

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 25th November, 2025

2.00 pm

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





AGENDA

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 25th November, 2025, at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

Ask for: **Anna Taylor**
Telephone: **03000 416478**

Membership

Reform UK (8) Mr W Chapman, Mr J Eustace, Mr T Mole, Mr T L Shonk,
Dr G Sturley, Mr D Truder, Vacancy x2

Liberal Democrat (2): Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE (Chair) and Mr A J Hook

Conservative (1): Mrs S Hudson

Labour (1): Mr A Brady (Vice-Chair)

Green (1): Mr M A J Hood

Church
Representatives (3): Mr J Constanti, Mr M Reidy and Mr Q Roper

Parent Governor (2): Ms R Ainslie-Malik and Ms H Carter

County Councillors who are not Members of the Committee but who wish to ask questions at the meeting are asked to notify the Chairman of their questions in advance.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

A - Committee Business

- A1 Apologies and Substitutes
- A2 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A3 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September and 2 October 2025 (Pages 1 - 14)

B - Any items called-in

C - Any items placed on the agenda by any Member of the Council for discussion

- C1 Revenue and Capital Budget Forecast Outturn Report - Quarter 2 (Pages 15 - 82)
- C2 Decision 25/00004 Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives (Pages 83 - 112)
- C3 SEND Scrutiny - Education Health and Care Plans (Pages 113 - 150)
- C4 25/00101 - Kent County Council Local Government Reorganisation: Strategic Business Case Submission to Government (Pages 151 - 152)

D - To Note

- D1 Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee - Annual Report (Pages 153 - 162)
- D2 Work Programme (Pages 163 - 166)

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
Deputy Chief Executive
03000 416814

Monday, 17 November 2025

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 17 September 2025.

PRESENT: Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE (Chair), Mr A Brady (Vice-Chair), Mr W Chapman, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr M A J Hood (Substitute for Rich Lehmann), Mr A J Hook, Mrs S Hudson, Mr T Mole, Mr T L Shonk, Mr P Thomas (Substitute for Dr G Sturley) and Mr M Reidy

ALSO PRESENT: Mr B Collins and Miss D Morton

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr R Smith (Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health), Mrs A Taylor (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny)), Ms H Gillivan (Interim Director Adults and Integrated Commissioning.), Ms P Parker (Transformation Lead), Ms C Maynard (Head of Commercial and Procurement), Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy), Mr B Watts (Deputy Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer)), Ms R Anderson (Head of Business Information, Strategy and Assurance), Mr M Cheverton (Head of Real Estate Services), Ms J Taylor (Head of Capital) and Miss M Goldsmith (Finance Business Partner - Adult Social Care and Health)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

9. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item A1)

Apologies were received from Mr Lehmann for whom Mr Hood was substituting, Mr Sturley for whom Mr Thomas was substituting, and Ms Kemp who was attending the meeting virtually. Mr Reidy, church representative was present but apologies were received from the other church representatives and parent governors.

10. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting

(Item A2)

There were no declarations of interest.

11. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the open and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025 be approved as a correct record.

12. 25/00042 - Older Persons Residential and Nursing Care Service

(Item C1)

1. The report was introduced by Diane Morton, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, who outlined the Older Person's Residential and

Nursing Care Service Key Decision, taken on July 25th after receiving endorsement from the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee. Miss Morton provided an overview of the ongoing challenges facing the Adult Social Care sector including the need to strengthen the local workforce and how this new contract aimed to address those issues.

2. In response to comments and questions from Members, the discussion covered the following:
 - Richard Smith, Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health, explained to the Committee that the contract acted as a framework that identified and enabled partnerships with strategic providers that met price, quality and location expectations.
 - Helen Gillivan, Interim Director Adults and Integrated Commissioning, explained that sustainable pricing for both the providers and KCC as well as quality assurances from implementing a Trusted Assessor Model separated this contract from previous versions. Clare Maynard, Chief Procurement officer, elaborated by explaining how the contract did not guarantee providers work, but that joining the framework gave them the opportunity to access KCC's client base, increasing control on spend and limiting spot- purchase arrangements. It was emphasised that on the current contract, 78% of providers had joined rather than engaging in spot- purchasing.
 - Concerning Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), break clauses would be offered in the contracts for new unitary authorities.
 - Mr Smith detailed the average annual 10-12% increase in demand for Adult Social Care, compared to the 4% annual increase in funding via taxation and ring- fenced grants. He also highlighted how the framework supported a sustainable service model post- covid, whilst also considering the balance between reducing demand for Adult Social Care and the statutory obligation to provide essential care services.
 - Dave Shipton, Head of Finance, clarified that KCC's commissioned contracts did not receive additional funding as a result of the increase in employer's National Insurance (NI). He also confirmed that subject to the continuation of the national grant, KCC's employment of more in-house staff would result in a higher allocation of funding from that grant.
 - Mrs Gillivan assured the Committee that an accommodation market position was being co- produced, that would model multiple options to address spot-purchasing and the degree of reliance on the private sector.
 - It was explained how the open purchasing system, categorisations of needs and tendering parameters streamlined the process for providers to access the framework, be placed in their respective price banding and access their care needs.
 - The premise of the open light- touch framework was to enable new providers to join throughout the duration and to address the locality-of-need issue present in the adult social care division.
 - In response to a concern about a red risk identified in the report, Mrs Gillivan clarified that legacy placements would not be included in the new contract. Further financial reporting would be done through Cabinet Committees to address any budgetary deviations from the report.
 - Ben Watts, General Counsel, explained that further decisions delegated to officers would not return to the Scrutiny Committee unless specifically requested, as there was no formal requirement to do so.

- Mr Smith explained that the process by which the Care Act 2014 acted as a safety net in the case of inflated financial pressures to ensure the statutory care obligations were met.
3. Following the questions, the Chairman welcomed comments and views from the Committee about the report. These included:
 - A Member raised concerns on the over- reliance on the private sector and requested an alternative model that included testing the market to be explored. Specific spot- purchasing percentages were also raised as a figure to be monitored in future reports.
 - Members requested a more detailed breakdown of costs and funding within the Adult Social Care sector, to provide greater context on spending for the Committee.
 - It was welcomed that options for both in- house provision and external sourcing of providers were being considered.
 - It was posed that options be explored to utilise the disposals process to provide additional supply for the care sector.
 4. The Chairman called on the Cabinet Member to provide comments and clarifications on the Member's points of debates:
 - Mr Smith welcomed the debate and suggested a dashboard be incorporated into the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee performance report to meet Member's requests for information.
 5. The Chairman proposed that the report be noted and requested that the Cabinet Member and the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee receive a future report on the relative cost of market-provided versus KCC-owned care homes under the new contract, with a suggested frequency of every 12 months and at least more frequently than the lifetime of the contract. The Scrutiny Committee also recommended a focus be given to the mitigation of the high risk associated with the transition from the current to the new contract and to incorporate a performance dashboard including KPIs, specifically on spot- purchasing and the impact of NI into normal Cabinet Committee reporting arrangements. This was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the report and request a future report to the Cabinet Committee on the relative cost of market- provided versus KCC- owned care homes under the new contract, with a suggested frequency of every 12 months and at least more frequently than the lifetime of the contract.

13. Kent County Council's Asset Disposal Strategy (Item C2)

1. The item was introduced by the Deputy Leader, Brian Collins, who provided a contextual overview of the statutory obligations of the Local Government Act 1970 and the Asset Disposal Strategy's importance in KCC's financial stability.
2. Rebecca Anderson, Head of Business Information and Assurance, introduced the report that outlined the statutory and fiduciary framework for disposing of KCC surplus freehold assets to generate capital receipts.

3. In response to comments and questions from Members, the discussion covered the following:
 - When determining the outcome for surplus assets, considerations were made for the property's holding costs, the strategic position of other KCC departments and environmental options. It was explained that the notice period given to other KCC departments on the availability of surplus properties varied depending on the amount of notice the service exiting the asset provided Infrastructure.
 - Mark Cheverton, Head of Real Estates, outlined the process of delegation to the Director of Infrastructure for any leases under 20 years, and clarified that an options appraisals included a viable leasing option before an asset was declared surplus.
 - The decision on whether to rent rather than sell an asset had no defined benchmark but instead depended on several factors including the market sector, value and potential risks.
 - In response to a request on further information on the 77 assets in the pipeline for disposal, commercial sensitivity was emphasised by Mr Cheverton.
 - As KCC was bound by Section 123 of the Local Government Act to dispose of any asset it declared surplus; any potential changes due to LGR could not override this statutory duty until a formal LGR decision was announced.
 - Mr Shipton explained the limited circumstances in which KCC could use capital receipts for revenue purposes, detailed in an appendix to the annual budget report.
 - Mr Cheverton provided an overview on how KCC's property acquisition and disposal teams collaborated to ensure held surplus assets were discounted from reuse before acquisitions were considered.
 - Mr Collins explained that the increase in the number of properties in the disposal pipeline did not indicate a change in policy, due to the proportion of assets that would not mature to disposal. Recent changes were also outlined to explain higher numbers of properties in the pipeline for disposal including an increased number of surplus children's centres following decisions for service changes.
 - Community Interest Groups may nominate a local property as an Asset of Community Value which ensured the community is given 6 months to prepare a bid for the property if it comes forward for disposal. It was emphasised that in line with KCC's Disposal Policy, groups could include a business case on its benefit value for KCC's wider services.
 - In response to a request for the annual cost to the Council of maintaining and securing unused assets, Mr Collins confirmed that the figure could be provided outside of the Committee meeting.
 - Where there were assets with De Minimis value, an external valuer would undergo an assessment before the transfer occurred to safeguard against an asset being sold significantly below market value.
 - The statutory obligation to dispose of a surplus asset applied to both leasing and freehold agreements but did not preclude KCC from leasing the surplus asset externally. The Committee was assured that assets were optimised and all options explored before the disposal process to ensure best value.
 - The warm, safe and dry policy was the basic condition for occupancy with a minimum requirement of safe for vacant properties.
4. Following the questions, the Chairman welcomed comments and views from the Committee about the report. These included:

- A Member raised concerns on if work would be done to give local authorities first option of development on their land.
 - It was posed that the Cabinet Member adopt a flexible attitude towards an asset's market value if the community organisations that presented the bid were willing to additionally supplement KCC funded services.
 - A Member raised concerns over transparency and requested that greater focus be given on the relationship between assets purchased and assets sold, including the viability of the timeframes.
 - A request was made for more detailed documentation to be provided, including on the relationship between service building providers and community interest parties, as well as business cases to be appended onto Policy and Resources (P&R) Cabinet Committee reports.
 - An emphasis was placed on the strategic impact of the disposals policy, including the transformation of assets that yield financial returns for KCC offsetting some disposals costs.
 - The Chairman commented on interest in the interpretation of policy in relation to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) but the committee acknowledged the levels of uncertainty currently surrounding LGR.
5. The Chairman called on the Cabinet Member to provide comments and clarifications on the Member's points of debates:
- Mr Collins emphasised the detailed reports on disposals provided at the P&R Cabinet Committee and questioned the necessity of additional documentation, considering the possibility of diverting officers attention away from their core responsibilities.
6. The Chairman proposed to note the report and request the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee to note the discussion of the Scrutiny Committee. This was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED to note the report and request the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee to note the discussion of the Scrutiny Committee.

14. Work Programme (Item D1)

Resolved to NOTE the Work Programme.

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 2 October 2025.

PRESENT: Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE (Chair), Mr A Brady (Vice-Chair), Mr J Eustace, Mr J Finch (Substitute for Mr W Chapman), Mr A J Hook, Ms I Kemp, Mr M A J Hood, Mrs S Hudson, Mr T Mole, Mr T L Shonk and Dr G Sturley and Mr D Truder.

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs M Lawes

IN ATTENDANCE: Superintendent P Steenhuis (Kent Police), Mr S Peerbux (Head of Community Safety), Mr M Rolfe (Head of Community Protection), Ms S Brinson (KCC Community Safety), Mr M Bunting (Vision Zero Strategy Manager), Ms J Mookherjee (Consultant in Public Health), Ms R Westlake (Senior Commissioner), Mr N Wilkinson (Assistant Director Contest and Serious Organised Crime (SOC)), Superintendent P Steenhuis (Kent Police), Mrs Clare Bright (Associate Director - Safeguarding, Kent & Medway NHS), Mrs Katie Castle (Head of Service, East Kent, Probation), Ms Jess Harman (Kent & Medway Prevent and Channel Coordinator) and Mrs A Taylor (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

15. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item A1)

Apologies had been received from Mr Chapman for whom Mr Finch was present as substitute.

16. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting

(Item A2)

1. Mr Hook declared that he was a Lawyer in private practice and his wife was a serving Probation Officer.

17. Kent Community Safety Agreement

(Item B1)

1. Mr Peerbux, Head of Community Safety, introduced the report and delivered a presentation which outlined the purpose and the functions of the Kent Community Safety Partnership.
 - a. It was highlighted that the Partnership team worked with local partners to tackle community safety issues, it operated as a county-level strategic coordinating group with a statutory responsibility for developing a comprehensive community safety strategy.

- b. Upcoming focus areas for the partnership included neighbourhood policing updates, domestic abuse commissioning work and continued cross agency collaboration.
2. Superintendent Steenhuis, Kent Police, explained that Kent Police had introduced a new neighbourhood policing model, which aimed to deliver more targeted and community focused policing across the county, with several key components
 - a. As part of the Neighbourhood Beat Teams Initiative, each ward had a named officer that the resident could identify online by entering their post code.
 - b. Child-Centred Policing Teams, made-up of beat officers and Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs), focused on youth engagement and worked closely with schools and the Youth Justice Team. Knife awareness programmes had been delivered to over 20,000 students.
 - c. Neighbourhood Task Teams based in each district supported beat officers by addressing complex issues such as antisocial behaviour with particular focus on town centres, retail crime and actions to protect women and girls.
 - d. The Rural Taskforce had achieved significant results in tackling serious thefts, particularly involving farm machinery.
 - e. Prevention Hubs provided centralised support across areas including anti social behaviour, drugs, licencing and child-centred policing, all aimed at crime prevention and community engagement.
3. Ms Cain, Commissioner, provided the Committee with an overview of the Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents Scheme (SAFER Scheme).
 - a. The SAFER Scheme was launched in March 2024 to help domestic abuse survivors remain safely in their homes through security enhancements and support services.
 - b. In the first thirteen months, the scheme received 810 referrals, with 75% of households receiving security improvements. It supported 1013 children and targeted underrepresented groups including men, people with disabilities and those in private housing across both high deprivation and affluent areas.
 - c. Kent also began developing a Cyber Sanctuary Scheme to launch in 2026, offering cyber security advice, home visits and training to address technology enabled abuse, which affected over 72% of service users.
4. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Kent Police did not have off-road motorbikes, due to budget constraints, instead drone technology was utilised to address the issue of anti-social behaviour. Superintendent Steenhuis highlighted the importance of encouraging the public to report incidents and working with landowners to limit unauthorised off-road vehicle use.
 - b. The specialist Anti-Social Behaviour Team (ASB) had managed complex cases, with ASB identified as a priority across all Community Safety Units. Effective partnership models, such as in Tonbridge, had been encouraged throughout the districts. Targeted action against the top 20 retail crime offenders, supported by criminal behaviour orders and substance misuse interventions, had resulted in reduced offending. ASB reporting had increased following enhanced community

engagement and a review of recording processes, which had strengthened data accuracy and operational response. Offender tag monitoring had also supported targeted follow-up near reported crime locations.

- c. There was no specific crime category for violence against women and girls but related offences were monitored closely under the lead of Chief Superintendent Emma Banks. Work had focused on early intervention in schools to challenge behaviours, targeted enforcement, diversionary measures and the use of alternative outcomes to ease court pressures. It was agreed that statistical data could be provided at a later date.
- d. A range of educational workbooks had been developed for use by officers, covering topics such as retail crime, behaviour and hate crime. It was highlighted that over 90% of those who completed the workbooks had not reoffended. Training had been delivered through the Violence Reduction Unit and Community Safety Unit, including education in schools and bystander training for licenced premises and door staff. Prevention remained challenging to measure but had shown positive impact.
- e. The success of schemes such as QR codes on taxis to allow individuals to report instances of inappropriate behaviour or refusal to drive a vulnerable individual and taxi driving training was also highlighted. The team worked closely with districts to address local issues using dedicated problem-solving funds, with a particular focus on town centre hotspots. Joint training was delivered in schools, supported by the Child-Centred Policing Team and key messages were shared with universities during Freshers Week. Prevent Education Officers reached 17,100 children across Kent and Medway with sessions including extreme misogyny awareness. The team also referenced the Adolescents programme on Netflix and highlighted strong partnership working with Kent Police and the Child-Centred Policing Team.
- f. In addition to face-to-face training, the team provided resources including signposting to the Department of Education and Educate Against Hate materials, which were distributed to designated safeguarding leads across all schools.
- g. The importance of the 'Don't Disrespect' campaign was acknowledged, it had been shaped by young people and supported by Kent Youth County Council. The campaign work had continued with posters distributed to all secondary schools in Kent at the start of the academic year to highlight healthy and unhealthy relationships and signpost support services. A resource pack had been provided to teachers to support PSHE lessons and a focused newsletter had been sent to schools directing them to the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services website. It was explained that further campaign activity would be developed in collaboration with the council's advisor over the coming year.
- h. Superintendent Steenhuis explained that 'Walk and Talk' events had been held to identify areas where communities felt unsafe, enabling joint problem solving with local authorities on issues such as lighting and overgrown hedges. Additionally, events had been advertised online allowing residents to find their local beat officers. Project Vigilant had been implemented to covertly target predatory behaviour with trained officers deploying community to identify this behaviour. Home Office

Grip funding had also been provided for high visibility patrols. Educational resources and workshops on domestic abuse and healthy relationships had been delivered in schools, through the Police Education Programme with peer champions also established.

- i. 'Safer' Campaigns had been run across Kent each year, informed by intelligence collected from the previous year in order to allocate resources effectively. The Government had also launched national 'Safer Campaigns' including the recent Safer Summer Campaign focused on town centres, with a Safer Winter Campaign forthcoming. Local resourcing had been aligned with Government data, these campaigns were set to continue.
- j. It was explained that resources had been allocated based on demand through the Tasking and Coordination Group, using threat, risk and harm assessments. Chief Inspectors had presented requests to Superintendents, who determined local resource allocations. Where needs exceeded divisional capability, matters were escalated to the Tasking and Coordination Group, where the Deputy Chief Constable approved additional support from other policing units.
- k. Training was driven by the Counter Terrorism Local Profile which was produced by Counter Terrorism Policing. The profile outlined the threats and risk faced by Kent and Medway, the annual training was focused on the specific threats found in the profile.
- l. When asked about the levels of Nitrous Oxide use, Superintendent Steenhuis explained that there was a low level of detections due to the covert nature of the use of the drug, which often occurred behind closed doors. Where the Police could identify offenders, they were prosecuted. Alongside enforcement, efforts had focused on diversion and education, particularly through schools, in an effort to tackle the online purchasing of these substances. Work was done with the young people's service 'We Are With You' on school engagement, engaging with young people about the dangers of substance use and looking for alternative activities. It was acknowledged that much of the activity around these substances was hidden and occurred online, making it challenging to address and difficult to provide accurate figures as to the levels of usage.
- m. Work around prevention of substance misuse was intelligence led, with reports directed to local beat officers, who developed problem solving plans to address the issue. All problem solving activities had been recorded on Problem Solving Plans (PSPs) within the Athena Database. This allowed local officers to access information and respond effectively to identified issues, ensuring a coordinated approach. This process formed a part of the new Neighbourhood Policing Model, which had already shown positive impact.
- n. When asked about the suicide rate being higher than national average in Kent, Superintendent Steenhuis explained that suicide rates in Kent were complex, with men aged over 45 predominantly affected due to stress and communication barriers. While self harm rates were similar across genders, men completed suicide attempts more frequently. Local research had identified domestic abuse as a significant factor increasing suicide rates for women. Financial stress, relationship breakdowns and substance abuse were also recognised as key national drivers. The need for targeted mental health support and the

understanding of demographic specific risk factors was emphasised. Superintendent Steenhuis expressed his appreciation for the mental health services across Kent, including the ICB which had 24/7 safe havens and a 24/7 hotline, for police and ambulance services to access advice from Mental Health Clinicians when dealing with individuals in mental distress.

- o. Ms Mookerjee, Consultant in Public Health, shared that the need for alcohol treatment remained high due to the complexity of addiction and individuals being at varying stages of help seeking. Services were available for those ready to engage, for drugs such as heroin and crack cocaine, the service provision was generally sufficient but it was recognised that more outreach was needed. Funding reductions over the past 15 years had limited outreach services but through government uplifts, the resources were restored enabling services to proactively engage with individuals where needed.
- p. It was reported that fraud remained a significant crime with efforts focused on providing guidance through community channels and educating the public to distinguish legitimate contracts from scams. Trading standards targeted fraud affecting older and vulnerable people, with dedicated teams supporting victims and preventing repeat incidents. Local health alliance and voluntary sector partners had also contributed to community support and fraud prevention.
- q. Low level local issues had been addressed using offender reoffending data, including a focus on the top 20 retail offenders. Multi-agency work through the Kent Criminal Justice Board and Integrated Offender Management had monitored individuals released from prison to ensure access to support services. Repeat offenders and repeat victims, including in cases of anti-social behaviour, had been targeted with tailored interventions to reduce reoffending and prevent further victimisation.
- r. Mr Peerbux explained within the partnership consideration was being given to analytical resources. The Kent Community Safety Team had planned to recruit an analyst to assist in the development of a dashboard. A senior officer level working group, which included all the agencies had been monitoring performance.
- s. Superintendent Steenhuis confirmed that Neighbourhood Officers were assigned covering multiple areas and were supported by task forces with additional resources. Visibility was highlighted as a challenge, efforts had been made to improve communication through 'My Community Voice' and corporate communications including social media podcasts and video updates to highlight work and engagement with local communities.
- t. It was reported that online harassment had a serious impact on mental health. Individuals were encouraged to report incidents, which were investigated, and where criminal, prosecuted. Efforts had also focused on raising awareness about online safety measures to prevent harm.
- u. Year 6 transition activities had been delivered to prepare pupils for secondary school, the team had engaged with primary schools and delivered safety sessions to this year group across the country. Staff had provided training to Virtual School Kent and received positive feedback for their support of vulnerable children.

- v. Collaboration had taken place between KCC Social Services and Integrated Children's Services to develop domestic abuse practice and adopt a strength based approach. This work had been carried out through the Early Intervention and Prevention Subgroup which had played a key role in the Domestic Abuse Strategy.
 - w. Partnership priorities were addressed in no particular order, resources had been flexibly allocated to support these priorities as needed.
 - x. Data collection faced challenges due to under reporting across many categories. The Crime Survey for England and Wales provided insights based on the surveyed experiences rather than reported incidents.
 - y. Ward-level surveys were conducted via My Community Voice and Officers used the data to understand local issues. It was explained that survey results have provided useful insights into priorities such as e-scooters, parking and fly-tipping. Additionally, surveys from various organisations had been consolidated to provide a comprehensive picture for the partnership.
5. Following the questions, the Chairman welcomed comments and views from the Committee about the report. These included:
- a. The importance of addressing threats from both the far right and the far left. In response to this a Member stressed the importance of allowing the professionals to manage the risks through their assessment process.
 - b. Every child in Kent schools be provided with an education on preventing domestic abuse, misogyny and promoting healthy relationships. Additionally, teaching children critical thinking, to understand the risks of certain online material, in an effort to prevent radicalisation.
 - c. To encourage the take up of resources aimed at reducing suicide levels in Kent.
 - d. To make more funding available for outreach work.
 - e. Using more positive language and outcomes within the report. In response to this a Member highlighted the presence of Prevent Officers within schools and that Prevent was a part of safeguarding training for teachers and governors.
 - f. A Member discussed the dashboard coming back to the Committee once developed to then discuss how it could be more visible to the public.
 - g. To discuss how the visibility of neighbourhood policing could be more closely monitored.
 - h. The importance of including Neighbourhood watch groups in the partnership to increase visibility and confidence.
6. In summary Mrs Lawes, Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities, explained that a balanced approach was needed in all initiatives. Mrs Lawes expressed concern about the number of programmes being delivered in primary schools and the potential impact on young children's education and wellbeing by introducing issues too early.
7. Superintendent Steenhuis, explained that engagement with young people focused on year 6 transition activities and wider community initiatives including youth clubs and diversion work. Superintendent Steenhuis highlighted the

partnerships achievements including the nationally recognised Body Tag Scheme and the Knife Replacement Initiative for domestic abuse cases. Performance monitoring combined the use of dashboards with case studies to better showcase successful interventions. Additionally, measures had been introduced to manage officer obstruction rates and protect neighbourhood visibility. The new one-click share feature on My Community Voice had improved information sharing and efforts were underway to strengthen links with Neighbourhood Watch through online platforms to enhance communication and community reach.

8. Mr Wilkinson, Assistant Director Contest and Serious Organised Crime, added that Prevent was one of the four elements of Contest, UK Counter Terrorism Strategy that had been in place since 2005. Whilst examples of misunderstanding around some terminology was acknowledged as a challenge, the importance of ongoing dialogue to improve clarity was emphasised.
9. Ms Mookerjee explained that Public Health played an important role in crime prevention and community safety focusing on prevention through health creation and building social cohesion. Strengthening community connections was highlighted as an effective way to support mental wellbeing, local health alliances, voluntary sector partners and Neighbourhood Watch were actively involved in this work. Improved access to services and a more proactive outreach or identified as current priorities to create healthier and safer communities.
10. Superintendent Steenhuis added that integration between Neighbourhood Watch, My Community Voice and doorbell footage had supported crime investigations. A digital asset management link had been used to request relevant footage from residents, which saved police time and helped to bring offenders to justice. This approach had successfully mobilised communities through technology.
11. A Member added that while protecting younger children was important, early intervention was necessary as young people were increasingly exposed to risks through social media and online gaming.
12. The Chair proposed and Mr Eustace seconded the following recommendation that:
13. The Scrutiny Committee note the report and offer sincere thanks to the partners for their work and their contributions to the report.
14. In noting the report the Scrutiny Committee identified the following points for consideration for the return of this report in July 2026:
 - a. How communications had been improved with the public and with services outside of the partnership.
 - b. How monitoring through the dashboard had progressed and how public confidence in the data within the report could be assured.

The Committee also noted five areas that remained of interest:

- a. The visibility of neighbourhood policing.

- b. The outreach from services into communities.
- c. Access to suicide prevention services.
- d. How best practice could be rolled out from individual parts of the partnership that were performing extremely well across the county.
- e. How the Neighbourhood Watch might be included in any future reports.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee note the report and offer sincere thanks to the partners for their work and their contributions to the report.

By: Anna Taylor, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny)

To: Scrutiny Committee, 25 November 2025

Subject: Revenue and Capital Budget Forecast Outturn Report – Quarter 2

Summary: As requested by the Chair and Spokespeople of the Scrutiny Committee the Committee is asked to discuss and note the Review and Capital Budget Forecast Outturn Report – Quarter 2.

1. Introduction

- a) The attached report was presented to Cabinet on 19 November 2025 and sets out the revenue and capital budget forecast monitoring position as at the end of September 2025-26. Cabinet were asked to agree a number of actions as set out in the recommendations within the report.
- b) The report sets out a forecast revenue overspend of £46.5m which represents 3.0% of the overall budget. The most significant overspend is in Adult Social Care and Health totalling £50.9m (7.2% overspend). Overspends must be financed from reserves, which is forecasting a balance of £41m by 31 March 2026 (page 22 of the report).
- c) Within the Report, there is detail about the actions that have been implemented to mitigate the revenue overspend and Cabinet were asked to agree the revenue and capital budget adjustments detailed in the report.
- d) Scrutiny has a key role to play when considering the Executive's draft budget proposals in January but financial scrutiny is a continuing duty throughout the year. In reviewing the revenue and capital budget monitoring reports the Scrutiny Committee can examine the rationale behind budget allocations, spending decisions and financial forecasts, and can challenge assumptions or request further evidence.
- e) The Scrutiny Committee plays a vital role in ensuring transparency, accountability and continuous improvement in KCC's decision-making and service delivery. The Committee can add value by reviewing how resources are prioritised and allocated, reviewing the integration between financial and service planning and testing out whether the council is directing its resources effectively. The Committee, through scrutiny in a public forum, provides a challenge to the Executive's management of the Council's finances, building trust in the Council's financial governance.
- f) The Scrutiny Committee considers the same report as presented to the Cabinet to reduce additional workload, this is in addition to the consideration of the draft budget proposals in January.

2. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to discuss and note the report.

3. Attached documents

- a) Cabinet Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report

4. Background documents

- a) [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 19th November, 2025, 10.00 am](#)

Contact Details

Anna Taylor
Assistant Democratic Services Manager
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03000 416478

From: Deputy Leader, Brian Collins
Interim Corporate Director Finance, John Betts

To: Cabinet, 19 November 2025

Subject: Revenue and Capital Budget Forecast Outturn Report – Quarter 2

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The attached report sets out the revenue and capital budget forecast monitoring position as at the end of September 2025-26, including progress against savings targets within the revenue budget, capital cash limit changes made between that Q1 and Q2 and monitoring updates for reserves, treasury management and prudential indicators.

The forecast revenue overspend reported needs immediate attention and steps are being taken to mitigate the level of the overspend. The report details the activities that have are being implemented to improve the situation and Cabinet are asked to endorse and support this approach.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is asked to:

- a) NOTE the revenue and capital forecast outturn position for 2025-26 as detailed in the report, and accompanying appendices
- b) NOTE the implementation of actions to mitigate the revenue overspend, both within Adult Social Care & Health specifically and across the authority
- c) AGREE the revenue and capital budget adjustments detailed in the report

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About this report

Updates on the monitoring of the in-year revenue and capital budget position are reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. This report presents the forecast position for the financial year 2025-26 as at September 2025.

From a revenue perspective, there are detailed sections covering the forecast revenue outturn position and variances against the working budget for each Directorate and a summary of the delivery of savings and additional income against targets set in the Budget. Delivery of savings is a crucial component of the Council's forecast outturn position. The Strategic Reset Programme (SRP) monitors key savings, working alongside the Directorates, Finance Business Partners and performance and analytics. Also included within the revenue section is the forecast outturn position for Schools' Delegated Budgets.

Similar information is provided for the capital forecast outturn position. Variances are shown either as a real or rephasing variance. A real variance affects the total cost of a capital project and a rephasing is because of a change in timescale for the delivery of a project, often due to slippage in the capital programme where spending or funding is delayed until future years and is reprofiled accordingly.

The report also contains more detailed information on the forecast reserves position at 31 March 2026, monitoring of prudential indicators and a treasury management update.

There are a recommendations for the Cabinet committee to consider, note or approve.

The revenue position

The 2025-26 budget included significant core funded spending growth, much of which has once again focused on increased costs in adults and children's social care due to inflationary uplifts in provider contracts, rising demand and increased complexity of needs.

The current working budget for 2025-26 is £1,531.9m. The forecast outturn variance against this budget is an overspend of £46.5m, which represents 3.0% of the overall budget.

When the council overspends, it must fund that overspend from reserves.

Any overspend is a concern for the authority and presents a risk to the Council's future financial sustainability and it is essential that the need to drawdown from reserves is reduced as far as possible, as drawdowns from reserves weaken the Council's financial resilience and increase the requirement to replenish reserves in future years. Our aim is that the Council holds General Reserves of at least 5% of our net revenue budget.

The increase in our overall position between Quarter 1 (£27.9m overspend) to Quarter 2 (£47.2m overspend) is a serious concern and heightens the risk to our future financial sustainability and financial resilience. Actions to address this overspend are detailed in the next section.

The most significant overspend is in Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH), totalling £50.9m (7.2% overspend). Of this variance, £20.9m relates to savings which are no longer anticipated to be achieved in this year, leaving £30.0m of other service related pressures. The overspend has increased significantly in the last quarter, and whilst this represents a continuation of the financial challenges facing the social care sector in general and by many other upper-tier local authorities, action does now need to be taken to curtail this increase. It is important to recognise that this forecast is based on the assumption that any further spending growth can be managed. If it cannot, the forecast overspend is likely to increase further.

The most significant pressures include £22.4m in Older People – Residential Care Services, from pressures relating to the numbers of people supported being higher than budgeted and savings targets not being fully achieved, and £16.3m in Older People – Community Based Services, in the main due to Older Persons Homecare activity and costs being higher than budgeted for.

There is an overspend in Children, Young People & Education of £2.2m (0.6% overspend). This is due to several different variances – a net

overspend of £8.7m in Children's Countywide Services and Operational Integrated Children's Services mainly related to the higher costs of packages for looked after children, and an underspend of £6.3m in Education & Special Educational Needs mainly related to Home to School Transport.

There is also an overspend in Growth, Environment & Transport (GET) of £1.4m (0.7% overspend). This is primarily due to a significant rise in passenger journeys with the English National Concessionary Scheme (ENCTS).

There are also underspends in the Chief Executive's Department (CED), Deputy Chief Executive's Department (DCED), Non Attributable Costs (NAC) and Corporately Held Budgets (CHB) which help to offset the overall position by £7.9m in total.

A table by directorate is shown at the beginning of [Section 1](#).

Each directorate is broken down into Divisions and Key Services. Each directorate has its own set of sections within the report presenting the outturn position by Division and providing explanations of the significant variances. A Key Service statement is available in [Appendix 1](#). Information on what each Key Service is responsible for can be found in the [2025-26 Budget Book](#).

Urgent actions to mitigate the revenue overspend

The scale of the forecast overspend is unprecedented and represents a critical risk to the financial resilience of the authority. This situation demands immediate action. If not addressed in the current financial year, it will have a severe impact on our reserves and will impact our budget position for 2026/27.

Whilst the majority of the overspend relates to Adult Social Care & Health, everyone in the authority has a role to play in improving our overspend position. We must act now to reduce expenditure wherever possible. To support this, the following actions are being implemented:

Focussed messaging to all staff

Ensuring a message of 'no non-essential spend' is delivered to all staff, together with supporting guidance. Any non-staffing expenditure deemed 'statutory' will need to be justified by specific reference back to the legislation requiring it.

Reminding budget managers of their responsibilities

A reminder message to all budget managers that they must at least stay within budget and make all efforts to underspend. Core funded spending for the remainder of the year needs to be reduced to the bare minimum necessary.

Holding budget managers to account

A panel will be set up to review any increase in forecasts from October to November to hold budget managers to account.

Reviewing spend against grant income

A review of all spend funded by grant to ensure we are maximising eligible spend (within grant conditions).

Recruitment review

In line with the need to focus only on essential spend, close monitoring of recruitment in line with this requirement.

Targeted actions in Adult Social Care & Health

Adult Social Care fully understands the challenging financial position of Kent County Council, whilst also delivering the most cost effective and lawful means of meeting assessed eligible needs. It also acknowledges that Council's available resources are not sufficient to sustain the current trajectory of spend in adult social care. The following high-level actions are being implemented:

A vacancy control panel to ensure recruitment is only authorised to deliver the core statutory duties of the Council. In addition, fixed term and interim arrangements are being reviewed to ensure roles that are not critical to the delivery of core duties are ended.

Action is being taken to reduce the financial consequences of new demand for Adult Social Care, by enhancing the most cost effective and lawful means of meeting assessed eligible needs through practice guidance. This will include updating guidance to ensure the workforce continues to meet Care Act (eligibility criteria) regulations. Also, social care is also working with NHS colleagues to ensure that we embed consistent approaches to supporting people to return home from hospital through the most cost effective and lawful method.

The Directorate is in the process of re-commissioning residential and nursing contracts, and home care contracts, which will reset the relationship with providers of care and support and costs associated with delivering this. The directorate is seeking to better understand the costs of providing care and support and moving to a more equitable means of setting fees across the sector, recognising the current approach is not financially sustainable. As part of the process, negotiations will be undertaken with individual providers, where they are a significant outlier on cost.

The directorate has also invested heavily in preventative measures, which includes how technology and equipment can complement physical support to deliver the most cost effective and lawful means of meeting assessed needs and outcomes. The focus of adult social care reviews is on ensuring that the current level of funded care and support remains proportionate to the level of assessed needs. This includes enhanced focused action in first reviews. As well as reducing the use of short-term beds at the point of discharge from hospital and the preferred use of framework providers.

Savings and additional income

The 2025-26 budget includes the requirement to deliver savings and additional income of £96.0m. A further £22.4m of undelivered savings from the previous year are included in the 2025-26 target, increasing the total requirement to £118.4m. The savings monitoring does not include increases to grant income of £35.0m or the removal of one-off or undelivered savings in previous years of £38.0m bringing the total monitored savings target for 2025-26 to £121.5m.

Key savings have greater scrutiny as part of the Strategic Reset Programme (SRP) and are BRAG (blue, red, amber, green) rated on a monthly basis, alongside increased monitoring of performance and analytical data.

As at September 2025, £98m is expected to be delivered in 2025-26, which represents 81% delivery against the target. £27.6m of savings are currently not expected to be delivered in 2025-26. Of this amount, £9.2m is planned to be delivered in future financial years, with the remaining £18.4m no longer deliverable. There is £2.9m of alternative savings identified to try and mitigate the current shortfall.

Schools' Delegated Budgets

Schools' Delegated Budgets' position is an overspend of £37.2m. This reflects the impact of high demand for additional special educational needs (SEN) support and greater demand for specialist provision. In 2022-23, the Council entered into the Department for Education's (DfE) Safety Valve Programme for those Councils with the highest deficits to support the development of a sustainable plan for recovery. This includes annual funding from the DfE totalling £140m by 2027-28 to pay off part of the deficit. Over the same period, the Council is also expected to contribute towards the residual deficit estimated to total over £80m.

In 2025-26, the Council will receive scheduled funding from DfE of £14.6m and the authority will contribute £14.2m.

Due to the in-year deficit on Schools' Delegated Budget, the Council's net DSG Deficit is forecast to increase from £97.5m to £133.4m. The statutory override for managing deficits runs until the end of the 2027-28 year. At this point deficits would need to be funded from general reserves, so reducing this deficit is becoming a more time critical challenge for the authority.

The capital position

The total approved General Fund capital programme including roll forwards for 2025-26 is £365.6m.

The capital programme spend for the year to the end of September is £112.1m, which represents 30.7% of the approved budget.

There is a forecast £35.4m underspend against the budget, which is split between a +£26.2m real variance and -£61.6m rephasing variance. Of the real variance, £20m is due to additional funding that is not yet included in the budget. Of the £61.6m rephasing, £10m is funded by borrowing and the rest is grant or external funding.

The 'Capital by directorate' table sets out the forecast position. The major in-year variances (real variances of over £0.1m and rephasing variances of over £1.0m) are also described by directorate within this section.

Section 1 | Revenue by directorate

The table below shows the forecast outturn position split by directorate. The overspend totals £46.5m excluding Schools' Delegated Budgets.

Each of the directorates has a colour theme which is used consistently in Finance reporting in the monitoring report and budget book.

All figures in £m

Page 23	Directorate	Working Budget	Forecast	Variance	Variance %
	Adult Social Care & Health	709.2	760.1	50.9	7.2%
	Children, Young People & Education	391.2	393.3	2.2	0.6%
	Growth, Environment & Transport	205.1	206.5	1.4	0.7%
	Chief Executive's Department	26.8	26.5	-0.3	-1.1%
	Deputy Chief Executive's Department	88.1	87.2	-0.9	-1.0%
	Non Attributable Costs	109.9	105.3	-4.6	-4.2%
	Corporately Held Budgets	1.6	-0.5	-2.1	-130.5%
	Total revenue position	1,531.9	1,578.4	46.5	3.0%
	Schools' Delegated Budgets	0.0	37.2	37.2	

1a | Adult Social Care & Health including Public Health

The table below shows the Adult Social Care & Health position by each of the five divisions.

All figures in £m

Division	Working Budget	Forecast	Variance
Adult Social Care (short-term support)	53.6	59.3	5.6
Adult Social Care (long-term support)	619.2	662.9	43.7
Strategic Management & Directorate Budgets	9.2	8.7	-0.6
Strategic Commissioning (Integrated & Adults)	27.1	29.2	2.1
Public Health	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	709.2	760.1	50.9

The Adult Social Care & Health directorate has a projected net overspend of +£50.9m of which of which +£20.9m relates to net savings which are no longer anticipated to be achieved this year, leaving £30.0m of other service related pressures. The forecast assumes that £35.1m of savings and income changes have been delivered, and that a further £6.1m in savings will be delivered. The forecast includes £7.2m for further growth in demand and cost for the year.

The most significant variances are in the following Key Services:

- **Older People – Residential Care Services: +£22.4m**
+£5.8m pressure on this service line relates to in-year savings targets not being fully achieved, and +£16.5m from pressures relating to the numbers of people supported being higher than budgeted for which

is partly offset by growth in cost pressures being lower than anticipated.

Above service related pressure includes impact of provider closure resulting in higher costs when sourcing alternative placements of +£1.0m. There is a further pressure on this service line of +£0.2m due to anticipated contributions to the provision for bad and doubtful debts being higher than budgeted for.

- **Older People – Community Based Services: +£16.3m**
A net +£2.3m pressure on this service line relates to in-year savings targets not being fully achieved, with +£14.0m pressure across Community Based services in the main due to Older Persons Homecare activity and cost being higher than budgeted for. There is a further pressure on this service line of +£0.1m due to anticipated contributions to the provision for bad and doubtful debts being higher than budgeted for.
- **Adult Learning Disability – Community Based Services & Support for Carers: +£7.7m**
+£7.1m pressure on this service relates to in-year savings targets not being fully achieved, with +£0.5m relating to service activity.
- **Adult Learning & Physical Disability Pathway – Community Based Services: -£5.4m**
Underspends across Community Services relating to younger adults which transferred into the Adult Social Care & Health directorate for 25/26, with these service lines seeing similar underspends in 24/25. The forecast on activity and costs for these services continued to reduce in the latter part of 24/25 after the 25/26 budget assumptions were agreed, which is the main reason for this variance.
- **Adult Case Management & Assessment Services (long-term support): -£2.9m**
Staffing underspends across long-term support case management and assessment services are largely due to transfer of staffing resource into short-term support case management and assessment services.

- **Adult Case Management & Assessment Services (short-term support): +2.7m**
Staffing pressures across short-term support case management and assessment services is due to transfer of staffing resource from long-term support case management and assessment services.
- **Adult Physical Disability - Residential Care Services: +1.8m**
Pressures due to combination of both activity and cost pressures above budgeted levels.
- **Adult Mental Health - Residential Care Services: +1.6m**
Pressures due to activity pressures above budgeted levels.
- **Adult Physical Disability - Community Based Services: +1.6m**
+£1.5m pressure on this service relates to service activity, with +£0.2m pressure relating to in-year savings targets not being fully achieved.
- **Adult In House Enablement Services: +1.3m**
Pressure in the main due to increase in staffing resource across Kent Enablement At Home (KEaH) services to increase capacity.
- **Community Based Preventative Services: +1.3m**
+£1.6m pressure relates to savings in payments to voluntary organisations which are no longer expected to be realised in 25/26, with this pressure offset by -£0.3m in anticipated one-off efficiencies on other Community Preventative Service contracts for 25/26.
- **Older People & Physical Disability Carer Support - Commissioned: +1.0m**
Pressure across Carer Support services due to increase in Carer Direct Payments and use of short term beds to offer carers respite.

A breakdown by Key Service is available in [Appendix 1](#).

1b | Children, Young People & Education

The table below shows the Children, Young People & Education position by each of the four divisions.

All figures in £m

Division	Working Budget	Forecast	Variance
Education & Special Educational Needs	121.6	115.3	-6.3
Strategic Management & Directorate Budgets	5.0	4.7	-0.3
Children's Countywide Services	106.3	112.2	5.9
Operational Integrated Children's Services	158.3	161.1	2.8
Total	391.2	393.3	2.2

The Children, Young People & Education directorate has a projected net overspend of +£2.2m this is formed from several significant variances. Children's Countywide Services and Operational Integrated Children's Services is forecasting a net overspend of +£8.7m, mainly related the higher costs of packages for looked after children resulting from the high cost and volume of placements, specifically residential. Education & Special Educational Needs are forecasting a net underspend of -£6.3m mainly due to an underspend on Home to School Transport.

The most significant variances are in the following Key Services:

- **Home to School & College Transport: -7.5m**

The forecast underspend reflects the expectation that savings achieved against last year's budget are ongoing and the contingency budget for higher price increases has not been required (£5m). A recent re-procurement of some SEN contracts has also resulted in

higher savings that originally budgeted in the MTFP (estimated at £2.5m). This forecast is based on current demand.

- **Looked After Children - Care & Support (Placements): +6.9m**

This overspend reflects the possible acceleration of the reduction in the number of in-house foster carer placements and increased reliance on the external market, including an increasing use of independent fostering agencies and where this is not possible, the use of residential care. Health Contributions towards placements is also forecast to reduce by £1.5m compared to the previous year. The average cost of residential care has increased by over 10% between March and September 2025. The forecast includes provisions of £2.1m for any potential increases in LAC or costs throughout the remainder of the year. There is also a forecast overspend on Legal services of £0.5m as a result of several months of higher than average costs.

- **Looked After Children (with Disability) - Care and Support (Placements): +6.5m**

This is due to the high cost of packages within the service, particularly within residential care. £2.6m of this forecast relates to one child with specific needs. The forecast contributions from health & education has reduced £1.0m compared to 24-25. The number of disabled LAC increased during 2024-25 and is remaining steady at the moment. This forecast includes £2.6m of provisional costs for any potential increases in LAC (or more likely costs) throughout the remainder of the year - this is in line with the trend in increasing costs between the same period last year.

- **Early Help and Preventative Services: -2.7m**

Use of Children & Families Prevention Grant to fund early help services in line with grant conditions leading to a £2m underspend. Further £0.7m underspend due to vacancies.

- **Community Learning and Skills (CLS): +1.1m**

Late notification of Skills funding cuts for 2025-26 academic year of over £0.5m have left little time to enact necessary structural changes to compensate. At the same time, the service have also seen a growth in 16-19 learners with corresponding increase in expenditure

whilst the lagged funding system means specific grant funding is insufficient (c£0.4m shortfall). In addition, redundancy costs from the previous restructure has been higher than anticipated (+£0.2m) and the apprenticeship provision continues to make a loss (+£0.1m).

A breakdown by Key Service is available in [Appendix 1](#).

1c | Growth, Environment & Transport

The table below shows the Growth, Environment & Transport position by each of the four divisions.

All figures in £m

Division	Budget	Forecast	Variance
Environment & Circular Economy	92.4	92.6	0.1
Growth & Communities	32.3	31.3	-1.0
Highways & Transportation	78.9	81.2	2.3
Strategic Management & Directorate Budgets	1.4	1.4	0.0
Total	205.1	206.5	1.4

The Growth, Environment & Transport directorate has a projected net overspend of +£1.4m, of which key pressure areas are detailed below. The +£1.4m pressure is primarily as a result of a significant rise in passenger journeys within the English National Concessionary Scheme (ENCTS) of £1.1m, unbudgeted road collapses / sinkholes within Highways of £0.6m and a rise in the number of free care/discounted passes for the Kent Travel Saver of £0.4m. This is offset by one-off release of reserves within Libraries, Registration & Archives of £0.7m.

All services/budgets across the directorate will continue to review their staffing and spend levels to ensure only essential spend is incurred and income/activity levels will continue to be reviewed and reflected. The unavoidable pressures are proposed to be realigned in the MTFP.

The most significant variances are in the following Key Services:

- **English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS): +1.1m**
Activity is significantly exceeding budgeted levels. Passenger journeys have increased by over 5% following confidence in the use

of public transport following the pandemic. This pressure is proposed to be realigned for in the 2026/27 budget.

- **Libraries, Registration & Archives: -0.8m**
Underspend from a combination of agreed drawdown from the RFID reserve plus a one-off contribution holiday for 2025/26 (-0.7m in total) and an overachievement of income.
- **Highway Assets Management: +0.7m**
Pressures continue to be reported in general maintenance across East/West Kent budgets with prices above budgeted inflation and increased demand for reactive works due to the condition of the network and necessary safety critical works (+£1.2m). Additionally, increasing pressure already in relation to unfunded road collapses/sinkholes (+£0.6m), staffing pressures across various teams (+£0.4m), costs associated with the closure of the Road of Remembrance in Folkestone (+0.1m) and increased spend on specialist external staff due to unsuccessful recruitment to vacant posts (+£0.1m). These overspends are partially offset by additional income (-£1.5m).
- **Kent Travel Saver (KTS): +0.4m**
Pressure resulting from growth in number of free/discounted passes over the past 2 years, which were offset by one-off grant income in the prior year but the increased pass numbers have continued into 25/26 which presents an adverse variance. This pressure has been proposed to be realigned in the MTFP for 2026/27 as it is a change in the demand levels based on the current policy/offering.
- **Waste Facilities & Recycling Centres: +0.4m**
There are a number of compensating variances within this area.

Pressures largely relate to additional incentivisation payments to districts (+£0.5m) as a result of improved recycling relates which prevents tonnes from being incinerated (Waste to Energy plant), at a higher cost to the authority than other forms of disposal. The savings from increased recycling were included in the 25/26 budget but this increased payment was not realigned. There are also increased

costs for Fixed Management across Transfer Stations and HWRC sites above budgeted levels (+£0.2m), and backdated rent and rates costs due to renegotiation of re-use income scheme (+£0.1m), increased Tipping Away charges (+£0.1m) to districts and increased costs with disposal of Gas Bottle Cylinders and Plasterboard (+£0.1m).

The majority of these pressures are proposed to be realigned for in the MTFP for 2026/27.

In addition, there are emergency floor repair works at Ashford WTS which are anticipated to continue into the next financial year (+£0.4m) following new legislation.

These pressures are offset by favourable volume variance (-£0.7m), a one-off saving on HWRC/WTS mobilisation due to extension of current contract (-£0.5m) and favourable price inflation savings across various contracts (-£0.1m).

Included within forecast is one-off payments to three districts (+£0.6m) following a small proportion of EPR funding from Government incorrectly due to be paid to KCC rather than directly to districts. These payments are forecast to be funded from drawdown of the Unspent grant and external funds reserve, which is held centrally.

A breakdown by Key Service is available in [Appendix 1](#).

1d | Chief Executive's Department

The table below shows the Chief Executive's Department position by each of the five divisions.

All figures in £m

Division	Working Budget	Forecast	Variance
Commercial & Procurement	3.3	3.4	0.1
Finance	10.9	10.5	-0.4
Governance, Law & Democracy	8.1	8.0	-0.1
Strategic Management & Departmental Budgets	-1.3	-1.3	0.0
Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance	5.8	5.9	0.1
Total	26.8	26.5	-0.3

The Chief Executive's Department directorate has a projected net underspend of -£0.3m of which -£0.3m relates underspends within Finance due to vacancy management. There are also savings on member travel, appeals costs and member allowances within Governance & Law and staffing savings within Strategic Policy Relationship and Corporate Assurance. These underspends are offset by overspends on the Kent Safeguarding boards of +£0.2m. Increasing costs for both safeguarding boards hosted by KCC are not currently covered by existing partner contribution rates and will required future revision to resolve the current pressure. Within Commercial & Procurement there has been a delay in the achievement of the MTFP saving for the Kent Support & Assistant Service (KSAS) and not achieving the expected level of income from the new Supplier Incentive Programme (SIP) resulting in additional pressures.

The most significant variances are in the following Key Services:

- **Children's and Adults Safeguarding Services: +0.2m**
The variance relates to both the Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards hosted by the council. Increased costs, particularly that of staff, are not met by the existing contribution rates from partners. A review of partner contributions for both boards are required.
- **Commercial & Procurement: +0.1m**
The variance is mostly due to expenditure on the Kent Support & Assistant Service (KSAS) and not achieving the expected level of income from the new Supplier Incentive Programme (SIP). There is a delay in the delivery of the expected MTFP saving on KSAS, resulting in the variance seen. The Supplier Incentive Programme is still embedding itself and it is hoped that the income target will be achieved in future years, once the programme is established.
- **Finance: -0.3m**
Underspend mainly as a result of vacancy management across a number of the Finance teams.
- **Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance: -0.1m**
This variance is as a result of in year staff savings.
- **Governance and Law: -0.1m**
Additional expenditure on legal staffing, subscriptions, software, legal and specialist fees are offset by savings in travel and reduced costs of appeals, which are due to the use of virtual hearings and existing internal resources. There is also an underspend in member allowances due to the extended time required to allocate new roles post election.

In addition to the savings achieved from the County Council decision to reduce all Member Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances by 5%, a further transfer of £113.4k from underspends within the Directorate is proposed to deliver the planned Combined Member Grant fund increase.

A breakdown by Key Service is available in [Appendix 1](#).

1e | Deputy Chief Executive's Department

The table below shows the Chief Executive's Department position by each of the six divisions.

All figures in £m

Division	Working Budget	Forecast	Variance
Corporate Landlord	26.7	26.7	0.0
Human Resources & Organisational Development	5.8	5.7	-0.1
Infrastructure	15.1	15.0	0.0
Marketing & Resident Experience	7.2	7.2	0.0
Strategic Management & Departmental Budgets	5.5	4.6	-0.9
Technology	27.9	27.9	0.0
Total	88.1	87.2	-0.9

The Deputy Chief Executive's Department directorate has a projected net underspend of -£0.9m of which -£0.7m relates to a staffing underspend on the Strategic Reset Programme. There are also underspends of -£0.2m due to vacancy management of key posts within the Strategic Management & Departmental Support division, and -£0.1m within Resident Experience, as a result of the closure of a Gateway. Human Resources & Organisational Development is also underspending due to increasing uptake of salary sacrifice schemes. These underspends are offset by a small minimal overspend in Marketing & Digital services where additional resourcing has been required to meet our statutory requirements.

The most significant variances are in the following Key Services:

- **Strategic Management & Departmental Support: -0.2m**
Majority of underspend due to vacancy management of key posts.

- **Marketing and Digital Services: +0.2m**
Additional costs to deliver our creative services are partially offset by an additional recharge expected from Public Health.
- **Resident Experience - Contact Centre; Gateways; Customer care and Complaints: -0.1m**
Majority of the underspend is due to a reduction in costs as a result of a Gateway closing. Additional expenditure on the Customer Service Delivery team is offset by a reduction in the Customer Feedback and associated teams.
- **Human Resources & Organisational Development: +0.1m**
Increased staffing expenditure and one-off staff related costs as a result of the service restructure, is offset by an increased up take up of salary sacrifice schemes leading to NI rebates. There is also additional income expected with the Learning & Development team.
- **Strategic Reset Programme: -0.7m**
Underspend due to staffing as result of vacancy management.

A breakdown by Key Service is available in [Appendix 1](#).

1f | Non Attributable Costs including Corporately Held Budgets

The table below shows the Non Attributable Costs position, including Corporately Held Budgets:

All figures in £m

Division	Working Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
Non Attributable Costs	109.9	105.3	-4.6
Corporately Held Budgets	1.6	-0.5	-2.1
Total	111.5	104.8	-6.7

Non Attributable Costs including Corporately Held Budgets' forecast is a net underspend of £6.7m.

The key variances are summarised below:

- Non Attributable Costs: -4.6m**
The impact of slower than anticipated reductions in the Bank of England base rate meaning higher returns on our cash balances which is partly offset by higher interest payments to third parties. Cash balances have been impacted by the upfront receipt of £52m Highways Maintenance Grant from Government rather than the previous quarterly profile but recently reduced by the early redemption of £50m debt in September. The reduction in investment income as a result of lower cash balances following the early debt repayment is more than offset by the discount and interest saved from repaying the loan early. The reported underspend also reflects savings in borrowing costs due to the early repayment of a loan at the end of 2024-25, and contributions to debt costs from the Home Office Grant related to the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker reception centres and from the CYPE directorate related to the development of in-house children's residential units.

It should be noted that the investment income forecast can be quite volatile due to the possibility of unforeseen fluctuations in our cash balances.

- Corporately Held Budgets: -2.1m**
Release of residual unallocated pay and employer's National Insurance budget, which will be included as a saving in the proposed 2026-27 budget. The forecast assumes that the HR spans and layers saving from reviewing adherence to the Council's organisation design policy is delivered, but delivery plans are still to be confirmed before this can be allocated to directorates. Until delivery plans are finalised, there remains a risk that the full saving will not be delivered.

A breakdown by Key Service is available in [Appendix 1](#).

1h | Schools' Delegated Budgets

The Schools' Budget reserves are Forecast to end the financial year with a surplus of £57.2m on individual maintained school balances, and a deficit on the central schools' reserve of £133.4m. The total Dedicated Schools' Grant for 2025-26 is £1,976.7m and is forecast to overspend by £64.7m.

The balances of individual schools cannot be used to offset the overspend on the central schools' reserve and therefore should be viewed separately.

The Central Schools' Reserve holds the balance of any over or underspend relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is a specific ring-fenced grant payable to local authorities to support the schools' budget. It is split into four main funding blocks: schools, early years, high needs and central, each with a different purpose and specific rules attached. The Council is required to hold the net under or overspend relating to the whole dedicated schools grant in a specific reserve and is expected to deal with any surplus or deficits through future years' spending plans. The tables below provide the overall position for the DSG in 2025-26 (table 1) and an overview of the movements on both the central schools' reserve and individual schools' reserves (table 2).

Table 1 Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) 2025-26 Forecast Summary:

All figures in £m			
DSG Block	2025-26 Budget*	2025-26 Forecast	2025-26 Variance
Schools' Block	1,367.6	1,368.4	+0.8
High Needs Block	369.0	434.9	+65.9
Early Years Block	227.2	225.3	-2.0
Central Services to Schools' Block	12.9	12.9	0.0
Total DSG 2025-26	1,976.7	2,041.4	+64.7

*Before recoupment and other DfE adjustments including additional funding from the Safety Valve Programme. Budgets include the impact of moving £16.5m from the Schools' block to the High Needs Block as agreed by the Secretary of State.

Table 2: Overall Forecast Position for the Schools' Budget Reserves:

All figures in £m		
	Individual Maintained School Reserves	Central Schools' (DSG) Reserve
Reserve Balance as at 1st April 2025*	58.5	-97.5
Contribution to/(from) reserves: Academy Conversions	-1.3	
Change in School Reserve Balances		
Overspend on DSG 2025-26		-64.7
Safety Valve: Local Authority Contribution		14.6
Safety Valve: Payment from DfE		14.2
Reserve Balance as at 31st March 2026*	57.2	-133.4

*Positive figure is a surplus balance & negative balance is a deficit balance

In accordance with the statutory override implemented by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), and in line with the Department for Education (DfE) and external auditors advice that local authorities cannot repay deficits on the DSG from the General Fund: any in-year central schools' (DSG) surpluses continue to form part of the main council reserves, whilst any in-year deficit balances are held in a separate unusable reserve from the main council reserves (see section 4). DLUHC have confirmed this statutory override will be in place until March 2026 whilst Council's implement recovery plans.

In 2022-23, the Council entered the DfE's Safety Valve Programme for those Councils with the highest deficits to support the development of a sustainable plan for recovery; this includes annual funding from the DfE,

totalling £140m by 2027-28 (plus £2m of project costs), to pay off part of the deficit but only if the Council can demonstrate and deliver a credible plan. Over the same period the Council is also expected to contribute towards the residual deficit which at the time of agreement was estimated to total over £80m. This has avoided having to identify £220m of savings across the SEN system. The DSG deficit is the Council's single biggest financial risk; therefore, the successful implementation of the Council's deficit recovery plan is critical. It is recognised, the Government's proposals to reform the SEND and alternative provision (AP) system to support a more sustainable high needs funding will not impact immediately and local actions are required.

