



# Building Control Partnership Delivery Plan



Director  
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Last updated

Tony Van Veghel  
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# **C O N T E N T S**

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## 1. SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN – 2016-2017

1 Objective		Improve customer service utilising IT development and increased customer interactions				
Action	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Lead Officer	
1.1 Development of on-screen plan vetting	In-house training to all surveyors	Increased plan checking within performance targets and reduced costs	Within current budget	June 2016	Plan vetting / inspection manager	
	Provision of home-based large screen monitors	Increased plan checking	Within current budget	September 2016	Plan vetting / inspection manager	
	Monthly and 3 monthly review of use and output		Within current budget	July to September 2016 monthly then 3 monthly	Plan vetting / inspection manager	
1.2 Increase the number of site inspections per surveyor	Number of inspections per surveyor increased by 20%	Achieving new target time per visit	Within current budget	Quarterly review	Plan vetting / inspection manager	
1.3 Achieving national performance indicator for plan vetting	85% plan vets within 10 working days, 100% within 15% working days	Improved turnaround time for plan vetting	Within current budget	Quarterly review, monitoring report and covalent	Phil Harris	
1.4 Improve consistency to plan vetting and site inspection with	Restructuring group to accommodate	Change in working practices	Within current budget	July 2016	Tony Van Veghel	

1 Objective		Improve customer service utilising IT development and increased customer interactions			
Action	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Lead Officer
the development of function based teams	functional teams	for surveyors			
	Appointing dedicated team leaders to oversee consistency and quality checks	Improve consistency	Within current budget	June 2016	Tony Van Veghel / Phil Harris
	Monitoring consistency and provide training where required	Improved consistency for both plan vetting and site inspection records	Within current budget	Monthly monitoring until March 2017	Phil Harris
1.5 Increase enforcement action and monitoring	Appointment of dedicated team through restructuring of group	Change in working practices for surveyors	Within current budget	July 2016	Tony Van Veghel
1.6 Tracking of applications via website and refine self-serve search facility	Identify funding to develop new website	Web capable of delivering customer tracking	To be investigated	End April 2016	Janine Boughton
	Development of website		To be investigated	October 2016	Janine Boughton
	Testing of enabling customer viewing of current stage of	24 hour access for customers to view stage of	Within current budget	March 2017	Janine Boughton

1 Objective		Improve customer service utilising IT development and increased customer interactions			
Action	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Lead Officer
	application	application			
	Online payment through website for new application and invoices	24 hour access for customers to make payments	To be investigated	December 2016	Janine Boughton
1.7 Improved communication with customers	Automated notification of inspection on booking	Confirmation of site booking to customer	To be investigated	End April 2016	Janine Boughton
	Greater use of email communication to customers	Faster and immediate notification	Within current budget	June 2016	Janine Boughton / Phil Harris
	Notification to customers prior to visit by surveyor	Confirmation of time of visit to customer	Within current telephone budget	August 2016	Plan vetting / inspection manager

2 Objective		Increase income generation by increasing market share and further expansion of partnership			
Action	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Lead Officer
2.1 Establish any further expansion opportunities	Increase resource to partnership to retain and improve resilience	Wider opportunities to generate income	Within agreed budget	September 2016	Tony Van Veghel
2.2 Develop account management	Greater frequency in engaging with partners	Retention of partners and market share	Within current budget	Quarterly	Phil Harris
2.3 Develop marketing strategy for 2017/2018	Strategy incorporating restructured building control and new commercial consultancy	Sustain market share and generate additional income	Within current budget	September 2016 to March 2017	Janine Boughton / Tony Van Veghel
2.4 Provision of additional complementary services	Identify additional services and resources which can be delivered to the public and private sector	Expand consultancy services and generate additional income	Within current budget / self-financing	June 2016	Tony Van Veghel / Phil Harris
	Market additional services		Within current budget / self-financing	July 2016 to September 2016	Tony Van Veghel / Phil Harris
	Monitor and review consultancy	Determine performance and income	Within current budget	November 2016	Tony Van Veghel / Phil Harris

