



**Meeting of South Thames Gateway Building Control
Joint Committee
20 September 2012
10:11 am to 11:10 am**

Record of the Meeting

Present:

Committee Members: Councillor Lewin (Swale Borough Council) (Chairman)
Councillor Burden (Gravesham Borough Council) (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Chitty (Medway Council)

In attendance: Janine Boughton (Head of Administration and Business, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership)
Paula Charker (Employee Relations Manager, Medway Council)
Jo Hammond (Senior Democratic Services Officer, Swale Borough Council)
Vikki Finneran, (Principal Accountant, Financial Services, Gravesham Borough Council)
James Freeman (Head of Planning, Swale Borough Council)
Stephen Gaimster (Assistant Director, Housing, Development and Transport, Medway Council)
Sarah Kilkie (Assistant Director, Communities, Gravesham Borough Council)
Tony Van Veghel (Director, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership)
Kevin Woolmer (Finance Manager, Business Support and Regeneration, Community and Culture, Medway Council)

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Record of the Meeting

The record of the Meeting held on 14 June 2012 was signed by the Chairman as correct.

3 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

4 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were no urgent items.

5 South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan 2012 - 2017

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership presented this report which set out the revised Business Plan for the second term of the partnership covering a five year period 2012 - 2017.

Members commented on the Government's proposed changes to legislation regarding building control. They considered that it would be useful for Officers to produce a briefing note for Members on any future proposed changes to legislation.

The Chairman congratulated Officers on their hard work.

Decision:

The Joint Committee approved the draft Business Plan to be sent for consultation to partner authorities.

Reasons for decision:

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

6 Swale Borough Council Audit Review of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership

The Head of Planning (Swale Borough Council (SBC)) presented the report which provided details of SBC's Internal Audit review, and in particular drew Members' attention to the substantial level of assurance awarded by the Auditors. He passed on the Auditors thanks to Officers for their assistance throughout the audit process.

Members welcomed the audit report. The Assistant Director, Communities, Gravesham Borough Council, advised that the report was being considered at their Business and Partnerships Committee in November 2012.

The Chairman considered that the recommendations were useful for all three authorities to consider and welcomed the opportunity to share the report amongst the authorities.

Decision:

The Joint Committee noted SBC's Internal Audit Review of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership.

7 South Thames Gateway Building Control Customer Service Survey

The Head of Administration and Business, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership presented this report which informed Members of customer opinion on the level of service provided by the partnership.

Members welcomed the positive feedback arising from the recent postal survey. Discussion ensued regarding the importance of being consistent with the advice

provided to customers. The Head of Administration and Business confirmed that this had been identified as an area for improvement.

Decision:

The Joint Committee noted the contents of the report.

8 Monitoring report April - August 2012

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership presented this report which updated the Joint Committee on the current forecast for the 2012/13 financial year and gave details against the progress of the objectives of the Business Plan 2012/17.

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership provided the following updates: paragraph 3.3 Persimmon Homes had chosen to use PG Surveyors for their new development in Dartford; paragraph 3.4 the new IT system would go out to tender in November 2012 with the new system going live in April 2013.

Members raised concern that, as the Partnership could not provide the necessary building warranties and road bonds, there was a risk that developers would continue to use other building control companies which were affiliated with warranty providers.

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership explained that the LABC considered warranty providers to be a separate business and it was difficult for Local Authorities to break into this market but he would continue to negotiate with developers.

Members discussed ways to promote the Partnership including producing cards and small brochures which could be handed out to developers, checking the accessibility of the Partnership's website from the three authorities' websites, and inviting the Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership to attend developer briefings to Members to advertise the Partnership's work.

Decision:

The Joint Committee noted the contents of the report.

Reasons for decision:

The Constitution requires the Joint Committee to maintain a monitoring role on the progress of the partnership.

Chairman

Date

Jo Hammond

Senior Democratic Services Officer

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