In 2025-26, the Council is expecting to receive a further £14.2m from the DfE, the fourth tranche of the £140m safety valve commitment, with the Council required to contribute a further £14.6m from reserves. This additional funding, along with the extra funding from the DfE and the Council in 2022-23 will have reduced the accumulated deficit from an estimated £293m to £133m as at 31st March 2025.

Key Issues	Details
Individual Maintained Schools Reserves	As at 31st March 2025, there were 288 maintained schools with a surplus reserve balance and 3 schools with a deficit reserve balance. Maintained Schools are required to submit a six & nine-month monitoring return each financial year and these forecasts will be reported in future reports. The Council commissions The Education People to support Schools with their recovery plans.
	This forecast includes 4 schools converting to academy status during 2025-26. When a maintained school converts to an academy status, the council is no longer responsible for holding the schools' reserve and the school's remaining school balance is either transferred to the academy trust, or in the case of a deficit, may have to be retained and funded by the Council depending on the type of academy conversion.
Schools' Block:	The Schools' Block funds primary and secondary core schools' budgets including funding for additional school

general overspend on growth funding

places to meet basic need or to support schools with significant falling rolls which is forecast to overspend by a combined total of +£0.8m. There has been more funding commitments to support growing schools than originally anticipated when the budget was set.

Early Years Block: underspend on new entitlements

The Early Years Block is used to fund early years' providers the free entitlement for eligible two, three and four-year olds, including the newly expanded offer for working parents for children from 9 months to 2 years, along with the funding of some council led services for early years.

Each year, when setting the funding rate an estimate must be made as to likely hours that will be provided to ensure it is affordable within the grant provided. This can lead to under or overspends if activity is slightly lower or higher than expected. This has resulted in a forecast underspend of £1.3m (mainly linked to 3- and 4-year old payments) and lower take-up of the Disability Access Fund of -£0.7m.

High Needs Block: Higher demand and higher cost for high needs placements.

The High Needs Block (HNB) is intended to support the educational attainment of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and pupils attending alternative education provision.

Safety Valve Payment & Local Authority Contribution.

The in-year funding shortfall for High Needs placements and support in 2025-26 is £65.9m due to a combination of continual higher demand for additional SEN support and higher cost per child resulting from continual demand for more specialist provision. The total forecast has increased by nearly £7m, mainly due to an increase in the number of independent placements. Whilst there are some indicators the level of growth in spending is starting to slow slightly (in comparison to recent years, see table 3 & 4), resulting from actions to support future financial sustainability, this has not been sufficient to meet the original expectations of the safety valve agreement . The number of placements in independent schools remains high and is forecast to grow further, even though the

numbers in mainstream, post 16 settings and special schools continue to increase. Higher placements costs, driven by inflation and greater demand by schools for additional funding, along with delays in DfE lead special school builds and larger numbers of other local authorities now refusing to fund the cost of their looked after children (where they had done so in the past), are all contributing to higher spend. The Council has confirmed to the DfE it no longer expects to reach an in-year breakeven position by 2027-28, and will have a residual accumulated overspend of around £125m by March 2028 (rather than £0m). The DfE have continued to pay their contributions at this time, and the Council is awaiting further actions following the expected national announcements on the future SEN system in the Autumn.

Many other councils are also reporting deficits on their high needs block, despite extra monies from the Government in recent years, resulting from significant increases in their numbers of EHCPs and demand for SEN services. However, historically Kent has seen this demand rising at a significantly faster rate than other comparative councils resulting in the council now educating a greater proportion of children in both special and independent schools compared to other councils, and a smaller proportion of children with SEND in mainstream schools. The impact of this is highlighted in national benchmarking data on the placement of children with SEN in Kent and our spend on High Needs Block. The tables below detail the trend in both spend and number of HNB funded places or additional support across the main placement types.

Table 3: Total Spend on High Needs Block by main spend type

All figures in £m						
	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
Maintained Special School	106	123	137	151	164	177
Independent Schools	54	66	71	83	91	108
Mainstream Individual Support & SRP* **	46	54	61	65	75	78
Post 16 institutions***	15	17	19	22	25	29
Other SEN Support Services	46	43	46	49	46	43
Total Spend	268	302	334	371	402	434
Rate of increase in spend	-	13%	10%	11%	8%	8%

Table 4: Average number of HNB funded pupils receiving individualised SEN Support/placements. This is not the total number of children with SEN or number of EHCPs

	£s per pupil					
	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
Maintained Special School	5,118	5,591	6,019	6,382	6,639	6,942
Independent Schools	1,185	1,418	1,543	1,685	1,762	1,935
Mainstream Individual Support & SRP*	4,510	5,258	5,772	6,496	7,057	7,445
Post 16 institutions***	1,222	1,383	1,511	1,600	1,751	2,045
Total Number of Pupils	12,035	13,650	14,845	16,163	17,209	18,367

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Table 5: Average cost of pupils funded from the HNB and receiving individualised SEN Support or placement cost.

	£ per pupil					
	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
Maintained Special School	£20,697	£22,067	£22,694	£23,623	£24,746	£25,462
Independent Schools	£45,494	£46,283	£46,246	£49,474	£51,723	£55,727
Mainstream Individual Support & SRP* **	£10,297	£10,241	£10,591	£10,079	£10,658	£10,489
Post 16 institutions***	£12,624	£12,314	£12,721	£13,617	£14,198	£13,991

*Specialist Resource Provision. From 2025-26, the number of children funded in mainstream schools changed, with the introduction of the community of schools model and a greater focus on whole school SEN offer, and moving away from funding for individual children only. Therefore, the number of children supported is an estimate only. This will affect the both the number of children funded and the average cost.

** Please note this data excludes any costs incurred by primary & secondary schools from their own school budget.

***Individual support for students at FE College and Specialist Provision Institutions (SPIs)

The Safety Valve agreement, sets out the key actions the Council intends to take to achieve a positive in-year balance on its central schools' DSG reserve by the end of 2027-28 and in each subsequent year. The actions are aligned with our strategy to support improvements across the SEN system in response to the SEN Improvement Notice through the delivery of the Accelerated Progress Plan. The impact of these actions were not expected to be immediate and would take several years to be fully embedded.

Section 2 | Savings and additional income by directorate

The 2025-26 budget includes the requirement to deliver savings and additional income of £96.0m. A further £22.4m of undelivered savings from the previous year are included in the 2025-26 target, increasing the total requirement to £118.4m. The savings monitoring does not include increases to grant income of £35.0m or the removal of one-off or undelivered savings in previous years of £38.0m bringing the total monitored savings target for 2025-26 to £121.5m.

The table below summarises the delivery of savings against the original target. The full breakdown by saving is available in [Appendix 2](#).

Figures in £m

	Directorate	2025-26 Savings Target	Delivery against original saving	Delivery against alternative saving (ongoing)	Delivery against alternative saving (one-off)	Total Delivery	Variance	Un- deliverable	To be achieved in future years
	Adult Social Care & Health	(63.2)	(41.1)	(0.2)	(1.1)	(42.4)	20.8	17.5	(8.5)
	Children, Young People & Education	(22.2)	(21.6)	0.0	(0.4)	(22.0)	0.2	0.0	(0.6)
	Growth, Environment & Transport	(17.2)	(17.3)	0.1	0.0	(17.2)	(0.0)	(0.1)	0.0
	Chief Executive's Department	(4.4)	(4.3)	0.0	0.0	(4.3)	0.1	0.0	(0.1)
	Deputy Chief Executive's Department	(10.2)	(10.2)	0.0	0.0	(10.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Non Attributable Costs	(2.8)	(2.8)	0.0	0.0	(2.8)	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Corporately Held Budgets	(1.5)	(0.5)	(1.0)	0.0	(1.5)	0.0	1.0	0.0
	Total	(121.5)	(97.7)	(1.1)	(1.5)	(100.4)	21.1	18.4	(9.2)

Section 3 | Reserves monitoring

The council holds general fund reserves as a consequence of income exceeding expenditure, budgeted contributions to reserves or where money has been earmarked for a specific purpose. Earmarked reserves are categorised across several headings.

Reserves balances are held as negative balances. All reserves are a negative balance except the DSG Adjustment Account, which is an unusable reserve held to manage the deficit on schools. The table below provides a summary of each of the reserve categories and highlights the main forecasted movements in 2025-26.

Figures in £m

Reserve	Opening Balance (01/04/25)	Forecast Movement in-year	Forecast Closing Balance (31/03/26)	Details
General Reserves				
General Fund	-78.5	37.5	-41.0	Budgeted contributions include £11.1m to repay the drawdown required in 2022-23 to fund the overspend and £4.8m to rebuild financial resilience and provide for future risks. Budgeted drawdowns include £7.2m and it is currently forecasted to need to drawdown £46.5m to fund the in-year overspend in 2025-26.
Earmarked Reserves				
Vehicles, Plant & Equipment (VPE)	-23.1	2.4	-20.7	
Smoothing	-111.8	3.0	-108.9	Movement includes a drawdown of £1.4m relating to election costs, budgeted drawdowns and contributions relating to the Local Tax Equalisation Reserve, £1.3m drawdown for our transformation partners and agency staff working on budget recovery and £2m relating to ICT projects.
Major Projects	-34.5	6.8	-27.7	The movement relates to major ICT projects including Oracle Cloud implementation (partly funded by the flexible use of capital receipts)
Partnerships	-44.5	0.0	-44.5	
Grant & External Funds	-7.7	-10.3	-18.0	The majority of the movement relates to the income received from as part of the Extender Producer Responsibility (EPR) grant. This use of this grant is subject to relevant government guidance.

	Reserve	Opening Balance (01/04/25)	Forecast Movement in-year	Forecast Closing Balance (31/03/26)	Details
	Departmental Over / Underspends	-0.6	+0.6	0.0	
	Insurance	-12.2	+2.9	-9.3	The drawdown forecast reflects the latest position on the Insurance fund in 2025-26.
	Public Health	-16.7	+2.0	-14.7	Use of unspent Public Health Grant in 2025-26.
	Special Funds	-0.8	-0.2	-1.0	
	Total Earmarked Reserves	-252.0	+7.2	-244.8	
	Total General Fund & Earmarked Reserves	-330.5	+44.7	-258.8	
Page 39	Schools Reserves	-58.5	-1.3	-57.2	
	DSG Adjustment Account	133.7	+35.9	169.6	<p>The movement reflects the net deficit on DSG budgets in 2025-26, made up of a £56.8m overspend, reduced by required contributions to the DSG Safety Valve Agreement in 2025-26 of £14.2m from KCC and £14.6m from the Department for Education (DfE).</p> <p>This reserve should be considered in combination with the £36.2m which is held in Partnerships (Earmarked Reserves). The true DSG deficit is therefore £133.4m.</p>

Section 4 | Capital by directorate

Figures in £m

Directorate	Working Budget	Total Variance	Real Variance	Rephasing Variance
Adult Social Care & Health	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Children, Young People & Education	112.8	-16.8	1.0	-17.8
Growth, Environment & Transport	222.1	-25.5	16.3	-41.8
Chief Executive's Department	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Deputy Chief Executive's Department	29.8	6.9	8.9	-2.0
Total	365.6	-35.4	26.2	-61.6

The total approved General Fund capital programme including roll forwards for 2025-26 is £365.6m. The capital programme spend for the year to the end of September is £112.1m, which represents 30.7% of the approved budget. There is a forecast £35.4m underspend against the budget, which is split between a £26.2m real variance and -£61.6m rephasing variance. Of the real variance, £20m is due to additional funding that is not yet included in the budget. Of the rephasing, £10m is funded by borrowing and the rest is grant or external funding.

The major in-year variances (real variances of >£0.1m and rephasing >£1m) are described below:

4a | Adult Social Care & Health

There are no major variances to report.

4b | Children, Young People & Education

Figures in £m

Page 41	Project	Real Variance	Rephasing Variance	Detail
	Modernisation Programme	1.8	-1.6	The real variance is due to: -£0.4m Blean Primary - tender prices are lower than anticipated, the school are self-delivering the second mobile which has also reduced the costs. -£0.2m of forecast related to the modular replacement Music room now shown as a separate project. +£0.4m Greenfields Primary - new project added to replace mobile roof and install new canopies. +£0.3m Bromstone Primary - mobile upgrade has been brought forward due to the very poor condition of the mobiles on site. +£0.3m St Paul's Primary, Swanley - new project - sewage treatment plant. +£0.2m Garlinge Primary School and Nursery - new project added for mobile refurbishments. +£0.2m Blean Primary - modular replacement Music room. +£0.2m Dunton Green Primary - upgrade conservatory roof - new project. +£0.2m Dover Grammar School for Girls - lift replacement. +£0.1m Oakley School - kitchen refurbishment - new project. 16 further projects have a real variance totalling +£0.5m, none individually over/under £0.1m. The rephasing variance is due to 9 projects, none of which are individually over £1m.
	Basic Need Programme KCP 2019		-1.2	The rephasing relates to: -£0.8m Highsted Grammar School. This is a school managed project, and the timing of which is dependent on school delivery. -£0.5m Chilmington Green Secondary.
	Basic Need Programme 2022-26	-1.5		The real variance is due to Cornwallis Academy – the expansion project is no longer proceeding. Places will be provided as part of the wider Maidstone Non Selective expansion in future years.
	Basic Need Programme 2024-28	0.2	-5.9	The real variance is due to: +£0.75m Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy. This is a new project for alterations to the existing building and to expand the dining facilities to support the school's growth from 8 to 10 form entry (FE). +£0.275m Leigh Academy Minster. This is a school managed project to accommodate a bulge year.

Project	Real Variance	Rephasing Variance	Detail
			<p>-£0.6m The Sittingbourne School – this project has been moved to Markers – Future Projects budget line.</p> <p>-£0.3m Ebbsfleet Green Primary – tenders received were lower than anticipated.</p> <p>The rephasing is due to:</p> <p>-£4.460 Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy. Design and costs have come in higher than expected. Infrastructure are testing the framework to check tender prices, with the project expecting to start early 2026.</p> <p>-£0.6m Ebbsfleet Green Primary, rephasing due to change in project scope and design.</p> <p>-£0.5m Dartford Grammar</p> <p>-£0.4m Oakwood Park</p>
Basic Need: Markers – Future Projects	3.1		<p>The real variance relates to:</p> <p>+£1.5m Maidstone Non Selective Secondary – additional places needed from 2027.</p> <p>+£0.8m Water Meadows – Payment to be made to the DfE towards the School Rebuild Programme Works.</p> <p>+£0.5m Swale permanent expansion required for 2027.</p> <p>+£0.3m bulge provision required in Swale for 2026.</p> <p>+£0.7m prior year costs recoded for projects which have transferred from the Basic Need Programme 2023-27.</p> <p>The real variance is expected to be funded from basic need grant allocations and developer contributions.</p>
High Needs Provision	-0.5	-3.0	<p>The real variance is due to:</p> <p>-£1.7m The Beacon, Folkestone. Overall cost reduction - The success of the project can be attributed to value engineering throughout the programme and the excellent collaboration between the Quantity Surveyor, Contractor, and Project Manager. Pre-contract surveys were conducted at the project's outset to identify and address any anomalies that might have arisen during construction, which could have resulted in costly variations for KCC. A contingency was held within the project budget, but this proved unnecessary due to the high level of project management demonstrated by all parties involved.</p> <p>-£1.0m Nore Academy - DfE funded project, budget held for Highway costs, no longer required.</p> <p>-£0.5m previously unallocated budget now allocated to projects.</p> <p>+£0.75m Five Acre Wood - additional space required, adaptation of a KCC building being looked into.</p>

Project	Real Variance	Rephasing Variance	Detail
			<p>+£0.5m Broomhill Bank - new school managed project added, modular expansion to provide additional places.</p> <p>+£0.5m Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy - new school managed project added to provide additional places.</p> <p>+£0.3m St Mary's CEPS, Swanley SRP - installation of a modular classroom plus provision of an outdoor area.</p> <p>+£0.2m The Downs CEPS, Deal - new project to add a Specialist Resource Provision.</p> <p>7 further projects have a real variance totalling £0.35m, none individually over/under £0.1m.</p> <p>The rephasing variance is due to:</p> <p>-1.4m Nexus School Phase 2 due to delays in stakeholder decisions.</p> <p>-£1.4m New Special Free School, Swanley – funding is dependent on DfE project delivery timescales.</p>
Childcare Expansion (Early Years)	-0.8	-1.3	The real variance is due to grant transferred to fund revenue expenditure in line with grant conditions. The rephasing is due to the timing of allocation of grant funding to providers. This process is managed by The Education People. Expressions of interest from providers continue to be reviewed in line with place numbers and funding allocated for self-managed projects.
<i>Previously reported variances:</i>			
Basic Need Programme 2023-27	-1.3	-5.0	<i>Previously reported real variance was -£0.589m. The real variance is due to prior year costs recoded for projects which have now transferred to "Markers – Future Projects." The rephasing is due to Northfleet Technology College. Design and costs have come in higher than expected, Infrastructure are testing the Framework to check tender prices, and the project is now expected to start early 2026.</i>

4c | Growth, Environment & Transport

Figures in £m

Project	Real Variance	Rephasing Variance	Detail
Highways & Transportation			
A2 Off Slip Wincheap, Canterbury		-1.5	Ongoing discussions between the developer and the National Highways regarding the design of the A2 Off Slip are ongoing. Several issues are still to be resolved that has delayed the commencement of the works until 26/27.
A228 and B2160 Junction Improvements with B2017 Badsell Road		-4.1	A number of factors have caused delays, these include the approvals process via Environment Agency, this has pushed the programme out. The HTMC contract ends within scheme window so a single procurement option is the chosen method, this will start in November with site start date estimated as June 2026. There have also been design package issues which are being worked through and as we enter the worse weather it wouldn't be viable to undertake the scheme as its a flood risk zone.
Fastrack Full Network – Bean Road Tunnels		-9.9	The scheme is externally funded and therefore requires an update to the existing legal agreements to confirm the contributions which are needed are in place. The Invitation to Submit Final Tender (ISFT) has been returned and subject to clarity on certain matters the contract is expected to be awarded In the near future. The works are expected to take approximately 15 months with completion likely in early 2027. There is an additional £2m of funding that is required and can be funded from Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) or BSIP funds, therefore this has been rephased into 2026-27.
Faversham Swing Bridge		-1.8	The rephasing is due to ongoing complex legal discussions with Peel Ports.
Housing Infrastructure Fund, Swale	3.7		The overspend has been reported to Sponsoring Group and will be funded by the Recovery Fund (S106 developer contributions).
Sturry Link Road	1.0		This is currently presented as an unfunded overspend but in reality the updated cost plan estimate has been provided and presented to Homes England who have endorsed the scheme under the Brown Infrastructure Land (BIL) Fund which through further approvals will provide additional external funding to enable the scheme to come forward.
Folkestone – A Brighter Future		-5.1	Rephasing into 26/27 & 27/28 due to delayed award of contract and shift in length of construction programme necessitates more works being delivered in 26/27 financial year. Current Programme completion date for Civils is August 26. Risk/inflation has also be profiled in 26/27 financial year for end of construction works.

	Project	Real Variance	Rephasing Variance	Detail
	EDC Landscaping		-1.1	Construction of sites 8,9 and 10 have been pushed back to next financial year hence the rephasing.
<i>Previously reported variances:</i>				
	Highway Asset Management, Annual Maintenance and Urgent Safety Critical Works	6.0	-0.5	<i>The real variance (previously reported £7.238m) includes overspends in the following areas: £5.816m on inspectors, and £0.202m on structures. Options to manage these overspends are being considered.</i> <i>The rephasing is on Trees which is externally funded.</i>
	Integrated Transport Schemes under £1m	1.5		<i>The real variance (previously reported £1.432m) is due to: £0.02m Transport Innovations, however funding is expected to be received in the next couple of months, £1.45m a number of small schemes which will be covered from additional external funding.</i>
Page 45	North Thanet Link	2.5		<i>(Previously reported £3.108m). The forecast reflects the anticipated 25/26 costs to proceed with the development of this scheme following approval of the Outline Business Case by the DfT. The real variance will be funded by external grant which is expected to be received imminently.</i>
	Dover Bus Rapid Transit	1.8		<i>(Previously reported £1.763m). There are ongoing disputes regarding the construction contract which makes the forecast spend difficult to predict. Further financial contributions are being explored for the project to help mitigate the overspend as well as considering additional funding streams with Dover District Council.</i>
	Diversion Routes for Unplanned Events (DRUE)	-0.1		<i>This is grant funding from National Highways for signs and amendments to signs for unplanned diversion routes on the A20/M20 between Dover and Folkestone and is currently forecasting an underspend. The service is asking for approval to redirect this underspend to additional works along the DRUE route.</i>
	Green Corridors		-1.4	<i>(Previously reported -£1.198m). The programme for delivery of the three larger sites (6,8 and 11) has been pushed back to September 2025, this is due to delays with consultants and the procurement process. For the Site 4 ramp this is due to land agreements taking longer than anticipated. There are also ecological constraints that mean we need to construct between April – September hence the delay to April 2026 as we have missed this year's window. Due to this, some forecast spend in the current financial year has been reprofiled into the 2026-27 financial year. This has been accepted by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) which is fully funding the Green Corridors programme.</i>

Figures in £m

Project	Real Variance	Rephasing Variance	Detail
Government Transition Works		-1.0	Confirmation has been obtained to allocate the unspent grant to a new project – A20 Union Street in Dover, which is planned for 26-27.
Kent Active Travel Fund (KATF) Phase 2	-0.2		(Previously reported -£0.255m). Change control requested from Active Travel England to transfer some unused budget to Sevenoaks Cycle Facility under KATF Phase 3. Once agreed, the cash limits will be updated.
Kent Active Travel Fund (KATF) Phase 3	0.2		(Previously reported £0.255m). Change control requested from Active Travel England to transfer some unused budget from KATF Phase 2 for Sevenoaks Cycle Facility under KATF Phase 3. Once agreed, the cash limits will be updated.
Thames Way (STIPS)		-3.4	The Thames Way Project has been paused given the current closure of Galley Hill and the implications that is having on the local road network and expected trips. This has resulted in forecast spend being reprofiled into later years pending a decision on Galley Hill.
Environment & Circular Economy			
Folkestone & Hythe Waste Transfer Station		-4.8	The project has been pushed back due to waiting for planning permission which took 13 months. The 25-26 spend will be approximately £0.47m to take the project to RIBA stage 3 and 4. The rest has been rephased.
Local Nutrient Mitigation		-1.8	(Previously reported -£5.8m). At the beginning of the year the only known investment was funding to support the establishment of Stour Environmental Credits Ltd (SEC Ltd) to a value of £0.45m. SEC Ltd and another mitigation provider have both indicated they will submit applications for further funding up to £4m within this financial year, which will result in £1.8m being rephased.
Growth & Communities			
Innovation Investment Initiative i3		-1.2	Innovation Investment Initiative (i3), will relaunch in 2026-27, with a bespoke offer, with terms and eligibility that is distinct from Kent & Medway Business Fund (KMBF), hence the rephasing.

4d | Chief Executive's Department

There are no major variances to report.

4e | Deputy Chief Executive's Department

Figures in £m

Project	Real Variance	Rephasing Variance	Detail
Strategic Estate Programme		-1.3	The spend has been re-profiled due to awaiting key decision on the way forward.
<i>Previously reported variances:</i>			
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Additional Accommodation Requirements	9.0		<i>(Previously reported £8.364m) The real variance is due to this project continually evolving and the full extent was not known and budgeted at the start of the year. The project is expected to be fully funded from Central Government.</i>

*The budgetary control for the following projects has been transferred to DCED directorate, however continue to be reported within CYPE for the remainder of this financial year: Schools Annual Planned Enhancement, Schools Modernisation Programme, School Roofs, Basic Need, High Needs, Special School Review.

4f | Capital Budget Changes

Cabinet is asked to approve the following changes to the Capital Budget:

Project	Year	Amount (£m)	Reason
Children, Young People & Education			
Basic Need Programme KCP 2019	25-26	+0.473	Increase in School Rebuild Programme Grant
Basic Need Programme 2021-2025	26-27	-0.616	To reduce developer contributions in the budget as the schemes have been pushed back
	27-28	-0.028	
Basic Need Programme 2022-2026	25-26	-1.244	To reduce developer contributions in the budget as the schemes have been pushed back
	26-27	-3.860	
Basic Need Programme 2024-2028	25-26	-0.305	To reduce developer contributions in the budget as the schemes have been pushed back
Growth, Environment & Transport			
Consolidated Active Travel Fund	26-27	1.000	Additional grant received from Active Travel England
	27-28	3.454	
North Thanet Link	25-26	2.456	Additional grant received
	26-27	0.814	
National Bus Strategy (BSIP)	25-26	11.926	Additional grant received
Fastrack Bean Tunnels	26-27	2.054	Additional external funding
Trees Outside Woodlands	25-26	-0.003	Returning unspent grant to DEFRA

Section 5 | Treasury Management Monitoring

Treasury management relates to the management of the Council's debt portfolio (accumulated borrowing to fund previous and current capital infrastructure investments) and investment of cash balances. The Council has a comparatively high level of very long-term debt, a significant proportion of which was undertaken through the previous supported borrowing regime.

5.1 Total external debt outstanding in September was £664.5m down by £68.1m since 31st March 2025	<p>KCC debt includes £410.7m of borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). The vast majority is maturity debt (debt is only repaid upon maturity) at a fixed rate of interest. The average length to maturity of PWLB debt is 14.7 years at an average interest rate of 4.3%.</p> <p>Outstanding loans from banks amount to £156.1m. This is also at fixed term rates with average length to maturity of 36.6 years at an average interest rate of 4.5%.</p> <p>The council has £90m of Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loans. These loans can only be renegotiated should the lender propose an increase in interest rates. The average length to maturity of LOBO loans is 38.4 years at an average interest rate of 4.1%.</p> <p>The balance of debt relates to loans for the LED streetlighting programme. The outstanding balance is £7.7m with an average of 15 years to maturity at an average rate of 2.9%.</p> <p>KCC's principal objective for borrowing is to achieve an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest rates and certainty of financing costs. This is achieved by seeking to fund capital spending from internal resources and short-term borrowing, only considering external long-term borrowing at advantageous interest rates.</p>
5.2 Majority is long term debt with only 4.1% due to mature within 5 years	<p>Maturity 0 to 5 years £27.0m (4.1%)¹</p> <p>Maturity 5 to 10 years £106.8m (16.1%)</p> <p>Maturity 10 to 20 years £189.7m (28.6%)</p> <p>Maturity over 20 years £340.90m (51.3%)</p>
5.3 Total cash balance at end of June was £483.2m, up by £8.2m from the end of March 2025	<p>Cash balances accrue from the council's reserves and timing differences between the receipt of grants and other income and expenditure.</p>

¹ Split across the next five years is as follows: Year 1 £10.00m, Year 2 £17.00m, Year 3 £0.00m, Year 4 £0.00m, and Year 5 £0.00m

5.4		<p>Cash balances are invested in a range of short-term, medium term and long-term deposits</p> <p>Investments are made in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy agreed by full Council alongside the revenue and capital budgets. The treasury management strategy represents a prudent approach to achieve an appropriate balance between risk, liquidity and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses on the sum invested. Longer term investments aim to achieve a rate of return equal or exceeding prevailing inflation rates.</p> <p>Short term deposits (same day availability) are held in bank accounts and money market funds. Current balances in short-term deposits in September were £136.9m (28.3% of cash balances). Short-term deposits enable the Council to manage liquidity. Bank accounts and money market funds are currently earning an average rate of return of 4%.</p> <p>Deposits are made through the Debt Management Office (an executive agency responsible for debt and cash management for the UK Government, lending to local authorities and managing certain public sector funds). As at the end of September, the Council had £36.1m in UK treasury bills and other deposits with the UK government. These deposits represent 7.5% of cash investments with an average rate of return of 4.1%.</p> <p>Medium term deposits include covered bonds, a form of secured bond issued by a financial institution that is backed by mortgages or public sector loans. In the UK the covered bond programmes are supervised by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). King and Shaxson acts as the Council's broker and custodian for its covered bond portfolio. As at the end of September, the Council had £103.3m invested in covered bonds earning an average rate of return of 4.4%.</p> <p>The Council has outstanding loans of £21.5m through the No Use Empty Loans programme which achieves an average return of 3.7% that is available to fund general services. This total includes £5.3m of loans made (£5.8m received) since March 2025.</p> <p>Long term investments are made through Strategic Pooled Funds. These include a variety of UK and Global Equity Funds, Multi Asset Funds and Property Funds. In total the Council has £184.1m invested in pooled funds (38.1% of cash balances) as at 30 September 2025.</p>
5.5		<p>Treasury Management Advice</p> <p>The Council secures external specialist treasury management advice from MUFG Corporate Markets. They advise on the overall strategy as well as borrowing options and investment opportunities. MUFG Corporate Markets provide regular performance monitoring reports.</p>
5.6		<p>Quarterly and statutory reports</p> <p>The Governance and Audit Committee receives detailed statutory reports on a regular bi-annual basis (the Treasury Strategy Mid-Year Update, and the Annual Treasury Outturn report), which are subsequently reported to County Council. Quarterly reports are reviewed by the Treasury Management Group (TMG). The TMG also reviews the three annual statutory reports.</p>

Treasury Management Indicators

5.7 The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators:

5.8 **Security:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its internally managed investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit risk indicator	Actual 30/09/2025	Minimum
Portfolio average credit rating	AA+	AA-

5.9 **Liquidity:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity risk indicator	Actual 30/09/2025	Minimum
Total cash available within 3 months	£193.1m	£100m

5.10 **Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates was:

Interest rate risk indicator	Actual 30/09/2025	Upper Limit
One-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£2.8m	£10m
One-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	-£2.8m	-£10m

5.11 **Maturity structure of borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing were:

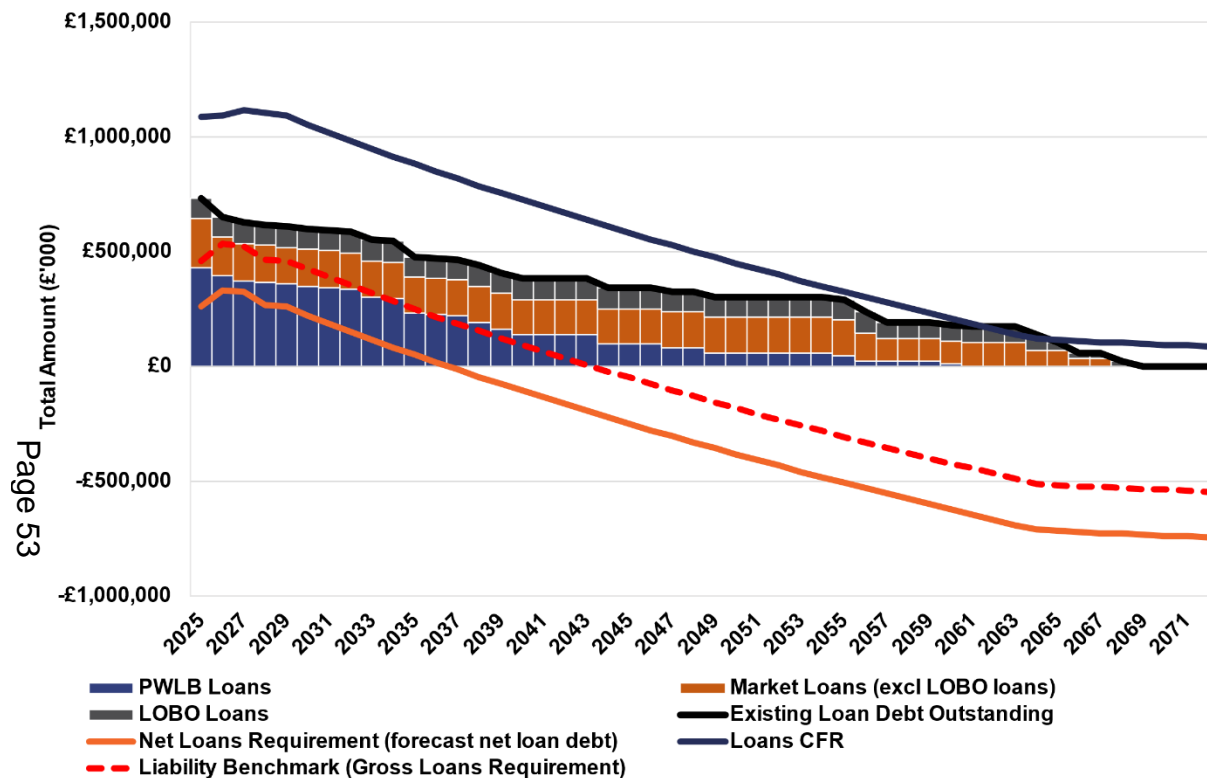
	Actual 30/09/2025	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	1.5%	100%	0%
12 months and within 5 years	2.6%	50%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	16.1%	50%	0%
10 years and within 20 years	28.6%	50%	0%
20 years and within 40 years	36.2%	50%	0%
40 years and longer	15.1%	50%	0%

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Page 52 12 **Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end were:

Price risk indicator	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	No Fixed Date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£150m	£100m	£50m	£250m
Actual as at 30 September 2025	£74.0m	£17.3m	£10.3m	£206.9m

5.13 Prudential Indicator: Liability Benchmark



The liability benchmark chart shows the Council should be able to accommodate the movement in Loans CFR through additional internal borrowing given the resources on the balance sheet if it wants to maintain treasury investments at the £200m liquidity allowance. However, this is based on the current assumption with regards to movement in reserves and that the working capital position remains at the 31/03/2025 level of £300m. It also assumes that the liquidity allowance of £200m remains appropriate given the £184.1m of external investments currently invested with fund managers over a long-term investment time horizon.

