

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**REGENERATION
CABINET MEMBER**

BUILDING CONTROL PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2012

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS BRIEFING NOTE

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet Member on the performance of the Building Control service in 2012.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Building Control is required to produce an annual performance review for the ISO external auditor.
- 2.2 The review highlights the difficulty in achieving income targets due to the recession. An additional £70,000 income has been achieved through cross boundary working and other additional commercial services to customers.
- 2.3 The review also highlights excellent performance results. This includes 100% overall customer satisfaction for a second year running.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The only option suggested for consideration is for the Cabinet Member to note the report.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 There are no resource implications to consider.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

- 6.1 There are no other implications to consider.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Not applicable.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the content of the Building Control Performance Review 2012.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None



BUILDING CONTROL PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2012

This has been a challenging year, with issues such as the recession and West Lindsey District Council deciding against a joint partnership to deliver the Building Control Service. A review of the service is also ongoing to address the shortfall in income. Despite these challenges, the performance of the section has yet again been excellent with 100% customer satisfaction results for the second year running.

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

APPLICATION TYPE	2011	2012	Difference
Full Plans (Fee Earning)	401	369	DOWN 8%
Partnership Apps (Fee Earning) outside North Lincs	54	38	DOWN 29.5%
Partnership Apps (Fee Earning) in North Lincs	55	39	DOWN 29%
Regularisation (Fee Earning)	9	24	UP 167%
Building Notices (Fee Earning)	253	310	UP 22.5%
Replacement Windows (Others) (Fee Earning)	38	33	DOWN 13%
Total No of Fee Earning Applications	810	813	UP 0.5%
Initial Notices (Fee Earning lost to private sector)	80	80	SAME
% of Fee Earning Applications lost to Private Sector as Initial Notices	9.75%	9.75%	SAME
Resubmissions of rejected Full Plans / Partnership applications (Non Fee Earning)	27	31	UP 15%
Competent Persons Notifications including cavity wall applications (Non Fee Earning)	9,611	7,534	DOWN 21.5%
Dangerous Structures (Non Fee Earning)	51	37	DOWN 27.5%
Demolitions (Fee Earning – Statutory Account)	43	32	DOWN 25.5%
Total No of Non Fee Earning Applications	9,812	7,714	DOWN 21.5%
Overall Number of Applications	10,622	8,527	DOWN 19.5%

In addition to the above, the following **Street Naming, Street Numbering and House Naming** schemes were completed:

Type of Scheme	2011	2012
Official Street Names	4	6
Official Street Numbering Schedules	5	4
Official House Naming Schedules	40	23

The section also processed 1701 **Land Charges Searches** in 2012 (including private searches), which is **32%** down from 2502 for 2011. This drop reflects the current recession.

Building Regulation Applications (Fee Earning) totalled 813, which is up by **0.5%** from 810 in 2011. This has held up well although includes a larger number of minor schemes. There has been a shift in application types from Full Plans to Building Notices.

Initial Notices (work carried out by our competitors) totalled 80, which is the same as in 2011. This keeps our market share of the work the same.

Competent Person Scheme Notifications (Non- Fee Earning) totalled 7,534 (down from 9611 in 2011). This shows a significant **21.5%** decrease. All of these need entering onto both the Building Control computer database and onto the Land and Property Gazetteer.

Dangerous Structures have decreased by **27.5%** (37 as opposed to 51 in 2011).

Demolitions have decreased by **25.5%** (32 as opposed to 43 in 2011).

Street Numbering schemes reduced from 5 to 4, whilst **Street Naming** increased from 4 to 6 and **House Naming** decreased significantly from 40 to 23. The low number of street naming and numbering schemes reflects the drop in new housing developments. The reduction in house naming can also be attributed to the introduction of charges in April 2011.

OVERALL BUILDING REGULATION FEE INCOME ANALYSIS

FEE INCOME	2011	2012	Difference
Building Regulation Fee Income Received (Includes all commercial income)	£410,722	£375,194	DOWN 8.5%

Building Regulation Fee Income for the calendar year 2012 has decreased by **8.5%** to £375,194 (down from £410,722 in 2011) due to the state of the economy. The fact that it still remains at such a high level, shows the success of the marketing initiatives and the income from cross boundary working which combined equate to around £70,000.

