



Building Control Service Delivery Plan 2023 to 2024

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. To this end, the fees review conducted during 2022 brings all fees into one holistic hourly charge rate, which shows value for money and gives transparency to all.

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.

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.

Non-fee earning work (Council funded)

Includes:

- responding to dangerous structure reports including co-ordinating the response of external bodies such as structural engineers or statutory undertakers
- process demolition notices

- carrying out enforcement action
- providing 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 150+ registered Approved Inspectors. This number has levelled off in the past couple of years due to insurance issues and the rules and regulation changes coming into force post Grenfell.

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. The coming year will also see the introduction of an exhaustive set of new validation criteria for surveying staff to accomplish.

The way Building Control is being administrated is changing significantly during 2023 to 2024. The introduction of a new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) will take full control of all "in-scope" buildings (those over 18m tall) with effect from April 2023. The BSR (part of the HSE) will put together the design teams for these projects and, although East Cambridgeshire do not have any such buildings, there is a chance some of our staff might be asked to help with these in neighbouring areas. In addition, the BSR will also introduce a register for all building control surveyors across the country. Every single building control surveyor will need to pass validation at one of three levels and then apply to be on the formal register. Anyone not validated by Summer 2024 will not be able to carry out site visits or plan checking until they do pass. Therefore, the next 12 months are pivotal for all staff to achieve validation and this must be an integral aspect of our work this year.

Cost of service

The cost to run the service is £543,885 per annum.

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 2023 to 2024 is £340,000.

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
- processing disabled person's applications
- providing advice to other council services
- safety advisory group and 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 2023 to 2024 is £110,750.

Staffing Information

As we enter 2023 to 2024, Building Control is made up of the following staff members.

Building Control Manager 1 full time

Senior Building Control Surveyor 2 full time

Building Control Surveyor 1 part time (0.6 full time equivalent FTE)

Assistant Building Control Surveyor 1 full time

Building Control Admin Manager 1 full time

Trainee 1 part time (0.6 FTE) on secondment from LABC national office for 3 years

Forward planning for Councillors

Proposed item	Proposed date of decision	Committee
Half year report 2023 to 2024	November 2023	Operational Services
End of year report 2023 to 2024	March 2024	Operational Services
Service Delivery Plan 2024 to 2025	March 2024	Operational Services

Building Control Service Delivery Plan 2023 to 2024

This Service Delivery Plan describes what Building Control will be doing to deliver continuous improvement (service objectives). Each performance measure relates to the Council's strategic outcomes and Corporate Plan 2022 to 2023.

Council's strategic outcome: Maintain sound finances. Improve systems and practices.

Building Control's strategic objective: Actively market and promote the building control service to maintain market share.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sound financial management.

Performance measure

Target and reporting timescale

Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023

Owner and co-owners

<p>Increase market share of local authority building control (LABC) services for all applications submitted in the East Cambridgeshire district</p>	<p>Minimum 80%, annually</p>	<p>Currently 79.9% so far in 2022 to 2023.</p>	<p>Building Control Manager Senior Surveyor (2) Surveyor Building Control Admin Manager Assistant Surveyor</p>
<p>Achieve a break-even budget for the fee earning account and be self sufficient</p>	<p>100%, annually</p>	<p>Budget slightly behind target so far for 2022 to 2023 up to end of January 2023, 81% of annual budget achieved with 2 months remaining – working with Management Accountant to re-profile and identify savings for 2023 to 2024.</p>	<p>Building Control Manager Management Accountant</p>
<p>Review/improve the Building Control area of the Council website to ensure the information available is up to date and relevant for all customers</p>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>Delayed intentionally in 2022 due to lack of staff, planned in for Spring 2023.</p>	<p>Building Control Manager Assistant Surveyor Web team</p>

Council's strategic outcome: Customers are at the heart of everything we do.

Building Control's strategic objective: Provide a dedicated high quality technical service to our customers.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sound financial management.

Performance measure

Target and reporting timescale

Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023

Owner and co-owners

<p>Register 85% of building regulations applications within 3 working days of submission and 100% within 5 days of submission and where initial plan check payment is made</p>	<p>85% and 100%, annually</p>	<p>Currently 93% for registrations within 3 days and 98% within 5 days for 2022 to 2023 as at 17 February 2023. One delay due to influx of applications when regulations changed – around 200 received in 3 weeks.</p>	<p>Building Control Manager Building Control Admin Manager</p>
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Performance measure **Target and reporting timescale** **Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023** **Owner and co-owners**

Ensure compliance with building regulations by carrying out plan checking within 3 working weeks, making decisions with 5 or 8 weeks as determined on application and aim to check applications for compliance within 3 working weeks

90%, annually

Currently at 79% for 2022 to 2023 as at 17 February 2023 for plan checks to be and 100% for decisions made within statutory timeframe.

Building Control Manager
Senior Surveyor
Surveyor/Assistant Surveyor

Council's strategic outcome: Customers are at the heart of everything we do.

