

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

Wednesday, 10 June 2015

10.00am to 10.45am

Record of the meeting

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

Present: Councillors: Chitty, Cubitt and Lewin

In Attendance: Janine Boughton, Head of Administration and Business Development
James Freeman, Head of Planning, Swale Borough Council
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director, Housing and Regeneration
Sarah Kilkie, Assistant Director (Communities), Gravesham Borough Council
Andrew Lawson, Finance Business Partner
Michael Turner, Democratic Services Officer
Tony Van Veghel, Director, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership

1 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Election of Chairman

Decision:

Councillor Lewin was elected Chairman for the 2015/2016 municipal year.

Councillor Lewin in the Chair.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Cubitt to his first meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Chairman for 2014/2015 (Councillor Chitty) asked that members' thanks be placed on record for the hard work and dedication of the building control partnership team and the people who supported the Joint Committee. She also asked for the Committee's thanks to be conveyed to Councillor Burden for his positive contributions over the years.

3 Election of Vice-Chairman

Decision:

Councillor Cubitt was elected Vice-Chairman for the 2015/2016 municipal year.

4 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 25 March 2015 was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

6 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were no urgent matters.

7 Final Outturn and Statement of accounts 2014/15

Discussion:

The Finance Business Partner (Medway Council) introduced a report which addressed the requirement for the Joint Committee to approve the draft Statement of Accounts for the 2014-2015 financial year.

The Partnership had achieved a surplus of £32,532 for 2014/2015 which could be used for specific purposes but not to subsidise statutory services.

A member welcomed the fact that a surplus had been achieved and expressed the view that, if possible, some of it be used to fund a pay increase for the staff working for the Partnership – many of whom had not received a pay increase in some time. (see also minute no. 8)

Decisions:

The South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee:

- (a) noted the outturn for 2014-15 and respective partner contributions as presented in section 2.2 of the report.
- (b) approved the Statement of Accounts, as presented at Appendix 1 to the report.

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- (c) requested that the Chairman and the Monitoring Officer of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership sign the Statement of Accounts as appropriate.

8 South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Annual Report

Discussion:

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership introduced a report which asked Members to approve the use of the reserve to pay for the consultancy and legal advice into the proposal to move the consultancy into a local authority company and also to deliver a new website with smart technology and enabling customer self-service. In response to a question, the cost of employing consultants was approximately £15,000 and quotes were being sought regarding improvements to the web site with the costings on both proposals being reported to the next meeting. Members welcomed a suggestion that the solicitors who had previously advised on moving to a local authority company could make a presentation to members at the next meeting on this proposal.

With regard to the suggestion that some of the surplus be used to fund a pay increase for staff the Director advised that he would report back to the next meeting with more information regarding this proposal and would consider a number of options in consultation with the Assistant Director Organisational Services. Whilst it is the case that surveyors had received a market premia last year that was as a consequence of the recruitment exercise not as a result of a reward for the team's efforts over the years.

Decision:

The South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee:

- (a) noted the contents of the report
- (b) approved the use of the reserve to pay for the consultancy and legal advice into the proposal to move the consultancy into a local authority company and also be used to deliver a new website with smart technology and enabling customer self-service, subject to a report to the next meeting on costings
- (c) requested a report to the next meeting on the possibility of using some of the surplus to fund a pay increase for the technical administration team

9 South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan

Discussion:

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership presented a report which sought the Joint Committee's agreement to the

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South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership's Business Plan (dated 16 December 2014 Version 4) and Service Delivery Documentation for 2015-2018.

During the discussion it was noted that there were significantly more local authority building control partnerships than when the South Thames Gateway Partnership was established. There was also an impetus for smaller councils to form such partnerships in order to build resilience, particularly given strong competition from the private sector.

Decision:

The Joint Committee agreed to adopt the 2015-2018 Business Plan dated 16 December 2014 Version 4 and Service Delivery Documentation.

10 South Thames Gateway Building Control - Marketing and Promoting Services

Discussion:

The Director of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership presented a report which dealt with the use of part of the general reserve for the engagement of consultants to examine the most effective way of promoting the Partnership's services.

The possibility of exploring the scope for the Partnership to provide more services for Gravesham Borough Council and its housing stock was agreed.

Decision:

The Joint Committee agreed to note the report and also the proposal to engage consultants referred to in the Annual Report (see minute no 7).

11 Administrative Arrangements 2015/2016

Discussion:

The Joint Committee considered a report regarding administrative arrangements for the 2015/2016 municipal year.

A member suggested that, if possible, the next meeting take place at the Partnership's new offices in Rochester which would give members the opportunity to carry out a site visit.

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Decision:

The Joint Committee:

- a) Agreed the timetable of meetings for the 2015/2016 municipal year (as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report) and that, if possible, the next meeting take place at the offices of the Partnership in Rochester
- b) Noted the appointment of the officers listed in paragraph 4.2 of the report as Monitoring and Deputy Monitoring Officers, and as S151 and Deputy S151 Officers,
- c) Agreed to select Swale Borough Council to provide a secretary to the Joint Committee for the 2015/2016 municipal year.

Chairman

Date:

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