

**GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 11th September, 2024

2.00 pm

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**



AGENDA

GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 11 September 2024 at 2.00 pm Ask for: **Hayley Savage**
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Telephone: **03000 414286**
Maidstone

Membership (17)

Conservative (12): Mr A Sandhu, MBE (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier (Vice-Chairman),
Mrs R Binks, Mr C Broadley, Mr T Cannon, Mr D Crow-Brown,
Mr S Holden, Mr S C Manion, Mr J P McInroy, Mr J Meade and
Mr A M Ridgers and Vacancy

Labour (2): Ms K Grehan and Mr B H Lewis

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr M J Sole

Green and
Independent (2): Mr M Baldock and Mr M A J Hood

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Introduction/Webcast announcements
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
- 4 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2024 (Pages 1 - 10)
- 5 Verbal updates by the Cabinet Members and Corporate Director
- 6 Performance Dashboard (Pages 11 - 26)
- 7 24/00080 - Amendments to the Highways Act 1980 - Sections 118ZA & 119ZA
(Pages 27 - 82)
- 8 Playground Early Years Programme (Pages 83 - 90)
- 9 24/00082 - Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme Update
(Pages 91 - 128)

- 10 24/00083 - Old Rectory Business Centre Management Contract (Pages 129 - 148)
- 11 24/00081 - Investment Advisory Board Terms of Reference and Recruitment of Volunteer Board Members to the Investment Advisory Board and Investment Advisory Board Sub-Groups (Pages 149 - 182)
- 12 Kent and Medway Business Fund Bi-Annual Monitoring - Q4 2023-24 (Pages 183 - 196)
- 13 Developing Discovery Park: Sandwich Task Force (Pages 197 - 206)
- 14 Work Programme 2024/25 (Pages 207 - 210)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Tuesday, 3 September 2024

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

**GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES
CABINET COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 14 May 2024.

PRESENT: Mr A Sandhu, MBE (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Baldock, Mrs R Binks, Mr T Cannon, Mr D Crow-Brown, Ms K Grehan, Mr S Holden, Mr M A J Hood, Mr B H Lewis, Mr S C Manion, Mr J P McInroy, Mr J Meade, Mr A M Ridgers and Mr M J Sole

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Murphy and Mrs C Bell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities), Ms H Savage (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

199. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

No apologies had been received.

Mr Baldock, Mr Hood, and Mr Manion were present virtually.

200. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

201. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 were a correct record, subject to the recording of Mr Baldock as present virtually.

202. Verbal updates by the Cabinet Members and Corporate Director

(Item 5)

Mr James Pearson (Head of Libraries, Registrations and Archives) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, paid tribute to Mr James Williams, Director of Public Health at Medway Council, and offered her condolences to Mr Williams' family and his colleagues in Medway.
2. Mrs Bell provided an update on the following:

- (a) The temporary library service provision for Folkestone Library remained in place and a public consultation would be progressed on the future long-term location. Timescales for the public consultation were to be confirmed.
 - (b) The Home Library Service delivered books and other library items direct to people's homes and a satisfaction survey was recently completed which achieved 99% customer satisfaction from 279 responses. A new Key Performance Indicator (KPI) relating to the Home Library Service had been created.
 - (c) Following the annual review for fees and charges the LRA service had started to introduce changes for 2024/25 which included necessary increases in response to the rise of inflation. Registration and archives fees and charges came into effect in early May 2024 with library fees and charges being introduced in June following a library system upgrade.
 - (d) The LRA service was preparing for the annual summer Reading Challenge called 'Marvelous Makers' which would engage young people in fun activity and reading over the summer holiday period.
 - (e) A multi-agency Kent Community Safety Partnership event on anti-social behaviour took place in March 2024 which Mrs Bell attended. The event included a number of excellent speakers and covered a range of anti-social behaviour topics.
 - (f) The coroner service delivered a record seven jury inquests during March 2024 and the investment in the new facilities at Oakwood House was having a positive impact on service delivery.
 - (g) Mrs Bell referred to the sad passing of Ms Debbie Large, Head of the Coroner Service. Mrs Bell said Ms Large's commitment to the service over many years had been instrumental in its development. She was nationally recognised for her expertise and would be sorely missed by the Council.
 - (h) The Resilience and Emergency Planning Service was preparing for the impact of the Entry/Exit System border checks as well as leading preparations internally for KCC. The Team continued to assess the implementation of the new Business Continuity Management System which would allow an improved governance regime.
3. The Chair expressed, on behalf of the committee, his condolences to the families of Mr James Williams and Ms Debbie Large.
4. Mr Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, provided an update on the following:
- (a) Mr Murphy congratulated Mr Jake Body, part of the No Use Empty (NUE) team, on his Level 3 Chartered Institute of Housing qualification, and welcomed Mr Tom Henderson to Economic Development who would be investigating energy issues facing the county.

- (b) The Council would welcome a delegation from West Flanders (Belgium) on 11 June including the Governor of the Province of West Flanders and the Cabinet member for West Flanders Water, Rural, Fisheries, and Agriculture. The meeting would be hosted by the Leader and Mr Murphy and would commence with discussions concerning Kent West Flanders bilateral Co-Operation especially economic, environmental & greater cooperation via the Straits Committee. Following this meeting the West Flanders delegation would visit the Water Efficient Technologies Centre at East Mailing.
 - (c) On 18 April 2024 Mr Murphy met with Cllr Catherine Mornindesally from Normandy Regional Council to discuss greater ties between Normandy and KCC with a focus on economic and environmental issues.
 - (d) Sittingbourne was going to be home to a net zero carbon logistics park thanks to a £150m vote of confidence by the site's owners, Panattoni. As the largest logistics real estate developer in the UK and Europe, the company would create Panattoni Park Sittingbourne on a site near Kemsley, and offer a total of 644,000 sq ft, split between two units. When built and occupied, the 26-acre site will offer the prospect of 1,069 new jobs for Swale. Panattoni is targeting net zero carbon development with an expected BREEAM sustainability rating of 'Excellent' and an EPC rating of 'A'. All units are to be developed with enhanced sustainability measures within the base specification, including the installation of roof-mounted photovoltaic panelling and electric vehicle charging points.
 - (e) BP pulse acquired Ashford International Truckstop, one of Europe's largest truck stops, unveiling ambitious plans to help Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) electrify.
5. Mr Jones, Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport, provided an update on the following operational matters:
- (a) Work on the Council's Mineral and Waste Local Plan had recently been transferred to the Economic Development Portfolio. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) sets out the County Council's 15-year strategy and policy framework and following consideration by County Council, the emerging Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in May 2024.
 - (b) Work was ongoing to finalise the transfer of responsibilities from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to Kent County Council on behalf of Kent & Medway. Whilst transition agreements were being finalised the Economy Team was developing the implementation plan for the Kent & Medway Economic Framework.
 - (c) Following the relaunch in November 2023, the Kent & Medway Business Fund was now fully operational with a high level of applications being received.
 - (d) A workshop took place in April to kick off a new 'health & economy' workstream in partnership with the Kent & Medway Integrated Care System and linking into the Kent & Medway Economic Framework.

- (e) KCC recently received confirmation from the Department for Business & Trade that the Kent & Medway Growth Hub would be funded for 2024/2025. Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce was contracted to run the service which acted as a single point of contact to business support services available to help the county's companies.
 - (f) Work had started to transform and refurbish the Dover Discovery Centre. The works would take around a year and would enable KCC services and Dover District Museum to be better delivered from the town centre building. For the duration of the works a temporary library service was being offered from the nearby Dover Gateway. Since April, following the successful bid for grant funding from the British Library, the library service had had virtual tours live across 31 of its county libraries, accessible via kent.gov.uk.
 - (g) The Community Warden staff consultation had closed, and data was being assessed to allocate wardens to individual communities in line with the geographic allocation policy. Discussions were taking place with several parish and local councils regarding funding or sponsoring a warden in their communities. KCC Community Wardens participated in the Multi-Agency Event for Safety in Action Week at Dreamland in Margate, to large groups of primary school children.
 - (h) Kent Scientific Services had a record business year in 2023/24 which saw an increase in samples received of almost 20% from the previous year.
 - (i) Trading Standards had secured grant funding from the Office for Product Safety and Standards to continue to provide the protective infrastructure preventing the importation of dangerous consumer goods at the channel crossings for the year ahead.
 - (j) The Active Kent and Medway Team were delighted to be working with Sport England to deliver two new programmes. The first related to engagement with a new national programme to support National Governing Bodies and their local clubs to promote good practice and safe sport for children, young people and adults at a local level. The second focused on the activation of multi sports facilities across the county and the Council was awarded £143,000 by Sport England to pilot this programme. The Everyday Active programme continued to go from strength to strength and further information on their flagship campaign could be found on the [Everyday Active Kent](#) website.
 - (k) Mr Jones passed on his own sincere condolences to the family of Ms Debbie Large.
6. A Member commented on the importance of public transport for people wishing to visit libraries. Mr Jones referred to the Bus Service Improvement Plan which would be discussed at the next meeting of the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee and Mr Pearson (Head of Libraries, Registrations and Archives) said the library service could be accessed in a wide variety of ways in addition to services provided at library buildings, for example through online services, the mobile library service, and the home library service.

RESOLVED to note the verbal updates.

203. 24/00032 - New contracts for the provision of Post-Mortem Facilities for the Mid Kent & Medway, North West Kent, North East Kent, Central and South East Kent coroner areas

(Item 6)

Ms Belinda Hooker (Acting Head of Coroner Service) and Mr Mark Rolfe (Interim Head of Community Protection) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Bell introduced the item and explained the importance of the contract in providing the provision of mortuary and post-mortem services in Kent.
2. Ms Hooker introduced the report and clarified that the contracts covered the entirety of the county including Medway, with four trusts encompassing five mortuaries and four coroner areas.

RESOLVED that the committee endorses the proposed decision to:

- 1) Issue new contracts, via direct awards, for the provision of Post-Mortem Facilities in Mid-Kent and Medway, Northwest Kent, and East Kent, Central and South East Kent coroner areas to commence from 1 April 2024 for a period of 3 years (36 months) with the option of extending for up to a further 2 years (24 months).
- 2) Delegate authority to the Director for Growth and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision.
- 3) Delegate authority to the Director for Growth and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Community and Regulatory Services to award extensions of contracts for commissioned services in accordance with the extension clauses within the contract (3 years + 2-year extension) as shown at Appendix B.

204. 24/00033 - Coroners Removals and Transfer Service Contract

(Item 7)

Ms Belinda Hooker (Acting Head of Coroner Service) and Mr Mark Rolfe (Interim Head of Community Protection) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Bell introduced the item and explained the statutory duty of the Council in relation to the contract.

RESOLVED that the committee endorses the proposed decision to:

- (a) Tender for the award of Contracts for the Coroners Removal and Transfer Service for the Kent and Medway coroners areas for an initial 3-year period, with an option to extend for up to 2 years;

- (b) Delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision;
- (c) Delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services to Award Renewals of the current contracts in accordance with the current clauses within the contract for the period 00:00 on 22nd May 2024 to 23:59 on 31st December 2024 to accommodate the required procurement process as shown at Appendix A.

205. 24/00034 - Decision to award contracts for Public Rights of Way Vegetation Clearance
(Item 8)

Mr Graham Rusling (Head of Service Public Rights of Way and Access) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Bell introduced the item explaining the purpose of the proposed decision, and Mr Graham Rusling provided a summary of the report.
2. Members welcomed the splitting of the work into 10 lots and a Member commented on whether this would result in an onerous process and discourage prospective contractors. Mr Rusling explained there was a correct process around procurement, and contractors were supported through the process.

RESOLVED that the committee endorses the proposed decision to:

- (i) AGREE the re-procurement and the award of new contracts for PRow vegetation clearance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, for a further period of five years and an allowable extension of two years subject to performance; and,
- (ii) to DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take other relevant actions, including, but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

206. Performance Dashboard
(Item 9)

Mr Matthew Wagner (Chief Analyst) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Matthew Wagner, Chief Analyst, introduced the report which set out the performance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity indicators for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 along with the KPIs and targets proposed for reporting 2024/25 performance.

2. A Member referred to KPI ED05 and asked whether the No Use Empty scheme applied only to houses and Mr Grimshaw explained it applied to empty residential properties being brought back into use and not commercial properties.
3. Mrs Bell highlighted, in relation to Appendix 2, that some of the targets had been increased substantially and commended officers particularly in light of the Council's financial pressures on resources.

RESOLVED to note the performance report for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 and the KPIs and targets proposed for 2024/25.

207. Kent County Council's support for Apprenticeships, Community Learning and Skills in the context of the Kent economy

(Item 10)

Mr David Smith, Economic Advisor, and Mr Mike Rayner, The Education People, were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Murphy introduced the item and Mr Smith introduced the report and explained that a similar presentation would be considered by CYPE Cabinet Committee. In addition, a paper would be submitted to the Employment Taskforce which brings together the organisations across Kent responsible for apprenticeships, community learning and skills, including Kent County Council and Medway Council.
3. Mr Mike Rayner from The Education People provided a presentation, a copy of which was appended to the report.
4. Members commented that most employers in Kent were small businesses, asked how a small business could apply for an apprenticeship and questioned the opportunities that were available to young people who were not academic. Mr Smith said gaining skills through apprenticeships was a route for those without academic qualifications and the paper looked at practical ways that small businesses could take on apprenticeships, for example improving the way the apprenticeship levy was shared and methods of advertising apprenticeships. He said a practical programme would be developed over the next few months.
5. Members discussed the level of education and skills within the UK compared to elsewhere in Europe, the attitude towards obtaining academic qualifications, and the adequacy of the career advice service in schools. The importance of building relationships with companies to ensure a county wide plan and to provide opportunities to join national companies was stressed. Mr Smith said there was a challenge in relation to the lifestyle and career ambitions of young people and schools were an important element of this. A programme would begin with schools to address the challenges.
6. Members discussed the need for collaborative working between schools, students, and businesses to inspire young people to work in particular areas and take on vocational training.

7. A Member asked what systems were in place for identifying 16-18 year olds who were NEET (not in education, employment or training) and Mr Rayner said this was the responsibility of The Education People and a NEET support service was in place.
8. A Member commented that Local Skills Improvements Plans (LSIPs) were crucial in terms of local leadership and ensuring the issue was addressed in a geographical way.
9. A Member stressed the importance of encouraging employers to base their businesses in Kent and bring up the level of education and skills in the workforce. Mr Smith said this was a competitive market and referred to the Kent and Medway Business Fund and the Inward Investment Agencies who dealt with companies who wanted to move to or expand their business in Kent. Connections with colleges meant specific courses could be created to enhance specific skills.
10. A Member suggested obtaining the views of school leavers as to what they feel they could have benefitted from at school and what was missing.
11. Members welcomed the presentation and supported the action points within the report.

RESOLVED to comment on the suggested actions being taken to meet current challenges and note the report.

208. District Visits Programme (Item 11)

Mr Colin Finch (Strategic Programme Manager) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Colin Finch introduced the report and said future visits had been planned for Gravesham, Dartford, and Swale.
2. The Chair emphasised to Members the importance of supporting the District Visits Programme.

RESOLVED to note the report.

209. No Use Empty (NUE) (Item 12)

Mr Steve Grimshaw (Strategic Programme Manager) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Steve Grimshaw introduced the report which provided an update on the No Use Empty scheme and updated Members on developments since the report was written.
2. Members asked how many houses were currently empty in Kent and what the causes were. Mr Grimshaw said there were approximately 7,200 long term empty properties (properties that had been empty for more than six months) and there were a variety of causes which included second homes and probate

issues. He said a number of properties were removed from the empty list due to councils reviewing Council Tax which affected the accuracy of the data. Mr Grimshaw highlighted that the Council worked in partnership with district councils who had the ability to charge a premium on properties that had been empty for a long period of time but not all the district councils had a full complement of staff engaged in empty property work. To provide loans to bring all empty homes back into use there would need to be a significant increase of funding.

RESOLVED to note the report.

210. Kent Film Office

(Item 13)

Ms Gabrielle Lindemann (Film Office Manager) and Mr Tony Witton (Culture and Creative Economy Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Bell introduced the item and highlighted the wider economic and tourism benefits the Kent Film Office brought to the county.
2. Ms Gabrielle Lindemann, Film Office Manager, set out the role of the Kent Film Office and used a recent commercial filmed in Broadstairs and Margate as an example of its work. The Kent Film Office was involved in providing support to the production company for example with parking, accommodation, locations, local crew, and marshals. Over £250,000 was spent on accommodation, £85,000 on locations, £20,000 on local security, and Thanet District Council received approximately £10,000 for parking. Ms Lindemann explained that the Kent Film Office took a 10% agency fee from the District Councils they worked with.
3. Mrs Binks declared an interest that her daughter worked in the filming industry and had filmed in Kent.
4. Mr Lewis declared an interest that he was a retired Film Extra who had filmed in Kent.
5. Members commented that the Kent Film Office was an asset to the Council and extremely useful in facilitating arrangements for productions filmed across Kent and contributing to the county's economy. The importance of promoting the use of historic buildings within Kent for filming was noted.

RESOLVED to note the report.

211. 'Project Gigabit' Broadband Programme

(Item 14)

Ms Liz Harrison (Strategic Programme Manager) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Murphy introduced the item and highlighted the broadband programme was not a specific KCC responsibility and the Council's role was to support and encourage the provider.

2. Ms Harrison provided an overview of the report which updated Members on the implementation of the Government's Project Gigabit programme in Kent and highlighted a few points.
3. A Member asked about homes in hard-to-reach areas and how many and where they were in Kent. Ms Harrison said this question had been put to the Department for Science and Technology regularly and she understood some modelling had taken place, but this had not yet been shared.

RESOLVED to note the current position and provide the Cabinet Member any comments on the proposed approach.

212. Work Programme 2024/2025

(Item 15)

RESOLVED to note the Work Programme.

213. Future Meeting Dates

(Item 16)

The Future meeting dates of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee were noted.

From: Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 11 September 2024

Subject: Performance Dashboard

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance Dashboard shows the performance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity indicators for Quarter 1 of 2024/25.

17 of the 22 KPIs that were reported this Quarter achieved target and are RAG rated Green. Three KPIs were below target but did achieve floor standard and are RAG rated Amber. Two KPIs are below floor standard and are RAG rated Red. Three new KPIs were not reported within the dashboard as they are still awaiting confirmation of funding before they can be reported.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance report for Quarter 1 of 2024/25.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Part of the role of Cabinet Committees is to review the performance of those functions of the Council that fall within its remit. To support this role, Performance Dashboards are regularly reported to each Cabinet Committee throughout the year, and this is the first report for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 1.2. The final report for the previous financial year was scheduled as an item at the July 2024 meeting of the Committee which was cancelled due to the general election. This report was circulated to Committee members in August for comment.

2. Performance Dashboard

- 2.1. The current Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance dashboard provides results up to the end of June 2024 and is attached in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. The Dashboard provides a progress report on performance for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2024/25 which were presented to Committee in May 2024. The Dashboard also includes a range of activity indicators which help give context to the KPIs.

- 2.3. KPIs are presented with RAG (Red/Amber/Green) alerts to show performance in the Quarter. Details of how the alerts are generated are outlined in the Guidance Notes, included with the Dashboard in Appendix 1.

3. Growth & Communities - Economy

- 3.1. The number of properties brought back to use through No Use Empty (NUE) over the 12 months to June 2024 was 567, which is above target, and one of the highest 12 month totals seen since the start of the project. The target for the number of businesses assisted via the Kent and Medway Growth Hub was exceeded for those provided with light/medium support. For those receiving intensive support it was just below floor standard, but numbers are expected to pick up from Quarter 2 onwards.

4. Growth & Communities - Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA)

- 4.1 Library footfall continues to grow steadily, with a 6% increase in visits for Quarter 1 compared to the same period last year. The library customer survey was carried out during April 2024 and saw a 51% increase in respondents compared to the survey last year with just over 9,000 responses. Overall customer satisfaction with Kent Libraries was 95%.
- 4.2 E-issues continue to grow, with an increase of 8% in e-book issues and 26% in e-audiobook issues in comparison with Quarter 1 2023/24.
- 4.3 The week beginning 24 June 2024 was Libraries Change Lives week. Two case studies from Kent were featured on the Libraries Change Lives website, and a social media campaign was run throughout the week to showcase the value of libraries and library staff, with a total of 53 posts reaching 14,400 Facebook users.
- 4.4 An issue with running reports from Spydus means that we are temporarily unable to report on physical library loans but we expect this rectified for the next Quarter.
- 4.5 The Archive service has experienced an extremely busy start to the year, with a 26% increase in visitors to the Search Room during Quarter 1 compared to the same period last year, while remote enquiries have increased by 10%.
- 4.6 Ceremonies teams across the county have also experienced a busy Quarter, with a 6% increase in ceremonies compared to the same period last year. This can be partly attributed to the increase in take-up of individual citizenship ceremonies, which were only introduced at Oakwood House in June last year, and also to the increasing popularity of Oakwood House as a venue.
- 4.7 3,962 deaths were registered representing a 6% decrease for Quarter 1 in comparison with the same period in 2023/24. Birth registrations remain fairly steady, with 4,154 appointments, a 2% decrease.

5. Growth & Communities – Strategic Development and Place

- 5.1 For Quarter 4, the 98% target for developer contributions secured against contributions sought (DC08) was exceeded. The percentage of public rights of way (PRoW) faults reported online (PROW14) continues to be in the high eighties, but not reaching the new 92% target.
- 5.2 The percentage of cases progressed for initial coronial decision within 2 working days of notification of a death (COR01), continues to be below floor standard in and was RAG rated Red. This continues to be due to some factors beyond the control of the service, including time taken by the NHS to progress cases. Staff resource issues within the coroner service also continue to impact on performance. The service is working towards a resolution.
- 5.3 Indicators for other services in Growth & Communities have met or exceeded target and are RAG rated Green.

6. Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance report for Quarter 1 of 2024/25.

Contact details:

Report Author: Matthew Wagner
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Relevant Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle
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Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance Dashboard

Financial Year 2024/25

Results up to end of June 2024

Produced by Kent Analytics

Guidance Notes

RAG RATINGS

Results in this report show either quarterly data or Year to Date (YTD) values.

GREEN	Target has been achieved
AMBER	Floor Standard* achieved but Target has not been met
RED	Floor Standard* has not been achieved

*Floor Standards are the minimum performance expected and if not achieved must result in management action

Activity Indicators

Activity Indicators representing demand levels are also included in the report. They are not given a RAG rating; instead, they are compared with previous year or tracked within an expected range represented by Upper and Lower Thresholds. The Alert provided for Activity Indicators is whether they are in expected range or not. Results can either be in expected range (**In Line**) or they could be **Above** or **Below**.

Key Performance Indicators Summary

Economy	RAG
EC05: Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty	GREEN
EC10: Businesses assisted via Kent and Medway Growth Hub contract	GREEN
EC11: Businesses assisted through intensive support provided via the Growth Hub contract	RED

NB: EC12, 13 and 14, will be new indicators for 2024/25 once funding is agreed and targets can be set.

Libraries, Registrations and Archives (LRA)	RAG
LRA06: Customer satisfaction with Registration Services	GREEN
LRA15: Total number of customers attending events in Libraries and Archives	AMBER
LRA17: Number of volunteer hours adding extra value to the LRA service	AMBER
LRA12: Customer satisfaction with libraries	GREEN
LRA13: Customer satisfaction with archives	GREEN

Strategic Development and Place	RAG
DC08: Developer contributions secured against total contributions sought	GREEN

Strategic Development and Place (continued)	RAG
PROW14: Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online	AMBER
PROW16: Median number of days to resolve priority faults on public rights of way network (rolling 12-months)	GREEN
CST01: Percentage of local actions from completed Domestic Homicide Reviews implemented by target date.	GREEN
CST02: % of Lessons Learnt Domestic Homicide Review attendees rating the event as good or better	GREEN
CST03: Percentage of service users who report feeling safer due to warden support	GREEN
COR01: Percentage of cases progressed for initial coronial decision within 2 working days of notification of a death	RED
KSS02: Number of priority 1 food, feed and consumer products sample tests reported to clients within 5 working	GREEN
KSS03: Number of independent proficiency tests rated as "good" or "satisfactory"	GREEN
PAG01: Percentage of planning applications determined to meet DLUHC performance standards	GREEN
PAG02: Number of statutory planning consultee responses submitted to the local planning authority within 21 days (Minerals & Waste)	GREEN
CP01: Percentage of the most vulnerable victims of scams recorded on the National Scams Hub supported by Public Protection	GREEN
CP02: Percentage of trader applications to the 'Trading Standards Checked' scheme processed within 10 working days	GREEN
TS04: Percentage of businesses rating Trading Standards advice (Primary Authority and Pay as You Go) as Very Good or Excellent	GREEN

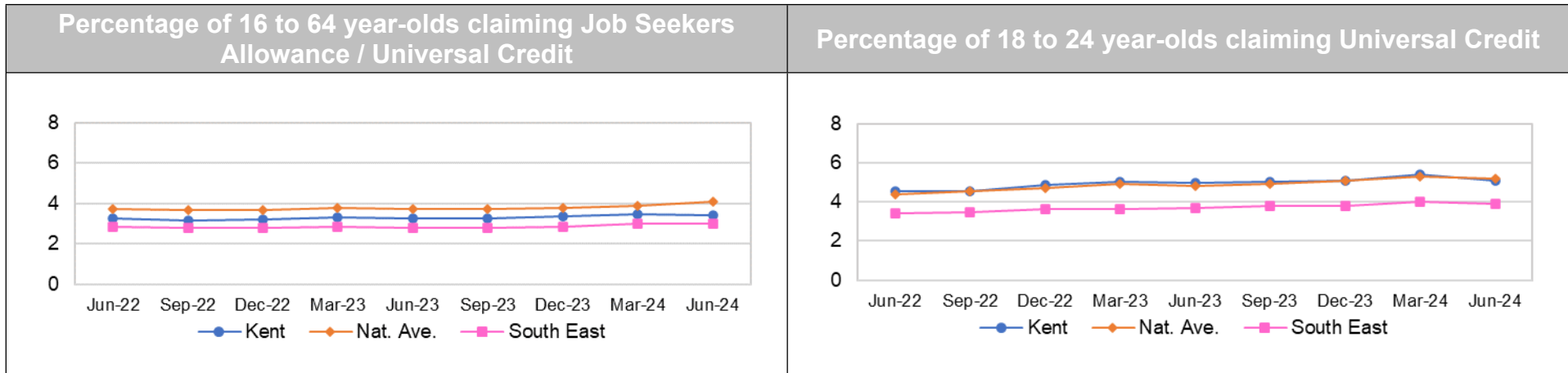
Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities - Economy	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Derek Murphy

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-23 (Q1)	Sep-23 (Q2)	Dec-23 (Q3)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Jun-24 (Q1)	RAG	Target	Floor
EC05	Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty (rolling 12 months)	388	395	509	474	567	GREEN	400	360
EC10	Businesses assisted via Kent and Medway Growth Hub contract (Year to Date)	261	552	783	1,059	251	GREEN	171	150
EC11	Businesses assisted through intensive support provided via the Growth Hub contract (Year to Date)	30	65	104	154	11	RED	14	12
EC12	Number of visitor economy businesses supported (through visitor economy and inward investment contract)	These are all new indicators for 2024/25 and funding is still to be agreed before targets can be set and the KPIs monitored.							
EC13	Number of inward investment projects secured (through visitor economy and inward investment contract)								
EC14	Number of jobs created or safeguarded (through visitor economy and inward investment contract)								

EC11 – The number of businesses which require intensive support will increase as the year progresses and numbers tend to be low in the first Quarter. In addition, an enhanced business support programme will be coming online in August which may boost numbers.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities - Economy	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Derek Murphy

Context indicators



Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Libraries, Registrations and Archives	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Clair Bell

Quarterly KPIs

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	RAG	Target	Floor
LRA06	Customer satisfaction with Registration Services	95%	94%	99%*	94%	97%	GREEN	96%	91%
LRA15	Total number of customers attending events in Libraries and Archives	41,969	53,015	42,341	48,194	46,203	AMBER	49,400	44,700
LRA17	Number of volunteer hours adding extra value to the LRA service	New indicator				7,435	AMBER	7,900	7,100

* Only includes citizenship surveys due to issues with booking system
 Jun-24 (Q1): LRA06 – 404 customers were surveyed, 390 were satisfied.

LRA15 – due to the upward trajectory of event attendance in 2023/24, a 5% increase was forecast for Quarter 1 2024/25. Although the ambitious target was not quite achieved, the result is still within the forecast parameters and is still positive in that it represents a 3% increase on the same period last year.

LRA17 – an ambitious 5% increase in volunteer hours was forecast for 2024/25, factoring in the re-branding and review of volunteer recruitment, plus extra recruitment for the Know Your Neighbourhood project. The Quarter 1 figure does not meet the target but is still within the forecast parameters and again is very positive as it still represents a 4% increase on what was achieved in the same period last year. We would expect figures to rise during Quarter 2 with the increase of young volunteers for the Summer Reading Challenge.

Annual KPIs

Ref	Performance Indicators	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	RAG	Target 2023/24	Floor 2023/24
LRA12	Customer satisfaction with libraries	83%	94%	94%	95%	**	GREEN	90%	85%
LRA13	Customer satisfaction with archives	No Survey	97%	98%	100%	**	GREEN	95%	90%

** The annual libraries survey is usually completed in Quarter 4, the archive survey in Quarter 3.
 2023/24: LRA12 – 9,037 customers surveyed, 8,540 satisfied; LRA13 – 81 surveyed, 81 satisfied.

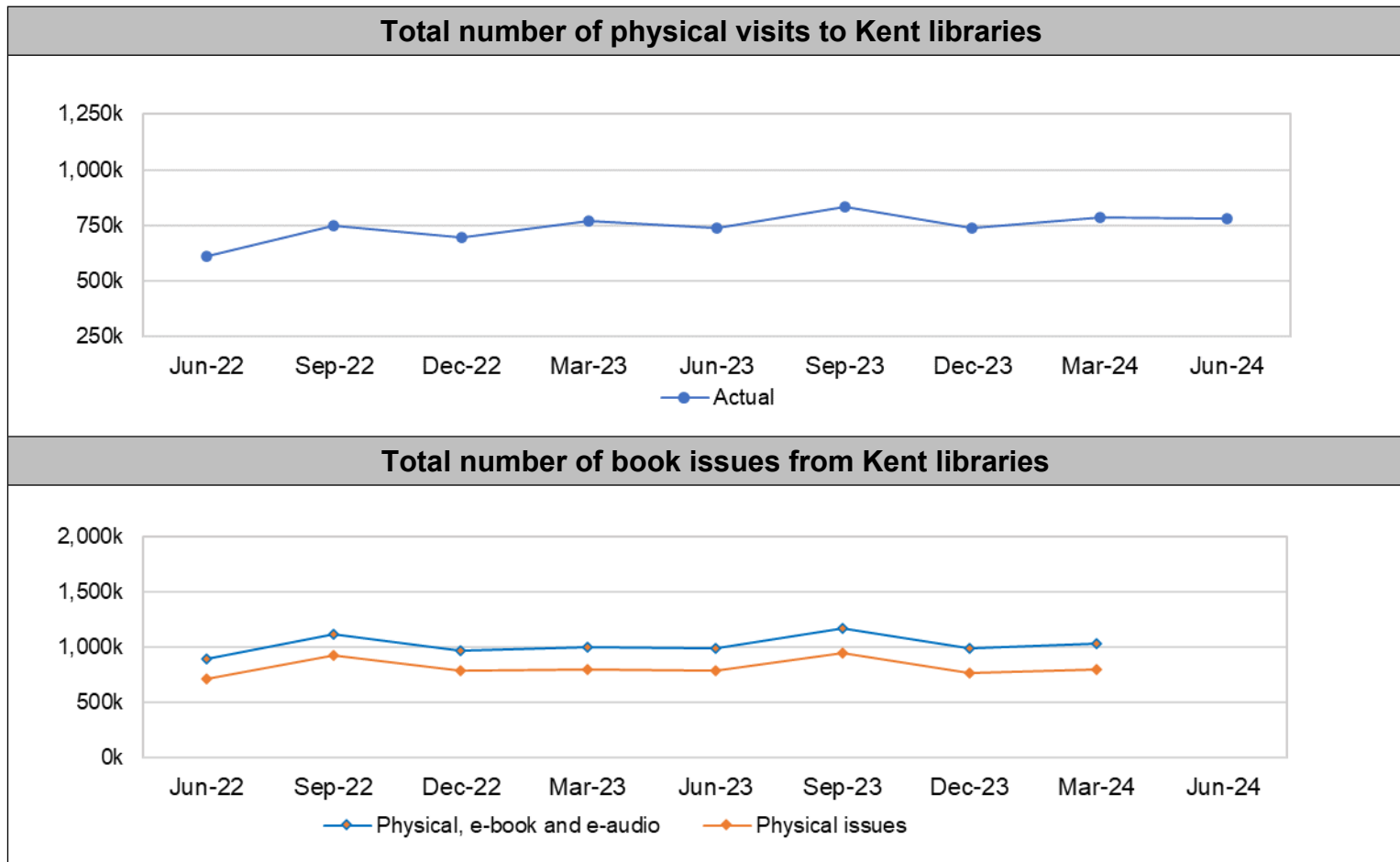
Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Libraries, Registrations and Archives	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Clair Bell

Ref	Activity Indicators (Quarterly totals)	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Value vs Expected	Expected Activity	
								Upper	Lower
LRA01	Number of visits to libraries (including mobiles) (000s)	736	831	740	787	781	In line	789	714
LRA02b	Physical, e-book and e-audio issues (000s)	993	1,167	988	1,032	*	N/a	1,054	954
LRA04	Number of wedding, civil partnership and citizenship ceremonies carried out by KCC Officers	New Indicator				2,199	In line	2,200	2,000

* Following an update to the library management system it has not been possible to run the usual report to produce the data needed for the Quarter to June-24. Work is ongoing to rectify this and will be completed for next quarter.

LRA02b – This indicator has been revised to remove e-magazines and e-newspapers from the figures following a change in how these are counted which means they are no longer comparable with previous figures.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Libraries, Registrations and Archives	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Clair Bell



Following an update to the library management system it has not been possible to run the usual report to produce the data needed for the Quarter to June-24. Work is ongoing to rectify this.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Strategic Development and Place	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Clair Bell

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-23 (Q1)	Sep-23 (Q2)	Dec-23 (Q3)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Jun-24 (Q1)	YTD 24/25	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
DC08	Developer contributions secured against total contributions sought	99.7%	99.6%	87.4%	97.9%	99.6%	99.6%	GREEN	98%	85%
PROW14	Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online	87%	87%	89%	87%	87%	87%	AMBER	92%	84%
PROW16	Median number of days to resolve priority faults on public rights of way network (rolling 12-month figure)	30	26	20	9	9	*	GREEN	15	24
CST01	Percentage of local actions from completed Domestic Homicide Reviews implemented by target date.	85%	95%	91%	90%	80%	80%	GREEN	75%	68%
CST02	Percentage of Lessons Learnt Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Seminar attendees rating the event as Good or better.	**	79%	84%	**	100%	100%	GREEN	90%	81%
CST03	Percentage of service users who report feeling safer due to warden support	67%	73%	75%	74%	70%	70%	GREEN	70%	65%

* No Year-to-Date figure as this is a Rolling 12-month indicator

** No seminars were held.

2024/25: DC08 - £2.6m secured; PROW14 – 2,235 faults reported, 1,952 were online; PROW16 – 50 priority faults resolved; CST01 – 10 actions, 8 completed by target date; CST02 – 32 reviews, 32 were very good or excellent; CST03 – 122 service users were surveyed, 85 service users reported feeling safer.

PROW14 – The 92% target is deliberately challenging. As has been described previously, when an issue is perceived as urgent (such as those relating to flooding, winter storms and tree damage) there is a greater likelihood of this being reported through a phone call, perhaps due to the reassurance of talking to a person. Where an individual has not previously registered on the fault reporting system there is a tendency for those individuals to also use the Contact Centre. We are completing a small piece of work to assist those reporting for the first time in the hope that once registered they will continue to use the online fault reporting tool.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Strategic Development and Place	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Clair Bell

Ref	Performance Indicators	Sep-23 (Q2)	Dec-23 (Q3)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Jun-24 (Q1)	YTD 24/25	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
COR01	Percentage of cases progressed for initial coronial decision within 2 working days of notification of a death.	78%	73%	78%	59%	62%	62%	RED	83%	76%
KSS02	Number of priority 1 food, feed and consumer products sample tests reported to clients within 5 working days	New indicator				93%	93%	GREEN	93%	88%
KSS03	Number of external independent proficiency tests rated as “good” or “satisfactory” with a statistical Z score of 2 or less.	New Indicator				90%	90%	GREEN	75%	67%
PAG01	Percentage of planning applications determined to meet DLUHC performance standards	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	100%	90%
PAG02	Number of statutory planning consultee responses submitted to the local planning authority within 21 days (Minerals & Waste)	New Indicator				100%	100%	GREEN	90%	80%

2024/25: COR01 – 1,476 cases, 909 progressed within 2 working days; PAG01 – 36 planning applications, all of which met DLUHC performance standard; PAG02 – 79 responses, all of which were within 21 days.

COR1 - The coroner service is reliant on information from other organisations particularly the NHS to progress cases and while these organisations continue to be under pressure, the information is not always provided quickly enough to meet the 2-day target. This has been exacerbated by the piloting of the Medical Examiner system by the NHS. The Coroner Service also continues to experience pressures due to extended staff absences and staff vacancies for which we have recruited into some positions and are currently in the process of recruiting into others. The service is working towards a resolution.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Strategic Development and Place	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Clair Bell

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-23 (Q1)	Sep-23 (Q2)	Dec-23 (Q3)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Jun-24 (Q1)	YTD 24/25	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
CP01	Percentage of the most vulnerable victims of scams recorded on the National Scams Hub supported by Public Protection	*	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	90%	80%
CP02	Percentage of trader applications to Public Protection's 'Trading Standards Checked' scheme processed within 10 working days.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	100%	90%
TS04	Percentage of businesses rating Trading Standards advice (Primary Authority and Pay as You Go) as Very Good or Excellent	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	90%	82%

* No return for Q1 2023/24 due to a reduction in referrals of people who have been scammed.

