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Date: 19 March 2026

Dear Member

COUNTY COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 2026

Agenda Item No

6 County Council Questions (Pages 1 - 24)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Watts', is positioned above the printed name.

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive

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Question 1

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Colin Sefton to Peter Osborne,
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

I have been advised that when reviewing transport assessments for planning applications, KCC Highways focuses on whether any shortcomings are material and significant enough, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to warrant an objection. This approach is supported by planning inspector decisions in cases where KCC has raised highway-related issues on appeal. Accordingly, for the Highway Authority to substantiate an objection, it must demonstrate that the appellant's transport assessment is flawed to the extent that it materially understates the anticipated transport impacts.

My understanding is therefore that KCC Highways does not seek to identify or correct all errors in transport assessments, and that reviewing non-material matters raised during consultation rests with others commenting to Local Planning Authority.

Does the Cabinet Member agree with and support this interpretation?

Answer

Whilst KCC Highways responses may highlight errors in a transport evidence base, Councillor Sefton has indeed been correctly advised on how KCC as Highway Authority is required to assess applications and provide recommendations to the Local Planning Authority.

Ultimately, the applicant is responsible for providing accurate information and the LPA is responsible for taking a 'sound' decision in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

As part of the consultation process, consultees may flag up concerns with the LPA who will consider these as part of their 'decision taking' process.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Alister Brady to Paul King,
Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Special Projects**

Kent County Council aims to send less than 1% of Kent's household waste to landfill. Can the Cabinet Member for Environment tell me if this means less than 1% of waste goes to Kent's landfill sites or do other Local Authorities and/or Counties, and possibly other Countries, dump their waste in Kent?

Answer

KCC sends less than 1% of Kent's household waste to landfill. The waste KCC sends to landfill consists only of asbestos/hazardous waste, and therefore it goes solely to Pinden Quarry in Dartford. Pinden Quarry is not exclusive to KCC, it is a regional hazardous waste facility serving Kent and the wider South East, meaning it can accept hazardous waste from other Local Authorities and organisations within the region.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

WITHDRAWN

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Martin Paul to Beverley Fordham,
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

With the national Not in Education, Employment, or Training rate increasing, and currently around one in ten young people across the country being classified as NEET, what specific responsibilities does Kent County Council have in addressing this issue, and what strategies are being implemented to prevent further increases in this trend in Kent.

Answer

All local authorities across England are expected to support NEETS in the following way:

- develop career information advice and guidance.
- improve and extend vocational education, training and apprenticeships.
- track all young people in Year 12 and 13 (16–18-year-olds).
- target support to young vulnerable people.
- reduce the number of young people who are NEET.
- develop employment engagement and programmes for Vulnerable Learners.
- develop targeted support for progression to Level 3.

There are two main reasons that NEET figures are increasing:

1. The rise in the number of post 16 students across the country - putting pressure on the available provision.
2. Post 16 funding mechanism hindering growth of provision. Post 16 providers receive their revenue funding on a lagged basis directly from the Department for Education. The Department holds the purse strings for the “growth fund”, which is intended to help address identified gaps in provision, and it holds the post-16 capital budget. The loss of the European Social Fund, which was funding courses for vulnerable young people, has resulted in fewer places being offered on courses at level 2 places and below.

KCC is proactive in ensuring as many relevant places are available as possible for this cohort, helping to identify gaps in provision in terms of geographical areas, qualifications, and training opportunities. Regular meetings take place with the Department for Education to outline need and demand.

KCC currently conducts the following to achieve its objectives towards all young people, and specifically for those who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET:

- strategically plans and influences providers to secure high-quality provision for 14-24-year-olds through its sector led Pathways for All work.
- undertakes provision mapping analysis and support for providers, including colleges and work-based learning providers, on 14-19 progression pathways and the post-16 offer through support for Pathways for All.
- assists with the design and implementation of the Post-16 district offer for all learners including vulnerable learners through support for Pathways for All.
- provides advice and support to the Post 16 sector to sustain and develop provision.
- provides information and guidance on the full range of education and training opportunities 14-19 (24), including apprenticeships and technical pathways using the KentChoices website.
- tracks all young people for the academic years 12 and 13 and engages those NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.
- enables all KCC schools to access the apprenticeship levy.
- supports schools to meet their statutory requirement to promote apprenticeships.
- raise awareness of apprenticeships across the county.

