

Building Control – 2018/19

Overview of the service

The principal role of Building Control is to provide a service to the construction industry, residents, other professionals and internal customers. It is a statutory service, which administers legislation relating to the built environment and operates in such a manner as to establish and maintain a high reputation for both itself and the Council. It therefore aims to provide a responsive service, which is of a consistently high standard and gives value for money to its customers.

The Service has two elements which are described as fee earning and non-fee earning work. The building regulation aspect of the service is income generating and in accordance with The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 and CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting) accounting requirements. This aspect of the business must be self-financing over a continuous three-year rolling period. The non-fee earning part of the Service is funded by the Council tax payer and includes dealing with dangerous structures, enforcement, demolitions, support for the safety advisory groups and consultancy services to other Council services.

1. Fee earning work (Income generating)

- Validating building control applications, checking applications for compliance, issue statutory notices, carrying out site inspections and issuing completion certificates. All within statutory time limits.
- Providing technical and professional guidance to members of the public, external agencies and other departments within the Council.

2. Non fee earning work (Council funded)

- Responding to dangerous structure reports including co-ordinating the response of external bodies such as structural engineers or statutory undertakers,
- Process demolition notices
- Carry out enforcement action
- Provide technical and professional support to the safety advisory groups and consultancy services and to other departments within the Council.

Local Authority Building Control is subject to significant competition from private sector building control bodies (approved inspectors or AI's) operating both regionally and nationally. This competitive scenario is applicable across all types of developments providing applicants a clear choice between the Local Authority Building Control Service (LABC) and private sector building control Approved Inspector (AI) services. Competition has ensured that the service provided must compete effectively both in terms of level of service and cost. Nationally, there are 200+ registered Approved Inspectors and the number has rapidly grown in the last few years.

The Local Authority retains the statutory duty of the enforcement of the Building Regulations in its area. Approved Inspectors have no statutory authority to perform this function and sites

which cannot be signed off by AI's revert back to Local authorities for enforcement. Thus irrespective of workload and income Local Authority must retain a building control service at some cost to the Authority.

The Service is also subject to a continuous programme of both administrative and technical legislative change. This means that management objectives and priorities may change at short notice.

Cost of service

Building Regulation Fee Earning Service

This Service is concerned with determining compliance with Building Regulations by assessing plans and carrying out site inspections at different stages of the building process. Customers are advised of contraventions of the building regulations and how they may be overcome.

Legislation allows prosecution in the magistrates' court for contraventions of the Building Regulations but it is generally used as a last resort where negotiation has failed.

This element of the service's work is subject to competition by the private sector.

The estimated income generation for 2017/2018 is **£280,000**.

Non Fee Earning Work

Building Control provides a number of services which are necessary as part of a local Authority service. These include:-

- **Dangerous Structures.**
- **Enforcement of Building Regulations.**
- **Demolitions.**
- **Registering AI Initial Notices and Competent Person Scheme works.**
- **Process disabled person's applications.**
- **Provide advice to other council services.**
- **Safety advisory group / safety at sports ground.**
- **General pre-application and building regulations advice.**

These elements of building control work do not require payment of a building regulation charge and are not required to be self-financing.

The estimated cost of the non-fee earning work in 2017/2018 is **£100,809**

Proposed changes and improvements to the existing service

Staffing information – Proposed Structure

Post	Full/Part time	Area of Department
1)Team Leader-Building Control Surveyor	Full Time	All
2)Senior Building Control Surveyor/Consultant	Part Time	All
3)Senior Building Control Surveyor	Full Time	All
3)Senior Building Control Surveyor	Full Time	All
4)Trainee Building Control Surveyor	Full Time	All
5)Building Control Technical Administrator	Full Time	All
Development Services Administrator	Fixed Term	All

