
SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Second Floor Conference Room, Swale House on Thursday, 22 September 2022 from 10.00 am - 10.33 am.

PRESENT: Councillors Neil Baker, Chitty and Tim Gibson.

PRESENT (Virtually): Councillor Steve Davey .

OFFICERS PRESENT: Karen Britton (Planning Manager - Canterbury City Council), Kellie MacKenzie (Democratic Services Officer - Swale Borough Council) and Janine Weaver (Director of South Thames Gateway Building Control).

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): Jo Millard (Democratic Services Manager - Swale Borough Council).

APOLOGIES: Councillor John Burden, Flo Churchill (Interim Head of Planning - Swale Borough Council) and Simon Thomas (Head of Planning – Canterbury City Council).

1 Emergency Evacuation Procedure

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

2 Record of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 June 2022 (Minute Nos. 1 to 11) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

4 Urgent Matters by Reason of Special Circumstances

There were no urgent matters.

5 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Agreed:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Act:

(3) *Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)*

(5) *Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.*

6 South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan and Delivery Plan 2023/2026

The Director of South Thames Gateway (STG) Building Control Partnership introduced the report which set-out the process for approval of the Partnership's Business Plan 2023-2026. She said there were difficulties recruiting experienced surveyors which would be compounded by the Building Safety Act (BSA) 2022 which required all surveyors to have their competency assessed, validated and re-assessed on a regular basis. She said that the partnership needed to adopt a more proactive recruitment and training strategy which would provide more resilience to the partnership.

The Director of STG Building Control Partnership spoke about additional financial burdens and the uncertainty of the cost-of-living crises which would impact the partnership.

Members considered the documents and raised the following comments:

- Succession planning was key in terms of staffing resilience;
- given the current economic climate the proposals were the only way forward;
- welcomed the reports and had to adapt to the current financial circumstances;
- needed to reflect their costs against the Value for Money local authorities received from the partnership; and
- happy with the proposed recommendations.

The Director of STG Building Control Partnership thanked Members for their understanding and support. In response to a request from a Member, the Director of STG Building Control Partnership agreed to provide more detail on costings to the next meeting for Members to review their contribution levels.

Resolved:

(1) That the 2023-2026 Business Plan and 2023-2026 Delivery Plan be adopted.

7 Monitoring Report: April to August 2022

The Director of STG Building Control Partnership introduced the report which provided updates on the current forecast for the 2022/2023 financial year and gave details against the progress of the objectives of the Business Plan 2022/2023. She reported that during Quarter 1 a contractor had been employed to assist with workloads. Mid-Kent Audit had given the Partnership a 'sound' rating following an audit and raised two areas of concern: the memorandum of understanding; and insurance cover. The memorandum of understanding had been reviewed by each authority and was currently being updated by legal. It would then be circulated back to each authority for review and then considered at the next meeting on Thursday 1 December 2022. She said that the concerns they had regarding insurance had been resolved.

The Director of STG Building Control Partnership spoke about the partnerships document retention policy which they considered should be modified to a rolling 20-year retention policy.

Members raised the following points:

- Considered that the rolling retention policy should be 15 years as that was what Government recommended; and
- welcomed the 'sound' audit rating.

Resolved: That the Monitoring Report April 2022 to August 2022 be noted and the document retention policy be modified to 15 years.

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel