



Building Control Service

Market Engagement Information Pack

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PLEASE NOTE:

ANY INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY PROVIDERS WILL BE STORED CONFIDENTIALY AND WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED TO ANY THIRD PARTY.

1. Introduction

1.1 Solihull MBC

Solihull Metropolitan Borough is located on the southern edge of the West Midlands conurbation, between Birmingham and the Black Country to the west and Coventry to the east. It is bound to the north by the rural area of North Warwickshire and to the south, by rural Bromsgrove, Stratford and Warwick. The Borough is renowned for its key economic assets and strategic transport infrastructure both of regional and national significance; its attractive environment and quality of life; aspirational housing and excellent schools. All of which mean that Solihull is a desirable place in which to live, work and invest. Together, these elements combine to establish Solihull's character of 'town in country' living up to the Borough's motto: "Urbs in Rure".

Solihull is part of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), a partnership led by key businesses and Local Authorities to drive sustainable growth and job creation. Solihull is also a constituent member of the newly formed West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). The Combined Authority has four priorities relating to economic growth, addressing the skills deficit, provision of a fully integrated rail and rapid transport network, and housing. Solihull is at the heart of the national rail and motorway network with direct rail services to London, Birmingham and the north along the West Coast and Chiltern Mainlines and has excellent access to other regions in the UK through the M42, which links the Borough to the M6 at the northern boundary of the Borough and the M40 to the south. This strategic transport infrastructure, together with Birmingham Airport, has ensured the Borough is the principal national and international gateway to the GBSLEP area and the wider West Midlands area.

The Borough is currently undergoing a review of the Local Plan and this will contribute to increased levels of development along with the work around UK Central and HS2. From 2017 onwards construction will begin on a high speed rail station interchange in the heart of the UK Central Hub on land adjacent to the NEC. It is anticipated that HS2 will be operational from 2026.

1.2 The Building Control Service

The Building Control Service monitors building work and enforces the Building Regulations and associated legislation. Building Regulations set national baseline standards to ensure that our buildings are safe, sustainable, energy efficient and accessible for everyone who lives and works in and around them. The Building Control Service administers the system through which these standards are applied and enforced. The regulations apply to most new buildings; and extensions and alterations of existing buildings, whether domestic or non-domestic.

The legislation also sets out the minimum standards relating to health and safety, energy conservation, carbon emissions and provides reasonable access for all potential occupants. It is the responsibility of building owners and their agents to meet these standards – Building Control provides a supporting role within the construction industry instigating enforcement action only when reasonable and appropriate.

The Service also monitors and enforces other building legislation relating to public safety and environmental amenity, working with developers and designers to help ensure statutory compliance and successful outcomes.

Focus of delivery

There are two primary strands of work to the service:

A. Statutory fee earning work

The Building Regulations process generally forms two stages:

- 1) Application/design
- 2) Site inspection process undertaken on a risk assessment

B. Statutory non fee earning

- 1) Regularising work
- 2) Dangerous structures
- 3) Contraventions
- 4) Safety at sports grounds
- 5) Administrative functions
- 6) Planning liaison
- 7) General enquiries

Solihull MBC is looking to procure building control services from providers who are enthusiastic to deliver this service in the Borough. The provider will be expected to plan, develop and deliver all of the functions.

2. Services

We invite those interested in delivering the service to share their vision for the way in which this work could be delivered.

2.1 Background information on current service

The service on average receives circa. 1200 applications a year, with over 90% of applications received being domestic in nature. This equates to on average 460 site inspections carried out a month by officers. Since the departure of Building Control Manager in June 2014, the authority has procured services of a part-time interim manager via a private building consultancy. This contract also included access to additional site surveyor support on an ad-hoc basis.

The current team consists of 3 full time surveyors and 1 full time trainee surveyor and is supported by an administration function shared with the Authorities Development Management service.

