

## **North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership**

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Held at Offices of the North Yorkshire Building Control - Easingwold  
on Wednesday 16 December 2009

### **Present**

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Councillors Baker, Bastiman, Cottam, Deans, Greenwell, Hemesley and Mackman

### **In Attendance**

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Audrey Adnitt, Mandy Burchell, Maurice Cann, Les Chapman, Paul Cresswell, Karen Iveson and David Simpson

### **Minutes**

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#### **12 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Allinson and Mr Archer.

#### **13 Minutes of the last meeting of the Partnership held on the 26 June 2009**

The minutes of a meeting of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership held on the 26 June 2009 (previously circulated) were presented.

#### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership held on the 26 June 2009 as submitted be approved.

#### **14 Performance Report**

The Head of Building Control submitted a report (previously circulated), in order to provide an update on operational performance for the period from 1 April 2009 to 30 November 2009.

A performance report was attached at appendix 1 from the Covalent system, and Members were pleased to learn that performance in checking full plans and accepting Building Notices was well above target.

Further details in relation to performance were given in the report, along with an update regarding staff training, with eight members of staff completing various courses and examinations during the period.

Members were reminded that a copy of the result for the first two quarters of 2009/10 customer surveys had been emailed to them for information, and a hard copy was available at the meeting.

The Chair advised that he would be sending a letter to Mr Harper to congratulate him on completing his Diploma in Management Studies, and also a letter to wish Ms Chapman well on commencing her part time HNC in Construction at York College.

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

**15 Financial Performance April to November 2009**

The Head of Building Control submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to present Members with the details of the financial performance for the months of April to November 2009 inclusive.

This was the first financial monitoring report of this financial year; annex A summarised the income and expenditure for the chargeable and non-chargeable account to 30 November 2009, together with the reserve balance as at that date.

For the period 1 April to 30 November 2009, the revenue account for the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership was showing a modest surplus of £33,725, and the financial position of the Partnership would require close monitoring during the remainder of 2009/10.

The Chair thanked Councillor Mackman (previous Chairman) and the Head of Building Control for their hard work particularly in relation to budgeting during the last difficult eighteen months.

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

**16 Increase in Charges**

The Head of Building Control submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to revise the Building Regulation Charges for the Building Control Partnership for the financial year 2010/11.

Members were reminded that in April 1999 changes to the Building (Local Authority charges) regulations 1998 required each Authority to establish charges to recover the cost for the delivery of their Building Regulation service and in accordance with CIPFA guidance.

When setting the charges for the current year the level of increase reflected the Board's aspirations to achieve a balanced budget in 2010/11 and therefore

return a surplus. The proposed budget for 2010/11 were based on a 4% increase in charges and 3% growth. This was in line with the recovery plan agreed by the Partnership Board in February 2009.

The proposed charges were appended at annex 1, and a discussion followed and Members were of the opinion that the proposed charges were appropriate.

### **Resolved**

That the scale of charges as set out in Appendix 1 be adopted with effect from 1 April 2010.

## **17 Budget 2010/11**

The Head of Building Control submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to present the proposed budget for the financial year 2010/2011.

Members were reminded of a series of meetings, which took place earlier in the year, regarding restructuring and the development of a four-year financial plan which was adopted at the February meeting.

The proposed budget was appended at annex A, and did not propose any changes to the current year's budget as income and expenditure were broadly in line with the adopted budget. The Members when adopting the recovery plan agreed a 4% increase in charges and 3% in growth for the financial year 2010/11 with a 3% increase on charges for the following three years together with growth of 3%, 4% and 4%. This increase in growth would recover the forecasted downturn to the 2008/09 level by the end of the 2012/13 financial year.

The Head of Building Control advised that if Partnership were to be enlarged by the addition of Richmondshire District Council, this budget would be need to be revisited.

A discussion followed in relation to the reserves balance shown in the budget, which differed from the reserves suggested in the Building Control Agreement, on looking at the agreement it was clear that the several areas needed updating and the Chair suggested that the current Building Control Agreement be reviewed at the next meeting.

### **Resolved**

- a. That the proposed budget set out in Annex A be adopted for the financial year 2010/11.
- b. That the current Building Control Agreement be reviewed at the next meeting.

18            **Agreement of Variation - Partnership Agreement**

The Head of Building Control submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to seek Members' approval to the adoption of revised legal agreement for the Partnership.

Following the meeting in June 2009, Members had requested that legal officers investigate the simplification of clauses 3.3 – 3.6 relating to the cost of early retirement for their former officers from each Partner Council where it was for the purposes of improving the efficiency of the service.

Set out at Annex A was the Agreement of Variation which had been drawn up by the Partnership's Solicitor, which stated that any costs associated with the termination of employment by severance, redundancy and pension funding would be met equally by the Partner Councils.

**Resolved**

That the variation set out in Annex A be adopted.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

19            **Health & Safety**

The Head of Building Control advised that there had been no notifiable incidents to report for the period 1 June 2009 to 30 November 2009.

20            **Debts Exceeding 60 days**

The Head of Building Control advised that the level of debt as at 30 November 2009 was £24,721 this was reduced from £34,833.68 in May 2009 with no debts written off. The Partnership and Ryedale District Council's legal department were actively pursuing all debts.

**EXEMPT ITEMS**

**Resolved**

That under Section 100(4)(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item as there would be a likely

disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the act as the information relates to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority).

## 21 **Staff Reduction**

The Head of Building Control submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to provide an update on the implementation of the second phase of the staffing restructure as agreed in February 2009.

Members were reminded that in February 2009 a report on the restructuring of the partnership had been approved. Phase 1 had already been implemented, and phase 2; a further redundancy had been deferred until later in the financial year, in order further assess market trend, and a number of variables.

In order to ensure the Partnership remained on target to achieve this forecast it had been necessary to enact the final staffing reduction. After careful consideration and taking into account the downturn in applications it had been most appropriate to make the reduction within the area of Assistant Building Control Officers. Following consultation with Human Resources, an individual had left the Partnership on the 30 November under a Compromise Agreement. The cost of funding this agreement had been met from the approved redundancy allocation agreed in February and salary provisions. The salary savings to the Partnership during this financial year were approximately £3,000.

### **Resolved**

- a. That the report be noted.
- b. That a letter of thanks be sent to all staff on behalf of the Board, to thank them for their help and support during a difficult year.

## 22 **Partnership Enlargement**

The Head of Building Control submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to advise Members of a possible enlargement of the Partnership by the inclusion of Richmondshire District Council from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

Members were reminded that in 2007, an approach had been made from to the Partnership to investigate the viability of Richmondshire joining the Partnership, and following discussions by all parties, it was considered inappropriate to pursue at that time.

Since the joining of Richmondshire and Hambleton Councils a further approach had been made to the Partnership to investigate the possibility of Building Control joining the Partnership. This approach had been made as a result of structural alterations within Richmondshire's Building Control team.

The Partnership had now requested a variety of information, to establish the viability of enlarging the Partnership. When this information had been received and a full appraisal had been undertaken a further report would be submitted to the Board.

**Resolved**

That the report be noted and a further report be submitted to the next meeting.

23 **Date of Next Meetings**

The next meeting will be held at 1.30pm on Wednesday 20 January 2010.