

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

Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025

2.00 pm

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



AGENDA

GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22 January 2025 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

Ask for: **Hayley Savage**
Telephone: **03000 414286**

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 Ms J Meade

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 6 November 2024 (Pages 1 - 8)
- 5 Draft Revenue Budget 2025-26 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025-28 Update, and Draft Capital Programme 2025-35 (Pages 9 - 40)
- 6 Verbal updates by the Cabinet Members and Corporate Director
- 7 Performance Dashboard (Pages 41 - 56)
- 8 24/00116 - The Future of Library Provision in Folkestone Town Centre (Pages 57 - 166)
- 9 24/00103 - Governance Arrangements for Growing Places Funding (Pages 167 - 196)

- 10 24/00102 - Connect to Work Programme (Pages 197 - 212)
- 11 24/00122 - Awarding of Local Nutrient Mitigation Funding to Local Planning Authorities for the delivery of mitigation schemes for Nutrient Neutrality in the Stour catchment (Pages 213 - 236)
- 12 24/00104 - External Grant Funding Acceptance by Kent County Council on behalf of Active Kent & Medway (Pages 237 - 256)
- 13 Update on the implementation of the New Operating Model and Geographical Allocation Policy for the Community Warden Service (Pages 257 - 266)
- 14 2024 Infrastructure Funding Statement (Pages 267 - 294)
- 15 Presentation from Visit Kent (Pages 295 - 312)
- 16 Work Programme 2025 (Pages 313 - 314)

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, 14 January 2025

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 Wednesday, 6 November 2024.

PRESENT: Mr A Sandhu, MBE (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Baldock, Mrs R Binks, Mr D Crow-Brown, Ms K Grehan, Mr M A J Hood, Mr J P McInroy, Mr J Meade and Mr M J Sole

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Murphy, Mrs C Bell and Mr P J Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Smith, Mrs S Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities), Ms H Savage (Democratic Services Officer), Ms B Hooker (Head of Coroner Service), Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr T Marchant (Head of Strategic Development and Place), Mr M Rolfe (Head of Community Protection), Mr G Rusling (Head of Public Rights of Way & Access), Mr S Samson (Interim Head of Economy), Ms J Farrell (Head of Service) and Dr E Schwartz (Deputy Director Public Health)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

227. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr Cannon, Mr Lewis and Mr Ridgers.

Mr Baldock and Ms Grehan were present virtually.

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

(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

229. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2024

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2024 were a correct record.

230. Manston Airport (Presentation)

(Item 5)

Mr Tony Freudmann, Director RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Tony Freudmann, Director of RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited, provided a presentation on Manston Airport, a copy of which was included in the agenda pack.
2. Members thanked Mr Freudmann for the presentation and discussed and commented on the airport in relation to sustainable growth, transport and infrastructure, and the impact it would have on jobs and the economy.
3. RESOLVED to note the presentation.

231. Verbal updates by the Cabinet Members and Corporate Director
(Item 6)

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, provided an update on the following:
 - (a) Feedback from the recent Folkestone Library consultation was being analysed and would inform the future decision.
 - (b) The Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) service had retained Customer Service Excellence standard. The Assessor was impressed by the enthusiasm displayed by staff, their local knowledge of communities and customers, the creativity and innovation that took place, and how the services and staff were open to change.
 - (c) Kent Libraries had once again signed up to the Warm Welcome Campaign which highlighted all Kent libraries as safe and welcoming places people could visit. This was featured on a recent ITV Meridian news item where staff at Margate Library were interviewed promoting warm welcoming library spaces.
 - (d) Black History Month in October was commemorated in libraries and throughout 2024 there had been a touring exhibition called 'Beyond the Bassline' 500 Years of Black British music, on loan from the British Library.
 - (e) Community Wardens had been allocated communities following changes to the service and engagement was taking place with parish and local councils regarding the option for them to fund a Warden in their area.
 - (f) Mrs Bell joined the Chair of National Trading Standards, Lord Bichard, at a visit with the Council's Trading Standards Ports Team to find out about their work protecting the border. The visit focussed on preventing illegal vapes entering the country but covered the whole remit of the team at the border. A visit to the Port of Dover was included where some of the challenges facing the team were demonstrated. Lord Bichard asked for the challenges that could be addressed centrally to be shared with him in writing so that he could discuss them with Government.

- (g) Trading Standards led and coordinated a multi-agency operation targeting illicit trade in tobacco products and vapes. Agencies included Kent Police, HMRC and local authorities.
 - (h) Mrs Bell attended the launch of the first Local Vape Action Project in Tunbridge Wells which was led by British Vape Trade Association and the project aimed at ensuring only legal safe products were sold and that sales to children did not occur.
 - (i) The main focus of the Resilience and Emergency Planning service continued to be the Entry/Exit System border checks and work continued internally and across the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum to ensure the Council was prepared. The Business Continuity Management System progressed and the Adult Social Care and Health directorate were trialling the system.
 - (j) Mrs Bell recently met representatives from the British Horse Society at Squirrels Riding School in Bluebell Hill, along with the local member, Chairman of the Council, and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, and heard about the challenges faced by equestrians using public rights of way and safety issues on the roads.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
- The Trading Standards Team was at the heart of the government consultation on vapes to ensure the right support could be provided to businesses. The market was starting to change ahead of the ban and the use of reuseable vapes was increasing.
3. Mr Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, provided an update on the following:
- (a) The lead officer for No Use Empty (NUE), Steve Grimshaw, delivered a presentation to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) officers following a recent letter from Mr Murphy to the Housing Minister, Mr Matthew Pennycook MP.
 - (b) The NUE scheme had returned approximately 8500 empty properties in Kent back into use since April 2005. So far for the financial year 2024/2025 22 loans had been approved with a value of £2.3million. The outstanding bad debt of the NUE scheme since 2005 was only £140,000.
 - (c) The NUE team recently participated in a day's filming about the successful empty properties scheme for a feature on the BBC's 'The One Show'.
 - (d) The NUE New Build Scheme had funded 243 new homes across eight Kent districts and a further eight applications were currently being progressed. Work was ongoing with the Kent and Medway Business Fund with a view to accessing more funding to promote commercial schemes.

- (e) Since the Kent & Medway Business Fund was relaunched earlier in the year, 15 applications had been approved for loans to the value of £1.2million for small business development.
 - (f) Mr Murphy attended, in September 2024, the opening of the Taittinger Vineyard in Chilham, Kent which was the first venture of any French vineyard outside of France. The vineyard comprises 150 hectares and had been a 10-15 year project. A growth in vineyards was now being seen in Kent which was the largest growing vineyard area in England.
4. Mr Jones, Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport, provided an update on the following operational matters:
- (a) The Registration teams were experiencing an increase in service demand through winter and customer service officers were allowing as many extra appointments as possible during this challenging period.
 - (b) The workload for continuing domestic abuse related death reviews remained high with 22 reviews currently being undertaken. Two sessions of a lessons learnt webinar were held in October in partnership with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding and Adults Board.
 - (c) Ashford Gateway hosted a team from Arts Council England to observe a 'Playground' session and the Arts Council England fed back that they viewed 'Playground' as a national example of good practice.
 - (d) Mr Jones thanked the 900 volunteers who added value to the Libraries, Registration and Archive service in delivering, for example, the home library service, maintaining reading gardens, research, supporting local history collections, and making a positive difference to communities. A promotional push of the Home Library Service would take place in the new year to highlight how people could get involved and encourage more volunteers to join the team.
 - (e) Mr Jones thanked the Economic Development team for their newsletter.
5. RESOLVED to note the verbal updates.

232. Draft Revenue Budget 2025-26 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025-28
(Item 7)

1. Mr Oakford introduced the report highlighting that it was published before the government's Autumn Budget and therefore did not include anything contained within that. He said the provisional Local Government Financial Settlement would not be received until December and therefore assumptions had been made regarding the grants the Council would receive. Mr Oakford explained that the draft budget and MTFP was not yet completely balanced, principally due to undelivered savings in adult social care, and £19.8million of policy savings also needed to be found. He said the increase in the living wage would have a substantial impact on the Council and its commissioned services. Mr Oakford said he believed, based on the recent Autumn Budget, that the Council

should receive an extra £13million for adult social care but, whilst this was welcomed, it was not enough to have a sufficient impact on the Council's budget.

2. Mr Murphy explained, in relation to the Economic Development portfolio, there was a spend of £3.8million against which there was an income in excess of £500,000 through No Use Empty and the East Kent Opportunities Scheme. He said savings of £85,000 had been included and highlighted this amount, although seemingly small, should be considered against the overall spend of £3.8million.
3. Mrs Bell said the overall budget for Community and Regulatory Services was approximately £25million, against which there was an underspend of just over £800,000 principally through additional income generated by Trading Standards, the Registration Service, and staff vacancies in the Coroners Service. Savings for 2025/26 reflected the overall size of the budget and work in previous years to make policy and efficiency savings. Mrs Bell highlighted a saving target in the Libraries, Registrations and Archives service of £300,000 was likely to be achieved through additional income from the service.
4. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - The new layout of the report was welcomed.
 - Cyclopark was a discretionary spend and Mr Murphy would be meeting with partners later in the year to discuss future plans.
 - The ambition was for Locate in Kent, Visit Kent and Produced in Kent to work together as one entity.
5. RESOLVED to note the administration's draft revenue budgets including responses to consultation.

233. Introduction of the National Medical Examiner Process - Impact on Kent Coroners and Registration Services (Item 8)

Ms Belinda Hooker, Head of Kent and Medway Coroner Service was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Bell introduced the report regarding the implementation of the statutory Medical Examiner System and its impact on coroners' responsibilities and ways of working, and explained the role of the Medical Examiner.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - It was anticipated that the changes being implemented, once the new system was established, would speed up the issuing of death certificates.
3. RESOLVED to note the changes in relation to the death management pathway and the impacts on the Coroner and Registration Services.

234. 24/00092 - Kent & Medway Skills Bootcamps Programme (Item 9)

Ms Jude Farrell, Head of Community Learning & Skills, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Murphy, Mr Samson and Ms Farrell introduced the report regarding a recent Kent County Council bid to the Department for Education (DfE) for a local, sector-focused 'Skills Bootcamps' programme for the 25-26 financial year to support local employers and the Kent & Medway workforce. Mr Samson said the outcome of the bid was expected in December 2024 and, if successful, 25 different bootcamps would be run for different sectors. It would secure £1.7million funding of which the Council would use approximately £250,000 to ensure the scheme was run on a full cost recovery basis.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - Work had begun with employers in different industry sectors, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and other stakeholders to identify who may wish to be involved in the programme. There would also be local communication before each bootcamp was launched.
 - Work was taking place with providers and stakeholders involved in the Lower Thames Crossing and a sub-contract opportunity within CYPE relating to the Adult Skills Fund aimed to prepare people for bootcamps.
 - There was the opportunity to approach the DfE for more funding in year if gaps in skills were identified.
 - The programme would effectively be a pilot and the procurement process would allow for flexibility for learners to access the programme from across the county. Opportunities for online learning would also be considered and discussed with training providers should a barrier to participation be identified and subject to the nature of the bootcamp. Market engagement through different stakeholder groups had taken place to ensure there was a full coverage of providers from across the county.
 - A geographical map highlighting what was available would be helpful and this was something that could be considered after programme launch.
3. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development (subject to receiving confirmation of funding from the DfE) to:
 - (i) APPROVE the acceptance of the National Skills Fund Grant, subject to final review and consideration of detailed terms and conditions from the Department of Education, for delivery of the Skills Bootcamps Programme for Kent & Medway.
 - (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, to review and agree to the required terms and conditions to enter into the necessary grant arrangements.
 - (iii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision to deliver

a Skills Bootcamp Programme for Kent and Medway as shown at Appendix A.

235. Public Rights of Way and Access Service - Overview

(Item 10)

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

1. Mrs Bell introduced the report which provided an overview of the Public Rights of Way and Access Service and explained that the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the 'median number of days to resolve priority faults on the public rights of way network' had reduced in quarter 3 (2023/2024) to 20 (and rag rated green) and the performance reports for quarter 4 (2023/2024) and quarter 1 (2024/2025) showed the number of days had reduced to 9. She drew Members' attention to Appendix B, sections 3.3 – 3.15, which set out the approach to the operational management of the network.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - PROW officers were commended for the service they provide.
 - Active Travel England funding was secured for the repair of a towpath between Aylesford and Maidstone and work was in progress.
 - Active Travel England were currently producing rural guidance and engaging with the PROW sector.
 - The current length of time for a PROW application to be processed from receipt to allocation to an officer was 58 months. The backlog was 93 cases and 14 or 15 per year were being progressed. The backlog was likely to increase as the Definitive Map and Statement would close to applications based on historical evidence as from 1 January 2031 and stakeholder groups were actively researching where applications could be made before that date.
3. RESOLVED to note and endorse the report.

236. Integrated Work and Health Strategy for Kent & Medway

(Item 11)

Ms Ellen Schwartz, Assistant Director Public Health, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Murphy, Mr Samson and Ms Schwartz introduced the report which provided an update on the development of an Integrated Health and Work Strategy for Kent & Medway which aimed to tackle economic inactivity relate to long-term health conditions.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - In terms of how often sick leave was reviewed, there was a reasonable adjustment section on 'fit note' forms that was used around 6% of the time. In June 2023 there were around 2357 issued relating to mental health issues and 1300 relating to musculo skeletal conditions. More

information would be provided in relation to how often reviews took place and who conducted them.

- The initial focus of the Strategic Partnership of Health and Economy was the Work and Health Strategy due to the funding being available from government. The broader remit of the partnership included how health and economic development could be looked at jointly to improve quality of life for residents, enhance workforce capacity and help businesses.

3. RESOLVED to note the report and endorse the development of an Integrated Work and Health Strategy for Kent & Medway.

237. Work Programme 2024/25

(Item 12)

1. Mr Sole asked that the item – Kent Rural Partnership – on the work programme include an update on Kent agriculture and land industry.
2. RESOLVED to note the Work Programme.

From: Roger Gough, Leader of the Council
Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services
Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee on 22nd January 2025

Subject: **Draft Revenue Budget 2025-26 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025-28 Update, and Draft Capital Programme 2025-35**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary:

This report sets out for further consideration the material changes to the administration's draft revenue budget proposals for 2025-26 from those presented to committees in November for the Cabinet portfolios and directorates relevant to this committee. As with the November report this is a tailored report for each committee.

The update includes the following information relevant to the Cabinet Committee's portfolio(s):

- Full year effect of variances reported in quarter two 2024-25 budget monitoring report;
- Latest projections for price indices applied for contractual price uplifts;
- Latest activity/demand/cost trends;
- Spending and income arising from Autumn 2024 Budget statement, Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (PLGFS) and departmental grant announcements;
- Updated savings and income forecasts, including further progress on £19.8m policy savings to replace one-offs in 2024-25

Appendices to the report set out the draft capital programme and significant changes to the revenue budget since the draft published in November.

The administration's final 2025-26 draft budget, 2025-28 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Capital Programme 2025-35 will be published in full for Cabinet endorsement on 30th January. This will need to show a balanced revenue position for 2025-26 and fully funded capital programme.

Recommendations:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- a) NOTE the update to administration's draft revenue budget proposals
 - b) NOTE and COMMENT on draft capital programme
 - c) Propose, to the Executive, any changes which should be made to the administration's draft budget proposals related to the Cabinet Committee's portfolio area before the final draft is considered by Cabinet on 30th January 2025 and presented to Full County Council on 13th February 2025.
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1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The setting of the budget is a decision reserved for Full Council. The Council's Constitution requires that a draft Budget is issued for consideration to Cabinet Committees and the Scrutiny Committee to allow for their comments and any recommendations to be considered before the final budget proposals are made to Full Council.
- 1.2 The Council is under a legal duty to set a balanced and sustainable budget within the resources available from local taxation and central government grants and to maintain adequate reserves. This duty applies to the final draft budget presented for Full Council approval at the annual budget meeting. The overall purpose of the budget is to ensure that the Council continues to plan for revenue and capital spending which is affordable, reflects the Council's strategic priorities, allows the Council to fulfil its statutory responsibilities and continues to maintain and improve the Council's financial resilience.
- 1.3 A 3-year MTFP covering the entirety of the resources available to the Council is the best way that resource prioritisation and allocation decisions can be considered and agreed in a way that provides a stable and considered approach to service delivery and takes into account relevant risks and uncertainty.
- 1.4 The administration's updated draft revenue budget 2025-26 proposals are now balanced, in principle, pending Cabinet endorsement. This includes resolution of the £11.4m unresolved balances in the November draft. The resolution comes from a mix of updated spending growth, updated savings and income plans, and increased/new grants in the PLGFS and other departmental grants. The timing of the £19.8m policy savings required to replace the use of one-offs to balance 2024-25 budget remains an issue for 2025-26, although this is now proposed to be resolved through a combination of funding qualifying revenue expenditure from capital receipts and extension of New Homes Bonus grant, with significantly less required from a loan from reserves.
- 1.5 The plans for 2026-27 and 2027-28 in the MTFP continue to be indicative based upon a set of assumptions for spending/savings & income, and funding. The plans for 2026-27 and 2027-28 are broadly balanced albeit at a high-level at this stage pending further detail of reforms to local authority funding and multi-year settlement. The illustrative plans set out the possible trajectory based upon current policy assumptions, although other scenarios are possible. There is a balance to be struck between planning for what is currently known (which are the factors cited above) and the likelihood of an improvement in the financial position via any additional Government support (including update and reform of current methodologies) or improved tax returns, with the risk being managed through reserves.
- 1.6 The draft Capital Programme has been prepared on the basis that only fully funded projects are included, with a separate schedule of potential projects which could be considered for inclusion in future programmes once funding has been secured. The programme is based on the presumption that there will be no new borrowing to fund new schemes. The plan includes the rephasing of projects as result of 2023-24 outturn as well as new fully funded schemes, invest to save projects, and resolution

of outstanding funding on essential commitments arising since the original programme was published.

1.7 This report focuses on the key policy considerations within the administration's draft budget proposals (updated revenue plans and capital programme) for each Cabinet portfolio. This focussed report allows Cabinet Committees to specifically consider the parts of the Budget that fall within their remit. The Scrutiny Committee will receive the budget proposals for the whole Council as the role of the Scrutiny Committee is to review and challenge the overall budget.

1.8 An updated interactive dashboard is also available via the link at point 10 of background documents to Members, enabling the details of revenue proposals to be examined and scrutinised, including a new dashboard covering the £19.8m required savings to replace one-off used to balance 2024-25 budget.

1.9 Separate appendices are included which set out:

- High Level Summary of draft capital programme 2025-35 (Appendix A)
- Detail of capital programme 2025-35 for Growth, Environment and Transport directorate (Appendix B)
- Projects under consideration for future capital programmes (Appendix C)
- An updated high-level summary of the administration's draft revenue plans 2025-28 (Appendix D)
- A summary of the updated revenue plan for Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) directorate for 2025-26 (Appendix E)
- Budget risk register (Appendix F)

1.10 These, together with the previous reports in November, provide the same level of background information as presented to Cabinet Committees and the Scrutiny Committee in previous years.

1.11 Following consideration of updated revenue plans and draft capital programme, a revised draft of the administration's final budget proposals will be published for Cabinet endorsement at the meeting on 30 January 2025 (including consideration of issues raised and alternative proposals raised at Cabinet Committees and the Scrutiny Committee) prior to final approval at County Council in February 2025.

2. Key Policy Considerations for Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee

Updated Revenue Proposals

2.1. Only minor changes relating to price increases (in line with changes to inflation indices) and profiling of growth pressures/savings have been adjusted.

Changes between current capital programme and draft programme 2025-35

2.2.1 The previous capital programme included a project to maintain and extend the useful life of the Essella Road Bridge through urgent works, a structure within the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network.

2.2.2 Due to further investigations of the structural integrity of the bridge, and the increase costs to repair the existing structure, the project has now been amended to

reflect the replacement of the bridge, with the cost of the scheme increasing accordingly.

Key decisions required

- 2.3 There are no new key decisions to be taken or are required as part of the new proposals over and above those that are brought to this committee anyway e.g. confirming Libraries, Registration and Archive price uplifts for the forthcoming year.

3. Contact details

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Relevant Corporate Directors:

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Background documents

- 1 [KCC's Budget webpage](#)
- 2 [KCC's Corporate Risk Register](#) (Governance and Audit Committee 16th May 2024)
- 3 [KCC's Risk Management Strategy, Policy and Programme](#) (Governance and Audit Committee 19th March 2024)
- 4 [KCC's approved 2024-25 Budget](#)
- 5 Q2 Budget monitoring Report [Cabinet Paper](#)
- 6 [Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy](#)
- 7 [Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Report](#)
- 8 Dashboard – [Dashboard](#)

APPENDIX A - CAPITAL INVESTMENT SUMMARY 2025-26 TO 2034-35

ROW REF	Directorate	Dir	Total Cost	Prior Years Spend	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
					Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
					£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
1	Adult Social Care & Health	ASCH	7,003	3,939	549	515	250	250
2	Children, Young People & Education	CYPE	565,619	162,244	97,113	105,761	53,338	27,325
3	Growth, Environment & Transport	GET	1,278,892	376,870	149,701	146,431	111,087	81,163
4	Chief Executive's Department	CED	3,973	1,634	-1,655	3,994	0	0
5	Deputy Chief Executive's Department	DCED	142,475	44,419	27,746	17,932	11,533	3,945
6	Total Cash Limit		1,997,962	589,106	273,454	274,633	176,208	112,683
Funded By:								
7	Borrowing		441,100	74,485	45,168	85,577	47,705	23,165
8	Property Enterprise Fund (PEF) 2		369	369				
9	Grants		1,107,270	351,956	143,509	110,169	77,192	65,353
10	Developer Contributions		184,067	45,322	34,435	56,608	33,685	10,521
11	Other External Funding e.g. Arts Council, District Contributions etc.		27,182	12,969	11,124	3,089		
12	Revenue Contributions to Capital		85,401	16,146	13,685	6,155	6,528	6,333
13	Capital Receipts		42,315	16,711	16,124	4,446	484	650
14	Recycled Loan Repayments		110,258	71,148	9,409	8,589	10,614	6,661
15	Total Finance		1,997,962	589,106	273,454	274,633	176,208	112,683

APPENDIX A - CAPITAL INVESTMENT SUMMARY 2025-26 TO 2034-35

ROW REF	Directorate	Dir	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
			Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
1	Adult Social Care & Health	ASCH	250	250	250	250	250	250
2	Children, Young People & Education	CYPE	22,338	19,500	19,500	19,500	19,500	19,500
3	Growth, Environment & Transport	GET	71,965	68,167	68,087	68,107	70,922	66,392
4	Chief Executive's Department	CED	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Deputy Chief Executive's Department	DCED	6,150	6,150	6,150	6,150	6,150	6,150
6	Total Cash Limit		100,703	94,067	93,987	94,007	96,822	92,292
Funded By:								
7	Borrowing		25,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000
8	Property Enterprise Fund (PEF) 2							
9	Grants		61,622	59,143	59,165	59,187	62,002	57,972
10	Developer Contributions		3,406	90				
11	Other External Funding e.g. Arts Council, District Contributions etc.							
12	Revenue Contributions to Capital		6,188	6,184	6,172	6,170	6,170	5,670
13	Capital Receipts		650	650	650	650	650	650
14	Recycled Loan Repayments		3,837					
15	Total Finance		100,703	94,067	93,987	94,007	96,822	92,292

Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)

ROW REF	Project	Description of Project	Total Cost of Scheme	Prior Years Spend	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
					Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Growth & Communities								
1	Country Parks Access and Development	Improvements and adaptations to country parks	756		126	70	70	70
2	Public Rights of Way (PROW)	Structural improvements of public rights of way	10,804		2,221	1,383	900	900
3	Public Sports Facilities Improvement	Capital grants for new provision/refurbishment of sports facilities and projects in the community	750		75	75	75	75
4	Village Halls and Community Centres	Capital Grants for improvements and adaptations to village halls and community centres	793		118	75	75	75
Transportation								
5	Highways Asset Management/Annual Maintenance [1] [2]	Maintaining Kent's roads	603,372		55,100	61,496	61,320	61,320
6	Integrated Transport Schemes [1] [2]	Improvements to road safety	39,941		4,373	3,952	3,952	3,952
7	Old Highways Schemes, Residual Works, Land Compensation Act (LCA) Part 1	Old Highways Schemes, Residual Works, LCA Part 1	93		80	13	0	0
8	Total Rolling Programmes [3]		656,509		62,093	67,064	66,392	66,392
Growth & Communities								
9	Digital Autopsy	To provide a body storage and digital autopsy facility	3,065	305	90	2,670	0	0
10	Essella Road Bridge (PROW)	Urgent works to ensure footbridge remains open	1,600	191	629	520	260	0
11	Public Mortuary	To consider options for the provision of a public mortuary	3,000	0	0	0	3,000	0
12	Innovation Investment Initiative (i3)	Provision of loans to small and medium enterprises with the potential for innovation and growth, helping them to improve their productivity and create jobs	10,375	7,379	1,190	1,100	706	0
13	Javelin Way Development	To provide accommodation for creative industries and the creation of industrial units	12,631	12,599	0	0	32	0
14	Kent & Medway Business Fund	Loan fund using recycled receipts from Regional Growth Fund, TIGER and Escalate, to enable creation of jobs and support business start ups	31,073	22,316	1,675	1,709	1,743	1,768
15	Kent & Medway Business Fund - Small Business Boost	Loan fund using recycled receipts from Regional Growth Fund, TIGER and Escalate, aimed at helping small businesses	12,268	2,977	1,778	1,813	1,849	1,876

Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)

ROW REF	Project	Description of Project	Total Cost of Scheme	Prior Years Spend	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
					Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
16	Kent Empty Property Initiative - No Use Empty (NUE)	Bringing long term empty properties including commercial buildings and vacant sites back into use as quality housing accommodation	73,237	60,251	2,567	1,087	6,315	3,017
17	The Kent Broadband Voucher Scheme	Voucher scheme to benefit properties in hard to reach locations	2,862	514	533	1,298	517	0
Environment & Circular Economy								
18	Energy and Water Efficiency Investment Fund - External	Recycling loan fund for energy efficiency projects	2,876	2,711	57	49	35	23
19	Energy Reduction and Water Efficiency Investment - KCC	Recycling loan fund for energy efficiency projects	2,439	2,308	27	27	25	19
20	Leigh (Medway) Flood Storage Area	Contribution to partnership-funded projects to provide flood defences for the River Medway	2,500	2,053	447	0	0	0
21	Kings Hill Solar Farm	Construction of a solar farm	5,038	4,897	141	0	0	0
22	Maidstone Heat Network	To install heat pumps in offices in Maidstone	408	332	76	0	0	0
23	New Transfer Station - Folkestone & Hythe [1]	To provide a new waste transfer station in Folkestone & Hythe	10,302	644	5,100	4,558	0	0
24	Surface Water Flood Risk Management	To provide flood risk management and climate adaptation investment in capital infrastructure across Kent, to reduce the significant risks of local flooding and adapt to the impacts of climate change which are predicted to be substantial on the county	5,493	765	600	628	500	500
25	Windmill Asset Management & Weatherproofing	Works to ensure Windmills are in a safe and weatherproof condition	1,794	1,286	100	186	100	122
26	Local Authority Treescape Fund (LATF)	Tree planting programme funded by grant	979	646	152	125	56	0
27	Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund	Grant funding to ensure a dedicated resource to respond to housing stalling resulting from nutrient pollution	9,800	7,000	2,800	0	0	0
28	Reuse Shop at Allington Household Waste Recycling Centre	Capital contributions to the provision of a reuse shop	360	44	50	50	50	166
Transportation								
29	A2 Off Slip Wincheap, Canterbury [1]	To deliver an off-slip in the coastbound direction	4,400	0	1,500	2,199	701	0
30	A228 and B2160 Junction Improvements with B2017 Badsell Road [1]	Junction improvements	4,790	878	3,897	15	0	0
31	A28 Chart Road, Ashford [1]	Strategic highway improvement	29,699	4,549	3,819	11,061	10,190	80
32	Bath Street, Gravesend	Bus Lane project - Fastrack programme extension	5,520	5,095	425	0	0	0
33	Dover Bus Rapid Transit	To provide a high quality and reliable public transport service in the Dover area, funded from Housing Infrastructure funding	25,899	25,654	185	60	0	0

Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)

ROW REF	Project	Description of Project	Total Cost of Scheme	Prior Years Spend	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
					Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
34	Fastrack Full Network - Bean Road Tunnels [1]	Construction of a tunnel linking Bluewater and the Eastern Quarry Development	23,539	2,903	11,439	9,197	0	0
35	Green Corridors	Programme of schemes to improve walking and cycling in Ebbsfeet	6,591	2,526	3,990	75	0	0
36	Herne Relief Road [1]	Provision of an alternative route between Herne Bay and Canterbury to avoid Herne village	9,076	9,076	0	0	0	0
37	Housing Infrastructure Fund - Swale Infrastructure Projects	Improvements to A249 Junctions at Grovehurst Road and Keycol Roundabout	45,199	35,890	9,124	185	0	0
38	Kent Active Travel Fund Phase 3	Investment in active travel initiatives as an alternative to the travelling public for shorter journeys	2,039	1,800	239	0	0	0
39	Kent Active Travel Fund Phase 4	Investment in active travel initiatives as an alternative to the travelling public for shorter journeys	2,698	1,782	916	0	0	0
40	Bearsted Road Improvements - formerly Kent Medical Campus (National Productivity Investment Fund - NPIF)	Project to ease congestion in Maidstone	14,357	8,278	6,049	30	0	0
41	Kent Thameside Strategic Transport Programme (Thamesway) [1]	Strategic highway improvement in Dartford & Gravesham	9,095	2,525	1,036	5,534	0	0
42	LED Conversion	Upgrading street lights to more energy efficient LED lanterns & implementation of Central Monitoring System	40,604	40,329	275	0	0	0
43	Maidstone Integrated Transport [1]	Improving transport links with various schemes in Maidstone	14,079	13,943	136	0	0	0
44	Rathmore Road Link	Road improvement scheme	7,808	7,777	31	0	0	0
45	Sturry Link Road, Canterbury [1]	Construction of bypass	43,774	6,072	1,646	26,486	9,111	301
46	Thanet Parkway	Construction of Thanet Parkway Railway Station to enhance rail access in east Kent and act as a catalyst for economic and housing growth	43,225	42,933	292	0	0	0
47	A229 Bluebell Hill M2 & M20 Interchange Upgrades [4]	Initial works for a scheme to upgrade junctions to increase capacity and provide free flowing interchange wherever possible	7,000	3,198	3,802	0	0	0
48	North Thanet Link (formerly known as A28 Birchington) [4]	Initial works on the creation of a relief road	4,294	4,002	292	0	0	0

Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)

ROW REF	Project	Description of Project	Total Cost of Scheme	Prior Years Spend	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
					Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
49	Zebra Funding - Electric Buses and infrastructure	Grant funded projects for electric buses and infrastructure	9,526	8,234	1,292	0	0	0
50	Folkestone Brighter Futures	A package of transport and public realm improvements from Folkestone Central Station through to the Town Centre, funded from Levelling Up Fund 2, which KCC are delivering on behalf of Folkestone and Hythe District Council	15,953	5,254	10,279	420	0	0
51	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) [1]	Grant funded project to provide electric vehicle infrastructure	12,280	0	525	762	1,106	1,128
52	National Bus Strategy - Bus Service Improvement Plan	Part of the National Bus Strategy for England to provide improved quality buses and services	14,660	13,560	1,100	0	0	0
53	M20 Junction 7	Highway improvements at M20 junction 7	6,622	164	1,826	4,578	54	0
54	Thames Way (STIPS)		3,380	1,000	2,380	0	0	0
55	Manston to Haine Link [1]	A package of new highway links and improved highway infrastructure linking strategic development in Westwood and Manston	17,514	80	373	2,945	8,345	5,771
56	Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) Landscaping Improvements	To deliver an exemplar approach to design and maintenance of green infrastructure and the creation of ecological value at key gateways into the Garden City	1,878	150	1,728	0	0	0
57	Tunnel Fans	To enhance fans at Chestfield Tunnel	1,000	0	1,000	0	0	0
58	Total Individual Projects		618,599	376,870	87,608	79,367	44,695	14,771
59	Total - Growth, Environment & Transport		1,275,108	376,870	149,701	146,431	111,087	81,163

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[1] These are projects that are relying on significant elements of unsecured funding and will only go ahead if the funding is achieved

[2] Estimated allocations have been included for 2025-26 to 2034-35

[3] Rolling programmes have been included for 10 year capital programme

[4] Initial works only are reflected, with the main scheme in the Potential Projects section, whilst awaiting award of funding.

Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)

ROW REF	Project	Description of Project	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
			Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Growth & Communities								
1	Country Parks Access and Development	Improvements and adaptations to country parks	70	70	70	70	70	70
2	Public Rights of Way (PROW)	Structural improvements of public rights of way	900	900	900	900	900	900
3	Public Sports Facilities Improvement	Capital grants for new provision/refurbishment of sports facilities and projects in the community	75	75	75	75	75	75
4	Village Halls and Community Centres	Capital Grants for improvements and adaptations to village halls and community centres	75	75	75	75	75	75
Transportation								
5	Highways Asset Management/Annual Maintenance [1] [2]	Maintaining Kent's roads	61,320	61,320	61,320	61,320	61,320	61,320
6	Integrated Transport Schemes [1] [2]	Improvements to road safety	3,952	3,952	3,952	3,952	3,952	3,952
7	Old Highways Schemes, Residual Works, Land Compensation Act (LCA) Part 1	Old Highways Schemes, Residual Works, LCA Part 1	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Total Rolling Programmes [3]		66,392	66,392	66,392	66,392	66,392	66,392
Growth & Communities								
9	Digital Autopsy	To provide a body storage and digital autopsy facility	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	Essella Road Bridge (PROW)	Urgent works to ensure footbridge remains open	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Public Mortuary	To consider options for the provision of a public mortuary	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Innovation Investment Initiative (i3)	Provision of loans to small and medium enterprises with the potential for innovation and growth, helping them to improve their productivity and create jobs	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Javelin Way Development	To provide accommodation for creative industries and the creation of industrial units	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	Kent & Medway Business Fund	Loan fund using recycled receipts from Regional Growth Fund, TIGER and Escalate, to enable creation of jobs and support business start ups	1,862	0	0	0	0	0
15	Kent & Medway Business Fund - Small Business Boost	Loan fund using recycled receipts from Regional Growth Fund, TIGER and Escalate, aimed at helping small businesses	1,975	0	0	0	0	0

Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)

ROW REF	Project	Description of Project	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
			Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
16	Kent Empty Property Initiative - No Use Empty (NUE)	Bringing long term empty properties including commercial buildings and vacant sites back into use as quality housing accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	The Kent Broadband Voucher Scheme	Voucher scheme to benefit properties in hard to reach locations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environment & Circular Economy								
18	Energy and Water Efficiency Investment Fund - External	Recycling loan fund for energy efficiency projects	1	0	0	0	0	0
19	Energy Reduction and Water Efficiency Investment - KCC	Recycling loan fund for energy efficiency projects	17	14	2	0	0	0
20	Leigh (Medway) Flood Storage Area	Contribution to partnership-funded projects to provide flood defences for the River Medway	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	Kings Hill Solar Farm	Construction of a solar farm	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	Maidstone Heat Network	To install heat pumps in offices in Maidstone	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	New Transfer Station - Folkestone & Hythe [1]	To provide a new waste transfer station in Folkestone & Hythe	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Surface Water Flood Risk Management	To provide flood risk management and climate adaptation investment in capital infrastructure across Kent, to reduce the significant risks of local flooding and adapt to the impacts of climate change which are predicted to be substantial on the county	500	500	500	500	500	0
25	Windmill Asset Management & Weatherproofing	Works to ensure Windmills are in a safe and weatherproof condition	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	Local Authority Treescape Fund (LATF)	Tree planting programme funded by grant	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund	Grant funding to ensure a dedicated resource to respond to housing stalling resulting from nutrient pollution	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	Reuse Shop at Allington Household Waste Recycling Centre	Capital contributions to the provision of a reuse shop	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transportation								
29	A2 Off Slip Wincheap, Canterbury [1]	To deliver an off-slip in the coastbound direction	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	A228 and B2160 Junction Improvements with B2017 Badsell Road [1]	Junction improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0
31	A28 Chart Road, Ashford [1]	Strategic highway improvement	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	Bath Street, Gravesend	Bus Lane project - Fastrack programme extension	0	0	0	0	0	0
33	Dover Bus Rapid Transit	To provide a high quality and reliable public transport service in the Dover area, funded from Housing Infrastructure funding	0	0	0	0	0	0

Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)

ROW REF	Project	Description of Project	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
			Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
34	Fastrack Full Network - Bean Road Tunnels [1]	Construction of a tunnel linking Bluewater and the Eastern Quarry Development	0	0	0	0	0	0
35	Green Corridors	Programme of schemes to improve walking and cycling in Ebbsfleet	0	0	0	0	0	0
36	Herne Relief Road [1]	Provision of an alternative route between Herne Bay and Canterbury to avoid Herne village	0	0	0	0	0	0
37	Housing Infrastructure Fund - Swale Infrastructure Projects	Improvements to A249 Junctions at Grovehurst Road and Keycol Roundabout	0	0	0	0	0	0
38	Kent Active Travel Fund Phase 3	Investment in active travel initiatives as an alternative to the travelling public for shorter journeys	0	0	0	0	0	0
39	Kent Active Travel Fund Phase 4	Investment in active travel initiatives as an alternative to the travelling public for shorter journeys	0	0	0	0	0	0
40	Bearsted Road Improvements - formerly Kent Medical Campus (National Productivity Investment Fund - NPIF)	Project to ease congestion in Maidstone	0	0	0	0	0	0
41	Kent Thameside Strategic Transport Programme (Thamesway) [1]	Strategic highway improvement in Dartford & Gravesham	0	0	0	0	0	0
42	LED Conversion	Upgrading street lights to more energy efficient LED lanterns & implementation of Central Monitoring System	0	0	0	0	0	0
43	Maidstone Integrated Transport [1]	Improving transport links with various schemes in Maidstone	0	0	0	0	0	0
44	Rathmore Road Link	Road improvement scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0
45	Sturry Link Road, Canterbury [1]	Construction of bypass	68	90	0	0	0	0
46	Thanet Parkway	Construction of Thanet Parkway Railway Station to enhance rail access in east Kent and act as a catalyst for economic and housing growth	0	0	0	0	0	0
47	A229 Bluebell Hill M2 & M20 Interchange Upgrades [4]	Initial works for a scheme to upgrade junctions to increase capacity and provide free flowing interchange wherever possible	0	0	0	0	0	0
48	North Thanet Link (formerly known as A28 Birchington) [4]	Initial works on the creation of a relief road	0	0	0	0	0	0

Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)

ROW REF	Project	Description of Project	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
			Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
49	Zebra Funding - Electric Buses and infrastructure	Grant funded projects for electric buses and infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0
50	Folkestone Brighter Futures	A package of transport and public realm improvements from Folkestone Central Station through to the Town Centre, funded from Levelling Up Fund 2, which KCC are delivering on behalf of Folkestone and Hythe District Council	0	0	0	0	0	0
51	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) [1]	Grant funded project to provide electric vehicle infrastructure	1,150	1,171	1,193	1,215	4,030	0
52	National Bus Strategy - Bus Service Improvement Plan	Part of the National Bus Strategy for England to provide improved quality buses and services	0	0	0	0	0	0
53	M20 Junction 7	Highway improvements at M20 junction 7	0	0	0	0	0	0
54	Thames Way (STIPS)		0	0	0	0	0	0
55	Manston to Haine Link [1]	A package of new highway links and improved highway infrastructure linking strategic development in Westwood and Manston	0	0	0	0	0	0
56	Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) Landscaping Improvements	To deliver an exemplar approach to design and maintenance of green infrastructure and the creation of ecological value at key gateways into the Garden City	0	0	0	0	0	0
57	Tunnel Fans	To enhance fans at Chestfield Tunnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
58	Total Individual Projects		5,573	1,775	1,695	1,715	4,530	0
59	Total - Growth, Environment & Transport		71,965	68,167	68,087	68,107	70,922	62,608

[1] These are projects that are relying on significant elements of unsecured funding and will only go ahead if the funding is achieved

[2] Estimated allocations have been included for 2025-26 to 2034-35

[3] Rolling programmes have been included for 10 year capital programme

[4] Initial works only are reflected, with the main scheme in the Potential Projects section, whilst awaiting award of funding.

APPENDIX C - POTENTIAL CAPITAL PROJECTS 2025-26 TO 2034-35 BY YEAR

These projects are currently very high level and commencement is subject to business case approval and affordable funding solutions identified.

Directorate	Potential Forthcoming Projects	Description of Project	Total Cost of Scheme	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
			£000s	Year 1 £000s	Year 2 £000s	Year 3 £000s	Year 4 £000s
Shortfall on Council's Office and Highways Network to Maintain Backlogs at Steady State							
DCED	Modernisation of Assets	Maintaining KCC's Office Estate	101,790	5,337	10,248	10,500	12,705
CYPE	Schools Annual Planned Enhancement	Planned and reactive capital projects to keep schools open and operational	53,500	1,000	5,000	5,000	5,500
CYPE	Schools Modernisation Programme	Improving and upgrading school buildings including removal of temporary classrooms	43,500		4,000	4,000	4,500
GET	Highways Asset Management, Annual Maintenance and Programme of Significant and Urgent Safety Critical Works	Maintaining Kent's Roads	1,321,101	105,034	110,285	115,800	121,590
GET	Public Rights of Way	Structural improvements of public rights of way	25,130	2,513	2,513	2,513	2,513
Potential Forthcoming Projects							
ASCH	Extra Care Facilities	Provision of Extra Care Accommodation	16,800		4,000	4,000	8,800
GET	Casualty Reduction/Congestion Management Schemes	Casualty reduction/congestion management scheme	7,500	7,500			
GET	Walking/Cycling/Public Transport Improvement Schemes	Walking, cycling and public transport improvement schemes	43,100	8,200	7,500	6,400	3,000
GET	Transitioning Fleet to EV	Transitioning Fleet to EV	7,500				2,500
GET	Kent Scientific Services	Renewal/Modernisation of laboratory facilities	10,000		10,000		
GET	Programme of Waste site Infrastructure Requirements	Programme of Waste Site Infrastructure Requirements	53,300	5,300	11,000	5,000	16,000
GET	Designated Funds	Programme of projects related to the Lower Thames Crossing	2,737	2,737			
GET	Dover Access Improvements	Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid to improve the efficiency of the port and also reduce congestion on the strategic and local road network	58,470	58,470			
GET	Thanet Way	Structural improvements to the Thanet Way A299	20,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
GET	North Thanet Link (formerly known as A28 Birchington)	Creation of a relief road	72,450	2,295	11,419	27,174	28,933
GET	A229 Bluebell Hill M2 and M20 Interchange Upgrades	Scheme to upgrade junctions to increase capacity and provide freeflowing interchange wherever possible	243,000	2,982	2,488	15,114	105,602
DCED	Future Assets	Asset review to include community services, office estate and specialist assets	52,000	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500
DCED	Further Provision for Member Accommodation in Invicta House	Further Provision for Member Accommodation in Invicta House	3,000		3,000		
DCED	Renewable Energy Programme	Renewable energy source options to work towards Net Zero target	32,000	8,000	7,500	8,000	8,500
Total Potential Forthcoming Projects			2,166,878	220,868	200,453	215,001	331,643

APPENDIX C - POTENTIAL CAPITAL PROJECTS 2025-26 TO 2034-35 BY YEAR

These projects are currently very high level and commencement is subject to business case approval and affordable funding s

Directorate	Potential Forthcoming Projects	Description of Project	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
			Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
			£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£'000s	£000s
Shortfall on Council's Office and Highways Network to Maintain Backlogs at Steady State								
DCED	Modernisation of Assets	Maintaining KCC's Office Estate	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
CYPE	Schools Annual Planned Enhancement	Planned and reactive capital projects to keep schools open and operational	5,500	6,000	6,000	6,500	6,500	6,500
CYPE	Schools Modernisation Programme	Improving and upgrading school buildings including removal of temporary classrooms	4,500	5,000	5,000	5,500	5,500	5,500
GET	Highways Asset Management, Annual Maintenance and Programme of Significant and Urgent Safety Critical Works	Maintaining Kent's Roads	127,669	134,052	140,755	147,793	155,182	162,941
GET	Public Rights of Way	Structural improvements of public rights of way	2,513	2,513	2,513	2,513	2,513	2,513
Potential Forthcoming Projects								
ASCH	Extra Care Facilities	Provision of Extra Care Accommodation						
GET	Casualty Reduction/Congestion Management Schemes	Casualty reduction/congestion management scheme						
GET	Walking/Cycling/Public Transport Improvement Schemes	Walking, cycling and public transport improvement schemes	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
GET	Transitioning Fleet to EV	Transitioning Fleet to EV	5,000					
GET	Kent Scientific Services	Renewal/Modernisation of laboratory facilities						
GET	Programme of Waste site Infrastructure Requirements	Programme of Waste Site Infrastructure Requirements	16,000					
GET	Designated Funds	Programme of projects related to the Lower Thames Crossing						
GET	Dover Access Improvements	Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid to improve the efficiency of the port and also reduce congestion on the strategic and local road network						
GET	Thanet Way	Structural improvements to the Thanet Way A299						
GET	North Thanet Link (formerly known as A28 Birchington)	Creation of a relief road	2,629					
GET	A229 Bluebell Hill M2 and M20 Interchange Upgrades	Scheme to upgrade junctions to increase capacity and provide freeflowing interchange wherever possible	67,901	45,617	626	2,670		
DCED	Future Assets	Asset review to include community services, office estate and specialist assets	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500		
DCED	Further Provision for Member Accommodation in Invicta House	Further Provision for Member Accommodation in Invicta House						
DCED	Renewable Energy Programme	Renewable energy source options to work towards Net Zero target						
	Total Potential Forthcoming Projects		251,712	213,182	174,894	184,976	183,195	190,954

APPENDIX D - High Level 2025-28 Revenue Plan and Financing

			INDICATIVE FOR PLANNING PURPOSES											
			2024-25			2025-26			2026-27			2027-28		
Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s			
			Original base budget			1,429,506.8	0.0	1,429,506.8	1,526,088.5	0.0	1,526,088.5	1,604,182.4	0.0	1,604,182.4
			internal base adjustments			-836.6	836.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1,315,610.6		1,315,610.6	Revised Base			1,428,670.2	836.6	1,429,506.8	1,526,088.5	0.0	1,526,088.5	1,604,182.4	0.0	1,604,182.4
			SPENDING											
31,721.5		31,721.5	Base Budget Changes			10,425.7	-744.1	9,681.6	-100.0	0.0	-100.0	4,000.0	0.0	4,000.0
35.0		35.0	Reduction in Grant Income			3,234.7	11,276.2	14,510.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
10,798.4	505.1	11,303.5	Pay			21,645.7	626.9	22,272.6	12,524.5	0.0	12,524.5	11,863.6	0.0	11,863.6
49,568.4	1,695.6	51,264.0	Prices			41,407.1	1,944.4	43,351.5	31,361.3	0.0	31,361.3	27,562.6	0.0	27,562.6
85,349.7	284.7	85,634.4	Demand & Cost Drivers - Cost			48,209.4	0.0	48,209.4	46,631.1	0.0	46,631.1	46,631.1	0.0	46,631.1
		0.0	Demand & Cost Drivers - Demand			22,989.0	24,150.3	47,139.3	23,025.6	-15,600.0	7,425.6	22,979.6	-14,200.0	8,779.6
16,393.1	-10,327.3	6,065.8	Government & Legislative			-14,751.5	5,814.5	-8,937.0	454.5	-19,502.4	-19,047.9	3,249.5	-1,898.1	1,351.4
15,712.2	-1,538.8	14,173.4	Service Strategies & Improvements			17,278.5	2,136.2	19,414.7	-757.6	236.5	-521.1	-803.2	-3,995.2	-4,798.4
109,578.3	-9,380.7	200,197.6	TOTAL SPENDING			150,438.6	45,204.4	195,643.0	113,139.4	-34,865.9	78,273.5	115,483.2	-20,093.3	95,389.9
			SAVINGS, INCOME & GRANT											
-36,454.8		-36,454.8	Transformation - Future Cost Increase Avoidance			-30,834.5	0.0	-30,834.5	-10,788.7	0.0	-10,788.7	-10,300.0	0.0	-10,300.0
2,068.7		2,068.7	Transformation - Service Transformation			-4,500.0	0.0	-4,500.0	-1,900.0	0.0	-1,900.0	-400.0	0.0	-400.0
-16,195.0		-16,195.0	Efficiency			469.6	-65.0	404.6	-4,243.5	0.0	-4,243.5	-171.2	0.0	-171.2
-15,406.6	-281.3	-15,687.9	Income			-20,109.3	0.0	-20,109.3	-6,344.6	0.0	-6,344.6	-6,643.8	0.0	-6,643.8
-10,967.6		-10,967.6	Financing			1,001.0	0.0	1,001.0	7,253.3	0.0	7,253.3	-2,166.3	0.0	-2,166.3
-11,910.2	-9.2	-11,919.4	Policy			-8,742.9	0.0	-8,742.9	-14,215.2	0.0	-14,215.2	-12,111.8	0.0	-12,111.8
-88,865.5	-290.5	-89,156.0	TOTAL SAVINGS & INCOME			-62,716.1	-65.0	-62,781.1	-30,238.7	0.0	-30,238.7	-31,793.1	0.0	-31,793.1
	7,210.7	7,210.7	Increases in Grants and Contributions			0.0	-25,209.8	-25,209.8	0.0	18,429.4	18,429.4	0.0	-8,876.7	-8,876.7
-88,865.5	6,920.2	-81,945.3	TOTAL SAVINGS, INCOME & GRANT			-62,716.1	-25,274.8	-87,990.9	-30,238.7	18,429.4	-11,809.3	-31,793.1	-8,876.7	-40,669.8
			MEMORANDUM:											
			Removal of undelivered/temporary savings & grant			32,735.3	3,362.8	36,098.1	10,715.1	19,502.4	30,217.5	800.0	5,470.3	6,270.3
			New & FYE of existing Savings			-71,942.1	-65.0	-72,007.1	-33,259.2	0.0	-33,259.2	-25,949.3	0.0	-25,949.3
			New & FYE of existing Income			-23,509.3	0.0	-23,509.3	-7,694.6	0.0	-7,694.6	-6,643.8	0.0	-6,643.8
			New & FYE of existing Grants			0.0	-28,572.6	-28,572.6	0.0	-1,073.0	-1,073.0	0.0	-14,347.0	-14,347.0
						-62,716.1	-25,274.8	-87,990.9	-30,238.7	18,429.4	-11,809.3	-31,793.1	-8,876.7	-40,669.8
Prior Year savings rolling forward for delivery in 25-26														
TOTAL Savings for delivery in 2025-26						-95,451.4	-28,637.6	-124,089.0						

2024-25				2025-26			INDICATIVE FOR PLANNING PURPOSES					
Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s		Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	2026-27			2027-28		
						Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	
RESERVES												
27,481.5		27,481.5	Contributions to Reserves	42,428.9	14,200.0	56,628.9	43,817.1	14,200.0	58,017.1	43,538.0	34,300.0	77,838.0
-24,739.6		-24,739.6	Removal of prior year Contributions	-34,545.8	-10,640.0	-45,185.8	-42,028.9	-14,200.0	-56,228.9	-35,796.1	-14,200.0	-49,996.1
-14,877.4	-1,350.5	-16,227.9	Drawdowns from Reserves	-13,064.7	-25,598.1	-38,662.8	0.0	-9,161.6	-9,161.6	0.0	-291.6	-291.6
5,318.9	3,811.0	9,129.9	Removal of prior year Drawdowns	14,877.4	1,271.9	16,149.3	13,064.7	25,598.1	38,662.8	0.0	9,161.6	9,161.6
-6,816.6	2,460.5	-4,356.1	TOTAL RESERVES	9,695.8	-20,766.2	-11,070.4	14,852.9	16,436.5	31,289.4	7,741.9	28,970.0	36,711.9
113,896.2	0.0	113,896.2	NET CHANGE	97,418.3	-836.6	96,581.7	97,753.6	0.0	97,753.6	91,432.0	0.0	91,432.0
			UNRESOLVED BALANCE / SURPLUS				-3,959.7	0.0	-3,959.7	2,638.3	0.0	2,638.3
			ADULT SOCIAL CARE FUNDING UNRESOLVED BALANCE				-15,700.0		-15,700.0	-18,400.0		-18,400.0
1,429,506.8	0.0	1,429,506.8	NET BUDGET	1,526,088.5	0.0	1,526,088.5	1,604,182.4	0.0	1,604,182.4	1,679,852.7	0.0	1,679,852.7
MEMORANDUM:												
The net impact on our reserves balances is:												
27,481.5	0.0	27,481.5	Contributions to Reserves	42,428.9	14,200.0	56,628.9	43,817.1	14,200.0	58,017.1	43,538.0	34,300.0	77,838.0
-14,877.4	-1,350.5	-16,227.9	Drawdowns from Reserves	-13,064.7	-25,598.1	-38,662.8	0.0	-9,161.6	-9,161.6	0.0	-291.6	-291.6
12,604.1	-1,350.5	11,253.6	Net movement in Reserves	29,364.2	-11,398.1	17,966.1	43,817.1	5,038.4	48,855.5	43,538.0	34,008.4	77,546.4
PER INITIAL DRAFT BUDGET												
			GROWTH	117,204.8	12,558.8	129,763.6	117,883.7	-16,436.5	101,447.2	106,103.6	-20,240.3	85,863.3
			SAVINGS, INCOME & GRANT	-41,633.1	7,370.8	-34,262.3	-40,368.6	0.0	-40,368.6	-28,656.1	-8,729.7	-37,385.8
			RESERVES	4,138.3	-20,766.2	-16,627.9	22,909.5	16,436.5	39,346.0	-4,795.2	28,970.0	24,174.8
			NET CHANGE	79,710.0	-836.6	78,873.4	100,424.6	0.0	100,424.6	72,652.3	0.0	72,652.3
CHANGE FROM INITIAL DRAFT BUDGET												
			GROWTH	33,233.8	32,645.6	65,879.4	-4,744.3	-18,429.4	-23,173.7	9,379.6	147.0	9,526.6
			SAVINGS, INCOME & GRANT	-21,083.0	-32,645.6	-53,728.6	10,129.9	18,429.4	28,559.3	-3,137.0	-147.0	-3,284.0
			RESERVES	5,557.5	0.0	5,557.5	-8,056.6	0.0	-8,056.6	12,537.1	0.0	12,537.1
			NET CHANGE	17,708.3	0.0	17,708.3	-2,671.0	0.0	-2,671.0	18,779.7	0.0	18,779.7

2024-25			2025-26			INDICATIVE FOR PLANNING PURPOSES					
Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s	Core £000s	External £000s	Total £000s
Funding per the Local Government Finance Settlement & Local Taxation											
	11,806.0				15,680.3			16,101.0			16,448.1
	117,046.1				137,143.6			137,143.6			137,143.6
	26,969.4				26,969.4			26,969.4			26,969.4
	11,686.6				0.0			0.0			0.0
					4,031.2			4,031.2			4,031.2
	1,311.9				0.0			0.0			0.0
					6,207.1			6,207.1			6,207.1
					0.0			0.0			0.0
	147,382.5				149,107.7			152,869.0			156,093.0
	50,014.7				61,701.3			61,701.3			61,701.3
	51,080.2				52,795.4			54,127.2			55,268.7
	2,058.5				1,926.7			0.0			0.0
					9,361.1			9,361.1			9,361.1
	3,544.6				0.0			0.0			0.0
	65,740.7				67,238.1			68,814.4			70,165.5
	2,682.8				0.0			0.0			0.0
	800,320.3				838,626.3			881,450.4			926,897.4
	135,347.0				155,922.5			178,406.7			202,566.3
	2,515.5				-622.2			7,000.0			7,000.0
	1,429,506.8	Total Funding			1,526,088.5			1,604,182.4			1,679,852.7

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APPENDIX E - GET DIRECTORATE (CORE ONLY)
PROPOSED 2025-26 BUDGET CHANGES BY CABINET MEMBER

GET	Environment & Transport			Growth, Economic Development & Communities			
	Neil Baker	Robert Thomas	TOTAL	Clair Bell	Derek Murphy	TOTAL	
Core £000s	Core £000s	Core £000s	Core £000s	Core £000s	Core £000s	Core £000s	
Original base budget	201,737.2						
internal base adjustments	-404.8						
Revised Base	201,332.4						
SPENDING							
Base Budget Changes	6,692.1	4,678.5	2,052.4	6,730.9	-38.8	0.0	-38.8
Reduction in Grant Income	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pay	-122.6	-96.6	-15.4	-112.0	-10.6	0.0	-10.6
Prices	5,413.5	2,248.2	2,914.2	5,162.4	251.1	0.0	251.1
Demand & Cost Drivers - Cost	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Demand & Cost Drivers - Demand	1,062.5	27.5	1,085.0	1,112.5	0.0	-50.0	-50.0
Government & Legislative	-488.0	-500.0	0.0	-500.0	12.0	0.0	12.0
Service Strategies & Improvements	1,735.0	-15.0	1,800.0	1,785.0	0.0	-50.0	-50.0
TOTAL SPENDING	14,292.5	6,342.6	7,836.2	14,178.8	213.7	-100.0	113.7
SAVINGS, INCOME & GRANT							
Transformation - Future Cost Increase Avoidance	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transformation - Service Transformation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Efficiency	150.0	0.0	150.0	150.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Income	-15,524.8	-1,576.7	-13,288.0	-14,864.7	-660.1	0.0	-660.1
Financing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Policy	512.5	0.0	560.0	560.0	38.0	-85.5	-47.5
TOTAL SAVINGS & INCOME	-14,862.3	-1,576.7	-12,578.0	-14,154.7	-622.1	-85.5	-707.6
Increases in Grants and Contributions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL SAVINGS, INCOME & GRANT	-14,862.3	-1,576.7	-12,578.0	-14,154.7	-622.1	-85.5	-707.6
MEMORANDUM:							
Removal of undelivered/temporary savings & grant	1,449.0	100.0	1,301.0	1,401.0	48.0	0.0	48.0
New & FYE of existing Savings	-686.5	0.0	-591.0	-591.0	-10.0	-85.5	-95.5
New & FYE of existing Income	-15,624.8	-1,676.7	-13,288.0	-14,964.7	-660.1	0.0	-660.1
New & FYE of existing Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	-14,862.3	-1,576.7	-12,578.0	-14,154.7	-622.1	-85.5	-707.6
Prior Year savings rolling forward for delivery in 25-26	0.0			0.0			0.0
TOTAL Savings for delivery in 2025-26	-16,311.3	-1,676.7	-13,879.0	-15,555.7	-670.1	-85.5	-755.6
RESERVES							
Contributions to Reserves	400.0	400.0	0.0	400.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Removal of prior year Contributions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drawdowns from Reserves	-160.0	-160.0	0.0	-160.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	475.0	475.0	0.0	475.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL RESERVES	715.0	715.0	0.0	715.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NET CHANGE	145.2	5,480.9	-4,741.8	739.1	-408.4	-185.5	-593.9

PROPOSED NET BUDGET

201,477.6

PER INITIAL DRAFT BUDGET

GROWTH	13,356.7	6,469.1	6,773.9	13,243.0	213.7	-100.0	113.7
SAVINGS, INCOME & GRANT	-1,372.5	-1,576.7	830.0	-746.7	-540.3	-85.5	-625.8
RESERVES	315.0	315.0	0.0	315.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NET CHANGE	12,299.2	5,207.4	7,603.9	12,811.3	-326.6	-185.5	-512.1

CHANGE FROM INITIAL DRAFT BUDGET

GROWTH	935.8	-126.5	1,062.3	935.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
SAVINGS, INCOME & GRANT	-13,489.8	0.0	-13,408.0	-13,408.0	-81.8	0.0	-81.8
RESERVES	400.0	400.0	0.0	400.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NET CHANGE	-12,154.0	273.5	-12,345.7	-12,072.2	-81.8	0.0	-81.8

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Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
Significant Risks (over £10m)							
CYPE	High Needs Spending	The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block does not meet the cost of demand for placements in schools, academies, colleges and independent providers.	The Safety Valve programme does not deliver the reduction to the in-year deficit on spending to support children with high needs as planned leading to a higher deficit. Whilst initial progress in 2022-23 and 2023-24 was positive the council was ahead of target, 2024-25 has been a more challenging year where the council is forecasting to be £10m off-target due to a combined effect of higher prices and significantly higher demand in financial support in mainstream schools. If compensating savings cannot be delivered and/or these pressures cannot be retained in future years, there is risk the Council will become increasingly off-target by the end of the agreement in 2027-28.	The Department for Education withholds its contribution towards the accumulated deficit and/or the increased overspend leaves a residue deficit. The government requires that the total deficit on the schools budget to be carried forward and does not allow authorities to offset from general funds anything above the amounts included in the Safety Valve agreement without express approval from Secretary of State. This approach does not resolve how the deficit will be eliminated and therefore still poses a significant risk to the council	4		165.0
AL Page 31	Non delivery of Savings and income and inability to replace one-off measures	Changes in circumstances, resulting in delays in the delivery of agreed savings or income and inability to replace one-off measures with sustainable permanent alternatives	Inability to progress with plans to generate savings or additional income as planned, due to changing circumstances	Overspend on the revenue budget, requiring alternative compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	4	120.7	
ASCH / CYPE	Market Sustainability	The long term impact of Covid-19 is still impacting on the social care market, as is several years of unfunded above inflation increases in the national living wage. There continue to be concerns about the sustainability of the sector as a result. At the moment all areas of the social care sector are under pressure in particular around workforce capacity including both recruitment and retention of staff especially for providers of services in the community, meaning that sourcing appropriate packages for all those who need it is becoming difficult. This is likely to worsen over the next few months with the pressures of winter, and increased activity in hospitals. Throughout this year we have continued to see increases in the costs of care packages and placements far greater than what would be expected and budgeted for, due to a combination of pressures in the market but also due to the increased needs and complexities of people requiring social care support.	If staffing levels remain low, vacancies unfilled and retention poor, then repeated pressure to increase pay of care staff employed in the voluntary/private sector in order to be able to compete in recruitment market. At the moment vacancy level said to be 1 in 10. The increases to the National Minimum and National Living Wage will create more challenges for the market to recruit and retain when other sectors may be paying more, so it may be that they will need to increase their wages accordingly. The changes to Employer National Insurance contributions affect all employers, but the reduction in the threshold to £5,000 pa hits this sector hardest because of the number of part-time and low paid employees.	Care provider closures are not an infrequent occurrence and whilst some providers that close are either too small or poor quality, others are making informed business decisions to exit the market. The more providers that exit in this unplanned manner further depletes choice and capacity to meet need, which can create pressures in the system regarding throughput and discharge from hospital thus potentially increasing price.	4	20.0	

Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
ALL	2024-25 potential overspend impact on reserves	Under delivery of recovery plan to bring 2024-25 revenue budget into a balanced position by 31-3-25.	Overspend against the revenue budget in 2024-25 required to be met from reserves leading to a reduction in our financial resilience	Insufficient reserves available to manage risks in 2024-25 and future years	3	26.8	
ALL	Revenue Inflation	The Council must ensure that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes robust estimates for spending pressures.	Inflation rises above the current forecasts leading to price increases on commissioned goods and services rising above the current MTFP assumptions and we are unsuccessful at suppressing these increases. Each 1% is estimated to cost £14m.	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	3	14.0	
ALL	Distribution of Grant Settlements	The government's reforms to funding allocations, starting with targeted approach to additional funding in 2025-26 ahead of broader redistribution of funding through multi-year settlement from 2026-27 and the consolidation of existing funding streams	Allocations to fund services and activities in Kent are reduced	The council is unable to make consequential adjustments to spending on the same timescale as funding changes resulting in further calls on reserves	4	22.0	
Page 32	Council Taxbase assumptions	Collection authorities assume lower collection rates (increased bad debts) and/or change local discretionary discounts/premiums	Reduced council tax funding	The existing smoothing reserves for local taxation equalisation is insufficient to cover this ongoing base shortfall beyond 2025-26	4	12.0	
ALL	Capital - Developer Contributions	Developer contributions built into funding assumptions for capital projects are not all banked.	Developer contributions are delayed or insufficient to fund projects at the assumed budget level.	Additional unbudgeted forward funding requirement and potential unfunded gaps in the capital programme	4		12.0
ALL	Demand & Cost Drivers	The Council must ensure that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes robust estimates for spending pressures.	Non inflationary cost increases (cost drivers) continue on recent upward trends particularly but not exclusively in adult social care, children in care and home to school transport above the current MTFP assumptions and the Council is not able to suppress these	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	4	12.0	
CYPE	Market Sustainability	Availability of suitable placements for looked after children.	Continued use of more expensive and unregulated placements, where it is difficult to find suitable regulated placements as no suitable alternative is available.	Unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves.	4	10.0	
CYPE	Home to School Transport	Lack of suitable local education placements for children with Special Education Needs	Parents seek alternative placements outside of their locality requiring additional transport support	Additional transport costs incurred resulting in an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves and potential recurring budget pressure for future years; or seek to demonstrate that the available local placements are suitable for the child's needs	3	10.0	

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Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
GET/DCED	Changing Government focus on funding to support the Net Zero/Carbon Reduction green agenda (capital spend)	Government has previously provided 100% funding for certain Net Zero/green projects e.g. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Funding towards the Bowerhouse and Kings Hill Solar Farms (£20m in total on community/HQ buildings, and £2m on schools), as well as LED installation, heat network or heat source pumps (gas, water). The PSDS grant is now moving focus from LED/Solar - despite the Council requiring 2 more Solar Parks as part of its Net Zero ambitions - and towards Heat Networks. Not only this, but whereas some projects were previously match funded, Government is now looking at >50% match funding requirements. The latest PSDS funding secured only funded 18% of the project. The cost of one large and one small Solar Park is in the region of £22.5m, plus a need for gas boilers on the corporate and schools estate to be replaced by heat source pumps (and/or hydrogen in the future).	The risk is that the Council has to find much higher match funding for future Net Zero projects, or review its expectations with regards to Net Zero 2030 and 2050 ambitions.	The consequence is that the Council has to put forward match funding for capital projects which can only come from borrowing or reserves. Borrowing then has a revenue implication and adds to the financing cost budget which is currently unaffordable, or accept that we will have to meet the target in other ways.	4		30.0
Non Attributable Costs	Insecure funding	The 2025-26 core budget includes £12.75m from insecure funding (company dividends, business rate pool and new homes bonus).	Previously it was recognised that core spending should not be funded from insecure/volatile sources and such funding should be held in reserve and used for one-off purposes	Funding is not secured at the planned level resulting in overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	3	14.2	

Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
Page 34	Waste capital infrastructure life expired and insufficient to cope with increased housing and population levels	A number of KCC's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) and Waste Transfer Stations (WTS) are life expired (35-40 years old) and require significant repair or replacement/reconfiguration. In addition to this, District Local Plan targets mean additional houses, and increasing population, presents a capacity issue for the service. Council Tax allows price inflation, additional tonnes (demography) and legislative changes to be taken into account, but does not allow for renewing or adding new infrastructure. The service started securing s106 from 2023 onwards, but unless other (Government) funding can be secured, the Council will need to invest in both of these areas. The introduction of new legislation (Simpler Recycling, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)) brings with it additional requirements and costs on how certain materials can be segregated, disposed of and new levies (Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) - Jan 28) will further add to the cost of disposal (estimated £12m-17m) for all tonnes that are disposed via the Energy for Waste plant.	Unless grant or other funding (s106, CIL) can be secured, the Council will need to fund replacing and reconfiguring (due to Government legislative unfunded changes) the existing sites, as well as building new sites. Outside of the capital programme, which includes building one new WTS, there is up to £50m investment required and noted in the 10-year capital programme. Funding has not been identified for these schemes, which include two new WTS and renewing existing sites, but is an indication of the level of investment required over the medium to long term and for which there is no currently identified funding source (one WTS/HWRC could be partner funded). Funding will also need to be set aside to react/prepare for changes in legislation (Simpler Recycling, EPR, ETS), although some of the EPR income can be used to reconfigure sites due to the new legislation, as well as to enable behaviour change in terms of improved recycling, re-use and hence lower disposal costs.	The consequence is that the Council has to put forward match funding, or the entirety of funding, for the new sites and/or reconfigured sites which means additional borrowing and the financing/borrowing costs that go along with this. £50m is the maximum financial impact figure, or accept the consequential reduction in capacity in terms of Waste Infrastructure, with impact of ETS then being estimated at £12m -17m per annum.	4		50.0
Other Risks (under £10m - individual amounts not included)						80.0	30.0
ALL	Full year effect of current overspends	The Council must ensure that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes robust estimates for spending pressures.	Increases in forecast current year overspends on recurring activities resulting in higher full year impact on following year's budget than included in current plan meaning services would start the year with an existing deficit (converse would apply to underspends). This risk is less significant than in previous year budget risk register due to a lower amount of base budget changes required in 2025-26 draft budget compared to 2024-25 budget	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	4		

Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
GET	Capital – asset management and rolling programmes including: Highways, Country Parks, PROW	The asset management/rolling programmes for KCC Highways are annual budgets and are not increased for inflation each year, meaning that the purchasing power reduces year on year as inflation is compounded yet the budget remains fixed.	Inflation pressures are incurred annually on these budget areas but the funding sources (Council borrowing, DfT grant) remain fixed and therefore this contributes to the 'managed decline' notion in that these budgets do not even maintain steady state as often the level of investment is significantly below (risk accepted by the Executive) the required level of spend - steady state asset management principles recommend £170m pa is spent. Plus year-on-year inflation is not budgeted for so the level of works commissioned reduces year-on-year also, which was exacerbated in 2023 with BCIS reaching 29% and RPIX 12%+ (inflation is estimated at needing to be £4m pa) just to stand still, plus then a £110m pa shortfall on asset management "steady state" (£170m, less actual capital spend of c£60m).	A funding gap exists annually, so steady state cannot be achieved, so unless budget provision is made, the level of capital/asset management preventative works commissioned each year will reduce. This will present a revenue pressure, as more reactive works are likely to be required, plus the respective backlogs for Highways Asset Management (c£700m) will increase exponentially. The risk represents the level of annual inflation required to mitigate this risk or accept that the asset will deteriorate.	4		
GET	Highways asset defects/failures as a result of static asset management funding	New risk of highways failures due to inadequate provision for inflation in DfT grants and KCC capital borrowing, leading to reduction in real terms value of grant/funding to the quantum of asset management/replacement works that can be effected. KCC spend c£60m per annum (DfT and KCC borrowing) but asset management principles calculate the annual spend requirement to remain at "steady state" to be £170m per annum and hence a £110m per annum shortfall.	An increase in reactive general repairs (revenue) as well as increased Cat 1 and Cat 2 defects where assets on the highways network will need replacement or extensive repairs well before the end of their useful economic life	Current funding levels are insufficient to be able to react to such defects, so the asset management backlog increases and more reactive revenue repairs are needed whereas proactive asset management/replacement is the preference. Previously an annual borrowing funded Cat 1 budget but this ceased 3 years ago when the no new borrowing stance was enacted	4		
ALL	Capital	Capital project costs are subject to higher than budgeted inflation.	Increase in building inflation above that built into business cases.	Capital projects cost more than budgeted, resulting in an overspend on the capital programme, or having to re-prioritise projects to keep within the overall budget. For rolling programmes (on which there is no annual inflationary increase), the level of asset management preventative works will reduce, leading to increased revenue pressures and maintenance backlogs.	4		
ALL	Contract retender	Contracts coming up for retender are more expensive due to prevailing market conditions and recruitment difficulties	This risk could result in a shortage of potential suppliers and/or increases in tender prices over and above inflation	Higher than budgeted capital/revenue costs resulting in overspends unless that can be offset by specification changes	4		

Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
GET	Investment in the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network	Insufficient funding to adequately maintain the PROW network. Estimated shortfall compared to steady state asset management principles is an additional £2.5m pa.	Condition of the PROW network suffering from under-investment. A £150k allocation was included in the 2021-22 but additional one-off and base funding is likely to be needed for a service that is already operating at funding levels below best practice recommended asset management levels. This has been further exacerbated by the increased usage several years ago arising from the covid related restrictions and national lockdown	The potential for claims against the Council due to injury and from landowners and the need to undertake urgent works that lead to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves.	4		
GET	Revenue - drainage and adverse weather	Persistent heavy rainfall and more frequent storm events mean insufficient revenue and capital budget to cope with the reactive and proactive demands on the service	An additional £1m was put into the drainage budget in 2021-22 but this was below the level of overspends in the two prior years and the risk is therefore the budget is not being funded at the level of demand/activity. More erratic weather patterns also cause financial pressures on the winter service and many other budgets. The risk is that this weather pattern continues and additional unbudgeted funding is required. A £1m saving was put into the budget in 2023-24 with a view to reducing the service standards/intervention levels in this area but due to the climate/persistent rainfall, damage to the network meant that additional works were required. Despite provisionally including £1m back into the 2024-25 budget, there is still a view that the budget is £1m light due to the changing weather climate/events and that the budget could see activity/demand require an additional £1m-£1.5m being required to reduce potential for flooding on the road network and the level of defects that then arise.	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves	4		
GET	Changing Government focus on funding to support the Net Zero/Carbon Reduction green agenda (revenue spend)	The Sustainable Business and Communities team with Net Zero within its remit has received significant EU/Interreg funding which has helped plan and deliver the plan for Net Zero by 2030/2050. This funding ceased in 2023-24 and the Council has invested £0.7m (2023-24) into the base budget to create a permanent team, with £0.3m deferred until 2025-26 (budgetary constraints) to deliver this strategy/Framing Kent's Future priority. If such funding is unaffordable to the Council then Net Zero requirements won't be met.	The risk is that the Council has to fund any reduction or cessation of funding.	The consequence is an overspend against the revenue budget, requiring compensating savings or funding from reserves, as simply not delivering Net Zero by 2050 is not an option due to Government legislation being implemented.	4		

Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
GET	Waste income, tonnage and gate fee prices	The current market has seen a considerable volatility in the income received for certain waste streams (potentially due to other supply shortages), as well as increased gate fees due to the double digit inflation seen in 2023 (majority of Waste contracts are RPI which was 12% during the year). The budget for 2024-25 includes not only significant price pressures for contract inflation, gate fees and HWRC management costs, but also realignment of budgets from 2023-24 where the actual inflation levels at the point the contracts are uplifted being higher than budgeted. Inflation is reducing, but November OBR showed a slowing rate of reduction than March OBR.	Projected levels of income fall, or gate fees/contractual price uplifts are above budgeted levels which leave an unfunded pressure.	This will result in an unfunded pressure that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	4		
CYPE	Recruitment, retention & cover for social workers	Higher use of agency staff to meet demand and ensure caseloads remain at a safe level in children's social work. The Service has relied on recruitment of newly qualified staff however this is being expanded to include a more focused campaign on attracting experienced social workers. There are higher levels of sickness and maternity leave across children's social work	Inability to recruit and retain sufficient newly qualified and experienced social workers resulting in continued reliance on agency staff, at additional cost. Higher levels of sickness and maternity leave resulting in need for further use of agency staff.	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	3		
DCED	Cyber Security	Malicious attacks on KCC systems.	Confidentiality, integrity and availability of data or systems is negatively impacted or compromised leading to loss of service, data breaches and other significant business interruptions.	Financial loss from damages and potential capital/revenue costs as a result of lost/damaged data and need to restore systems	3		
DCED	Strategic Headquarters	Sub optimal solution for the Council's strategic headquarters following the decision to market Sessions House as an entire site (with options on individual blocks)	Capital programme includes a capped £20m allocation for strategic assets project that limits the available options. Provision of a dedicated council chamber cannot be afforded within the current allocation. If the purchase falls through then KCC would need to re-assess all options.	Inability to address all backlog issues increases the risk of cost overruns and potential need for higher future maintenance, running and holding costs	3		
ALL	Capital - Capital Receipts	Capital receipts not yet banked are built into the budget to fund projects.	Capital receipts are not achieved as expected in terms of timing and/or quantum.	Funding gap on capital projects requiring additional forward funding.	3		

Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
ALL	Income	The Council must ensure that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes robust income estimates.	Income is less than that assumed in the MTFP.	Loss of income or reduced collection of income that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	3		
GET Page 38	English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) and Kent Travel Saver (KTS) journey levels	ENCTS journeys have reduced over time, more so during the pandemic, so a £3.4m reduction was reflected in 2022-23 budget with a further £1.9m reduction in the 2023-24 budget. Should custom/patronage return to pre-covid levels, this would lead to a £5.3m budget shortfall. This is a national scheme and the Council has to reimburse the operators for running this on the Council's behalf. There was initially a ringfenced grant for this service, it then became part of the Revenue Support Grant and now no specific grant exists so the taxpayers of Kent fund this scheme and would need to fund any update.	Activity levels return to a level of journeys in excess of the revised budget, therefore causing a financial pressure.	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years if current activity levels are not indicative of the new normal.	3		
Non Attributable Costs	Volatility on Investment Income	The 2025-26 budget for investment income from the treasury management strategy is £10.2m for 2025-26 and £9.9m for 2026-27. The outturn is heavily dependent on the path of short term interest rates, the level of cash that is available for investment, and the performance of investments. The budget already assumes a reduction in interest rates but a faster or more severe decline in rates could lead to underperformance versus the budget.	Performance of our investments falls below predicted levels as a result of volatility in the economy	Reduction in investment income leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	3		
CYPE	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking (UAS) Children	Home Office Grant for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and (former UAS Children) Care Leavers permanently residing in Kent has not increased for inflation for several years	The Grant no longer covers the full cost of supporting UAS Children and Care Leavers permanently residing in Kent. The Home Office does not increase the rates with inflation.	Overspend on the revenue budget, requiring alternative compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	3		

Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
CYPE / DCED	Reduction in DFE grants for central services for schools and review of school services provided by the Local Authority	Local Authority grant funding to support schools continues to be reduced, equating to a cumulative total reduction of nearly £5m for the Council since 2019-20. Consequently the Council needs to review its relationship with schools and the services it provides free of charge.	Long term solutions cannot be implemented within timescales and may require schools agreement (which may not be achieved). There is also a risk that passing greater responsibilities to schools could have a possible negative impact on other areas of Local Authority responsibility if schools do not comply (for example: school maintenance). There is also the risk of further cuts to the Local Authority Central Services for School Grants in the future.	If this remains unresolved there is a risk that this will also have to either be met from reserves in future years or result in an overspend until a longer term solution is identified	3		
ASCH (PH)	Uplift in Public Health Grant	The 'real' increase in the Public Health grant is insufficient to meet additional costs due to i) price increases (particularly those services commissioned from NHS staff where pay has increased) and/or increased demand; and/or ii) costs of new responsibilities.	The increase in the Public Health grant is less than the increases in costs to Public Health.	(i) Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. (ii) Public Health Reserves could be exhausted	3		
ALL	Capital - Climate Change	Additional costs are incurred to comply with climate change policy	Project costs increase beyond budget	Overspend on the capital programme resulting in additional borrowing	3		
DCED	Enterprise Business Capabilities (EBC) - Now called Oracle Cloud Programme	Cost and/or timescale overruns on implementation phase for Oracle replacement	Unforeseen or higher than budgeted costs	Additional unfunded costs over and above the reserve set aside for the project	3		
DCED	Capital Investment in Modernisation of Assets	Unless the Council estate asset base is reduced sufficiently, there is risk of insufficient funding to adequately address the backlog maintenance of the Corporate Landlord estate and address statutory responsibilities such as Health & Safety requirements	Condition of the Corporate Landlord estate suffering from under-investment. Recent conditions surveys estimate an annual spend requirement of £12.7m per annum required for each of the next 10 years. Statutory Health & Safety responsibilities not met.	The estate will continue to deteriorate; buildings may have to close due to becoming unsafe; the future value of any capital receipts will be diminished. Potential for increased revenue costs for patch up repairs. Risk of legal challenge.	2		
ALL	VAT Partial Exemption	The Council VAT Partial Exemption Limit is almost exceeded.	Additional capital schemes which are hosted by the Council result in partial exemption limit being exceeded.	Loss of ability to recovery VAT that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	2		

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Appendix F: Budget Risks Register 2025-26

TOTAL £m	341.7	287.0
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Annual Financial Exposure £m	Estimated Lifetime Financial Exposure £m
ALL	IFRS9	Local Authorities will be required to recognise the revenue impact on the General Fund of unrealised gains/ losses on pooled fund investments from 2025-26 when the statutory override ceases. The statutory override currently allows unrealised gains/losses resulting from changes in the fair value of pooled investment funds to be transferred to an unusable reserve until the gain/loss is realised once the financial asset has matured.	Any unrealised gain or loss as a result of stock market performance will impact on the General Fund. The likelihood and estimated financial exposure reflected reference an adverse scenario where the Council would need to recognise a significant loss on its investments, (as a scenario where the council recognises a significant gain, would be to our advantage and therefore not a budget risk).	A significant loss would reduce our General Fund and the council's financial resilience.	2		
CYPE	Capital - Basic Need Allocations	Estimates of future basic need allocations are included in the capital programme.	Basic need allocations are less than expected.	Funding gap for basic need projects which will need to be funded either by reprioritising the capital programme or by descoping.	2		
DCED Page 40	Highways unadopted land	Maintenance costs for residual pieces of land bought by Highways for schemes and subsequently tiny pieces not required or adopted.	Work becomes necessary on these pieces of land and neither Highways or Corporate Landlord have budget to pay for it.	Work needs to be completed whilst estates work to return the land to the original landowner	1		
DCED	Backlog of maintenance for properties transferring to Corporate Landlord	Maintenance backlog historically funded by services from reserves or time limited resources which have been exhausted. Properties that have been transferred to the corporate landlord require investment.	Urgent repairs required which cannot be met from the Modernisation of Assets planned programme within the capital budget	Unavoidable urgent works that lead to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	1		

Likelihood Rating

Very Likely	5
Likely	4
Possible	3
Unlikely	2
Very Unlikely	1

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 – 22 January 2025

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 2 of 2024/25.

16 of the 22 KPIs 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. Three KPIs are below floor standard and are RAG rated Red. Three new KPIs for 2024/25 are not reported within the dashboard as confirmation of funding for these has only recently been received.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance report for Quarter 2 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 second report for the 2024/25 financial year.

2. Performance Dashboard

- 2.1. The current Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance dashboard provides results up to the end of September 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 September 2024 was 493, marking the fourth consecutive quarter where performance has been above target. The target for the number of businesses assisted via the Kent and Medway Growth Hub was exceeded for both those provided with light/medium support and those receiving intensive support.

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

- 4.1 There were over 861,500 visits to Kent Libraries during Quarter 2, which is a 3% increase on the same quarter last year. Over 18,400 children took part in this year's Marvellous Makers Summer Reading Challenge, and although this was fewer than last year, more than 9,200 children completed the Challenge by reading six books during the summer holidays to maintain their reading levels ready for their return to school in September. Just under 300 events and activities linking in with the Challenge took place across Kent's Libraries.
- 4.2 Issues, including prison issues, eBook and eAudio have decreased by 2% on the same quarter last year. This breaks down into a 5% decrease in physical issues, but a 10% increase in eBook and eAudio issues as the popularity of these formats continues to rise.
- 4.3 Quarter 2 is the busiest period for the Ceremonies teams, and this year was no exception with a 3% increase in ceremonies on the same period in 2023/24 with 2,983 ceremonies completed. The number of marriage and civil partnership ceremonies have risen by 1% on the same quarter last year, while an increase of 63% in the number of citizens being welcomed as British citizens at both Oakwood House and Danson House reflects the growth in demand for not only the group sessions but the increasingly popular individual ceremonies.
- 4.4 While the number of death registration appointments has decreased by 5% on the same quarter last year, births have increased by 3% with a total of 4,327 appointments delivered during Quarter 2. Customer satisfaction with the Registration Service during this quarter was 96%.
- 4.5 After an extremely busy Quarter 1, the Archive service experienced a quieter period in Quarter 2, with a 14% decrease on visitors to the Search Room on the same period last year, and a 7% decrease in remote enquiries. Although this is being investigated, there is no obvious reason for this drop.
- 4.6 At the end of September Kent LRA underwent the annual assessment for the Customer Service Excellence award, and was again successful in achieving this award, being fully compliant in all the required criteria and maintaining 24 Compliance Plus points which indicate a recognition of best practice. The Assessor was particularly impressed with the longevity of staff working within the service, and the creativity, dedication and local knowledge to ensure services were tailored to the local communities they serve.

5. Growth & Communities – Strategic Development and Place

- 5.1 For Quarter 2, section 106 developer contributions secured against contributions sought (DC08) failed to meet target and was RAG rated Amber; this was largely due to viability issues at one site in Tunbridge Wells.
- 5.2 The percentage of public rights of way (PRoW) faults reported online (PROW14) has maintained 87% performance for the last four quarters, but is not reaching the new 92% target.
- 5.3 The percentage of local actions from completed Domestic Homicide Reviews implemented by target date, fell below floor standard in Quarter 2, and was therefore RAG rated Red. This was due to a number of older actions that were followed up with various partners during the summer period, and this has led to a drop in performance as these were implemented outside of the target timescale. Concerted efforts were made to ensure appropriate updates were gathered from the relevant partner agencies to provide assurances to the Steering Group when they met in September.
- 5.4 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 Quarter 2 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, and new statutory reforms which were implemented on 9th September 2024 and have negatively affected timescales. For this reason, it is recommended that reporting of the KPI is suspended for the remainder of the year.
- 5.5 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 2 of 2024/25.

Contact details:

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Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance Dashboard

Financial Year 2024/25

Results up to end of September 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	GREEN

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	RED
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 (Section 106)	AMBER

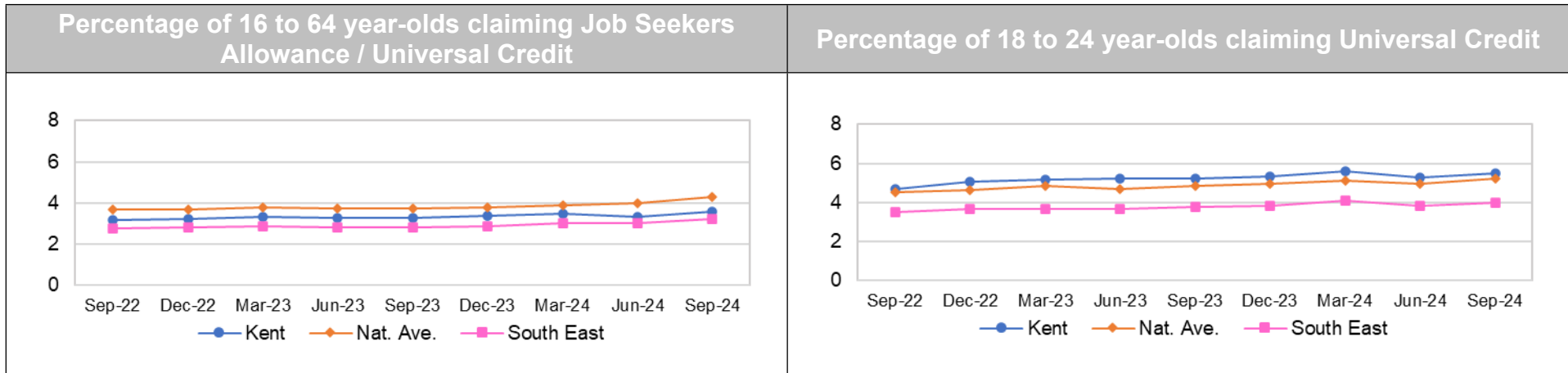
Strategic Development and Place (continued)	RAG
PROW14: Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online	AMBER
PROW16: Median number of days to resolve priority faults on public rights of way network (rolling 12-months)	GREEN
CST01: Percentage of local actions from completed Domestic Homicide Reviews implemented by target date.	RED
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	Sep-23 (Q2)	Dec-23 (Q3)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	RAG	Target	Floor
EC05	Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty (rolling 12 months)	395	509	474	567	493	GREEN	400	360
EC10	Businesses assisted via Kent and Medway Growth Hub contract (Year to Date)	552	783	1,059	251	419	GREEN	342	300
EC11	Businesses assisted through intensive support provided via the Growth Hub contract (Year to Date)	65	104	154	11	32	GREEN	30	25
EC12	Number of visitor economy businesses supported (through visitor economy and inward investment contract)	These are all new indicators for 2024/25 and targets have now been set following confirmation of funding and monitoring will begin in Quarter 3.							
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)								

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	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	RAG	Target	Floor
LRA06	Customer satisfaction with Registration Services	94%	99%*	94%	97%	96%	GREEN	96%	91%
LRA15	Total number of customers attending events in Libraries and Archives	53,015	42,341	48,194	49,439	53,281	RED	63,400	57,300
LRA17	Number of volunteer hours adding extra value to the LRA service	New indicator in 2024/25			7,696	7,626	AMBER	7,900	7,100

* Only includes citizenship surveys due to issues with booking system

Sep-24 (Q2): LRA06 – 1,225 customers were surveyed, 1,175 were satisfied.

LRA15 – due to the upward trajectory of event attendance in 2023/24, a 4% increase was forecast for Quarter 2, 2024/25. This took into account the busy period around the delivery of the Summer Reading Challenge, when there are more events to encourage children to participate in and complete the Challenge. Sadly, this year's Challenge was not as popular as last year's, and numbers of children taking part were lower than in 2023, a trend that was reflected across other library services across the country and which impacted event attendance figures. There will be a review nationally of how the summer reading challenge is delivered as though still popular, it is important to assess whether the approach can be updated to better encourage take-up.

LRA17 – an ambitious 5% increase in volunteer hours was forecast for 2024/25, and although the Quarter 2 figure does not meet target, the number of hours is still within the forecast parameters, and represents an increase of just over 500 hours on what was achieved in the same period last year. 134 volunteers were recruited to support the Summer Reading Challenge, which is the highest number since pre-Covid.

Annual KPIs

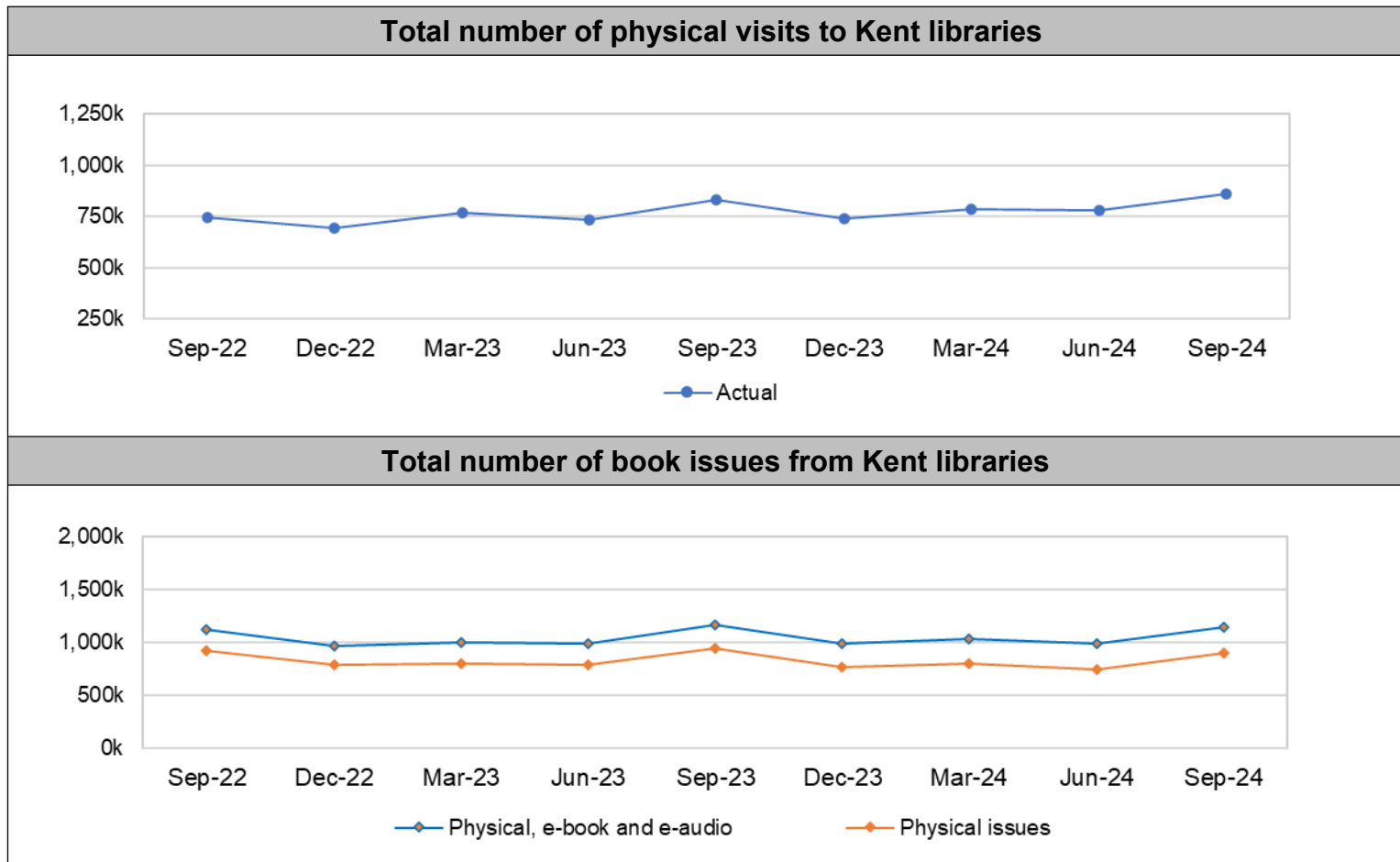
Ref	Performance Indicators	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	RAG	Target 2023/24	Floor 2023/24
LRA12	Customer satisfaction with libraries	83%	94%	94%	95%	**	GREEN	90%	85%
LRA13	Customer satisfaction with archives	No Survey	97%	98%	100%	**	GREEN	95%	90%

** 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.

Activity indicators

Ref	Activity Indicators (Quarterly totals)	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Value vs Expected	Expected Activity	
								Upper	Lower
LRA01	Number of visits to libraries (including mobiles) (000s)	831	740	787	781	862	In line	896	811
LRA02b	Physical, e-book and e-audio	1,167	988	1,032	983	1,144	In line	1,253	1,134
LRA04	Number of wedding, civil partnership and citizenship ceremonies carried out by KCC Officers	New indicator in 2024/25			2,199	2,983	In line	3,000	2,800

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



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

Ref	Performance Indicators	Sep-23 (Q2)	Dec-23 (Q3)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	YTD 24/25	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
DC08	Developer contributions secured against total contributions sought (section 106)	99.6%	87.4%	97.9%	99.6%	93.2%	94.7%	AMBER	98%	85%
PROW14	Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online	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)	26	20	9	9	8	*	GREEN	15	24
CST01	Percentage of local actions from completed Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) implemented by target date.	95%	91%	90%	80%	51%	57%	RED	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	73%	75%	74%	70%	74%	72%	GREEN	70%	65%

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

** No seminars were held.

2024/25: DC08 - £11.4m secured; PROW14 – 4,384 faults reported, 3,811 were online; PROW16 – 104 priority faults resolved; CST01 – 47 actions, 27 completed by target date; CST02 – 32 reviews, 32 were very good or excellent; CST03 – 243 surveys were returned, 175 responses indicated the service user felt safer.

DC08 – We are seeing an increasing number of applications with viability assessments as financial pressures on the market increase. The reduced KPI percentage is largely attributed to a viability site at the former Benenden hospital in Tunbridge Wells. The planning committee at Tunbridge Wells determined that affordable homes should be prioritised over other contributions, reducing the level of contributions KCC will receive for education. Officers have negotiated two clauses in the s106 which could recoup the education contributions in the event that viability is improved when the new homes are sold.

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 close to completing a small project to assist those reporting for the first time in the hope that once registered they will continue to use the online fault reporting tool

CST01 - Updates for all actions being monitored by the DHR Steering Group are sought from partners each quarter. A number of older actions that had not received sufficient updates to allow closure were escalated with the relevant partners during the summer period, and this led to a drop in performance as the closure/implementation date then fell outside of the target timescale. Concerted efforts ensured appropriate updates were gathered from the relevant partner agencies to provide assurances.

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

Ref	Performance Indicators	Dec-23 (Q3)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Mar-24 (Q4)	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	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.	73%	78%	59%	62%	70%	66%	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%	95%	94%	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%	82%	84%	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%	89%	94%	GREEN	90%	80%

2024/25: COR01 – 2,874 cases, 1,891 progressed within 2 working days; PAG01 – 78 planning applications, all of which met DLUHC performance standard; PAG02 – 174 responses, 164 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 within the timeframe required to meet the 2-day target. This has been exacerbated by a reform, implemented on the 9th Sept 2024, which is the most significant of its kind for 50 years and provides guidance for a statutory Medical Examiner system. Specifically, the medical examiners system now apply scrutiny to community deaths as well as hospital deaths. As the community deaths are a fairly new part of the medical examiner role there has been some embedding time which has also added to this. **For this reason, it is proposed that reporting on this KPI is suspended for the rest of the year while the impacts of the changes are assessed, and with a view to reinstating a revised KPI in 2025/26.**

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)	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	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%	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%	GREEN	90%	82%

* No ratings received

2024/25: CP01 – 47 people supported. CP02 – 78 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.

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

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

Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth Environment and Transport

Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee -
22 January 2025

Subject: The future of library provision in Folkestone town centre

Decision no: 24/00116

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of Report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All divisions within Folkestone and Hythe district

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This paper covers the results of the recent public consultation on the future town centre location of the Folkestone Library and registration service, analysis of the options available and the proposed next steps KCC proposes to progress to find a long-term solution.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services on the proposed decision to:

- A. APPROVE to issue the draft consultation report set out in Appendix B.
- B. APPROVE to Issue the consultation response set out in Appendix C.
- C. Note that KCC remain committed to a full town centre library provision in Folkestone Town Centre.
- D. APPROVE that further work be undertaken to explore and implement an alternative town centre location for the temporary library and registration service, from which a greater range of services could be delivered, within current budgets, until a permanent library and registration service location is opened in the town centre.
- E. APPROVE that the options for the future of the Grace Hill building which involve KCC retaining responsibility for maintenance and repair of the building, be discounted, acknowledging that this will require KCC to make a disposal of the building to a third party (by way of freehold transfer or grant of a long lease), and progress actions relating to its listing as an asset of

- community value (ACV), including issuing a notice of intention to dispose to Folkestone & Hythe District Council which triggers the AVC process;
- F. APPROVE that further work be undertaken on the two remaining options, including further engagement with Creative Folkestone and, if appropriate, other individuals or groups who may make proposals for the Grace Hill building (including through the ACV process).
 - G. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to issue the draft consultation responses
 - H. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Community and Regulatory Services to proceed with the work required on the remaining two options, noting that these will be subject to further governance and decision making
 - I. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services 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
 - J. Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services 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
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Folkestone town centre library and registration service is located in the Grade II listed building at 2 Grace Hill (referred to throughout as the 'Grace Hill building'). This building had to be closed due to health and safety reasons in December 2022. This necessitated the temporary closure of the service and provision of temporary services and facilities nearby. The latest cost estimate to repair the Grace Hill building is £2.9m. Following the temporary closure, KCC has been exploring the options for the future provision of the service and undertook an eight-week public consultation in 2024.
- 1.2 This report covers the outcomes of the public consultation and recommends next steps.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Library, Registration and Archives (LRA) service is a statutory and highly valued public service which is currently delivered through; a network of 99 libraries, five register offices, five mobile libraries, an archive centre, the stock distribution and support function building at Quarry Wood, the information service 'Ask a Kent Librarian'; and 24-hour accessible online services.
- 2.2 Library authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons who live, work or study in the area'.

- 2.3 Folkestone Library is part of this network and until December 2022, the town centre library and registration service was provided at the Grace Hill building.
- 2.4 The Grace Hill building temporarily closed in December 2022 because it became unsafe for customers and staff. Since then work has been undertaken to, investigate the extent and cost of the works needed to bring the building back into use, exploring ways to fund the works, explore other locations in Folkestone town centre where the library could be located, and consider the future of the Grace Hill building.
- 2.5 While the Grace Hill building has been temporarily closed, temporary service provision has been put in place for service users and resident to access a library and registration service which consists of:
- Town centre access to the local history collections and public PCs at 'Folkestone Library – Heritage and Digital Access.' This also includes a free library book (and other materials) borrowing and reservation service.
 - Extended branch opening at nearby Wood Avenue and Cheriton libraries.
 - Additional public PCs and an additional location where public can complete birth and death registration appointments at Wood Avenue Library.
 - Promotion of other ways to access free library services online, the Mobile Library and the Home Library Service.
- 2.6 A petition was lodged with KCC and ran from 28/03/2023 to 29/06/2023. This called on KCC to 'fix Folkestone library and re-open it to the public.' The petition was signed by 3,647 people and as a result there was a petition debate at the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee in September 2023
- 2.7 The Grace Hill building was listed by Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC) as an asset of community value (ACV) in July 2023.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 An eight-week public consultation on the future of Folkestone Library ran from 18 July to 11 September 2024.

Consultation process

- 3.2 The consultation document was available online at www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary via our Let's talk Kent website, promoted and highlighted to local partners and stakeholders, and paper copies were available in all Folkestone and Hythe district libraries. It was also available in large print and easy read formats. All consultation and promotional materials included contact details to request hard copies and any other formats or languages.
- 3.3 Alongside the consultation document the following supporting documents were also made available:
- Consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).
 - Breakdown of the estimated costs to repair the Grace Hill building.

- Frequently Asked Questions, which were updated throughout the consultation period.
- 3.4 During the consultation period there were 5,180 visits to the consultation webpage by 4,673 visitors.
- 3.5 Feedback was captured via an online questionnaire and paper copies were available in Folkestone and Hythe district libraries and on request. A word version of the questionnaire was also made available online for anyone who did not want to complete the online version. Emails and letters received during the consultation period have been analysed and considered alongside the questionnaire responses.
- 3.6 Four in-person drop-in sessions were advertised and took place at Wood Avenue Library and 5 Grace Hill (Folkestone Library – Heritage and Digital Access). These were to raise awareness of the consultation and provide the opportunity for people to ask questions. The sessions were scheduled on different days and times to allow as many people as possible to attend. As well as asking questions face to face, attendees could fill in the questionnaire during drop-in sessions or take away the questionnaire to fill in at home and return via any library.
- 3.7 A wide range of communication methods were used to promote the consultation, including:
- Press releases at the start and towards the end of the consultation and a half page local newspaper advert.
 - Email to key stakeholders including community groups, schools, town and parish councils, local voluntary and charity organisations and library groups and partners.
 - Promotion via the LRA staff and displays in all the Folkestone and Hythe district libraries.
 - An invite to 549 people and organisations registered with Let's talk Kent who had expressed an interest in hearing about new consultations on libraries in the Folkestone and Hythe district.
 - Posters displayed at the Grace Hill building and other public buildings in Folkestone.
 - Social media posts from Folkestone Library, Kent Libraries and KCC's corporate social media accounts. This included paid Facebook adverts to extend the reach of the consultation beyond those who follow KCC's channels.
 - Promotional links from the Folkestone Library service webpage on Kent.gov.
 - Articles in KCC's residents' e-newsletter.
- 3.8 The Save Folkestone Library group and other members of the community also undertook extensive promotional activity. They organised handing out of the promotional posters, took paper copies of the questionnaire to distribute, highlighted the consultation on social media and organised several events during the period. KCC is grateful to the group and all local partners in ensuring that the consultation was promoted as widely as possible.

