



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

To:

The Head of Building Control
Unitary Metropolitan, District and London Borough Councils in England
County and County Borough Councils in Wales
City of London
Council of the Isles of Scilly

Approved Inspectors

The Chief Fire Officer: Fire and Rescue Authorities in England & Wales

21 April 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

Achieving Consensus between Building Control and Fire and Rescue Authorities in building works

The Government's Fire Safety Consultation sought views on supporting Building Control Bodies and Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in achieving consensus should there be disagreement on whether plans for building work meet fire safety requirements. The Government Consultation response published on 17 March 2021 noted the strong preference from respondents for establishing a process to facilitate achieving consensus.

In response to the consultation, the Joint Regulators Group established a taskforce led by Local Authority Building Control (LABC), National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Association of Consultant Approved Inspectors (ACAI) to develop a sector-led approach.

The group have set out a 3 stage process including: a Peer Review of the case; a Consensus Panel discussion with representatives from LABC, NFCC and ACAI; and finally a Formal Review by 6 members of the Consensus Panel (2 representatives from each organisation) to reach a consensus. This has now been documented in an appendix to the Procedural Guidance (issued by LABC/NFCC and ACAI last Summer) and can be found here <https://www.labc.co.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/LABC.Fire-Service-and-Building-Control-Consensus-Reaching-v14-260321.pdf>.

We welcome this sector-led approach to achieving consensus which appears to offer a practical solution to complement current arrangements and enables ownership to remain with Building Control Bodies and FRAs who are best placed to consider specific compliance issues. Whilst the process is entered into on a voluntary basis it provides an important function in achieving consensus among different parties and we strongly encourage all parties to take up this new approach when required.

Any enquiries regarding this letter should e-mail enquiries.br@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

Camilla Sheldon
Deputy Director
Building Safety Programme