

Committee(s) Planning & Transportation	Dated: July 2022
Subject: District Surveyors Annual Report 2021/22	Public
Report of: Director of the Built Environment	For Information
Report author: Gordon Roy, District Surveyor	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the workings of the District Surveyor's office which reports to it for the purposes of building control, engineering services for the City's major infrastructure and to provide resilience to buildings and businesses within the square mile that maybe affected by climatic and environmental risks. To provide Members with a better understanding of the work of the District Surveyor it was agreed to submit annual reports to the committee for information.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report for information.

Main Report

Background

1. The principal role of the District Surveyor's Building Control Service is to ensure that all building work complies with the requirements of the Building Act 1984 and the Building Regulations 2010. Building Regulations are minimum standards laid down by Parliament to secure the health and safety of people in or about buildings with an increasing emphasis on improving energy efficiency, sustainability and accessibility. The building control section is also responsible for notices submitted under Section 30, London Building Act (Amendment) Act 1939 for temporary demountable structures.
2. In offering this Building Regulation regulatory service within the City, the District Surveyor's Office is in direct competition with approximately 90 private firms operating as corporate Approved Inspectors authorised to offer a building regulations approval service.
3. In addition, Dangerous Structures within Inner London are dealt with under the London Building Acts 1930-1939. Responsibility for dealing with them is delegated, by your committee to the District Surveyor. This service is provided on a continuous basis, 24 hours a day throughout the year to ensure public safety. A record of all calls is maintained on the CAPS Uniform software.
4. Other responsibilities placed upon the District Surveyor include:
 - Maintaining a register of all work under the control of Approved Inspectors.
 - Registering certificates under the Competent Persons Schemes.
 - Processing and recording Demolition Notices.

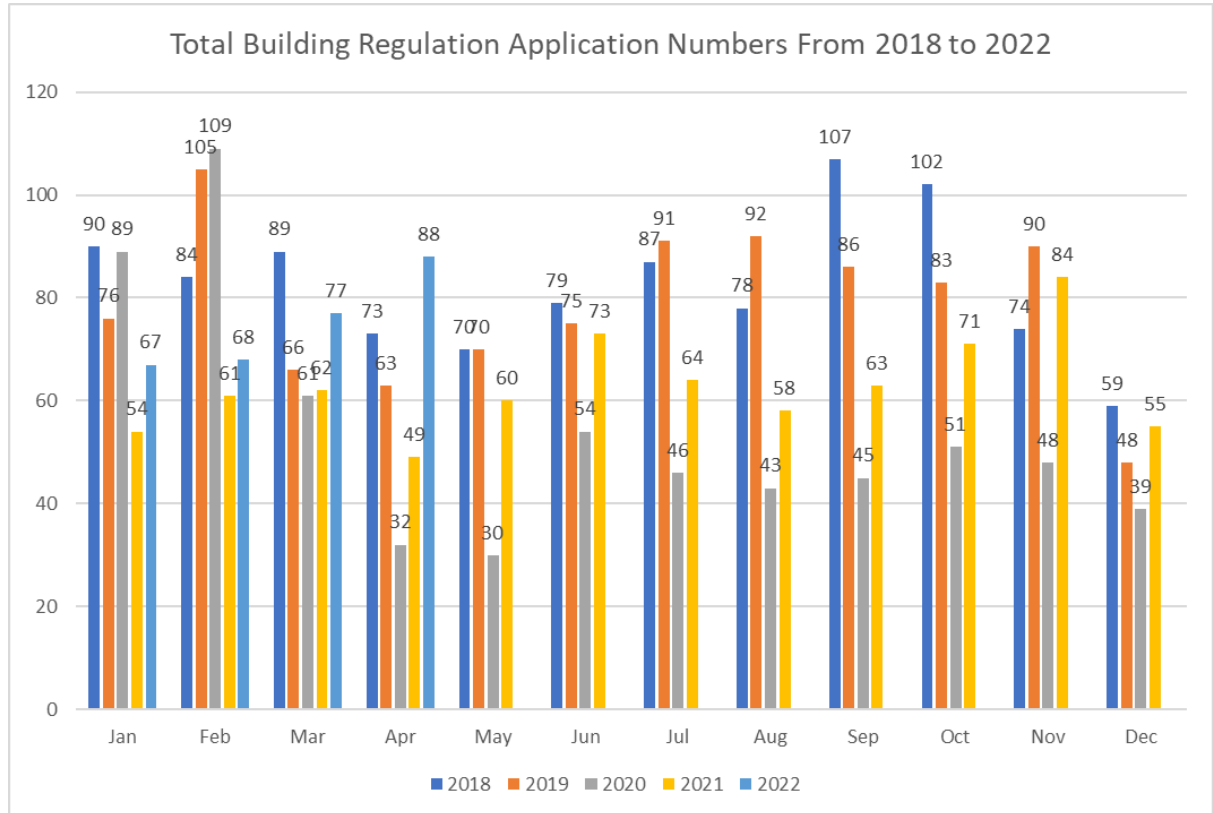
- Advice to the Community and Children’s Services on Marriage Licence applications for the technical standards in relation to Health and Safety.
 - Advice to the Planning Service on major Planning Applications on the design of Sustainable drainage systems. This service was extended in April 2020, to include Fire Safety and Energy Statements, which are additional requirements for major planning applications under the Local Plan.
5. Advice and guidance on technical and procedural requirements are made freely available to other areas of the City of London Corporation and the public upon request.
 6. The Engineering Team are responsible for the structural inspection and maintenance of approximately 80 Highway Structures, the City’s 5 river Bridges and a number of Statutory Reservoirs on which they have reported separately to your committee, Bridge House Estates Board and Open Spaces Committees respectively. The Engineering Team also provide advice on major Infrastructure Projects to protect the City’s interests.
 7. The Environmental Resilience Team, formed in June 2019, aims to improve the resilience of the City Corporation and the Square Mile to environmental impacts including flooding, and fulfilling the City Corporation’s statutory duties as Lead Local Flood Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
 8. The District Surveyor is also responsible for monitoring delivery of projects within the Environment Department, designed to deliver the Corporate Climate Action Strategy.