Despite all the good work, we are keen to do better at preventing young people become NEET in the first place. KCC is undertaking a review of its Post 16 work across the local authority, The Education People, FE and HE Providers and training providers to ensure a joined-up responsibility to identify potential NEETs earlier and to provide advice and guidance to support young people transitioning to Post 16.

In September 2026 Kent will be visited by the Department for Education's Area FE Regional Improvement Team to look at the work being conducted in Kent, particularly the sector led Pathway's for All initiative, and to determine whether additional funding is needed to improve destinations at Post 16.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

Question by Alan Cecil to Beverley Fordham,
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

The Government's White Paper for Post 16 Education and Skills, particularly Part 4, outlines the role of local authorities in ensuring there are sufficient college places to meet growing demand.

Given that vocational courses, such as those at Dartford College and especially in construction, are currently full to capacity, what specific role does Kent County Council play in addressing this issue?

Are they allocated any funding or grants to help to expand capacity in these high-demand courses ensuring that there are enough placements for students?

Answer

Local Authority duties regarding post-16 education are set out in "Participation of young people in education, employment or training" April 2024¹. The responsibilities are:

- To secure enough suitable education and training provision to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 or over and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained.
- To make available to all young people aged 13-19, and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs (SEN), support it considers appropriate to encourage, enable or assist them to effectively participate in education or training.

Despite having these responsibilities, the local authority is not the commissioner of post-16 education. This function sits with the Department for Education (DfE). Local authorities do not receive specific revenue or capital grants to develop post-16 provision in response to changing needs. The DfE funds providers direct.

The role of the local authority is to have detailed knowledge of the educational offer and identify any gaps. It should then seek to work with local education providers to fill those gaps. If it is unable to fill the gaps using local resources, then the LA should submit evidence to the DfE requesting their support². KCC has had a gaps case accepted by the DfE, but the DfE has not yet secured additional places for the County. In Spring 2024, we were promised an additional 450 places for the County, but this offer was withdrawn three days before the start of the Autumn term 2024 due to lack of funding.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-market-entry>

LAs are expected to convene partners and provide leadership of the sector. KCC is a national leader in doing this. KCC conducted a review of post-16 education called "Pathways for All". We have developed a strategic board of partners from the post-16 sector and have established local groups of education providers to take ownership of their collective local offer. Collaboration is improving rapidly. New provision is beginning to emerge and collaborative approaches to transition into post-16 are being developed to ensure young people are successful. This approach has been recognised nationally and the DFE has asked KCC to share its experiences with other local authorities.

The Post-16 White paper says the DFE will pilot of Regional Improvement Teams to work with colleges and FE providers to ensure that they are offering sufficient provision in their areas. Kent has been selected as one of three areas in the country due to its well evidenced work on provision gaps and the advanced work through Pathways for All. We are currently awaiting the details of what this will entail.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Mike Sole to Peter Osborne,
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

The village of Bridge near Canterbury, sits in the Nailbourne Valley. When it rains the main road through the village can become a river flowing down towards the lowest point of the village, which includes Patrixbourne Road. This flooding often leads to blocked gullies which residents and the parish council regularly report. On one occasion, the parish council were informed that following a risk assessment it had been determined that the location did not meet the intervention criteria for additional reactive works and would continue to be maintained through the cyclical cleansing programme, which appears to be on a triennial basis.

Please would the Cabinet Member confirm how often the gullies in Bridge are cleared, the date of the last clean, the next scheduled clean, and whether the village can be reassessed to an annual cleaning schedule.

Answer

Thank you for your question about how often the gullies in Bridge including Patrixbourne Road are cleaned.

Our drainage maintenance programme operates on a risk-based approach which determines cleansing frequency according to the assessed risk to highway safety, property, and the wider road network.

High Street Bridge is cleansed annually; it was last attended in July 2025 and is next due in July 2026. Patrixbourne Road was most recently cleansed in March 2025, with additional targeted works undertaken in December 2025 to address specific concerns raised at that time. The next scheduled maintenance is towards the end of 2027.

Recent inspections have identified several gullies near the High Street junction that were not draining effectively. We have therefore arranged additional cleansing and jetting of the connecting pipework to improve flow. Any defects identified during this work will be passed to our local engineer for investigation and resolution in line with our established procedures.

