

CABINET

12 FEBRUARY 2013

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP – BUSINESS PLAN 2012/17

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jane Chitty, Strategic Development and Economic Growth and Member of Joint Committee

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration and Development

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Summary

This report seeks agreement to the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan for 2012/2017.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The approval of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan is a matter for Cabinet, however, specific parts of the plan may need to be progressed in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures.

2. Background

- 2.1 The South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (involving Medway, Gravesham and Swale) went live in 2007 and a second term was agreed, last year, to run from 2012 to 2017. The partnership's business plan covers the next five year period and will be refreshed each year to reflect changing circumstances, however, the plan outlines how the building control function for the three partnership Councils will be delivered over the next five financial years.
- 2.2 The Joint Committee's Constitution sets out the process for approval of the 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. In order to streamline the process the Cabinets in each partner authority have agreed to delegate authority to the relevant director, in consultation with the council's Chief Finance Officer and appointed member on the Joint Committee to deal with this element of the process.
- 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).

2.3 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.

2.4 In accordance with the timetable above, a draft business plan was drawn up and sent to the partners for comment in September 2012. In keeping with good practice the plan now covers a five year period rather than a three year period as has previously been the case.

2.5 On 13 December 2012 the Joint Committee agreed the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership's Business Plan for 2012/17 as attached at Appendix 1. This encompasses the comments already received from the Partner Authorities.

3. Options

3.1 The Cabinet needs to advise the secretary to the Joint Committee whether it approves or rejects the revised draft business plan.

4. Advice and analysis

4.1 Amendments have been made to the original draft business plan including:

- The incorporation of an action to review options for alternative partnership models;
- The need to secure further legal advice regarding EU procurement law thresholds to establish most appropriate way forward for expanding the consultancy service;
- The need to include final contribution figures for 2013/14 to inform each Authority's budget planning processes.

4.2 It should also be noted that the Business Plan has been presented in two parts to aid reading and understanding

4.3 Part One sets out the Business Plan with the following 5 objectives:

- To improve customer satisfaction by providing an effective and efficient administration and site inspection regime in particularly through improved use of information technology and communication;
- To raise the profile of STG by developing a dynamic marketing strategy;
- To provide a healthy, safe and accessible built environment reducing the carbon footprint and contributing to sustainable construction;
- To provide additional services through a consultancy to generate additional income;
- To continually review contributions by partner authorities to reflect reductions in expenditure.

4.4 Part Two sets out the action plans and targets to achieve the objectives. The key projects for the service in 2013/14 will be:

- Enable customer self-service for tracking and searches;
- Increased use of mobile technology with the ability to update in real time;
- Increase income for consultancy services by 30% over the 2012/13 budget figure;
- Examine the use of different delivery models for the partnership;
- Further expansion of the partnership with the inclusion of new partner authorities;
- Identify new accommodation for the partnership head office.

4.5 The Council has adopted a Diversity Impact Standard to ensure policies and significant projects reflect potential impact on residents due to their racial group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion. In line with this, the first stage of a Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 2. The findings of this indicate the Business Plan does not need a full Diversity Impact Assessment.

5. Risk Management

5.1 This is detailed in Chapter 4 of the Service Delivery documentation and focuses on a lack of recovery in the economic situation and an inability to sustain growth as well as a lack of investment in staff development and IT solutions.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The report has been agreed by the Joint Committee of the three Partner Authorities on 13 December 2012 and is being presented to all three partner authorities.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 The next five year period is unlikely to show much growth within the construction industry with predictions of stabilisation in 2013 and possible growth of 4%-5% in 2014/15. However, through the introduction of new working practices with increased efficiency through IT investment, there will be a total reduction of £60,000 in contributions between 2012 and 2017. This represents an 18.5% reduction in contributions from the three partner authorities over the 5 year life span of the Plan.

- 7.2 The constituent authorities are required to make contributions to fund non chargeable activities. Medway's contributions are shown in the table below.

Year	Contribution £	Reduction on previous year £
2012/13	186,439	21,150
2013/14	173,601	12,838
2014/15	160,816	12,785
2015/16	157,016	3,800
2016/17	154,607	2,409

- 7.3 The Memorandum of Agreement, which underpins the Partnership, states "each Council shall notify the Partnership no later than 28 February in each year the amount the Council has allocated to the Partnership from its revenue budget". For Medway the sum of £173,601 has been provided for in the 2013/14 draft budget.
- 7.4 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. The Joint Committee has approved the Partnership undertaking consultancy work under the powers of Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That the proposed Business Plan for 2012/17 for the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership, as set out at Appendix 1, be approved by the Cabinet.

9. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 9.1 The constitution of the Joint Committee requires approval of the Business Plan for the following year by the Cabinet of each Partner Authority.

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Background papers: None

Appendix 1 South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Draft Business Plan 2012/2017 and Service Delivery Documentation 2012/17

Appendix 2 Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2012-2017



Director Tony Van Veghel
Version No. 4
Last updated 20 November 2012

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Appendix 1 - Service delivery documentation

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This business plan covers the next term of the Partnership from 2012-2017. It builds on the resilience demonstrated over the last five and continues to use and develop the skills and expertise of the staff to deliver a wide range of services for customers and maximise income streams.
- 1.2. Since the challenges of the economic recession began in 2008, the Partnership has demonstrated a high degree of flexibility in mitigating a great deal of the financial pressure, caused by the reduction in the construction market, by being able to change working practices of staff and increasing the offer to customers.
- 1.3. The next five year period is unlikely to show much growth with predictions of a likely fall in 2012, stabilisation in 2013 and possible growth of 4%-5% in 2014/15.
- 1.4. In order to maintain a balanced budget it is important to supplement income from the Building Regulation charges with other income streams such as the consultancy and regularisation budgets. The decline in complex projects has had a direct effect on the level of work coming through the consultancy from external customers. Therefore a concerted effort to expand the internal market, with continued support from the three Partner Authorities, is paramount in maintaining income and increasing the diversification of roles of staff.
- 1.5. New legislation to further strengthen the enforcement powers of Local Authorities is proposed for 2013/14 and this will offer greater opportunities to drive out “cowboy builders” and improve general building standards especially in the domestic market.
- 1.6. Investment in IT is key to increasing efficiency and giving greater opportunities for customers to interface with the Partnership. Development will allow applicants to track applications, carry out historical research on their property and will give the opportunity for mobile working. This will improve the inspection service still further, recording data in real time and delivery on increased number of inspections per officer per day.
- 1.7. When the economic conditions have improved further legal advice will be sort to reconsider the case for the consultancy operating through a different delivery vehicle so as to allow greater flexibility in resourcing an increase in demand.
- 1.8. During this next five year period the Partnership will have to relocate, as the lease on our current accommodation will end in March 2015. This, together with the possibilities from mobile working will allow us to reduce our office accommodation and therefore costs. The most recent customer questionnaire revealed that our present location is popular so any decision on a move away from the Maritime area will have to be properly examined, however, better connectivity through the IT system may reduce foot fall in reception.
- 1.9. An important area for consideration is the opportunity to expand the Partnership so as to encompass additional authorities. Discussions with Tonbridge and

Malling is ongoing and possible changes to service delivery in a number of other authorities over the next few years may offer further potential partners.

- 1.10. The next phase of the Partnership will not only consolidate the successes of the past five years but continue the expansion of services, staff development and improved customer service which the investment of the three Partner Authorities has allowed.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. South Thames Gateway (STG) is a Partnership of three authorities (Gravesham Medway and Swale) that was established on 1st October 2007 to build in resilience for the building control service across the Thames Gateway area.
- 2.2. STG Building Control was founded on the extensive knowledge, experience, integrity and professionalism of the building control team to deliver a first class service to a population of over 470,000 people covering some 257 square miles of Kent.
- 2.3. The Partnership in fact delivers three complimentary services that impact on the health and safety of people living, learning, working or visiting the area.
 - The building regulation service which consists mainly of checking building plans, the inspection of building works in progress and appropriate enforcement to ensure all relevant building work complies with the building regulations.
 - A public protection service which includes both inspections and information which councils are required to provide, for example, dangerous structures, demolitions, unauthorised works, competent person schemes and the initial notices register.
 - A consultancy which delivers additional discretionary services including energy, fire risk, access and Code for Sustainable Homes assessments together with SAP and Sbem calculations and Party Wall surveying work.
- 2.4. Following the success of the first five year term, Members unanimously voted for a continuance of the Partnership into a second term from October 2012 to September 2017. This decision has been endorsed and agreed at each of the Cabinets of the partner authorities.

3. REVIEW

- 3.1. Last year was a very important year for the Partnership. The first term agreed by the Partner Authorities was for 5 years from October 2007 and then the Agreement was to be reviewed to determine if the three authorities wanted to carry this arrangement on for a further five years.
- 3.2. Members agreed unanimously that the Partnership had been a success and a second term was agreed at each Authority's Cabinet taking the Partnership forward to 2017.
- 3.3. Although applications fell by around 9% in 2011/12 against the 2010/11 figures and total income fell by just over 1%. However, due to the cost reductions implemented during the year the Partnership was able to post a surplus of around £45,000. This was assisted by a continued expansion of the consultancy which also provided opportunities to develop the skills and expertise of staff to reflect the changing demands of the market.
- 3.4. A very constructive customer survey was carried during the year with over 300 responses. Whilst the overall results were very pleasing with 94% rating us as good or very good overall, we did identify improvements that could make home owners in particular more inclusive in the process.
- 3.5. With the success of the Partnership over the first five years Members were keen to see the best practice that had been developed shared with other authorities and have included expansion of the Partnership as one of the objectives over the next five years.
- 3.6. The partnership was reassessed and registered as a quality company under BS EN ISO 9001: 2008 by the British Standards Institute as an external auditor on 22 May 2012.
- 3.7. An audit review was also carried out in June 2012 by Mid Kent Audit on behalf of Swale Borough Council. It concluded that the controls surrounding the building control partnership provided a **substantial** level of assurance overall. This is a testament to the setup and development of the processes agreed through Joint Committee for the operation of the Partnership.

4. NATIONAL & LOCAL DRIVERS

Political

4.1. The Building Regulations and Standards Division within the Department for Communities and Local Government carried out a major building regulations consultation in January 2012. This was looking at suggested alterations to the building control system as well as significant amendments to a number of individual Approved Documents. In order to improve the Local Authority building control process it has been suggested to:

- Make the issue of completion certificates by Local Authorities mandatory and within a specified time period.
- Amend the wording on completion certificates and their equivalents to become evidence, but not conclusive proof, that the works are compliant. This recognises the client responsibility for compliance.
- For Local Authorities to reduce statutory notifications to commencement and completion and introduce a requirement to declare relevant inspection “service plans”.

4.2. There are also proposals to extend the competent person self certification schemes framework and introduce specialist third party certification schemes including the option for developers to use Appointed Persons to manage compliance on construction sites.

4.3. Within existing domestic buildings there are also suggestions that standards for components and services should be increased and an additional requirement to provide Consequential Improvements should be included. Although the level of this improvements is proposed to remain at 10%, to the extent that it is technically, functionally and economically feasible, the amendments are subject to the issue of Green Deal legislation.