Appendix 1 | Key Service Statement

Adult Social Care & Health

Figures in £m

	Budget	Forecast	Variance
Adult Social Care & Health	709.2	760.1	50.9
Adult Social Care & Health (long-term support)	619.2	662.9	43.7
Adult Case Management and Assessment Services (long-term support)	36.1	33.2	-2.9
Adult In House Carer Services	2.7	2.9	0.2
Adult In House Community Services	6.2	6.0	-0.2
Adult Learning and Physical Dis pathway - Resid Care Serv and Support for Carers	7.4	7.6	0.2
Adult Learning and Physical Disability Pathway - Community Based Services	47.5	42.2	-5.4
Adult Learning Disability - Community Based Services and Support for Carers	134.3	142.0	7.7
Adult Learning Disability - Residential Care Services and Support for Carers	82.0	82.0	0.1
Adult Mental Health - Community Based Services	36.1	35.3	-0.9
Adult Mental Health - Residential Care Services	24.0	25.7	1.6
Adult Physical Disability - Community Based Services	37.9	39.5	1.6
Adult Physical Disability - Residential Care Services	29.3	31.1	1.8
Adult Social Care - Divisional Management and Support	0.2	0.3	0.1
Older People - Community Based Services	30.3	46.6	16.3
Older People - Residential Care Services	142.3	164.7	22.4
Older People and Physical Disability Carer Support - Commissioned	2.3	3.3	1.0
Strategic Safeguarding	36.1	33.2	-2.9

Figures in £m

	Budget	Forecast	Variance
Adult Social Care (short-term support)	53.6	59.3	5.6
Adaptive and Assistive Technology	1.3	2.3	0.9
Adult Case Management and Assessment Services (short-term support)	13.9	16.6	2.7
Adult In House Enablement Services	7.7	9.0	1.3
Adult Social Care - Divisional Business Support	8.1	8.2	0.1
Adult Social Care - Divisional Management and Support	0.2	-0.2	-0.4
Contest and Serious Organised Crime (SOC)	0.3	0.3	0.0
Independent Living Support	0.9	0.9	0.0
Older People - In House Provision	17.6	18.1	0.4
Sensory Services	1.7	2.0	0.3
Statutory and Policy Support	1.9	2.2	0.3
Public Health	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Health - Advice and Other Staffing	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Health - Children's Programme	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Health - Healthy Lifestyles	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Health - Mental Health, Substance Misuse & Community Safety	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Health - Sexual Health	0.0	0.0	0.0
Strategic Commissioning (Integrated and Adults)	27.1	29.2	+2.1
Community Based Preventative Services	9.1	10.3	1.3
Housing Related Support	4.4	4.7	0.3
Partnership Support Services	0.0	0.0	0.0
Social Support for Carers	2.4	2.7	0.3

Figures in £m		Budget	Forecast	Variance
Strategic Commissioning (Integrated and Adults)		3.2	3.1	-0.1
Transformation Delivery and support		8.0	8.3	0.2
Strategic Management & Directorate Budgets (ASCH)		9.2	8.7	-0.6
Innovation and Partnership		4.1	3.7	-0.3
Operational and transformation costs pending allocation		0.0	0.0	0.0
Strategic Management & Directorate Support (ASCH)		5.2	5.3	-0.2

Children, Young People & Education

Figures in £m		Budget	Forecast	Variance
Children, Young People & Education		391.2	430.5	2.2
Children's Countywide Services		106.3	112.2	+5.9
Adoption & Special Guardianship Arrangements & Service		18.2	18.3	0.0
Asylum - Kent Permanent Care Leavers and New Arrival Service for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children		0.1	0.0	0.0
Care Leavers Service		5.9	5.4	-0.5
Children in Need (Disability) - Care & Support (payments & commissioned services)		11.8	11.1	-0.7
Children's Countywide Services Management & Directorate Support		0.1	0.2	0.1
Children's social care - in house provision		4.1	4.7	0.6
Children's Social Work Services - Assessment & Safeguarding Service (County Teams)		11.6	11.6	-0.1
Countywide Children's and Education support services		12.0	11.8	-0.2
Disabled Children & Young People Service (0-17) - Assessment Service		6.7	6.7	0.0
Looked After Children - Care & Support (Staffing)		8.7	8.8	0.1
Looked After Children (with Disability) - Care & Support (Placements)		27.1	33.6	6.5

Figures in £m

	Budget	Forecast	Variance
Education & Special Educational Needs	121.6	115.3	-6.3
Community Learning & Skills (CLS)	0.2	1.2	1.1
Early Years Education	0.0	-0.0	0.0
Education Management & Division Support	1.5	1.4	-0.1
Education Services provided by The Education People	2.5	2.4	-0.1
Fair Access & Planning Services	0.6	0.6	0.0
Home to School & College Transport	97.7	90.2	-7.5
Other School Services	1.2	1.3	0.1
Pupil Referral Units & Inclusion	0.0	0.0	0.0
Special Educational Needs & Psychology Services	17.9	18.1	0.2
Operational Integrated Children's Services	158.3	161.1	2.8
Asylum - Kent Permanent Looked After Children (under 18)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Children in Need - Care & Support (payments & commissioned services)	2.2	1.5	-0.8
Children's Social Work Services - Assessment & Safeguarding Service (Operational Teams)	42.0	41.5	-0.5
Early Help & Preventative Services	8.8	6.2	-2.7
Family Hubs	4.7	4.6	-0.1
Looked After Children - Care & Support (Placements)	99.9	106.8	6.9
Operational Integrated Children's Services Management & Directorate Support	0.6	0.6	0.0
Strategic Management & Directorate Budgets (CYPE)	5.0	4.7	-0.3
Strategic Management & Directorate Budgets (CYPE)	5.0	4.7	-0.3

Growth, Environment & Transport

Figures in £m

		Budget	Forecast	Variance
Growth, Environment & Transport		205.1	206.5	1.4
Environment & Circular Economy		92.4	92.6	0.1
Environment		3.3	3.3	0.0
Environment and Circular Economy Divisional management costs		2.3	2.4	0.0
Residual Waste		48.5	48.2	-0.2
Waste Facilities & Recycling Centres		38.3	38.7	0.4
Growth & Communities		32.3	31.3	-1.0
Community (Assets & Services)		2.4	2.3	-0.1
Community Protection		12.5	12.3	-0.2
Growth - Economy		1.6	1.5	-0.1
Growth - Place		3.8	4.1	0.2
Growth and Communities Divisional management costs		0.5	0.5	0.0
Libraries, Registration & Archives		11.5	10.7	-0.8
Highways & Transportation		78.9	81.2	2.3
English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS)		16.6	17.8	1.1
Highway Assets Management		40.4	41.1	0.7
Highways & Transportation divisional management costs		4.3	4.2	-0.2
Kent Karrier		0.0	0.0	0.0
Kent Travel Saver (KTS)		4.7	5.1	0.4
Supported Bus Services		6.2	6.2	0.0
Transportation		6.7	6.9	0.2

Figures in £m

	Budget	Forecast	Variance
Strategic Management & Directorate Budgets (GET)	1.4	1.4	0.0
Strategic Management & Directorate Budgets (GET)	1.4	1.4	0.0

Chief Executives' Department

Figures in £m

	Budget	Forecast	Variance
Chief Executive's Department	26.8	26.5	-0.3
Commercial & Procurement	3.3	3.4	0.1
Commercial & Procurement	3.3	3.5	+0.2
Finance	10.9	10.5	-0.4
Finance	10.3	10.0	-0.3
Subsidies to Kent District Councils to maximise Council Tax collection	0.6	0.5	-0.1
Governance, Law & Democracy	8.1	8.0	-0.1
Governance & Law	7.8	7.6	-0.1
Local Member Grants	0.4	0.4	0.0
Strategic Management & Departmental Budgets (CED)	-1.3	-1.3	0.0
Strategic Management & Departmental Budgets	-1.3	-1.3	0.0
Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance	5.8	5.9	0.1
Childrens and Adults Safeguarding Services	0.4	0.5	0.2
Resettlement Schemes, Domestic Abuse and Civil Society Strategy	0.2	0.2	0.0
Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance	5.2	5.1	-0.1

Deputy Chief Executive's Department

Figures in £m

	Budget	Forecast	Variance
Deputy Chief Executive's Department	88.1	87.2	-0.9
Corporate Landlord	26.7	26.7	0.0
Corporate Landlord	26.7	26.7	0.0
Human Resources & Organisational Development	5.8	5.7	-0.1
Human Resources & Organisational Development	5.8	5.7	-0.1
Infrastructure	15.1	15.0	0.0
Emergency Planning	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kent Resilience	0.8	0.8	0.0
Property related services	9.0	9.0	0.0
School Property Budgets	5.3	5.3	0.0
Marketing & Resident Experience	7.2	7.2	0.0
Marketing & Digital Services	2.2	2.4	0.2
Resident Experience - Contact Centre; Gateways; Customer care & Complaints	5.0	4.9	-0.1
Strategic Management & Departmental Budgets (DCED)	5.5	4.6	-0.9
Business & Client Relationships	2.7	2.7	0.0
Health & Safety	0.5	0.5	0.0
Strategic Management & Departmental Support	0.5	0.4	-0.2
Strategic Reset Programme	1.7	1.0	-0.7
Technology	27.9	27.9	0.0
Technology	27.9	27.9	0.0

Non Attributable Costs including Corporately Held Budgets

Figures in £m		Budget	Forecast	Variance
Non Attributable Costs including Corporately Held Budgets		111.5	104.8	-6.7
Non Attributable Costs		109.9	105.3	-4.6
Corporately Held Budgets		1.6	-0.5	-2.1

Appendix 2 | Savings Statement

Adult Social Care & Health

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Adult Social Care & Health	-63,138.0	-41,035.4	-178.1	-1,128.9	-42,342.4	20,795.5	17,490.0	-8,516.6
Efficiency Savings in relation to the purchasing of residential and nursing care for older people	-6,790.1	-4,292.1	0.0	0.0	-4,292.1	2,498.0	0.0	-2,498.0
Efficiency Savings in relation to the purchasing of care and support in the home	-3,967.3	-161.3	0.0	0.0	-161.3	3,806.0	3,805.9	0.0
Efficiency savings in relation to the purchasing of equipment contract	-590.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	590.0	590.0	0.0
Efficiency savings in relation to the purchasing and monitoring of delivery of supported living	-7,546.0	-750.0	-178.1	0.0	-928.1	6,617.9	6,046.0	-750.0
Review of 18-25 community-based services: ensuring strict adherence to policy, review of packages with high levels of support and enhanced contributions from health - short term support	-0.7	-0.7	0.0	0.0	-0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of 18-25 community-based services: ensuring strict adherence to policy, review of packages with high levels of support and enhanced contributions from health - long term support	-649.3	-649.3	0.0	0.0	-649.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
18-25 Community Based Services saving (transport)	-250.0	-250.0	0.0	0.0	-250.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un-deliverable	To be achieved in future years
Annual uplift in social care client contributions in line with estimated benefit and other personal income uplifts, together with inflationary increases and a review of fees and charges across all KCC services, in relation to existing service income streams - long term support	-3,897.6	-3,897.6	0.0	0.0	-3,897.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Annual uplift in social care client contributions in line with estimated benefit and other personal income uplifts, together with inflationary increases and a review of fees and charges across all KCC services, in relation to existing service income streams - short term support	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0	-2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Annual uplift in social care client contributions in line with estimated benefit and other personal income uplifts, together with inflationary increases and a review of fees and charges across all KCC services, in relation to existing service income streams for clients aged up to 25	-40.0	-40.0	0.0	0.0	-40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Estimated annual increase in Better Care Fund - short term support	-382.3	-382.3	0.0	0.0	-382.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Estimated annual increase in Better Care Fund - long term support	-1,924.8	-1,924.8	0.0	0.0	-1,924.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Explore alternative sources of funding for the Kent Support & Assistance Service	-567.2	-487.2	0.0	-80.0	-567.2	0.0	80.0	0.0
Revision of Adults Charging Policy, in line with Care Act legislation and the statutory guidance for 18-25 - long term support	-128.9	-128.9	0.0	0.0	-128.9	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un-deliver-able	To be achieved in future years
The full year effect of the Adults Charging Policy changes made in line with Care Act Legislation and statutory guidance in September 2024 - long term support	-1,573.2	-1,573.2	0.0	0.0	-1,573.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
The full year effect of the Adults Charging Policy changes made in line with Care Act Legislation and statutory guidance in September 2024 - short term support	-21.7	-21.7	0.0	0.0	-21.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Revision of Adults Charging Policy, in line with Care Act legislation and the statutory guidance for 18-25 - short term support	-0.2	-0.2	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of preventive services to prevent, reduce and delay care and support. Working with the NHS and wider partners to commission collaboratively to deliver efficiencies	-2,588.6	0.0	0.0	-1,048.9	-1,048.9	1,539.7	0.0	-2,588.6
Savings from moving individuals previously supported in community-based services into grant funded safe accommodation	-225.0	-225.0	0.0	0.0	-225.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cease our contribution to the Home Improvement agency	-294.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	294.0	0.0	-294.0
Efficiencies in Enablement	-7,581.2	-9,855.3	0.0	0.0	-9,855.3	-2,274.2	0.0	0.0
Initial Contact	-1,667.4	-231.5	0.0	0.0	-231.5	1,435.9	1,435.9	0.0
Maximisation of in-house short term beds	-2,151.9	-1,516.8	0.0	0.0	-1,516.8	635.2	173.7	-461.5
Reduction in Residential and Nursing Placements	-772.5	-500.4	0.0	0.0	-500.4	272.1	70.9	-201.2
Occupational Therapists	-1,840.0	-1,966.6	0.0	0.0	-1,966.6	-126.6	0.0	0.0

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un-deliver-able	To be achieved in future years
Partnership working - continuing health care	-1,046.2	-1,046.2	0.0	0.0	-1,046.2	-0.0	0.0	0.0
Ongoing Reviews	-2,295.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	2,295.7	1,905.3	-390.4
First Reviews	-3,111.3	-1,147.4	0.0	0.0	-1,147.4	1,963.9	860.8	-1,103.1
Supported Living	-3,533.8	-3,304.1	0.0	0.0	-3,304.1	229.8	0.0	-229.8
Technology Enabled Lives	-1,748.7	-3,252.1	0.0	0.0	-3,252.1	-1,503.4	0.0	0.0
Additional plans are being considered and further 2025-26 savings are being modelled on other areas which could support the plans already in place.	-2,521.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,521.5	2,521.5	0.0
Over delivery of £3,373.3k of savings in 2024-25 against some of the streams within the £30,154.8k 2024-25 savings target from the review and reshape of ASCH as set out in the sustainability plan to deliver new models of social care - long term support	-3,373.3	-3,373.3	0.0	0.0	-3,373.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in ASCH Directorate, to establish opportunities for consolidation and/or centralisation of practice	-55.2	-55.2	0.0	0.0	-55.2	0.0	0.0	0.0

Public Health

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Public Health	-74.2	-74.2	0.0	0.0	-74.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Children's Health Programme savings on premises due to more efficient use of available premises	-25.0	-25.0	0.0	0.0	-25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reduction in demand for Buprenorphine	-40.0	-40.0	0.0	0.0	-40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of Public Health Services principally related to Healthy Lifestyles to ensure spending is contained within ringfenced grant	-9.2	-9.2	0.0	0.0	-9.2	0.0	0.0	0.0

Children, Young People & Education

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Children, Young People & Education	-22,204.9	-21,604.9	0.0	-400.0	-22,004.9	200.0	0.0	-600.0
Efficiency: Children's Social Care – Review of Legal Services Spend through cost efficiencies by Invicta Law and review of the use of legal services by social workers	-232.0	-232.0	0.0	0.0	-232.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Policy: Services to Schools – Review our offer to schools in light of the latest DFE funding changes and guidance including exploring alternative funding arrangements and engaging in efficiency measure to reduce costs	-400.0	0.0	0.0	-400.0	-400.0	0.0	0.0	-400.0
Review of Legal Services Spend through cost efficiencies by Invicta Law and review of the use of legal services by social workers - CCS	-19.3	-19.3	0.0	0.0	-19.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of Legal Services Spend through cost efficiencies by Invicta Law and review of the use of legal services by social workers - ICS Operations	-830.7	-830.7	0.0	0.0	-830.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Implementation of new statutory guidance for Home to School Transport (published June 23) including making use of a new system for transport planning to explore route optimisation and use of standard pick up points, where appropriate.	-300.0	-300.0	0.0	0.0	-300.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reduction in the number of Historic Pension Arrangements - CYPE Directorate	-120.4	-120.4	0.0	0.0	-120.4	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un-deliver-able	To be achieved in future years
Adoption Service	-89.5	-89.5	0.0	0.0	-89.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kent 16+ Travel Saver price realignment to offset bus operator inflationary fare increases	-108.4	-108.4	0.0	0.0	-108.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Introduction of charging for post 16 SEN transport and reductions to the Post 19 transport offer	-541.0	-541.0	0.0	0.0	-541.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review our offer to schools in light of the latest DFE funding changes and guidance including exploring alternative funding arrangements and engaging in efficiency measure to reduce costs	-250.0	-250.0	0.0	0.0	-250.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Policy: Services to Schools – Review our offer to schools in light of the latest DFE funding changes and guidance including exploring alternative funding arrangements and engaging in efficiency measure to reduce costs	-707.4	-707.4	0.0	0.0	-707.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review contract with Health for fast tracking mental health assessments for Looked After Children	-1,117.0	-1,117.0	0.0	0.0	-1,117.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of open access services in light of implementing the Family Hub model - ICS Operations	-1,533.8	-1,533.8	0.0	0.0	-1,533.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of open access services in light of implementing the Family Hub model - CCS	-66.2	-66.2	0.0	0.0	-66.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of Kent 16+ Travel Saver - above inflation increase to cover full cost of the pass	-385.0	-385.0	0.0	0.0	-385.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un-deliver-able	To be achieved in future years
Review of services for schools including contribution to TEP, facilities management costs, staff care services and any other services for schools	-1,322.8	-1,322.8	0.0	0.0	-1,322.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of Respite Offer	-200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	200.0	0.0	-200.0
Use of external grant to part fund respite offer	-550.0	-550.0	0.0	0.0	-550.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Estimated reduction to the impact of rising pupil population on SEN Home to School and College Transport	-10,600.0	-10,600.0	0.0	0.0	-10,600.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Initiatives to increase use of Personal Transport Budgets to reduce demand for Hired Transport	-400.0	-400.0	0.0	0.0	-400.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of children with disability packages ensuring strict adherence to policy, review packages with high levels of support and enhanced contributions from health	-756.3	-756.3	0.0	0.0	-756.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Implementation of strategies to reduce placement costs for looked after children including the impact of kinship service to reduce the number of children remaining in care, along with increased health contributions.	-1,500.0	-1,500.0	0.0	0.0	-1,500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in CYPE Directorate, to establish opportunities for consolidation and/or centralisation of practice	-175.1	-175.1	0.0	0.0	-175.1	0.0	0.0	0.0

Growth, Environment & Transport

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Growth, Environment & Transport	-17,180.3	-17,505.5	0.0	-200.0	-17,705.5	-525.2	0.0	0.0
Reduced cost of food waste disposal following Government legislation regarding consistent collections, and work with Kent District Councils to deliver savings from improving kerbside food waste recycling rates.	-76.0	-76.0	0.0	0.0	-76.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review service delivery model for Visitor Economy and Inward Investment services to bring about efficiency savings within the operating model	-150.0	-150.0	0.0	0.0	-150.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Undeliverable prior year saving from increased waste material segregation, that was intended to generate income or reduce cost. This has not been possible due to a change in Government legislation whereby certain items can no longer be recycled.	-390.0	-390.0	0.0	0.0	-390.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Revenue savings from a spend to save initiative by paying off an interest bearing loan early related to the development of Dunbrik Waste Transfer Station	-395.0	-395.0	0.0	0.0	-395.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increased Libraries, Registration and Archives income due to increased uptake of services	-400.0	-525.0	0.0	0.0	-525.0	-125.0	0.0	0.0
Changes to the contribution from Medway Council under SLA relating to	-109.0	-109.0	0.0	0.0	-109.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figures in £000s

Saving		2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
increasing/decreasing costs for provision of Coroner service in Medway									
Annual inflationary uplift to Library, Registration and Archives income levels and fees and charges in relation to existing service income streams		-50.0	-50.0	0.0	0.0	-50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Inflationary increase in income levels and pricing policy for Kent Scientific Services		-86.1	-86.3	0.0	0.0	-86.3	-0.2	0.0	0.0
Continuation of a one-off (2025-26) increase in the annual financial distribution to partners from East Kent Opportunities LLP. The remaining land parcels are currently anticipated to be disposed of by the end of 2025-26, at which point East Kent Opportunities LLP will be dissolved and the budget will need to be realigned in 2026-27.		-50.0	-50.0	0.0	0.0	-50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kent Travel Saver price realignment to offset bus operator inflationary fare increases		-479.7	-479.7	0.0	0.0	-479.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Trading Standards inflationary fee increases		-2.0	-2.0	0.0	0.0	-2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of all Highways & Transportation fees and charges, that are to be increased annually in line with inflation		-65.0	-65.0	0.0	0.0	-65.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Highways & Transportation - review of future activity levels with a view to increasing income targets to ensure compliance with fees and charges policy		-1,032.0	-1,232.0	0.0	0.0	-1,232.0	-200.0	0.0	0.0

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Increased income within Kent Scientific Services for toxicology analysis for the Coroners Service	-13.0	-13.0	0.0	0.0	-13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Surplus from traffic management penalties including contravening traffic restrictions, box junctions and bus lanes under new Moving Traffic Enforcement powers, to offset operational costs and overheads - compliance with fees and charges policy	-200.0	-200.0	0.0	-200.0	-400.0	-200.0	0.0	0.0
Income to offset part of the cost of disposal of packaging waste under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation	-13,288.0	-13,288.0	0.0	0.0	-13,288.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of Community Warden Service to deliver a £1m saving which has resulted in an overall reduction in wardens This is the residual budget once pension liabilities expire	-67.0	-67.0	0.0	0.0	-67.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increase income from Country Parks	-120.0	-120.0	0.0	0.0	-120.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
A reduction in the KCC contribution to the operational costs of the Cyclopark sports and community facility in Gravesend. The park is owned by KCC and operated on KCC's behalf by the Cyclopark charitable trust.	-12.5	-12.5	0.0	0.0	-12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reduction of KCC funding to support the operational costs of Produced in Kent, the county's food & drink sector business membership organisation and promotional agency.	-58.0	-58.0	0.0	0.0	-58.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figures in £000s

Saving		2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Reduction in the budget for the Straits Committee whilst continuing to meet the committees commitments		-15.0	-15.0	0.0	0.0	-15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Work with Kent District Councils to deliver savings from improving kerbside food waste recycling rates		-80.0	-80.0	0.0	0.0	-80.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in GET Directorate, to establish opportunities for consolidation and/or centralisation of practice - Environment & Circular Economy Division		-21.0	-21.0	0.0	0.0	-21.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in GET Directorate, to establish opportunities for consolidation and/or centralisation of practice - Highways & Transportation Division		-21.0	-21.0	0.0	0.0	-21.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Chief Executive's Department

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Chief Executive's Department	-4,433.0	-4,313.0	0.0	0.0	-4,313.0	120.0	0.0	-120.0
Reduction in the number of Historic Pension arrangements within CED Directorate	-105.5	-105.5	0.0	0.0	-105.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Support Service targeted reductions - review of discretionary spend	-100.0	-100.0	0.0	0.0	-100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Support Service targeted reductions - reduced contribution to pension fund in respect of change to requirements	-107.0	-107.0	0.0	0.0	-107.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increase in the recharge to the Pension Fund to better represent the cost of hosting of the Fund within KCC, including overhead elements. Further work to establish full cost recovery will continue over the next few months and may result in a further increase in 2026-27.	-230.9	-230.9	0.0	0.0	-230.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Explore alternative sources of funding for the administration of the Kent Support & Assistance Service	-262.0	-142.0	0.0	0.0	-142.0	120.0	0.0	-120.0
Review of Committee support arrangements	-20.0	-20.0	0.0	0.0	-20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cease Early Intervention Payments to District Councils	-82.5	-82.5	0.0	0.0	-82.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Terminate current arrangements to provide annual incentive to collection authorities to reduce/remove empty property council tax	-1,450.0	-1,450.0	0.0	0.0	-1,450.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
discounts and charge premiums on long-term empty properties								
Terminate the current £1.5m annual support provided to collection authorities towards the administration of local CTRS. The current arrangements provide each district with a fixed sum of £70k plus share of £660k based on number of eligible low income pensioner and working age households. The payments are funded by all major precepting authorities pro rata to share of council tax. There is a separate share of £0.5m funded solely by KCC allocated according weighted number of working age eligible households as incentive to align local CTR schemes with other welfare conditions.	-1,746.7	-1,746.7	0.0	0.0	-1,746.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reducing the subsidy to the Civil Society	-200.0	-200.0	0.0	0.0	-200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in CED Directorate, to establish opportunities for consolidation and/or centralisation of practice	-128.4	-128.4	0.0	0.0	-128.4	0.0	0.0	0.0

Deputy Chief Executive's Department

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Deputy Chief Executive's Department	-10,151.0	-10,151.0	0.0	0.0	-10,151.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Property savings from a Corporate Landlord review of specialist assets	-309.4	-309.4	0.0	0.0	-309.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Support Service targeted reductions - reduced contribution to pension fund in respect of staff who transferred to Agilisys	-169.6	-169.6	0.0	0.0	-169.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Support Service targeted reductions - staffing efficiencies within Business Management & Client Relationships	-19.0	-19.0	0.0	0.0	-19.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Support Service targeted reductions - staffing efficiencies within Strategic Reset Programme	-82.2	-82.2	0.0	0.0	-82.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Support Service targeted reductions - staffing efficiencies within Infrastructure	-201.1	-201.1	0.0	0.0	-201.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
One-off use of capital receipts under the Governments flexible use of capital receipts policy, which allows authorities to use the proceeds from asset sales to fund the revenue costs of projects that will reduce costs, increase revenue or support a more efficient provision of services. We are applying this flexibility to eligible Oracle Cloud costs in 2025-26. This flexible use of capital receipts is partially compensating for the share of the £19,835.2k policy savings required to replace the one-off solutions in the 2024-25 budget that are planned	-8,021.0	-8,021.0	0.0	0.0	-8,021.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
to be delivered in 2026-27. £11,705.8k of the £19,835.2k policy savings is planned for 2026-27, which will be temporarily met in 2025-26 from this £8,021k flexible use of capital receipts, £1,926.7k from our allocation of New Homes Bonus and £1,758.1k use of reserves, until the base budget savings are delivered in 2026-27.								
Income: Resilience and Emergency Planning - Additional income from reservoir work	-60.0	-60.0	0.0	0.0	-60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Corporate Landlord review of Community Delivery including Assets	-1,095.0	-1,095.0	0.0	0.0	-1,095.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of Office Assets.	-178.4	-178.4	0.0	0.0	-178.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in DCED Directorate, to establish opportunities for consolidation and/or centralisation of practice - SMDB Division	-1.8	-1.8	0.0	0.0	-1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in DCED Directorate, to establish opportunities for consolidation and/or centralisation of practice - Technology	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0	-2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in DCED Directorate, to establish opportunities for consolidation and/or centralisation of practice - Infrastructure	-8.5	-8.5	0.0	0.0	-8.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review of embedded teams in DCED Directorate, to establish opportunities for	-2.6	-2.6	0.0	0.0	-2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
consolidation and/or centralisation of practice - Marketing & Resident Experience Division								

Non Attributable Costs including Corporately Held Budgets

Figures in £000s

Saving	2025-26 Savings Target	Forecast delivery against original saving	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (ongoing)	Forecast delivery against alt. saving (one-off)	Total Forecast Delivery	Variance	Un- deliver- able	To be achieved in future years
Non Attributable Costs	-2,798.1	-2,798.1	0.0	0.0	-2,798.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Review amounts set aside for debt repayment (MRP) based on review of asset life	-1,000.0	-1,000.0	0.0	0.0	-1,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reduce the annual budget for Modernisation of the Council/ Workforce Reduction based on recent years' activity and fund any in-year excess costs from the reserve	-500.0	-500.0	0.0	0.0	-500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increase in the dividend from Commercial Services Group following an increase in the commissioning budgets for ICT & HR services	-1,298.1	-1,298.1	0.0	0.0	-1,298.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Corporately Held Budgets	-1,500.0	-500.0	-1,000.0	0.0	-1,500.0	0.0	1,000.0	0.0
Reduction in the volume and duration of agency staff	-750.0	0.0	-750.0	0.0	-750.0	0.0	750.0	0.0
Reduction in the volume and duration of agency staff	-250.0	0.0	-250.0	0.0	-250.0	0.0	250.0	0.0
Review of structures across the Council to ensure adherence to the Council's organisation design policy	-500.0	-500.0	0.0	0.0	-500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Appendix 3 | Prudential Indicators

The prudential indicators consider the affordability and impact of capital expenditure plans, in line with the prudential code.

