

# **SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL JOINT COMMITTEE**

**2 DECEMBER 2021**

## **SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS PLAN 2022-2025**

Report from: Janine Weaver, Director, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership

### Summary

The report seeks agreement to the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership's Business Plan and Delivery Plan for 2022-2025 (dated 3 November 2021 Version 2).

#### 1. Budget and policy framework

1.1. Following presentation of the draft Business Plan at Joint Committee on 16 September 2021, the Plan has now been circulated for comments and the Joint Committee is required to agree any revisions.

#### 2. Background

2.1. The Joint Committee's Constitution sets out the process for approval of the Partnership's Business Plan each year and the timing required to ensure that each Partner Authority can incorporate associated budget requirements into the financial planning process for the subsequent year. The stages to this process are as follows:

- Before 1 October each year the Joint Committee is required to approve and send its draft Business Plan for the following year to each Partner Authority for comments.
- Each Council has 35 days (from receipt) to provide comments to the Secretary of the Joint Committee on the draft Business Plan.
- The Joint Committee is then required to meet to consider any comments received and agree any revisions to the draft Business Plan.
- By no later than 5 January the Joint Committee must 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).

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

### 3. Director's comments

3.1. The Business Plan (Appendix 2) outlines how the building control function will be delivered on behalf of the four partnership Councils up until 2025 and indicates what the contributions will be for 2022 - 2023 and forecasted to 2025.

3.2. The amended plan presented to Members for final consideration indicates the four agreed objectives:

- Embracing our customer needs and expectations
- Maximisation of technology to reduce costs and continue to improve the way we work
- Valuing, supporting and development of staff

The plan also includes action plans and targets to achieve these objectives.

Our continuing key projects for 2022-2023 will be:

- improvements to our online portal to facilitate other forms of building regulation notifications;
- improvements required to the quality and consistency of plan checking and site inspections;
- development of the back-office system to improve enforcement activity; and
- training and evidencing of surveyor competencies and capabilities to attain the required licences under the new Building Safety Bill.

3.3. These items will form the focal point in the year ahead and underpin the objectives in the delivery plan (Appendix 3). With continued support from the four authorities, these objectives will build on the reputation of delivering a first-class service to customers and stakeholders.

3.4. The new three-year Business Plan will take us beyond this third term of the partnership and will see further improvements in customer service through the development of the website and legislative changes to the building control environment.

### 4. Financial Implications

4.1. Figure 1 of Appendix 1 shows the adjusted financial plan following Governments announcement of the temporary rise by 1.25% from April 2022 to the National Insurance contributions. This increase will then be replaced by a separate health and social care levy from April 2023. The financial plan will then be adjusted to show this revised levy.

- 4.2. Potential re-grading and training costs as a requirement of the Government changes to surveyor licencing under the Building Safety Bill are not included within the financial forecast. This financial information will be provided once available.
- 4.3. These yearly contributions from the constituent authorities which are shown in the financial plan will be ratified by the acceptance of the Business Plan.

## 5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. Where appropriate these are set out in the report and in the Business Plan (dated 3 November 2021 Version 2). The Business Plan makes provision for partnership working with private architects. This will be done under the recognised Local Authority Building Control Partnership scheme.

## 6. Risk Management

- 6.1. Should chargeable applications and therefore income fall below expectations and outside of any mitigating proposals put forward to enable a balanced budget, there may be further calls on the contributions from each of the partner authorities. However, this would be only applied for as a last resort.

## 7. Recommendation

- 7.1. The Joint Committee is asked to approve the updated version of the Business Plan, now incorporating any comments received, and refer it to the Cabinet or relevant Committee of each partner authority to approve the Final Draft Business Plan.

## 8. Suggested Reason for Decision

- 8.1. The Joint Committee has a duty under the Memorandum of Agreement to formally consult with partner authorities on the draft Business Plan.

### Lead officer contact

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### Exempt Appendices

Appendix 1 – Three Year Budget Build and Contribution Calculation for 2022-2025  
Appendix 2 – Business Plan (dated 3 November 2021 Version 2)  
Appendix 3 – Service Delivery Plan (dated 3 November 2021 Version 2)

### Background papers

None