STATUTORY INCOME ANALYSIS

INCOME	2011	2012	Difference
Street Naming, Numbering, House Naming and Demolitions	£2,157.00	£3,350.00	UP 55.5%

From April 2011, it was necessary to introduce charges for street naming, numbering, house naming and demolitions to offset efficiency savings. Any analysis is difficult as charges only started in April 2011. However, income has increased significantly during 2012.

TIME SHEET ANALYSIS

This shows the percentage of staff time spent on Building Regulation applications and forms the hourly rate. It also gives the split on time spent on work relating to both the commercial and statutory accounts based on current CITFE guidelines.

YEAR	WORK ON BUILDING REGULATION APPLICATIONS	WORK RELATING TO COMMERCIAL ACCOUNT	WORK RELATING TO STATUTORY ACCOUNT
2011	33%	59%	41%
2012	35%	55%	45%

The analysis shows an increase of **2%** on work relating to Building Regulation applications. The percentage of time spent on work relating to the statutory account increased by **4%**. These are as a result of workloads since the service ceased to manage West Lindsey Building Control. Currently only 30% of time is funded by the Council as the accounts are based on a 70% commercial account (HP5100) and 30% statutory account (HP5101) split. This means that customers using the Building Regulation service are subsidising the statutory functions, which legislation does not permit.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

All applicants receive **Customer Service Questionnaires** on completion. The response rate was 30.25% with the following results:

Question	Percentage Satisfied 2011	Percentage Satisfied 2012	
1. How satisfied were you with the Building Control web page?	100%	100%	SAME
2. How satisfied were you with the facilities at Church Square House?	100%	100%	SAME
3. How helpful and responsive were the Building Control personnel?	100%	100%	SAME
4. How courteous did you find the Building Control personnel?	100%	100%	SAME
5. How accessible were Building Control personnel?	100%	100%	SAME
6. Do you feel Building Control added value to the finished product?	98.5%	99.5%	1% UP
7. If you are a regular user of the service, has the quality of the service improved over the last year?	47% Yes 53% Same 0% Worse	52% Yes 48% Same 0% Worse	5% UP 5% DOWN SAME
8. Overall how satisfied were you with the service offered by Building Control?	100%	100%	SAME
9. Do you feel that Building Control applied the Building Regulations professionally?	98.5%	100%	1.5% UP
10. Do you consider the approval and site inspections value for money?	88%	81%	7% DOWN

The results from the **Customer Questionnaires** for 2012 are very encouraging, with high satisfaction across the board. Particularly pleasing are the results for overall satisfaction, which maintained **100%** for the second year running. The added value and acted professionally categories also improved by **1%** and **1.5%** respectively. The only fall was value for money which dropped by **7%**. This reflects the current economy.

All applicants receive **Customer Diversity Questionnaires** on completion. Results as follows:

Question	Results 2011	Results 2012
1. What is your Gender?	Male 76.5% Female 23.5%	Male 74% Female 26%
2. What is your age group?	18-29 10% 30-39 14% 40-49 30% 50-59 24% 60-69 19% 70+ 3%	18-29 6% 30-39 21% 40-49 26.5% 50-59 24.5% 60-69 19% 70+ 3%
3. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?	White British 94% White Irish 1.5% White European 0.75% Other European 0.75% Gypsy 0.75% Pakistani 1.5% Bangladeshi 0.75%	White British 93% White Irish 2.5% White European 0% Other European 0% Indian 1.5% White/ Asian 1.5% Bangladeshi 1.5%
4. Do you have a disability?	No Disability 90.5% Ambulant Disability 5.5% Wheelchair Bound 2.5% Learning Difficulties 1.5%	No Disability 91% Ambulant Disability 6% Wheelchair Bound 1.5% Learning Difficulties 1.5%

The results from the **Customer Diversity Questionnaires** are similar to last year, as they show a majority of white British, male customers, which have few disabilities, but with an even split of age groups.

The **Performance Indicators** include areas covered by national Building Control Performance Standards together with indicators specific to North Lincolnshire Council. BC5 allows for a 30% reduction in the overall staff total to cover for non-commercial activities in line with national guidelines. The results are as follows:

Performance Indicator	Overall 2011	Target	Jan–Mar 2012	Apr–Jun 2012	Jul–Sep 2012	Oct–Dec 2012	Overall 2012
BC1 % of Building Regulation applications receiving a substantive reply within 15 days	95.5%	90%	96%	99%	99%	97%	97.75%
BC2 Number of site inspections per dwelling during course of construction	7.1	7.0	7.91	8.54	7.83	7.19	7.87
BC3 % of customers satisfied overall with the Building Control Service	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BC4 % of Building Regulation applications received on-line	26.2%	20%	24%	24%	34%	34%	29%
BC5 % qualified staff as % of all Building Control staff working on Building Regulation apps	73.2%	80%	76%	76%	76%	76%	76%

These results show that BC1–BC5 have maintained the high levels from 2011. They have all achieved the relevant targets except for BC5, which has still shown an improvement. Customer satisfaction results have now been 100% for the last two years. The number of on-line applications continues to grow each year and the target will be 30% for 2013.

