

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PLANNING, TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABILITY

To : Planning Committee

Date : 18th August 2022

Subject : Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd - Annual Performance Overview

Period : Financial Year (1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022 *inclusive*)

Background

Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd was established as a wholly owned company by Birmingham City Council in April 2012. This report focusses on Building Consultancy performance for the previous financial year April 2020 to March 2021 (inclusive).

Contractual obligations between the Council and Building Consultancy require that performance is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to an independent Performance Management and Monitoring Board (PMMB). This is chaired by the Council's Statutory Functions Officer (CSFO) with support from the Contract Management and Performance Team (CMaP). A key outcome from these meetings is to ensure that this performance is shared with the Planning Committee on an annual basis.

Performance Context

The services provided by Building Consultancy are statutory and therefore delivered on behalf of the City Council. One consequence of this is that any formal notices issued during the execution of functions must be in the Council's name and duly authorised by a nominated officer (CSFO).

Acivico Building Consultancy has a longstanding reputation for the provision of high-quality public facing services and contractual measures are therefore in place to ensure that its Customer Service Excellence (CSE) and ISO9001:2015 certifications are maintained. Both are widely regarded as national benchmarks and are independently assessed by licensed external bodies on an annual basis.

The Customer Service Excellence assessment was completed in November 2021 and in keeping with previous years confirmed full compliance along with a number of aspects of compliance plus (service excellence). The ISO9001:2015 assessment was completed in January 2021 and also concluded that the service's operational and management systems were fully compliant with its exacting requirements.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are agreed on an annual basis in conjunction with the Performance Monitoring and Management Board and are subject to robust challenge/review with any subsequent adjustments reflected in the contract. For the year in review (2021-2022) four primary measures were agreed to enable a targeted focus of the most critical functions.

Building Regulation Applications

Almost all construction projects from a residential kitchen extension to a multi-storey mixed-use commercial building require a Building Regulations input to ensure that they meet the minimum technical standards for construction. This is most commonly discharged through two linked processes, firstly initial assessment of design stage plans/details followed by on-going site verification inspections during the construction phase.

Decision Speed

There is a statutory requirement to issue a decision on a Building Regulation application (design stage appraisal) within twenty five working days of submission.

Target 100%	Actual 100%
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Trend Analysis over the previous five years.

2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
100%	100%	100%	100%	99%

N.B. The minor decline in performance for the year 2020-2021 was a direct consequence of COVID19 upon resources and operational systems.

Decisions Approval Rate

Building Consultancy has a performance objective to ensure that an appropriate percentage of decisions are either approved or conditionally approved first time. The certainty that this generates is something that is valued by regular volume submitters. However, the capacity to 'approve' is dependent upon the technical quality of submitted plans along with a number of associated legislative constraints including input from third parties consultees such as West Midlands Fire Service.

Target 95%	Actual 95%
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Trend Analysis (Previous year end performance)

2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
97%	97%	97%	96%	96%

Dangerous Structures (Response Times)

Dangerous structures are reported from a variety of sources including, councillors, officers, emergency services and the public. Incidents are assessed for their severity from the information available to determine a target level of deployment for an officer. There are three contractual levels of response (working hours) are as follows;

Category A (immediate danger) – arrival on site **within 2 hours**

Category B (moderate danger) – arrival on site within 6 hours

Category C (low risk) – arrival on site by the close of the next working day.

Building Consultancy also support the Council's resilience team through a 24/7 365 day a year response service via the corporate emergency contact centre. Due to their nature requests through this channel are automatically categorised as category A incidents.

Category A - Target 100%	Actual 100%
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2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
98%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Categories B and C do not form part of the formal KPI but are closely monitored due to the public safety nature of the service delivered.

Category B+C - Target 95%	Actual 95%
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N.B. All of the contributing incidents to the above were categorised as low public risk and inspected within twenty four hours of the published target. Due to the low numbers involved the statistical impact of a breach in percentage terms is disproportionately high.

Complaint Response Times

Building Consultancy mirrors the Council's corporate complaints process and as such ensure expressions of dissatisfaction are appropriately investigated and responded to within fifteen working days. This also forms an integral element of both the CSE and ISO9001:2015 standards.

Target 100%	Actual 100%
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Trend Analysis (Previous year end performance)

2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
100%	100%	100%	100%

Additional activities

Building Consultancy continues to deliver a number of specialist technical roles to support the Council in the discharge of its statutory responsibilities under the Building Act and allied legislation. Many of these are not formally represented by KPIs but remain subject to robust scrutiny and quarterly oversight using a comprehensive suite of contract management indicators (CMIs) which are reported at each quarterly PMMB.

Independent Review of Building Regulations & Fire safety : The Hackitt Review

This matter has previously been reported and continues to be an area of evolving governmental policy. The most significant adjustment to emerge is the formation of an independent Building Safety Regulator to provide an additional scrutiny to in scope buildings (High Rise Residential). This will be delivered by an arm of the Health and Safety Executive in conjunction with existing public and private sector Building Regulation providers. Further measures include a proposal for a register of licensed building inspectors who will need to demonstrate competence (either through qualification or experience) in order to 'sign off' in scope works. Both proposals are welcomed and bring much needed scrutiny and transparency to the sector. Building Consultancy continues to be in a strong position to implement these adjustments once they become operational in 2023.

Implications for Priorities

A Modern and Successful City

An effective Building Control service is integral to the development process ensuring that buildings achieve the required standards of health, safety and welfare for those who own, work in or use them.

Recommendation

That this report be noted.

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