

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Planning & Transportation Committee – For information	Dated: 22 nd June 2026
Subject: District Surveyors Annual Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties • Delivers projects under the Climate Action Strategy	Providing excellent services. Flourishing public spaces. Leading sustainable environment.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment
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 Registered Building Control Approvers (RBCA) authorised by the Building Safety Regulator, 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 IDOX Uniform software.
4. Other responsibilities placed upon the District Surveyor include:
 - Maintaining a register of all work under the control of 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. General 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 Natural Environment 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 2025/26 workload has generally been high with a number of large projects currently under construction and developments such as 8 Bishopsgate and 1 Leadenhall being fitted out by new tenants.

10. Applications received by the Building Control Service for 2024/25 and the resulting market share are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Market Share					
	Yr. 2021/22	Yr. 2022/23	Yr. 2023/24	Yr. 2024/25	Yr. 2025/26
City of London Applications	222	216	166	126	164
Initial Notices Received	574	590	574	636	602
Total Number of Applications	796	824	740	762	766
City of London Market Share	28%	26%	22%*	17%*	21%*

- The percentage does not include applications that are now sent directly to the BSR due to the Building Safety Act 2022

11. Market share was 21% and therefore just below our target 22-30% range. Table 2 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 2

Building Control market share			
Provider	Number of applications 24/25	Number of applications 24/26	Percentage of Market 2025/26
City of London	126 (17%)	164	21%
Shore Engineering	65 (8.5%)	N/A	
Sweco Building Control Limited	109 (14%)	118	15%
Stroma Building Control Limited	71 (9%)	32	4%
Salus (Building Control & Fire Safety Consultants) Limited	80 (10.5%)	56	7%

SOCOTEC Building Control, Ltd (From 25/26 includes Shore)	70 (9%)	125	16%
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12. A summary of the all the Building Control Service workload for 2021/22 to 2025/26, is shown in table 3:

Table 3

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Corporate Complaints	0	0	0	0	0
Jobs Commenced	210	191	198	108	128
Jobs Completed	164	146	163	100	87
Full Plans Applications Submitted	118	108	107	90	120
Building Notice Applications submitted	78	71	36	0	1
Partnership Applications	9	10	8	11	6
Regularisations	14	24	15	25	37
Cross Boundary applications	3	3	0	0	0
Total Number of Applications	222	216	166	126	
Competent Person Notifications	508	366	504	370	330
Dangerous Structure Call Outs	22	18	28	14	17
Site Inspections	1256	1205	1415	1341	2355
Income	£1,028,099	£1,054,705	£1,144,404	£1,175,301	£1,445,554
Market Share	28%	26%	22%	17%	21%

13. Income from Building Regulation applications for year 2025/26 was £1,445,554. This income and total Local & Central risk expenditure for delivering this service has been determined and included into the Building Control Financial Statement and be submitted to the Chamberlain for approval.

The statement has determined that the Building Regulation service has made a financial surplus of £169,310 for 2025/26.

14. Tables 1 and 3, show the total number of Building Regulation applications received by the Building Control team. During 2025/26, full plan applications increased and was the highest number over the past 5 years.

Over the past three years the number of Building Notices has decreased substantially. This can be directly attributed to the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and changes in the Building Control system where all works to residential properties, such as the Barbican flats, now have to be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator.

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

- Special and Temporary and Special Structures- 52 applications.
- Approvals in Principle for the Engineering Team- 44 applications.
- Marriage Act applications to carry out a technical assessment for the premises prior to a Licence being issued- 8 applications.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - providing the technical advice and assessment for major planning applications -43 applications.
- Demolition Notices - 16
- Fire Safety Statement advice for major planning applications- 78 applications.

From these non-building regulation applications and other administration works, building control received a further £238,829 in income.

16. Following the Grenfell tragedy, the government carried out a review into the construction industry, fire safety and the building control system, resulting 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.
- Regulation of the Building Control profession through competency assessment and registration within Class bands of Building Control Surveyors, as Registered Building Inspectors (RBI's)
- From 6th July 2024, all RBI's working within their class bands, under The Building (Restricted Activities & Functions) (England) Regulations 2023.
- From 1st October 2023, the Building Safety Regulator acting 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 applications for Building Regulation approval for works in HRB's must now be submitted to the BSR, hence the reduction in our applications.

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.

18. In October 2023, with the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022, The District Surveyors Office started to act as the London HUB for the Building Safety Regulator. All applications for Building Regulation submitted to the BSR for approval from this date, required the BSR to check and approve the building work. Under Section 13 of the legislation, the BSR can ask for assistance from Local Authorities. To help the BSR coordinate requests for assistance within London, The District Surveyors office set up the HUB to act as the London coordinator.

19. In the summer of 2025 due to pressures from major developers, the BSR changed their approach to checking their applications and formed an internal "Innovation Unit". The formation of this unit saw the number of Section 13 request fall significantly, and now the HUB receives none or very few requests. We are hopeful that this will change over the coming months, but we are dependent on the BSR approach and their preferred delivery model.

Major Projects that Completed in 205/26

20. During 2025/26, a number of new buildings were completed such as 1 Leadenhall and 1-2 Broadgate. Other buildings that had been completed continued to be fitted out. These included:

- Multiple fit out works for 22 Bishopsgate.
- Multiple fit out works for 8 Bishopsgate.
- Multiple fit out works for 40 Leadenhall.

21. Works at 81 Newgate Street, Salisbury Square development, 2-3 Finsbury Avenue, 50 Fenchurch Street, 14-21 Holborn Viaduct and the Museum of London are continuing.

