current resourcing issues continued to damage the Partnerships ability to function, its reputation and its ability to maximise income.
- The Partnership continued had relied heavily on the support provided to them through the Technical Team from Mid-Devon and wanted to give thanks for their support.
- There had been a successful recruitment drive and two new Technical Support Officers had been recruited with both new members of staff starting in early November 2023. This would bring the Support Team up to full numbers.
- It would however, take some time for the new members of staff to be fully up to speed.

In response to a question on when the new officers were actually starting. The Building Control Manager advised that one officer had a start date of 6 November 2023 for the new Technical Team Leader post and the other post was 13 November 2023. References were still to be checked but that wasn't expected to be an issue.

In relation to their training this would be carried out in sections, to be fully trained would take some time. It was hoped to get them answering the telephones and logging applications to start.

- Prior to 1st October, owners of buildings in scope, (those buildings that were more than 18 metres in height and contained two or more residential units) were legally required to register those buildings with the Building Safety Regulator.

- From 1st October 2023 any work carried out to an in scope building could only be undertaken with a Building Regulation application being submitted to the Building Safety Regulator.
- This change would encourage the owner took more responsibility over the process by signing declarations ensuring competent designers and contractors were hired to carry out the works.
- The changes also placed a duty on the appointed designer and contractors to be responsible for their design and/or work carried out and were required to sign a declaration to demonstrate their work complied with the building regulations.
- New enforcement powers for local authorities were introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> October. Stop Notices were intended for the more serious contraventions that were considered to be life threatening and generally related to structural deficiencies or breaches of the fire regulations.
- Compliance notices would be used for everything else that was not considered life threatening.
- It is thought these changes to enforcement powers could lead to increased workloads in enforcement, which was a non-chargeable element of the Partnership's work.
- The five permanent surveying team members were currently at various stages of the validation process with the Local Authority Building Control (LABC), which was free to full time LABC employees at this time.
- The validation process needed to be completed by April 2024. The Building Control Manager had completed stage 1 of this process and was ready to proceed to stage 2, which was an exam.
- Once surveyors had passed their exams they could apply to the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to register at the competence level they had demonstrated they could operate.
- Where surveyors did not achieve a registration band they would not be able to perform restricted functions such as plan checking or site inspections without being under supervision of a Registered Surveyor at that competence band.
- The BSR had announced its registration charges which were:
  - £336 for initial registration for a four year cycle, and;
  - £216 per year per surveyor for monitoring between four year cycles.
- This confirmed the previously reported additional costs the Partnership needed to account for this year.
- AS reported previously the BSR would require the Partnership to demonstrate its operations were in line with new Operating Standards and report on performance on a quarterly and annual basis.
- Engagement with the South West Group was underway to ensure a consistent approach to the new requirements and it had already been highlighted that changes to the application form, acknowledgement letter and completion procedures to capture the duty holder changes, recently introduced, would be required.
- Consultation with Mid-Devon Planning Support, once the new Technical Support Team were in place, would be needed to use their expertise in extracting the information from Uniform, the data base system, which will be required.



- A preliminary meeting for this was yet to be arranged but looked likely to be early in the new year, 2024.

In response to questions from the Joint Committee, the Building Control Manager advised that:

- Stately homes were not considered in scope buildings in terms of the new regulations that came into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023.
- There were very few buildings in the area over the 18 metre height that were in scope but it would cover hospitals with more than four storeys and care homes.
- The current period of notice for an employee to give varied depending on the status of their role, so for a surveyor a month's notice was required but a manager had to give three months' notice.
- The LABC had issued their interpretation of the new changes yesterday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023, once the guidance had been understood the back office system could be upgraded to allow for the changes.

The Committee noted the report and,

RECOMMENDED that:

- (a) in the short-term both Authorities use the 10% discretion payable on salaries to retain staff;
- (b) in the long-term re-evaluate the job descriptions; and
- (c) To seek guidance on whether it would be possible to extend the period of notice needed to be given by an employee from one month to three.

