

# ISLE OF MAN CONSTRUCTION FORUM

## MINUTES OF MEETING

HELD AT THE ISLE OF MAN CONSTRUCTION FEDERATION OFFICES, ONCHAN

Friday 23rd February 2018

### Present

Gary Crittenden, SCS Limited	Chairman
Gordon Leach, Burroughs Stewart Associates	Vice Chairman
Brian Butler, Bell Burton Associates	Secretary
Seymour Corkill, Colas Limited	Treasurer
Matt Bond, Project Management Unit	DOI
John Cryer, Marshall Cryer Architects	Architects
Stephen Smyth, Island Aggregates	Suppliers
Mark Pearce, Ellis Brown Architects	Architects
Corelli Bentham	University College Isle of Man
Clive Callister, Colas Limited	Contractors
Michael Hodgson, March Consultants	Services Engineers
Hugh Logan, HLA	Architects
Peter Tyreman, Ellis Brown Architects	Architects
Ian Copley, Curtins	Structural and Civil Engineers
Stan Yellop, SMS (IOM) Limited	Planning Supervisors
Andy Cowie, MUA/DOI/PT	Utilities
Kris Killip, IDGW	Contractors
Andrew Coleman, Camada	Contractors
Tony Lloyd-Davis, Cornerstone Architects	Architects
Nicholas Jones, Manx Structural	Structural Engineers
Richard Lole, Department for the Environment	

### Apologies for absence

Jeff Robinson, Pat Collett, Mark Lewin, Jeff Magee, Nick Black, Steve Moore, Adrian Moore, Jeremy Humphries, Carl Hawker, Stephen Carter, Neil Callin, Andy Bostock, Ralph Peak MHK, Rob Callister MHK, Shirley O'Neill, Steve Woodward, Julie Edge MHK

## **1.0 Welcome and introduction**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

## **2.0 Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above

## **3.0 Minutes of the AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on 26 January 2018 were approved.

## **4.0 Richard Lole, Chief Executive Department for the Environment**

Richard advised that the Health and Safety Team were currently involved in a number of specific issues based on risk assessments, these were not construction industry related and Richard noted that the construction industry was not the largest risk sector at the moment. Richard congratulated the industry on this.

The Building Control Team are in a stable position with Maurice Collister settling in well to his new position with positive feedback recently. The recent consultation has now closed with over 500 responses with a wide range of views. The timeframe for review is as soon as possible with supporting energy efficiencies and reducing both heating bills and carbon emissions the most important considerations.

Energy Performance Certificates were initially discounted by the Department but are now under consideration. Householders are unable to check on the energy efficiency of dwellings which could affect buyers choices but in the UK these Certificates are sometimes only provided at point of sale and older buildings are difficult to certify. The market does take account of these certificates in the UK. However, the Forum noted that equipment was sometimes put in place and areas of air leakage taped up to achieve standards and if to be implemented these cheating techniques would need to be tightened up. The cost of providing an EPC can also be high which must be passed onto the purchaser.

It would be better if buildings could be designed to be more energy efficient rather than relying on standard building techniques and testing to provide a certificate. It was also noted that designing higher energy efficient buildings is much more desirable than utilising renewables which rarely have a payback on the Island, however, it was noted that detailing regarding air tightness had not improved much over the last 20 years.

Should Regulations be implemented it would be better to base them on energy reduction rather than carbon emissions, Passiv type design is more important than air tightness testing, it was also noted that current Island Regulations provided for higher insulation levels than the UK.

MH noted that CIBSE usually recommends gas whereas electric heating is more responsive and provides better energy reduction in a well-constructed well insulated building.

The Forum asked if an equivalent to the Green Loan would be made available, Richard advised that currently there are no plans for this as it is considered that alternative funding is available. Most householders would prefer to know what energy reduction work could be undertaken and base their expenditure on the most efficient work to reduce their energy costs.

Richard noted that Building Regulations would force Island wide regulation rather than Local Authority Regulation. There are currently no plans to bring Onchan and Douglas under the Government Building Regulation control.

The Forum requested that Richard considers altering the way planning fees are calculated from gross external floor area to gross internal floor area, this simple change would enable designers to design wider external walls to increase thermal efficiencies without affecting the cost of planning.

Richard noted that the planning consultation had now closed with a significant public response. There will be a political workshop in a few weeks to discuss the consultation. It was noted that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Right of Appeal would probably stay although this was not supported by the Forum. It was thought that there should be a weighting on the view of 3<sup>rd</sup> party right of appeal to ensure that those affected, mainly developers and consultants, views be more important than the general public particularly for developments of national or economic importance. It was also noted that in the UK only the Local Authority and applicant can appeal a planning decision.

It was agreed that the Islands planning system was no slower than the uk, however, one area that could speed up the Islands system is to include statutory time frames for Local Authorities and Government Departments to comment on applications.

