

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL JOINT COMMITTEE

21 NOVEMBER 2007

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS PLAN AND REVENUE BUDGET 1 APRIL 2008 – 31 MARCH 2009

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks agreement to the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnerships business plan for 2008/2009.

2. Decision Issues

- 2.1 The Joint Committee is requested to agree a draft Business Plan for 2008/2009 and invite each Partner Authority to provide its comments on this draft plan to the Secretary of the Joint Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1 The South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (involving Medway, Gravesham and Swale) went live on Monday 1 October 2007 immediately following the inaugural meeting of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee on that day. The Joint Committee's Constitution sets out the process for approval of the Partnership's Business Plan each year and the timing required to ensure that each Partner Authority is able to incorporate associated budget requirements into the financial planning process for the subsequent year. The stages to this process are as follows:

- Before 1 October each year the Joint Committee is required to approve and send its draft Business Plan for the following year to each Partner Authority for comments
- Each Council has 35 days (from receipt) to provide comments to the Secretary of the Joint Committee on the draft Business Plan

- The Joint Committee is then required to meet to consider any comments received and agree any revisions to the draft Business Plan.
- By no later than 5 January the Joint Committee has to send a revised draft to each Partner Authority for their final approval.
- Each Partner Authority must advise the Secretary to the Joint Committee whether it approves or rejects the revised draft Business Plan by no later than 10 days before the Annual Meeting of the Joint Committee. (The Joint Committee will formally adopt the Business Plan at its Annual meeting).

3.2 There are also provisions in the Constitution of the Joint Committee stipulating the process and timescales for agreeing amendments to the Business Plan during the course of each year.

3.3 The Joint Committee has approved its first Business Plan covering the period from 1 October 2007 until 31 March 2008. The timescales envisaged in the Constitution for approval of the 2008/09 Business Plan cannot be met in full because the Partnership only came into being on 1 October. Also in subsequent years the Business Plan may have to be submitted in draft to each Partner Authority twice for comment and approval. In order to streamline the process the Cabinets in each Partner Authority have been recommended to delegate authority to the relevant Director, in consultation with the Councils Chief Finance Officer and appointed member on the Joint Committee, to provide comments to the Secretary of the Joint Committee on the first draft of the Business Plan and on any proposed amendments (during the course of each year) with the approval of the second draft of the Business Plan if required being reserved for the Cabinet. This will eliminate a requirement for two versions of the Business Plan to be considered by the Cabinet each year.

4. Directors Comments

4.1 The business plan outlines how S.T.G will deliver the building control function for the three partnership Councils over the next financial year.

4.2 It includes details of the statutory and discretionary functions to be carried out together with a list of priorities that will need to be addressed throughout the year.

4.3 There is an analysis of the likely market and workload over the area, broken down into the different fee schedules of work,

Residential, Domestic and Commercial. Targets are set for income generation which will require winning more work from the Private sector.

- 4.4 Marketing forms a very important part of the new organisations ethos but this will only work if there is a quality service to sell, so there are examples of performance management tools which will be used to ensure maximum output from surveyors together with building in a consistent approach to many on site problems.
- 4.5 Retention and recruitment of staff is also very important and the introduction of a career grade system after harmonisation, together with a comprehensive training programme identified from Personal Development and Review meetings, will be essential in this regard.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Section 3 of the Plan details the budget for 2008/2009 and targets a profit of £80,000 for the financial year. This includes the contributions payable by the constituent authorities that will be ratified by their acceptance of the Plan.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Where appropriate these are set out in the report and in the draft Business Plan. The draft Business Plan makes provision for partnership working with private architects. This will be done under the recognised Local Authority Building Control Partnership scheme.

7. Recommendations

The Joint Committee is recommended to ask each of the three Councils to submit comments on this initial draft business plan for 2008/2009 with a further meeting of the Joint Committee on 13 December 2007 to consider any comments received and any amendments required.

8. Background Papers

Appendices 1 – 5 of Business Plan.