



Report To: Audit and Governance Committee

Date: 19th January 2026

Subject: Audit of Building Control Service by the Building Safety Regulator

Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the audit of the Building Control Service by the Building Safety Regulator

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Baxter, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Report Of: Christian Allen, Assistant Director – Regulatory

Report Author: Pauline Lyon, Group Manager – Building Control

Ward(s) Affected: None

Exempt Report: No

Summary

This is a report to share the outcome of the recent Building Control audit by the Building Safety Regulator and to provide assurance to Members of the work being done to ensure the service meets the Building Safety Regulator Operational Standards.

Recommendations

Members of the Audit and Governance Committee note the report and the work underway to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Regulator audit outcome.

Reasons for Recommendations

To provide assurance to members of the work being done to ensure the Council are complying with the Building Safety Regulator Operational Standards.

Other Options Considered

None

1. Background

- 1.1 The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) undertakes inspections to ensure that Building Control Bodies (BCBs) i.e., Local Authorities (LA's) and Registered Building Control Approver's ('RBCAs') are complying with the Building Act 1984 and associated legislation. All BCBs are subject to ongoing monitoring and at least one inspection over a five-year period.
- 1.2 The objective of an inspection is to verify that BCBs are complying with the Operational Standard Rules (OSRs), as well as identifying opportunities for improvement within the Building Control profession. Where non-compliances are identified the BSR as the regulatory authority have a series of escalating sanctions and enforcement measures to maintain standards and deal with poor performance, when identified.

2. Report

- 2.1 The BSR undertakes routine audit inspections of BCBs every five years. In addition, they can initiate an investigation at any time if they believe BCBs have contravened the OSRs or committed a criminal offence. As part of the establishment of the BSR, each BCB is subject to an initial inspection within 12 months.
- 2.2 The first Inspection of BBC commenced in December 2024 and concluded in October 2025. The inspection was a comprehensive and detailed process, involving a series of constructive meetings, extensive document sharing and in-depth discussions with the Inspector to clearly demonstrate established processes and practices.
- 2.3 The scope of the inspection included (this is not an exhaustive list):
 - Evaluation of governance, risk management and control arrangements to confirm if the building control statutory obligations are being met and are aligned with the Operational Standards Rules (OSRs). This included reviewing assurance activities in place recognising that the LA remains accountable for effective and efficient delivery of its statutory building control functions
 - Assessment of compliance with building control systems, policies and processes as set out in our Quality Management System (QMS).
 - Consideration of how building control functions/activities align to 'The strategic context for the regulated framework'.
 - Confirmation that there are;
 - sufficient, experienced and qualified staff with competencies appropriate to the type of building control work undertaken.
 - workforce and succession plans in place to enable ongoing effective and efficient discharge of our statutory BC functions and activities; and
 - robust arrangements exist for continuing professional development and training to maintain competence.
 - Evaluation of the robustness of the building control inspection regime through sample and testing a variety of application types.

2.4 In preparation for the implementation of the Building Safety Act post Grenfell Enquiry, a comprehensive programme of work was undertaken to ensure readiness, compliance and service continuity.

2.5 Key actions included:

- All inspectors were fully supported with any additional training necessary to demonstrate competence for registration.
- Inspectors were actively supported throughout the registration process, resulting in all staff being successfully registered ahead of the statutory deadline, an outcome not achieved universally across the sector.
- Job evaluations were completed at each Council to reflect the changes arising from the new regulatory framework. Importantly, no inspectors left the service as a result of the registration process, which is also not an outcome seen elsewhere in the profession.
- All operational processes were reviewed, aligned and formally introduced to ensure consistency and compliance.
- Governance arrangements were reviewed and strengthened to ensure ongoing compliance with regulatory requirements.
- New procedures were introduced, including the systematic collection and management of Operational Standards Rules (OSRs) data.
- All service documentation was reviewed and updated to reflect current requirements.
- A robust succession planning approach was implemented, including the recruitment of three trainees two years ago. Two are now registered inspectors, with the third due to complete their registration imminently.

2.6 The outcome of the inspection identified only three areas for improvement, all of which relate to the strengthening of arrangements to ensure continuous oversight across all project risk types.

2.7 The building control team, supported by the Leadership Team has already taken proactive steps to implement improvement actions, including:

- Legacy applications are being systematically reviewed, with increased focus on high-risk projects and the introduction of regular monitoring arrangements across all project risk types.
- In addition, a corporate ICT Alignment Programme is underway across the Partnership. This includes the introduction of an upgraded ICT platform that will further strengthen the alignment of the Building Control system with evolving operational and regulatory requirements.

2.8 The BSR has acknowledged the wider national context within which local authority building control services operate, including the well-documented shortage of registered Building Inspectors, particularly within local authorities. It is also recognised that, over several years, resources within Local Authority Building Control (LABC) teams have been impacted by broader financial pressures affecting local government nationally.

2.9 In response to these challenges, MHCLG is currently consulting on proposals to reform the fees and charges regime for local authority building control services. These reforms would enable authorities to recover costs for a wider range of

activities, with the anticipated outcome of more resilient, sustainable and well-resourced local building control services.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The audit outcome provides assurance that the Building Control Service is demonstrating very high levels of compliance with the Operational Standard Rules (OSRs) prescribed by the BSR.
- 3.2. The BSR recognises that a lot of work has gone into aligning building control processes and procedures across the SELCP with the OSRs.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

Due to the aligned policies and procedures at BBC and ELDC, the BSR agreed to extend their scheduled audit at SHDC by 12 months.

Corporate Priorities

Delivery of high-quality services and maximising use of technology to support residents.

Staffing

The service is progressing the improvement actions using service's existing resources. Officers remain in on-going constructive dialogue with the BSR auditor to ensure that the measures being implemented align with regulatory expectations.

Workforce Capacity Implications

As above

Constitutional and Legal Implications

The Building Safety Regulator is the regulator for Building Control. Local Authorities (LA's) and Registered Building Control Approver's ('RBCAs') must comply with the Building Act 1984 and associated legislation.

Data Protection

None

Financial

None

Risk Management

N/A

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

The portfolio holder has been informed of the outcome of the audit and will be kept apprised of progress with improvement actions.

Reputation

Reputational risk is mitigated through the timely and effective delivery of the identified improvement actions.

Contracts

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

None

Acronyms

Building Safety Regulator (BSR)
Operational Standard Rules (OSRs)
Building Control Bodies (BCBs)
Registered Building Control Approvers (RBCAs)
Local Authority Building Control (LABC)
Quality Management Systems (QMS)

Appendices

N/A

Background Papers

No background papers

Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body

Report Approval

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