Services delivered by Building Control within the scope of this exercise

2.2.1 Statutory fee earning work

2.2.2 Building Regulations Process

The Building Regulations process generally forms two stages:

1. Application/design assessment (plans, details, calculations etc. resulting in a formal decision. If non-compliant further submissions can be received on a continuous basis until Approval is achieved. Statutory period for a decision is 25 days (five weeks) extendable to 40 (8 weeks) by agreement with the client. A charge is applied and paid at submission stage, which would typically be scaled to complexity and 30% of the total. VAT is applicable on all fees.
2. Site inspection process undertaken on a risk assessment in conjunction with the fee paid throughout construction to ensure compliance. Typically this would involve 6-10 inspections depending on the size of the scheme, builder, duration etc. The charge is scaled to complexity and is typically 70% of the total charge paid. The charge is invoiced for at first visit.

N.B. Stage one can be by-passed for domestic projects where there is no requirement for a pre-approved plan e.g. simple project or DIY. This is called a Building Notice and from a fee perspective is equivalent to both charges from 1 and 2 above paid up-front.

2.3.1 Statutory non fee earning work

2.3.2 Regularising work

Illegal work can be formally rectified through a Regularisation Application. This is a statutory option to correct the fact that an application was omitted at the time of construction. The charge is normally not variable but inflated above standard levels to address the added complexity of picking up the project either part through or after construction.

2.3.3 Dangerous Structures

Discharge of the Council's statutory responsibilities under Sections 77/78 of the Building Act with regard to dangerous structures. Potential cases are reported via the public, other officers, elected members or the emergency services. We have a duty to investigate and secure an appropriate resolution if a danger is perceived. Action will be in the form of immediate action and may involve organising work in default if the owner is not present or cannot be traced. Less immediate action may require the owner to take action within 28 days. Equally what some perceive to be dangerous is not so 'no action' is often an outcome.

2.3.4 Demolition Notices

Discharge of the statutory responsibilities under Sections 80/81 of the Building Act with regard to private notifications for demolition (effectively anything above a single garage size). Owner has a responsibility to notify the council and we in turn have a duty to provide a counter notice of 'best practice' requirements (no burning on site etc.).

2.3.5 Contraventions

Investigation of reported breaches of the Building Regulations. Work started without an application, work progressing that differs from an application etc. Resolutions may involve serving official notices, encouraging a valid application or removal of work. In many cases the reported work may not require an application or may be being progressed by a private sector provider.

2.3.6 Safety at Sports Grounds

The Council has a statutory role with regard to regulated stands or facilities. Within SMBC there is only one facility that falls within the criteria. The role would normally involve attending Safety Advisory Group forums to provide specialist advice with regard to fire, crowd safety etc. in conjunction with club, emergency services etc.

2.3.7 Administrative Functions

The recording and processing of competitor notices (Initial Notices) and standard notifications from registered competent persons (gas, electrics, windows etc.) all of which The Council has a duty to record 'in a retrievable format' for property conveyancing purposes.

2.3.8 General Enquiries

The general discharge of the Council's responsibilities with regard to a 'generic port of call' for building related enquiries. General advice with regard to boundary disputes, building practice, historic access to records etc. A significant percentage simply require a general knowledge application from a construction context and although not our statutory role are generally best placed within BC due to the specialism and nature of the core role.

2.3.9 Planning Liaison

A general duty to co-ordinate with colleagues who generally have a similar interest in a new or altered building. Close working and joint visits are occasionally required and tend to arise within the 'contravention/illegal build' sector.

3. Process

3.1 CURRENT POSITION

Solihull Council seeks to ensure that relevant providers are aware of the opportunity available with the delivery of this service and to help shape the service model. These documents seek to do this as part of the market testing process.

3.2 WHY MARKET TEST?

The current service provider's contract is due to expire in 2018 and, as part of the consultation, we want to engage with providers to understand the possibilities on the type of service model which might be best placed to deliver this service moving forward. These consultation sessions will be on a 1:1 basis with information provided being treated as confidential.

All this information will be used to inform the future model for the Building Control Service delivery.

3.3 ANTICIPATED PROCESS/TIMESCALES

Deadline for return of questionnaire from providers	10 th January 2018
Market place / consultation sessions (1:1)	Weeks commencing 15 th and 22 nd January 2018
Procurement Process begins	February/March 2018
Contract start	1 st June 2018

3.4 COMPLETING QUESTIONNAIRES

The Council would be grateful if you could complete section 4 and respond by the **10th January 2018** through our eTendering portal CSW-JETS.

The sessions will be allocated on a first come first served basis so please return the questionnaire at your earliest convenience.