

NOTE TO: JOINT SERVICES COMMITTEE

DATE: 10/02/2022

TOPIC: BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS UPDATE

REPORT BY: MIKE TUCKER (BUILDING CONTROL MANAGER)

1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 REPORT

2.1 Workload

Despite the decrease in applications in July and August workloads have remained high for individuals as this takes time to filter through to impact day to day activity and the impact of the holiday season.

2.2 Staffing

We still have a member of our Technical Support Team on maternity leave who anticipates returning to work on 17 February 2022 on a part time 20 hour contract. As soon as her revised contract is signed and returned we anticipate advertising for a further part time post to make up the difference.

We advertised unsuccessfully three times to fill the vacancy created by the promotion of a member of the Technical Support Team to Team Leader. However, due to a change of circumstances the out-going team leader has decided not to retire at this point and has been appointed as a Technical Support Officer to fill this vacancy although the contracted hours have been reduced to 29.6 hrs.

A new trainee has now been recruited and joins us with a BSc (Hons) Degree in Building Surveying. Hence we are hopeful that their training and development will follow the pattern of our previous trainee resulting in a fairly rapid contribution to servicing the workload. However, at the current time this is an effective reduction in productive resource.

We also have a long term sickness issue with a Senior Surveyor having been off work since the beginning of December.

These staffing issues are now placing a strain on individuals due to the reduction in available resource. This will be further exasperated with the retirement of the Building Control Manager at the end of March as duties are delegated to other senior member of the team until a replacement is in post.

At current workloads this reduction in resource will impact performance and is likely to require some prioritisation of inspections. In the short term it is anticipated that this shortfall in resource will in part be relieved by the use of overtime to aid plan checking response times. This will be budgeted for via the absence of the Building Control Manager.

2.3 Building Safety Regulator

More information with regard to the requirements for validation as a registered Building Inspector are gradually becoming available although the distribution of information from the Building Safety Regulator and LABC has been limited and contradictory up to this point causing significant despondency and moral issues amongst staff.

Unfortunately it now transpires that the Level 6 validation achieved by five of the staff in November 2019 will no longer be considered adequate for registration purposes with the scope of skills and experience required having been expanded beyond just the fire safety elements. Grant aided funding is now available for upgrading of Surveying staff but currently this is limited to Local Authorities that have high rise residential buildings (HRB's) within their area. However, it is anticipated that costs will be covered by LABC for the NMD Partnership and a budget has been allocated to support this.

Resource problems are not limited to the NMD partnership as there is a shortage of resources across the South West. By example the majority of HRB's.

2.4 Reversions from Approved Inspectors

We are continuing to receive an increase number initial notice cancellations from Approved Inspectors as they are unable issue completion certificates as they do not consider themselves in a position to certify compliance.

As a result of this we are required to obtain reversion applications from the person carrying out the work and take over supervision. These projects can be difficult and time consuming which is further impacting limited resources.