3.9 The consultation received 600 responses. 510 were submitted online, and 86 questionnaires were submitted in hard copy or by email. An additional four emails and letters were received, and this feedback has been analysed alongside responses provided via the consultation questionnaire.

Consultation proposals

3.10 The consultation explained that, since the temporary closure of the library in December 2022, KCC had been investigating the extent and cost of works needed to bring the Grace Hill building back into use, exploring ways to fund the repairs, looking at other locations in Folkestone town centre where the library could be located, and considering the future of the Grace Hill building. The consultation explained the options KCC had been considering and that, while these were at a formative stage, they had developed to the point where KCC wished to seek the public's views before progressing any further.

3.11 The consultation explained that KCC's preferred option, at that stage, was to:

- Permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the Folkestone town centre library and registration service; and
- Take forward work with Folkestone & Hythe District Council on moving the service to the FOLCA¹ building on the high street.

3.12 The consultation addressed the following alternative options:

- Continue with temporary provision permanently and exit the Grace Hill building.
- Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library within the Grace Hill building and co-locate with other services.
- Relocate the library service to another existing KCC building.
- Sell or issue a long lease to another party and then lease back part of the building. It was noted that Creative Folkestone had expressed an interest to KCC in taking forward an idea/proposal of this nature (see Section 6 below).
- Move the library service to an alternative leasehold site.

4. Overview of Consultation Feedback

4.1 Lake Market Research have independently analysed consultation responses. Cabinet Members have been briefed on the results, but Cabinet Committee Members are invited to carefully consider the full consultation report as set out at Appendix B.

4.2 In summary:

- 55% of consultees disagreed with KCC's proposal to permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service, while 38% of consultees agreed.

¹ This is the name of the building **owned by Folkestone & Hythe District Council**, which was the former Debenhams store on the High Street in Folkestone.

- The most common reasons for disagreement with this proposal related to how the Grace Hill building is seen locally, for example its historic and heritage character, the fact that it is a listed building, as well as the view that the building should be restored and preserved as a library. Consultees noted that Grace Hill was purpose built as a library, and that it was gifted to Folkestone as a public asset. Some consultees also preferred the location of Grace Hill to any other in the town centre.
 - The most common reason for agreement was that the library should be in a central, convenient location, and that moving the library as proposed would be beneficial to the town. Some consultees expressed general agreement with moving the library to another location. Other consultees in agreement referred to understanding the financial considerations.
- When asked about agreement or disagreement with KCC's preferred option to move the library and registration service to FOLCA, 51% disagreed and 43% agreed.
 - The most common reasons for disagreement included specific factors relating to the Grace Hill building and a desire to restore the building as a library. Some consultees also expressed concerns about the suitability of the FOLCA building, the cost of moving to FOLCA, and concerns about KCC renting rather than owning a library building.
 - The most common reasons for agreement again related to a desire for the library to be in a central, convenient location. Some expressed the view that FOLCA would be accessible, including by public transport, had good parking nearby, and would attract more people to use the service.

4.3 Several other specific themes emerged from consultation feedback which have informed the consideration of next steps, as explained elsewhere in this report.

4.4 Cabinet Committee are invited to review Appendix C. This is the consultation response and reflects the options analysis and proposals set out in this report.

5. Engagement with Creative Folkestone

5.1 Prior to, during and following the consultation Creative Folkestone continued, with the support of others, to express an interest in the future of the library service at the Grace Hill building. Creative Folkestone is an independent arts charity established in 2002 to regenerate Folkestone and the surrounding area, with a focus on 'making it a great place for people to live, work, study, play and visit through creativity'.

5.2 Creative Folkestone has indicated that it may be prepared to take over responsibility for the Grace Hill building from KCC by way of a disposal (either a gift or long-term lease at peppercorn rent), with the intention of allowing it, as a charity, to raise funding that may not be available to KCC to address the physical condition of the building. This idea is linked to Creative Folkestone's broader proposals for a Creative Campus. Creative Folkestone envisages that

the library could remain on the ground floor of the Grace Hill building, with other parts of the building put to community use and use as a space for artists. KCC has engaged with Creative Folkestone on this since late 2023.

- 5.3 Following the consultation, officers met with Creative Folkestone to further discuss their ideas with a view to ensuring that KCC has full information about the proposed approach, was aware of any changes, and to explain officers' working views. The meeting was constructive with a shared understanding that further discussion would be needed to further develop. The purpose of further engagement is to enable KCC to take an informed decision regarding this option in due course.

6. KCC Financial Position and Capital Maintenance Budget

- 6.1 Like many other councils, KCC is facing significant financial challenges. Since 2011, KCC has had to make almost £1 billion in savings and income generation to manage services and assets within the funding available to us. However, the demand for and cost of providing services was such that, for the first time in 22 years, KCC ended the 2022-23 financial year with a significant overspend of £44.4 million, followed by an overspend of £9.6m in 2023-24. KCC funded these overspends by using reserves, but this is not a sustainable solution.
- 6.2 The biggest pressures were related to services for the most vulnerable residents in the areas of adult and children's social care, and home to school transport. These services are continuing to present financial pressures in 2024-25 and again KCC is forecast to overspend. We estimate the additional demand and costs for these service areas alone will total £83 million in 2025-26.
- 6.3 The draft budget for 2025-26 identifies core funded spending growth of £150.4m, compared to funding increase of £96.5m (Council Tax, Business Rates and General Grant increases/growth) so once other minor adjustments are reflected, this leaves a shortfall of £62.7m that needs to be closed through savings and income. A balanced budget is being proposed to County Council for 2025-26 but this relies on several one-off initiatives that require base funding in 2026-27 onwards, as well as any additional savings and income that will be necessary in latter years as core funded spending growth continues to exceed available funding increases each year. We are continuing to look across all our services to identify where savings can be made, and income can be raised. Spending controls are in place and difficult decisions across KCC's services, and regarding the disposal of surplus buildings, are having to be considered. All of this highlights the significant financial pressure KCC remains under.
- 6.4 At present the annual capital budget for maintenance of all KCC property assets, is £3m just to maintain the status quo, alongside which KCC faces an estimated £159m backlog of maintenance and condition works across all buildings. An additional £5.6m has been allocated in 2025-26 and 2026-27 to complete some of the most urgent back-log maintenance issues. This however falls significantly short of what is required across the estate and at the present time it is necessary to prioritise spend to support safeguarding and essential services such as care homes and highways depots. No funding was able to be allocated to the Grace Hill library. In 2024/25 an allocation of £500k was made for works across KCC's 99 libraries, nine country parks and seven picnic sites.

- 6.5 The financial climate of local government and KCC are such that unfortunately it has and continues to be necessary to consider difficult decisions across a range of service areas and must also consider disposal of buildings to meet the financial challenge.
- 6.6 Budget papers for the 2025-26 financial year have been taken to all KCC Cabinet Committees. The proposed budget contains specific proposals for savings and income with a view to offsetting the growth pressures facing the Council and for which an increase in Council Tax, Business Rates and General Grants is insufficient to meet the budget gap. The proposed budget for 2025-26 will be presented to County Council in February 2025 and covers both revenue and capital budgets.

7. Critical Success Factors and Key Considerations

7.1 The critical success factors and key considerations which options are considered against are as outlined below:

- Service requirements: does the option meet LRA's service's requirements? These are:
 - Location. It is important to be somewhere visible and accessible, which is why high street locations are generally the service's preference. They are where most people will go or be able to get to. Libraries can play an important role in wider high street regeneration. As a rule, we want to be in a location that lots of people will naturally pass so that we can advertise and be visible for those who are not yet users of the service with the desire that they do become users. Where the best location is in a community may change over time and we should always keep this under review.
 - Space. We need adequate and affordable space to meet service needs.
 - Partnership potential. The service is in general keen to co-locate with other customer and community services. This brings more services to people in one convenient place but also has the potential to increase the take-up of library and other services for those who do not currently use them. There is extensive evidence of successful partnership working and co-locations across Kent.
- Financial factors: How much will it cost KCC, both in terms of capital and revenue both short and long term? Does the option rely on securing grant funding? If so, what timescale could we be looking at? Will the option generate any income for KCC, given the already-described financial challenge facing the Council?

7.2 Other key considerations are:

- Deliverability. Can the option be delivered and what is the timeline for deliverability?
- Environmental. Does the option reduce the carbon footprint therefore supporting KCC's net zero target?

8. Options Analysis

Overview

8.1 Each of the options identified in the consultation document have been assessed against the critical success factors and key considerations above. Taking this into account and the outcomes and feedback from the public consultation it is proposed that the following options should be discounted:

- Continue with temporary provision permanently and exit the Grace Hill building.
- Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services there.
- Relocate the library service to another existing KCC building.

8.2 It is recommended that further consideration given to the following two options:

- Selling or issuing a long lease of the Grace Hill building to another party, and then leasing back part of the building. This option would enable KCC to relinquish its interest in and responsibility for maintenance and repair of the Grace Hill building, whilst retaining the library and registration service at the Grace Hill building. This option is the subject of ongoing engagement with Creative Folkestone. This option may also involve the consideration of proposals from other individuals or groups, should any such proposals be made (including through the ACV process).
- KCC's original preferred option to exit the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the LRA service.

Options analysis detail

Continue with temporary provision permanently and exit the Grace Hill building

8.3 This option would be the most financially advantageous, as it would not involve additional capital spend on repairing the Grace Hill building and enable KCC to realise the capital value of the asset. It would be deliverable (it is the option currently in place) and would help KCC achieve its net zero target (reflecting the smaller library space currently being made available).

8.4 However, this option would not meet the service's requirement and therefore only meets one of the critical success factors. The current temporary provision does not allow full library and registration services to be delivered from one town centre location, it is scattered across the town, and beyond the branch libraries there is no town centre book browsing or children's library. The current temporary provision was never intended to be a permanent replacement for the services delivered from the Grace Hill building, and this remains the case.

8.5 Consultees also raised concerns about the current temporary provision. A number of consultees, when asked about the alternative options for Folkestone library, expressed the view that the current temporary provision is not suitable

for the long term. Others expressed the view that permanent library facilities were required as soon as possible, with no preference as to location. A clear message from the consultation feedback is that people wanted to see either the re-opening of the library at the Grace Hill building or the service move to a single permanent alternative location.

8.6 It is therefore recommended that this option should be discounted.

Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services

8.7 This option is not considered financially affordable, notwithstanding the strong views and wishes of many consultees concerning repairing and re-opening the Grace Hill building. This is because the cost of undertaking necessary repairs to the building, with a view to re-opening the library making the building sound for the short-term, is estimated to be £2.9m (as at the time of consultation). This is based on an assessment undertaken in May 2024 by a Chartered Building Surveyor. Estimated costs may change over time.

8.8 As explained above, KCC is faced with significant financial challenges. We have had to make difficult decisions in a number of areas regarding service provision, the disposal of other assets in KCC's estate, and regarding the amount we spend on capital maintenance.

8.9 Given the age, construction and listed status of the building, there is a risk that significant additional costs may be required in future or that there may be a closure in the future should there be another significant failure.

8.10 Many consultees disagreed with KCC's proposal to leave the Grace Hill building and felt that KCC should find a way to repair the building. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to permanently leave Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the service, roughly a third of consultees raised points relating to the broader value of the building as, for example, a historic, attractive, community, listed building, and a landmark in Folkestone. A similar proportion expressed the view that the building should be restored and preserved as a library. Around a fifth of consultees expressed views connected with seeing the building as a public space which belongs (and was gifted) to the community. Some consultees expressed a preference for the location of the building at Grace Hill (albeit fewer in number than those who indicated support for a high street location).

8.11 A number of potential ideas for enabling KCC to retain ownership of the building and make repairs were proposed in response to the consultation. For example, it was suggested that KCC could fundraise with the local community, and that KCC could reach out to local businesses to make the cost of repairs cheaper as well as using volunteers to undertake the works. It was also suggested that KCC should apply to other sources of grant funding and that other uses could be made of the space at Grace Hill, some of which (such as venue hire and a café) could raise revenue. Given the £2.9m estimated cost of the repairs, and the complex nature of any restoration project, which would need to be undertaken by expert contractors, we do not consider these

options to be viable. The alternative ideas suggested by consultees are further considered as part of Appendix C.

- 8.12 The service considers that there are both advantages and disadvantages of the space at Grace Hill. The building maintenance issues have impacted on the ability to deliver a reliable and quality service over the years, for example unplanned closures or necessitating buckets around the building to capture water ingress. It does however provide sufficient space from which to deliver the service, and is an existing, known building. There may be some scope for revising and improving the layout to maximise space. On the other hand, the structure, nature and layout of the building has previously prevented KCC from taking forward the co-location of KCC services or maximising the use of the space, adult education for example. Overall, the service has a preference for a high street location, which it considers would help make the service more visible and attract more customers.
- 8.13 Regarding environmental considerations, while some improvements could be made, due to the age and construction of the Grace Hill building this option would not significantly contribute to achieving KCC's net zero target.
- 8.14 The main deliverability challenge for KCC in regard to the Grace Hill building is financial, as explained above. Cabinet members as well as Cabinet Committee should have careful regard to consultees' views, and the other factors above. Taking everything into account and particularly the financial circumstances facing KCC, it is felt that spending £2.9m on a single building is not justifiable or a responsible use of KCC funds.
- 8.15 It is therefore recommended that this option should be discounted.

Relocate the library service to another existing KCC building.

- 8.16 Opportunities have been explored to relocate the service to other KCC services in Folkestone town centre, namely: The Cube (KCC Adult Education); the KCC Family Hub buildings around Tontine Street; and the KCC offices at Cheriton House, Cheriton High Street.
- 8.17 None of these buildings would provide enough space taking into account other service usage of these buildings from which to deliver the library service or offer an improved location in the town. Additionally, Cheriton House is not in Folkestone town centre.
- 8.18 There was no significant support within consultation responses for a move to any existing KCC building in Folkestone.
- 8.19 From a review of the KCC buildings there is no suitable KCC space available which makes this option undeliverable.
- 8.20 We therefore recommend that this option should be discounted.

Sell or issue a long lease to another party and then lease back part of the building

- 8.21 This option would involve selling the building or granting a long lease to another party on the basis that KCC could lease back part of the building for the library to use. Creative Folkestone is the only potential partner so far to have proposed taking forward this type of arrangement.
- 8.22 As explained above, many consultees felt that the Grace Hill building should be repaired and remain as a library, often highlighting the building's specific characteristics. Some consultees also preferred the location of the Grace Hill library to the high street. 17 consultees (3% of those answering the question), when explaining their agreement or disagreement with the proposal to permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative location on the high street, expressed a view that KCC should consider the Creative Folkestone proposal. When asked to provide comments on alternative options, 25 consultees (7% of those answering the question) said that KCC should consider the Creative Folkestone proposal, and a further 14 (4%) gave positive responses regarding a sale and leaseback. 64 consultees (18% of those answering the same question) indicated that KCC should share the Grace Hill building with partner services as a way of keeping the library there. A smaller number of consultees referred to the Creative Folkestone proposal when providing any further comments not already covered in their consultation response.
- 8.23 This option is subject to ongoing engagement with Creative Folkestone and may also involve the consideration of proposals from other individuals or groups, should any such proposals be made (including through the ACV process). Continuing to explore this option is consistent with important elements of consultation feedback. Officers intend to return to Cabinet Members and Cabinet Committee with further information and analysis in due course.

Permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the library

- 8.24 This remains a potential option for returning a full town centre library and registration service to Folkestone. The consultation explained that, following its purchase of the former Debenhams store on the high street, now named FOLCA, Folkestone & Hythe District Council's (FHDC) ambition was to deliver a mixed-use building in the heart of Folkestone. KCC officers have engaged with FHDC's officers around the potential for the library to be part of the project which is looking at concept design for a combination of public sector, community and commercial space. KCC's proposal, subject to consultation feedback, was to take forward the detailed work needed with the District Council to realise this project. If, for any reason it was not possible to progress a move to FOLCA, then the consultation explained that KCC would commit to finding an alternative town centre site.
- 8.25 This option would meet the service's requirements. The FOLCA building could provide a public library space that is equivalent to the public library and registration spaces at Grace Hill. It would offer potential advantages in terms of the ability to develop a new modern library layout design and the potential to work and collaborate with other public services. It would also offer advantages in terms of its location. A high street location for the library service

would bring greater visibility and opportunities to attract customers to the service. If, for any reason, it was not possible to take forward the FOLCA building, officers would look at other leasehold sites available on or close to the High Street. Officers have initially identified some potential alternative leasehold sites.

8.26 This option would be financially viable. It would avoid the need to spend an estimated £2.9m on repairing the Grace Hill building which, as explained above, is not considered to be affordable given KCC's financial position. If the library service were to leave the Grace Hill building, the building would be declared surplus to requirements, enabling KCC to potentially realise a capital receipt, after following the ACV process. This option would also avoid the risk of exposure to significant future maintenance liabilities if KCC remained responsible for the Grace Hill building. KCC currently estimates that the capital investment needed to move into the FOLCA building and transform the empty space into a functioning library would be around £150,000 to £200,000. The service and building operating costs (including staffing and service charge) would be expected to be similar to how much it cost us at Grace Hill.

8.27 Officers assess that this option is deliverable, although there are areas of uncertainty. The FOLCA option is subject to more detailed development, working with the District Council. Prior to consultation, officers at KCC and FHDC drew up indicative costs and principles of a potential lease arrangement. Further details would need to be developed and formal agreement would be needed. FHDC submitted a consultation response making clear that its first preference was for KCC to make repairs to, and re-open the Grace Hill building, co-locating with other service, with a second preference of selling and leasing back part of the building for the library service. FHDC explained that:

If KCC decides against these options, then our preference is the library service be retained in Folkestone town centre. However, this option should not be considered without full public disclosure of both the outcome of this consultation together with the basis for the final decision made.

It is only at that point that this Council would be able to consider progressing a decision about using Folca for the library and registration services.

8.28 Some consultees raised concerns about the cost and time involved in converting FOLCA or another town centre site, including specific concerns about the condition and suitability of the FOLCA building and possible maintenance issues. Any building issues would need to be addressed as part of the project. Ultimately, responsibility for the building would rest with FHDC as owners of the building. It is also acknowledged that time would be needed to complete all necessary works and that overall timescales for delivery are still to be confirmed and subject to FHDC's governance and processes.

8.29 Relocating to the FOLCA building would be likely to reduce KCC's carbon footprint relative to remaining at the Grace Hill building. The same would likely be true of an alternative town centre site.

- 8.30 There was support for KCC's proposed option among a significant proportion of consultees. While more consultees disagreed than agreed, 38% of consultees indicated that they agreed with KCC's proposal to permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the library service (21% agreeing, and 17% tending to agree). The most common reason for agreement related to the view that the library should be located in a convenient town centre location. A significant minority of consultees also agreed with KCC's proposals given the financial reasons described in the consultation. Some consultees expressed enthusiasm for the FOLCA project on the basis that FOLCA is itself an important building for the town centre. 43% of consultees indicated they agree with KCC's preferred option to move the service to FOLCA. Again the most common reason for agreement related to the location of FOLCA (including access, parking and transport).
- 8.31 50% of consultees disagreed with the proposal to leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service, and 51% disagreed with KCC's preferred option to move the library and registration service to FOLCA. The most common reasons for disagreement with the proposal to leave Grace Hill are discussed above (see paragraph 8.10). Consultees also raised specific concerns about the suitability of the FOLCA building (see paragraph 8.28 above).
- 8.32 Considering KCC's critical success factors, other relevant considerations, and consultation feedback, it is considered that KCC's proposal for the service to permanently leave the Grace Hill site and find an alternative town centre location remains viable, and should not be discounted.

ACV Status of the Grace Hill building and Recommendation to Issue Notice of Intention to Dispose

- 8.33 As explained above, it is recommended that further consideration should be given to the two options referred to at paragraph 8.2.
- 8.34 It should be noted that both of these involve inherent uncertainties and would require detailed work with partners over an extended period of time, including on legal agreements, funding, and redevelopment works.
- 8.35 Both recommended remaining options would very likely involve a disposal of the Grace Hill building to a third party (by way of freehold transfer or grant of a long lease) in line with KCC's **disposal policy** ([link to policy](#)). This would free KCC of responsibility for maintenance and repair of the Grace Hill building which would pass to the third party.
- 8.36 The Grace Hill building is listed as an asset of community value (ACV) under relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011. KCC therefore cannot enter into a "relevant disposal" of the building unless a number of statutory conditions are met. A relevant disposal is a disposal of the freehold estate of the land with vacant possession or the grant of a lease of a term of at least 25 years. Both recommended remaining options would very likely involve KCC entering into a relevant disposal.

- 8.37 Given the above, it is recommended that KCC now issues a notice of intention to dispose to Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC). This would trigger the ACV process. Separately, bids would be invited on an all-enquiries basis including freehold disposal or via a long-leasehold structure and would be compliant with KCC's disposal policy. KCC would invite bidders to set out the detail of proposals that could allow the LRA service to remain in part of the building. This would enable consideration of all proposals regarding the building. It would also allow both the recommended remaining options to continue, and officers to return to Cabinet Members and Cabinet Committee with further information and analysis, and recommendations for decision-making.
- 8.38 Issuing a notice of intention to dispose will trigger an initial six week moratorium period, during which any community interest group may submit to FHDC a written request to be treated as a potential bidder for the land. If no such request is received from a community interest group within the six week moratorium, then from an ACV perspective KCC will be free to dispose of the Grace Hill building in line with its disposal policy. However, if a written request is received within the initial moratorium, it will trigger the six-month 'full moratorium period' during which KCC may not enter into a relevant disposal other than to a community interest group. KCC is not obliged to accept any bid from a community interest group. At the end of the full moratorium, from an ACV perspective KCC will be free to dispose of the Grace Hill building as it wishes in line with its disposal policy.

9. Commercial Bids

- 9.1 Under section 123 of the Local Government Act KCC has a statutory duty to obtain best consideration in the disposal of land, unless the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of economic, social, or environmental well-being. KCC's approach in relation to freehold asset disposals is set out in the Council's disposal policy, including how value in relation to KCC statutory services can be considered alongside commercial bids as part of an open marketing process. KCC will need to consider any potential disposal in light of its disposal policy in due course.

10. Temporary Provision

- 10.1 As explained above, temporary town centre library and registration service provision has been put in place following the closure of the library in December 2022. Some consultees raised concerns about the sufficiency of this as well as the time it was taking in bringing back a full town centre library and registration offer. Cabinet Committee is asked to note that either of the two recommended remaining options will take a significant period, possibly years, to deliver.
- 10.2 It is therefore proposed to explore further and implement an alternative town centre location where temporary library and registration services could better be delivered with a greater range of services, within current budgets, until a permanent library and registration service location is opened in the town centre. This could include a single site temporary library and registration

service which could include a children's library, public PCs, birth and death registration, the heritage collections and lending book collections for example..

11. Legal Implications

- 11.1 Cabinet Committee is asked to note KCC's ongoing statutory duty relating to the provision of a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service across the County. Officers consider that the current temporary provision in Folkestone meets this duty although, as above, we recommend that further enhancements of the temporary provision are explored.
- 11.2 The Committee is also asked to note the legal requirement that KCC gives conscientious consideration to consultation responses. Committee Members should give careful thought to the analysis of consultation responses in this report, the analysis set out in the draft consultation response at Appendix C, and the consultation report at Appendix B.
- 11.3 KCC must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty in s. 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Cabinet Members are referred to the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) at Appendix D.
- 11.4 The statutory requirements relating to the status of the Grace Hill building as an asset of community value are covered above.

12. Equalities implications

- 12.1 An EqIA has been undertaken for this project which has been updated following the public consultation. The key findings from this support the recommendations of this paper:
 - KCC is committed to providing a full town centre library service for everyone. This is restated to mitigate any concerns raised that certain customer groups e.g. children would be disadvantaged.
 - There was feedback that any move of the library away from Grace Hill may increase is distance from the immediate area and make the service less accessible for those with protected characteristics in that area. Whilst the immediate location in Grace Hill does have high levels of deprivation, it is considered that a high street location does have the advantages of greater accessibility across the district for those that have protected characteristics.
 - Equally there was also feedback that a town centre location would be an improvement with parking and public transport links close by.
 - Any design of future library and registration space for Folkestone would consider feedback to ensure that wherever it is located we deliver an inclusive and accessible space for all.
 - The EQIA will continue to be developed as part of next steps.

- 12.2 The full EQIA is included as Appendix D

13. Financial Implications

- 13.1 The £2.9m estimated costs are simply to repair the building. As explained in the options analysis, spending £2.9m on repairing just one building is not justifiable. KCC also needs to be mindful of the risk that significant additional costs may be required in future, given the age, construction, and listed status of the building. It is recommended that other options (i.e. continuing with the current temporary provision and relocating the service to another existing KCC building) are discounted for non-financial reasons. The financial implications of the recommended remaining options will be further addressed in a future decision report.
- 13.2 The Best Value Duty is a statutory requirement for local authorities under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 and 1999. The financial context of the Council remains challenging, and any decision will be taken considering both the capital and revenue financial position in determining the best value solution.

14. Governance

- 14.1 Future Key Decision paper to come to Cabinet Committee on the location of the permanent provision once further work on the recommended remaining options has been undertaken.

15. Conclusions

- 15.1 While recognising consultees' views about the Grace Hill building, it is not considered that making the necessary repairs to the building is financially justifiable.
- 15.2 It is recommended to undertake further work on the two remaining options set out at paragraph 8.2 above.
- 15.3 Both these options would very likely involve a disposal of the building to a third party, which would free KCC of responsibility for maintenance and repair of the Grace Hill building. It is recommended that KCC now issues a Notice of Intention to Dispose in respect of the Grace Hill building to FHDC. This would allow further work to continue on both remaining options. It would also allow KCC to consider any further proposals or options that come forward.
- 15.4 Officers intend to continue to explore other alternative town centre locations including continued exploration of the FOLCA option with FHDC.
- 15.5 It is also recognised as set out in the feedback the desire to see town centre library provision return to a single location as soon as possible. It is proposed to look at the options for improved temporary provision while we take forward work on a permanent solution.
- 15.6 Officers propose to return to Cabinet Members and Cabinet Committee in due course with further information and analysis to enable an informed decision to be made about the future of Folkestone Library and the registration service.

16. Recommendation(s):

16.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services on the proposed decision to:

- A. APPROVE to issue the draft consultation report set out in Appendix B.
- B. APPROVE to Issue the consultation response set out in Appendix C.
- C. Note that KCC remain committed to a full town centre library provision in Folkestone Town Centre.
- D. APPROVE that further work be undertaken to explore and implement an alternative town centre location for the temporary library and registration service, from which a greater range of services could be delivered, within current budgets, until a permanent library and registration service location is opened in the town centre.
- E. APPROVE that the options for the future of the Grace Hill building which involve KCC retaining responsibility for maintenance and repair of the building, be discounted, acknowledging that this will require KCC to make a disposal of the building to a third party (by way of freehold transfer or grant of a long lease), and progress actions relating to its listing as an asset of community value (ACV), including issuing a notice of intention to dispose to Folkestone & Hythe District Council which triggers the AVC process;
- F. APPROVE that further work be undertaken on the two remaining options, including further engagement with Creative Folkestone and, if appropriate, other individuals or groups who may make proposals for the Grace Hill building (including through the ACV process).
- G. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to issue the draft consultation responses
- H. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Community and Regulatory Services to proceed with the work required on the remaining two options, noting that these will be subject to further governance and decision making
- I. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services 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
- J. Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services 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

18. Appendices

Appendix A- Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix B- Folkestone Library consultation report

Appendix C- Draft KCC consultation response themes consideration
and alternative proposal and alternative ideas consideration.

Appendix D- Folkestone Library EQIA

19. 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:

24/00116

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

The future of library provision in Folkestone town centre

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services I agree to:

- A) APPROVE to issue the draft consultation response set out in Appendix B.
- B) APPROVE to Issue the consultation report set out in Appendix C.
- C) Note that KCC remain committed to a full town centre library provision in Folkestone Town Centre.
- D) APPROVE that further work be undertaken to explore and implement an alternative town centre location for the temporary library and registration service, from which a greater range of services could be delivered, within current budgets, until a permanent library and registration service location is opened in the town centre.
- E) APPROVE that the options for the future of the Grace Hill building which involve KCC retaining responsibility for maintenance and repair of the building, be discounted, acknowledging that this will require KCC to make a disposal of the building to a third party (by way of freehold transfer or grant of a long lease), and progress actions relating to its listing as an asset of community value (ACV), including issuing a notice of intention to dispose to Folkestone & Hythe District Council;
- F) APPROVE that further work be undertaken on the two remaining options, including further engagement with Creative Folkestone and, if appropriate, other individuals or groups who may make proposals for the Grace Hill building (including through the ACV process).
- G) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to issue the draft consultation responses
- H) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Community and Regulatory Services to proceed with the work required on the remaining two options, noting that these will be subject to further governance and decision making
- I) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services 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
- J) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services 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

Reason(s) for decision:

Folkestone town centre library and registration service is located in the Grade II listed building at 2 Grace Hill (referred to throughout as the 'Grace Hill building'). This building had to be closed due to

health and safety reasons in December 2022. This necessitated the temporary closure of the service and provision of temporary services and facilities nearby. The latest cost estimate to repair the Grace Hill building is £2.9m. Following the temporary closure, KCC has been exploring the options for the future provision of the service and undertook an eight-week public consultation in 2024.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee will consider the proposal at their meeting on 22 January 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- Continue with temporary provision permanently and exit the Grace Hill building. This option would not meet the service’s requirement for location. The current temporary provision does not allow full library and registration services to be delivered from one town centre location, it is scattered across the town, and beyond the branch libraries there is no town centre book browsing or children’s library. The current temporary provision was never intended to be a permanent replacement for the services delivered from the Grace Hill building, and this remains the case
- Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services there. This option is not considered financially affordable
- Relocate the library service to another existing KCC building. Opportunities have been explored to relocate the service to other KCC buildings in Folkestone town centre, however, none of these buildings would provide enough space taking into account other service usage of these buildings from which to deliver the library service, or offer an improved location in the town.

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

None

.....
signed

.....
date



KENT COUNTY COUNCIL FOLKESTONE LIBRARY CONSULTATION REPORT



PREPARED BY LAKE MARKET RESEARCH



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 596 responses were received to the consultation questionnaires (including Easy Read). An additional 4 emails / letters were received. Feedback from all sources have been included in this report.
- The most common means of finding out about the consultation was Facebook (32%), followed by at a Folkestone and Hythe district library (23%) or from a friend or relative (19%).
- 80% of consultees visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill prior to its temporary closure to some degree (defined as consultees visiting at least once a week up to and including less regularly prior to closure). 57% were frequent visitors and visited at least once a month. 14% of consultees have visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill in the past and 6% have never visited.
- 51% of consultees have used other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries while Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill has been temporarily closed. 18% used the online e-library service and 15% used 'Folkestone Library – Heritage and Digital Access' at 5 Grace Hill. 35% have not used any temporary or alternative services.
- 55% disagree with KCC's proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service. Strength of disagreement is high with 50% strongly disagreeing and 6% tending to disagree. 38% agree with KCC's proposal (21% strongly agree, 17% tend to agree);
- Consultees were asked to indicate their reasons for their response to the proposal. With significant proportions of consultees agreeing and disagreeing with the proposal, free text feedback is mixed. The key themes in support of keeping the library at 2 Grace Hill are listed below:
 - The history of the building / part of local heritage / a landmark
 - Repairs should be made to keep the building as a library
 - The building belongs to the community
 - The building is suitable in terms of building and location as a library.
- Key themes in support of finding an alternative town centre location are as follows:
 - The location would be central / convenient / beneficial,
 - Perceived high repair / maintenance costs at 2 Grace Hill
 - Generally being a more cost-effective option.
- 50% disagree with KCC's current preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street. Strength of disagreement is high with 43% strongly disagreeing and 8% tending to disagree. 43% agree with KCC's current preferred option (27% strongly agree, 15% tend to agree).
- Consultees were asked to indicate their reasons for their response. With significant proportions of consultees agreeing and disagreeing, free text feedback is mixed. The reasons put forward in support of moving to / renting space at FOLCA are broadly consistent with comments to the first proposal. The reasons put forward for keeping the library at 2 Grace Hill are also broadly consistent, however, a proportion also raised concerns that FOLCA is considered unsuitable / it's too much work and too costly to convert FOLCA / it requires maintenance.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Background

Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill temporarily closed in December 2022 because it became unsafe for customers and staff. Since then, Kent County Council (KCC) has been investigating the extent and cost of the works needed to bring the building back into use, exploring ways to fund the repairs to the 2 Grace Hill building, looking at other locations in Folkestone town centre where the library could be located, and considering the future of the Grace Hill building.

The strength and depth of local feeling regarding this building and the importance of Folkestone's town centre library and registration service is recognised. While options are still at a formative stage, they have developed to the point that KCC have shared these in the form of a public consultation to listen to views before progressing any further.

KCC are committed to securing a permanent town centre location for the library and registration service. Having carefully considered the options KCC proposed the following to go to public consultation:

- Permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the Folkestone town centre library and registration service.
- Take forward work with Folkestone & Hythe District Council on moving the service to FOLCA on the high street.

Consultation process

On the 18 July 2024, an eight-week consultation was launched and ran until the 11 September 2024. The consultation invited residents, library users and other interested parties to provide views on the proposed options or suggest potential alternatives.

Feedback was captured via a consultation questionnaire which was available on the KCC engagement website (www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary). Hard copies of the consultation material, including the questionnaire were also available in all Folkestone and Hythe district libraries and on request. Easy Read and large print formats were available from the consultation webpage and consultation material and the webpage included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or an alternative format. A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version.

A consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to assess the impact the proposals could have on those with protected characteristics. The EqIA was available as one of the consultation documents and the questionnaire invited consultees to comment on the assessment that had been carried out. An analysis of responses to this question can be found with the overall findings' sections of this report.

Activities to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, included the following:

- Four in person drop-in sessions at Wood Avenue Library and 5 Grace Hill at the Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access.
- Promotion via library staff and displays in all Folkestone and Hythe district libraries, including paper copies of the consultation document and questionnaire.

- Emails to key stakeholders, including Folkestone and Hythe Member of Parliament, local KCC Members, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Town and Parish Councils, community groups, local charity organisations, library groups and partners.
- Local schools were contacted twice, at the beginning and towards the end of the consultation. The consultation period coincided with the annual library school age children's Summer Reading Challenge which is a busy time of year seeing many families visiting libraries.
- Press releases at the start of the consultation and towards the end and a half page advert in the Kent Messenger Folkestone & Hythe Express newspaper.
- E-mail Invite to 549 people and organisations registered with Let's talk Kent who had expressed an interest in hearing about new consultations on libraries in the district of Folkestone and Hythe.
- Promotional material displayed at 2 Grace Hill and other public buildings in Folkestone, including the Family Hub, Adult Education building, Folkestone & Hythe District Council offices, Folkestone Town Council, Hythe Town Council and Sandgate Parish Council offices and local charity offices such as Age UK, South Kent Mind and Social Enterprise Kent.
- Promoted on FOLCA digital screen.
- Social media posts from Folkestone Library, Kent Libraries and KCC's corporate social media accounts, including paid Facebook adverts to extend the reach of the consultation beyond those who follow KCC's channels.
- Promotional links from the Folkestone Library service webpage on Kent.gov.
- Articles in KCC's residents' e-newsletter.

Promotional activity was also undertaken by the Save Folkestone Library group, New Folkestone Society and other members of the community who took copies of the promotional material.

A summary of interaction with the consultation website and documents can be found below:

- 5,180 visits to the consultation webpage by 4,673 visitors.
- 834 downloads of the main consultation document, 32 of the Easy Read format and 7 of the large print version.
- 264 views of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- 146 downloads of the Word version of the questionnaire, 14 of the Easy Read survey and 4 of the large print version.
- 123 downloads of the breakdown of repair costs document.
- 53 downloads of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Consultation response

There were 600 responses to this consultation:

- 510 were submitted online and 86 questionnaires were submitted in hard copy or by email. 9 of the hard copy questionnaire were Easy Read versions.
- An additional 4 emails / letters were received by the KCC project team. Their open feedback has been combined with that collected from the official consultation questionnaire and are included in this report's analysis.

Points to note

- Consultees were given the choice of which questions to answer / provide a comment for. The number of consultees providing an answer to each question is shown on each chart / data table featured in this report.
- Consultees were asked to detail the reasons for their views in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed the comments made for each of these questions and grouped common responses together into themes. These themes are reported where relevant in this report. Please note the percentages in these data tables will exceed the sum of 100% and comments often cover more than one theme.
- Please note the sum of individual percentages in any single choice question in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
- Please note that participation in consultations is self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses. The consultation was widely promoted across Folkestone and Hythe but inclination to take part in the consultation is subject to individual personal topic interest and service usage.
- Whilst this consultation was open to all residents and stakeholders to participate, it should be noted that 80% of consultees responding indicated they visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill to some degree before its temporary closure (defined as consultees visiting at least once a week up to and including less regularly prior to closure).
- KCC were responsible for the design, promotion and collection of the consultation responses. Lake Market Research were appointed to conduct an independent analysis of feedback.

CONSULTATION PROFILE AND AWARENESS

Response profile

The majority of consultees responding to the consultation questionnaire are Folkestone and Hythe residents (92%); 4% of consultees are residents that live somewhere else in Kent or further away. 7 questionnaire submissions were received from Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillors, 1 on behalf of a Town, Parish or District Council in an official capacity, 2 as a representative of a local community group or residents' association and 1 on behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college.

CONSULTEE TYPE	Count	Percentage
As a Folkestone and Hythe resident	546	92%
As a resident from somewhere else in Kent or further away	20	4%
As a member of KCC staff	5	1%
A Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor	7	1%
On behalf of a Town, Parish or District Council in an official capacity	1	0.2%
As a representative of a local community group or residents' association	2	0.3%
On behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college	1	0.2%
Other / As something else (Member of Parliament, former resident / library user, member of the local artistic and creative community / organiser of Folkestone Music Town and as an employee of the Arts Council England / Conservation Architect on behalf of Heritage Conservation)	8	1%
Blank	4	1%
Total	596	

In addition to the consultation questionnaires, letters / email were received from:

- Folkestone Town Council
- Creative Folkestone
- Previous member of staff at Folkestone Library
- A library user unable to complete the consultation questionnaire.

Demographic profile

The tables below show the demographic profile of resident consultees who completed the consultation questionnaire (568 in total). The proportion who left these questions blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.

POSTCODE AREA (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
CT18	37	7%
CT19	210	37%
CT20 1	76	13%
CT20 2	93	16%
CT20 3	44	8%
CT20 (no further detail)	8	1%
CT21	51	9%
Other postcode area	41	7%
Blank	8	1%

GENDER (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
Male	160	28%
Female	262	46%
Prefer not to say / blank	146	26%

GENDER SAME AS BIRTH (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	417	73%
No	2	0.4%
Prefer not to say / blank	154	26%

AGE (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
16-24	4	1%
25-34	26	5%
35-49	113	20%
50-59	78	14%
60-64	39	7%
65-74	109	19%
75-84	51	9%
85 and over	6	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	142	25%

DISABILITY (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	64	11%
- Physical impairment	36	6%
- Sensory impairment	10	2%
- Longstanding illness or health condition	28	5%
- Mental health condition	19	3%
- Learning disability	7	1%
- Other	3	1%
No	351	63%
Prefer not to say / blank	123	22%

CARER (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	53	9%
No	369	65%
Prefer not to say / blank	123	22%

ETHNICITY (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
White English	346	61%
White Scottish	9	2%
White Welsh	4	1%
White Northern Irish	2	0.4%
White Irish	10	2%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	1	0.2%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	2	0.4%
Mixed White & Asian	3	1%
Black or Black British Caribbean	3	1%
Arab	1	0.2%
Chinese	2	0.4%
Other (including White British, White European)	33	6%
Prefer not to say / blank	152	27%

RELIGION (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
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Yes	141	25%
- Christian	121	22%
- Buddhist	2	1%
- Jewish	3	1%
- Other	11	2%
No	261	46%
Prefer not to say / blank	146	29%

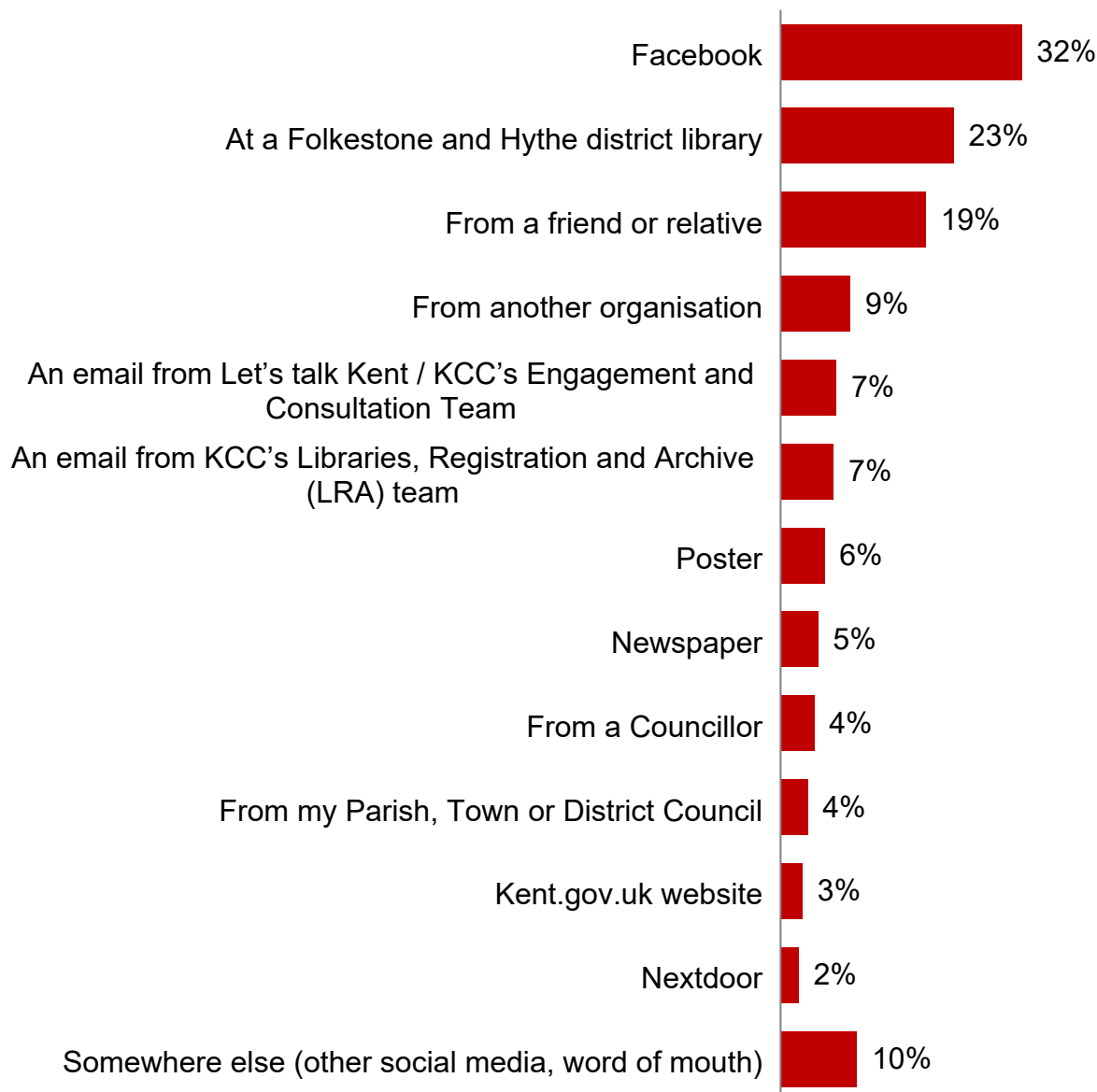
SEXUALITY (resident consultees only)	Number of responses	Percentage
Heterosexual / Straight	337	59%
Bi / Bisexual	15	3%
Gay man	14	32%
Gay woman / Lesbian	8	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	194	34%

Consultation awareness

The most common means of finding out about the consultation is Facebook (32%), followed by at a Folkestone and Hythe district library (23%) or a friend or relative (19%).

9% found out from another organisation and 14% found out via a prompted email (7% from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation Team and 7% from KCC's Libraries, Registration and Archive (LRA) team).

How did you find out about this consultation? Base: all providing a response (591)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Facebook	192	32%
At a Folkestone and Hythe district library	136	23%
From a friend or relative	113	19%
From another organisation	54	9%
An email from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation Team	44	7%
An email from KCC's Libraries, Registration and Archive (LRA) team	41	7%

SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Poster	34	6%
Newspaper	29	5%
From a Councillor	26	4%
From my Parish, Town or District Council	21	4%
Kent.gov.uk website	17	3%
Nextdoor	14	2%
Other / somewhere else (other social media, word of mouth)	59	10%

VISITING FOLKESTONE LIBRARY AT 2 GRACE HILL AND TEMPORARY / ALTERNATIVE SERVICES

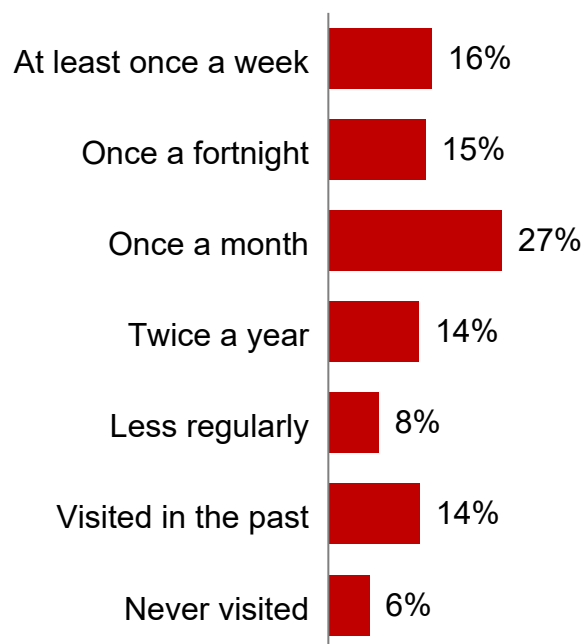
Frequency of visiting Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill prior to temporary closure

80% of consultees visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill prior to its temporary closure to some degree (defined as consultees visiting at least once a week up to and including less regularly). 57% were frequent visitors and visited at least once a month.

14% of consultees visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill in the past and 6% have never visited.

How often did you visit Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill before its temporary closure?

Base: all responding to consultation (575)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Visited to some degree (At least once a week to less regularly)	458	80%
Net – At least once a month	329	57%
At least once a week	90	16%
Once a fortnight	86	15%
Once a month	153	27%
Twice a year	83	14%
Less regularly	46	8%
Visited in the past	81	14%
Never visited	36	6%

The table below depicts the proportion of consultees who visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill before its temporary closure by resident gender, age, disability and postcode area groups.

Frequency of visiting is highest amongst residents aged 35-49 (60% visited at least once a month) and residents living in the CT20 1 postcode area (72%) and lowest amongst residents aged 75 and over (43% visited at least once a month).

% visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill at least once a month	Number of responses	Percentage
Male residents	86	56%
Female residents	154	57%
Residents aged 35-49	68	60%
Residents aged 50-64	68	57%
Residents aged 65-74	59	55%
Residents aged 75 and over	24	43%
Residents who have a disability	37	55%
Residents who do not have a disability	202	58%
Residents living in CT18 postcode area	16	43%
Residents living in CT19 postcode area	135	66%
Residents living in CT20 1 postcode area	54	72%
Residents living in CT20 2/3 postcode area	64	47%
Residents living in CT21 postcode area	27	52%

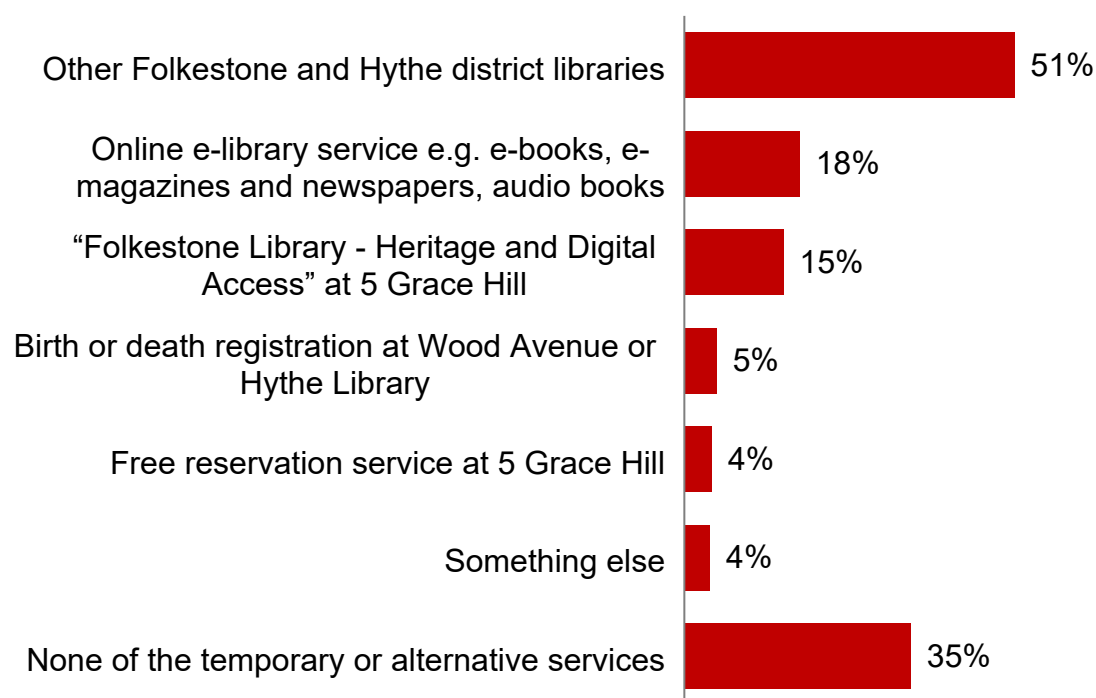
* Please note that the number of resident consultees aged 34 and under taking part in this consultation is too small to include in the table above.

Use of temporary or alternative services while Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill has been temporarily closed

Half of consultees (51%) indicated they used other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries while Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill has been temporarily closed. 18% used the online e-library service and 15% used 'Folkestone Library – Heritage and Digital Access' at 5 Grace Hill.

Just over a third (35%) indicated they did not use any temporary or alternative services.

Which of these temporary or alternative services have you used while Folkestone library has been temporarily closed? Base: all responding to consultation (570)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries	291	51%
Online e-library service e.g. e-books, e-magazines and newspapers, audio books	101	18%
"Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access" at 5 Grace Hill	87	15%
Birth or death registration at Wood Avenue or Hythe Library	29	5%
Free reservation service at 5 Grace Hill	25	4%
Something else	20	4%
None of the temporary or alternative services	201	35%

The table below depicts the proportion of consultee subgroups who used temporary or alternative services while Folkestone Library has been temporarily closed by frequent / less frequent visitor groups, gender, age, disability and postcode area groups.

