

North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership

Held at Offices of North Yorkshire Building Partnership - Easingwold
on Wednesday 22 December 2010

Present

Councillors Baker, Bastiman (Chairman), Duff, Hemesley OBE, Mackman and Wainwright

In Attendance

David Archer, Mandy Burchell, Paul Cresswell, Les Chapman, Karen Iveson and Nicki Lishman

Minutes

71 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Maurice Cann, Keith Dawson, David Simpson and Councillors Cottam, Philips, Deans, Branch and Allanson.

72 Minutes of the meeting held on the 29 September 2010

The minutes of the meeting of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership held on 29 September 2010 were presented.

Members were informed that minute 63 Street Naming and Numbering Changes had been approved by the Head of Building Control in consultation with the Board Chairman following consultation with users and Scarborough Borough Council. Changes to start 1 January 2011.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership held on 29 September 2010 be approved.

73 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

74 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

75 Performance Report

The Head of Building Control presented to Members a report (previously circulated), which detailed the Building Control Partnership's operational performance from 1 April 2010 to 30 November 2010.

Appended to the report was the Covalent Performance Report for the period which showed an increasing number of targets not being achieved. These included:

- BC1 Check plans within 10 working days. Continued in downward direction, this was likely to have been caused by the high number of applications submitted in September to beat changes in Regulations and by staff holidays. It was noted that since June one surveyor had been on maternity leave.
- BC3 Plans over statutory time period. A small number of applications continued to go over the statutory time period. However with increased monitoring it was anticipated that the number of plans going beyond the target would be reduced.
- BC4 Applications approved first time. Significant reduction in November on the number of applications approved first time. This, in the majority of cases, related to the high level of applications submitted prior to changes in Regulations on 1 October 2010.
- BC6 Completion Certificates issued within 5 days. Significant reduction again in November. This was due to a member of staff being on holiday and the failure of surveyors to notify administration by email of successful completions.

The Head of Building Control advised the Board that the current quarterly targets had seen improvement. Officers had also been reminded of the necessity to advise administration of successful completions as soon as possible.

For information, Members were advised that three officers had recently achieved corporate membership of their designated institute.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

76

Financial Monitoring

The Head of Building Control presented a report (previously circulated) which detailed the financial performance of the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership for the months of April 2010 to November 2010 inclusive.

Annex A summarised the income and expenditure for the chargeable and non-chargeable accounts to 30 November 2010, together with the reserve balance at that date.

The overall surplus for the North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership for the period 1 April 2010 to 30 November 2010 was £86,245, against a profiled revised budgeted surplus of £62,290.

The balance on the reserve account at 30 November 2010 was £78,075 which took into account redundancy costs.

At 30 November 2010 the Partner authorities (excluding Richmondshire) received a contribution of £38,075 (or £9,519 each) in order to maintain a minimum balance on the reserve account of £40,000.

Using the revised budget submitted to the Board on 29 September 2010 the overall surplus for 2010/11 was projected to be £59,145 with an estimated balance on the reserve account at 31 March 2011 of £50,975, having taken account of redundancy costs. The Partners were therefore estimated to receive a contribution of £10,975 (or £2,744 each) for the 2010/11 financial year to meet the minimum level of reserve requirement of £40,000. However, it was agreed to reduce the reserve balance accordingly. This assumed expenditure and income remained in line with the profiled revised budget for the period 1 December 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

77

Business Plan

The Head of Building Control presented a report (previously circulated) which detailed the revised Business Plan for the year 2011/2012.

Members were aware that the original Business Plan was developed in liaison with consultant Keith Bachelor to meet the then CPA requirements and to deliver a cost effective and efficient building control service.

The Business Plan, included as Appendix A, was recently revised by the Partnership, with an emphasis on developing an integrated IT system to meet service delivery and partner authority requirements. It was also necessary to revise processes to maximise efficiency and cost savings and to facilitate any future expansion.

Members discussed the proposed Business Plan and were keen to ensure that any improvements were self-financing and met budget targets for 2011/2012.

Resolved

That the Business Plan for 2011/12 be adopted.

78

Work Placement

The Head of Building Control presented to Members a report (previously circulated) which requested Members' approval for a student work placement for a twelve month period.

The current age profile of the Partnership indicated that seven Surveyors were likely to retire within the next four to ten years. It was therefore essential to establish a succession plan to ensure that the Partnership continued to deliver a high quality, local building control service within local government in the future. To deliver this plan there were two options: to buy in or to train and develop.

If the Partnership bought in staff as and when required there was a risk that such staff would not be team motivated, loyal or committed, as they often used such positions as a temporary stepping stone on their career path. However, finances would only be committed as and when required and training costs would be held to a minimum.

The Partnership found in the past that, by training and developing staff, there was a greater period of stability as the training period inevitably took five to seven years to conclude and there were lower employment costs during the training period until the Surveyor was fully qualified. Staff were invariably more loyal to the Partnership and in the past it was found that their commitment continued after qualification. However, Surveyors were at university for thirty days per year with subsequent downtime and training course costs.

By taking on a student during their work placement there was the potential to employ the individual once they had completed their degree and as they were a known quantity this reduced the risk of employing an individual who was not suitable for the job.

The cost of this work placement was partly offset by an employee being on maternity leave prior to and during the early part of the placement.

Resolved

That a twelve month student work placement be approved.

79 Any other business that the Chairman decides is urgent.

There were no items of urgent business.

80 Audit Letter

The Head of Building Control presented the External Auditor's Letter (previously circulated) regarding the audit for the year ending 31 March 2010.

The Partnership's external auditors attended the Board meeting on 29 September and gave their view on the Partnership's accounts and value for money for the year ending 31 March 10. The Partnership and Ryedale District Council 151 Officers received the Auditor's formal letter relating to the accounts which was attached in an appendix to the report. The final report did

not include any additional items to those discussed with members at the meeting in September.

The Auditor recommended that the Partnership and the Finance Department needed to prepare accounts for the current financial year based on "International Financial Reporting Standards" for local authority accounting. The Partnership, in conjunction with the Finance Department, assessed what changes needed to be implemented in readiness for the next audit and took action to ensure all debtors and creditors are processed in the appropriate financial year.

Resolved

That the report was noted.