

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL JOINT COMMITTEE

14 JUNE 2012

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS PLAN 2011-2014

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

Summary

This report seeks agreement to the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership's Business Plan for 2011-2014 (incorporating financial plan 2011-2015).

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Constitution for the South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee specifies that the Business Plan shall be adopted at the Annual General Meeting.
- 1.2 This is an executive function and therefore would be subject to the call-in arrangements of the partner authorities. Specific parts of the plan, such as those surrounding retention and recruitment of staff, would be carried out in line with Medway Council's Constitution and human resources policies and procedures.

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. Director's comments

- 3.1 On 27 September 2011 the Joint Committee agreed a first draft of the STGBC Business Plan for 2011-2014 and invited each partner authority to provide its comments. The second draft of the Business Plan incorporated the comments received and was presented to Joint Committee on 8 December 2011.
- 3.2 The Business Plan outlines how the Building Control function will be delivered for the three partnership councils over the next three financial years. These include the statutory and discretionary functions together with five over-riding objectives and a delivery plan designed to ensure each target is met. Revisions to the business plan will be presented to Joint Committee in accordance with the timetable laid down in the Memorandum of Agreement.
- 3.3 A number of revisions had taken place to add clarity and explanation within the context of the plan. At the meeting on 8 December 2011 Members requested that the objectives of the Business Plan be amended to reflect the need to approach adjoining Authorities to explore the possibilities of them joining the Partnership.
- 3.4 Objective 2 of the Plan was therefore amended prior to being taken to each authority's Cabinet to reflect this change and approaches have been made to other authorities. Progress of which will be reported to Members through other papers submitted to Joint Committee.
- 3.5 The Director advised that charts and graphs contained in the business plan would need to be amended in due course as they were time dependent on when the report was written as to what information was available.
- 3.6 Version 7 last updated on the 12 December 2011 was taken to each Authority's Cabinet and approved and is presented to Joint Committee for final adoption.
- 3.7 Section 2 of 'The Way Forward' within the Business Plan identifies the financial plan for 2011-2015 and includes details of the contributions from the partner authorities required to fund the non fee-earning activities.

- 3.8 The final Business Plan for 2011-2014 (incorporating financial plan 2011-2015) is attached as an exempt appendix for Members' adoption.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Section 2 of 'The way Forward' within the Business Plan details the financial plan 2011-2015 and targets a fee income of just over £1.1m for 2012-2013.
- 4.2 In addition to this the constituent authorities are required to make contributions totalling £351,772 to fund non fee-earning activities. These contributions are, for Gravesham £70,354, for Medway £186,439, and for Swale £94,978 and have been 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. 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 fee earning applications and therefore income fall below expectations and outside of any mitigating proposals put forward to enable a zero based 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. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Joint Committee is asked to adopt the 2011-2014 Business Plan (incorporating Financial Plan 2011-2015).

8. Suggested Reasons for Decisions

- 8.1 The Joint Committee has a duty under the Memorandum of Agreement to formally adopt the Business Plan at the Annual General Meeting.

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Background papers:

Business Plan 2011-2014 (incorporating Financial Plan 2011-2015)