Economic

4.4. The UK construction industry worth £100 billion and representing around 6% of total GDP has inevitably been subject to the ongoing affects of the global crises of 2008. After growing by 8% in 2010 and around 2% in 2011 output is forecast by the Construction Products Association to decline by 5% in 2012 and stabilise in 2013 before growing at 4%-5% in 2014 and 2015. Even this is dependent upon a recovery in the private sector and with the underline economic uncertainties at the start of 2012 these forecasts may prove to be optimistic.

4.5. It is expected that any recovery will be heavily led by the private sector, albeit one which is still often beset by project delays and funding difficulties.

4.6. Although there is little sign of growth in the housing sector before 2015 there is an optimistic view of the £5 billion retail market which has an annual expected growth of between 3%-5% over the next few years.

Sociological

4.7. The current population base for the three Councils is around 470,000 people. The trend analysis shows increases in all three areas likely to be 10% over the

next fifteen years. The analysis also shows older people accounting for the largest increase and experience has shown that this will lead to an increase in adaptations to people's homes together with an increase in the expectation of people to be able to purchase lifetime homes. Year on year there has also been an increase in the numbers of applications we have received from disabled customers. With the changes in charges legislation allowing for the same exemption as applies to those applications also being attributed to their carers, these figures will continue to rise. As these applications are exempt from fees they are paid for by the contributions from partner authorities. Details of the increased numbers and costs can be found on page 12.

Technological

4.8. Further improvements to the IT system have been identified which will match the service delivery requirements identified in the Business Plan objectives. An IT strategy has been developed to deliver the procurement of an improved back office system enabling the greater use of mobile technology and allowing customers to track applications and carry out many self service investigations themselves which would assist in lowering our costs.

Legal

4.9. Within the consultation document from the CLG are some significant suggested amendments to the Approved Documents in both their format and technical guidance. The Parts of the Building Regulations specifically targeted are A, B, C, K, L, M, N and P there are also considered changes to the way Access Statements are required in supporting applications and a review within Part M of changing places for people with disabilities.

4.10. The most significant revisions proposed relate to Approved Document L and the proposal includes suggestions for tighter carbon dioxide emission standards for new homes and non-domestic buildings, to take the next step towards "zero carbon" standards, plus tighter performance standards for work to existing buildings. The paper also contains proposals to introduce, on a phased basis, requirements for additional energy efficiency improvements to be carried out when other specified works (eg extensions) are planned and Green Deal finance is available as an option to meet the up front costs.

4.11. There will also be proposals to strengthen enforcement powers and consideration has been given to extending the time limit and increasing the fine limit for non-compliance. In order to improve levels of on-site compliance consideration has been given to introduce a number of new enforcement sanctions including; fixed monetary penalties, variable monetary penalties, compliance notice, restoration notice, stop notice and a voluntary agreement with the Local Authority at the request of the person carrying out the work called enforcement undertakings.

4.12. Local Authorities enforcement powers will remain, but Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) are minded that there should be a way for Local Authorities to issue a civil sanction where an Approved Inspector is the building control body and the Approved Inspector has asked the Local Authority to do so.

Environmental

- 4.13. The Partnership has continued to develop its discretionary services through the consultancy and many of these focus on the sustainability issues which directly affect the environment. We have two Code for Sustainable Homes assessors, five people accredited to produce SAPs, and one member of staff able to produce Display Energy Certificates for public buildings.
- 4.14. Not only are we able to help reduce the CO² production of each new or altered building but we also deal with environmental impacts from dangerous structures, demolitions and dilapidated buildings. These can directly affect the amenity of the local area and we regularly give advice on the reduction and re-use of redundant building materials.
- 4.15. A local driver that is extremely important to each of the partner authorities is how the work of the partnership demonstrates delivery on each of their priorities. These are shown in the Service Delivery Documentation (Appendix 1).

5. PERFORMANCE & BENCHMARKING

5.1. Since 2007 the Partnership has taken part in the DCLG's Performance Indicator questionnaire which is based on performance standards for building control bodies both in the public and private sector. This work is carried out by ELJ Consulting, on behalf of the Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group (BCPSAG), funded by the DCLG. The results provide indicators regarding the performance of building control bodies (BCB's) measured against the National Performance Standards. This benchmarking exercise provides comparative data that should assist BCB's in making improvements in their service. STG's results against each of the seven criteria are shown in Appendix 1, however, the key findings of the analysis are shown below with comments on STG's performance against the criteria.

- The total number of participants in the 2010/11 survey was 85, a fall from the 96 that participated in the 2009/10 survey. As in the previous surveys, there are a few that have left many of the indicators blank.
STG were able to complete all of the indicators.
- There is a continued high level of compliance with the various aspects of best practice service delivery, however only 32% of Building Control Bodies (BCBs) responded 'yes' to all seven questions (BC1- Best Practice Service Delivery).
STG were able to respond positively to six of the seven criteria, however, we were unable to fully comply with 6(i) "Is there a system in place to ensure that client requests are responded to by a case officer within a reasonable time frame" which we will address through our QA system.
- The proportion of schemes that receive a formal written consultation with the Fire & Rescue Authority varies widely, much the same in previous reports. As for last year, in general there is a high level of satisfaction from the Fire & Rescue Authority (BC2- Consultation with the Fire Authority).
Of the 152 sample cases discussed with the fire authority they confirm 100% satisfaction with the effectiveness of the timely consultation which contained all the relevant information for discussion.
- The proportion of staff that is qualified and experienced varies, as it does in previous reports. The spread is largely similar to last years' results, however this year 3 BCBs reported a qualified and experienced staff percentage of 0-20%. In the 2009/10 survey there were zero BCBs with 0-20% (BC3- Qualified and Experienced Staff as a Percentage of the Total Staff Employed by the BCB).
The percentage of qualified and experienced staff was 37%, however, this included the technical administration group and when examining the surveyors group independently the percentage increased to 60%.
- On average, qualified and experienced members of staff received 37.0 hours of training per year, and non-qualified staff 26.7 hours (BC4- Staff Development). This is a large decrease compared to 2009/10.
The average number of hours of relevant training for qualified and experienced staff matched the national average of 37 hours, however, non-qualified staff including technical administration only averaged 14 hours.

- For non-domestic schemes, Building Control Bodies in general spend less time on-site than they planned, much the same as all three previous reports found. For domestic schemes, the case was the same for both new dwellings, and alterations and extensions. (BC5- Onsite Input)
The time spent on both non-domestic and domestic schemes was broadly coincident to that which had been planned; this is an improved position on the national average.
- 69% of the Building Control Bodies had issued completion certificates for 100% of the projects that had been completed (BC6- Ensuring Compliance).
Of the 2284 projects completed STG were able to issue final completion certificates on each one which is an improved position on the 69% national average.
- While both the domestic and non-domestic survey response rates were quite low, the customer satisfaction is very high for both. Customers were on average over 98% satisfied on every aspect, save “added value to the finished product” in the domestic survey where average satisfaction was 94% which is still very high. (BC7- Customer Satisfaction).
With only a low response to the non-domestic customer questionnaire there was inadequate data to formulate a response. However, the 98% “fairly and very satisfied” responses to the domestic market questionnaire met the national average with “added value” 91% falling just short of the national average. A general comment made by respondents in respect of the last question was that they did not understand its relevance and were not able to comment.
- Although it cannot be conclusive, comparison of responses across the last three years’ reports shows that the performance of BCBs has remained fairly constant in all of the indicators, improved in a few areas and deteriorated in a couple of areas, the most outstanding being the number of hours training provided to non-qualified staff.

5.2. As an outcome from this benchmarking exercise we need to focus on two main areas. Firstly to put mechanisms in place to ensure a timely response to requests by the case officer and secondly to ensure the average hours of relevant training for non-qualified staff are increased to at least the national average. This will be dealt with through our PDR process.

5.3. Although not mandatory the CLG have “strongly recommended” this industry initiative which should be adopted by both Local Authority Building Control (LABC) and Approved Inspectors.

5.4. The LABC position is that it fully supports the building control performance standards and the seven performance indicators that support them. They also encourage each local authority to set local performance indicators which would achieve a national standard in for example, application acknowledgement, plan vetting, determinations (within 5 weeks or 2 months) and completion certificates which are shown on page 10 and are published on our website.

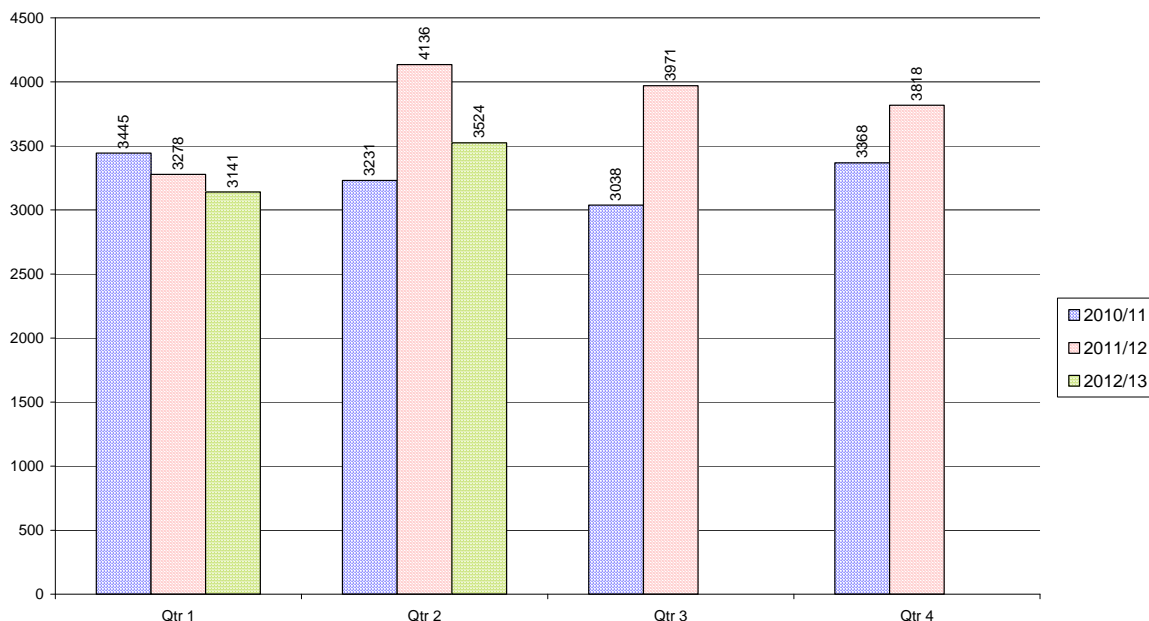
Quarterly Benchmarking

	% plans checked within 15 days	% plans checked within 10 days	% determined within 5 weeks /or 2 months	No of PCI's	% completion certs sent within 5 days	Reg & Acknow within 3 days	% LC Searches - Medway within 3 days	% LC Searches - Swale within 3 days	HIPs within 10 working days
2010-11	Target 85%	Target 70%	Target 100%		Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%
Q1	87.89%	70.70%	98.32%	n/a	59.89%	81.73%	100.00%	99.70%	90.63%
Q2	85.81%	64.19%	100.00%	n/a	73.39%	80.41%	100.00%	100.00%	69.37%
Q3	84.50%	68.42%	99.53%	33	71.79%	86.85%	100.00%	100.00%	96.72%
Q4	88.69%	77.37%	99.26%	65	97.12%	99.65%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
2011-12	Target 85%	Target 70%	Target 100%		Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%
Q1	88.85%	53.38%	90.79%	25	99.10%	88.82%	100.00%	99.66%	91.78%
Q2	88.34%	71.43%	99.47%	377	98.48%	97.54%	100.00%	100.00%	92.78%
Q3	90.79%	70.39%	100.00%	319	99.32%	99.71%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Q4	96.63%	75.96%	100.00%	411	100.00%	95.22%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
2012-13	Target 85%	Target 70%	Target 100%		Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%	Target 95%
Q1	91.45%	69.14%	100.00%	203	99.66%	99.80%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Q2	97.06%	84.03%	*	166	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Q3									
Q4									