Prudential Indicator 1: Estimates of Capital Expenditure (£m)

	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Budget	25-26 Forecast	26-27 Estimate	27-28 Estimate	28-29 Estimate
Total	269.6	358.4	330.1	312.5	197.3	177.0

Prudential Indicator 2: Estimate of Capital Finance Requirement (CFR) (£m)

The CFR is the total outstanding capital expenditure not yet financed by revenue or capital resources. It is a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need.

	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Budget	25-26 Forecast	26-27 Estimate	27-28 Estimate	28-29 Estimate
Total CFR	1,295.9	1,234.1	1,271.8	1,286.3	1,265.5	1,233.9

Prudential Indicator 3: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement (£m)

Projected levels of the Authority's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases and transferred debt) are shown below, compared with the CFR.

	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Budget	25-26 Forecast	26-27 Estimate	27-28 Estimate	28-29 Estimate
Other long-term liabilities	230.3	159.1	230.3	230.3	230.3	230.3
External borrowing	732.6	684.7	624.8	600.6	593.3	586.0
Total Debt	962.9	843.8	855.1	830.9	823.6	816.3
Capital Financing Requirement	1,295.9	1,234.1	1,271.8	1,286.3	1,265.5	1,233.9
Internal borrowing	333.0	390.3	416.7	455.4	441.9	417.6

Prudential Indicator 4: Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt (£m)

The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (the authorised limit for external debt). A lower "operation boundary" is set should debt approach the limit.

	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Budget	25-26 Forecast	26-27 Estimate	27-28 Estimate	28-29 Estimate
Authorised limit – borrowing	946	1,201	1,201	1,233	1,225	1,225
Authorised limit – other long-term liabilities	230	240	230	230	230	230
Authorised limit – total external debt	1,176	1,441	1,431	1,463	1,455	1,455
Operational boundary – borrowing	822	1,101	1,101	1,133	1,125	1,125
Operational boundary – other long-term liabilities	230	215	230	230	230	230
Operational boundary – total external debt	1,052	1,316	1,331	1,363	1,355	1,355

Prudential Indicator 5: Estimate of Finance Costs to Net Revenue Stream (%)

Financing costs comprise interest on loans and minimum revenue provision (MRP) and are charged to revenue. This indicator compares the net financing costs of the Authority to the net revenue stream.

	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Budget	25-26 Forecast	26-27 Estimate	27-28 Estimate	28-29 Estimate
Proportion of net revenue stream	7.38%	6.76%	6.67%	6.58%	6.46%	6.15%

Prudential Indicator 6: Estimates of net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream

	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Estimate	26-27 Estimate	27-28 Estimate
Net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream (%)	0.34	0.34	0.29	0.28

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By: Anna Taylor, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny)

To: Scrutiny Committee, 25 November 2025

Subject: 25/00004 - Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives

Summary: The Chair and Spokespeople of the Scrutiny Committee have asked that decision 25/00004 – Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives be placed on the Committee agenda for discussion.

1. Introduction

- a) In March 2025 a decision was taken, under the previous Council administration, to cease the financial support and incentive payments towards the cost of setting up and administering local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) with effect from 1 April 2025. A report from the responsible Cabinet Member and s151 Officer providing an update on the decision, along with the Record of Decision, associated Decision Report and Equality Impact Assessment, are attached as appendices.
- b) This decision was called-into the Scrutiny Committee in April 2025 ([Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 10th April, 2025, 10.30 am](#))
- c) Previously this had been discussed by the [Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025, 10.00 am](#)
- d) The decision papers remain available online here: [Decision - 25/00004 - Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives](#) but are republished in the agenda pack as appendices for ease of reference.
- e) The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 April confirm that, at the time, Members of the Scrutiny Committee considered that the decision would have a negative impact on KCC and the removal of the subsidy would impact the next administration negatively. The Chair and Spokespeople would now like to review this decision to determine any possible impact on KCC in advance of decisions being made about this year's budget.

2. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the update on decision 25/00004 - Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives

3. Attached documents

- a) Scrutiny Report provided by the Executive

- b) [25-00004 - Record of Decision](#)
- c) [25-00004 - Decision Report](#)
- d) [25-00004 – EqlA](#)

4. Background documents

- a) [Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 10th April, 2025, 10.30 am](#)
- b) [Agenda for Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025, 10.00 am](#)

Contact Details

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By: John Betts, Interim Corporate Director – Finance
Brian Collins, Deputy Leader

To: Scrutiny Committee, 25 November 2025

Subject: 25/00004 - Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives

Summary:

The Chair and Spokespeople of the Scrutiny Committee have asked that decision 25/00004 – Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives be placed on the Committee agenda for discussion.

This paper sets out the council tax base assumptions for 2025-26 compared to 2024-25 as determined by the 12 collection authorities in Kent in comparison with the national totals for England and Shire districts.

The analysis shows that the growth in the net taxbase between 2024-25 and 2025-26 after adjustments for discounts, exemptions and premiums (this includes the impact of council tax reduction discounts) across Kent was similar to the national England average (and slightly above the average for Shire districts). However, after taking into account changes in estimated collection rates the growth in the taxbase for council tax setting purposes was less than the national English and Shire district averages.

The report outlines the County Council's arguments against more generous local council tax reduction schemes

If council tax collection is more difficult for those households already in receipt of council tax reduction discounts, then it is reasonable to conclude that increasing council tax reduction discounts for 2026-27 should improve collection rates and there may not be an overall discernible reduction in tax base growth for council tax setting purposes. This may already have been built into some districts' taxbase estimates from this year. However, until we have seen initial estimates from districts, we cannot be sure.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2025 a decision was taken, under the previous Council administration, to cease the financial support and incentive payments towards the cost of setting up and administering local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) with effect from 1 April 2025. The Record of Decision, associated Decision Report and Equality Impact Assessment are attached as appendices.
- 1.2 This decision was called-into the Scrutiny Committee in April 2025 ([Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 10th April, 2025, 10.30 am](#))

- 1.3 Previously this had been discussed by the [Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025, 10.00 am](#)
- 1.4 The decision papers remain available online here: [Decision - 25/00004 - Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives](#) but are republished in the agenda pack as appendices for ease of reference.
- 1.5 The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 April confirm that, at the time, Members of the Scrutiny Committee considered that the decision would have a negative impact on KCC and the removal of the subsidy would impact the next administration negatively. The Chair and Spokespeople would now like to review this decision to determine any possible impact on KCC in advance of decisions being made about this year's budget.

2. Background

- 2.1 All council tax billing authorities (the 12 district, borough and city councils in Kent) have a statutory responsibility to calculate an estimate for the council tax base for council tax setting purposes under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. The calculation is based on determining the relevant number of properties liable to pay council tax in each council tax band (quoted as band D equivalent properties) and an estimate of the collection rate for the year.
- 2.2 The number of properties liable for council tax is adjusted for those subject to discounts, exemptions and premiums. It is based upon the number of dwellings in each band (A to H) shown on the valuation list at a prescribed date (usually 30th November). This is then adjusted for exempt dwellings (student dwellings, etc.), eligible discounts (single occupancy discount, etc.), premiums (long term empty and second homes), discounts for council tax support (low-income, elderly and working age households) and where applicable assumed in-year changes to the number on the valuation list, eligible discounts and premiums).
- 2.3 The calculations must be approved by each authority for the forthcoming year between 1st December and 31st January to enable precepting authorities and billing authorities to determine council tax charges as part of annual budget setting in accordance with council tax referendum requirements (as set out in the Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) (England) Report). Major precepting authorities must notify billing authorities of their council tax precept by 28th February.

3. Comparison of Kent Tax Base Estimates

3.1 Table 1 shows comparison of the overall tax base estimate for 2025-26 compared to the England national and Shire district averages. This information has been extracted from statutory CTR1 returns¹.

Table 1	Change in tax base after discounts, exemptions and premiums	Change in estimated collection rate	Change in tax base for council tax setting purposes
Kent Average	2.0%	-0.7%	1.2%
England Average	2.0%	0.0%	1.9%
Shire District Average	1.7%	-0.1%	1.6%

3.2 Table 2 shows the individual returns for the 12 Kent Collection authorities compared to the Kent, England National and Shire District averages

Table 2	2024-25			2025-26		
	Net taxbase after discounts, exemptions & premiums	Estimated collection rate	Council taxbase for council tax setting purposes	Net taxbase after discounts, exemptions & premiums	Estimated collection rate	Council taxbase for council tax setting purposes
Ashford	50,571.00	98.5%	49,832.00	50,589.00	97.5%	49,332.00
Canterbury	54,437.00	98.0%	53,348.30	56,756.68	97.0%	55,053.98
Dartford	42,081.50	97.5%	41,029.50	42,992.10	97.0%	41,702.34
Dover	41,560.60	98.0%	40,874.50	43,273.84	97.0%	42,119.72
Folkestone & Hythe	41,664.80	96.5%	40,466.10	43,100.73	95.5%	41,413.64
Gravesham	36,450.20	98.8%	35,994.60	36,258.71	97.8%	35,442.89
Maidstone	69,129.30	98.5%	68,263.60	69,652.41	97.5%	68,085.50
Sevenoaks	52,700.90	99.4%	52,394.70	53,318.24	99.4%	53,008.33
Swale	51,031.30	98.7%	50,367.90	51,707.48	97.7%	50,518.21
Thanet	47,385.00	98.0%	46,454.10	49,742.77	97.0%	48,260.89
Tonbridge & Malling	54,347.50	98.4%	53,477.90	55,061.15	97.8%	53,849.80
Tunbridge Wells	49,474.10	97.8%	48,360.90	50,137.35	98.0%	49,134.60
Kent Total/Average	590,833.20	98.2%	580,864.10	602,590.46	97.5%	587,921.90
England Total	19,317,385.72	98.1%	18,987,788.60	19,696,007.44	98.1%	19,348,235.71
Shire District Total	7,114,885.11	98.4%	7,020,041.30	7,237,446.52	98.3%	7,134,487.45

3.3 The changes in taxbases between 2024-25 and 2025-26 suggest that some district councils may have already effectively “baked in” reductions in the taxbase as a result of more generous local discount schemes. In the majority of cases the assumed collection rate performance has got worse. In some areas (for example, Ashford) the taxbase itself has reduced by a remarkably precise

¹ The CTR1 return is a form used by local billing authorities (such as shire districts, London boroughs, metropolitan districts, and unitary authorities) to report details of how they have calculated their council tax requirement for the upcoming financial year. This form is part of a set of Council Tax Requirement (CTR) forms submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).

figure (in this case, precisely 500). All this makes it very difficult to predict the taxbase for 2026-27.

4. Local Council Tax Discount Schemes

- 4.1 Local councils have been responsible for providing support to low income households through Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (LCTRS) since responsibility for Council Tax Benefit (CTB) was localised in 2013. Local schemes must include mandatory council tax reductions of up to 100% for pensioner households in accordance with national provisions, but discounts for working age households are discretionary. When funding was transferred in 2013 it came with a 10% reduction. Local schemes are agreed and administered by collection authorities (district councils in two-tier areas) although the majority of the impact falls on major precepting authorities (County Council, Police & Crime Commissioner and Fire & Rescue).
- 4.2 In Kent we had an agreement with collection authorities to apply a maximum 80% discount for working age households (albeit with the ability for local variation providing other measures were also taken such as changing empty property discounts to fund these variations). The 80% discount applies to families with no qualifying income other than Universal Credit and other welfare benefits with the discount reducing according to bands as income increases.
- 4.3 Until this year KCC and other major preceptors paid subsidies totalling £2m (KCC share £1.75m) to all 12 collection authorities in return for councils adopting the standard scheme (80% maximum discount subject to local variations). This was a discretionary arrangement and the previous Administration agreed to remove this subsidy in 2025-26 as part of the savings requirement and the focus on KCC's statutory responsibilities.
- 4.4 Some collection authorities had already been considering opting out of the standard agreement and were considering introducing higher discounts to help low income households struggling to pay council tax. Other collection authorities suggested that without the subsidy it would not be economic for them to continue to offer the current discounts, as it would cost more to collect council tax than their share (typically districts receive between 10% to 12% of total council tax).
- 4.5 To date 9 councils have undertaken public consultation on changing their LCTRS. To date none have made the final decision. This decision would need to be taken by end of January.

5. Response to LCTRS Consultation

- 5.1 KCC has submitted response setting out its opposition to the proposed changes to LCTRS, as they reduce the council tax base (and therefore the amount of council tax all authorities will receive). Kent Fire & Rescue services has responded along very similar lines.
- 5.2 KCC acknowledges that the current arrangements were developed mutually between collection and precepting authorities with the aim of mitigating the

original reduction in funding from the estimated cost of previous Council Tax Benefit arrangements. This agreement was based on setting a maximum discount of less than 100% for working age households on the lowest incomes (with tapered reductions in discounts as income increases), adopting standard criteria for other aspects scheme such minimum income thresholds, and reductions in empty property discounts. The mutual agreement was subsequently refined and local schemes updated to mirror the welfare reforms under the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

- 5.3 KCC has also supported changes made by districts to simplify local schemes with a move to a banded approach. This has provided more certainty for individuals as discounts only change should their circumstances mean they move into a different band. The change to a banded approach has reduced the assessment burden on districts and has not materially affected the taxbase (other than impacts that would have occurred due to any economic upturn or downturn affecting employment and income levels).
- 5.4 However, KCC does not support proposals to provide a higher level of discount (either 90% or 100%) for those in the lowest income band or increasing the discount in other bands. KCC does not support other options under consideration such as removing the minimum income floor and believes the current scheme should be retained. The reasons are set out below.

Impending Local Government Reorganisation

- 5.5 The Government has recognised that although councils were invited to submit proposals for unitary government, in the meantime Councils should continue to deliver essential services and meet statutory obligations. In doing so the government has been clear that decisions of existing councils should not compromise the future sustainability of new councils or fetter future decisions of new councils. Included in the examples of such decisions are local council tax support schemes and council tax exemption schemes.
- 5.6 KCC is concerned that consultations on more generous LCTRS have not acknowledged that changing schemes for 2026-27 to allow higher discounts will reduce the overall taxbase (both for existing councils as well as newly re-organised councils). It also fails to acknowledge that a re-organised unitary authority would probably take a broader view, rather than just considering the impact of schemes on individual recipient households and impact on cost of council tax collection. Instead, new unitaries are left with lower taxbases, potentially exacerbated over a wider geographical area than just the current district boundary. Because this decision will affect the council tax base (and thus the future sustainability of new councils to deliver a wider range of services) we believe this is a fundamental flaw and should have been explicitly covered in the consultation.

Impact of Proposed Changes

- 5.7 The cost of LCTRS discounts is borne by all taxpayers and this has not been made clear in consultations. Respondents haven't been asked whether they support a greater share of the council tax they pay being used to support those on low incomes. KCC believes that it should have been made much more

explicit in the consultation that the proposals will impact on all council taxpayers.

Fiduciary Duties

- 5.8 It is a long-standing legal principle that in managing their financial affairs, councils have a fiduciary duty to all taxpayers. KCC contends that this fiduciary duty does not just apply to the individual collection authority budget and that in discharging statutory functions with regard to council tax collection, authorities are already under a duty to seek to maximise collection at lowest possible cost. In only considering the impact of the costs of administration of LCTRS compared to the income the collection authority receives from its share of council tax collection, districts have not demonstrated that this meets the fiduciary responsibility to all taxpayers.
- 5.9 Effectively the cost of LCTRS discounts is borne by all taxpayers and this has not been made clear in the consultation, or respondents asked whether they support a greater share of the council tax they pay being used to support those on low incomes. KCC believes that it should have been made much more explicit in the consultation that the proposals will impact on all council taxpayers

Comparison with Other Councils

- 5.10 KCC is concerned that there does not appear to be any analysis of schemes in other council areas. Schemes offering 100% discount remain in place in only a minority of other councils, with the most common schemes offering 70%-80% discounts (that is, in line with the current arrangements in Kent). There has been no acknowledgement in consultations that the proposals would result in more generous discounts than in most other council areas.

Evidence of Impact on Collection Rates, Council Tax Collection Costs and other impacts.

- 5.11 Consultations have not explicitly stated how offering a higher discount will impact on council tax collection rates (it is implied that the difficulty households face in paying existing discounted bills impacts on collection, but no evidence has been supplied). This lack of evidence on collection rates for households in receipt of support through LCTRS and households paying full council tax should have been made available to inform consultees.
- 5.12 No evidence has been provided to precepting authorities or other consultees on the cost of administering current LCTRS or costs of council tax collection for those paying full council tax. No evidence has been provided on the lower costs of administering the proposed new schemes for respondents to judge whether these savings are appropriate, compared to costs. Since one of the stated objectives is to reduce the cost of administering schemes, this information should have been provided.

Alternatives

- 5.13 KCC is concerned about the lack of alternatives considered. These have been limited to continuing with the current scheme, either with the subsidy from preceptors restored, or reducing other services to maintain council tax

collection. The consultation should have spelled out other alternatives such as improving council tax collection to pay for the cost of collection, doing more to tackle fraud and error, increased efficiencies in council tax collection, and reductions in discounts.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 It is evident that the majority of Kent districts are considering LCTRS changes that will reduce the overall taxbase. It is not clear what that impact may be, as some districts appear to have pre-empted that decision in the current taxbase. It is also unclear what impact (if any) the County Council's response to consultations on these proposals may be.
- 6.2 If council tax collection is more difficult for those households already in receipt of council tax reduction discounts, then it is reasonable to conclude that increasing council tax reduction discounts for 2026-27 should improve collection rates and there may not be an overall discernible reduction in tax base growth for council tax setting purposes. This may already have been built into some districts' taxbase estimates from this year. Until we have seen initial estimates from districts, we cannot be sure.
- 6.3 In order to partly mitigate some of the risk of lower than expected taxbases being issued by districts, the County Council could choose to reverse its previous decision and continue subsidising the legal responsibilities of district councils. In doing so, it would need to consider how much subsidy to offer and whether to apply any conditions to the subsidy (for example, minimum taxbase increases, improved collection rates, guaranteed reversals of LCTR proposals). To give district sufficient time to consider such an offer, it would need to be made prior to the Christmas period.

7. Recommendation

As per Covering Report - The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the update on decision 25/00004 - Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives.

8. Attached documents

- a) [25-00004 - Record of Decision](#)
- b) [25-00004 - Decision Report](#)
- c) [25-00004 – EqIA](#)

9. Background documents

- a) [Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 10th April, 2025, 10.30 am](#)
- b) [Agenda for Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025, 10.00 am](#)

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From: John Betts, Interim Corporate Director Finance

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

Subject: Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives

Decision no: 25/00004

Key Decision : Affecting more than 2 Electoral Divisions
Expenditure and savings of more than £1m

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee 27th November 2024
Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee 5th March 2025

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report makes recommendations further to the requirement to deliver policy savings in the 2025-26 revenue budget to replace the use of one-off solutions used to balance 2024-25 revenue budget. The report outlines the history of the long-standing subsidies and incentives provided to district/borough/city councils as the billing authorities for council tax. The report recommends ceasing certain subsidies and incentives to facilitate the tax collection authorities ("Billing Authorities") discharging their statutory functions as this is no longer tenable and the Council has to focus on its own statutory services.

Recommendation(s):

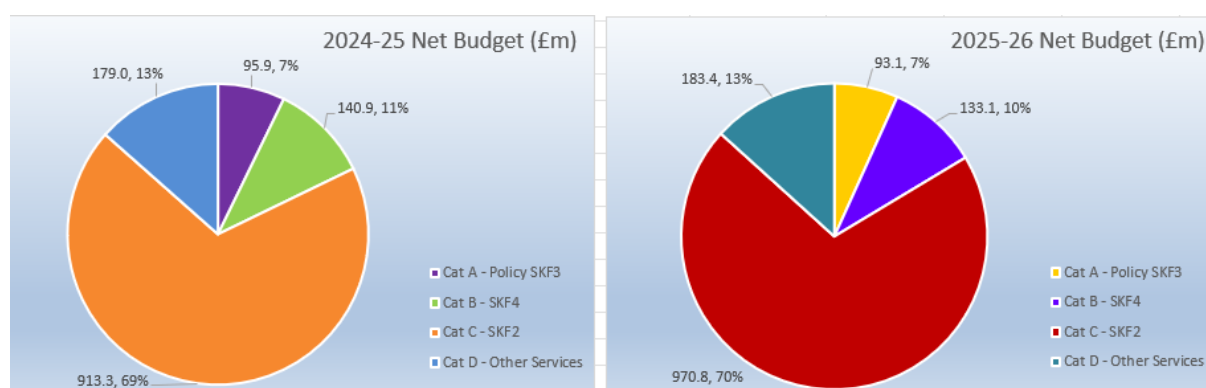
That the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

- (a) Cease the current arrangement with the Billing Authorities pursuant to which the Council provides financial support and incentive payments towards the cost of setting up and administering local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) with effect on and from 1st April 2025.
- (b) Cease the current arrangements with the Billing Authorities pursuant to which the Council makes incentive payments to support the removal of local discretionary empty property discounts and the charging of empty property premiums with effect from 1st April 2025.

- (c) Delegate authority to Interim Corporate Director Finance to formally notify the Billing Authorities that payments will cease from 2025-26 financial year and to take any actions or make any decisions deemed necessary to the Interim Corporate Director Finance to implement the decisions of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services in (a) and (b) above.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The approved revenue budget for 2024-25 included £19.8m of one-off solutions from use of capital receipts, use of reserves and the final year of New Homes Bonus Grant. The budget setting report to the Council made it clear that the package of one-off solutions in 2024-25 needed to be replaced with equivalent, ongoing savings in 2025-26 and 2026-27. The details of these savings were still under development at the time the 2024-25 budget was approved and the report identified that all that was required for Council approval of the 2024-25 budget was confirmation of the principle that any recurring costs funded from one-off sources in 2024-25 must be replaced through ongoing savings and income in subsequent years.
- 1.2 The final 2024-25 budget set out the clear expectation that these £19.8m of policy savings would have to be found in accordance with Objective 3(Policy choices and scope of Council's ambitions) set out in Securing Kent's Future. Consequently, it has been essential that all areas of discretionary spending are reviewed and considered for savings.
- 1.3 To assist this process of considering savings a breakdown of the 2024-25 budget and planned amounts for 2025-26 and 2026-27 was prepared across four categories. These categories comprised the totality of the Council's budget (excluding non-attributable costs and centrally held budgets) as demonstrated in the graphic below:
- Category A - spending where there is most scope for local decisions. This includes discretionary services, services where there is a mix of statutory requirements and discretion, and statutory services where there is a significant degree of choice over the level of services provision.
 - Category B - support functions.
 - Category C - spending on adult social care, children in care, home to school transport.
 - Category D - other services (largely statutory with less choice over level of service provision).



- 1.4 In considering savings from spending in category A it was identified whether there was a binary choice whether to spend or not, those services where there was a range of options to review, or whether spending was considered too low to warrant consideration/was out of scope. Spending within the first two sub-categories was then tested against the following policy considerations:
- Whether the Council should limit spending on grant funded activities to the amount available within the grant conditions with no discretionary top-ups
 - Whether the Council should seek full cost recovery from clients/service users of discretionary services
 - Whether spending is on (niche) services which are visible/accessible/benefit a small number of the Kent population
 - Whether the Council is willing to remove or reduce (cross) subsidies where there is no requirement (duty) to provide support
- 1.5 The totality of spending (£3.75m net to KCC in 2024-25 budget) on the current arrangements for subsidies and incentives on council tax collection (including Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) and empty property discounts), and joint work on fraud and error comes is Category A spending and has been reviewed as part of this programme against the policy considerations – specifically the final one.
- 1.6 Spending on joint fraud and error activities across all 12 districts, and spending to subsidise the pursuit of outstanding debts in 3 East Kent districts (only the 3 districts are subsidised) provided returns on investment of over 400% per annum and therefore this report does not recommend making any savings from this expenditure.
- 1.7 There was not the same evidence for the spending on subsidising and incentivising Billing Authorities for local CTRS or incentives to reduce/remove empty property discounts/charge premiums on long-term empty properties. Consequently, spending on these activities (£1.75m net 2024-25 budget) for CTRS support and incentives and (£1.45m net 2024-25 budget) for empty properties was put forward for member consideration as part of formulating draft budget proposals. After full consideration proposed savings from ceasing these payments in 2025-26 were included in the administration's draft 2025-26 budget proposals published on 29th October 2024 and final budget proposals approved by full Council on 13th February 2025. Following approval of the budget it is then necessary for the key decisions recommended in this report to be made in order to achieve the budgeted savings.
- 1.8 Leaders, Chief Executives and Chief Finance Officers of each of the district/borough/city councils (who are the billing authorities for council tax) (the Billing Authorities) have been informed at an early stage in the current financial year of the requirement for KCC to make £19.8m policy savings to replace one-offs in 2024-25 budget, and that these activities relating to council tax collection subsidies and incentives fell within the scope of those considerations. The Billing Authorities response was that if the subsidies and incentives were removed they would have to review working age CTRS and empty property discounts/premiums especially where these result in council tax charges that are not cost effective for the district to collect from their share of council tax. To date no Billing Authority has proposed or implemented any changes to discounts or premiums.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 As outlined in the introduction the Council has reviewed all spending on (cross) subsidies where there is no statutory requirement (duty) to provide support. This review is not limited to the support provided to the Billing Authorities towards their statutory obligations and reviews have taken place in other areas including support for schools, health authorities and the voluntary sector.
- 2.2 The key considerations for this particular decision included the potential impact on the council tax precept if Billing Authorities chose to reduce the size of collection teams, with a consequential impact on council tax collection rates. Consideration was also given to the impact should Billing Authorities choose to change local CTRS and/or reinstate council tax discounts or cease premiums.
- 2.3 In respect of the size of collection teams/council tax collection rates, there is a statutory obligation on individuals to pay council tax and the Billing Authorities are under a duty to levy and collect council tax. The section 151 officers and the monitoring officers of the Billing Authorities are also subject to their own duties (respectively) relating to the financial administration and legal compliance of their authority. Therefore, the potential impact on council tax collection rates is considered to be a matter for individual Billing Authorities to determine and justify through their own governance and compliance arrangements. See also paragraph 5 below for the financial implications and mitigation.
- 2.4 Whilst it is acknowledged that the vast majority of council tax is collected by the Billing Authorities on behalf of other authorities (including the Council) (the precepting authorities), any financial support by the Council towards collection is discretionary. Furthermore, collection costs are already deducted from council tax proceeds before they are distributed between precepting authorities and the Billing Authorities. This tension between collection and receipt of tax does not occur in unitary areas.
- 2.5 All Billing Authorities have simplified their local CTRS and moved to a banded approach. Under a banded scheme an individual household's discount does not change whilst household income remains within the band. This provides increased certainty for recipients and reduces assessment costs for the Billing Authorities. The Council has fully supported this move to banded arrangements even though up to this point there has been no change to financial support provided by the major preceptors. Effectively Billing Authorities have already benefitted from efficiency gains whilst still receiving subsidy from the Council.
- 2.6 The major precepting authorities have not required Billing Authorities to account separately for spending from the subsidy and incentive payments. Consequently, there is very little evidence how much it costs the Billing Authorities to operate local schemes. Up to 2022-23 the government also provided the Billing Authorities with a separate Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) Administration Subsidy Grant. This was calculated annually based on caseloads. This LCTS grant was rolled into Revenue Support Grant in 2023-24, an indication that government now considers administration of local schemes to be a business as usual activity with no separate funding.

