

Meeting Date	4 October 2017
Report Title	Expansion of South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership
Cabinet Member	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins
Head of Service	James Freeman
Lead Officer	James Freeman
Classification	Open with restricted appendices
Recommendations	1. To approve the expansion of the Partnership through the inclusion of Canterbury City Council's building control service.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to extend the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership by the inclusion of Canterbury City Council's building control service.

2 Background

- 2.1 Following an approach by Canterbury City Council the partnership engaged in a project to examine the viability of them joining as a fourth partner.
- 2.2 Members of Joint Committee instructed that any expansion could only be considered at nil detriment to the existing arrangements. Not only would that mean no increase to their forecasted contributions but also equally important was to ensure the excellent reputation of the partnership and the high quality service to customers would be maintained.
- 2.3 An Outline Business Case was taken to Joint Committee in June 2017 and following their consideration and recommendations the attached business case (Appendix I) has been developed through negotiation and discussion between the partnership and Canterbury City Council.
- 2.4 Through the development of the partnerships digitalisation programme and the creation of a business model using agile and mobile working, the partnership has been able to demonstrate how improvements to customer service and service delivery can be achieved. Through the effective use of borderless office principles the model can be incorporated in this and future partnership expansion plans.

- 2.5 A financial forecast within the business case demonstrates further reductions in contributions by the existing three partners to 2021 should this proposal be taken forward. It should be noted that this is considered to be a prudent forecast without taking into account further opportunities to increase income from dealing with increased enforcement activity in the Canterbury area and to potentially enhance the consultancy service. There are also details of the operational plan and revised staffing structure to verify the viability of the project.
- 2.6 The partnership has been operated successfully over the last 10 years and Members of Joint Committee have expressed a view to share some of the benefits from the operation with the adjoining authorities and to also importantly, enhance the resilience and opportunities through a wider market that expansion would bring.
- 2.7 This proposal looks to take the benefits and improvements to customer service that have been developed over the last ten years to a wider audience, increasing critical mass of the partnership, delivering greater consistency and improving market share over an area of Kent which would comprise a population base of over 627,000.
- 2.8 The partnership benefits from being able to work across boundaries without the restrictions that individual local authorities have, therefore moving resources to where demand exists is much more feasible and with the additional benefit now, of being able to operate in a mobile environment.
- 2.9 Continuous service improvement is a high priority to both the partnership and Canterbury City Council. This expansion would allow for improvements in the way customers track their applications, give more consistency in the interpretation of building regulations across a large area of Kent and provide a responsive site inspection regime with all relevant information available to the surveyor on site. Ongoing development in plan processing and plan vetting online will be taken forward together with a more responsive service being able to deliver building control advice and guidance to clients in their home or office rather than them having to travel to Council offices.
- 2.10 With the availability of complimentary services through the consultancy, clients will be able to benefit from a one stop shop approach to their construction needs including energy, fire risk and accessible assessments together with access to the pressure and sound testing facilities.
- 2.11 Should the expansion be agreed then we would look to implement the new arrangement from 1st April 2018 subject to Canterbury progressing their digitalisation of building control so as to facilitate working in the STG agile environment. All costs related to integrating Canterbury Building control into the shared service would be met by Canterbury City Council.
- 2.12 As set out in paragraph 3.26 of the Memorandum of Agreement before an additional authority is permitted to join the partnership each of the existing councils are required to agree the proposal through their individual Cabinets.

2.13 Canterbury City Council will also need agreement through their full council meeting on 19th October 2017 having taken reports to their Management Team on 12 September 2017 and Policy and Resources Committee on 4th October 2017.

3. Proposal

3.1 It is proposed that approval be given for the expansion of the South Thames gateway Building Control Partnership through the inclusion of Canterbury City Council's Building Control service.

3 Alternative Options

4.1 Should a decision be made to not accept expansion, the current service would continue as is. This is not recommended as the proposal should give rise to the expected benefits of building further resilience and providing for a wider market and broader customer base as well as providing some reduction in contributions from the existing partner authorities.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

3.1 The South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee has been fully advised on progress of the proposed expansion and fully support the proposals and business case.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications																				
Corporate Plan	Contribute to meeting the objective of a 'council to be proud of'.																				
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>There will be no cost to the existing partnership with Canterbury City Council responsible for any costs associated to them joining.</p> <p>It is anticipated that following expansion there would be a small reduction in the Council's contribution to support the service:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="487 1596 1437 1929"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="487 1596 803 1745"></th> <th data-bbox="803 1596 1120 1745">Current Agreed Business Plan contribution for Swale BC</th> <th data-bbox="1120 1596 1437 1745">With expansion – proposed business plan contribution for Swale BC</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="487 1745 803 1785">2017/18</td> <td data-bbox="803 1745 1120 1785">£72,050</td> <td data-bbox="1120 1745 1437 1785"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="487 1785 803 1824">2018/19</td> <td data-bbox="803 1785 1120 1824">£68,653</td> <td data-bbox="1120 1785 1437 1824">£66,226</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="487 1824 803 1864">2019/20</td> <td data-bbox="803 1824 1120 1864">£66,018</td> <td data-bbox="1120 1824 1437 1864">£62,972</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="487 1864 803 1904">2020/21</td> <td data-bbox="803 1864 1120 1904"></td> <td data-bbox="1120 1864 1437 1904">£59,244</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="487 1904 803 1929"></td> <td data-bbox="803 1904 1120 1929"></td> <td data-bbox="1120 1904 1437 1929"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Current Agreed Business Plan contribution for Swale BC	With expansion – proposed business plan contribution for Swale BC	2017/18	£72,050		2018/19	£68,653	£66,226	2019/20	£66,018	£62,972	2020/21		£59,244			
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Legal and Statutory	The Memorandum of Agreement sets out the requirements for additional authorities to join the partnership under paragraph 3.26. Legal representation for the partnership is provided by Medway Council and as the lead authority they will draft the necessary documentation to be agreed and signed by all four authorities.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage
Environmental Sustainability	None identified at this stage
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Risk analysis has been carried out within the business case and how through these negotiations we have been able to mitigate exposure to risk to the partnership and the individual authorities.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	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: Business case: Proposed expansion of South Thames gateway Building Control Partnership (STG) to incorporate Canterbury City Council Building Control (CCC)
- Appendix II: Organisational Charts pre and post Expansion

8 Background Papers

None.