

Committee(s): Planning & Transportation	Dated: 26 th July 2024
Subject: District Surveyors Annual Report 2023/24	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Providing Excellent Services.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director of Planning & Development	For Information
Report author: Gordon Roy, District Surveyor	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update 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 (called Registered Building Control Approvers (RBCA) since 06th April 2024) authorised to offer a building regulations approval service.

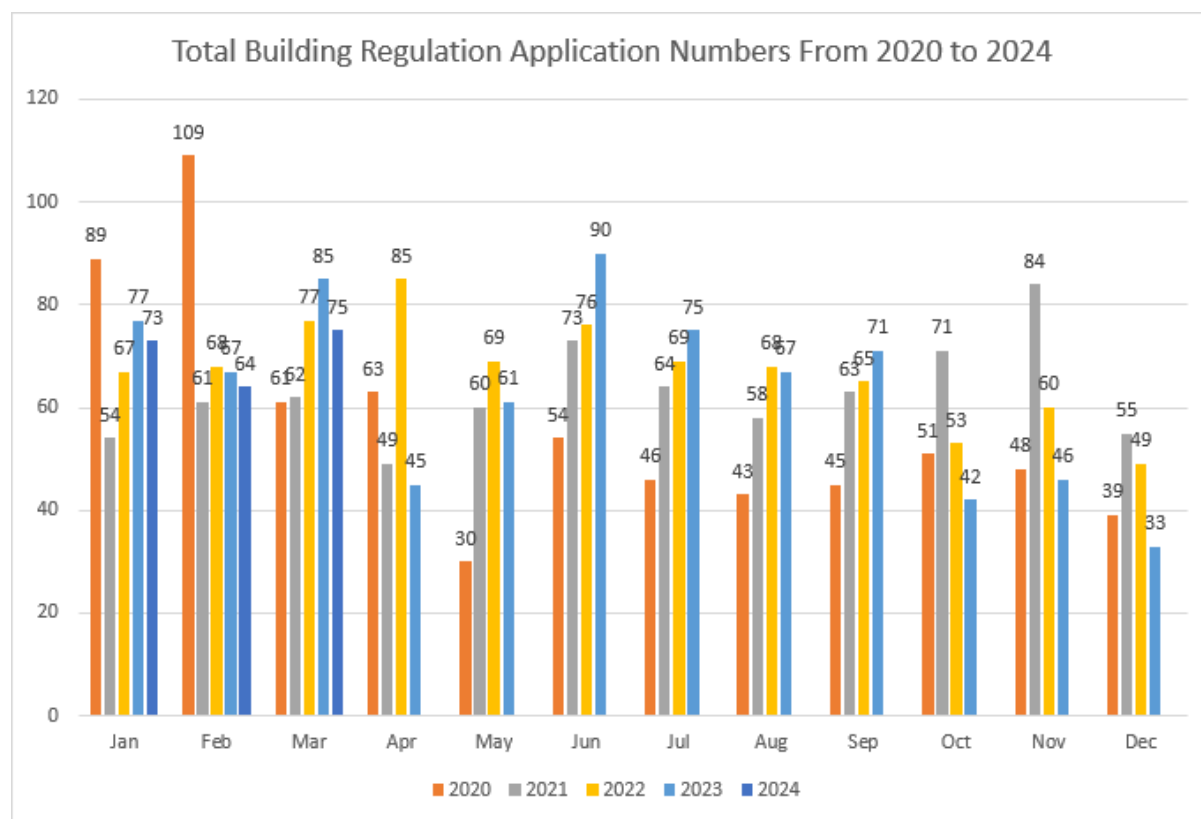
3. In addition, Dangerous Structures within Inner London are dealt with under the London Building Acts 1930-1939. Responsibility for dealing with them is delegated, by your committee to the District Surveyor. This service is provided on a continuous basis, 24 hours a day throughout the year to ensure 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 / RBCA's.
 - 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, City Bridge Foundation 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 2023/24 workload has generally returned to a normal level, following the Covid-19 pandemic where applications received by both the Approved Inspectors and The District Surveyors Office dropped by around 50% from previous years. The following bar chart

(Table1) shows the number of applications and Initial Notices received by the District Surveyors Office over the last few years.