#### **14. DATE AND LOCATION OF FUTURE MEETING.**

The Joint Committee agreed the remaining date of the final meeting for 2023/24, which was scheduled to be held on:

- Thursday 25th January 2024 at 10:00am in the Barum room, Brynsworthy Environment Centre.

Chair

The meeting ended at 10.40 am

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2023/24 Building Control Partnership Trading Account Qtr 3

	1		2			3		4		5	
	2023/24 BUDGET		2023/24 FORECASTED OUTTURN					NDC 2023/24		MDDC 2023/24	
	NDC	MDDC	NDC	MDDC	Total	NDC	MDDC	Chargeable	Non Chargeable	Chargeable	Non Chargeable
	£	£	£	£	£	65.62% £	34.38% £	75% £	25% £	75% £	25% £
<b>Expenditure</b>											
Employees	401,510	225,003	418,725	160,070	578,795	379,794	199,001	284,846	94,949	149,250	49,750
Transport	22,480	11,500	12,500	8,800	21,300	13,977	7,323	10,482	3,494	5,493	1,831
Supplies and Services	9,400	14,420	8,650	16,450	25,100	16,470	8,630	12,353	4,118	6,472	2,157
Third Party Payments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central & Support Service charges	86,170	58,540	86,170	58,540	144,710	94,956	49,754	71,217	23,739	37,315	12,438
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>519,560</b>	<b>309,463</b>	<b>526,045</b>	<b>243,860</b>	<b>769,905</b>	<b>505,197</b>	<b>264,708</b>	<b>378,898</b>	<b>126,299</b>	<b>198,531</b>	<b>66,177</b>
<b>Income</b>											
Building Regulation Charges	-397,870	-266,328	-319,038	-167,166	-486,204	-319,038	-167,166	-319,038		-167,166	
Misc Income/S106 Receipts					0	0	0	0		0	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-397,870</b>	<b>-266,328</b>	<b>-319,038</b>	<b>-167,166</b>	<b>-486,204</b>	<b>-319,038</b>	<b>-167,166</b>	<b>-319,038</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-167,166</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit for Year</b>	<b>121,690</b>	<b>43,135</b>	<b>207,007</b>	<b>76,694</b>	<b>283,701</b>	<b>186,159</b>	<b>97,542</b>	<b>59,860</b>	<b>126,299</b>	<b>31,365</b>	<b>66,177</b>
	% income split		65.62%	34.38%							
								283,701	186,159		97,542
<b>Total Actual Variance To Budget Spend</b>					<b>118,876</b>						

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**Appropriation Profit/Loss**

Cash require to pay over from MDDC to NDC

20,848 MD to pay ND

Debtor to be raised by NDC to MDDC

-20,848  
0

MEMO for Tony

<b>Reconciliation - 12 month position compared to budget</b>		
	NDC	MDDC
Base budget excluding transfer between authority	121,690.00	43,135.00
Budgeted contribution between each authority	-23,430.00	23,430.00
Bottom line for comparison	98,260.00	66,565.00
12 Month Actual from above	186,159.31	97,541.69
<b>12 Month Deficit / (Surplus) compared to budgete</b>	<b>87,899.31</b>	<b>30,976.69</b>

118,876.00

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## Building Control Joint Service Committee

Report Date: 07.01.2024

Report By: Andy Howard

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update members regarding the progress of the Partnership and contains no recommendations.

### Report

Since the last Joint Committee Meeting the Activity Reports have been updated to include figures for Q3 2023/24.

The data from 2022/23 below has been included to provide a comparison and help demonstrate the current trend for the figures for 2023/24 on the following page.