Current Position

9. As referenced earlier in the report, the Building Regulations function of the District Surveyor’s Office is open to extensive competition and is affected by the fluctuating extent of building work within the City. During 2020/21 workload was affected severely by the Covid-19 pandemic where applications received by both the Approved Inspectors and The District Surveyors Office dropped by around 50% from previous years. During 2021/22, the number of applications started to increase as the pandemic affects decreased, and the following bar chart (Table1)

shows the number of applications and Initial Notices received by the District Surveyors Office over the last few years identify the fluctuating pattern.

Table 1



10. Applications received by the Building Control Service for 2021/22 and the resulting market share are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Market Share					
	Yr. 2017/18	Yr. 2018/19	Yr. 2019/20	Yr. 2020/21	Yr. 2021/22
City of London Applications	248	244	300	158	222
Initial Notices Received	773	791	697	418	574
Total Number of Applications	1021	1035	997	576	796
City of London Market Share	24%	24%	24%	27%	28%

11. Market share was 28% and therefore towards the top end of our 22-30% range.

12. A summary of the all the Building Control Service workload for 2021/22, is shown in table 3:

Table 3

Building Control Statistics					
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Corporate Complaints	0	0	0	0	0
Jobs Commenced	237	205	278	151	210
Jobs Completed	188	142	186	121	164
Full Plans Applications Submitted	159	110	174	100	118
Building Notice Applications submitted	63	73	78	46	78
Partnership Applications	9	24	10	8	9
Regularisations	17	28	29	12	14
Cross Boundary applications	N/A	9	9	2	3
Total Number of Applications	248	244	300	158	222
Competent Person Notifications	739	827	376	554	508
Dangerous Structure Call Outs	29	33	23	12	22
Site Inspections	1603	1537	1759	894	1256
Income	£874,660	£957,150	£1,058,245	£810,533	£1,025,501
Market Share	24%	24%	30%	27%	28%

13. Other areas where Building Control services have been requested include:

- Special and Temporary and Special Structures- 23 applications.
- Approvals in Principle for the Engineering Team- 48 applications.
- Marriage Act applications to carry out a technical assessment for the premises prior to a Licence being issued- 6 applications.
- Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) - providing the technical advice and assessment for major planning applications - 42 applications.
- Demolition Notices - 24.

