

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

**Thursday, 12 March 2026**

**10.02am to 10.56am**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Burden, Curry (Chairperson), Edwards and Gibson

**In Attendance:** Steve Dickens, Democratic Services Officer  
Shazad Ghani, Head of Planning, Gravesham Borough Council  
Simon Thomas, Head of Planning, Canterbury City Council  
Janine Weaver, Director, South Thames Gateway Building  
Control Partnership, Director STG Building Control Partnership  
Rebecca Wilcox, Chief Housing Officer, Medway Council

**773 Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Head of Place, Swale Borough Council, Joanne Johnson.

**774 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 11 December 2025 was agreed and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

**775 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

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

There were none.

**777 Proposed dates for the 2026/27 Municipal Year**

**Discussion:**

The Democratic Services Officer highlighted the Joint Committee dates for 2026/27 were scheduled to take place on 18 June, 17 September, 10 December and 11 March, administered by Swale Borough Council.

**Decision:**

The Committee noted the proposed dates for the 2026/27 municipal year.

**778 Exclusion of the press and public**

**Decision:**

The Committee excluded the press and public during consideration of the following reports because consideration of this matter in public would disclose information falling within one or more of the descriptions of exempt information contained in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as specified below, and, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**779 Monitoring Report December 2025 to February 2026**

**Discussion:**

The Director, South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership introduced the report. She highlighted the positive performance by the Partnership with key performance indicators met during the period.

She explained that enforcement activity had increased; the Partnership provided a proportionate response which prioritised issues of safety given the current level of resources. However, all owners who had undertaken unauthorised works had been contacted, and all cases would be revisited as resources allowed.

There were two challenges to the continued strong performance, applications remained at similar levels to last year, 46% below pre-pandemic levels. Recruitment and retention remained the other significant challenge for the partnership. The Partnership currently had five vacancies including one management position, staff turnover stood at 38%, more than twice the national average as per a 2022-23 building control workforce strategy undertaken by the LGA. The principle reason for the level of turnover was salaries at all levels of experience. The salary the partnership was able to offer remained below the market value in the private sector.

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More positively there had been an increase in the value of applications received so there had been a rise in income generated by the Partnership. Regularisation had also assisted in reducing the financial pressures and consequently income had exceeded targets achieving 124% of the annual forecast and the Partnership remained on track to achieve a surplus.

The Director requested the Joint Committee consider options to respond to the challenge of salaries differentials, such as a skills shortage payments to recognise the difficulty of recruitment and retention recruitment faced by the partnership.

The Director stated that the Partnership faced additional resourcing issues responding to out of hours calls which placed a strain on capacity. Officers had been repeatedly called out to non-emergency calls and this was both a strain on resources and a safety risk for officers. She asked the Joint Committee to approve the partnership to prioritise out of hours call outs where there was an identified risk to safety and the partnership had been contacted directly by the emergency services to provide assistance.

The following issues were discussed:

**Recruitment and Retention** – the Joint Committee discussed potential responses to ongoing recruitment and retention issues. The Joint Committee recognised the difficulties caused by the higher salaries which could be achieved in the private sector and the potential need to employ expensive temporary staff if it could ensure it had the workforce required to complete its duties.

The Joint Committee discussed ways which the Partnership could meet the salary gap. In response to a question whether the benefit package could be improved, the Partnership Director stated that whilst the benefits available as part of the reward package was strong, there was a significant gap in expected salary between the public and private sector, and this was the principle cause of recruitment and retention issues. It was discussed whether the Partnership was subject to the requirements set out in Medway Council's Medpay scheme. The Chief Housing Officer, Medway Council undertook to discuss with the Partnership Director and colleagues at Medway Council the reward package available. It was agreed that a new salary scheme be developed, including consideration of payroll being administered by another authority within the Partnership, and that a detailed report with proposals be provided. Given the urgency of retention issues, it was further agreed that a short term review of a potential uplift to contracts in respect of skills shortages be undertaken, with the outcome reported to an additional meeting of the Joint Committee to be held during the current municipal year.

**Out of Hours Contact** - Members agreed that staff should not attend alone and should only do so in the company of the emergency services. Members further noted that the public would be likely to contact the emergency services in the first instance should an incident arise, and in such circumstances the

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emergency services would, where a risk had been identified, contact the Partnership accordingly.

**Building Safety Levy** - Members requested further information regarding data capture regarding the Building Safety Levy, the Partnership Director stated that the work required to capture the additional information required was underway, IDOX had said the IDOX Cloud system was expected to be upgraded at no additional cost. The Exacom system was already used by the other three partnership authorities for CIL/S106 and the building control module would attract a cost, however, there was a government fund available to cover the cost. How this would be implemented, had not been finalised, however, the costs associated with the Building Safety Levy was recoverable in full, so there would be no cost to the Partnership.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the contents of the report.
- b) The Committee requested a further report from the Partnership Director to consider options to improve recruitment and retention at an additional meeting to be arranged.

### **Chairperson**

**Date:**

**Steve Dickens**

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