

Wyre Forest District Council

Planning Health & Environment Division

Building Control Section

Business Plan

2008 - 20011

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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING, HEALTH and ENVIRONMENT DIVISION

**BUILDING CONTROL SECTION
BUSINESS PLAN 2008 – 2011**

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Wyre Forest District presents a varied mix of urban and rural environments, including areas of natural beauty, outstanding architecture, canal and riverside amenities and numerous retail, commercial, tourist and leisure businesses. The three towns of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley form a triangle within the District and are surrounded by a number of outlying villages and hamlets.

Covering an area of seventy-five square miles, it has a population of approximately 98,500. The District is dissected by the River Severn with land to the east forming part of the West Midlands Green Belt and land to the west being designated as being of Great Landscape Value and containing part of the Wyre Forest from which the Council derives its name.

The Building Control Section, which is situated at Duke House in Kidderminster, forms part of the Planning, Health and Environment Division, and is responsible for carrying out its duties under the Building Act 1984 to ensure that development complies with the Building Regulations.

The Council's vision is "**Building a Better Future**" and the Building Control Section, whilst established as a separate business unit, sees itself at the centre of a dynamic Authority.

The British Standards Institute award of BS EN ISO 9001:2000 to Building Control for its Quality Management System confirms the Section's commitment to service delivery and customer satisfaction.

The Council is fully committed to the principles of best value. As such, Building Control has drawn up this Business Plan within the context of the Council's range of linked plans and strategies that underpin the way in which we deliver our services.

The District's first Community Strategy sets out shared visions and priorities, and links very closely with the Council's Corporate Plan, which outlines the Council's visions and values, and identifies how it will conduct it's business in order to deliver it's strategic aims and objectives.

The Building Control Service operates within the Council's Corporate Aims to deliver '*A Sustainable Environment*' and '*A Well Run & Responsive Council*', where the supporting priorities are to '*Reduce waste to landfill & increase recycling*' and for '*District-wide regeneration*' respectively.

Together with the rest of the Division, our vision is "*to apply the principles of sustainability to guide and shape the built and natural environments throughout the District, protecting our heritage assets and promoting quality in new development, to ensure that residents and businesses enjoy a vibrant, safe and healthy environment in which to live and invest in and which can be enjoyed by everyone*"

The Planning, Health and Environment Division produces an annual service business plan, explaining how it's own services work towards achieving the strategic aims and priorities as defined in the Corporate Plan. Feeding into this is Building Control's own Business Plan, which translates the Divisional Plan into more specific targets and actions.

KEY SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Building Control Section is to provide a value for money Building Control service based on clearly defined outputs, programmes and budgets which, through its well informed decisions, creates and maintains a safe built environment within the Wyre Forest area.

In particular, the Building Control Section aims to :

- Recover all relevant costs through charges over a rolling three year accounting period.
- Fulfil the statutory functions of the service as defined by the Building Act 1984 and the Building Regulations 2000, and as set out in the 'Level of Service' document, which we are committed to continually review following the publication of the Building Control Performance Standards Document.
- Actively market the Service through the Building Control Local Marketing Strategy.
- Focus on the speed, efficiency and quality of service delivery.
- Continually assess and review our practices and procedures as part of our ISO 9001 Quality Management accreditation.
- Act in an open, fair and professional manner based on best current advice and working practices.
- Continually look for new ways of operating and broadening the scope of the service that are clear, understandable, user-friendly and meet the needs of our customers.
- Work in partnership to promote sustainability and energy efficiency in new development.
- Continually develop the human resources of the Section to ensure up to date, high quality professional advice is provided in carrying out the Building Control function on the Council's behalf.
- Continually improve the information systems and technology used to support the provision of better quality services.
- Monitor and review resources, performance and costs including those divisional and central recharges made by others to ensure that value for money leading to the continuation of the service is achieved
- Continue to improve upon our co-ordinated approach to the provision of Development Control and Building Control functions through the Development Team Approach.

BUILDING CONTROL FUNCTION

The Building Control Section remains functionally separate but has a close working relationship with the Development Control Section, improving the links necessary and desirable for effective development monitoring and more flexible operational management.

Under the supervision of the Building Control Manager, the Building Control Section provides a full range of services which are designed on the basis of four area teams (*see APPENDIX 1*).

Key Components of Building Control

- The examination, approval or rejection of submitted plans, specification and other relevant information
- The inspection of building work in progress for which an application has been received
- The keeping of adequate records in relation to plan vetting and site inspection matters
- Taking enforcement action in respect of breaches of the Building Regulations
- Control of dangerous structures
- Demolition
- Providing advice and guidance on related issues, i.e. energy conservation and sustainability, access
- Development monitoring via a Service Level Agreement between Building Control and Development Control.

BUILDING CONTROL MARKET

The Building Control service has a specific range of customers who purchase their services in a competitive market. In addition, there are a range of beneficiaries, such as the general public, who benefit indirectly from the Council's Building Control function, which seeks to achieve reasonable standards of health and safety and to ensure that the Council's duties and liabilities under the Building Act 1984 are adequately fulfilled.

We are committed to achieving these aims through effective partnerships with internal and external bodies such as other Local Authority sections and the Fire Service, Water Authority and other professionals.

Our customers include agents, individuals and organisations submitting Building Regulation applications, the Enforcement function of Development Control, and other sections of the Council such as Environmental Health.

The Section takes a positive approach to customer relations and is receptive and responsive to their needs. This is borne out in the positive feedback from the joint Building Control / Development Control Focus Group meetings and the Section's biennial Customer surveys (*see APPENDIX 2*) which are used to improve service provision and strengthen the existing marketing strategy. As can be seen, results from the surveys were very positive; the majority of people found Wyre Forest Building Control to provide a good all-round value for money service in a practical and friendly manner.

With the need to continually look for new ways of operating the service, we are active participants in the LABC Partner Authority Scheme (PAS), which transforms local authorities into national partners without losing the local benefits which each local authority has to offer as the works progress on site.

At present, we are partnered 'officially' with 5 local companies / practices and, also, act as unofficial partners to the County Council on their property throughout Worcestershire. This work is not only a significant source of revenue to the section, but, as each partner company is partnered with a particular member of staff to allow a more personal service, also provides staff with a variety of workload in terms of the different types of building project with which they have to deal.