<b>3 Objective</b>		<b>Development of consultancy services with dedicated staff under separate company</b>			
Action	Output	Impact	Resources	Milestones/P.I.s	Lead Officer
3.1 Investigate / Setting up separate company	Engage with consultants on delivery model business case	Report to be taken to Joint Committee	To be investigated	August 2016	Tony Van Veghel
	Appoint appropriate qualified and dedicated staff	Focus delivery model to customers	Invest to save / self-financial	October 2016	Tony Van Veghel / Consultancy Manager
	Increase services to a wider market (regionally and nationally)	Wider opportunities to generate income	Self-financing / return on investment	March 2017	Consultancy Manager
3.2 Determine the distribution of surpluses	Working group set up to reach agreement on the percentage split of any commercial surplus	Agreed mechanism and time period for repaying original setup costs	Within Partner Authority budget for officer time	September 2016	Joint Committee Members, Steering Group Officers, Financial Officers, Legal Officers



## 2. CONTRIBUTION AND SUPPORT FOR COUNCILS PRIORITIES

2.1. As STG is a Partnership of three authorities, it is important that its values reflect those of the three councils. The three partner authority priorities are:

Gravesham's priorities are:

- Safer Gravesham - 'where local residents and visitors can live, work and travel in a safe, clean and green borough'
- Stronger Gravesham - 'a healthier more cohesive community where children have the best start in life and people are proud to call home'
- Sustainable Gravesham - 'a thriving and sustainable local economy, built on the foundations of high quality regeneration and development projects'
- Sound and Self-Sufficient Council - 'a well-run and innovative council supporting its staff to realise commercial opportunities whilst transforming its services to deliver at the best possible value for money'

Medway's priorities for the next three years are:

- Safe, Clean and Green Medway
- Children and young people have the best start in Medway
- Adults maintain their independence and live healthy lives
- Everyone benefitting from regeneration

Medway Values

- Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do
- Giving value for money

Swale's priorities are:

- A borough to be proud of
- A community to be proud of
- A council to be proud of

2.2. There are clear links between the three and all revolve around regeneration and sustainability, maximising opportunities for local communities and delivering quality services. These are also encompassed in the values of putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and giving value for money.

## **Regeneration**

### **Linked to Council Priorities:**

- Sustainable Gravesham - 'a thriving and sustainable local economy, built on the foundations of high quality regeneration and development projects' - Gravesham priority
- Everyone benefitting from regeneration – Medway priority
- A council to be proud of – Swale priority

2.3. Our consultancy is now able to offer a range of services to the major regeneration projects in the area. Early intervention in the design process will eliminate issues that could provide conflicts with legislation at a later date. Our range of services include:

Code for sustainable home assessment, SAP calculations, SBEM calculations, Display Energy Certificates, Access Audits and Fire Risk Assessments.

We have also teamed up with colleagues LABC Services, the commercial arm of LABC, through whom we are able to offer air pressure testing, acoustic testing and have access to CDM co-ordinators together with other expertise and specialism's which we are now able to facilitate.

2.4. We work with colleagues in Private Sector Housing and Environmental Health to aid the transformation of areas through social regeneration, providing advice on bringing back into use empty and dilapidated properties, giving advice on houses in multiple occupation and the refurbishment and repair of commercial premises. We have a number of joint meetings with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and have shared technical updates through the seminars we have organised.

2.5. We offer the design and surveying team expertise in the design of many adaptations to Medway's schools, and have partnered with a number of architectural practices that are working through programmes of school extensions and adaptations. We work with Medway Education and Business Partnership to assist in work experience for school leavers.

### **Links to STG Delivery Plan Reference:**

- Objective 3 (see page 8)

## **Sustainability**

### **Linked to Council Priorities:**

- Sustainable Gravesham - 'a thriving and sustainable local economy, built on the foundations of high quality regeneration and development projects' – Gravesham priority
- Safer Gravesham - 'where local residents and visitors can live, work and travel in a safe, clean and green borough' - Gravesham priority
- A clean and green environment – Medway priority
- A borough to be proud of – Swale priority

2.6. Building Control has a major part to play in ensuring the innovative designs for the regeneration of the area are still compliant with the Building Regulations. As sustainability is an important part of the Government's agenda to reduce CO2 emissions and reduce energy costs for everyone, the adaptation and renovation of buildings within the area, together with control of new buildings will ensure the impact on the environment and energy bills are kept to a minimum.

2.7. The Government have stated:

"The Energy White Paper produced by the Government acknowledged the reality of climate change and stated a commitment to putting the UK on a path to cutting carbon dioxide emission by 60% before 2050 with real progress by 2020 by cutting emissions by 34% of the 1990 levels.

