

Employer Case Study

Construction & the Built Environment

Building Control Services

Building Control Services is a section of Bradford Metropolitan District Council which deals with building regulations, demolitions, dangerous structures, dilapidated buildings and neglected sites, street naming and property numbering, land drainage and many other matters associated with the built environment and construction industry.

As the complexity of work has grown so has the status of the Building Control Surveyor and his /her evolution from Building Inspector to Building Control Surveyor. Acceptance by 'Industry' of Building Control as a profession has been bolstered by a parallel evolution in Further and Higher Education.

The introduction of competition and continued growth of workload has spread thin the existing 'qualified' surveyors and accentuated the need for the profession to adapt its training profile to accommodate increasing demands on its limited resources.

The nature of the work is complex requiring staff with a blend of both practical and academic skills. These range from in-depth knowledge of building construction, the application of law relating to construction projects and enforcement, health and safety, the ability to communicate at many levels, mediation and administration together with awareness of our political position.

The Further and Higher Education Colleges and Universities we deal with serve us well with a range of National Vocational Qualifications giving a starting point to careers and leading to National Certificates and Degree level qualifications.

The use of local College/University part time courses blended with an in-house training programme, occasionally supplemented by 'industry' input from Professional bodies and manufacturers, has enabled Bradford Building Control to maintain a high standard of service in challenging times.

We have accepted the skills shortage has no quick fix but by recruiting from the historical source of 'tradesmen' with existing site skills and putting them back into the education system and using a clear 'career' structure we have been able to plan for the future.

Alongside this we have participated in schemes to take on trainee/apprentice surveyors, both as an authority and in partnership with the other West Yorkshire Metropolitan authorities.

In this way we have built a staff structure able to hold its own in a growing marketplace based on a philosophy of providing good career prospects, building in training and skills necessary for the future and retaining staff members, thereby augmenting future staff reductions due to retirement.

Without the full and willing co operation of local Colleges/University and their response to our needs, this would not have been anywhere near so successful.

Councillor Anne Hawkesworth, Bradford Council's Executive Member for Environment and Culture, said: *"Our main concern as a Local Authority and as an employer is our ability to provide open, accountable, good quality services to our clients through our duties in law or our commercial services."*