A higher proportion of consultees who visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill visited other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries and 'Folkestone Library – Heritage and Digital Access' at 5 Grace Hill while Folkestone Library has been temporarily closed. In addition, use of temporary or alternative services is lowest amongst residents aged 50-64 and residents living in the CT20 postcode area.

% selected	% other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries	% "Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access" at 5 Grace Hill	% none of the temporary or alternative services
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>at least once a fortnight</u> before closure	65%	23%	24%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>less than once a fortnight</u> before closure	49%	14%	35%
Male residents	51%	19%	36%
Female residents	54%	13%	32%
Residents aged 35-49	59%	14%	35%
Residents aged 50-64	44%	18%	43%
Residents aged 65-74	52%	16%	29%
Residents aged 75 and over	57%	11%	28%
Residents who have a disability	50%	23%	33%
Residents who do not have a disability	53%	14%	34%
Residents living in CT18 postcode area	54%	8%	32%
Residents living in CT19 postcode area	60%	12%	31%
Residents living in CT20 1 postcode area	36%	30%	41%
Residents living in CT20 2/3 postcode area	44%	15%	44%
Residents living in CT21 postcode area	60%	10%	27%

* Please note that the number of resident consultees aged 34 and under taking part in this consultation is too small to include in the table above.

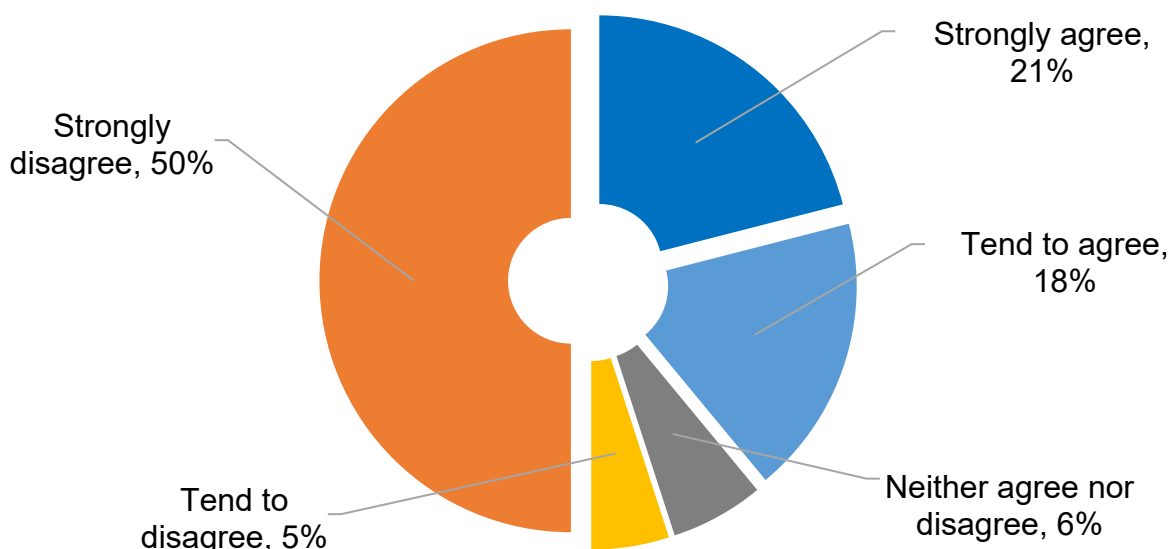
RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

This section of the report details response to the two proposals put forward in the consultation.

Proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service

38% indicated they agree with KCC's proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service (21% strongly agree, 17% tend to agree). Over half (55%) indicated they disagree with KCC's proposal to permanently leave the 2 Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location. Strength of disagreement is high with 50% strongly disagreeing and 6% tending to disagree.

How much do you agree or disagree with our proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service? Base: all providing a response (594), the sum of individual percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Agree	228	38%
Net – Disagree	328	55%
Strongly agree	125	21%
Tend to agree	103	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	36	6%
Tend to disagree	33	6%
Strongly disagree	295	50%
Don't know	2	0%

The table below depicts response to the proposal by consultee subgroups by frequent / less frequent visitors of the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill, users / non-users of temporary or alternative services, gender, age, disability and postcode area groups.

Agreement with the proposal is higher amongst consultees who have either visited the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill in the past or have never visited (56%), consultees who have used temporary or alternative services since closure (43%) and consultees with a disability (56%). Conversely, agreement with the proposal is lower amongst consultees who used to visit the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill at least once a fortnight (28%) and consultees who have not used temporary or alternative services since closure (34%).

Agreement with the proposal is lowest amongst residents aged 35-49 (29%) and residents who live in the CT20 1 postcode area. Agreement is highest amongst residents aged 75 and over (61%).

% selected	% Net - Agree	% neither agree nor disagree	% Net - Disagree
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>at least once a fortnight</u> before closure	28%	5%	67%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>less than once a fortnight</u> before closure	39%	6%	55%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>in the past or never visited</u>	56%	5%	37%
<u>Used</u> temporary or alternative services since closure	43%	6%	51%
<u>Have not used</u> temporary or alternative services since closure	34%	5%	61%
Male residents	41%	5%	53%
Female residents	44%	5%	50%
Residents aged 35-49	29%	10%	61%
Residents aged 50-64	41%	4%	55%
Residents aged 65-74	52%	2%	46%
Residents aged 75 and over	61%	4%	33%
Residents who have a disability	56%	0%	42%
Residents who do not have a disability	41%	6%	53%
Residents living in CT18 postcode area	50%	3%	47%
Residents living in CT19 postcode area	36%	5%	59%
Residents living in CT20 1 postcode area	29%	11%	61%
Residents living in CT20 2/3 postcode area	42%	6%	51%
Residents living in CT21 postcode area	40%	6%	52%

* Please note that the number of resident consultees aged 34 and under taking part in this consultation is too small to include in the table above.

Reason for agreement rating (Proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service)

Consultees were asked to detail their reasons for their level of agreement with the proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. 97% of consultees provided a comment to this question.

Consistent with significant proportions of consultees agreeing and disagreeing with the proposal, free text feedback is mixed. A number of the common themes noted expressed reasons for wanting the library to remain at 2 Grace Hill (all percentages are based on the proportion of consultees answering the question):

- Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage / iconic / landmark / beautiful / listed – 34%
- Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library / preserved – 30%
- Grace Hill belongs to the community / it's a public space / asset / was a gift / part of Folkestone – 20%
- Grace Hill is suitable for a library / Grace Hill is purpose built – 15%
- Prefer current Grace Hill location / accessible / good location – 11%

Reasons for supporting the proposal to find an alternative town centre location were also evident:

- Library should be in a good location / central / convenient / town centre / would be beneficial to town – 21%
- Repair / maintenance costs are high at Grace Hill – 10%
- Cost effective to move to town centre / KCC doesn't have money for repairs – 10%
- Generally agree with moving library to another location – 9%

13% of consultees answering believe that Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC has neglected Grace Hill.

Please tell us the reason for your answer in the box below.

Base: all consultees providing a response (574), themes 2% and above reported below

% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage / iconic / landmark / beautiful / listed	195	34%
Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library / preserved	174	30%
Library should be in a good location / central / convenient / town centre / would be beneficial to town	121	21%
Grace Hill belongs to the community / it's a public space / asset / was a gift / part of Folkestone	114	20%
Grace Hill is suitable for a library / Grace Hill is purpose built	84	15%
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC neglected Grace Hill	73	13%
Prefer current Grace Hill location / accessible / good location	66	11%
Repair / maintenance costs are high at Grace Hill	58	10%
Cost effective to move to town centre / KCC doesn't have money for repairs	57	10%
Generally agree with moving library to another location	50	9%
Any library location to be accessible with parking / good public transport / easy to get to	49	9%
Concerned about future of Grace Hill if library moves / don't want it to be sold off	44	8%
Like the suggestion of FOLCA / would make use of the building	39	7%
Library is / could be a community hub	36	6%
Permanent library facilities required ASAP / no preference as to location	34	6%
New location would attract more people / higher footfall / passing foot traffic / be more visible	33	6%
Good idea to share site with other services	33	6%
Need new library / modern / up to date facilities / spacious	32	6%
Disagree with relocating library	32	6%
Libraries are essential	29	5%
Alternative locations / sites (including FOLCA) are not suitable / there are other plans for FOLCA	29	5%
Grace Hill is poorly maintained / outdated / unsafe to access	28	5%
Sassoon Gallery / exhibition space is valuable / don't want to lose them	27	5%
Costly to convert new site to a library	25	4%
Grace Hill has access issues / in a poor location / lack of public transport / parking	20	3%
% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
Host events / venue hire / café to raise revenue	18	3%

Grace Hill should be repaired / used for something else (not a library)	17	3%
Cost effective to invest in Grace Hill	17	3%
Consider Creative Folkestone proposal	17	3%
Grace Hill building not accessible for users with disabilities / accessibility is difficult	9	2%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the themes of wanting the library to remain at 2 Grace Hill can be found below:

“The library building is a significant, purpose-built local landmark that should be brought back to its best through its use as a library. It is in a good location and is well loved by the community.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“The Grace Hill building is a heritage building and should be preserved. The library there was excellent and it was a good community asset and base with huge potential to be an amazing community space that is much needed. The building and the library space go together.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“The Grace Hill building is a beautiful, purpose-built library building. It was gifted to the community and was designed to serve the more deprived side of the town, hence its location on the east side of the town centre. This community has very few beautiful public buildings and we love our library. It instils a sense of civic pride as well as being a space for residents to escape often overcrowded homes. It's a place for people to study and I know of many young people who share bedrooms who relied on it as a quiet place to revise for exams/write essays etc. It's an important warm hub in winter for people who live on the more deprived side of town and who are struggling with the cost of heating their homes, and it's a place where children from households with high levels of deprivation to access books and develop a positive relationship with reading in a location close to their homes. Many on the east side of the town are digitally excluded and need to access the computer terminals in the library. The building also has one of the few significant gallery spaces in a town with a high level of people making their livings creatively. We can't afford to lose these important facilities anywhere, but particularly in this specific location.” (Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor)

“I strongly disagree with the proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill. The library is a historically significant community asset, deeply valued for its unique atmosphere, cultural importance, and its role in connecting the town to its heritage. Relocating to a more commercially-focused space risks diminishing its identity, disrupting the quiet and reflective environment, and undermining long-standing community connections.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“The Grace Hill library is a community asset of huge historic, local and practical importance for the people of Folkestone. It was given to the people of Folkestone; and should stay in the service of the people of Folkestone. It has provided a valuable library service for many years, in an area of the town that has many challenges, and where library services are of crucial importance to the community. It was not maintained by Kent County Council and was allowed to run into disrepair. The library needs to be repaired by Kent County Council and re-opened as a library to the community.” (Other)

“Grace Hill Library is of vital importance to the people of Folkestone, most notably those in the Central, East and Harbour wards. These parts of Folkestone are some of the most deprived in Kent and the Library should be there to provide a safe and warm space to relax, learn and access local services. Reopening of the Library in its original Grace Hill site is essential for the health and wellbeing of local residents and we would wish to see the refurbishment and reopening of the Grace Hill Library.” (Response received by letter, Town Council)

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the proposal to find an alternative town centre location can be found below:

“From the available figures it seems that Grace Hill would not only be extremely expensive to repair and there would be an ongoing requirement for remedial work in the future. I believe a central location would make the library far more accessible.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I would prefer to have a library sooner rather than later. The FOLCA building is conveniently located for bus services and on level ground which makes accessibility easier. It will draw more footfall into the town centre and be a useful purpose for a publicly owned building.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“Reluctantly I tend to agree because it is a part of our heritage. I visited Grace Hill library from the age of 4 and have fond memories of the building, museum and library. However, I find your report about the state of the building and cost of repairs well written and convincing.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I think having a centrally located library along with other services will aid footfall in that part of town. A newly, purpose-built refurbishment will me more accessible to those with disabilities. Close to other facilities in town including transport links and parking.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“The location at Grace Hill is an unattractive part of the town on a one-way system. The opportunity to move to a High Street location with much larger footfall with improved access is too good to be missed even without the considerable savings that will be made with this option. Buildings like the library at Grace Hill are outdated & no longer suited to the delivery of modern library services, as well as being hugely expensive to maintain.” (A resident from somewhere else in Kent or further away)

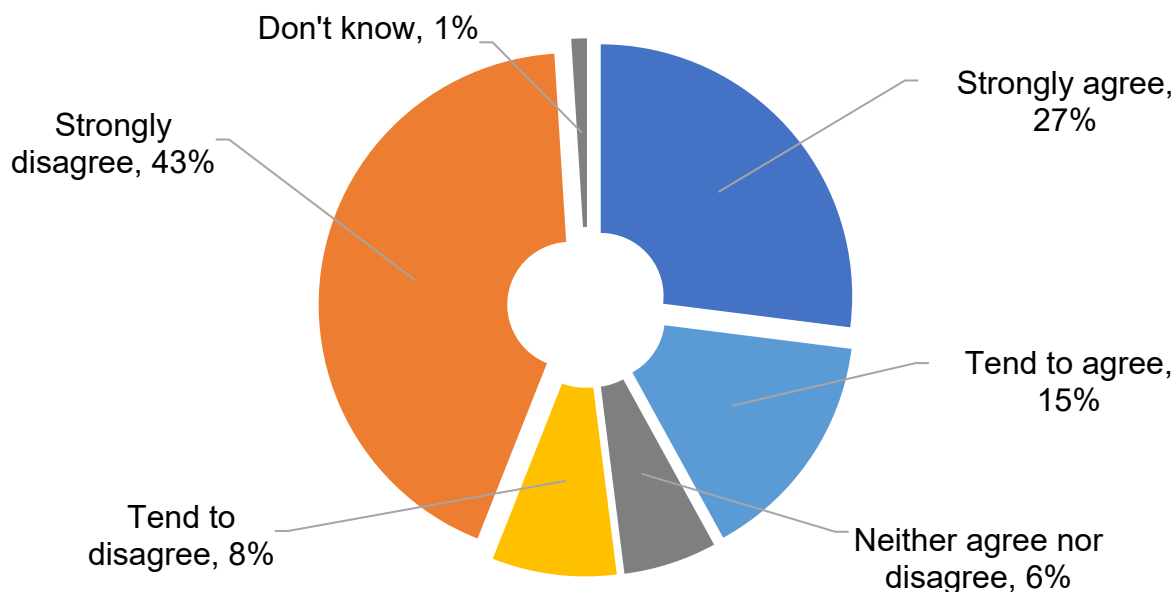
“The building is some way from the bus stop in town and needs to be in the centre of town and easily accessible for children and others to go to whereas it is currently on a very busy road on the outskirts and not near other facilities.” (Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor)

Current preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street

43% indicated they agree with KCC’s preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street (27% strongly agree, 15% tend to agree). Half (50%)

indicated they disagree with KCC's preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street. Strength of disagreement is high with 43% strongly disagreeing and 8% tending to disagree.

How much do you agree or disagree with our current preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street? Base: all providing a response (593), the sum of individual percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Agree	253	43%
Net – Disagree	299	50%
Strongly agree	162	27%
Tend to agree	91	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	36	6%
Tend to disagree	46	8%
Strongly disagree	253	43%
Don't know	5	1%

The table below depicts response to the proposal by consultee subgroups by frequent / less frequent visitors of the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill, users / non-users of temporary or alternative services, gender, age, disability and postcode area groups.

Agreement with the proposal is higher amongst consultees who have either visited the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill in the past or have never visited (57%), consultees who have used temporary or alternative services since closure (47%). Conversely, agreement with the proposal is lower amongst consultees who used to visit Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill at least once a

fortnight (34%) and consultees who have not used temporary or alternative services since closure (36%).

Agreement with the proposal is lowest amongst residents aged 35-49 (41%) and residents living in the CT19 postcode area (38%). Agreement is highest amongst residents aged 75 and over (65%).

% selected	% Net - Agree	% neither agree nor disagree	% Net - Disagree
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>at least once a fortnight</u> before closure	34%	4%	62%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>less than once a fortnight</u> before closure	43%	8%	50%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>in the past or never visited</u>	57%	6%	34%
<u>Used</u> temporary or alternative services since closure	47%	6%	36%
<u>Have not used</u> temporary or alternative services since closure	36%	7%	57%
Male residents	45%	6%	47%
Female residents	47%	7%	46%
Residents aged 35-49	41%	8%	50%
Residents aged 50-64	39%	7%	54%
Residents aged 65-74	52%	5%	42%
Residents aged 75 and over	65%	7%	26%
Residents who have a disability	51%	8%	38%
Residents who do not have a disability	46%	5%	48%
Residents living in CT18 postcode area	58%	3%	39%
Residents living in CT19 postcode area	38%	8%	54%
Residents living in CT20 1 postcode area	42%	5%	53%
Residents living in CT20 2/3 postcode area	46%	4%	49%
Residents living in CT21 postcode area	40%	8%	50%

* Please note that the number of resident consultees aged 34 and under taking part in this consultation is too small to include in the table above.

Reason for agreement rating (Current preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street)

Consultees were asked to detail their reasons for their level of agreement with the proposal to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. 89% of consultees provided a comment to this question.

Consistent with significant proportions of consultees agreeing and disagreeing, free text feedback for this proposal is also mixed. Free text reasons for supporting the move / renting space at FOLCA on the high street can be found below (all percentages are based on the proportion of consultees answering the question):

- Library should be in a good location / central / convenient – 27%
- It would be accessible / easy to get to / good parking / public transport – 15%
- Makes sense to use FOLCA building / make use of FOLCA / good for town – 14%
- FOLCA is acceptable / good choice – 10%
- New location would attract more people / higher footfall / passing foot traffic – 7%

Consistent with response to the first proposal, there are also a number of themes that express reasons for wanting the library to remain at 2 Grace Hill and perceptions that FOLCA is not suitable:

- Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library – 18%
- FOLCA is unsuitable / too much work to convert FOLCA / requires maintenance – 14%
- Concerned about renting a building not owning / renting is costly / renting is risky – 9%
- Costly to convert FOLCA to a library / could be more / same cost to repairing Grace Hill – 9%
- Prefer Grace Hill / unnecessary to move elsewhere – 9%
- Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage – 8%

11% of consultees answering comment that FOLCA should be used for something else (not a library).

Please tell us the reason for your answer in the box below.

Base: all consultees providing a response (529), themes 3% and above reported below

% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
It would be a central location / good location / convenient	141	27%
Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library	93	18%

It would be accessible / easy to get to / good parking / public transport	77	15%
Makes sense to use FOLCA building / make use of FOLCA / good for town	78	14%
FOLCA is unsuitable / too much work to convert FOLCA / requires maintenance	74	14%
FOLCA should be used for something else (not a library)	58	11%
FOLCA is acceptable / good choice	54	10%
Concerned about renting a building not owning / renting is costly / renting is risky	50	9%
Costly to convert FOLCA to a library / could be more / same cost to repairing Grace Hill	47	9%
Prefer Grace Hill / unnecessary to move elsewhere	46	9%
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage	41	8%
New location would attract more people / higher footfall / passing foot traffic	39	7%
Libraries are assets to community / should be treated as assets / invested in / central to the community	37	7%
It has not yet been agreed with FHDC that FOLCA can be used as a library	33	6%
Concerned with future of Grace Hill / don't sell off Grace Hill	29	5%
Good idea to share site with other services	28	5%
Need new library / modern / up to date / spacious	28	5%
Grace Hill is a purpose-built library	28	5%
Concerned about timescales to convert FOLCA to library	24	5%
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC neglected Grace Hill	23	4%
Cost effective to move to FOLCA / costly to repair Grace Hill	21	4%
Criticism of consultation / questions posed	19	4%
Space / library services / facilities will be diluted / compromised / reduced at FOLCA	14	3%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the themes of moving / renting space at FOLCA on the high street can be found below:

“FOLCA is in the town centre - better located than Grace Hill. FOLCA needs to be in public use and would be a hub in the town centre. It's close to public transport. Although 2 Grace Hill has a strong place in my heart, so too does FOLCA and I would very much like to see it at the centre of community life. "The Forum" in Norwich city centre is a useful comparison, albeit a fairly new building and not a repurposed department store.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“FOLCA is in the heart of the town centre. It is vital this building is bought back into use, and the library will provide a key anchor in this building, driving footfall and activity that it vitally needed in the town centre. It will align well with proposals for a new town centre park. It is more accessible, directly off the bus, and easy to get to on foot and cycle.”
(Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“It is central to the town. It could be used as a multi-use space. It might attract more people due to its location. It is easy to access. It might be easier and more economic to maintain. FOLCA has been empty for too long and is an important building in our town centre which needs to be reopened and used before it deteriorates any further.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I believe this main high street location is a better option for a library that serves the community. Especially too if this will co-locate services all together. The glass-fronted windows presents an opportunity to present the library and books in a modern way and to make sure people are aware of the library and its services. I believe there is a lot of potential at this location to include other business, services, a cafe and a co-working space also, making it truly a hub for the community.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, underpinning the reasons for wanting the library to remain at 2 Grace Hill and perceptions that FOLCA is not suitable can be found below:

“I disagree with renting space in the FOLCA building because it risks compromising the unique identity and historical significance of Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill. Moving to a mixed-use commercial space may prioritize footfall and flexibility over the cultural and community value that the current library offers. The FOLCA location could dilute the quiet, reflective environment essential to a library and reduce its role as a cultural hub. Renting space in a commercial building also leaves the library vulnerable to future changes in use or rent increases.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I don't believe it is the right location and don't believe it has been chosen with the public's interest at heart. I do not believe the library should be part of the town centre regeneration. I also believe the Grace Hill site is a phenomenal building both architecturally, culturally and historically; a rare gem in Folkestone's landscape which should be preserved for the benefit of local people.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“FOLCA is not an acceptable building. It requires substantial internal work and would take 2-3 yrs minimum or likely longer. Also, there is no agreement with FHDC to relocate there, nor will there be. Moving would also entail losing the Sassoon gallery and also the Heritage Tudor fireplace and modern artworks very likely also only a more perfunctory and reduced library/computer etc facility.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I just don't see the long-term value in moving from a purpose-built, much-loved location to a new location which is designed as a department store! The FOLCA building could be a valuable community space, but I just don't think relocating the library here is a sensible long-term plan.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“Folding the library into another building with mixed use will diminish what it can offer, range of books available, services, accessibility, etc. Seems a neat way to reduce the

importance of libraries for local communities when in fact more funding and resource should be given to them.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“By moving west to the new site, the Library will be in an area of significantly less deprivation. It will also then border an area further to the west of significant affluence. It will be leaving an area of the town that is surrounded by areas of high deprivation. The building is a Grade II listed building which means it is of ‘special interest and warranting every effort to preserve it’. The proposal has no approach to preserving the building. The responsibility for this sits with KCC as owners. It would not be appropriate to just off-load the building, so it suffers whatever fate awaits it.” (Letter from local stakeholder organisation)

“The FOLCA building is not purpose built for a library. It is going to be years before it will be usable. Where is the money going to come from to renovate it? The position of the Grace Hill building was chosen for it's accessibility to the more deprived parts of Folkestone. That is where it should stay. You are asking people to vote for something which is not defined in any way. You have given no idea of the proposed size of the library, what else will be in the building? You quote a sum of £150.000 or thereabouts, that seems a paltry amount to spend on a library. You do not give figures on any other costs, such as rent, and you haven't even got the agreement of Folkestone and Hythe District Council to go ahead with this proposal.” (Representative of a local community group or residents' association)

“The FOLCA building should become a shopping place again, that is what is desperately lacking in Folkestone. Something like a department store or another Wilkinsons. Grace Hill should remain the library. The historic look of the Grace hill building should be the library. My pupils at my primary school enjoyed visiting the Grace hill library over the years and it always held a sense of peace and quiet, a place to read and a place to look through the archives. That is where we would like to return to with our pupils. At the moment my pupils do not have a local library. The FOLCA building is not even prepared as a library and it is the wrong venue completely. By closing Grace hill you have prevented hundreds of pupils from enjoying the library.” (Behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college)

“Regarding the Debenhams site, there is much evidence of the need for extensive maintenance issues to be addressed going forward. Has the building been checked for asbestos? The seagull problem outside the Debenhams area is the worst anywhere I've seen when passing, so I assume the roof will be as big a problem for the Debenhams building as it is for the library roof. Looking round the back of the Debenhams store, the potential fire hazards looked horrendous. I speak from having surveyed so many libraries. Does this still happen in libraries?” (Response sent by letter, Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Any comments on the alternative options considered or any other options or ideas that should be considered

Consultees were asked if they had any comments on alternative options considered or any other options / ideas that should be considered in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. It should be noted that under two thirds of consultees (59%) provided a response to this question.

Half of consultees answering (50%) would like to see Grace Hill repaired / restored / renovated and to remain a library. 11% commented that the Grace Hill building is historic / part of heritage.

18% of consultees answering expressed a desire to share the Grace Hill building with other services / partner services in order to keep the library there.

15% of consultees answering indicated they generally agree with the relocation to FOLCA / it seems the most sensible alternative.

Please tell us if you have any comments on the alternative options we have considered or if there are any other options or ideas you think we should consider.

Base: all consultees providing a response (353)

% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library	176	50%
Share Grace Hill with other services / partner services to keep library there	64	18%
Generally agree with relocation to FOLCA / appears to be most sensible alternative	51	15%
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage	39	11%
New location must be central / accessible	26	8%
Don't want Grace Hill to be sold off / concerned for future	26	8%
Consider proposals by Creative Foundation	25	7%
Make use of space at Grace Hill / venue hire / café / tourist attraction	24	7%
Seek alternative funding for Grace Hill	22	6%
Suggested other locations (e.g. former Wilkinsons building, Bouverie House (SAGA), Bouverie House Business Centre (above Burger King), alternative KCC building, old job centre, former retail units in town centre, Queens House, Civic Centre)	20	6%
New location will have modern / up to date facilities / spacious / safe	18	5%
Become a community hub / for community use	18	5%
Seek alternative use for Grace Hill	17	5%
Library must have specific facilities / services / activities	14	4%
% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
Agree with sale and leaseback / could be viable	14	4%
Permanent library facilities required as soon as possible	13	4%
Temporary library provision is not suitable for the long term	13	4%
Criticism of consultation	13	4%
Grace Hill is not suitable for future use / building too restrictive	12	3%

Good idea to share site with other services at new location	12	3%
There are no viable options	12	3%
Not cost effective to repair Grace Hill	11	3%
An alternative to Grace Hill needed	10	3%
Grace Hill should be sold off	10	3%
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC neglected Grace Hill	10	3%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the theme that Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library can be found below:

“The council have a responsibility for this grand building. No option should be considered that removes it from council ownership. Selling and releasing would be counterintuitive. Selling entirely would leave this valuable building at risk in the hands of other developers. Avenues for repairing, upgrading and making the building fit for future use should be adopted. This should offer options for revenue generation including events and weddings etc. It should take advantage of its prime cultural location in between the museum, Quarterhouse and high street. Local authorities across the country are using their assets for public good - see Waltham Forest Town Hall. Why should Folkestone set a precedent?” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“To sell Grace Hill and then lease back part of the building for the library and registration services is a preposterous idea which, for future generations, would not make good financial sense but would leave residents to foot the bill for evermore. Surely owning Grace Hill outright is by far the better option: freehold versus leasehold, the former wins by a long way. Looking for another building in the town centre to use as a public library does not make good financial sense, given that the Grace Hill library was built for that very purpose and can be used again as an important community facility.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I understand that council budgets are under great strain and that difficult decisions need to be made. However, there are other options to keep Folkestone Library open, that have the backing of many in the community. For example, Creative Folkestone has put forward a proposal to keep library services at Grace Hill as a Community Hub.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I am strongly of the view that KCC should explore funding and partnership options for refurbishment of the Grace Hill building and returning full library services to the building with much more commitment and enthusiasm. Having stated that any option is better than this it is no surprise that seeking innovative solutions to Grace Hill are dismissed in the consultation document as too difficult. This could be a great example by KCC of how to create a viable new future for this key building in Folkestone's heritage with determined effort to seek external funding rather than just giving up.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the theme of sharing Grace Hill with other services can be found below:

“I believe that the council ought to: "Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services." If they chose to dispose of the Grace Hill, they will probably face the maintenance liability of the building before they encounter a buyer; who would have to comply with the listed building liabilities anyway.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“Repair grace hill and restore library and gallery plus new complementary partner services (or rent space to community businesses to generate income ongoing from the space).” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services. Whilst costlier in capital terms this is the correct long-term option which any custodian has the duty to pursue. Try explaining other options to your kids in ten years.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“Give us back our library at Grace Hill. Make the repairs. Co-locate other services there and consider using the upstairs as a community centre/small theatre space.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, underpinning the theme of generally agreeing with relocation to FOLCA / FOLCA appearing to be most sensible alternative can be found below:

“Continuing with the temporary provision is not an option: this is not a suitable main library service for this size of town. I agree that repairing Grace Hill building is too expensive. Use of another town centre building would be okay, but FOLCA is ideal.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“If the FOLCA building were sympathetically made useable as a state-of-the-art library and registration service, with exhibition space this would be acceptable.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“If the resolution to move from Grace Hill is taken, FOLCA appears to be the most sensible option and could even represent an opportunity to regenerate library and associated services - it could be a very positive step. If FOLCA does not prove possible - and there appears to be some doubt - I have concerns about other possible appropriate locations as there seem to be no further obvious options.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I truly feel that Grace Hill, even in a repaired and fully-functioning state, is no longer a viable location for the town's library and registration services. As sad as it is to for the library to lose its original, historic home, a central location in town with similar space available is what is best for its future. I believe FOLCA is the best option, but if it were no longer viable then another building in the town centre would be desirable.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Any comments on anything not already covered

Consultees were asked if they had any other comments on anything else that hadn't already been covered in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. It should be noted that just over a third of consultees (35%) provided a response to this question.

19% of consultees answering commented on concerns they had with the consultation exercise / whether a decision had already been made / queried whether all potential options had been outlined. 17% of consultees commented that Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC has neglected Grace Hill.

17% of consultees put forward a variety of suggestions for facilities / activities that could be introduced at Grace Hill or FOLCA to benefit visitors / potentially generate income (e.g. community events / classes, facilities for children, café / refreshments).

Is there anything else, not already covered, that you would like to tell us?

Base: all consultees providing a response (210)

% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
Criticism of consultation / concern decision has already been made / concern not all options outlined / questions posed	38	19%
Suggestions for specific facilities / activities at Grace Hill or FOLCA / to benefit visitors / possibly generating income (e.g. children's section, community rooms / events / meetings, coffee shops)	34	17%
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC neglected Grace Hill	34	17%
Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library / remain with KCC	33	16%
Libraries are essential / enjoy using the library	25	12%
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage	22	11%
Good location / accessible / passing foot traffic / central to town	15	7%
New location must be modern / up to date facilities / spacious / disabled access	14	7%
Permanent library facilities required ASAP	14	6%
Agree with relocation to FOLCA	13	6%
Concerned for future of Grace Hill if unused / sold / difficult to find buyer	12	6%
Libraries are welcoming / warm / safe places / inclusive	11	5%
Gallery / exhibition / art space needed / don't want to lose Sassoon Gallery	8	4%
Consider Creative Foundation proposal / Grace Hill should be for community use	8	4%

% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
This is more than about saving money / KCC should look at bigger picture	6	3%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the main theme of consultation concerns / whether a decision had already been made / queries about whether all potential options had been outlined can be found below:

“The recommendation is heavy handed and peremptory - who exactly is making this recommendation - they should be named and questioned to see if they have self-interested motivations.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“You have not provided all the relevant information, the FOLCA building has significant structural issues and it will incur a significant cost to the public purse to repair. How does this compare the cost of repairing Grace Hill? Why have you not released more details of the Creative Folkestone offer so that residents can make an informed choice rather than one based on misleading information.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“Who is ultimately accountable for the lack of investment, early identification of necessary building works & wider oversight of the Grace Hill Library? This has not been made clear.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“When looked at from the outside, the estimate for the repairs (compared to the total repair budget allocated for county libraries), suggests that either the repair estimate is over inflated, or the setting of the budget is woefully inadequate for the current liabilities. Setting a budget which is unable to meet existing, known liabilities seems to be loading the dice in favour of the answer being planned for!” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, underpinning the theme of suggestions for specific facilities / activities at Grace Hill or FOLCA / to benefit visitors / possibly generating income can be found below:

“People love coming into the town centre. Successful libraries round the country have a very active children's section. Few things can be more important than engaging with kids while they are young.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“If a new library moved to FOLCA maybe we could have a community room to hold Pilates and Yoga classes in. I would love it if there were a cafe in the new library. We will need toilets of course. In the old Grace Hill library, the toilets were sometimes closed due to hooliganism. I could never understand why they didn't have a key system. I would patronise temporary art exhibitions and book events/talks in the new FOLCA building. I think it is important to have printers/photocopiers available and don't mind paying for print outs and copies.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“I owe the library of my childhood so much. Spent hours escaping from an unhappy home life reading and studying. There also needs space for older children to sit and do homework after school. Information on sports facilities for teenagers. Children go home after school and often are expected to do home duties or otherwise just hang out and get into trouble.” (A resident from somewhere else in Kent or further away)

“Once repaired, many of the rooms could be rented to community groups to offset some of the ongoing running costs, you could also lease space for a small coffee shop to bring in additional revenue. These spaces could be offered outside of standard library hours too, to increase opportunity for revenue. In the first instance however, engaging local building companies and contractors to provide discounted services or materials in return for public recognition would no doubt reduce initial costs. An open call for public donations too would make sense and I don't doubt would have a great response.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

“Open a coffee shop in the library. It'll attract more people, give you more funds to claw back from fixing the busking and get more families in the building.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

RESPONSE TO EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Consultees were asked to provide the views on KCC's equality analysis on in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section.

Only 22% of consultees provided a response to this question.

Amongst those commenting, the most important area of consideration are visitors with a disability / Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (32%) in terms of access and facilities provided. 20% of consultees answering commented that the library site (2 Grace Hill or FOLCA or an alternative) must be accessible to all in terms of parking and public transport / ease of access.

We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything else we should consider relating to equality and diversity?

Base: all consultees providing a response (133)

% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
Disability / SEND must be considered	42	32%
Site must be accessible to all / parking / public transport	27	20%
Everyone should be considered / treated equally / included / catered for	20	15%
Families / children / young people must be considered	16	12%
Elderly must be considered	15	11%
Lower income must be considered	15	11%
Criticism of consultation / is this consultation reaching everyone?	11	8%
Equality analysis seems adequate	11	8%
Equality is irrelevant to this	8	6%
Vulnerable people (unspecified) must be considered	6	5%
Ethnic minorities must be considered	4	3%
Equality analysis seems inadequate	2	2%
Comments unrelated to equality analysis	11	8%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the theme of disability / SEND considerations can be found below:

“By accident or design, the proposed relocation to FOLCA will provide better access for older and people with physical disabilities, since it is closer to bus stops and on flat ground. The hilly location at Grace Road and nearby Payers car park makes it more accessible to people who can afford to drive. I realise that it is accidental, but this inadvertently discriminates against people with lower disposable incomes.” (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

“I am part of a neurodiverse family. The change to building would mean that myself and my two autistic children would not use the library. My daughter has an anxiety-based condition, and she has grown up using this library and it is a safe space she has been able to access. She won't feel comfortable accessing one in town. With having another building, I wonder if the council has considered noise impacts and light impact and colours etc. Libraries have always been quite sensory toned-down spaces which are accessible for autistic and people who are neuro diverse. Mixing a library purpose with other purposes will make a library inaccessible for a lot of neurodiverse children and adults.” (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

“Grace Hill has step-free access to everything on the ground floor. Would this be possible in the FOLCA building?” (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

“I appreciate your commitment to a central location as this is more accessible, due to various reasons, including train access. Please do not assume that everyone can just drive or get buses to further out locations as has been assumed with the alternative locations (for children's services), as this has not been easy for us at all (due to disabilities) and has hugely reduced accessibility for us.” (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

“A new library needs to be wheelchair accessible. Also have dimmer switches for lights for neuro diverse customers. Provide toilets etc, baby change. A quiet space for breast feeding.” (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, underpinning the theme of the library site being accessible to all / have parking / public transport access can be found below:

“I believe relocating to the FOLCA building will be fairer giving access to all and more parts of our community will know of it's existence being in such a visible location.” (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

“The original library is easier to access from domestic properties and the creative quarter, where much research originates. The proposed bus station is moving nearer to the original library.” (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

“Having elderly parents parking is always an issue in the town centre. The reduction of bus services could also be a factor for elderly people that don't drive or do not have family that could take them. I guess the same could be said for Grace Hill locations though.” (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

NEXT STEPS

The feedback from this consultation is being reported to the 22 January Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee and will be taken into consideration before any decisions are taken.

Temporary provision will stay in place until any permanent options are delivered.

KCC will continue to keep the consultation webpage updated with the latest Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as well as updating on the Folkestone Library [webpage](#)¹.

Section 1 – About you

Q1. How are you responding to this consultation?

Please select the option from the list below that most closely represents how you are responding to this consultation. *Select **one** option.*

- As a Folkestone and Hythe resident
- As a resident from somewhere else in Kent or further away
- On behalf of a friend or relative ([please complete this questionnaire using their information](#))
- As a member of KCC staff
- As a Town, Parish, District or County Councillor
- On behalf of a Town, Parish or District Council in an official capacity
- As a representative of a local community group or residents' association
- On behalf of a charity or Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisation
- On behalf of a business owner or representative
- On behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college
- Other, please tell us:

Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of your organisation. Please write in below.

Q2. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please use your organisation's postcode. If you are responding on behalf of someone else, please use their postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Q3. How did you find out about this consultation? *Select all that apply.*

- An email from KCC's Libraries, Registration and Archive (LRA) team
- An email from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation Team
- At a Folkestone and Hythe district library
- Facebook
- From a Councillor
- From a friend or relative
- From another organisation
- From my Parish, Town or District Council
- Kent.gov.uk website
- Poster
- Newspaper
- Nextdoor
- Other, please tell us:

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or as a member of KCC staff, please go to question 6.

If you are responding as a resident or on behalf of a friend or relative, please continue to the next question (question 4).

Q4. How often did you visit Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill before its temporary closure? Select one option.

- At least once a week
- Once a fortnight
- Once a month
- Twice a year
- Less regularly
- Visited in the past
- Never visited

Q5. Which of these temporary or alternative services have you used while Folkestone Library has been temporarily closed? Select all that apply.

- "Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access" at 5 Grace Hill
- Free reservation service at 5 Grace Hill
- Other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries
- Online e-library service e.g. e-books, e-magazines and newspapers, audio books
- Birth or death registration at Wood Avenue or Hythe Library
- None of the temporary or alternative services
- Other, please tell us:

Section 2 – Our proposals

KCC is committed to securing a permanent town centre location for the library and registration service. Having carefully considered the options at this stage we are proposing to permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for Folkestone's town centre library and registration service.

More information on the proposal can be found from page 12 of the consultation document.

Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with our proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service? Select one option.

A question will follow on our preferred alternative town centre location.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q6a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q6 in the box below.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

Our current preferred option is to find space in another town centre location for the library and registration service to move into. The most viable location at present is FOLCA on the high street.

Following the purchase of the former Debenhams store, now named FOLCA, Folkestone & Hythe District Council's ambition is to deliver a mixed-use building in the heart of Folkestone. The District Council has appointed an architect to develop a concept design with a combination of public sector, community and commercial space, including potentially space for KCC to deliver the Folkestone town centre library and registration service. Discussions with the District Council have progressed positively to the point where we believe this option for Folkestone Library is feasible and viable. Subject to this consultation and decision process, we are proposing to take forward the detailed work with the District Council needed to realise this project.

More information on why this is our current preferred option can be found from page 12 in the consultation document.

The map below shows the location of Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill, the current temporary provision 'Folkestone Library Heritage & Digital Access' at 5 Grace Hill and FOLCA on the high street.



Q7. How much do you agree or disagree with our current preferred option to move the library and registration service to FOLCA on the high street? *Select one option.*

A question will follow on the other options we have considered for Folkestone's town centre library and registration service.

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

Don't know

Q7a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q7 in the box below.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

Before reaching our preferred way forward, a number of other options were considered:

- Continue with temporary provision permanently and exit the 2 Grace Hill building.
- Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services.
- Relocate full library service to another existing KCC building.
- Sell Grace Hill and then lease back part of the building for the library and registration service.
- Look for another building in the town centre for the library and registration service if FOLCA was no longer a viable option.

More information on these options can be found from page 17 of the consultation document.

Whilst this consultation asks for views on our proposals to permanently leave the Grace Hill building and work towards a new library and registration service in FOLCA, it is also an opportunity to comment on the other options we have considered and for other ideas to be suggested. You can tell us your ideas and suggestions in the question below.

Q8. Please tell us if you have any comments on the alternative options we have considered or if there are any other options or ideas you think we should consider.

If your comments relate to a specific option, please make that clear in your answer. Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

Q9. Is there anything else, not already covered, that you would like to tell us? Please write in below.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

Section 3 – Equality analysis

To help ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we have carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIAs) on our proposals.

An EqIA is a tool to assess the potential impact any proposals could have on the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. At KCC we also include carer's responsibilities. The EqIA is available online at www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary, in paper / hard copy from any Folkestone and Hythe district library or on request.

Q10. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity. Please add any comments below.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

Section 4 – More about you

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we are asking you these questions. We will only use this information to help us make decisions and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

It is not necessary to answer these questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation.

If you are responding **on behalf of someone else**, please answer using their details.

Q11. Are you...? Select *one* option.

Male

Female

I prefer not to say

Q12. Is your gender the same as at your birth? Select *one* option.

Yes

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

No

I prefer not to say

Q13. Which of these age groups applies to you? Select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

0-15

60-64

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

16-24

65-74

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

25-34

75-84

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

35-49

85+ over

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

50-59

I prefer not to say

Q14. Do you regard yourself as belonging to a particular religion or holding a belief? *Select one option.*

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Q14a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q14, which of the following applies to you? *Select one option.*

- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other
- I prefer not to say

If you selected Other, please specify:

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a long standing physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis, and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q15. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010? Select one option.

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Q15a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q15, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.

You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select 'Other' and give brief details of the impairment you have.

- Physical impairment
- Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)
- Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
- Mental health condition
- Learning disability
- I prefer not to say
- Other

Other, please specify:

A Carer is anyone who provides unpaid care for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Both children and adults can be carers.

Q16. Are you a Carer? *Select one option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q17. Are you ...? *Select one option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual/Straight
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bi/Bisexual
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay man
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay woman/Lesbian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q18. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? Select one option. (Source 2011 Census)

<input type="checkbox"/>	White English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black African
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Asian
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Other*
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British African
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Other*
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arab
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British Other*		

*Other - If your ethnic group is not specified on the list, please describe it here:

This report was produced for Kent County Council

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KCC response to key themes and alternative proposal and idea consideration

The below table provides a summary of the key themes from the Lake Market Research Consultation Report (Appendix B) and KCC's response to these themes.

KCC's response to feedback from the consultation on the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been detailed separately as part of Appendix D.

Consultation response theme	KCC response
<p>This is more than about saving money / KCC should look at bigger picture</p>	<p>KCC recognises the depth of feeling towards both the Grace Hill building and Library service in Folkestone and that there are different views on the way forward as demonstrated through the response to the public consultation. However, the reality is that KCC cannot ignore the financial challenges it is facing and is having to make very difficult decisions and cutting services and making savings across all of its service delivery. This is the context the council faces. It is therefore essential to find a long-term and crucially financially sustainable solution for the Grace Hill building which is in the best location for the Folkestone library and registration town centre service.</p> <p>KCC remain open to exploring viable and deliverable options for the Grace Hill building and are committed to finding a town centre location for the library and registration service.</p>
<p>Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library</p>	<p>Given KCC's challenging financial situation and the number of buildings it has across the county it cannot justify funding the £2.9m currently estimated to repair the building. It is also about more than just repairing</p>

	<p>the building it is also about maintaining it so that services could be reliably delivered from it and being able to use the space as effectively and efficiently as possible</p> <p>Given the maintenance backlog that exists for KCC across all its buildings and the potential future needs of the building, even if repaired we might still find ourselves in the same situation. Unfortunately, this is the reality. The Grace Hill building is a listed building of great character that means a lot to many in Folkestone but we have to be realistic about what can be done. This is why a key consideration has to be the ability to deliver a reliable and sustained service from whichever building the library and registration service is located in. KCC remains open to exploring viable and deliverable proposals for Grace Hill that could see it repaired and restored and the library service continue at this location.</p>
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage / iconic / landmark /beautiful / listed	KCC recognises this but cannot afford the repair or ongoing maintenance. KCC remains open to exploring viable and deliverable proposals for Grace Hill that could see it repaired and restored, and the library service continue at this location.
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC has neglected Grace Hill	KCC has temporary closed Grace Hill as it is no longer safe to occupy. Maintenance works have been completed in the past and emergency maintenance have been recently carried out to stop ingress of rainwater, KCC has consulted with the Conversation Team at Folkestone and Hythe Council due to the listed building status of the building as works have been undertaken.

Concerns about what happens to the Grace Hill building if the library moves location and how the building could still be repaired and used by the community	If it were decided that the library would permanently be relocated and the Grace Hill building was to be disposed of by KCC, there would still be an opportunity for the community and local groups to come forward and take it on. The building is listed as an Asset of Community Value which means if KCC wants to dispose (including a long lease) of the building this triggers a process that includes a period of up to six months to enable groups to develop proposals to take the building on. This could see a sustainable new community use emerge.
Library needs to be in a good / central / town centre location	KCC is committed to finding a town centre, viable, location for the library and registration services. A high street location located with or near other community or local services represents the best location for the service. Accepting that town centres are struggling we see the library wherever it is located as key anchor points for supporting high street recovery. KCC acknowledges there was mixed feedback from consultees about the location of the library, with some preferring the current location and others expressing support for a location on the high street.
Make better use of Grace Hill building with other community uses, café, venue hire	When the building was open the service looked to maximise its use. We previously looked into bringing other services in, the Skills Plus centre

	<p>and using the first floor space for community groups are examples of this. Wherever the library and registration service is located we would continue to look at this potential. Some consultees suggested that other uses could be made of the space at Grace Hill (e.g. venue hire and a café) as a way of raising revenue but given the estimated cost of repairs we do not consider that this would raise sufficient funds to enable us to restore and re-open the building.</p>
<p>Seek alternative funding for Grace Hill repair</p>	<p>KCC has looked at the external grant funding options available for repairing the building but has not found any that meet the building's needs. . There are funds like National Heritage Lottery funding that could have potential but money from these funds is not awarded for simply repairing the building, there needs to be a significant service development alongside. Additionally these are schemes that need years of development and there is no guarantee at the end that you will get the funding, you are competing with other worthwhile projects. As such KCC does not see this option as viable to guarantee repair of the building. It may be that other community or charity bodies would have better opportunity to lever in quicker more appropriate funding sources that are not available to KCC.</p>
<p>The Grace Hill building belongs to Folkestone community not KCC</p>	<p>While recognising this is a building of importance to the people of Folkestone, the building is owned by KCC.</p>
<p>Concern for the Grace Hill building being left vacant if no one comes forward to buy or lease it or what happens if someone does buy it as to what they do to the building</p>	<p>If there was no one else who wanted to lease or buy the building, KCC would manage the building as a vacant building. If the building is acquired by a third party, any changes where appropriate will require Planning Permission and or approval from Folkestone and Hythe Heritage Team given its Listed building status which will still apply if the</p>

	property is not in the ownership of KCC.
KCC should explore other town centre locations for the library and registration service. Suggested other locations; former Wilkinsons building, Bouverie House (SAGA), Bouverie House Business Centre (above Burger King), alternative KCC building, old job centre, former retail units in town centre, Queens House, Civic Centre	KCC have looked into all of these alternative town centre locations to see if any other town centre and high street options are viable. Some have been ruled out as they do not meet the requirements for the LRA service. Those with potential will be explored further as part of the future decision making
New location would attract more people / higher footfall / passing foot traffic / be more visible.	This is one of the reasons KCC has put forward the option of relocating to a High street location, potentially FOLCA or another High Street location as may do this.
Library needs to be a community hub	We agree and view all our libraries as key community hubs.
Not viable that the library could move to FOLCA as not agreed with Folkestone and Hythe District Council	Discussions with Folkestone and Hythe District Council officers on the potential for the library to move to the FOLCA have progressed positively and had taken place before the public consultation. It is correct to say there no agreement between both councils has yet been reached and nor would it be right to do so when KCC is consulting on potential options for the service and for 2 Grace Hill. Conversations had progressed to the point it was a viable option to put in the consultation document.
Creative Folkestone idea should be considered further	This idea has been considered and will be the subject of ongoing engagement with Creative Folkestone. KCC is mindful of allowing all potential proposals for the building to come forward, which could involve a local group buying or leasing the building. KCC is open to considering proposals from other individuals or groups, should any such proposals

	be made (including through the ACV process).
Need new library / modern / up to date facilities / spacious	Whatever location the library takes up permanently there is inevitably going to be a period where works are required before the library can move in and open. This will enable the service to look at the space, look at opportunities to modernise and design a library space that will meet local needs. If located with other services in a building we would also look to make use of shared spaces like meeting rooms for other activities and community use.
Concern about the loss of the Sassoon Gallery space	The Sassoon Gallery had a regular programme of displays that people could access for free as part for the Grace Hill building. When looking at future space requirement in any building the library and registration service occupies we have to make sure that we prioritise space for the statutory library and registration service. The Gallery is not a statutory function for the library service or KCC. While KCC recognises the support for a gallery, KCC has to balance that against cost of space as well. In that context we are not looking to re-provide the Sassoon Gallery space as a must-have space requirement. We will continue to explore the potential to work in partnership with others to see if there are other options to providing community gallery space in Folkestone. A gallery remaining at the Grace Hill building may come forward as part of the ACV process work with Creative Folkestone or any proposals made by other individuals or groups.
Lack of temporary children's library in the town centre	We do have the children's libraries and their activities in the other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries as our temporary provision. We

	are mindful however that any longer term solution to providing the town centre library and registration service is realistically some years away so KCC is exploring options for further temporary library provision which could include a children's library to see us through this transition period.
Concerns about cost and time of converting FOLCA or another town centre site into a library and registration service	Folkestone and Hythe District Council is developing the proposals for the FOLCA project and there is government Levelling Up grant funding towards works needed to FOLCA. There will be time needed to complete all the works required for the building but this would be the case whatever building option we pick, if we repaired Grace Hill or moved to another town centre site for example. We do recognise the time needed which is why we will look to explore any other options available to strengthen our current temporary library and registration service offer to mitigate for this.
Concerns about the condition of FOLCA and the maintenance needed	Folkestone and Hythe District Council recognise that at present there are a number of condition issues that would need to be addressed with the FOLCA building. It is important to reflect that the former Debenhams is made up of two buildings and it is only one that is proposed for the scheme. As part of the potential project it is proposed that all the building issues would be addressed so that FOLCA is fit-for-purpose for services to move into. Folkestone and Hythe District Council own the building so this will form part of their considerations but we have already highlighted this feedback to them and agreed this response.
Concern that KCC would be renting a building / selling off a building	KCC use a mix of freehold and leasehold buildings across the county and will continue to operate the estate on that basis.
Library service and space would be reduced at FOLCA	KCC said at the time of the public consultation that whatever location we provide the library and registration service from, that the library and

<p>or another town centre location</p>	<p>registration service would be the equivalent of what was at Grace Hill. That does not mean that we would have the same amount of space as the whole of the Grace Hill building. We are not looking for example to re-provide the gallery, and we would look to reduce back-office and storage areas. The public spaces that people use for the library or to attend a birth and death registration appointment would be equivalent to the Grace Hill building.</p> <p>The same range of public library services will all be provided wherever we are located and this will include books for all ages, children's library, events and activities, computers, study space, local studies, information and birth and death registration appointment rooms. We would look at opportunities to develop the service, for example we may look to increase the size of the children's library to best deliver the events and activities we put on.</p>
<p>Concern that Grace Hill was purpose built for a library and could be moving somewhere that was not</p>	<p>KCC accepts that Grace Hill was a building designed to hold a library and while this still can work as a library that does not mean that other buildings could not be designed to be a library either. The service has evolved and we have good experience in Kent of many projects designing spaces to be fit for purpose modern libraries. If the service was to move to the FOLCA or another town centre location there would be the opportunity to design the space so it worked.</p>
<p>Permanent library facilities required as soon as possible</p>	<p>KCC recognises that the town centre library has been closed since December 2022 and that we all want to find a way forward. Accepting that any permanent solution will still realistically take some time to be completed, we are proposing to progress next steps as per the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee paper for 22nd January.</p>

<p>Temporary library provision is not suitable for the long term / permanent library facilities required ASAP</p>	<p>KCC agrees that the current temporary library provision is not a long term solution which is why this option has been ruled out. We are proposing to progress the next steps as outlined In the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee paper for 22nd January to get a permanent library location for Folkestone town centre as soon as practical. KCC is also exploring further temporary library provision to mitigate further while this process progresses.</p>
<p>What will happen to the Chris Offili Screen if the building was to be sold</p>	<p>Options would be looked at for the screen and in the first instance we would engage with the artist on this.</p>

Suggested proposals and ideas considered

Alternative idea suggested	Results upon consideration
<p>The Creative Folkestone / Community / Folkestone and Hythe District Council options have not been represented in the consultation document should be further considered.</p>	<p>Options to be further explored.</p> <p>The Creative Folkestone idea is considered further in the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee paper for 22nd January. Some further conversations have taken place post the consultation and engagement is ongoing. KCC is open to considering proposals from other individuals or groups, should any such proposals be made (including through the ACV process).</p> <p>Discussions with Folkestone and Hythe District Council officers on the potential for the library to move to the FOLCA have progressed positively and had taken place before the public consultation. It is correct to say no agreement between both councils has yet been reached and nor would it be right to do so when KCC has been consulting on potential options for</p>

	<p>the service and for 2 Grace Hill. Conversations had progressed to the point it was a viable option to put in the consultation document.</p>
<p>Fundraising approach with local community to fund the repair of the building</p>	<p>Not progressed</p> <p>The amount that needs to be fundraised is significant at £2.9m which realistically could need a lot of time to achieve, it may also not be reached. We appreciate the local enthusiasm but we don't feel this is a viable option at this time.</p>
<p>Reach out to local community businesses to make the cost of repairing the building cheaper / volunteers to do the work</p>	<p>Not progressed</p> <p>This is a listed building and works need to be completed to a required specification and co-ordinated. This is best co-ordinated through a contractor completing the project and with full consideration to the health and safety of those completing the work</p>
<p>Make Folkestone Library a special case to KCC policy to enable it to be repaired or enable the Creative Folkestone option to progress</p>	<p>Not progressed</p> <p>KCC has a clear building disposal policy which it follows consistently across the county for all buildings. As such it cannot make an exception for any one building. KCC will work with partners to enable any proposals to fit within KCC's policies. We have addressed the Creative Folkestone option above, and explained why we cannot justify funding the £2.9m currently estimated to repair the building.</p>

<p>Lobby funding bodies for libraries that should consider a building repair funding pot</p>	<p>Kent County Council has raised this nationally on a number of occasions, ultimately it is not in our gift to achieve.</p>
<p>Develop a scheme to apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund that would repair the building and transform the service</p>	<p>Not progressed</p> <p>This fund is not just awarded for repairing the building, there needs to be a significant service development alongside if the Lottery Fund is to agree a grant. Given that this is not a solution to repair of the building in the short term, KCC does not see this option as viable to guarantee repair of the building.</p>

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GET Document Control

Revision History

Version	Date	Authors	Comment
V0.1	08/03/24	Anna Hendy and Sarah Bedingfield	First draft
V0.2	08/03/24	Anne Wynde and James Pearson	Comments
V0.3	15/03/24	Sarah Bedingfield	Data inputted
V0.4	15/03/24	Anna Hendy	Responding to comments
V0.5	15/03/24	James Pearson	Review and responding to comments
V1	28/06/24	Anna Hendy and Donna Marie Dunn	Adaptation for refocused consultation. Consultation Stage EQIA
V1.1	02/09/24	Anna Hendy	Review considering consultation feedback
V1.2	02/10/24	Anna Hendy	Review with feedback from James Pearson, Aisha Affejee, Sarah Bedingfield, Donna-Marie Dunn, Anne Wynde
V1.3	07/10/24	James Pearson	Review of feedback and comments
V1.4	25/10/24	Anna Hendy and Sarah Bedingfield	Comprehensive review of consultation equality feedback ensuring responses incorporated into EqIA
V1.5	02/01/25	James Pearson and Anna Hendy	Further review following initial legal review
V1.6	09/01/25	Sarah Bedingfield, Anna Hendy and Aisha Affejee	Further review & data verification
V2 (this should be assigned to the version to be uploaded to the app)	10/01/25	Sarah Bedingfield/Anna Hendy and Anne Wynde	

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Submission Section A

EQIA Title

Folkestone Library

Responsible Officer

Anna Hendy - GT GC

Type of Activity

Service Change

Service Change

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

Libraries, Registration & Archives

Responsible Head of Service

James Pearson

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle

Aims and Objectives

Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill temporarily closed on 20 December 2022 because it became unsafe for customers and staff. Kent County Council's (KCC) financial situation remains very challenging and means that the Council does not have the budget to repair and reopen the building. The current estimated costs to repair the building is £2.9 million.