Table 1



10. Applications received by the Building Control Service for 2023/24 and the resulting market share are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Market Share					
	Yr. 2019/20	Yr. 2020/21	Yr. 2021/22	Yr. 2022/23	Yr. 2023/24
City of London Applications	300	158	222	216	166
Initial Notices Received	697	418	574	590*	574
Total Number of Applications	997	576	796	824	740
City of London Market Share	24%	27%	28%	26%	22%

- 618 Initial Notices deposited, 20 Cancelled and 8 Rejected.

11. Market share was 22% and therefore at the bottom of our target 22-30% range. Table 3 below sets out the numbers of applications received by the top 6 building control providers within the City, and it demonstrates that the District Surveyors remain the highest provider of this service.

Table 3

Building Control market share		
Provider	Number of applications	Percentage of Market
City of London	166	22%
Shore Engineering	93	13%
Sweco Building Control Limited	90	12%
Stroma Building Control Limited	64	9%
Salus (Building Control & Fire Safety Consultants) Limited	55	8%
SOCOTEC Building Control, Ltd	49	7%

12. A summary of the all the Building Control Service workload for 2019/20 to 2023/24, is shown in table 4:

Table 4

Building Control Statistics					
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Corporate Complaints	0	0	0	0	0
Jobs Commenced	278	151	210	191	198
Jobs Completed	186	121	164	146	163
Full Plans Applications Submitted	174	100	118	108	107
Building Notice Applications submitted	78	46	78	71	36
Partnership Applications	10	8	9	10	8
Regularisations	29	12	14	24	15

Cross Boundary applications	9	2	3	3	0
Total Number of Applications	300	158	222	216	166
Competent Person Notifications	376	554	508	366	504
Dangerous Structure Call Outs	23	12	22	18	28
Site Inspections	1759	894	1256	1205	1415
Income	£1,058,245	£810,533	£1,025,501	£1,054,705	£1,144,404
Market Share	30%	27%	28%	26%	22%

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

- Special and Temporary and Special Structures- 30 applications.
- Approvals in Principle for the Engineering Team- 33 applications.
- Marriage Act applications to carry out a technical assessment for the premises prior to a Licence being issued-14 applications.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - providing the technical advice and assessment for major planning applications -56 applications.
- Demolition Notices -14
- Fire Safety Statement advice for major planning applications-39 applications.

14. Income from Building Regulation applications for year 2023/24 was £1,144,404.

This income and total Local & Central risk expenditure for delivering this service has been determined and included into the Building Control Financial Statement and has been approved by the Chamberlain. The statement has determined that the Building Regulation service has made a financial surplus of £185,018 for 2023/24.

15. Tables 2 and 3, show the total number of Building Regulation applications received by the Building Control team, dropped during 2022/23 and further in 2023/24. This reduction is mainly in the number of Building Notices received, and this can be attributed to the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and changes in the Building Control system.

16. Following the Grenfell tragedy, the government carried out a review into the construction industry, fire safety and the building control system, which has resulted in the introduction of The Building Safety Act 2022. This new legislation includes.

- The formation of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to oversee safety in the construction industry.
- From 1st October 2023, the Building Safety Regulator to act as the Building Control Authority for all Higher Risk Buildings. (A higher risk

building is defined as a building containing at least 2 residential units, a care home or a hospital and has a floor higher than 18 m or 7 storeys.)

- All building control surveyors must register with the BSR.
- As part of their registration, all surveyors are required to demonstrate their competence by completing an assessment with an approved third-party approver.
- Competency of surveyors will be assessed depending on individual's knowledge and experience and they will be assigned a Class. Class 1-Trainee, Class 2-General, and Class 3-Specialist.
- From 6th July 2024, all surveyors will be required to work within their class bands, under the Building (Restricted Activities & Functions) (England) Regulations 2023.