While we acknowledge that Patrixbourne Road can experience flooding issues during periods of heavy rainfall, its current assessed risk level does not currently meet the threshold required to justify increasing its cleansing frequency from the established three-year cycle to an annual programme

It is also important to note that the drainage system outfalls directly into the Nailbourne. When the river is running high, the drainage system cannot discharge as effectively

because the water has nowhere to go. This happens because of river levels rather than the frequency of gully cleansing.

For these reasons, and based on current evidence, the scheduled maintenance timescales will remain. We will, of course, keep the location under review, and residents and councillors are encouraged to report issues via our online fault reporting system so that reactive works can be undertaken where necessary.

COUNTY COUNCIL**Thursday 19 March 2026****Question by Luke Evans to Paul Webb,
Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services**

There are currently eight wards in Thanet that have a dedicated Community Warden, yet Garlinge has none. This disparity is particularly concerning given the unique pressures facing Garlinge. The ward has higher crimes rates than the other 8 parishes that I represent, and future planned development will only increase the need for community safety support via the Wardens.

Given that this council has a statutory duty to provide for community safety and cohesion, can the Cabinet Member explain the rationale behind the allocation of Community Wardens and advise what steps he will take to review this based on the concerns raised?

Answer

Thank you for the question.

The allocation of Community Wardens across Kent, including within Thanet, is determined by Kent County Council's Geographical Allocation Policy (GAP), which was subject to public consultation and formally agreed through the Council's decision-making process. The policy was also considered by the Scrutiny Committee and is publicly available.

The GAP is based on a range of agreed indicators and data aligned to the service's objectives, including factors linked to vulnerability, social isolation, community cohesion, deprivation and rurality. While crime-related indicators do form part of that overall assessment, the Community Warden Service is not designed to be deployed into areas of highest crime, as it is a preventative, community-based service which does not have any enforcement role.

Under this policy, Thanet benefitted and received an enhanced allocation of Community Wardens compared to the minimum level provided to each district, reflecting the district's overall level of need. Within Thanet, ward-level deployment was prioritised in line with the agreed indicators and population thresholds set out in the policy. The data showed that Garlinge was lower down the priority table for coverage than other awards in Thanet and therefore does not, unfortunately, have a dedicated community warden. It is not that Garlinge, or other areas that we cannot cover, would not benefit from a Community Warden, rather that we do not have enough funding, and therefore staffing to place a warden in all areas currently. This is something that I am looking at.

It is also important to note that the data underpinning the policy is developed over a long cycle and reflects confirmed and established need. While I recognise the concerns raised locally about future development, including proposed housing growth, these proposals are still in progress and would not require a formal review currently of warden deployment under the agreed framework.

Any future review of the Community Warden allocation would need to be considered consistently across Kent and in line with the existing policy, available resources and the Council's wider financial position. In the meantime, the service can and does undertake referrals outside of the designated wards as and when capacity allows. It also continues to work with district, parish and community partners to respond to local issues where appropriate.

It is also worth mentioning that over the last year, the officers have been working with the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and a number of parish councils to set up a sponsorship programme which allows parish and local councils to fund a Community Warden in their community, helping more communities to benefit from a Community Warden.

Several parish councils are now actively funding wardens in their areas, which has enabled us to expand our coverage and increase our capacity.

There are two options available: councils can either pay KCC to provide the service, or choose to directly employ their own warden. For full details about each approach, we have prepared a helpful FAQ document.

If you would like to find out more or request the FAQ, please email communitywardenreview@kent.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Terry Mole to Chris Palmer,
Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services**

At a time of high cost of living, which leaves many families struggling, is there any particular support family hubs provide to these families?

Answer

Kent Family Hubs and the Network provide a range of services which are all free. We help parents to access the information, resources and advice they need and the following is not an exhaustive list but gives a flavour of the depth and breadth of how Family Hubs and the Family Hub Network support families facing financial hardship.