The Building Control Performance Standards also require that a questionnaire be sent to the Fire Service regarding the effectiveness of the consultation on each application. The table below highlights the responses for 2012.

FIRE SERVICE FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS 2012

Question	Satisfied 2012	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied 2012	Dissatisfied 2012
1. Are you satisfied with the adequacy of your discussions with Building Control?	100%	0%	0%
2. Were you satisfied that the consultation with Building Control was at the most appropriate time in the application process?	100%	0%	0%
3. Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of the ongoing dialogue with Building Control?	100%	0%	0%
4. Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of Building Control in communicating the issues raised during consultation to the client?	100%	0%	0%

The above results show the effectiveness of the long and excellent working relationship with Humberside Fire and Rescue Service.

Benchmarking

The section has again participated in the National Building Control Performance Standards return, with submissions made for 2011/2012. Unfortunately, no results have been published to date.

Building Regulation Changes

There have been no changes in 2012.

Marketing

- As a result of increased marketing, there are now 41 Partner Companies signed up with the service. This means that there is potential for a significant amount of extra income from Partner applications across the country.
- LABC produced a LABC North Lincolnshire logo, which is now included on templates and used on safety helmets.
- A new Building Control folder is in place to promote the service. This is sent via e-mail to customers as part of the application communication. It is also available to view on the website.

- Two Building Control Newsletters were e-mailed to customers including posting on the website.
- The fifth regional South Yorkshire and the Humber LABC Building Excellence Awards were held at Forest Pines, near Scunthorpe and attended by 240 people. For the third year running, North Lincolnshire had winners in two categories. One project going through to the National LABC Awards held at The Brewery, London in November. Unfortunately, it was not an overall winner on the night.
- South Yorkshire and Humber LABC held a marketing seminar in November for Building Control and Planning staff across the Authorities. This was attended by staff across both Building Control and Planning at North Lincolnshire Council.
- An arrangement was set up with Jackson Building Centres whereby Building Control Officer hold a bimonthly surgery at the Scunthorpe Branch where builders and staff from the Building Centre can be updated on issues and have queries answered. The first surgery was held in December.

Training

Mainly through joint arrangements with Hull City Council, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service, the Association of Building Engineers (ABE) and South Yorkshire and the Humber LABC. Those highlighted * involved no direct costs to the section. The list includes:

- *Evening Seminar on Slate Roofs through the ABE (2 Officers).
- *Evening Seminar on Lower Carbon, Lower Costs through the ABE (8 Officers).
- *Evening Seminar on Lightweight Roofing through the ABE (7 Officers).
- *Evening Seminar on Acoustic Solutions through the ABE (4 Officers).
- *Evening Seminar on Green Roofs and PV'S through the ABE (7 Officers).
- *Evening Seminar on Insulation and Membranes through the ABE (1 Officer).
- *Building Regulation Update through LABC Yorkshire & Humber (1 Officer).
- *Building Information Modelling through CIC (1 Officer).
- *Marketing Training through South Yorkshire & Humber LABC (6 Officers plus 4 from wider Planning and Regeneration division).
- Nearer to Zero through Carbon Trust (3 Officers).
- SBEM assessor course through Stroma (1 Officer).
- SAP assessor update course through BRE (2 Officers).
- *Fire Resistant Glazing through C R Parrott (3 Officers).
- *Toilet Provision through C R Parrott (3 Officers).
- *Ironmongery through C R Parrott (2 Officers).
- *SAP update though Jackson Building Centres (2 Officers).
- *Emergency Planning training through Humber Emergency Planning (2 Officers).
- *Report Writing through North Lincolnshire Council (1 Officer).
- *Update on SAP, SBEM and Code for Sustainable Homes through North Lincolnshire Council (9 Officers).
- *Refresher course in English through North Lincolnshire Council (1 Officer).

