

Building Standards Hub Pilot  
Fire Engineering Expert Hub Working Group  
Tuesday 2 May 2023  
10:30 – 12:00

### **Attendees**

Alan McAulay, Building Standards Hub Pilot (Chair)  
Raymond Barlow, Glasgow City Council  
Stephen Garvin, Building Standards Division, Scottish Government  
Colin Hird, Building Standards Division, Scottish Government  
Gillian McCabe, Building Standards Division, Scottish Government  
Peter Drummond, RIAS  
Alison Scott, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Hugh McNamara, ARUP  
William Connolly, NHS Scotland  
Scott Thomson, University of Glasgow

### **Apologies**

John Paul Breslin, Stirling Council  
Craig Ross, RICS  
Stuart Russell, NHS Scotland  
Angus Law, University of Edinburgh

## **1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for agreeing to be members of the Working Group. The meeting will be a scene setting meeting, giving background to the creation of the Building Standards Hub Pilot and the relationship it will have with the Fire Engineering Expert Hub Working Group and to seeks opinions on the purpose of the Fire Engineering Expert Hub and the Terms of Reference.

## **2. Background to creation of hub pilot and working group**

A presentation on the background of the Hub Pilot and its relationship to the Fire Engineering Expert Hub was provided. A fuller version of the presentation could be sent to the group if required.

A question was raised around the regulator (BSD/verifier/SFRS) route to IEng/CEng being restrictive and that this created a blockage in regulators receiving formal accreditation. Some members of the group agreed to share their experience of obtaining IEng/ CEng but were not aware of any blockages.

An issue was discussed on the capacity and capability in fire engineering, with reliance on verification using the technical handbook guidance. The Futures Board Compliance Plan work stream has defined the definition of High Risk Buildings (HRBs), which includes buildings over 11m. The section 34 letter states 60 m as a

trigger for reference of the application to BSD. It was also noted that the final decision on the future of the Section 34 rests with Scottish Ministers.

It was agreed that further discussion will be needed around this point.

### **3. Agreement of draft Terms of Reference (FEWG/01/001)**

The Terms of Reference are currently in draft form and comments were invited from the Group. The Group's remits include two phases, as follows:

- Phase 1 – to set up a fire engineering hub of experts and agree how it will operate (get into details at future meetings)
- Phase 2 – to consider a range of related matters which would support and strengthen verification involving matters related to fire engineering

It was flagged that once the Fire Hub becomes public knowledge that it may receive FOI/EIR requests. As the Hub is hosted at Fife Council any requests would need to be answered by Fife. It would be useful to publish the terms of reference, agendas and minutes proactively.

Members comments included the following:

- Ensuring the fire safety of buildings should be added to the terms of reference and the terms.
- Articulate more about what the Hub is trying to achieve.
- Make reference to digital and sustainability development given that the way buildings are analysed is completely changing.

One member stated that the work of the Hub was far more advanced than expected, but they were happy with the clear direction it has taken to date. The NHS is looking at similar factors around competence and governance which can be shared with the group.

### **4. Agree purpose of a fire engineering hub**

The aim of the Hub is to give fire engineering support to verifiers for complex applications sent under level 3 (Complex Building Warrant Applications).

One member suggested that only around 3% of BW applications fall into that category, questioning the need for an expert group and further research may be required to confirm this. The general feeling around the group was that this figure is fairly accurate and additional research was not required.

It was also suggested that BW applications at level 2 may also use the Fire Expert Hub, but it is not proposed to bring all routine fire engineering applications to the Hub.

It was felt that level 3 BW applications should be further defined since most councils rarely see applications involving fire engineering design from “first principles”.

Reference was made to the 2018 Stollard report that stated that a Hub should become the ‘verification body’ for complex applications, including design and site inspection stages. Further consideration is needed on the numbers of applications and how they would get referred to the hub.

One member questioned the role of the expert hub in checking fire engineering calculations and considered that a clearer purpose was required.

## **5. Action Points**

By Friday 12 May:

- Chair to look at publication options for key documents (terms of reference, agendas and minutes).
- All members - provide feedback on the draft terms of reference document.
- All members - provide further considerations on ‘the purpose of a fire engineering hub of experts’.

## **6. Programme for future meetings**

The above will be discussed in more detail at future meetings.

## **7. Proposed date of next meeting**

Poll will be sent for next meeting scheduled for mid-late June.

## **8. Any other business**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.