- Activities, courses and groups including events and places
- Pregnancy and the first two years - advice on pregnancy, birth, childcare- including advice on accessing free early education and tax-free childcare, working parent and universal entitlements, and free childcare for foster carers
- BookStart - free book packs for families
- Helping children develop and learn - including free resources to help with homework and home learning, free EasyPeasy app access, and free access to family learning courses for parents, grandparents, carers and their children in partnership with Kent Adult Education
- Mental health and family relationships- including free perinatal mental health helpline, free access to Kooth (online wellbeing),
- Free access to sexual health clinics, substance misuse intervention
- Information and signposting to benefit eligibility and financial assessment information
- Signposting to fuel poverty services including Green Doctors, Better Housing Better Help, Citizens Advice, Ofgem, Fuel Direct.
- Free breast pump loans
- Information on eligibility for free bus travel, NHS travel scheme and Kent and Medway journey share.
- Healthy Start scheme for milk, fruit, vegetables, and vitamins.
- Kent Advice Hub- free support online, by phone or video calling as well at kiosks in some community locations, to help people with money worries

- Signposting to charities, phone lines, webchats, that give material aid, debt and budgeting advice

We have several food banks within the Family Hub Network, and several Family Hubs are distribution points for food and hygiene parcels.

Family Hubs signpost to Refer Kent and we are planning to become distribution points for the KCC Digital Kent Hardware access scheme this Summer. Family Hub Community Development Workers are district debt and welfare champions, making sure staff are aware of support available locally to signpost families to.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Harry Rayner to Brian Collins,
Cabinet Member for Deputy Leader**

Would the Deputy Leader, in their role overseeing the Council's Treasury Management arrangements, consider it appropriate for Kent County Council to purchase diesel oil futures as a hedge against oil price inflation?

Answer

Whilst the CIPFA code and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy does allow consideration of use of standalone derivatives that meet approved investment criteria, their use is very uncommon in Local Government and has been challenged in the past. It also comes with significant risk, one which we do not believe we should be taking. Proper advice would need to be taken to ensure that the derivatives meet the approved investment criteria and that all risks and implications when compared to other alternative investments are considered.

So, whilst the power to enter into derivative contracts is available, it would need to be done with proper advice which will also need to consider its purpose, cost, risks and we would add that timing and scale (which would be required to be established first) would be important consideration in the current fast moving situation, and is therefore not be considered appropriate.

As a risk management tool, oil futures could potentially help manage exposure, but the risk associated with financial derivatives, along with the timing risk of implementation, it is not considered an appropriate measure for the Council to put in place.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Richard Streatfield to Diane Morton,
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health**

Only 174 houses were built in Sevenoaks District last year, only one of which is accessible under Building regs Doc M M4(2) and none for para (3) regulations.

Can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health explain whether KCC works with districts to ensure that KCC's policy for promoting care at home is deliverable.

Answer

Thank you for your question.

We recognise that the ambition to support as many people as possible to remain living independently in their own homes is heavily reliant on the availability of appropriate, accessible housing. The Authority is therefore actively building and strengthening relationships with district and borough councils to ensure they are fully aware of the accessibility requirements for older and disabled people, and that these needs are reflected in the planning, development and future updating of local housing stock.

As set out in the Adults Accommodation Market Position Statement, the Council will work closely with district and borough partners to support the provision of suitable housing across the county. The Authority is clear that, wherever possible, new housing developments should meet the accessibility standards outlined in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations, with an appropriate proportion of new homes delivered to the M4(3) wheelchair-accessible standard.

The Authority asks that district and borough councils consult with us as part of the planning application process to ensure the appropriate allocation and provision of adapted and accessible properties.

In addition, the Authority is working closely with the Maintaining Independence Through Housing project, which aims to deliver more than 1,000 new high-quality homes for older people across Kent and Medway. This programme directly responds to the urgent and growing housing, health and social care needs associated with an ageing population.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Alex Ricketts to Linden Kemkaran,
Leader of the Council**

On 6th November the Council approved the Reforming Kent 2025–28 strategy, yet it still has not been published on the KCC website. During the debate, Mr Sole highlighted that the strategy commits to supporting planning authorities in resisting office-to-residential conversions, which contradicts the Council's excellent No Use Empty scheme. No amendment was made and the policy was passed.

At the following Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee meeting, the Chair informed Mr Sole that this wording was a “typo” and said the Council was considering how to correct it.

Can the Leader confirm if the wording will be amended and what the democratic processes is for doing so. In answering, can the Leader explain why the Strategy is still not published in its final form, 5 months after formal approval.