We are continually looking out for opportunities to develop and expand our partnering arrangements, whilst, at the same time, being aware of the need to ensure we have sufficient resources in place, both material and staffing wise, to be able to deliver a competitive service.

This means we have to ensure we employ **and retain** suitably experienced and qualified staff to operate in what is an extremely competitive market.

FORCES FOR CHANGE

Government Attitude

It is long standing Government policy to open up the work of Local Authority Building Control (L.A.B.C.) to competition. Approximately 70% of the work carried out by L.A.B.C. is estimated to be fee earning work which is directly attributable to the processing of applications. This has been sample tested and verified but needs to be further analysed during the Plan period through the full use of timesheets if the Section is to adjust to the pressures of an increasingly competitive environment. The Government has confirmed the view that local authorities should recover **all of these relevant costs** associated with fee earning work. At the same time both residential and commercial work is open to competition from an ever-increasing number of Approved Inspectors.

Legislation

The former Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions in consultation with the Local Government Association have devolved charges for Building Control Services in accordance with the Local Government Association's Model Scheme from the 1st April 1999. The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998 provides that there is a requirement for the Building Control Section to demonstrate **full charge recovery over a three year rolling period**. The Section is committed to meeting this challenge whilst not compromising the quality of service delivered. Initially the standard charges were adopted, but it has been agreed that these may vary by + or – 10% without reference to Committee in order to ensure that the Section remains competitive. Indeed, due to the Section's achievement in realising full cost recovery over a continually rolling 3 year period since 1999, only minor increases to certain categories have occurred since April 2003.

Economic Climate

In spite of the general unpredictable economic climate within the building industry, the number of Building Control applications has increased over the last 2 calendar years. This situation is constantly monitored as it has direct consequences on the financial viability of the Section over the Plan period. Substantial opportunities exist locally with various town centre commercial projects, industrial opportunities and medium -scale residential schemes and much emphasis will continue to be given to winning this work.

We will also try to develop our partnership working, as mentioned earlier, which, in itself, is a significant revenue source.

Best Value

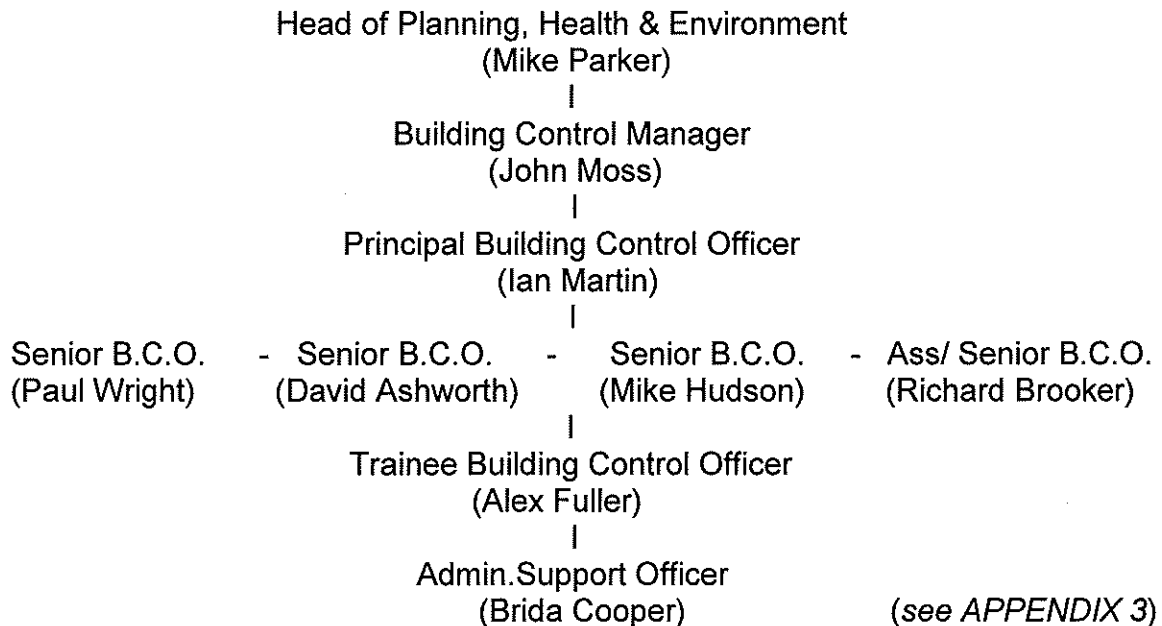
Under the umbrella of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (C.P.A.) there is still an emphasis on achieving the principles of 'best value' in service delivery. Local Authority Building Control has done much in recent years, through the Level of Service Model Guide document and Quality Management Toolkit, to promote a customer orientated quality approach with many authorities now providing excellent examples of good practice. The Worcestershire and Herefordshire County Group of Chief Building Control Officers has, and will continue to be, increasingly used for benchmarking purposes. The Building Control Section is aware of its need to compete for work in a limited market, provide quality services and to demonstrate 'Best Value' to its customers, and in doing so it will continue to draw upon the experience and practices of others, together with its own marketing strategy to respond positively to this challenge which will ultimately benefit its customers. Better communication with our customers and users of the Building Control service is already being achieved through our Newsletter, Advice Leaflets, Guidance Notes, Customer Surveys and Focus Group meetings.

The Audit Commissions Inspectors' findings and recommendations report of January 2003 on Wyre Forest District Council's Planning Services, commented on the fact that **'an efficient and effective building control service is provided'**. This report, together with our established plans and strategies, are used to drive forward continuous improvement in the service we provide to our customers.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

In September 2004 the Council underwent its formal C.P.A. inspection by the Audit Commission and has been found to be a 'fair and improving' Council. In order to ensure continuous improvement the Council has developed an Improvement Plan following the outcome of C.P.A. The Building Control Section recognises the role it plays in supporting improvements to the services the Council offers and will continue to respond positively in supporting the C.P.A. Framework.

The Structure of the Building Control Section



The Building Control Section is a relatively small and autonomous team operating as a business unit and consisting of the Building Control Manager, Principal Building Control Officer, three Senior Building Control Officers, an Assistant Building Control Officer and a Trainee.

General back up is provided by staff in the Technical Support, Secretariat and Administrative Services, and 18 hours from a dedicated Administrative Support Officer.

The closer working relationship with the Development Control Section has produced stronger links between professional disciplines, providing development monitoring opportunities and a single development contact through the Development Team Approach. As mentioned in the Audit Commission's Best Value report '**the close working relationship between building control, development control and enforcement has also contributed added value to the planning process**'.

Strength and Weaknesses of the Building Control Section

A S.W.O.T. analysis was undertaken recently with the Building Control staff as part of the Divisional Business Plan annual review.

A version of the 2008 / 2009 analysis is shown in (see APPENDIX 4).

ISSUES AFFECTING PERFORMANCE

Work Trends and Pressures for Change

The work and income of the Building Control Section are directly related to the state of the U.K. economy and strength of the construction industry.

During the recent 'uncertainty' in the economic health of the country in general, the UK construction industry is showing signs of recession. Growth in the building sector has slowed with a drop in the number of house sales and with the commercial sector 'tightening its financial belt', the industry faces a tough immediate future.

There is little doubt that the U.K. economy is undergoing a significant downturn in growth with pressure on interest rates leading to reduced confidence within the construction industry.

However, sustained growth has never been taken for granted in terms of either Building Regulation application numbers or income derived from charges received.

Performance Chart

Number of Building Control Applications including Full Plans and Building Notices (excluding Resubmissions and Cavity Fill)																			
Schedule					Schedule					Schedule					Schedule				
1	2	3	4*	5*	1	2	3	4*	5*	1	2	3	4*	5*	1	2	3	4*	5*
58	475	348	121	16	45	439	377	63	10	26	420	339	110	10	43	392	397	137	2
TOTALS : 1018					TOTALS : 934					TOTALS : 905					TOTALS : 971				
Year : 2004 / 2005					Year : 2005 / 2006					Year : 2006 / 2007					Year : 2007 / 2008				

*4 Exempt

*5 Multi-Schedule

2004 / 2005# (to Feb 05)

Number of Reported Dangerous Structures				
	26	27	22	25
Year	2004 / 2005	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	2007 / 2008

Number of Regularisation Applications				
	61	57	61	57
Year	2004 / 2005	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	2007 / 2008

The amount of enforcement cases handled by the Section over recent years is very few in number due to the positive approach taken towards achieving compliance throughout the construction period. Wherever possible problems are dealt with at an early stage in an effort to avoid delays, and enforcement, as an option, is only used as a last resort. This is consistent with the Council's Pro-Active Planning Enforcement Policy.

Human Resources

Quality services depend totally upon quality employees. The efforts of employees are recognised by the Council's vision for the future and its commitment is shown in the Investors in People award.

Demand

The number of staff required is directly related to the amount of work undertaken, which equates simply to the number of applications received. This demand in relation to the fee earning work also depends on the level of service, which is specified from time to time in the Level of Service document. Additional demands arise from non-fee earning work such as dangerous structures and demolitions, which only Local Authorities are empowered to undertake, and work to provide access and facilities for disabled people, which is exempt from fee payment and accounts, annually, for approximately 10% of all Building Regulation applications received.

Local Authority Building Control provides a basic formula for assessing staff levels in relation to the national level of service document which they produced and which Wyre Forest has interpreted at the local level. The formula which they provide indicates that, along with most other Authorities, we operate slightly below a full staff complement.

Supply

Work levels have increased and remain strong. The experience and local knowledge of staff is essential to enable the Section to respond to the new challenges faced by changing legislation and increasing competition. Investment in the staff, the Section's most important asset, is vital to maintain and strengthen the Service. There is a pressing need to ensure that salary rates for the Section's staff are attractive in comparison with other Local Authority Building Control services and private Approved Inspector organisations, in order **to retain** and recruit appropriately experienced and qualified staff. At present the Section employs three fully qualified senior officers and one assistant in the fourth year of his degree course and a trainee into the third year of his degree course.

It is a proven fact that other Local Authority Building Control sections, especially locally, are suffering from lack of staff due to people moving into the more lucrative private sector area, attracted not only by increased salaries but also by better employment packages.

Training

Wyre Forest District Council is committed to 'Investors in People'. Staff training and development is very important and staff are guided through the system of Employee Development Review (EDR) to ensure that they remain conversant with legislative changes and procedures relative to Building Control. In this way, Building Control officers and support staff will be supported in training opportunities and initiatives designed to ensure continuing professional and personal development relevant to the delivery of the Building Control Service, the Planning, Health and Environment Division Service Business Plan and the Corporate Plan.

Recognising that the recruitment of qualified officers has been particularly difficult in recent years, the Building Control Section has regularly invested in a Trainee Building Control Officer in order to 'succession plan' for the future.

This has already proved invaluable with previous trainees moving up into an assistant's role and a new trainee appointed in their place.

Additionally, staff have been trained in Health and Safety and Risk Assessment issues, with the emphasis on safe working practices and procedures.

External Consultations / Services

An integral part of the plan vetting service relates to statutory consultations with Fire Safety Officers from Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade. This arises when Building Regulation applications relate to premises designated under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The consultation relates to means of escape in case of fire provisions and, at present, approximately 15% of all Building Regulation applications require Fire Officer consultation.

The Section also consults with Severn Trent Water Authority on applications affected by public sewers, and occasionally uses the services of structural engineers, energy assessors, and construction information service providers.

THE COST OF THE BUILDING CONTROL SERVICE

Costs

The gross budget cost for the whole Building Control Service in 2007 / 08 was £405,840, with an income of £261,350 giving a net cost of £144,490. This Business Plan concerns itself, primarily, with the fee earning work where the costs of the Service have to be balanced by the income derived from charges levied. This information is presently commercially sensitive.