With around half of the CO<sup>2</sup> emissions coming from building energy use, the Building Regulations are a key part of Government efforts to tackle climate change through higher building standards. CLG recognise that Building Control professionals are at the forefront of these efforts."

2.8. Following the Housing Standards Review the Government are reliant on the building regulations reducing CO2 emissions and have introduced changes to Part L which will deliver zero carbon homes from the latter part of 2016.

2.9. The Infrastructure Act will provide powers to deliver allowable solutions to meet this zero carbon policy. This will be done through on-site energy efficiency to a code level 4 equivalent standard and by using off-site measures to offset 100% of the remaining regulated emissions. The allowable solutions being developed at present include:

- more energy efficiency on site
- a national fund
- partnering with a third party to provide off-site carbon abatement which could be a local scheme

2.10. The overriding factors will be cost effectiveness, certifiable and verifiable as well as delivering the off-set of the remaining emissions over a 30 year period.

2.11. Ministers have stated that local planning authorities will be able to set and apply policies in their local plan which require compliance with energy performance standards that exceed the energy requirements of the building regulations until commencement of amendments to the Planning and Energy Act 2008 in the Deregulation Bill 2015. This is expected to happen alongside the introduction of the zero carbon homes policy in late 2016.

2.12. After this energy performance requirements, in the building regulations, will be set at a level equivalent to the outgoing Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. Until then the Government expect local planning authorities to take this statement of the Government's intention into account in applying existing policies and not set conditions with requirements above the code level 4 equivalent.

2.13. In order to support small builders all new homes will be required to meet the strengthened on-site energy performance standard but those building on small sites will not be required to support any further off-site carbon abatement measures. This applies to the size of the site not the size or type of developer. There will be an exemption for small housing sites of 10 units or fewer from the allowable solutions element of the zero carbon homes target with an overall maximum size of 1000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space for the site. Legislation will be put in place to ensure this exemption is not abused. The Government intend to review this exemption after three years. They intend to use the powers in the Building Act that not only enable Building Regulations to be made that provide an exemption based on site size, but also enable provision to prevent the sub-division of larger sites in order to abuse the exemption.

2.14. There have been key changes to the Building Regulations following the Housing Standards Review which will entail greater liaison between planning and building control bodies.

- Energy (Part L) - Code for Sustainable Homes is being wound down and building regulation used to delivery zero carbon homes
- Water (Part G) - optional higher standard of 105 litres per person per day based on planning information where the water supply is low
- Access (Part M) - two additional levels of compliance have been introduced equivalent to life-time homes and wheelchair housing. The designation of appropriate plots will be based on the planning permission.
- Security (Part Q) - a new regulation has been introduced to control minimum levels prescribed for security for doors and windows.
- Space – this is a new nationally described standard which will be controlled through planning legislation but enforced through building control.

2.15. This key message from the Government and the demand from the construction industry for pre-application advice and discussion mean it is imperative that STG invest in continually training staff to provide the lead and the service that is required. This necessary training will ensure that sufficient qualified staff are available to provide a design service through the consultancy, and a checking service through the administration of the Building Regulations without compromising the necessary checks and balances which need to be in place to ensure complete scrutiny in both the design and checking processes, similar to that which exists in private sector competition.

**Links to STG Delivery Plan Reference:**

- Objective 3 (see page 8)

**Maximising Opportunities for local communities**

**Linked to Council Priorities:**

- Stronger Gravesham - 'a healthier more cohesive community where children have the best start in life and people are proud to call home' – Gravesham priority

- Children and young people having the best start in life – Medway priority
- Older and vulnerable people maintaining their independence – Medway priority
- A community to be proud of – Swale priority

2.16. Through our work with the housing sections of two partner authorities we help to deliver improvements to council owned properties through the Decent Homes, condition surveys and fire risk assessments. During these surveys we also assess health and safety requirements of the occupants and impacts on the community.

2.17. With joint training, guidance and information sheets, together with builder and architect forums, the Partnership aims to support all of our customers in their building projects. Over the next three years mini guides will be developed both locally and nationally to cover general standards of construction on many projects in the domestic market such as garage conversions, small extensions and removal of load-bearing walls. This will assist in ensuring a consistent approach to the many challenges, the multitude of complex and interactive regulations now presents to every development.