Services have been put in place since the temporary closure of the Grace Hill building to minimise the impact of the closure on our customers. These will be kept in place until a long-term town centre location for Folkestone Library opens. The temporary services we have put in place include:

- "Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access" which opened in November 2023 at 5 Grace Hill (previously the Shepway Youth Centre). This is temporarily the location for the complete local studies collection, public PCs, Wi-fi, microfilm reader, photocopying and study space.
- A free reservation service provided at 5 Grace Hill. The service means that customers can order anything from the Kent library catalogue and have it delivered for free to the building for collection.
- The opening hours at the libraries closest to Folkestone town centre have been increased so that there is library provision available six days a week. Hythe Library has increased by 7.5 hours from 37 hours to 44.5 hours per week and Wood Avenue Library has increased by 15.5 hours from 23 hours to 38.5 hours per week. While Folkestone Library was also open on Sundays the temporary provision offers library opening across six days. Sunday usage

was lower compared to the weekdays so to maximise the offer we put the extra hours into the other libraries across Folkestone and Hythe during the week.

- Additional services have been provided at Wood Avenue Library including three additional public computers and increased loanable stock. We have also added this as a location to register a birth or death, in addition to Hythe library.

The temporary provision at 5 Grace Hill was subject to a separate EQIA.

As well as the temporary measures, the following existing library services are also available to help mitigate the impact of the temporary closure:

- E-library service - we have a large digital offer with thousands of free e-books, audiobooks and online newspapers and magazines for all ages and interests.
- Library services direct - including the Home Library Service, where we can deliver library items to people if they cannot visit a library, and also our Mobile Library Service.
- Other libraries in the Folkestone and Hythe district - Hythe, Cheriton, Wood Avenue, Lyminge, Sandgate, Lydd, and New Romney.

KCC is committed to securing a permanent town centre location for the library and registration service. Having carefully considered the options at the point of consultation, KCC proposed to:

- **Permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the Folkestone library and registration service.**
- **Take forward work with Folkestone & Hythe District Council on moving the library and registration service to FOLCA on the high street.** Ahead of the consultation and subject to any feedback, we considered this to represent the best long-term option for Folkestone's town centre library.

FOLCA is Folkestone & Hythe District Council's project to transform the former Debenhams store (which the District Council owns) on Sandgate Road into a mixed-use building in the heart of Folkestone. The District Council has appointed an architect to develop a concept design for a mixed-use building with a combination of public sector, community and commercial space, including potentially space for KCC to deliver the Folkestone town centre library and registration service. If agreement with the District Council about the FOLCA was not possible then KCC would look for an alternative town centre, high street location to move the library service into.

Discussions with the District Council have progressed positively to the point where we believe this option to move Folkestone Library into FOLCA is feasible and viable.

Before reaching our consultation proposals, a number of other options were considered, and these were detailed in the consultation documentation:

- 1. Continue with temporary provision permanently and exit the 2 Grace Hill building.** The temporary provision does not allow full library and registration services to be delivered from one town centre location. The temporary provision was never envisaged or considered as a permanent replacement. The temporary provision at 5 Grace Hill was subject to a separate EQIA.
- 2. Make repairs to the 2 Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services.**
- 3. Relocate full library service to another existing KCC building.** There is no viable alternative KCC building identified so this will not receive any further EQIA analysis.
- 4. Sell/lease the 2 Grace Hill building and then lease back part of the building for Folkestone Library.** Creative Folkestone has indicated that it may be prepared to take over responsibility for the Grace Hill building by way of a disposal (either a gift or long-term lease

at peppercorn rent), with the intention of allowing it, as a charity, to raise funding that may not be available to KCC to address the physical condition of the building. This is the subject of ongoing engagement with Creative Folkestone. This option may also involve consideration of proposals from other individuals or groups, should any such proposals be made (including through the ACV process). There is not enough information available at present to undertake a full screening.

- 5. Move service to an alternative leasehold site.** There is not enough information available at present to undertake a full screening. KCC's Property team continue to investigate potential sites which may be viable alternatives to the FOLCA building. Impacts identified with alternative sites will be assessed as part of future decision-making, as appropriate.

KCC is committed to ensuring that all statutory services previously provided at 2 Grace Hill will be provided in any new location within Folkestone town centre.

The Sassoon Gallery would not be included in the service provision in the options detailed above. other than possibly Option 4, this could impact negatively across all protected characteristic groups. The Gallery is not a statutory function for the library service or KCC to deliver. While KCC recognises the support for a gallery, KCC has to balance that against cost of space as well. In that context we are not looking to re-provide the Sassoon Gallery space as a must-have space requirement. We will continue to explore the potential to work in partnership with others to see if there are other options to providing community gallery space in Folkestone. A gallery remaining at the 2 Grace Hill building may come forward as part of any proposal made by other individuals or groups to return to the 2 Grace Hill building.

This EQIA analyses how all viable options might affect or impact the protected characteristic groups and, where adverse impacts are identified, addresses how such impacts may be mitigated. This EQIA is intended to help ensure the Council complies with its duty to have due regard to the need to: (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (c) foster good relations between persons with who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

An eight-week public consultation has been completed and the EQIA has been updated to reflect the feedback from this including additional ward data which has been followed up through KCC data and analytics team and subsequently further data from the 2021 census has been included within. This EQIA will be part of the paperwork that will be presented to decision makers to inform the decision.

This EQIA will continue to be developed as KCC undertakes further work on the options proposed to progress as detailed in the Cabinet Committee Report for 22 January 2025.

Equality RISK: Low:

It is recommended that KCC takes a key decision in January 2025 to discount some of the options covered at the time of the public consultation.

Option 1, which is the continuation of the temporary provision, has been analysed and it is clear that it presents a number of negative equalities impacts. Whilst there are ways to mitigate the negative impacts, this EQIA supports that option 1 should be rejected.

While it is recommended that option 1 is rejected, in response to consultation feedback officers are proposing to explore and implement an alternative location where temporary library and registration services could better be delivered. This could include a single site temporary library and registration service which could include a children's library, public PCs, birth and death registration, the heritage collections and lending book collections.

This EQIA identifies that the impacts across the protected characteristics for options 2 and 4 (which would involve the library service remaining at 2 Grace Hill) and our consultation proposal of moving to FOLCA or an alternative town centre location (option 5) are similar overall (although there would be some different impacts on some individuals and groups).

All could represent viable locations for a town centre library and registration service providing mitigations are put in place as detailed in this EQIA. This EQIA will be further updated as part of the next stage of work to inform a future further key decision on the long-term future of Grace Hill and the location of the Folkestone town centre library and registration service.

The findings of this EQIA support the recommendation that option 4 and 5 continue to be explored, considered and evaluated.

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?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

A public consultation ran from 18 July to 11 September 2024. The consultation questionnaire included a question to capture feedback on the consultation stage EQIA and if there was anything else consultees felt we should consider relating to equality and diversity. 22% of consultees provided a response to this question. An analysis of responses can be found within the consultation report. An appendix (Appendix 3) with the full list of responses to this question is attached. It details how the comments have been recognised, considered and incorporated into the EQIA where applicable.

Feedback was captured via a consultation questionnaire which was available on consultation webpage (www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary). Hard copies of the consultation material, including the questionnaire were also available in all Folkestone and Hythe district libraries and on request. Easy Read and large print formats were also available. The consultation material and webpage included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or an alternative format. In addition, four in person drop-in sessions were held at Wood Avenue Library and 5 Grace Hill. A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version.

The consultation was promoted in a mix of digital (for example, social media, emails, website) and non-digital methods (for example, posters, postcards, newspaper advert). Library staff were briefed to promote the consultation to service users and provide support as required. Library public computers could be used to access the consultation website and complete the online questionnaire.

Emails were sent to key stakeholders, including Folkestone & Hythe District Council, the town and parish councils, community groups, local charity organisations, library groups and partners encouraging their participation in the consultation and support promoting it to their residents, members or the people they work with. Local schools were contacted twice, at the beginning and towards the end of the consultation. The consultation period coincided with the annual library school age children's Summer Reading Challenge which is a busy time of year seeing many families visiting libraries.

This EQIA has been updated following the consultation and will be used to inform any decision KCC then takes.

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Residents of Folkestone and key local stakeholders. In detail:

- Library customers
- Wider Folkestone and Hythe residents
- Folkestone district library staff
- Folkestone and Hythe KCC members
- Folkestone & Hythe District Council
- Key interest/campaign group or key customer contacts
- Local MP
- Creative Folkestone
- Folkestone Town Council, Sandgate Parish Council and Hythe Town Council
- Cheriton Nepalese Group
- Library related groups, such as Books Groups, Baby Rhyme, Books Beyond Words etc.
- Folkestone Community Fridge (currently partners at Wood Avenue Library)
- Living Words (displaced due to Folkestone temp closure)
- Local schools and colleges
- Department for Culture Media and Sport

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

Yes. This is version 2 of this EQIA. A consultation stage EQIA (version 1) formed part of the public consultation. We have also completed an EQIA on the temporary provision.

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

Yes. Since the temporary closure of the library local people and community groups have been providing feedback through a variety of means and so we recognise the strength and depth of local feeling regarding the 2 Grace Hill building and the importance of Folkestone's town centre library and registration service. We have reviewed all comments provided on the EQIA in the consultation feedback and adapted the EQIA to a new version mindful of the feedback where relevant.

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff/volunteers

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?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

Following the temporary closure of the 2 Grace Hill building, Folkestone's town centre library and registration services are being delivered from a number of different buildings.

Option 1 Making the temporary provisions permanent does not provide any positive impacts as it would not return a full statutory library service to one location in Folkestone's town centre.

Option 2 and 4

Re-opening Folkestone Library in 2 Grace Hill would ensure that the full town centre service, with equivalent book stock and event space is delivered in one building and available for everyone.

Opening Folkestone Library in 2 Grace Hill with other public and community services, such as the option being discussed with Creative Folkestone, would offer opportunities such as partnership working with other customer and community services. This brings more services to people in one convenient place but also has the potential to increase the take-up of library and other services for those who don't currently use them.

Grace Hill is accessible from the high street and there are nearby public transport services and parking options.

Grace Hill is located in the Folkestone Central ward next to the Folkestone Harbour ward which is an area of high deprivation. The 2 Grace Hill library building is closer to parts of the community who could particularly benefit from accessing library services although there are areas of need across Folkestone. Those living in areas of high deprivation may face greater challenges in accessing services.

The consultation proposal/option 5

A move to a building co-located with other public and community services offers opportunities such as partnership working with other customer and community services. This brings more services to people in one convenient place but also has the potential to increase the take-up of library and other services for those who don't currently use them.

Re-opening Folkestone Library in FOLCA or an alternative town centre location would ensure that the full town centre service, with equivalent book stock and event space is delivered in one building and available for everyone.

Moving to a high street location like FOLCA or another high street building would offer a positive impact for many customers as it would remain accessible to public transport links.

A high street location could be more accessible for those with mobility impairments due to the proximity to other shops and services that people will want to access. The high street is also accessible from public transport and parking options.

Library usage data (Appendix 2) from before 2 Grace Hill temporarily closed, showed that the largest proportion of library users travelled from Folkestone East and Folkestone Central wards which would make the library closer for them if the decision is taken to relocate to FOLCA on the high street. While concern has been raised that a high street location would make the library less accessible for those from the Folkestone Harbour ward it is felt that any high street location would be positive overall given that other services, retail and leisure facilities are also in the town and the distances involved are reasonable.

The consultation proposal and options 2 to 5 would all restore the full town centre library and registration provision.

Consultation proposal and options 2, 4 and 5

Re-instating a full town centre library and registration service would provide the following benefits:

Age/Children/Pregnancy and Maternity

- Early years activities, such as Rhyme Time and Summer Reading Challenge can return to Folkestone town centre providing greater accessibility.
- Birth and death registration appointments would resume in Folkestone town centre.

- Customers would be able to access a full library and registration service/full public computers/activities in the town centre again.
- All of these activities would be available to attend in a town centre location.

Disability/Carers

- Books Beyond Words reading group (reading group for people with learning disabilities) could resume at a town centre location and this option would be discussed with the group.
- Specialist book stock to support those with disabilities would be available again at a town centre library location.

Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation

- Specialist LGBTQIA+ book stock would be available again at town centre library location.

Race

- Dual language and specialist book stock to support those whose first language is not English would be available again at town centre library location.
- Potential for meet and practice English groups to be setup in a town centre location once more.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships

- Notice of marriage and/or civil partnership appointments could return to a town centre library location.

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

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Library customers would need to travel to one of the other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries to access full library services and there is no children's library provision in the temporary town centre library at 5 Grace Hill. The closest libraries to Folkestone town centre are in Wood Avenue or Cheriton. This additional travel could be more of a challenge for elderly customers or those with young children and babies.
- Early years library initiatives such as the Rhyme Time and Playground sessions for pre-schoolers, would not be available in Folkestone town centre because there is not the space to run these in the temporary provision.
- People with young children, young people in their teens or older people may find it difficult to travel to libraries further away.
- Use of public transport may have a cost attached and for those using an older person's bus pass, which has time restrictions.
- No public toilets available at the other district libraries (although provision available in current Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access).

Options 2 and 4 – Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill

- Under option 4 the library may be split over two floors depending on which other organisations or services are co-located within the building. This could be more of a challenge to elderly customers, or those with babies. It should be noted that this was the case before the library was temporarily closed, with the main library downstairs and the local

studies upstairs. How the building is kept accessible would be key to consider moving forward.

- 2 Grace Hill is located at the bottom of a hill, and there is a walk needed to the high street and other local services which could be a challenge for some older customers or those with babies.
- While 2 Grace Hill has nearby parking, the nearest is only available for short term parking.
- 2 Grace Hill is located on a very busy road which could pose accessibility challenges that could disproportionately impact, elderly people and those with young children.

Consultation proposal and option 5 - Move to FOLCA/other town centre location

- The journey from the current building to the proposed new location at FOLCA is uphill. This could be more difficult for some older customers or those with babies if they live closer to the current location on Grace Hill.
- The library may be split over two floors depending on who is co-located within the building. This could be more of a challenge to elderly customers or those with babies. How the building is kept accessible would be key to consider moving forward.
- Co-location options may present a busier library space and therefore potential challenges for some in visiting a noisier and busier space.

Mitigating Actions for Age

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Promote digital resources and Home Library Service (HLS) which is where a volunteer can deliver books direct to people's homes.
- Promote our eBook/magazine/newspaper collections all available for free via our website.
- Review of district opening hours and consider making permanent the extended opening hours in place at Wood Avenue and Hythe Libraries.
- Customers can ask to use the staff toilets in locations without public toilets, but these may not be suitable for people with disabilities. This also may be a barrier as customers may be embarrassed to ask.
- The distance from 2 Grace Hill to FOLCA is 0.3 miles. FOLCA is located near many other local services on the high street, such as the Post Office, banks, supermarkets and shops meaning that customers would be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities.

Options 2 and 4 – Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill

- Ensure working lift is available. Like all mechanical lifts it is to be expected that they will have periods of mechanical breakdown.
- In looking at the Creative Folkestone option or any building proposals to look to retain the library at 2 Grace Hill, KCC would ensure that in discussions with Creative Folkestone and/or another partner any building design resulted in a fully accessible library space, and that as much of the public library and registration service space was on the ground floor. It would also be an opportunity to refresh the library layout where possible. We would work to ensure any new design and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.
- For those unable to travel to the Grace Hill location or any nearby libraries we can offer the Home Library Service as an alternative way to access the service.

Consultation proposal and option 5 - Move to FOLCA/other town centre location

- FOLCA is a more central town centre location than 2 Grace Hill as it is on the high street. FOLCA in comparison to 2 Grace Hill is closer to the bus station (there may be future

changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre). There is a car park located very close to the FOLCA building.

- Ensure clear signage is in place as is the case for 2 Grace Hill and raise awareness of the new location. A communications plan would be put in place to raise awareness of the new location, promote the services available and inform people of timescales.
- For those customers unable to travel to a high street location we can offer the Home Library Service as an alternative way to access the service.
- The data on the home addresses of Folkestone Library customers from 2022 (prior to the temporary closure) was reviewed (Appendix 2) to cross reference with the wards served by Folkestone Library. The data shows that the highest proportion of Folkestone Library users live in the Folkestone Central ward which is closer to FOLCA.
- For the customers travelling from Folkestone Harbour and Folkestone East wards there is already an uphill journey to get to 2 Grace Hill. The distance from 2 Grace Hill to FOLCA is 0.3 miles. FOLCA is located near many other local services on the high street, such as the Post Office, banks, supermarkets and shops meaning that customers would be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities.
- If the service is split over two floors we would ensure a working lift is available and that the building is accessible for all including having accessible public toilets.
- Considering equality feedback, we would look to engage with young people (teens) to ensure the layout is optimal for all. A new layout would be considered in line with ensuring accessibility, this could include quieter spaces, dimmable lighting (not available in Grace Hill). We would work to ensure any new building and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

20. Negative impacts and mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

Yes

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- To access a physical library service, Folkestone town centre customers would need to travel to one of the district libraries - the closest are in Wood Avenue or Cheriton. This could be more of a challenge for customers with disabilities, for example, mobility impairments, anxiety, visual impairments or people with learning disabilities, who might struggle to get to a non-town centre location.
- The Books Beyond Words group would remain at Wood Avenue Library meaning potential access issues as described above for this group.
- Book stock which supports different disabilities (for example, Access 2 Books – Braille and Giant Print, Books Beyond Word – supporting people with learning disabilities, Children’s mental health Reading Well book stock etc) may not be readily available at the smaller libraries so customers may have to use the reservation service. This means they may have to pay reservation fees for books they wouldn’t normally have to if there was a full town centre library.

Options 2 and 4 – Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill

- The library may be split over two floors depending on who is co-located within the building which could present a challenge to those with disabilities as there have been times when the lift is out of order for some time.
- In looking at the Creative Folkestone option or any building proposals to look to retain the library at 2 Grace Hill, KCC would ensure that in discussions with Creative Folkestone

and/or another partner any building design resulted in a fully accessible library space, and that as much of the public library and registration service space was on the ground floor. It would also be an opportunity to refresh the library layout where possible. We would work to ensure any new design and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.

- For those unable to travel to the Grace Hill location or any nearby libraries we can offer the Home Library Service as an alternative way to access the service. The service also offers an extensive range of digital resources.
- The Grace Hill building is located towards the bottom of a hill, approximately 0.3 miles from the high street and other local services which could be a challenge for some customers with disabilities.
- Co-location options may present a busier library space and therefore potential challenges for some in visiting a noisier and busier space.
- The Grace Hill building is located on a very busy road which could pose accessibility challenges that could disproportionately impact those with disabilities.

Consultation proposal and option 5 - Move to FOLCA/other town centre location

- FOLCA is towards the top of the high street so the journey from the current building to the proposed new location at FOLCA is uphill. This could be more difficult for someone with mobility issues if they live closer to the current location on Grace Hill.
- The library may be split over two floors depending on who is co-located within the building which could present a challenge to those with disabilities.
- For some customers accessing a new and different building can be daunting for example those with neuro diversities.
- Co-location options may present a busier library space and therefore potential challenges for some in visiting a noisier and busier space.

Mitigating actions for Disability

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Wood Avenue and Sandgate libraries can be highlighted as nearby alternatives with automatic door access. Wood Avenue also has extended opening hours.
- Promotion of digital resources and the Home Library Service, which is where a volunteer can deliver books direct to people's homes.
- Promotion of eBook/magazine/newspaper collections all available for free via our website.
- Extra vigilance around which customers may be eligible for an Exempt card, meaning they wouldn't have to pay for reservations.
- A free reservation pickup service is available at the current temporary library provision at 5 Grace Hill, which could be made permanent.

Options 2 and 4 – Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill

- Ensure working lift is available and continued provision of accessible public toilets. The lifts present at 2 Grace Hill have suffered a number of breakdowns and while reported and fixed it is nearing end of its mechanical life so will need to be factored into any building restoration.
- In looking at the Creative Folkestone option or any building proposals to look to retain the library at 2 Grace Hill, KCC would ensure that in discussions with Creative Folkestone and/or another partner any building design resulted in a fully accessible library space, and that as much of the public library and registration service space was on the ground floor. It would also be an opportunity to refresh the library layout where possible. We would work to ensure any new design and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.

- For those unable to travel to the Grace Hill location or any nearby libraries we can offer the Home Library Service as an alternative way to access the service and promotion of eBook/magazine/newspaper collections all available for free via our website.

Consultation proposal and option 5 - Move to FOLCA/other town centre location

- FOLCA is a more central town centre location than 2 Grace Hill as it is on the high street. FOLCA in comparison to 2 Grace Hill is closer to the bus station (may be future changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre) and equal distance to the train station. There are car parks located very close to the FOLCA building at Middelburg Place and Bouverie Place which are multi storey car parks with designated disabled spaces.
- Ensure clear signage is in place as is the case for 2 Grace Hill and raise awareness of the new location. A communications plan would be put in place to raise awareness of the new location, promote the services available and inform people of timescales.
- The Home Library Service and the alternative Folkestone and Hythe district libraries offer alternative ways to access the service for those customers unable to travel to a high street location. The service also offers free eBook/magazine/newspaper collections via our website. Further promotion could be carried out to raise awareness of these services.
- The data on the home addresses of Folkestone Library customers from 2022 (prior to the temporary closure) was reviewed (Appendix 2) to cross reference with the wards served by Folkestone Library. The data shows that the highest proportion of Folkestone library users live in the Folkestone Central ward which is closer to FOLCA.
- For the customers travelling from Folkestone Harbour and Folkestone East wards there is already an uphill journey to get to 2 Grace Hill. The distance from 2 Grace Hill to FOLCA is 0.3 miles. FOLCA is located near many other local services on the high street, such as the Post Office, banks, supermarkets and shops meaning that customers would be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities.
- For those with neurodivergent conditions or anxiety when accessing new spaces we would provide a social story for a new location and a virtual tour to allow customers to familiarise themselves with the space before visiting. We would also arrange a virtual tour to be uploaded to our webpage.
- A new layout would be considered in line with ensuring accessibility, this could include quieter spaces, dimmable lighting (not available in Grace Hill). We would work to ensure any new building and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.
- If the service is split over two floors we would ensure a working lift is available and that the building is accessible for all including having accessible public toilets.
- Public/accessible toilets would be part of the service requirements. There may be opportunities to look at further enhancements including a Changing Place facility. We would raise this with Folkestone & Hythe District Council if the decision was taken to progress this proposal.

Responsible Officer for Disability

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

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

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Limited specialist LGBTQIA+ book stock in the smaller district libraries so customers are unable to browse collections and would have to reserve and pay a reservation fee.

Options 2 and 4 – Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill - No negative impacts identified. Services would be designed with all needs in mind including book stock that covers the full range of customer preference.

Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Need to review but likely that there would be a need to look at some form of stock collection or continue with the free reservation collection service.
- Promote our eBook/magazine/newspaper collections all available for free via our website.

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

Are there negative impacts for Race

Yes

Negative impacts for Race

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Smaller district libraries have limited ethnic minority group book stock and books in different languages, meaning customers may have to make reservations.

Options 2 and 4 - Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill - No negative impacts identified. Services would be designed with all needs in mind including book stock that covers the full range of customer preference.

Mitigating actions for Race

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Need to review if need to develop the stock collection available in the town centre as no book lending collections available or continue the free reservation collection service.
- Promote our eBook/magazine/newspaper collections all available for free via our website.

Options 2 and 4 - Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill

- In looking at the Creative Folkestone option or any building proposals to look to retain the library at 2 Grace Hill, KCC would ensure that in discussions with Creative Folkestone and/or another partner any building design resulted in a fully accessible library space, and that as much of the public library and registration service space was on the ground floor. It would also be an opportunity to refresh the library layout where possible. We would work to ensure any new design and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.
- For those unable to travel to the Grace Hill location or any nearby libraries we can offer the Home Library Service as an alternative way to access the service.

Consultation proposal - Move to FOLCA

- FOLCA is a more central town centre location than 2 Grace Hill as it is on the high street. FOLCA in comparison to 2 Grace Hill is closer to the bus station (there may be future changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre) and equal distance to the train station. There are car parks located very close to the FOLCA building at Middelburg Place and Bouverie Place which are multi storey car parks with designated disabled spaces.
- We would ensure that clear signage is in place as is the case for 2 Grace Hill and raise awareness of the new location. A communications plan would be put in place to raise awareness of the new location, promote the services available and inform people of timescales.
- The Home Library Service and the alternative Folkestone and Hythe district libraries offer alternative ways to access the service for those customers unable to travel to a high street location.
- The data on the home addresses of Folkestone Library customers from 2022 (prior to the temporary closure) was reviewed (Appendix 2) to cross reference with the wards served by Folkestone Library. The data shows that the highest proportion of Folkestone library users live in the Folkestone Central ward which is closer to FOLCA.
- For the customers travelling from Folkestone Harbour and Folkestone East wards there is already an uphill journey to get to 2 Grace Hill. The distance from 2 Grace Hill to FOLCA is 0.3 miles. FOLCA is located near many other local services on the high street, such as the Post Office, banks, supermarkets and shops meaning that customers would be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities.

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

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

Yes

Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- There is a limited provision of specialist LGBTQI+ book stock at the smaller district libraries meaning customer may have to make reservations and pay.

Consultation proposal and options 2 and 4 – Move to FOLCA/Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill - No negative impacts identified. Services will be designed with all needs in mind including book stock that covers the full range of customer preference.

Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Review availability of specialist LGBTQI+ stock in the town centre but a free reservation collection service is available from temporary library provision.
- Promote our eBook/magazine/newspaper collections all available for free via our website.

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

26. Negative impacts and mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity

Yes

Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- No town centre provision means that customers would need to travel to other libraries to access our physical services. This could be more of a problem for women who are pregnant or mothers who are on maternity leave, who may be unable to travel to another location.
- No Playground and Baby Rhyme Time sessions at a Folkestone town centre location which could result in customers having to travel further/additional cost or not being able to attend.
- The registration of births is not available from town centre location so customers needing to register a birth must travel to their closest alternative registration point in Wood Avenue Library or Hythe library.

Consultation proposal and options 2 and 4 – Move to FOLCA/Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill - No negative impacts identified. Registration of births and Playground and Baby Rhyme Time sessions would be available in a town centre location again. Services would be designed with all needs in mind including book stock that covers the full range of customer preference and ensuring the provision of baby change facilities as at 2 Grace Hill.

Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Review of provision of children’s stock.
- Customers can be directed to services and sessions at the nearest possible library in Wood Avenue, Cheriton, Sandgate or Hythe.

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Yes

Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Notice of marriage/civil partnership cannot be given in a town centre library location. Customers would need to travel to Wood Avenue Library.

Consultation proposal and options 2 and 4 – Move to FOLCA/Folkestone Library remains at 2 Grace Hill - No negative impacts identified. Notice of marriage/civil partnerships would be delivered again from a town centre location.

Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Retention of Notice of marriage appointments at Wood Avenue Library.

Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

28. Negative impacts and mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities

Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities

Yes

Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Without a town centre provision, customers would need to travel to other libraries to access our physical services. This could mean that Carers are unable to access physical library services because they are unable to travel further with the person they are caring for or they are unable to spare the additional travel time/cost.
- Book stock which provides help to Carers and also may support different disabilities may not be available at the smaller district libraries so customers may have to pay and reserve books.

Options 2 and 4 - Library service remains at Grace Hill

- The library may be split over two floors depending on who is co-located within the building which could present a challenge to those with disabilities and therefore their Carers.
- Grace Hill is located towards the bottom of a hill, approximately 0.3 miles from the high street and other local services which could be a challenge for some customers with disabilities and therefore their Carers.

Consultation proposal and option 5 - Move to FOLCA/other town centre location

- The library may be split over two floors depending on who is co-located within the building which could present a challenge to those with disabilities and therefore their Carers.
- FOLCA is towards the top of the high street so the journey from the current building to the proposed new location at FOLCA is uphill. This could be more difficult for someone with mobility issues and their Carers if they live closer to the current location on Grace Hill.

Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities

Option 1 - Continue with temporary provision permanently

- Promotion of digital resources and Home Library Service.
- Review of hours across the district. Consider extended opening hours being made permanent in Wood Avenue and Hythe Libraries.
- Vigilance around which customers may be eligible for an Exempt card, meaning they wouldn't have to pay for reservations.
- Review and consider retention of free reservation service.

Options 2 and 4 - Library service remains at Grace Hill

- Ensure working lift is available and continued provision of accessible public toilets. The lift at 2 Grace Hill has suffered a number of breakdowns and while reported and fixed it is nearing end of its mechanical life so will need to be factored into any building restoration.

Consultation proposal - Move to FOLCA

- FOLCA is a more central town centre location than 2 Grace Hill as it is on the high street.
- FOLCA in comparison to 2 Grace Hill is closer to the bus station. There may be future changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre) and equal distance to the train station. There are car parks located very close to the FOLCA building at Middelburg Place and Bouverie Place which are multi storey car parks with designated disabled spaces.

- If the service is split over two floors we would ensure a working lift is available and that the building is accessible for all.
- Ensure clear signage is in place as is the case for 2 Grace Hill and raise awareness of the new location. A communications plan would be put in place to raise awareness of the new location, promote the services available and inform people of timescales.

Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

Appendix 1

Demographic Profile: Folkestone and Hythe

Data primarily sourced from Office of National Statistics (ONS) data from KCC's [website](#)¹.

Folkestone is a coastal town in East Kent with a population of 52,279 (2021 census) and sits within the Folkestone & Hythe District which has an overall population of 110,200, forecast to rise to 120,700 by 2027.

Age and Sex

4.5% of the population of Folkestone & Hythe fall within the 0-4 age group, 10.7% are aged 5-14 and 9.5% are aged 15-24. 49.7% of the population are aged 25-64, while 18.7% are aged 65-79, and 6.8% are 80 and older.

48.7% of the population are male, and 51.3% female.

Life expectancy in Folkestone & Hythe is 79.2 years for males and 83.2 for females.

Diversity

88% of the population are White British, and 12% are in ethnic minority groups which are broken down as follows:

Groups	Percentage
White minority groups	4.6%
Asian	3.9%
Black Caribbean or African	0.6%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1.9%
Other ethnic groups	1%
Total	12%

13.7% of young people aged 0-15 are in ethnic minority groups, as are 14.4% of adults aged 16-64 and 5.3% of older people. 2.3% of households have no adults with English as their main language, while 0.6% have no adults but at least one person aged 3 to 15 who has English as their main language.

48% of people stated their religion is Christian, 1.3% Hindu, 1% Muslim and 0.9% Buddhist. 42.1% stated that they have no religion.

Socio-economic groups and Deprivation

The Mosaic data for Folkestone and Hythe from 2022 is as follows:

Mosaic Group	Definition	Percentage of overall population
Group D – Rural Reality	Householders living in inexpensive homes in village communities	13.6%
Group E – Senior Security	Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement	13.2%
Group C – Country Living	Well off owners in rural locations enjoying the benefits of country life	9.5%
Group H – Aspiring Homemakers	Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means	9.4%
Group L – Vintage Value	Elderly people reliant on support to meet financial or practical needs	9.1%
Group O – Rental Hubs	Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods	8.2%
Group B – Prestige Positions	Established families in large detached homes living upmarket lifestyles	6.6%
Group F – Suburban Stability	Mature suburban owners living in settled lives in mid-range housing	5.8%
Group G – Domestic Success	Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers	5.6%
Group I – Family Basics	Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet	5.4%
Group J – Transient Renters	Single people privately renting low cost homes for the short term	4.7%
Group M – Modest Traditions	Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles	3.7%
Group N – Urban Cohesion	Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity	3.2%
Group K – Municipal Challenge	Urban renters of social housing facing an array of challenges	1.8%
Group A – City Prosperity	High status city dwellers living in central locations and pursuing careers with high rewards	0.2%

Mosaic is a classification system designed by Experian to profile the characteristics of the UK population. Each household in the UK is classified as belonging to one of 15 groups and 66 types. These groups identify clusters of individuals and households that are as similar as possible to each other, and as different as possible to any other group. They describe the residents of a postcode in terms of their typical demographics, their behaviours, their lifestyle characteristics and their attitudes.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for 2019 reports that Folkestone comprises 67 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Four of which rank among the top 10% most deprived areas in the country. The wards within which these LSOAs sit are Folkestone Harbour, East Folkestone and Folkestone Central.

2 Grace Hill sits within the Harbour Ward and FOLCA is in Folkestone Central.

14.9% of 16 to 64 year olds in the district were recorded as claiming Universal Credit in November 2022, which is 1.6% higher than the average for Kent, and 0.8% higher than the national average. 63.8% of the claimants are not in employment. As of December 2022, Folkestone Harbour, Folkestone Central and East Folkestone wards have the highest rate of unemployment within the Folkestone & Hythe District².

East Folkestone sits within the top 10 wards in Kent with the highest number of children in absolute low-income families³.

Central and Folkestone Harbour ward data from 2021 Census

Ward	% Population Disabled Under the Equality Act
Folkestone Central	25.1%
Folkestone Harbour	22.5%

Ward	% Population Under 16
Folkestone Central	13.5%
Folkestone Harbour	21.5%

Ward	% Population from an Ethnic Minority background*
Folkestone Central	23.9%
Folkestone Harbour	14.5%

* including white ethnic minorities

Ward	% of Population from an Ethnic Minority Background**
Folkestone Central	11.8%
Folkestone Harbour	7.3%

² Kent Analytics: Ward Unemployment Bulletin - www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-Kent/economy-and-employment#tab-5

³ Kent Analytics: Children in Poverty 2022 - www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/7956/Children-in-poverty.pdf

Folkestone Library Statistics

Issues (library items taken out e.g. book loans)

The table below shows issue rankings for Folkestone and Hythe district libraries in relation to the 99 Kent Libraries. The more library loan items taken out the higher the ranking, e.g. 1 equals the highest number of loans in the county, whereas 99 equals the lowest level of loans.

Library	Issue ranking for April to November 2022 ⁴
Hythe	21
Folkestone	25
Cheriton	40
New Romney	54
Lyminge	64
Wood Avenue	72
Sandgate	89
Lydd	94

Active Borrowers

The number of people borrowing items from Folkestone Library had been steadily increasing throughout the year, and from April to November 2022 increased by 18%. In November Folkestone Library had 2,911 active borrowers, while Hythe Library, although issuing more items, had 2,347 active borrowers.

1,402 customers borrowed items during the last full quarter of Folkestone Library being open, and these customers can be broken down into the following age categories:

Age band	No. of customers	Percentage
0-10	536	38.2%
11-19	126	9.0%
20-29	62	4.4%
30-39	141	10.1%
40-49	126	9.0%
50-59	88	6.3%
60 plus	314	22.4%
Age unknown	9	0.6%

Of these customers 45.9% identify as female, 25.9% as male, 0.14% as non-binary/3rd gender while 28.03% did not specify their gender identity.

17 customers (1.21%) indicated that they had a disability as follows:

Disability	No. of customers
Mental health	2
Physical impairment	5
Vision impairment	2
Learning impairment	8

⁴ This period was chosen as this was the last period during the financial year 22/23 when Folkestone Library was open.

Not all customers will provide information on disability when joining the library service, therefore it is likely that the true figure would be more.

Of the 335 customers who indicated their ethnicity, 83% were White British and 17% in ethnic minority groups which can be broken down as follows:

Ethnicity	No. of customers
Asian/Asian British – Chinese	2
Asian/Asian British – Indian	4
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	2
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	3
Asian/Asian British – Other	1
Black/Black British – African	3
Black/Black British – Caribbean	1
Black/Black British – Other	1
Mixed/Multiple – White and Asian	2
Mixed/Multiple – White and Black Caribbean	1
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	2
White – Irish	1
White – Other	24
Other ethnic group	10

Visitors

Library	No. of visitors April to November 2022
Folkestone	50,675
Hythe	38,399
Wood Avenue*	22,209
Cheriton	21,397
Sandgate	6,982
New Romney	6,392
Lydd	3,092
Lyminge	3,007

*Wood Avenue Library visitors include customers using the Community Fridge

PC Usage

Use of the public computers (PCs) increased by 36% from April to November 2022 compared with the previous year, with over 6,000 hours of PC usage in total for the year up to December 2022.

Events and Activities

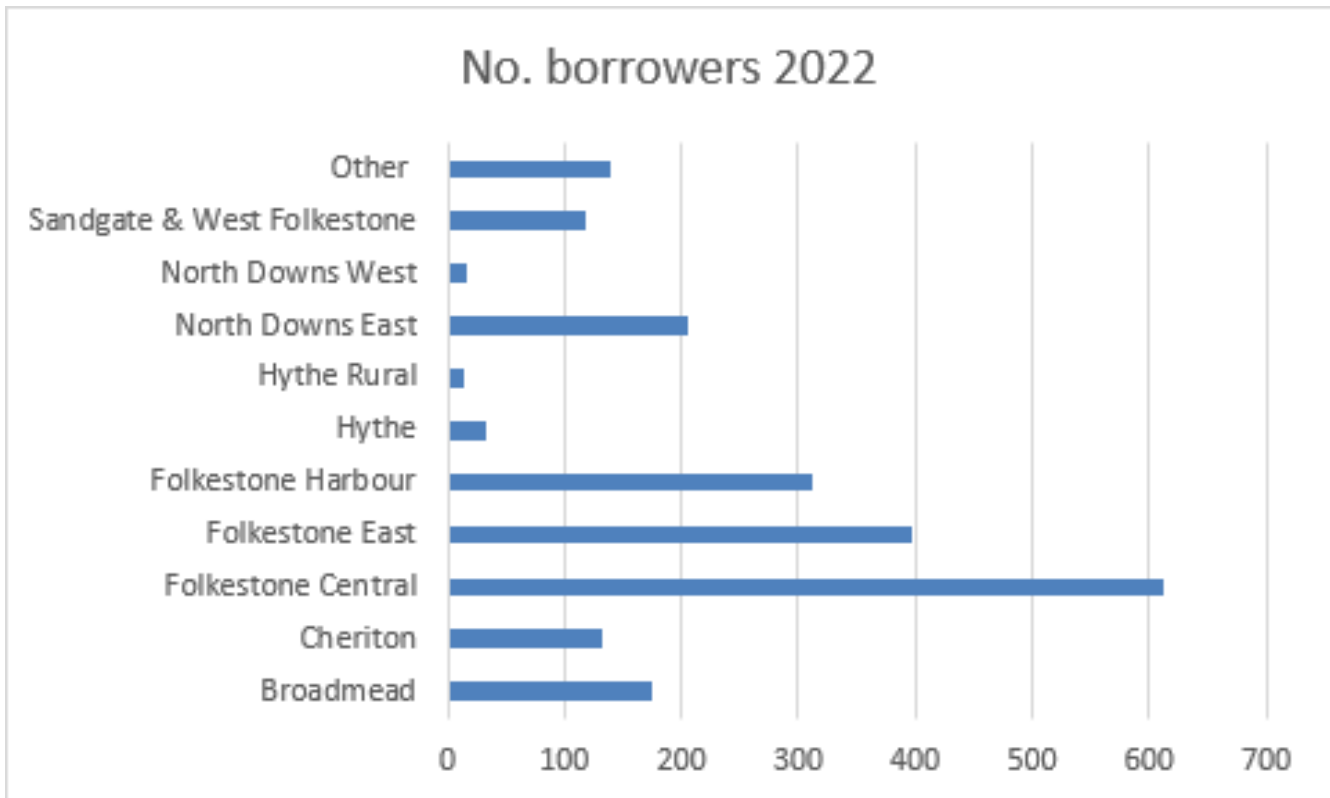
From April to November 2022, Folkestone Library held 141 community events and activities, with 1,464 attendees. These activities include the following:

- Rhyme Time for babies, toddlers and their parents and carers.
- Playground artist-led sessions for babies 0-18 months and their parents and carers.
- Books Beyond Words book group sessions for adults with learning disabilities.
- Meet and Practise English sessions for adults whose first language is not English.

- School Holiday activities in conjunction with the Summer Reading Challenge.
- The library also hosted a series of sessions for the Flux programme with partners Living Words, who were working with 18 to 25 year old LGBTQIA+ people addressing issues around self-harm, ill mental health, and suicide through the creative arts.

Appendix 2

Library borrowers in 2022 cross referenced with wards that are served by Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill:



NB - North Downs West would be served mostly by Lyminge Library, and Hythe by Hythe Library. 2 Grace Hill sits within the Harbour ward and FOLCA is in Folkestone Central ward.

The details of the above graph are detailed in the table below:

Ward	Number of Registered Borrowers at Folkestone Library
Folkestone Central	613
Folkestone East	396
Folkestone Harbour	313
North Downs East	205
Broadmead	174
Cheriton	132
Sandgate & West Folkestone	117
Hythe	34
North Downs West	17
Hythe Rural	13
Other (covers customers from other wards/districts who have registered at Folkestone; includes Romney Marsh, Dover, Dartford, Canterbury, Ashford, Maidstone, Thanet, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells),	139

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

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee 22 January 2025

Subject: Governance Arrangements for Growing Places Funding

Key Decision: 24/00103

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: For decision by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Electoral Division: All KCC electoral divisions

Summary: This report provides an overview of the proposed arrangements for the governance of a new round of Growing Places Funding following the closure of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to agree to:

- LAUNCH a new round of the Growing Places Fund (GPF) capital loan-based funding programme for Kent;
- APPROVE the new governance arrangements for managing the GPF programme;
- ACT as the accountable body for projects within Kent's geographical boundaries that are to receive GPF loan funding; and
- DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take relevant actions including but not limited to entering contracts and/or other legal agreements as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides an overview of the proposed governance arrangements for a new round of Growing Places Fund (GPF) capital loan funding for Kent to be

managed by KCC following the closure of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) in 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1 GPF was established by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2011 to unlock economic growth, create jobs and build houses and help 'kick start' development at stalled sites. GPF was distributed to Local Enterprise Partnerships, with the mandate to use their local knowledge to use the funding to grow the local economies.
- 2.2 SELEP (whose geographical boundaries included Kent, Medway, East Sussex, Essex, Southend-on-Sea, and Thurrock) was awarded £49.2m of capital GPF to create a recycled capital loan scheme.
- 2.3 The capital loans were used to support project proposals that would deliver new or safeguard existing jobs, support learners with upskilling and unlock housing and/or commercial floorspace. The eligibility criteria for GPF loans were set by the SELEP Strategic Board¹, and reviewed when loan repayments were repaid to check the eligibility criteria were still fit-for-purpose.
- 2.4 SELEP tasked its local federated boards (including the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP)) with advertising the call for GPF applications and assessing the strategic fit of each GPF application. Based on this assessment, KMEP would provide a ranked list of GPF applications to the SELEP Strategic Board for it to consider. The SELEP Strategic Board would make the final decision as to which loans to award, based on the advisory recommendations of KMEP and an Independent Technical Evaluator analysis.
- 2.5 Once loans were issued, the SELEP Accountability Board would have responsibility for the oversight of the loans and could agree to extend loan terms if they felt that was warranted.
- 2.6 Since 2011, SELEP, supported by KMEP, has provided £26.467m of capital loans to projects within Kent. Details of the Kent projects funded by SELEP are shown in Appendix 1. This information includes photographs from the round 2 and 3 projects, the delivery organisations, and the number of jobs, homes and commercial units that have been delivered.

3. The closure of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership

- 3.1 In August 2023, the Government confirmed that it had decided that all functions of LEPs were to be transferred back to local authorities from April 2024. Consequently, the SELEP Accountability Board met in February 2024 to agree the disaggregation on a per-capita basis of GPF to the six-constituent county and unitary authorities, following SELEP's closure.

¹ The SELEP Strategic Board consisted of the 6 Leaders of the county and unitary councils, 5 business representatives from Kent & Medway, 4 business representatives from Essex, Southend, and Thurrock, 3 East Sussex business representatives, and co-opted members representing universities, colleges, and Social Enterprise.

- 3.2 The SELEP Accountability Board agreed that £14.802m of GPF would be disaggregated to KCC with the purpose of using the recycled loan funding in line with the original aims of the scheme. Medway Council has also been allocated a separate allocation of £2m which it will retain for local projects in Medway.
- 3.3 This £14.8m sum is currently committed to ongoing loan projects in Kent. However, a number of repayments from these live projects are due to be made by 31st March 2025. This provides a significant opportunity for the reinvestment of this funding into new capital projects within Kent that will contribute to economic growth.
- 3.4 The dissolution of SELEP means that new governance arrangements for GPF in Kent must be agreed prior to launching a new funding round.

4. Future Arrangements for GPF

- 4.1 As part of the LEP transition arrangements, KCC has taken on the role of Accountable Body for the £14.802m of GPF that has been disaggregated in its area. Proposed future governance arrangements for the Kent GPF are set out below.
- 4.2 The success of the new round of funding will be dependent on supporting projects and initiatives that have the potential for the biggest local impact and that support objectives and priorities agreed by key stakeholders in the county. KMEP² is the formal Local Growth Board for Kent & Medway and the only forum which brings together private-sector business leaders, further education principals, higher education vice-chancellors, and all local council leaders (from county, unitary and district authorities) to support local economic growth. KMEP is also responsible for oversight of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework, the agreed economic growth strategy for the functional economic region. As such, KMEP would be well placed to act as the advisory board to KCC on the ongoing re-allocation of GPF in Kent.
- 4.3 KMEP board members have a broad range of knowledge, expertise, and skills, provided from both the public and private sector perspectives, which would be helpful in assisting KCC with making the most informed decisions on which investments will produce the most beneficial impact economically. The KMEP board also has over a decade of experience in GPF loan assessments.
- 4.4 The proposed new governance arrangements would see KMEP acting as an Advisory Board to KCC in a similar way to how the Investment Advisory Board provides recommendations to the Council with regard to allocation of the Kent & Medway Business Fund.
- 4.5 It should be noted that Medway Council has determined that it will allocate its own share of the GPF within its boundaries, so Medway Council will not have a role in KMEP discussions on allocating KCC's GPF share.

