

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

**Thursday, 8 December 2011**

**10.00am to 10.50am**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Burden, Chitty (Chairman) and Lewin

**In Attendance:** Janine Boughton, Head of Administration and Business Development  
Paula Charker, Employee Relations Manager  
Vikki Finneran, Principal Accountant Financial Services, Gravesham Borough Council  
James Freeman, Swale Borough Council  
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director Development, Economy and Transport  
Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer  
Sarah Kilkie, Gravesham Borough Council  
Tony Van Veghel, Director, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership  
Kevin Woolmer, Finance Manager, Business Support & Regeneration, Community & Culture

**22 Apologies for absence**

There were none.

**23 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 27 September 2011 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**24 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

**25 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**26 South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan 2011/2014**

**Background:**

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership presented a report that sought agreement to the revised South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership's Business Plan. The draft business plan had been initially considered by this Committee on 27 September 2011 at which point the plan had been circulated for comments to the three partner authorities.

The business plan outlined how the building control function would be delivered for the three partnership Councils. It identified five main objectives for 2012/14 and contained delivery plans for each, together with actions. It was noted that the Partnership's constitution required the Joint Committee to approve and send a revised draft of the business plan for the following year to each partner authority for comments no later than 5 January each year.

The Director provided an overview of the business plan and explained that no comments had been made by the partner authorities on the draft plan but that a number of charts, and text where necessary, had been further updated to reflect a half-yearly position. He stated that it was necessary to invest in IT improvements to relieve pressure on staff and deliver improvements for customers. In addition, partner contributions had reduced by 34.42% over the four year lifespan of the Business Plan reducing the percentage of contributions by 2% each year for 2011/2012 onwards.

Members discussed the future of the partnership including additional Local Authorities joining the Partnership becoming one of the Business Plan's main objectives.

An Exempt Appendix set out the Business Plan 2011/2014.

**Decision:**

- a) The Joint Committee approved the updated version of the Business Plan now incorporating any comments received and referred it back to the Cabinet of each partner authority to approve the Final Draft Business Plan subject to the revision to objective No. 2:
  - To raise the profile of STG by developing a dynamic marketing strategy and pursuing the expansion of the Partnership through additional partners.
- b) The Joint Committee noted the final contributions figures which will be included in each authority's budget planning process for 2012/2013.

**Suggested Reason for Decision:**

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

**27 South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership - Second Term**

**Background:**

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership presented a report that reflected on the achievements of the Partnership over the past 5 years and sought the Joint Committee's endorsement of continuing onto a second term. The report provided details of the achievements under a number of headings: financial; resilience; staff development and flexibility. The Director stated that the direct costs of the partnership had reduced, in real terms, by 17% whilst external income had fallen by 19% in its first five years. As such, the partnership had been successful in dealing with the outcomes and pressures of the economic downturn since 2008. The Director also referred to the proposals for a second term including the possibility of more Local Authorities joining the partnership.

Members discussed a range of issues including the possibility of the partnership giving a presentation to Elected Members of the partner authorities to highlight the work and the benefits of the partnership and the possibility of more Local Authorities joining the partnership. Officers confirmed that they were actively speaking to other Local Authorities including Dartford and Canterbury Councils.

**Decision:**

- a) The Joint Committee agreed to recommend to Gravesham, Medway and Swale Councils that the South Thames Gateway Partnership continues for a second term from 1 October 2012 and requested that the Director of the South Thames Gateway Partnership, in consultation with the Officer Steering Group, submits reports to the respective authorities.
- b) The Joint Committee agreed that the above recommendation be presented to the respective authorities at the same time as the report on the Business Plan 2011/14 which incorporates the financial plan up to 2015.

**Suggested Reason for Decision**

Through Joint Committee's monitoring role they should advise their respective Cabinets on the progression of the partnership into a second term.

**28 Schedule of Meetings 2012/2013**

**Background:**

The Clerk to the Committee submitted a report which set out the proposed meeting dates and venue for 2012/2013.

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Members discussed the possible venue for the meetings and expressed a preference to continue to hold meetings at Gun Wharf, Chatham.

### **Decision:**

The Joint Committee noted the timetable of meetings for the 2012/2013 municipal year.

## **29 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

### **Resolved:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt material relating to agenda item 9 (Monitoring Report September to November) because consideration of this matter in public would disclose information falling within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as specified in agenda item 8 and, in all the circumstances of the case, the Joint Committee considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **30 Monitoring Report September to November**

### **Background:**

This report updated the Joint Committee on the current forecast for the 2011/12 financial year and gave details against the progress of the objectives of the Business Plan 2011/2014.

Details of applications and income received compared against the last two years was shown in Appendix 1 to the report. An interim November monitoring report was shown in Appendix 2 to the report and continued to reflect a balanced budget estimated on likely income to the end of the year.

Members discussed a range of issues including the partnership's charging policy in relation to those building control applications which had remained live over a certain period of time. The Director confirmed that applications made since 2010 were subject to revised legislation and as such additional charges could be applied in certain cases, however, he would require further legal advice with regards to cases before 2010.

### **Decision:**

The Joint Committee noted the report.

### **Suggested Reason for Decision:**

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

**South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee, 8 December 2011**

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer**

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