

North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership

held at Coxwold House, Easingwold Business Park, Stillington Road, Easingwold, York.
Wednesday 18 June 2008

Present

Councillor A Hemesley
Miss C Gaynor
Mrs M Jackson

Councillor J Mackman
Mr S Martin
Mr K Ross

Councillor Baker
Mr M Cann

Councillor Bastiman
Mr D Archer

Mr L Chapman

Representing

Ryedale District Council
Member Services – Ryedale District Council
Corporate Director – Ryedale District Council

Selby District Council
Strategic Director – Selby District Council
Principal Accountant – Selby District Council

Hambleton District Council
Head of Planning Services – Hambleton District Council

Scarborough Borough Council
Director of Operations - Scarborough Borough Council

Building Control Manager

Minutes

BCP.121 Election of Chairman

Resolved

That Councillor J Mackman be elected Chairman of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership for the ensuing year.

Councillor Mackman thanked Members for his election and took the Chair.

BCP.122 Appointment of Vice Chairman

Resolved

That Councillor R Baker be appointed Vice-Chairman of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership for the ensuing year.

Councillor Barker thanked Members for his appointment.

BCP.123 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cottam, Fletcher, Allanson, Percival and Mr P Cresswell.

The Chairman suggested that the Partnership adopt a policy of open substitution in order to ensure that future meetings were quorate. It was also suggested that potential substitutes from each of the authorities be invited to attend several meetings to gain further knowledge of the Partnership and its objectives.

BCP.124 Minutes

The minutes of a meeting of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership held on the 12 March 2008 (previously circulated) were presented.

Resolved

That the minutes of a meeting of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership held on the 12 March 2008 as submitted be approved.

BCP.125 Partnership Accounts for the Year End 31 March 2008

Kevin Ross, Selby District Council's Principal Accountant submitted a report (previously circulated), which presented the accounts of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership for the financial year ended 31 March 2008.

Mr Ross reported that the accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 required that the Partnership must approve the Annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Return for Audible Bodies whose income and expenditure did not exceed £1 million. The Partnership had a statutory duty to approve its accounts for 2007/08 by 31 July 2008 (separate circulated document).

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008 were attached as an annex to the report as required by legislation. The accounts were subject to statutory audit by Mazars LLP. Members considered the accounts in detail.

Mr Ross reported that the accounts were to be placed on deposit with Mazars LLP from Monday 18 August 2008 and were available for inspection by the public a minimum of twenty days (21 July 2008) prior to this date. The Auditor had set 18 August 2008 as the date on which the public could ask questions about the accounts.

Mr Ross reported that the Statement of Accounts was to be formally signed by the Chair and the Building Control Manager.

The Chairman requested the following changes of the official Accounts of the Partnership:

- Page 5 – rename the column 'Difference' to now read 'Variance'
- Page 5 – Paragraph 6. to read 'income was £127' and not £125

The Chairman referred to the circulated Annual Return document and requested a detailed copy of the figures relating to Section 1 (Statement of Accounts)

Resolved

- (a) That the Accounts of the Partnership for the financial year 2007/08 be approved subject to the agreed changes.
- (b) That Section 1 and 2 of the 2007/08 Annual Return be approved.

BCP.126 Harmonise Charges for Supply of Information

The Building Control Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) the purpose of which was to harmonise the charges made by North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership, following the amalgamation with Hambleton and Scarborough Building Control, in relation to solicitor searches, requests for copies of completion certificates, approval and acceptance notices.

The Building Control Manager reported that the Partnership charged customers for the provision of building regulation application information and copies of associated documentation.

The Partnership currently had three charging regimes in place, as a result of the recent merger with both Hambleton and Scarborough Building Control.

Members were advised that the charge regime may be subject to further change as a result of the introduction of the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004, whereby local authorities may be required to provide, free of charge, the Building Control Register.

The Building Control Manager reported that it was essential that the charge regimes be harmonised in order to deliver a fair consistent service to customers. The Partnership had taken this opportunity to review all of the process, taking into account the average level of administration time associated with the activities.

Details of the current charges and proposed revised charge regime, made by both the Partnership and Scarborough Building Control, were attached as an Annex to the report.

Resolved

That the proposed scale of charges be adopted with immediate effect.

BCP.127 **Monitoring Statement**

The Building Control Manager circulated a report the purpose of which was to present Members with details of the provisional financial performance of the partnership for the months of April to May 2008.