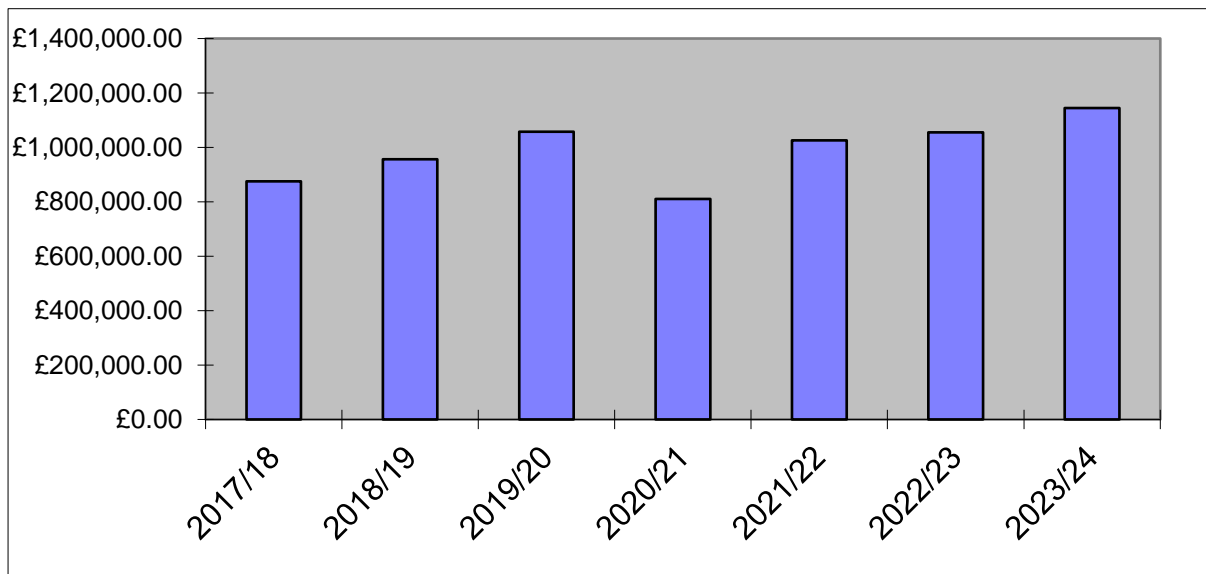
17. The reduction in Building Notices being received, correlates to the introduction of the Building Safety Regulator becoming the building control authority for Higher Risk Buildings, as all building notices received were for alterations to residential flats, mainly in the Barbican, which have now transferred to the BSR. All other applications remain at a stable level.

18.

19. This legislative change and the resulting falling building notice numbers has resulted in the market share also falling. We will continue to monitor the effects of the new legislation on applications and income, over the coming years.

20. As application received over the past few years continues to be monitored, and the fees generated from those applications can be seen in Table 5. This shows that application activity in 2023/24 was buoyant.

Table 5



21. 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 6:

Table 6

Table 6 Building Control Applications 2017-2023		
Year	Number of Application	Fees Generated
2017	236	£778,279
2018	246	£778,279
2019	266	£1,091,256
2020	191	£1,091,256
2021	210	£1,391,085
2022	191	£1,091,256
2023	166	£1,246,499

22. The analysis of Table 6 suggests that although application numbers have decreased, income generated from applications remains high. This is linked to large scale developments commencing and fit out applications to recently completed office developments continuing to drive construction activity within the square mile. The office has also received requests for pre application advice form a number of new large schemes, so the outlook remains extremely positive.

Major Projects that Completed in 2023/24

23. Construction work during 2023/24 has seen the completion of a number of major buildings. These included:

- 8 Bishopsgate.
- 100 Liverpool Street.
- 40 Leadenhall

- Multiple fit out works for 22 Bishopsgate.
- Multiple fit out works for 8 Bishopsgate.

24. While the number of large projects that completed was small, fit out works at 22 Bishopsgate and, 8 Bishopsgate continue as does the construction works at 81 Newgate Street, Salisbury Square development, 1 Leadenhall, 1-2 Broadgate, 2-3 Finsbury Avenue and the Museum of London.

London HUB

25. In January 2023, this Committee agreed that the District Surveyor could act as the single point of contact between the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and all London local authority building control teams, when the BSR requires assistance under Section 13, as they carry out their duties as a Building Control Authority. This is known as the London HUB and has been in operation since 1st October 2023.

26. Between 1st October 2023 and 5th April 2024, 108 requests had been received but this is expected to rise over the next few years as the construction industry transitions to the BSR acting as a Building Control Authority.

Engineering Team

27. The Engineering team are continuing to work in collaboration with the development project team, for the Museum of London at Smithfield. Their projects to waterproof a number of bridges around Smithfield and Snow Hill, are taking longer to match their access requirements and further delaying strengthening to the bridge at Lindsey Street.