2024/25: CP01 – 2 people supported. CP02 – 42 trader applications processed; TS04 – 2 out of 2 businesses have rated trading standards advice as very good or excellent since the start of the year.

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From: Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

**To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities
Cabinet Committee 11 September 2024**

Subject: Amendments to the Highways Act 1980 – sections 118ZA & 119ZA

Decision No: 24/00080

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary: Amendments to the Highways Act 1980 to provide a right for landowners to apply for public path diversion and extinguishment orders were included in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. After a considerable delay, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has been progressing the statutory instruments required to implement the amendments. The amended provisions, and administrative obligations that stem from them, apply to both the County Council and District Councils. In order to ensure a consistent approach to delivery and decision making relating to the provisions and the determination of applications, agreement is sought to accept the delegation of this function by district councils, should they wish to, to the County Council.

Recommendation(s):

Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services on the acceptance by Kent County Council of the delegation by Kent District Councils of their functions in respect of public path orders and applications made under the Highways Act 1980 sections 118ZA and 119ZA as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction and background

1.1 The Kent Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network extends to 4,375 miles (6,910 km) and, with a small number of exceptions, is publicly maintainable highway. Every year a number of applications are made by landowners/ occupiers to divert public paths in their interest. The County Council has, for several decades, accepted such applications and where the legal tests are met, made Orders, which if successful divert or extinguish public rights. This work is discretionary and largely funded by recharging the costs, as far as the County Council is permitted, to the applicant.

- 1.2 At the time of the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, proposals emerged to amend the Highways Act 1980 sections 118 (extinguishment of public paths) and 119 (diversion of public paths) to provide landowners with a “right to apply” for a public path extinguishment or diversion order. This was in response to frustrations expressed in other areas of the country that authorities, unlike Kent, were not willing to accept or consider such applications. Amendments were consequently made to the Highways Act 1980 (Highways Act 118ZA and 119ZA) to provide landowners with a “right to apply” for public path diversion and extinguishment orders. Implementation has been significantly delayed; however, we have been informed by the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that the secondary legislation required to bring the provisions into effect is being prepared.
- 1.3 For the purposes of clarity, where a district council is the planning authority it is responsible for the making of Orders under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in cases where the diversion or extinguishment of a public path is required in order for development to lawfully progress. Eleven planning authorities in Kent have entered service level agreements with the Kent Public Rights of Way and Access Service for the processing of such Orders. The new provisions have no bearing on those existing arrangements or the TCPA 1990 powers exercised by the districts.
- 1.4 The power to make Orders under the Highways Act 1980 sits with both county and district councils. It is technical, highly regulated work and subject to significant scrutiny. In amending the provisions within the Highways Act 1980, the new obligations to determine applications currently apply to both the county and district councils.
- 1.5 In practice the districts have not exercised the power to make public path orders under the Highways Act 1980 since the ending of the PRoW management agency agreements in 1991 and 2000. Since this time, all applications have been made to the County Council. This is the situation in many of the two-tier local government areas. DEFRA expected, on the introduction of the new provisions, that applications would be made to county councils in two tier areas. While that may be the case, it would be open to an applicant to choose to make their application to a district and there may be advantages in doing so; for example, where a county council has previously rejected a proposal or where the applicant believes that a county council may actively oppose a proposal. It seems that a district council will not be able to refuse an application where a similar application is pending with the county council or vice versa.
- 1.6 Under the “right to apply” amendments, a district council (in common with the county council), that receives such an application will have a number of obligations. A district will be required to:
- a) determine the application as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within four months of receipt;
 - b) appoint a scale of charges for dealing with such applications; and
 - c) keep and publish a register of such applications.

- 1.7 In addition, it will be necessary for district councils to have consultants or officers appropriately trained and experienced to determine the applications and to make available guidance and an application form.
- 1.8 It is clear that there has been little or no engagement by DEFRA with districts concerning the new provisions. One option suggested by DEFRA for dealing with applications in two tier areas is that the new obligations are delegated to the county council. We have been proactive in engaging with district Chief Executives through the Joint Kent Chiefs Group. The initial indication is that districts will wish to delegate the function. This would be possible utilising the provision contained in the Local Government Act 1972 section 101. A key decision is required to enable the County Council Public Rights of Way and Access Service to accept such a delegation from a district.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 It is intended that authorities will be able to recover the full costs incurred in processing applications under the new provisions and further cost recovery regulations are intended to be laid before Parliament to this end. Our schedule of charges will be updated when the necessary regulations are implemented to ensure that the financial impact to the County Council is fully mitigated. However, while it is intended that the regulations will enable full cost recovery in accepting and determining correctly made applications, it is clear that the full potential financial impacts of the new provisions have not been considered. Examples of where the County Council's costs would not be met include:
- a. Considering consultations where applications are made to, or determined by, a district council;
 - b. Correcting a draft Order, Order plan or associated notices where drafted by a district council; and
 - c. Objecting to a proposal or Order made by a district council, the Secretary of State, or even by the County Council on direction of the Secretary of State, in cases where a proposal or Order is not considered to be in the interests of the public or Kent County Council. For example, a diversion proposal does not meet the legal tests as set out in the Act or it involves a bridge that would become maintainable at the County Council's expense.
- 2.2 The acceptance of the delegation of the new obligations by a district would be cost neutral in respect of the determination/ processing of applications. It would secure economies of scale in terms of expertise, knowledge and meeting the ancillary requirements of the new provisions (see paragraph 1.6 a-c). It may mitigate potentially adverse financial/ resource impacts resulting from poor proposals or poorly drafted Orders as set out at paragraph 2.1 a-c.

3. Policy Framework

- 3.1 The proposed decision seeks to deliver this work in the most efficient, economic and effective way by maximising existing economies of scale, expertise and knowledge and meeting the ancillary requirements of the new provisions, prioritising the Council's best value duty. It seeks to minimise unrecoverable costs and long term costs to the County Council and in that respect it is well aligned with Securing Kent's Future.

3.2 The proposed decision supports a number of identified policies within the adopted [Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Kent – 2018-2028](#) (Appendix B). The plan was produced following wide ranging public consultation and engagement. Specifically, the decision will support identified objectives relating to:

- a) the enjoyment of rights with responsibilities; in which working with the landowning community to improve the network including progressing public path orders and reducing conflict are specific actions; and
- b) efficient service delivery in which seek to strengthen working arrangements with local authorities to deliver a well maintained, safe and pleasant environment.

3.2 The recommended decision contributes to meeting the 'Environmental step change' priority in Framing Kent's Future and the second commitment:

"Improve access for our residents to green and natural spaces especially in urban and deprived areas and through our Public Rights of Way network to improve health and wellbeing outcomes."

4. Legal Implications

4.1 The statutory instruments necessary to commence amendments to the Highways Act 1980 sections 118ZA and 119ZA are in preparation. Once commenced, the County Council and district councils will have a number of new obligations in respect to the administration of the new provisions and the determination of applications made under them. There will only be a short period in which to prepare for the new provisions.

4.2 The legal advice received is that the new provisions are non-executive functions and that a district council may formally arrange for their, anticipated, responsibilities under sections 118ZA and 119ZA of the Highways Act 1980 to be carried out by Kent County Council. Delegation would be under the Local Government Act 1972. It would be for the relevant district to conclude its own governance requirements in respect of the delegation of the function. However, in order to accept the delegation of this function, a key decision is required by the County Council.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Amendments are to be made to the Highways Act 1980 in consequence of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The introduction of the new provisions (Highways Act 1980 sections 118ZA and 119ZA) apply equally to county and district councils. There are benefits to both Kent County Council and the district councils in districts delegating the functions to the County Council, principally it would:

- a. secure economies of scale in terms of expertise, knowledge and meeting the ancillary requirements of the new provisions;
- b. remove the burden the function would place on districts;
- c. ensure greater consistency in the delivery of the function; and
- d. it may mitigate potentially adverse financial/ resource impacts resulting from poor proposals or poorly drafted Orders as set out at paragraph 2.1.

6. Recommendation(s)

Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services on the acceptance by Kent County Council of the delegation by Kent District Councils of their functions in respect of public path orders and applications made under the Highways Act 1980 sections 118ZA and 119ZA as shown at Appendix A.

7. Background Documents

- Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision
- Appendix B: Rights of Way Improvement Plan [Rights-of-Way-Improvement-Plan-2018-2028.pdf \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)
- Appendix C: Equalities Impact Assessment

9. Contact details

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

DECISION NO:

24/00080

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Amendments to the Highways Act 1980 – Sections 118ZA & 119ZA

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, I agree to the acceptance by Kent County Council of the delegation by Kent District Councils of their functions in respect of public path orders and applications made under the Highways Act 1980 sections 118ZA and 119ZA.

Reason(s) for decision:

Amendments to the Highways Act 1980 to provide a right for landowners to apply for public path diversion and extinguishment orders were included in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. After a considerable delay, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has been progressing the statutory instruments required to implement the amendments. The amended provisions, and administrative obligations that stem from them, apply to both the County Council and District Councils. In order to ensure a consistent approach to delivery and decision making relating to the provisions and the determination of applications, agreement is sought to accept the delegation of this function by district councils, should they wish to, to the County Council.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by members of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 11 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The only other option available would be to not accept a delegation of the function by the District Councils. It may be, of their own volition, that Districts choose to deliver the function. There are likely to be negative outcomes for both Districts and the County should this be the case. Specifically:

- a. A resource implication for the districts who would be unlikely to secure any economies of scale due to insufficient demand.
- b. Difficulty in recruiting and developing staff with the relevant knowledge and skill set.
- c. Inconsistency in approach, decision making and the quality of public path orders.
- d. Demands on County Council resource to check, amend, or object to applications for which it cannot charge.

A similar function, the making of public path diversion and extinguishment orders under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, is currently delivered by the Public Rights of Way and Access Service on behalf of eleven of Kent's thirteen planning authorities for the reasons above.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL'S

RIGHTS OF WAY Improvement Plan



2018 - 2028

Page 35

Foreword



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hill" with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Mike Hill OBE -
Cabinet Member for
Community and
Regulatory Services

Welcome to Kent County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The plan sets out our objectives for Kent's Public Rights of Way (PROW) network and wider public access for the next 10 years.

I have been very pleased to see how the Public Rights of Way and Access Service and partners have managed to translate the previous plan into well informed and tangible projects. I have been called upon to cut the ceremonial ribbon on a number of occasions to celebrate projects that have contributed to the health and well-being of the public, supported the rural and visitor economy of Kent and provided alternative sustainable travel options to the car. All of these projects have contributed to delivering unparalleled access to Kent's wonderful and diverse countryside and coast.

This plan is founded on detailed research, analysis and consultation with the public and stakeholders. It sets out the very positive outcomes that are delivered through having an extensive 6,900 km of Rights of Way network, access to quality greenspace, the coast and as a high amenity alternative to footways and roads in the urban environment. The scale of the response received reflects the great value that Kent residents and stakeholders attach to being able to access the county's countryside and coast and the passion that they hold for it. It also reflects that the work of the PROW and Access Service over the past 10 years has been in the right direction, providing extensive improvements to the network. This plan provides a mandate to continue to build on these achievements over the next 10 years.

This plan is both ambitious and realistic about the challenges that Kent and wider society face. Delivery of the plan will contribute significantly to making Kent a healthy, prosperous and enjoyable place in which to live.

Our Vision

“To provide a high quality, well-maintained Public Rights of Way network, that is well used and enjoyed. The use of the network will support the Kent economy, encourage active lifestyles and sustainable travel choices that support health and wellbeing, and contribute to making Kent a great place to live, work and visit “.



Introduction

Kent County Council has a duty to prepare a ROWIP under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and to update the plan every 10 years. The revision of the Kent ROWIP provides an opportunity to take a more integrated view of the value of the rights of way network in fulfilling the needs of the communities of Kent.

In the period 2007 – 2017 the County Council delivered a wealth of improvements to the PROW network despite the extremely challenging financial climate. This is a plan that aims to secure the best possible outcomes with the resource that is available, accepting that the current limitations on resources are set to continue. It seeks to address the future needs of Kent's PROW users through the delivery of a range of actions over the next decade.

Kent County Council's PROW and Access Service is committed to working to deliver the positive outcomes identified in the plan and has looked for innovative ways to improve the PROW network in the face of financial challenges. We aim to create a network that not only provides a safe, sustainable means of travel but also delivers the benefits that access to the network, countryside, coast and green spaces can make to improve the quality of life for Kent's residents and visitors.

The PROW network is free to all users regardless of age, race or gender and provides physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits to all. The plan will aim to encourage use of the network through the promotion of these important benefits.

The plan assesses the extent to which the PROW network meets the present and likely future need to the public in:

- **contributing towards more sustainable development;**
- **delivering active travel options;**
- **providing opportunities for exercise, leisure and open-air recreation.**

The plan will also look to address the accessibility issues and other barriers that the visually impaired, those with mobility problems and under-represented groups face when using the PROW network.





Rights of Way Improvement Plan Process

The PROW and Access Service team have followed the statutory process to create the plan, following relevant guidance and advice. The plan was completed in five stages:

- 1) **Review of the ROWIP 2007 – 2017** (pages 8 – 9).
- 2) **Review of current policy, strategies, academic studies and completion of market research** (pages 10 – 17).
- 3) **Analysis of current provision, spatial data and future demand** (pages 18 – 29).
- 4) **Identification of key themes** (pages 6 – 7).
- 5) **Delivery Plan and Statement of Actions** (30 – 41).

The plan is therefore structured around the outcomes of each of these five stages. The research and analysis completed has given us further insight into the current needs and priorities of Kent's PROW network users. Six broad themes emerged, which are set out in the next section. The themes are not in order of priority or importance, each has a main objective and a number of actions and benefits which are detailed in the Delivery Plan – Statement of Actions.

The research and analysis has provided a strong validation for the work of the Service in delivering projects under the 2007-17 ROWIP. It tells us that the needs and priorities of Kent's PROW network users have not significantly changed since 2007.

Key Themes



Active lifestyles

The health and wellbeing benefits of physical activity are well recognised, especially when the activity takes place in areas of countryside and green space. This theme aims to encourage active lifestyles through making changes to the network to accommodate active travel and encourage leisure and recreational use.

We will aim to contribute towards tackling health issues and inequalities through improving access to the natural environment and green spaces.

We will promote use particularly in deprived areas where existing access is low and where there are poor health outcomes.



Evolution of the network

The need for the PROW network to evolve and to meet the future demand from Kent's growing population was identified and is well understood. Well planned new provision, including green infrastructure is required to facilitate sustainable travel patterns, with the PROW network providing an important element of this infrastructure.

The PROW network is required to evolve not to only withstand the pressures from increased use but also to provide a high quality facility to encourage a modal shift to walking and cycling; in this way the PROW network is a key contributor to getting people out of their cars to take on more active travel for everyday journeys and for recreation and leisure.



Knowing what's out there

Results from the market research showed that the most common barrier preventing use of the network is lack of information. People want to know where routes are and where they will take them.

We will continue to break down these barriers and encourage new users to the network as well as increasing current use, through targeting information, improving signage and improving provision around key leisure and recreational facilities.



Well-maintained network

Maintenance was the most common theme to emerge from our market research when we asked our customers what issues they had encountered on the PROW network. Overgrown vegetation and poor maintenance were the top answers received from stakeholders, Kent residents and online groups. Poor maintenance acted as a significant barrier, stopping people from using the network, especially for a higher percentage of the older age groups (55+). With Kent's ageing population this is a barrier we as a Service will aim to reduce.

The well-maintained network theme will improve and increase the current maintenance of the network through further targeted vegetation clearance, signage and surfacing to encourage and increase use. Maintenance on locally important strategic routes will be prioritised.



Rights with responsibilities

The PROW and Access Service has a statutory duty to ensure the network is recorded, protected and maintained. It is important that we work with the landowning community in ensuring statutory compliance and in delivering improvements to the network. We advise on and where appropriate, progress applications to amend the PROW network in the interest of the public and/or the landowner.

The PROW and Access Service will continue to promote responsible use by the public when exercising their rights.



Efficient delivery

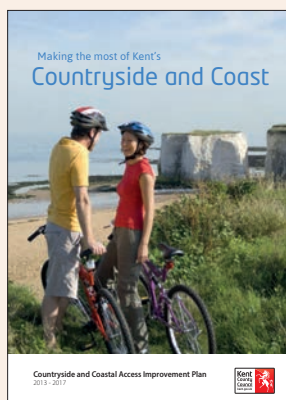
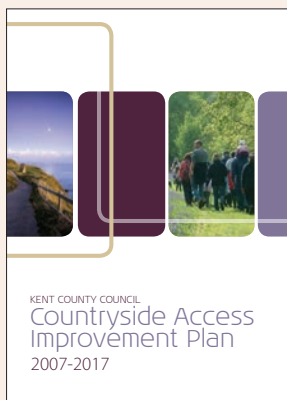
The review of previous ROWIP's and the analysis of market research has provided us with an insight of our customers' needs and priorities.

Access to new information and advances in available technology will help us build on the significant and innovative developments already made by the PROW and Access Service.

Reflections on the delivery of ROWIPs 2007 -17

During the first phase of the production of this plan, we reviewed what had been achieved through the delivery of the award winning ROWIP 2007-2017 and the Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan 2013 – 2017.

A full report 'Review of the ROWIP 2007 – 2017' providing further details of the PROW and Access Service's achievements over the last decade forms part of the evidence base and is available online and on request.



Adoption of asset management principles enabled better planned programmes of maintenance and resulted in lower levels of reporting for some elements of the asset.



Requirements attached to the regime of agricultural subsidies delivered higher levels of compliance by the agricultural community and reduced levels of reported obstructions to the PROW network by agricultural activity. Changes to the regime have the potential to deliver further benefits in the next plan period.



The adoption of a policy of least restrictive access and the removal of existing stiles, where this could be negotiated, has delivered a network that is now 70% stile free. This activity could be better targeted to deliver further improvements in accessibility.



The creation of coherent networks of higher status routes for horse riders and cyclists remains a significant challenge, particularly away from economic growth areas. Greater consideration needs to be given to using existing roads and verges to reduce the fragmentation of the network of bridleways, cycle tracks and byways.



There has been some truly innovative work completed to inform the public about the network and encourage use. In terms of securing health benefits, activity must be targeted at, and communicated in a way that encourages use by those communities where poor health outcomes are prevalent. We cannot place too great a reliance on on-line communication.



Housing and business development in the county placed significant pressure on the PROW and Access Service, but it also provided significant opportunities to secure improvements to the network, particularly connectivity, asset renewal and provision for higher rights users.



Nuisance use of PROW network is an issue raised by many stakeholders and users and generally reflects wider issues within society. There is a role for the Kent Countryside Access Forum in promoting understanding between different stakeholders and responsible use of PROW network by the public.



The Service will need to continue to embrace new technology and improve existing systems if it is to maintain or improve levels of customer service.

Policy Context

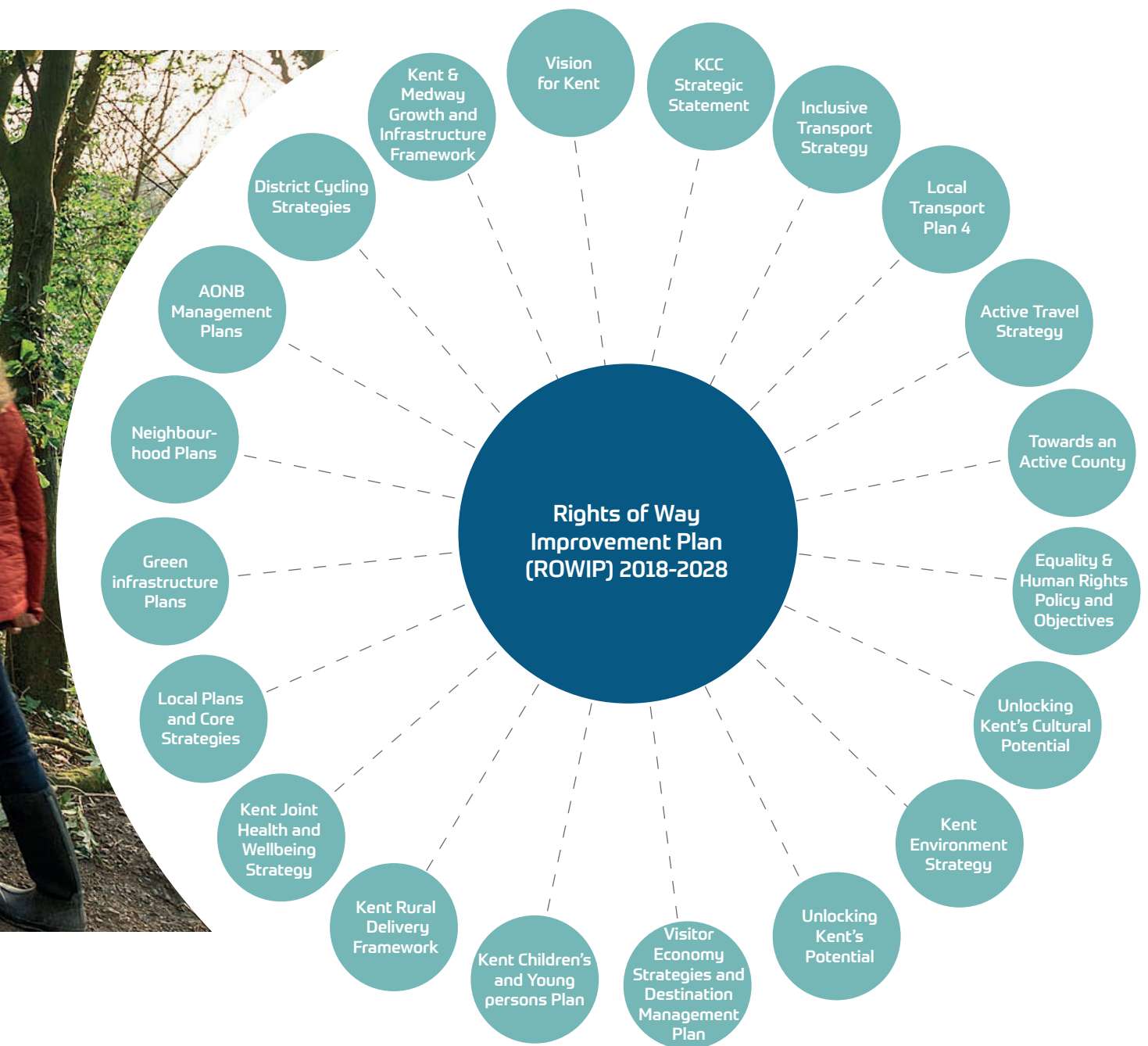
The importance of the PROW network, the countryside, riverside, coast and publicly accessible green space is recognised in many national and local strategies and is afforded strong protection in law. An estimated 4000 individual statutes, regulations and judgements have a direct relevance to its protection, use and development.



The 'Strategy and Policy Review' provides a detailed overview of associated strategy and policy forms part of the evidence base available online and on request.

Delivering Kent's Priorities

Due to the wide-reaching work of the PROW and Access Service, the ROWIP directly contributes to the delivery of many Kent policies and strategies, some of these are Kent County Council's and others are those of partner organisations. The diagram below shows the policies and strategies that share common objectives to the ROWIP.



Benefits of Using the Public Rights of Way Network

Credit: photojB/Sustrans



There is a large and growing body of evidence about the benefits of physical activity and access to green space and coast, of which the PROW network and access land are key components. The network provides important social, recreational and sustainable travel options which support Kent's economy. This section provides a summary of the evidence gathered from the Policy and Literature Review.

The 'Policy and Literature Review' provides detailed information on the benefits of the PROW network, forms part of the evidence base and is available online and on request.

Health and Wellbeing

- Being physically active can help towards the prevention of at least 20 different chronic health conditions, including coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes and mental health problems¹.
- Physical inactivity costs Kent £306 million and 300 premature deaths each year².
- NHS Digital statistics show 18,442 patients had a condition where obesity was a factor during 2016/17, compared to 14,032 the previous year - a 31% increase; around half of Kent's 1.5 million population are now said to be overweight or obese, creating huge pressure on the NHS³.
- Increasing evidence suggests that one of the most efficient ways to manage mental health issues is through physical activity, especially in the natural environment which is associated with greater feelings of revitalisation, increased energy and decreases in tension, confusion, anger, and depression⁴.
- The benefits of exercise in the natural environment happen almost immediately: only 5 minutes of exposure improves self-esteem and mood, irrespective of gender, age and health status⁵.
- Health and wellbeing outcomes have historically been poorly integrated with spatial planning, creating places that do not support people to improve their health through regular activity such as walking or cycling, or which contribute to poor health through high levels of road pollution, for example⁶.
- Health & wellbeing is also improved through regular horse riding⁷. It is particularly relevant to the under 16s and women over the age of 45 who would otherwise be sedentary. There is no significant difference in activity up until the age of 75.

The ROWIP has a significant role to play in helping to deliver health and wellbeing benefits and will aim to contribute to redressing some of the spatial planning deficiencies and health inequalities throughout Kent.

1 (Department of Health/Chief Medical Officers, 2011)

2 (UK Active, 2014)

3 (Kent Messenger Published 5th (April 2018))

4 (Thompson Coon, et al., 2011)

5 (Barton & Pretty, What is the best dose of nature and green exercise for improving mental health? A multi-study analysis, 2010)

6 (Barton H. , 2009), (Building Health Foundation, 2009)

7 (Barton H. , 2009), (Building Health Foundation, 2009)



Supporting Rural Economy and Economic Growth

- Kent's transport network is a vital element in facilitating economic growth and supporting the demands of a rising population.
- A well planned green infrastructure which promotes and encourages sustainable and active travel is required and the PROW network is a significant element of this.
- Working with local authorities and developers in the context of Local Plans and the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) to identify growth areas and the infrastructure needed to accommodate this growth until 2031, we can work towards more sustainable travel patterns in Kent.
- Tourism is an important industry for Kent, with the total tourism value estimated at £3.6 billion in 2015, supporting just under 52,000 full time equivalent jobs¹⁰.
- Kent's landscape is a key tourist attractor: it offers one of the longest coastlines in the UK, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the North Downs Way and England Coast Path national trails.
- The Natural England Monitoring Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) data indicates an average spend when visiting the countryside of £6.44 per visit; with an estimated total spend of £20bn in England between March 2014 and February 2015¹¹.

Sustainable Travel Encouraging Active Lifestyles

- Walking and cycling as a means of transport to reach a destination, termed 'active travel', allows people to be physically active as part of their daily lives.
- Active travel brings a range of health and wellbeing benefits (as detailed on page 12), reducing traffic congestion, air pollution and outputs of climate change gases.
- Physical activity is essential for healthy growth and development, it increases cognitive outcomes and school attainment, and improves social interaction and confidence⁸.
- In March 2018 the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published new guidance relating to the importance of physical activity in the local environment and how the PROW and cycle network and public open space can help facilitate active lifestyles.
- A lack of routes, poor availability of information about routes, concerns over safety and the speed and convenience of motorised transport can all act as barriers to people choosing active travel.⁹

The ROWIP will aim to encourage active lifestyles through:

- better promotion of the existing network;
- addressing barriers that prevent use;
- working in partnership with planning authorities and developers to create well-designed, accessible environments that encourage active travel and walking, cycling and horse riding as leisure and recreational pursuits.

The ROWIP can help contribute towards a robust infrastructure that enables development and encourage economic growth leading to regeneration and attraction of new businesses. The ROWIP has a significant role in supporting sustainable economic growth, directly contributing to transport, green infrastructure and open spaces; three areas identified in Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework as critical to support growth in the period to 2031.

The ROWIP as a statutory document can inform, support and add weight to policies within Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

Sustainable rural leisure and tourism is a key way to support the socio-economic well-being of rural areas, providing jobs and supporting community services. The PROW network and the ROWIP has a critical role in this.

8 (All-Party Parliamentary Commission on Physical Activity, 2014)

9 (Lee & Moudon, 2004), (Kent County Council, 2017, Active Travel Strategy (draft))

10 Visit Kent (2016), Economic Impact of Tourism – Kent – 2015 Results.

11 Natural England – Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Report, May 2017.

Market Research & Stakeholder Engagement



Market research was used to gather information from our customers and stakeholders to understand their priorities and needs and how the network currently meets demand. The research also helped to determine how the network must evolve to meet future requirements for residents and visitors, providing services accessible to all people within the community. Through analysis of the information gathered, common themes emerged. These themes were used to guide the ROWIP's delivery plan and statement of actions.

The 'Market Research and Stakeholder Report Summary' forms part of the evidence base and is available online and on request.

Key Findings

PROW Use

- The top two most popular reasons for using the PROW and cycle network were: 'to go for a walk / run / cycle / be active / healthy' and 'visiting nature / wildlife'.
- Using PROW to take children to school or getting to work scored relatively low in our research with less than 10% using the network for this purpose. There is clearly potential to encourage increased use of the PROW network for this purpose, particularly given extensive and often high amenity PROW networks within urban areas.
- Our research showed that the vast majority of PROW users experienced positive feelings relating to vitality and happiness when using the network, showing how valuable the network is in improving our quality of life through health and wellbeing.

Barriers to PROW Use

- The top three issues that were stopping PROW use were: overgrown vegetation, cleanliness / unpleasant environment and poor maintenance of paths.
- Lack of information acted as a greater barrier for the younger age groups than older demographic.
- There was a lower frequency of PROW use for those who indicated that they had a disability when compared to those who did not, with only 11% with a disability using the footpaths at least once a week compared to 38% of able bodied users.
- The older age groups (55+) found poor maintenance of stiles/gates and surface, overgrown vegetation and difficult terrain the biggest barriers.
- Fragmentation of the PROW network, especially for higher status routes, and the volume of motorised traffic on connecting highways raises safety concerns and makes the network inaccessible.
- In line with previous Sustrans research, we found that use of cycle path / tracks was higher amongst males (33%) when compared to females (22%). Sustrans have identified the need to provide cycle paths / tracks separated from traffic to get more women cycling.



Encouraging PROW Use

- PROW non-users were less confident in their knowledge of PROW. In other words, there was a correlation between increased use of PROW and greenspace and the provision of information. Those with good access to online PROW information demonstrated higher levels of use for activities like horse riding, visiting viewpoints /attractions and geocaching. Findings showed that increased knowledge improved confidence and encouraged use.
- The top three answers to ‘what will encourage use of the PROW network’, related to information: knowing where routes will take me, knowing where routes are and improving signage and waymarking on routes.
- There was a correlation between age groups and the type of information they use; younger age groups 16 – 44 demonstrated a willingness to use phone apps, those over 55 used maps and guides.
- Factors identified to encourage use were: cutting back vegetation and improving cleanliness (removal of litter, animal fouling and graffiti). For the non-user groups the top two responses were ‘knowing where the routes are’ and ‘knowing where the routes will take me’.
- Improvements to the reporting system were highlighted through the research with 60% of the stakeholder group saying that improvements relating to customer service were needed. The top three methods chosen for reporting a problem on the network were online, by phone and using a phone app, with 51% of the non-stakeholders expressing a preference for making reports by phone.

Evolution of the PROW Network

Through stakeholder engagement the following were identified as key ways in which the PROW network needs to evolve to meet future demands:

- Increase provision of traffic free routes as a safe and sustainable alternative to car travel.
- Provide links to places of work, schools and other amenities.
- Provide good circular and promoted routes for leisure and tourism.
- Remove barriers and replace stiles with gaps or gates.
- Introduce strategies and policies to ensure connectivity of the network through the consideration of PROW within new development and within transport plans.
- Protect, enhance, expand and integrate the PROW network. With the limited resources available, focus on priority routes which are promoted or provide primary access to amenities.



Credit: Cycling Projects (the national inclusive cycling charity)

Blind, Partially Sighted and Limited Mobility Access

Through stakeholder engagement the following were identified as key ways in which the PROW network needs to evolve to meet future demands:

- Improvements to the physical network were identified, specifically:
 - Remove barriers where feasible.
 - Provide smoother, wider, all-weather surfaced routes with tactile entrances.
 - Use large, clear print signage on routes.
- Information facilitates informed decision making about route choice.

Improving the Accessibility to Woodland including for Equestrians and Cyclists

Through stakeholder engagement the following were identified as key ways in which the PROW network needs to evolve to meet future demands:

- Resilient surfaces are required to sustain cycle and equestrian use and to avoid conflict between users.
- A strategic overview is required to identify opportunities for cyclists and equestrians, including consideration of new bridleway routes and better connections to other PROW and the wider highway network.
- The importance of well signed, well maintained routes with improved surfaces and no stiles.
- The provision of parking at accessible woodland sites is important for those that do not live close to woodlands.

The ROWIP will use the information gathered through the market research and engagement to enhance the identification of future projects most likely to deliver positive outcomes and to inform policy and design. We will continue to build on partnerships with stakeholders over the next 10 years; ensuring delivery is aligned to our customers' needs.

Under-represented Groups

Studies have shown that people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, disabled people and younger age groups visit the countryside less frequently. The market research also showed an under representation for these specific groups. Details of the market research demographic results are included in 'The Current Network - Use and Provision' document.

'The Current Network – Use and Provision' forms part of the evidence base and is available online and on request.

People with a Disability

The term disability covers a range of conditions and impairments, each condition or impairment has a different effect on the individual's confidence and ability to use the PROW network.

- The MENE research has shown that 18% of people with a disability never visit the natural environment, compared with 8% of the non-disabled population. Reasons for not visiting the countryside are related to their condition, with 'old age', 'poor health' and 'a physical disability' given by 92% of respondents.¹²
- Providing a network for people with different disabilities proves challenging, as different requirements often result in conflict between users e.g. where a tactile pavement required by a visually impaired user is unsuitable to a wheelchair user.
- The results from the market research showed that respondents who said they were 'confident and had a basic knowledge' were significantly lower amongst those who indicated that they have a disability.

The PROW and Access Service has a good record of working closely with disabled user groups making improvements to the network. We will continue to improve routes for different types of disabled users. Following initial contact during the analysis stage of the plan, we will keep communication open with specialist user groups to share information about newly accessible routes.

We will continue to liaise with these groups and organisations to ensure the design of schemes meets their needs. We will refine guidance for specific user groups, which we will share with planners and developers.



¹² Natural England Monitoring Engagement with the Natural Environment – 2015-2016 'old age' 70%, 'poor health' 42% and 'a physical disability' 34%



Under-represented Age Groups

- Other under-represented groups that are less likely to visit the countryside, are the younger and older age ranges.
- MENE research shows that those aged between 19 and 25 and those over the age of 65 were least likely to have visited the outdoors in the previous 7 days. The results from the market research also showed that the 16 – 24 age group were underrepresented.
- Market research results highlighted that younger age groups were less likely to be interested in using the PROW network or take alternative transport. It showed that a lack of information acted as more of a barrier for the younger age groups.

Breaking down barriers preventing use through better promotion, sharing of information and increasing knowledge & confidence of the PROW network will encourage these under-represented groups to visit the countryside. We will continue to provide information at gateways to the PROW network, such as country parks, to encourage wider exploration.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Groups

- MENE research has shown that BAME populations who do visit the outdoors are more likely to visit urban locations and places closer to home.
- A higher proportion of Kent's ethnic population live in urban Dartford and Gravesend where the cost of travel, time and transport issues need to be considered when accessing the countryside. There is great value in designing housing developments where access to greenspace is available, and where access to established communities, the wider countryside and coast is retained or created.
- Overcoming barriers is key to encouraging use for these under-represented groups. The DEFRA report 'Outdoors for All?'¹³ suggests various actions which include making sure promotional material is available in a range of formats and languages, avoiding stereotypes, working in partnership with a range of organisations and establishing community outreach organisations extending staff and volunteer awareness and diversifying the volunteer profile.

The PROW and Access service will continue to seek improvements in making information more accessible to increase knowledge & confidence for all under-represented groups.

Current Resource, Provision and Use



Public Rights of Way Resource

There are a range of resources that the PROW and Access Service has at its disposal including staff, allocated budget, volunteers, PROW asset and funding raised through external sources. In the case of the latter we have had success in securing funds for improvements to the network from developer contributions through requesting Section 106 Agreements, the Single Growth Fund, PASSAGE project, Tesco’s Bags of Help and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Staff and Volunteers

The PROW and Access Service has 22 full time equivalent staff members who are assisted by the Countryside Access Wardens, Kent Countryside Access Forum and various volunteers and volunteer groups who carry out a range of work from vegetation clearance, gate and step installation to completing surveys and historic research.

Volunteers are the eyes and ears in the communities of Kent and the Countryside Access Wardens are integral to the PROW and Access Service in helping keep the network free of obstructions and signposted. The Kent

Scheme is innovative and popular in that it allows volunteers to work in their own time and report back to us on their activity and findings.

Partners

There are a wide range of organisations and services that are active in the management of Kent’s countryside and coast and have much to contribute towards the improvement of the PROW network. Partnership working with these organisations and services is key to the delivery of this plan.

Some of our key partners include Countryside Management Partnerships, Country Parks, District, Borough and Parish Councils, English Heritage, Explore Kent, Forestry Commission, High Weald AONB, Kent Downs AONB, KCC Highways Transportation and Waste, MOD, National Trust, Natural England, user and interest groups (listed in the glossary on page 43), Visit Kent and the Woodland Trust.

Public Rights of Way Network

Like the rest of England and Wales, Kent has a network of paths which are protected in law and known as PROW. These paths form a unique resource freely available to the public to explore the countryside and coast and provide important links between and within Kent’s communities.

This section provides a summary of the current PROW network and access opportunities available to Kent’s residents and visitors, looking specifically at links to areas of green space, transport hubs and growth.

Kent has a 6900km network of public rights of way. The percentage of higher status paths including Byways, Restricted Byways and Bridleways is lower than the national average, with only 16.65% of the network available to equestrians and cyclists and less still, 5.5 %, available to carriage drivers and 3.35% to motor vehicles. The table below shows the total length of PROW network available at the time this document was written.

