

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL JOINT COMMITTEE

17 JUNE 2021

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS PLAN 2021-2024

Report from: Janine Weaver, Director, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership

Summary

The report seeks agreement to the STG Building Control Partnership's Business Plan (dated 15 October 2020 Version 3) and Service Delivery Documentation for 2021-2024 (dated 15 October 2020 Version 3).

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1. The Constitution for the STG 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 17th September 2020 the Joint Committee agreed a first draft of the STGBC Business Plan for 2021-2024 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 3rd December 2020.
- 3.2. The Business Plan (Appendix 2) outlines how the building control function will be delivered on behalf of the four partnership Council's up until 2024 and indicates what the forecasted contributions will be between 2021 to 2024.
- 3.3. The amended plan presented to Members for final consideration indicates the four objectives:
- Continue to meet customer needs and expectations
 - Maximisation of technology to reduce cost and improve delivery
 - Continue to improve the way we work
 - Valuing, supporting and development of staff

The plan also includes action plans and targets to achieve these objectives.

Our continuing key projects for 2021/2022 will be:

- Development of inspection report through mobile app
 - Enhancement to back-office system to include an enforcement module
 - Development of other application types through our website
 - Expanding surveyors' capabilities to deal with more complex and specialist works
- 3.4. These items will form the focal point in the year ahead and underpin the objectives in the delivery plan (Appendix 3). With continued support from the four authorities these objectives will build on the reputation of delivering a first-class service to customers and stakeholders.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. Appendix 1 of this report details the financial plan for 2021-2024 showing projected expenditure, income, and contributions over the 3-year period.

4.2. In addition to this the constituent authorities are required to make contributions totalling £310,590 to fund non-chargeable activities. These contributions are for Canterbury £71,436, Gravesham £46,589, Medway £127,342 and for Swale £65,224 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 dated 15 October 2020 Version 3. 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 chargeable 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. Recommendation

7.1. The Joint Committee is asked to adopt the 2021-2024 Business Plan dated 15 October 2020 Version 3 and Service Delivery Documentation.

8. Suggested Reasons for Decision

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

Lead officer contact

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Exempt Appendices

Appendix 1 – Three Year Budget Build and Contribution Calculation for 2021-2024

Appendix 2 – Business Plan (dated 15 October 2020 Version 3)

Appendix 3 – Service Delivery Documentation (dated 15 October 2020 Version 3)

Background papers

None