28. Designs have been developed for the waterproofing and joint replacement of London Wall Car Park with the scheduling of works in two phases commencing at the western end in summer of 2024 and the eastern half in summer of 2025.

29. Working with colleagues at Hampstead Heath a number of the smaller non-statutory Reservoirs were successfully de-silted, and we have participated in consultation for recent flood events by the local authority. The increased development activity referenced above has also been matched by increased abnormal load movements, crane notification etc.

30. A number of reservoir projects are also continuing to proceed along with maintenance and inspection of all the structures the team advise on.

Environmental Resilience Team

31. The Environmental Resilience Team has continued to deliver work that increases the resilience of the City to the increasing risks we face from climate change (flooding, heat stress, water shortages, biodiversity loss, emerging pests &

diseases and disruption to food, trade and infrastructure). The Team is responsible for the implementation of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS), and two programmes within the Climate Action Strategy – Cool Streets and Greening, and Mainstreaming Climate Resilience.

32. Progression of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-27 continues. 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. The City of London Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2023 was published in November 2023. In response to the Environment Agency's Thames Estuary 2100 Plan initial conversations have been undertaken towards the development of Central Section (Chelsea Bridge to Tower Bridge) Joint Thames Strategy as part of a Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee funded refresh program. This would support the implementation of the City of London Riverside Strategy which is proposed to be updated in 2024.
33. Cool Streets & Greening programme has delivered a number of pilot projects, and more are in development. This programme tests the suitability of 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. Delivering these schemes is also building capacity internally. Construction completed on a further 11 sites in 2023-24 bringing the total to 17, three sites are underway, and designs are progressing for a further 21 sites. This includes works to transform 14 City Gardens as part of the replanting for climate resilient, 7 schemes of which have been completed. 12 new street trees were planted this year bringing the total to 43 and a new round of site identification will take place in time for the 24/25 tree planting season with target of 100 street trees across the programme. Supporting this work a climate measures catalogue and a resilient planting catalogue have been developed and lessons learnt from complete projects are being used in those being designed.
34. The team has also been successful in attracting external funding to expand the programme. This has included £23 590 for the creation of leaky dams and brush bundles at Yardley Lane, Epping Forest. This grant is part of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee's Natural Flood Management (NFM) fund and will be used as a demonstration project as part of an NFM Toolkit the team is developing. The team also support the Friends of City Gardens with a successful bid to the Rewild London Fund for a project at Bunhill Fields.
35. The installation of city-wide Climate Sensors Network, which had been delayed due to supply chain issues, has progressed. With a number of temperature, soil moisture sensors now installed across the Square Mile. Gully sensors are due to be rolled out later this year. They provide city-specific long-term climate monitoring data, be used to assess the effectiveness of interventions in reducing overheating and flood risk and offers the opportunity to be used in real-time decision making for operations including gully cleaning and irrigation of planted areas.

36. The Natural Environment Research Council funded “Cubic Mile” project came runner up at the London Tree and Woodland Awards in the London Urban Forest Award. The joint project between the Environment Resilience Team and the British Geological Survey reviewed below ground mapping to identify opportunities for SuDS, tree planting and cool spaces. The outputs from which have already been used to assist with identification of sites for Cool Street and Greening Programme.
37. As part of the Climate Action Strategy’s Mainstreaming Resilience project, the team have been working with colleagues from across the Environment Department to create specifically tailored Climate Adaption Action Plan. This will be rolled out in the following year to the Community & Children’s Services department. The team have continued to run a series of “Climate Chats” to communicate climate change issues within the Environment Department as well as supporting other informative events to a wider audience. This has included establishing a staff group of Climate Champions which was launched at the Mansion House in February 2024.
38. This year the team will be finishing a horizon scanning exercise into the pest and diseases that are likely to increase due to climate change. Working with colleagues across the organisation, they are going to highlight the work we already do and undertake a gap analyse to identify any areas where additional research would be beneficial. A working partnership with the public health team has been established, with a joint presentation being given to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Further collaboration is underway to integrate the two fields of health and climate.
39. The Environmental Resilience Team remain active within the climate resilience professional community, contributing to sharing best practise, remaining up to date with changes and demonstrating leadership across London. The team collated the City Corporation response to the call for evidence from the London Climate Resilience Review. Team members contribute to the steering group for the Thames Tidal Councils Forum, attend the London Climate Change Partnership, London Drainage Engineers Group, London Borough’s Biodiversity Forum, London Urban Forest Partnership, London Council’s Green and Resilient Working Group, and other groups.
40. The team is also working with community groups to coordinate on biodiversity initiatives including Friends of City Gardens and Pollinating London Together, this has included arranging a number of bat walks, butterfly recording, and moth trapping exercises. The groundwork has been laid for collaboration with a number of academic partners including Imperial College London, Queen Mary University and Royal Holloway to undertake further efforts to record and enhance biodiversity across the coming year.