A detailed overview ‘The Current Network (Use and Provision)’ forms part of the evidence base and is available online and on request.

Current Provision	PROW Length (km)	Footpaths (km)	Bridleways (km)	Restricted Byways (km)	BOATs (km)
2017	6898	5748	764	149	231

Public Rights of Way Asset

The PROW network asset comprises many elements, some of which are entirely the responsibility of the County Council, such as surface maintenance, fingerposts, waymark posts, safety barriers and many of the bridges. Other elements are the responsibility of landowners.

The value of the asset based on current replacement costs for those elements for which the County Council is responsible, is calculated at £108 million, with an annual capital and revenue requirement of £2.4 million to maintain the asset in an optimum condition.

The County Council formally adopted asset management principles for the management of the PROW network on the 8 February 2008. This approach has been beneficial in establishing the resources required to meet the County Council's statutory obligations in respect of:

- i maintaining the PROW network;
- ii identifying priorities for expenditure, and;
- iii allowing procurement decisions and the standards adopted for the asset to be rigorously tested so as to achieve best value.

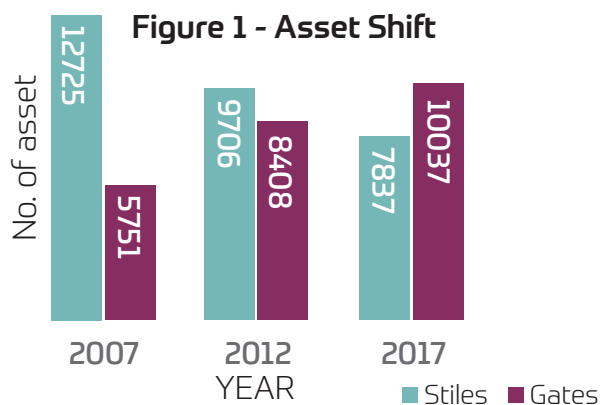
Key to the delivery of the positive outcomes set out in the ROWIP is the ability to take informed decisions about the PROW asset and where investment is best made to both comply with the County's statutory obligations and deliver the greatest return in respect of positive outcomes. It also enables informed decisions to be taken around design and investment commitments required to address pressure arising from climate change. The PROW and Access Service developed a simple cost benefit analysis tool, the 'Intelligent Investment Tool' to facilitate informed decision making.

The 'PROW and Access Service's Asset Management Plan' is updated on a regular basis and forms part of the evidence base available online and on request.

Removing Barriers

The use of stiles on the network as a means of stock control acts as a barrier to PROW users. People with a wide range of mobility issues from wheelchairs users, ambulant disability, those who are elderly or those with young families may find stiles impassable or difficult to use.

Figure 1 highlights how this element of the PROW asset has changed over the last decade, with the number of stiles reducing and access to the network improving as a result.



Access to Green Space

In addition to the PROW network, there are approximately 12,480 hectares of publicly accessible green space in Kent. Evidence around the health and wellbeing benefits provided by access to green space are well documented. Areas of accessible green space include Country Parks, Forestry Commission land, Woodland Trust land, Village Greens, Common Land and Open Access Land.

The Kent Nature Partnership's Health and Nature subgroup produced a natural green space needs assessment, which identified those areas where there is both a low prevalence of the population being physically active and a low level of natural green space provision.¹⁴ The Marmot Review¹⁵ also recognised the importance of good quality open and green space in tackling health inequality and recognised that the availability and quality of access to green space is not evenly distributed, with those in deprived urban areas often having less access to health-improving green space.



¹⁴ (Bennett, Davies, Hodgson, Pett, & Witts, 2016)

¹⁵ Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) (2010)



Access to the Coast

Following the introduction of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the County Council has been working in partnership with Natural England to establish the Kent stretches of the England Coast Path. This is a new National Trail walking route that will eventually circumnavigate the entire English coastline. In addition to the creation of a linear walking route, the project secures access rights for the public to explore beaches and land along the coastline – known as ‘spreading room’.

When the National Trail is complete, the path will be approximately 2,700 miles long, making it one of the longest promoted coastal walking routes in the world. Due to the scale of the project, the trail is being developed in stretches around the country. The first stretches of the Coast Path in Kent, between Ramsgate and Camber, were opened to the public on the 19 July 2016. This provided a 106 km (66 mile) trail, connecting coastal communities and bringing tourism opportunities to the region. Work is currently in progress to develop the remaining stretches of coast path along the North Kent coast, which are planned to be open to the public by 2020.

Current Use and Value

The PROW and Access Service often uses ‘counters’ as a measure of the use of a route prior to and after improvement. There are further tools such as Outdoor Recreation Valuation (ORVal), Walkability and Propensity to Cycle tools that are also available.

Welfare Value

The ORVal tool is a map-based web application. It provides further evidence of the value and benefits that are derived from publicly accessible space and the PROW network. ORVal shows usage and welfare values that are generated by accessible green space either as an individual site or as a region. The welfare refers to sense of wellbeing or utility that each person feels as a result of their experience. The welfare value for green space is the figure for the monetary equivalent of the welfare enjoyed by a person as a result of having access to green space. The welfare value can be used when applying cost-benefit analysis to assess future planning applications and projects that impact on the PROW network and other accessible green space. It is supported by DEFRA and endorsed by the Treasury.

Physical Activity Data Tool

The physical activity data tool published by Public Health England in April 2018, presents data on physical activities including walking and cycling with the aim of helping to promote physical activity, develop understanding and support the benchmarking, commissioning and improvement of services. It also includes information on related risk factors and conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

Kent Mental Health & Wellbeing Index

The Kent Mental Health & Wellbeing Index has been created from a wide range of aspects of wellbeing. Constructed at ward level, it provides an assessment of the relative assets and vulnerabilities of an area in respect of the mental health and wellbeing of the population within it.

In addition, the Propensity to Cycle Tool, Route Selection Tool and the Walking Route Audit Tool, as referenced in the Government’s technical guidance for local cycling and walking infrastructure, help gauge the likely or relative level of use and can assist in directing investment decisions.

These assessments and data tools combined with available mapping can be used to prioritise areas for future action and investment, based on levels of population deprivation, size and need. They can be used by the PROW and Access Service to support strategic decision making with regard to service provision and to identify projects which focus on preventative action and with potential to deliver greatest value in health and wellbeing benefits.

Identifying Future Demand



It is important to look at how Kent's population is going to change in order to identify future demand and plan the Service's delivery over the next 10 years. This section summarises Kent's demographics, current travel patterns and growth and development areas and how the ROWIP intends to respond to the pressures and demands each place on the PROW network. What is clear is that if population in the county grows as predicted and house building keeps pace this decade will witness an unprecedented scale and pace of growth. Growth on this scale has the potential to bring with it increased demand and pressure on the PROW network.

Further information on these areas are available in 'The Current Network (Use and Provision)', which forms part of the evidence base and is available online and on request.

Kent's Population Demographics

"All regions of England are projected to see an increase in their population size over the next decade, with London, the East of England and South East projected to grow faster than the country as a whole. The population is also ageing with all regions seeing a faster growth in those aged 65 and over than in younger age groups." Suzie Dunsmith, Population Projections Unit, Office for National Statistics.

Kent's population is predicted to increase at an accelerated rate to the rest of the country, with the older age groups making up a larger percentage of the population than the younger groups. The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework forecast shows an estimated population of 2,127,600 by 2031; an increase of 396,300 people, equivalent to a 23% growth in population from 2011 to 2031¹⁶.

A predicted 178,600 homes are required in Kent between 2011 and 2031 to meet the housing demand.¹⁷ A well-planned green infrastructure that protects important landscapes and access to amenities is key to creating sustainable communities. The demographics of Kent's population will also play an important role in making future decisions, targeting limited resources to deliver the best possible service to meet our customer's requirements and needs and deliver positive outcomes.

Current Travel Patterns

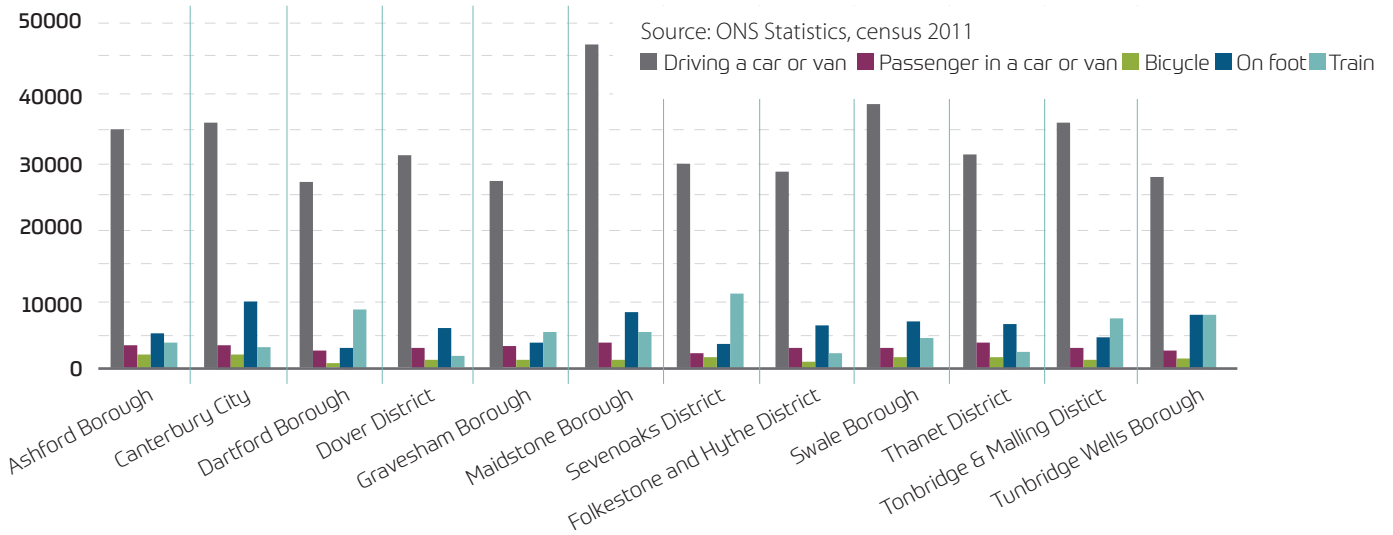
Information available from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Statistics Census 2011 on the ways that Kent's residents reach work, provides an important insight into travel patterns and where the PROW and Access Service can help encourage more sustainable options. Figure 2 (page 22) focuses on five specific modes of transport used in Kent. Driving to work is by far the most common method used. Although walking to work is the second most popular method for seven of Kent's districts, the remaining districts' second choice was to travel to work by train.

The distance to work can affect the method of travel chosen; people are more inclined to choose walking or cycling for shorter distances. Figure 3 (page 22) shows the distance travelled to work in each of Kent's districts, for a journey that is less than 10km. Encouraging people to leave their cars at home and use active travel methods for shorter journeys will not only provide health and wellbeing benefits to the participant, but will also have a positive impact on the local environment, contributing to reduced road congestion and better air quality. The provision of links that provide access to work, school and facilities is an essential element of a well-planned green infrastructure to facilitate sustainable and active travel.

¹⁶ Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (KCC) 2018 Update

¹⁷ Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (KCC) 2018 Update

Figure 2 - Method of travel to work



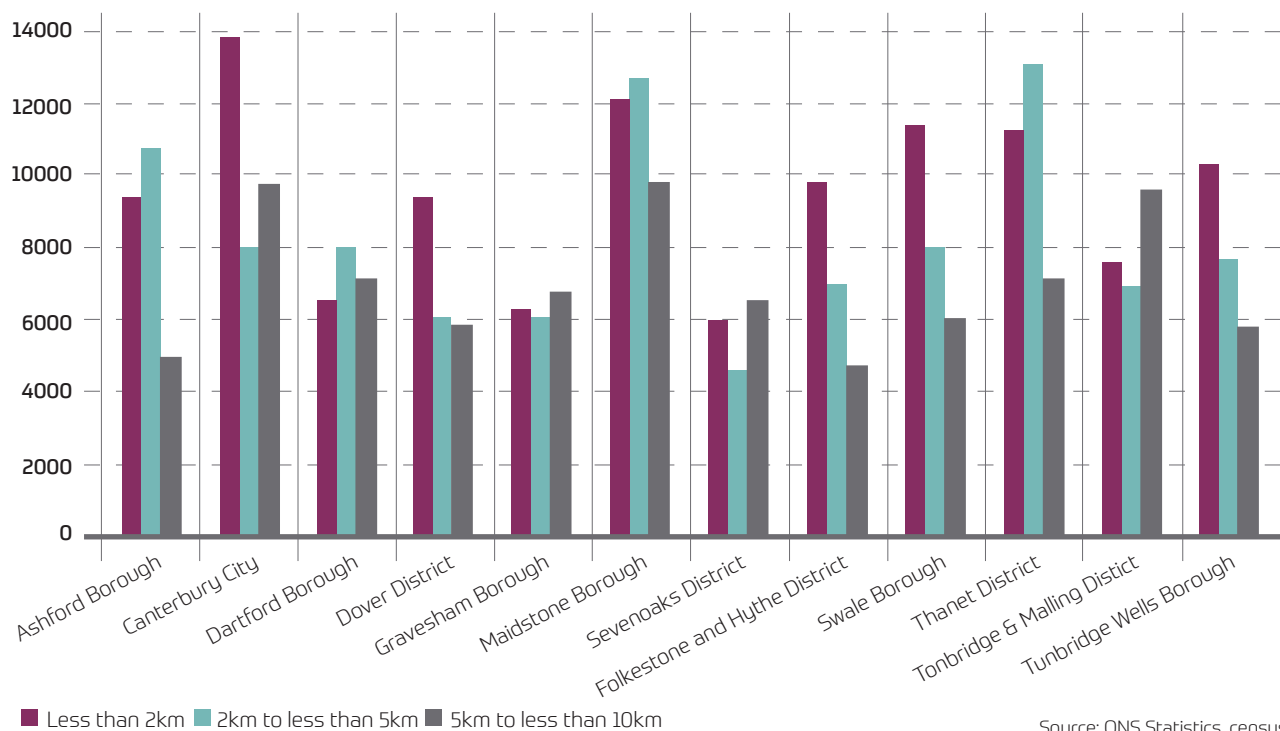
Access to Public Transport

For longer distances, walking and cycling may not be feasible and other methods of travel including bus, car and train will need to be used. The PROW network still plays an important role in providing links to these modes of transport, such as bus and railway stations.

Figures 1 and 2 relate to current travel patterns. There will, no doubt over the duration of this plan, be a continued change to working patterns; increased home working and remote working facilitated by the role out of high-speed internet connections. The continued development and improvement of electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles and even electrically assisted bicycles may revolutionise travel choices.

Through the improvement of the existing PROW network to facilitate active travel for shorter journeys and improving links to transport hubs, we can work towards more sustainable travel patterns in Kent. The PROW and Access Service will use the available transport information to make informed decisions when responding to planning applications and developing provision in growth areas. We recognise there is the potential for a rapid change to working and travel patterns over the duration of this plan and may need to further develop policies as a result.

Figure 3 - Distance travelled to work



Source: ONS Statistics, census 2011



Growth Areas

The PROW and Access Service will continue to work with planners and developers to secure PROW enhancements and improvements to the network over the next 10 years in growth areas and associated developments. We will continue to comment on and influence local planning documents, land allocation and master plans through to detailed applications. Comments will reflect National Planning Policy Framework 2018 paragraphs:

- 96 'Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities' and
- 98 'Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails'.

Use of Spatial Data

The spatial data sets available to the PROW and Access Service have increased over the last 10 years:

This includes data on:

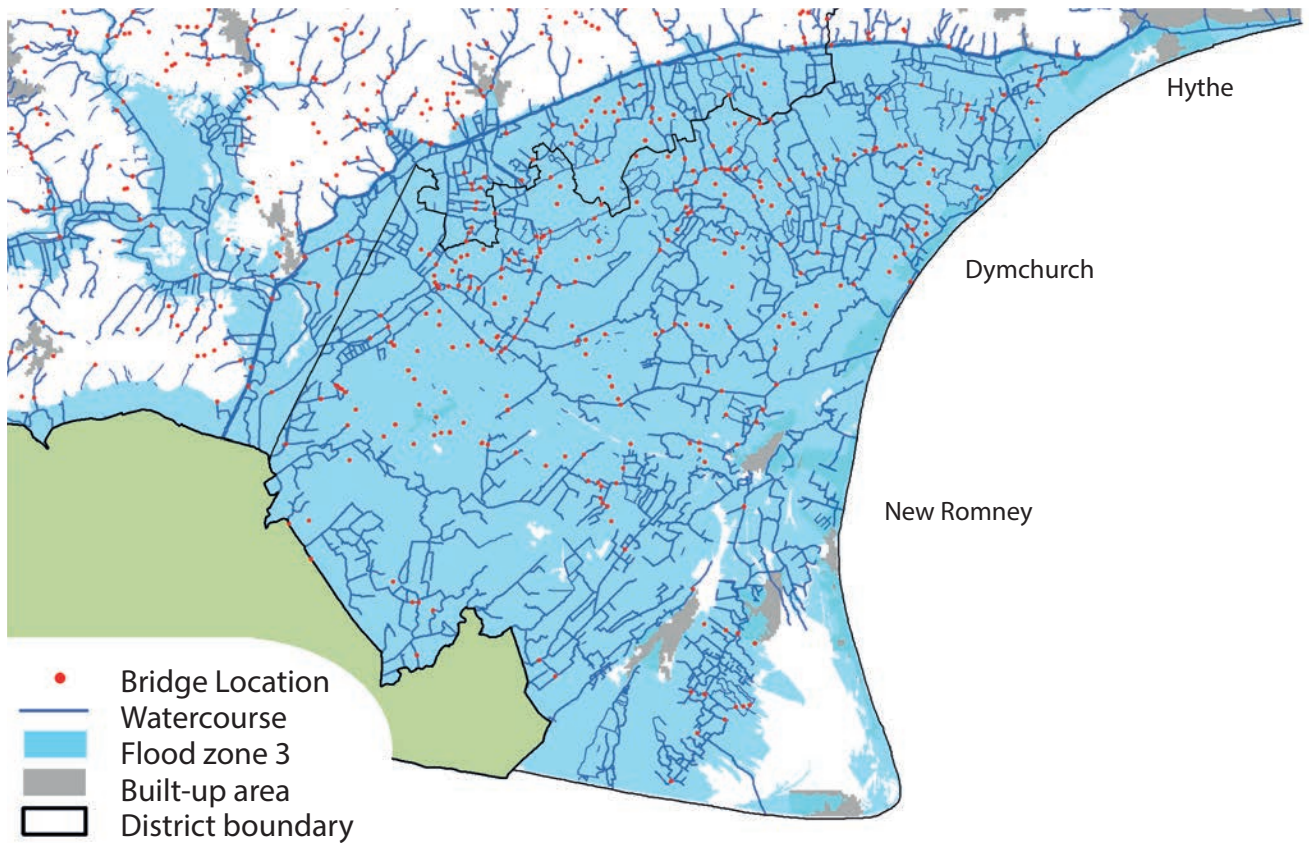
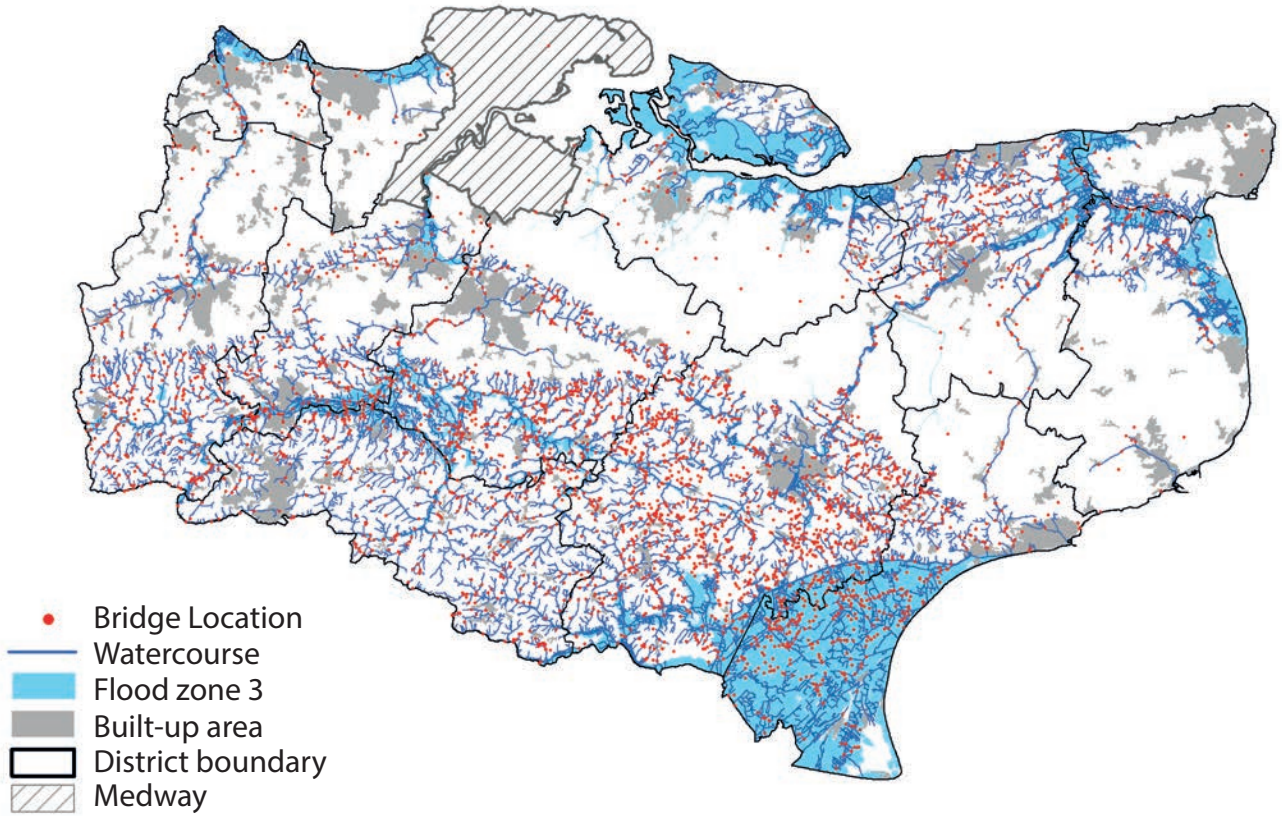
- The PROW network asset
- The PROW network
- Access Land
- Publicly accessible greenspace and coast
- Permissive access
- Highways
- Customer insight – MOSAIC.
- Health
- Multiple Index Economic Deprivation
- Travel patterns.
- Links to public transport
- Growth areas
- Flood zones
- Land use
- Points of interest
- Constraints – such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and scheduled ancient monuments

This information can be harnessed to inform decision making about which projects are likely to deliver positive outcomes and how best to design them. Examples of how information that can be used to direct activity are as follows:



Example 1: Safeguarding the PROW Asset

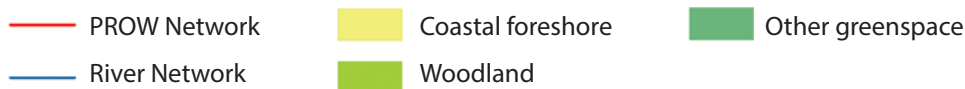
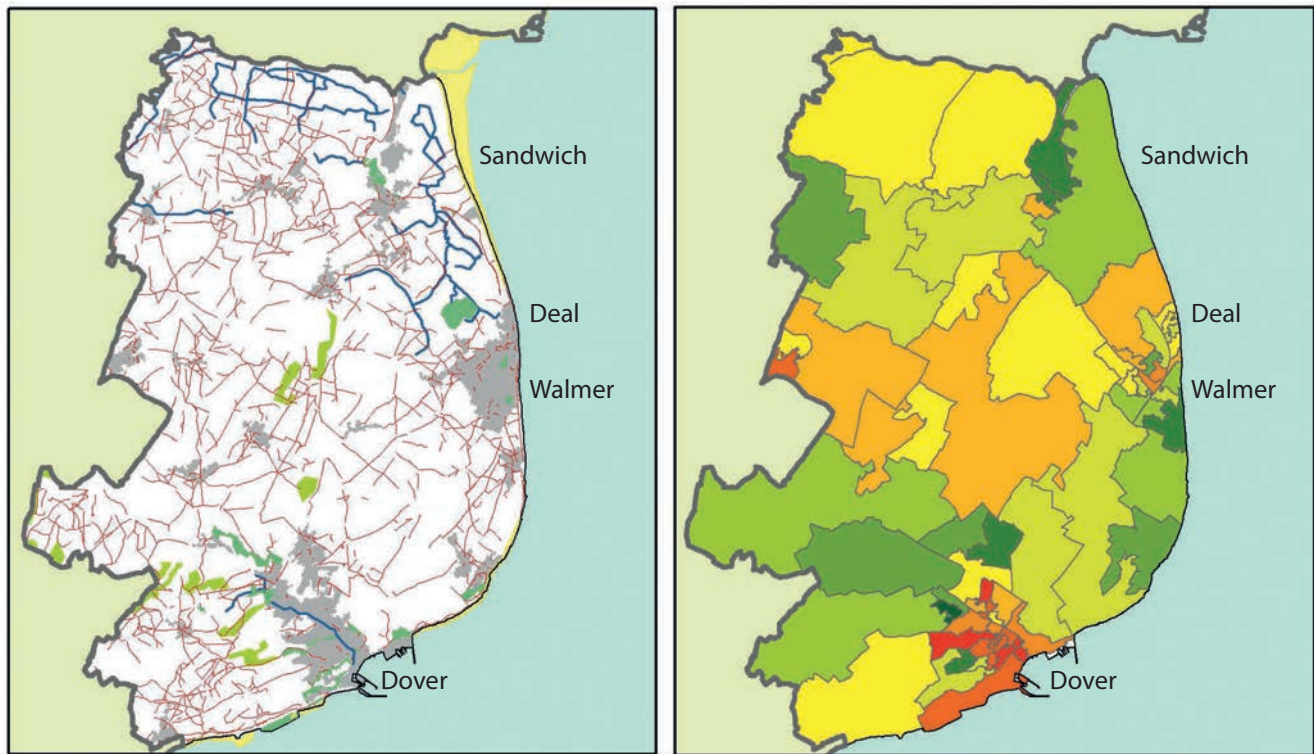
Using flood zone, watercourse mapping and spatial data showing the PROW bridge asset, we can identify those structures at greatest risk and direct activity to safeguard the asset through bridge anchoring, anti-scour works and other protective measures.



Example 2: Tackling Health Inequalities through Access to Greenspace

Research has identified a correlation between areas where there is a low prevalence of the population being physically active and low levels of natural green space provision.¹⁸ Good quality open and green space is important in tackling health inequality and it has been recognised that the availability and quality of access to green space is not evenly distributed.

Dover District



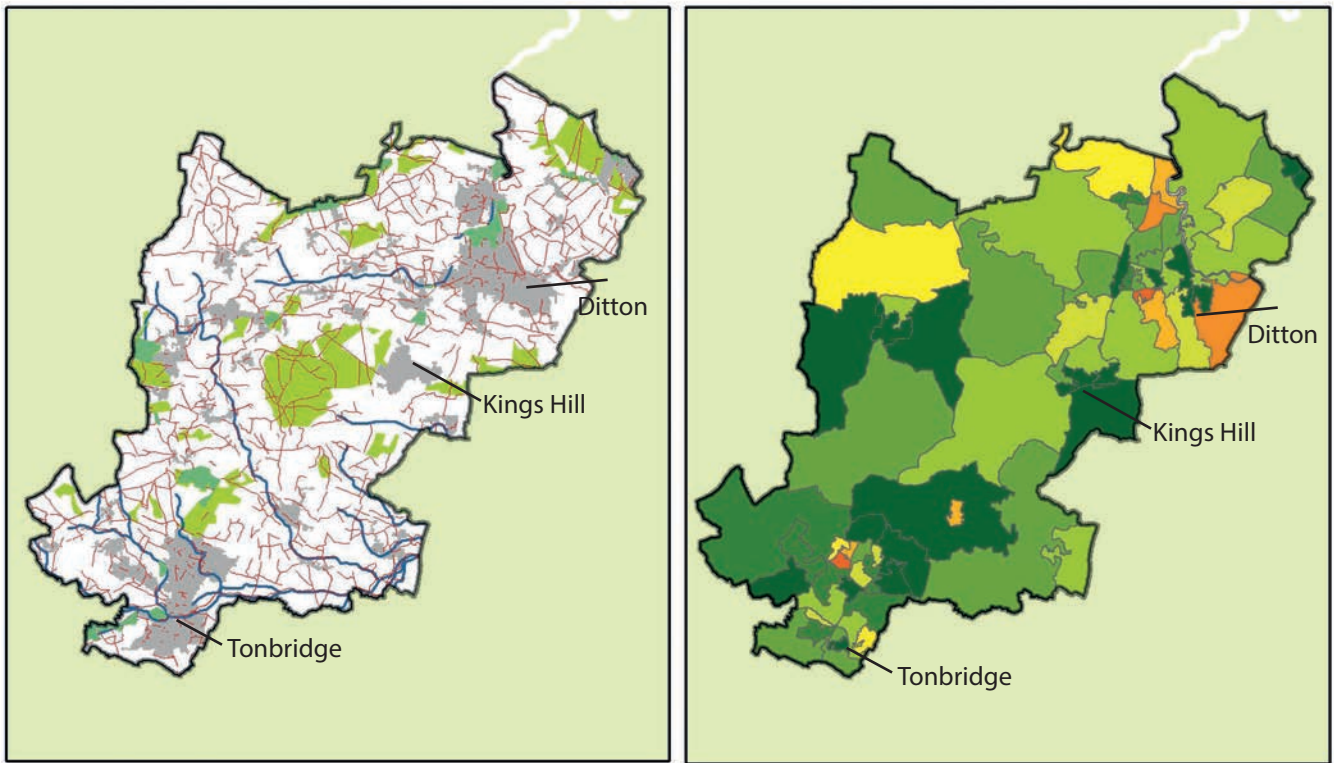
Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015)



¹⁸(Bennett, Davies, Hodgson, Pett, & Witts, 2016)

Mapping showing indices of multiple deprivation, access to open and green space and areas of poor health can be compared to inform decision making for future projects, programmes and planning responses, to help encourage active lifestyles and tackle health inequality in Kent.

Tonbridge & Malling District



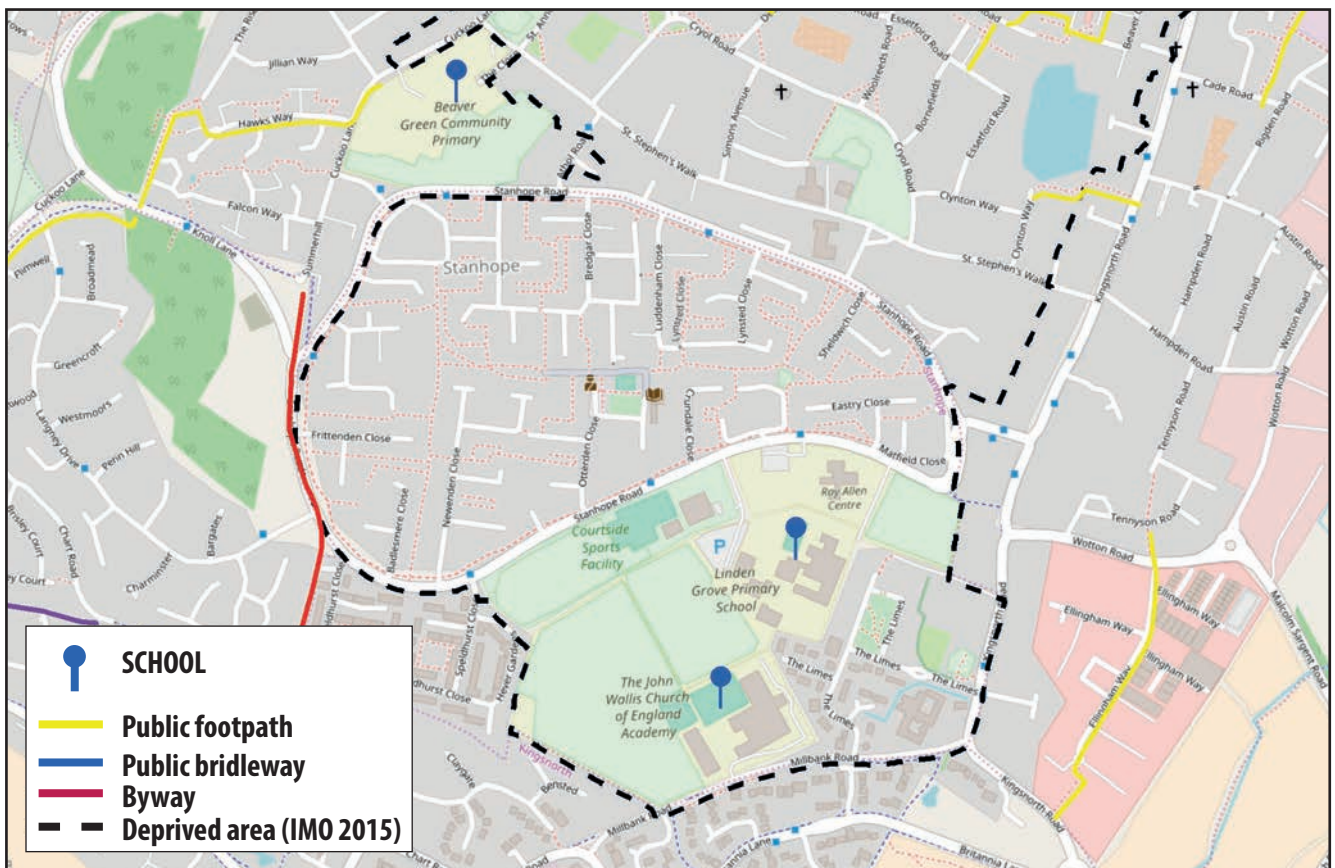
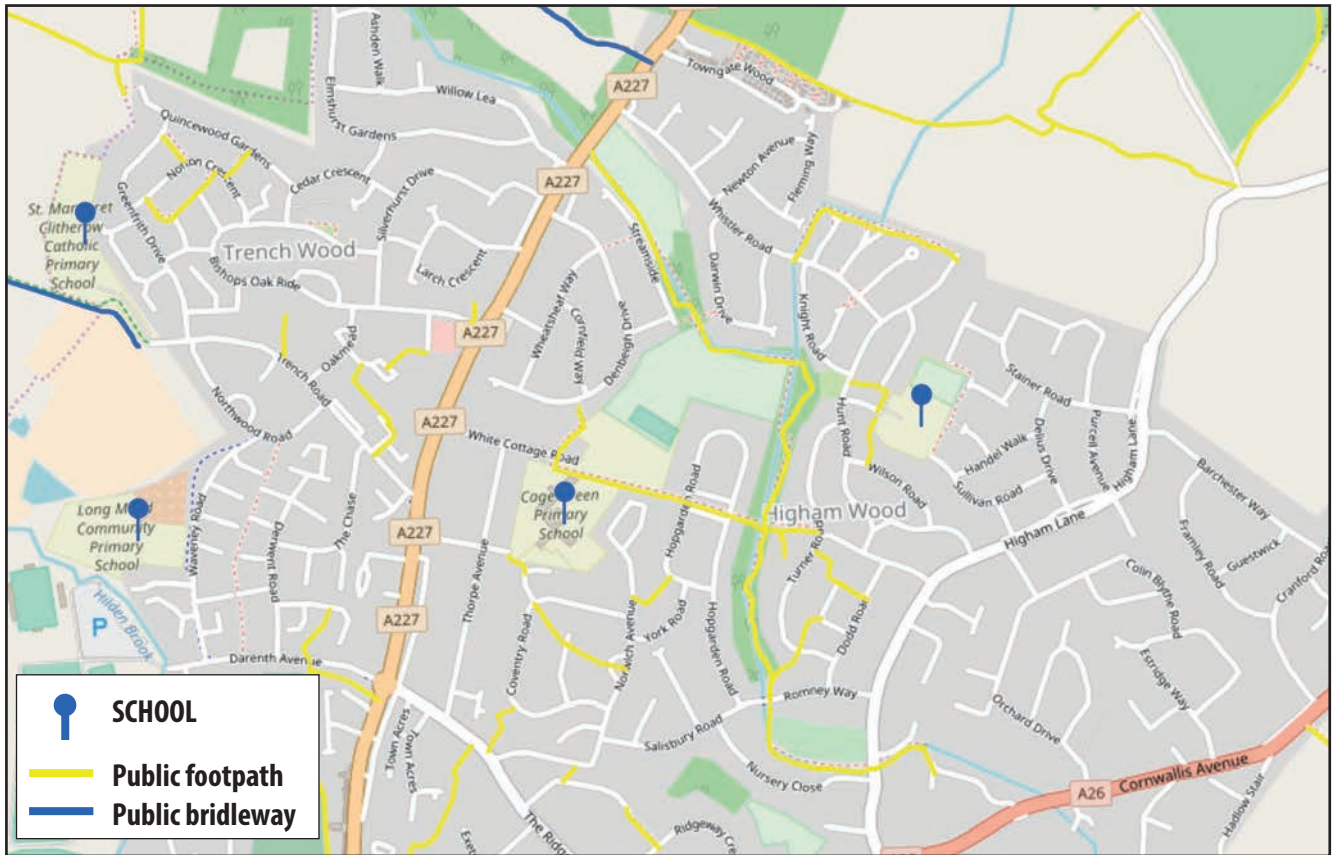
- PROW Network
- River Network
- Coastal foreshore
- Woodland
- Other greenspace

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015)



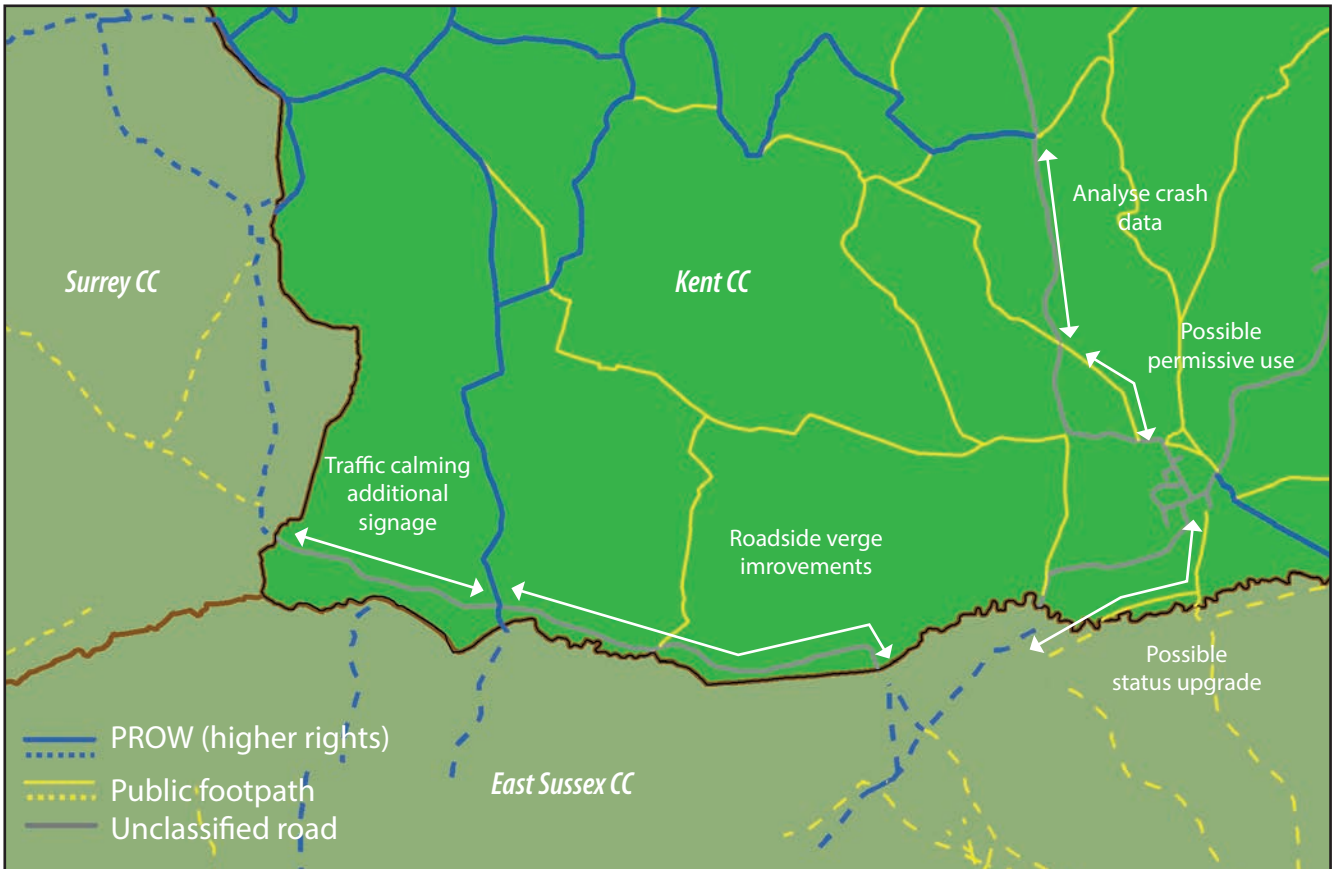
Example 3: Encouraging Active Lifestyles

Using spatial data we can identify improvements, linking schools to the wider PROW and cycle network. Information can be further scrutinised to target specific schools and potential links to the network, encouraging active travel and healthy lifestyle choices. The provision and improvement of such links has the potential to unlock great benefits in areas of poor health outcomes.