### Key Performance Indicators 2022/2023

KPI	KPI	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Building Regulation Full Plan applications determined in 2 months	95%	100%	95%	96%	94%
Building Regulation Applications examined within 3 weeks	95%	81%	85%	79%	88%
Average time to first response (Days)	10	12	16	16	18
Market Share - Number of applications %	75%	75%	76%	72%	70%
Market Share - New Housing Completions %	40%	39%	40%	83%	40%
Financial Position	Breakeven	-	-180,157	-104,379	-68,843
Number of applications received	N/A	424	251	225	247



## Key Performance Indicators 2023/2024

KPI	KPI	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Building Regulation Full Plan applications determined in 2 months	95%	94%	98%	98%	
Building Regulation Applications examined within 3 weeks	95%	75%	93%	85%	
Average time to first response (Days)	10	19	18	17	
Market Share - Number of applications %	75%	72%	70%	80%	
Market Share - New Housing Completions %	40%	49%	16%	34%	
Financial Position	Breakeven	-66,396	TBA	TBA	
Number of applications received	N/A	253	245	275	

The table above shows performance in relation to decisions within two months at 98% (target 95%), plan examination response times with applications being examined within 3 weeks at 85% (target 95%) and average time to first response 17 days (target 10 days).

The reported KPI processing times through to decision making are a direct result of the continued support we have received from the Mid Devon Planning Technical Team and without this support performance would be significantly worse.

Improvement in the three week and time to first response remain our long term target but with three vacant Surveying positions, inexperienced Technical Support staff, inexperienced Surveying staff and the changes to our back office systems that are required in the coming months, immediate improvement in these figures should not be anticipated.



At the last Joint Committee, general Market Share was reported to have stabilised in the Q2 2023/24 at 70 percent.

Despite our challenges our Market Share has improved and is up by 10% in Q3 and is currently 80 percent.

While this is encouraging, these figures should be reviewed over a longer period to establish the trend and our true market share.

Despite our Market Share, total application numbers are at significantly lower level than the total number received by the end of Q3 in previous years.

### Total Application Numbers and Market Share Comparison at the End of Q3

<u>Year</u>	<u>Applications Received</u>	<u>Market Share</u>
2023/24	688 Applications	80%
2022/23	902 Applications	72% (7 employees departed Partnership)
2021/22	996 Applications	84%
2020/21	922 Applications	84% (Pandemic)
2019/20	1000 Applications	74% (Pandemic)
2018/19	985 Applications	72%
2017/18	983 Applications	74%

The application numbers continue to reflect the general economic climate and the lack of confidence in the housing and property investment market.

Taking public perception into account, interest rates and with property owners being risk averse to investment in their homes and businesses, despite our relatively competitive Market Share, the lack of activity in construction sector is being reflected in the number of applications being received and inevitably in our reduced levels of income.

The overall financial position is to be advised by finance but after much improved receipts in October and November, income in December was disappointing.

Income remains at much lower levels than previous years and estimated forecasted income will need to be revised.



As reported previously, there is a continued trend not only in the number of applications but also in the work types that are being submitted. Projects that are being submitted tend to be for smaller, less complex in size, which in turn sit in the lower fee income brackets and therefore impact on overall income.

As anticipated Housing Market Share has returned closer to our 40% target at 34%.

However, it is apparent all new house builds are continuing to slow down within the region as developers are struggling to sell the completed plots. This is leading to an overall reduction in site activity on the existing housing sites we are overseeing as developers wait for further signs the housing market is turning in a positive direction.

## Resource Implications

The Partnership is continuing the re-building process and recent recruitment has reduced vacant positions from six, down to three.

Since the last Committee Meeting our vacant Technical Support posts have been filled and the New Technical Support Team Leader (full time) and Assistant (24 hours) joined on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Both are becoming increasingly productive and an asset to our operations but are some way from completing training with our part-time well established Technical Support Assistant.

While this training continues, the Partnership is also preparing for the Building Safety Regulator Regime changes, with this in mind, we will continue to access assistance from Mid Devon Planning Support, to process Building Regulation applications and payments with a view to maintaining acceptable management of new work flow.

In addition, the vacant Mid Devon Principal Surveyor's position has been filled and our new recruit has been in post since 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

While the Mid Devon Senior Surveyor will not be advertised immediately, approval has been given to advertise the vacant Senior Surveyor position in North Devon and our vacant Trainee Building Control Surveyor position.

With the recruitment successes the Partnership has reduced its reliance on expensive agency surveying staff and we are now just contracting one agency Surveyor.

The current agency Surveyors contract expires at the end of March 2024.