2.18. Whilst plan assessments identify areas of non-compliance and contraventions within the drawing they also often identify areas where the builder, developer or owner may need to pay particular attention to an element of construction. By formulating best practice guides on domestic developments, we will create a mechanism to ensure areas of concern on site are minimised and that not only will the completed project comply with the Building Regulations, it will also satisfy good building practice in many areas that are not necessarily covered by our controls.

2.19. Inclusive design is a paramount requirement of both newbuild and refurbishment works. Advising on compliance with The Equalities Act and Part M of the Building Regulations is a major part of public protection inspection services non-chargeable work. This not only delivers a more suitable environment for disabled people, but also transfers the benefits to the greater community, i.e. young families, older people and those caring for others.

2.20. The revisions to Part M of the Building Regulations will ensure consideration is given to both life-time homes and wheelchair accessible homes for future occupants of a new residential development. These will help maintain communities and help to support older and vulnerable people to remain in the areas they know.

2.21. The majority of the work of the Partnership is concerned with protecting the community through health and safety requirements in the regulations or in other sections of the Building Act.

2.22. Important examples of health and safety requirements include fire safety (means of escape, fire spread and access for the fire service) structural safety and satisfactory drainage. In addition, the Partnership deals with dangerous

structures, demolitions, dilapidated buildings and contraventions of the Building Regulations. The Government have also introduced a new Part Q to the Building Regulations to introduce security as a measure that needs to be considered.

2.23. We assist with a number of local agents and private sector housing sections to ensure adaptations comply with the Regulations to enable older and vulnerable people to stay in their homes and maintain their independence.

**Links to STG Delivery Plan Reference:**

Objective 1 Action 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 (see page 5 & 6)

Objective 2: Action 2.1 & 2.4 (see page 7)

Objective 3 Action 3.1 (see page 8)

**Delivering quality services**

**Linked to Council Priorities:**

- Sound and Self-Sufficient Council - 'a well-run and innovative council supporting its staff to realise commercial opportunities whilst transforming its services to deliver at the best possible value for money' – Gravesham
- Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do - Medway
- Giving value for money - Medway
- A council to be proud of - Swale

2.24. Our customer survey revealed that the overall service provided by STG is of a very high standard with 97% of respondents rating it good to excellent. A further postal survey was carried which targeted owners of properties where works had been carried out.

2.25. Of the processes involved with delivering the service, communication and speed of delivery were seen as important by all customers in last years' survey (81% to 100% rated this as important), it is therefore encouraging to see that 93% to 95% of customers feel they have received a Good to Excellent service in this.

2.26. The development of the new back office system will improve many elements of our customer service. Through the Business Plan we will be able to deliver a better service on site with access to real time information and through further developments of the system the ability to deliver inspection notes, notices and letters on site. Customers will be able to track the progress of applications online and carry out initial surveys on their properties through the web. We will be revisiting and revising guidance documentation for owners and developers to improve consistency on site and ensure communication throughout the life of the project is improved.

2.27. Local Authorities have a duty to ensure that building work complies with the Building Regulations (Section 91 of the Building Act 1984). If our requests to rectify contraventions fail then, as a last resort, more formal action is used. There are two courses of action available:

Prosecution of the builder in the Magistrates Court under Section 35 of the Building Act 1984: in most cases, action must be started within six months of the contravention being discovered, the period of discovery being extended in 2008 to two years from the date the works were completed.

Notice under Section 36 of the Building Act 1984 requiring the owner to remove or rectify the contravening work. This Notice must be served within 12 months from the date of discovery of the contravention.

- 2.28. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (Fines on Summary Conviction) Regulations 2015 came into force in March 2015 and removed the £5,000 cap that used to limit the maximum fine Magistrates could impose. It applies to fines imposed by the Building Regulations under Sections 35 and 35A of the Building Act. Magistrates can now issue much higher penalties on offenders who have committed the most serious level 5 offenses and can now hand down prison sentences up to 6 months and be able to refer what more serious cases to a Crown Court.
- 2.29. However, most enforcement work is carried out by negotiation. Prosecutions through the courts are an exception, but every day a number of the inspections carried out involve some form of intervention to either prevent or rectify work which was in contravention of the Regulations. We have worked with our software provider to design a way of capturing this information in the form of pre-contravention inspection reports and we will monitor this monthly to reflect the number of inspections carried out that have protected consumers from building regulation contraventions during the course of their development.
- 2.30. As mentioned previously, consistency remains an important requirement identified by customers. We will be examining this area through the provision of training and shared experiences of staff and designers, the use of guidance notes and the use of comprehensive clauses, conditions and site notes.

