

CABINET

15 FEBRUARY 2011

SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP – BUSINESS PLAN

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jane Chitty, Strategic Development and Economic Growth and Member of Joint Committee

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

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

Summary

This report seeks agreement to the seventh draft South Thames Gateway Partnership Business Plan for 2011/2014.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The approval of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan is a matter for Cabinet, however, specific parts of the plan may need to be progressed in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures.

2. Background

2.1 The South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (involving Medway, Gravesham and Swale) went live in 2007 and the partnership's business plan outlines how the building control function for the three partnership Councils will be delivered over the next three financial years.

2.2 The Joint Committee's Constitution sets out the process for approval of the 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. In order to streamline the process the Cabinets in each partner authority have agreed to delegate authority to the relevant director, in consultation with the council's Chief Finance Officer and appointed member on the Joint Committee to deal with this element of the process.
 - 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. Members of the Joint Committee agreed to delay the meeting until 20 January in order to ensure the financial outcomes from the Comprehensive Spending Review could be included in the financial planning.
 - 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).
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 On 20 January 2011 the Joint Committee agreed the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership's Business Plan for 2011/14 as set out in an exempt appendix. This encompasses the comments already received from the Partner Authorities
- 3. Options**
- 3.1 The Cabinet needs to advise the secretary to the Joint Committee whether it approves or rejects the revised draft business plan.
- 4. Advice and analysis**
- 4.1 The Business Plan outlines how the building control function will be delivered for the three partnership Councils over the next three financial years. It includes details of the vision, objectives and key performance indicators together with a review on the effects of increased competition and new charges legislation. It also looks at how the cost savings required by each Council's four year budget reductions will be met.
- 4.2 In recognition that the partnership serves three local authorities, demonstrable links are drawn between STG's delivery plan and each council's priorities. Clearly value for money is a recurring theme as each council meets the challenges of a reducing budget. The need to cut costs as well as mitigate against a shrinking construction market

are demonstrated in the workforce planning section where further staff development over the life of the plan is discussed together with changes in the way the service will be delivered. This is designed to maintain a high level of service with employing reduced resources and maximising income from available income streams.

4.3 A number of revisions have taken place to add clarity and explanation within the context of the Plan:

- A version number and last update has been included on the front cover as a number of draft copies have been in circulation and this will ensure that the most up to date version is being viewed.
- National and Local Drivers has been moved to Section 3 as it should follow on from the introduction.
- Paragraph 4.4 has been added to reflect the overall reduction in contributions by 2013/14 and clarity on the fee earning/non-fee earning contributions required over the 3 year period introduced to the financial plan on page 9.
- The opportunity has been taken to update the data and statistics to reflect the half yearly figures rather than the first quarter as shown in the previous version.
- Where necessary the text has also been amended to reflect conclusions derived from the new data.
- Non-fee earning work is now described more fully as Public Protection Services and divided into inspection and information services with new pie charts shown in figure 5 to give a breakdown of applications. Included within the text of each work type are comparisons with previous years statistics.
- The Quality and Performance matrix shown in 2.3 on page 30 has been assessed to determine which criteria we could make further improvements on through the life of the business plan. From this we have determined two targets 2011/12 to achieve a further 9 points from the total score.
- Delivery plan on page 33 has been enhanced to demonstrate which actions are planned for each of the financial years between 2011 and 2014. This will allow for greater monitoring and review in order to ensure outputs are delivered on time.

4.4 The following five objectives are supported by delivery plans within the Business Plan 2011/14:

- To improve customer satisfaction by providing an effective and efficient administration and site inspection regime in particularly through improved use of information technology and communication.

- To raise the profile of STG by developing a dynamic marketing strategy.
- To provide a healthy, safe and accessible built environment, reducing the carbon footprint and contributing to sustainable construction.
- To provide additional services through a consultancy to effectively compete with the private sector and generate additional income.
- To reduce contributions by partner authorities by 30% over 4 year period.

4.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment screening form has been completed and is attached at Appendix 1. This found that the Business Plan did not require a full Diversity Impact Assessment.

5. Risk Management

5.1 This is detailed in Chapter 8 of the Business Plan and focuses on a lack of recovery in the economic situation and an inability to sustain growth as well as a lack of investment in staff development and IT solutions.