² [Home | KMEP](#)

4.6 Proposed new governance arrangements would work as follows:

Repayments are made on existing GPF loans, allowing a new call for projects to be made.

↓

Eligibility Criteria must be agreed:

- KMEP to meet and recommend eligibility criteria for the GPF call for projects to the KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development*.
- KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development to formally decide on eligibility criteria based on KMEP and KCC officer advice.
- The eligibility criteria would consider the loan value, term, interest rates, as well as the strategic fit and technical assessment criteria.

↓

Call for projects launched:

- KMEP to launch and advertise the call for projects, via its website, KCC's website, and other dissemination channels including local media.

↓

Applications received and assessed:

- KCC officers (Economy, Finance) to receive GPF applications, and undertake assessment of each bid against the eligibility criteria.
- Due diligence checks commissioned / undertaken on prospective applicants to prevent fraud or conflicts of interest.
- Independent Technical Assessment carried out (details tbc)
- Applications that fail due diligence checks are not presented to KMEP

↓

Applications ranked in priority order:

- The KCC officer assessments to be presented to KMEP, alongside the application, for their review.
- KMEP to discuss each application and then produce a ranked priority list for KCC to consider alongside commentary to explain their rationale.

↓

KCC to make the final decision on which GPF projects to award funding to, based on KMEP's recommendation. Following consultation with the section 151 officer, the Director of Growth and Communities to take relevant actions including but not limited to entering contracts and/or other legal agreement as necessary to implement the decision.

↓

GPF loans monitored:

The GPF loans would be monitored on a quarter basis, with this information reported back to the KCC Cabinet Member, GEDCCC, and KMEP.

↓

Repayments are made on the loan, allowing new projects to commence.

4.7 KMEP's conflicts of interest's policy will remain in place to ensure that projects are assessed fairly.

4.8 **Appendix 2** sets out the proposed high-level terms and conditions for the new round of GPF and eligibility criteria against which loan applications will be considered.

5. Monitoring

5.1 KCC's economy team, with support from Finance and Legal will be responsible for monitoring ongoing and new loan projects.

5.2 Where successful applicants submit a change request, such as an extension to their loan term, it is proposed that the KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development is given the decision-making power to approve any such material requests. This information would be reported back to KMEP and GEDCCC for their information.

6. Strategic Alignment

6.1 The development of the new GPF governance arrangements and its future implementation supports the following local priorities and strategies:

Kent & Medway Economic Framework:

- Action Area 2: Focusing support to business on measures that will increase long-term productivity and resilience.
- Action Area 3: Attracting and welcoming investors to Kent and Medway
- Action Area 4: Supporting the conditions for growth
- Action Area 6: Investing in Kent and Medway's skills infrastructure.
- Action Area 10: Understanding our infrastructure needs and developing new solutions.
- Action Area 13: Ensuring that everyone who wants a job can find work.
- Action Area 16: Embedding economic opportunity at the centre of local regeneration.

Framing Kent's Future: Priority 1: Levelling Up Kent

- To support the Kent economy to be resilient and successfully adapt to the challenges and opportunities it faces over the coming years.
- To see significant improvements in the economy, connectivity, educational attainment, skills and employment rates and public health outcomes for deprived communities in coastal areas so that they improve faster than the rest of Kent to reduce the gaps.

Government priorities: Invest 2035: Industrial strategy has been launched by the Government for consultation, which sets out to create more good jobs in every part of the country.

Securing Kent's Future: The new governance arrangements propose that a management fee and interest on the loans is charged to cover the costs to KCC associated with running the GPF programme.

7. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

- 7.1 Returning the funding to central government and not running a new GPF scheme. This was discounted as it would miss a significant opportunity to allocated recycled loan funding to new schemes in Kent in support of economic growth.
- 7.2 Retaining the funding for KCC to use for economic growth programmes (such as No Use Empty commercial) rather than enabling external organisations to apply for funding. This option was discounted as KCC-run schemes and programmes can still apply for the new round of GPF (and will be encouraged to do so) but other strategically important projects promoted by partners and stakeholders will also be able to apply for funding to propose projects that contribute to the priorities of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework. All the GPF projects (both internal and external) will have the same ambition, which is to boost economic growth through the realisation of new jobs, learners, houses, or commercial floorspace.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The maximum amount of GPF money available for reinvestment in a new round of funding from 25/26 onwards is £6,470,000 with further amounts to be repaid from current projects in subsequent financial years. This is subject to the repayments being made in line with existing repayment schedules (shown in **Appendix 3**).
- 8.2 KCC is due to receive some residual funding following the closure of SELEP which will support the set-up stage of the programme (i.e. legal costs). Work is currently underway with finance to assess the full operating costs (staffing, due diligence, legal fees etc.) of running the scheme. It is proposed that a management fee and an appropriate rate of interest on the loans are charged to future GPF applicants to fully recover the cost to KCC of operating the scheme. This will enable the GPF programme to retain its value and remain in place as an evergreen fund.
- 8.3 Were any projects to fail, any bad debt would be a loss to the fund, rather than KCC but robust application assessments and loan agreements will mitigate this risk as far as possible to ensure that the fund is protected for future reinvestment.
- 8.4 **Appendix 3** provides the repayment schedule for GPF loans.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1 KCC's legal team are supporting work to develop the new loan agreement templates and other associated terms and conditions of the scheme to ensure that the funding is used in line with its original purpose and that any financial risk to KCC is minimised in the event of any projects defaulting on their agreed responsibilities.
- 9.2 This work is examining existing processes used for the KCC-run No Use Empty and Kent & Medway Business Fund schemes to see if the same robust

processes can be followed to ensure an efficient approach. Processes will also verify that projects are in line with subsidy control rules. Additionally, the options of security against the loans will be assessed and would form part of any loan agreements where the assessments conclude that a sufficient level of risk exists to warrant security.

10. Equalities implications

10.1 An EqIA is in attached.

11. Data Protection Implications

11.1 Loan applications to KCC will be treated as commercially sensitive. Personal data will be redacted where necessary before sharing application details with KMEP for consideration.

11.2 Loan beneficiary organisations will be required to sign loan agreements that set out their responsibilities regarding data protection requirements with the delivery of their projects and how monitoring reports provided to KCC should treat personal data.

12. Conclusions

12.1 The £14.8m GPF due to be returned to KCC following the closure of SELEP provides a significant opportunity to launch a new round of capital loan funding to support the county's local growth priorities and boost the economy through unlocking economic growth in Kent. The proposed new GPF governance arrangements will enable the continuation of the GPF programme in support of a range of new initiatives that will create jobs and workspace and develop key sectors in the county.

13. Recommendations

13.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to agree to:

- LAUNCH a new round of the Growing Places Fund (GPF) capital loan-based funding programme for Kent;
- APPROVE the new governance arrangements for managing the GPF programme;
- ACT as the accountable body for projects within Kent's geographical boundaries that are to receive GPF loan funding; and
- DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take relevant actions including but not limited to entering contracts and/or other legal agreements as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

14. Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix 1: GPF Loans made by SELEP to Kent projects between 2011 and 2024.

Appendix 2: The eligibility criteria recommended by KMEP for KCC's consideration.

Appendix 3: GPF Repayment Schedule

Appendix 4: EqIA

15. Contact details:

Report Author: Sarah Nurden Job title: Strategic Programme Manager (KMEP) Telephone number: 03000 416518 Email address: sarah.nurden@kent.gov.uk	Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle Job title: Director of Growth & Communities Telephone number: 03000 412064 Email address: stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk
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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:

24/00103

For publication**Key decision: YES****Subject Matter / Title of Decision:** Governance Arrangements for Growing Places Funding

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Economic Development I agree to:

- LAUNCH a new round of the Growing Places Fund (GPF) capital loan-based funding programme for Kent;
- APPROVE the new governance arrangements for managing the GPF programme;
- ACT as the accountable body for projects within Kent’s geographical boundaries that are to receive GPF loan funding; and
- DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take relevant actions including but not limited to entering contracts and/or other legal agreements as necessary to implement the decision

Reason(s) for decision:

The Growing Places Fund was established by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Transport in 2011 to unlock economic growth, create jobs and build houses and help ‘kick start’ development at stalled sites. GPF was distributed to Local Enterprise Partnerships, with the mandate to use their local knowledge to use the funding to grow the local economies. For Kent and Medway this was the South East LEP (SELEP). In August 2023, the Government confirmed that it had decided that all functions of LEPs were to be transferred back to local authorities from April 2024. The dissolution of SELEP means that new governance arrangements for GPF in Kent must be agreed prior to launching a new funding round.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposal is being considered by the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 22 January 2025..

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Returning the funding to central government and not running a new GPF scheme. This was discounted as it would miss a significant opportunity to allocated recycled loan funding to new schemes in Kent in support of economic growth.

Retaining the funding for KCC to use for economic growth programmes (such as No Use Empty commercial) rather than enabling external organisations to apply for funding. This option was discounted as KCC-run schemes and programmes can still apply for the new round of GPF (and will be encouraged to do so) but other strategically important projects promoted by partners and stakeholders will also be able to apply for funding to propose projects that contribute to the priorities of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework. All the GPF projects (both internal and external) will have the same ambition, which is to boost economic growth through the realisation of new jobs, learners, houses, or commercial floorspace.

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

.....
signed

.....
date

Appendix 1

Project within Kent	Type	Amount of GPF loaned (£m)
Workspace Kent (Round 1 of GPF)	Commercial space / business support	1.5
Discovery Park (Round 1 of GPF)	Site Enabling Works	5.3
Live Margate (Round 1 of GPF)	Commercial space / business support	5
Javelin Way Development (Round 2 of GPF)	Commercial space / business support	1.597
No Use Empty Commercial Phase 1 (Round 2 of GPF)	Commercial space / business support	1
Wine Innovation Centre (Round 3 of GPF)	Innovation/R&D	0.6
Green Hydrogen Generation Facility (Round 3 of GPF) <i>(NB due to unforeseen technical issues around a supply of green energy, the project was unable to proceed)</i>	Energy	3.47
No Use Empty Commercial Phase 2 (Round 3 of GPF)	Commercial space / business support	2
Herne Relief Road (Round 3 of GPF)	Transport	3.5
No Use Empty Residential (Round 3 of GPF)	Housing	2.5
Total		26.467

Details of the some of the round 2 & 3 projects:

Wine Innovation Centre



£600k was lent to the East Malling Trust and NIAB EMR to create a wine innovation centre at the East Malling Estate.

This is the first UK research vineyard and supports Kent's wine sector to develop as a global leader in innovation. The GPF was used for ground and foundation works as well as the installation of utilities and services, construction and the fit-out of the building. 4 researcher jobs have been produced.

As a result of this project, NIAB and its research partners have now secured two research projects worth £524,000. The first project is entitled "Increasing productivity and sustainability in UK viticulture: investigating the potential impact of groundcover management practices on soil health, yields and juice quality, and emissions" and the second "Manipulating soil water and vine nitrogen availability to improve yields, juice, and wine quality".

A small experiment with WineGB comparing Spur pruned yields and grape quality to Cane pruned vines (3 varieties - Chardonnay, Pinot noir and Bacchus) started in April 24. This is the first time WineGB have contributed any funding for research.

There has been a recent Vine and Wine discovery day which many producers and growers attended. This was to show what capabilities the centre has and to drive forward the ambition to create a viticulture centre of excellence on Kent. A new club has been launched to provide vineyard managers and staff with access to emerging innovative research. This will bridge the gap between viticulture plant science and practical application.

Javelin Way



£1.597m was lent to Kent County Council to develop the Javelin Way, for employment use, with a focus on the development of Ashford's creative economy.

The Project consists of two elements: the construction of a 'creative laboratory' production space (a new build two storey dance school) and the development of 29 light industrial units, including external works and new electrical sub-station.

The project has been successful in that all 29 units have been let or sold. The development has become a creative hub, with the Jasmin Vardimon Company occupying the creative laboratory and Kent Music separately deciding to move into units at the site. The intention is that 311 jobs will be delivered over 10 years. A survey of the businesses occupying the site is due to happen next year to ascertain the job numbers delivered to date.

No Use Empty Commercial Phase 1 & 2 and No Use Empty Residential



£5.5m (split into three tranches) was lent to Kent County Council so they could run their No Use Empty programme.

The No Use Empty Initiative seeks to improve the physical urban environment in Kent by bringing empty properties back into use as high-quality housing accommodation or as commercial premises and by raising awareness of the issues surrounding empty properties, highlighting the problems they cause to local communities. This objective is achieved through the provision of short-term secured loans (up to 3 years) to property owners.

The GPF loan allowed the No Use Empty team to focus on commercial premises for the first time. The GPF was targeted at town centres, where secondary retail and other commercial areas have been significantly impacted by changing consumer demand and have often been neglected as a result of larger regeneration schemes.

By the end of the loan period, it is expected that 177 homes and 120 jobs will have been delivered.

These photographs show one of their commercial properties brought back into use in Sandgate, Folkestone.



Herne Relief Road



£3.5m was lent to Kent County Council to build the Herne Relief Road supporting the construction of c. 2,500 new homes in Canterbury

The project has delivered two new roundabout junctions, one at the junction between Bullockstone Road and A291 Canterbury Road and one to the north of the junction between Bullockstone Road and Lower Herne Road to connect into the proposed developer spine road. The carriageway has been widened to 7m and includes the provision of a shared 2m Footway/Cycleway throughout the entire extent of the scheme. Over 300 trees have been replanted as part of the works alongside the creation of two new attenuation ponds.

GPF was needed to forward fund this infrastructure, as the developer contributions would only be paid to Kent County Council once the housing was delivered, not beforehand.

To date, 932 houses and 345 jobs have been delivered because of this project.

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Appendix 2

The eligibility criteria recommended by KMEP for KCC's consideration:

Duration of GPF loans:

- 1.1 Historically, SELEP offered the opportunity for a three- or five-year loan. Based on experience, most applicants sought a 3-year repayment. This shorter timeframe helps GPF be reinvested into new projects at the earliest opportunity, allowing more benefits to be realised at a faster pace.
- 1.2 KMEP's recommendation to KCC is to consider a 3-year loan option.

Value of GPF loans:

- 1.3 Up to a maximum of £6.47m of GPF is available to loan in 2025.
- 1.4 KMEP's recommendation to KCC is to seek loan applications seeking a GPF contribution between £300k and £2million. The higher-level means that there should be at least three loans provided, which should spread the economic benefit across the county, but also allow exciting large-scale projects to come forward. The lower threshold should help bring forward a manageable number of applications on which to undertake due diligence and ensure that the loans produce a discernible impact on the local economy.

Charging of interest:

- 1.5 Historically, GPF funding has operated as a low-interest rate loan. Interest has been charged on GPF loans at two percent below the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) Fixed Loan Maturity Rate or zero percent – whichever is higher. The exact rate of interest has been determined on the day of the credit agreement was finalised with the successful applicant.
- 1.6 KMEP's recommendation is the continuation of this approach. Charging an interest rate will help to maintain the value of the fund for future reinvestment.

Late repayments:

- 1.7 Historically, if a project failed to meet the agreed repayment schedule detailed within the credit agreement, interest was charged at the full PWLB interest rate from the point of default on the loan repayment.
- 1.8 KMEP's recommendation is the continuation of this approach.

Management Fees and Security:

- 1.9 SELEP has not historically charged a management fee or asked for security.

1.10 Given the current financial challenges faced by KCC and the requirement for new activity to operate on a full cost recovery basis in line with Securing Kent’s Future, KMEP agrees that KCC may wish to charge the applicant a management fee and ask for security. The management fee is necessary to cover:

- Due diligence
- Credit checks
- Security checks
- Legal fees
- Costs associated with managing the scheme (staff time for administration, monitoring, audit etc.)

The risk of non-repayment sits over the fund. SELEP loans historically did not ask for any form of security, and in a few instances, the applicants were not able to repay the full amount, reducing the total amount available for reinvestment in the future. KMEP agrees that KCC may wish to ask for security to prevent GPF being reduced due to bad debt.

Strategic Fit criteria:

1.11 KMEP proposes to KCC that GPF loan application are asked to align with these strategic fit criteria:

Strategic Fit to Industrial Strategy & Local Sector Strengths	Ranking
<p>Awarded to applications which: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Align with the high-growth sectors identified in the Government’s Invest 2035: Industrial Strategy Green Paper, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advanced manufacturing ○ Clean energy industries ○ Creative industries ○ Defence ○ Digital and technologies ○ Financial services ○ Life sciences ○ Professional and business services - And/or align with Kent & Medway’s sector strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advanced manufacturing ○ Clean energy industries ○ Creative industries ○ Digital and technologies ○ Life sciences ○ Professional and business services ○ Health ○ Tourism & Hospitality ○ Retail ○ Education ○ Construction ○ Transport & Logistics ○ Agriculture and horticulture 	<p>Pass</p>

Preference will be given to applications which conform to both the industrial strategy high growth sectors and Kent & Medway sector strengths.	
Awarded to applications which: - - Do not align with the Government's eight high growth sectors or Kent & Medway's sector strengths (as listed above)	Fail
Strategic Fit to Kent & Medway Economic Framework	
Awarded to applications which: - - Demonstrate they deliver against the ambitions of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework (KMEF), namely the project will help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ enable innovative, creative, and productive businesses. ○ widen opportunities and unlock talent. ○ secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth. ○ place economic opportunity at the centre of community wellbeing and prosperity. ○ create diverse, distinctive, and vibrant places. 	Pass
Awarded to applications which: - - Do not demonstrate they deliver against the ambitions of the KMEF.	Fail

Technical Criteria:

1.12 KMEP proposes to KCC that GPF loan application are asked to align with these technical criteria:

Expected benefits	
Awarded to applications which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate substantial project outcomes, including delivery of new jobs, learners, houses, and/or commercial floorspace which are expected to outweigh total project costs. - provide robust, well-evidenced analysis of the estimated number of jobs and homes that the scheme is going to support, jobs safeguarded, or skills benefits delivered. 	Green
Awarded to applications which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate some project outcomes, including delivery of new jobs, learners, houses, and/or commercial floorspace which are expected to outweigh total project costs. - provide some evidence of the estimated number of jobs and homes that the scheme is going to support, jobs safeguarded or benefits to skills levels, but the analysis is insufficiently transparent. 	Amber

<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do not demonstrate project outcomes, including delivery of delivery of new jobs, learners, houses, and/or commercial floorspace, but which are not expected to outweigh total project cost. - do not provide sufficient evidence of how the number of jobs and homes that the scheme is going to support, or skills benefits have been estimated, and there is insufficient evidence to justify assumptions. 	Red
Pace of benefit realisation	
<p>Awarded to applications which: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate that the benefits of the project will immediately follow project completion. - have low risk of the project benefits not materialising. 	Green
<p>Awarded to applications which: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have project dependencies identified which may impact on the pace of the project benefits coming forward - have low to medium risk of the benefits not materialising at the pace detailed in the Business Case 	Amber
<p>Awarded to applications which: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have project dependencies/risks which may impact on the pace of the project benefits coming forward. - have medium to high risk of the benefits not materialising at the pace detailed in the Business Case 	Red
Need for intervention	
<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strongly demonstrate the need for public sector intervention. <p>Arguments for the ‘need for invention’ may include securing a funding stream that otherwise must be repaid to the Government or would result in previous investments not achieving their full potential. In such cases, evidence should be given that this additional investment adds value to capitalise on schemes which have previously received public investment in order to unlock additional benefits and return on investment.</p>	Green
<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate the need for public sector intervention. 	Amber
<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do not clearly demonstrate the need for public sector intervention. 	Red
Viability	
<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fully justify the costs of the project including any assumptions made. 	Green

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify the timescales over which the GPF is required. - demonstrate that any additional funding sources which are required to deliver the project have been secured. - have match-funding of at least 50%. - explain how the ongoing operational costs will be met. 	
<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - justify the costs of the project including any assumptions made. - identify the timescales over which the GPF is required. - identify the additional sources of funding - create some uncertainty as to the availability of other funding sources which are required to deliver the project (e.g. sources of funding have been identified but have not been secured in full) - have identified potential match-funding of at least 20%. - explain how the ongoing operational costs will be met. 	Amber
<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do not provide sufficient evidence that the project costs have been considered in detail. - do not provide sufficient detail as to how other projects costs will be met. - create uncertainty as to the availability of other funding. - do not identify any match funding. - sources which are required to deliver the project (e.g. funding sources have not been secured in full) 	Red
Deliverability	
<p>Awarded to applications where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evidence is provided that potential delivery constraints and project dependencies (including, but not limited to, land and property acquisition, planning approval and environmental constraints) present a low risk to the project cost and the project delivery timescales. 	Green
<p>Awarded to applications where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evidence is provided that potential delivery constraints and project dependencies (including, but not limited to, land and property acquisition, planning approval and environmental constraints) present a low to medium risk to the project cost and the project delivery timescales. 	Amber
<p>Awarded to applications where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evidence is provided that potential delivery constraints and project dependencies (including, but not limited to, land and property acquisition, planning approval and environmental constraints) present a medium to high risk to the project cost and the project delivery timescales. 	Red
Contribution to the establishment of a revolving fund	
Awarded to applications which:	Green

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commit to a 3-year loan repayment schedule and no concerns are raised through company credit checks and appropriate due diligence. 	
<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commit to a 3-year loan repayment schedule and no concerns raised through company credit checks and other appropriate due diligence checks but some concerns raised over the certainty of the proposed repayment mechanism. 	Amber
<p>Awarded to applications which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cannot commit to repay the loan in the 3-year schedule or issues have been raised through company credit checks and other appropriate due diligence checks. 	Red

Appendix 3: GPF Repayment Schedule

All figures shown are £ millions

Project within Kent	Already repaid to SELEP	Repayment due to KCC on 31 March 25	Repayment due to KCC on 31 March 26	Repayment due to KCC on 31 March 27
Workspace Kent (Round 1 of GPF)	1.246633	0	0	0.2346
Discovery Park (Round 1 of GPF)	5.3	0	0	0
Live Margate (Round 1 of GPF)	3.5	1.5	0	0
Javelin Way Development (Round 2 of GPF)	0.5	0.5	0.597	0
No Use Empty Commercial Phase 1 (Round 2 of GPF)	1	0	0	0
Wine Innovation Centre (Round 3 of GPF)	0.1	0.25	0.25	0
Green Hydrogen Generation Facility (Round 3 of GPF)	0	3.47	0	0
No Use Empty Commercial Phase 2 (Round 3 of GPF)	0	0.75	0.75	0.5
Herne Relief Road (Round 3 of GPF)	0	0	3.5	0
No Use Empty Residential (Round 3 of GPF)	0	0	1.25	1.25
Total	6.346633	6.47	6.347	1.9846

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Growing Places Fund Programme

Responsible Officer

Sarah Nurden - GT GC

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

Steve Samson - 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

Growth & Communities

Responsible Head of Service

Steve Samson - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

Purpose and Objectives:

The Growing Places Fund (GPF) is a capital loan fund that has existed since 2011. GPF has been lent to public and private sector organisations following a competitive bidding process. The aim of GPF is to unlock economic growth. The GPF projects that have been successfully awarded funding have brought about project benefits that include the delivery of new jobs, new houses, new learners or new commercial floorspace.

Following the closure of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Kent County Council is to take over the management of the Growing Places Fund Programme. The intention is to run a call for new GPF projects, and this EqIA is to ensure that the design of the GPF programme treats everyone fairly and does not discriminate against any protected characteristic groups.

Potential bidders to the GPF Programme:

Public and private sector organisations are welcome to bid to the GPF Programme, including councils, colleges, universities, and businesses. These organisations may be run by individuals that are included

within the various protected characteristic groups.

Data Collection and Analysis:

Requests for this funding are based upon assessment of the proposed GPF project and its likelihood of growing the economy. All applications will be comprehensively screened to ensure they meet the agreed defined criteria for funding.

To prevent any unconscious bias affecting the decision-making process, it is not intended to ask for personal identifying information within the application form for GPF, other than the minimal amount that is required to complete financial and legal due diligence checks. The KMEP board, which will act as the advisory board to Kent County Council, will not be provided with personal identifying information when they make their ranked priority lists. Following the award of funding, data on the beneficiaries will be requested so that the council can monitor the equality impact.

Equality Impact Assessments

As part of the GPF application form, each applicant will have to include an equality impact assessment for their individual project, setting out how their project will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. These Equality Impact Assessments must set out how the project will have a potential positive or negative impact on each protected characteristic groups (e.g., age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). These Equality Impact Assessments must include details of any mitigation measures that are planned to prevent an adverse impact. Finally these Equality Impact Assessments must set out how the applicant will monitor their project's impact on equality.

Section B – Evidence

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

No

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

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Kent Economic Development Officers Group
Kent & Medway Economic Partnership
Business Advisory Board
Business Investment Colleagues within KCC.

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

No

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
The aim of the GPF programme is to unlock economic growth through the delivery of new jobs, houses, learners, and commercial floorspace. Residents could positively benefit from these new jobs, houses, etc.
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 Directorate

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee 22 January 2025

Subject: Connect to Work Programme

Key decision 24/00102

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report provides an overview of the Department for Work & Pensions' 'Connect to Work' supported employment programme and plans to roll this out in Kent & Medway.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee is asked, to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development on the proposal outlined in this paper for

Kent County Council to ACT as Accountable Body and oversee the delivery of the Kent & Medway element of the national 'Connect to Work' supported employment programme; and

To DELEGATE to the Director of Growth & Communities in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance to take necessary actions including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts, or other legal agreements to implement this decision.as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction to Connect to Work

1.1 The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) is launching a new national supported employment programme called 'Connect to Work' (C2W). C2W is a key part of the Government's new Get Britain Working Strategy and its commitment to supporting the 1.8m people in the UK who would like to work but are not currently participating in the labour market.

1.2 C2W aims to support up to 100,000 people with a disability or health conditions and those with complex barriers to employment to access and succeed in work per year. The primary focus is on supporting people who are economically

inactive (85% of programme) but the programme will also provide some support people who are at high risk of falling out of work (15% of programme).

- 1.3 Long-term sickness continues to be the most common reason for non-engagement in the labour market among the working age population and people with complex barriers to work often also have health conditions or a disability.
- 1.4 C2W will provide tailored support to participants using two specific supported employment models 'Individual Placement and Support' (IPS) and the Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF). According to DWP, these models have proven highly effective in the implementation of existing supported employment programmes Local Supported Employment (LSE) and Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care (IPSPC). Local areas are therefore required to adhere to them in the delivery of the C2W programme and there may be opportunities for individuals supported by other skills/training programmes to participate in Connect to Work if deemed eligible.
- 1.5 Supported Employment is tailored to meet the needs of an individual and their (prospective) employer through five stages of activity outlined in the DWP guidance:
 1. **Engagement** - an opportunity for a potential participant to learn about Supported Employment and decide whether it is right for them
 2. **Vocational profiling** - a planning process enabling a participant to identify what they want to achieve and work out a plan for getting there
 3. **Employer Engagement** - the participant learns about the job and the employment advisor works out a plan with the employer on how the participant would be supported through the recruitment process and in the workplace
 4. **Job Matching** - the participant is supported to find vacancies that meet the jobseeker's employment goals
 5. **On and off the job support** - the participant is supported to learn the job and sustain employment. This could include job coaching, training/support from a mentor and workplace reviews
- 1.6 The target participant groups set out in the DWP guidance are as follows:
 - People with a disability or long term health condition
 - Specified disadvantaged groups:
 - Offenders / ex-offenders
 - Carers / ex-carers
 - Homeless people
 - Armed Forces (AF) veterans / current AF personnel
 - People with drug or alcohol dependencies
 - Care experienced young people / care leavers
 - Refugees (resettled Afghans) / people on the Ukrainian scheme
 - Victims / survivors of domestic abuse
 - Young people (19+) involved in or at risk of serious violence
 - Victims of modern slavery

1.7 DWP requires Local Authorities to run the C2W programme in their areas as they are considered by Government to be best placed, along with support from their local partners, networks and stakeholders, to engage with relevant people in their communities who would benefit from supported employment and to engage with local employers to ensure that the programme can assist with tackling skills gaps.

2. The Kent & Medway Approach

2.1 KCC has been asked by DWP to become the Accountable Body for the C2W programme in Kent & Medway. As such KCC will be responsible for management and oversight of the local programme, commissioning a range of service providers to deliver programme activity and reporting back to DWP on progress and outcomes.

2.2 The programme will run until 31 March 2030 and indicative annual 'programme starts' in Kent & Medway should reach 2,900 participants per year (2,500 Kent, 400 Medway) at peak delivery. Support to assist people into work lasts for up to a year, while support to help people remain in work can run for up to four months.

2.3 The first step is for KCC and Medway Council to draft and submit a delivery plan to DWP for approval. The document outlines information including:

- The proposed delivery model (we will be proposing a mix of in-house and commissioned services)
- How the programme will be launched, managed and scaled up
- A breakdown of how the allocated budget will be used
- Stakeholder, participant and employer engagement
- Governance and oversight
- The participant journey
- Risk management, financial management, performance management
- Synergies with local programmes and priorities

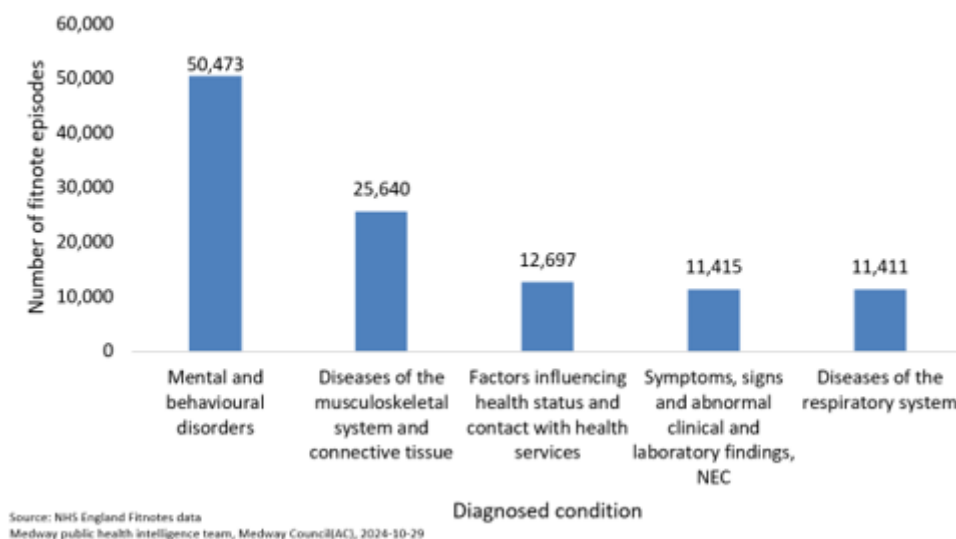
2.4 Once the delivery plan is agreed by DWP, a grant funding agreement will be issued enabling the necessary arrangements to be put in place to formally launch the programme in Kent & Medway. KCC's new 'External Grant Application Process' is also being followed.

2.5 Local areas are encouraged to focus support on target groups where there is a particular need and available data will be used to highlight areas of Kent & Medway where there might be high numbers of people from the target groups and to inform which of the target groups should be a particular focus for the local programme. The programme will respond to a known local need - unemployment due to long-term health conditions which is a significant issue in Kent with 27% of economic inactivity among 16-64 year olds is due to long term sickness. The figure is 20% for Medway, 22.7% in the wider South East and 27.3% nationally¹. For Kent & Medway there are around 63,000 people of working age who are currently economically inactive due to a long term health

¹ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

condition. The data does not explain why there is such a marked difference between these rates in Kent compared to Medway but a breakdown of the different health conditions affecting economic inactivity are as follows:

Top 5 Diagnoses from fitnote episodes by NHS kent and Medway ICB
(Apr 2019 to June 2024)



- 2.6 As the programme has a fixed end date, the intention is to launch as soon as possible to maximise the number of people who can benefit from the programme.
- 2.7 Given the size, scope and specialist nature of the programme, a number of providers will be required to deliver supported employment services to eligible participants and a procurement process will be launched to identify suitable suppliers. The Education People (TEP), which has significant expertise, experience and capacity to deliver supported employment activity under the two specified models, will be used as an initial provider. Regulations governing Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCOs) allow this and mean that the programme can be launched while other providers are procured during 2025.
- 2.8 Support from and ongoing engagement with local stakeholders will be essential for the successful delivery of the programme. Government has written to Integrated Care Systems encouraging them to support the implementation of the programme. The Kent & Medway Employment Task Force, the Strategic Partnership for Health & Economy, the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership and the Integrated Care Partnership have been regularly updated on early developments with the programme and will continue to play a role in supporting its delivery. The NHS, Social Care and Public Health services and employer representative bodies (Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Institute of Directors), District and Borough Councils and the voluntary & community sector will all have a role to play in encouraging referrals and supporting employer engagement. The intention is to establish a specific multi-agency steering group led by KCC, and including various KCC departments, to

enhance the implementation of the programme and ensure the close monitoring of activities and a robust evidence trail.

3. Implementation Timetable

January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision Reports presented to GEDCCC and Medway Council Cabinet and Key Decisions taken • Submission of (draft) Delivery Plan to DWP • Market Questionnaire sent to potential service providers • Stakeholder Meetings to share programme information, plans and prepare for programme launch • Recruitment of Programme Team commences
February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWP Approval of K&M Delivery Plan
March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Funding Agreement signed • Market Engagement Sessions for potential providers
April/May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Programme Launch with TEP as delivery partner • Formal procurement process launched
October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal procurement process concludes
January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other providers commence delivery

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The programme is fully funded by a DWP grant so KCC can undertake the role of Accountable Body on a full cost recovery basis. A maximum DWP grant of £3,900 per participant can be allocated which will cover all programme management and operational costs for KCC, associated costs for Medway Council and all services to be procured for the implementation of the programme. The programme will be managed as a single programme with a single detailed budget for the area (currently being worked up), which KCC as accountable body will manage. A review by KCC legal services will determine whether a partnership agreement is required with Medway Council to ensure that any elements of the programme led by Medway pose no additional financial risks to KCC as accountable body.
- 4.2 At peak delivery, the annual value of the Kent & Medway programme will be in excess of £10m if the target number of participants can be achieved.
- 4.3 KCC has received an initial 'Section 31' grant instalment of £100,000 to cover up to six months preparation costs and enable a recruitment process to commence for a programme management team. The full grant agreement will be signed following KCC's external grants acceptance requirements including a legal review of the terms and conditions and sign off from the S151 Officer/Corporate Director of Finance.
- 4.4 The programme management team will to be appointed on the basis of fixed term contracts aligning with the timelines set out in the grant agreement and grant funding would be planned to ensure that any redundancy liabilities are minimised.

4.5 Once the programme is up and running, funding will be paid on a monthly basis in arrears once satisfactory monitoring and reporting information and evidence is submitted by KCC to DWP.

5. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

5.1 Not engaging with the C2W programme. This would miss a significant opportunity to help a large number of local people to access the labour market while tackling known skills gaps in Kent & Medway. It would also reflect poorly on Kent and Medway's commitment to Growth, undermining positioning work undertaken to date with the new Government.

5.2 Not using TEP as a key delivery partner and relying solely on the external market place to source providers to deliver the programme. This would delay the launching of the programme and the implementation period in Kent & Medway.

6. Policy Frameworks

6.1 The C2W programme will support the following local priorities and strategies:

Securing Kent's Future:

The Connect to Work programme will support Securing Kent's Future through securing external funding to deliver a programme on the basis of full cost recovery. The programme will also reduce demand for public services that support people who are currently economically inactive.

Kent & Medway Economic Framework:

- Action Area 2: Focusing support to business on measures that will increase long-term productivity and resilience.
- Action Area 6: Investing in Kent and Medway's skills infrastructure
- Action Area 7: Retaining and developing talent
- Action Area 13: Ensuring that everyone who wants a job can find work

Framing Kent's Future: Priority 1: Levelling Up Kent

- To support the Kent economy to be resilient and successfully adapt to the challenges and opportunities it faces over the coming years.
- To see significant improvements in the economy, connectivity, educational attainment, skills and employment rates and public health outcomes in deprived communities in coastal areas so that they improve faster than the rest of Kent to reduce the gaps.
- To work with our partners to hardwire a preventative approach into improving the health of Kent's population and narrowing health inequalities.

Kent & Medway Integrated Care Strategy:

- Shared Outcome 4 - Empower people to best manage their health conditions
- Shared Outcome 6 - Support and Grow our Workforce

The emerging Kent & Medway Integrated Strategy for Work & Health

- **Aspiration A: Build Employer Confidence** - Build employer confidence in the ways they support employees with LTHC and disabilities and access to relevant support.
- **Aspiration C: Person-Centred Approach** - Build employee confidence to engage in meaningful work.

The strategy aligns with the recent commitment to create a **Marmot Coastal Region in Kent** with that commitment's aim of reducing health inequalities in the boroughs of Swale, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, and Ashford.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 KCC will be required to enter into a grant funding agreement with DWP and will be expected to deliver the programme in line with government guidance. Contracts will be put in place with service providers to highlight their responsibilities with delivering elements of the programme.
- 7.2 In line with KCC's new grant acceptance policy, KCC's legal team will undertake a check of the grant funding agreement to ensure that the Authority is able to comply with the terms and conditions. The team will also review contracts prior to them being issued and signed to ensure that the financial risk to KCC is minimised and that suppliers can be held to account for any under-performance

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is attached to this report and it is anticipated that the C2W will have positive impacts for a number of groups with protected characteristics in Kent & Medway who will benefit from enrolment in the supported employment programme.

9. Other Corporate Implications

- 9.1 KCC's finance, legal and procurement teams have provided and will continue to provide support to the Economy Team to ensure the successful implementation of the programme. Other parts of the KCC and Medway Council (including Adult Learning & Skills, Public Health, Adult Social Care) will also be involved as the programme supports their work in supporting local residents. These and other services will have a role to play in supporting referrals e.g. from care leavers to sign up for the programme.

10. Data Protection implications

- 10.1 A full Data Protection Impact Assessment will be completed once further details of DWP systems and reporting requirements are known.
- 10.2 Data sharing agreements will be required between KCC and the service providers for the purposes of monitoring and reporting and to ensure that personal data for beneficiaries is correctly handled and protected.

11. Appendices and Background Information

- Appendix A - Proposed Record of Decision
- Equalities Impact Assessment

12 Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee is asked, to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development on the proposal outlined in this paper for

Kent County Council to ACT as Accountable Body and oversee the delivery of the Kent & Medway element of the national 'Connect to Work' supported employment programme; and

To DELEGATE to the Director of Growth & Communities in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance to take necessary actions including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts, or other legal agreements to implement this decision.as shown at Appendix A.

13. Contact details:

Report Author:

Steve Samson

Head of Economy

steve.samson@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Relevant Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle

Director for Growth and Communities

stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development

DECISION NO:

24/00102

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision; Connect to Work Programme

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Economic Development I agree to:

- Kent County Council to ACT as Accountable Body and oversee the delivery of the Kent & Medway element of the national 'Connect to Work' supported employment programme; and
- To DELEGATE to the Director of Growth & Communities in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance to take necessary actions including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts, or other legal agreements to implement this decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) is launching a new national supported employment programme called 'Connect to Work'. KCC has been asked by DWP to become the Accountable Body for the C2W programme in Kent & Medway. As such KCC will be responsible for management and oversight of the local programme, commissioning a range of service providers to deliver programme activity and reporting back to DWP on progress and outcomes.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposal is being considered by the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 22 January 2025..

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Not engaging with the C2W programme. This would miss a significant opportunity to help a large number of local people to access the labour market while tackling known skills gaps in Kent & Medway. It would also reflect poorly on Kent and Medway's commitment to Growth, undermining positioning work undertaken to date with the new Government.

Not using TEP as a key delivery partner and relying solely on the external market place to source providers to deliver the programme. This would delay the launching of the programme and the implementation period in Kent & Medway.

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

Connect to Work

Responsible Officer

Steve Samson - GT GC

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

Stephanie Holt-Castle - 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

Economy

Responsible Head of Service

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

KCC is becoming the accountable body for a new national supported employment programme led by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) called 'Connect to Work' (C2W). C2W is a key part of the Government's new Get Britain Working Strategy and its commitment to supporting the 1.8m people in the UK who would like to work but are not currently participating in the labour market.

The programme will provide supported employment services to some 2,900 people in Kent & Medway per year until 20230 to people with a disability or long term health conditions and those with complex barriers to employment. Participants will be assisted to access and remain in employment. The primary focus is on supporting people who are economically inactive (85% of programme) but the programme will also provide some support people who are at high risk of falling out of work (15% of programme).

The programme is specifically targeted at the following target groups:

- People with a disability or long term health condition
- Specified disadvantaged groups:
 - o Offenders / ex-offenders
 - o Carers / ex-carers
 - o Homeless people

- o Armed Forces (AF) veterans / current AF personnel
- o People with drug or alcohol dependencies
- o Care experienced young people / care leavers
- o Refugees (resettled Afghans) / people on the Ukrainian scheme
- o Victims / survivors of domestic abuse
- o Young people (19+) involved in or at risk of serious violence
- o Victims of modern slavery

KCC will be commissioning a number of service providers to support the delivery of the programme.

In order to prepare for the roll out and targeting of the programme, further data is being sought confirming where they are people from designated target groups in different parts of Kent, and which particular target groups would benefit most from support from the programme (e.g. we know in Kent we have 2000+ care leavers per annum so data will be sought to target these people to offer assistance). Data will be collected through a series of stakeholder engagement meetings and analysing population data.

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 programme is at the early stages of development and further stakeholder engagement is planned but the following groups/partnerships have been made aware of the programme:

The Kent & Medway Employment Task Force
 The Strategic Partnership for Health & Economy
 The Kent & Medway Economic Partnership
 The Kent & Medway Integrated Care Partnership

The above partnerships include the private sector (businesses, business representative organisations) public sector (local authorities, NHS, Public Health) and education sector (further and higher education), training providers, the voluntary & community sector.

The government is expecting local partners to be involved in supporting the programme and a steering group will be set up in 2025.

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?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
The programme specifically targets disadvantaged groups (a prescribed list of participant groups is provided by government) and people with disabilities to provide support to help them to access employment. This support will reduce inequalities and disadvantage by providing real opportunities to access the labour market.
The programme will have a very positive impact on people with the following protected characteristics by providing them with 121 support to access and remain in work: People with disabilities People of different races (notably Ukrainian and Afghan refugees) Young people (19+) including care leavers
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 Transportation

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee
22 January 2025

Subject: **Awarding of Local Nutrient Mitigation Funding to Local Planning Authorities for the delivery of mitigation schemes for Nutrient Neutrality in the Stour catchment**

Key decision: 24/00122

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: None

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: Ashford Central, Ashford East, Ashford Rural East, Ashford Rural West, Ashford Rural South, Ashford South, Canterbury City North, Canterbury North, Canterbury City South, Canterbury South, Elham Valley, Herne Village & Sturry, Herne Bay East, Maidstone Rural East.

Summary: Nutrient neutrality in the catchment for the Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve is having a significant impact on the delivery of homes in East Kent. The government has awarded £9.8m of capital to KCC for nutrient neutrality mitigation works in East Kent along with revenue grants to support the delivery of those works. The funding must be committed to a programme by March 2025 and it is expected the funding will be awarded to Local Planning Authority partners to deliver nutrient mitigation and unlock the restrictions on housing development.

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 proposed decision to:

- (i) AGREE, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Traded Services to £9.8 million of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, be used to award grant funding to Local Authority partners to deliver mitigation schemes for Nutrient Neutrality in the Stour catchment.
- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in agreement with the Cabinet Member for Environment, and Cabinet Member for Economic Development to nominate an officer as an observer to sit on the executive board of Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council joint venture company Stour Environmental Credits Ltd which will deliver mitigation schemes on their behalf.

- (iii) AGREE to the adoption of the Stodmarsh Nutrient Neutrality Strategy to support the awarding of grant funding to Local Authority partners.
- (iv) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to take 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.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In Summer 2020, Natural England issued advice to the local planning authorities (LPAs) on the River Stour (Canterbury, Ashford, Folkestone & Hythe, Maidstone and Swale) that meant new developments must not increase the level of nutrients nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) in the River Stour, as they are having a negative impact on Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve, a nationally and internationally designated site.
- 1.2 These nutrients are in the effluent from wastewater treatment works (WwTW). Any new housing development in the catchment of the WwTW will increase the amount of effluent they discharge and therefore the amount of nutrients that enter the River Stour.
- 1.3 To meet current planning requirements, proposed new developments with overnight accommodation must demonstrate that the development achieves nutrient neutrality i.e. the level of nutrients in the river is the same after the development as it was before. Achieving nutrient neutrality is complex but planning authorities cannot approve planning applications for developments including overnight accommodation that cannot demonstrate this.
- 1.4 This has effectively put a hold on housing developments whilst mitigation options are sought.
- 1.5 A total of approximately 30,000 new homes in Kent are forecast to be affected by nutrient neutrality up to 2040 (note: not all affected LPAs have an adopted Local Plan that goes up to 2040, this figure is an estimate of future housing need that is affected).
- 1.6 Papers introducing nutrient neutrality were presented at the GEDCCC on 22 March 2022 and GEDCCC on 22 September 2022. These papers contain more background on nutrient neutrality, options to mitigate it and the impact on development.
- 1.7 A further paper was presented at the GEDCCC on 5 March 2024 for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding as a prerequisite to access funding to deliver the Nutrient Neutrality Strategy in East Kent.

2. Nutrient mitigation

- 2.1 To be able to receive planning approval for a development with overnight accommodation, developers must be able to demonstrate nutrient mitigation is in place that offsets the additional nutrients the development will contribute to

the catchment.

- 2.2 This mitigation may be in a number of forms. Large developments can construct their own wastewater treatment works and wetlands to manage the nutrients on site. For smaller sites this might be wetlands that reduce nutrients either by directly taking the effluent from WwTW before it is discharged into the river or taking water out of the river and returning it with fewer nutrients. There are other options, including retrofitting water efficiency measures to existing housing stock, replacing septic tanks with more efficient package treatment works, creation or restoration of floodplain meadows, and agricultural reversion.
- 2.3 Delivering this mitigation requires investment. Large sites will be required to deliver their own mitigation on-site, however smaller sites would not be able to provide this mitigation, and mitigation schemes are required elsewhere in the catchment to support small and medium sites.
- 2.4 The local authorities within East Kent have started to deliver mitigation. Ashford Borough Council has generated a small volume of credits by retrofitting water efficiency measures on council owned housing stock. Maidstone Borough Council has purchased credits generated from the Forestry Commission woodland scheme at Pleasant Farm.
- 2.5 However, an established credit trading market is needed to generate and sell credits. This will meet the current credit demand and will release housing which cannot be discharged from conditions without nutrient credits and also planning applications which similarly cannot be granted without nutrient credits.

3. Delivery of Nutrient Mitigation

- 3.1 KCC as Local Planning Authority received £9.8 million (in December 2024) funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to fund mitigation works within the catchment and generate credits, this funding must be committed to a programme of delivery by March 2025.
- 3.2 It is expected that £7m of funding will be bid for and awarded in the first quarter of 2025 (2024/24 financial year), with Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council and Folkestone and Hythe District Council having expressed interest in funding for mitigation works.
- 3.3 KCC will require Local Authorities seeking award of any funding to undertaking a bidding process. Successful bids will be required to detail the proposed mitigation measures they are seeking funding for. Demonstrate the KG of Phosphorus and Nitrogen the proposed mitigation will achieve providing a technical assessment which includes the calculations based on the Natural England nutrient budget calculator. The quantity of credits to be generated and the approximate number of housing that will be released and over what timeframe. (Development sites are subject to individual nutrient budgets and therefore housing numbers will vary). Whether credits will be interim/bridging (up-to 2030), in-perpetuity or both. That measures accord with the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) requirements.

- 3.4 The funding must be recycled and returns generated from the sale of credits will either be recirculated into the purchase of additional mitigation measures by the Local Authority or will be returned to KCC to be reallocated to further bids. Bidders will be required to set out their arrangements for the recirculation of credit returns.
- 3.5 Bids will be determined by a panel decision, the panel will be formed of KCC, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Swale Borough Council, Dover District Council and Thanet District Council.
- 3.6 A technical assessment of bids will be undertaken by the consultancy Water Environmental Ltd, who have been commissioned by KCC since 2022 to provide technical guidance for the development of nutrient neutrality in the Stodmarsh catchment.
- 3.7 It is recommended that the decision to award funding be delegated to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance based on the recommendations of the panel.
- 3.8 Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council have sought agreement from their respective cabinets to establish a joint venture company, Stour Environmental Credits Ltd. Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council will jointly bid for grant funding via this wholly owned joint venture company and will use Stour Environmental Credits Ltd to deliver mitigation and generate credits to release housing across the catchment but primarily within their own districts.
- 3.9 The local authorities within the catchment which do not wish to join with Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council and use Stour Environment Credits Ltd will have the opportunity to bid to deliver mitigation within their own districts.
- 3.10 Bidders will be required to enter a legally binding grant agreement with KCC for the delivery of the mitigation. The grant agreement will be with the Local Authorities and conditions will be placed on how the grant is spent, monitored and recovered in the event that it is not spent.
- 3.11 Bids from Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council, via Stour Environmental Credits Ltd, a company wholly owned by the relevant councils and limited by shares will be required to meet the additional condition that KCC will appoint an observer to the executive board of Stour Environmental Credits Ltd. The 'observer' will provide no direction or instruction but will have oversight of the decision-making process for the grant funding and the use of the awarded funds to provide additional assurance to KCC as the accountable body.
- 3.12 The grant will be released in tranches, and bidders will be required to demonstrate spend within the first six months of receipt of the allocation.

Receipt of spending will be required to release the next tranche of funding to support a bid.

- 3.13 The grant and any returns from it must be invested locally on nutrient mitigation schemes for the whole catchment. There is currently only a limited credit market available to developers, priority will be given to bids which can realise mitigation measures quickly, such as septic tank conversion and agricultural reversion, to unlock housing which is currently blocked.
- 3.14 The recycling of returns will continue until nutrient mitigation is no longer required. At this point, any residual funding must be invested in measures to aid the restoration of Stodmarsh to a favourable conservation status; and secondarily to be invested in the objectives of sustainable development and promoting public access to nature.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

- 4.1 Do nothing - If KCC was to decide to take no action this would prevent the delivery of high-quality locally led mitigation solutions, and result in the housing allocation within the impacted districts not being met. This would have wider implications of negatively impacting economic growth within the county

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications for KCC; revenue spending will come from the £531,414 Ministry of Housing Community and Local Government revenue grant awarded to KCC. The award of grant funding to Local Authority partners to deliver nutrient mitigation will be made from the £9.8 million capital funding received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 5.2 KCC will be the Accountable Body, so part of this role will be to ensure funds are spent in line with the terms of the grant determination letter and the identification and review of controls to ensure Local Authorities also conform to the terms of the grant.
- 5.3 The Water Resources Manager within the Flood and Water Management team is a base funded member of staff who has the catchment co-ordinator role within their remit. The Water Resources Manager will be responsible for the administration of the defrayment of the funding via the service level agreements.
- 5.4 Additional resourcing to support the awarding of grant funding will be required from the Planning, Policy and Strategy and Internal Audit teams as part of business as usual activity. Any costs incurred to these teams will be met from the revenue grant funding.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 A legal review has previously been undertaken of the MoUs for KCC to accept the Government Grants. The MoUs are not considered to be legally binding nor could they be interpreted as legally binding or give rise to legal obligation.