- 2.7 In conclusion, whilst there is there is an economic argument for providing increased support to low-income households this would still apply even if the Council removes the current subsidies and incentives. In setting local CTRS Billing Authorities will have to balance competing claims of securing their financial resilience through their own budgets with protecting residents in difficult financial circumstances through cost of living crisis. Billing Authorities have their own challenge through increased costs of and demand for their council services within limited resources available through local taxation referendum limits and central government grants which can only be balanced through a combination of cuts to other council services, raising income from other sources or increasing council tax income through reviewing local schemes.
- 2.8 There is also little evidence that removing empty property discounts adds a significant ongoing administrative burden on Billing Authorities. One of the benefits put forward by Billing Authorities for removing discounts was that it would avoid the requirement to assess whether a property is empty to qualify for the discount. Consequently, there is a strong argument that this incentive payment should have been time limited in the first place and is no longer required.
- 2.9 The original arrangement was on an understanding that it was reviewed on a three-year cycle. The first review was undertaken and implemented in 2017 (delayed a year from 2016 to allow schemes to be aligned with changes to other welfare benefits under the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016). There has been no subsequent review as emphasis has switched to providing support during Covid-19 pandemic and Cost of Living challenge. Consequently, review of the arrangements is long overdue.

3. Background

Council Tax Reduction Schemes

- 3.1 Until 2013 households on low incomes could claim welfare benefits (up to 100% of council tax) towards their household council tax charge. These arrangements were transferred to local CTRS in April 2013 under provisions in the Local Government Finance Act 2012. Funding from council tax benefit (CTB) was transferred from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) into the local government finance settlement and allocated to the Billing Authorities through the redistribution mechanism for retained share of business rates (business rate baseline) and Revenue Support Grant (RSG). These are shown in the settlement as Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). The funding transferred came with an overall 10% reduction compared to the cost of CTB.
- 3.2 Each Billing Authority is responsible for developing local CTRS to provide low income households with a discount on council tax charges. The legislation required that schemes for pensioner households had to provide the same value discount as CTB entitlement. A default scheme for working age households also offered the same discounts as CTB, or Billing Authorities could consult on and agree their own local schemes for working age discounts (in consultation with major precepting authorities in two tier areas).
- 3.3 To support the introduction of local schemes in April 2013 it was agreed locally in Kent that a total of £1.5m payment would be made by the major precepting

authorities to the 12 Billing Authorities towards the cost of setting up and administering local schemes. The preceptor shares are split pro rata to respective council tax shares, and have been fixed at 2017-18 levels (excluding adult social care levy for KCC) since then i.e. 83.1% KCC, 11.5% Police and 5.4% Fire. The agreement was designed to ensure that local CTRS took account of the 10% reduction in funding and the overall impact was financially neutral for all authorities.

- 3.4 A standard Kent scheme was developed that provided a maximum 81.5% discount for eligible working age households on the minimum level of income, with a tapered reduction to the discount for incomes above the minimum. This provided an offset for the 10% reduction in funding. There were different minimum income levels depending on household circumstances e.g. single person, lone parent, couples with no children, couples with children. Individual Billing Authorities had the option to agree alternative local arrangements to the standard Kent scheme e.g. provide more generous working age discounts, provided the impact remained financially neutral with offsetting reductions to other discounts e.g. empty properties.
- 3.5 Originally the arrangement provided all Billing Authorities with a fixed sum of £125k. This was partly funded by Billing Authorities agreeing to reducing the class C empty property discount (empty and largely unfurnished dwellings) from 6 months to 3 months. This increased council tax proceeds for all authorities. The allocation to Billing Authorities was subsequently reformed from the start of 2017 to the current arrangements based on lower fixed sum of £70k and the balance of the £1.5m allocated according to number of eligible low income households (pensioner and working age). The overall amount provided has never subsequently been changed since introduction of the scheme in April 2013. The £1.5m payment was provided by all major precepting authorities pro rata to share of council tax (excluding the subsequent ASC levy for KCC).
- 3.6 The original intention was that these local arrangements would be reviewed on a three-year cycle. The first review due for 2016 was delayed a year to ensure that changes to local CTRS could be made to align them with other welfare reforms under the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. This review resulted in the Council agreeing an additional £500k incentive fund, taking the total value of subsidy and incentive payments to £2m. This was intended to encourage Billing Authorities to align schemes with other welfare reforms and to incentivise districts to reduce the working age discount (the standard scheme was amended to 80%) and change other criteria limiting access to discounts e.g. levels of household savings. These changes were partly in response to reductions in RSG since the original schemes were introduced which had affected the financial neutrality equation. District allocations from the incentive fund are calculated annually based on number of eligible working age households weighted according to the extent to which changes to local schemes impact the council tax base calculations.
- 3.7 The amounts paid through the preceptor support subsidy and additional KCC incentive for local CTRS in 2024-25 are set out below:

District	Original CTRS Agreement				Additional KCC Incentive	Total KCC
	Preceptor Support Subsidy	Police Share	Fire Share	KCC Share		
Ashford	£127,485	£14,679	£6,849	£105,957	£58,745	£164,702
Canterbury	£130,524	£15,028	£7,013	£108,483	£41,175	£149,658
Dartford	£112,527	£12,956	£6,046	£93,525	£40,528	£134,053
Dover	£148,431	£17,090	£7,975	£123,366	£51,179	£174,545
Folkestone	£130,283	£15,001	£7,000	£108,282	£46,920	£155,202
Gravesham	£113,783	£13,101	£6,113	£94,569	£27,335	£121,904
Maidstone	£131,526	£15,144	£7,066	£109,316	£45,529	£154,845
Sevenoaks	£108,290	£12,468	£5,818	£90,003	£31,354	£121,357
Swale	£131,012	£15,085	£7,039	£108,889	£62,325	£171,214
Thanet	£148,431	£17,090	£7,975	£123,366	£45,274	£168,640
TMBC	£112,559	£12,960	£6,047	£93,551	£25,650	£119,201
TWBC	£105,150	£12,107	£5,649	£87,393	£23,986	£111,379
Total	£1,500,000	£172,710	£80,590	£1,246,700	£500,000	£1,746,700

Empty Property Discounts and Premiums

- 3.8 Until 2013 there were mandatory exemptions on council tax for certain empty properties. These included class C exemption of 6 months on empty and largely unfurnished dwellings, and class D exemption of 12 months on properties undergoing major repairs or structural alterations. The previous mandatory 50% discount on second homes had been removed by earlier legislation in 2004 and Billing Authorities already had discretion to offer discounts between 10% to 50% on second homes. There was a long-standing agreement between the Council and the Billing Authorities to share the proceeds from reducing the discounts on second homes.
- 3.9 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 introduced additional discretions on council tax. This included removing the mandatory class C and class D exemptions and replacing these with discretionary power to grant discounts of between 0 to 100%. The Act also extended the discount on second homes to between 0% and 50% and introduced a discretionary power to raise 100% premium on properties empty for more than two years (effectively meaning 200% charge on such properties).
- 3.10 The Council encouraged the Billing Authorities to use these new powers to reduce empty property discounts and to levy premiums on long term empty properties. The policy objective was consistent with the Council's "No Use Empty" programme and was intended to encourage empty properties to be brought back into use. Building on the existing second homes arrangement the Council offered 25% of its share of the increased council tax base to those Billing Authorities that agreed to reduce empty property council tax discounts and/or introduce council tax premiums on long empty properties under the new powers (other than to those Billing Authorities which elected to change empty property discounts as part of variations from the standard approach to local CTRS).
- 3.11 At the time individual Billing Authorities adopted differing approaches with some continuing to offer discounts but for reduced periods and others removing all

empty property discounts. The amounts paid to individual Billing Authorities are largely historical based on the impact at the time discounts were reduced/removed and premiums levied. Each year Billing Authorities are asked whether they would like a roll-over of the previous year's payment or to provide latest information on numbers of dwellings being charged a premium/discounts removed and the council tax raised for the Council (excluding adult social care levy) to enable the subsidy to be recalculated. The previous second homes arrangement was ceased.

3.12 The premium on long term empty properties has subsequently been extended to allow discretion to raise additional premiums on properties empty for more than 5 years (200% premium taking the council tax charge to 300% of the standard rate) and more than 10 years (300% premium taking the council tax charge to 400% of the standard rate). In 2024 the power was extended to levy premiums on properties empty for more than one year. All Kent Billing Authorities used the powers to raise these long term empty premiums and by 2024 all authorities had removed all empty property discounts. In 2025 new powers come into force that allow up to 100% premium to be levied on second homes (taking the council tax to 200% of the standard charge).

3.13 The amounts paid under the empty property incentive in 2023-24 are set out below (the budget for 2024-25 was increased following the agreement with all Billing Authorities to remove all remaining empty discounts and maximise premiums although details of 2024-25 payments are still to be finalised awaiting confirmation from the Billing Authorities of the council tax raised for the Council):

Dartford	£109,550
Folkestone & Hythe	£152,861
Gravesham	£46,030
Maidstone	£100,009
Sevenoaks	£95,550
Tonbridge & Malling	£209,503
Tunbridge Wells	£109,780

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

4.1 Maintaining the current arrangements is not considered sustainable in the current financial climate with the urgent need for the Council to focus on its statutory responsibilities and consequential requirement to review policy choices and scope of the Council's ambitions. Reducing the amount was not considered as an option as this was identified as a binary choice whether or not the Council should continue to cross subsidise statutory functions of Billing Authorities. As set out in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.7 this poses a potential risk to future council tax income, but it is suggested that this is a potential risk rather than inevitable consequence. The decision does not alter either the statutory obligation on individuals to pay council tax or the duty on the Billing Authorities to levy and collect council tax. Ceasing these payments is consistent with the policy consideration to review (cross) subsidies where there is no statutory requirement to provide support. The Council is not aware of similar subsidies and incentives towards the cost of council tax collection in other two tier areas.

- 4.2 A transitional arrangement which would allow for the phased removal of the two subsidies/incentives, with the empty property agreement ceased in April 2025 and local CTRS agreement ceased from April 2026, has been considered. This option is not recommended on the grounds that it would reduce the potential savings that could be achieved against the targets required for 2025-26 (increasing the amount that would need to be found from other alternatives or one-offs) and would run counter to the policy consideration to remove (cross) subsidies where there is no statutory requirement to provide support.
- 4.3 The Council intends to continue to contribute towards the costs of fraud and error activities which increase the amounts of council tax received and additional support towards the recovery of debt in those areas where council tax is proving most difficult to collect in 3 East Kent districts, provided these continue to show a positive return on investment.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The annual saving to the Council from ceasing the subsidy and incentive on local CTRS is £1,746.7k based on 2024-25 approved budget. The annual saving to the Council from ceasing the empty property incentive is £1,450k based on 2024-25 budget.
- 5.2 A 1% reduction in collection rates across all 12 Billing Authorities would result in £9.5m to £9.8m reduction in the Council's share of council tax (with proportionate reductions in other preceptors and Billing Authority shares). Actual losses from collection will not be confirmed until annual accounts have been closed and audited. The Council will continue to manage fluctuations in collection through a smoothing reserve set up specifically for this purpose. The Council's annual council tax precept must be set based on tax base estimates calculated by each Billing Authority. The deadline for notifying these estimates is 31st January prior to the start of each financial year. The Council must notify the Billing Authorities of its council tax precept by the end of February.
- 5.3 It is estimated that if the cessation of the local CTRS subsidy and incentive led to Billing Authorities reverting to the default scheme for working age households this would increase council tax discounts for the major preceptors by £14.6m, £12m of which would be the Council share. There would be an appropriate pro rata increase in the discounts on the Billing Authority share. Changes to CTRS schemes are subject to statutory consultation and must be agreed and implemented by 11th March prior to start of financial year. Re-instating empty property discounts and/or removing empty property premiums would also reduce the share of council tax for all councils (preceptors and billing authorities) although the impact is more difficult to estimate as it depends on the number of empty properties at any point in time.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The Council is not under a duty to provide the subsidies and incentives that it is proposing in this report to end. The Council can therefore cease the payments in accordance with its functions.
- 6.2 The obligation on individuals to pay their council tax, and the obligation placed on Billing Authorities to collect to council tax remain.
- 6.3 The subsidies and incentives have been paid pursuant to informal arrangements between the Council and the Billing Authorities. There is no formal agreement that commits the Council to continue the payments beyond this financial year and the Council has not made any other express or implied commitment or given any assurance to the Billing Authorities that any payment would continue beyond this financial year.
- 6.4 The Council has consulted on the savings identified through the budget setting process and has engaged specifically with the Billing Authorities on the removal of these payments with the outcome of those consultations taken into account in preparing this report and summarised.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 No equalities implications identified as this decision does not directly impact on individuals with protected characteristics.

8. Data Protection Implications

- 8.1 No data protection impact identified.

9. Other corporate implications

- 9.1 No overlap with other functions of the Council

10. Governance

- 10.1 No additional delegations required other than to delegate authority to Interim Corporate Director Finance as per the recommendations in this report.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 The subsidies and incentives the Council currently offers to Billing Authorities towards the costs of council tax collection are long standing but entirely discretionary, and as far as we can ascertain unique to Kent. The Council has a requirement to find £19.8m savings to replace one-off solutions used to balance the 2024-25 budget in accordance with Objective 3 (Policy choices and scope of Council's ambitions) set out in Securing Kent's Future. Removing these

subsidies and incentives is consistent with the policy consideration to review all (cross) subsidies where there is no statutory requirement (duty) to provide support.

- 11.2 Ceasing these arrangements will not alter either the statutory obligation on individuals to pay council tax or the duty on Billing Authorities to bill and collect council tax. In ceasing these arrangements the Council is aware of the potential risk of loss of council tax income through under collection and/or increased discounts/reduced premiums. The Council believes these risks are potential and not inevitable and in the short-term can be mitigated from an established smoothing reserve to deal with fluctuations in collection levels.

Recommendation(s):

That the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agrees to:

- (a) Cease the current arrangement with the Billing Authorities pursuant to which the Council provides financial support and incentive payments towards the cost of setting up and administering local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) with effect on and from 1st April 2025.
 - (b) Cease the current arrangements with the Billing Authorities pursuant to which the Council makes incentive payments to support the removal of local discretionary empty property discounts and the charging of empty property premiums with effect from 1st April 2025.
 - (c) Delegate authority to Interim Corporate Director Finance to formally notify the Billing Authorities that payments will cease from 2025-26 financial year and to take any actions or make any decisions deemed necessary to the Interim Corporate Director Finance to implement the decisions of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services in (a) and (b) above.
-

10. Contact details

Report Author: Dave Shipton	Director: John Betts
Job title: Head of Finance (Policy, Planning & Strategy)	Job title: Interim Corporate Director Finance
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Peter Oakford

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

DECISION NUMBER:

25/00004

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES / NO

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*
- b) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions)*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives

Decision:

As Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, I agree to:

- (a) Cease the current arrangement with Billing Authorities pursuant to which the Council provides financial support and incentive payments towards the cost of setting up and administering local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) with effect from 1st April 2025.
- (b) Cease the current arrangements with Billing Authorities pursuant to which the Council makes incentive payments to support removal of discretionary empty property discounts and charge empty property premiums with effect from 1st April 2025.
- (c) Delegate authority to the Interim Corporate Director Finance to formally notify the Billing Authorities that payments will cease from 2025-26 financial year and to take any actions or make any decisions deemed necessary to the Interim Corporate Director Finance to implement the decisions of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services in (a) and (b) above.

Reason(s) for decision:

The subsidies and incentives the Council currently offers to Billing Authorities towards the costs of council tax collection are long standing but entirely discretionary, and as far as we can ascertain unique to Kent. The Council has a requirement to find £19.8m savings to replace one-off solutions used to balance the 2024-25 budget in accordance with Objective 3 (Policy choices and scope of Council's ambitions) set out in Securing Kent's Future. Removing these subsidies and incentives is consistent with the policy consideration to review all (cross) subsidies where there is no statutory requirement (duty) to provide support.

Ceasing these arrangements will not alter either the statutory obligation on individuals to pay council tax or the duty on Billing Authorities to bill and collect council tax. In ceasing these arrangements the Council is aware of the potential risk of loss of council tax income through under collection and/or increased discounts/reduced premiums. The Council believes these risks are potential and not

inevitable and in the short-term can be mitigated from an established smoothing reserve to deal with fluctuations in collection levels.

Financial Implications

The annual saving to the Council from ceasing the subsidy and incentive on local CTRS is £1,746.7k based on 2024-25 approved budget. The annual saving to the Council from ceasing the empty property incentive is £1,450k based on 2024-25 budget.

A 1% reduction in collection rates across all 12 Billing Authorities would result in £9.5m to £9.8m reduction in the Council's share of council tax (with proportionate reductions in other preceptors and Billing Authority shares). Actual losses from collection will not be confirmed until annual accounts have been closed and audited. The Council will continue to manage fluctuations in collection through a smoothing reserve set up specifically for this purpose. The Council's annual council tax precept must be set based on tax base estimates calculated by each Billing Authority. The deadline for notifying these estimates is 31st January prior to the start of each financial year. The Council must notify the Billing Authorities of its council tax precept by the end of February.

Legal Implications

The Council is not under a duty to provide the subsidies and incentives that it is proposing in this report to end. The Council can therefore cease the payments in accordance with its functions. The obligation on individuals to pay their council tax, and the obligation placed on Billing Authorities to collect to council tax remain.

Equalities implications

No equalities implications identified as this decision does not directly impact on individuals with protected characteristics.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Policy & Resources Cabinet Committees was consulted on 5th March 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

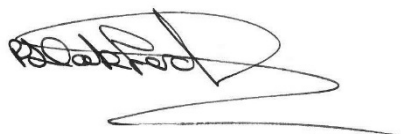
Maintaining current arrangements

- Transitional arrangement for phased removal of subsidies / incentives

Further information regarding consideration of alternatives is available in the report.

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

N/A



.....
signed

19th March 2025

.....
Date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives

Responsible Officer

Dave Shipton - CED F

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

Dave Shipton - CED F

Type of Activity

Service Change

Service Change

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Strategic and Corporate Services

Responsible Service

Finance

Responsible Head of Service

Dave Shipton - CED F

Responsible Director

John Betts - CED F

Aims and Objectives

The approved revenue budget for 2024-25 included £19.8m of one-off solutions from use of capital receipts, use of reserves and the final year of New Homes Bonus Grant. The budget setting report to the Council made it clear that the package of one-off solutions in 2024-25 needed to be replaced with equivalent, ongoing savings in 2025-26 and 2026-27. 1.2 The final 2024-25 budget set out the clear expectation that these £19.8m of policy savings would have to be found in accordance with Objective 3 (Policy choices and scope of Council's ambitions) set out in Securing Kent's Future. Consequently, it has been essential that all areas of discretionary spending are reviewed and considered for savings

The spending on the current arrangements for subsidies and incentives on council tax collection (including Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) and empty property discounts) falls within the discretionary spending and specifically whether the Council is willing to remove or reduce (cross) subsidies where there is no requirement (duty) to provide support.

There is a statutory obligation on individuals to pay council tax and the Billing Authorities are under a duty to levy and collect council tax. The section 151 officers and the monitoring officers of the Billing Authorities are also subject to their own duties (respectively) relating to the financial administration and legal compliance of their authority. Therefore, the potential impact on council tax collection is considered to be

a matter for individual Billing Authorities to determine and justify through their own governance and compliance arrangements.

Section B – Evidence

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

Yes

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

No

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Leaders, Chief Executives and Chief Finance Officers of each of the district/borough/city councils (who are the billing authorities for council tax) (the Billing Authorities) have been informed at an early stage in the current financial year of the requirement for KCC to make £19.8m policy savings to replace one-offs in 2024-25 budget, and that these activities relating to council tax collection subsidies and incentives fell within the scope of those considerations. The Billing Authorities response was that if the subsidies and incentives were removed they would have to review working age CTRS and empty property discounts/premiums especially where these result in council tax charges that are not cost effective for the district to collect from their share of council tax. To date no Billing Authority has proposed or implemented any changes to discounts or premiums.

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

Billing Authorities may elect to increase Council Tax Reduction Discounts

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: Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

To: Scrutiny Committee, 25th November 2025

Subject: Report discussing why Kent is an outlier with regards to SEND

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides a range of evidence and discussion about SEND related data and an update on the impact of some of the development work being undertaken.

Recommendation(s):

The committee is asked to note the report.

1. Introduction and Context

1.1 SEND is a topic which is frequently in the media and links to a number of recent publications discussing the issues are included in Appendix 1. Nationally, the annual budget has risen by 58% in a decade to £10.7 billion in 2024-25, but this has not led to better outcomes for children with SEN. In Kent, an estimated £699 million will be spent on education-related SEND excluding health spending in this financial year 2025-26 so understanding how this resource can be better invested to improve outcomes is critically important.

1.2 Kent continues to issue Education, Health and Care Plans at a rate significantly above national and regional comparators. As of January 2025, Kent had 20,635 children and young people with EHCPs (SEN2 data)—approximately 6.2% of the 2–18 population, compared to 5.6% nationally and 4.9% across statistical neighbours. However, as discussed below, the gap between Kent and the national average is narrowing. Alongside having a higher proportion of children and young people with an EHCP, Kent also continues to have more children and young people attending special schools, both state-funded and independent, however the numbers in independent schools have remained relatively static for three years. An improvement plan is in place and there is clear evidence of improvements, however work continues apace to improve further.

1.3 The National Context: The current legislative Framework and historic Ofsted reviews. The Children and Families Act 2014 brought widescale reform to the SEND system supported by the statutory Special Educational

Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years 2014, a comprehensive guidance document

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

1.4 The model of support adopted for children and young people who meet a threshold of needing additional support was to introduce an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which details what support should be provided by each of the agencies in recognition that these should be developed for children and young people with the highest level of need. The COP also promotes the principle a 'mainstream school presumption'. This means children and young people with SEND have a right to attend a mainstream school and can only be refused if it would negatively impact the efficient education of other children and no reasonable steps can be taken to avoid this. The complexity of a child's needs is not a valid reason to refuse a mainstream placement. The Children and Families Act 2014 and subsequent guidance requires mainstream schools to have clear processes to support children with SEND and ensure they are able to engage in the school's activities alongside children who do not have special educational needs.

1.5 Accountability for implementing the legislation is tested through inspection, at a school and setting level and also at a SEND system level. The inspection framework for education settings made reference to SEND and SEND inclusion, with expectations gradually being strengthened as frameworks have been updated, with the new framework which will be fully operational from December 2025, having SEND inclusion as a key component.

1.6 The first local area SEND inspections led by Ofsted and CQC took place in May 2016, with the Kent area inspections taking place in September 2019 and again in September 2022. Since then, the most recent updated local area inspection framework and handbook were published in June 2025 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-framework-and-handbook/area-send-inspections-framework-and-handbook> , which is the framework that officers are expecting to be used in the forthcoming Kent area inspection.

1.7 The previous government undertook a great deal of development work on SEND reform. In March 2022 the DfE and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) jointly published a Green Paper which found the system created "vicious cycles" of worsening performance with needs being identified late, insufficient capacity, and a lack of confidence in the system. This was followed in March 2023, by an improvement plan which is still being implemented, until it is superseded by the forthcoming White Paper delayed to spring 2026. Through KCC's regular reporting to and assessments by both the DfE and NHS England officers are confident that improvement and transformation projects are in line with emerging government policy.

1.8 This report does not provide a detailed analysis or draw firm conclusions as this is outside the scope of the resources and expertise available. The report discusses the historical context, contributing factors, comparative data

and the strategic actions Kent County Council (KCC) is taking to address the issues and rebalance the system. It also discusses data related to reasons that have been suggested for the differences between Kent cohorts and that of others, for example considering data relating to premature birth. The report situates Kent's reforms within the wider national policy landscape, including the forthcoming SEND White Paper.

1.9 Prior to the change in legislation and guidance in 2014, Ofsted published a Special Educational Needs and Disability Review in 2010 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-educational-needs-and-disability-review>. At that point in England, just over one in five pupils (20%) or 1.7 million school-age children were identified as having special educational needs using the 2001 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. There were three levels of identification according to the degree of support pupils required; School Action was for pupils with additional learning needs that could be met within the school, School Action Plus pupils meant staff working with them should receive advice or support from outside specialists and those pupils in need of the most intensive support were given a statement of special educational needs.

1.10 Drawing on an extensive evidence base, in this report Ofsted concluded that as many as half of all pupils identified for School Action would not be identified as having special educational needs if schools focused on improving teaching and learning for all, with individual goals for improvement. The team also found that the consistency of the identification of special educational needs varied widely, not only between different local areas but also within them, despite the guidance available.

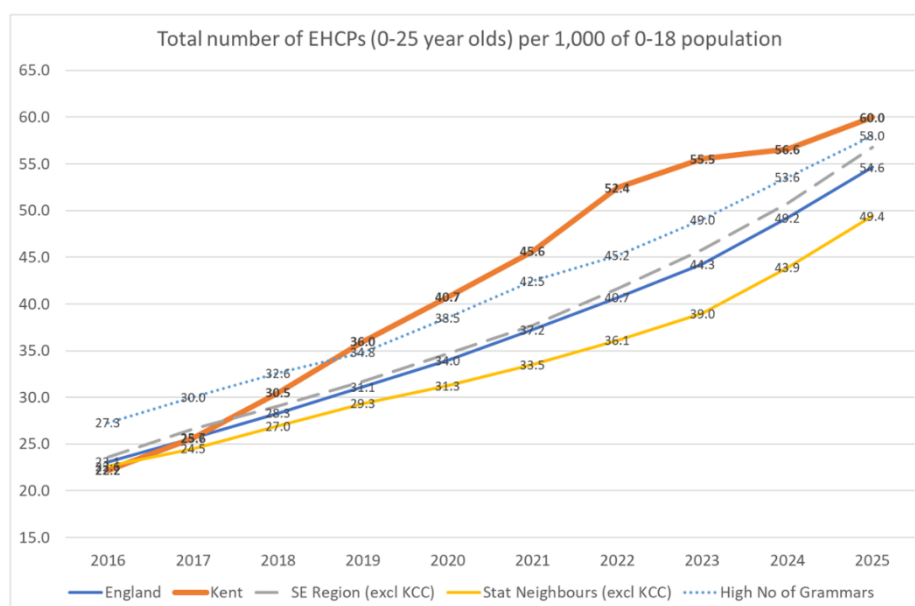
1.11 By 2021 when Ofsted published Supporting SEND: How children and young people's special educational needs (SEN) are met in mainstream schools <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-send> seven years after the change in legislation, around 1.4 million or 15.5% of pupils in English schools were identified as having a special educational need (SEN) at two levels, SEND support and with an EHCP. The report commented on the rapidly rising numbers of pupils being identified as having SEND and Ofsted suggested that there are varying interpretations and practices across professionals, schools and local authorities in both SEN identification and provision. Considering this historic context demonstrates both that challenges in developing an effective and consistent SEND system is not a new issue and illustrates how policy and practice changes can impact on data.

2. The Current Position: Kent's Data in relation to Key Comparators

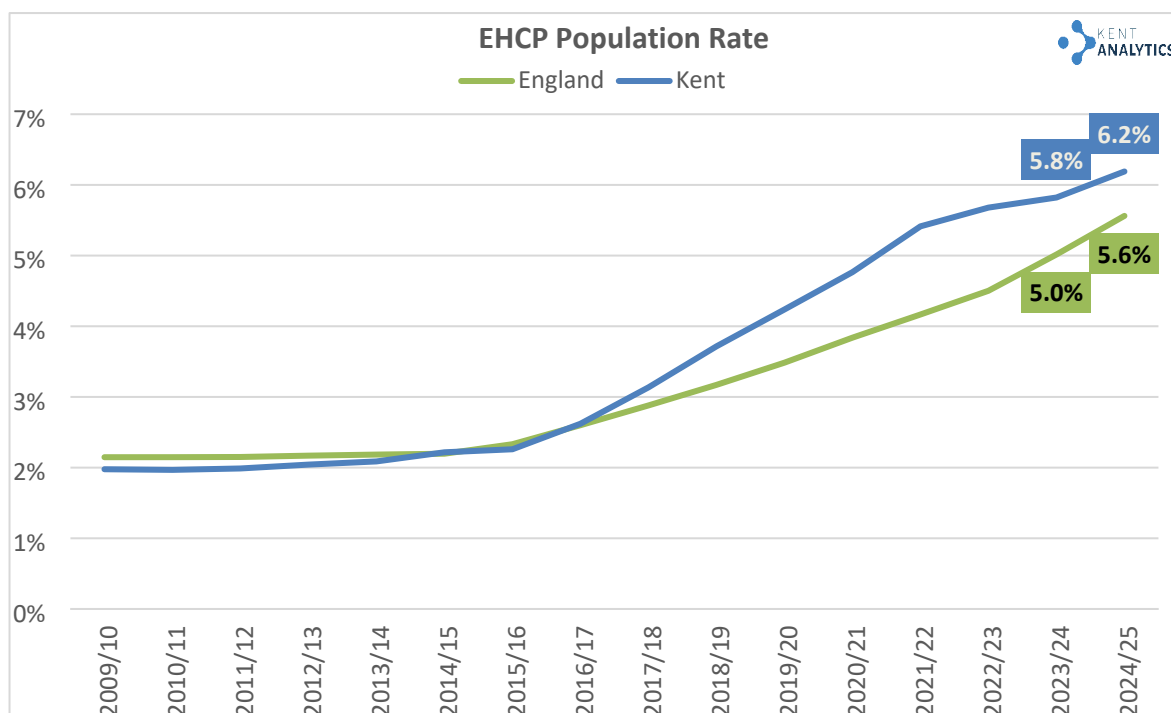
2.1 Population with an EHC plan rate England vs Kent

The graph below shows the data over time and in 2016 the proportion of children and young people with EHCPs in Kent was below the national (England) average. By 2017, Kent is slightly above the national average and by 2018 the gap is widening. By 2019 Kent is 4.9 above the national average,

6.7 above the rate for statistical neighbours and 1.2 above all other LAs with a high number of selective schools. The trajectory of growth continues to increase rapidly with the biggest divergence in 2022 when Kent had 52.4 children and young people aged 0–25-year-old with an EHCP, which was 16.3 more than statistical neighbours, 11.7 more than national figures and 7.2 more than other LAs with high numbers of selective schools. The trajectory slowed during 2022- 24, with a steeper trajectory 2024-25, but with the gap between Kent and the national average narrowing.