Due to the Building Safety Regulator registration requirements and the likely impact upon the number of available agency staff, agency costs are likely to spiral in the coming months.





While it may be possible to completely remove the Partnerships reliance on Temporary Surveyor support by the end of Q4, this will depend largely on our success/failure in forthcoming recruitment rounds, our current resource levels remaining consistent and work load not increasing significantly.

The current 10% Market Supplement which was put in place in Q4 of 2022/23, after the loss of seven established, qualified and experienced staff will stop at the end of Q1 2024/2025.

The Market Supplement has been successful in its aim to retain staff and has eliminated the risk of further departures for the time being, by stabilising our remaining resource and providing competitive terms and conditions which has enabled some significant success in recruitment to our vacant positions.

With the Market Supplement coming to an end Senior Management are in the process of tasking Human Resource Teams within each authority to jointly review and potentially harmonise permanent competitive terms and conditions.

This action is being taken with a view to avoiding further departures, as once the Market Supplement ends the Partnership's terms and conditions will again become uncompetitive.

## **Building Safety Act 2022 Duty Holder and Processing Changes**

As reported at the last Joint Committee, the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 changes laid the ground for new duties and responsibilities for owners who are undertaking work to any building they own whether it's in scope or not.

The changes place duties on the applicant, designer and contractor to sign declarations to confirm works are compliant with the Building Regulations.

The Technical Support Team have been working on new application forms, acceptance letters, invalid letters, duty holder notification forms, decision notes and completion processes.

The new forms and revised processes went live at the beginning of the New Year.

The changes made to our application forms allow us to capture information the Building Safety Regulator requires us to record. This new data includes, details of the contractor, details of the designer, the height of the building and an intended commencement date for the work.

Until the Uniform upgrade is completed we will record all new required information to our Documentation Management System, but once the upgrade has been completed it



is anticipated there will be additional fields and boxes within the Building Control Module of Uniform to record this information and then have the ability to report upon.

We have created further invalid application letter pro forms to issue to applicants where insufficient information has been received. These letters will enable the Partnership to request the additional information prior validation and issuing an acceptance letter.

Our application acceptance notices on full plans applications now have Duty Holder completion protocol notes and forms for the relevant Duty Holders to complete.

To ensure compliance with the Building Safety Regulator Regime requirements, wording changes have been made to our full plans application decisions notices.

A Conditional Approval is now known as Approval with Requirements and a Full Plans Approval is now known as Application for Full Plan Building Regulation Approval Notice.

Forms have been created to allow applicants to formally advise the Partnership of changes to Duty Holders, which must be given in writing. These written notifications include changes of ownership, changes relating to the designer, contractor or the design itself.

The Technical Support Team have also created a Completion Declaration document for all Duty Holders to sign at completion prior to a Completion Certificate being issued.

As reported previously, the changes also introduce additional enforcement powers for local authorities enabling Compliance and Stop Notices to be issued for work that is not compliant with the Building Regulations.

Stop Notices are intended for the more serious contraventions which are considered to be life threatening and generally related to structural deficiencies or breaches of the fire regulations.

It is the intention of the Building Safety Act to allow individual Registered Surveyors of the appropriate competence to issue these notices to offenders.

However, there has been some discussion with regard to the delegation of power under the Constitution and that current provision may not have permitted individual Surveyors to issue Stop and Contravention Notices.

Having spoken with both legal sections it has been confirmed that as long as the delegation is declared the Constitutions allow for the Building Control Manager to delegate such powers to individual Surveyors.



Once these delegations have been declared to each relevant legal section, the Partnership will be in a position for Surveyors to individually issue the new Stop and Contravention Notices.

Having the capability to digitally record location, time and date stamped, photographic evidence of inspection stages will be a requirement of the new BSR regime.

This will be required with the view to providing applicants with inspection reports upon request.

It will also be a requirement for the Partnership to demonstrate how Surveyors access application information on site.

With this in mind the Partnership will need to have access to the latest version of the Building Inspector APP (BI).