Financial Year	Fee Earning Applications Received*	Estimated Value of Work (£)
2004 / 2005	751	26,041,037
2005 / 2006	871	37,272,072
2006 / 2007	780	23,297,500
2007 / 2008	834	60,382,000

*includes Regularisation and Building Notices

Other Sources of Income

With competition increasing in the Building Control market, it is important for the Section to look at ways of achieving income from other sources. At present the Section performs a site monitoring function for Development Control, for which an annual payment is received. Also, under Local Authority Building Control's Partner Authority Scheme, Wyre Forest Building Control has Partnership Agreements with five local businesses, which enables the Section to receive plan charge income on applications made to other local authorities. The Section will seek to further develop their involvement in this scheme and, in the meantime, other areas of possible revenue will be pursued whilst continually seeking out opportunities to promote the Service to existing and potential customers.

SERVICE TARGETS

Performance Management

Wyre Forest Building Control is committed to providing quality services in line with the principals of Best Value. The Section is accredited with BSI EN ISO 9001:2000, confirming it's commitment to being cost effective and responsive to the needs of its service users. The Section has set out the high standards of service against which it will be judged in the Level of Service document. A Local Marketing Strategy and Section I.T. Strategy have established action plans which set out areas for improvement and development within pre-determined time scales.

The existing computer management system generates a range of specific reports for monitoring purposes, with each officer having their own workstation and access to the Building Control databases. The Section is committed to embracing into its working practices and procedures the DIP/Workflow system, which has recently been introduced at Divisional level.

The following performance indicators and management standards, (see *APPENDIX 5*), are based on those drawn up by the Building Control Performance Standards Group, and form the basis against which we will monitor our performance, internally and externally benchmarking against other local authorities and Approved Inspectors.

Performance against these targets will be monitored and reviewed periodically to ensure that we continue to provide the best possible services within available resources.

Performance Indicators and Standards

Attached in *APPENDIX 5* are the performance indicators (I) and management standards (S) together with the target. Performance against the targets will be the subject of on-going appraisal and review as part of the Section's quality management auditing programme and the Council's Best Value Improvement Plan. Quarterly summary figures are produced and displayed on the Internet as part of the Section's quality management system. Performance is also reported twice yearly as part of the Business Plan monitoring procedures.

Marketing

Given the competition that the Section faces, Wyre Forest Building Control Services require effective marketing to maintain and extend its customer base. A Marketing Strategy has been developed from the initial foundations already laid with the Customer surveys, Focus Group meetings and Newsletter publications. A market profile of customer needs, service provision and cost effectiveness forms the basis of the strategy with the objective of maintaining and extending our market share.

Operating in a competitive environment and in order to remain an effective force in service delivery, it is important that our marketing strategy is continually reviewed and updated. Comments and suggestions from customers are gathered through our surveys, focus groups, seminars and continuous feedback through day-to-day contact with our clients, and are fed into the development of the strategy.

As the strategy develops we continue to listen to the needs and requirements of people in the marketplace to ensure that our service remains relevant and competitive.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

The biggest single challenge faced by Wyre Forest Building Control is to continually break even within the three year Plan period arising from local charge setting. Anticipating demand is difficult, but what is clear is that with competition on the housing and commercial fronts, it will be a challenging time to maintain our existing market share. The Section has to be increasingly cost conscious as income is directly related to applications, which are both volatile and susceptible to the fortunes of the construction industry, which would respond quickly to any persistent downturn in the U.K. economy.

The Building Control Section is also developing a pro-active approach to marketing not only to 'fight off' competition, but to potentially win back and retain customers from competing service providers.

We are continually looking at new ways of working through electronic service delivery, home / remote working, increasing our number of partnership agreements and joint working agreements with other authorities.

We are also aware of the future developments and possible implications of joint working as a means of business operating. We have already made exploratory investigations into the possibility of working in conjunction with neighbouring authorities, and, whilst this did not prove to be initially suitable at that stage of our business development, we have, and will, continue to assess the options available, so that we are in a position to respond effectively to any strategic plans put forward.

The Plan is a living document and will evolve over time responding particularly to market forces. It also has to relate to the Planning, Health and Environment Divisional Service Business Plan, Building Control Marketing Strategy and Building Control I.T. Strategy, all incorporating Building Control's actions and targets set out in *APPENDIX 6*.

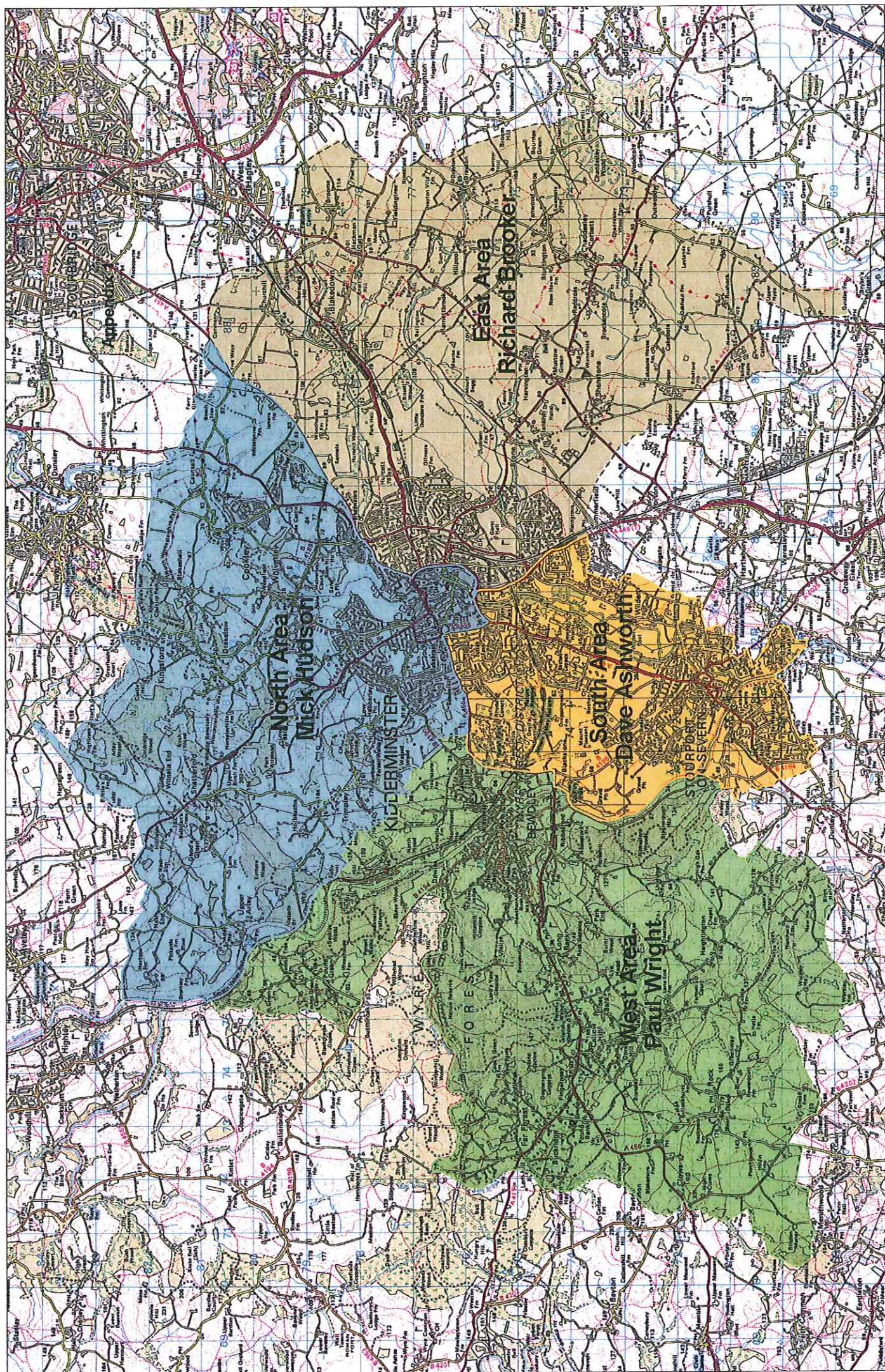
As progress is made along the life cycle of this Plan, it is envisaged that creative measures and partnering agreements will have to be explored to reduce on-costs and central recharges to ensure Best Value in service delivery.

