

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL JOINT COMMITTEE

17 March 2009

10:00 am to 11:06 am

RECORD OF THE MEETING

PRESENT:

Committee members: Councillor Chitty (Medway Council) (Chairman)
Councillor Lewin (Swale Borough Council)
(Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Dyke (Gravesham Borough Council)

In attendance: Janine Boughton (South Thames Gateway Building
Control Partnership)
Paula Charker (Medway Council)
James Freeman (Swale Borough Council)
Stephen Gaimster (Medway Council)
Phil Harris (South Thames Gateway Building
Control Partnership)
Sarah Kilkie (Gravesham Borough Council)
Anthony Law (Medway Council)
Angela Riches (Medway Council)
Tony Van Veghel (South Thames Gateway
Building Control Partnership)
Kevin Woolmer (Medway Council)

716 RECORD OF THE MEETING

The record of the meeting held on 23 February 2009 was signed by the Chairman as correct.

717 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of PKF, external auditor to the Joint Committee.

718 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

719 ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER

Discussion:

This report set out details of a limited assurance audit for 2007/2008 undertaken by PKF, the appointed auditor to the Joint Committee.

The 2007/2008 Statement of Accounts had been approved by the Joint Committee in September 2008 and it was reported that the auditor had raised no issues.

Members were advised of the recommendation from the auditor that future Joint Committee accounts be prepared in accordance with Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) requirements. Officers were proposing that this would happen from 2009/10 onwards.

Decision:

The Joint Committee noted the Auditor's report and approved the management response as detailed.

Reasons for Decision

The Joint Committee has a key role in monitoring the performance of the Partnership and the report summarised the Auditor's assessment of the Partnership.

720 SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Discussion:

This report set out details of a proposed South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership's enforcement policy.

The policy, as set out at appendix 1 to the report, sought to ensure effective compliance with legislation whilst minimising the burden to the three Councils, the public and to businesses. It would support the

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achievement of the overall aims of the three Partner Councils and ensure the principles of: standards and procedure, helpfulness, openness, transparency, proportionality, consistency, targeting and handling complaints are properly applied throughout the area.

It was noted that the policy would be reviewed every twelve months to reflect the changes indicated by internal monitoring, by legislation or by guidance. It was also noted that the first stage of a diversity impact assessment had been undertaken to ensure the policy reflected potential impact on residents due to their racial group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion.

Decision:

The Joint Committee approved the Enforcement Policy as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Reasons for Decision

By providing an enforcement policy, the Partnership can ensure that decisions to take action are consistent, fair, transparent to the community and proportionate to any breach of legislation.

721 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

Discussion:

The report set out the forecast variation against the Partnership's revenue budget for 2008/2009, based on February data, and explained the more significant underlying factors.

Based on data to February 2009 it was noted that a deficit of £259,000 was anticipated as a consequence of the downturn in the economy and that at this level of deficit, additional contributions for 2008/2009 will be required from the constituent authorities (Medway £137,000, Gravesham £52,000 and Swale £70,000). The position represented a slight improvement to the predicted deficit of £309,000 reported to the Joint Committee on 23 February 2009.

Members were advised of the additional 0.3% pay award, to be backdated to 1 April 2008, which had been agreed at a national level. This would be reflected in future budget monitoring reports to the officer steering group and Joint Committee.

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Decision:

The Joint Committee noted the forecast deficit for 2008/2009 and the estimated additional contributions that will be required as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report.

Reasons for Decision

The Joint Committee has a key role in monitoring the budgetary control of the Partnership.

722 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Discussion:

This report and a presentation given by Phil Harris (Operations Manager from the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership) informed the Joint Committee of performance during 2008/2009.

Performance was measured against local indicators, such as the average time taken to check applications and site inspections, a Quality Performance Matrix and the nationally agreed Standards. It was noted that these would be used to benchmark the partnership against comparable local authorities and Partnerships to ensure the delivery of an efficient, cost effective, quality service to our customers.

Decision:

The Committee noted the current performance as set out in the report and agreed that future performance monitoring reports to the committee focus on areas where performance has either changed or remained poor.

Reasons for Decision

The Joint Committee has a key role in monitoring the performance of the Partnership and in ensuring that any actions arising are followed through.

**South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee, 17 March
2009**

Chairman

Date

Anthony Law

Cabinet co-ordinator

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