



## Item

# ANNUAL REPORT OF 3C BUILDING CONTROL SERVICE 2019/20

### To:

Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces

Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee 30 June 2020

### Report by:

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### Wards affected:

All

## Not a Key Decision

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the performance of the 3Cs Building Control Shared Service during 2019/10.
- 1.2 The principle of producing a single annual report for both the 3Cs and Greater Cambridge (2Cs) shared services was agreed at committee in July 2015.
- 1.3 The overarching Annual Report for the 3Cs Shared Services, submitted to South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Council Committees for scrutiny, includes ICT, Legal and Building Control Shared Services. At the City Council, only the Building Control service falls under the remit of this Committee, and therefore the annual report is extracted from the overarching report and enclosed below.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to note the content of the report.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 In July 2015, Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire District and South Cambridgeshire District Councils each approved a model for sharing Legal, Building Control and ICT services. The three services went live within 3C Shared Services in October 2015 with a commitment to provide an Annual report.
- 3.2 The overarching Shared Service performance is monitored through the Greater Cambridge Shared Services Management Board (containing the lead directors from each authority), Greater Cambridge Chief Executives' Board and 2C Joint Advisory Group (comprising of the leaders of each of the Councils).
- 3.3 The service business plan for the Shared Building Control service was approved by the City, Huntingdonshire District and South Cambridgeshire District Councils' committees in March 2019.
- 3.4 The business plan contains the priorities, key performance indicators and budgetary profiles for 2019/20.

## **4. Building Control Shared Service Annual Report 2019/20**

### **4.1 General Information**

- 4.1.1 3C Building Control was set up in October 2015 with the following objectives:

- Protection of services which support the delivery of the wider policy objectives of each Council.
- Creation of services that are genuinely shared between the relevant councils with those councils sharing the risks and benefits whilst having in place a robust model to control the operation and direction of the service.
- Savings through reduced managements costs and economies of scale.
- Increased resilience and retention of staff.
- Minimise the bureaucracy involved in operating the shared service.
- Opportunities to generate additional income, where appropriate.

- 4.1.2 When creating the shared service, the priorities were to improve capacity by expanding the skilled team with management arrangements that enabled resources to be deployed effectively and efficiently, the adoption of best practices and processes and to improve recruitment and retention in local authority building control services.

- 4.1.3 This Annual Report reflects progress against the Business Plan for 2019/20. The Plan contained detailed service information and was approved at partner

committees in March 2019. Given the commercial nature of the service, only limited information has been included in this public report.

### **General Progress**

- 4.1.4 Recruitment has again been successful with four new team members appointed, one senior, one surveyor, one apprentice assistant and one technical support officer. This is to replace a senior who gained promotion to another Council, one support officer who retired and planned recruitment into vacant positions.
- 4.1.5 The service review is underway. Although the impact of Covid-19 has caused a delay in implementation it has also provided a real opportunity in respect of transforming the service needs in respect of ICT and accommodation. The service proportions set for fee earning and non fee earning for the financial year 2020/21 have been reviewed.
- 4.1.6 The team continues to improve its processes. The majority of applications are now submitted electronically, and the service incorporates fully digital processes. There is now a planned programme of scanning of live historical files in the second quarter of 2020/21.
- 4.1.7 With regard to its marketing activities, the service nominated a number of schemes for the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) National Building Excellence Awards 2020, however it is likely these may not continue this year based on the impact of Covid-19. The service was also selected as a finalist in the LABC Annual Awards 2019/20 for the best Shared Service. Again, the impact of Covid-19 has delayed the final of this award and it may not continue this year.
- 4.1.8 In terms of the recognition received by staff during the year, the team were finalists in the Association for Public Service Excellence Awards 2019 for the Best Construction Team for the second year and the team also won Silver in the coveted iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards in March 2020 for the Working Together category.

### **Financial Performance**

- 4.1.9 The outturn position for 2019/20 is recorded in the table below:

£	Budget	Actual	Variance/Outturn
3C Building Control	1,858,273	1,701,940	-155,270

- 4.1.10 It is a requirement that each Council contributes to the non-fee earning account for all statutory works for which the service is unable to charge.
- 4.1.11 The service is forecasting an increase in the deferred income.

### **Service Performance**

4.1.12 Building Control had eight Key Performance Indicators for 2019/20 ranging from acknowledging and determining applications to customer satisfaction levels. These KPIs form part of the quality management system adopted by the service.

### **Customer Feedback**

4.1.13 For 2019/20 the Building Control Partnership has been collating data on the percentage of customers who overall have rated the service as good and above. A KPI target has been reported on throughout the year. The service distributes customer satisfaction surveys to all customers, including those who submit regularisations. This is captured via an online questionnaire. Returns are generally positive. An interim target of 75% has been exceeded with an actual rate of 86% satisfaction. Some areas have been identified for improvement, which the service reviews and actions if appropriate.

### **Key Projects**

4.1.15 Building Control completed three of the six projects identified in 2018/19 Business Plan.

4.1.16 Those completed projects included the development of the professional and business development team, implementing the ISO 9001: 2015 quality management system across the partnership and developing a marketing and communication strategy for the service. These projects are now business as usual.

4.1.17 The following projects are still underway, a full review of the ICT infrastructure to maximise effectiveness of the team and enable agile working. This interlinked with other workstreams including change management and implementing a digital service. The Council Anywhere project and new equipment has transformed the service along with a fully digitised records and management system.

4.1.18 Various workstreams have been identified to unlock the commercial potential of the team. These include providing energy, sustainability and climate change advice, clerk of works service and peer reviews in other Councils. The service also provides inspection cover to another adjoining Council.

## **5. Implications**

### **a) Financial Implications**

The financial implications are shown in section 4.1.9 above.

## **b) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications.

## **c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

Not required for this report.

## **d) Environmental Implications**

None for this report.

## **e) Procurement Implications**

None specific related to the service. Any procurement relating to the service provision is carried out in line with the Councils' policies.

## **f) Community Safety Implications**

There are no community safety implications.

## **g) Consultation and communication considerations**

This will be conducted in accordance with the Council's agreed policy.

## **h) Background papers**

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

Shared Service Quarterly reports  
3C Shared Services 2019/20 Annual Report  
3C Shared Services 2019/20 Business Plan

## **i) Appendices**

None

## **j) Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Fiona Bryant, Strategic Director, tel: 01223 - 457325, email:

[fiona.bryant@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.bryant@cambridge.gov.uk) or Heather Jones, Strategic Lead, tel: 07712 239246, email: [heather.jones@3csharedservices.org](mailto:heather.jones@3csharedservices.org)