Example 4: Reducing Fragmentation of the Network and Improving Safety

The example map below demonstrates the power of spatial data in building up a picture of the 'missing links' that could deliver maximum benefit to connectivity. Using multiple datasets e.g. road data, crash statistics, cross-border assets etc. to build up an accurate picture of the local situation, allows the most appropriate options for delivering improvements to be identified. This may be improving the roadside verge; working to improve signage and traffic calming features; trying to establish behind the hedge routes; or, working for permanent or permissive upgrades to existing lower status paths.







Delivery Plan / Statement of Actions




The ROWIP provides valuable insight into the needs and priorities of Kent's PROW network users, what they would like from the Service and how we can improve walking, equestrian and cycling opportunities in Kent. The six key themes that have emerged and the actions required to deliver them, sit well with the themes of the previous ROWIP and ensure the continuity of the service and the assurance that our previous work was well directed. The key themes are not in order of priority or importance, each has a main objective and set of actions that form the basis of the PROW and Access Service's 10 year delivery plan and statement of actions.

Decisions need to be made around how resources will be allocated to best meet our statutory obligations and deliver the improvements that the public desire. This is particularly important when budget and staff resources are under increasing pressure. There is a need to ensure that each programme or project delivers the greatest benefit and aligns most closely with Kent's relevant strategies and policies. Through producing the ROWIP, an evidence base has been developed to support this prioritisation, delivery plan and statement of actions. Evaluation of the plan's effectiveness is also crucial in ensuring that the service is fulfilling identified priorities and needs, both overall and on a project by project basis. The PROW and Access Service will quantify the outcomes and outputs of the plan through an annual review and report throughout the 10 years of the plan.









Key for Benefits





-  Supports active travel (reducing congestion, outputs of climate change gases, noise and air pollution)
-  Increasing levels of activity leading to better physical and mental health and wellbeing
-  Supporting Kent's economy
-  Improved customer experience

Key for Resource/Limitation





-  Deliverable with existing resource levels
-  Additional resource required
-  Potential for income generation or budget savings













Active lifestyles









Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource / Limitation	Key Partners
AL01	Increase Health and Wellbeing Benefits	<p>1.1 Target priority areas and deliver improvements to the network addressing health inequalities through increasing active travel and recreational activity.</p> <p>1.2 Prioritise maintenance on those PROW providing access to natural greenspace and public open space or where providing an accessible resource for community-based activities (walking groups, health walks).</p> <p>1.3 Improve connectivity and consider equestrian and other parking where reasonable to encourage recreational and leisure activity; including access to country parks, honey pot sites and other facilities of high leisure use, such as National Trails, promoted routes and routes within and leading to AONBs.</p> <p>1.4 Support volunteering in greenspace and on PROW network.</p> <p>1.5 Work with partners to support implementation of health improvement initiatives, such as Walking for Health, cycling and equestrian initiatives and GP referrals.</p> <p>1.6 Support schemes that will contribute to a reduction of air pollution, particularly in those areas where levels are high, and measures of deprivation and health are poor.</p>	   	EgE E+ E✓	<p>Active Travel Strategy Steering Group</p> <p>Countryside Access Wardens</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Explore Kent</p> <p>Health Care Providers and Professionals</p> <p>KCC Country Parks</p> <p>KCC Highways Transportation and Waste</p> <p>Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</p> <p>Kent Sport</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Local Schools</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>
AL02	Active Travel	<p>1.7 Support and influence local authority strategies and policies to ensure that active travel is firmly integrated into development planning.</p> <p>1.8 Work with developers to ensure active travel routes are incorporated and link to PROW / cycle networks, transport hubs and greenspaces.</p> <p>1.9 Provide motorised traffic free, safe walking, cycling and equestrian and routes linking to towns, urban and rural areas. Seek to provide longer distance links between urban centres.</p> <p>1.10 Remove barriers to active travel and recreation and promote routes and opportunities. For example promote recreational routes to introduce people to active travel and work with KCC's Active Travel Strategy Group to support work with children to develop bike skills, build confidence and encourage...</p>	   	EgE E+ E✓	<p>Active Travel Strategy Steering Group</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>KCC Highways Transportation and Waste</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Local Schools</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>

AL03	Tackling Deprivation & Disadvantage	<p>1.11 Remove barriers for economically disadvantaged communities by encouraging the use of the network as a free-at-the-point-of-use resource for active travel, recreation and leisure use.</p> <p>1.12 Tackle health disadvantage by promoting access to the natural environment and green space, beyond urban areas, providing connectivity to nature and cultural landscapes.</p> <p>1.13 Utilise information available on health inequalities, areas of deprivation poor health, high air pollution, and current access to green space to support measures to focus efforts on the areas that will have greatest impact.</p> <p>1.14 Encourage active travel to schools through promotion and enhancing PROW and cycle networks, targeting areas of childhood obesity and deprivation affecting children.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ £V	Active Travel Strategy Steering Group Developers Explore Kent Health Care Providers and Professionals KCC Country Parks KCC Highways Transportation and Waste Kent Countryside Access Forum Kent Downs and High Weald AONB Kent Sport Local Schools Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups
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Evolution of the network

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource / Limitation	Key Partners
EN01	Modal Shift to Cycling and Walking to Reduce Road Air Pollution	<p>2.1 PROW network to provide realistic traffic free alternative to the car especially for short journeys to keep towns moving at peak flow times. Provide routes to encourage walking & cycling as a realistic mode of transport for utilitarian purposes as well as for leisure use.</p> <p>2.2 Improve and upgrade the PROW network where it links with amenities, public transport nodes, work and education to increase the attractiveness of walking, cycling and riding as an alternative to driving.</p> <p>2.3 Work with planners to secure PROW within green space and green corridors which actively ameliorate air pollution.</p> <p>2.4 Further develop policies and projects in line with changes in working and travel patterns over the duration of the plan.</p> <p>2.5 Work to secure higher status routes (bridleway, restricted byway) to provide access for the greatest range of users.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ £V	Active Travel Strategy Steering Group Developers Explore Kent KCC Highways Transportation and Waste Kent Countryside Access Forum Local Schools Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups













EN02	Improve Green Infrastructure	<p>2.6 Work with planners and developers to create a planned strategic green infrastructure which incorporates the PROW network to promote and encourage sustainable, active travel and provide opportunities for leisure and recreation.</p> <p>2.7 Work with stakeholders to create places where people are not impeded in undertaking physical activity, accessing nature and having low air pollution levels.</p> <p>2.8 Support improved communication with planning officers to ensure access is integrated into developments and best practice is applied.</p> <p>2.9 Maintenance and improvements will be designed to be in keeping with surrounding environment. For example a tarmac path would not be suitable choice through a woodland habitat.</p>	   	<p>EgE E+ E✓</p>	<p>Active Travel Strategy Steering Group</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>KCC Highways Transportation and Waste</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>
EN03	Safe Travel	<p>2.10 Maintain the PROW network to support safe and easy travel.</p> <p>2.11 Work in partnership to provide new and upgraded routes in areas of evidenced need and to encourage use through well designed safe routes.</p> <p>2.12 Look to improve safety of railway and road crossings where possible, working with Highways and PROW partners.</p> <p>2.13 Maintain highway verges and unsealed unclassified highways to improve the connectivity of the PROW network.</p> <p>2.14 Identify and support policies and measures that seek to reduce traffic speed and volume where this will preserve or improve network connectivity for non-motor vehicle users.</p>	   	<p>EgE E+ E✓</p>	<p>Developers</p> <p>KCC Highways Transportation and Waste</p> <p>Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</p> <p>Kent Sport</p> <p>Kent Wildlife Trust</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Network Rail</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>
EN04	High Standard Good Design Routes	<p>2.15 Liaising with disabled user groups and organisations, use expert knowledge and experience to update existing Kent Design standards for specific user groups.</p> <p>2.16 Establish and share design standards for specialist users and incorporate these design standards where it is appropriate to do so for new and existing PROW. (A higher standard of maintenance programme will be required for such routes and can be applied when funding is available).</p> <p>2.17 Establish and share general good design standards and guidance for use for KCC and local authorities in developing the network including access to specialist engineering skills and knowledge base in the design, improvement and upgrade of PROW.</p>	   	<p>EgE E+ E✓</p>	<p>Developers</p> <p>KCC Highways Transportation and Waste</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>




EN05	Strategic Overview	<p>2.18 Looking at the available PROW network and the barriers preventing use, take a strategic overview to provide more relevant shared use routes and better links and access to facilities where needed.</p> <p>2.19 Strengthen partnership working with stakeholders and planning bodies to make better sense of the network and provide a well maintained safe, pleasant environment based on customers priorities, needs and choices.</p> <p>2.20 Work closely with District/Borough and Parish Councils to ensure PROW input into Local and Neighbourhood Plans.</p>	   	EgE E+ EV	Active Travel Strategy Steering Group Developers KCC Highways Transportation and Waste Kent Countryside Access Forum Landowners Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups
EN06	Environmental Impact and Mitigation	<p>2.21 Identify climate change impact and mitigation measures.</p> <p>2.22 Use data available on air quality to prioritise projects and schemes to help towards improving the local environment.</p> <p>2.23 Identify flood risk areas and likely impact on PROW network and put in place mitigation measures.</p>	   	EgE E+ EV	Active Travel Strategy Steering Group Developers KCC Highways Transportation and Waste Kent Countryside Access Forum Kent Environmental Strategy Kent Resilience and Emergency Planning Landowners Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups

Knowing what's out there





Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource / Limitation	Key Partners
KT01	Maintain the Record	<p>3.1 Maintain and update the county's Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way, Register of Common Land and Village Greens and their associated schedules.</p> <p>3.2 Ensure that the Definitive Map and Statement are easily accessible.</p> <p>3.3 Encourage stakeholders to submit applications that ensure that rights of way are preserved prior to legislative changes which are due to come into force on 1 January 2026.</p>	   	EV	













KT02	Better Promotion	<p>3.4 Promote the benefits of active travel to encourage this type of use and relate it to the most popular response when we asked why PROW are used (to go for a walk / run / cycle / be active / healthy)</p> <p>3.5 Promote specific types of network use, where there are suitable equestrian and cycle routes to encourage this type of use which is currently low.</p> <p>3.6 Working with key partners seek to improve promotion of PROW and cycle network, highlighting new and improved routes, shared use and higher status routes. Improve type of information available online i.e. destination, length and difficulty of route.</p>	   	EgE E+ E✓	Active Travel Strategy Steering Group Countryside Access Wardens Explore Kent Health Care Providers and Professionals KCC Country Parks KCC Highways Transportation and Waste Kent Countryside Access Forum Kent Downs and High Weald AONB Kent Sport Libraries Local Schools Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups
KT03	Sustainable Tourism	<p>3.7 Help to keep spend by visitors (e.g. walkers and cyclists) in the local and rural areas through linkages with local businesses, thereby supporting Kent's small business sector.</p> <p>3.8 Develop access which does not conflict with nature conservation interest and support mitigation measures which may require recreational pressure to be diverted from sensitive sites.</p> <p>3.9 Provide information to help support community led tourism.</p> <p>3.10 Increase length of stay through packaging, linking and developing new products (e.g. new routes or new promoted routes). Promote the resource widely to target short break audiences.</p>	   	EgE E+ E✓	Explore Kent KCC Country Parks Kent Countryside Access Forum Kent Downs and High Weald AONB Libraries Local Businesses Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups Visit Kent
KT04	A Strong Brand for Kent (Encouraging visits to Kent)	<p>3.11 Use PROW and countryside access to strengthen <i>Kent – The Garden of England</i> brand of Kent as a whole and in local areas.</p> <p>3.12 Maintain primary promoted routes to a high standard to safeguard Kent's high-quality reputation for countryside access.</p> <p>3.13 Developing new products (e.g. new routes or new promoted routes) taking a strategic view of Kent's needs and markets.</p>	   	EgE E+ E✓	Explore Kent KCC Country Parks Kent Countryside Access Forum Kent Downs and High Weald AONB Libraries Local Businesses Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups Visit Kent

KT05	Promotion of National Trails	<p>3.14 Establish trail partnership for England Coast Path.</p> <p>3.15 Promote National Trails, North Downs Way and England Coast Path as visitor destinations.</p> <p>3.16 Using external funding Improve National Trail branded signage.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ £V	<p>Explore Kent</p> <p>KCC Country Parks</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</p> <p>Libraries</p> <p>Local Businesses</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p> <p>Visit Kent</p>
KT06	Grow New Markets	<p>3.17 Improving priority routes which facilitate horse riding, cycling and walking for more targeted tourist leisure and recreational use.</p> <p>3.18 Support development of growing sectors such as adventure sports and active leisure.</p> <p>3.19 Create bespoke and “off the peg” walking itineraries for domestic and overseas markets. Promote the Kent Countryside North Downs Way as a viable day, short break or rural tourism destination.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ £V	<p>Explore Kent</p> <p>KCC Country Parks</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</p> <p>Libraries</p> <p>Local Businesses</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p> <p>Visit Kent</p>
KT07	More Accessible Information / Increasing Knowledge & Confidence	<p>3.20 Tailor information to reach the widest range of customers (online, phone apps, maps and guides), including specific groups, young to old age groups and visually impaired and disabled user groups.</p> <p>3.21 Reach specific groups that lack confidence and knowledge of PROW such as the non-users, under-represented age groups and those that indicate they have a disability.</p> <p>3.22 Target approach to reach PROW non -users, improving accessibility of information to spark interest in walking / cycling and horse riding, increase knowledge and confidence to encourage use.</p> <p>3.23 Make information more accessible for BAME groups and ensure promotional material will be appropriately targeted to BAME groups and provided in alternative formats and languages as necessary.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ £V	<p>The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award</p> <p>Explore Kent</p> <p>KCC Country Parks</p> <p>KCC Youth Services</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</p> <p>Libraries</p> <p>Local Businesses</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p> <p>Visit Kent</p>





KT08	Keep Communication Open	<p>3.24 Retain community involvement as a key element of service delivery.</p> <p>3.25 Liaise with planning authorities and developers, look at key development areas and potential gains to the network specific to each group.</p> <p>3.26 Provide updates about specific improvements to user groups.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ £√	<p>Explore Kent</p> <p>KCC Country Parks</p> <p>KCC Youth Services</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</p> <p>Libraries</p> <p>Local Businesses</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p> <p>Visit Kent</p>
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Well-maintained network

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource / Limitation	Key Partners
MN01	Better Network for Leisure and Daily Use	<p>4.1 Further improve the performance of the vegetation clearance contract across the county. (A higher standard of maintenance will be required for higher priority routes, which can be applied when funding is available).</p> <p>4.2 Work with local authorities and volunteers to target activity to improve the amenity of urban routes, remove litter, graffiti and dog fouling which acts as barrier to use.</p> <p>4.3 Target surface maintenance programmes to encourage the use of PROW for daily walking, cycling, riding especially in urban areas and for short journeys. Prioritise those routes particularly suited to wider use of the network.</p> <p>4.4 Improve general fingerpost and waymarking maintenance to encourage use and build confidence, prioritising areas with high leisure use. Promote and provide better signed circular routes to increase confidence in wider use.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ £√	<p>Contractors</p> <p>Countryside Access Wardens</p> <p>KCC Country Parks</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>





MN02	A Strong Brand for Kent (Priority routes include promoted routes and links to key facilities)	4.5 Maintain National Trails, trail corridors and promoted routes to a high standard to safeguard Kent's high-quality reputation in countryside access. 4.6 Maintain high priority routes to facilitate horse riding, cycling and walking for more targeted tourist leisure and recreational use.	   	Eg£ £+ £V	Explore Kent KCC Country Parks Kent Countryside Access Forum Kent Downs and High Weald AONB Libraries Local Businesses Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups Visit Kent
MN03	PROW Asset Management Plan	4.7 Use the PROW Asset Management Plan approach to make informed decisions for programme and project delivery. 4.8 Annually review and update the PROW Asset Management Plan throughout the 10 year plan, reflecting network and structure inspections and public reports.	   	£V	
MN04	The Intelligent Investment Tool	4.9 Use the Intelligent Investment Tool, a simple cost benefit analysis approach to make informed decisions for programme and project delivery. 4.10 Annually review and update the Intelligent Investment Tool throughout the 10 year plan.	   	£V	

Rights with responsibilities









Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource / Limitation	Key Partners
RR01	Provide Advice on PROW Network	5.1 Provide advice and guidance to landowners. 5.2 Liaise with Planning Authorities and Parish Councils to provide advice on Local Plans and the inclusion of PROW improvement projects and provision in Neighbourhood Plans. 5.3 Attend meetings and workshops for large developments getting PROW input into the overall site design at early stage. 5.4 Provide advice on planning applications. 5.6 Advise on, and, where appropriate, progress orders to amend the PROW network in the interest of the public and or the landowner.	   	Eg£ £+ £V	Country, Land and Business Association Developers KCC Highways Transportation and Waste Kent Countryside Access Forum Landowners Land Managers National Farmers Union Parish Councils Planning Authorities User and Interest Groups

RR02	Negotiate Improvements	<p>5.7 Work with landowners to deliver improvements to the PROW network to increase accessibility and encourage active travel and active recreation, leisure use and the local economy.</p> <p>5.8 Secure any opportunities that arise from changes to the regime of agricultural and land management subsidies.</p>	   	<p>EgE</p> <p>E+</p> <p>E✓</p>	<p>Country, Land and Business Association</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Land Managers</p> <p>National Farmers Union</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>
RR03	Compliance	5.9 Work with landowners to ensure higher levels of compliance with their obligations in respect of PROW. Take enforcement action where required to ensure PROW is open and available to the public.	  	<p>E+</p> <p>E✓</p>	<p>Country, Land and Business Association</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Land Managers</p> <p>National Farmers Union</p>
RR04	Increase Accessibility of the PROW Network	<p>5.10 Continue to uphold our policy of least restrictive access.</p> <p>5.11 Utilise new data showing how many stiles are present on each route to target removal for the greatest impact.</p> <p>5.12 Seek to reduce the number of barriers to use such as steps and narrow gates.</p>	   	<p>E+</p> <p>E✓</p>	<p>Country, Land and Business Association</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Land Managers</p> <p>National Farmers Union</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>
RR05	Promote Responsible Use	<p>5.13 Working with key partners to prevent conflict between different user groups.</p> <p>5.14 Work towards and support responsible use of the network to address local issues such as anti-social behaviour and dog fouling.</p> <p>5.15 Support measures designed to prevent or reduce anti-social and criminal behaviour while preserving public access.</p> <p>5.16 Working with stakeholders to minimise impact of use on sensitive areas i.e. SSSI and scheduled monuments.</p>	   	<p>E✓</p>	<p>All Partners</p>

Efficient delivery

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource / Limitation	Key Partners
ED01	Volunteers	<p>6.1 Continue to develop the Countryside Wardens Scheme expanding the roles of individual wardens.</p> <p>6.2 Link with Sustrans Rangers to ensure that the cycling network is adequately covered.</p> <p>6.3 Continue to develop volunteer programmes that support the delivery of the objectives of the ROWIP.</p>	   	<p>EgE</p> <p>E+</p> <p>E✓</p>	<p>Countryside Access Wardens</p> <p>Explore Kent</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Land Managers</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>

ED02	Improved Customer Service	<p>6.4 Through feedback identify improvements relating to customer service.</p> <p>6.5 Deliver the needs of customers through developing new routes and improvements in areas of demand using data from CAMS and MOSAIC.</p> <p>6.6 Continue to make improvements to reporting system in line with customer requests identified through review process.</p> <p>6.7 Provide the customer with a range of methods of reporting an issue to the appropriate body.</p>	 	EV	<p>Countryside Access Wardens</p> <p>Explore Kent</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>
ED03	Increase Awareness of ROWIP	6.8 Raise awareness of the ROWIP to customers, non- users of the network and stakeholders.	   	EV	All Partners
ED04	Working in Partnership	<p>6.9 Strengthen partnership working with key stakeholders including land managers, planning bodies, local authorities and Parish Councils to make better sense of the network and provide a well maintained safe, pleasant environment.</p> <p>6.10 Work in partnership with neighbouring County Councils' to ensure cross county boundary improvement projects take place where they provide benefits to the local communities.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ EV	All Partners
ED05	PROW Network Links to Encourage Sustainable Travel	<p>6.11 Utilise the available transport information to make informed decisions when responding to planning applications and developing green infrastructure for growth areas.</p> <p>6.12 Establish potential links to the highway network. Make information available to Officers to assist with making informed decisions on planning applications and other projects.</p> <p>6.13 Use fragmentation analysis to identify where higher status routes link to quieter, less well used roads to improve network connectivity.</p> <p>6.14 Establish potential links on road verges, where quieter roads are not available.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ EV	All Partners
ED06	Programme and Project Assessment	<p>6.15 Consider various data tools and data sets when assessing programmes and projects and when responding to development consultations. Including ORVal Welfare Value, Physical Activity Data Tool.</p> <p>6.16 In identifying programmes and projects that deliver the objectives of this plan, design will, where feasible include targets that are measurable.</p>	   	Eg£ £+ EV	

ED07	Secure Additional Funding	<p>6.16 Seek to maintain and improve the delivery of the PROW and Access Service through charging for activity where admissible.</p> <p>6.17 Seek additional funding to maintain the current network and deliver targeted improvements to routes in line with the ROWIP.</p> <p>6.18 Seek opportunities to work jointly to secure funding for key promoted routes, National and International trails.</p>	   	<p>£g£ £+</p>	<p>Active Travel Strategy Steering Group</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Explore Kent</p> <p>KCC Country Parks</p> <p>KCC Highways Transportation and Waste</p> <p>Kent Countryside Access Forum</p> <p>Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</p> <p>Local Businesses</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Planning Authorities</p> <p>User and Interest Groups</p>
ED08	Operational Policy	<p>6.19 Review operational policies and priorities in light of the adopted policies and objectives in this plan.</p> <p>6.20 Periodically review operational policies in response to legislative change.</p> <p>6.21 Provide PROW Officers and volunteers with the training necessary to ensure effective delivery of PROW operations.</p>	   	<p>£g£ £+ £√</p>	

Glossary

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BOAT	Byway Open To All Traffic
CAMS	Countryside Access Management System
CAW	Countryside Access Warden
CROW	Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
DH	Department of Health
DMS	Definitive Map and Statement
ECP	England Coast Path
EH	English Heritage
FC	Forestry Commission
KCAF	Kent Countryside Access Forum
KCC	Kent County Council
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MENE	The Natural England Monitoring Engagement with the Natural Environment
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOSAIC	Mosaic is Experian's powerful cross-channel consumer classification designed to help understand the demographics, lifestyles, preferences and behaviour of the UK adult population in great detail
NDW	North Downs Way
NE	Natural England
NHS	National Health Service
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
NT	National Trust
ONS	Office for National Statistics
ORVal	Outdoor Recreation Valuation tool
PROW	Public Rights of Way
ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
WHI	Walk for Health Initiative

Stakeholders, User and Interest Groups

The list below includes user and interest groups (this is by no means a complete list).

AUK	Age UK
BHS	British Horse Society
BDS	British Driving Society – representative body for carriage driving
CLBA	Country Land and Business Association
CP	Cycling Projects (the national inclusive cycling charity)
CUK	Cycling UK
DR	Disabled Ramblers
KAB	Kent Association for the Blind
KCAF	Kent Countryside Access Forum
KWT	Kent Wildlife Trust
LARA	Motorised Organisations' Land Access and Recreation Association
OSS	Open Spaces Society
NFU	National Farmers Union
RA	Ramblers
SE	Sport England
SUSTRANS	Sustainable Transport Charity
TRF	Trail Riders Fellowship
U3A	Groups University of the Third Age
WT	Woodland Trust
WW	Wheels for Wellbeing

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Photos: EXPLORE KENT



EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Acceptance of delegations of Highways Act Powers from District Councils

Responsible Officer

Graham Rusling - GT GC

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Tom Marchant - GT GC

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

Acceptance of the delegation of Highways Act 1980 s118ZA and 119ZA powers from District Councils

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

GC/SDP/ Public Rights of Way and Access Service

Responsible Head of Service

Tom Marchant - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

A key decision that will permit the Public Rights of Way and Access Service to accept the delegation of Highways Act 1980 section 118ZA and 119ZA powers from District Councils on the introduction of these new powers.

The aim is to :

- a. secure economies of scale in terms of expertise, knowledge and meeting the ancillary requirements of the new provisions
- b. remove the burden the function would place on Districts
- c. ensure greater consistency in the delivery of the function
- d. it may mitigate potentially adverse financial/ resource impacts resulting from poor proposals or poorly drafted orders.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Not Applicable
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
The decision relates to the administration of changes to primary legislation to be introduced by Government. Consultation with stakeholders took place as part of the Parliamentary processes through which the legislation was introduced.
While the public path orders orders that may be made in consequence of the legislative changes may impact on stakeholders and those with protected characteristics they are subject to separate consultation.
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff No
Residents/Communities/Citizens Residents/communities/citizens
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
No. Note: If Question 17 is "No", Question 18 should state "none identified" when submission goes for approval
Details of Positive Impacts
The decision is entirely neutral. There are no negative or positive impacts.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No. Note: If Question 19a is "No", Questions 19b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Completed
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Completed
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No. Note: If Question 20a is "No", Questions 20b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Completed

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No. Note: If Question 21a is "No", Questions 21b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Completed
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No. Note: If Question 22a is "No", Questions 22b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Completed
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No. Note: If Question 23a is "No", Questions 23b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Race
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Completed
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No. Note: If Question 24a is "No", Questions 24b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Completed
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No. Note: If Question 25a is "No", Questions 25b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed

26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No. Note: If Question 26a is "No", Questions 26b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No. Note: If Question 27a is "No", Questions 27b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No. Note: If Question 28a is "No", Questions 28b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed

From: **Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services**

Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 11 September 2024

Subject: Playground Early Years Programme

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: n/a

Future Pathway of report: n/a

Electoral Division: Countywide

Summary: Playground is a pioneering programme of high-quality creative engagement for babies and young children delivered by the Culture and Creative Economy Service (CCES) and Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) working in partnership.

Playground recognises that the first years of life are crucially important for the development of the child's brain, and that the first three years are the most critical in having lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed at school and in life. Playground aims to ensure that all young children and their families in Kent can realise and share their own creativity.

This paper summarises the key achievements of Playground's busy and inspiring period of activity.

Recommendation(s): The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note and endorse this report and make comments to the Cabinet Member.

1. Background and Strategic Context

- 1.1 Playground achieved the prestigious status of National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) with Arts Council England (ACE) in April 2023. An NPO is a cultural organisation considered to be of national strategic significance and the status is held by organisations such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, Jasmin Vardimon Company, and Turner Contemporary. There are 16 Kent based organisations in the current Arts Council National Portfolio.
- 1.2 Playground embodies a shared commitment to the United Nations Rights of the Child Article 31 - *All children have the right to access high quality cultural activity*. Playground recognises that this should start from the earliest years when a child is developing most quickly so that the benefits of cultural engagement can have a lasting positive effect on a child's development. [Scientific evidence](#) shows that engagement in cultural activities at this early age gives young people better chances later in life as described in [The Early Years](#)

[Healthy Development Review Report](#). Playground is designed to make a vital early intervention in supporting children to get the best start in life.

“Yes, so the first few times he came he really didn’t want to engage he was a bit shy and quiet and quite reserved and gradually as we have come over the few weeks it’s just built up his confidence. He ends a session by running around bouncing and he’s so happy afterwards, his mood completely changes. This morning before we actually came, he’d had multiple meltdowns at home and then to see him come here he’s a completely different child. It’s just amazing.” Parent attending Family Playground with two young children.

- 1.3 Inspired by the Starcatchers model in Scotland, which is recognised by the Scottish government and across the national and international cultural sector as an exceptional model of innovative early years creative engagement, Playground is a high-quality baby and child-led creative programme that seeks to engage young children and their families, and to develop artists and library staff with specialist skills and understanding of early childhood development.
- 1.4 Sessions comprise of artist led sensory activities which are shaped individually in each session in response to the reactions of the babies and children.
- 1.5 Libraries are an ideal venue for Playground, with their experience of established early years programming and being welcoming spaces that families from all backgrounds are comfortable to access. Playground underpins LRA Ambitions of Enriching People's Lives and Connecting Communities by supporting the service to continue to be very focused on the local community as well as providing a way for the service to enable everyone to access cultural activity in all its forms. At the heart of Playground delivery is transformative activity that supports early development, growth of engagement and social skills which forms a further new way LRA and CCES can support enabling children to get the best start in life.

“It is absolutely brilliant; I really look forward to the session and make a special effort to make myself and baby available. I’ve never seen my little boy so happy. The artists are fantastic, so welcoming and kind and excellent at what they do. When the sessions finish, we really miss them. They have been invaluable. I was even planning my return to work around the days they playground is run as I know how beneficial it is for my little one.”

Playground Parent

- 1.6 Playground supports the ambitions of the Kent Cultural Strategy contributing to its aim to create a place *“where culture becomes a part of everyday life with more people engaging with, experiencing and being inspired by excellent art”*; and delivers on the strategic aim that children are entitled to high quality cultural experiences from the very earliest age.
- 1.7 Playground aligns with Let’s Create, Arts Council England’s Strategy 2020-2030, which has a strong focus on the value and strength of work with, by and for babies and young children.

- 1.8 Liz Moran, previously Director of Arts and Culture at University of Kent is Playground's Creative Director.

2. Playground Progress to Date

- 2.1 Playground's first year as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) with Arts Council England (ACE) has seen creative engagement with, by and for families with young children develop at a rapid pace.



- 2.2 A range of national and international partners including from Scotland, Finland and Norway are now in place, all with a shared vision and ambition to ensuring all young children have access to the highest quality of creative activity to share with their family.

- 2.3 To ensure Playground engages with and can be accessed by the widest and most diverse range of children and families, alongside our work in twelve libraries across Kent, we offer Playground in three Family Hubs, refugee settings, a diverse range of summer festivals across the county, and, through investment from Rose Bruford College, we work with children with additional needs in Wyvern School and 3 MASH Centres (Multi-Agency Specialist Hubs).

"The security lady said she'd never ever seen the mums and dads like that - together with the children, playful and laughing. It really was joyful. She said, which we found interesting, it's the music, the drums and making music together and remembering together if that makes sense. But to see some of the dads leaping around with their daughters so carefree was an eye opener."
Casey – Playground Artist after a Playground session with Afghan refugee families

- 2.4 The number of Playground artists has increased from 12 to 21 all of whom are actively engaged in a professional development programme developing skills

and understanding of engaging young children and the adults who accompany them. The impact of this is evident from the number of our artists who have successfully secured Arts Council investment to create their own work for early years and gained work with other early years creative companies, whilst continuing to work as part of our Playground team.

- 2.5 Our first “Playground Presents” event was a sound and Light installation (First Light) created for babies by Playground Lead Artist Daniel Naddafy. This took place in Dartford and Gravesend Libraries.

“Thank you for bringing something different and artistic to Gravesend. My baby really enjoyed the experience, and it was a lovely thing for us to do together.”
Parent after attending First Light

- 2.6 Arts Council England national and regional Officers have made frequent visits to observe Playground and in our Annual Review the work was described as “unique and innovative”. They are impressed with the pace of Playground’s development and potential impact and influence on the wider cultural sector.
- 2.7 We take a robust approach to evaluation and work with a professional independent evaluator to assess the impact of all activity and produce comprehensive and detailed research documents that support and inform Playground’s ongoing development. Our most recent report, [Family Playground – Moments of Togetherness](#), drew on both quantitative and qualitative data, with the main focus of the evaluation being the impact on the family.
- 2.8 The evidence shows that the vast majority of parents/carers and their children thoroughly enjoy Playground, and value its welcoming atmosphere, inclusivity and accessibility. 99% of Playground families would recommend Playground to others and their descriptions of Playground are overwhelmingly positive. Words such as engaging, calming, baby led and inspiring were commonly seen as responses and reflect the ethos of Playground well.
- 2.9 As well as overwhelming positivity towards the sessions themselves, Playground is clearly having a positive impact on attitudes towards accessing art for children and babies and on creative engagement in the home. 62% of the participants reported that Playground had changed their views about creative play, and over 4 out of every 5 adults (83.3%) indicated that it had challenged them to engage with their child/children in a different way
- 2.10 The qualitative data provides a rich picture of what Playground means to families and the profound impact it has on relationships. The themes which emerged centralised around the increasing confidence of children and adults to engage in creative activities, the interactions that they experienced both within and between families, and an appreciation of the time and space that Playground provided for this. The proportion of parents/carers who engaged creatively with their children at least once per day rose from 39.6% before Playground, to 59.7% after playground. This supports more anecdotal evidence that Playground is inspiring parents/carers to participate in creative activities more frequently in the home.

- 2.11 The evidence from Playground SEND families is particularly impactful and gives an important insight into the lack of accessibility to art experienced by these families, but also the joy that Playground gives them. Central to this experience was a sense of inclusivity and belonging, and a way of understanding their relationships through creativity.

“The sessions are beautifully constructed it was really overwhelming to watch. Our interventions with children are very clinical, we rarely get the opportunity to sit back & watch the magic of a child in awe & wonder of their surroundings & experience. It is a beautiful opportunity for parents to experience their child’s joy when normally their day consists of meeting the basic care needs & trying to keep their children healthy & safe. It really should be part of every parent’s day.”

KCC Social Services observing Playground session with children with additional needs

3. Looking Forward

- 3.1 Year 2 of our NPO will see even more exciting and innovative developments with the recent launch of the Playground website www.playgroundkent.co.uk With support from Kent Family Hubs we will launch Digital Playground which will include films and podcasts enabling even more families to engage with Playground.
- 3.2 Playground Presents will develop with international work alongside work specially created by Playground artists to tour to libraries and children’s centres. The next tour will take place in November with OvO, a version of The Ugly Duckling from internationally renowned Norwegian dance company Dybwik Dans.
- 3.3 Sector leadership is a key element of the development of Playground. In November 2024 we will bring together local, national and international organisations and individuals who share our commitment and ambition to ensuring equality of access with, by and for very young children and their families to the highest quality of creative activity. This will include exploring how we might collaborate with the aim to influence future early years policy and practice.
- 3.4 A priority is to secure investment for an action research project to evidence the powerful and transformational impact Playground has on families with babies and young children with additional needs. We plan to submit a major project bid to Arts Council to work with families, teachers, artists and strategic partners to create a scalable model of practice igniting significant positive change in the quality of creative learning and engagement opportunities for all young children with additional needs.
- 3.5 We plan to deliver a Playground early years festival in 2026 celebrating the creativity of babies, young children and their families. This will feature a programme of the most inspiring national and international work created for young children and their families. The festival will include an event bringing families, academics, early years practitioners, artists and decision makers

together to increase understanding and awareness of the need for all young children to have access to the highest quality of creative activity. Ultimately the event will aim to ignite positive and powerful change to make this ambition a reality.