Planning, Health and Environment Division

**Building Control Section
Business Plan 2008-2011**

APPENDIX 1

Area Map



Date: 12/08/2008
Scale: 1:89518
Ref: S08176

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Planning, Health and Environment Division

**Building Control Section
Business Plan 2008-2011**

APPENDIX 2

Customer Survey Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Questionnaires were sent out to building owners who had just satisfactorily completed their building projects, and were enclosed with the Building Regulation Completion Certificate.

It covered the three main areas of Building Control service ;

- General Service Provision
- Plan Submission and Administration
- Site Inspection and Completion of Works

50 questionnaires were sent out over a period of 2 months to a range of building owners, from domestic through to commercial and industrial.

The total number of replies represented a response rate of 40%.

The main findings of the survey are as follows:

General Service Provision;

- 90% of our customers were fairly / very satisfied with the availability of appropriate staff, with 84% satisfied with the standard of advice.
- The helpfulness and courtesy of staff was deemed 'fairly to very satisfactory' by 85% of respondents.
- In terms of our co-ordination with Planning, 73% found this aspect to be 'v satisfactory' to 'satisfactory' with 17% unable to answer.
- 74% of respondents were very / fairly satisfied in respect to the added value to the finished product that the service provided ; 4% being dissatisfied.
- 79% found the information available in our reception area to be 'fairly to very satisfactory', although 21% of customers deemed it only average.
- In respect to applying the Regulations professionally, 85% of people were fairly to very satisfied.

Plan Submission and Administration;

- When questioned on our plan checking service, 84% of customers actually benefited from the pre-submission advice facility, 42% being 'very satisfied'.
- 95% found our application forms clear and easy to use.
- A pleasing result from the survey was that everyone who responded was satisfied with the speed of our plan check, 53% being very satisfied.

Site Inspection and Completion;

- In respect of the site inspection service, 6% of customers found the number of inspections we carry out only 'average'. On the other hand, 94 % were satisfied with the number carried out, and, again, 94% very / fairly satisfied with the standard and quality of inspections.
- Officer response time to requests for inspections was deemed 'very satisfactory' by 73% of customers, 27% being fairly satisfied.
- When asked for their opinion on completion certificates, again, 73% of customers were very satisfied with the speed with which they received their certificate.

A full analysis of the survey returns, arranged by question number, is included in this report.