* unable to provide data until 8 weeks following quarter end

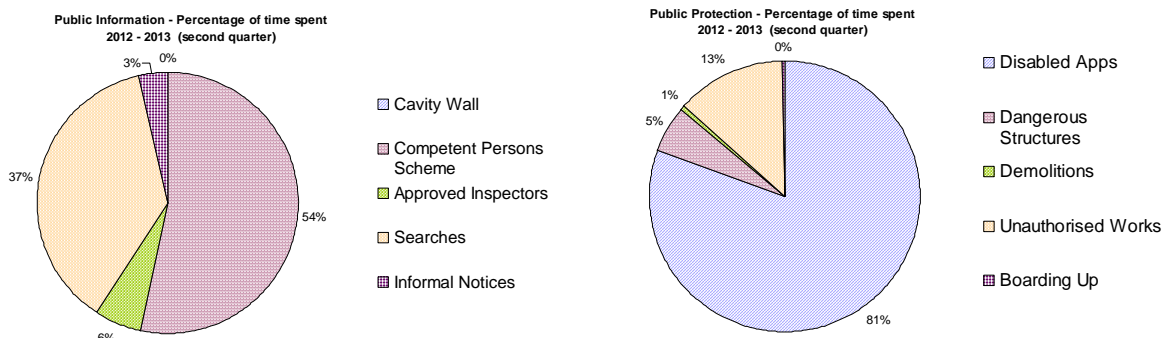
- 5.5. In conjunction with the objectives in the business plan there will be a move to a function based model which matches resources against income for the three services referred to earlier but this is not likely to be implemented until 2014/15.
- 5.6. The inspection service was one of the most valued aspects of local authority building control. An inspection notification framework is issued with each project and it is often added to as the surveyor determines additional inspections which will inevitably arise. Again through the customer survey results it is evident that the majority of builders and developers welcome the frequency of visits and the ability to request a visit for advice. By operating improved working practices we are able to maintain over 3,000 inspections per quarter.

Quarterly number of Site Inspections carried out
2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13



5.7. There is a large proportion of statutory public protection services (non-fee earning work - detailed below) which the Partnership is required to carry out to fulfil the public protection duties of the three Partner authorities as well as maintaining certain registers which are required by law. This non fee-earning work is resourced through the contributions from each Local Authority and was estimated to equate to 25% of the Partnership staff time for 2012/13. Through the action plans attached to each objective in this Business Plan we anticipate changing certain working practices and reorganise the team such that in 2013/14 we will be able to reduce the cost to the authorities by 2% with a further 2% the following year and half a percent for each of the last two years of the next term.

5.8. The charts below show comparisons of the time spent on non-fee earning work through public protection and information and inspection (currently second quarter details only available).



- **Disabled person applications**

With the extension to carers of the exemption to pay fees on building control applications it was not surprising to see a rise in the numbers of applications claiming exemption through the new charges legislation. However with grant funding still available the number of these types of applications has continued to increase through 2012/13. The estimated value of income lost through this criteria is around £251k since March 2008 (as at 30 June 2012), and the cost to the partnership is much greater in officer time as the time spent on inspections of these applications increases due to the necessity for increase customer contact to meet customer expectation.

- **Dangerous structures**

There were 119 reported dangerous structures in 2011/12 with a further 178 being monitored from previous years. Unfortunately there are many structures which although in a state of disrepair are not so dangerous as to require us to serve either a Section 77 or 78 (emergency measures) Notice on the owner. These remain the responsibility of the owner and it is for them to take remedial action. However, most of this type of preventative repair is not covered by insurance and is also very expensive to fund with the consequence that the structure remains unaltered until it deteriorates to such an extent that we need to serve a notice. The possibility then exists that if no funds are forthcoming the owner declines to do anything and the council have to step in to remedy the situation. We will carry out the minimum work necessary to remove the danger but cannot carry out full repairs or remedial works. The cost of the minimum work carried out is often then put as a charge on the property.

This process is often further lengthened as other parts of the Building Act deal with defective premises and dilapidated buildings which again rely on the courts serving notice and the owner carrying out the work. If the owners default on carrying out the work it falls again to the council to rectify the defects and recharge the owner often as a charge on the property which is only recovered in the medium to long term, if at all. Further difficulties exist where ownership cannot be determined and each council is expected to deal with the danger in the public interest. This can be extremely expensive when dealing with major structures that have failed.

- **Demolitions**

27 demolitions were inspected varying in size and impact on the local community in 2011/12. A number of inspections were required for each of these sites in order to make sure the demolition is carried out in accordance with Building Act requirements and that such things as drains and sewers were properly sealed. Currently the partnership is still monitoring 97 of the demolitions submitted in previous years which are either still ongoing or awaiting commencement. Liaison with the Health and Safety Executive is very important as the method of demolition is controlled under their legislation.

- **Unauthorised works**

191 unauthorised works were inspected in 2011/12 either as a direct result of complaints from the community or through the intervention of officers investigating works which they had discovered in carrying out a general site inspection. Currently the partnership is pursuing a further 160 cases of which 112 are currently recorded on Land Charges. Where possible many of the unauthorised works are converted to regularisation applications which generated additional income. Throughout 2012/13 officers from STG have vigorously pursued unauthorised work so as to reduce the burden on customers of illegal works and rogue traders. It remains the responsibility of the owner to ensure their property complies with the building regulations and whilst every effort is made to negotiate a way forward there are provisions within the Building Act to prosecute the builder and serve notice on the owner to ensure works comply.

- **Competent person schemes**

Members of these schemes are considered competent to self certify that their work complies with the relevant requirements and are used for installations such as new boilers, replacement windows and domestic electrical works. These place a heavy administrative burden on the Partnership as each installation needs to be recorded and the various scheme operators use a variety of systems to transfer data. In 2011/12 there were 24,687 notifications reported. A revised schedule of competent persons now includes roofing contractors and flat roof specialists.

- **Approved Inspectors**

It is a legal requirement to record each Initial Notice submitted by an approved inspector and to make this available to the public. There were 331 Initial Notices deposited in 2011/12 and each one was required to be checked against the approved inspector legislation to ensure validation and was required to be acknowledged within five working days.

- **Pre-application advice**

On larger projects we encourage pre-application discussion to try and resolve any potential problems before the statutory time periods for dealing with an application begin. This also gives us an opportunity to consult with other departments and services such as the Fire Service in order to deliver a more holistic approach to our customers.

5.9. The health, safety, welfare and convenience of our customers are paramount whether dealing with applications, dangerous structures, demolitions or unauthorised works. The service has been proven to provide excellent value for money and an action plan is being developed to enhance liaison with the supporting services i.e. Development Management, Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing from all three councils.

6. STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS

- 6.1. One of the most difficult aspects of research we have found is trying to obtain feedback from customers. For most people, as owner/occupiers they only become involved with the building control process once or twice in their lives. Therefore they seldom respond to a questionnaire. On the other hand the agents they use are very familiar with the building control process and the personnel from various councils in their area and as such do not feel the need to engage in customer surveys. Lastly the larger developers may only deal infrequently with a particular building control body and have quite complicated structures with regards to contracting and subcontracting work. It is often quite difficult to determine the best person to respond to questionnaires about the process and again this has resulted in a very poor response.
- 6.2. Whilst we do get feedback from our partners at focus groups and forums following the seminars that we hold, we have to recognise that there are large groups in our customer profile where we have not benefitted from responses.
- 6.3. The intensive customer survey carried out in 2011 highlighted that owners felt detached from the service with little communication between themselves and our officers taking place. The customer survey carried out in 2012 was specifically aimed at owners to establish whether they felt the same following the service improvements initiated.
- 6.4. Commencement packs and officers engaging more with owners has seen an improvement. 86% to 96% of customers felt they received a Good to Excellent service. The ability to speak direct with staff that are knowledgeable with excellent attitudes features high with customers with 72% feeling that they have received this during their build.
- 6.5. With 87% taking away an overall excellent impression of the service we still need to improve. In 2012 we have produced a domestic development guide which covers extensions, alterations and conversions and includes helpful guidance. To achieve maximum coverage an E-Book has been produced which has been appended to all staff's email signatures and is available in both hard copy and electronic format from our website.
- 6.6. The quality of the service, as always, features as the most important to customers and we will be continuing to strive to improve our delivery further. Incorporated into our IT development strategy are features from both surveys that customers felt important. Technological advancements that will improve the efficiency of our site inspections and interaction with customers, such as mobile working and notification of site inspection by text.

7. VISION, OBJECTIVES & KPI'S

7.1. Vision

To provide an efficient cohesive partnership offering expertise, flexibility and professionalism in the administration of building legislation

7.2. Objectives for 2012-2017

- To improve customer satisfaction by providing an effective and efficient administration and site inspection regime in particularly through improved use of information technology and communication
- To raise the profile of STG by developing a dynamic marketing strategy and pursuing the expansion of the Partnership through additional partners.
- To provide a healthy, safe and accessible built environment, reducing the carbon footprint and contributing to sustainable construction.
- To provide additional services through a consultancy to generate additional income.
- To continually review contributions by partner authorities to reflect reductions in expenditure.