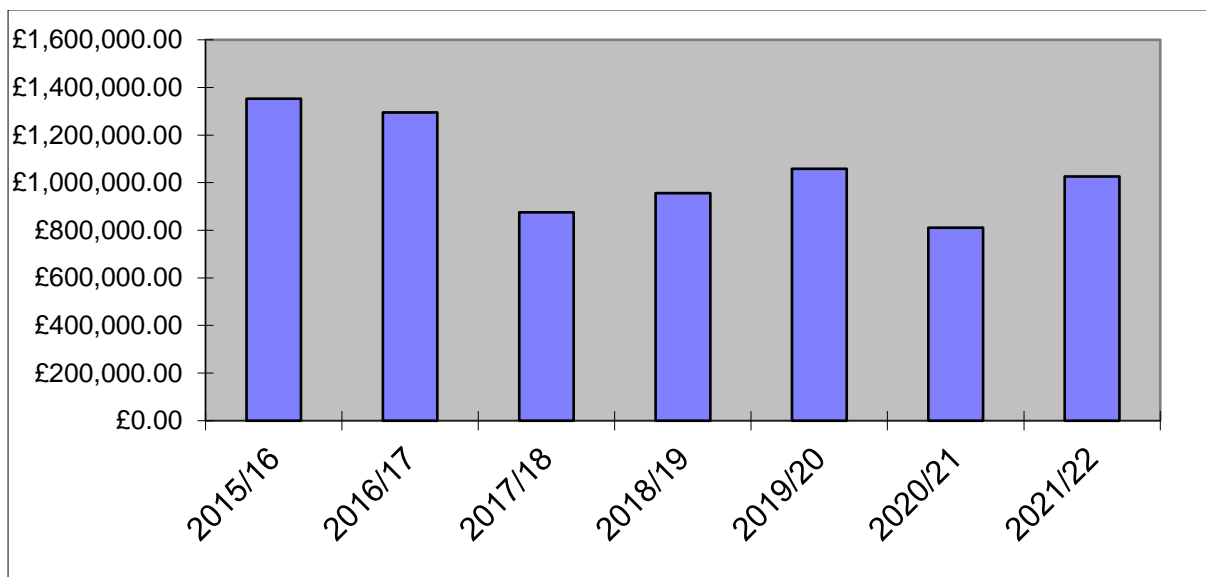
14. Tables 2 and 3, show the total number of Building Regulation applications dropped significantly during 2020/21 but started to increase again during 21/22. This general recovery in Building Regulation applications can also be seen across all development related work, with significant increases in demolition

notices, Temporary Structures applications, Approval in Principles and Marriage Licence inspections.

15. The Covid Pandemic in April 2020, required Building Control to stop all physical site inspections of on-going building work, with surveyors having to adopt a new remote inspection process, where photographs, Facetime, video, and similar electronic methods of completing a remote inspection, were used. While this remote method is not ideal, it allowed contractors to proceed with their works, while keeping the surveyors safe. Working with Corporate Health & Safety team, and the Construction Leadership Council's Covid guidelines, a revised Covid-19 Risk Assessment was produced and agreed, and physical site inspections recommenced during the summer 2020, with a very strict protocol being implemented and contractors being asked to supply in advanced Covid Secure site inspection plans. The District Surveyors Office has adopted a pragmatic attitude to the Covid pandemic, and this has allowed the construction industry within the City to continue during this time.

16. As application numbers started to recover in 2021/22, income also increased. Table four shows fee generation from applications between 2013 to 2021 to use as a comparison.

Table 4



17. Income received in a year can be difficult to use as a measure of new business activity as large projects which have already started, are invoiced throughout their construction period and can disguise market activity. To analysis new business activity, applications received in a calendar year and their respective fee income is checked and the results are listed in table 5:

Table 5

Table 5 Building Control Applications 2015-2022		
Year	Number of Application	Fees Generated
2015	280	£1,210,007
2016	228	£847,099
2017	236	£778,279
2018	246	£778,279
2019	266	£1,091,256
2020	191	£810,533
2021	210	£1,391,085

18. The analysis of Table 5 suggests that although application numbers have increased slightly, income generated from these applications has grown significantly. This suggest that new large scale construction activity which during 2020/21 paused due to the pandemic, has started to recommence with a number of very large schemes now submitted.
19. Fees and charges for Building Regulation work are governed by The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 and the City are required to approve a Building Regulation Charges Scheme. In 2010 the charges scheme was approved and has been reviewed annually to ensure the principles of the Regulations, to ensure full cost recovery of the Building Regulation part of the service, was being maintained. The scheme was amended in 2018, 2020, and in 2022. As requested by the Committee, an annual report relating to the fees was submitted to review the current charges scheme ensuring fees are set at an appropriate rate. This report recommended some changes to the scheme, for commencement from May 2022, which was agreed and has been implemented.
20. Dangerous structure call-out inspections returned to their normal level during 21/22 but 8 reported dangerous structure call out requests resulted from a storm which passed through the City on the 18th February 2022. Following this event, we have reviewed our dangerous structure procedures, to ensure adequate recourses are available to deal with any potential increase in call out requests, during similar events.

Major Projects that Completed in 2021/22

21. Construction work during 2021/22 was still affected by the COVID pandemic but works to a number of major buildings still completed during the year. These included:
- 150 Bishopsgate.
 - 35 Vine Street

- Fit out works for 5 Appold Street
- Fit out works for 1 Bartholomew Close and
- Multiple fit out works for 22 Bishopsgate.