For the period to 31 May 2008, the chargeable account had achieved a surplus of £55,098. Non-chargeable surplus was £9,145.

Members were of the opinion that the Building Control Partnership was in need of an exhibition/seminar in order to be more recognisable to all potential developers. It was suggested that the Building Control Manager arrange a series of presentations across the partnership area.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

BCP.128 **Performance Report**

The Building Control Manager submitted a report (previously circulated), which detailed the Partnership's operational performance from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. The report summarised the performance targets and actual outcomes with explanations.

The Building Control Manager reported that following the last meeting of the Partnership Board, the performance indicators, as agreed in the business plan, had been placed on Ryedale's Covalent system. Back data was currently being put onto the system, which would be used for the monitoring trend analysis. A copy of the report was circulated at the meeting.

The report had also outlined the following:

- Training
- Computer integration
- Customer and agent surveys
- Staffing

With regard to training, the Building Control Manager reported that Michelle Smith and Helen Winfield successfully passed their examinations for the issuing of Energy Performance Certificates. Daniel Page had attended a one-day seminar in Manchester on the preparation of his critique and interview process to become a member of the Association of Building Engineers.

All staff had attended a Level 2 Health and Safety Training course in May 2008 and Senior staff would be continuing with a three-day examination course at Level 3 in September. This course had been offered to other departments on a shared cost basis.

The Building Control Manager also reported that a series of Business Development Meetings would be held over the next five months. These consisted of four half-day sessions as follows:

- Session 1 Identifying lessons learnt from the merger
- Session 2 Clarifying the Partnership's identity
- Session 3 What is a high performing team?
- Session 4 Identifying problems and creative problem solving

Members suggested that, in terms of team building, it would be beneficial to organise a 'round about session' for Board Members to interact with the staff involved in the Building Control Partnership.

With reference to the 'Clarifying the Partnership's identity' session, Members were of the opinion that a new North Yorkshire Building Control image/logo should be investigated, would be recognisable and stand out. It was suggested that either the staff or local schools could enter a competition to design an image/logo.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

BCP.129 Restructure Report

The Building Control Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) which sought Members approval to investigate the restructuring of the Partnership to meet current and future operational requirements, recruitment and staff retention.

Following the downturn in finance for the last two quarters of the 2007/08 financial year the three vacant posts were frozen pending a review of operational needs. Within this review it was prudent to investigate surrounding authorities, conditions of service and salary levels as all of these had a significant impact on recruitment and retention of staff. The review also needed to take into account the age profile of existing officers and develop a strategy whereby vacancies could be filled in-house upon retirement of existing officers.

With the merger of two further authorities into the Partnership over the past year, there had been an overall reduction across all authorities of six posts from those shown on the current establishment excluding the current three frozen posts. This reduction was considered manageable as three of these posts related to managers and senior officers and the duties of the remaining three posts would be absorbed within the current structure or were deleted due to operational changes and efficiency savings.

The Building Control Manager reported that it was essential that the Partnership Board undertook a review of the Partnership's current operational requirements, staffing structure and budget and proposed that a Working Group of two or three members be established to oversee this and report back to the next meeting of the Partnership Board.

The Building Control Manager also reported that an Assistant Building Control Officer was taking maternity leave from September 2008 and wished to return to work on a part time contract from July 2009. Also a Building Control Officer would be taking flexible retirement from 1 September 2008. Arrangements were in place to cover site inspections however; it was considered necessary to employ an Assistant/Trainee Building Control Officer to fill the vacancy baring in mind the high number of officers approaching retirement.

Resolved

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a Working Group of two/three members be established to oversee the review of the restructure.
- (c) That a further report of costings be submitted to the next meeting of the Partnership Board following consultation with staff and unions.
- (d) That an Assistant/Trainee Building Control Officer be employed to cover flexible retirement, maternity leave and part time working.

BCP.130 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held at 1.30pm on Wednesday 24 September 2008 at Coxwold House, Easingwold Business Park, Stillington Road, Easingwold, York.

Members requested that a schedule of meetings be arranged for the 2008/09 municipal year. The Building Control Manager suggested the following dates all to be held at Easingwold Business Park at 1.30pm:

- Wednesday 17 December 2008
- Wednesday 25 March 2009
- Wednesday 17 June 2009