This will give individual Surveyors access to plans, specifications and inspection records via upgraded android tablets with our current IPADS due to be replaced in the next two to three weeks ensuring all Surveyors have suitable equipment.

It is anticipated the forthcoming changes to our data base package, Uniform, will allow reports to be automatically populated but if this is not the case, then these will have to be manually produced upon request.

## **Internal Audit**

The Partnership is awaiting the final report from the internal audit team.

## **Building Control Charges**

New Building Control Charges will be introduced and will apply from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

The charges will increase from the current rate by 6.7 percent across the board.

## **Validation Process**

All of the current permanent (six) Surveying team members have now completed their Stage one validation submission.

Two have sat the relevant exams for their Class in December and are awaiting the results.

The remaining four Surveyors have the examination booked in for the end of January or the end of February 2024.



## Training Update

The Partnership is required to have action plans, training plans, and CPD logs in place for each employee and keep them updated for the BSR.

These have just been completed but will require regular updating by individuals and monitoring by the Principal Surveyors and BCM in preparation for providing this information to BSR upon request.

The Building Control Manager has just completed a Level 6 Course in Building Control Management, submitted the course assignment and is due to receive the results in the coming weeks.

The scoping work undertaken to complete the training /action plans has identified further courses, some of which have already been booked.

Level 6 Legislative Compliance for the Mid Devon Assistant Surveyor who is keen to explore enforcement as a specialist.

Uniform Systems Administrator course for the Technical Support Team Leader.

These courses will commence in February and March 2024 and will be funded through this financial year's training budget.

Further Surveyor courses will be booked in the new financial year and will be Class dependant.

The two new Technical Support Staff will also be offered the opportunity to take the Level 3 LABC Technical Support Course in the new financial year.

## Building Safety Regulator Registration Update

The Building Safety Regulator Register opened on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 which allows Building Control Surveyors to register their competence once they have proven it through one of the validation processes.

In a recent release the BSR advised all Surveyors to register as Class 1 Surveyors to avoid a surge of applications towards the end of March 2024.

Once registered, upon successful examination validation evidence being submitted to the BSR, individuals will be able to transfer from Class 1 (Trainee) to their proven Class free of charge and Surveyors are currently making applications to register with the BSR.



## **BSR Operational Standards and Upgrade to Uniform**

As reported previously, the Building Safety Regulator will require the Partnership to demonstrate its operations are in line with new Operating Standards and report on performance on a quarterly and annual basis.

The Partnership has been waiting on confirmation of when the delayed roll out of the Uniform upgrade from IDOX will be available before being able to start this work.

Once installed, the upgrade should enable the Partnership to begin preparations for the additional reports required by the BSR to demonstrate performance against the new regime KPIS.

Last week Mid Devon IT confirmed they had received the upgrade and it is proposed this will be installed on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Initial discussions have already taken place with Mid Devon Planning System Report writers and work will start on the new reports at the earliest opportunity.

## **LABC ISO Framework**

LABC are yet to release the changes to the ISO Quality Framework System that will bring it into line with the BSR regime.

Once received, the Partnership will need to re-engage with this platform, make the appropriate adjustments to our back office systems and then operate in accordance with those confirmed changes.

## **Partnership Priorities**

To introduce the new Building Control Charges.

The Partnership needs to remain competitive in the employment market to ensure recruitment and retention and have sufficient staff to be ready for the market upturn.

Continue to prepare Surveyors for the validation and registration process so that we are ready to meet the Building Safety Regulatory requirements by April 2024.

Continue to prepare the team and our procedures for the changes the New Operational Standards will bring. This includes adapting working practices and creation of new reports to be in a position to report on the fifty new KPI's the Building Safety Regulator will require information on.

Ensure employees have sufficient time for training, CPD and staff development.

# Agenda Item 7



To maintain, monitor and audit our Quality Management System.

Review of the facilities at Woodlands is to be considered given our increased agile working since the pandemic and may provide a 10K annual saving if we no longer operate from this base.

Consider a more permanent hybrid working system and hot desk arrangements for both the Surveying and Technical Support Team.

Develop a more agile and pro-active relationship that enables the Partnership to respond to change.