Building Control's strategic objective: Determine building regulations applications and carry out site inspections within specified statutory timescales.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sound financial management.

Performance measure **Target and reporting timescale** **Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023** **Owner and co-owners**

Examine and determine applications within statutory period of 5 weeks or 2 months where an extension of time agreed to, penalties can be incurred for missing these deadlines so must be adhered to

100%, annually

100% throughout 2022 to 2023.

Building Control Manager
Senior Surveyor
Surveyor/Assistant Surveyor

Carry out site inspections the next working day if requested before 4.30pm the day before and within 2 days for large completion inspections

100%, annually

Currently 99% for 2022 to 2023.

Building Control Manager
Senior Surveyor
Surveyor/Assistant Surveyor

Council's strategic outcome: Be an excellent employer.

Building Control's strategic objective: Maintain a full and professionally qualified team that is technically up to date with current and emerging legislative changes. Ensure that the Council's corporate risks are managed effectively and mitigations are put in place to reduce impact.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sound financial management.

Performance measure **Target and reporting timescale** **Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023** **Owner and co-owners**

Identify training needs across the service by following effective performance management processes, ensure succession planning is in place and maintain a full professionally qualified (applicable to post) team

100%, annually

Recruitment of 2 senior surveyors during 2022 to 2023 has kept us at the required standard. In 2023 to 2024 all surveying staff have to become validated at required level by April 2024 – residential level 4, commercial level 5 and specialist level 6 – at least 1 at each level is needed.

Building Control Manager
Senior Surveyor

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
<p>Conduct regular team meetings, ensure they have the correct structure to be valuable and warranted, including training, legislation, workloads; 1-2-1's and appraisals to be completed regularly</p> <p>To regularly review risks associated with Building Control, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Safety Regulator/Register - new Surveyor Register being implemented during 2023, all surveying staff need to pass validation and register by April 2024 • Building Safety Levy - strong possibility of BSL being allocated to Building Control, await developments from BSR on this (staffing/resources) • cost of living crisis - to be aware of cost of living rises impacting on people delaying building projects, rise in materials or lack of them, increased number of reposessions, increased labour costs • training/validation - to keep abreast of all legislation changes and in turn update our partners and architects, ensure staff are given enough time to complete validation training • updated SWOT Analysis - identify current threats to the service 	<p>As required, annually</p>	<p>Regular team meetings and 1-2-1 meetings take place continually – appraisals to take place late February and early March 2023.</p>	<p>Building Control Manager Senior Surveyor</p>
<p>Council's strategic outcome: A clean, green and attractive place.</p> <p>Building Control's strategic objective: Ensure the provision of a safe and healthy environment.</p> <p>Link to Corporate Plan: Sound financial management. Housing.</p>		<p>Risks are regularly reviewed and mitigated wherever possible and when within our remit and control. Looking ahead, cost of living is beginning to have an effect on projects being started as well as new applications but industry competitors are being hit harder than we currently are. Building Safety regulator/register will involve a lot of training and revision for all surveying staff during 2023 to 2024.</p>	<p>Building Control Manager Senior Surveyor Building Control Admin Manager Assistant Surveyor</p>
<p>Ensure the provision of a responsive dangerous structures service by attending:</p>	<p>100%, annually</p>	<p>100% attended within timeframe so far for 2022 to 2023.</p>	<p>Building Control Manager Senior Surveyor Assistant Surveyor Customer Service Team</p>

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
<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%, annually	100% processed within the better performing 4-week period so far for 2022 to 2023.	Building Control Manager Senior Surveyor Building Control Admin Manager Assistant Surveyor
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	As required, annually	100% attended so far for 2022 to 2023. Staff booked on new national Level 6 Safety at Sports Ground course May 2023.	Building Control Manager Senior Surveyor
Attend and provide technical guidance at all applicable Safety Advisory Group meetings both internally and externally			
Council's strategic outcome: A clean, green and attractive place.			
Building Control's strategic objective: Undertake activities which help to mitigate/adapt to climate change.			
Link to Corporate Plan: Cleaner, greener East Cambridgeshire.			
Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
Implement further digitisation of our service in order to reduce paper use and postage/printing costs (specifically in 2023 to 2024, send all acknowledgement letters by email only, rather than post, and investigate other measures to further reduce paper/printing/postage usage)	As identified, annually	Digitisation started in January 2023 – too early to see benefits yet – hoping to see savings in excess of £3K in 2023 to 2024.	Building Control Manager Senior Surveyor Building Control Admin Manager Assistant Surveyor
Reduce the number of business miles by putting in place measures within the team whereby officers reduce both the number of site visits to those which are strictly necessary, and combine site visits to a single journey where this is practicable	As identified, annually	New performance measure. This should reduce the overall mileage undertaken by officers - baseline to be established - resulting in both a financial saving and carbon emissions saving for the Council.	Building Control Manager Senior Surveyor Building Control Admin Manager Assistant Surveyor