Answer

The Strategic Statement ‘Reforming Kent’ was approved at the Full Council meeting on 6 November 2025, and the approved version is available within the published meeting papers on kent.gov.uk.

A designed version intended for publication on kent.gov.uk was approved by the Leader in early December 2025. However, several Cabinet Members have indicated a desire to propose changes or additions to ‘Reforming Kent’ in light of emerging priorities within their portfolio responsibilities.

As the Strategic Statement requires Full Council approval, any further amendments must be agreed by Full Council. Cabinet Members are currently consolidating their proposed changes to incorporate into a revised version, which will be brought to Full Council at the May meeting. A designed version will then be published on kent.gov.uk shortly afterwards.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question from Claudine Russell, the Member for Cranbrook to
Linden Kemkaran, Leader of the Council**

Does the Leader believe that the process used for handling Council complaints and enquiries is delivering an efficient and satisfactory service for the residents of Kent?

Answer

The Council's complaints and enquiries process is providing an effective service for many residents despite high volumes of feedback and sustained pressures across several services, often driven by national and statutory challenges. Many services continue to meet expected timescales, and learning from complaints is being used to improve services.

Where performance has fallen below expectations, this is largely confined to a small number of high-demand, high-complexity areas affected by workforce pressures and complex statutory cases. Officers handling complaints are often the same staff delivering frontline services, which supports informed responses but can limit capacity during periods of high operational pressure.

Targeted action plans are in place to address backlogs, prioritise older cases and strengthen oversight. While performance may remain lower in the short term as backlogs are reduced, progress is closely monitored and reported to Members. Overall, the framework is sound, underperformance is being actively managed, and the Council is taking transparent and proportionate action to improve outcomes for residents.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

Question by Mark Hood to Beverley Fordham
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

The Specialist Teachers Learning Service has seen significant disruption to its operations in recent months.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm how many members were employed by the service when it was transferred in to the direct control of the County Council and how many are employed currently?

Answer

At the point the Specialist Teachers Learning Service transferred into the direct control of Kent County Council on 1 September 2025, the service employed the equivalent of 90 full-time staff. As of 12 March 2026, the service employs 78 full-time equivalent staff.

This represents a net reduction of 12 posts overall.

A breakdown by staff group is set out below:

- District Leads and Teachers: reduced from 71 to 67
- HLTAs and Support Staff: reduced from 7.5 to 5.5
- Administrative Staff: reduced from 11.5 to 5.5

The most significant reduction has been within administrative staffing. Where administrative staff have left the service, many have returned to roles within school environments rather than leaving employment altogether.

A formal consultation process, which concluded on 6 March, has been underway regarding proposals to move administrative functions into a centralised SEN Business Support team.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by Antony Hook to Brian Collins,
Cabinet Member for Deputy Leader**

At the time of writing this question (4 March) events in the Middle East have caused a spike in oil prices from \$60 to \$83 per barrel. If this is sustained, the Resolution Foundation has predicted a 1% increase in CPI inflation, including a significant rise in energy prices, NIESR has predicted a 0.8% increase in the BoE base rate. A number of banks and other experts have made similar predictions.

Can the Deputy Leader please explain in the event that inflation or interest rates rise as a result of either the conflict around Iran or other causes later in the year, what impact he thinks this will have on the Council's financial plans? And what, if any, plans does he have to respond to these financial challenges as part of ensuring the sustainable delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities?

Answer

The budget for 2026-27 includes provision for inflation based upon the November 2025 forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility. The latest OBR report for the Chancellor's March statement before the conflict showed the rate of inflation is forecast to be slightly lower than the November forecast. The budget includes a general reserve to mitigate for unforeseen circumstances such as economic uncertainties, at this stage we are confident there is sufficient within this reserve to compensate for the inflation impacts being predicted. Should this position change and we see a return to much higher levels of inflation then we will need to keep this under review and act accordingly to secure the Council's financial sustainability.