2.2 The table below shows the same data by percentage and demonstrates the increase in EHCPs both in Kent and in England. The gap between the EHCP rate in Kent and England has now reduced to a 0.6 pp going gap, smaller than the gap in 2019/2020.



The data at a more granular level is included below.

Number of EHCPs Per 1000 2-18 years

	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Jan 2025
Kent	40.7	45.6	52.4	55.5	56.6	60.0
Buckinghamshire	38.0	40.3	44.1	47.8	54.2	58.4
Surrey	38.7	42.3	46.0	50.6	55.8	63.2
West Berkshire	30.4	31.5	35.3	39.1	45.5	50.4
Essex	31.2	33.8	36.2	37.7	42.1	45.8
Hertfordshire	27.7	31.9	35.8	39.8	45.1	49.0
England	34.0	37.2	40.7	44.3	49.2	54.6
SE Region (excl Kent)	34.7	37.7	41.6	45.8	50.8	56.8
Statistical Neighbours	31.3	33.5	36.1	39.0	43.9	49.4
High % Grammar	38.5	42.5	45.2	49.0	53.6	58.0

2.3 Kent's EHCP rate is the highest among its home county peers and significantly above the 'statistical neighbour' average and above the average for Local Authorities with a high proportion of selective schools (circa 1/3 of Kent mainstream secondary schools are selective).

2.4 Placement patterns

In addition to being an outlier in number of EHPCs, Kent is also an outlier with regard to where children and young people attend school with children and

young people are more likely to be attending a special school both state funded and independent.

Area	% placements in mainstream	*% placements in mainstream (including SRPs)	% Placements in Special Schools	% Placements in Independent/Non-maintained
Kent	30%	35%	31%	9%
England	39%	42%	25%	6%
Surrey	35%	39%	22%	13%
Essex	45%	46%	29%	4%
Hertfordshire	46%	47%	24%	4%
Buckinghamshire	40%	43%	25%	5%

Area	Per head of population (per 1000 of the 2 -18 population)			
	Placements in mainstream	Placements in mainstream (including SRPs)	Placements in Special Schools	Placements in Independent/Non-maintained
Kent	18.1	21.2	18.7	5.2
England	21.1	23.2	13.7	3.5
Surrey	21.9	24.8	13.7	8.4
Essex	20.5	21.1	13.1	1.8
Hertfordshire	22.8	23.2	11.6	2.2
Buckinghamshire	23.4	25.4	14.6	3.1

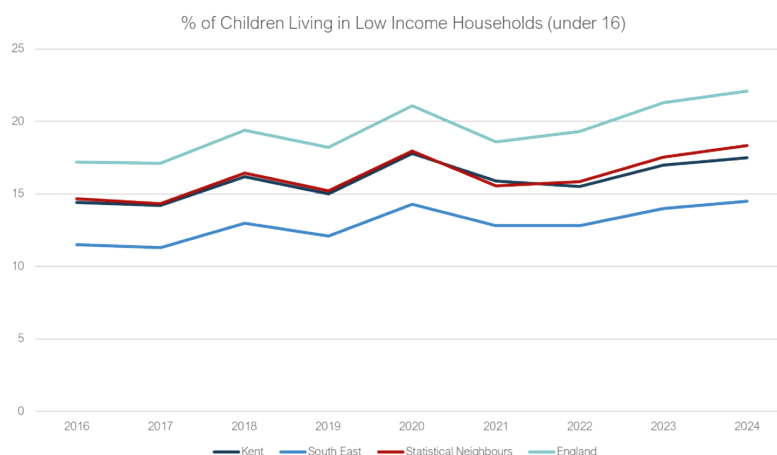
2.5 Kent places fewer children in mainstream settings than both the national average and comparator counties. Whilst special schools are a really important part of the educational landscape, some argue that placing a bigger proportion of children and young people in specialist settings is beneficial for them. If that were true, it would be reasonable to expect that at a statistical level outcomes for pupils with SEND in Kent would be better than the national average. However, outcomes for pupils with SEND in Kent were not good and this was commented on in the 2019 inspection report-“Educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND are not good enough.” and in the 2022 report inspectors judged there had been insufficient progress in addressing the poor standards achieved and progress made by too many children and young people with SEND.

3. The key question: Why is Kent an outlier?

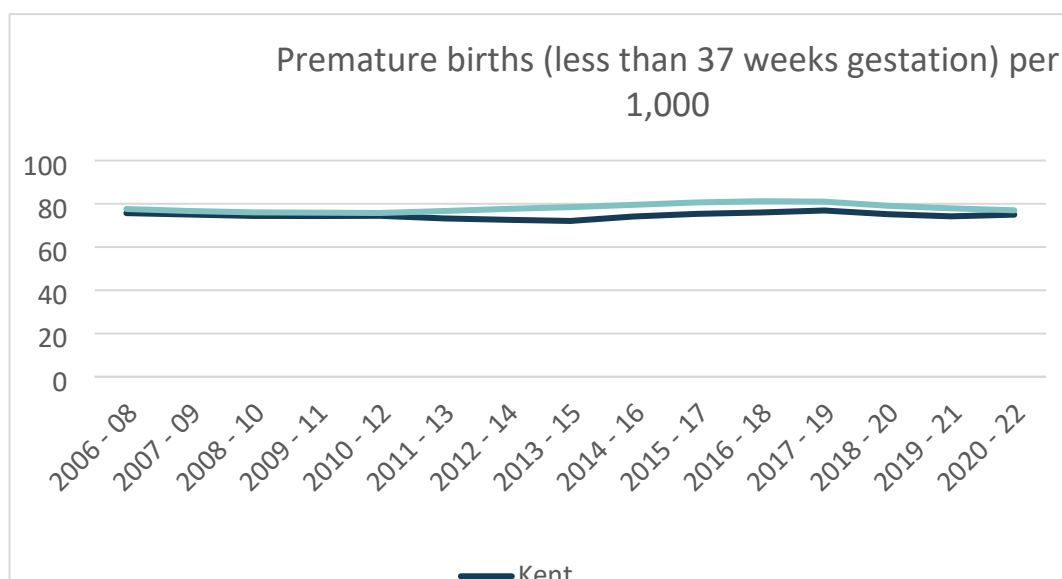
3.1 In this section we examine some of the hypotheses that have been suggested as influencing SEND demand. Firstly, is there a relationship with socio-economic factors? Evidence does suggest there is a relationship

between SEND and socio-economic factors however this does not translate into demand for EHCPs locally. The proportion of children (aged under 16) living in low-income households in Kent with an EHCP has been consistently lower than the national average and in line with statistical neighbours since 2016. Therefore, deprivation rates do not explain the higher ECHP rates in Kent compared to England since 2017.

Children in low-income Households and EHCPs



3.2 Premature Births - Kent's rate of premature births per 1,000 has been between 72 and 77 since 2006 and has been lower than the national average each year. This means that premature births have not been a contributor to the increased demand for EHCPs.

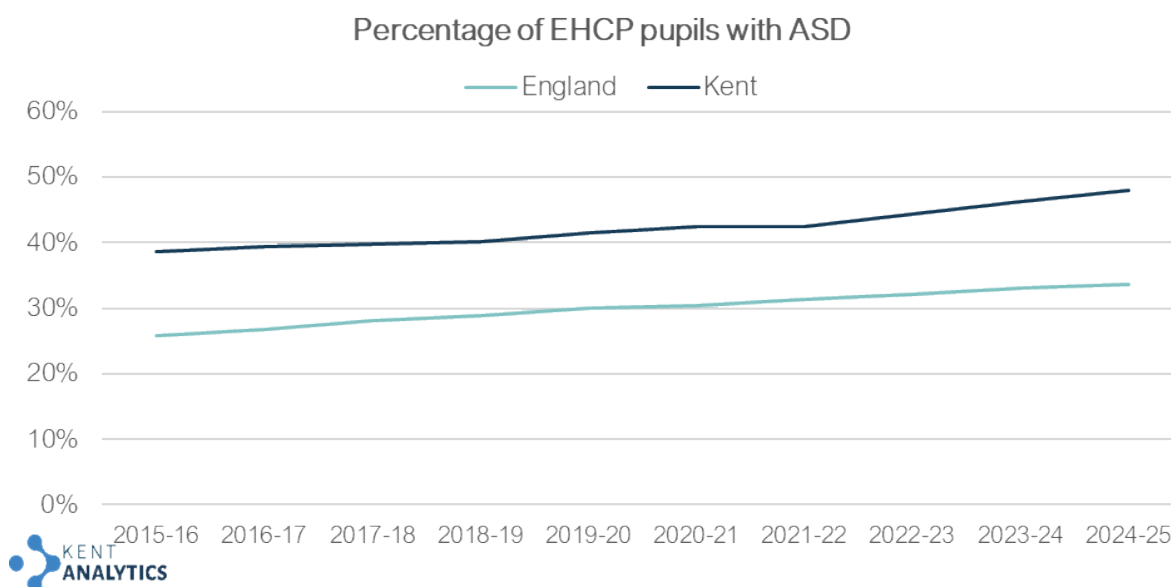


3.3 The national data shows that between 2015 and 2024 there was a 140% increase in children with an EHCP, and most of this increase related to autistic spectrum disorders, speech and language and communication needs and social, emotional and mental health needs.

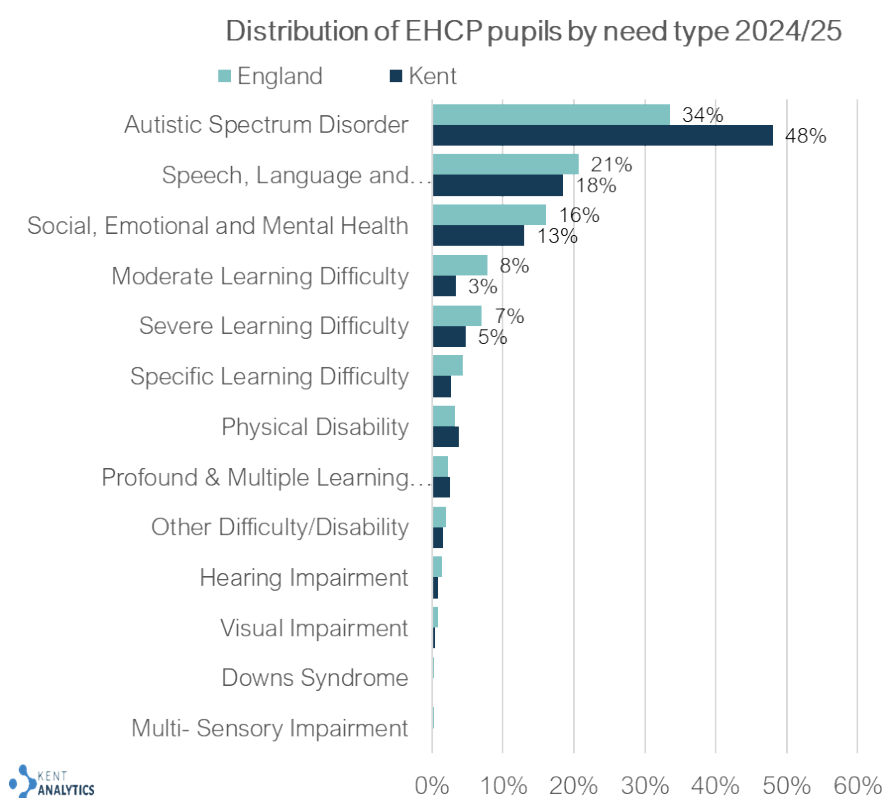
3.4 Environmental factors and the prevalence of autism

Kent has proportionally more pupils with an EHCP for autism spectrum disorder when compared to England. In the period focused on for data analysis, ASD in Kent has always been higher than England's rate, and the gap between Kent and national average continues to increase.

Children and young people with an EHCP and a diagnosis of ASD



This table shows the distribution of pupils with an EHCP by need type.



3.5 The question asked by Members, is to what extent can this be explained by environmental factors. The current medical view is that Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is due to gene–environment interplay, in which a genetic susceptibility may be triggered by toxic environmental influences. However, it is generally accepted that environmental influences account for a very small proportion of the increased prevalence which is believed to be due to three factors:

1. **Changes in diagnostic criteria:** Diagnostic guidelines have evolved, broadening the definition of autism. The modern autism diagnosis now includes people with lower support needs who previously got a different diagnosis or were overlooked entirely.
2. **Improved screening tools and procedures:** The development and widespread use of more effective screening tools have enabled earlier and more accurate identification of autism in all young children.
3. **Increased awareness:** Greater autism awareness in the public as well as among medical professionals has led to an increase in diagnoses.

While the impact of other genetic and environmental factors on prevalence is still being studied, they likely account for only a small part of the increase.

3.6 As can be seen in the graph above, the diagnosis in Kent increased by approximately 10% between 2015/16 and 2024/25, over a time period when significant work has been going on to improve environmental factors such as reducing car emissions. It is outside the scope of this paper to analyse causal factors for the increase particularly in Kent but it can be assumed that environmental factors such as car emissions will generally be much higher in major urban areas such as Greater London where concern about air quality has led to the introduction of the ULEZ charge, but London does not have the highest prevalence of ASD diagnosis. Another factor that has been suggested is exposure to pesticides, but again Kent is not unique in England in the extent of land which is farmed and where pesticides are applied.

3.7 With regard to any link with parental occupation being a factor, other counties such as Surrey, Essex and Cambridgeshire are likely to have the same if not a higher proportion of adults working in financial and technical services than Kent residents. Again, a detailed level of analysis is outside the scope of this paper.

3.8 Neurodivergence, a term which includes ASD as well as ADHD and dyslexia amongst other conditions, is a common topic for discussion in the media and social media, often with strong encouragement to pursue diagnosis. Alongside this, is the on-going public debate on wellbeing and mental health. This means there is a high level of awareness and possibly a number of perceived benefits to obtaining a diagnosis. The hypothesis put by the recent Policy Exchange report August 2025 is that there has been an extension of societal definitions of mental ill health and neurodivergence over time.

3.7 Factors which may influence demand for diagnosis and EHCPs

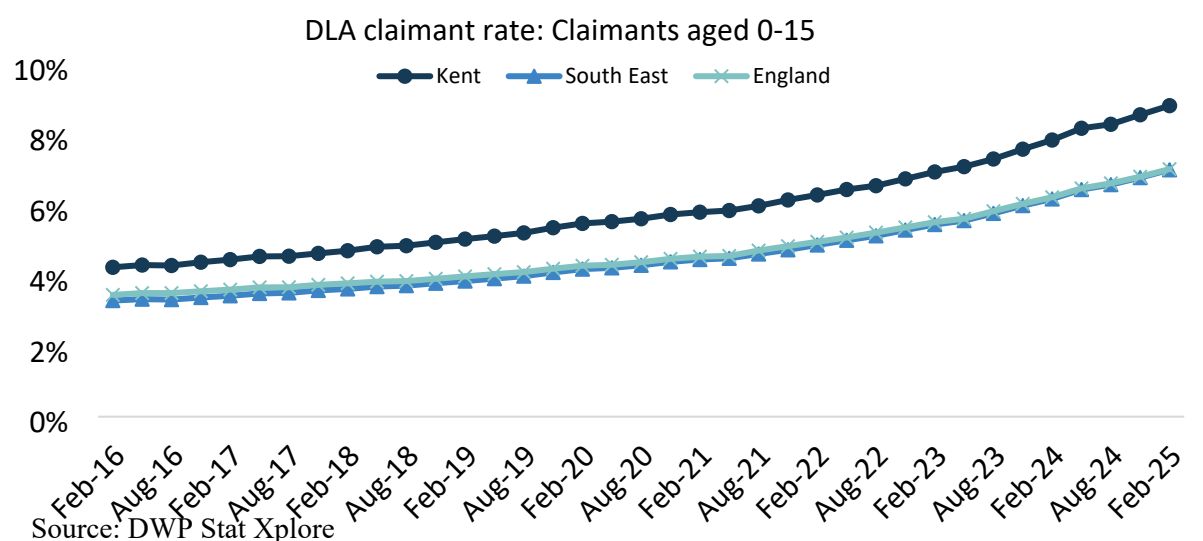
On the 11th of April 2025, The Telegraph published an article in the Money section entitled *How to get an EHCP for your child* which stated –

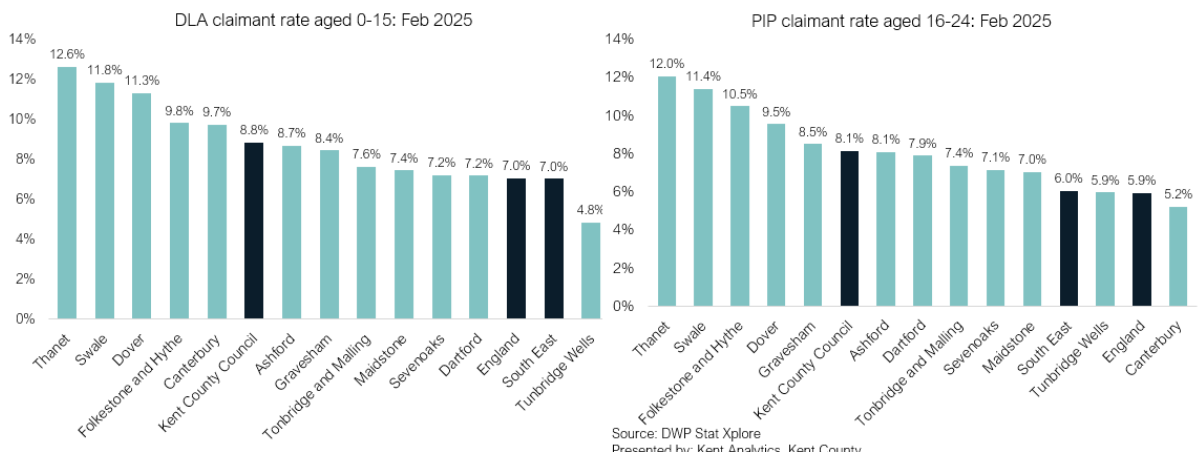
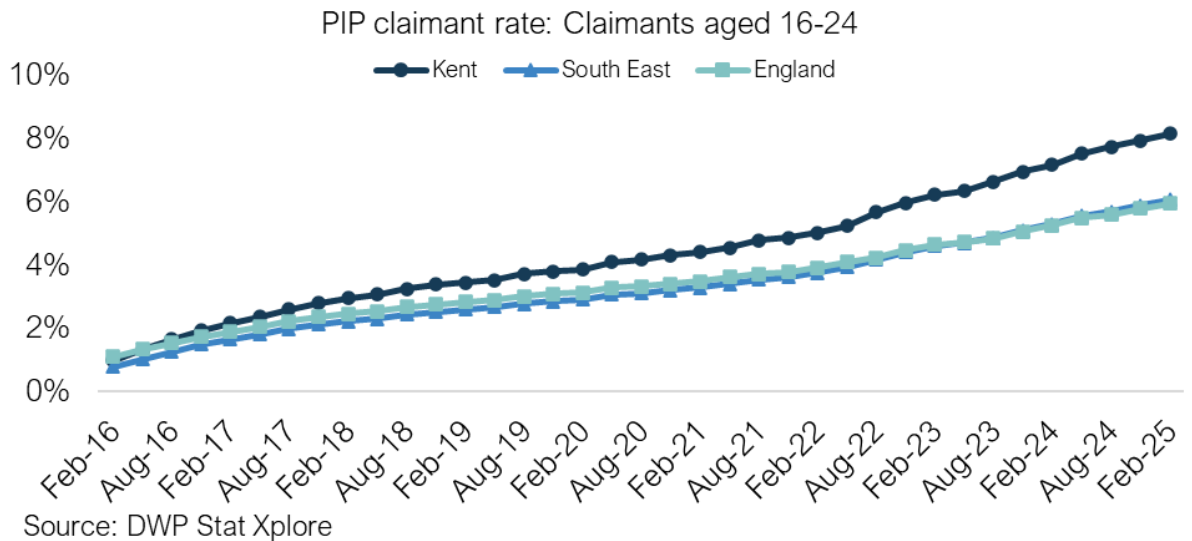
“ Among the list of benefits it can grant is the fact that an EHCP means parents will be [exempt from the VAT charges](#) placed on private school fees, which the Government introduced in January.”

Some many argue, this could create a clear financial incentive for some families to pursue an EHCP.

3.8 Other data which may be of relevance to this debate is the fact that Kent has a higher proportion of 0–15-year-olds receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and 16-24 year olds receiving Personal Independence Payments (PIP) compared to the national average and this gap is increasing year on year. As of Feb 2025, 8.8% of 0-15 year olds in Kent were claiming DLA compared to 7% nationally while 8.1% of 16-24 year olds were claiming PIP compared to 5.9% in England. Claimant rates vary considerably by district and this is correlated with the deprivation rates in those districts.

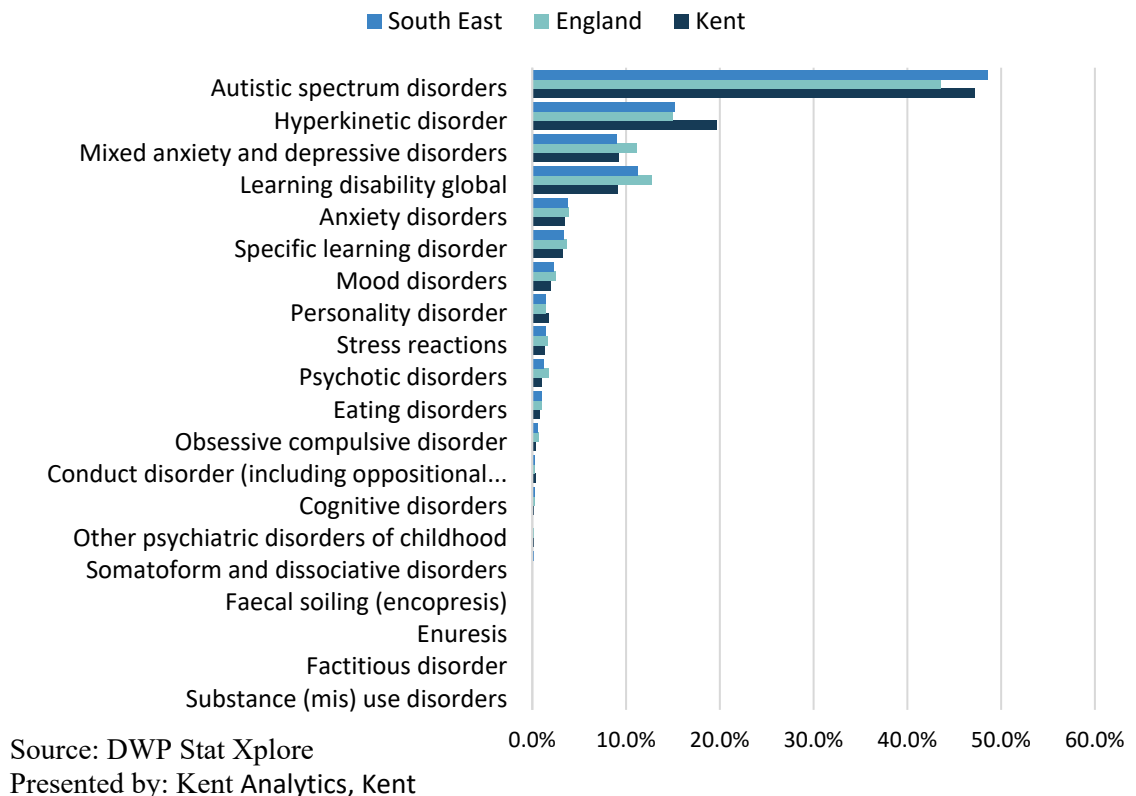
DLA and PIP Claimants





3.9 Males aged 16-24 were more likely to claim PIP than Females aged 16-24, with 9.1% of males in this age group claiming PIP compared to 7.1% of females. Nationally the rates are 6.6% and 5.2% respectively. Kent has a very similar profile of health conditions for those claiming PIP compared to national and regional comparators. However, is it possible that the higher rates of ASD in Kent could be a factor in Kent having a higher rate of 16-24 year olds claiming PIP.

Pip claimants aged 16-24 detailed psychiatric disorders, Feb 2025



3. 10 Does the way the system is led and managed impact on demand?

Whilst an increased in demand for an EHCP and an increase in spending on SEND relative to national and other benchmarks started prior to 2019 when the first area inspection took place, Kent's divergence from other LAs really gathered pace following this inspection. This can be seen in the graph included in 2.1 (above) Total number of EHCPs per 1000 population, but also in the graphs below.

3.11 The 2019 inspection found that there were systemic issues impacting on SEND services and support including:

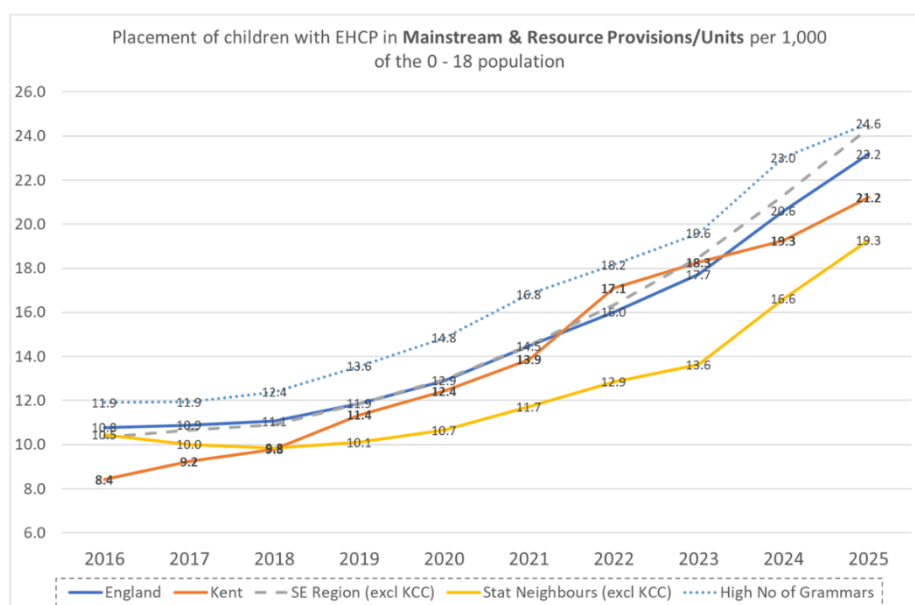
- Poor communication with parents
- Lack of co-production in planning and delivering services
- Inconsistent support across schools
- Underdeveloped health and social care integration
- Educational inequality

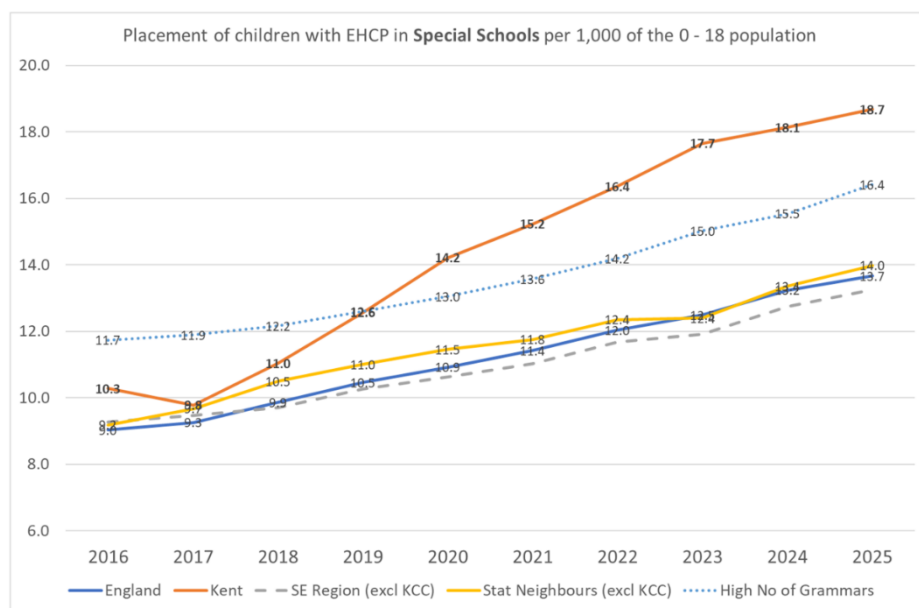
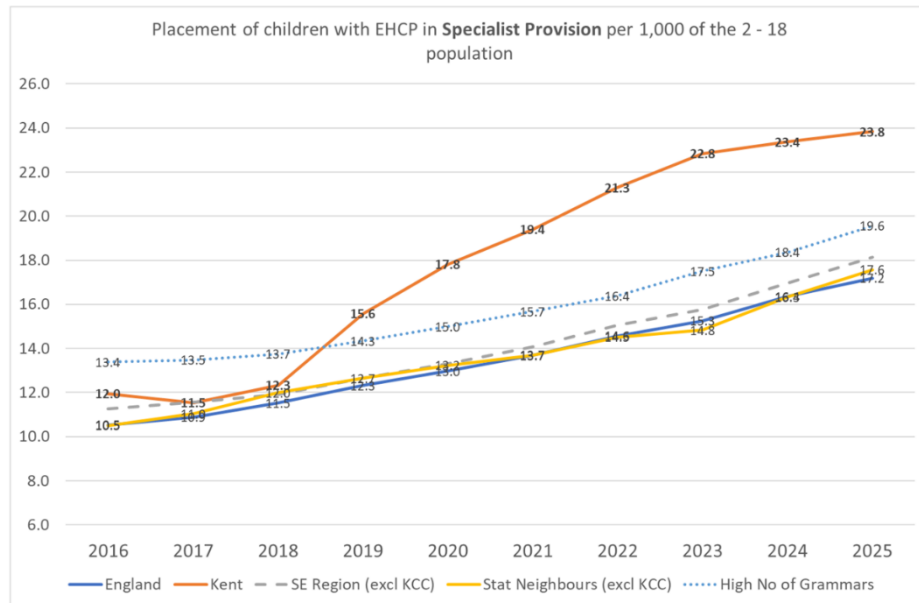
3.12 Parents were very unhappy and anxious which will have been a driver for increased demand. It seems likely that the LA's response to this situation was to become more permissive in its management of the system rather than instigating a root and branch reform to address the systemic issue identified by the inspection. This approach was not effective as evidenced by outcomes of the 2022 inspection which found there had been insufficient progress against all nine of the Areas of Weakness identified in 2019, alongside a

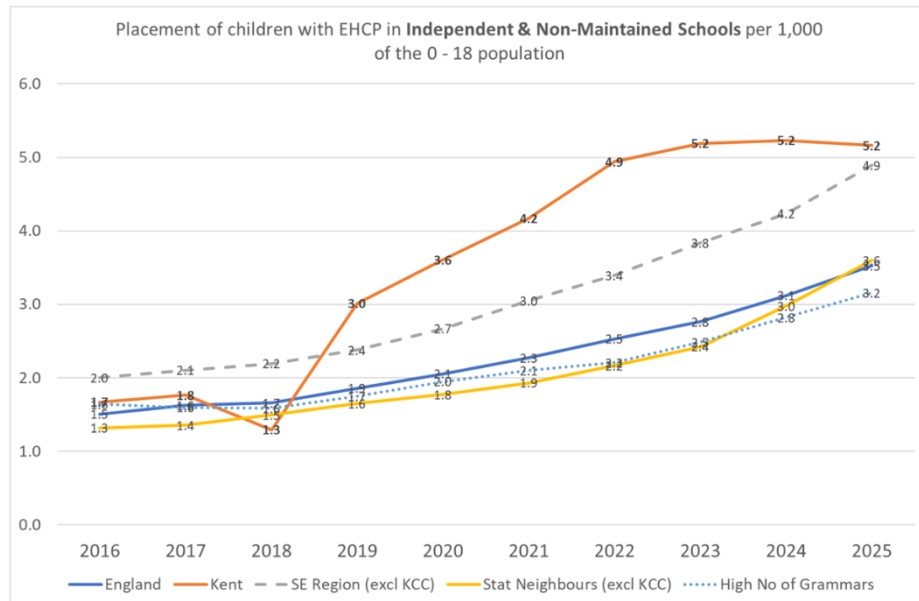
growing deficit which resulted in KCC entering into a Safety Valve agreement with the DfE.

