

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL JOINT COMMITTEE

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SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS PLAN 2010/2011

Report from: Tony Van Veghel, Director, South Thames Gateway
Building Control Partnership

Summary

The report sets out the initial proposals for the South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan and seeks approval for the Draft Business Plan to be sent for consultation to Partner authorities.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The Constitution states that 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.

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 is able to incorporate associated budget requirements into the financial planning process for the subsequent year. The stages to this process are as follows:

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

- Each Partner Authority must advise the Secretary to the Joint Committee whether it approves or rejects the revised draft Business Plan by no later than 10 days before the Annual Meeting of the Joint Committee (The Joint Committee will formally adopt the Business Plan at its Annual meeting).
- 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. Business Plan 2010/2011

- 3.1 The business plan outlines how the building control function will be delivered for the three partnership Councils over the next financial year.
- 3.2 It includes details of the vision, objectives and key performance indicators for the year ahead together with a review of how the economic downturn and recession impacted on the business last year.
- 3.3 It is important to recognise that the Partnership serves three local authorities and needs to ensure that the priorities of each are reflected in the goals and objectives of the plan. Demonstrable links are drawn between STG's delivery plan and the priorities so as a tangible contribution is evident to each Council's plan.
- 3.4 Given the economic situation and the slow recovery of the construction industry, with differing parts of the market recovering quicker than others, it was not felt prudent to develop the consultancy into a Local Authority Company during 2009/10.
- 3.5 Provision has, therefore, been made to take the process forward in 2010/11 and provide a delivery plan to drive the process and monitor and manage it so that we are in a strong position to compete with the private sector when the demand improves.
- 3.6 There are a number of local and national drivers in place to take the service forward. In particular, the proposals to change the charging arrangements so as to reflect the true cost of dealing with inexperienced developers as is often found in the domestic market.
- 3.7 Also a review of the enforcement powers and penalties that Local Authorities could employ to ensure unauthorised work is more readily rectified.
- 3.8 For the first time STG will be able to compare performance data through the National Standards and Quality and Performance Matrix as well as through the setting up of the Kent Building Control Benchmarking Group. The Partnership has been further assessed

through the British Standard Institute and monitors the Quality Award issued under BS EN ISO 9001:2000.

- 3.9 Four main objectives have been identified for 2010/11 and delivery plans for each together with actions have been identified within the document.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Section 3 of the Business Plan details the budget for 2010/11 and targets a fee income of just below £1.17 million.
- 4.2 This includes contributions payable by the constituent authorities that will be ratified by their acceptance of the Plan.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Where appropriate these are set out in the report and in the Business Plan. 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. Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Joint Committee approves the Business Plan for consultation as set out in the summary of this report.