**Links to STG Delivery Plan Reference:**

Objective 1 Action 1.2 – 1.5 – (see page 4 & 5)

Objective 2 Action 2.4 – (see page 7)

### 3. SERVICE RISKS

#### Risk rating key

##### Likelihood

- A. Very high
- B. High
- C. Significant
- D. Low
- E. Very low
- F. Almost impossible

##### Impact

- 1. Catastrophic (showstopper)
- 2. Critical
- 3. Marginal
- 4. Negligible

Host Directorate: RCC			<b>Service: STG Building Control</b>		<b>Manager: Tony Van Veghel</b>		Portfolio Holder: STG Joint Committee	
Risk Title: Finance and Strategy					Description of Risk: Reduced income			
Date	Risk No	Risk Rating	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequences if Risk Realised	Mitigation/Action Points for Risk Owners	Service Plan Ref.	
17/12/15	01	B2	Inability to recruit staff in a competitive market from a reducing pool of resource	6 qualified surveyors	Additional staff brought in from agencies which would significantly increase costs.	Continuance of market premia. Development of assistant building control surveyors and continue recruitment of assistants from other areas in the construction industry.	1.9, ,4.7, 4.9, 5.4	
17/12/15	02	C2	Current infrastructure unable to support	Inability to access back-office system	Inefficient service delivery resulting in further loss of	Development of online solution to become more cloud based and	1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 2.5,	



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Date	Risk No	Risk Rating	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequences if Risk Realised	Mitigation/Action Points for Risk Owners	Service Plan Ref.	
			development of technological advancements in service delivery	and meet customer demands	market and inability to compete.	invest in both hardware and software.	3.7, 4.2	
17/12/15	03	C3	Increased demand on public protection duties	Percentage time spent exceeds contributions income	Further call on contributions from partners. Reduction in service to partners.	Close monitoring of time spent and increase in demand. Investigate recovery of some costs through insurance claims.	1.3, 3.8, 3.9, 3.11, 4.8	
10/08/15	04	C2	Highly competitive and unpredictable market. Diminishing income through lack of building regulation applications.	65% of market share	Insufficient income to cover expenditure on chargeable account resulting in an increase on the followings year's chargeable rate which may make us uncompetitive.	Reduced expenditure to limit income deficiency. Look for alternative income streams through consultancy service. Improve marketing strategy and rationale services provided.	1.9, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 5.2, 5.3	
10/08/15	05	C3	Inability to sustain growth and acquire additional business.	Reduction in market share and consultancy services income	Inability to match income with expenditure resulting in increase in following year's chargeable rate. Surveyors chargeable time transfers to enforcement activity which would not be sustainable from the contributions. Consultancy losing income and not sustainable.	Invest in training and development of staff so as to diversify resources into consultancy work. Increased time allocation monitoring.	1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 1.12, 2.6, 3.12, 3.13, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5	

Host Directorate: RCC			Service: <b>STG Building Control</b>		Manager: <b>Tony Van Veghel</b>		Portfolio Holder: STG Joint Committee	
Risk Title: Finance and Strategy					Description of Risk: Reduced income			
Date	Risk No	Risk Rating	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequences if Risk Realised	Mitigation/Action Points for Risk Owners	Service Plan Ref.	
10/08/15	06	D3	Current economic situation leading to increased debt arising from unpaid invoices.	Increased number of applicants unable to pay invoices.	Number and value of debtors increased affecting the budgeted income figure. Unpaid invoice provision within budget would need to be increased.	Careful monitoring of debtors list. Vigorous pursuit of large debts. Database clearly marked where invoice remains unpaid so as site surveyor can pursue on inspection. Taking over the functions of invoicing and dept collection from the finance department.	2.3, figure 1	
10/08/15	07	D3	Failure to suitably develop staff to meet the needs of the business and match personal self improvement expectations.	The market is regularly changing to offer alternative services to clients which compliment building regulation work. The Partnership requires staff to be trained to deliver a more diverse service and remain competitive.	Insufficient skill base would result in customers being more attracted to the competition with a resultant loss in work.	Ensure staff are well trained and able to compete with the services offered by the private sector.  Develop training matrix to ensure staff development through PDR process.	1.9, 1.10, 2.4, 3.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 5.11	