Engineering Team

22. On behalf of the City Surveyors the failing campshed at Swan Lane adjacent to the Pier has successfully been replaced with environmental enhancements included in the Project. The start was delayed in obtaining all the necessary consents, but the works were successfully tendered and completed within budget.

23. The Replacement Walkway Bridge over Basinghall St has been completed by the developer after approval by the Engineering team for the design and supervision of the installation and construction. The complications of this Bridge are worthy of awards in the Bridge sector, and we have been encouraging the developer's team to submit for these. Despite the best efforts of my engineer the removed Wormwood St Walkway Bridge could not be re-

used complete. We are now working with the developer to find re-use for the main steel beams of the bridge and the carbon offset for our removed infrastructure.

24. The Engineering team have had a busy year with procurement successfully tendering Inspection Contracts for all our Highway Structures, City Bridge Foundation Inspection Contract, Engineering support for City Bridge Foundation, and Inspecting Engineer from the Reservoirs Panel for our Statutory Reservoirs. We have also undertaken a live Emergency Exercise on our Reservoirs at Hampstead Heath, as well as progressing projects on Reservoirs at Epping Forest.
25. The City Bridge Foundation Board and Institution are requiring more engineering input and wanting to progress more projects whilst undertaking an independent review into World Class Bridge Owner definition and aspiration which is requiring greater resource from the Engineering team. We continue to work in partnership with CBF to ensure appropriate resources are available for all anticipated projects and workstreams.

Environmental Resilience Team

26. 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
27. 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. A popular series of webinars on flooding was held over the winter months to raise public awareness. Officers have continued to contribute to the development of a Joint Thames Strategy and have been actively engaging with the new London Surface Water Strategy and its associated central catchment partnership. The team is in the process of developing an updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy that will run 2027-2033.
28. The Cool Streets & Greening programme has delivered further pilot projects, and more are in development to be delivered later this year. This programme tests the suitability of climate resilience measures such as sustainable drainage (SuDS), climate resilient greening and tree planting. Delivering these schemes is also building capacity internally. Construction completed on a further 7 sites in 2025-26 bringing the total to 35. An additional Phase 5 of schemes has been allocated CAS funding these will focus on creating green-blue links across the City. 15 new street trees were planted this year bringing the total to 77 and a final round of site identification is taking place in time for

the 26/27 tree planting season with target of 100 street trees across the programme. The Climate Action Strategy is entering its final year and the team are actively working to embed best practise and lessons learnt from the programme into business as usual.

29. As part of Mainstreaming Climate Resilience project, the team have been working with colleagues from across the organisation to understand how climate will impact their services and staff. They have created an innovative approach to embed resilient thinking at all levels by developing a series of engaging workshops that can be tailored to the specific circumstances of priority teams. The Climate Champions staff group which was launched in February 2024 continues to grow and create opportunities for all staff to engage with climate action.

On flooding, in addition to LFRMS activities, the team has overseen the construction of four new raingarden in the Square Mile, and through their roll in the Lead Local Flood Authority consulted on the pipeline of planning developments which should seen sustainable drainage systems covering over 30 hectares.

30. On overheating, the team has continued to work with public health colleagues and the corporate Resilience Team to prepare for heatwaves. A drive to increase cool spaces registered in the Square Mile saw a 400% increase. A heat focused session was held with the resident Green Champions, and insights from this are being used to inform a Summer 26 heatwave campaign. The climate sensors network continues to provide useful insight in the role of greening, with temperatures recorded during the late May heatwave being significantly lower in greener areas (Monument – 33.4 degrees, Postman's Park – 29.5 degrees).

31. On water stress, a new cross-corporation officer working group has been established to give a focal point in the organisation on tackling this issue. A Water Resilience Action Plan has been development, with the aim of implementing quick-win actions and creating an evidence base for a further action in the next Climate Action Strategy. The team again worked with colleagues in Public Health to understand the health implications of a drought, and a drought exercise was held with emergency planners.

32. On biodiversity loss, the London Nature Recovery Strategy has now been adopted, and the team have been co-ordinating the response and next steps arising from this. The team lead on the first Statutory Biodiversity Report.

33. On pests and diseases, a report updating on the horizon scanning exercise and its implication for health were taken to Port Health and Environmental Services and the Health and Wellbeing Board. This report outlined a number of recommendations which the team are now progressing with others across the organisation.

34. On impacts to food, infrastructure and trade, the team have continued to work with Responsible Procurement to promote more resilience procurement

approaches. Following a number of national reports into food security the team are beginning to explore what role the City Corporation may have.

35. 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. Team members contribute to the steering group for the Thames Tidal Councils Forum, attend the London Climate Ready 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. The team are increasingly sharing best practise from the programme and showcasing completed schemes, which has included presentations to surrounding local authorities, national government, academia, and international groups.

Staff

36. The overall team has remained at 36. This includes 27 within the Building Control Team, 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.
37. 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 Registered Building Control Approvers, and constraints due to corporate Grading structures, therefore the team has reduced in size and experience over the past few years.
38. However, as set out in previous reports, we have undertaken recruitment to increase our establishment in targeted areas. This has resulted in the recruitment of 2 new graduate surveyors, to bring long term stability and resilience to the team.
39. 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 took effect, 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 legislation have completed the process or are working under supervision.

40. 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 1 Undershaft, and British Library (in conjunction with Camden). Through our LDSA HUB, we are supporting the Building Safety Regulator with applications at Great Ormond Street Hospital, 63 Fleet Street and 122 Minories 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.
41. 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.
42. The Building Control division operate a Quality Management System which was externally audited in July 2025 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 32 years. The BSR also during 2025 carried out an audit of Building Control and found zero non-compliance's against their Operational Standard Rules.
43. 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

44. 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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