7.3. Key projects for 2013/14

- Enable customer self-service for tracking and searches
- Increase use of mobile technology with the ability to update in real-time
- Increase income from consultancy services by 30% over the 2012/13 budgeted figure
- Examine the use of different delivery models for the partnership
- Further expansion of the Partnership with the inclusion of new partner authority
- Identify new accommodation for the Partnership head office

7.4. National and local key performance indicators

National key performance indicators are more easily achieved because we have the controls to ensure they are delivered on, eg:

- 70% of plans checked within 10 working days
- 85% of plans checked within 15 working days

- 95% of applications processed within 3 working days

Local key performance indicators are outside of our control and very dependent on the recovery of the economy eg:

- The percentage of site visits which produced advice and guidance to the customer that prevented a breach of the Building Regulations
- Income against target
- Market share to increase within commercial sector by 5% on 2012/13 figures
- To increase response rate from customers satisfaction surveys particularly through web access
- Increase enforcement activity to ensure protection of the public and reduce impact of “rogue builders” within the domestic market

8. FINANCE AND RESOURCES

- 8.1. In order to meet the timetable required by the Constitution the first draft of the Business Plan is required to be presented to Joint Committee in September 2012. The financial plan on page 19 has been amended to take into account any known pressures and savings over the next five years up to and including 2016/17. This will allow partner authorities to show their contribution commitment over the next five years in their budget planning forecasts.
- 8.2. The reduction in the amount of contribution will equate to 18.15% over the life of the Business Plan. The budgets have been built on the basis of a reduction in non-chargeable work from 25% in 2012/13 to 23% in 2013/14, 21% in 2014/15, 20.5% in 2015/16 and 20% in 2016/17. A review will take place each year to ensure these savings are on track and to deal with any unexpected pressures or gains which may be identified. The new draft incorporates a recognised decrease in premises costs due to the fact that in 2015/16 the lease of the current accommodation ends. With the advancement of mobile working and a reduced requirement for office space there will be an expected reduction of 15% in premises costs.
- 8.3. In 2010 a Value for Money exercise was carried out by Gravesham Borough Council which proved that the Partnership continued to deliver cost savings against the service had it remained in house. A further audit was carried out by Swale Borough Council in June 2012 which came to the same conclusion and stated that the controls surrounding the building control partnership provide a substantial level of assurance overall.
- 8.4. The total contributions will have reduced by £60,000 between 2012 and March 2017.

Five Year Budget Build and Contribution Calculation For 2012/2013 - 2016/2017

	<u>2012/13 Budget</u>	<u>2013/14 Budget</u>	<u>2014/15 Budget</u>	<u>2015/16 Budget</u>	<u>2016/17 Budget</u>
Staffing	1,093,010	1,108,773	1,129,538	1,145,138	1,158,543
Premises	102,346	102,532	102,532	87,194	87,194
Transport	48,580	46,580	46,580	46,580	46,580
Supplies and Services	104,942	108,030	108,030	108,030	108,030
Support Services	58,210	58,210	58,210	58,210	58,210
Total Cost:	1,407,088	1,424,125	1,444,890	1,445,152	1,458,557
Contributions	-351,772	-327,549	-303,427	-296,256	-291,711
Fee Income	-1,102,052	-1,096,576	-1,141,463	-1,148,896	-1,166,846
Total Income	-1,453,824	-1,424,125	-1,444,890	-1,445,152	-1,458,557
Net (surplus) / deficit	-46,736	0	0	-0	-0

<u>Contribution Calculation</u>	<u>2012/13 Budget</u>	<u>2013/14 Budget</u>	<u>2014/15 Budget</u>	<u>2015/16 Budget</u>	<u>2016/17 Budget</u>
Fee Earning 80%					1,166,846
Non Fee Earning 20%					291,711
			0	0	1,458,557
Fee Earning 79.5%				1,148,896	
Non Fee Earning 20.5%				296,256	
			0	1,445,152	0
Fee Earning 79%			1,141,463		
Non Fee Earning 21%			303,427		
			1,444,890	0	0
Fee Earning 77%		1,096,576			
Non Fee Earning 23%		327,549			
		1,424,125			
Fee Earning 75%	1,055,316				
Non Fee Earning 25%	351,772				
	1,407,088				

Fee Earning 73%					
Non Fee Earning 27%					

<u>Authority And Agreed Percentage</u>	<u>2012/13 Budget</u>	<u>2013/14 Budget</u>	<u>2014/15 Budget</u>	<u>2015/16 Budget</u>	<u>2016/17 Budget</u>
Gravesham 20%	70,354	65,510	60,685	59,251	58,342
Swale 27%	94,978	88,438	81,925	79,989	78,762
Medway 53%	186,439	173,601	160,816	157,016	154,607
	351,772	327,549	303,427	296,256	291,711

9. WORKFORCE PLANNING AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

- 9.1. Signs of any recovery in the construction industry remain far off with predictions of a slow return to growth around 2014/15. It is predicted that activity at that time will have recovered to where it was in 2010. The Partnership has shown great resilience in combating the pressures of the economy by diversifying its workforce. This has to be maintained to ensure a continued delivery of high quality services and value for money for each partner authority.
- 9.2. Income streams, therefore, have to be set at realistic levels and there will be continued pressure on the building regulation charging account until the economy recovers. Some of the pressure this puts on a balanced budget can be relieved by driving down running costs and this has been applied to the budget over the next five years and is included in the previous section under financial planning. Opportunities exist to further mitigate this pressure by increasing income from other areas and this process has been assisted by the advent of the Localism Act which lifts some of the barriers previously in place on Local Authorities.
- 9.3. The Partnerships approach has to apply some of both philosophies in order to generate a balanced budget whilst reducing partner contributions over the five year period. The improvements to IT over the next two years allowing customers to carry out searches online, track their applications and review inspections for their site will inevitably reduce the amount of customer transactions required through the technical administration team. Since 2007 this team has reduced in capacity by 30% and is now configured to support and generate income streams in its own right. However, work will continue over the next two years to further diversify roles and there are actions within the delivery plan to accommodate staff members as qualified SAP assessors. A secondment to a new enforcement team and staff trained to carry out inspections on many disabled person applications.
- 9.4. The introduction of mobile working will allow for much greater flexibility in the surveyors inspection service. Over the next two years surveyors will be able to see their daily workload on their tablet at the beginning of the day, go directly to site from home, view plans electronically and maintain their site inspection records updating the back office system in 'real time'. This will reduce staff time on site, enable greater numbers of inspections to be carried out and deal with enquiries including dangerous structures, demolitions and unauthorised works at the point of origin. This increased performance for the surveyors will help to accommodate a reduction in numbers allocated to the building regulation charging account.
- 9.5. There are actions included in the delivery plan which will realign staff resources with the income generate from that function. We currently have three income streams; the building regulation charging account, the public protection account (paid for by partner contributions) and the consultancy account. In the past we tried to allocate staff to these various functions but this proved unworkable due to resource implications at the time. With the advent of true mobile working this more efficient way of resourcing will be able to be planned and adopted. As all

services are very much demand driven this will still rely on the flexibility built into the group but will allow to improve services and generate additional income.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1. The first five years have been challenging in respect of the economic situation and the slow recovery in the construction industry. The Partnership has shown over this first term how its flexible approach has been able to mitigate much of the financial pressures it has faced whilst maintaining an excellent services to customers.
- 10.2. The next five years will be equally as challenging but with the assurance of continued improvement as we see the benefits of the IT investment come into fruition and the consolidation of alternative services which help to both develop staff and generate additional income streams.
- 10.3. The feedback from stakeholders has been invaluable in shaping how the Partnership will look in the future and how it will meet the expectations of its customers. There is the possibility of expansion, so as to include new authorities and new staff with additional skills. We will need to move to a new headquarters building in 2015 where location, accessibility and cost will be paramount concerns and we will further develop the consultancy with a wider range of services and new employment possibilities. The next 5 years will be both challenging and rewarding for all those involved in the STGBC partnership.



Building Control Partnership Service Delivery Documentation 2012-2017



Director Tony Van Veghel
Version No. 4
Last updated 20 November 2012

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1. DELIVERY PLAN

Objective 1		To improve customer satisfaction by providing an effective and efficient administration and site inspection regime in particularly through improved use of information technology and communication					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
1.1	To improve the efficiency of the inspection service using information technology	Phil Harris Operations Manager	Daily applications uploaded on tablets by September 2013	Value for money Improve service delivery to customer Allows for more effective enforcement	Investigate costs through MIS user group	Monthly / Quarterly Plan Vetting P.I.s	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
	Year 2012/13	Phil Harris Operations Manager	All data records and photographs recorded remotely and downloaded on system through documentation by September 2013	Value for money Improve service delivery to customer	Funded as customer improvement via Charges Legislation 2010 or reinvestment of surpluses	Trial download of data to database by March 2013 Staff trained to record inspection records and reports on site by September 2013	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
	Year 2013/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager	Daily inspections and data transfer in real time by March 2014	Value for money Improve service delivery to customer	Funded as customer improvement via Charges Legislation 2010	Ability to provide database as a slim client by October 2013	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group

Objective 1		To improve customer satisfaction by providing an effective and efficient administration and site inspection regime in particularly through improved use of information technology and communication					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
					or reinvestment of surpluses		Meetings
	Year 2013/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager	Daily inspections and data transfer in real time by March 2014	Value for money Improve service delivery to customer Allows for more effective enforcement	Funded as customer improvement via Charges Legislation 2010 or reinvestment of surpluses	Trial real time data transfer by March 2013 All staff trained in real time operation by January 2014	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
1.2	To improve efficiency of the application and validation process through the use of IT systems	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Move towards self-service by customers	Customer service improvement Reduction in staff costs Increased enforcement activity	Identified and presented to Joint Committee	Monthly / Quarterly Application Processing P.I.s	Fortnightly management meeting Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	All Initial Notices registered on MIS system and viewed by web access by March 2013	Customer service improvement Reduction in staff costs	Funded as customer improvement via Charges Legislation 2010 or reinvestment of surpluses	Service provider and web team to agree implementation plan by December 2012	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings

Objective 1		To improve customer satisfaction by providing an effective and efficient administration and site inspection regime in particularly through improved use of information technology and communication					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Initial data pertaining to search enquiries to be available through web access by September 2013	Customer service improvement Reduction in staff costs Increased enforcement activity	Funded as customer improvement via Charges Legislation 2010 or reinvestment of surpluses	Trialling of data upload by June 2013 All staff trained on new procedure by September 2013	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Ability to view current submitted applications by September 2013	Customer service improvement Reduction in staff costs Increased enforcement activity	Funded as customer improvement via Charges Legislation 2010 or reinvestment of surpluses	Trial data upload by June 2013	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
	Year 2013/14	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Customer online application tracking by March 2014	Customer service improvement Reduction in staff costs Increased enforcement activity	Funded as customer improvement via Charges Legislation 2010 or reinvestment of surpluses	Six month trial on data tracking by July 2013 All staff trained on new system by October 2013	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings

Objective 1		To improve customer satisfaction by providing an effective and efficient administration and site inspection regime in particularly through improved use of information technology and communication					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
	Year 2013/14	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Increased web usage by customers	Customer service improvement Reduction in staff costs Increased enforcement activity	Customer service improvement Reduction in staff costs Increased enforcement activity	Customer satisfaction survey to judge impact of improvements by March 2014	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
1.3	To increase response rate from customers satisfaction surveys	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Increased number of responses each quarter and fair access to service analysed	Highlight level of service through personal and telephone surveys	Within current budget	Quarterly Customer Satisfaction P.I.s	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Increased number of responses each quarter and fair access to service analysed	Highlight level of service through personal and telephone surveys	Within current budget	First annual results analysed September 2012	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings

In support of the Councils priorities:

- To transform the Council into an economically sound organisation delivering excellent accessible services that provide value for money - Gravesham

- Value for money and putting the customer at the heart of everything we do - Medway
- Open for business - Swale

Local Performance Indicators:

- Percentage of plans checked within 10 and 15 working days
- Applications processed within 3 working days
- Percentage increase inspections per surveyor
- Quarterly customer satisfaction survey

Rationale

- To improve the speed and quality of the application process
- To increase the number of relevant inspections to deliver the required inspection framework for each application
- To ensure continued improvement and customer satisfaction