We will need to pay particular attention to those costs more directly related to oil costs such as energy, raw materials etc. In the case of energy our supplies are procured through Kent Commercial Services where the majority of our requirements are purchased in advance so as long as any impact is short term we should be protected. Our exposure to interest rate changes is limited as the majority of the Council's borrowing is at fixed interest rates but higher rates could have positive impact on investment returns.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

Question by Geoffrey Samme to Paul Webb,
Cabinet Member for Communities

Racism is a force of evil. In the year to March 2025 the police recorded a 6% increase in racial hate crime. Many residents express disgust and dismay at an increase in racial comments they see online or even in-person, including assumptions being made about an individual or a group because of their skin colour or ethnicity.

What is the Council currently doing and what will the Council do in the future to contribute to the fight against racism?

Answer

Thank you for your question.

KCC is opposed to racism, and we are acting both as an employer and community leader. As an employer, through our 'Respect Me' campaign, we set out a zero-tolerance approach to racism, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, and harassment.

Our people strategy and core values provides the framework for this approach to managing our people and we deliver by being compassionate, understanding, and respectful to all.

In communities, through our Community Safety function, KCC contributes to tackling racism and hate crime primarily through partnership working, awareness-raising and prevention activity.

KCC is a statutory partner within the Kent Community Safety Partnership, which identifies preventing extremism and hate as a shared countywide priority.

Through the partnership, funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Crime Reduction Grant is used to support activity delivered through the Prevent Team focused on hateful extremism, countering extreme ideologies, and anti-racist education in schools.

The Kent Community Safety Team supports learning, information-sharing and professional awareness across the county through events programme and regular e-bulletins to partners. Recent activity has included briefings from Tell MAMA and the Community Security Trust on measuring anti-Muslim attacks and protecting Jewish communities.

Community Wardens are vital engaging with our local communities and promoting social cohesion. They will, where necessary, call out inappropriate behaviour when witnessed and assist individuals to report incidents and access help.

Schools are required to comply with the Equality Act and safeguarding requirements including reporting annually on racist incidents.

What we will do next, is:

- Contribute to the refresh of the Kent Community Safety Agreement to ensure it continues to reflect emerging risks, local need and the changing nature of hate crime.
- Partnership activity will continue to evolve, with a sustained focus on early intervention, prevention and community cohesion.
- From September 2026, schools will implement the updated Department for Education Relationships Education guidance, strengthening the teaching of mutual respect and tolerance as a fundamental British value.
- KCC will continue to work with partners, communities and schools to ensure professionals are better equipped to recognise hate crime, challenge harmful narratives and support affected individuals.

This coordinated approach, combining strong leadership as an employer with active partnership working in our communities ensures that KCC is both addressing racism now and strengthening its response for the future.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

**Question by John Moreland to Chris Palmer,
Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services**

KCC is consulting on a proposed change to the provision of short break respite offered to families with children with complex needs, moving from a guaranteed 24 nights respite to a needs-based system.

Based on the data available, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether the proposed change is expected to increase or decrease both the total number of respite nights allocated and the overall cost to the Council?

Answer

The activity regarding short breaks provision is not going to generate a saving but support cost efficiency and equity of service delivery by ensuring children's needs inform intervention whilst supporting more families in being able to access support.

The fixed guarantee of 24 nights respite was set at a time when there wasn't such support within communities nor understanding of various medical experiences to inform other interventions which may support a child in experiencing improved sleeping arrangements through the night.

The consultation seeks to incorporate improved community local offers and improved health and social care interventions whilst utilising the same resource to support more families. This does mean there are families who may experience less nights whilst others may experience more, but overall, the observation is there will be less nights provided to more individuals and those families currently on the waiting lists will be able to utilise the new capacity to be developed from the strategy. Our experience is that those families on waiting lists are more likely to experience stress and family dysfunction which are likely to influence family breakdown.

The consultation seeks to implement a strategy which will keep more families together whilst supporting children with the best opportunity of developing the best level of independence they may achieve.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 19 March 2026

Question by Tim Prater to Brian Collins,
Cabinet Member for Deputy Leader

How many premises does KCC currently occupy—whether owned, leased, or licensed—, and how this is expected to change over the next three financial years?

Answer

KCC has a property interest in 552 assets that are directly used for the delivery of KCC services. This includes educational related assets, that form the Community school education estate.

The estate is continually changing due to the evolving requirements of KCCs services, with the shape and size of the council's property portfolio responding as appropriate to service changes and policy. Based on current trends it is expected that the portfolio of circ1800 assets in which KCC has a legal interest will reduce slightly over the next three years by 2-3%.

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