

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
BUILDING CONTROL BOARD
HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 7.00 - 8.10 PM**

Committee Members Present

Marcus Franks (Chairman)	West Berkshire Council
David Coppinger	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Norman Jorgensen	Wokingham Borough Council
Simon Weeks	Wokingham Borough Council

Officers Present

Callum Wernham	Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Steve Broughton	Wokingham Borough Council
Sean Murphy	West Berkshire Council
Roger Paine	Wokingham Borough Council
Rob Stubbs	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council

1. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor David Coppinger be elected Chairman of the Building Control Board for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Norman Jorgensen be appointed Vice Chairman of the Building Control Board for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Michael Airey and Emma Webster.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 20 March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. BUILDING CONTROL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Board considered a report, set out in agenda pages 7 to 12, which gave an update on the ongoing Building Control transformation programme.

Marcus Franks, West Berkshire Council, asked when an updated business plan could be expected. In response Steve Broughton, Building Control Strategic Change Lead, stated that an updated plan was being drafted however it was not ready to be viewed currently. He added that the original business plan was overly optimistic and that the main issue with the updated plan was in forecasting the service's financial position. Steve stated that any surplus made would need to be used to develop the business (for example, hiring more staff or reducing fees) as there was a legal requirement for the service to be cost neutral.

IT

Steve Broughton stated that all partners were in agreement that they wanted a single integrated IT system, and this was being provided by Tascomi. He added that this service

would go live with for all new activity from 2 January 2018 for new activity. He added that importantly data held on the three legacy systems need be migrated on to Tascomi in addition to the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) data. Roger Paine, Building Control Operational and Commercial Manager, clarified that the LLGP was an address database maintained by Local Authorities and that it was a means of identifying a particular property. He added that this data needed to be transferred from each individual authority to the central Tascomi system in the next phase of the programme.

Steve Broughton stated that West Berkshire and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) had raised concerns over General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) with regards to transferring the LLP data. He added that there had been meetings were taking place between the GDPR experts in each of the 3 partner Authorities to look into resolving the issue, however this had currently put the transformation programme 5 weeks behind schedule. Roger Paine added that Wokingham Borough Council would be processing the data on the behalf of the other 2 partner Authorities as the data controller, but that each Authority would still be in ownership of their respective datasets. Roger stated that the original data sharing agreement made in 2016 would likely need to be updated to ensure that it complied with the new GDPR. David Coppinger, RBWM, stated that each Member of the board would follow this matter up with their respective Authorities to enable a swift solution to the issue.

Steve Broughton stated that other than the GDPR concerns, other aspects of Tascomi were proceeding well. Steve raised that should the delays to project continue, there could be an additional cost incurred by the service as Tascomi had allocated a specific amount of time and resources in order to complete the project, meaning that the service could have to purchase more resources from Tascomi to enable project completion.

Accommodation

Steve Broughton stated that the current accommodation being provided in Market Street (Newbury) by West Berkshire was undergoing a change from 1 December 2018, whereby staff were moving floor and would be reducing their current level of occupation from 10 workstations to a flexible 3 'hot desk solution' to accommodate surveyors. He added that the service, primarily based at Shute End in Wokingham, was still looking at a unique overall solution with regards to accommodation. As previously reported, Waterford House in Wokingham remains a favoured option with discussions to enable continue with WBC Property Team He added that early indications were that there would be no additional costs to move to Waterford House (compared to the current costs of being based in Shute End, Wokingham) and that the facility would be much more suitable for the service's needs than the current arrangements at Shute End.

David Coppinger asked whether the service would retain the use of the West Berkshire Office once suitable and permanent accommodation had been secured. In response, Steve Broughton clarified that due to the wide geographical area that the service covered it made sense to have a base for surveyors outside of Wokingham to minimise travel time and to maximise efficiency of the workforce.

Recharges between the partner Authorities were discussed by Members. Steve Broughton stated that the recharge figures were likely to change and that the updated figures would circulated to the Board when they were ready.

Staffing

Steve Broughton stated that there had been ongoing issues with staff retention and recruitment. He outlined that the service currently had 6 vacancies, one more vacancy upcoming, 2 members of staff on maternity leave (one of which had stated that they would not be returning) and one further member of staff due to go on maternity leave. He added that this had begun to cause increased stress levels amongst staff.