- 1) The above is a proposed revision to the existing Building Control structure and is awaiting agreement. After reviewing the existing structure, it became apparent that career progression became somewhat stunted from surveyor level. By reinstating the team leader post a career route is provided. Furthermore having a team leader post will provide a clear contact point for potential new clients.
- 2) Nigel Harper will reach retirement age in July 2018. Nigel would not like to retire completely therefore after discussions with Jo Brooks it was agreed that Nigel would remain, working 2.5 days a week. Retaining Nigel's vast experience, particularly in fire safety will be vitally important to the service. He will play a key role in interpreting and implementing anticipated regulation changes arising from the Grenfell tragedy and the resulting Hackitt review. In addition, Nigel will actively market the service to generate additional income.
- 3) The proposal is to promote two existing surveyors to senior positions. Both surveyors now have extensive experience to take up the posts and are undergoing an in house management training programme to obtain the required skills to manage staff.
- 4) Currently there are two salary scales between the trainee post and surveyor post. In reality the existing trainee may stay at the top of their existing pay scale for up to two years whilst working towards becoming qualified. It is proposed to introduce an additional post, surveyor (unqualified). This will ensure the trainee surveyor can receive appropriate remuneration for experience and knowledge attained whilst working towards becoming professionally qualified.
- 5) The current administrator's responsibilities will be extended (after appropriate training) to include dealing with elementary technical enquiries. It will provide the post holder with a more interesting and rewarding role within the service. In addition the surveyors will have more time improving and marketing the service.

By introducing this new structure:

- The existing staff will feel more empowered to actively contribute to the continued improvement of the service
- The existing staff recognise the authority's commitment to their progression and are therefore more likely to remain at the council
- Additional time can be spent actively marketing the service to generate additional income
- The service will be sufficiently robust enough to facilitate any additional responsibilities imposed on local authorities as a result of the Hackitt review

- Most importantly, we will continue to provide a professional and consistent service to our customers

Budgets and fee's

We are restricted by CIPFA regulations to generating a maximum annual profit of 10%. On the surface this does appear to contradict all business practices! What it actually does is to concentrate our efforts on providing a customer focused service as opposed to a financially focused service.

The service has been able to cap its fee's for the previous 6 years. As mentioned previously, additional income will be required to cover the salary changes. The proposal is to increase the fee's by 10% across the board. The anticipated additional income will support the proposed changes. We will also be reducing the number of fee scales shown on our website and fee sheets. Historically all our fees have been available to view by the public, including private building control companies. This has always been a huge bone of contention within our sector as it allows private companies to view our fee's and in turn offer a cheaper service. By reducing the number of fee scales, clients will have to contact us for a fee quote. This will provide a key marketing opportunity to talk directly to potential clients at an early stage.

Changes to the service resulting from Lean

At the end of 2017 the service provided to our customers was audited by Hetty Thornton. The results highlighted the need to portray the service in a more corporate, professional manner whilst retaining an affiliation with the Local Authority. A number of internal processes require updating or removing. To date the following improvements have been made:

- A corporate identity has been produced with the introduction of a unique logo. The logo will appear on all building control correspondence, website, protective equipment worn on site and all marketing literature.
- Proposed staffing changes to provide a clear career path and to retain existing staff
- Updating existing office procedures, identifying waste and removing where possible enabling the service to provide a more efficient service to its customers
- Updating processes in readiness for mobile working
- Website to be redesigned following review. New design will ensure information relevant to the customers requirements/knowledge can be retrieved quickly.