- 3.6 Work will shortly begin to develop a five-year strategy and business plan for the future development and sustainability of Playground to inform our next bid for National Portfolio Funding from 2027.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Playground achieved National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status with Arts Council England in April 2023 providing annual funding of £285,290 (total £885,270) until March 2026. The NPO application includes an additional £20,000 contribution from each of CCES and LRA budgets. Governance of the programme is contained within the revenue budgets of CCES and LRA. ACE is extending the 2023/26 NPO programme for an additional year until March 2027 through a non competitive application process launching in September 2024. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

5. Data Protection

- 5.1 The existing privacy notice covers the operation of the service and no new data protection issues arise due to the contents of this paper.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 There is an ongoing [Equality Impact Assessment](#) that covers the programme which is regularly reviewed and widely contributed to. An equality action plan derived from the mitigations identified is an important tool that artists, staff and partners can refer to ensuring Playground is fully inclusive and accessible.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This report has highlighted some of the key successes and positive developmental outcomes that Playground has achieved in its first year as an NPO as well as the ambitious and exciting plans in place for the next period, all delivered through Arts Council funding.
- 7.2 Playground will continue to provide an innovative, unique and high quality service to give early years children the best start in life. Through the development of a five year strategy, we will explore ways to sustain and develop delivery beyond the life of the current Arts Council NPO funding. This includes an application to the NPO extension year 2026/27 and to the next round of NPO funding from 2027.

8. Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note and endorse this report and make comments to the Cabinet Member.

9. Contact details

Report Author:

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Relevant Directors:

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From: Derek Murphy - Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee –
11 September 2024

Decision No: 24/00082

Subject: Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Countywide

Summary: The County Council has a statutory responsibility to plan for future minerals supply and waste management within Kent via a Mineral and Waste Local Plan and associated Minerals Sites Plan.

Legislation requires local plan making work to be undertaken in accordance with a published timetable or 'Development Scheme'. The most recent timetable for updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) and the Kent Mineral Sites Plan (MSP) is set out in the Council's 'Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme' (LDS), November 2023. A change to the timetable related to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan work is now proposed for the following reasons:

- (i) The independent examination hearing for the KMWLP commenced in September and this impacts upon potential adoption dates;
- (ii) To meet the examination hearing deadlines for the KMWLP, staff resources have had to be focussed on activities associated with the KMWLP rather than the Mineral Sites Plan (MSP); and
- (iii) Evidence gathering and assessment in relation to the MSP work is currently incomplete. Work is ongoing to test whether the evidence is robust and consistent with national planning policy which will determine whether a new quarry site should be allocated or not.

Recommendations

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development who is responsible for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan on the proposed Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme 2024 (as set out in Appendix 1) that concerns:

- The review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039
- The review of the Minerals Sites Plan

The proposed record of decision is appended as Appendix A.

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 As the minerals and waste planning authority for Kent, the County Council is required to prepare and maintain planning policy concerning waste management and minerals supply in the County. The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 was adopted by the Council in July 2016 and sets out the strategy and policy framework for minerals and waste development in Kent which includes future capacity and supply requirements.
- 1.2 The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan, together with the Kent Mineral Sites Plan, forms part of the Development Plan for Kent which is key, both for the determination of planning applications for minerals and waste development by the County Council, and applications relating to other development that may affect minerals and waste development or other aspects determined by the District and Borough Councils in Kent.
- 1.3 The Plan preparation process needs to follow that set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated plan making regulations² as well as the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. This includes preparing, including updating, plans in accordance with a published timetable known as a Local Development Scheme. In Kent the timetable updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Kent Mineral Sites Plan is published in the 'Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme', the latest version of which was considered by Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2023 and agreed by the Cabinet Member for Environment. The responsibility for the local plan work has since transferred to the Economic Development portfolio.

Updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 1.4 Following its adoption, the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan was subject to an 'Early Partial Review' and changes resulting from this review were adopted by the Council in September 2020.
- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and legislation¹) states policies in Local Plans should be reviewed at least once every five years to assess whether they need updating and should then be updated as necessary. A review of the Vision, Strategic Objectives and policies in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan was undertaken in 2021 that concluded updates to the Plan, in response to relevant Government, policy and legislation, as well as local strategies, published since the Plan was adopted in 2016, were necessary. The changes to policy and legislation

¹ Regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

have included the following:

- Updates to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023 and associated Planning Practice Guidance;
- legislation and policy concerning the need to adapt to, and mitigate, climate change and associated low carbon growth; and,
- policy and legislation concerned with achieving a circular economy³ where more waste is prevented or reused.

- 1.6 In line with the legislation and guidance, updates to the Plan have been proposed and undergone consultation with communities and relevant stakeholders. Subsequently the proposed updated Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by a Government-appointed inspector in May 2024.
- 1.7 For the updated Plan to be adopted the Inspector must first find that the Plan is 'sound' and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory plan making process. The examination of the updated KMWLP is now ongoing and the resources of the Planning Policy team are now focused on responding to the Inspector's questions and preparing for, and attending public hearings programmed for 10 to 19 September 2024.
- 1.8 The changes to the currently adopted Plan are all shown clearly in a tracked change version of the document which can be found, with all other documents submitted to the Secretary of State, in the 'examination library' within the dedicated examination website².

Kent Mineral Sites Plan

- 1.9 The current adopted Kent Mineral Sites Plan was adopted by the County Council on 10 September 2020 and identifies mineral sites and locations for mineral extraction, processing and importation that reflect the principles and strategy of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 - 2030. The minerals covered in the document are soft sand (building sand) and sharp sand and gravels. The sites allocated are:
- Chapel Farm, Lenham (soft sand)
 - Extension to Stonecastle Farm, Hadlow/Whetsted (sharp sand and gravels)
 - Moat Farm, Capel (sharp sand and gravels)
- 1.10 Updating the period of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan from 2013-30 to 2024-39 requires land to be identified, if possible, which could be developed for the extraction of hard rock to ensure the County Council meets its obligation to plan for a steady and adequate supply over the new period. This land would be identified in an update to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan.
- 1.11 The key stages involved in identifying suitable new site(s) for hard rock are follows:
- Call for Sites
 - Initial assessment of nominated sites

² <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/economic-regeneration-and-planning-policies/planning-policies/minerals-and-waste-planning-policy/kent-minerals-and-waste-local-plan-review-2024-39>

- Consultation on Site Options (Regulation 18) which allows a short list of potential sites to be identified
- Detailed technical assessment of site options on the short list, including Sustainability Appraisal. This assessment process identifies suitable sites for potential allocation in the updated Minerals Sites Plan.
- Publication of an updated Plan showing new site(s) for representations on soundness and legality.
- Independent examination

1.12 In response to the first Call for Sites exercise, land south and west of the existing Hermitage Quarry near Maidstone was initially nominated by Gallagher Aggregates (potential site operator) for extraction of hard rock and was subject to an initial (desktop) assessment of its suitability. Public consultation on the nominated site took place June and July 2023 which resulted in approximately 26,200 representations.

1.13 In light of the representations a second call for sites was undertaken but this did not yield any potential alternative sites. Detailed technical assessment on the suitability of the nominated site is now ongoing. It is important that this assessment is undertaken with due rigour in order that any decision on inclusion of the nominated sites is robust such that it would be sound at an independent examination. No decision has yet been made as the detailed technical assessment is ongoing.

2 Update to the Kent Minerals and Waste Development Scheme

2.1 In light of the need to focus resources on the examination of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan, work on the Kent Mineral Sites Plan has effectively been paused. Although some detailed technical assessment continues it will not be possible to progress the work on the Sites Plan to the timetable set out in the current Kent Minerals and Waste Development Scheme and so an update to the scheme (published timetable) is now proposed. An updated Minerals and Waste Development Scheme will also take account of the anticipated Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 examination hearing dates.

2.2 The proposed revised Scheme is included as Appendix 1 and includes the timetables set out below.

Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Changes to timetable

Stages	<i>Current</i>	Proposed
Independent Examination Hearings	<i>July 2024</i>	September 2024
Inspector's Report	<i>November 2024</i>	December 2024
Adoption	<i>February 2025</i>	March 2025

Kent Mineral Sites Plan – Changes to timetable

Key Stages	Current	Proposed
Evidence gathering including detailed technical assessment	<i>July 2023 – June 2024</i>	
Publication of draft Mineral Sites Plan for representations on soundness (Reg 19)	<i>October – November 2024</i>	June – July 2025
Submission to Secretary of State for examination	<i>February 2025</i>	October 2025
Independent Examination Hearings	<i>March-April 2025</i>	January 2026
Inspector's Report	<i>August 2025</i>	April 2026
Adoption by Council	<i>December 2025</i>	September 2026

- 2.3 The Government is currently consulting on potential changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. Amongst other matters, this proposes possible changes to the plan making process which if implemented could affect the timetable set out above. This matter will therefore need to be kept under review.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 Subject to the views of GEDCCC and the Cabinet Member agreeing the revised Kent Minerals and Waste Development Scheme, it will be published by the Council on its website. Work on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and Kent Minerals Sites Plan will proceed in accordance with the revised timetables set out above.
- 3.2 With regard to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan, if the detailed technical assessment concludes that it is appropriate to allocate the Hermitage Quarry extension, County Council would be asked to agree any proposal for its allocation, prior to a draft updated Sites Plan being published for representations on soundness and legality in Summer 2025.
- 3.3 With regard to the Kent Mineral and Waste Local Plan 2024-39, subject to the Plan being found sound by the independent Inspector, County Council would be asked to adopt the Plan in Spring 2025.
- 3.4 The previous Government had proposed changes to the system used to prepare Local Plans. In a consultation on the changes, the previous Government indicated that any Local Plan submitted before 30 June 2025 would be able to progress under the existing system, meaning preparation of the KMWLP 2024-39 should be completed under this system. However, work on the Mineral Sites Plan would be affected by the changes. The new Government is currently undertaking consultation on changes to the local plan making process as part of the public consultation on a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will therefore be important to monitor any changes proposed by the new Government. The implications of any such

changes, including to the Plan timetables will be reported to this Cabinet Committee in due course.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The costs of updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Development Scheme are not significant and will be met from the existing Planning Applications Group budget.
- 4.2 It is not anticipated that the extended timetable for preparing the Kent Mineral Sites Plan will involve additional costs as additional activity is not envisaged, merely that the activity will take place over an extended timeframe. There remains the risk that publication of the Minerals Sites Plan for representations in 2025 may result in representations which require additional resources to defend the plan at the independent examination.
- 4.3 The costs of preparing the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and updating the Mineral Sites Plan will need to be met from existing KCC budgets. The majority of the costs of the Local Plan work are met from the Growth and Communities Division Planning Applications budget. The balance, mainly relating to specialist advice and the independent examination may need to be sought from a corporate reserve.
- 4.4 Implementation of the Plans will ensure the wider Kent economy continues to benefit from the management of waste and supply of minerals within its area. For example, costs of waste management and mineral supply to businesses in Kent would be higher if a Plan was not in place which does not clearly state how and where waste can be managed and minerals supplied in Kent. It would also assist in measures to address fly-tipping by providing adequate capacity and facilities to manage Kent's waste.

5 Policy Framework

- 5.1 The Kent Minerals and Waste Development Scheme does not include policy as it is a document that describes the process and timetable associated with the preparation of planning policy in Kent.
- 5.2 The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and Kent Mineral Sites Plan deliver the Council's adopted Mineral and Waste planning strategy and are important in the determination of planning applications in Kent. A Local Plan is prepared in accordance with national planning policy and guidance, whilst providing a local perspective. Mineral and waste planning policies support and facilitate sustainable growth in Kent's economy. They also support the protection and creation of a high-quality environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs.
- 5.3 Updating minerals and waste planning policies takes account of changes to the County Council's corporate policies since July 2016 which are concerned with the

way in which land is developed in Kent. These include the Kent Environment Strategy, the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, Kent's Plan Bee pollinator action plan and Kent Plan Tree.

- 5.4 Updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Kent Mineral Sites Plan supports the County Council's strategy, Framing Kent's Future 2022-2026. In particular, the KMWLP helps facilitate the key strategic priorities of an Environmental Step Change and Infrastructure for Communities by supporting the delivery of sustainable growth in Kent's economy. The Plans recognise Kent's environment as a core asset and seeks to adapt to, and mitigate, the impacts of climate change and assist in the delivery of net zero objectives. The proposed planning strategy will reflect recent changes to the environmental agenda including mitigation and adaptation to Climate Change and Kent's Climate Change Statement, the Circular Economy, biodiversity and measures to support covid recovery.
- 5.5 The Local Plan work and the associated Local Development Scheme is a statutory requirement as part of the Council's town planning responsibilities. The local plan work has been carried out in accordance with Objective 3 of Securing Kent's Future which seeks to ensure that the Council prioritises its Best Value Statutory obligations.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The County Council has a legal obligation under the Town and Country Planning legislation to prepare a statutory Development Plan. The County Council is also required by national planning policy to ensure that local plans promote sustainable minerals and waste development. Updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Kent Mineral Sites Plan will ensure that minerals and waste development in Kent continues to occur in line with national planning policy.
- 6.2 There is an expectation by Government (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) that all planning authorities have an up-to-date local plan in place. Without an up to date adopted plan, there is a risk that the Secretary of State will step in as the plan making authority, reducing local accountability.
- 6.3 The process of updating planning policy must take place in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 which include the requirement that public consultation takes place in accordance with Local Planning Authority's Statement of Community involvement and the timetable in the Local Development Scheme.

7 Equalities Implications

- 7.1 Equality impact assessments (EQIA) have been prepared as part of updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Mineral Sites Plan and no equalities implications have been identified so far. An EQIA to accompany the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 was submitted to the Inspector as part of the Plan's evidence base.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 This report provides an update on the progress being made in preparing updated minerals and waste planning policy for Kent in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and the Kent Minerals Sites Plan. This work is necessary to meet the County Council's statutory obligations to prepare a local plan for mineral and waste management development.
- 8.2 The report outlines the next steps and notes that the timetable for updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and that for updating the Kent Minerals Sites Plan needs to be updated in light of progress being made. A revised Local Development Scheme setting out the revised timetable for the work is presented for agreement.

9 Recommendations

- 9.1 The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development who is responsible for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan on the proposed Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme 2024 (as set out in Appendix 1) that concerns:
- i. The review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039
 - ii. The review of the Minerals Sites

The proposed record of decision is appended as Appendix A

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Appendix 1: Draft Revised Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme, September 2024

Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessments

Background documents:

- [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme - November 2023](#)
- [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 - \(showing changes tracked\). This shows the changes proposed to the adopted Plan, November 2023](#)
- [Draft Kent Mineral Sites Plan including details of nominated hard rock site, May 2023](#)



Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan



Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme

September 2024



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Glossary of Terms/Abbreviations Used in the Text

Abbreviation	Explanation
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	A statutory document (referred to in legislation ¹ as the 'Authority Monitoring Report') which monitors the progress of preparation of planning documentation against the Development Scheme milestones as well as progress in meeting the objectives and implementing the policies set out in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30.
Biodiversity net gain (BNG)	Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development which means that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than they were in before development took place.
Kent Minerals and Waste Development Plan	The Kent Minerals and Waste Development Plan comprises the development plan documents that provide planning policy for minerals and waste development in Kent, currently this is the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 and the Kent Mineral Sites Plan 2020.
Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (KMWLP)	This adopted plan (July 2016) sets out the County Council's vision, objectives & spatial strategy for Minerals and Waste planning matters. It contains a statement of strategy and a set of primary policies and proposals for delivering the Core Strategy. The KMWLP was modified via an Early Partial Review (EPR) in 2020 to update the waste strategy and clarify the approach to mineral and waste safeguarding. The modified KMWLP adopted September 2020 sets the policy framework for the allocation of mineral sites and development management decisions.
Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39	The plan currently being prepared to replace the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30.
Kent Mineral Sites Plan	This adopted plan (September 2020) allocates sites in Kent that are considered suitable for mineral working, subject to planning permission.
Kent Development Plan	The portfolio of documents that together provide the policy framework for all forms of development in Kent. It currently includes the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30, the Kent Mineral Sites Plan, as well as Local Plans produced by the Kent Borough and District Councils.

¹ Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (MWLDS)	The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme is this document. The MWLDS includes a project plan setting out the County Council's programme and timetable for updating planning policy for waste and minerals development in Kent as well as associated Supplementary Planning Documents.
The Planning Inspectorate (PINS)	The Government agency responsible for programming and conducting the Independent Examination of Local Plans and for managing appeals on planning applications.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	The SCI sets out the Council's policy for involving the community and other stakeholders in the preparation and revision of the Kent Minerals and Waste Development Plan and in the development management process. The SCI is not a Local Plan.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	A formal process that analyses and evaluates the social, economic and environmental effects of a plan or programme.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	A document produced by the County Council that provides guidance on the implementation of policies in the Kent MWLP, for example in relation to minerals and waste safeguarding.

1. Introduction

1.0.1 Kent County Council, as the minerals and waste planning authority for the County Council's administrative area, must prepare and keep under review a Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (MWLDS). The MWLDS sets out a timetable for the production of the key planning documents related to minerals and waste planning policy in Kent. This September 2024 MWLDS covers the period 2024-26 and replaces the previous November 2023 Scheme.

The Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme sets out the County Council's programme for the update of key planning documents related to minerals and waste planning policy in Kent during the period 2024-2026. Under this programme the Council will:

- **Prepare the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39**
- **Review the Kent Mineral Sites Plan regarding the provision of Hard Rock**
- **Commence preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document related to Biodiversity Net Gain and waste and minerals development**

1.0.2 The County Council is committed to the new programme set out in this MWLDS. Its progress will be reviewed annually and reported through the Annual Monitoring Report. Depending on progress this scheme will be updated to reflect changes to timetables.

1.0.3 This Development Scheme has two key objectives:

- To inform the public and stakeholders of the documents that make up the planning policy framework for minerals and waste in Kent and the programme anticipated for their updating.
- To reflect the County Council's priorities and to enable work programmes to be set for preparation of the documents.

1.1 Legislative Context and Background

1.1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004² sets out the system of requirements and procedures for local development planning in England. These requirements are applicable to all Minerals and Waste Planning Authorities and form the basis for the preparation of Kent County Council's suite of minerals and waste plans and supporting documents, as described within this Development Scheme.

1.1.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) build on the 2004 statutory framework (as amended) for the preparation and

² As amended by sections 110 -113 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

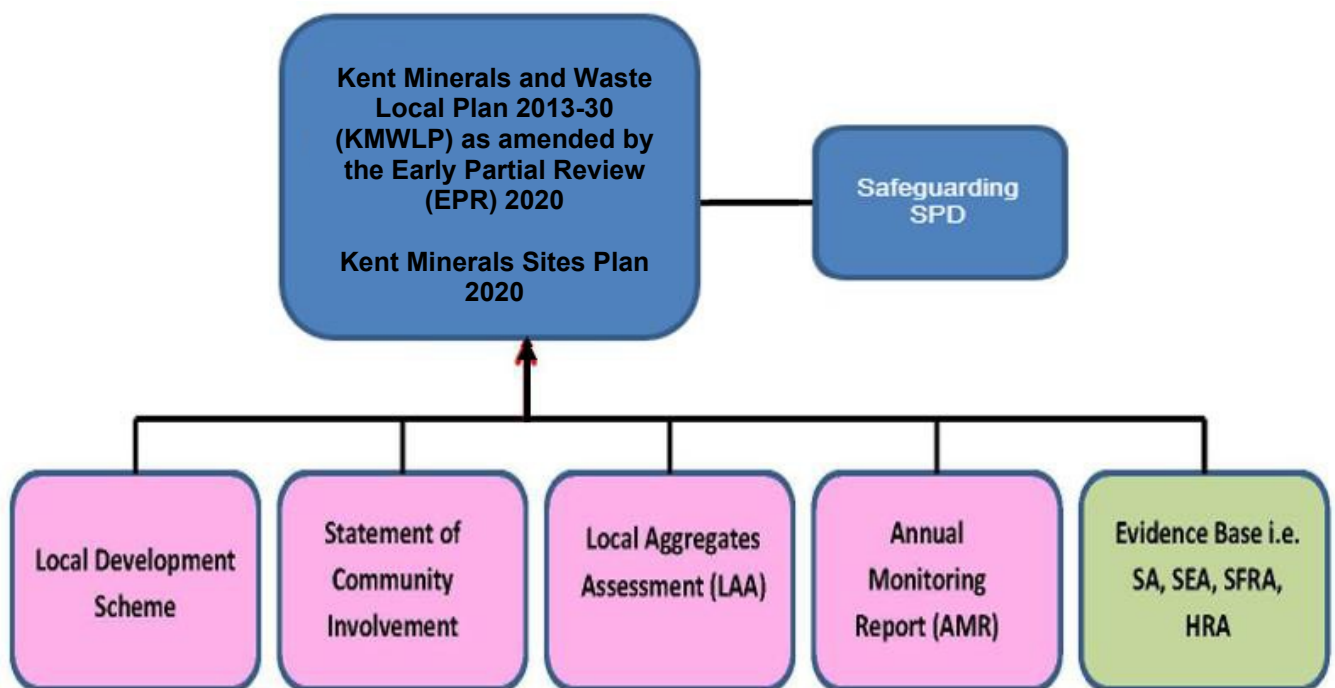
adoption of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents; the Regulations refer to Development Plan Documents as “Local Plans” since this term is believed to be more easily understood.

- 1.1.3** In 2023 parliament passed the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 that includes reforms to the planning system. Many of these reforms, including to the plan making system, will be implemented by secondary legislation which is currently awaited. These reforms will need to be addressed by Kent County Council and may require an update to the scheme for preparing planning policy in Kent though it is currently not anticipated that this will affect the development of the Plans set out in this MWLDS.

1.2 The Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme

- 1.2.1 Figure 1 below shows the relationship between the minerals and waste plans and supporting documents that currently form and underpin the adopted minerals and waste planning policy in Kent.
- 1.2.2 The Annual Monitoring Report³ and the Local Aggregates Assessment are prepared on an annual basis and monitor performance (e.g. how development has actually come forward) against Plan objectives. These monitoring documents, as well as other survey work, help inform reviews of the adopted Plans and indicate whether changes might be required.
- 1.2.3 The Annual Monitoring Report and the annual Local Aggregate Assessment also inform decision makers of changes, such as aggregate landbank levels, that may be material to the determination of planning applications and appeals, and would need to be taken into account as well as the policies of the adopted Plans.
- 1.2.4 Appendix A includes an outline programme for all the planning policy activity covered by this Scheme to August 2026.

Figure 1 - Relationship between current adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan Documents



³ The Annual Monitoring Report is produced to meet the Council’s statutory requirement to produce an ‘Authority Monitoring Report’ at least every 12 months.

2. Minerals and Waste Local Plans

2.0.1 The following describes the main Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan documents.

2.1 Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 - 2030

2.1.1 The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 is the strategic document which sets out the vision and delivery strategy for mineral provision and waste management in Kent. The Plan is formed of core strategic policies and a monitoring implementation framework, as well as development management policies against which any proposals for minerals and waste development will be assessed. The Plan makes provision for the ensuring of a ready and sustainable supply of minerals to meet construction and industrial requirements as well as the sustainable management of all wastes in Kent which includes supporting the principles of the UK Government's waste hierarchy.

2.1.2 An Early Partial Review of the Plan was undertaken that covered two key aspects of the adopted Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30. This review resulted in changes to the Plan which were adopted in September 2020 and are explained below.

Need for a Waste Sites Plan

2.1.3 The adopted 2016 KMWLP identified a shortfall in waste management capacity over the Plan period to be met, in part, by development on sites allocated in a Waste Sites Plan. Early work on a Waste Sites Plan included a reassessment of waste management requirements which showed that the identification of sites within a separate Waste Sites Plan was no longer justified. One of the main reasons for the change in position was that additional significant waste other recovery⁴ capacity had been constructed in Kent that meant there was no longer a shortfall in such capacity. To regularise the position, modifications to the KMWLP were made.

Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Matters

2.1.4 Following its adoption in 2016, implementation of the KMWLP revealed a significant ambiguity within policies DM 7 and DM 8 which was having a detrimental impact on the ability of the KMWLP to safeguard mineral resources and minerals and waste management infrastructure. Modifications to rectify this issue were made as part of the Early Partial Review in 2020.

2.1.5 The modifications to the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 meant that the remaining saved policies in the Kent Waste Local Plan (1998) were replaced.

⁴ 'Other recovery' is the recovery of waste by means other than recycling and composting often includes 'energy from waste' involving incineration.

Review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021

- 2.1.6** The National Planning Policy Framework (and legislation⁵) states policies in local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary.
- 2.1.7** Although the implementation of policies is monitored on an ongoing basis, the five yearly review is intended to establish whether any work is needed to update the policies. An update to a policy may be needed for the following reasons:
- The policy is no longer in conformity with national planning policy;
 - changes to local circumstances; such as a change in the quantum of development requirements or development of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project within the area (or nearby);
 - whether issues have arisen that may impact on the deliverability of key site allocations;
 - their appeals performance;
 - success of policies against indicators in the Development Plan as set out in the Annual Monitoring Report;
 - plan-making activity by other authorities, such as whether they have identified that they are unable to meet all their development needs;
 - significant economic changes that may impact on viability; and,
 - whether any new social, environmental or economic priorities have arisen.
- 2.1.8** As the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted in July 2016 all its policies were reviewed in 2021 (including those which were updated by the Early Partial Review).
- 2.1.9** The review concluded that revisions were needed to the Plan to address updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2018, 2019 and 2021 and associated planning practice guidance; legislation and policy concerning the need to adapt to, and mitigate climate change and associated low carbon growth; new policy relating to the management of low-level radioactive waste and policy and legislation concerned with achieving a circular economy where more waste is prevented or reused. Updates are also needed to reflect local context including the need for additional household waste management capacity, the Kent Environment Strategy and the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy.
- 2.1.10** The table below sets out the key stages for the five-yearly review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 and preparation of an updated Plan that will cover the period 2024-39.

⁵ [Regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)](#)

Review and Update of Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 - Timetable for Key Stages

Stages	Dates
<i>Evidence gathering to inform review</i>	<i>June 2020 – March 2021 (completed)</i>
<i>Consultation with key stakeholders on need for review of policies</i>	<i>January 2021 – May 2021 (completed)</i>
<i>Report outcome of review to Members including recommendations on the need to update policies</i>	<i>September - November 2021 (completed)</i>
<i>Consultation on draft updated policy (Regulation 18)</i>	<i>December 2021 – February 2022 (completed)</i>
<i>Consultation on draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2023-38 (Regulation 18)</i>	<i>October 2022 – November 2022 (completed)</i>
<i>Consultation on further proposed changes to the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Regulation 18)</i>	<i>June – July 2023 (completed)</i>
<i>Publication of draft updated policy (Regulation 19) for representations on soundness (Pre-Submission Draft)</i>	<i>Jan – Feb 2024 (completed)</i>
<i>Submission to Secretary of State</i>	<i>May 2024 (completed)</i>
Independent Examination Hearings	September 2024
Inspector's Report	December 2024
Adoption	March 2025

2.1.11 The table above has changed slightly from that published in the previous Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (November 2023). The timetable shows the consultation that took place in 2023 on a small number of further material changes to the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The timetable includes a sensible period between receipt of the Inspector's Report and adoption of the new Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039 proposed for adoption will be presented to Full Council for agreement.

2.1.12 To a certain extent, the timing of the examination hearings and receipt of the Inspector's Report are dependent on the Planning Inspectorate. Indeed, the slight change to the timetable reflects the fact that examination hearings are taking place in September 2024 (rather than July as indicated in the previous MWLDS).

2.2 Kent Mineral Sites Plan

Mineral Sites Plan

2.2.1 The current adopted Kent Mineral Sites Plan identifies mineral sites and locations for mineral extraction, processing and importation that reflect the principles and strategy of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 - 2030. The minerals covered in the document are soft sand (building sand) and sharp sand and gravels. The sites allocated are:

- Chapel Farm, Lenham (soft sand)
- Extension to Stonecastle Farm, Hadlow/Whetsted (sharp sand and gravels)
- Moat Farm, Capel (sharp sand and gravels)

2.2.2 The Kent Mineral Sites Plan was adopted by the County Council on 10 September 2020. The 2020 Mineral Sites Plan replaces any sites allocated in the following previously adopted Plans:

- Kent Minerals Local Plan: Brickearth (1986)
- Kent Minerals Local Plan Construction Aggregates (1993)
- Kent Minerals Local Plan Chalk and Clay (1997)
- Kent Minerals Local Plan Oil and Gas (1997)

2.2.3 As mentioned above, in light of the preparation of the updated Core Strategy policy to cover the period 2024 to 2039, there is now a need to investigate whether the Mineral Sites Plan can be updated to ensure sufficient sites are allocated to meet requirements for land won hard rock over this extended period.

2.2.4 The revised timetable for work relating to the Mineral Sites Plan is set out below. The changes to the November 2023 MWLDS relate to the extent of the detailed technical assessment being undertaken on a site nominated for allocation and the need for work to pause to allow resources to be focussed on the independent examination of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. If the nominated site is considered suitable for hard rock extraction, it is now anticipated that adoption would take place in July 2026.

Update of the Kent Mineral Sites Plan - Timetable for Key Stages

Stages	Dates
<i>Call for Sites</i>	<i>October - November 2022 (completed)</i>
<i>Consultation on a Site Nominated for Hard Rock (Regulation 18)</i>	<i>June - July 2023</i>
<i>Second Call for Sites</i>	<i>August - October 2023</i>
Publication of draft updated Minerals Sites Plan for representations on soundness (Regulation 19 (Pre-Submission Draft))	June - July 2025
Submission to Secretary of State for Examination	October 2025

Independent Examination Hearings	January 2026
Inspector's Report	April 2026
Adoption	September 2026

2.3 Adopted Policies Maps

2.3.1 The Adopted Policies Maps illustrate the mineral and waste policies on an Ordnance Survey base. Once a Local Plan has been adopted, the County Council's policies maps including the mineral safeguarding areas and allocations should be included as part of the Local Plans maintained and adopted by borough/district planning authorities. The borough/district council maps should be updated and amended whenever a new or revised Minerals and Waste Plan is adopted.

2.4 Arrangements for the preparation of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and updates to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan

2.4.1 Arrangements for the preparation of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and updates to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan are set out in the table below.

Organisational Lead	Minerals and Waste Planning Policy Team, Growth and Communities, Kent County Council
Political Management	Decision making by Cabinet Member responsible for Minerals and Waste Local Plan matters, relevant Cabinet Committee, Cabinet and Full Council as appropriate.
Resources Required	Existing staff resources and consultancy support
Community & Stakeholder Involvement	In accordance with the Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.

3 Key Supporting Documents and Evidence Base

3.1 Annual Monitoring Report and Local Aggregates Assessment

- 3.1.1** Plan preparation progress and the implementation and effectiveness of adopted plan policies is, and will be, reviewed annually through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). Monitoring will indicate what, if any changes, need to be made and these will be incorporated into subsequent reviews of the adopted policies.
- 3.1.2** In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework states that Mineral Planning Authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates by preparing an annual Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA) based on:
- A rolling average of 10 years sales data and other relevant local information; and,
 - an assessment of all of the supply options (including marine dredged, secondary and recycled sources).
- 3.1.3** The AMR and LAA are published annually on the County Council's website⁶.

3.2 Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.2.1** The Government has set minimum standards for consultation during plan preparation prior to its submission for examination⁷. It is crucial that all interested parties, including local communities, the minerals and waste industry and environmental groups are involved in the preparation of planning documents.
- 3.2.2** Kent County Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how communities are to be involved in the preparation of Local Plan documents. The document sets the standards and opportunities for community involvement in the preparation and review of the Local Plan documents identified in this Development Scheme, as well as involvement in planning applications that the County Council determines⁸.
- 3.2.3** The current version of the SCI was adopted in August 2021. The latest SCI reflects the increased ability to consult by electronic means and includes how the County Council engages with the process of neighbourhood planning. The County Council is required to review the SCI at least every five years and so the next review will take place in 2026 unless relevant circumstances change requiring an earlier review.

⁶ Available from: [Monitoring and assessment - Kent County Council](#)

⁷ See The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

⁸ The Statement of Community Involvement can be viewed at: [Statement-of-Community-Involvement.pdf \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)

3.3 Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document

- 3.3.1** The County Council adopted an updated Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in March 2021.
- 3.3.2** The purpose of the SPD is to provide guidance on the implementation of policies in the adopted Kent MWLP in relation to minerals and waste safeguarding matters; it does not introduce new policy. The adopted policies on safeguarding prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of the mineral resources in Kent deemed of economic importance by the British Geological Survey (BGS). The Plan also safeguards minerals and waste importation and processing infrastructure (wharves, railheads and the production of secondary and recycled mineral substitute products and waste management infrastructure).
- 3.3.3** Similarly, the policies ensure that the existing minerals and waste management infrastructure in Kent is not lost to, or its use compromised by, the inappropriate proximity of non-mineral or waste developments that, by their nature, may be incompatible with their continued operation. An example could be housing development within close proximity to an existing operationally unrestricted mineral wharf.
- 3.3.4** The SPD was updated to reflect updates to the mineral and waste safeguarding policies made by the Early Partial Review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030, and to provide further guidance on their application.

3.4 Supplementary Planning Document related to Biodiversity Net Gain

- 3.4.1** The Environment Act 2021 introduces a statutory requirement for new development to achieve 'biodiversity net gain' (BNG). This new requirement is being reflected in the updated Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39. As this is such a complex area, especially when applied to the restoration of mineral workings, it is considered that a Supplementary Planning Document, or equivalent guidance⁹, should be prepared that will set out how policy requirements for BNG associated with waste and minerals development will be implemented.
- 3.4.2** Work on the Biodiversity Net Gain SPD will commence following adoption of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39. An outline timetable for its preparation is included below. The timetable and process of preparing the SPD may be affected by new legislation included in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Future updates to this MWLDS will take account of such changes.

⁹ Proposed reforms to the planning system indicate that Supplementary Planning Documents will no longer exist in their current form.

Biodiversity Net Gain SPD - Timetable for Key Stages

Stages	Dates
Text of Draft Revised SPD	<i>June – August 2025</i>
Consultation and engagement on draft SPD	<i>September – November 2025</i>
Analysis of consultation feedback with recommendations for changes to SPD	<i>December 2025 – January 2026</i>
Update SPD to prepare final for adoption	<i>February – March 2026</i>
Adoption	<i>April 2026</i>

3.5 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.5.1** The preparation of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039 and updates to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan are subject to appraisal and testing through Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA). SEA is a systematic process of identifying and addressing the environmental consequences of plans and programmes originally required by European Union directive that is in force in UK environmental law. The testing will identify any likely significant environmental effects resulting from the implementation of updated strategies, policies and proposals brought forward with the objective of promoting sustainable development.
- 3.5.2** A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was published alongside the draft updated Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan policies between December 2021 and February 2022, and a draft Sustainability Appraisal accompanied the draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan that was published between October and December 2022 and the further proposed changes published in 2023. An updated SA of the KMWLP 2024-39, which took account of comments received on the draft SA published in 2023, was published to accompany the publication of the Pre-Submission Draft KMWLP 2024-39 in early 2024. The Scoping Report sets out the scope of the SA process and is used to consult the views of the three statutory consultees on that scope, namely the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. An SA Scoping Report for the Mineral Sites Plan work was published alongside the Call for Sites and a further SA was published to support the draft updated Minerals Sites Plan that included details of the nominated site for hard rock in June/July 2023.

3.6 Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive

- 3.6.1** The purpose of Appropriate Assessment (AA) is to assess the impacts of spatial plans, which includes Local Plans, against the nature conservation objectives of any 'Habitat

site¹⁰ and to ascertain whether they would adversely affect the integrity of that site. There are a number of Habitat Sites in Kent and the County Council will, as necessary, apply Appropriate Assessment to any proposed updates to policy.

- 3.6.2** An Appropriate Assessment of the updated policies in the KMWLP has been prepared and this was published alongside the Pre-Submission Draft KMWLP 2024-2039 in early 2024.

¹⁰ European Sites are sites which are designated under The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 which in turn was amended under the Conservation of Habitat and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

4 Supporting Statement

4.1 Management and Resources

4.1.1 This scheme amends earlier schedules to reflect the current programme for the preparation of minerals and waste planning policy in Kent.

4.2 Evidence Base

4.2.1 To create a sound evidence base for the preparation the KMWLP 2024-39 and the Kent Mineral Sites Plan, relevant surveys and monitoring information are needed.

4.2.2 The evidence base consists of indicators set out in the monitoring schedule of the current adopted KMWLP. Indicators are also included within the Data Monitoring chapter of the AMR which, in summary, includes the following:

- The production of aggregates
- New mineral reserves
- Landbanks
- Safeguarding
- Sales of construction aggregates at wharves and rail depots
- Capacity of any new waste management facilities
- Waste arisings including municipal waste
- Exports and imports of waste
- Exports and imports of minerals
- Capacity for handling waste materials in Kent.

4.2.3 Other evidence base reports have been compiled to support the Kent Minerals and Waste Local 2024-39. Reports associated with the assessment of the nominated site for hard rock for allocation in the Mineral Sites Plan will be prepared.

4.3 Duty to Co-operate

4.3.1 The 'Duty to Cooperate' arising from the Localism Act 2011, applies to all Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and prescribed bodies¹¹ and requires that they must co-operate with each other to maximise effectiveness in planning for strategic cross-boundary matters in development plans.

