

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
BUILDING CONTROL BOARD  
HELD ON 11 MARCH 2019 AT 7.00 - 8.25 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

John Halsall	Wokingham Borough Council
Graham Howe	Wokingham Borough Council
Richard Somner	West Berkshire Council
James Cole	West Berkshire Council
David Coppinger (Chairman)	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

**Officers Present**

Steve Broughton	Wokingham Borough Council
Sean Murphy	West Berkshire Council
Roger Paine	Wokingham Borough Council
Andy Glencross	Wokingham Borough Council
Madeleine Shopland	Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Richard Prewer	RBWM Council

**8. APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Graham Howe be appointed Vice Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

**9. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 12 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the amendment of the reference to '2018' under the Building Control Transformation Update to '2019'.

**11. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**12. BUILDING CONTROL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Board received an update on the ongoing Building Control Transformation Programme.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- With regards to staffing Roger Paine, Building Control Commercial & Operational Manager, informed Members that recruitment remained an issue. Work was being done with Jobs Go Public regarding recruitment to vacancies within the team. An advert for surveyor posts would be published the next day.
- Councillor Howe asked how many surveyors were required and was informed that there were five vacancies although it was anticipated that one post would be deleted. There were currently three vacancies within the support team. Interviews had been held recently and offers made to two candidates which had been verbally accepted. A third post would be deleted as a result of the efficiencies brought about by the introduction of Tascomi.
- Building Control Solutions had not been successful in appointing a Marketing Manager and was reviewing the best approach to marketing and business development.

- With regards to IT, it was noted that the Tascomi IT system had the data of Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire Council transferring to it. Data currently on the legacy systems was being transferred and it was anticipated that this would be finalised by the end of March for Wokingham Borough Council and by May for West Berkshire Council. Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Council had a different system and processes in place.
- Richard Prewer, Head of Property and Compliance, RBWM Council, advised that at present there was not an appetite from RBWM Council to migrate its data to the Tascomi system. There were some concerns regarding the procurement exercise. Councillor Howe questioned whether these concerns were procedural, financial, operational or technical.
- Richard Prewer stated that a meeting would be held on 26 March and it was hoped that RBWM's position would be clarified following this.
- Members proposed that RBWM Council officers present a paper to the Board at the earliest opportunity to outline the particular concerns. Councillor Halsall suggested that this should be carried out by June. Councillor Coppinger indicated that he hoped for clarification as soon as possible.
- Councillor Somner questioned what the implications would be for Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils. The shared service agreement was discussed. Sean Murphy, Public Protection Manager West Berkshire Council, emphasised that the shared service needed to move to a single IT service. Andy Glencross, Lead Specialist, Community, Heritage & Green Infrastructure, indicated that in the short term the Councils could move forward together. However, should RBWM not buy into the Tascomi system there would be cost implications of running two systems.
- Roger Paine went on to state that the service's ISO:9001 registered Quality Management System was regularly audited by the British Standards Institute and the next audit was due in June.
- With regards to accommodation, Members were advised that there were ongoing discussions about the team possibly moving to Waterford House or staying at Shute End. Five West Berkshire surveyors continued to be based at the West Berkshire Council offices, although much of their time was spent working remotely. The support team was based in Wokingham Borough Council offices. The service was working towards having the whole team located in one area.
- All staff now had a Building Control Solutions email address ([firstname.surname@bcsolutions.org.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@bcsolutions.org.uk)). In addition the service now had a new single telephone number 0300 7900 580 to ease the customer experience.
- Councillor Halsall suggested that the Councils' websites should include a link to the Building Control Solutions portal.
- Processes and procedures were being reviewed and revised to align to the Tascomi IT system, stepping towards a single set of processes and procedures delivering efficiencies and consistent service delivery. Councillor Cole asked why this had not been done earlier in the process and was informed that the work in this area could not be completed until full implementation of Tascomi had been achieved with the inclusion of RBWM Council. Councillor Somner questioned whether the outcome of the review could inform the meeting on 26 March and was informed that it would not have an impact on decisions other than the fact that it was more efficient to run a single system rather than two.