Commitments towards our Vision

Building Control Service Delivery Plan 2018-2019

Performance Measure	Link to Corporate Plan Priority	Target and reporting timescale (i.e. 6 monthly or annually)	Baseline from previous year/output from previous year	Owner and co-owners
To actively market and promote the building control service to maintain market share	Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council	Local authority building control (LABC) services used on a large proportion of all applications submitted in the East Cambridgeshire District 75% of all Building Control applications submitted use Local Authority Building Control	64% - <i>At the time of this report there are still 5 weeks of the year left. It is anticipated that our target will be achieved by 31st March. Confirmation will be provided in the 6-month report.</i>	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Duncan Hones-Building control surveyor John Jeffery-Building control surveyor Darren King- Building control administrator Jeannie Ambrose – Trainee Building Control Surveyor
		Achieve a break-even budget for the fee earning account and be self sufficient	Balanced budget achieved	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor
		Review/improve the Building Control area of the Council website to ensure the information available is up to date and relevant for all customers	Completed	Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor
To ensure the provision of a safe and healthy environment	A fantastic place to live, work and visit	To ensure the provision of a responsive dangerous structures service by attending: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of reports of a dangerous structure within 2 hours if after a desktop assessment it is determined the structure may cause immediate danger to the public 100% of reports of a dangerous structure within 24 hours if after a desktop assessment it is determined the structure will not cause immediate danger to the public 	100% Attended	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Duncan Hones-Building control surveyor John Jeffery-Building control surveyor Jeannie Ambrose – Trainee Building Control Surveyor
		To respond to 100% of demolition notices within 4 weeks (statutory requirement 6 weeks) in order to ensure compliance with statutory legislation and support customer needs	100% Processed within the statutory 6 week period	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Duncan Hones-Building control surveyor John Jeffery-Building control surveyor Darren King- Building control administrator Jeannie Ambrose – Trainee Building Control Surveyor
		Attend and provide technical guidance at all applicable Safety Advisory Group meetings both internally and externally	100% Attended	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Duncan Hones-Building control surveyor John Jeffery-Building control surveyor

Performance Measure	Link to Corporate Plan Priority	Target and reporting timescale (i.e. 6 monthly or annually)	Baseline from previous year/output from previous year	Owner and co-owners
To provide a dedicated high quality technical service to our customers	Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council	Register 80% of building regulations applications within 3 working days of submission	92%	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Darren King- Building control administrator
		To ensure compliance with building regulations by carrying out plan checking within 3 working weeks Check 70% of applications for compliance within 3 working weeks	74%	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Duncan Hones-Building control surveyor John Jeffery-Building control surveyor Jeannie Ambrose – Trainee Building Control Surveyor
To maintain a full and professionally qualified team that is technically up to date with current and emerging legislative changes		To identify training needs across the service by following effective performance management processes. To ensure succession planning is in place. To maintain a full professionally qualified (applicable to post) team	Completed	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor
		Appraisals to be completed annually	100%	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Duncan Hones-Building control surveyor John Jeffery-Building control surveyor
To determine building regulations applications and carry out site inspections within specified statutory timescales	A fantastic place to live, work and visit	To examine and determine 100% of applications within statutory period of 5 weeks or 2 months where an extension of time agreed too.	100%	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Duncan Hones-Building control surveyor John Jeffery-Building control surveyor Jeannie Ambrose – Trainee Building Control Surveyor
		Carry out 90% site inspections on same day if requested before 10am and within 5 days for completion inspections 90% carried out on day of request	98%	Nigel Harper-Senior Building Control surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control surveyor Duncan Hones-Building control surveyor John Jeffery-Building control surveyor Jeannie Ambrose – Trainee Building Control Surveyor
Ensure that the Council's corporate risks are managed effectively and mitigations are put in place to reduce impact	Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council	To regularly review risks associated with Building Control, including: Carrying out site inspections - Possible impact to the health & safety of the public resulting from incorrect decision making by Surveyor - Possible impact to reputation of the Authority Attending dangerous structures calls - Possible impact to the health & safety of the public and Council employees resulting from incorrect dangerous structure management - Possible impact to reputation of the Authority		Nigel Harper- Senior Building Control Surveyor Jason Johnson- Senior Building Control Surveyor Duncan Hones- Building Control Surveyor John Jeffery- Building Control Surveyor Jeannie Ambrose – Trainee Building Control Surveyor