- 6.2 KCC legal will be drawing up the grant agreements between KCC and the Local Planning Authorities, which will provide a back-to-back agreement with the grant determination letter and MOUs for the funding. Conditions within the grant agreement will include how the monies are to be returned if unspent, failure to meet the terms of the agreement and the payment of credit returns for bidder who will not recirculate the returns themselves.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 An EqIA screening has been completed and identified no harmful implications for any protected characteristic groups at this stage.

8. Other corporate implications

- 8.1 This issue is affecting the delivery of up to 30,000 homes up to 2040 in East Kent, including developments around Ashford, Canterbury, Herne Bay, Otterpool, and Lenham. The costs of mitigation options will potentially also affect the viability and deliverability of sites, which may require the need to renegotiate S106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy and ultimately, see less funding for key infrastructure and services delivered by KCC. The delay to new housing impacts KCC's share new Council Tax income with direct impact on KCC's finances as a significant proportion of new growth pressures and overall funding come from Council Tax, therefore facilitating development is in KCC's interests.

9. Governance

- 9.1 An Executive working group comprising of KCC, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Maidstone Borough Council, and Swale Borough Council as catchment partners and Dover District Council and Thanet District Council will be invited as independants to form a panel to make recommendations, subject to heads of terms to be agreed by the Corporate Director of Growth Environment and Transport in January 2025 . This panel will review and vote on the submitted bids and the recommendations of the panel will be submitted to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance for sign off of the grant. KCC will retain the ultimate decision making over the awarding of monies.
- 9.2 The Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport and Corporate Director of Finance will have delegated powers to award grant funding to mitigation schemes for nutrient neutrality in the Stour catchment.
- 9.3 The Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in agreement with the Cabinet Member for Environment, and Cabinet Member for Economic Development will have authority to appoint an officer as an observer to the executive board of the Stour Environment Credits Ltd.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 The requirement for nutrient neutrality in the catchment of Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve is having a significant impact on the delivery of homes in East Kent.
- 10.2 The government has awarded KCC £9.8 million of capital for the delivery nutrient mitigation, which will generate credits which in turn will release housing. This funding must continue to be recycled and invested in mitigation until nutrient mitigation is no longer required. The residual funds must then be invested in measures to aid the restoration of Stodmarsh to favourable conservation status.
- 10.3 KCC as catchment coordinator will be responsible for the delivery of the catchment strategy and the awarding of capital grant funding to local planning authorities to deliver mitigation measures to achieve nutrient neutrality.

11. 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 proposed decision to:

- (i) AGREE, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Traded Services to £9.8 million of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, be used to award grant funding to Local Authority partners to deliver mitigation schemes for Nutrient Neutrality in the Stour catchment.
- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in agreement with the Cabinet Member for Environment, and Cabinet Member for Economic Development to nominate an officer as an observer to sit on the executive board of Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council joint venture company Stour Environmental Credits Ltd which will deliver mitigation schemes on their behalf.
- (iii) AGREE to the adoption of the Stodmarsh Nutrient Neutrality Strategy to support the awarding of grant funding to Local Authority partners.
- (iv) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to take 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.

12. Appendices:

- Appendix A Proposed Record of Decision
- EQIA
- Stodmarsh Nutrient Neutrality Strategy

13. Contact details

Report and Appendices Authors:

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Flood and Water Manager
03000 414 829
Louise.Smith@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Stephanie Holt-Castle
Director of Growth and Communities
03000412064
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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:

24/00122

For publication**Key decision: YES**

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Awarding of Local Nutrient Mitigation Funding to Local Planning Authorities for the delivery of mitigation schemes for Nutrient Neutrality in the Stour catchment

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Economic Development I agree to:

- (i) AGREE, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Traded Services to £9.8 million of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, be used to award grant funding to Local Authority partners to deliver mitigation schemes for Nutrient Neutrality in the Stour catchment.
- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in agreement with the Cabinet Member for Environment, and Cabinet Member for Economic Development to nominate an officer as an observer to sit on the executive board of Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council joint venture company Stour Environmental Credits Ltd which will deliver mitigation schemes on their behalf.
- (iii) AGREE to the adoption of the Stodmarsh Nutrient Neutrality Strategy to support the awarding of grant funding to Local Authority partners.
- (iv) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to take 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

Reason(s) for decision:

Nutrient neutrality in the catchment for the Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve is having a significant impact on the delivery of homes in East Kent. In December 2024, KCC received £9.8 million funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to fund mitigation works within the catchment. This funding must be committed to a programme of delivery by March 2025.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposal is being considered by the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 22 January 2025..

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do nothing - If KCC was to decide to take no action this would prevent the delivery of high-quality locally led mitigation solutions, and result in the housing allocation within the impacted districts not being met. This would have wider implications of negatively impacting economic growth within the county.

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

.....
signed

.....
date

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Stodmarsh Nutrient Mitigation Strategy

Introduction

The Stour Valley Catchment and Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve is currently impacted by excess nitrogen and phosphorus from waste water discharges, which is negatively impacting the nationally and internationally important wildlife sites located there. In 2020, Natural England advised that any new housing in the area must not result in additional nutrients (nitrogen or phosphorus) entering the River Stour catchment to ensure no adverse impact on Stodmarsh. As a result, new housing delivery in East Kent is being held up.

Figure 1 below shows the planning applications for dwellings, both major and minor, for Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council, the two most affected planning authorities, from 2014 to 2024. There is a noticeable decline from 2020, when nutrient neutrality was first required.



Figure 1 Planning applications granted for minor and major dwellings

This is having a significant impact on economic growth of the local economy and service provision in East Kent. Small developers are significantly affected by this, as they are less able to deliver sites outside the affected areas. It is also slowing the delivery of social housing.

Additionally, it means that affected LPAs are at risk of not meeting their five-year housing land supply targets. Both Ashford and Canterbury have large areas in the catchment and significant growth planned in these areas, they also have significant areas outside the catchment, where less development is planned. Nutrient neutrality means that planned development in identified growth areas cannot be delivered, providing support for planning appeals for unplanned developments outside the catchment. This is undermining the planned approach to housing delivery and other associated infrastructure.

Table 1 outlines the houses currently awaiting planning approval due to nutrient neutrality as of May 2023.

Table 1 Houses currently awaiting planning approval due to nutrient neutrality

	Ashford	Canterbury	Folkestone	Maidstone	Swale
The number of dwellings consented with nutrient mitigation	726	5,000	8,554	0	0
The number of dwellings held up because of nutrient neutrality	5,190	1750	3	202	0

Many existing wastewater treatment works in the catchment will be upgraded by 2030, which will reduce the additional nutrients that arise from new houses they serve. However, these system upgrades will not solve the problem and Stodmarsh will continue to be impacted by excess nutrients.

Providing mitigation for these nutrients in the Stour catchment is a significant challenge. There are only limited sources of phosphorus in the catchment, as it is predominantly from wastewater. Improving the management of wastewater is the best option for delivering phosphorus mitigation. Nitrogen mitigation is slightly easier to achieve, as there are significant sources of nitrogen from agricultural land in the catchment, which gives the option of managing land differently to reduce nitrogen inputs (there is only limited phosphorus applied to the land in the Stour catchment).

To date, partners have worked together to consider how these issues can be mitigated and how new housing can be delivered that does not increase nitrogen or phosphorus in the catchment. In 2024, this work resulted in government awarding the catchment £9.8m from the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund for mitigation measures in the catchment. Our award is the joint highest alongside the River Avon catchment (as shown in Annex A), which illustrates the national importance of this area. To meet the requirements of this funding, a coherent strategy for housing delivery needs to be agreed by March 2025.

Strategy

Managing the issues faced within the catchment requires a holistic approach and commitment from stakeholders across the public and private sector to delivering homes with planning permission.

This strategy identifies the main programme of works to achieve mitigation, with flexibility to deliver different components and seek innovative solutions to achieve the stated outcome of new houses granted planning permission.

The strategy in the Stour is in two parts depending on the size of the potential new development. Large developments of over 300 properties will be required to provide mitigation on site, likely in the form of on-site wastewater treatment works. This should be possible at a reasonable cost. This approach has been taken at a number of sites that have

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achieved planning permission, including Mountfield Park, Otterpool, Hoplands, and Kingsnorth Green.

Small developments of less than 300 properties cannot follow this approach, as the space requirements are too significant and they will not meet the minimum housing numbers for a treatment works to work effectively. A catchment wide approach is therefore required to provide mitigation for small developments.

Table 2 shows the projected mitigation requirements for small developments in the catchment up to 2030 and between 2031 and 2040. The mitigation figures from 2031 onwards are lower due to the improvements in WwTW performance required by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Up to 2030 Temporary credits will be required by developers to mitigate the higher nutrient values within the catchment. After 2030 only permanent credits will be required by developers as the nutrient values within the catchment will be lower.

Developers seeking planning permission up to 2023 will be required to purchase both temporary and permanent credits for the life of their development.

Table 2 Nutrient mitigation requirements for small sites up to 2040

	Up to 2030	2031 - 2040
Nitrogen, kg/yr	17,921	14,251
Phosphorus, kg/yr	744	708

There are a number of options for providing this mitigation but the scale remains challenging. Wetlands that either treat effluent from wastewater treatment works or from water abstracted from the river, septic tank replacement, retrofitting water efficiency measure and floodplain meadow are identified as the most appropriate options for the catchment. Natural England have identified other mitigation options including land use change (e.g. agricultural offsetting), buffer strips, and river restoration, however these are less efficient options. . This mitigation will then generate credits that can be sold to developers to offset the nutrients created by small developments.

Given the limited scale of opportunities for mitigation, however, there is also an opportunity for large developments to over deliver on nutrient mitigation, which can then be used to generate credits and offset nutrients produced by small developments.

Off-site mitigation options must be reserved for sites that cannot achieve on-site mitigation, as the catchment does not have enough nutrient mitigation options to serve all the forecast housing.

Where off-site mitigation options are viable, opportunity to deliver nature recovery, public access and biodiversity net gain should be sought alongside nutrient neutrality.

In the long term the options for restoration of the water environment and nature recovery which can ensure management of nutrients needs to be better understood. The development of innovative approaches to nutrient mitigation through collaboration with the public and private sector will help to deliver sustainable economic growth.

Delivery

Funding from the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund to support the delivery of this strategy has been paid to Kent County Council who is the catchment coordinator. The objectives of the funding are to:

- Provide nutrient mitigation in the Stodmarsh catchment through mitigation schemes
- Deliver schemes that create credits, not buy credits that already exist
- Sell nutrient mitigation credits to developers delivering housing in the catchment
- Ensure benefiting developments that need credits from the catchment scheme cannot mitigate nutrients on-site following exhaustive consideration of all possible options.

The Local Authority catchment partners will bid for this funding via a non-competitive bidding process to invest in schemes that deliver against these objectives. Bids will be required to:

- Detail the proposed mitigation measures in the Stodmarsh catchment they are seeking funding for
- Demonstrate the kilograms of phosphorus and nitrogen the proposed mitigation will achieve
- Provide a technical assessment that includes the calculations based on the Natural England nutrient budget calculator
- Set out the quantity of credits to be generated and the approximate number of houses that will be released and over what timeframe (development sites are subject to individual nutrient budgets and therefore housing numbers will vary).
- Set out how the mitigation measures will be monitored and reported in perpetuity
- Confirm whether credits will be interim/bridging (up-to 2030), in-perpetuity or both
- Confirm that the measures accord with the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) requirements.

The funding must be recycled and returns generated from the sale of credits will either be recirculated by the bidder into the purchase of additional mitigation measures or will be returned to KCC to be reallocated to further bids. Bidders will be required to set out their proposed arrangements for the recirculation of credit returns.

Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council have formed a joint venture company, Stour Environmental Credits Ltd to deliver mitigation and generate credits to release housing across the catchment but primarily within their own districts. The local authorities within the catchment that do not use Stour Environment Credits Ltd will be able to bid to deliver mitigation within their own districts.

The grant agreement for funding will be with the Local Authorities and conditions will be placed on how the grant is spent, monitored and recovered in the event that it is not spent.

The grant and any returns from it must be invested locally on nutrient mitigation schemes for the whole catchment. There is currently only a limited credit market available to developers, priority will be given to bids that can realise mitigation measures quickly to unlock housing which is currently blocked.

The recycling of returns will continue until nutrient mitigation is no longer required. At this point, any residual funding must be invested in measures to aid the restoration of Stodmarsh

to a favourable conservation status and secondarily to be invested in the objectives of sustainable development and promoting public access to nature.

The mitigation measures may provide wider benefits, including biodiversity credits, however, the schemes that are funded must provide nutrient credits.

Table 3 contains a summary of the mitigation measures that bidders may pursue. The mitigation detailed is based on permanent credits, post 2030 following upgraded waste water treatment works performance.

The table provides detail of the maximum potential for total phosphate and total nitrogen that can be achieved by the mitigation measure based on desktop analysis and the catchment average nutrient budget. The number of dwellings is also the maximum that could be released based on the available nutrient budget.

As shown, septic tank upgrades and floodplain meadows have significant potential within the catchment. The total figures for these two measures are unlikely to be achieved, however the total mitigation values go beyond what is required to achieve nutrient neutrality within the catchment. However, this illustrates the potential for septic tank upgrade and floodplain meadows to solve nutrient neutrality and delivery the strategy for the Stodmarsh catchment.

Table 3 Nutrient Mitigation Values

Mitigation	Total Phosphorus (KG)	Total Nitrogen (KG)	No. Dwellings (Post 2030)
Retrofitting	40	1850	1,250
Septic tank upgrade	4000	38000	55,072
Floodplain Meadows	15573	169160	245,160
Wetlands	8000	13000	18,841

Governance

The Executive Working Group of Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Maidstone Borough Council, and Swale Borough Council will be joined by Dover District Council and Thanet District Council as independents to form a review panel with oversight of the strategy and to assess bids. The panel will be subject to the terms of reference set out in Annex B.

A technical assessment of bids will be undertaken by the consultancy Water Environmental Ltd, who have been commissioned by Kent County Council since 2022 to provide technical guidance for the development of nutrient neutrality in the Stodmarsh catchment. Bids will also be reviewed on the basis of any wider benefits the mitigation can achieve including

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creating space for nature and recreation as well as offering new income streams for landowners.

This will inform the panel who will review and vote on the submitted bids and the recommendations will then go through the internal governance process of Kent County Council to arrange the transfer of funding.

Kent County Council is the accountable body for the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund monies and will ensure that spend complies with their rules for procurement and spending activity set out in their document 'Spending the Council's Money' .

The Executive Working Group will oversee this strategy, its progress and agree any amendments to it.

The Officer Group of Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Swale Borough Council is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the Strategy, including the prioritisation of credits.

Prioritisation of credit allocation

As mitigation schemes are delivered, the generated credits will be available to sell to developers. The amounts required will differ, as will the amounts mitigated by various mitigation measures, as detailed in Table 3. A key challenge in implementing the strategy will be the allocation of a potentially limited number of credits as the credit market is established.

Where districts are enabling the creation of nutrient credits through their own actions (for example retrofitting) in respect of their own stock (land or buildings), then they will determine when and how those credits are utilised in releasing schemes within their districts.

However, with a view to the availability of nutrient credits from strategic mitigation schemes, including those generated by the Stour Environmental Credits Ltd, this will require further discussion as to how those credits should be apportioned to developments across the catchment where there are insufficient credits available to release all potential schemes at any point in time. Table 4 below identifies key criteria that will be used as an objective mechanism for prioritising the release of development proposals so that this can present a consistent approach to the development market and mitigate the risk of applicants playing one authority off against another.

Where on-site mitigation is not possible, a scoring scheme is proposed based upon the matrix set out in Table 4.

Table 4 Draft credit prioritisation scoring matrix

Development	Score range	Score allocation
Regeneration sites where the objective meets a council vision, objective policy or strategy relating to regeneration (not solely housing delivery)	0-100	The scoring will reflect the importance of the scheme to regeneration as set out in an adopted or emerging Plan or strategy.

Development	Score range	Score allocation
A social housing scheme promoted by a Registered Provider or Council	0-100	A scheme that would deliver 30% affordable housing would be awarded a score of 30 whilst a 100% affordable housing scheme will be awarded 100
Schemes that are ready to be delivered within 6 months to a year - where all matters resolved and s106 requirements been secured	0-100	A scheme that is ready to be delivered in 6 months will be awarded 100% whilst a scheme that is ready to be delivered in 12 months will be awarded 50%

The matrix above will be refined as this strategy is delivered but the principle of such an approach will be followed.

Stodmarsh restoration

The ultimate goal is for Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve to be in favourable condition. This would remove the need for nutrient neutrality and Stodmarsh would be a healthier environment for the native species. Nutrient neutrality does not help Stodmarsh to recover, it serves to prevent it from further decline.

Directly supporting the recovery of Stodmarsh is something that we are considering in the catchment. Natural England is responsible for the management and maintenance of the lakes and for developing and implementing the recovery plan. Natural England is currently developing a recovery strategy for Stodmarsh,.

This approach would help to address the longer-term issue that mitigation options will be increasingly difficult to find, and the cost of mitigation will hamper economic growth in East Kent. The recovery of Stodmarsh is the best approach to manage this.

Annex A: Table of successful Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund

Nutrient catchment	Lead local authority	Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund round one maximum
River Camel	Cornwall County Council	£2 m
Poole Harbour	Dorset Council	£4.63m
Solent and River Itchen	Fareham Council	£9.6 m
River Lugg (sub-catchment of the River Wye)	Herefordshire County Council	£1.76 m
Stodmarsh	Kent County Council	£9.8 m
Norfolk Broads	Broadland District Council	£9.6 m
Somerset levels	Somerset County Council	£9.6 m
River Avon	Wiltshire Council	£9.8 m

Annex B: Nutrient Neutrality Executive Working Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Nutrient Neutrality Executive Working Group will provide oversight and strategic direction for the delivery of nutrient mitigation in the Stour catchment and agree the strategy for nutrient mitigation. The group will agree how funding for nutrient mitigation is allocated in the catchment, in accordance with the strategy, and oversee the delivery of nutrient mitigation measures. The group will escalate any matters or decisions as required.

The members of the Executive working group will be responsible for communicating the nutrient mitigation strategy to their authorities, including Chief Executives and Leaders, and for ensuring that their authorities act consistently with the strategy.

Membership

The Executive Working Group will consist of senior officers from Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council. Dover District Council and Thanet District Council will be invited as independent members to support the decision making process for funding bids.

Current members are:

Matt Smyth, KCC - Chair
Peter Davies, CCC
Ben Lockwood, ABC
Ewan Green, FHDC
William Cornall, MBC

The Executive Board is supported by:

Louise Smith, KCC, the catchment coordinator for the Stour catchment.
Guy Laister, Water Environment Ltd, a consultant working for KCC and other LPAs in the catchment.

Other groups

Planning officers meet regularly (currently fortnightly). This group will continue to provide direction on planning matters relevant to nutrient neutrality. The Executive Group will provide direction to the planning group as necessary.

Other groups may also be need to cover other aspects of nutrient mitigation delivery. These will be established as needed.

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Nutrient Neutrality Local Nutrient Mitigation Funding

Responsible Officer

Louise Smith - GT - ECE

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

Helen Shulver - GT - ECE

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

Defraying of grant funding

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Flood and Water Management

Responsible Head of Service

Helen Shulver - GT - ECE

Responsible Director

Matthew Smyth - GT - ECE

Aims and Objectives

KCC as Local Planning Authority has received £9.8 million (in December 2024) funding for mitigation works and this funding must be committed by March 2025. It is expected the funding will be defrayed to Local Planning Authority partners including potentially the joint venture company Stour Environmental Credits Ltd to deliver nutrient mitigation.

KCC acts as the catchment coordinator, a non-statutory role, for the Stour Catchment Nutrient Neutrality. KCC has been working in partnership with the districts to assess and identify mitigation measures for managing nutrient levels within the Stour Catchment. Currently housing development within the impacted districts cannot proceed without the generation of nutrient mitigation credits which can demonstrate that the nutrient loading within the catchment will not increase as a result of further housing development.

KCC has been awarded funding from the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund for the delivery of mitigation schemes which can offset nutrients and generate credits. Districts will bid to KCC for funding to develop and deliver mitigation.

This issue is affecting the delivery of up to 30,000 homes up to 2040 in East Kent, including developments around Ashford, Canterbury, Herne Bay, Otterpool, and Lenham. The costs of mitigation options will

potentially also affect the viability and deliverability of sites, which may require the need to renegotiate S106 agreements and ultimately, see less funding for key infrastructure and services delivered by KCC. It is anticipated that the defrayment of funding will release up to 7,000 homes before 2030.

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?

Local Planning Authorities:
Ashford, Canterbury, Maidstone, Folkestone and Hythe, Swale.

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

No

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

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

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 22 January 2025

Subject: External Grant Funding Acceptance by Kent County Council on behalf of Active Kent & Medway

Key Decision: 24/00104

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: All Divisions

Summary: Active Kent & Medway is the hosted service that provides strategic leadership, direction and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity across the county. Active Kent & Medway (formerly known as Kent Sport) has been hosted by Kent County Council continuously since March 2006 and promotes the physical, mental, and social benefits associated with being active.

Active Kent & Medway is externally funded and received a grant for the 2022 – 2027 period from Sport England of £3,452,950, paid in instalments to support the delivery of [Move Together - ActiveKent](#) – the countywide strategy for sport and physical activity. The strategy itself, with its vision to get “more people, more active, more often” and enjoying the benefits that sport and physical activity can bring, was shared with the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee for comment on 22nd November 2022. In November 2024, Active Kent & Medway was awarded an additional £219,600 of investment by Sport England linked to the original funding agreement. Consequently, it has come to light that the acceptance of the initial grant was not subject to the Key Decision process and retrospective agreement from the Cabinet Member (pertaining to the original grant and the new additional award) is now sought for Kent County Council to accept funding for the benefit of Kent’s residents on behalf of Active Kent & Medway.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Regulatory Services on the proposal outlined in this report:

To ENDORSE Kent County Council acting as the accountable and host body for the Active Kent & Medway Partnership and permit the acceptance of funding to support

the delivery of the Kent & Medway Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity 2023-2027. ([Move Together - ActiveKent](#))

To ENDORSE the Kent County Council and Active Kent & Medway Memorandum of Understanding for Hosting 2023-2027.

To DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services and the S151 Officer or Cabinet Member for Finance to accept and deploy grants and other external funding to support the delivery of the Kent & Medway Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity; including future years allocations, providing it is on the same terms and conditions as previous grant funding.

To DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take necessary actions including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts, or other legal agreements to implement this decision.

The proposed record of decision is attached as Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Active Kent & Medway (AKM) is one of 43 Active Partnerships in England. The principal funders are Sport England and Kent County Council (KCC) via a Public Health Grant, whose strategies and priority outcomes set the direction of our work and activity.
- 1.2. AKM's vision is 'more people, more active, more often', with a mission to 'change and improve lives through sport and physical activity'.
- 1.3. In order to achieve this, AKM aims to increase participation in sport and physical activity with a focus on encouraging the least active of Kent's 1.9 million residents to become more active; through the promotion of the associated personal and public health benefits and targeting resources where need is greatest, especially at those from under-represented groups including women, older people, people living with a disability or long-term health condition, ethnically diverse communities and people from lower socio-economic groups.
- 1.4. AKM engages with partners and networks across the county including those in health, adult social care, community cohesion, housing, and transport as well as governing bodies of sport, clubs, school sports networks, charities, leisure providers and local authorities, to provide opportunities for everyone to get involved in sport and physical activity for enjoyment as well as wider health and social outcomes.
- 1.5. In 2022, AKM was awarded a grant of £3,452,950 by Sport England to support its work across Kent with a focus on working where need is greatest through the development and delivery of a localised iteration of Uniting the Movement, the national strategy for Sport and Physical Activity. This recognised that traditional sport alone will not encourage more people to enjoy the benefits of being physically active and that to address inactivity there is a need to engage with new partners and in different ways with more diverse audiences.

- 1.6. Move Together (Kent's Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity focuses on taking a place based approach to:

Connecting Communities – bringing people together and harnessing sport and physical activity's unique ability to make places better to live

Health and Wellbeing - working in partnership and enabling everyone to benefit physically and mentally from an active lifestyle

Providing Positive Experiences for Children and Young People – helping children and young people to enjoy being active and creating the right foundations for a long, active and healthy life

Supporting Sport - helping local organisations to better understand their community and to deliver activities appropriate to people's needs and motivations

Active Environments – Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

- 1.7. AKM has subsequently been offered, in principle, a further £219,600 of investment for work specifically focused on the delivery of the School Games and Active Lives Children and Young People Survey.
- 1.8. At the point of offer of this investment it has come to light that whilst Move Together – the countywide strategic framework for sport and physical activity - was shared with the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee for feedback, the paper and discussion did not specifically ask that KCC agrees to receive the associated investment on behalf of AKM.
- 1.9. Therefore, retrospective agreement is sought for KCC to receive this and future grants from Sport England associated with this work, on behalf of AKM.
- 1.10. As a hosted service, AKM is subject to KCC's financial and governance processes and procedures.
- 1.11. AKM has its own independent Board, on which there is representation from KCC. The Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction of AKM and accountable for risk management and mitigation.
- 1.12. For all of AKM's work, the accountability and liability for delivery and spend sits with the Active Partnership and not KCC as per our Hosting Memorandum of Understanding.
- 1.13. External funding enables AKM, through KCC, to employ 22 staff to deliver our overarching strategy and associated activity for the benefit of Kent's residents. It also allows AKM to engage with wider opportunities – for example, attracting investment into schools through the Department of Education.
- 1.14. It also should be noted that a key function of AKM is to create alignment and unite the sport and physical activity sector behind a shared vision, strategy and

approach. Since the launch of Move Together in May 2023, 147 Organisations have directly engaged with the strategy and 80 have formally pledged time and/or resource to support its delivery. Further information pertaining to the work of AKM and its impact is summarised in its annual reviews. The most recent of which can be found here. [Annual Review 2023-24 - ActiveKent](#)

2. Active Kent & Medway and Kent County Council

2.1 Move Together was written to align with KCC's Framing Kent's Future Strategy, with its focus on the social, economic and community issues the county is facing. Move Together sought to recognise where sport and physical activity has a role to play in the levelling up of Kent, further developing infrastructure for communities, creating an environmental step change and contributing to new models of care and support. As well as ensuring alignment with KCC's Strategic Objectives, AKM has sought to provide direct benefit to KCC, not just through the delivery of Move Together, but in a number of different ways including:

- The administration of the Capital Grants for Sport Programme on behalf of KCC. Over the last five years £507k has been awarded to 104 organisations and leveraged an additional £10 million of investment into capital projects to support community sport and physical activity club delivery.
- The provision of £225k funding towards Explore Kent through the Partnership's grant funding between 2022 and 2025 to support campaign delivery and costs.
- Planned financial investment into a shared healthy placemaking resource within the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate.
- Support for major sporting events e.g. the Open Golf.
- Collaborating on a diverse range of projects with colleagues across KCC to promote active travel and to provide guidance to developers, informing strategy consultations and distributing significant grant funding to organisations and individuals across the county.

2.2. A discontinuation of the current hosting Memorandum of Understanding between KCC and AKM would significantly reduce the opportunity for collaborative work between the two organisations. It would also have a direct bearing on AKM's ability to provide the same level of support to partner organisations and stakeholders that work to provide opportunities for Kent's residents to be active, as described at 4.2.

3. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

3.1 To not enter into the agreement to act as host accountable body for Active Kent and Medway. This would reduce the opportunity for collaborative work between AKM and KCC and have an impact on support provided to partner organisations and stakeholders that work to provide opportunities for Kent's residents to be active.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Current revenue budget is nil.
- 4.2 AKM is hosted by KCC and in addition to this support, currently receives £300k per annum in funding via a KCC Public Health Grant and £734.5k per annum (£3,452,950 over 5 years) of external funding from Sport England to support the delivery of Move Together.
- 4.3 There are no match funding requirements for these grants.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 AKM is an unincorporated body and not a legal entity in its own right – hence grants being accepted by KCC on behalf of the partnership.

6. Equalities implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been submitted. The evidence reviewed in undertaking the EQIA suggests that there is no potential for discrimination and all appropriate measures have been taken to advance equality and foster good relations between the protected groups.

7. Data Protection Impact Assessment

- 7.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) Has been undertaken. Minimal risk has been identified and mitigations are in place.

8. Recommendation(s)

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Committee Member for Communities and Regulatory Services on the proposal outlined in this report:

To ENDORSE Kent County Council acting as the accountable and host body for the Active Kent & Medway Partnership and permit the acceptance of funding to support the delivery of the Kent & Medway Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity 2023-2027. (Move Together - ActiveKent)

To ENDORSE the Kent County Council and Active Kent & Medway Memorandum of Understanding for Hosting 2023-2027.

To DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services and the S151 Officer or Cabinet Member for Finance to accept and deploy grants and other external funding to support the delivery of the Kent & Medway Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity; including future years allocations, providing it is on the same terms and conditions as previous grant funding.

To DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take necessary actions including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts, or other legal agreements to implement this decision.

The proposed record of decision is attached as Appendix A.

9. Appendices and Background Documents

- Appendix A – Proposed record of decision
- Appendix B – Hosting Agreement
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Sport England - ; [Uniting the Movement | Sport England](#)
- Active Kent & Medway - [Move Together - ActiveKent: Move Together](#)

10. Contact details

Report Author:
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Active Kent & Medway
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Relevant Director:
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Director Growth and Communities
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stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

DECISION NO:

24/00104

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: External Grant Funding Acceptance by Kent County Council on behalf of Active Kent & Medway

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services I agree to:

- To ENDORSE Kent County Council acting as the accountable and host body for the Active Kent & Medway Partnership and permit the acceptance of funding to support the delivery of the Kent & Medway Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity 2023-2027. (Move Together - ActiveKent)
- To ENDORSE the Kent County Council and Active Kent & Medway Memorandum of Understanding for Hosting 2023-2027.
- To DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services and the S151 Officer or Cabinet Member for Finance to accept and deploy grants and other external funding to support the delivery of the Kent & Medway Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity; including future years allocations, providing it is on the same terms and conditions as previous grant funding.
- To DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take necessary actions including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts, or other legal agreements to implement this decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

Active Kent & Medway is the hosted service that provides strategic leadership, direction and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity across the county. Active Kent & Medway is externally funded and received a grant for the 2022 – 2027 period from Sport England of £3,452,950, paid in instalments to support the delivery of Move Together; the countywide strategy for sport and physical activity. In November 2024, Active Kent & Medway was awarded an additional £219,600 of investment by Sport England linked to the original funding agreement.

Consequently, it has come to light that the acceptance of the initial grant was not subject to the Key Decision process and retrospective agreement from the Cabinet Member (pertaining to the original grant and the new additional award) is now sought for Kent County Council to accept funding for the benefit of Kent's residents on behalf of Active Kent & Medway

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposal is being considered by the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 22 January 2025.

Move Together – Active Kent– the countywide strategy for sport and physical activity has been previously shared with the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee for

comment on 22nd November 2022.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

To not enter into the agreement to act as host accountable body for Active Kent and Medway. This would reduce the opportunity for collaborative work between AKM and KCC and have an impact on support provided to partner organisations and stakeholders that work to provide opportunities for Kent's residents to be active.

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

.....
signed

.....
date

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL AGREEMENT REGARDING THE HOSTING OF ACTIVE KENT AND MEDWAY 2023 - 2027

CONTEXT

1. Active Kent and Medway is Kent's Active Partnership and previously operated as Kent Sport. It is one of 43 Active Partnerships in England.
2. Active Kent and Medway works with partners and networks across Kent and Medway – including governing bodies of sport, clubs, school sports networks, local authorities, and partners in health, adult social care, community cohesion, housing and transport – to provide opportunities for everyone to get involved in sport and physical activity for enjoyment as well as wider health and social outcomes.
3. As a not-for-profit Active Partnership, Active Kent and Medway is an unincorporated organisation and has been hosted and supported by Kent County Council (KCC) since its inception in 2006. It is governed by an independent board.
4. Our principal funders are Sport England and Kent County Council, whose strategies set the direction of our work and activity.
5. This hosting agreement sets out the remit and responsibilities of Kent County Council in relation to the Sport England System Partner Role (2022 – 2027) plus a range of other projects.
6. The establishment of an “Active Partnership” (AP) is a condition of Sport England's System Partner Contract awarded to Kent , and this agreement identifies Active Kent and Medway's roles and responsibilities, stakeholder makeup and governance arrangements.

THE ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP (AP)

7. The AP is known as “Active Kent and Medway”. It consists of an independent board (the “Active Kent and Medway”) and a staff team (the “Active Kent and Medway”).
8. The Active Kent and Medway Board is an independent board which has been formed to guide the work of Active Kent and Medway, make decisions where appropriate, and to provide good governance. The Board's Governance Framework is attached in Appendix 1.
9. As the local lead agency for physical activity and sport, Active Kent and Medway's mission is to change lives through sport and physical activity, leading to improved physical health, mental wellbeing, individual development and social outcomes. Active Kent and Medway also acts as the consultative body on national and sub regional sport and physical activity matters on behalf of Kent.
10. Active Kent and Medway works with partners to coordinate the production of the Kent and Medway Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
11. The Kent and Medway's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy's objectives will be achieved by partners from a wide range of sectors working on a whole-system approach to increase participation rates in the whole population, but with particular focus on targeting inactivity in under-represented groups, thus reducing health inequalities. Progress against the Strategy's objectives will be shared annually with KCC's.
12. The Active Kent and Medway Board and Team are responsible for the development and implementation of the Active Kent and Medway operational plan. This provides a clear road map for Active Kent and Medway's work, it is physically linked to the Kent and Medway Sport and

Physical Activity Strategy and is informed by an in-depth analysis of a wide array of data sources and insight. Active Kent and Medway makes evidence-based decisions and focus our efforts on making a real difference to the lives of local residents.

13. Active Kent and Medway's vision in **More People, More Active, More Often** and its mission is to improve **the lives of Kent's residents through sport and physical activity**.

Active Kent and Medway's objectives are to ensure that:

- Organisations who work with those who are less active, are embedding sport and physical activity into their services.
- The sport and physical activity sector is inclusive and accessible, and better able to meet the needs of our communities.
- New audiences are reached by prioritising resources to tackle inequalities.

LEGAL STATUS

14. Active Kent and Medway is unincorporated and as such works closely with an accountable body to act on its behalf. Kent County Council (KCC) has been appointed and agreed to host Active Kent and Medway for the duration of this Agreement. KCC will be known as the “Host Authority”.
15. KCC will apply for and accept grants in its own name (acting as an “Agent”) on behalf of Active Kent and Medway (the “Award Recipient”); the terms and conditions of any grant shall be binding on Active Kent and Medway. KCC will act as appropriate should any incident occur which produces financial risk in connection with the funding conditions of any award and, subject to clause 23, if the risks are not acceptable to KCC, it has the power to refuse to accept awards and take whatever action it deems necessary.
16. KCC will hold statutory responsibilities / liabilities as the direct employer of the Active Kent and Medway Team who will be KCC employees and will be bound by the policies and procedures laid down by KCC.
17. However, KCC will delegate authority to the Active Kent and Medway Board which means that the Board will have the independent responsibility for a number of specific functions including, but not limited to, oversight and management of the Active Kent and Medway Director, financial decision-making and strategy (including implementation thereof). For full details – see Appendix 1. In exercising these powers, the Board will work within the legal, policy and operating procedures of KCC and act within the boundaries and spirit of its delegated powers.
18. In order to participate in the Board’s activities, KCC will maintain one nominated position on the Active Kent and Medway Board whilst Active Kent and Medway remains hosted by KCC. This will be a senior officer/director.
19. KCC may, subject to clause 24, take action as appropriate when any unexpected incident occurs that could result in defamation of character or bring the reputation of KCC into question.
20. KCC will provide the appropriate infrastructure and services (including but not limited to finance, accounting, audit services, office accommodation, IT equipment, HR, legal etc) to enable Active Kent and Medway to function effectively and efficiently.
21. KCC, through the Active Kent and Medway, will develop relevant Service Level Agreements with either individual or combined partners in order that the objectives of the System Partner Contract and any other Additional Services Contracts can be effectively and efficiently achieved.
22. All monies awarded to, or raised by, Active Kent and Medway, are the sole responsibility and under the control of the Active Kent and Medway Board whatever the legal status of Active Kent and Medway. In particular should Active Kent and Medway become an incorporated organisation outside of KCC, all monies are guaranteed to be transferred to the new legal entity.
23. KCC, as the Host Agency agrees to manage the day to day finances within the Host Agency’s policies and procedures. Active Kent and Medway will have a separate bank account from the Host Agency, into which Sport England and other funding generated through the Active Partnership will be paid. The details of the delegated authorities are included in Appendix 1.
24. In the case of any dispute in relation to this Agreement the Dispute Resolution procedures set out in Appendix 2 shall be followed.

EFFECTIVE DATE AND PERIOD OF THE AGREEMENT

25. The agreement is to be effective for the period 1 April 2023 – 31st March 2027.
26. This agreement will be reviewed annually.
27. If either party wishes to terminate this Agreement, a minimum period of twelve months' notice must be given in writing. The parties agree that the first possible effective date for termination is 31 March 2024.
28. If either party materially breaches the terms of this agreement, including for avoidance of doubt any significant deterioration in the level or timeliness of any services, the other party shall have the right to terminate this Agreement on giving 60 days' notice in writing.

GOVERNING LAW

29. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

SIGNED

Name: Mike Hill

Signed:

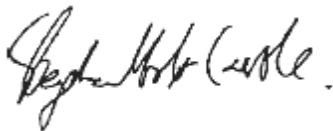


Date:

Position: Cabinet Member

Name: Stephanie Holt Castle

Signed:



Date: 11 April 2023

Position: Director

Name: Graham Razey

Date:

Position: Chair, Active Kent and Medway



Name: Liz Davidson

Signed:

Date:

Position: Director, Active Kent and Medway



25/04/2023

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

External Funding Active Kent and Medway

Responsible Officer

Liz Davidson - 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 External Grant Funding

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Active Kent and Medway

Responsible Head of Service

Tom Marchant - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

Active Kent & Medway is the hosted service that provides strategic leadership, direction and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity across the county. Active Kent & Medway (formerly known as Kent Sport) has been hosted by Kent County Council continuously since March 2006 and promotes the physical, mental, and social benefits associated with being active.

Active Kent & Medway is externally funded and received a grant for the 2022 – 2027 period from Sport England of £3,452,950, paid in instalments to support the delivery of Move Together – the countywide strategy for sport and physical activity. The strategy itself – with its vision to get “more people, more active, more often” and enjoying the benefits that sport and physical activity can bring was shared with GEDCCC for comment on 22nd November 2022. In November 2024, Active Kent & Medway was awarded an additional £219,600 of investment by Sport England linked to the original funding agreement. Consequently it has come to light that the acceptance of the initial grant was not subject to Key Decision process and as such we are now seeking a retrospective agreement from Cabinet Committee (pertaining to the original grant and the new additional award) that KCC is happy to accept funding for the benefit of Kent’s residents on behalf of Active Kent & Medway.

The focus of the funding is to create the conditions for change and targeted opportunities to support those

facing the greatest inequalities within our communities to enjoy the benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

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?

As part of our work we regularly consult with a wide range of stakeholders through events, surveys and wider opportunities as part of our ongoing learning and desire to ensure we are directly and through partners tackling the inequalities intrinsically linked to inactivity and delivering on our funding commitments.

Swale Borough Council
Canterbury City Council
Gravesham Borough Council
University of Kent
Active Kent & Medway
Macmillan Cancer Support
Kent Golf
Swale Community Leisure
Kent County Council
Kent Volunteer Partnership
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Medway Council Public Health Team
Charlton Athletic Community Trust
Thanet District Council
Active Life Ltd
Children & Families Ltd
Dover District Council
The Education People
Oasis Isle of Sheppey
Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne
Howard School Sports Partnership
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
The Sports Trust
Shepway Sports Trust
Gravesham Borough Council
Play Place
Your Leisure
Aire Trampoline Club
Active Kent & Medway Board
HeadStart Kent
Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust
Tunbridge Wells Hockey Club - Flyerz
Sported
Active Life / StreetGames
Mencap

Porchlight
Kent County Football Association
Kent MS Therapy Centre
Kent County Council
Medway Youth Service
Medway Sport - Medway Council
Kenward Trust
Kent and Medway Integrated Care System
Parkinson's UK
Kent County Football Association
Involve Kent
Bubble & Scruff
British Triathlon
Take pride cic
Sheppey Matters
Folkestone and Hythe District Council
NBE Fitness CIC
Dartford Borough Council
Deal & Sandwich PCN
Sport England
Everyone Active
Sense Active
Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust
British Orienteering
CEDAK
West Kent Housing Association
Medway Ghanaian Association
Canterbury City Council
Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Services
Kent & Medway Recovery and Wellbeing College
NHS England & Improvement
Freedom Leisure
British Cycling
Streetgames

Sports Connect
Team Tasha Fitness CIC
Activity Alliance
Peabody
Youth Ngage Kent CIC
Age UK South Kent Coast
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Wild Rover Media
Medway Diversity Forum
Greenacre Sports Partnership
Home-Start Shepway
Cycling UK
Golding Homes
Delamill Tutoring
Disability Assist Ltd
Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge
Kent Association for the Blind

England Handball and Volleyball England
 Inclusive Sport
 Ideas Test
 Home-Start Dover District
 Kent Wildlife Trust
 Olympia Boxing CIC
 Youth Ngage Kent CIC
 All Shades of Life CIC
 Kent Cricket Community Trust

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?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The primary focus of the funding is on AKMs role as a system partner and ensuring we model good governance (including in the area of EDI) and work to tackle the inequalities intrinsically linked to low levels of physical activity.

From a governance perspective - we have our own Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which outlines our ambitions in this space. And equality diversity and inclusion is a thread that runs throughout our work. The secondary element of this investment is to support the delivery of the School Games. This again is focused on reaching students who face the greatest barriers to participation - which are often linked to the protected characteristics.

Across our work collect data relating to the protected characteristics to ensure our work reached it's intended audiences - directly and through partners.

Where there may be challenges to reaching specific audience e.g. older people as a consequence of them being less confident or able to access technology, we will seek to overcome and better understand what the issues are and how to address. Via alternative formats etc.

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

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

Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 22 January 2025

Subject: Update on the implementation of the New Operating Model and Geographical Allocation Policy for the Community Warden Service

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All

Summary: The Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) delivered a planned reduction in base budget of £1m over 2023-24 and 2024-25. A public consultation in latter half of 2023 focussed on how best to redesign the service under these reductions. The service transformation is now near completion: staffing levels have been reduced to allow the savings target to be met; and the service has refocused and targeted its limited resources across Kent.

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and COMMENT on the progress made in implementing the new service model and geographical allocation policy, and delivering the savings required.

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the Securing Kent's Future strategy and the Council's commitment to delivering the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) delivered a planned reduction in base budget of £1m over 2023-24 and 2024-25. A proposed model for the service to achieve the savings, and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) were subject to public consultation in the latter half of 2023.
- 1.2 The findings from the consultation were discussed by Members of the [Growth, Economic Development and Communities\(External link\)](#) (GEDC) Cabinet Committee on 18 January 2024 and at [Scrutiny Committee\(External link\)](#) on 7 February 2024. Following these meetings, the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services took the decision to implement a new service model and geographical allocation policy for the Kent Community Warden Service. Implementation has been taking place across 2024

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Prior to the new operating model and geographical allocation policy, KCWS had teams that covered all 12 districts in Kent, with wardens based in particular communities but also able to respond to wider need, enabling whole county coverage. The service was due a review of which communities wardens were

based in, which became of greater significance due to the reductions in budget and therefore size of the service.

2.2 The public consultation in 2023 focussed on how best to redesign the service under these reductions. It was subsequently agreed, and a commitment was made to:

- Retain the service's wide remit (variety of ways it supports residents and communities), providing a proactive service which enables prevention and early identification of issues.
- Retain its community-based proactive approach which is a key strength and highly valued aspect of the service¹.
- Retain a presence in all 12 districts that:
 - Reduces the number of uniformed wardens (70 to 38) and management posts (3 to 1), and retains the Business Coordinator².
 - Sets a minimum team size for each of six teams, that will each cover two districts.
 - Enhances team size (within the limit of 38 wardens overall) and thereby district coverage for districts with higher evidenced need, compared to other districts under and within the new model.
 - Allocates wardens to specific wards (ratio of 1 warden to 6000-12000 population) in each district where they will focus/target their work. Coverage of a whole district will no longer be possible.)
- Adopt a Geographical Allocation Policy (GAP) which will use data and indicators of need to identify:
 - Districts with higher need, informing which teams will be enhanced beyond the minimum of one Team Leader and three wardens.
 - Then, balanced by contextual/partner information, identify wards with highest need in each district to be prioritised for warden allocation.

3. Progress following February 2024's key decision

3.1 **New Operating Model** – In order to deliver the required savings, the KCWS was reduced from 70 wardens (CW) to 38 (including six operational team leaders (TL)); from three managers to one (an Operational Manager); and one Business Coordinator.

3.2 A staff consultation was required to allow the reduction in service size which ran from mid-February 2024 to mid-March 2024. Following feedback and amendments, a diminution exercise was undertaken with the subsequent notice periods running through into the summer of 2024.

3.3 **Team sizes** – The above enabled the new team sizes to be established and are now in place as follows:

¹ 87% of consultation respondents agreed with retaining the service remit, and 93% agreed with wardens being community based. ([Consultation report.](#))

² Retaining the Business Coordinator post allows efficient centralisation of administrative tasks, provides consistency, removes risk of duplication of efforts, and reduces administrative burdens upon frontline staff.

Teams	Recommended future staffing (Community Warden Full Time Equivalent posts - split between districts)
Ashford and Swale	1 Operational TL **, 6 CW (2.5 Ashford, 3.5 Swale)
Canterbury and Thanet*	1 Operational TL **, 7 CW (3.5 Canterbury, 3.5 Thanet)
Dartford and Gravesham	1 Operational TL **, 3 CW (1.5 Dartford, 1.5 Gravesham)
Dover and Folkestone & Hythe	1 Operational TL **, 8 CW (4 Dover, 4 Folkestone & Hythe)
Maidstone and Tonbridge & Malling	1 Operational TL **, 5 CW (3.5 Maidstone, 1.5 Tonbridge & Malling)
Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells	1 Operational TL **, 3 CW (1.5 Sevenoaks, 1.5 Tunbridge Wells)
Total	38

*Teams with vacant posts at time of this paper. Recruitment is underway.

**TLs (Team Leaders) and wardens are on the same tier within KCC's reporting structure. All 38 formally report to the new, single Operational Service Manager post, with TLs having delegated duties to enable them to provide support and guidance to these remote teams and be a knowledgeable SPoC (single point of contact) for two districts.

- 3.4 **Adoption of GAP** – Following the key decision, the GAP, with its [indicators and information](#) was adopted and adjusted based on the public consultation feedback. Greater emphasis was placed on the indicators relating to the vulnerable and elderly, and rurality also factored in.
- 3.5 **Ward allocations** – Following the setting of the team sizes, final ward allocations utilising the GAP were established. The available warden resource within each district was allocated to areas where the need for the service was highest and where there was the potential to make the greatest difference, whilst remaining within the stated warden to population ratio. A series of communication activities then took place across the autumn of 2024 to inform affected Members, staff, parish and town councils, district and borough councils, and partners. Communications have been provided to give notice that warden coverage is either being withdrawn, maintained, or introduced.
- 3.6 **Transition to new areas** – The transition period for the service began in October 2024 following the communications mentioned above. A considered period of time was given to allow gradual moves of wardens from one area to another. The intention was to provide time for strategies to be developed and any handovers to be made with local partners where alternatives are required for any community activities and service users, alongside a gradual introduction and familiarisation with new areas. Activities during the transition period have included:

- linking residents into remaining support services where possible. Although KCWS is unique in its broad remit and community based approach, there may be services and facilities remaining which can each support certain aspects previously addressed by wardens. Such options are: community groups, GP surgeries, police officers from the rural police taskforce, parish councils, community/voluntary services, and Kent Fire and Rescue service.
- addressing issues to point of completion before the warden departs.
- supporting residents to access grants from District and Borough Councils.
- establishing bases, networks and priorities for any new areas.

The aim is for these transitions to have completed this month.

3.7 The final list of allocations can be found in Appendix A.

3.8 **Alternative funding** – At GEDCCC previously, a strong view was made by Members that they would not wish for the service to be reduced. The Committee recognised the value of KCWS alongside the financial challenges. It was asked if alternative funding could be found. Various avenues (such as the Police, Public Health, Parishes, Adult Social Care) were explored and presented at the time, however no viable options that would significantly offset the savings required within the timescales needed were found.

3.9 The new model for the service was designed to be scalable so that, if resources became available, the council could look again at its provision. During the course of the work to allocate wardens to teams and communities, it became apparent that some parish and local councils would welcome the opportunity to explore the possibility of retaining, or introducing a Community Warden in their area using their own funding sources to resource this. This led to the service developing two potential models for those councils to consider; a direct employment model and a sponsorship type model. The Group Head of Community Protection along with the Head of Community Safety has been actively liaising with local councils, KALC, and KCC Members to raise awareness, share further details and consider practicalities of these models for specific areas/scenarios. An event for all KALC members is being planned for January 2025 to further promote the opportunity and answer any questions about the models. To date, 23 parish and town councils have enquired after these models and several discussions are ongoing.

3.10 **Securing Kent's Future** - In 2023, Cabinet considered 'Securing Kent's Future (SKF) – Budget Recovery Strategy'³. This report set out the Council's strategy for achieving both in-year and future year savings to achieve a more sustainable financial position for the Authority and set out new strategic objectives focused on putting the Council on a financially sustainable footing. This included making one of the four objectives set out within Framing Kent's Future⁴ a priority: delivering New Models of Care and Support

³ [Securing Kents Future - Budget Recovery Strategy.pdf](#)

⁴ [Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy 2022-2026](#)

- 3.11 Delivering the £1m saving through implementation of the new KCWS service model supports SKF Objective 1: Bringing the budget back into balance. The new service model also supports Objective 2 which includes opportunity areas to reduce future costs. Those relevant to KCWS work are ASCH social care prevention, as the service receives referrals from ASCH (302 referrals from ASCH were received by KCWS in FY 23/24) and is placed in communities to enable early identification of needs. Further detail of KCWS work relating to ASCH is detailed in 7.2. The second relevant opportunity area is the hospital discharge pathway as KCWS receives referrals to support those recently discharged from hospital (In FY 23/24 KCWS received 163 referrals from the Health Sector including hospitals and GPs).
- 3.12 The new KCWS service model also supports the prioritised New Models of Care and Support objective which includes the commitment to “work within the system to ensure a strong focus on preventative community services”. The other three objectives of Framing Kent’s Future, though not prioritised by SKF, are identified as remaining important and are areas where work should continue where possible. This includes ‘Infrastructure for Communities’ and the commitment to “Work with civil society and other partners to find ways to tackle social isolation and loneliness, including ‘social prescribing’ to community groups and activities that help people connect with others, building upon the successes of the Connected Communities project and through our Community Wardens, targeting them where they are most needed.”
- 3.13 It is important to note that the service undertakes front-line activity which supports other council duties (community safety, emergencies, severe weather etc) and council services as outlined in section 7 of this paper. The new service model therefore allows this work to continue, albeit on a smaller scale, targeting areas of greatest need. The council also has the ability to build upon the service with potential income or investment in the future.
- 3.14 In addition to the contribution KCWS makes to these local strategies through its uniquely broad remit and community place-based approach, the wardens service also aligns to Government’s priorities described in their [Plan for Change](#). The service’s focus on prevention and early intervention supports the aims relating to the NHS, and the significant focus the service has on community safety supports the Safer Streets priority. KCWS recorded 3,726 crime prevention, anti-social behaviour and environment related tasks (31% of all KCWS work) for the FY 23/24.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The £1m saving was originally agreed as part of the 2023-24 budget in February 2023 and saw the base budget reduced by £500k in 2023/24 and a further £500k reduction in 2024-25. Initially, and as a result of the 12 week consultation period, the new structure was delivered a little later than planned but existing vacancies, as well as new vacancies arising from resignations once the review of the service was announced, meant that the 23/24 £500k was still delivered but clearly this was unsustainable and the fundamental change in the operating model as outlined in 2.2 was required.