Members queried how the service was still functional with such issues with current staffing levels. Steve Broughton stated that agency staff were being utilised to provide support in the short term. He added that the service had set a cap on the maximum hourly pay of its agency staff, and although this was needed for affordability reasons it could mean that in future they will be limited in which agency staff they can access. Steve stated that the current agency staff were proficient and were having a positive impact on the service. He added that the current staff were having to adapt to a wide range of issues, and that resources sometimes had to be switched to different areas in order to maintain business continuity.

Simon Weeks queried whether the service was having to turn away work as a consequence of the staffing issues. Steve Broughton stated that as a local authority building control service they were not permitted to turn work away and that current workloads were high across the service.

Steve Broughton stated that a new member of staff with responsibility for marketing would be joining the service in February 2019. He added that this new member of staff would aim to retain market share and to bring in more work and publicise the service more effectively.

David Coppinger queried how the service would achieve an increased workload with the current staffing issues. Roger Paine stated that it would require effective resource management in addition to keeping close attention to the 'day to day' issues that were likely to occur as a result of the increased workload.

Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)

Steve Broughton stated that the service was in consultation with legal representatives regarding the creation of the LATC and that it had been agreed that it needed to be the 'right time' for the service to undergo the change to becoming a LATC.

Norman Jorgensen, Wokingham Borough Council, asked for clarification on when the 'right time' would be for the service to become a LATC. Steve Broughton stated that once the transformation project was completed and the central IT system was in place and fully operational. He stated that he would hope that the service could begin to look into the transformation into a LATC in perhaps one years' time. Steve reiterated that the main issue currently for the service was the transition to a central IT solution, and emphasised that once this was completed he hoped that staffing issues would become less prominent.

Members asked if there had been any overtures from other Local Authorities who were interested in joining the partnership. Steve Broughton stated that Bracknell had contacted the service last year but had not since followed up that initial discussion. He added that Reading had also been in contact with the service several times, but more research was needed to be conducted to understand Reading's business needs and what they can bring to the partnership (and vice versa).

Marcus Franks asked about whether there was an update risk matrix to the version that was taken to the last meeting of the Board. Steve Broughton stated that the risk matrix could be included in the quarterly briefing document that was circulated to lead Officers. Members asked that the quarterly briefing documents be circulated directly to Members of the Board in future in addition to being sent to the lead Officers.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Building Control Transformation Programme Update be noted;
- 2) Members of the Board follow up on concerns regarding GDPR related issues with their respective Authorities;
- 3) financial figures relating to recharges between the partner authorities be circulated to Board Members in due course;
- 4) Board Members receive future quarterly briefing documents directly in addition to lead Officers receiving them.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members discussed the recent performance statistics of the service.

Marcus Franks stated that performance and financial statistics should be made a standing item on the Board's agenda.

Simon Weeks queried why there had been a reduction in achieving some of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Roger Paine clarified that this was due to a combination of staffing level issues and the high amount of staff leave that was taken over the summer months. He added that he hoped that these figures would be improved in the upcoming performance updates.

David Coppinger asked as to why the financial statistics were not included at this meeting. Steve Broughton stated that the statistics should have been made available on the day, but the data that had been supplied by the finance team had been confusing and needed clarification. He added that he was fairly confident that there would be some level of underspend this financial year.

Members asked that the financial statistics be circulated to the Board by the end of the 2018 calendar year. Members added that they would like a telephone discussion with Officers once this data was made available.

Marcus Franks asked for an update on the service's market share position. Roger Paine stated that there had been a small and ongoing reduction in their market share in part due to large private national building control companies increasing their focus on domestic extension projects (which is a large part of the service's workload). He added that the service currently had approximately 55-60% market share of local domestic work, but this percentage was slipping gradually.

Members stated that they wanted the next meeting of the Board to be brought forward from April 2019, to February 2019.

Members discussed a point regarding the division of overheads and costs for non-fee earning activities and fee earning activities. It was decided that more information regarding the issue needed to be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) performance and financial statistics updates be a standing item on future agendas for Board meetings;
- 2) the current financial statistics be circulated to the Board by the end of the 2018 calendar year and a telephone discussion with Building Control Officers be organised to discuss the statistics;
- 3) the next meeting of the Board be scheduled for February 2019
- 4) an item and report by Barbara Richardson, Lead Officer RBWM, regarding division of overheads and costs for non-fee earning activities and fee earning activities be taken to a future meeting of the Board.