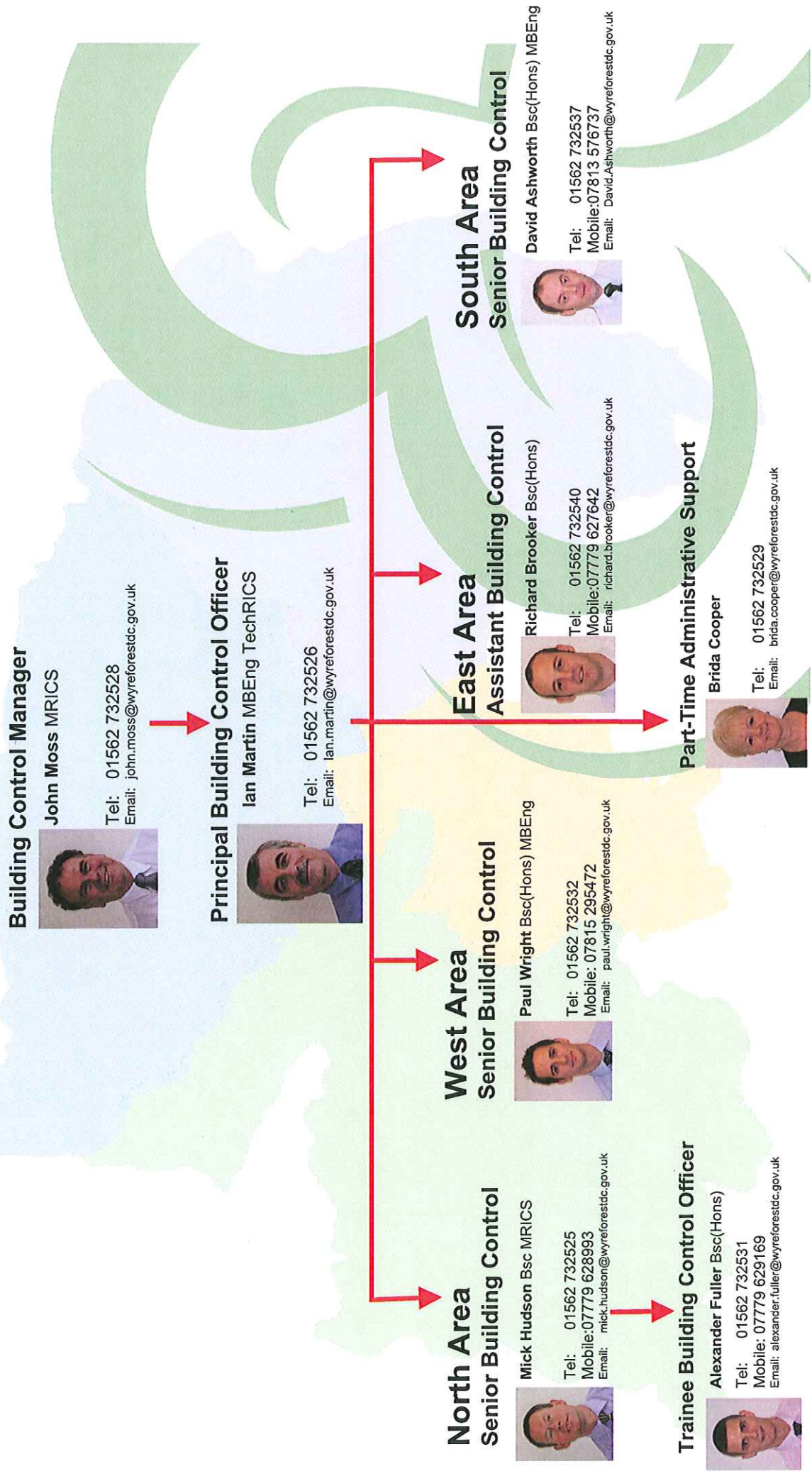
Planning, Health and Environment Division

**Building Control Section
Business Plan 2008-2011**

APPENDIX 3

Organisation Chart

Wyre Forest Building Control Organisation Chart



Planning, Health and Environment Division

**Building Control Section
Business Plan 2008-2011**

APPENDIX 4

S.W.O.T. Analysis

SWOT ANALYSIS [2008]

<i>2007 Results</i>	<i>2008 Results</i>
<i>BUILDING CONTROL</i>	

Strengths

- Experienced and long-serving professional staff who have an in-depth knowledge of the local area and conditions.
-
- Flexibility and willingness of staff to accept increasing change in the face of intense competition from the private sector.
- Generally good relations with local professionals and builders / designers due to ability of staff to negotiate and liaise.
- Inter-relation with external agencies and consultees is positive.
- Strong links with other Building Control sections within the Region and County, with joint protocol and cross-boundary working agreements in place.
- Excellent attendance record of staff over a number of years.
- Availability and accessibility of staff, office based and on site, at most times during working hours.
- Section's own I.T. budget and investment is continually improving efficiency in terms of performance management and access / retrieval of information.
- The ability to set our own level of charge based on national guidelines.

Strengths

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- The ability to set our own level of charge.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Agreements with 4 local businesses has increased our income potential. • Marketing strategy and budget allows us some control over service standards and provision • Proven track record in succession planning, with trainee position on permanent establishment. • Relocation has strengthened existing positive internal relations with other Divisions and Sections. • ISO 9001 registration is proof of our commitment to service delivery. • Part time administrative post provides dedicated support to the section. • Fully staffed • I I P Status • Good website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Agreements with 2 local businesses and the administration of the County Property Partnership Agreement has increased our income potential. • Marketing strategy and budget allows us some control over service standards and provision • Proven track record in succession planning, with trainee position on permanent establishment. • Relocation has strengthened existing positive internal relations with other Divisions and Sections. • ISO 9001 registration is proof of our commitment to service delivery. • Part time administrative post provides dedicated support to the section. • Fully staffed • I I P Status • Good website |
|---|---|

Weaknesses

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working space and storage facilities could be improved. • I.T. development is slow due to corporate practices and procedures. • Not having complete control over our own dedicated full-time self-contained administration. • • Access Officer is only part-time • Operating in an ever-increasing competitive market on unequal terms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working space and storage facilities could be improved. • I.T. development is slow due to corporate practices and procedures. • Not having complete control over our own dedicated full-time self-contained administration. • • Access Officer is only part-time • Operating in an ever-increasing competitive market on unequal terms. |
|--|--|

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to operate outside of corporate restraints • Restrictions on investment of surpluses – loss of unused surplus. • Lack of staff incentive schemes • Remuneration package for staff is poor in comparison with Approved Inspectors in the private sector. • Severn-Trent protocol causing extra burden on service. • Lack of sufficient car-parking facilities could have detrimental effect on customer satisfaction. • Open plan office means lack of privacy – office used as a corridor by other staff • Hub has lead to lack of customer / officer interface • Working environment too hot in summer; too cold in winter • New Innogistic / Metascybe systems not being used to their full potential through lack of comprehensive training • Loss of uniformity within County on charge setting for applications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to operate outside of corporate restraints • Restrictions on investment of surpluses – loss of unused surplus. • Lack of staff incentive schemes • Remuneration package for staff is poor in comparison with Approved Inspectors in the private sector. • Severn-Trent protocol causing extra burden on service. • Lack of sufficient car-parking facilities could have detrimental effect on customer satisfaction. • Open plan office means lack of privacy – office used as a corridor by other staff • Hub has lead to lack of customer / officer interface • Working environment too hot in summer; too cold in winter • Innogistic / Metascybe systems not being used to their full potential through lack of comprehensive training • Loss of uniformity within County on charge setting for application • Uncertainty over single site |
|--|---|