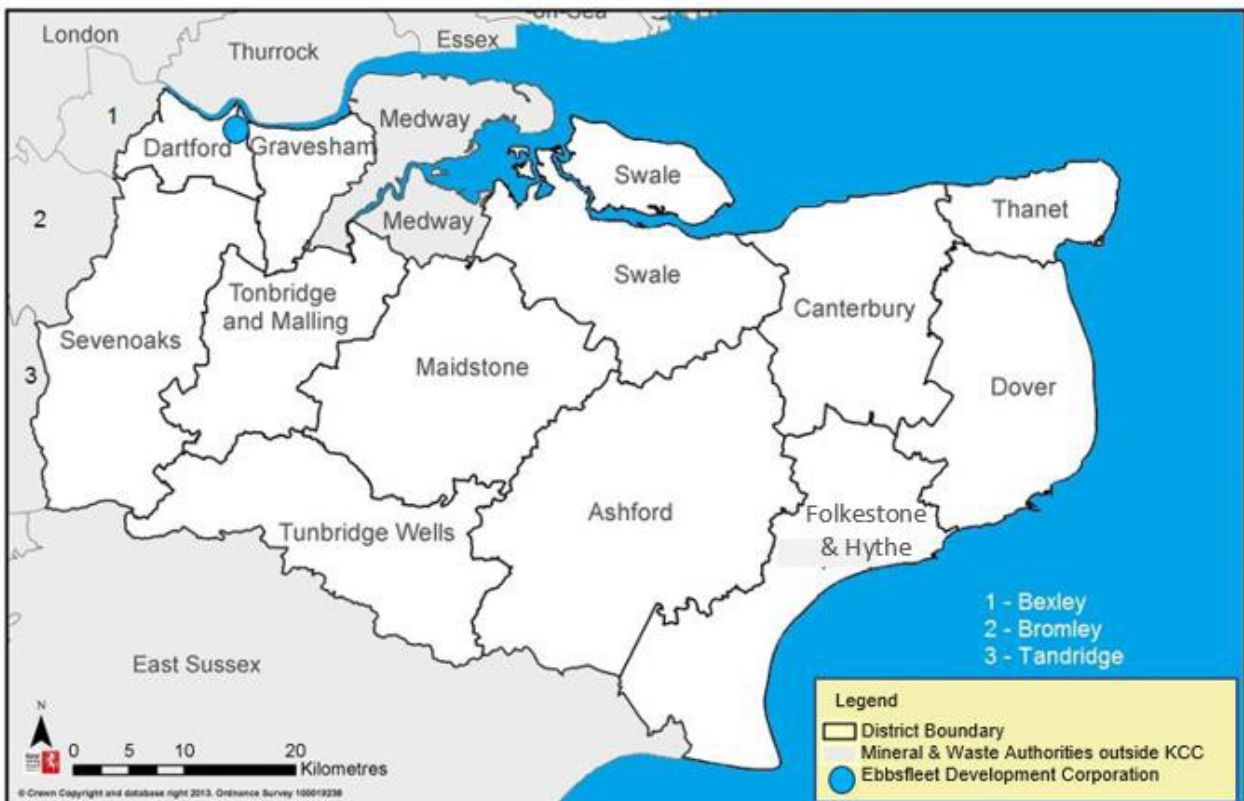
4.3.2 The duty imposed on these bodies requires that engagement should occur constructively, actively and on an on-going basis during the plan making process and that regard must be given to the activities of other authorities where these are relevant to the local planning authority in question. For Kent, this represents the boroughs/districts within the county, as well as those which may border Kent or authorities which import/export a significant amount of minerals or waste to and from

¹¹ See Regulation 4 (1) The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Kent.

- 4.3.3 Within the Kent area both Kent County Council and Medway Council are minerals and waste planning authorities. It is recognised that the strategic nature of minerals and waste planning issues may not be confined within the respective areas of each authority. We will continue our commitment to joint working and sharing of evidence with Medway Council to ensure that there is both common understanding and consistency in the development and direction of policy for the individual local plans. To this end a Statement of Common Ground between Kent County Council and Medway Council that addresses these issues has been prepared and will be updated as necessary. Statements of Common Ground on mineral and waste planning matters have also been agreed with a number of neighbouring mineral and waste planning authorities and Kent Borough and District Councils.
- 4.3.4 The Annual Monitoring Report includes information on activity undertaken by the Council as part of its Duty to Cooperate.
- 4.3.5 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 will abolish the statutory Duty to Cooperate and regulations detailing alternative arrangements are awaited. The County Council will monitor implementation of this legislation and ensure planning policy is prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements.

Figure 2 - Geographic area covered by Kent County Council



4.4 Risk Assessment

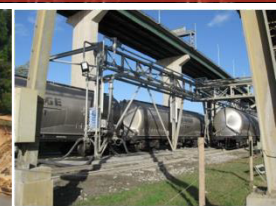
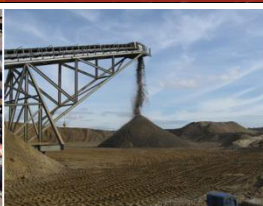
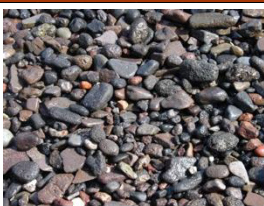
4.4.1 In preparing this Development Scheme, consideration has been given to potential risks that might impact on preparation of the Local Plan. These risks include:

- **Personnel** - Availability of experienced personnel.
- **Decision Making** - Political processes.
- **Soundness** - Working alongside key stakeholders to ensure the KMWLP is delivered in accordance with the appropriate regulations.
- **External Bodies** - The length of time it takes to receive responses from stakeholders and the nature of these responses.
- **Community Engagement** - Issues of concern and the scale of response may influence the programme.

Appendix A: Summary Programme of Planning Policy Activity

Activity	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025
Updated Minerals and Waste Development																
Review																
Publish update if required																
Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39																
<i>Prepare documentation for submission</i>																
Submission to Secretary of State		Submission														
Independent Examination Hearings						Hearings										
<i>Inspector's Report</i>									IR							
Adoption												ADOPTION				
Kent Mineral Sites Plan (Crushed Rock)																
<i>Detailed Technical Assessment</i>																
Publication of Preferred Sites (Regulation 19) for representations on soundness															Req 19	Req 19
Submission to Secretary of State																
Independent Examination Hearings																
<i>Inspector's Report (IR)</i>																
Adoption																
Biodiversity Net Gain SPD																
Text of Draft Revised SPD																
Consultation and engagement on draft SPD (allow 3 months)																
Analysis of consultation feedback with recommendations for changes to SPD																
Update SPD to prepare final for adoption																
Adoption (inc. report writing)																
Annual Monitoring Report																
Monitoring of all policies																
Draft in light of annual waste data and LAA																
Finalise taking account of monitoring of policies																
Local Aggregates Assessment																
Survey of operators inc. recycled aggregate producers																
Update data (10yr av.; landbanks etc.) in light of survey																
Update commentary in previous LAA based on revised data																
Draft for SEEA/WP																
Consultation with SEEA/WP																
Prepare final draft in light of SEEA/WP comments																
Publish Final Draft																
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)																
Review need for changes to the SCI																
Adopt updated SCI (if required) (late 2026)																

Continued on next page.



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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development

DECISION NO:

24/00082

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme Update

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development who is responsible for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan on the proposed changes to the timetable for the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme 2024 (as set out in Appendix 1) that concerns:

- The review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039
- The review of the Minerals Sites Plan

Reason(s) for decision:

Legislation requires local plan making work to be undertaken in accordance with a published timetable or 'Development Scheme'. The most recent timetable for updating the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) and the Kent Mineral Sites Plan (MSP) is set out in the Council's 'Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme' (LDS), November 2023. A change to the timetable related to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan work is now proposed for the following reasons:

- (i) The independent examination hearing for the KMWLP commenced in September and this impacts upon potential adoption dates;
- (ii) To meet the examination hearing deadlines for the KMWLP, staff resources have had to be focussed on activities associated with the KMWLP rather than the Mineral Sites Plan (MSP); and
- (iii) Evidence gathering and assessment in relation to the MSP work is currently incomplete. Work is ongoing to test whether the evidence is robust and consistent with national planning policy which will determine whether a new quarry site should be allocated or not.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by members of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 11 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The County Council has a statutory responsibility to review its Local Plan every five years and to prepare revised policy and guidance as necessary in accordance with the Plan Making Regulations.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan2024-2039

Responsible Officer

Bryan Geake - GT GC

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Sharon Thompson - GT GC

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Growth and Communities

Responsible Head of Service

Sharon Thompson - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

The County Council is required by planning legislation to produce a development plan (commonly known as a Local Plan) for the sustainable delivery of mineral resources, safeguarding of mineral and waste infrastructure and the sustainable management of waste. As the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for the County Council's administrative area, it is required to prepare and keep under review a Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (MWLDS). The MWLDS sets out a timetable for the production of key documents related to minerals and waste planning for Kent. The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) provides the strategy to 2039.

The MWLDS sets out the County Council's program for updating of key planning documents related to the minerals and waste policy in Kent during the period 2024 to 2026 period and relates to the following:

1. Prepare, examine and adopt the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39;
2. Review of the Kent Minerals Sites Plan regarding the need for hard (crushable) rock for aggregate purposes; and
3. Preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document related to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and waste and minerals development.

The current MWLDS was adopted in November 2023 and covers the 2023 to 2025 period. The County Council is committed to the new programme as set out in the August 2024 revision of the MWLDS; its progress will be reviewed annually and reported through the Authority Monitoring Report system. If need be, the Scheme will be updated to reflect further changes to timetables which may arise from the examination timetable which is informed by third party actions and the complexity of issues raised.

In discharging its plan making responsibilities, the Council must be certain that its local plan work, or the production of supplementary planning documents, does not result in any inherent adverse impacts on persons or groups with a protected characteristic. The revised Local Development Scheme does not result in any inherent adverse impacts on persons or groups with a protected characteristic.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

The community has had the opportunity to comment on the further changes to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan Review via a series of public consultation events, the last being between 13 June to the 25 July 2023. The Council used a variety of communication methods as set out in the County Council's Statement of Community Involvement. All relevant groups within the county were engaged without bias to any one definable group within the community as a whole. Accessible documents were available, and material was available in hard copy.

In addition to local communities, all relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees have been consulted; they include:

- Parish Councils
- Borough and District Council
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Historic England
- Highways England
- Health and Safety Executive,
- Health Protection Agency (Public Health England)
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Civil Aviation Authority ((Head of Aerodromes Standards Department),
- Kent Wildlife Trust
- Gardens Trust
- Ministry of Defence
- Network Rail
- The respective water authority (e.g., South East Water)
- UK Power Networks
- Sports England
- Ramblers Association

No response to the public consultation identified an adverse impact upon those with a protected characteristic.

The proposed Plan's soundness public consultation (Regulation 19) was undertaken between the 17 January and 29 February 2024, inviting comments using the same methodology. As before, no response to this public consultation identified any adverse impact upon those with a protected characteristic.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

No

Details of Positive Impacts

Not Applicable

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Applicable

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

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From: Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services

Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee 11th September 2024

Subject: 24/00083 - Old Rectory Business Centre Management Contract

Key decision Required as gross income from site in excess of £1m

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: [23/00026 - Old Rectory Management Contract](#) 16th May 2023

Future Pathway of report: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division:

- Conrad Broadley, Northfleet & Gravesend West
- Dr Lauren Sullivan, Northfleet & Gravesend West

Summary:

The Old Rectory Business Centre in Northfleet is a KCC-owned facility that has been offering high quality office space to local businesses since 2009. The current contractual arrangements with the company that manages the day-to-day operation of the centre will expire on 30 November 2024. Kent County Council is seeking to determine next steps for the facility and five options for the future of the site are outlined in this report. In the light of 'Securing Kent's Future' which requires a review of all discretionary expenditure, KCC is proposing to dispose of the asset as a going concern. This would provide a one-off capital receipt for KCC while ensuring the continued availability of in-demand workspace premises in Gravesham, the lack of which is a recognised constraint on the expansion of local small and medium sized enterprises.

Recommendation:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider, endorse or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to

(i) APPROVE and DELEGATE to the Director of Growth and Communities to extend the current contract period for a period of nine months to allow time to undertake the disposal.

(ii) AGREE that the necessary steps can be taken to dispose of the Old Rectory Business Centre in Northfleet as a going concern.

(iii) DELEGATE authority to The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

The Proposed Record of Decision is appended at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The [Old Rectory, Northfleet](#) is a KCC-owned facility, managed by an external service provider which has offered high quality office space to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) since 2009. In September 2015 the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee approved the procurement of management services at the centre, to test the market to ensure value for money. Following a Public Contract Regulations-compliant procurement process, a seven-year contract was awarded to “Basepoint Centres Ltd” in December 2015 with provision for a extension of up to four years if required. Following a recommendation from GEDCCC and a decision from the Cabinet Member for Economic Development in May 2023, the original contract was extended for one year to allow the centre to continue to provide premises and business support services to local firms and enable the KCC to undertake a review of options for its future.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Old Rectory is a Grade II* Listed building of approximately 270sq m gross (2,900 sq. ft) built in the early 16th Century. The Annexe is a modern building of approx. 673 sq. m gross (7,680sq. ft) over three floors. KCC originally purchased the property from Gravesham Borough Council in 2004 with the intention of bringing the vacant building back into viable economic use.
- 2.2 The business centre currently offers 28 furnished offices providing a minimum of 100 workstations. There is a general lack of workspace available for businesses in the county and the Old Rectory meets an established need for local SMEs in the Gravesham borough.
- 2.3 Presently the centre is almost at full occupancy (96%), with a wide variety of businesses operating from the centre, working within areas of energy efficiency, care support, IT, leisure, recycling, electrics, education, software, lighting, waste management, recruitment, drainage, counselling and surveying services. Some 25 businesses are currently based at the Old Rectory employing around 100 people. Small businesses benefit significantly from the facilities available at the Old Rectory which provides a dynamic, flexible environment in which to grow and benefit from networking and peer-to-peer support on site.
- 2.4 The current service provider is required to undertake the following tasks:
- To promote and market the business centre space, manage the sales process, and negotiate licenses. Collect and hold deposits, invoice, and recover monthly Licence fees and consumables

- To provide cost effective property management services to the whole building, including telecoms, IT, reception, cleaning, security (including the wider site), repair & maintenance, utilities, waste, health & safety/compliance, and landscaping (note that the buildings insurance is covered under a KCC bulk policy)
 - To provide proactive business centre management services to both the business centre customers, including telecoms, support and guidance where needed, deliveries, post, etc.
 - Provide a range of support and development measures for the new businesses
 - To manage the reception area providing welcome services, visitor management, information and ensure legislative requirements such as those for health and safety, DDA and equalities issues are properly addressed
- 2.5 In addition to the above, the provider is responsible for:
- All running costs, including utilities and marketing
 - Procuring and managing the core property management services, providing centre staff, and delivery of all services to the building and its occupiers
 - The licensee agreements
 - Reporting to KCC on a quarterly basis (on-site meetings)
 - Providing KCC with monthly accounts detailing the previous month's income and expenditure
- 2.6 KCC's Growth and Communities division is responsible for both the contract management and approving maintenance/improvement works at the centre, as well the financial monitoring of the Old Rectory which includes invoicing for the reimbursement of profit to KCC on an annual basis. KCC's Infrastructure division maintains responsibility for property level compliance, including asbestos management, water hygiene, electrical certificates, fire risk assessment, gas safety and lift policies.
- 2.7 The Old Rectory supports the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership's '**Kent and Medway Economic Framework**' which looks ahead to 2030 and sets out Kent's priorities to build and safeguard a prosperous economy: increasingly productive, sustainable and inclusive. The centre contributes to the ambitions and actions areas in the Framework, for example **action area 4 "Supporting the conditions for growth"** by ensuring access to the spaces that businesses need to expand and by "**embedding economic opportunity at the centre of local regeneration**" (**action area 16**). Through the Kent & Medway Business Advisory Board, KCC is regularly made aware of a general lack of start-up and grow-on space for local businesses in the county.
- 2.8 A number of local authorities in Kent & Medway currently own or are creating managed workspaces to meet growing demand in the county for flexible and hybrid workspace including Maidstone BC's Business Terrace which is currently being extended to meet the demand for grow-on space, Gravesham BC which is converting part of a shopping centre into flexible work space for local businesses and the Medway Innovation hub which is providing space for companies to use as a base in Chatham town centre.

- 2.9 Gravesham Borough Council's "Economic Development Strategy for Gravesham 2019-23" describes Gravesham's economy as being predominantly made up of small and micro-businesses across a wide range of sectors. Access to business support services, especially to start-up firms, remains important and efforts to co-ordinate this are made locally. The strategy also states that the availability of a good quality supply of employment land and premises in Gravesham is a constraint on expansion of business, jobs and the attraction of inward investment. The Old Rectory has played a key role in addressing these challenges.
- 2.10 According to a 2024 CoStar report, total industrial floorspace in Gravesham only increased by 5% over the last ten years compared to a 44% increase in Dartford and 16% in Medway. Total office floorspace across a total of 118 properties in Gravesham has not increased at all over the last ten years compared to a 3% increase in Dartford. The office vacancy rate in Gravesham is current only 1% which demonstrates that despite the rise in hybrid working, there is a constrained market and positive levels of demand for office space in the borough and across North Kent (vacancy rate of 2%).
- 2.11 Through this centre and the partnership that KCC has developed with the provider, the council maintains a direct role in backing SMEs and entrepreneurs to start-up and grow. With many businesses having to deal with current economic challenges, KCC's involvement with the centre has provided much needed stability and assurance to businesses located at The Old Rectory.

3. Options

- 3.1 Officers have considered five options. The preferred option is to **dispose of the asset and transfer its functions (as a business centre) as a going concern.**
- 3.2 As a going concern, the asset has been valued by Investment and Disposals, Property Strategy at circa £773,000 although an actual figure will only be determined by testing the market.
- 3.3 This option will also ensure continued availability of business workspace in an area of the county where there is a lack of these facilities compared to neighbouring districts reinforcing KCC's commitment to supporting economic regeneration and growth.
- 3.4 Under this option, KCC will forego an annual income stream of at least £25,000 profit from the centre per annum after management and maintenance costs are taken into account.
- 3.5 KCC would need secure interest from a buyer which would take over the ownership of the site and continue to enable local businesses to use the facility. Legal advice would need to be commissioned to establish the terms and conditions any buyer would need to adhere to in order to ensure that the site remained a centre for business rather than being converted for other uses which could put a number of local small businesses at risk.

- 3.6 If the Property is deemed suitable for disposal, KCC might wish to assess whether the property should be retained for a strategic reason or for the delivery of Council services, now or potentially in the future, for example, by providing community facilities, supporting the 'Kent & Medway Economic Framework' or facilitating regeneration or redevelopment. The loss of development potential and the loss of amenity value would also need to be considered.
- 3.7 Staff resource would be required during the current and next financial year from the property team, legal services and the Economy team to oversee and implement the disposal process, inform stakeholders and businesses about the plans and achieve an appropriate outcome for the Council and the businesses on the site.
- 3.8 The main risks associated with this option are securing market interest in taking over the facility as a going concern, ensuring that businesses on the site do not face any disruption and securing a maximum financial return for KCC for the facility.
- 3.9 Other options considered are:
- **Initiate a full Public Contracts Regulations compliant procurement exercise to provide management services to run the facility on behalf of KCC.** While The Old Rectory has benefited from the current service provider maximising potential income generation from the centre, under this option a full procurement process would permit KCC to test the market to ensure continued or better value for money and also receive an ongoing share of profits in the future. The centre could continue to operate on a full cost recovery basis, with gross estimated income from the facility around £1,700,000 over a five year period with KCC receiving in excess of £250,000 which would be used to cover the staff time required to manage the contract, maintenance and improvements to the centre as well as generating surplus income for KCC on an annual basis. However this option would not fully support the objectives of Securing Kent's Future to review all discretionary spend despite the potential for long-term income generation.
 - **Dispose of the asset.** As with the preferred option, under this option KCC would lose out on future income revenue but would receive a one-off capital receipt which could be put towards supporting the Council's financial position. An extension to the current contract would be required if this option were chosen to work through the necessary procedures, give notice to businesses on the site and assist them in finding alternative premises. Investment and Disposals, Property Strategy estimated the current value on the open market with vacant possession ranges from £830,000 to £1.1m but the reality of this figure would only be confirmed by testing the market. This option would pose a significant risk to the tenant businesses on the site which employ over 100 people and may also lead to redundancies for the site management team were the site to no longer operate as a business centre.
 - **Extend the current contract for a duration of 2-years exercising the full extension clause within the existing contract.** Gross estimated income is estimated at around £680,000 if the contract were to be extended for a further

two years, and KCC would receive in excess of £100,000 over this period to support the maintenance of the facility and management of the contract as well as some £50,000 in profit. However, this option would not permit KCC to test the market to ensure both price and best value and would not fully support Securing Kent's Future.

- **KCC to take over the management of the facility.** This option would ensure minimum disruption to existing businesses located at the centre. KCC would also receive all income generated by the facility rather than a share of the profit each year. This operation could be achievable within the forecasted income/profits generated but internal costs would need to cover all running costs, including utilities and marketing, the delivery of all services to the building and its occupiers as well as procuring and managing the core property management services and providing centre staff and is therefore not recommended at a time where all discretionary activities are under review.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The table below sets out the financial implications of each option

Option	Capital Receipt	Revenue Income	Other considerations
Dispose as a going concern	£733,000 (estimated figure – will only be confirmed by testing the market)	Nil	Loss of ongoing income for KCC and future risk to businesses on site should the facility not be managed to a high standard.
Dispose of the asset	£830,000 to £1,000,000 (estimated figures – will only be confirmed by testing the market)	Nil	Loss of workspace in area where there is a current lack compared to the rest of the county, potential for redundancies for the site management team and disruption and harm to 25 local businesses and their 100 employees
Initiate a full Public Contracts Regulations compliant procurement exercise to provide management services to run the facility on behalf of KCC	Nil	£50,000 per annum approximately	Income would be used to cover staff time to manage the contract and for maintenance as well as generating a surplus for KCC of around £25K pa
Extend the current contract for a duration of 2-years exercising the full		£100,000 gross (£50,000 pa)	Does not allow KCC to test the market for best value

extension clause within the existing contract.			
KCC to take over the management of the facility.		Approximately £83,000 pa gross	KCC would need to take on responsibility for centre staffing, maintenance, marketing costs and delivery of all services to occupants. Surpluses will generate an income stream to KCC and would not need to be shared with an operator retaining the facility on a self-financing basis and an ongoing source of income generation.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under s123 of the 1972 Local Government Act to obtain not less than best consideration in the disposal of property assets.
- 5.2 Legal advice would need to be commissioned to support the disposal process and in particular to ensure that there is a mechanism available to avoid any future changes of use and protect the businesses and the staff operating from the site

6. Equalities implications

- 6.1 In terms of the day to day operations of the site, an EqIA was published in 2023, with low/no negative impact on Protected Groups. Some sections of the Grade II* listed section of the centre are less accessible to those with a physical disability. KCC and Basepoint have made reasonable adjustments to this section of the property (without breaching the law protecting listed buildings) to minimise any negative impacts for disabled customers or employees. The assessment also identifies positive impacts on Protected Groups. The previous assessment was in 2019.
- 6.2 However, a further EqIA will need to be conducted to ensure that the disposal of the site as a going concern would not lead to any disadvantages from groups with protected characteristics. Gravesham is a borough with a high number of black and ethnic minority community residents and although KCC does not currently hold equalities data for site tenants, any change to the availability of business premises for local residents could have a negative impact.

7. Other Corporate Implications

- 7.1 The sale of the property will generate a capital receipt back for KCC to reinvest in other strategic priorities or improve the County's financial position.

8. Governance

- 8.1 Delegated authority is to be given to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the decision.
- 8.2 The Director of Growth and Communities will have delegated authority to enter into a short term contract extension with the current management company to allow time to prepare for and execute the disposal strategy for the property.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The [Old Rectory, Northfleet](#) is a KCC-owned facility, managed by an external service provider and has offered high quality office space to SMEs since 2009 offering 28 furnished offices providing a minimum of 100 workstations.
- 9.2 Presently the centre is almost at full occupancy (96%), with a wide variety of businesses operating from the centre,
- 9.3 There is a general lack of workspace available for businesses in the county and the Old Rectory meets a known need for office space for local SMEs in Gravesham borough which has less than neighbouring local authority areas.
- 9.4 The current management contracts ends on 30 November 2024. In light of Securing Kent's Future and review of discretionary spend it is recommended that the property is disposed of as a going concern which will generate a one-off capital receipt for KCC circa £733,000 whilst ensuring that workspace is retained in the county to support small and medium sized businesses in an area where there is a shortage.

10. Recommendations:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider, endorse or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to:

- (i) APPROVE and DELEGATE to the Director of Growth and Communities to extend the current contract period for a period of nine months to allow time to undertake the disposal.
- (ii) AGREE that the necessary steps can be taken to dispose of the Old Rectory Business Centre in Northfleet as a going concern.
- (iii) DELEGATE authority to The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

The Proposed Record of Decision is appended at Appendix A.

11. Background Documents

- Appendix 1 – Old Rectory Business Centre photo gallery and testimonial
- Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- Appendix B – EqIA

12. Contact details

Report Author:

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Relevant Director:

Stephanie Holt-Castle

Director for Growth and Communities

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Appendix 1 - Old Rectory Business Centre photo gallery and selection of testimonials





A selection of testimonials from
www.basepoint.co.uk/locations/northfleet/testimonials

“We have found Basepoint in Northfleet a very welcoming place to work, the unique building sets it aside from any other office space in the area. The staff are always friendly, happy to help and run the building in a professional, efficient way” - Sam Brown, Brown and Mills Entertainment UK Limited

“Very pleased with the decision to take offices with Basepoint, Northfleet. The Old Rectory is a lovely building and the Basepoint staff are very friendly, professional and helpful at every stage” - Richard Woodall, Alma Recruitment

“The centre management team give fantastic customer service and go the extra mile in ensuring that we have minimum administration to deal with which allows us to concentrate on building our business. I would have no hesitation in recommending Basepoint, Northfleet to any prospective tenants” - Graham Stoner, CWI Summits LTD

“Very impressed with the facilities and services available. A pleasant and comfortable working environment. The centre team have been exceptionally helpful in settling us in, and nothing is too much trouble for them. They would be an asset to any business” - Barry Taylor, Vision Windows Ltd

“The BASE motivation seminar I attended was brilliant. I thoroughly enjoyed all of the speakers' talks and learnt some invaluable tips going forward. Thank you for arranging an enjoyable and inspirational morning!” - Kerry Holden, Kerry Holden Interiors

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services

DECISION NO:

24/00083

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Old Rectory Business Centre Management Contract

Decision:

As Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services

- (i) APPROVE and DELEGATE to the Director of Growth and Communities to extend the current contract period for a period of nine months to allow time to undertake the disposal.
- (ii) AGREE that the necessary steps can be taken to dispose of the Old Rectory Business Centre in Northfleet as a going concern.
- (iii) DELEGATE authority to The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Old Rectory Business Centre in Northfleet is a KCC-owned facility that has been offering high quality office space to local businesses since 2009. The current contractual arrangements with the company that manages the day-to-day operation of the centre will expire on 30 November 2024. Kent County Council is seeking to determine next steps for the facility and five options for the future of the site are outlined in this report. In the light of 'Securing Kent's Future' which requires a review of all discretionary expenditure, KCC is proposing to dispose of the asset as a going concern. This would provide a one-off capital receipt for KCC while ensuring the continued availability of in-demand workspace premises in Gravesham, the lack of which is a recognised constraint on the expansion of local small and medium sized enterprises.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by members of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 11 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- **Initiate a full Public Contracts Regulations compliant procurement exercise to provide management services to run the facility on behalf of KCC.** This option would not fully support the objectives of Securing Kent's Future to review all discretionary spend despite the potential for long-term income generation.
- **Dispose of the asset.** This option would pose a significant risk to the tenant businesses on the site which employ over 100 people and may also lead to redundancies for the site management team were the site to no longer operate as a business centre.
- **Extend the current contract for a duration of 2-years.** This option would not permit KCC to

test the market to ensure both price and best value and would not fully support Securing Kent's Future.

- **KCC to take over the management of the facility.** This option would require KCC to cover all operational costs as well as procuring and managing the core property management services and providing centre staff and is therefore not recommended at a time where all discretionary activities are under review.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Old Rectory Business Centre

Responsible Officer

Mark Reeves - GT GC

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Mark Reeves/Growth, Environment and Transport

Responsible Head of Service

David Smith - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

The Old Rectory, Northfleet is a KCC owned, Grade II* listed property with a 20th Century annexe, providing high quality business space and incubator services to SME's. Currently the business centre offers 27 furnished offices. In September 2015 the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee approved the procurement of management services at the Centre. Following a full OJEU procurement process a seven-year contract was awarded to "Basepoint Centres Ltd" in December 2015. The contract commenced on 1 December 2015 and had a termination date of 30 November 2022 with an option to extend for up to 48 further months. An extension by the Director for Growth and Communities was granted in October 2022 for a further one year which will end on 30 November 2023. As of April 2023 the county council is seeking cabinet decision to continue management services at the centre.

KCC Growth and Communities is responsible for both the contract management and approving maintenance/improvement works at the centre, as well the financial monitoring of the Old Rectory which includes invoicing for the reimbursement of profit. KCC Property maintains responsibility for property level compliance, including asbestos management, water hygiene, electrical certificates, fire risk assessment, gas safety and lift policies. The contracted provider (Basepoint) is responsible for range of services including:

- The licensee agreements
- Procuring and managing the core property management services, providing centre staff, and delivery of all services to the building and its occupiers
- Providing a range of support and development measures for the new businesses
- Managing the reception area providing welcome services, visitor management, information and ensure

legislative requirements such as those for health and safety, DDA and equalities issues are properly addressed

As part of the procurement process in 2015, Basepoint was required to complete a diversity questionnaire as part of the tender process, where the potential supplier is assessed on equalities issues. In addition, Basepoint by contract is required to provide services consistent with the Kent County Council's Equality and Diversity Statement.

The businesses centre is marketed using a variety of media through relevant support organisations to ensure information about the centre and the service it provides reaches the widest variety of people. Access to physical space at the centre is offered on "first come, first served" basis. When the centre is 100% occupied, the business centre operates a waiting list, and space is offered to the business placed first on the list. The decision to issue a licence to a business is based on financial and business information submitted by the applicant to the business centre. The centre does not discriminate against any Protected Group, and is actively providing a safe and secure, managed environment to all Licensees.

The centre maintains a strict policy for Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour (including discrimination or harassment when related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010). This policy forms part of the licensee handbook and all licensees are required to comply with the Act.

The aims and objectives of this EQIA are:

- To determine if people experience direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of their Protected Characteristics because of The Old Rectory Project
- To identify any impacts (negative and positive) the service/facility may have on Protected Groups
- To identify actions to address any potential negative impacts and to advance and to foster good relationships between people with and without protected characteristics

Summary of equality impact - This Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on The Old Rectory Business Centre to consider any impact that the project/service may have on Protected Groups. It is deemed that The Old Rectory has low or no negative impact. However, some internal actions could be taken, such as collecting and monitoring equalities data from Licensees to ensure that there is no significant impact on any Protected Group and to inform The Old Rectory's marketing strategy.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Basepoint Centres PLC

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The Old Rectory Business Centre has a positive impact on the local community, increasing access to affordable office space and good quality business support for small and new businesses in the Gravesham area. The centre provides support for businesses to grow and expand, creating opportunities for job creation in the local area. The service/facility offers equal opportunities for all licensees.

The property is compliant with the Equalities ACT 2010 and provides a safe and secure environment for all licensees.

The centre is marketed using a variety of media and relevant support organisations to ensure information about the centre and the service it provides reaches the widest variety of people. Basepoint/Old Rectory involves a wide range of partners in providing a business service that benefits all. The Centre also offers “virtual office” facilities, allowing licensees (particularly those with disabilities) to work from home (or at an alternative work space) and benefit from the wide range of business services that the Old Rectory provides without having to travel/and or visit the centre.

Age - The service/facility offers equal opportunities for all. For older people, according to the ONS, nationwide there has been an increase in first-time entrepreneurs over the age of 50, and the availability of flexible business units/business services, such as is provided by The Old Rectory, is beneficial to this group.

Disability - The service/facility offers equal opportunities for all. The property is DDA compliant, and most of the centre is accessible to wheelchair users. Units are flexible spaces and can be adapted to benefit the user. Licensees provide their own furniture/equipment including any specialised ICT equipment and adapted furniture if required. The Centre offers “virtual office” facilities, allowing licensees (including those with disabilities) to work from home (or an alternative work space) and benefit from the wide range of business services that the Old Rectory provides (including a business address and telephone number, mailbox packages, telephone answering service, access to meeting rooms and drop in lounges, etc).

Gender - The service/facility offers equal opportunities for all. Basepoint organises events that are free and open to all kinds of business, offering them the opportunity to meet new people, to build on existing business relationships and to generate new leads. Professional Women in Business Networking is one such event that provides an effective platform for both women in business and professions within Gravesham and wider Kent, to meet, share ideas and experiences and to learn, as well as the opportunity to do business together.

Race - The service/facility offers equal opportunities for all. In terms of providing business support to people from all backgrounds and communities the centre maintains contacts with translation services and race business support organisations. Basepoint also advises businesses to make checks to ensure that a business name does not have any unfortunate meanings in foreign languages.

Carer’s Responsibilities and Pregnancy and Maternity - The service/facility offers equal opportunities for all. Offering equal opportunities for all. The Centre also offers “virtual office” facilities, allowing licensees (which may include people with carer’s responsibilities) to work from home and benefit from the wide range of business services that the Old Rectory provides (including a business address and telephone

number, mailbox packages, telephone answering service, access to meeting rooms and drop in lounges, etc).

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Age

For young people, to start a business legally in the UK you must be at least 16 years of age (and 18 years of age to sign some legal documents).

Mitigating Actions for Age

None

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Mark Reeves

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

Yes

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

The Old Rectory, Northfleet is a Grade II* listed property with a 20th Century annex. The building is DDA compliant, with access to all floors via a fully maintained lift, and most of the building is accessible to wheelchair users. Some sections of the Grade II* listed section of the centre are less accessible to wheelchair users and to those with a physical disability which prevents them from using stairs.

Mitigating actions for Disability

KCC and Basepoint have made reasonable adjustments to this section of the property (without breaching the law protecting listed buildings) to minimise any negative impacts for disabled customers or employees.

Responsible Officer for Disability

Mark Reeves

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not Applicable

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Yes

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No known negative impact. However, staff training could include awareness-raising regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Provider to consider offering staff training to raise awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Mark Reeves

23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

Are there negative impacts for Race
Yes
Negative impacts for Race
Northfleet has a significant Asian population - approximately 15% (over 10% for Gravesham). In Northfleet approximately 7% of the language spoken is Asian.
At this stage, it is not known if there are any licensees from this Protected group (and from the local Asian population).
There is no known negative impact relating to this group. However, the Centre is designed for use by all the community - signage at the centre is solely in English, as is the text on the website. This may have a low adverse effect on certain race groups.
Mitigating actions for Race
A review of equality data should tell us if a more targeted approach to promoting the centre/services to particular race groups is required, if it is shown that a particular group is underrepresented at the centre.
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Mark Reeves
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No

Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Simon Jones, Director of Growth Environment & Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet
Committee, 11 September 2024

Subject: Investment Advisory Board Terms of Reference and
Recruitment of Volunteer Board Members to the Investment Advisory
Board and Investment Advisory Board Sub-Groups

Key decision: 24/00081

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report provides an overview of the formal review process of the Investment Advisory Board Terms of Reference and recruitment of volunteer board members. It summarises the full recruitment process of volunteer appointments made to the Investment Advisory Board and/or one of its Sub-Groups.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development on the Investment Advisory Board Terms of Reference and the voluntary appointments made to the Boards: The Investment Advisory Board, ("IAB"), IAB Sub-Group and the IAB Debt Recovery Group as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Investment Advisory Board ("IAB), the IAB Sub-Group and the IAB Debt Recovery Group convene monthly to support the operational delivery of the Kent & Medway Business Fund, Innovation Initiative Investment Fund (i3), the Discovery Park Technology Fund (DPTIF), Kent Life Sciences Fund (KLS) and the RGF Bespoke Equity Fund (RGFBEF). The role of the board and sub groups is to make:

- Recommendations to KCC to approve, reject or defer a funding application, to include what conditions should be set if funding is approved.
- Recommendations to KCC to reprofile repayment schedules for companies in receipt of funding within the Loan Portfolio and/or make recommendations to recover loan funds where all other repayment options have been exhausted.

- 1.2 The work of The Boards are covered by a number of Key Decisions attributable to specific loan schemes, the latest being 23/00088 in conjunction with a revised set of Terms of Reference

2. Investment Advisory Board - Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The original Terms of Reference have been formally reviewed, by the KCC Office of General Counsel, officers of the GET Directorate Business Investment Team in conjunction with external support from a specialist lawyer within Bevan Brittan. This work provided a new draft set of Terms of Reference for review and subsequent approval on 16 January 2024 by the Investment Advisory Board.
- 2.2 The Terms of Reference can be found at Appendix 1. They require greater oversight of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.

3. Update on Investment Advisory Boards Composition

3.1 Recruitment, vetting process, and exit interview process of Volunteer Board Members

To support an interim recruitment exercise and thereafter an annual recruitment drive (subject to requirements for additional board members), the Business Investment Team developed a recruitment pack, consisting of:

- Advertisement
- KMBF Board Overview
- Board Member Case Study
- Application Form
- Equality Form
- Recruitment Assessment Form

- 3.1.1 A recruitment panel has also been established consisting of five existing Board Members and one KCC officer, consisting of both public and private sector existing members. The recruitment panel is supported by the Interim Head of Economy, Steve Samson and Susan Berdo, Strategic Programme Manager.
- 3.1.2 Following receipt of volunteer board member applications, these are circulated to the recruitment panel with a request to complete an assessment form. The completed assessment forms are then collated into one single response to support panel members at face-to-face interviews undertaken by the recruitment panel.
- 3.1.3 Following interview, should an appointment be made, private sector volunteer board members are provided with an appointment letter and a Consent to Credit Checks with a request to complete, sign and return. Due diligence checks are then undertaken by KCC's Data and Intelligence Team on each newly appointed member.