Other Changes and Issues

- One of the main difficulties facing the section has been the need to maintain income in the face of the economic recession. This has been partially addressed through a combination of cross boundary working, other commercial services and assisting with risk assessments of existing Council offices.
- The Joint Partnership did not materialise in April due to a decision by West Lindsey District Council in March. North Lincolnshire Council subsequently gave notice to cease

managing West Lindsey Building Control from 1 July. This has created a financial pressure, as the Partnership would have addressed both the shortfall in income and the alteration in the split of the funding of the statutory and commercial accounts. The section has still continued to assist in undertaking site inspections for West Lindsey as and when required.

- The section seconded a Senior Building Control Officer to North East Lincolnshire Council from April to assist with addressing the shortfall in income.
- The section moved from Resources and Business Services, Infrastructure to Planning and Regeneration, Places following a Council reorganisation.
- A review of Building Control is ongoing as part of the wider Planning and Regeneration review. This will address the Building Control shortfall in income. The review is most likely to see Building Control incorporated into the wider Planning Service.
- The section passed the annual audit on ISO 9001:2008 in January from the British Standards Institute without any significant issues.
- The SAP and Energy Performance Certificate service for dwellings continued to be a big success and introduced additional income. The Code for Sustainable Home assessment service has also been utilised more this year including assessments in Barnsley, and the SBEM and Energy Performance Certificate service for non dwellings also picked up several projects in the area. This includes Council buildings and has meant that a second officer is now being trained to become an SBEM assessor.
- The process of receipting was changed and the till is not now used. Instead receipts are issued from receipt books, which is easier to reconcile.
- Risk assessments of both the Civic Centre and Hewson House were undertaken jointly with Corporate Safety. This initiative brought in additional income for the section.
- An Operational Plan for 2012/2013 was produced and actioned for the section.
- A new Building Control Policy was introduced to match the new aims of the Council. This is available to view on the webpage.
- Development Management introduced procedures to promote the Building Control Service on planning correspondence. In addition, surgeries were introduced on a fortnightly basis with Property Services. This allows for input at an early stage, which helps all parties.
- The out of hour's service for dealing with Dangerous Structures has again been a success. The number of dangerous structure cases dealt with has reduced after having been consistent for the previous two years.
- Employee Development Reviews were undertaken for all staff during the year.
- The South Yorkshire and the Humber LABC Marketing Group decided against producing a calendar this year. The group is also assessing the current arrangement for marketing the services against the private sector. This is in addition to organising the annual regional Building Excellence Awards. The next event is to be held at Forest Pines Hotel, Scunthorpe on 2 May 2013. This will again include a charity golf day.
- Work has been ongoing on updating application details on the computer system to ensure that the Land Charges section can deal with searches directly without passing through to Building Control. This will come into effect in April 2013 and will free up capacity within the section.
- Building Control had a stand at the inaugural North Lincolnshire Careers Convention held at Forest Pines Hotel in October, which had over 2,000 visitors.
- Staff attended a joint technical meeting with North East Lincolnshire Council and Hull City Council to receive updates on key areas.
- There were various work experience placements including an unpaid placement for several weeks to allow a student to complete an NVQ Level 1 qualification.
- Administration Performance Targets have been difficult to monitor and achieve due to staff shortages. This includes a Technical Administration Assistant post reducing to three days a week and the Modern Apprentice post being vacant.

- Work on updating the Building Control web pages continued throughout the year. The section also continues to act as web author for the regional website on behalf of the South Yorkshire and the Humber Authorities.

Consultants

- The Building Control Standards Document requires that the Annual Review look at consultation with other partners etc.
- In terms of the Fire Service, there have been no problems highlighted on consultation throughout the year. The Performance Standards require that questionnaires be sent to the Fire Service on completion of all applications covering their involvement, and the feedback has shown 100% satisfaction with the consultation process.
- The two consulting engineering companies are required under the signed agreements to work to strict deadlines, which we consistently monitor. On the rare occasions that these are not met, a penalty clause is invoked which reduces the fee paid to them for checking the relevant application. The penalty clause is part of the agreement and written into the ISO 9001:2008 procedures document. Overall, both companies have provided a good service throughout the year. The current arrangement finishes on 30 June 2013 and a new framework arrangement is then required.