Objective 2		To raise the profile of STG by developing a dynamic marketing strategy and pursuing the expansion of the Partnership through additional partners					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
2.1	Carryout market research to assess potential customers awareness of partnership's services	Janine Boughton Head of Administration and Marketing Team	Marketing research report by March 2013	Determination of market share	Within current budget	Quarterly Customer Satisfaction P.I.s	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks

Objective 2		To raise the profile of STG by developing a dynamic marketing strategy and pursuing the expansion of the Partnership through additional partners					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
2.2	Match customer requirements with our current and proposed service developments	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Review of customer improvements to match priorities	Improved service delivery	Within current budget	Quarterly Customer Satisfaction P.I.s	Monthly at team meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Review of customer improvements to match priorities by September 2012	Improved service delivery	Within current budget	Briefing report to members by September 2012	Monthly at team meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Review of customer feedback to match priorities	Improved service delivery	Within current budget	Development marketing strategy to promote customer priorities by November 2012	Monthly at team meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks
2.3	Identify additional services which would persuade customers to use the partnership rather than the private sector	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Training of staff or alternative provision	Development of staff introduced through PDR process	Within current training budget	Quarterly Customer Satisfaction P.I.s	Monthly at team meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks

Objective 2		To raise the profile of STG by developing a dynamic marketing strategy and pursuing the expansion of the Partnership through additional partners					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Training of staff or alternative provision	Development of staff introduced through PDR process	Within current training budget	Examine current resources to determine whether in-house provision possible by December 2012	Monthly at team meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Setting up of SLA	Potential profit reduced Contractual arrangement with penalty clauses	Within current budget	Identification of those services better provided by buying in expertise by March 2013	Monthly at team meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks
	Year 2012/13	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Training of staff	Increased profit by in-house service delivery	Invest to save bid	Training of existing staff in the required discipline by July 2013	Monthly at team meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks
	Year 2013/14	Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Review of stakeholders feedback to match service delivery priorities	Number of focus groups held each year	Current budget	Review stakeholders to ascertain service delivery throughout 2012- 2014	Monthly at team meetings Marketing group meeting every six weeks

Objective 2		To raise the profile of STG by developing a dynamic marketing strategy and pursuing the expansion of the Partnership through additional partners					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
2.4	To approach adjacent authorities and determine their position with regards to joining the partnership	Steering Group and Tony Van Veghel	Presentations to authorities that show an interest in joining the partnership	Draft procedure for new authority joining partnership	Current budget	Commitment from new authority to join 2012/13	Steering Group Joint Committee
	Thorough investigation of joining authorities situation with regards operations, finance, HR, legal and IT Year 2012/13	Tony Van Veghel	Determination of adequacy of authority to join the partnership	Proven business case for partnership expansion	Charge to new authority and reflected in contributions	Business case by December 2012	Steering Group Joint Committee
	New authority operating from within the partnership with additional representation on Joint Committee and Steering Group Year 2013/14	Tony Van Veghel	New ways of working for the partnership including the use of additional satellite office	Increased resources, additional staff skills, additional income stream, further reduction in direct costs	From within new budget	Half yearly report by October 2013	Steering Group Joint Committee

In support of the Councils priorities:

- To transform the Council into an economically sound organisation delivering excellent accessible services that provide value for money - Gravesham
- Value for money and putting the customer at the heart of everything we do - Medway
- Open for business- Swale

Local Performance Indictors:

- Increased market share

- Monitoring usage of website through number of hits per quarter
- Increase in the number of services being accessed

Rationale

- To ensure we raise the profile of STG
- Retain existing customers
- Engage with new customers and increase market share
- Ensuring the widest marketing of the range of services now available through STG

Objective 3		To contribute to sustainable construction and provide a healthy, safe and accessible built environment by developing a consistent interpretation of complex regulations					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
3.1	To provide guidance on complex regulation interpretation through training and workshops	Managing Surveyors	Consistent interpretation of regulations	Reduction in complaints from customers	Within current budget	Identify differences in determination through quarterly workshops between April 2012 to March 2014	Monthly team meeting
	Years 2012 - 2014	Managing Surveyors	Consistent interpretation of regulations	Reduction in complaints from customers	Within current budget	Training to all surveyors on agreed outcomes within 1 month of workshop	Monthly team meeting
3.2	Production of guidance sheets to assist builders and developers in compliance	Managing Surveyors	Greater understanding by the developer on problem resolution by March 2014	Less complaints More efficient use of time on site	Within current budget	Draft guidance produced after workshop	Monthly team meetings
	Years 2012 – 2014	Managing Surveyors	Greater understanding by the developer on problem resolution by March 2014	Less complaints More efficient use of time on site	Within current budget	Discussed and refined during training Guidance sheet produced for customers within 2	Monthly team meetings

Objective 3		To contribute to sustainable construction and provide a healthy, safe and accessible built environment by developing a consistent interpretation of complex regulations					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
						months of workshop	
3.3	Identify learning and development needs through PDR process and map in staff training matrix following workshops	Management team	Any gaps in understanding identified in workshops and training would be addressed	Personal development of individuals Increased customer satisfaction	Within training budget	PDR's completed annually by end of April	Monthly team meeting Steering meetings
	Years 2012 - 2014	Management team	Any gaps in understanding identified in workshops and training would be addressed	Personal development of individuals Increased customer satisfaction	Within training budget	Quarterly review of training matrix	Monthly team meeting Steering meetings
3.4	To investigate alternative working arrangements so as to encourage consistency in plan vetting / site inspection work	Tony Van Veghel Director Phil Harris Operations Manager	Consistently meeting plan vetting targets Increased number of site inspections	Increased turn around time for customers More responsive inspection service	Within current budget	Investigate best practice use of alternative service delivery in other building control	Monthly team meeting
	Year 2012/13	Tony Van Veghel Director Phil Harris	Consistently meeting plan vetting targets	Increased turn around time for customers	Within current budget	Trial alternative operations by March 2013	Monthly team meeting

Objective 3		To contribute to sustainable construction and provide a healthy, safe and accessible built environment by developing a consistent interpretation of complex regulations					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
		Operations Manager	Increased number of site inspections	More responsive inspection service			
	Year 2013/14	Tony Van Veghel Director	Consistently meeting plan vetting targets	Increased turn around time for customers	Within current budget	Select most appropriate method of service delivery and implement by July 2013	Monthly team meeting
		Phil Harris Operations Manager	Increased number of site inspections	More responsive inspection service			

Objective 3 continued...

In support of the Councils priorities:

- To transform the Council into an economically sound organisation delivering excellent accessible services that provide value for money - Gravesham
- Value for money and putting the customer at the heart of everything we do - Medway
- Open for business - Swale

Local Performance Indicators:

- The number of technical staff achieving their CPD requirements
- Reduction in number of complaints caused by interpretation of regulations
- The number of training days per FTE
- Increase in customer satisfaction

Rationale

- Increase customer satisfaction by reducing the number of conflicting interpretations of complex regulations and processes
- To provide for the continued development of staff and ensure they are up-to-date with legislative changes
- To interact with customers and clients to resolve areas of concern

Objective 4		To provide additional services through a consultancy to generate additional income					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
4.1	To undertake GAP analysis to determine where additional expertise is required to deliver additional services and undertake staff training	Tony Van Veghel Director	Training needs assessment for individuals who require to develop new skills	Being able to provide additional service and increase income and market share Development of individual in new skills	To be identified through a cost report	Staff development and training costs identified	Monthly team meeting Steering meetings six weekly
	Years 2012 - 2014	Tony Van Veghel Director	Training needs assessment for individuals who require to develop new skills	Development of individual in new skills	To be identified through a cost report	Implement training programme between December 2012 and March 2014	Monthly team meeting Steering meetings six weekly
	Years 2012 - 2014	Tony Van Veghel Director	Evaluation of training carried out for future development	Development of individual in new skills	To be identified through a cost report	Review value for money from each training course to determine suitability for future staff	Monthly team meeting Steering meetings six weekly
4.2	Assess strengths and weaknesses of current service delivery and identify areas of improvement to increase STG	Janine Boughton Head of Administration and Marketing Team	Improved service delivery to meet customer expectation	Increase in market share	Within current budget	SWOT analysis carried out by June and annually reviewed Update marketing strategy following	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings

Objective 4		To provide additional services through a consultancy to generate additional income					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
	profile					annual review	Marketing group meeting every six weeks
4.3	Provision of publicity material for all additional services	Janine Boughton and Marketing Group	High quality brochure for distribution to customers	Increase market share	Within current budget	Additional publicity literature produced when consistent quality service validated between September 2012 to March 2014	Marketing group meeting every six weeks
4.4	To determine how much 'additional' consultancy work can be undertaken without affecting the building control service.	Phil Harris Operations Manager	Matching resources with demand	Transferring staff between core function and consultancy Introduction of consultants and/or temporary contract surveyors	Within current budget	To calculate an estimated activity analysis of each new service six monthly	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings Joint Committee

In support of the Councils priorities:

- To transform the Council into an economically sound organisation delivering excellent accessible services that provide value for money - Gravesham
- Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do - Medway
- Giving value for money – Medway
- Open for business – Swale
- Embracing localism - Swale

Local Performance Indicators:

- Number of external qualifications obtained per FTE
- The % of consultancy work compared to current STG fee earning and non fee earning services
- The amount of income generated by the consultancy
- The % breakdown of the consultancies service provision to target appropriate markets

Rationale

- Supporting the current services of building control through a second source of income
- Effective use of development of staff skills
- More effective competition against private companies

Objective 5		Continually review contributions by partner authorities to reflect reductions in expenditure					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
5.1	Identify services to be delivered through improved technology and customer self-service	Tony Van Veghel Director	Improved interface between customers and back office system	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years		Review of services	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
	Year 2012/17	Tony Van Veghel Director	Improved interface between customers and back office system	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years	Within current budget	Identify most adaptable service to be provided through improvements in technology by December 2012	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
	Year 2012/17	Tony Van Veghel Director	Improved interface between customers and back office system	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years	Within current budget	Report to Joint Committee on resource savings and impact on customers by June 2013	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
5.2	Identify cost reductions and determine alternative methods of service delivery	Tony Van Veghel Director	Reduced premises costs by 15% following lease expiration in March 2015	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years		Identify alternative accommodation during 2013/14	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting

Objective 5		Continually review contributions by partner authorities to reflect reductions in expenditure					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
	Year 2012 – 2015	Tony Van Veghel Director	Saving of 15% on premises costs equalling £15k	Reorganise working practices and implement risk based inspection regime	Within current budget	Greater use of mobile technology, hot desking and remote working by September 2014	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
5.3	Encourage staff development to undertake new and diverse roles	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Assisting staff with new skills to enable delivery of consultancy services	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years		Identify gaps in consultancy	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
	Year 2012/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Assisting staff with new skills to enable delivery of consultancy services	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years	Within current budget	Identify gaps in consultancy tasks between June 2012 to December 2012	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
	Year 2012/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Assisting staff with new skills to enable delivery of consultancy services	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years	Within current budget	Identify potential individuals to fulfil tasks between October 2012 to March 2013	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting

Objective 5		Continually review contributions by partner authorities to reflect reductions in expenditure					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
	Year 2012/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Assisting staff with new skills to enable delivery of consultancy services	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years	Funded as customer service improvement via Charges Legislation 2010 or reinvestment of surpluses	Programme in training between April 2013 to September 2013	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
5.4	Increase use of IT and web to enable customers to self-serve on general enquiries, application tracking and some historical data	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Customers able to self-serve enquiries from the web	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years		Quarterly review of development plan	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
	Year 2013/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Web self-service	Cost savings		Service provider and web team to agree implementation plan by May 2013	Monthly management team
	Year 2013/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Web self-service	Cost savings	Within current budget	Trialling of data upload by September 2013	Monthly management team
	Year 2013/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager	Web self-service	Cost savings	Within current budget	All staff trained on new	Monthly management

Objective 5		Continually review contributions by partner authorities to reflect reductions in expenditure					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
		Janine Boughton Head of Administration				procedure by December 2013	team
	Year 2013/14	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Customers able to self-serve enquiries from the web	Cost savings	Within current budget	Trial data upload by October 2013	Monthly management team
	Year 2014/15	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Customers able to self-serve enquiries from the web	Cost savings	Within current budget	Six month trial on data tracking by July 2014	Monthly management team
	Year 2014/15	Phil Harris Operations Manager Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Customers able to self-serve enquiries from the web	Cost savings	Within current budget	All staff trained on new system by October 2014	Monthly management team
5.5	Reorganise support team to provide additional support to the consultancy	Tony Van Veghel Director Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Multi-skilled support team with transferable skills between core function	Contributing towards 18.15% cost saving over 5 years		Discuss and agree consultation and implementation process for change of	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting

Objective 5		Continually review contributions by partner authorities to reflect reductions in expenditure					
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
			and consultancy work			contracts with staff and HR between March 2013 to October 2013	
	Year 2013/14	Tony Van Veghel Director Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Multi-skilled support team	Cost savings	Within current budget	Agree process for buying in staff time for consultancy by June 2013	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting
	Year 2013/14	Tony Van Veghel Director Janine Boughton Head of Administration	Multi-skilled support team	Cost savings	Within current budget	Review working practices and impact on both functions by December 2013	Joint Committee Quarterly Quarterly Steering Group meeting

In support of the Councils priorities:

- To transform the Council into an economically sound organisation delivering excellent accessible services that provide value for money - Gravesham
- Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do - Medway
- Giving value for money – Medway
- Open for business - Swale

Local Performance Indicators:

- Number of external qualifications obtained per FTE

- The % of consultancy work compared to current STG fee earning and non fee earning services
- The amount of income generated by the consultancy
- The % breakdown of the consultancies service provision to target appropriate markets

Rationale

- Supporting the current services of building control through a second source of income
- Effective use of development of staff skills
- More effective competition against private companies

2. CONTRIBUTION AND SUPPORT FOR COUNCILS PRIORITIES

2.1. As STG is a Partnership of three authorities, it is important that its values reflect those of the three councils.

Gravesham's priorities are:

- to achieve a safe, clean and green place of choice
- to foster vibrant and cohesive communities with affirmative action to promote meaningful engagement, diversity and social inclusion, health and well-being, leisure and culture
- to seek to provide and work with others to ensure quality and affordable housing
- to secure a sustainable and buoyant economy, particularly in the town centre and Ebbsfleet, with attractive investment opportunities and a developing tourism market and to maximise regeneration opportunities for the benefit of existing and new communities
- to invest in the future of Gravesham through development of its youth
- to transform the council into an economically sound organisation delivering excellent accessible services that provide value for money.

Medway's priorities for the next three years are:

- Safe, Clean and Green Medway
- Children and young people have the best start in Medway
- Adults maintain their independence and live healthy lives
- Everybody travelling easily around Medway
- Everyone benefitting from the area's regeneration

Medway Values

- Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do
- Giving value for money

Swale's priorities are:

- Healthy environment
- Open for business
- Embracing localism

2.2. There are clear links between the three and all revolve around regeneration and sustainability, maximising opportunities for local communities and delivering quality services. These are also encompassed in the values of putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and giving value for money.

Regeneration

Linked to Council Priorities:

- to secure a sustainable and buoyant economy, particularly in the town centre and Ebbsfleet, with attractive investment opportunities and a developing tourism market and to maximise regeneration opportunities for the benefit of existing and new communities - Gravesham priority
- Everyone benefitting from the area's regeneration – Medway priority
- Healthy environment – Swale priority

2.3. Our consultancy is now able to offer a range of services to the major regeneration projects in the area. Early intervention in the design process will eliminate issues that could provide conflicts with legislation at a later date. Our range of services include:

Code for sustainable home assessment, SAP calculations, SBEM calculations, Display Energy Certificates, Access Audits and Fire Risk Analysis and reports.

We have also teamed up with colleagues LABC Services, the commercial arm of LABC, through whom we are able to offer air pressure testing, acoustic testing and have access to CDM co-ordinators together with other expertise and specialism's which we are now able to facilitate.

- 2.4. We also work with colleagues in Private Sector Housing and Environmental Health to aid the transformation of areas through social regeneration, providing advice on bringing back into use empty and dilapidated properties, houses in multiple occupation and the refurbishment and repair of commercial premises. We have a number of joint meetings with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and have shared technical updates through the seminars we have organised. Through our unique and extensive database of historic records, we are able to assist many design projects in bring back premises in key areas to align with the regeneration policies of each authority.
- 2.5. We offer the design and surveying team expertise in the design of many adaptations to Medway's schools, and have partnered with a number of architectural practices that are working through programmes of school extensions and adaptations put in place following the cancellation of the Building Schools for the Future programme. We work with Medway Education and Business Partnership to assist in work experience for school leavers.

Links to STG Delivery Plan Reference:

- Corporate Consideration Workforce Development Action W1 (see page 29)
- Objective 4 (see page 13)

Sustainability

Linked to Council Priorities:

- to achieve a safe, clean and green place of choice – Gravesham priority

- A clean and green environment – Medway priority
- Healthy environment – Swale priority

2.6. Building Control has a major part to play in ensuring the innovative designs for the regeneration of the area are still compliant with the Building Regulations. As sustainability is an important part of the Government's agenda to reduce CO₂ emissions and reduce energy costs for everyone, the adaptation and renovation of buildings within the area, together with control of new buildings will ensure the impact on the environment and energy bills are kept to a minimum.

2.7. The Government have stated:

“The Energy White Paper produced by the Government acknowledged the reality of climate change and stated a commitment to putting the UK on a path to cutting carbon dioxide emission by 60% before 2050 with real progress by 2020 by cutting emissions by 34% of the 1990 levels.

With around half of the CO₂ emissions coming from building energy use, the Building Regulations are a key part of Government efforts to tackle climate change through higher building standards. CLG recognise that Building Control professionals are at the forefront of these efforts.”

2.8. A major impact on the repair and maintenance of housing stock will be the effect of Green Deal. The Green Deal is a new Government initiative that is designed to bring together business and home owners to employ more green technologies in their properties. The idea is to install this technology to the property with no upfront costs as the costs will be paid back through energy bills over a period of time. This is unlike a conventional loan because if the owner moves out of the property the bill stays with the property where the savings are occurring and does not move with the bill payer. The golden rule of the Green Deal is that the expected financial savings must be equal to or greater than the costs attached to the energy bill.

2.9. The underpinning framework for the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) was approved by the House of Lords on 23 July 2012. The Government confirmed their intention to introduce the Green Deal through supporting a responsible and controlled approach with full national systems testing. From October 2012 authorised and accredited assessors will be able to begin operating so consumers will be ready to complete a Green Deal plan at the end of January 2013 when the relevant parts of the framework regulations come into affect.

2.10. Also in October 2012 ECO's begin enabling energy companies and others to start delivering energy efficiency and heating measures. The Government are also revitalising the Home Energy Conservation Act requiring all English local authorities to report a proposed energy conservation measure to improve the energy efficiency of their residential accommodation as the Green Deal can enable them to achieve this. Opportunities exist here for the Partnership to expand its consultancy services to accommodate Green Deal advisors who will be able to work with home owners and partner councils to review and implement energy improvements in their properties building fabric.

2.11. This key message from the Government and the demand from the construction industry for pre-application advice and discussion mean it is imperative that STG invest in continually training staff to provide the lead and the service that is required. This necessary training will ensure that sufficient qualified staff are available to provide a design service through the consultancy, and a checking service through the administration of the Building Regulations without compromising the necessary checks and balances which need to be in place to ensure complete scrutiny in both the design and checking processes, similar to that which exists in private sector competition.

Links to STG Delivery Plan Reference:

- Objective 4 Action 4.1 and 4.2 (see page 13)

Maximising Opportunities for local communities

Linked to Council Priorities:

- to foster vibrant and cohesive communities with affirmative action to promote meaningful engagement, diversity and social inclusion, health and well-being, leisure and culture – Gravesham priority
- to seek to provide and work with others to ensure quality and affordable housing – Gravesham priority
- to invest in the future of Gravesham through development of its youth – Gravesham priority
- Children and young people having the best start in life – Medway priority
- Older and vulnerable people maintaining their independence – Medway priority
- Embracing localism – Swale priority

2.12. Through joint training, guidance and information sheets, together with builder and architect forums, the Partnership aims to support all of our customers in their building projects. Over the next 3 years mini guides will be developed both locally and nationally to cover general standards of construction on many projects in the domestic market such as garage conversions, small extensions and removal of load-bearing walls. This will assist in ensuring a consistent approach to the many challenges, the multitude of complex and interactive regulations now presents to every development.

2.13. Inclusive design is a paramount requirement of both newbuild and refurbishment works. Advising on compliance with the DDA and Part M of the Building Regulations is a major part of public protection inspection services (non-fee earning) work. This not only delivers a more suitable environment for disabled people, but also transfers the benefits to the greater community, i.e. young families, older people and those caring for others. Applications for works to benefit disabled people increased by 14% in 2010/11 and continue to show an increase in 2011/12.

2.14. The majority of the work of the Partnership is concerned with protecting the community through health and safety requirements in the regulations or in other sections of the Building Act.

- 2.15. Important examples of health and safety requirements include fire safety (means of escape, fire spread and access for the fire service) structural safety and satisfactory drainage. In addition, the Partnership deals with dangerous structures, demolitions, dilapidated buildings and contraventions of the Building Regulations. The CLG have programmed a consultation exercise in 2012/13 to determine if security ought to feature as a separate part of the building regulations.
- 2.16. We assist with a number of local agents and private sector housing sections to ensure adaptations comply with the Regulations to enable older and vulnerable people to stay in their homes and maintain their independence.

Links to STG Delivery Plan Reference:

Objective 1 Action 1.1 (see page 1)

Objective 2 Action 2.2 (see page 5)

Objective 3 Action 3.1 & 3.2 (see page 10)

Objective 5 Action 5.4 (see page 18)

Objective 5 Action 5.5 (see page 19)

Corporate Consideration Workforce Development Action W1 (see page 29)

Delivering quality services

Linked to Council Priorities:

- to transform the council into an economically sound organisation delivering excellent accessible services that provide value for money. – Gravesham
- Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do - Medway
- Giving value for money - Medway
- Open for business - Swale

2.17. The customer survey carried out in 2011 revealed that the overall service provided by STG is of a very high standard with 97% of respondents rating it good to excellent. However, the survey also revealed areas where improvements can be made.