Opportunities

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open market and competition from Approved Inspectors is providing an opportunity for the section to operate on a self-financing business-like footing which is helping to drive performance and improve service standards. • Ability to set our own charges allows flexibility in our approach to service provision. • Ability to embrace and promote various initiatives from L.A.B.C. Services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open market and competition from Approved Inspectors is providing an opportunity for the section to operate on a self-financing business-like footing which is helping to drive performance and improve service standards. • Ability to set our own charges allows flexibility in our approach to service provision. • Ability to embrace and promote various initiatives from L.A.B.C. Services. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to build upon existing / potential Partnership Agreements. • Staff retention in a competitive employment market. • To forge closer working links with a positive Development Team Approach. • To build on positive feedback from the Best Value Review and customer surveys • Re-location will enhance service delivery. • Investment in I.T. will continue to improve service delivery. • Ability to embrace alternative approaches to service provision – create extra sources of income • Worcestershire Hub will allow easier / quicker access to our services. • Develop specialisms within the office. • Joint working with other authorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to build upon existing / potential Partnership Agreements. • Staff retention in a competitive employment market. • To forge closer working links with a positive Development Team Approach. • To build on positive feedback from the Best Value Review and customer surveys. • Re-location has enhanced service delivery. • Investment in I.T. will continue to improve service delivery. • Ability to embrace alternative approaches to service provision – create extra sources of income • Worcestershire Hub may allow easier / quicker access to our services. • Develop specialisms within the office. • Joint working with other authorities • To develop flexible working conditions, i.e. remote / home working and shared or joint working |
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Threats

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open market and competition – the section must be in a position to compete on equal terms with Approved Inspectors who are increasing in number. • Central and Local Government cut-backs / reorganisation which could reduce the Section's Level of Service and performance standards. • Natural staff reduction through retirement, redundancy, moving to better paid posts etc. • Uncertainty in the political climate both locally and nationally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open market and competition – the section must be in a position to compete on equal terms with Approved Inspectors who are increasing in number. • Central and Local Government cut-backs / reorganisation which could reduce the Section's Level of Service and performance standards. • Natural staff reduction through retirement, redundancy, moving to better-paid posts etc. • Uncertainty in the political climate both locally and nationally. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability, at present, to predict the continuing standard and quality of service provision in an increasingly competitive market. • Increasing customer expectation. • Uncertainty of future and job security. • Worcestershire Hub may affect service provision / quality of advice given to customers • Constant legislative changes impose extra workload on existing staff. • Increasing technical complexity of regulations imposes burden on officer time. • Reduced number of applications / fee income may lead to increased charges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability, at present, to predict the continuing standard and quality of service provision in an increasingly competitive market. • Increasing customer expectation. • Uncertainty of future job security. • Worcestershire Hub may affect service provision / quality of advice given to customers • Constant legislative changes impose extra workload on existing staff. • Increasing technical complexity of regulations imposes burden on officer time. • Reduced number of applications / fee income may lead to increased charges |
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January 2008

Planning, Health and Environment Division

**Building Control Section
Business Plan 2008-2011**

APPENDIX 5

Performance Indicators and Standards

**Building Control Performance
Indicators and Standards**

Type / No.	Process	Target	Annual Performance											
			1997/8	1998/9	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	
P.I. 1	ALL APPLICATIONS Initial registration. Charge assessment and acknowledgment.	3 days*	99.70%	98.10%	98.50%	97.40%	97.80%	98.10%	97.40%	95.20%	97.24%	94.30%	94.90%	
P.I. 2	FULL PLANS Applicant notified verbally or in writing of defects / amendments required.	3 weeks*	N/A*	73%	53%	50%	74%	94%	78%	63%	56%	61%	79%	
P.I. 3 (S)	Approval Notice issued following receipt of acceptable amendments.	2 days	N/A*	63%	74%	71%	79%	79%	76%	83%	N/A#	N/A#	N/A#	
P.I. 4	Decision issued within stat.time limits.	5 weeks	56%	65%	47%	49%	57%	69%	56%	51%	54%	N/A**	N/A**	
P.I. 5	Decision issued within stat.time limits.	8 weeks	95%	99%	99%	99%	99%	100%	99%	99.60%	99.50%	99.33%	100.00%	
	INSPECTIONS - BUILDING REGS.													
P.I. 6 (S)	Same day requests received before 10.30 am	Same day	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
P.I. 7	Relevant Stat. notifications visited within time limits or as agreed	1 day	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
P.I. 8	Relevant Stat. notifications visited within time limits or as agreed	2 days	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
P.I. 9 (S)	Completion certificates issued following satisfactory inspection	5 days	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	61%	60%	78%	80%	97%	
P.I. 10 (S)	In-progress letters on inactive sites	3 months	BCM*	BCM*	BCM*	BCM*	BCM*	BCM*	BCM*	BCM*	BCM*	BCM* see note		

[illegible]

Type /No.	Process	Target	Annual Performance											
			1997/8	1998/9	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	
P.I. 20	Dang. Struct. established /confirmed owner contacted/ notice served.	1 day Audit on P.N.7		90%					Audit PN7	Audit PN7	Audit PN7	100%	100%	
P.I. 21	Demolition : Issue of Section 81 Notice when appropriate.	10 days	N/A*	N/A*					67%	65%	82%	89%	90%	
P.I. 22	Correspondence / advice response time for replies	5 days Audit on P.N.15		82%	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	
P.I. 23(S)	Availability to public of case officer for advice	By appoint	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP**	CP**	
P.I. 24(S)	Available to public for specialist advice	9.00am - 4.30pm	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP**	CP**	
P.I. 25(S)	Available to public for general advice	9.00am - 4.30pm	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP*	CP**	CP**	
Q.P.M.	Measurement and comparison of full range of serv provision - LABC perf.ind.	100%	N/S*	N/S*	N/S*	N/S*	41%	51%	51%	66.50%	64.50%	67%	69%	

Notes

days/wks* represents working days/weeks

N/A* figures not available from existing management system

BCM* activity carried out at discretion of Building Control Manager - letters being sent from 1/04/07

CP* figures available through Corporate Policies and Complaints Procedures

N/S* no system for measurement

N/A# no longer recorded

N/A** P.I. 4 and P.I.5 now combined to give overall figure for decision within statutory time limit

CP** centralised hub centre now available for customers - officer availability by appointment only.