Staff

41. The overall team has increased to 34 from last year's total of 28. This includes 25 within the Building Control Team rising from last year's 19, 5 within the Engineering Team. And 4 within, the Environmental Resilience Team. The District Surveyors Office has officers of various seniority and specialisms to reflect the work we do. These include structural engineers, chartered surveyors, Chartered fire engineer, services engineers and environmental specialists. All members of the Engineering Team are civil engineers.
42. Over the last few years, the Building Control Team has been in transition with a number of staff members retiring. Recruitment to fill positions has been extremely difficult due to the national shortage of Building Control Surveyors, competition from Approved Inspectors, and constraints due to corporate Grading structures, therefore the team has reduced in size over the past few years.
43. However, as set out in last year's report, we have undertaken recruitment to increase our establishment in targeted areas. This has resulted in the recruitment of 2 new technical apprentices, 2 graduate surveyors, 1 qualified surveyor and a new team leader, bringing stability and resilience to the team.
44. In October 2023, new legislation required all Building Control surveyors to start to register with the Building Safety Regulator, and this process was completed in April 2024. From 6th July 2024, The Building (Restricted Activities & Functions) (England) Regulations 2023 will take effect, (delayed from its original 6th April 2024) that requires all building control surveyors to have their competence validated and recorded as part of their registration. Without the correct validation and registration, surveyors will not be able to work without supervision. All surveyors affected by this new legislation have either completed this process or are actively involved within the validation process.
45. 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 requests have been received regarding, 70 Gracechurch Street and 1 Undershaft. Initial design workshops regarding the Markets relocation project are continuing. Through our LDSA HUB, we are supporting the Building Safety Regulator with applications at Great Ormond Street Hospital and a number of other smaller projects within the Square Mile. We will continue to support the Building Safety Regulator in their role as a building control body where we can, but the Committee should be aware that the regulator has issued guidance that includes "Conflict of Interest" clauses, so if the Corporation own or manage a property, such as the Barbican, we are unable to assist them with that building.
46. 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 was President during 2023 and completed his term of office in March 2024.

47. Regular reviews of our workload and performance are carried out and reviewed in the light of regular customer surveys.

48. Performance standards are measured by means of Key Performance Indicators which indicated in table seven, KPI's 2023.

Table 7 KPI's

	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	%
2023/24												
Apr		4	2	50%		2	2	100%		12	12	100%
May		2	1	50%		6	5	83%		10	10	100%
Jun		1	0	0%		7	6	86%		9	9	100%
Jul		3	3	100%		4	3	75%		7	7	100%
Aug		2	0	0%		6	4	67%		6	6	100%
Sept		6	3	50%		7	5	71%		16	16	100%
Oct		3	1	33%		5	3	60%		13	13	100%
Nov		5	3	60%		7	3	43%		11	11	100%
Dec		2	2	100%		3	2	67%		3	3	100%
Jan		5	3	60%		1	0	0%		12	12	100%
Feb		10	8	80%		1	0	0%		25	24	96%
Mar		8	5	63%		0	0	100%		26	26	100%
YEAR TOTAL		51	31	61%		49	33	67%		150	149	99%

49. The Building Control division operate a Quality Management System which was externally audited in August 2023 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 30 years.

50. The District Surveyor's office uses the Building Control module of IDOX 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 system is currently being updated to ensure we are able to submit all required new performance information to the Building Safety Regulator as set out in their Operational Standard Rules-Monitoring.

51. The District Surveyor continues to work closely with other London Local Authority building control teams and the Building Safety Regulator on all building control matters to ensure our teams are adequately prepared for the challenges that new legislation, due to the Grenfell tragedy, are bringing to the construction industry.

Conclusion

52. 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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