22. While the number of large projects that completed was small, fit out works at 22 Bishopsgate and, 150 Bishopsgate continue and completion and fit out of 100 Liverpool Street continues.

Engineering Team

23. Recently your Engineer has been heavily involved with the Bank Station Upgrade project where the scheme has failed to comply with the legal agreement for the reinstatement of Arthur St, and are now trying to find resolution that can protect the City in conjunction with colleagues in the City Surveyor's through a property agreement

24. With the ongoing relocation of the Museum of London to Smithfield's, the Engineering Team have been working in collaboration with the development's project team, for their contractor to waterproof a number of bridges around Smithfield and Snow Hill, as well as carrying out investigations to the bridge at Lindsey Street, and endeavouring to protect the City's Highways

25. The increased development activity referenced above has also been matched by increased abnormal load movements, crane notification etc.

Environmental Resilience Team

26. The Environmental Resilience Team has continued its leading-edge work to ensure that the City is resilient to the risks we face from climate change (flooding, heat stress, water shortages, biodiversity loss, emerging pests & diseases and disruption to food, trade and infrastructure).

27. Implementation of the City's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-27 is underway. This work has advanced in parallel with our contribution to the Environment Agency's second cycle Flood Risk Management Plan. These tasks contribute to fulfilling the City Corporation's duties as Lead Local Flood Authority for the Square Mile under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Flood Risk Regulations 2009.

28. In order to address the increased risk of flooding from the tidal Thames as a result of sea level rise, the team has progressed a pilot Riverside Strategy, part funded by the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. This strategy was adopted in November 2021 and demonstrates how the City can adapt the riverside to cope with higher tides whilst maintaining a well-designed and

accessible riverside for all. Implementation of the strategy has begun and the City is engaging with the Environment Agency's Thames Estuary 2100 team on their 10-year review which includes an assessment of funding options for flood defence raising.

29. The Cool Streets & Greening programme of pilot projects is underway to assess suitable climate resilience measures such as sustainable drainage (SuDS), climate resilient greening and tree planting, which will protect the Square Mile from climate related changes in our weather. Construction is complete on six sites and designs are progressing for a further 9 sites. Monitoring is underway, using smart sensors, to assess the effectiveness of these interventions in reducing overheating and flood risk.
30. The Environment Resilience Team is working with British Geological Survey on the NERC funded "Cubic Mile" project which entails below ground mapping to identify opportunities for SuDS, tree planting and cool spaces. This will feed into the identification of future sites for Cool Street and Greening Programme.
31. As part of the Climate Action Strategy's Mainstreaming Resilience project, the team worked with Buro Happold to produce climate risk assessments for City Corporations three service directorates (environment, Community & Children's services and Innovation & Growth) and risk assessment and action plan for climate resilience of the City's wholesale markets. We have run a series of "Climate Chats" to communicate climate change issues to a wider audience and we represent the City at regional forums addressing flood risk and climate resilience.

Staff

32. During the Target Operating Model changes to form the Environment Department, the District Surveyors Office structure had had only limited changes. The overall team of 30, including 24 in the Building Control Team, 5 in the Engineering Team, and the District Surveyor post. In addition, the Environmental Resilience Team has been consolidated to ensure delivery of the Climate Action Strategy objectives and now has a team of 2.5 officers with another officer about to be recruited. The District Surveyors Office has officers of various seniority and specialisms to reflect the work we do. These include structural engineers, chartered surveyors, fire engineer, services engineers and environmental specialists. All members of the Engineering Team are civil engineers.
33. Over the last few years, the Building Control Team has been in transition with a number of staff members retiring. At the end of March 2021, 3 members of the team, who had a combined service to the Office in excess of 110 years, retired. Recruitment to fill these positions is extremely difficult due to the National shortage of Building Control Surveyors, competition from Approved Inspectors, and constraints due to corporate Grading structures. In 2021, we were successful in appointing to one of the positions but the officer subsequently resigned due to being offered an enhanced financial package from their previous employer. A

further recruitment in 2021 for a Mechanical & Electrical engineer resulted in a trainee engineer being appointed. No qualified engineers applied.