Planning, Health and Environment Division

**Building Control Section
Business Plan 2008-2011**

APPENDIX 6

Building Control Actions and Targets

Building Control

Corporate Plan Aim	Action	Target Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed	Time Scale	Resp. Officer	NI	Council Priority	Sustain. Commun. Strategy Block
A Sustainable Environment	55. To review and improve our performance across the Division	a. To implement a workable building control enforcement policy for the section. b. To revise and update the Building Control business plan for the period 2008 – 2011. c. To maintain ISO 9001 accreditation through 6 monthly assessment. d. To continue to investigate and explore new ways of increasing the section's income – i.e. plan checking service, cross boundary work and partnerships.	Aug 08 Oct 08 May/Nov 08	JM/IM IM IM			
A Well Run & Responsive Council	56. To monitor and publish performance indicators	a. To achieve a score of 72.5% measured against LABC's QPM. b. To undertake performance management of the section to continue to improve performance against a range of targets. c. To continue to monitor and budget profile building control income and take appropriate steps on fee levels as necessary.	March 09 Ongoing Ongoing	JM/IM JM/IM JM	PHE 6		

Corporate Plan Aim	Action	Target Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed	Time Scale	Resp. Officer	NI	Council Priority	Sustain. Commun. Strategy Block
A Well Run & Responsive Council	57. To develop the use of I.T. to facilitate remote working	a. To continue to develop the use of remote working practices and procedures. b. To develop the use of P.D.A. technology and investigate the use of laptops	Ongoing Dec 08	JM/IM JM/IM			

Action	Current Achievement	Target	Time Scale	Monitor	Respl officer
To maximise the use of Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility for electronic plan submission IT strategy established in tandem with corporate policy Remote working software installed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote and encourage more use of system through staff and customer training To make progress towards paperless office / home working To maximise the use of the Worcestershire Hub 	12 – 18 Months 3 – 5 years 2 years	No of electronic submissions Annual Report to DMT	JM/IM ALL ALL
To maximise contacts within the construction industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service letters sent re: identified planning applications and permissions Contact database established Focus group established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve early contact with potential customers using the Development Team Approach. Monitor and update information sent out To re-establish links with lost customers To develop a plan and schedule for contacts To develop input and analyse output from focus group meetings 	Continuous Continuous Jan 2008 Every 6 months	Market Share Potential Customer Response Potential Customer Response Building Control User/Customer Surveys	IM ALL IM JM
To explore the development of a customer / service matrix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example Matrix being discussed in conjunction with WFDC IT section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish a matrix as a tool for providing specific market information and trends 	Autumn 2008	Report To Building Control Manager	IM
To promote customer awareness of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twice yearly newsletter Advice leaflets Seminars Web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase content To increase the number of advice leaflets by 2 per annum To provide a seminar each year for our contacts (county basis) To develop website content 	Continuous Continuous Continuous Continuous	Customer feedback Customer Update Customer Participation and feedback Monitor usage and feedback	IM/AF IM/AF IM/PW RB/AF

Marketing Strategy

Issue 2 April 2007

Action	Current Achievement	Target	Time Scale	Monitor	Respl Officer
To promote the Development Team Approach to potential and existing customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTA practice note developed and DC leaflet no.12 published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop formal arrangements for Building Control involvement 	April 2008	Report to DMT	ALL
To measure service performance against the DSA Quality Performance Matrix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing score 67% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve a score of 72.5% To achieve a score of 80% 	March 2008 2010	Quarterly reports to Building Control Manager on Performance standards	JM/IM
To maintain ISO 9001 accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 monthly external reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve re-registration 	November 2007	Through achievement and successful continuous assessment	IM/PW/BC
To limit the decrease in the market share of the commercial sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76% Local Authority market share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To capture 80% market share of commercial sector 	April 2007 - March 2010	6 monthly report to Building Control Manager	ALL
To increase market share in housing sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77% Local Authority Market Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To capture 80% – 85% Local Authority Market Share 	April 2007 – March 2010	6 monthly report to Building Control Manager	ALL
To maintain current market share in domestic (Schedule 2) sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 99.5% Local Authority market share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain 99% - 100% market share 	April 2007 – March 2010	6 monthly report to Building Control Manager.	ALL

Action	Current Achievement	Target	Time Scale	Monitor	Responsible officer
To maintain our involvement on the Divisional IT working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative already sitting on relevant groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the interests of the Section are accounted for in the introduction of systems technology 	Continuous	Presence on working groups	RB / AF
To embrace the proposed Divisional management and workflow systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management system in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that any new systems integrate effectively into the performance management of the section 	December 2007	Reports from working groups	IM / RB
To incorporate any new management and workflow systems into Building Control working practices and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input into ongoing discussions on management system – Building Control needs and requirements communicated to relevant groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To fully utilise the potential capabilities of the management system to increase our performance levels 	Continuous	Input into Building Control systems	JM / IM
To develop our I.T. systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers have their own p.c. access, mobile phone, digital camera and pda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide laptop / tablet technology to facilitate possible remote working 	April 2008	Report to Building Control Manager	IM
To develop and encourage the use of electronic plan submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedure under-used due to lack of training and marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve substantial increase in the number of electronic applications i.e to increase number by 100% on 2006 total 	12 months	No. of electronic submissions	IM / ALL

Action	Current Achievement	Target	Time Scale	Monitor	Respl Officer
To be aware of the latest I.T. hardware and software available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers attend internal training courses and are in regular communication with the I.T. section Remote working software installed and embedded into management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To move towards remote working with the introduction of laptop / tablet technology To incorporate latest relevant technical software into everyday service provision 	3 – 5 years	Annual report	ALL
To be aware of other building control bodies in the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation at county group meetings and national body seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To regularly benchmark on local and national level 	Continuous	Market share and customer feedback	ALL
To liaise with I.T. and Finance sections to develop and build on the I.T. strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad-hoc arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement the I.T. strategy in line with financial requirements. 	June 2008	Report to Building Control Manager	IM
To monitor the website content and general e-service provision to ensure service delivery is in line with local authority PARSOL standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website is currently being upgraded corporately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To specifically provide register of applications and fee calculator and generally improve content. 	April 2008	Report to Building Control Manager	IM / RB / AF