6. Consultation

6.1 The report has been agreed by the Joint Committee of the three Partner Authorities on 20 January 2011 and is being presented to all three partner authorities.

7. Financial and legal implications

7.1 Section 4 of the Business Plan details the budget for 2011/14. It is now proposed to reduce total partner contributions over the three year plan by 27.18% giving a reduction in total contributions of £107,167 by 2013/14.

7.2 In addition to this the constituent authorities are required to make contributions to fund non-fee earning activities. These contributions are shown in the table below.

	<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>
	£	£	£
Gravesham	78,336	71,357	65,022
Medway	207,589	189,095	172,307
Swale	105,753	96,332	87,779
Total	391,678	356,784	325,108

7.3 The Memorandum of Agreement, which underpins the Partnership, states “each Council shall notify the Partnership no later than 28 February in each year the amount the Council has allocated to the

Partnership from its revenue budget". For Medway the sum of £207,589 has been provided for in the 2011/12 draft budget.

- 7.4 The draft Business Plan makes provision for partnership working with private architects. This will be done under the recognised Local Authority Building Control Partnership scheme. The Joint Committee has approved the Partnership undertaking consultancy work under the powers of Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That the proposed business plan for 2011/14 for the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership be approved by the Cabinet and that the proposed contribution of £207,589 from Medway be noted.

9. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 9.1 The constitution of the Joint Committee requires approval of the Business Plan for the following year by the Cabinet of each Partner Authority.

Lead officer contact

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Background papers

Building Control Joint Committee report and minutes – 20 January 2011

Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Directorate Regeneration Culture and Community	Name of Function or Policy or Major Service Change Building Control Partnership		
Officer responsible for assessment Tony Van Veghel	Date of assessment 31 January 2011	New or existing? Existing	
Defining what is being assessed			
1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives	To ensure compliance with the Building Act 1984 by enforcing the Building Regulations across three boroughs. Deal with dangerous structures, demolitions, unauthorised work.		
2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?	Residents, businesses and visitors to Medway.		
3. What outcomes are wanted?	A healthy and safe environment.		
4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	Contribute Resources available from the Partnership. Support from the three constituent Authorities.	Detract Competition from the private sector. Economic climate.	
5. Who are the main stakeholders?	The three boroughs in the Partnership, Medway, Gravesham and Swale. Property owners, businesses, developers and architects.		
6. Who implements this and who is responsible?	No third parties are involved.		

Assessing impact		
7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial groups</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation.	
8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation although disabled people or their carers are not charged a fee under the exemptions in the Charges legislation.	
9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation.	
10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation.	
11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation.	
12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to people's <i>age</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation.	
13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>being trans-gendered or transsexual</i>?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	



What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation.	
14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. people with caring responsibilities or dependants, those with an offending past, or people living in rural areas)?	YES	If yes, which group(s)?
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation.	
15. Are there concerns there could be a have a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. disability and age)?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	All applications are processed in accordance with The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations 2010 legislation.	

Conclusions & recommendation		
16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?	YES	Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?	YES	Please explain
	NO	Not applicable
Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
NO	This function/ policy/ service change complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.	
NO, BUT ...	What is required to ensure this complies with the requirements of the legislation? (see DIA Guidance Notes)?	<p>Minor modifications necessary (e.g. change of 'he' to 'he or she', re-analysis of way routine statistics are reported)</p> <p>Since April 2009 information has been collected on diversity. However, the number of responses is noted to be extremely low and the process was reviewed in April 2010 and the issue discussed with the Research and Review team during training for all staff on diversity. It was felt that more one-to-one surveys may be more productive and this is planned for 2011/12.</p>

YES	Give details of key person responsible and target date for carrying out full impact assessment (see DIA Guidance Notes)	

Action plan to make Minor modifications		
Outcome	Actions (with date of completion)	Officer responsible
Better understanding about applicants community identity	To implement dedicated one-to-one survey during one week in each half of the financial year. By April 2012	Tony Van Veghel

Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review	
Date of next review	May 2012
Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)	Validity and depth of information gathered.

Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?	No	
Signed (completing officer/service manager) 	Date	31/01/11
Signed (service manager/Assistant Director) 	Date	31/01/11