34. Building Control recruitment market remains extremely difficult and a recent recruitment for a new surveyor and an engineer, resulted in only an engineer being recruited, on a part time basis only.
35. Whilst Building Control is committed to training apprentices for the long-term, short-term recruitment of new staff, is becoming extremely difficult due to limited financial packages that we can offer. A review will be undertaken shortly to review potential financial package options, to retain and recruit professional staff.
36. We continue to actively seek out potential clients and win new work, with discussion continuing with major developers and landowners, such as British land. Pre application agreements have been signed regarding, Avenue, Custom House, 55 and 70 Gracechurch Street. We also work with British Land on their framework agreement for redeveloping the whole of Broadgate. Applications for 1-2 Broadgate, 30-34 New Bridge Street, 2-3 Finsbury Avenue, 120 Fleet Street, 81 Newgate Street and the Fleet Street Courts project have recently been submitted. We are therefore very optimistic for the future and continue to market the service at every opportunity.
37. The London District Surveyors Association (LDSA) represents the heads of Building Control in the 33 London authorities. The District Surveyor office continues to support the work of the LDSA and is represented on all its major committees, including its executive committee. Gordon Roy, the District Surveyor is the Vice President in 2022 and will have his Presidential year from March 2023.
38. Regular reviews of our workload and performance are carried out and reviewed in the light of regular customer surveys.
39. Performance standards are measured by means of Key Performance Indicators which indicated in table six, KPI's 2021.

Table 6

	LBC1	5 week apps 90% within 19 working days			LBC2	8 week apps 90% within 26 working days			LBC3	Completion Certificates Issued 85% within 10 working days		
		Apps.	Success	%		Apps.	Success	%		Final Inspections	Success	%
2021/22												
Apr		2	2	100%		3	2	67%		8	7	88%
May		1	1	100%		5	5	100%		11	11	100%
Jun		6	6	100%		7	7	100%		17	17	100%
Jul		7	7	100%		3	2	67%		13	13	100%
Aug		4	4	100%		4	4	100%		18	18	100%
Sept		7	7	100%		3	2	67%		13	13	100%
Oct		1	0	0%		1	1	100%		12	12	100%
Nov		5	5	100%		9	6	67%		19	19	100%
Dec		11	10	91%		5	4	80%		12	12	100%
Jan		1	1	100%		6	4	67%		9	9	100%
Feb		1	1	100%		4	4	100%		11	11	100%
Mar		6	5	83%		6	6	100%		17	17	100%
YEAR TOTAL		52	49	94%		56	47	84%		160	159	99%

40. The Building Control division operate a Quality Management System which was externally audited in August 2021 and received re-accreditation. This re-accreditation of the Building Control Quality Management System means that the

division has been providing an accredited management system, continuously for 28 years.

41. The District Surveyor's office uses the Building Control module of CAPS Uniform software to record all applications and records. This is the same software that the Planning department use for their purposes. The use of a common system enables easy abstraction of information for building searches and shared information. The software is part of the corporate IDOX/M3 replacement programme which should be concluded shortly.

Building Safety

42. Following the Grenfell tragedy, the Government appointed Dame Judith Hackitt to conduct a review into the Building Regulations and Fire Safety, and in the summer of 2019 the government published proposals for reforming the building safety system. In 2021, The Building Safety Bill was published and in April 2022, this Bill received Royal Assent with the publication of the Building Safety Act 2022. This new Act is designed to ensure people are and feel safe in and around buildings and affects all buildings within the built environment.
43. The Act will see major changes to the Building Control system, which will include.
 - The introduction of the Building Safety Regulator as part of the Health & Safety Executive.
 - All building control surveyors having to register with the Regulator as "Building Control Inspectors"
 - All "building control Inspectors" to be able to demonstrate their competence
 - The Building Safety Regulator will become the Building Control authority for high-risk buildings (high rise residential buildings over 18m in height), rather than the Local Authority or an Approved Inspector.
 - The Building Safety Regulator will be able to require a Local Authority to provide services to them as the Building Control Authority.
 - Introduction of industry wide Performance Standards and indicators, with the Building Safety Regulator being able to issue Improvement Notices on a Local Authority.
 - Improved building control enforcement procedures with the introduction of Compliance and Stop Notices.
 - Introduction of Gateway's 2 and 3. This will require developments on high-risk buildings (high rise residential buildings over 18m in height), to not proceed into construction or occupation without Building Control approval.
 - The introduction of new safety protocols for existing high rise residential buildings, including the need to produce and have approved, Building Safety Cases, to ensure people are and feel safe.
44. The District Surveyor Building Control team is well progressed, with implementing additional training of staff to be able to demonstrate competence and is currently working with other London Borough building control teams to ensure delivery of local authority building control to the new Regulator.

Conclusion

45. This report describes the background of Building Control, the Engineering Team and the Environmental Resilience Team within the City of London and the work of the District Surveyor's office over the last year plus looks positively forward to the challenges ahead.

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