

Medway Council
**Meeting of South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint
Committee**

Thursday, 9 June 2011

10.20am to 11.25am

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present: Councillors: Burden and Chitty

In Attendance: Janine Boughton, Head of Administration and Business Development
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director Development, Economy and Transport (Medway Council)
Sarah Kilkie, Assistant Director (Communities) (Gravesham Borough Council)
Anthony Law, Democratic Services Officer (Medway Council)
Angela Riches, Senior Accountant (Medway Council)
Tony VanVeghel, Director, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership
Terri Williams, Resourcing Manager (Medway Council)
Kevin Woolmer, Corporate Accountant (Medway Council)

1 Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Decision:

- a) Councillor Jane Chitty was elected Chairman for the 2011/12 municipal year.
- b) Councillor Gerry Lewin was elected Vice-Chairman for the 2011/12 municipal year.
- c) The Committee noted that the following Members have been appointed to the South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee at the respective Annual Council meetings:

Gravesham

Councillor Burden

Councillor Cribbon (substitute Member)

Medway

Councillor Chitty

Councillor Bright (substitute Member)

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Swale

Councillor Lewin

Councillor Morris (substitute Member)

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gerry Lewin and James Freeman (Swale Borough Council).

3 Minutes

The record of the meeting held on 23 March 2011 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

4 Chairman's Announcements

The Joint Committee agreed that a letter be sent thanking Councillor Michael Snelling (Gravesham Borough Council) and the team at Gravesham Borough Council who had hosted the Joint Committee during the 2010/2011 municipal year.

5 Declarations of Interests

During the discussion on agenda item 6 (Final Outturn and Statement of Accounts 2010-2011 and Appointment of External Auditor) Councillor John Burden declared a personal interest insofar as discussion took place as to the pension scheme and he had been appointed to the Kent County Council Superannuation Fund Committee.

6 Final Outturn and Statement of Accounts 2010-2011 and Appointment of External Auditor

Background:

The Corporate Accountant explained the contents of this report, which provided details of the partnership's draft Statement of Accounts for the 2010-2011 financial year. The partnership was required under its Memorandum of Agreement and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended) to produce an annual statement of accounts that was subject to scrutiny by the external auditors.

Members were also advised that the Audit Commission had confirmed the appointment of Jackie Bellard, an officer of the Commission's Audit Practice, as External Auditor to South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership. This appointment was made under section 3 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and was for a two-year period, commencing with the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2011.

It was noted that the final outturn for 2010-2011 was a deficit of £71,000, which was an improvement of £13,000 on the forecast reported to the Joint

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Committee in January 2011. Details of the outturn and the resultant partner contributions were also given, together with the impact of the new charging policy and the options available for the treatment of the £54,000 deficit set out in the report.

Responding to Member questions the Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership gave details as to the progress of the partnership over the last 4 years and the Resourcing Manager provided clarification as to the partnership's pension arrangements.

Decision:

The South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee:

- a) noted the outturn for 2010-2011 and respective partner contributions as presented in Table 1 of the report.
- b) approved the Statement of Accounts as presented at Appendix 1 of the report.
- c) approved the appointment of Jackie Bellard, of the Audit Commission, as auditor to the Joint Committee for the 2010/11 and 2011/12 financial statements.

Reasons:

The Joint Committee has a key role in monitoring the performance of the Partnership and is required to approve the Statement of Accounts.

7 South Thames Gateway Building Control Accommodation

Background:

This report informed Members of the partnership's accommodation arrangements.

It was noted that the partnership was currently based at the Compass Centre at Chatham Maritime and the current arrangements between Medway Council and the partnership needed to be extended beyond the existing lease, which would expire on 2 November 2011.

A copy of a new agreement was attached to the report, together with copies of plans of the building and car park areas. The new agreement would extend the lease until 11 March 2015. Members were advised that discussions on the accommodation agreement were ongoing and that whilst the new agreement would extend the lease beyond the original term of the partnership, the agreement included an appropriate mutual break clause.

During the discussion of this item the Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership undertook to further investigate cohabitation with related industries, such as architects, and whether suitable clauses could be included within the accommodation agreement.

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Decision:

The South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee noted the report and requested that the Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership investigate cohabitation with related industries, such as architects, and whether suitable clauses could be included within the accommodation agreement.

Reasons:

The Joint Committee has a key role in ensuring suitable facilities are available to the partnership to deliver the service to its customers.

8 Administrative Arrangements

Background:

Details were given of the proposed administrative arrangements for the Joint Committee for the next municipal year. This included the schedule of meetings and the appointment of proper officers.

Decision:

- a) The Joint Committee agreed that the meetings for the 2011/12 municipal year be held on the following dates:
 - 22 September 2011
 - 8 December 2011
 - 22 March 2012
- b) The Joint Committee noted the following appointments:
 - Monitoring officer - Michael Hayley (Assistant Director Business & Law, Gravesham)
 - Deputy Monitoring Officer – Mark Radford (Corporate Services Director, Swale)
 - S151 Officer – Mick Hayward (Chief Finance Officer, Medway)
 - Deputy S151 Officer – Eric Fisher (Head of Finance, Swale)
- c) The Joint Committee agreed that Medway Council provide secretarial support to the Joint Committee for the 2011/2012 municipal year.

9 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were no urgent matters. It was however noted that a report on the term of the agreement for the partnership would be presented to a future meeting.

10 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Joint Committee agreed to exclude the press and public for the consideration of agenda items 11 (Annual Report 2010 - 2011), 12 (South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2011 – 2014) and 13 (Software Provision) as they contained commercially sensitive information under paragraph 3 part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

11 Annual Report 2010-2011

Background:

The Committee was informed of performance management and financial information for the year 2010/2011.

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership gave a brief introduction to the information contained within the report and responded to Members' questions. He also undertook to bring a report back to the Committee providing details of the costing for the public protection role undertaken by the partnership on behalf of the partner authorities.

Decision:

The Joint Committee noted the report.

Reasons:

The Constitution requires the Joint Committee to maintain a monitoring role on the progress of the partnership.

12 South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2011-2014

Background:

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership presented a report that sought agreement to the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership's Business Plan for 2011/2014. The Partnership's constitution required adoption of the Business Plan at the Annual General Meeting.

The business plan outlined how the building control function would be delivered for the three partnership Councils. This included details of the statutory and discretionary functions to be carried out together with a list of objectives and a delivery plan to ensure each target is met.

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The plan had been developed in accordance with the provisions set out in the Joint Committee's constitution. This had included agreement by each of the partner authorities.

Decision:

The Joint Committee adopted the 2011- 2014 Business Plan as attached to the report.

Reasons:

The Joint Committee has a duty under the Memorandum of Agreement to formally adopt the business plan at the Annual General Meeting.

13 Software Provision

Background:

This report informed the Committee of the expiry of the current agreement with the partnership's existing software provider and considered the options available.

It was noted that any procurement would need to follow Medway Council's procurement process.

Decision:

- a) The Joint Committee agreed that the Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership continues with the tender process, in compliance with procurement regulations, and Swale Council's renewal of the MIS software does not include reference to the partnership's renewal as this would be negotiated separately.
- b) The Joint Committee agreed that a further report be brought back to the Committee when tenders are submitted.

Reasons:

The Joint Committee has a key role in ensuring suitable systems are in place to deliver a first class service to customers.

Chairman

Date:

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