

Appendix 1: Audit Wales – Crack in the Foundations Report – Actions/Update 2024

| Audit Wales Report Date | Title | Recommendations | Response & RAG (if applicable) | Target Completion Date |
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| August 2023 | Cracks in the Foundations – Building Safety in Wales | Recommendation/Proposals for improvement: | | |
| | | <p>R1 The Welsh Government should provide greater clarity on the implementation and expectations of the Building Safety Act to ensure local authorities are able to deliver their new responsibilities and duties. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarifying the detailed requirements for competency and registration to enable local authorities to plan for these changes; • a specific timetable for development and adoption of Welsh guidance to ensure local authorities and others can deliver their duties; and • the Welsh Government should work with key stakeholders, such as LABC Cymru, to support understanding and implementation when guidance is issued. | This recommendation is targeted to Welsh Government | N/A |
| | | <p>R2 The Welsh Government should ensure that it has sufficient resources to deliver the legislative and policy changes for Building Safety to reduce implementation risks</p> | This recommendation is targeted to Welsh Government | N/A |
| | | <p>R3 The Welsh Government should review the mixed market approach to building control and conclude whether it continues to be appropriate and effective in keeping buildings in Wales safe. This should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the status quo against potential changes, such as the model of delivery in Scotland; • be framed around a SWOT analysis of costs, benefits, threats, and risks; • draw on existing research to identify good practice; and | This recommendation is targeted to Welsh Government | N/A |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be published and agree a way forward. | | |
| | <p>R4 The Welsh Government should increase its oversight and management of the building control sector to ensure there is a robust assurance system in place for building control and safety by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a national performance framework with clear service standards to promote consistency of service. • <p>This should also include outcome measures to monitor performance and an evaluation and reporting framework for scrutiny.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a national building safety workforce plan to address the most significant risks facing the sector. This should include regular data collection and publication, as well as coverage of priorities, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a greater focus on trainees to mitigate succession risks; ○ establishing aligned, national job roles matched to competency levels; ○ increasing the diversity of the sector to ensure it reflects modern Wales; and ○ specific funding to enable surveyors to obtain and maintain competence should also be considered. • the Welsh Government should explore with the further education sector how best to provide building control training in Wales to support succession planning, skills development, and competency. | <p>This recommendation is targeted to Welsh Government</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| | <p>R5 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>We don't currently have a Local Action Plan that articulates a clear vision for how BC plan to effectively implement the requirements of the Act. This needs to be developed and put in place. This would include</p> | <p>End of August 2024</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>amongst other things the 4 bulleted points in R5.</p> <p>Work with other local authorities across Wales supported by LABC Cymru continues around further discussion on Local Action Plans and their format and approach and whether any best practice has been identified within other local authorities. Next meeting is due in May 2024.</p> <p>The Building Control Service at Flintshire has also been 3 members of staff down due to vacancies for the past 2 years, which amounts to around a third of the overall team. This has included 2 technical support posts and one Building Control Officer post. The priority has been to recruit into these posts to build in resilience within the team and all three posts have now been filled.</p> <p>Additionally, the introduction of new Building Control Competency Registration requirements has meant that in order to continue to practice, all Building Control Officers have to</p> | |
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| | | | <p>undertake their registration process by 6 April 2024. There are 3 levels of competency: domestic, general and specialist. The deadline was extended until 6 October 2024 to allow building control inspectors across Wales to undertake exams and assessments and all officers within Flintshire's Building Control Service have undertaken their exams and assessments and waiting on their results. In the meantime, in order to allow them to continue to practice whilst the validation process and exam results are ongoing, all officers have temporary registration in place that will see them through until 6 October 2024. This has been a very high priority for the service as without registration the service will be unable to operate.</p> <p>As at 31st May 2024, all Flintshire County Council Building Control Officers have successfully completed and passed their exams required to enable them to register under the new requirements and the Council now has Building Control</p> | |
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| | | | <p>Officers registered with the Building Safety Regulator for England & Wales at all three levels of competency.</p> | |
| | | <p>R6 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; • 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>Fees for Building Regulations are set locally by Flintshire County Council. Fees were last comprehensively reviewed in 2018. A review of Fees will take place in 2024 and will include a comparison with other local Councils, particularly neighbouring Councils in North Wales. The Service will also be assisted by internal Audit who have programmed Building Control into their 2024/25 work and this will also include work around fees and charges.</p> <p>Building Control is a competitive service. Customers can use other means to secure their Building Regulations outside of the Council (e.g. use independent Approved Inspectors) so a review and any subsequent review of Fees will need to ensure we remain competitive and do not out price the Council's services out of the market.</p> | <p>End of September 2024</p> |

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| | | | <p>A review of the fees and charges will reflect the cost of the service and ensure the service is complying with the new Regulations. Such fees must be CIPFA compliant.</p> <p>Additionally, the Building Control budget is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Service Manager for Development with Finance colleagues (monthly budget reviews)</p> <p>The Service provides training for its staff to ensure compliance with Regulations. Officers are also required to maintain their qualifications under the new competency framework.</p> | |
| | | <p>R7 Local authorities should work with partners to make better use of limited resources by exploring the potential for collaboration and 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.</p> | <p>This will require discussion at regional level to explore the potential for collaboration and establishing a regional model.</p> <p>Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Partnership Authority Scheme is already in place which is shared by all LA building control teams in England and Wales and this allows customers to work</p> | <p>End of 2024</p> |

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| | | | <p>with any LA building control team to undertake all pre-app and design vetting work, regardless of the project's geographical location. We already provide this service for Iceland Foods. We vet their plans for new stores and re-fits regardless of where they are located geographically.</p> <p>Further discussion with local authorities through LABC and LABC Cymru networks and regional meetings will continue, sharing best practice and further exploring the potential for collaboration.</p> | |
| | | <p>R8 Local authorities should review risk management processes to ensure that risks are systematically identified, recorded, assessed, mitigated and subject to regular evaluation and scrutiny.</p> | <p>A review of risk management processes needs to be undertaken. There are a number of risks already identified including the functionality of the back office system and a lack of agile working functions (for surveyors on site) & the new requirements for registering as Registered Building Inspectors from 6 April 2024.</p> | <p>End of 2024</p> |

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| | | | The Building Control Team/function is included as an area supported by an internal Audit Review as part of their programme for work in 2024/25. | |
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