2.18. Whilst price is important it was not always the deciding factor in many cases criteria. Communication and speed of turn around are very important and featured highly in many categories as the most important factor. We will be implementing changes throughout this year to establish better communication with owners so that they are more fully engaged with the works being undertaken to their property and also better understand the interaction of building control.

2.19. We have worked hard in 2011 to reduce the turn around times for plan checking and will continue to improve the service through 2012. We will be introducing tracking of applications via our website and will further improve the service to customers facilitating self-service searches online.

2.20. We will be revisiting and revising guidance documentation for owners and developers to improve consistency on site and ensure communication throughout the life of the project is improved. Much of these improvements are based on further developments of our IT system and an IT strategy will enable more informative mobile and remote working.

2.21. Local Authorities have a duty to ensure that building work complies with the Building Regulations (Section 91 of the Building Act 1984). If our requests to rectify contravention fail then, as a last resort, more formal action is used. There are two courses of action available:

Prosecution of the builder in the Magistrates Court under Section 35 of the Building Act 1984: in most cases, action must be started within six months of the contravention being discovered, the period of discovery being extended in 2008 to two years from the date the works were completed.

Notice under Section 36 of the Building Act 1984 requiring the owner to remove or rectify the contravening work. This Notice must be served within 12 months from the date of discovery of the contravention.

- 2.22. Most enforcement work is carried out by negotiation, and through 2009/10 the CLG asked authorities to demonstrate activity in this area. Prosecutions through the courts are an exception, but every day a number of the inspections carried out involve some form of intervention to either prevent or rectify work which was in contravention of the Regulations. We have worked with our software provider to design a way of capturing this information in the form of pre-contravention inspection reports and we will monitor this monthly to reflect the number of inspections carried out that have protected consumers from building regulation contraventions during the course of their development.
- 2.23. As staff numbers have been reduced to lower the Partnership's costs, it remains important that a resilient and quality service is still in place. Therefore, alternative methods of working are being investigated to make more effective use of surveyors' time on site. Remote working will allow for a greater number of inspections to be carried out per surveyor. It will also allow for 'real time' information to be available at the back office so as to deal with enquiries more efficiently. This will also allow for better communication between office and site based staff.
- 2.24. As mentioned previously, consistency remains an important requirement identified by customers. We will be examining this area through the provision of training and shared experiences of staff and designers, the use of guidance notes and the use of comprehensive clauses, conditions and site notes.

Links to STG Delivery Plan Reference:

- Objective 1 Action 1.1 – (see page 1)
- Objective 1 Action 1.2 – (see page 2)
- Objective 3 Action 3.2 – (see page 10)
- Objective 5 Action 5.1 – (see page 16)

3. COUNCIL WIDE THEMES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENTS

Workforce Development (including recruitment, retention, development and equalities issues in staffing)							
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
W1	To provide development opportunities to enable staff to carry out a range of diverse services through mentoring, coaching and direct training.	Tony Van Veghel Director	Range of services increased, available resource to carry out services enhanced	New skills developed by individual staff members and redirection of time spent on various building control functions	Within current budget	Number of qualifications obtained Increased number of products and services by September 2012	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings PDR plus 6 monthly review
W2	See 1.1 above						
W3	See 1.3 above						
W4	See 3.3 above						
W5	See 5.3 above						
W6	See 5.5 above						

New Ways of Working and Value For Money issues							
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
N1	See 1.1 above						
N2	See 1.2 above						
N3	See 2.2 above						
N4	See 3.4 above						
N5	See 5.3 above						
N6	See 5.4 above						
N7	See 5.5 above						

Data Quality							
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
D1	To ensure data quality and integrity within STG	Robert Wiseman	Data quality audits to be conducted on all system to the agreed schedule	Data security and improved quality	Within current budget	Continued implementation of data quality audit program The number of recommendations given after each audit	Monthly at team meetings

Fair access to service (equalities)							
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
F1	To ensure all policy, procedures and strategy provide fair access to service	Janine Boughton Head of Admin.	Appropriate staff to be DIA trained by May 2010	Equality and fair access to service for all	Within current budget	DIA training to be identified in relevant staff PDR DIA to be completed and reviewed to the agreed schedule	Monthly at team meetings
			All staff to have refresher training on DIA by May 2013				

Customer Feedback and Consultation							
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
C1	See 1.3 above						
C2	See 2.1 above						
C3	See 2.2 above						
C4	See 2.3 above						
C5	See 5.4 above						

Benchmarking							
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
B1	To assess efficiency and best practice by being members of the Kent Benchmarking Club	Tony Van Veghel Director	Number of new ideas adopted	Improved service delivery	Within current budget	Number of meetings attended Comparison year on year of the quality performance matrix Retention of ISO 9001 by BSI	Monthly at team meetings Quarterly Steering Group Meetings
B2	To develop benchmarking criteria with family of authorities by April 2013	Tony Van Veghel	Benchmarking table drawn up	Learning from best practice	Within current budget	Agreement with "family authorities" on benchmarking criteria by July 2012	Comparative data collected by March 2013

Sustainability							
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
S1	See 1.1 above reduction in transport cost would result in a reduction of mileage using various modes of transport			Reduction in CO2 emission			

Partnership Working							
Action		Lead person	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Monitoring
P1	To ensure public safety by working in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure fire procedures meet the requirements before and after occupancy	Phil Harris Operations manager	Number of successful consultations that resulted in no further work for the occupant	Customer satisfaction	Within current resources	Number of consultations carried out Develop a joint customer satisfaction questionnaire July 2010	Monthly at team meetings Half yearly meetings with the fire service
P2	To work as part of the Kent Building Control Partnership to provide knowledge and skills to deliver the 'Schools for the Future Programme'	Tony Van Veghel Director	Number of successful bids	Value for money Customer satisfaction	Within current resources	Terms of reference to be developed for the partnership by May 2010 Number of bids	Monthly at team meetings Bi monthly KBC meetings

4. SERVICE RISKS

Risk rating key

Likelihood

- A. Very high
- B. High
- C. Significant
- D. Low
- E. Very low
- F. Almost impossible

Impact

- 1. Catastrophic (showstopper)
- 2. Critical
- 3. Marginal
- 4. Negligible

Host Directorate: RCC		Service: STG Building Control			Manager: Tony Van Veghel		Portfolio Holder: STG Joint Committee	
Risk Title: Finance and Strategy					Description of Risk: Reduced income			
Date	Risk No	Risk Rating	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequences if Risk Realised	Mitigation/Action Points for Risk Owners	Service Plan Ref.	Council Priority
29/07/11	01	C3	Continuation of economic downturn resulting in low numbers of applications	10% fall in income	Insufficient income to cover expenditure on fee earning account resulting in an increase on the followings year's chargeable rate which may make us uncompetitive.	Reduced expenditure to limit income deficiency. Look for alternative income streams through consultancy service.	1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 3.2, 4.0	G4 MV2 S4
29/07/11	02	C3	Inability to sustain growth and acquire additional business.	All three schedules, residential, commercial and	Inability to match income with expenditure resulting in increase in	Invest in training and development of staff so as to diversify resources into consultancy work. Increased	4.0, 5.3	G2, 4 M1 & 5 MV2 S1, 2 & 3

Host Directorate: RCC		Service: STG Building Control			Manager: Tony Van Veghel		Portfolio Holder: STG Joint Committee		
Risk Title: Finance and Strategy					Description of Risk: Reduced income				
Date	Risk No	Risk Rating	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequences if Risk Realised	Mitigation/Action Points for Risk Owners	Service Plan Ref.	Council Priority	
				domestic show little sign of recovery between 2011/2014.	following year's chargeable rate. Surveyors chargeable time transfers to enforcement activity which would not be sustainable from the contributions.	time allocation monitoring.			
29/07/11	03	D3	Current economic situation leading to increased debt arising from unpaid invoices.	Increased number of applicants unable to pay invoices.	Number and value of debtors increased affecting the budgeted income figure. Unpaid invoice provision within budget would need to be increased.	Careful monitoring of debtors list. Vigorous pursuit of large debts. Files clearly marked where invoice remains unpaid so as site surveyor can pursue on inspection. Taking over the functions of invoicing and dept collection from the finance department.	1.2, 5.4	G4 MV2 S4	

Host Directorate: RCC		Service: STG Building Control			Manager: Tony Van Veghel		Portfolio Holder: STG Joint Committee		
Risk Title: Inadequate Staff Development					Description of Risk: Insufficient investment in staff				
Date	Risk No	Risk Rating	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequences if Risk Realised	Mitigation/Action Points for Risk Owners	Service Plan Ref.	Council Priority	
29/07/11	04	D3	Failure to suitably develop staff to meet the needs of the business and match personal self improvement	The market is regularly changing to offer alternative services to clients which compliment building regulation	Insufficient skill base would result in customers being more attracted to the competition with a	Ensure staff are well trained and able to compete with the services offered by the private sector. Develop training matrix to	1.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 5.3, 5.5	G3 & 4 M1 & 5 MV1 S1 & 4	

Host Directorate: RCC			Service: STG Building Control		Manager: Tony Van Veghel		Portfolio Holder: STG Joint Committee	
Risk Title: Inadequate Staff Development					Description of Risk: Insufficient investment in staff			
Date	Risk No	Risk Rating	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequences if Risk Realised	Mitigation/Action Points for Risk Owners	Service Plan Ref.	Council Priority
			expectations.	work. The Partnership requires staff to be trained to deliver a more diverse service and remain competitive.	resultant loss in work.	ensure staff development through PDR process.		

Host Directorate: RCC			Service: STG Building Control		Manager: Tony Van Veghel		Portfolio Holder: STG Joint Committee	
Risk Title: Inability to develop IT to match expectations					Description of Risk: Ineffective IT			
Date	Risk No	Risk Rating	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequences if Risk Realised	Mitigation/Action Points for Risk Owners	Service Plan Ref.	Council Priority
29/07/11	05	B2	Inability to provide remote working and make consequence service improvements and cost savings.	Inability of software system to be accessed effectively in real time	Unable to change working practices, unable to save transport costs and unable to compete effectively with the private sector on site.	Trialling alternative software providers. Investigate `best practice' in other building control bodies. Possible use of IT consultant.	1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 5.2, 5.4	G6, M5, MV1, MV2, S4
29/07/11	06	B2	Inability to develop web based self-service.	Customers unable to research information/check progress on applications on website	Unable to divert staff away from this function therefore unable to make necessary savings.	Investigate `best practice' in other building control bodies. Agreed action plan with web provider.	1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 4.4, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5	G6, M5, MV1, MV2, S4

5. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR BUILDING CONTROL

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR BUILDING CONTROL

Name	<i>Tony VanVeghel</i>
Job Title	<i>Director</i>
Contact Number	<i>0163433 1522</i>
Contact e-mail	<i>Tony VanVeghel@STGBC.org.uk</i>
Organisation	<i>South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership</i>

CONTEXTUAL DATA

a) Number of domestic projects

	Number of residential projects
Dwellings (each house/flat/unit counts as a project)	354
Alterations and extensions (each application counts as a project)	1660
Total	2014

What 12 month period was this data collected over?

