

<b>Meeting Date</b>	6 February 2018
<b>Report Title</b>	STG Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2019 to 2022
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
<b>Head of Service</b>	James Freeman, Head of Planning
<b>Lead Officer</b>	James Freeman, Head of Planning
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business and Delivery Plans for 2019 to 2022 be agreed.

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider and make any comments on the draft STG shared Building Control Partnership (STG) Business and Delivery Plans 2019 to 2022 and to refer the comments to the Joint Committee.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 STG Building Control Partnership (involving Medway, Canterbury, Gravesham and Swale) went live in October 2007 with Canterbury joining last April. Under the terms of the Memorandum Agreement between the four partner authorities, a three year rolling business plan needs to be agreed.
- 2.2 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 in June each year
- 2.3 Whilst much of the Building Control Partnership operation is subject to competition from Approved Inspectors, the service retains statutory responsibilities regarding public protection e.g. dangerous structures, demolitions, unauthorised works and maintaining registers etc.
- 2.4 Since 2017 the service has made rapid progress on embracing digital transformation increasing the freedoms and accessibility that remote and agile working operations deliver, improving the customer experience and introducing efficiencies and savings to service delivery.
- 2.5 Despite these major improvements, the service has experienced a sudden fall in income from building control applications from August 2018 arising from a recession in the construction industry at a time where the service has had to compete with the increased number of approved inspectors in a shrinking market. This has resulted in a service budget shortfall forecast of £132,000 across the four partner authorities (£29,000 share to Swale Borough Council).

- 2.6 Actions have been put in place to ensure that the current deficit is accounted for in the 2019/20 service budget to ensure as far as possible a balanced budget is secured. This will be achieved by terminating contractor contracts, not filling expected posts following retirement and an immediate moratorium on expenditure. Fortunately, the resilience provided by the shared service and the investment in the training of junior staff, who are now in a position to take on an increased and more complex workload, will enable the expected required savings to be secured.
- 2.7 During this difficult period, the service has been able to maintain a high level of performance and there has been no noticeable increase in customer dissatisfaction.

### **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 The plan includes actions to maintain progress towards;
- continued working towards a paperless and borderless office;
  - utilising the benefits of digital transformation;
  - consequential reduction in staffing numbers;
  - offering dedicated consultancy resource to deliver energy assessments.
- 3.3 In order to meet the requirements of each authority's reducing budgets, Swale's contribution to the shared service will fall from the current £68,266 to £56,094 by 2020/21. This reduction includes making savings to counter the drop in fee income as described previously. This represents a further 17.8% saving on existing budget over the business plan period. Details of the financial plan 2019-21 are included in Appendix I.

### **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The Cabinet needs to advise the secretary to the Joint Committee whether it approves without amendment or approves with further proposed modifications to the Business plan to be agreed with partner authorities or rejects the revised draft business plan.

### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 The Business Plan has been considered and agreed by the Joint Authorities Committee overseeing the operation of the Building Control partnership. This has involved the Cabinet member for planning throughout the process.

### **6 Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	The Partnership has built resilience into the service that supports the Council's aim to be a Council to be proud of.
Financial, Resource	Appendix I sets out the details of the financial plan accompanying the

and Property	<p>Business Plan.</p> <p>It is proposed to reduce total partner contributions over the three year plan by £12,172 (17.8%).</p> <p>The contributions for Swale BC are as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Contribution (£'s)</th> <th>Reduction for previous year (£'s)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018/19</td> <td>68,266 (+ £27,720)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>62,972</td> <td>5,964 (33,684)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>59,244</td> <td>3,728</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>56,094</td> <td>3,150</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>At Swale, the medium term financial plan will accommodate the proposed contributions as stated above.</p>	Year	Contribution (£'s)	Reduction for previous year (£'s)	2018/19	68,266 (+ £27,720)		2019/20	62,972	5,964 (33,684)	2020/21	59,244	3,728	2021/22	56,094	3,150
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Legal and Statutory	The Partnership and Joint Committee operate under a memorandum of agreement signed by each of the partner authorities.															
Crime and Disorder	Effective control and enforcement of building standards and dealing with dangerous structures is consistent with an increased perception of security and wellbeing.															
Risk Management and Health and Safety	This is detailed in Section Three of the Service Delivery Documentation, focussing on the highly competitive market the partnership operates within as well as a lack of investment in staff development and IT solutions.															
Health and Well Being	None identified at this stage.															
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.															
Sustainability	None identified at this stage.															

## 7 Appendices

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

- Appendix I: South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership – Business Plan 2019 – 22
- Appendix II: South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership – Service delivery Plan 2019 - 22

## 8 Background Papers

None.