Staffing

- A Senior Building Control Officer continued to act up as Principal Building Control Officer to cover for the arrangements with West Lindsey until the arrangement finished on 1 July 2012.
- A Technical Administration Assistant post changed from full time to three days a week

Overall Performance

- Problems remain in obtaining definitive guidance and training in advance from the Department of Communities and Local Government and LABC on major issues such as changes to the Building Regulations, Register of Building Control Information, fee structures and risk assessing projects.
- Although the total number of fee earning applications has remained very similar to last year, the income has reduced due to the nature of the applications. The new Building Regulation fee structure introduced in 2010 has also made it more difficult for the service to achieve the previous income levels. The overall income has remained high due to a proactive approach in developing other income streams.

The performance has been good and recognition to staff for their efforts is in order.

2013

Looking to 2013, again there are many changes and issues to address.

- One of the main issues will again be trying to maintain income against the backdrop of the economic recession and the loss of income from managing West Lindsey and seconding staff to North East Lincolnshire Council.
- Timesheet analysis has shown that the financial split should be 60/40 and not 70/30 as at present. This may be resolved in April 2013.
- The review of Planning and Regeneration Division is looking at the role of the Building Control service. This may well extend some duties and alter others which will assist in reducing the level of income needed to balance the commercial account.

- The Planning and Regeneration Review is still ongoing, however the section is likely to move to the Civic Centre as part of a wider Planning service. This will create problems in terms of storage space and may mean that a significant number of files and other information will remain at Church Square House. A management review has seen the deletion of the Building Control Manager post with the post-holder taking voluntary redundancy in 2013. This will mean a restructuring of the team and a change in the managerial arrangements.
- The secondment arrangement with North East Lincolnshire Council to supply a Senior Building Control Officer finished at the end of December. There may still be occasional requests to assist with site inspections whilst the new post remains unfilled. This will assist with the shortfall in income.
- The agreement to hold Builders Surgeries at Jackson Building Centres will continue on a bimonthly basis. Other builder's merchants may adopt the arrangement.
- The Cashiers Office at Church Square House is to close with relocation to the Civic Centre. This will create problems on banking and card payments for customers whilst the section remains at Church Square House.
- The Government are introducing the risk assessment aspect of determining the number of inspections in April 2013. This will have a significant effect on all applications and may then reduce income levels, particularly in terms of domestic work. Validating applications will become a more complex procedure. It will be a particular challenge with the decision not to abolish Building Notices.
- The Building Regulations are updating in 2013 with the majority of the Approved Documents changing. This includes the new Part L requirements on energy conservation. This will mean additional training is required for both staff and customers to address the changes. South Yorkshire & the Humber LABC will provide the training.
- The Government are reviewing legislation to look at reducing the burden on construction. This includes changing the Building Regulations and possibly allowing self-regulation. This may well have a significant impact on the service.
- The effect of the temporary relaxation in Town and Country Planning legislation will mean that there is likely to be an increase in unauthorised works. This in turn will put additional pressure on the resources of the section in terms of enforcement.
- The Government may implement the Register of Building Control Information during 2013, which will require significant resource to implement.
- The sixth South Yorkshire and Humber Building Excellence Awards event is on Thursday 2 May 2013. The venue continues to be Forest Pines Hotel and Golf Resort, with a Charity Golf Day as part of the event. Considerable staff time is required to organise the event, but this is an excellent marketing opportunity for the section and should forge closer links with stakeholders.
- ISO 9001:2008 is due for auditing by the British Standards Institute in January.
- Regular Newsletters and forums will continue to engage with customers in order to both maintain and improve the market share of work and income.
- Produce a new Operation Plan for the service in 2013/2014.
- Produce a new Fee Charges Scheme for the service in 2013/2014 to reflect any changes resulting from the hourly rate.
- Continue to offer and expand the uptake in the domestic SAP/EPC service, Code for Sustainable Home assessment service and the commercial SBEM/EPC service.
- The framework arrangement for the structural engineering support finishes on 30 June 2013 and new framework arrangements are then required.
- From April 2013, the Land Charges section will be able to deal with searches directly without passing through to Building Control. This will free up capacity within the section.
- As one of the performance indicators is the percentage of fully qualified and experienced staff, there is a need to encourage the remaining Building Control Officers who are not corporate members of either the ABE/RICS to become fully qualified.

- Monitoring of the Administration Performance Targets is required, although this is difficult to achieve having not filled the Modern Apprentice post during the job freeze and a Technical Administration Assistant post reducing to three days a week.
- A further rise is likely in the number of online applications in 2013.
- The introduction of electronic consultation with structural engineers and the Fire Service is likely in 2013.

Although overall there are many difficulties and uncertainties ahead, I am confident that the Building Control Service will again rise to the challenge.