

NOTE TO: JOINT SERVICES COMMITTEE

DATE: 23/01/2020

TOPIC: BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS UPDATE

REPORT BY: MIKE TUCKER (BUILDING CONTROL MANAGER)

1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 REPORT

2.1 Staff

- 2.1.1 Seven Surveyors sat the LABC validation of fire safety expertise examination 19 November 2019 and I am delighted to report that 5x Surveyors passed with 2x near misses.
- 2.1.2 This is one of the highest pass rates in the country and this was achieved despite the limited complexity of work in the partnership area and is testament to the hard work put in to preparation for the exam by the surveyors.
- 2.1.3 The successful candidates will now be issued with an individual licence by LABC enabling compliance with our QA system and proposed legislation regardless of the height or complexity of developments.
- 2.1.4 The parish allocation to Surveyors has been revised introducing an area for which our graduate trainee will be responsible and balancing the workload between the Surveyors.

2.2 AI insurance issues

- 2.2.1 To date there is still only four Approved Inspectors who have failed to gain reinsurance and it appears unlikely that there will be any further casualties at this time.
- 2.2.2 We have now received 15x Reversion applications for projects left without Building Control as a result of the collapse of AEDIS. The remainder of the projects either had not started or were found to be exempt works and as a result the Initial Notices have been withdrawn.
- 2.2.3 A number of these projects have now been successfully completed but there are also a number with significant contraventions including the conversion of a listed hotel to 12x flats in Ifracombe.

2.3 Revision to regulations

- 2.3.1 The old adage that hasty legislation is bad legislation was confirmed by a recent High Court Ruling. The recent Regulation changes resulting from the Grenfell Tower fire included a restriction on the combustibility of items attached to the façade of a building including products intended to reduce heat gain. The ruling found that the

Regulation was not valid due to a failure to consult adequately prior to implementation and as a result the regulation has been withdrawn.

- 2.3.2 The Future Homes Standard consultation with regard to changes to Requirement L – Conservation of fuel and power and Requirement F – Ventilation. The consultation proposes an 80% improvement in carbon emissions over current standards by 2025 with regulatory revisions in 2020 and 2025. Two options are provided for the 2020 changes with the Government's stated preference being Option 2.

Option 1

20% reduction from current standard in 2020 delivered through improved fabric standards.

Option 2

31% reduction in carbon emissions delivered based on carbon saving emissions such as photovoltaic (solar) panels and a smaller improvement in fabric standards.

Our response was that Option 1 would be better as it raises the standard to that needed to implement the future homes standard. The biggest issue is the performance gap in construction detailing. Hence, to raise standards this should be the industry focus. The sustainable improvements to building services have a shorter life span and can be added later whilst the fabric is generally for the life of the building. However, I appreciate that Option 2 may be preferred by government to stimulate investment in renewable technologies.

The main issue with regard to meeting the regulatory standard is the performance gap on site and the proposals seek to address this by requiring the energy assessor to sign off the work on site as complying with the design. However, in order for this to be effective it is essential that the building is designed in advance of construction so that the specification can be implemented. Currently Regulation 27 that requires provision of energy calculations prior to commencement of work on site is not enforceable under Section 35 of the Building Act by virtue of Regulation 47. Hence, it can be ignored with impunity and may as well not exist. This problem is not addressed in the consultation.

2.4 Marketing

- 2.4.1 Nominations are now being sought for the LABC SW Building Excellence Awards 2020 and we are currently liaising with clients to assist in the preparation of entries and meetings are being arranged with key clients and outstanding projects to encourage entry and advice on how to maximise the chances of success.
- 2.4.2 We have a display stand at the Direct Contact Exhibitions CPD event at the Barnstaple Hotel on 5th February 2019.
- 2.4.3 We are organising a further CPD event in partnership ARC Building Solutions for our clients. ARC are an independent manufacturer of fire protection products. The provisional date is 20th February 2020 and will be hosted at the Barnstaple Museum.