- 4.2 The agreed approach has allowed the service to deliver £1.06m of gross savings in a timescale which accounted for consultation and governance requirements as well as pension obligations of approximately £161k.
- 4.3 The pension obligations which have been smoothed utilising the general KCC reserve, will enable the service to account for the costs over the next three financial years when the full £1.06m will be realised. Redundancy costs totalling just over £58k have been met by the central KCC Workforce Reduction Fund.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 KCWS was set up as part of the County Council's response to the statutory responsibilities under the **Crime and Disorder Act 1998** (amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006). Section 6 of the 1998 Act requires the responsible authorities (commonly referred to collectively as a Community Safety Partnership (CSP)) in a local government area to work together in formulating and implementing strategies to tackle local crime and disorder in the area. Additionally, [Section 17](#) places a duty on local authorities to consider crime and disorder implications for all their functions and decisions. To achieve all that can be reasonably expected with a reduced KCWS we incorporated partner information such as that from policing partners, within the KCWS GAP. Final allocations have also been shared with partners such as police and districts. This is to support making the best use of our resources and continuation of partnership working.
- 5.2 Under the **Care Act 2014** KCWS's broader role in communities contributes to delivering KCC's duties under [Section 1 Promoting individual well-being](#) (which places the general duty on a local authority to promote individual well-being), and [Section 2 Preventing needs for care and support](#) which states that a local authority must have regard to;

2 a - the importance of identifying services, facilities and resources already available in the authority's area and the extent to which the authority could involve or make use of them in performing that duty.

2 b – the importance of identifying adults in the authority's area with needs for care and support which are not being met (by the authority or otherwise).

Additionally, KCWS contributes to duties under [Section 42 Enquiry by local authority](#) - Although KCWS may not be part of a formal enquiry, they are often asked by ASCH (and others) to engage with adults for whom there are concerns. KCWS are then able to either a) quell concerns (putting in prevention measures where appropriate) or b) confirm concerns, supporting ASCH in their triaging and resource allocation. 6,139 tasks were recorded as relating to safeguarding of vulnerable people between April 2023 and mid-January 2024 (full FY data not currently available due to system changes).

The service's work in relation to safeguarding has been recognised at a national level. [National Safeguarding Adults Board Excellence Awards](#) were won in 2023, and a further two in November 2024, recognising the excellent and valuable work of the team.

To achieve all that can be reasonably expected with a reduced KCWS, the service worked with KCC partners to inform the KCWS GAP. Specifically the indicators were discussed with ASCH Assistant Directors and Area Managers and the new allocations for wardens have been shared with ASCH to support the continuation of the referral pathway between ASCH and KCWS. Further detail of KCWS work relating to ASCH is detailed in 7.3

6. Equality Implications

- 6.1 Four groups; the elderly; females; people with a disability or long-term impairment; and those with carer's responsibilities were identified as being more adversely impacted by the changes of the final recommended service model as they represent the majority of the wardens' current service users. The [impact assessment](#) was previously published.
- 6.2 Our plans to take into account information from key partners as part of the GAP contributes to mitigating cumulative adverse impacts.
- 6.3 Mitigations are described in the EqIA. Whilst the service will seek to minimise the adverse impacts of the changes, they cannot be eliminated.

7. Other corporate implications

- 7.1 **Community Safety** – The KCWS provides an operational response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in working in partnership to address the causes of Crime, Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour. KCWS recorded 3,726 crime prevention, anti-social behaviour and environment related tasks (31% of all KCWS work) for the FY 23/24. In addition to this, the KCWS proactively supports the work of Children, Young People and Education through work with schools, colleges, youth groups and the younger residents in the communities served. Wardens deter anti-social behaviour and provide prosocial modelling for adolescents⁵.
- 7.2 **Trading Standards (TS)** – In 22-23 the wardens carried out 867 visits, engaging with scam victims. This is significant work, as victims require at least 2 visits, with follow up work through Social Services and other support networks. The time taken to deal with these victims is estimated at over 5,000 hours or 140 weeks. TS relies on additional capacity from the KCWS to deal with this large number of visits which helps prevent the elderly population becoming or continuing to fall victim to financial abuse. During 23-24, TS adjusted processes in light of the significant period of change and reductions to KCWS, reducing demand by requesting warden visits for only one of the two categories of scam victims who used to be referred on to KCWS. In response TS has had to increase their resource in this area, and switched to contact by letter rather than visits in some cases. Unfortunately this has been necessary due to the limitations being worked within. The consequences of people being defrauded

⁵ <https://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/transforming-behaviour-pro-social-modelling-in-practice/r/a11G00000017zZ5IAI>

in their own homes are that they are 2.5 times more likely to either die or go into residential care within a year⁶.

7.3 Adult Social Care and Health – Various partners noted the importance of wardens being a frontline service, and that their client facing approach allows early identification, a quick response and development of trust. District councils particularly value the wardens being able to link into social care for their residents. Wardens are often called upon to support ASCH through welfare visits and engagement with hard-to-reach residents. In FY22/23, KCWS undertook 602 tasks originating from ASCH. 61% of these were dealt with by KCWS with no onward referral required. KCWS also made 255 referrals to ASCH that year from identifying issues within the community or from other agency interactions, supporting the duty in Section 2, 2b of the Care Act 2014.

7.4 Public Health – Wider determinants of health such as loneliness and social isolation are of importance to Public Health. In 2018, KCC launched a select committee on loneliness and social isolation. They recognised that Community Wardens were already addressing this issue. Following the height of the pandemic, 'Positive Wellbeing', a social prescribing service was launched and a pilot delivered by a small cohort of Community Wardens as part of the EU funded Connected Communities project. An evaluation undertaken by the University of Essex found that there were statistically significant reductions in loneliness and aspects of isolation, along with statistically significant improvements in aspects of wellbeing and feelings of trust for participants that the Community Wardens worked with^{7,8}. The Positive Wellbeing model is now embedded across the wider service with wardens continuing to support residents through the structured intervention to increase their social connections, allowing this impact of the service to be measured. The service is also linked in to support Public Health's recent Stop Smoking campaign which aims to increase the numbers of residents making the commitment to quit.

7.5 Emergency Planning – Wardens have been called upon to be part of the response to various circumstances over the years and across the county. Floods, water outages, severe weather, landslides, road incidents, the pandemic. They have provided both practical support such as carrying out Covid-19 variant surge testing, as well as humanitarian support, reaching out to manage concerns, provide reassurance and make sure the most vulnerable are informed and able to access available support.

8. Governance

8.1 The Director of Growth and Communities to continue to inherit the main delegations via the Officer Scheme of Delegation.

8.2 County Council agreed to reducing the base budget by £1m in February 2023. A Cabinet Member key decision was required, and taken in February 2024, to

⁶ https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/safe-at-home/rb_oct17_scams_party_conference_paper_nocrops.pdf

⁷ <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk:9071/documents/s121610/Positive%20Wellbeing%20Pilot%20Service%20Report.pdf>

⁸ [UoEPWEvaluationKentFinal.pdf](https://www.kent.gov.uk/media/121610/UoEPWEvaluationKentFinal.pdf)

enact the service transformation given the impact was over 1m and affects more than two electoral divisions.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 KCC's financial circumstances have resulted in planned budget reductions to KCWS. These could only be implemented following public and staff consultations on the proposed changes and full equality impact analysis.
- 9.2 The service transformation is now near completion: staffing levels have been reduced to allow the savings target to be met; and the service has refocused and targeted its limited resources across Kent in a fair and consistent manner. Transitions under the geographical allocation policy are being completed, and there now needs to be a period of time for the service to fully establish itself into any new areas. The new service operating model and GAP implementation has not been without its difficulties and the service is all too aware that this has had and will have an impact on our staff, partner agencies and some communities across Kent. It is clear that the service is highly valued by partners and communities alike and as a result, the service has been responding to a number of communications from a wide variety of sources on the matter. However we are confident that the GAP as described at para 3.4 and consulted upon as described at para 2.2 remains a strong and impactful delivery model within the resource envelope available, and one that, as described at 3.9 can be readily scaled up.
- 9.3 GEDCCC is asked to consider and comment on the progress made in implementing the new service model and geographical allocation policy, and delivering the savings required.

10. Recommendation(s):

- 10.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and COMMENT on the progress made in implementing the new service model and geographical allocation policy, and delivering the savings required.

11. Contact details

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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 - 22 January 2025

Subject: 2024 Infrastructure Funding Statement

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: County Wide

Summary: Kent County Council (KCC) is required by statute to provide a summary of the financial position relating to Developer Contributions for the previous financial year through publication of an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement. This report provides a summary of that Statement.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Through the Community Infrastructure Levy (amendment) (England) (no.2) Regulations 2019, Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide a summary of all financial and non-financial developer contributions that they have been involved with over the course of a given financial year. The Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is the platform through which to do this and must include a report on Planning Obligations relating to Section 106 (S106) of the Town and County Planning Act 1990, Section 278 (s278) of the Highways Act 1980 and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 1.2 Along with summary information, the latest IFS also provides some examples of infrastructure projects that Kent County Council (KCC) has delivered within specific District authority areas during 2023/24. This has been included to demonstrate how developer contributions are an essential tool in unlocking and delivering growth across the county. The statement is produced by the Development Investment Team (DIT) within the Growth and Communities Division, with assistance from services across the wider Authority.

2. 2023/2024 Infrastructure Funding Statement

- 2.1 The IFS document has been attached as Appendix 1 or can be viewed online, along with previous versions, via [KCC Infrastructure Funding Statements](#).

- 2.2 Throughout the IFS there will be references to the following definitions:
- **Secured** – Contributions that have been included within a signed legal document for a planning application. These contributions have not been collected / delivered and if the planning application is not implemented, they will never be received.
 - **Received** – Contributions received, either monetary or non-monetary (in kind), that have been transferred to KCC.
 - **Allocated** – Contributions that have been received and allocated to specific projects.
 - **Spent / Delivered** – Monetary or non-monetary contributions that have been spent or delivered.
 - **This Financial Year** - unless stated otherwise, this refers to the period 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024.
 - **District** – unless stated otherwise, this refers to one or more of Kent's District, City and Borough Councils.

2.3 S106 Contributions

- 2.4 Section 106 monies are secured for a range of infrastructure. They can only be sought where they meet the three legal tests as set out in paragraph 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010:
- they are directly related to the development,
 - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, and;
 - necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

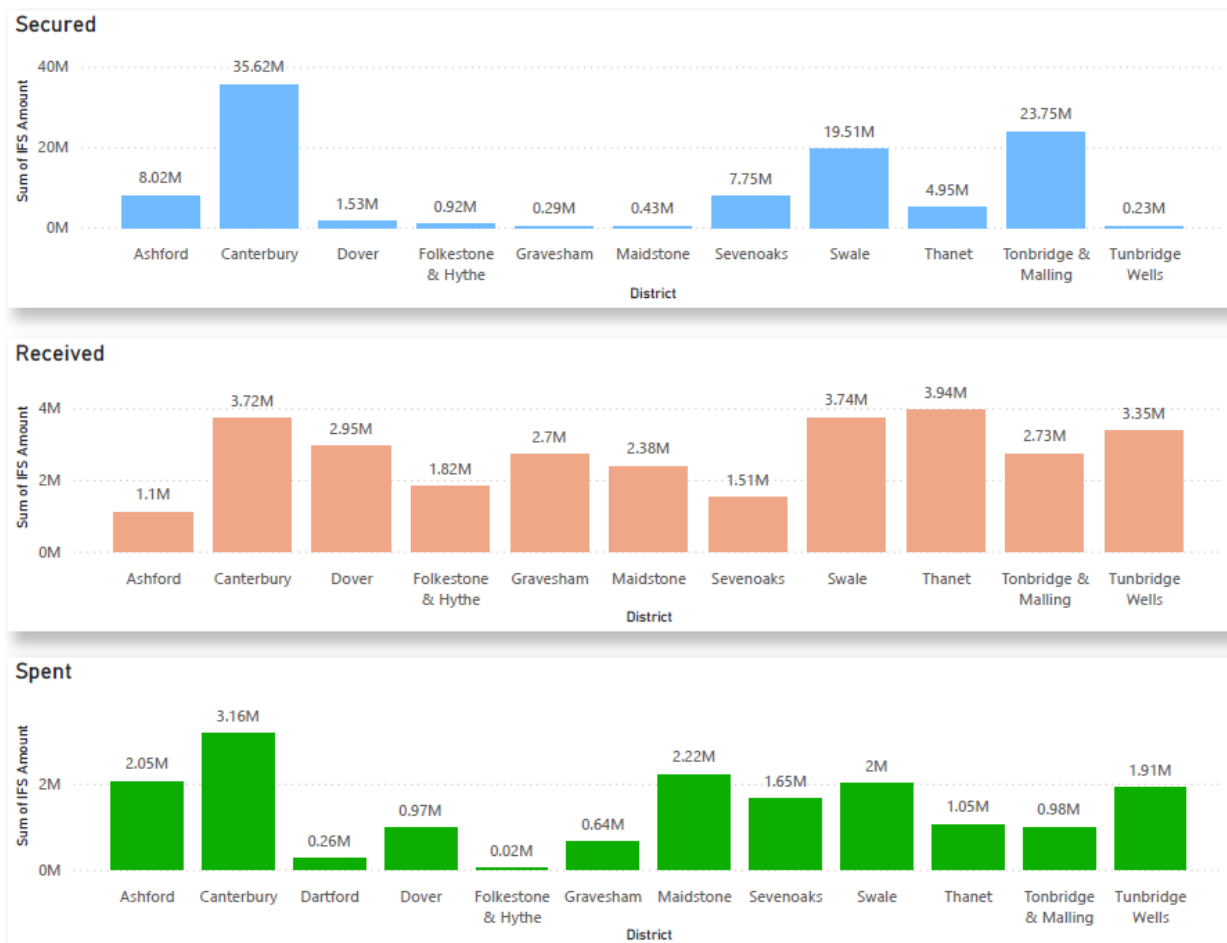
2.5 KCC secures contributions towards primary and secondary education, SEND, highways and transportation, adult social care, sustainable urban drainage, strategic waste disposal services, libraries, adult education and integrated children's services. In most instances KCC will have ten years to allocate funding received.

Table 1 below shows the total amount of s106 money secured, received and spent during the financial year 2023/2024.

Service Area	Secured	Received	Spent
Adult Social Care	£1,618,183	£335,606	£116,360
Community Facilities	£1,929,926	£1,481,873	£944,848
Education	£82,627,371	£22,009,961	£10,606,914
Education Land	£11,417,706		
Highways	£3,466,824	£5,577,154	£4,038,566
PRoW	£845,974	£397,253	£52,744

Strategic Waste Services	£967,862		
Monitoring Fees	£25,148		
Kent Thameside	£0	£1,114,107	£1,306,602,
Total	£102,898,994	£30,915,953	£17,066,034

2.6 District Analysis of secured, received and spent contributions in 2023/24



2.7 CIL Contributions

2.8 Developer contributions are secured through the CIL mechanism within five Local Planning Authorities in the county: Canterbury; Dartford; Folkestone and Hythe; Maidstone; and Sevenoaks. In these areas the contributions are collected by the local Planning Authorities. **Table 2** below shows the amount of CIL provisionally secured, received, and spent during the financial year for 2023/2024.

Local Planning Authority	Secured (Provisional)	Received	Spent
Sevenoaks	£209,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
Folkestone & Hythe		£347,282	£772

Table 2.

- 2.9 Of the five CIL authorities, contributions were only received and spent in Folkestone and Hythe. The arrangement with Folkestone and Hythe ensures that KCC receives 35% of their CIL receipts for the previous financial year. Other authorities invite KCC to submit bids to be made towards projects determining their success through their committee systems.
- 2.10 KCC made an application to Sevenoaks District Council for CIL funding in July 2023. Bids were made towards the expansion of Sevenoaks Museum and for improvements to local Public Rights of Way. The District Council advised that KCC had been successful in its bid for £209k towards the upgrade of a number of Public Rights of Way. The project will be delivered in three phases with an initial draw down of funding expected April 25.
- 2.11 Section 278 Contributions
- 2.12 KCC, as the local highway authority, is responsible for the maintenance and development of the local road network within its borders. If planning permission has been granted for a development that requires changes or improvements to public highways, then KCC will often enter into a Section 278 (s278) agreement with the developer. As with s106 agreements this can only take place when the requested improvements are compliant with the CIL 122 regulations listed at paragraph 2.4 of this report. A s278 agreement details and enables highway changes to be made which the developer pays for and constructs. Examples of works that may be featured in a s278 agreement include roundabouts, improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and traffic calming measures.
- 2.13 The value of s278 agreements takes the form of a performance bond paid to KCC by the developer based on the cost of the highway works (including utility works). A performance bond protects KCC against the risk of unforeseen expenditure if the works are not completed by the developer. If the works are delivered, then the bond is repaid to the developer, generally in a series of payments based on completion stages.
- 2.14 S278 agreements are subject to reasonable and proportionate fees which KCC can charge as part of delivery and monitoring arrangements outlined within each agreement. These charges cover KCC costs associated with the necessary work involved, for example commissioning road safety audits.
- 2.15 **Table 3** below outlines the value of bonds within signed s278 agreements and fees received in the financial year 2023/2024.

S278 Contributions	Bonds	Fees
	£21,029,384	£1,831,982

Table 3.

3. Future Spending Priorities and Case Studies

- 3.1 During the financial year 2023/24, KCC's position with unspent s106 contributions has moved from £105,186,512 to £119,382,942. This is a net increase of £14,196,430 (13.5%) i.e. KCC has received more contributions during 2023/24 than it has spent.
- 3.2 It is important to note that this is not uncommon as some projects require a significant amount of starting capital and the sums are spread across 12 Districts and Boroughs. The figures shown should be placed in context of the size of the county and the costs of specific infrastructure items. For example, the current costs of delivering a two form entry primary school will be in the region of £10m.
- 3.3 Significant funding is being held for the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (£5.9m) and the Chilmington Green secondary school (£6.3m) (Ashford). It may often be the case that Highways use s106 contributions as match funding for grant bids to the Large Local Major Road (LLMR) fund, or Major Road Network (MRN) fund. Such schemes take many years to deliver through the design, bidding and build phases. Consequently, large amounts of funding can be anticipated to be held.
- 3.4 The [full statement](#) demonstrates the largest planned infrastructure projects that unspent monies are allocated towards and an estimated date of expenditure. It also includes a breakdown of the funding held per KCC service area. The delivery schedule of these infrastructure projects can be influenced by a number of factors, including whether sufficient finance is available but also land availability and central government policy.
- 3.5 This year's IFS contains the details of five projects delivered through the expenditure of developer contributions during the 2023/2024 financial year. The statement highlights the financial position of developer contributions and case studies within Ashford, Tonbridge & Malling, Thanet and Gravesham. A detailed breakdown of funding for all 12 Districts and Boroughs can be found on an accompanying spreadsheet, via [the district breakdown](#).

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The costs of producing the IFS relate to staff resources and are covered within the budget allocated to the KCC Development Investment Team.
- 4.2 Since the adoption of the KCC [Developer Contributions Guide](#) in 2023, which this Committee informed, the DIT secures a £300 monitoring fee per trigger payment date. Income received will be monitored under existing financial

processes and may in part be used to offset costs relating to the production of the IFS.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Through the Community Infrastructure Levy (amendment) (England) (no.2) Regulations 2019, Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide a summary of all financial and non-financial developer contributions that they have been involved with over the course of a given financial year. The Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is the platform through which to do this and must include a report on Planning Obligations relating to Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990, Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 5.2 The document must be published by the 31st December each calendar year demonstrating the financial details of the previous financial year.

6. Other Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The DIT has established strong working relationships with each of the wider KCC service areas to ensure that contributions are targeted to their needs. Work completed during the adoption of the updated Developer Contributions Guide has enabled planning responses to include greater flexibility of infrastructure project descriptions. Moving forward, this will assist KCC service areas' ability to spend the contributions they receive, helping to unlock existing barriers, where overly prescriptive project descriptors within s106 agreements have historically made it harder for service areas to spend. To give an example of the new approach, for Adult Social Care, rather than naming specific buildings, project requests now include wording such as "*adaptation of community facilities or technology to promote independence within the Borough.*"
- 6.2 Although the level of unspent contributions has continued to rise, significant progress has been made with KCC service areas holding funding to help them improve oversight of the funding available, with the objective of increasing the in-year levels of spending and infrastructure delivery. Working with colleagues from Integrated Children's Services, a new Developer Contributions Board has been created, providing increased levels of transparency of spend and aiding the placement of funding into areas of need.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The County Council continues to demonstrate good levels of success in securing financial contributions to mitigate the impact of development across the county.
- 7.2 There is a need for further work to be completed to assist KCC service areas in increasing the levels of infrastructure delivered, to reduce the current levels of unspent contributions being held and meet identified local needs.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

9. Background Documents

Appendix 1, 2023/2024 Infrastructure Funding Statement

10. Contact Details

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Infrastructure Funding Statement



2023 -2024



Published December 2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Community Infrastructure Levy(amendment) (England) (no.2) Regulations 2019 place a duty on Local Authorities to provide a summary of all financial and non-financial developer contributions that they have been involved with over the course of a given financial year. The Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is the platform in which to do this and must include a report on Planning Obligations Section 106 (S106), Section 278 (S278) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), in relation to the previous financial year. The legislation also requires Local Authorities to report on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which it intends to wholly or partly fund by CIL.
- 1.2. Along with summary information, this IFS will also provide some examples of infrastructure projects that Kent County Council (KCC) has delivered, planned, or allocated contributions towards during 2023/24 as a means to demonstrate how developer contributions are an essential tool in unlocking and delivering growth across the county.
- 1.3. KCC is responsible for delivering and maintaining a wide range of strategic infrastructure such as roads, schools and social care but it may not be the Local Planning Authority for entering into legal agreements with developers. Thus, KCC works closely with its local District and Borough colleagues to ensure that its statutory responsibilities can be met and there is a smooth and timely transfer of developer contributions between the respective authorities. KCC will report the net result of such transfers within its IFS.
- 1.4. Throughout the IFS there will be references to the following definitions:
 - **Secured** – Contributions that have been included within a signed legal document for a planning application. These contributions have not been collected / delivered and if the planning application is not implemented, they will never be received.
 - **Received** – Contributions received, either monetary or non-monetary (in kind), that have been transferred to KCC.
 - **Allocated** – Contributions that have been received and allocated to specific projects.
 - **Spent / Delivered** – Monetary or non-monetary contributions that have been spent or delivered.
 - **This Financial Year** - unless stated otherwise, this refers to the period 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024.
 - **District** – unless stated otherwise, used to refer to one or more of Kent’s District and Borough Councils.

2. Developer Contributions

Section 106 Planning Obligations

- 2.1. Section 106 Agreements are a legal mechanism used to fund additional infrastructure needed as a result of increased demand caused by development within a local area.
- 2.2. Section 106 monies are secured for a range of infrastructure. They can only be sought where they meet the three legal tests, set out in paragraph 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010:
 - they are directly related to the development,
 - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, and;
 - necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- 2.3. KCC secures contributions towards primary and secondary education, highways and transportation, adult social care, sustainable urban drainage, strategic waste disposal services, libraries, adult education and integrated children's services. Kent's District and Borough councils secure contributions towards infrastructure such as affordable housing, healthcare, local play areas and some aspects of further education. All of these items are essential in building and maintaining sustainable communities.
- 2.4. S106 agreements are secured on a site-by-site basis with payments typically being made in instalments as the development is built out. Contributions can only be spent against the purposes for which they are collected.
- 2.5. Unilateral Undertakings (UUs), which are a simplified version of a planning agreement entered into between the landowner and KCC, will also be included within this section.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.6. Under CIL, each District is to create a charging schedule which is applied to the floor space of the development. The funding raised from CIL is collected by the Districts, pooled into a 'pot' and can be spent on a wide range of infrastructure types.
- 2.7. The infrastructure that receives CIL funding will be determined by the local District. Whilst KCC is not directly responsible for collecting CIL, it is heavily involved in discussions about accessing these funds in order to deliver its statutory duties and ensure that all communities, both new and existing, within Kent benefit.

Section 278 Highway Agreements

- 2.8. Additional legal agreements that can fund infrastructure are Section 278 Agreements (S278). These are legally binding agreements made under the Highways Act 1990 between Local Highway Authorities and Developers. S278 agreements are required to secure alterations or improvements to the highway.

Forecasting

- 2.9. National guidance recommends that Councils should consider reporting on estimated future income where possible. KCC will look at incorporating forecasting of developer contributions within future versions of the IFS, although KCC will ultimately rely on information provided by Kent's Districts and Boroughs.

3. S106 Contributions

Contributions received or invoiced before the start of 2022/23 that had not been spent

- 3.1. Table 1 below shows the total amount of S106 money held or invoiced but not spent by KCC on 31st March 2023, the end of the previous financial year (2022/23). Invoiced money has not necessarily been received.
- 3.2. It is important to note that large accumulations of contributions are not uncommon as some projects require a great deal of starting capital, plus the sums are spread across 12 Kent Districts and Boroughs.

Table 1 – Received or invoiced contributions yet to be spent and held by the Council at 31st March 2023 (Year start position)

Service Area	Amount
Adult Social Care s106 agreements	£2,452,601
Adult Social Care UUs	£458,921
Community Services ¹ s106 agreements	£4,513,967
Community Services UUs	£738,106
Education ² s106 agreements	£50,778,822
Education UUs	£9,652,510
Highways ³ s106 agreements	£29,179,185
Highways UUs	£3,456,621
Kent Thameside s106 agreements	£3,346,373
Total	£104,577,107

- 3.3. The majority of the developer contributions held are in education and highways. To give some context, the timing of developer contributions rarely matches with when the spend is incurred. On some occasions KCC receives money before the capital project and spend is due to take place or, KCC has to await match funding from other sources. KCC is often asked to bear the risk on developer contributions by delivering schemes in advance and then having to wait to receive contributions over a number of years.

Contributions agreed in 2023/24 through S106 Agreements

- 3.4. Table 2 outlines the financial contributions that have been secured by KCC through signed S106 agreements this financial year. The majority of this will be transferred to KCC from Kent's Districts and Boroughs.
- 3.5. Whilst money may be secured through S106, it is not a guarantee that the money will ever be received. If the development does not go ahead or planning circumstances change (through appeals, renegotiations etc.), then the amounts of money that KCC actually receives will be different.

¹ Community services includes Community Learning and Skills, Libraries and Youth Services

² Education includes Primary and Secondary Educational facilities

³ Highways includes works to the road network, cycle lanes, pedestrian access, and public rights of way

Table 2 – Contributions secured in 2023/24 through S106 Agreements

Service Area	Amount
Community Services	£1,929,926
Education	£82,627,371
Highways	£3,466,824
Land (for Educational facilities)	£11,417,706
Social Care	£1,618,183
Strategic Waste Services	£967,862
Monitoring Fees	£25,148
Public Rights of Way	£845,974
Total	£102,898,994

Contributions received in 2023/24 (regardless of S106 Date)

- 3.6. Table 3 shows the total amount of money received by KCC from developer contributions this financial year. The majority of this money is transferred from Districts and Boroughs at KCC's request.
- 3.7. In many instances the money received was agreed and signed for in S106 agreements predating this financial year.

Table 3 – Total s106 contributions received this financial year by KCC

Service Area	Amount
Adult Social Care	335,606
Community Facilities	1,481,873
Education	22,009,961
Highways	5,577,154
Public Rights of Way	397,253
Kent Thameside	1,114,107
Total	30,915,953

Contributions spent in 2023/24

- 3.8. Table 4 provides details on the amount of S106 contributions spent by the KCC this financial year.
- 3.9. Some of this will be money that was received and allocated in previous years but could only be spent when sufficient sums were received to pay for a project in its entirety.

Table 4 – Total contributions spent by KCC in 2023/24

Service Area	Amount
Adult Social Care	116,360
Community Facilities	944,848
Education	10,606,914
Highways	4,038,566
Public Rights of Way	52,744
Kent Thameside	1,306,602
Total	17,066,034

Contributions returned in 2023/24

3.10. Most s106 agreements come with a return clause where if contributions remain unspent after a certain period, then KCC is legally obliged to hand the contribution back to the developer.

3.11. No s106 contributions had a return clause triggered during 2023/234

Non-monetary contributions agreed in 2023/24 through S106 Agreements

3.12. Table 5 provides a summary of the non-monetary (in kind) contributions that were agreed through S106 agreements in the financial year 2023/24. Non-monetary contributions include provision of land transfers for the provision of Primary and Secondary schools.

Table 5 – Non-monetary S106 contributions

Item	Application	District	Amount
Land transfer for a 2FE Primary School	CA/16/0600	Canterbury	N/A
Land transfer for a 2FE Primary School	CA/16/0600	Canterbury	N/A
Land transfer of 1.6ha for a 1FE Primary School	SE/19/05000	Sevenoaks	N/A
Land transfer of 5ha for a 6FE Secondary School	SE/20/02988	Sevenoaks	N/A
Land transfer for School Car Park	SW/21/504028	Swale	N/A
Land transfer of 3ha for a 3FE Primary School	TM/22/00113	Tonbridge & Malling	N/A

Money borrowed

3.13. In the last financial year, no S106 money was spent repaying money borrowed.

4. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Contributions

- 4.1 KCC is not responsible for collecting or distributing CIL receipts. However, as part of ongoing negotiations between the County Council and those Districts and Boroughs charging CIL, governance exists or is in the process of being formed that sets out the requirements for KCC to access these funds.
- 4.1. The processes set out for KCC to access a District's CIL receipts varies between Districts. These processes may take the form of either a set percentage of CIL receipts transferred from a District to KCC annually, or a requirement to make bids against a District's CIL receipts. Further details can be found in Section 6.

Unallocated receipts from previous years

- 4.2. KCC has no unallocated CIL receipts from previous years.

Total CIL receipts

- 4.3. Table 6 outlines the CIL monies that KCC has received during 2023/24.

Table 6 – CIL Monies received during 2023/24

Item	
Sevenoaks Education	1,500,000
Folkestone & Hythe Waste	347,282

CIL retained at end of year

- 4.4. Table 7 below outlines the CIL monies that KCC has retained at the end of year (31st March 2024). This relates to CIL monies received in 2023/24 that were allocated towards Education and Waste projects.

Table 7 – CIL Monies retained at end of year

Item	Amount
Folkestone & Hythe Waste	955,915

CIL receipts allocated and spent in the year 2023/24

- 4.5. KCC has spent £1,500,772 of CIL received

Table 8 – CIL Monies allocated and spent during 2023/24

Item	Amount
Folkestone & Hythe Waste	772
Education- Trinity, Weald of Kent & Tunbridge Wells Grammar Schools	1,500,000

Amount of CIL spent on administrative expenses

4.6. No CIL receipts were spent on administrative expenses by KCC in 2023/24.

CIL Spending Governance

4.7. KCC's process for receiving CIL is determined at District level. It is important to note that not all Districts have adopted a CIL. Table 9 below summarises the current position of local planning authorities with regards to a CIL charging regime and how these funds can be accessed.

Table 9 – District CIL regimes and access to CIL funding

District	CIL Position	Process for accessing CIL funds
Canterbury	Adopted Apr 2020	Bidding process under development
Dartford	Adopted Apr 2014	Representation within Leader's Advisory Group and projects within Dartford's Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Folkestone and Hythe	Adopted Jul 2016	Set proportion of funds passed to KCC annually to spend on CIL infrastructure priorities
Maidstone	Adopted Oct 2017	Application to annual bidding process
Sevenoaks	Adopted Feb 2014	Application to CIL Spending Board

4.8. KCC has created an internal CIL working group which includes representation from all of KCC's infrastructure services that make use of developer contributions including Highways, Education, Adult Social Care, Libraries, Youth Services, Community Learning and Skills, Sustainable Urban Drainage and Strategic Waste Services. The role of this group is to consider how to bid for and spend any CIL receipts it receives, assessing policy and infrastructure demands to do so.

4.9. KCC made an application to Sevenoaks District Council for CIL funding in July 2023. A bid of £209,000 was approved by the CIL Board in November 2023 to improve nine Public Rights of Way across the district. The improvements will include the provision of all-weather surfaces, signage and measures to encourage biodiversity.

5. S278 Contributions

- 5.1. KCC, as the local highways authority, is responsible for the maintenance and development of the local road network within its borders. If planning permission has been granted for a development that requires changes or improvements to public highways, then KCC will often enter into a Section 278 (s278) Agreement with the developer. This agreement details and enables these changes to be made which the developer pays for and constructs. Examples of works that may be featured in a s278 include roundabouts, improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and traffic calming measures.
- 5.2. The value of s278 agreements takes the form of a performance bond paid to KCC by the developer based on the cost of the highway works (including utility works). A performance bond protects KCC against the risk of unforeseen expenditure if the works are not completed by the developer. If the works are delivered, then the bond is repaid to the developer, generally in parts based on completion stages.
- 5.3. KCC can also request a commuted sum payment from the developer. A commuted sum covers the maintenance and renewal costs (for 30 years) of assets built by the developer as part of an agreement and then adopted into public ownership by KCC.
- 5.4. S278 agreements are subject to reasonable and proportionate fees which KCC can charge as part of delivery and monitoring arrangements outlined within each agreement. These charges cover KCC costs associated with the necessary work involved, for example commissioning road safety audits.

Bonds agreed in 2023/24 through S278 Agreements

- 5.5. Table 10 outlines the value of bonds within signed S278 agreements this financial year.

Table 10 – Total value of S278 bonds signed in 2023/24

Item	Amount
S278 bonds signed with KCC	£21,029,384

Fees received in 2023/24 (regardless of S278 Date)

- 5.6. Table 11 outlines the total value of fees that have been paid to KCC as part of S278 agreements this financial year.

Table 11 – Total value of S278 fees received in 2023/24

Item	Amount
S278 fees received by KCC	£1,831,982

6. Future Spending Priorities

Table 12 – Received or invoiced s106 contributions yet to be spent and held by the Council at 31st March 2024 (Year-end position)

Service Area	Amount
Adult Social Care	3,130,768
Community Facilities	5,789,098
Education	71,834,380
Highways	34,518,902
Kent Thameside	3,153,878
Waste CIL	955,915
Total	119,382,941

- 6.1. During the financial year 2023/24, KCC's position with unspent s106 contributions has moved from £105,186,512 to £119,382,942. This is a net increase of £14,196,430 (13.5%) i.e. KCC has received more contributions during 2023/24 than it has spent.
- 6.2. The largest planned infrastructure projects that monies are allocated towards are summarised in Table 13. The delivery schedule of these infrastructure projects is informed by a number of factors, including whether sufficient finance is available but also land availability and Central Government policy. Spend projection dates are estimated and where not shown are awaiting the progression of associated contributing developments.

Table 13 – Largest planned infrastructure projects with unspent contributions

Project	Unspent Monies (Allocated) £m	District	Spend Projection
Maidstone Integrated Transport	5.9	Maidstone	2024 onwards
Chilmington Green, Secondary	6.3	Ashford	2024
A228 and B2160 junction Improvements with B2017 Badsell Road Paddock Wood	4.4	Tunbridge Wells	2024
Herne Relief Road	2.2	Canterbury	2024
New Hermitage Lane Primary	4.4	Tonbridge & Malling	2026
Dartford Bridge Primary	3.6	Dartford	2025
Strategic Transport Infrastructure Programme, Kent Thameside	3.2	Dartford	2024
Cornwallis Academy	3.8	Maidstone	2024
New Shorncliffe Garrison Primary	3.3	Folkestone & Hythe	
New Herne Bay Primary	3.0	Canterbury	
New Westwood Cross Primary	3.2	Thanet	
New Kingsnorth Primary	2.9	Ashford	
Bearsted Road/M20 Jnct 7	1.8	Maidstone	2024 onwards
Headcorn Primary	1.4	Maidstone	
New Quinton Road Secondary	2.6	Swale	2026
New Faversham Primary	2.1	Swale	

Swale Housing Infrastructure Fund	1.2	Swale	2024
Greenfields Primary	1.5	Maidstone	
Sturry Link Road	1.6	Canterbury	2026
New Aylesford Primary	1.4	Tonbridge & Malling	
Marden Primary	1.9	Maidstone	
Palmarsh Primary	1.5	Folkestone & Hythe	
New Rushenden Primary	1.4	Swale	
Cable Wharf Primary	1.1	Gravesham	2025
Mascalls Academy	1.2	Tunbridge Wells	
Valley Invicta Primary School at Kings Hill	1.1	Tonbridge & Malling	
Pilgrims' Way Primary	1.0	Canterbury	
	69.0		

- 6.3. KCC remains committed to seeking developer contributions across the County to ensure that development pays a fair proportion for its impact on Kent's infrastructure, both existing and new.
- 6.4. Kent County Council emphasises the importance on taking an 'Infrastructure First' approach, reflected in Framing Kents Future): *“As the county continues to grow, we will seek to ensure that all communities, new and existing, have the right infrastructure around them for a good quality of life. This includes taking an 'Infrastructure First' approach to new development, improving digital connectivity and access, supporting our rural areas, ensuring people have access to safe and efficient travel options and that all communities can benefit from a strong social infrastructure.”*
- 6.5. Districts' Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) provide a long-term plan of infrastructure requirements arising from the allocation of housing within their Local Plans. These IDPs set out what is needed, where it is needed and when it is needed. These plans include KCC services.
- 6.6. KCC will continue to work in partnership with those Districts that are CIL charging authorities and set out governance arrangements in order to comply with their bidding processes. Regardless of the bidding requirements, KCC will prioritise the infrastructure projects that should be delivered first given the possible CIL monies available for KCC to bid for or spend.

7. Case Studies

- 7.1. The following case studies provide some highlights of development funded infrastructure that has been delivered within Kent Districts and Boroughs. Further information regarding the breakdown of information for Districts and Boroughs can be found on the accompanying Excel sheet [Here](#).

Focus on: Ashford

Case Study: Brockmans Lane, Park Farm, Ashford

S278 bond value: £326,018

The scheme comprises offsite highway works relating to the Park Farm South residential development site.

A section of Brockmans Lane was widened and a new access provided to the development. Traffic signals relating to an existing three way junction with Finn Farm Road (north and west) were moved further south on Brockmans Lane to provide more space for vehicles to manoeuvre through a constrained layout.

The improved Brockmans Lane and traffic signal location now form the main vehicular access route to the development site. This will enable the Finn Farm Road (north) to become a pedestrian and cycle only route which prioritises non-motorised users.

The detailed design and technical approval process took place in late 2021 with delivery of the highway works in 2023.



Case Study: New Digital Learning Centre, The Norton Knatchbull School, Ashford

Scheme Total Cost	£2,092,510
Developer contributions used to date	£1,383,302
Scheme Delivered	September 2021

A new Digital Learning Centre was opened for students in September 2021 offering larger and improved facilities. The expansion provided 5 new classrooms, including two exemplar science labs and prep room on the ground floor and three specialist computing labs on the first floor. The classrooms were designed to provide flexibility for both staff and students and engender collaboration during lessons, creating a unique environment in which to learn.

The building is fully accessible to all students.

The additional space and learning facilities delivered enabled the school to offer an additional 71 places in each year group.



Table 14 – Ashford developer contributions summary

Ashford 23/24	Secured	Received	Spent
	£8,016,498	£1,103,358	£2,049,010

Focus on: Tonbridge & Malling

Case Study: Station Road, Aylesford

S278 bond value: £1.4m
Scheme Delivered : 2023

The scheme links a new industrial estate road to the existing highway network and provides pedestrian links to local amenities.

The works included carriageway widening, resurfacing, lighting, lining and signing on Station Road to form a new signalised junction. It included provision of a shared footway/cycleway facility, along with tactile and corduroy paving, to enhance pedestrian movements through the junction.

A standalone pedestrian crossing facility was installed to the east of the junction to provide links to Aylesford Train Station.

The detailed design and technical approval process took place in 2022-23 with delivery of the highway works shortly thereafter and snagging works completed in 2024.



Table 15 – Tonbridge & Malling developer contributions summary

Tonbridge & Malling 23/24	Secured	Received	Spent
	£23,746,739	£2,731,734	£999,799

Focus on: Thanet

Case Study: New Children's library, Margate Library.

Scheme Total Cost	£50,000
Developer contributions Used	£5,350
Scheme Delivered	March 2024

Libraries, Registration & Archives carried out a refurbishment of the children's library at Margate library.

Margate library is situated within Margate town centre in the Gateway building sharing facilities with district council services. The project expanded the footprint of the children's library, improved furniture & facilities including new carpets & seating.

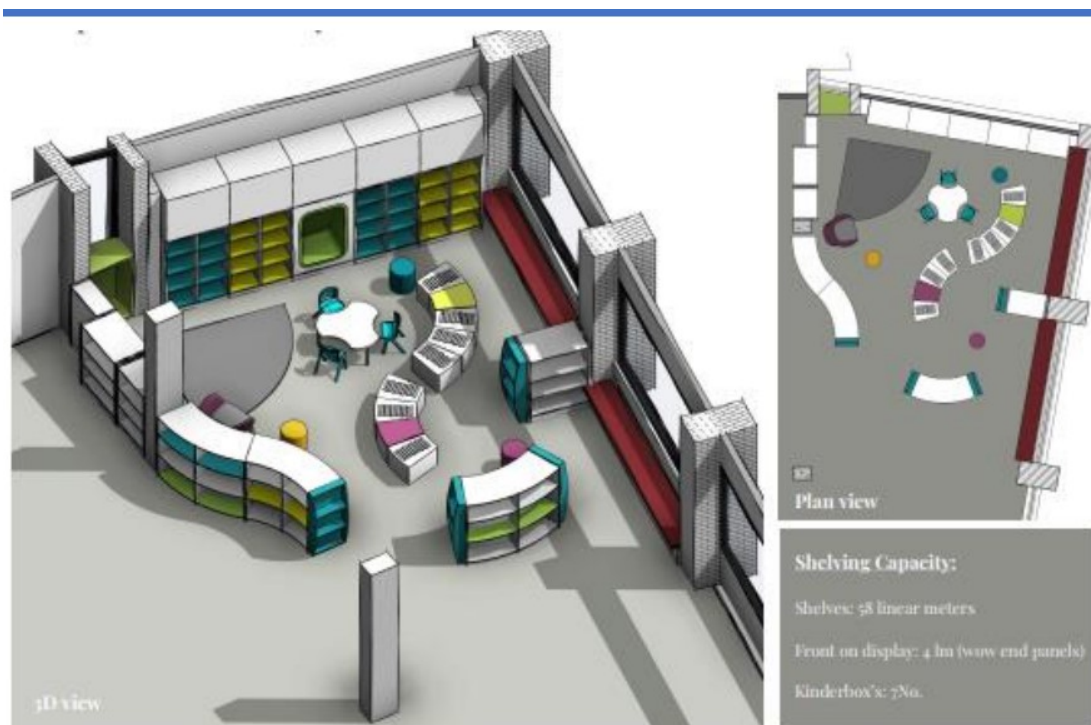




Table 17 – Thanet developer contributions summary

Thanet 23/24	Secured	Received	Spent
	£4,947,816	£3,935,326	£1,049,121

Focus on: Gravesham

Case Study: Northfleet, Adolescent Response Team (ART)

**Developer contributions Used
Scheme Delivered**

**£13,277
2023/2024**

The Adolescent Response Team (ART) is a flexible workforce, delivering services to children and families on evenings, weekends, and holidays to support KCC's approach to contextual safeguarding.

The model was developed and implemented in recognition of the links between contextual harm and family breakdown, learning from other high performing local authorities and learning from our partnerships with the University of Bedfordshire and the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

The ART service is uniquely creative and solutions-focussed in enabling a swift, flexible, and intensive response to meet the needs of children. The ART approach:

- provides evening and weekend non-case holding support at times of crisis for adolescents and their families, where contextual risks threaten family or placement breakdown
- works in an integrated way with wider adolescent services (Family Hub Work, Social Work, Early Help and Youth Justice) and multi-agency partners, through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings, to assess and respond to identified locations and spaces of contextual concern

Work with individual children and families

The referral inbox is monitored from 9am – 5pm. The referring case holder is responded to within 1 hour with details of allocation to an Adolescent Response Practitioner (“Responders”) or to discuss the request further. Responders can visit children and families 7 days a week (including holidays) up to 8pm.

Responders adopt a model of support which is relevant to the child, approaching each child/family as an independent source and offer support ‘in the moment’ to prevent, de-escalate and stabilise the situation. This approach builds familial resilience and prevents children coming into care.

Responders are trauma informed and many are Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) trained. They appreciate and understand the complexity of adolescents and the impact this can have on a family in crisis. Senior staff are available to support and guide responders in addition to the support of lone working and staff supervision practices and development opportunities.

Community Contextual Safeguarding Work

The ART Service is fully cognisant of the growing evidence of child criminal exploitation in Kent and work closely with the Gangs & County Lines Police Team and Violence Reduction Unit. This collaboration aims to identify children who are

being exploited, to disrupt exploitation activity, and support children to identify and actively withdraw from those causing them harm. It is evident that increasing the intensity of support to these individuals is crucial in disrupting grooming activity, alongside offering, promoting, and often joining children to engage in alternative pro-social activities.

ART support the community multi-agency team to undertake location assessments aimed at understanding the context of the harm.

These assessments are a foundation for developing a collaborative multi-agency plan to support positive change for not only the children present in those spaces but also the broader local community.

In 2023/24, in Northfleet, these sessions were strategically implemented in response to locations and spaces identified during District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings (DCSM) as posing a potential risk of harm to children. These include 'hotspot' areas and urban locations, parks, abandoned premises, private businesses, and housing estates.

Table 18 – Gravesham developer contributions summary

Gravesham 23/24	Secured	Received	Spent
	£286,369	£2,704,969	£640,319

KCC Cabinet

Deirdre Wells OBE

Visit Kent



This infographic summarises the volume and value of tourism and the impact of visitor expenditure on the local economy in 2023. It provides comparative data against previously published data. The results are derived using the Cambridge Economic Model under licence by Destination Research Ltd. The 2023 economic impact results show a significant recovery in volume of trips and related expenditure, compared to 2021.

66M VISITORS



£4.1BN VALUE



77,854 JOBS



KENT'S PERFORMANCE

2021 → 2023

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PURPOSE OF TRIP TO KENT



HOLIDAY 43%
THOSE ON HOLIDAY
STAY 3.6 NIGHTS
IN THE AREA AND
SPEND £236.26
FOR THE DURATION OF THE
TRIP



BUSINESS 11%
THOSE ON BUSINESS
STAY 2.9 NIGHTS
IN THE AREA AND
SPEND £273.17
FOR THE DURATION OF THE
TRIP



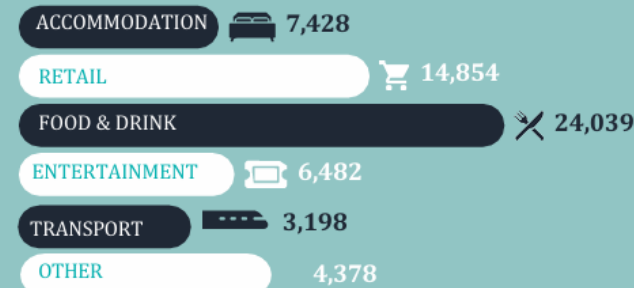
VFR 42%
THOSE VISITING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES
STAY 3.1 NIGHTS
IN THE AREA AND
SPEND £112.58
FOR THE DURATION OF THE TRIP



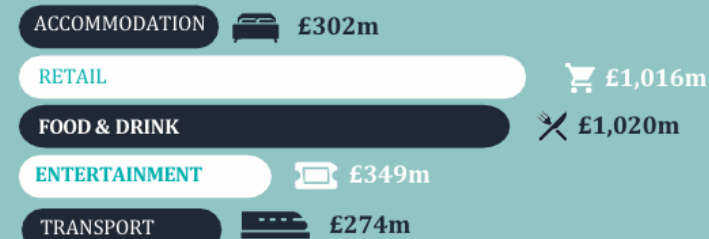
4%
OTHER PURPOSES
INCLUDING OVERSEAS
STUDY VISITS

VALUE AND VOLUME

TOURISM JOBS



DIRECT EXPENDITURE



VISITOR BREAKDOWN



Key findings

Inbound Visitors
higher than pre-
pandemic levels

VFR accounts for
42% of the visitor
economy

Food & Drink
Heritage
Shopping

11% of all jobs
in Kent





Challenges & Opportunities



Challenges

Reduced funding
for visitor
economy

Recruitment &
Retention of staff

Higher
Overheads

Cost of living
crisis

Opportunities

Page 300

Strong demand

Diversified
product

Year-round job
creation

Pride in
Place





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THE VISITOR ECONOMY DELIVERS SOCIAL VALUE

**GROWING KENT'S VISITOR ECONOMY
TOGETHER**

**Local Visitor
Economy
Partnership**

Recognised by

VisitEngland

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KENT GARDEN *of* ENGLAND
Destination Management Plan

2024 - 2029



Objectives

1. Place

Improve external perceptions of Kent

2. Prosperity

Increase the productivity of the Kent visitor economy to deliver job opportunities and prosperity to our places

3. Product

Create new reasons to visit and a welcoming visitor experience by driving even greater collaboration

4. People and Planet

Bring together businesses, residents, and visitors to positively impact community, climate and nature



What's next?





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BLITZ



STARRING GB!

WINE TOURISM





INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

In Kent



KENT

BIG WEEKENDTM

Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th April 2025

KENT GARDEN *of* ENGLAND

visitkent.co.uk

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**GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 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 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	Kent Rural Partnership – Update of last 18 months of activity and priorities	Agriculture and farming economy - land based industries and food production	(Mr Sole – GED&C CC 14 March 2023)
8	Farming Economy		
9	Brand Kent Commission Update		
10	<i>TBC - Inward Investment Economic Impact update – Locate in Kent</i>		<i>(Mark Hood – Agenda Setting 3/8/22)</i>
11	KMEF Implementation Update		
12	Minerals and Waste Local Plan		
13	Trading Standards Checked – (Information paper (rollout, progress and delivery)		
14	Sports Capital Grant	Deferred from July, September and November	
15	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	<i>Thames Estuary</i>		<i>Kate Willard - Thames Estuary Envoy and Chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board Frances Moffett- Kouadio - Strategic Investment Director (moved from January 2025 agenda)</i>
7	Performance Dashboard		
8	Kent Design Guide		
9	Border Target Operating Model and Trading Standards/ KSS		
10	Employment Task Force	A general update on key activities to date, results and future focus and plans	
11	Integrated Work and Health Strategy for Kent and Medway	Key decision	
12	Work Programme	Standing item	

Items for Consideration/Not yet 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.	<i>(Mr Robey – agenda setting 31/01/23)</i>
Lower Thames Crossing		
Otterpool Garden Town		
Energy Infrastructure		