3.1.4 Board Members then undergo a full induction programme, which consists of the following, and its completion is monitored via a Declaration of Induction Checklist:

- Reading of the
 - Kent & Medway Business Fund Standard and KMBF Small Business Boost Guidance Notes
 - Member and Officer Code of Conduct
 - Investment Advisory Board Terms of Reference
- Observing two Board Meetings
- Attending a two-hour induction programme, where possible delivered face to face.

3.2 Exit Interviews

Included in the recruitment process, is an exit interview for departing volunteer board members, which is used to learn, review and improve the activity the Boards undertake and the administrative processes that support it.

3.3 Resignations received from Volunteer Board Members:

Quarter 3 2023-24

- IAB – Susie Warran-Smith.
- IAB Sub-Group – Greg Taylor, MHA Macintyre Hudson

Quarter 4 2023-24 (February)

- IAB – Cllr Robert Thomas
- IAB and IAB Debt Recovery Group – Ron Roser
- IAB – Simon Thomas, Contacta Systems Ltd

3.4 Interim Recruitment Exercise

A recruitment exercise took place in Quarter 4 2023-24 (January 2024), to ensure that the minimum number of total Volunteer Board Members was compliant with the Terms of Reference in place for the activity of The Boards (namely a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 20 members).

3.5 Annual Recruitment Exercise – 2024-25

To support the work of the Boards and to ensure that we have the required minimum number of board members as determined by the Terms of Reference a further recruitment exercise will commenced towards the end of Quarter 1 2024-25 and the beginning of Quarter 2 2024-25.

3.6 Appointments

Quarter 4 2023-24

- IAB – Rachel Emmerson, Kreston Reeves.
- IAB Sub-Group – Dr Kouros Kouchakpour, Metro Bank

Quarter 2 2024-25

- IAB – Alison Soltani-Davies
- IAB – Valerie Marshall

- IAB – Nick Fenton
- IAB Sub-Group – Tunde Daczo
- IAB Sub-Group – Alex Sammonds
- IAB Debt Recovery Group – Alex Sammonds

3.7 The current Board Composition can be found at Appendix 2.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 Volunteer Board Member posts attract nil remuneration and/or expenses.

5. Legal implications

5.1 The Terms of Reference were produced with the support of the KCC Office of General Counsel and a legal representative from external law firm Bevan Brittan.

5.2 Volunteer Board Members when they carry out their duties as a Board Member will be covered by KCC's insurance policy, but please note that Board Members remit is limited to support the recommendation to approve, reject or defer a funding application during Board Meetings which take place at Invicta House.

6. Equalities implications

6.1 Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are in place for the various funds that form part of The Boards operational remit.

6.2 The developed recruitment pack has been designed to support recruitment of Voluntary Board Members from under-represented groups.

7. Data Protection implications

Data Protection Impact Assessment screening have been undertaken leading to a full DPIA being submitted with an Approved status and Outcome date of 2 January 2024. Actions pertaining to the DPIA have been completed or are work in progress as activity is ongoing.

8. Governance

8.1 The Director of Growth and Communities and the Interim Head of Economy will inherit the main delegations via the Officer Scheme of Delegation, and approve Recommendations made by the IAB of one of its Sub-Groups, via and Officer Record of Decision.

9. Conclusions

9.1 The Investment Advisory Board ("IAB), the IAB Sub-Group and the IAB Debt Recovery Group convene monthly to support the operational delivery of the Kent & Medway Business Fund, Innovation Initiative Investment Fund (i3), the Discovery Park Technology Fund (DPTIF), Kent Life Sciences Fund (KLS) and the RGF Bespoke Equity Fund (RGFBEF).

9.2 Following review of the Terms of Reference a recruitment process has been established to vet and recruit voluntary board members and several appointments have been made.

10. Recommendation

10.1 The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development on the Investment Advisory Board Terms of Reference and the voluntary appointments made to the Boards: The Investment Advisory Board, ("IAB"), IAB Sub-Group and the IAB Debt Recovery Group as shown at Appendix A

11. Appendices:

Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix 1: Investment Advisory Board - Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: Current Board Composition

12. Contact Details

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Relevant Director:

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Job Title: Director Growth & Communities

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development

DECISION NO:

24/00081

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Investment Advisory Board Terms of Reference and Recruitment of Volunteer Board Members to the Investment Advisory Board and Investment Advisory Board Sub-Groups

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development I agree to accept the Investment Advisory Board Terms of Reference and the voluntary appointments made to the Boards: The Investment Advisory Board, ("IAB"), IAB Sub-Group and the IAB Debt Recovery Group.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Kent & Medway Investment Advisory Board has been established by the Cabinet of Kent County Council (KCC) as an advisory body charged with advising KCC, directly and as the Accountable Body in relation to any and all Kent and Medway Business Fund Schemes.

The Investment Advisory Board (IAB), IAB Sub-Group and IAB Debt Recovery Group have operated in their current capacity for a number of years and following a full review of the loan schemes, their associated administrative processes and funding thereof, options were considered for Board composition and recruitment thereof, in line with the revised Terms of Reference provided by Bevan Brittan and supported by the Office of General Counsel.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by members of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 11 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Continue with the same recruitment processes which involved the nomination by an existing Board Member of a proposed new Board Member to approach.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

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Kent and Medway Investment Advisory Board (KMIAB)

Terms of Reference

Final Version – November 2023

1. Purpose

1.1 The Kent and Medway Investment Advisory Board (the Board) is an advisory grouping of leaders from the business community and of Members of Kent County Council (KCC) and Medway Council (MC), brought together to assist KCC in developing policy, assessing applications for funding and the operation of a number of identified Schemes (as detailed in paragraph 3 below) for which the Council is the funder or the accountable person acting on behalf of the awarding body.

2. Remit

2.1 The Board as formed was to originally support the work of the former RGF Expansion East Kent, its purpose was to provide an element of oversight and review into funding decisions. All applications were subject to independent due diligence before being examined by the Board. The majority of the Board Members were to come from the private sector. Once an application has been reviewed by the Board, it was to make a recommendation to KCC to approve, reject, part-fund, or defer a funding application and what conditions should be set if funding is approved. The remit of the Board has since been extended in scope to cover all of the Schemes listed in paragraph 3, which may be subject to further change as required, and assist in line with its terms of reference as set out at paragraph 5.

2.2 These Schemes operate within a wider framework of rules, regulations, and procedures of KCC, this includes:

- KCC's Treasury Management Strategy
- KCC's Financial Regulations

2.3 These Schemes also operate within the wider economic objectives of KCC, this includes:

- KCC's Strategic Statement: Framing Kent's Future – Our Council Strategy
- Kent and Medway Economic Framework

2.4 The Schemes were originally funded by other organisations, these include Government Departments and other agencies such as the South-East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), known as the Awarding Bodies. As such, the Schemes also operate within the contracts and procedures laid down by the Awarding Bodies.

2.5 The geographical coverage of the Board is defined as the Kent & Medway area, these are local authority areas covered by Kent County Council (Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Dartford Borough Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Swale Borough Council, Thanet District Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Thurrock Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council) and Medway Council.

3. The Schemes

3.1 The Board provides the same function to KCC in respect of funding schemes from different Awarding Bodies, referred to throughout as the Schemes, which are currently formed of the:

- i. **Future schemes** - Offering loan investments in the Kent and Medway area and funded from recycled RGF and i3 investments.
- ii. **Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) (2023)** – Offering loan investments in the Kent and Medway area and funded from recycled RGF investments. To be re-launched in late 2023.
- iii. **KMBF Small Business Boost (KMBF SBB) (2023)** – Offering loan investments in the Kent and Medway area and funded from recycled RGF investments. To be re-launched in late 2023.
- iv. **Innovation Loan Scheme (i3)** – Offers innovative loan and equity investments in Kent and Medway.
- v. **Kent Growing Places Fund** – Offers loans to promote investment and economic growth in the Kent & Medway area.
- vi. **Small Business Boost (SBB)** - Offered small loans in the Kent & Medway area. All investments prior to March 2023
- vii. **Small Business Boost (SBB)** - Offered small loans in the **RGF Expansion East Kent** eligible area. All investments prior to January 2017.
- viii. **Kent Life Science Fund (KLS)** – Offered life science equity investments funded from recycled RGF investments. All investments made prior to March 2023.
- ix. **Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF)** – Offered loan and equity investments in the Kent and Medway area and funded from recycled RGF investments. All investments prior to March 2023.
- x. **Discovery Park Technology Investment Fund (DPTIF)** – Offered equity investments under the former RGF **Expansion East Kent** scheme. All investments prior to March 2023.
- xi. **Bespoke Equity Fund (BEF)** - KCC equity investments under the former RGF schemes at (i) to (iii) above (**RGF Expansion East Kent, Tiger and Escalate**).
- xii. **RGF Escalate** – Offered loan and equity investments in Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, and Tunbridge Wells. All investments prior to March 2023.
- xiii. **RGF Tiger** – Offered loans and equity investments in Dartford, Gravesham, Medway, Swale and Thurrock (formerly part of the **RGF Tiger** eligible area). All investments prior to March 2017.
- xiv. **RGF Expansion East Kent** – Offered grant, loan and equity investments in Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, and Thanet. All investments prior to March 2023.

3.2 The Schemes may change from time to time and this paragraph will be amended accordingly.

4. The Accountable Body - Kent County Council

4.1 In respect of a Scheme for which KCC is the Accountable Body for investments (grants, loans, and equity) made by the Schemes, as well as for those Schemes that KCC has established and funds, KCC is responsible for: -

4.1.1 the allocation and management of the Schemes in accordance with KCC Financial Regulations and governance arrangements; and

4.1.2 ensuring that the funding is managed in accordance with any conditions agreed with the Awarding Bodies (including Subsidy Control restrictions).

4.2 KCC officers provide the Secretariat support for the Schemes (as detailed at paragraph 10) which includes, but is not limited to, the activities of managing the application process, co-ordinating appraisal of applications, contract reviews, contract award and execution, compliance, and enforcement (include debt collection) and ongoing monitoring of use of funds awarded and Scheme outputs.

4.3 Unless the matter is reserved to Cabinet or a Cabinet member, an officer of KCC holding delegated authority (the decision-maker) will determine each application under the relevant Scheme. The decision-maker shall give due weight to the recommendations of the Board, alongside the objectives and conditions of the applicable Scheme, other KCC approved policies and any governance and other requirements that may be relevant to the decision to be made.

5. Terms of Reference – The Role of the Kent & Medway Investment Advisory Board

5.1 The Kent & Medway Investment Advisory Board (the Board) is established by the Cabinet of Kent County Council (KCC) as an advisory body with the following terms of reference (ToR).

5.2 The Board is not a decision-making board but is charged with advising KCC, directly and as the Accountable Body in relation to any and all Schemes (as detailed at paragraph 3 above) to:

(a) Provide advice to KCC by inputting into the overall investment strategy for the Schemes, which may include but is not limited to recommending that KCC encourage applications from particular business sectors or geographical areas and recommending any conditions to be applied to any investments to be made by KCC.

(b) Consider applications received against the relevant KCC funding criteria, as may be amended from time to time and as currently set out at **Annex 6**, and make recommendations to KCC as to whether:

- i. to approve, reject or defer the application to a later meeting of the Board for further consideration (on receipt of further information sought from the applicant); and
- ii. any conditions that, in the Board's view, KCC should place on the investment, including but not limited to payment terms, security to be taken in relation to the investment and repayment profile;
setting out reasons for doing so, including viable alternatives where appropriate.

- (c) Keep under review the performance of the Schemes and investments against the outputs and leverage levels specified in the Agreements with the Awarding Bodies, or as may be established by KCC, and advise KCC on any recommended action it might take to improve performance where appropriate.
- 5.2 It is intended that, when making recommendations and giving advice to KCC, members of the Board should make a distinctive contribution to consideration of any item and Board discussion by drawing on their own industrial and commercial experience of businesses within the sectors and areas covered by the programme.
- 5.4 The structure, objectives and membership of the Board will be reviewed from time to time to ensure it remains fit for purpose and is delivering on its key purpose.

6. Membership

- 6.1 The Board shall be appointed every four years by KCC and shall consist of no more than 20 Board Members and no fewer than 14 Board Members. KCC will make every effort in its recruitment of Board Members to ensure that the Board composition is diverse, inclusive and maintains a strong and balanced membership.
- 6.2 The KCC Cabinet Member holding the portfolio for Economic Development shall be a member of the Board. One or more other KCC elected Members shall also be appointed to the Board as per paragraph 6.5 below. The MC Cabinet Member holding the portfolio responsible for economic development shall be a member of the Board.
- 6.3 If a KCC or MC elected Member on the Board is unable to attend a specific Board or Board Sub-Group Meeting, their views should be submitted to the Secretariat prior to the scheduled Meeting using the form in **Annex 3**.
- 6.4 KCC will endeavour to appoint to the Board such that a majority of Board members are from the private sector. Other than the appointment of elected Members of KCC and MC under 6.2 above, all appointments to membership of the Board shall be made as per paragraph 6.5 below and in accordance with the recruitment and selection arrangements detailed in **Annexes 1 and 2**. Recruitment, selection, and administrative support for this purpose will be provided by KCC as the Board's Secretariat. Board Members will be elected for a term of four years and can hold one further concurrent term of four years e.g. a eight year tenure as a maximum.
- 6.5 The appointment to membership of the Board will be recommended and determined as an executive decision of the KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development.
- 6.6 The first period of appointment for Board members will commence upon the implementation of the updated KMBF, including the approval of these Terms of Reference (2023) and Membership. Future terms will vary depending individual membership decisions.
- 6.7 New Board members may be appointed at any time, subject to the provisions of paragraphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5.
- 6.8 Board Members may resign by giving no less than 20 working days' notice to the Chair of the Board and Secretariat.

- 6.9 Where a Board Member fails to attend 3 consecutive Board or Board Sub-Group Meetings, they shall cease to be member of the Board, unless the Cabinet Member for Economic Development receives a written explanation for ongoing absence that is approved by the Lead KCC Officer in consultation with the IAB Chair.
- 6.10 The membership of Board Sub-Groups shall in the first instance be appointed from the Membership of the Board and will conform to the principles laid down in paragraphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7. However, New Board Members may be appointed to specifically work in Board Sub-Groups, if required, subject to the provisions of paragraphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5.
- 6.11 Prospective Board Members shall be subject to due diligence checks at the point of their nomination/application. This shall comprise of checks carried out via Companies House on the trading history of any companies they have been associated with as a director or in an executive capacity.

7. Conduct

- 7.1 Prior to undertaking their role Board Members must agree to observe the Kent Code of Member Conduct for members of advisory boards which can found in Part 4 of the Constitution, paragraphs 21.32 to 21.92 which includes the Seven Principles of Public Life and ([Constitution.pdf \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)). [An extract of the Kent Code of Conduct will be made available to all Board Members.](#)
- 7.2 A Register of Interests shall be held by the Secretariat. Board Members are responsible for ensuring that the Secretariat is informed of any changes that should be made to the Register of Interests. The Register will be available for public scrutiny.
- 7.3 Should a Board Member become aware that s/he has any conflict of interest, direct or indirect, in any matter being considered by the Board, then they shall:-
- (a) Disclose the interest to the Meeting and not take part in any consideration or discussion of the matter or vote in any questions with respect to it; and
 - (b) Unless the Meeting invites him/her to remain, withdraw from the Meeting.
- 7.4 The rules in paragraph 7.3 apply whether the interest concerned is already set out in the Register of Interests.
- 7.5 However, the rule in paragraph 7.3 above does not apply where the interest concerned relates primarily to the general interest of any public sector Member in his/her area of geographical responsibility, or to the interests of Kent and Medway as a whole.
- 7.6 Members of the Board in performing their functions will be indemnified by KCC as though a member of a committee of KCC and KCC will apply to them the provisions of section 39(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (Protection of members and officers etc. of local authorities from personal liability), such that no matter or thing done shall, if the matter or thing were done were entered into bona fide for the purpose of executing the proper functions of KCC, subject them or any of them personally to any action liability claim or demand whatsoever.
- 7.7 Board Members shall attend such training as is offered by KCC to enhance the performance of their role.

- 7.8 A complaint may be made to the relevant or proper officer of KCC:
- (a) a Board Member, whereupon they will undertake such enquiries as they consider necessary and may make a recommendation to the KCC Leader or Cabinet Member for Economic Development for their removal from the Board;
 - (b) an elected Member which shall be considered according to KCC procedures for administering allegations of failure to observe the KCC Code of Conduct;
 - (c) an officer of KCC which shall be considered under the relevant KCC policies and procedures; or
 - (d) concerning an issue relevant to the KCC Whistleblowing Policy.

8. The Chair of the Board and Vice Chair of the Board

- 8.1 The Chair of the Board or any Sub-Group shall be an elected Member of KCC (as the Accountable Body) and a Member of the Board. The Chair will be, or be appointed by, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and be appointed for a ten-year period.
- 8.2 The Vice Chair of the Board or any Sub-Group shall be an elected Member of KCC (as the Accountable Body) and also a Member of the Board. The Vice-Chair will be appointed by the KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development and be appointed for a ten-year period.

9. Quorum

The Board

- 9.1 The quorum of a meeting of the Board shall be at least a third of the full membership of the Board and must always include at least one Board member who is an elected Member of KCC.
- 9.2 Should a Board not be quorate before or during the Board itself, the Chair of the Board may choose one of three options:
- a) that Board Members to be asked to convey their views electronically to all the other Board Members, via the Secretariat, providing a formal response to an emailed request for their recommendation. Members must respond within 5 working days of the request being sent (see **Annex 3**);
 - b) to arrange a Special Meeting of the Board to deal with outstanding business; or
 - c) to allow business to adjourn to the following ordinary Board meeting.

Sub-Groups

- 9.3 The quorum of a Sub-Group meeting shall be at least a third of the full membership of the Sub-Group and must always include at least one representative appointed by the Accountable Body.
- 9.4 Should a Sub-Group not be quorate before or during the Sub-Group itself, the Chair of the Board may choose one of three options:
- a) that Sub-Group Board members to be asked to convey their views electronically to all the other Board Members of the Sub-Group via the Secretariat, providing a formal

response to an emailed request for their recommendation. Board Members must respond within 5 working days of the request being sent (see **Annex 3**);

- b) to arrange a Special Meeting of the Sub-Group to deal with outstanding business; or
- c) to allow business to adjourn to the following ordinary Sub-Group Meeting.

10. Secretariat and administration

- 10.1 Secretariat and administration of the Board shall be carried out by KCC. This shall include management of the funding application and appraisal process, preparation of Board agendas, papers and minutes, proposals for the establishment of a themed or specific funding round and the efficient processing of Board Recommendations to KCC for decision.
- 10.2 The Board shall be asked to give its recommendations on the basis of detailed case papers and due diligence, circulated in advance, and short oral presentations by the applicants and the appraisal team.
- 10.3 The Board shall be entitled to ask the Secretariat to prepare quarterly reports containing sectoral and geographical analyses of applications received, and impact assessments of those funded, and papers evaluating the administration of the programme.

11. Agenda and Minutes

- 11.1 Agenda and Minutes of Meetings of the Board and Sub-Groups shall be prepared by the Secretariat and circulated to Board Members together with the proposed Agenda for the next Board or Sub-Group for confirmation.
- 11.2 The papers for Board or Sub-Group Meetings shall be circulated to the Board Members by the Secretariat not less than five working days before each Board or Sub-Group Meeting.

12. Business

- 12.1 The Board Meetings may be held in-person or remotely (Teams, Zoom or other means of holding meetings) based on business needs as may be determined by the Chair.
- 12.2 The Chair of the Board shall preside at Meetings of the Board or any Sub-Group. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair of the Board shall preside. In the absence of the Chair of the Board and the Vice-Chair of the Board or any Sub-Group, the Board shall elect a member of the Board to act as Chair of the Board for that Meeting only.
- 12.3 Recommendations to be made by the Board or Sub-Group to KCC shall normally be taken by full consensus. In the absence of full consensus, the recommendation must be supported at least 75% of the Board or Sub-Group Board Members present and must include the support of the elected KCC Members appointed to the Board and present (or whose support has been provided in writing in accordance with 6.3 above and **Annex 3**).
- 12.4 Where the Board or Board Sub-Group determines to recommend to KCC the approval, rejection, part-funding, or deferral of an application, that decision to recommend shall be without prejudice to any subsequent application. The Recommendation Form (see **Annex 4**) and will be based upon the information available to the Board or Board Sub-Group at the relevant time: any subsequent decision (see **Annex 4b**) and offer made by KCC will be conditional upon all requisite due diligence being undertaken and the appropriate level of security sought being provided to satisfy KCC's governance requirements and public sector duties.

- 12.5 Where the number of supportable projects (i.e. projects that are recommended for approval by the Board or Board Sub-Group) exceeds the available budget for the Meeting, then the process for prioritisation laid down in **Annex 5** will apply. If the Board or Sub-Group agree to defer making a recommendation on an application for funding. Then at the same time the Board or Sub-Group also need to confirm that the funding related to this application is ring-fenced until a future Meeting at which a recommendation can be made.
- 12.6 All applications for assistance from any of the Schemes (paragraph 3) shall be appraised and recommended for approval by KCC officers before being submitted to the Board or Sub-Group for consideration. The Board or Sub-Group shall make no recommendations to KCC unless the Board has received the appraisal documentation from KCC officers and appointed third party advisors.
- 12.7 The Chair of the Board and/or Vice-Chair of the Board must sign off the Recommendation Form in **Annex 4a** to confirm that the information contained within it provides an accurate reflection of the recommendation being made to KCC.

13. Urgent Recommendations

- 13.1 The Chair of the Board may decide that a matter requires urgent consideration in order to make a recommendation to KCC. If an urgent decision is required, the Chair of the Board may either: -
- (a) through the Secretariat, call a Special Meeting giving no less than three working days' notice and in such a case, the quorum requirements set out in paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2 shall apply;
 - (b) through the Secretariat, request that a decision on whether or not to recommend be made by e-mail and in such cases the Secretariat shall provide Board Members with all appropriate information requesting a decision on whether or not to recommend in no less than three working days – in which circumstance, the minimum number of written responses to be received for a decision on whether or not to recommend shall be a third of the Board, including at least one of the KCC elected Members; or
 - (c) where a decision on whether or not to recommend is made at a Board or Sub-Group Meeting, and such recommendation is subject to conditions, the Chair of the Board may subsequently amend any conditions contained within the agreed recommendation outside of any Board or Sub-Group Meeting in which circumstance this will be noted and confirmed in the minutes of the next Board or Sub-Group Meeting.

14. Transparency

- 14.1 Where items should be regarded as commercial in confidence, this shall be clearly specified by officers and marked as 'exempt information not for publication' in relation to subsequent decision notices or reports.
- 14.2 Commercially sensitive information is likely to be circulated to the Board or Sub-Group Board Members given the nature of the Schemes. All applications for assistance and papers describing negotiations with applicants will be considered as having protected information and shall be marked "Restricted – Commercial". A summary outcome of the Board's discussions and its recommendations made to KCC shall be on the public record as part of

the KCC officer decision making process, but with appropriate exclusions for commercially sensitive information.

15. Reporting

- 15.1 If the individual members of the Board provide updates or information concerning recommendations of the Board or Sub-Groups to third parties, Board Members must not disclose details of specific applications, keeping such information to a strategic level, bearing in mind the commercial sensitivity of matters.
- 15.2 The Secretariat will provide to the Board quarterly reports containing sectoral and geographical analyses of applications received, and impact assessments of those funded, and papers evaluating the administration of the programme.
- 15.3 The Cabinet Member for Economic Development will ensure reports are prepared on a bi-annual basis, detailing the activities of the KMBF, for consideration by the relevant Cabinet Committee (work programme depending). In developing these reports, the Cabinet Member will seek the views of the Board for presentation to the relevant Committees.
- 15.4 Determinations of:
- (a) the KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development on membership to the Board or to amend these terms of reference under paragraph 6.5 above; and
 - (b) the decision-maker in relation to the outcome of applications under a Scheme
- shall be published as may be required by the KCC Constitution and relevant standing orders, which may include or make reference to the minutes and recommendations of the Board or Sub-Group meetings of the Board as is considered necessary by the proper officer of KCC.

16. Board and Sub-Group Meetings

- 16.1 Board and Sub-Group Meetings shall be scheduled in such a way that the business of the Board and Sub-Groups can be expedited efficiently and in accordance with the target timescales for decisions on whether or not to recommend approval to KCC as set out in the latest Application Guidance Notes of the relevant Scheme.
- 16.2 In any case, the Board shall meet no less frequently than once every three months.

17. Termination

- 17.1 The Board and Sub-Groups shall terminate their activities when the operation of the Kent and Medway Business Fund or other relevant Schemes ceases.

18. Amendment of Terms of Reference

- 18.1 The Board or Board Sub-Groups may make recommendations to the Secretariat to vary these Terms of Reference, provided the procedures in paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2 are followed.
- 18.2 Any amendments to the Terms of Reference must be approved by the Director of Growth and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

19. Sub-Groups

- 19.1 The Board may choose to establish one or more permanent Sub-Groups to deal with issues such as governance, legacy issues relating to previous loan agreements, or ad-hoc Sub-Groups for a specific activity on a time limited basis.
- 19.2 All permanent or ad-hoc Sub-Groups should operate under the same open and transparent manner as indicated in paragraphs 1 to 21 inclusive. Any such Sub-Group shall also be advisory in nature and not a decision-making Board of KCC.
- 19.3 Membership of Sub-Groups should be determined on the basis of paragraph 6.4.
- 19.4 KCC shall act as the Secretariat for all permanent or ad-hoc Sub-Groups agreed by the Board.

20. Appeals

- 20.1 There is no automatic appeal process, and the Board is not the decision-maker. However, in the course of seeking to challenge or appeal a funding decision made by KCC under the KMBF arrangements, applicants may ask for a review by the Secretariat of the recommendation of the Board or Sub-Group to establish whether the recommendation was formed inappropriately and contrary to proper process, for example if the applicant can prove the Board or Sub-Group has not followed the correct procedures or assessed their bid correctly. There are three options for a review:
- (a) That the Board or Sub-Group did not follow the published procedures for the bid.
 - (b) The applicant can show that the Board or Sub-Group have misunderstood a significant part of the application.
 - (c) The applicant can show that the Board or Sub-Group did not take notice of the relevant information.
- 20.2 For those applicants requesting a review - no new evidence or no additional information not already provided can be taken into account.

21. Funding Rounds

- 21.1 The Board and the Sub-Groups may recommend the allocation of funding to a themed or specific funding round within the framework of the Schemes. A themed or specific funding round will be established based on proposal by the Secretariat (see paragraph 10.1) and after that proposal has been approved by the Leader of KCC, Cabinet or the KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development.
- 21.2 A themed or specific funding round shall operate in the same open and transparent manner as indicated in paragraphs 1 to 21 inclusive.

22. Equity

- 22.1 The Board and Sub-Groups provide the same functions and operate under the same open and transparent manner as indicated in paragraphs 1 to 21 inclusive for all recommendations related to the Bespoke Equity Fund, Discovery Park Technology Investment Fund and the Kent Life Science Fund.

Annex 1

Board Membership – Recruitment & Selection

The Secretariat on behalf of KCC will manage the recruitment and selection process of Board Members, this includes:

- Ensuring all Board Members meet the terms of the Nomination Criteria;
- Supervise the recruitment and selection process(es) linked to Board Members;
- Regularly review the recruitment and selection processes and make any appropriate recommendations to KCC.

The Secretariat as part of its annual review of the Board recruitment and selection processes, will:-

- In consultation with the Board will review the size, balance, and composition, including the equality and diversity of membership of the Board and Sub-Groups, in line with best practice;
- In consultation with the Board review the skills, knowledge, and experience of the Board and Sub-Groups;
- Examine potential Board vacancies and to define appropriate criteria for the filling of such vacancies, particularly for any individual Board Member whose term of office is due to expire;
- Review the policies in respect of the recruitment, selection, induction, development, and performance review of Board Members; and
- Review the attendance statistics for individual Board Members.

Where annual reviews support changes to Board Membership, the Secretariat will provide recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to support an Executive Decision to approve relevant membership changes / updates, subject to any required recruitment and selection processes as detailed below.

Where vacancies arise, these will be advertised using the person specification detailed in **Annex 2**. Applicants will be selected via Officer interview panel making a recommendation to the Cabinet Member. Confirmation of appointment will be via significant Executive Decision.

Appointments to the Board will be for four years. Board Members may not serve more than two consecutive terms without being subject to the full membership assessment and recruitment process set out in paragraph 6 of the ToR and these annexes.

Board Members may be re-appointed to the Board for a maximum number of two terms, providing the above processes are followed. Any re-appointments must be subject to Cabinet Member Decision as per Membership decision-making above.

Enterprise Leadership Experience - A Board Nominee should have extensive and relevant leadership experience, including current or prior service as an entrepreneur, business owner, a high-level executive within a private sector company or a comparable position in the non-profit sector or government.

Relevant Sector Experience - A Board Nominee should have gained their leadership experience in sectors directly relevant to key business sectors within Kent & Medway, or in professional disciplines pertinent to these sectors. This could include experience in one or more of the following:

- **Digital, Technology and Innovation** - The Board Nominee has experience with eCommerce, digital marketing, data and analytics, information technology or digital transformation, or relevant innovation experience including with new technologies, product development or scientific research.
- **Environmental and Social Responsibility** - The Board Nominee has experience with sustainability, social responsibility, or human capital matters (including diversity, equity and inclusion issues and initiatives).
- **Finance** - The Board Nominee has a background in finance, including an understanding of accounting and financial reporting processes, complex financial transactions and/or strategic mergers and acquisitions.
- **Manufacturing Industry** - The Board Nominee has experience in the fast-moving consumer goods industry or other complementary field, such as public health.
- **Regulatory** - The Board Nominee has experience working in a highly regulated industry, such as pharmaceutical, healthcare or insurance.
- **Risk Management and Cybersecurity** - The Board Nominee has experience with overseeing and managing risk management processes, including with respect to cybersecurity.

International Experience - International experience (such as living and working outside of the United Kingdom) will be considered a positive characteristic in a Board Nominee's profile. Understanding of the language and culture of non-English speaking countries is also important.

Corporate Governance - The Board Nominee should have sufficient applicable experience to understand the Board's role as an advisory body to KCC.

Diversity - In considering Board Nominees KCC is striving to reflect the diversity of the business community within Kent & Medway, including with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and cultural background. The Board should comprise of individuals with diverse perspectives, skills and experiences.

Education - Generally, it is desirable that a Board Nominee should hold an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university or have gained a professional or postgraduate qualification. Board Nominees who do not meet these educational criteria will not be excluded, and an individual's extensive leadership experience will be taken into account.

Personal – A Board Nominee should be of the highest moral and ethical character. The Nominee must exhibit integrity, independence, objectivity and be capable of serving in the best interest of all.

Individual Characteristics - A Board Nominee should have the personal qualities to be able to make a substantial active contribution to Board deliberations. These qualities include intelligence, self-assuredness, a high ethical standard, interpersonal skills, independence, courage, a willingness to ask the difficult question, communication skills and commitment.

Availability - A Board Nominee must be willing to commit, as well as have, sufficient time available to discharge the duties of a Board Member.

Compatibility - The Board Nominee should be able to develop a good working relationship with other Board members and contribute to the Board's working relationship with the KCC as the Accountable Body including those KCC officers who provide the Secretariat.

Annex 3

KMBF INVESTMENT ADVISORY BOARD

COMMENTS FORM

COMPANY NAME

<u>Key Issues</u>	<u>Actions/Confirmation</u>
Page 169	

Total Score	??/28 or 45	<i>Depending on whether it is secured or unsecured</i>
--------------------	--------------------	---

Director Credit Reports undertaken by KCC Public Protection Intelligence Team		
Directors Credit Report	Include any points to note e.g. CCJs.	Add recommendation if applicable

Company Credit Report/Finance Review undertaken by KCC Finance Team		
Company Credit Report	<p><i>Please select one of the following:-</i> <i>Start up – No Co-Credo Report available</i> <i>OR</i> <i>Established business (Please refer to Co-Credo Report)</i></p> <p>Risk Index - ?????? out of 100</p> <p>Rating Description - ????? risk (low/medium/high) The company credit report confirms:- (a) ??? Judgments/Legal Events (b) ??? Outstanding Mortgages/Charges.</p>	
Finance Review	<i>(Please copy paragraph 5 from the Finance Review and paste here)</i>	

Other Due Diligence undertaken in relation to proposed security offered*		
Land Registry Checks		
Companies House Checks		
Enquiries with priority / existing lenders		

KMIAB / KMSG Prioritisation (only to be completed if the Board is required to prioritise application due to over-subscription)		
Prioritisation Category	Weighted Score	Follow-up from Board
High		IF THIS IS NON-APPLICABLE, THIS BOX CAN BE REMOVED TOTALLY
Medium		
Low		
Reject		

[KMIAB / KMSG] Reasons for [Approval / Rejection / Deferral]

The Board decided to [approve/reject/defer] the application for the following reasons:
(a)

[KMIAB / KMSG] Recommendation

The Board agreed to recommend [approval/rejection/deferral] of the application [fully / partially] at a total loan amount of [£____] [with the following conditions to be incorporated into the loan offer or loan documentation – APPROVAL ONLY]:
(a)

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY FORM APPROVED BY THE [BOARD/SUB-GROUP] AS ACCURATE BY: -

Signatory	Decision	Signature
Signed by [Chair/Deputy Chair] ([IAB/IAB Sub-Group] [Sir Paul Carter/Derek Murphy/Robert Thomas]	[Approve/Decline/Defer] Click or tap to enter a date.	

Register of Interests

[Kent & Medway Business Fund Investment Advisory Board/Sub-Group]

Name of Company

Date of Meeting and Agenda Item	To be completed
Brief Summary of Item	Appraisal Report prepared by Kreston Reeves
Application Reference (if applicable)	Loan Reference Number
Name of Board member declaring an interest	Name of Board Member
Interests declared	State the interest declared
Any other matter you would like to declare	To be completed if appropriate

Signatory	Acknowledgement of Interests Signed by [Chair / Deputy Chair]
Signed by [Chair/Deputy Chair] ([IAB/IAB Sub-Group/ IAB Debt Recovery Sub-Group]) [Sir Paul Carter/Derek Murphy/Robert Thomas]	[Signature]

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Name and Job Title

DECISION NO:

To be completed by
Democratic Services

For publication

Subject matter:

Cabinet Member decision to which this action relates:

Please insert the Cabinet Member decision number and link or details of Committee decision

Decision:

What actions have been agreed?

Reason(s) for decision:

Financial Implications:

Legal Implications:

Equality Implications:

Comments received from any Members or Officers consulted:

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Any conflict of interest declared by any executive member consulted by the decision maker and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

signed

date

Annex 5

Prioritisation of funding: When demand for fundings outstrips the budget

Where the number of supportable projects (i.e. projects that are recommended by the Board or Sub-Group to be approved in full or part by KCC) exceeds the available budget for that Meeting - the following process shall be followed:

Step one: The KMIAB Board or Sub-Group notes the available budget for the purposes of the relevant Board or Sub-Group Meeting. KCC officers will notify the Board in advance of the budget available.

Step two: Based on the appraisals presented at the Board or Sub-Group Meeting, those attending either:

- Reach a Recommendation by voting on a show of hands and assign a tentative score of High (each vote scores 3); Medium (each vote scores 2); Low (each vote scores 1) or Reject. There will be no further discussion of projects that are rejected.

or

- Reach a Recommendation based on level of priority (high, medium, low, reject) by full consensus.

Step three: Having discussed all the projects it is good practice to assign a score and produce a table (sample below) placing the applications in high, medium and low priority bands (high = 3; medium =2; low priority = 1; Reject = 0), according to their score at step two.

On the basis of 7 Board Members present:

Project	High	Med	Low	Reject	Total	Cost	Cumulative Cost	Priority Band
Bid B	7	0	0	-	21	£305,100	£305,100	High
Bid F	6	1	0	-	20	£293,200	£598,300	Medium
Bid C	2	3	2	-	14	£331,600	£929,900	
Bid D	0	6	1	-	13	£444,800	£1,374,700	Low
Bid A	0	0	7	-	7	£225,000	£1,599,700	
Bid E	-	-	-	7	0	£144,000	£1,743,700	Reject

The Board or Sub-Group will be asked to confirm that, having had the opportunity to compare the relative merits of the applications that they are content with the scoring allocated, or whether they wish to further consider whether or not particular applications should move up or down to a different priority band.

Step four: Review this list against the available budget for the Meeting. The discussion will then focus on the priority band in which the budget runs out. So, if the budget is insufficient to fund all the High priority projects, there will be further discussion and comparison of the projects in the high band. This is the group of projects that offer the best overall return on investment.

After further discussion, a vote by show of hands or agreement by consensus on which of these applications in the high priority band offer the highest return on investment. This process may not be easy, but discussion must continue until a list of the High priority projects that fit within the available budget for the Meeting is agreed.

This is where weighting of the relevant considerations applies. It is the Board or Sub-Groups prerogative to choose a portfolio of projects to recommend and, under the principles of administrative law, they are free to do so taking into account:

1. that a varied portfolio is important, for example, geographical and sector spread as well as the range of size and type of applications received by KCC.
2. The published criteria, appraisal reports and the criteria below:
 - **Value for money** – Assessing the overall benefit in proportion to our investment. Which projects have the greatest potential impact and give KCC the opportunity to make the greatest difference for its investment (which offer the greatest overall added value).
 - **Job Creation** – Those applications offering the most potential for new job creation or safeguarding of existing jobs.
 - **Added value** – Offering the opportunity to impact on local supply chains, act as a catalyst for other businesses and leveraging other funding.

The written minutes will record the final priority level allocated to each application along with rationale.

v) Communicating Reasons for Rejection to applicants

Applicants should be provided with clear reasons for the Board and Board Sub-Groups recommendation to KCC. Applicants should be provided by KCC with clear reasons for the outcome of their application and KCC's determination of the same.