The Forum asked if it would be better to have applications that are probably go to appeal go straight to an Inspector rather than wasting Planning Officer resources by having to first go through the process. It was noted that timescales for Planning Inspectors were good but

sometimes the signing off process takes too long. Richard asked that details of any long signing off process be advised as the Department has targets in place for these.

The quality of planning applications was discussed. A recent application was not in accordance with the requirements laid down by the Planning Authority. Richard agreed to look into this application. It is important that standards are maintained and that Officers are reminded of the requirements.

The Forum also asked Richard if there is a system in place where the workload of staff members on leave is taken up by other staff members. A number of examples were provided where Architects and Developers were told they would have to wait for staff members to return to the office before advice could be given on an application. Another issue was when an application which was complicated and would take up a lot of officer time was due, was there a plan to prioritise applications so that other applications were not delayed by the complex case.

Richard was asked if the CDM regulations would be brought into line with the UK or changed. Richard advised that Brexit was having a huge impact on the limited resources within the Department and that changing the CDM Regulations was not a high priority. Richard also noted that the Islands Construction Industry was performing well in regard to Health and Safety.

The Forum thanked Richard for his attendance and frankness which was greatly appreciated.

## **5.0 Forum Objectives 2018**

A discussion was held on what objectives should be set by the Forum for 2018. It is important that the Forum is prominent in decision making processes and assisting the industry in improving.

Following discussion it was agreed that the following would be included as Forum objectives in 2018:

1. Complying with Planning Application Quality Provisions. It was agreed that the Forum would seek enforcement of the requirements of the Planning Department.
2. Incorporation of statutory timescales within Planning for Local Authorities and Departments.
3. There are employment relocation grants available, however, the Construction Industry is barred from applying for these grants.

It was agreed that a meeting would be sought with the Political Member for Construction, Lawrie Hooper MHK, to discuss the above objectives.

## **6.0 Construction Forum Public Relations**

It was agreed that the Forum should be more prominent and be more public relations friendly. It was agreed that a Facebook page would probably not be the best option but issuing press releases would be beneficial. Corelli Bentham and Stephen Smyth agreed to assist when press releases were required.

## **7.0 Department for Enterprise Update**

Both Adrian Moore and Stephen Moore were unavailable to attend the meeting, however, Adrian advised that announcements are expected to be made next week regarding the setting up of the Agencies by the DfE with internal recruitment to follow and recruitment of the Agency Chairmen to be advertised.

Adrian also advised that the Personnel requirements for the delegate for Construction would also be advised soon.

The Forum agreed that the selection of the delegate for Construction would be discussed once the personnel specification was issued. The Forum agreed to work closer with both the Chamber of Commerce Construction Committee and the Construction Federation to provide a single voice, as much as possible, for construction.

The structure of the Regeneration Committees was discussed, no forum members knew who currently made up the Committees and it was agreed that the Forum would seek advice from Adrian Moore to enable closer working with the Committee.

## **8.0 Reports from Delegates**

Chairman Gary had queried the latest unemployment figures issued with the Department as it was noted that there was 35 skilled workers unemployed. It was advised that there was still some classification errors and the actual figure was 14. It was important that the classifications were correct as it affected Work Permit approval.

Corelli Bentham advised that there was a skills test at the College on 16 March 2018 and all were invited, it only takes 10 minutes and no appointment is necessary. Corelli advised that both Jersey and Guernsey Colleges had been invited.

Stephen Smyth advised that the Chamber of Commerce were initiating joint forums with Wirral Chamber of Commerce the first of which would be an Energy and Environment Forum on 20 March with a Construction Sector Forum also in planning. The forums would be networking and skills and ideas sharing the agenda of which would be circulated by Stephen in due course. Any delegates with ideas to add to the agenda are requested to forward the ideas to Stephen.

Stan Yellop advised that his company is now providing courses on the Environment if anybody is interested please contact Stan directly

Hugh Logan announced that following an upturn in business and further green shoots, he is moving to larger premises soon.

Matt Bond advised that he has been speaking to a number of school students at career fairs recently on careers in construction. He has issued leaflets by the CIOB who have some very good information available on careers and would continue to attend career assemblies. A Facebook page is being considered for students.

## **9.0 Future developments in the industry/ Topics for future discussion**

Jennifer Chance has agreed to attend the next meeting to discuss planning. If any delegates wish to ask specific questions could they please forward the questions to Secretary, Brian Butler, for forwarding to Jennifer.

The April meeting will be attended by Sheila Lowe, Chief Financial Officer to discuss the recent budget.

## **10.0 Next meeting**

The meeting closed at 9:50

The next meeting of the Construction Forum is on Friday 23 March 2018 at the Isle of Man Construction Federation Offices, Onchan starting at 8.00am