

Council Response Form

Council action planned in response to the recommendations issued by Audit Wales

Council: Carmarthenshire County Council

Report title: 'Cracks in the Foundations' – Building Safety in Wales

Issue date: August 2023

Document reference:

Ref	Recommendation	Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales	Target date for completion of actions	Responsible officer
R1-4	For Welsh Government as noted in the report.			
5	<p>Local authorities should develop local action plans that articulate a clear vision for building control to be able to plan effectively to implement the requirements of the Act. The Plans should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be based on an assessment of local risks and include mitigation actions; • set out how building control services will be resourced to deliver all their statutory responsibilities; 	<p>Local Authority Building Control in Wales is designated as the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) which is governed by the Health and Safety Executive. Within Carmarthenshire County Council, the Building Control function is represented in the senior management structure of the Place and Sustainability department which includes the Local Planning Authority functions. The department adopts a plan based approach to development control and monitors the types of buildings within</p>	<p>April 2025 (pending the outcome of R4)</p>	<p>Rhodri Griffiths, Head of Place & Sustainability</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> illustrate the key role of building control in ensuring safe buildings and be linked to well-being objectives and other corporate objectives; and include outcome measures that are focused on all building control services, not just dangerous structures. 	<p>the County. The number of High-Rise Buildings within the County is limited to two and there are no current proposals or applications for further High Risk Buildings premises above five storeys or 18m. The County has a small number of hospitals and care homes that fall within the High risk category and the department's risk register has identified the need for a Class 3 Specialist surveyor to undertake work in these areas, should the demand arise. While it is supporting a number of class 2 surveyors to achieve this classification by April 2025, it is engaging with other authorities to secure support at Class 3 should it be required in the interim.</p> <p>The Authority has reviewed the structure of its building control function to ensure compliance with its statutory responsibilities and specifically those introduced by the Building Safety Act 2022. Posts are currently being re-evaluated to reflect the new competency-based requirements. That work will be completed by April 2025.</p> <p>The role of the Building Control function is set out within the Place and Infrastructure departmental Plan. The plan is structured around corporate objectives set out within the Authority's Corporate Strategy including the Authority's Well-being</p>		

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		<p>objectives and vision statement. Progress against the plan is reported through the Authority's Performance Indicator Management System (PIMS).</p> <p>Monitoring of compliance of the Building Control service is already included as part of the Authority's PIMS framework and which will be extended to include the introduction of the new national performance management framework being developed by the Welsh Government (ref recommendation 4). We anticipate the new All Wales framework to be delivered within the next 12 months. As such indicators have already been rolled out in England, the Authority has already started to consider how some of the likely measures might be quantified and reported through PIMS.</p>		
6	<p>Local authorities should urgently review their financial management of building control and ensure they are fully complying with Regulations. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing a timetable of regular fee reviews to ensure charges reflect the cost of services and comply with the Regulations; 	<p>The Building Control function is audited regularly both internally by the finance function of the Authority and externally through the Local Authority Building Control network in accordance with the Building (Local Authority Charges) regulations 2010.</p> <p>The Authority reviews the Building Control fees every two years with the process commencing in</p>	April 2025	Steven Pound, Building Control Manager

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annually reporting and publishing financial performance in line with the Regulations; • ensuring relevant staff are provided with training to ensure they apply the Regulations and interpret financial reporting correctly; and • revise fees to ensure services are charged for in accordance with the Regulations. 	<p>January with the introduction at the beginning of the next financial year.</p> <p>The Authority is reviewing the information that it publishes on the financial performance in line with The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 and which will be complete by April 2025.</p> <p>Staff involved in the delivery of the service are provided with training on financial requirements. The Authority also operates a checking system at the registration process to improve consistency. Fees are set and quality assured to ensure fees charged are reflective of the works to be carried out.</p> <p>The Authority reviews the Building Control fees every two years with the process commencing in January with the introduction at the beginning of the next financial year. The process includes a review of hourly rates and reflect the cost of both chargeable and non-chargeable services and allows the Authority to provide bespoke fees where projects fall outside our standard set of fees.</p>		
7	Local authorities should work with partners to make better use of limited resources by exploring the potential for collaboration and	The Authority is working with the other authorities who have a similar profile to ours namely Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion which have been identified by the LABC as good potential fit. This is	April 2025	Steven Pound, Building

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	regionalisation to strengthen resilience through a cost benefit analysis of partnering with neighbouring authorities, establishing joint ventures and/or adopting a regional model where beneficial	currently in its infancy, but it will help to consider where there may be opportunities for greater collaboration. That work also involves looking at collaboration models that are provided for in other parts of Wales such as the SWFRS and encompasses the wider work that is being taken forward through LABC Cymru.		Control Manager
8	Local authorities should review risk management processes to ensure that risks are systematically identified, recorded, assessed, mitigated and subject to regular evaluation and scrutiny	Risk associated with Building Control are identified through the Place and Sustainability risk register which is monitored on a quarterly based. Risks identified through the authority's risk prioritisation matrix are escalated through the Authority's risk management process.	Complete	Rhodri Griffiths, Head of Place & Sustainability