

Building Regulations Research Newsletter 2008-09

October 2008

Introduction

This newsletter contains details of the new projects in Communities and Local Government's 2008-09 Building Regulations research and technical support programme.

The Building Regulations are made under powers provided in the Building Act 1984, and apply in England and Wales. The current edition of the regulations is "The Building Regulations 2000" (as amended) and the majority of building projects are required to comply with them. They exist to ensure the health and safety of people in and around all types of buildings (ie, domestic, commercial and industrial). They also provide for energy conservation, and for access and facilities for disabled people. Research is carried out to ensure that the Building Regulations, and associated guidance, have a scientific basis.

For 2008/09, the new projects have been planned according to four broad areas. These are:

(i) **Sustainability:** – our objective is to significantly improve the sustainability of all new and existing buildings by using the Building Control system and other appropriate levers. More specifically we aim to:

- improve their energy efficiency/reduce their CO2 emissions
- improve their water efficiency
- ensure that they can adapt/are resilient to a changing climate
- reduce the wider impact that they have on the environment.

(ii) **Progressing the review of the building control system** – our objective is to ensure the building control system remains fit for purpose and capable of responding to future challenges including climate change.

(iii) **Initiating the proposed periodic reviews of the Regulations.** We have received positive responses to the suggestion in the consultation document on the Review of Building Control that there should be a three yearly review of the Regulations and a gap of six years between reviews of individual parts.

(iv) **Safety and standards** – our objective is to secure sound quantified evidence, which will be used to help us develop the technical standards in the Building Regulations; help us address new risks to building safety as they emerge and help support preparation for European discussions on building standards.

Most of the new projects will be carried out either under framework agreements which ended on 31 July 2008 or under new ones awarded in August 2008. The projects let under the new framework agreements will be subject to competitive tendering by the framework contractors. All other projects will be let by competitive tender.

New projects which the Department plans to commission in 2008-09

Sustainability projects:

- Phase 1 VOA domestic stock model - test the use of Council Tax property attributes data to provide a model for domestic energy consumption.
- Scoping study on the impact of fire on the environment and building sustainability.
- Biennial Parliamentary reporting under the Secure and Sustainable Buildings Act.
- Code for Sustainable Homes - Technical guidance call-off contract.
- Compliance with Part L for new homes - stage 2.
- Technical support for the delivery of amendments to Parts L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) & F (Ventilation).
- SBEM development and support.
- SAP development and support.
- Further development of an Impact Assessment for Energy Performance Standards in New Non Domestic Buildings

Progressing the review of the building control system projects:

- Streamlining of electronic communications for Building Control documents.
- Future of building control consultation analysis.

Initiating the proposed periodic reviews of the Regulations.

- Support for the revision of Approved Document Part A – structure.
- Support for the revision of Approved Document Part C - site preparation and resistance to contaminants and moisture.
- Support for the revision of Approved Document H: hygiene.
- Support for the revision of Approved Document J – Combustion Appliances and Fuel Storage Systems.

Safety and standards projects:

- Building Regulation Advisory Committee (BRAC) Part M Working group on accessible housing and lifetime homes – secretariat.
- Lifetime homes standards in the Code for Sustainable Homes – technical support, review and guidance for code assessors and code assessing organizations.
- Economic and statistical analysis of the need for accessible housing, and the possible impact of lifetime homes standards in England and Wales.
- Analysis of distribution of housing typologies in public and private sector and typical compatibility with lifetime homes standards.

- Assessing the benefits of building to the lifetime homes standards – case study and scoping study.
- Lifetime homes standards, promotion and technical guidance programme.
- Preparation of PD 6696 - complimentary standard for masonry.
- Flood performance of buildings.
- Impact assessments for amendments to Part L & F.
- Investigating the fire performance of structural insulated panel systems.
- Guidance on the assessment of large panel structures dwelling blocks to resist accidental loading.
- Innovative Construction Products and Techniques methods in the UK construction industry - safe introduction and long-term performance.
- Costs and benefits of fitting trickle ventilators in replacement windows.
- Warranty Link Rule - to review the application of the Warranty Link Rule to contaminated land and to assess the current and future risk of problems arising with new homes.
- Review of synergies between proposed European standard on environmental performance of buildings (M350) and CLG policy developments.
- Provision of expert advice on Fire Safety issues.