

Cabinet Meeting**Agenda Item:**

Meeting Date	7 February 2017
Report Title	South Thames gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2018 to 2021
Cabinet Member	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
Head of Service	James Freeman, Head of Planning
Lead Officer	James Freeman, Head of Planning
Recommendations	The Draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan for 2018 to 2021 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 South Thames gateway Building Control Partnership (STG) Business Plan 2018 to 2021 and to refer the comments to the Joint Committee.

2 Background

- 2.1 The South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (involving Medway, Gravesham and Swale) went live in October 2007. Under the terms of the Memorandum Agreement between the three 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 Over the past year, the Building Control partnership has successfully
- maintained a balanced budget despite the difficult market competition and conditions;
 - Over the past three years STG have further developed their IT systems to enhance off-site technology, to provide 24/7 access to customer based systems and to deliver digital savings with other statutory bodies such as the water companies and the fire and rescue service; and
 - maintained high performance levels with excellent customer satisfaction ratings given the above and the increased difficulties in retaining and recruiting qualified staff.

- 2.5 Agreement has been reached with Canterbury City Council for their building control service to join with STG and this merger is on track for this to take place on 1 April 2018. It should be noted that the draft Business Plan includes scenarios for the three existing authorities with and without the inclusion of Canterbury City Council.
- 2.6 STG recently received excellent results from the BSI quality assurance audit in November which not only reconfirmed STG as a quality assured company but through the preparation work that was carried out in the Summer, were also upgraded to the new standard, nearly a year ahead of planned implementation.
- 2.7 Whilst staffing issues during the Summer/Autumn of 2017 has had an impact on performance levels, additional communication with key customers has meant that customer satisfaction levels have been maintained. New staff have now been trained on plan vetting and this should be reflected in a return to improved performance levels and meeting expected targets.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The introduction of Canterbury City Council into the partnership with a new much larger area will bring with it a number of opportunities to increase current market share and build in further resilience to the partnership.
- 3.2 The plan includes action plans aimed at:
- Working towards a paperless office;
 - Applying the principles of the borderless office; and
 - Utilising the benefits of digital transformation.
- 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 £68,653 to £59,244 by 2020/21. This represents a 13.7% saving over the business plan period. Details of the financial plan 2016-19 are included in Appendix I.

4 Alternative Options

- 1.2 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

- 1.3 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

Issue	Implications															
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 and Property	<p>Appendix I sets out the details of the financial plan accompanying the Business Plan.</p> <p>It is proposed to reduce total partner contributions over the three year plan by £9,409 (13.7%).</p> <p>The contributions for Swale BC are as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="488 600 1435 905"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="488 600 805 688">Year</th> <th data-bbox="805 600 1122 688">Contribution (£'s)</th> <th data-bbox="1122 600 1435 688">Reduction for previous year (£'s)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="488 688 805 741">2017/18</td> <td data-bbox="805 688 1122 741">72,050</td> <td data-bbox="1122 688 1435 741"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="488 741 805 793">2018/19</td> <td data-bbox="805 741 1122 793">68,266</td> <td data-bbox="1122 741 1435 793">3,784</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="488 793 805 846">2019/20</td> <td data-bbox="805 793 1122 846">62,972</td> <td data-bbox="1122 793 1435 846">5,294</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="488 846 805 905">2020/21</td> <td data-bbox="805 846 1122 905">59,244</td> <td data-bbox="1122 846 1435 905">3,728</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)	2017/18	72,050		2018/19	68,266	3,784	2019/20	62,972	5,294	2020/21	59,244	3,728
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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 2018 – 21
- Appendix II: South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership – Service delivery Plan 2018 - 21

8 Background Papers

None.