High priority

If we are unable to fund some high priority cases then we make clear that the application was unsuccessful due to insufficient funding being available. The Board may also want to provide guidance for the Secretariat on any messages to be given to any unsuccessful applicants regarding re-applying at a later date or seeking a reduced amount of funding. As now, there should be no automatic right of return with the same project and no guarantee of funding can be given to any applicant.

Medium priority

In the case of medium priorities the reason for not supporting them will also be insufficient funding available if all funding has been allocated to high priority cases. The Board may also wish to provide constructive feedback as to how the project might achieve better value for money in any future application made.

Low priority

Low priority for our available funding will be given as the recommendation for rejection in these cases (if all funding has been allocated to high and/or medium priority cases) with additional feedback given as appropriate to assist with any future application made.

Recommended for rejection by the Secretariat at the point of presentation to the Board or Board Sub-Group

Where a case is recommended for rejection on the paper application by the Secretariat the paper presented to the Board should set out clearly the reasons and these should be noted as either agreed or agreed as amended by the Board.

Annex 5
Kent and Medway Investment Advisory Board

Prioritisation Form

Name of Applicant:		Name of Board Member:					
Declaration of Interest:							
<p>Prioritisation - Where the number of supportable projects (i.e. projects that are recommended for approval by the Board) exceeds the budget available to KCC. Board Members are therefore asked to assign a score of High (each vote scores 3); Medium (each vote scores 2); Low (each vote scores 1) or to recommend the Rejection of this application as part of the prioritisation process and the ranking of applications based on funding available.</p>							
High	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reject	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Comments:							

Kent and Medway Investment Advisory Board

FUNDING CRITERIA FOR SCHEMES

In accordance with the Board's Terms of Reference (set out at section 5), each application for funding is to be considered by the Board against the funding criteria relevant to each Scheme as follows.

1. RGF Expansion East Kent

1.1 [...]

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE KENT AND MEDWAY BUSINESS FUND - INVESTMENT ADVISORY BOARD,
IAB SUB-GROUP AND DEBT RECOVERY SUB-GROUP

<u>Investment Advisory Board</u>		<u>Investment Advisory Board Sub-Group</u>		<u>Debt Recovery Sub-Group</u>	
Name	Organisation\Sector	Name	Organisation\Sector	Name	Organisation\Sector
Councillor Paul Carter (Chair)	Kent County Council	Councillor James McInroy (Chair)	Kent County Council	Councillor Paul Carter (Chair)	Kent County Council
Councillor Derek Murphy (Vice-Chair)	Kent County Council	Councillor Derek Murphy (Vice-Chair)	Kent County Council	Councillor Derek Murphy (Vice-Chair)	Kent County Council
Councillor James McInroy	Kent County Council	Councillor Harinder Mahil	Medway Council	Councillor James McInroy	Kent County Council
Councillor Harinder Mahil	Medway Council	Ben Fitter-Harding	Private Sector	Ian Ellis	Private Sector
Ian Ellis	Private Sector	Ella Brocklebank	Private Sector	Alex Sammonds	Private Sector
Miranda Chapman	Private Sector	Craig Harrison	Private Sector		
Ray Johnson	Private Sector	Dr Kouros Kouchakpour	Private Sector		
Rachel Emmerson	Private Sector	Alex Sammonds	Private Sector		
Alison Soltani-Davies	Private Sector	Tunde Daczo	Private Sector		
Verie Marshall	Private Sector				
Nick Fenton	Private Sector				

Public	4	Public	3	Public	3
Private	7	Private	6	Private	2
Total	11	Total	9	Total	5

Total Board Member Count	
Minimum 14 – Maximum 20	
Public	4
Private	13
Total	17

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From: **Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member, Economic Development**
Simon Jones - Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 11 September 2024

Subject: **Kent and Medway Business Fund Bi-Annual Monitoring – Q4 2023-24**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: This report summarises the results of KCC’s monitoring returns from businesses that have received loans and equity from KCC managed Government funded Business Investment Schemes – this consists of the current Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) scheme and the former Regional Growth Fund (RGF) schemes.

Since 2012, the number of new and protected jobs recorded up to the end of Q4 2023-24 is 5,259 (increase of 33 since the last report), consisting of 3,784 new jobs (increase of 36 since last report) and 1,475 protected jobs (decrease of three since the last report). The scheme was closed to new applicants between April and October 2023 so no new loans joined the portfolio for a seven-month period. The average cost per job is £1,002.96 (see Section 5).

The total cumulative loan repayments to the end of Q4 2023/24 of the value of £39,437,172 (increase of £1,216,584 since last report) have been received. These repayments are being recycled through the Kent and Medway Business Fund to enable KCC to continue to offer financial support for new investment.

Out of the 90 loans being reported, 71.1% are rated as Green or Amber, 28.9% of loans are rated Red (see Section 3.1).

Recommendation: The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and make any recommendations to the Cabinet Member.

1. Background Information

1.1 Since January 2017, KCC has used the recycled KMBF and RGF loan repayments to enable the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) to provide loans and equity investments ranging between £50,000-£500,000 to eligible businesses across Kent and Medway (origins of the scheme Annex One). The majority of funding recipients received 0% interest loans, with a repayment period of up to five years. The recycled RGF loan repayments are also used to finance the Kent Life Sciences Fund (KLSF), a sub-programme of the KMBF scheme. This provides equity investments predominantly in the life science sector. A summary of the equity investments can be found in Section 4 of this report.

- 1.2 All applications to the KMBF scheme undergo due diligence inquiries from an independent financial appraiser and KCC Finance colleagues before being examined by the Investment Advisory Board (IAB) and its Sub-Group. There are three senior KCC Councillors who currently sit on the IAB and Sub-Group, of whom two chair the main IAB and that Sub-Group. The majority of the members of the Board come from the private sector, including Finance and Banking, Manufacturing, and the Scientific and Creative Industries. Once an application has been reviewed by the Board, it makes a recommendation to KCC to Approve or Reject the project and what conditions should be set if funding is approved. KCC officers review the Recommendation and approval is made by either the Director of Growth and Communities or the Interim Head of Economy in line with the Officer Scheme of Delegation.
- 1.3 The scheme uses Bevan Brittan LLP and Freeths Ltd to provide advice on contracts and on insolvency issues and to work with the KCC Business Investment Team to recover the maximum amount of loan value. KCC Internal Audit oversees the investment procedures and processes and advise on other matters related to the use of the funds. A recent KCC Internal Audit report identified one High Risk, three Medium Risks and two Low Risks related to the Kent and Medway Business Fund. This report was extensively discussed at the Governance and Audit Committee in October 2022. Following on from this meeting a plan of action was agreed with the support of the Corporate Director Finance and KCC Finance colleagues. Progress on this action plan will be regularly reported and monitored by the Governance and Audit Committee and is being actively monitored by officers from within KCC Internal Audit as part of KCC good governance and assurance.
- 1.4 In order to reduce the risk of default, KCC requires applicants to provide some form of security, whether through assets, property, or personal guarantees for all loans over £100,000. For loans between £26,000 and £99,999, normally security is not taken.
- 1.5 Where businesses find it difficult to repay the loans, KCC can offer to restructure their debt to support further business growth and resume repayments. In cases of non-engagement, KCC pursues loan recovery through Security or Personal Guarantees, where applicable (see Section 2.1).
- 1.6 Working with an independent financial appraiser and KCC Finance colleagues, KCC has established a Debt Recovery Working Group, a sub-group of the IAB, chaired by a KCC Member to advise on technical issues related to the recovery of existing investments (see Section 2.1).
- 1.7 The previous contracts with the Government ended on the 31 March 2023. KCC closed KMBF to new applications on 9 February 2023 pending a decision by the Government on the future use of the fund.
- 1.8 As reported at the May and June 2023 meetings of this committee, KCC has now received a positive decision on the future use of the recycled KMBF/RGF investments.
- 1.9 Details of the proposed new arrangements for the recycled KMBF/RGF investments were presented and discussed at the September 2023 meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee and a new Key

Decision was subsequently agreed by the Cabinet Member (23/00088). The scheme reopened to pre-applications in November 2023.

2. Update on Government Funded KCC Business Investment Schemes

2.1 The table below shows the total funding committed in loan and equity investments, broken down by local authority area, the number of jobs created/protected and private sector investment (leverage) cumulatively as of the 31 March 2024.

Local Authority	Funding per Local Authority £	Private Investment £	No. of Businesses	No. of Jobs Created	No. of Jobs Protected	Total Jobs
Ashford	£1,857,600	£1,739,637	23	59	34	93
Canterbury	£9,884,680	£10,995,473	65	1,384	91	1,475
Dartford	£2,470,115	£2,238,578	16	138	52	190
Dover	£15,606,053	£19,219,589	57	495	213	708
Folkestone & Hythe	£6,886,468	£10,426,900	33	214	123	337
Gravesham	£881,062	£843,375	5	55	60	115
Maidstone	£4,318,837	£4,527,436	24	126	92	218
Medway	£5,066,621	£4,396,664	29	218	150	368
Rother (1)	£136,250	£136,250	3	34	3	37
Sevenoaks	£734,000	£790,472	8	50	20	70
Swale	£7,685,202	£19,140,158	27	286	286	572
Thanet	£8,921,256	£11,659,724	65	439	282	721
Thurrock (2)	£881,700.00	£1,421,356	4	72	13	85
Tonbridge & Malling	£1,533,510	£1,617,798	14	54	27	81
Tunbridge Wells	£2,083,000	£2,279,250	17	155	25	180
Wealden (1)	£200,000	£200,000	1	5	4	9
Total	£69,146,354	£91,632,660	391	3,784	1,475	5,259

2.2 All businesses are still required to complete a monitoring return as part of their loan agreements with the County Council and these must include employment contracts and copies of payroll as evidence for jobs created and protected. The cumulative total of jobs that have been created or protected is 5,259 as of 31 March 2024. In its positive decision on the future use of the recycled KMBF/RGF investments (see Section 1.8) the Government have confirmed that KCC has exceeded agreed jobs targets laid down in its contracts.

2.3 The cumulative amount of repayments expected to the end of Q4 2023/24 was £43,127,092. The actual amount received by the end of Q4 2023/24 was £39,187,172 which represents an achievement of 90.8%.

3. Loan Monitoring

3.1 As part of the loan agreement, each business is contracted to provide a quarterly monitoring return. These returns are in arrears of the previous quarter, and upon receipt and internal validation, one of the following RAG ratings is applied:

- Green Risk Status: full return received and no outstanding issues;
- Amber Risk Status: partial return received and/or some issues re contracted milestones;
- Red Risk Status: Category A (Bad debt); Category B (No monitoring return); Category C (Non-achievement of key milestones/targets, including loan repayment, job outcomes and/or delay to planned objectives).

- 3.2 Out of the 90 being reported on during the monitoring period 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024, 64 (71.1%) of returns were flagged as Green or Amber. The value of those loans was £7,157,436. Of the total number monitored during the period, 12 businesses (loan value £800,500) identified were in the Red Category B (Nil or incomplete monitoring return) and 14 businesses (loan value £2,419,000) were identified as Red Category C (Non-achievement of key milestones/targets).
- 3.3 Since programme inception, 92 businesses (increase of seven since last report) have had loans which are in Category A (Bad Debt) with a value of £13,049,622 (increase of £2,204,072 since last report) of which £3,680,693 (increase of £356,670 last report) has so far been recovered. The total of funds not yet recovered is therefore £9,368,929 (an increase of £1,847,402 since last report) which equates to 13.5% of the total loan and equity investments made to date. This includes businesses which KCC is still actively pursuing to repay the debt and where further debt recovery is still possible (£2,920,065). The total value of KMBF/RGF loans where debt recovery is no longer possible is £5,274,593, such a determination is reached in line with KCC Financial Regulations. Any bad debts incurred during the normal course of business investment (loans and equity) are attributed as a loss to the Fund rather than to the County Council. The County Council's liability is limited to instances of KCC's misadministration of the Fund.

4. Equity Investments

- 4.1 Between 2013 and 2016 KCC made equity investments via the KCC RGF Bespoke Equity Fund (KRBEF) and the Discovery Park Technology Investment Fund (DPTIF) in 19 businesses at a cumulative initial value of £9,387,417 at the time the respective equity investments were made. KCC has fully exited from one business and partially exited from another business.
- 4.2 In January 2017 the Kent Life Sciences Fund (KLSF) was established with the aim of making equity investments in companies with game-changing medical technologies and advanced therapeutics. This sector was targeted because of its high growth potential and the opportunities it offered to build upon the facilities offered by Discovery Park, Kent Science Park and the Kent based universities. KCC has committed equity investments to nine businesses at a cumulative initial value of £4,762,392. KLSF is funded from recycled KMBF/RGF loan repayments.
- 4.3 In making these equity investments, KCC has seen its role as a "patient investor". Newable Ltd (now Maven Cognition) and NCL Technology Ventures (NCL) have been appointed by KCC to manage, monitor, and oversee these investments. Both contractors work with the businesses in receipt of our equity investments to design an appropriate exit strategy for each investment. Quarterly reports on the performance of all the equity investments are provided to the KMBF Investment Advisory Board (chaired by a KCC Member) and an annual report is provided to KCC Finance for audit purposes as part of the reporting on companies in which KCC has an interest.
- 4.4 There have been 28 investments in 26 companies (two companies were jointly funded by DPTIF/KLSF). KCC has fully exited from one company, and it is no longer monitored, and six companies are categorised as Bad Debt (see Section 4.5). Therefore 19 equity investments are still being monitored.

4.5 Newable and NCL have designated eight of KCC's equity investments as having Green Risk Status, seven as Amber Risk Status and four as Red Risk Status (total initial value £1,656,000). Six of KCC's equity investments (total initial value £3,619,072) are designated as Bad Debt as of 31 March 2024. Again, such determination is reached in line with KCC Financial Regulations, and represents a loss to the Fund rather than the County Council

4.6 To mitigate the potential impact of the current economic conditions on companies in receipt of equity funding, KCC has been working with Newable and NCL to ensure that the innovative companies in which KCC invested have received specialist support and assistance.

5. Cost per Job

5.1 In terms of the unrecovered funds, the cost per job is £1,002.96.

5.2 In terms of the total loan and equity awarded by the KMBF/RGF schemes the average "cost" per job is £13,149.19 in comparison with the national average for Regional Growth Fund Schemes of £37,400 per job (over the first four RGF rounds according to the 2014 National Audit Office report on the Regional Growth Fund).

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The capital costs of loan and equity investments are sourced from current and future recycled loan and equity investments from the KMBF/RGF schemes.

6.2 The annual cost to KCC of administering the KMBF scheme (inc. staff, legal, appraisal and monitoring costs) is £670,000 per annum, in addition KCC have made significant changes in recent months to reduce operating cost. The revenue costs of this activity have been funded from two sources: a) a management charge of up to 10% levied from the fund on the value of all investments made to companies; and b) an administrative charge of 10% levied from the companies on the value of all loans since November 2023. This makes the scheme self-funding.

7. Legal

7.1 KCC had two contracts with DBT, both ended on the 31 March 2023. A recent decision by DLUHC mandated that all the recycled KMBF/RGF funds are to be managed by KCC as either a loan or equity scheme for a 10-year period, until 2032.

7.2 KCC also has legal agreements with the company undertaking independent financial appraisals, two legal companies (see Section 1.6) and the two companies managing the equity portfolio (see Section 4.3).

8. Policy Framework

8.1 The KMBF is in-line with Priority 1: Levelling Up Action 3 - Kent County Council's Strategic Statement Framing the Future: Framing Kent's Future – Our Council Strategy - as KMBF seeks to attract national and international investment to businesses in the county.

8.2 KMBF also supports the following priority in Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy, Objective 3 - Full cost recovery on discretionary spend.

9. Equalities implications

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and is attached to this report as an appendix.

9.2 The EqIA will be kept under review as the project progresses.

10. Data protection

10.1 The existing privacy notice covers the operation of the KMBF, and no new data protection issues arise due to the contents of this paper.

11. Recommendation

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and make any recommendations to the Cabinet Member.

12. Contact details

Report Author: Martyn Riley Project Manager Tel: 03000 417161 martyn.riley@kent.gov.uk	Relevant Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle Director for Growth and Communities Tel: 03000 412064 stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk
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Annex One

The Regional Growth Fund (RGF) was established in June 2010 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills now the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) with three objectives:

- To facilitate new investment by private sector enterprise: the aim was to support projects with significant potential for economic growth and to create sustainable private sector employment.
- To help those areas and communities that were particularly dependent on the public sector to make the transition to sustainable private sector-led growth and prosperity; and
- To address a market failure in the provision of bank lending to viable small and medium sized businesses who had a limited credit history or track record and required finance on flexible terms given their limited collateral.

The Government's Regional Growth Fund allocated £55 million to KCC between 2011 and 2014. This funded three RGF schemes covering the whole of Kent and Medway and additional local authority areas:

- Expansion East Kent (East Kent - £35 million);
- Tiger (North Kent and Thurrock - £14.5 million);
- Escalate (West Kent and parts of East Sussex - £5.5 million).

These RGF schemes provided grants, loans, and equity investments for businesses with investment plans leading to job creation and growth from November 2011 to January 2016. For most businesses, loan finance was provided at 0% interest, with a repayment period of between five and seven years. The schemes also allocated grants, loans and equity investments.

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

The Kent and Medway Business Fund -2023

Responsible Officer

Susan Berdo - GT GC

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

Service Redesign

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Economy

Responsible Head of Service

Steve Samson - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

The Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) was established in 2017 as a vehicle to deliver investment in new and existing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kent and Medway, delivering sustainable employment over the long term, creating and adopting innovative products, processes and services and improve their productivity.

The objective of the scheme is not to replace commercial sources of finance or offer operating subsidies. Rather it will support projects with strong business cases for which commercial finance is unavailable on viable terms (for example, because the product or technology involved is untested). The scheme will offer two types of investments, KMBF Standard Loans which will provide finance for up to 50% of project costs for investments between £100,000 and £500,000, and the KMBF Small Business Boost Loans (KMBF SBB) which will provide no more than 70-80% of finance for KMBF investments of between £26,000 and £99,999, with the remaining balance funded through private sources, including bank lending.

Loans will be generally offered interest-free although arrangement charges will be levied to pay for administration costs.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

No
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Yes
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
<p>To deliver the scheme, Kent County Council works closely with all the Kent City, District and Borough Councils and with the Unitary Authority of Medway Council.</p> <p>The scheme will be run in line with KCC's Equality & Diversity Policy Statement. As such we are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment. Equality and freedom from discrimination are fundamental rights and we seek to demonstrate leadership and commitment in promoting these rights.</p> <p>KCC is in regular contact with local trade bodies for the business community and the local chambers of commerce, independent business advisors, Locate in Kent, and the Federation of Small Businesses. KCC manages the Kent and Medway Growth Hub from whom it receives some referrals to the scheme . All referrals are recorded and include some Equality data, in line with the Department for Business & Trade (DBT) Framework. The Growth Hub maintain extensive data sets to include business information for Kent and Medway, to which KCC have access. The Growth Hub report on a regular monthly basis as part of their contractual obligations</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring that current and potential business applicants, their employees and job applicants will not be discriminated against on the grounds of social circumstances, gender, race, disability, sexuality, age, religion/belief or any other protected characteristic.</p> <p>Only limited data on protected characteristics is currently gathered by the application process, specifically age and gender and this is cross referenced to data held at Companies House. This data has been compared with the data reported in the House of Commons Research Briefing on Business Statistics dated 6 December 2022, which confirmed national statistics regarding leadership of businesses by gender and ethnicity.</p> <p>The Office of National Statistics does not currently gather data regarding the age of business leaders or directors, so it is difficult to find comparative data on this factor. However the Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring United Kingdom Monitoring Report 2021 states that those aged 25-34 are more likely to be involved in early-stage entrepreneurial activity than all other age groups, though the difference between other ages groups between 18 and 44 is not significant. In this regard, the new KMBF scheme will offer loans to both established, early stage and start-up businesses.</p> <p>KCC now uses a voluntary equality and diversity survey at pre-application stage to gather anonymous data regarding applicant's protected characteristics. The response rate to this survey is currently 22.2%, the results indicate that the make-up of the applicants' businesses in terms of gender leadership and ethnicity are broadly in line with the national statistics recorded in the House of Commons Research Briefing, and that the applicants by age are also broadly comparable to national statistics.</p>
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
Yes
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff No
Residents/Communities/Citizens Residents/communities/citizens
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
<p>The revised scheme will target all sectors of the business community and information and application forms will be easy to access. There are multiple possible referral routes (the Business & IP Centre, business associations (FSB, IoD), chambers of commerce and the Growth Hub, business community groups) to reach the Kent & Medway business community. The project has strict perimeters in which it can operate. Businesses that are eligible for support have to be located within the eligible area - Kent and Medway.</p> <p>The revision of the Standard Loan Scheme and the Small Business Boost Scheme have been supported by a range of web accessible marketing collateral which includes appropriate imagery reflecting the county business demographic. Hard copies of all documentation are available and alternative versions of the application documents can be made available when requested. The delivery team have consulted with industry professionals to ensure the widest possible reach and ensure that representation is multi-faceted. Any physical engagement events will take into account meeting times to suit a range of needs and will ensure that there is full disability access to enable maximum engagement and opportunity. This new marketing collateral will be used as part of a wider marketing communications strategy to improve awareness and reach of the Kent & Medway Business Fund.</p> <p>The scheme will make available services and make any possible steps to accommodate any circumstances or adjustment that is required to accommodate business directors with any of the protected characteristics. All online communications material is subject to a digital accessibility check to ensure that it meets the WCAG 2 recommendations (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)</p> <p>With regard to the equality & diversity data that the Kent & Medway Business Fund currently gathers the make-up of these businesses in terms of whether they are female led, male led or equally led are broadly in line with national statistics (source: House of Commons), though KCC will use targeted promotional activities to make direct engagements with members of the Kent Population with protected characteristics. KCC will continue to use existing tools to gather equality & diversity data in their latest forms, while ensuring ongoing compliance with data protection policies in order to ensure that individual's data is kept private and anonymised.</p> <p>All funding decisions are based on the business case and financial viability only. Support is provided to the Investment Advisory Board (including training if required) who make funding recommendations (the final decision lies with KCC) to ensure compliance with our equality duties.</p> <p>It is a legal requirement of the scheme's funding agreement with the UK government to promote equality & diversity though opportunities for addressing equality issues outside of the eligible areas and activities defined within this contract are restricted. The programme management team are in a good position to promote equal opportunities and can provide examples of good practice.</p>
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?

No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

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From: **Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development**

Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: **Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 11 September 2024**

Subject: **Developing Discovery Park: Sandwich Task Force**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: **N/A**

Future Pathway of report: **N/A**

Electoral Division **All**

Summary: This report describes Kent County Council’s support for Discovery Park, the work of the Sandwich Task Force following Pfizer’s decision to exit from the company’s Small Molecule Research and Development (R&D) facilities in Kent, and the development of an action plan using local potential to meet national challenges.

The Task Force focused on providing help to those being made redundant to find new jobs, to find and support new investors who could acquire the facilities which Pfizer was planning to vacate, and to enhance Discovery Park’s contribution to the national and regional science park and technology eco-system, securing long-term sustainability and growth.

Over a quarter of those made redundant have obtained new employment at Discovery Park and new investors have announced long-term plans for expansion.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development on the suggested actions described in paragraphs 7.6 – 7.8.

1. Background history

- 1.1 Discovery Park has long been a national centre of science and innovation, dating back to Pfizer’s original presence in Sandwich in the 1950s.

- 1.2 Pfizer's decision in January 2011 to close its European Research and Development (R&D) headquarters on its 220 acre research site at Sandwich was part of a global programme to reduce costs and to consolidate its R&D at sites in the USA. 1.6 million sq ft of laboratory, office and manufacturing facilities at Sandwich were to be vacated and the majority of its 2,400 employees were put on notice of redundancy.
- 1.3 To co-ordinate the UK's response to this situation, Government set up a Task Force to consider what actions should be taken to mitigate the impact on the economy of East Kent.
- 1.4 All the recommendations then put forward by the Task Force chaired by the then Leader of Kent County Council, Paul Carter, were taken forward. Pfizer decided to retain a significant presence at Sandwich on a leasehold basis, focusing on development of new medicines and producing samples for clinical trials, and the legal protection of its patented medicines.
- 1.5 Pfizer sold the freehold of site to Discovery Park Limited which planned to develop it into a self-contained science park. The Government designated the site as an Enterprise Zone which gave business rates reliefs over seven years to new businesses establishing in the Zone. Using part of the Government's Regional Growth Fund, Kent County Council set up the £35 million Expansion East Kent scheme to provide interest free loans and new equity for business investment and the creation of jobs at Discovery Park and the surrounding Districts.

2 Kent's potential for expanding its Life Sciences sector.

- 2.1 For several decades, Oxford, Cambridge and London have been the foremost life sciences centres in the UK. The clustering of government funded research and the world's most innovative research-based pharmaceutical companies in this "Golden Triangle" has generated highly paid employment and high value-added supply chains.
- 2.2 Science parks elsewhere in the UK have attempted to emulate the success of the Golden Triangle. The facilities at Discovery Park, particularly those vacated by Pfizer in 2011, have made it an attractive location for investment for technology based companies and organisations. The Government designated the site as a Life Sciences Opportunity Zone in recognition of the site's innovative and collaborative environment and support services. Over the past ten years, the number of businesses located at Discovery Park increased from five to nearly two hundred, with the number of jobs rising from around 500 to over 3,500. But Pfizer was still the "anchor tenant" and a challenging economic environment meant that many of the facilities at Discovery Park remained vacant.

3 Life sciences post Covid

- 3.1 Over the past decade, pharmaceutical companies across the world began to follow the model established by Pfizer: R&D has been increasingly outsourced to Contract Research Organisations (CROs) and Contract Development and Manufacturing Organisations (CDMOs). Pharmaceutical sites around Britain and across Europe have been vacated and CROs and CDMOs in India, China and the Far East have grown rapidly.
- 3.2 During the Covid-19 pandemic, governments in many countries supported research and development of vaccines and medicines, their manufacture and distribution. The UK was the first country to approve a fully tested Covid-19 vaccine which had been produced collaboratively between Pfizer and a German research company, BioNTech, using new messenger RNA (mRNA) technology to trigger the human immune system to produce protective antibodies. The Oxford – AstraZeneca vaccine, which was approved four weeks later, in December 2020, was based on traditional vaccine technology. A third vaccine, developed by Moderna of the USA based on mRNA technology, was approved by the UK in January 2021. These approvals enabled Pfizer, Astra Zeneca and Moderna to lead the world in the roll-out of Covid-19 vaccines. The Pfizer – BioNTech vaccine was proving to have an efficacy of 95 per cent, Moderna’s vaccine showed 94 per cent and AstraZeneca’s between 62 and 90 per cent.
- 3.3 The discovery in Kent of a cluster of very fast spreading mutations in late 2020 coincided with the UK’s approval of the three Covid-19 vaccines; future mutations showed that the AstraZeneca vaccines were less effective than the mRNA based vaccines, and this led to Pfizer and Moderna’s dominant market share world-wide for their vaccines and consequent extraordinary profitability during the Covid period.

4. Pfizer’s withdrawal from its Small Molecule facilities at Sandwich and the establishment of a new Task Force.

- 4.1 In November 2023, Pfizer announced proposals to exit its remaining Pharmaceutical Sciences Small Molecule (“PSSM”) facilities at Discovery Park putting 500 of its employees at risk of redundancy as part of the company’s \$3.6 billion global cost reduction programme, responding to a significant reduction in revenues following a substantial fall in earnings from its Covid-19 vaccine.
- 4.2 The remit of a new Task Force to be chaired by the KCC Leader, Roger Gough, was to help those being made redundant at Discovery Park, to find and support new investors who could acquire the facilities which Pfizer was planning to vacate, and to enhance Discovery Park’s contribution to the national and regional science and technology eco-system, securing long-term sustainability and growth. Pfizer agreed to be a member of the Task Force.

5. Supporting the staff.

- 5.1 A programme of measures to support the staff affected was put in place, including:
- Pfizer organised a careers fair for colleagues with local and national employment opportunities.
 - Pfizer enabled multiple companies to showcase their businesses (in person at Discovery Park and virtually) leading to UK employment opportunities.
 - Canterbury Christ Church University, the University of Kent and the University of Greenwich together offered a specialist programme of business advice and science support to assist displaced Pfizer employees.
 - Discovery Park organised events offering support for new business start-ups. • Discovery Park organised an in depth “Biotech Bootcamp” providing sector-specific support for start-up businesses. “Bootcamp Rebooted” has subsequently provided further support. • Barclays Eagle Labs launched a ‘start-up club’ specifically for Pfizer staff, offering weekly free coaching sessions in business skills.
 - Pfizer has provided generous support for colleagues looking to start a business including help with laboratory facilities and equipment.
 - Kent County Council has offered financing support for these new start-up businesses.
- 5.2 The main aim was to accelerate the process for individuals looking for new roles and to share with them opportunities, many of which are local to Discovery Park, that they may not have had exposure to previously. These support measures have allowed skilled individuals to explore their choices both locally and within the East Kent area and more broadly in the UK Life Sciences ecosystem. Seed projects being developed by Discovery Park in partnership with other local organisations (e.g. the NHS and Kent’s Universities) have also provided opportunities for skilled and experienced individuals as well as leveraging transferrable skills developed through their employment with Pfizer.
- 5.3 The announcement on 21 May 2024 by Asymchem Laboratories Ltd that it will take over the small molecule API pilot plant and part of the development laboratories through a new lease agreement with Discovery Park is a significant step in retaining clinical small molecule development and manufacturing in Sandwich. Asymchem plans to employ approximately 100 staff by the end of 2024 including many previously employed by Pfizer. It has also announced plans to grow this business in Kent, serving UK and other European markets.
- 5.4 Kent County Council, Discovery Park, Barclays Eagle Lab, Innovate UK, and Pfizer have collaborated closely with those employees wishing to start their own businesses to ensure they have viable business plans and Pfizer owned equipment is being made available at a fair price. Two such companies have

now started up in business: both have in place trailing contracts with Pfizer to provide services from refurbished lab space at Discovery Park. Having satisfied the usual governance criteria, Kent County Council is providing them with interest free loans from the Kent and Medway Business Fund to enable them to expand.

- 5.5 In addition, Pfizer has confirmed its commitment to maintaining a significant presence at Discovery Park: the 450 employees in its Global Regulatory Affairs Hub are not affected by its decision to exit the PSSM facilities.

6. Finding new investors.

- 6.1 The Task Force worked closely with Pfizer and Discovery Park, supported by the Department for Business and Trade and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, to find suitable organisations and companies which could acquire the facilities and assets at Sandwich no longer required by Pfizer.
- 6.2 An extensive international marketing programme, including paid digital campaigns on Google and LinkedIn targeting an international audience of over 92,000 C-Suite executives¹, resulted in several serious expressions of interest in the other facilities being vacated by Pfizer.
- 6.3 At an early stage, a CDMO based in China, Asymchem Laboratories (Tianjin) Co Ltd discussed the possibility of acquiring the small molecule Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) pilot plant and part of Pfizer's development laboratories. On 21 May 2024, negotiations were successfully concluded.
- 6.4 On 2 August, at Discovery Park, Asymchem's Board of Directors celebrated with its new employees the launch of its business in Europe. The Leader of Kent County Council was invited to give a speech welcoming the company to Kent.

7. Actions to enhance Discovery Park's contribution to the national and regional eco-system, securing long-term sustainability and growth.

- 7.1 Based on Pfizer's previous investment in laboratory and science facilities, nearly two hundred companies and organisations have relocated to Discovery Park in the last ten years to take advantage of its research and development facilities, modern office space and bespoke warehousing. The site provides an innovative and collaborative environment and support services in a location which is exceptionally well served by Kent's outstanding countryside and educational establishments. It is five minutes away from Sandwich railway

¹ "C-suite" refers to the executive-level managers within a company who have titles that start with the letter C, such as Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, and Chief Operating Officer.

station and the new Thanet Parkway station which connect the location to St Pancras in central London by High-Speed trains in 75 minutes.

- 7.2 Current economic uncertainty in world markets has meant that a suitable tenants for the other facilities available at Discovery Park could not be found at the present time.
- 7.3 The laboratory facilities and office space left unoccupied from Pfizer's 2011 partial withdrawal, and other areas of the site are still available for the building of new facilities where older Pfizer buildings have been demolished. With the excellent site infrastructure, these provide considerable potential for investment and the location of new developments.
- 7.4 For example, Building 500 is still only partially occupied. Previous support from the Government's Growing Places Fund enabled 50,000 sq. ft in Building 500 to be re-purposed for smaller occupiers. Since the newly refurbished space opened in March 2023, a thriving community of innovative and growing businesses already occupies almost sixty percent of the refurbished space.
- 7.5 The challenge therefore remains how to establish a viable basis for Discovery Park's future.
- 7.6 The immediate action would be for the Valuation Office to reassess the rateable value of the now empty space, building by building.
- 7.7 Pfizer has in addition suggested that the Government could provide a new framework for the site which would encourage new investment and facilitate international trade. Its proposal is attached as Annex 1.
- 7.8 Members of the Task Force have also been exploring the potential for establishing new ventures which can deliver national ambitions in areas such as medicine, biotech, agri-tech, and data management. Discussions have taken place with Kent's three Universities, Imperial College, Queen Mary University of London, and several Universities in continental Europe, as well as the Industrial BioTech Innovation Centre (IBioIC) and The Data Lab in Scotland.
- 7.9 The next phase of the Task Force's work will be to evaluate these proposals in more detail, assessing the viability and necessary support required to deliver long-term growth and sustainability. We shall invite Government to help us in delivering a successful outcome.

8. Financial Implications for KCC

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications for KCC arising from the issues in this paper.

9 Equalities

- 9.1 Equalities impact assessments have been prepared for relevant KCC programmes, such as the Kent and Medway Business Fund. KCC involvement in future actions may require new assessments to be undertaken.

10 Data protection

- 10.1 There are no data protection implications. Personal details of Pfizer's staff were not shared with the Task Force.

11 Next steps

- 11.1 The Task Force will reconvene in the Autumn to focus on finding and supporting new investment and jobs at Discovery Park and to continue to develop and support the projects suggested by the Universities.

12. Recommendation

- 12.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development on the suggested actions described in paragraphs 7.6 – 7.8.

13. Background appendices

Appendix 1: Proposal for an Investment Zone

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APPENDIX 1:
Proposal for an Investment Zone / Freeport.

Pfizer note on Special tax or customs duty status for Sandwich operations.

In the context of manufacturing, food industry, or discovery sciences, the benefits of a Freeport would be the creation by Government of an economic zone with tax and customs incentives to attract business investments and jobs. This is could potentially be achieved by allowing some or all the following benefits:

Delayed Tariff Payments (cost avoidance)

- Businesses can manufacture goods using imports within the Freeport area and export from the UK without paying tariffs.
- Duties and taxes are paid only on finished products staying within the UK at the time of leaving the Freeport.
- Businesses operating in the Freeport would show compliance through rigorous documentation processes.

Simplified/ streamlined customs procedures

Imports can enter Freeport customs sites with streamlined customs paperwork reducing customs clearance timelines.

- Documentation must demonstrate compliance to the regulations.

Financial benefit to investing in infrastructure & equipment

Provides accelerated tax relief for qualifying investments in plants and/or machinery used within Freeport sites.

- Enhanced structures and building allowances encourage investment in infrastructure.
- Relief from Stamp Duty Land Tax if additional land or property is acquired within the Freeport.
- Reduced National Insurance contributions for additional employees hired within Freeports.
- Innovation support via direct engagement with regulators (Freeport Regulation Engagement Network).

If Dover & Manston Airport were part of the Freeport zone:

- Dover would make transit to the EU via road more viable transportation option.
- If Manston reopens next year, it will give the proximity of air travel as well, making even overnight deliveries from outside the EU/ UK possible.
- With those two additions, it will make the location attractive to courier companies and brokers to have local offices and/or warehouses to facilitate importation for customers.

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**GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2024/2025**

Item	Cabinet Committee to receive item
Work Programme	Standing item
Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corporate Director	Standing item
Final Draft Budget	November and January
Risk Register – Strategic Risk Register	Annually (March)
Performance Dashboard	Quarterly
Kent and Medway Business Fund Monitoring	Bi-annual reporting (6 monthly)
Key Decision Items	

6 NOVEMBER 2024 at 2pm

1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item
6	Folkestone library and 2 Grace Hill building - Consultation Response	Key Decision - Subject to consultation and timing
7	Universal Support	Key Decision - Deferred from September
8	Skills Bootcamps	Deferred from September
9	Initial Draft Budget	
10	Thames Estuary	Deferred from July
11	Sports Capital Grant	Deferred from July - Information item
12	Lower Thames Crossing	Deferred from July and September
13	Coroner/Medical Examiner	Information paper
14	Otterpool Garden Town	
15	Energy Infrastructure	
16	Deep dive into PROW	Deferred from July and September
17	Growing Places Fund Update	
18	Manston Airport	
19	Work Programme	Standing item

22 JANUARY 2025 at 2pm

1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
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2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item
6	Final Draft Budget	
7	Trading Standards Checked – Information paper	
8	Kent Rural Partnership – Update of last 18 months of activity and priorities	Agriculture and farming economy - land based industries and food production Deferred from July
9	Brand Kent Commission Update	
10	KMEP Implementation Update	
11	Border Target Operating Model and Trading Standards/ KSS	
12	Community Wardens Update	
13	Employment Task Force	General update
14	Performance Dashboard	
15	Tourism in the county and economic impact	
16	Work Programme	Standing item
6 MARCH 2025 at 10am		
1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item
6	KMBF Bi-Annual report	
7	Work Programme	Standing item
1 JULY 2025 at 10am		
1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item
6	Kent Design Guide	
7	Performance Dashboard	
8	Work Programme	Standing item

Items for Consideration that have not yet been allocated to a meeting

Dungeness Nuclear Power Station

Given the announcement in the March 2024 Government Budget that Great British Nuclear will delay a decision on where the first Small Modular Reactors will be delivered until after the General Election, there is no substantive update that can be provided to Cabinet Committee. Work and engagement will continue in meantime and will be reported upon in 2025.

(Mr Robey – agenda setting 31/01/23)

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