**RESOLVED:** That the current position of the transformation programme be noted.

### **13. BCS FINANCIAL FORECAST 2018/19 AND BUDGET SETTING 2019/20**

The Board received the BCS Financial Forecast 2018/19 and Budget Setting 2019/20.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- Building Control Solutions operated within two separate budget accounts; a Trading Account and a Non-Trading Account.
- The budget forecast outturn for 18/19 was positive with a modest surplus of approximately £20,000 being anticipated within the trading account and a significant reduction, compared to last year, in contributions needed from all partners to fund the non-trading account.
- Roger Paine indicated that the shared service agreement referred to an annual uplift in partner contributions based upon CPI and this has been applied to the forecast 2018/19 position to set the 2019/20 budget proposal. This was detailed in Table 2 of the report.
- Building Control Solutions had performed well with regards to income generation considering the tough market and were anticipated to generate approximately £1.6million in income. Subject to the outcome of Brexit and other unknown factors a similar position was anticipated for 2019/20. It was hoped that the market share would increase year on year.
- Members were informed that the current percentage split for Building Control Solutions was 83% of trading activity and 17% of Non-Trading activity. A review of this split would be carried out in the late summer.
- In response to a question regarding Grazeley, Steve Broughton, BC Change Management Lead, indicated that a draft business plan and financial viability forecast had been produced and that this had been circulated to each partner council's lead officers for comment and contribution.
- Richard Prewer expressed concern regarding the recruitment of surveyors, which was an issue nationally. He questioned whether the forecast took into account the team being fully staffed and was informed that it did allow for that.
- Councillor Cole questioned whether the business plan allowed for the employment of agency staff. Steve Broughton stated that there was provision in the budget forecast for additional cover that may be needed and this included agency staff.
- Members were informed that Building Control Solutions were 'growing their own' and that a number of assistant surveyors had progressed through the team and the support team.
- Councillor Somner asked about apprenticeships. Roger Paine stated that Local Authority Building Control were working with the University of Wolverhampton on an apprenticeship scheme and that the first cohort was due to begin in September 2019. Whilst Building Control Solutions needed to grow more of its own resources through apprenticeships it needed more employed expertise to be able to provide the appropriate support and mentoring that apprentices would need, and it would monitor this for the future.

**RESOLVED:** That

- 1) the current forecast for end year end 2018/19 be noted;
- 2) the budget proposal for 2019/20 be noted and agreed;
- 3) the planned review of the 'percentage split' be noted.

#### **14. BUILDING CONTROL SHARED SERVICE CHARGES**

The Board received a report on the Building Control Shared Service Charges.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- The Building Control Charges were last increased in line with inflation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.
- It was proposed to increase the Building Control Charges with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. These changes had been revised in accordance with the current charge bandings and reflected an increase in line with the latest CPI index (3.2%).
- Roger Paine commented that with regards to larger jobs such as redevelopments, customers would be encouraged to request a quote online.
- Councillor Halsall questioned whether the charges were competitive. Roger Paine stated that Building Control Solutions was required to publish its charges whilst private companies were not. Private companies were also able to build in a profit whilst Building Control Solutions was a cost recovery service. Nevertheless, charges were similar to other Berkshire authorities. He went on state that he would like to make greater use of mystery shopping.
- Councillor Coppinger asked whether a single point of contact was appointed for major customers and was informed that, that approach was starting to be taken.
- Councillor Somner questioned whether consideration had been given to approaching Reading and Bracknell Councils to join the shared service. Steve Broughton confirmed that both councils had made contact previously but this had not progressed further. It was proposed that the Chairman follow this up with Members from those authorities.
- In response to a question from Councillor Coppinger about the homeowner guides, Roger Paine indicated that these were being updated and shortly all would show the Building Control Solutions brand.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposed schedule of charges be agreed.

## **15. BUILDING CONTROL SHARED SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

The Board received a report on the Building Control Shared Service Performance.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- Overall performance had remained close to performance target levels. There had been some resource issues in the summer period when many staff traditionally took leave. Since then performance had been above or in line with KPI target levels.
- The target for the registration of applications continued to be met and well exceeded on a month by month basis. How quickly surveyors looked at applications and provided feedback was also monitored.
- Councillor Somner commented that the KPIs appeared to be quite 'safe' and asked whether they would be reviewed in future. Steve Broughton emphasised that although the service had performed well it continued to be under resourced and in achieving well in some areas there may be other areas where improvements would need to be made in future.
- Councillor Cole asked what percent of applications were never signed off. Roger Paine commented that this percentage was larger with regards to jobs in the domestic environment. Some of Building Control Solutions work was to revisit old jobs where a completion certificate had not been provided for whatever reason.

**RESOLVED:** That the current position in respect of the performance of the shared service, be noted.

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members agreed that the next meeting would be held Monday 3 June 7pm and that a further meeting would be arranged for autumn.