April 2010-March 2011

b) Number of non-domestic projects undertaken in each of the following construction value bandings

	Number of non-domestic projects
Band 1 - Under £20'000	184
Band 2 - £20'000 - £49'999	31
Band 3 - £50'000 - £99'999	29
Band 4 - £100'000 - £499'999	70
Band 5 - £500'000 - £1million	13
Band 6 - Over £1million	4
Total	331

What 12 month period was this data collected over?

April 2010 to March 2011

Please list below any projects of high value that have been excluded from the above figures where they are deemed to be 'one-off' events

Project	Value
Strood academy	£24,000,000

c) Average total hours input per project

Should be all input including site visits and office based tasks

	Average number of hours input to project
Dwellings	15
Alterations and extensions	12.5
Band 1 - Under £20'000	8
Band 2 - £20'000 - £49'999	15
Band 3 - £50'000 - £99'999	20
Band 4 - £100'000 - £499'999	40
Band 5 - £500'000 - £1million	65
Band 6 - Over £1million	? 130

What Period was this data collected over?	<i>Apr - march 2010-2011</i>
Is this data for all projects in this period or a sample of projects?	<i>sample</i>
If the data was for a sample of projects how was the sample identified?	<i>Random pus guesstimate due to wide range considered</i>

d) Resource information

	Number of full-time equivalent
Qualified and experienced Building Control Officers	9.3
Part-qualified Building Control Officers	6.8
Other staff employed by the service	9.25

Total	25.35
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What 12 month period was this data collected over?

Apr 2010 - Mar 2011

Contextual data narrative

Please add any narrative in the box below which you feel would help an external audience to interpret your contextual data.

This could be issues which you feel are specific to your circumstances

South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership also provide a consultancy to which the building control staff are seconded. The consultancy deals with related building control assessments including Code for Sustainable Homes, SAP assessments, SBems, party wall awards, fire risk assessments, access audits, and also providing Clerk of works services for the decent homes programme

BC 1

For each question place a '1' in the box corresponding to the correct answer. Leave the incorrect answer blank.

Question Number	Question	Yes	No
1	Is a standard process used to ensure that all advice given is recorded by the service provider, and is accessible to the client throughout the life of the project and afterwards?	1	
2	Is the Building Control Service enabled for the on-line submission of plans by applicants and an on-line response by the Building Control Body?	1	
3	Does the Building Control Body have a recognised external accreditation of service quality? (recognised external accreditations are those which involve external validation of the service through an on-site process of assessment such as ISO9000 and Charter mark)	1	
4	Is there formal adoption of an inspection regime at the outset of each project, and is this notified to the client?	1	
5	Does the Building Control Body have a published complaints procedure which complies with the Performance Standards document and is actively published?	1	
6i	Is there a system in place to ensure that client requests are responded to by a case officer within a reasonable timeframe?		1
6ii	Is contact by all methods (phone, fax, e-mail, and office address) clearly advertised to all customers at the outset of the project and on all relevant correspondence?	1	

Total	6	1
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BC2

BC2
<i>Consultation with the Fire Authority</i>

a) Schemes on which the Building Control Body (BCB) carries out a formal written consultation with the Fire and Rescue Authority expressed as a percentage of the number of schemes received by the BCB

	Number of schemes
Number of schemes that received a formal written consultation with the Fire and Rescue Authority	<i>152</i>
Total number of schemes received by the BCB	<i>152</i>
Percentage of schemes received by the Building Control Body which received a formal written consultation with the Fire and Rescue Authority	<i>100%</i>

b) Average number of working days

	Average number of working days
Average number of working days elapsing between the Building Control Body receiving the "plans to be used for consultation purposes" and the plans being forwarded to the Fire and Rescue Authority	<i>10</i>
The Building Control Body receiving the written observations of the Fire and Rescue Authority and the observations being passed on to the applicant	<i>10</i>

What Period was this data collected over?	<i>guestioned not recorded</i>
Is this data for all projects in this period or a sample of projects?	<i>sample</i>
If the data was for a sample of projects how was the sample identified?	<i>random</i>

c) Fire and Rescue Authority perceptions of liaison with the Building Control Body in terms of 4 key questions

Use BC2i to help fill out this form

	Total Number of Respondents	Number "Fairly" and "Very" satisfied	Percentage "Fairly" and "Very" satisfied
Adequacy of discussions with the Building Control Body	152	152	100%
Timeliness of the consultation process	152	152	100%
Effectiveness of the ongoing dialogue	152	152	100%
Effectiveness in communicating the issues raised during consultation to the client	152	152	100%
Total	608	608	100%

<i>BC3 - Staff skills</i>	
<i>Qualified and experienced staff as a percentage of the total staff employed by the Building Control Body</i>	

Total number of qualified and experienced staff	9.3
Total number of staff employed by the service	25.35

Qualified and experienced staff as a percentage of total staff	37%
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It may be helpful for each member of staff to complete the spreadsheet BC4i and the results can then be amalgamated into this spreadsheet

a) Average number of hours of relevant training provided per annum by the Building Control Body per member of qualified and experienced staff

	Total
Grand total hours of training provided for qualified and experienced staff (the total of the individual BC4i worksheets for qualified and experienced staff)	340
Average	36.55913978

b) Average number of hours of relevant training provided per annum by the Building Control Body per non-qualified member of staff

	Total
Grand total hours of training provided for non-qualified staff (the total of the individual BC4i worksheets for non-qualified staff)	219
Average	13.64485981

BC5
<i>On-site input</i>

For assistance in completing this sheet use workbook BC5i

ai) Average number of hours on-site planned for each category of non-domestic work (voluntary indicator)

	Average number of hours planned
Band 1 - Under £20,000	4
Band 2 - £20,000 - £49,999	6
Band 3 - £50,000 - £99,999	9
Band 4 - £100,000 - £499,999	28
Band 5 - £500,000 - £1million	54
Band 6 - Over £1million	70+

aii) Average number of hours on-site planned for each category of domestic work (voluntary indicator)

	Average number of hours planned
Dwellings	10.5
Alterations and extensions	9.2

bi) Average number of hours on-site completed for each category of non-domestic work

	Average number of hours completed
Band 1 - Under £20,000	3.8
Band 2 - £20,000 - £49,999	6.5

Band 3 - £50,000 - £99,999	9.2
Band 4 - £100,000 - £499,999	27
Band 5 - £500,000 - £1million	56
Band 6 - Over £1million	70+

bii) Average number of hrs on-site completed for each category of domestic work

	Average number of hours completed
Dwellings	10
Alterations and extensions	11.4

BC6
Ensuring compliance

Percentage of projects reaching a satisfactory conclusion

Number of projects completed	2284
Number of completion certificates issued for completed projects	2284
Percentage of projects where completion certificates issued as proportion of projects completed	100%

BC7
<i>Customer satisfaction</i>

a) Percentage of responses from domestic customers invited to complete a customer satisfaction form

Total number of survey forms issued	2225
Total number of completed forms received	58
Percentage of responses	3%

b) Percentage of domestic customers who are satisfied with the service they received from the Building Control Body (use BC7i to help fill out the information below)

	Total Number of Respondents	Number "Fairly" and "Very" satisfied	Percentage "Fairly" and "Very" satisfied
Added value to the finished product	56	51	91%
Being helpful and responsive to needs	56	55	98%
Applying the Building Regulations professionally	58	57	98%
The overall service	58	56	97%
Total	228	219	96%

Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Directorate Regeneration Culture and Community	Name of Function or Policy or Major Service Change Building Control Partnership		
Officer responsible for assessment Tony Van Veghel	Date of assessment 15 January 2013	New or existing? Existing	
Defining what is being assessed			
1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives	To ensure compliance with the Building Act 1984 by enforcing the Building Regulations across three boroughs. Deal with dangerous structures, demolitions, unauthorised work. Provide discretionary services through a consultancy. The objectives of the agreed Business Plan 2012/17 reflect those of the previously considered Business Plan 2011/14 and do not affect the responses given then. However, as the Business Plan now continues to 2017 a new DIA has been carried out.		
2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?	Residents, businesses and visitors to Medway.		
3. What outcomes are wanted?	A healthy, safe and sustainable environment.		
4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	Contribute Resources available from the Partnership. Support from the three constituent Authorities.	Detract Competition from the private sector. Economic climate.	
5. Who are the main stakeholders?	The three boroughs in the Partnership, Medway, Gravesham and Swale. Property owners, businesses, developers and architects.		
6. Who implements this and who is responsible?	No third parties are involved.		

Assessing impact		
7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial groups</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	
8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation although disabled people or their carers are not charged a fee under the exemptions in the Charges legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	
9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	
10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	
11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	

12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to people's age?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	
13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>being transgendered or transsexual</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	
14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. people with caring responsibilities or dependants, those with an offending past, or people living in rural areas)?	YES	If yes, which group(s)?
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	
15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. disability <u>and</u> age)?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation. All enquiries for consultancy services are based on competitive quotes compared against the private sector.	

Conclusions & recommendation		
16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?	YES	Please explain
	NO	Not applicable

Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
NO	This function/ policy/ service change complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.	
NO, BUT ...	What is required to ensure this complies with the requirements of the legislation? (see DIA Guidance Notes)?	<p>Since April 2009 information has been collected on diversity. However, the number of responses was noted as being extremely low and the process was reviewed in April 2010 and the issue discussed with the Research and Review team during training for all staff on diversity. It was felt that more one-to-one surveys may be more productive and this was carried out in June 2011.</p> <p>The survey carried out in June 2011 generated a 74% return on monitoring diversity survey. Results and outcomes were discussed at Joint Committee on 27 September 2011. A further postal survey was carried out in June 2012 with 88% of the respondents either fully or partial completing the Equality and Diversity section of the survey. Outcomes were discussed at Joint Committee on 20 September 2012 noting that the customer profile had remained the same as the previous survey results.</p> <p>Males formed the largest group at 83%, however, the majority of this group were aged between 55 and 64 (the middle three age bands 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 all scored between 14% and 36%). 82% of this group mainly consists of White British men with 3% being Asian or Asian British forming the next highest group.</p> <p>The majority of females that contacted the service were aged between 45 and 54 which is the same as in 2011/12 survey, however, 94% considered themselves White British with 6% being Asian or Asian British.</p> <p>Following the implementation of the IT improvements planned for 2013/14 our next survey is programmed for the Summer of 2014.</p>
YES	Give details of key person responsible and target date for carrying out full impact assessment (see DIA Guidance Notes)	

Action plan to make Minor modifications		
Outcome	Actions (with date of completion)	Officer responsible
An understanding of how the improvements to the IT system, giving access to greater customer self-service has affected delivery	To implement one-to-one survey during the Summer of 2014. By August 2014	Tony Van Veghel

Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review	
Date of next review	September 2014
Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)	Validity and depth of information gathered.

Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?	No	
Signed (completing officer/service manager) Tony Van Veghel	Date	15/01/13
Signed (service manager/Assistant Director) Stephen Gaimster	Date	15/01/13