

Regional Quality Forum held on 26 September 2023 at Aberdeenshire Council HQ, Westhill, Aberdeen

Representatives from:

Aberdeenshire Council
Aberdeen City Council
Moray Council
NHS Grampian
JM Architects
Harley Haddow
Goodson Associates
McLeod & Aitken
Mackie Ramsay Taylor Architects
hub North Scotland and CQIC
Morrison Construction
Robertson Construction
MPS Housing
Kier Construction
Bancon
FES
Everwarm
Ogilvie Construction
CHAP
R Davidson
Scottish Government (Procurement Policy Unit)
SFT

Brief Notes from the Forum

Discussion points captured on the day.

- Scottish Construction Accord.
 - CQIC quality campaign is a workstream of the Accord.
 - Accord launched in October 2022 to bring improved outcomes for public sector and construction industry.

- Improving Construction Quality Applies Across:
 - All parts of the process
 - All people in the process

- We have:
 - New normals / realities

- Working patterns / hours
- Attitudes to work
- Focus on work/life balance
- New goals / metrics / ambitions (e.g. net zero)
- SHoPS are discussing the issues of net-zero across local authorities.
- New levels of labour resource availability – Skills shortage with increased reliance on agency personnel.
- New constraints on productivity.
- Health sector has NHS Assure which was created following issues across a number of projects.
- Passivhaus adoption over the last few years has driven a requirement for upskilling for both designers, contractors and the supply chain.

➤ Where are we with our CQIC Values across the sector - on a scale of 0 to 10?

- Ambition 6
- Commitment 6
- Collaboration 6
- Openness 8
- Respect 6

Would like to get all beyond 8...to help make change sustainable...

- Openness caveated with concerns about the ability to give bad news on cost and programme.
- Respect “until challenges escalate when people begin to defend their position.”

➤ The Charter

- It was developed to be holistic and equally applicable to all parts of the sector.
- There was no “political” input. It was developed by the sector for the sector.
- It would be good to highlight the added value commitment to it brings.
- Aberdeenshire Council is latest organisation to commit. Required committee approval to do so.

➤ The reasons for Change

- The cost of error – GIRI research says basic cost is 5% but actual cost is higher.
- Contractors returned to rectify defects in PFI/PPP schools, identified by surveys post Edinburgh Schools, at their own cost.
- Safety of end-users – don’t rely on “luck and timing”.
- Health & Safety – Research found 40% of reportable accidents were during re-work.
- Zero Waste Scotland say 50% of waste is generated by work in the built environment.
- Reputation of the sector in the press and across the public.

➤ Areas to focus on for improvement - ‘to increase the chance of success’

- Pre-construction stages are important - setting up for success
- Understand what ‘getting it right first time’ means...
 - Measure success on construction quality, not just programme and cost

- Clerks of works should be supporting getting it right, not just finding lots that is wrong.
- Projects can be handed over with minimal snags.
- Quality Plans
 - Needed for all stages and for all parties. Needs to focus on what that party is doing to deliver quality.
 - Were mandated for schools in LEIP. Good practice for all projects.
- Programme
 - Additional time for activities at the pre-construction
 - Adequate allowance for design development
 - Enough time to be ready at key stages
 - Enough time for commissioning and validation
 - Enough time for new realities of reduced labour availability
- Need to look to the period after Handover (in operation)
- Clarity of expectations - at all stages
 - Client needs to better understand what they need and what they are receiving.
 - There is a tendency to “over promise”
- Design development
 - Design coordination is essential
 - The role of Contractor Designed Portions has proliferated - development of good practice guide needed.
 - Status of design development prior to construction is key
 - Passivhaus adoption over the last few years has required focus on details
- Procurement
 - Understanding the role of procurement in achieving better construction quality
 - ‘Paying properly to do a proper job’ by all concerned
 - Being clear about expectations - scope - and budget required
- Competency and skillsets - across all players in the process
 - Importance of education and training
 - Need dialogue with Colleges and Universities
 - Apprenticeships are an issue which need attention
 - Clarity on pipeline key to investment in training. Construction Pipeline Database highlighted - [Infrastructure Investment Pipeline | Scottish Futures Trust](#)
 - Liaison with the Workforce and Skills workstream of the Accord is needed.
- Consideration of the local (geographic) dimension
 - Availability of resources – many specialist trades travel from central belt.
 - Off-shore industry competes for resources (people and materials)
 - Locally based wholesalers and suppliers is limited.

- Leadership
 - Key area for change in culture
 - Communication across all parts of the chain
- Opportunities for networking / collaboration / sharing knowledge
 - Interest in quarterly forum to discuss local trends, issues and ideas. hubNS offered to coordinate.

THE 12 COMMITMENTS IN THE CHARTER

The commitments are -

Quality control and assurance

Doing it right first time - at the right time

- Processes are in place to ensure compliance and to prevent errors
- Mechanisms are in place to detect and address any variations to agreed standards
- Appropriate project resources are available for budget, programme, design, materials, and skills

Behaviour

Creating the conditions that embed a “right first time” culture

- Leadership demonstrates a commitment to delivering the CQIC vision and values at all times
- All personnel are engaged and committed to creating a positive working environment with the right conditions for realising change

Alignment

All parts of the process are designed and implemented to drive quality, improve performance, and deliver compliance

- Leadership support initiatives that are designed to align policy and guidance across the sector
- Project delivery systems, including procurement, are aligned to drive quality
- Everyone has access to the right information at the right time

Competence, Roles & Responsibilities

Ensuring that everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities and is competent to deliver them

- Appropriate project leadership and management is in place
- Culture encourages everyone to accept responsibility for delivering quality
- Everyone has the right skills, experience, and qualifications to do a quality job
- We are all committed to developing people