3.13 KCC entered the DfE's Safety Valve Programme for those Councils with the highest deficits to support the development of a sustainable plan for recovery in 2022-23; this includes annual funding from the DfE, totalling £140m by 2027-28 (plus £2m of project costs), to pay off part of the deficit but only if the Council can demonstrate and deliver a credible plan to develop a more sustainable SEND system. Over the same period the Council is also expected to contribute towards the residual deficit which at the time of agreement was estimated to totalling £82m. This has avoided having to identify £222m of savings across the SEN system. The DSG deficit is the Council's single biggest financial risk; therefore, the successful implementation of the Council's deficit recovery plan is critical. It is recognised, the Government's proposals to reform the SEND and alternative provision (AP) system to support a more sustainable high needs funding will not impact immediately and local actions are required.

3.14 Longitudinal data showing changes post inspection in 2019 and in 2022 following a change in leadership of SEND

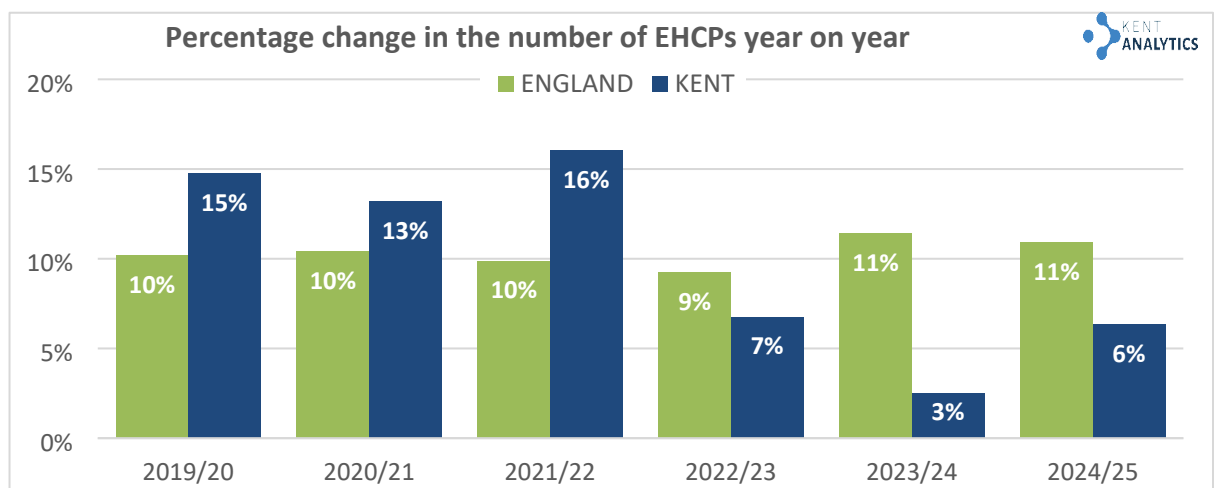






3.15 Evidence supporting the hypothesis that management of and confidence in the system is a critical factor is the change in trajectory in each of these graphs from 2023 when SEND came under the leadership of the Education Division. The final graph is of particular interest where it can be seen that the placement of children with an EHCP in independent and non-maintained schools per 1000 of the population has remained steady at 5.2 since 2023.

3.16 With regard to EHCPs, this bar chart shows the reduction by year.



3.17 Officers have reported regularly on the SEND reform and improvement programme. An update is included below and we are starting to see the evidence of the positive impact of greater inclusion in mainstream schools in relation to the number of children with EHCPs and the number of children being placed in special schools. In regard to EHCPs, a recent (October 2025) comparison of Kent performance to national averages indicates that:

- The percentage of the population with an EHCP is consistently increasing in Kent and England. Although Kent's rate remains higher than the national average the gap is continuing to narrow.
- The percentage increase in the number of EHCPs between 2022/2023 and 2024/25 in Kent was lower than the increase reported in England.
- Kent accounted for 3.23% of England's EHCPs in 2024/25, down from a peak of 3.7% in 2021/022.
- The number of EHCPs requested per 1,000 of 0-25 population in 2024/25 in Kent was lower than the national average. Compared to 2020 and 2021 when the number of requests for EHCP's per 1,000 in 0-25 population was significantly higher than the national average.
- The approval rate of ECHP rates in Kent has been lower than England, South East and Statistical Neighbours over the last 3 years.
- Over the last two years Kent has had a higher rate of EHCP plans cease compared to the national average.
- In 2023 this was 10.5% compared to 6.8% nationally.
- This is reflected in the high percentage decreases in EHCPs for those aged 20+ that have been recorded over the last two years in Kent.

3.18 Extract of our SEN2 data return as of July 2025 illustrates a slowing of the number of children placed in either a maintained special school or independent school. This is within the context of recognising that Kent places more children in these settings than most of country.

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Independent Schools	1,671	1,769	1,795	1,776
State-funded Special Schools	5,534	6,018	6,222	6,427
Total	7,205	7,787	8,017	8,203
% Year On Year change	11%	8%	3%	2%
% Year On Year change – National	7%	5%	7%	5%

*Between 2022 and 2025, the number of independent and state-funded special school places increased by 19%, whilst in Kent it was 14%.

3.19 In conclusion, whilst environmental and genetic factor may have some influence on the SEND system, there may be other drivers. The data shows the way the system is managed and led is more critical and evidence has been presented of the changes in the data following implementation of an improvement programme.

3.20 The use of data is critical, but there are caveats which are explained in Appendix 2. The consistent identification of SEND is challenging, largely due to the subjective and interpretative nature of the existing SEND frameworks and the overarching definitions first established in the late 1970s and 1980s

and not appropriately reviewed or updated since. As a result, comparisons and judgements made about incidences of SEND are challenging to make and uphold in a robust way.

3.21 These challenges are well documented, and have been identified by subsequent governments and independent experts over decades (House of Commons Select Committee, 2006; OFSTED, 2010; DfE, 2011; DfE 2023; Education Policy Institute, 2025), and include:

- Inconsistent application and differing interpretation and implementation of policy in different areas
- Lack of a clear, unambiguous and universal understanding of what SEND is and how to identify it
- Masking of needs by children and young people, particularly those with social, emotional, or neurodevelopmental differences
- Impact and implications of the whole-school environment, curriculum and provision on whether needs are able to be met without identifying as SEND
- Parental influence - understanding need and knowing when and how to support identification through external assessment and diagnosis.

3.22 This is why multiple data sets are used wherever possible, to enable triangulation and more robust conclusions to be drawn. It also supports the rationale for Kent developing its own draft SEND Continuum of needs and provision in the absence of any national guidance https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/215576/DRAFT-Kent-Continuum-of-Need-and-Provision-Published-June-2025.pdf . This ground-breaking document provides a framework and toolkit for all education settings in Kent to support consistent understanding and discussions about expectations for meeting the needs of all children and young people. It was developed to provide clarification and consistency in discussions and practices for meeting the needs of pupils with more complex needs across our education system, informed by the tremendous expertise within the Kent system.

3.23 The section below described some of the work being undertaken to improve outcomes for children, young people and families whilst at the same time contributing to a more efficient system. Initial evidence suggests a significant positive impact and this data is being tested against other data sets to see if the initial findings can be relied upon.

4. Kent's Strategic response to inspection outcomes

4.1 A summary of systemic changes

Following the 2022 inspection a wholesale transformation of the SEND system has been underway which has included:

- A strengthened policy framework through the publication of the Education Strategy, the SEND strategy, the Accessibility Strategy which provides a clearer rationale for capital investment.
- Development of a service model which brings clarity and consistency to expectations of universal, targeted and specialist services particularly with regard to schools and settings. Building on the original Mainstream Core Standards, this work includes the Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision, The SEND continuum of needs and provision, extensive training and support programmes for school leaders, SENCOs, staff and governors
- More effective commissioning of school places through the development of an agreed, statutorily compliant continuum of education provision from which offer differentiated levels of support in response to complexity of pupil need from mainstream to Specialist Resource Provision and Alternative Provision to Special Schools. Significant growth in the number of state funded special school places and planned growth in SRP places (CYPE Cabinet Committee November 2025).
- Improving the management and productivity of statutory processes as evidenced by a rolling average of completion of EHCPs at circa 65% approximately 15% above the national average and significant improvement in the completion of Annual Reviews since inspection
- Cultural and structural development of the SEND staffing cohort
- More effective deployment of non-statutory SEND services to support schools and families.
- Structural changes to encourage and enable better use of expertise in the system, collaborative working and peer review at a local level (Communities of Schools)
- Significant investment in supporting the development of SEND inclusion in mainstream schools, including the continued funding of several non-statutory SEND support services, despite the budgetary pressures
- School SEND funding reform
- Investment in improved communications.

4.2 As can be seen, KCC's strategic response is multi-faceted with an emphasis on early intervention, cultural change including mainstream core standards and Communities of schools, sufficiency and infrastructure change. These align with the DfE's Five Principles for SEND Reform:

1. Early and local support
2. Evidence-based provision
3. Fair resourcing
4. Integrated Services
5. Safeguarded specialist

This government framework is used to update on some of the development work within the Kent SEND system, below. Emerging evidence does suggest

that the approaches are having impact, adding weight to the hypothesis that effective management of the SEND system and evidence-based decisions about the best use of resources are critical to improvement rather than ever more resources.

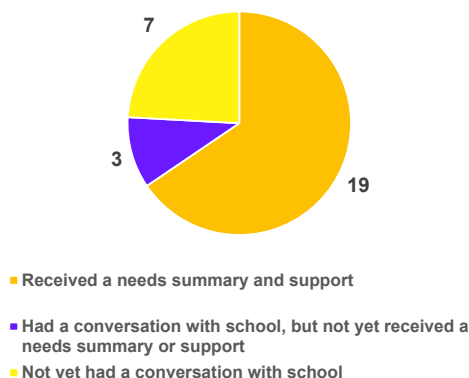
4.3 Early and local support & Evidence based provision and integrated services-

Developing capacity in mainstreams schools to support neurodivergent children and young people. The range of work going on across the system to build capacity is extensive and has been reported on previously, so this section confines itself to just a few examples. Recognising the need to respond proactively to pupil needs, KCC invested in a project with the Autism Education Trust to deliver training across Kent more than three years ago. In parallel the ICB invested in a successful pilot project to identify and support ND children in mainstream schools, called This is Me and more information can be seen here: [This is me :: Kent & Medway ICS](#). Informed by evidence of impact from the This is Me pilot, Kent and Medway made a successful bid for a new DfE pilot, PINS (Promoting Neurodiversity in Schools) which focused on the development of the school organizational capacity. In 2024 Kent launched a successful amalgamation of This is Me and PINS which developed school capacity through targeted training, whilst providing individual support for identified children and families and evaluation findings are promising. The model is explained in greater detail in Appendix 3, together with evidence of impact.

4.4 This approach was piloted in Maidstone providing coverage for 30,000 pupils across all mainstream schools in the district. This places Kent as one of a handful of Integrated Care Systems nationally to have substantively commissioned a needs-led support pathway for neurodivergent children. A short public-facing video explaining 'This is Me' can be found [here](#). All 60 mainstream schools received a 2-day training course in conducting in-depth 'strengths and needs conversations' with families of neurodivergent children and young people, which also covers key elements of neuro-affirmative practice. Since the first tranche of schools were trained, more than 200 children have been provided support through the new pathway within education, 58 of whom have received more intensive support from the new Community Neurodiversity Support Team. Between 1000 and 1500 children and young people in the Maidstone area or circa 10% of the pupil population, were supported during the initial year through education, utilising training, resources, advice and guidance from the new community neurodiversity team.

4.5 Early evaluation is promising, and some key points are shared here

This is Me – family questionnaire



- **89%** of those who have received a needs summary and support **reported a positive experience**
- **68%** of those who have received a needs summary and support **report a positive impact**
- **68%** of those who have received a needs summary and support **have used it in other situations**



This is Me – ‘What was good about This is Me?’

"It was very detailed and helpful for my son, it was good that the teachers and staff at his school were knowledgeable about his needs, it was 2 hours so very thorough."

"This has been a huge eye opener linking home with school behaviour. Seeing Mrs Goldson in action was truly amazing! The advice and guidance that came from Mrs Goldson has been applied at home and there is a great difference for us a family. There were also topics that we could bring to school, that is now making school easier for my son and we can see that his anxiety levels have come down."

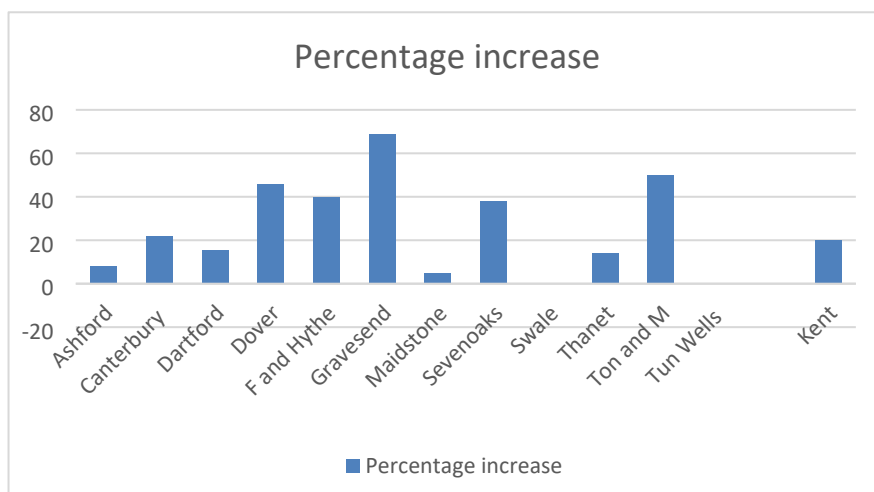
"It's been really helpful to gain a better understanding of my child which I've been able to share with family for them to better understand to. It's also been incredibly helpful for my child to help her understand why she is the way she is."

"My daughter has a plan & a safe place. A lot more settled. Teachers are aware of her needs."

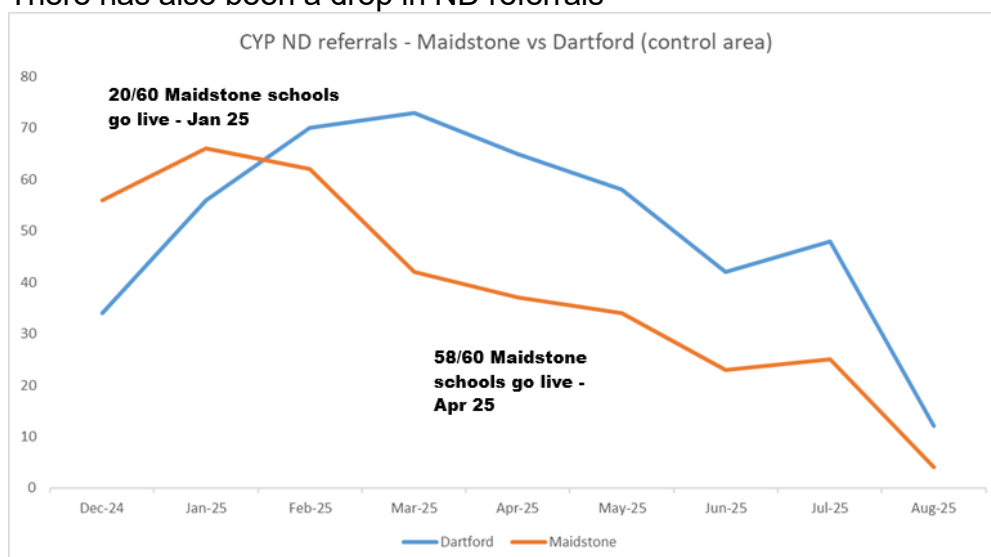


4.6 The evidence of impact:

Maidstone saw a decline in diagnostic requests compared to Dartford. This suggests that early intervention may reduce pressure on diagnostic pathways, but further triangulation is underway to substantiate this. With regard to Statutory Needs Assessments & EHC plans, Maidstone saw a 9.66% increase in requests (below Kent's 11% average) and the rate of requests per pupil (1.6%) is among the lowest in Kent. Maidstone's figures when analysed over two years rather than one, show that there has been very little increase in Requests, compared to the majority of Kent Districts.



There has also been a drop in ND referrals



This academic year, the programme is being rolled out in Swale and has been very enthusiastically received. Findings and recommendations are being disseminated across the county. There is an intention to roll out the programme to all schools over time.

4.7 Making changes to adult services to create a unified service pathway

A child/young person's Education Health and Care plan be in place from 0-25 years where it is still required. This poses additional challenges both locally and nationally due to other services operating to different age models (i.e. 0-18yrs). Therefore, it is essential adult services also work with those in education and SEN. In alignment with the children's transformation above, adult's Neurodevelopmental pathway services are being recommissioned on a support-first model designed around four key pillars: self-management, keyworker and community support, diagnostic, and intensive support. (see Adult's ASD Support Pathway Approach).

4.8 A Lived Experience Board has been established with commissioning responsibilities for the expanded self-management and community support elements, which will embed co-production for services delivered to autistic adults in Kent and Medway. This new arrangement has been operational since April 2025, though the co-production of the self-management and community support elements is still underway.

4.9 For those areas operating under the new Neurodevelopmental Support Pathway already, there has been a reduction of referrals to the ND waiting list that replicates the experience elsewhere in the country. In combination with the strong positive feedback received from families supported through 'This is Me', we are confident that the new Neurodevelopmental Support Pathway will put our waiting list figures onto a downward trajectory by meeting the needs of families earlier.

4.10 In parallel to the new pathway transformation, Kent and Medway ICS has undertaken a service improvement programme to ensure current services are functioning as effectively as possible. This has resulted in:

- Recommissioned paediatric ND assessment services live from October 2025
- Implementation of agreed prioritisation criteria across clinical providers to ensure children and young people at most need are assessed soonest
- Implemented a rapid assessment pathway for children who are identified as being suitable for single-clinician assessment where clinically appropriate
- Created a central [public-facing website](#) providing information on support, services and transformation across Kent and Medway.
- Provided Personal Health Budgets (PHBs) to 103 children and young people currently waiting for assessment for ASD or ADHD
- A pilot exploring innovative approaches to supporting neurodivergent children and young people within primary care has been undertaken in 5 Primary Care Networks across Kent
- Contacted almost all families currently awaiting assessment to provide advice, signposting, and a check to ensure their prioritisation status on the waiting list is correct.
- NELFT have provided regular freely accessible ND workshops to support people pre- and post-diagnostically on a number of frequently identified challenges Information on these, and other resources available for families while they wait can be found on [NELFT's website](#). These have had 22 attendees to date.
- Sample feedback: *"I thought it would be another high-level information sharing session but the organizer knew the topic very well and were sharing detailed, pertinent info."*

4.11 Safeguarded specialist provision & Fair resourcing - Developing a sustainable school system in Kent including the special school review. Work is continuing with mainstream schools and settings extend the existing effective SEND inclusion practice across the county through the Communities of Schools model of delivery which went live on 1st April 2025, more information can be seen here <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/inclusion/localities-model-for-school-inclusion/communities-of-schools>

4.12 Representatives of all schools, including special schools, continued to work with Dr Alison Ekin of Valley Invicta Multi Academy Trust to develop the final draft of the SEND continuum of Needs and Provision (<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/news/primary/continuum-of-need-and-provision>) which provides greater clarity over the expectations of mainstream, Specialist Resource Provision, Special School Satellites, Pupil Referral Units and Special Schools in educating children and young people with special and additional needs. The contents will be finalised when the next schools White Paper is published.

4.13 The KCC Education Accessibility Strategy 2025-28 is live <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/inclusion/education-accessibility-strategy-2025-28> with supporting School Access Initiative and Policy <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/inclusion/school-access-initiative-sai-policy-and-procedure> Whilst the strategies and policies may be new, KCC's commitment to improving accessibility has been supported by prioritising the use of capital funding. Over the 5-year period 2019-24, £3,152,274 was spent on 83 school accessibility projects. This investment (together with other support) has enabled children and young people with physical disabilities and/or complex medical needs to access education at a local school in their community. Investment going forward will be used more strategically to develop accessible school buildings across the county so that all families have improved access to an adapted school locally.

4.14 There are currently 72 Specialist Resource Provisions operating in 68 mainstream schools. Following a review of the existing provisions and robust pupil data it has been identified there would be a clear benefit to put a total of 55 new SRPs in place over the next three years across the four areas of Kent.

Overall total planned SRPs:

	Primary	Secondary	Total
East	4	5	9
North	12	7	19
South	9	6	15
West	5	7	12
Total	30	25	55

4.15 Each one of these SRPs will have an individual business case. The two highest incidences of need are neurodiversity (autism, ADHD /communication and interaction) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health. KCC has invested significantly in developing school capacity and expertise through work disseminating the Autism Education Trust materials and more recently in partnership with the Integrated Care System on This is Me programme as well as the DfE funded Promoting Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) pathfinder. Gaps in existing SRP provision for children and young people who are neurodivergent have been identified through KCC's work on school sufficiency and proposals will be brought forward to address these gaps. With regard to SEMH, the new SRPs planned will make an important contribution to developing capacity to better meet SEMH needs.

4.16 Developing the Kent education offer; special schools
Kent officers and Special School heads are working together with special schools in order to (where appropriate) widen admission criteria and the needs of pupils for whom it can cater in order to reflect local requirements. This joint work, and the other work presented above, will ensure those children and young people with the special educational needs will be able to attend a suitable educational setting locally. The individual plans for these schools will commence rollout in September 2026, in line with the original plan.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The question posed by members is a complex one and this report will not answer all the questions as there are many unknowns, for example a definitive understanding of the priorities within the SEND service post 2019 and how these may have contributed to the pressures. This period is when the biggest rise in spending occurred, but this exponential increase in spending did not result in improved satisfaction, better pupil outcomes or an improved SEND system. This is an important point as there is an assumption that putting ever increasing resources into SEND will 'fix' the issues and address parental concerns. The experience in Kent clearly shows that unless the leadership and management of the system is right, additional resources make no difference at all.

5.2 Using longitudinal data, officers have attempted to show how changes in approach impacts on the data. At a more operational level, the emerging impact that the innovative ASD case study of This is Me rolled out in collaboration with PINS is having on local demand for EHCPs is discussed. It is premature to have too much confidence in the outcomes to date, but the data does look promising, and officers will continue to collect, analyse and triangulate data, using the findings to further strengthen the system and to build financial sustainability.

6. Recommendation(s)

The committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

7. Contact Details

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Key recent SEND publications

Appendix 2 - National Challenges with the identification of SEND and use of SEND data

Appendix 3 - Supporting Neurodiversity in Kent - Member Briefing

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Appendix 1 Key recent national SEND publications

- National Audit Office report *Support for Children and Young People with SEND* October 2024 <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/support-for-children-and-young-people-with-special-educational-needs.pdf>
- ISOS Partnership commissioned by the Local Government Association June 2025 *Reform of the SEND System* <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/reform-send-system-what-might-next-stage-look-and-how-can-we-build-consensus>
- The Policy Exchange August 2025 *Out of Control* <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/out-of-control/>
- Institute for Fiscal Studies September 2025 <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/englands-send-crisis-costs-challenges-and-case-reform>
- ISOS Partnership commissioned by the County Councils Network November 2025 *SEND in England* <file:///C:/Users/McInnC01/Downloads/CCN-Isos-SEND-in-England-How-we-got-to-crisis-point-why-we-need-reform-1.pdf>

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Appendix 2. National challenges with the identification of SEND and use of SEND data

The consistent identification of SEND remains fraught with challenges, largely due to the subjective and interpretative nature of the existing SEND frameworks and the overarching definitions. These frameworks, originally set up in the late 1970s and 1980s, have not been appropriately reviewed or updated since. As a result, comparisons and judgements made about incidences of SEND are challenging to make and uphold in a robust way.

These challenges are well documented, and have been identified by subsequent governments and independent experts over decades (House of Commons Select Committee, 2006; OFSTED, 2010; DfE, 2011; DfE 2023; Education Policy Institute, 2025), and include:

- Inconsistent application and differing interpretation and implementation of policy in different areas
- Lack of a clear, unambiguous and universal understanding of what SEND is and how to identify it
- Masking of needs by children and young people, particularly those with social, emotional, or neurodevelopmental differences
- Impact and implications of the whole-school environment, curriculum and provision on whether needs are able to be met without identifying as SEND
- Parental influence - understanding need and knowing when and how to support identification through external assessment and diagnosis

The Education Policy Institute (2025) has further explored these challenges, identifying the following key areas for consideration (some of which continue to evidence the long-term systemic issues set out above):

- Postcode lottery- 'The school attended was more important than anything about the individual child in explaining who was identified with SEND' (EPI, 2025: 6). 'Local authorities played a smaller-than-expected role in the chances of SEND identification' (EPI, 2025: 7).
- Link between SEND identification and deprivation- Rates of SEND identification are influenced by access to enriching experiences. Early Personal, Social and Emotional Development at age 5 as being a key indicator of future SEND identification
- Link between looked-after status and early childhood experiences- Children with adverse early experiences or in care are disproportionately likely to be identified with SEND.
- Gender disparities - Emotional and neurodevelopmental needs in girls are frequently masked or misinterpreted, leading to later or missed identification.

Understanding the Challenges: SEND Data and Identification

Across England, there are national challenges in how children and young people with SEND are identified and supported. The quality and consistency of data play a big part in this.

- Different definitions and thresholds: Schools and local authorities don't always use the same criteria to decide when a pupil has SEND. This makes national data difficult to compare or rely on.
- Data that misses the detail: Numbers alone don't show the full picture — for example, they may overlook children whose needs are emerging or unmet, or whether the help they receive is making a difference.
- Separate systems: Education, health, and social care often hold data separately, which makes it hard to build a full picture of a child's needs and outcomes.
- Looking backwards, not forwards: National data often relies on test results or exclusion figures, which show what has already happened rather than what support is needed early on.

Consequently, national SEND data provides only a partial view of what children need and how well the system is working.

What This Means for Local Authorities

These national issues directly affect how local authorities plan, fund, and monitor SEND support in their areas.

- Getting the local picture right: If schools record SEND differently, the local authority can't get a true sense of how many children need support or what kind of help is most needed.
- Fair funding: Inconsistent data can lead to funding being unevenly distributed — some areas may have hidden unmet need, while others face financial strain from over-identification.
- Early help and inclusion: If needs aren't identified early, children are less likely to get timely support. This can lead to bigger challenges later, such as exclusions or the need for specialist placements.
- Using data for improvement: When education, health, and social care data aren't joined up, it's harder for local authorities to track progress, understand impact, and plan better services.

Without clearer and more consistent data, access to SEND support can depend too much on where a child lives or how well their needs are understood, rather than on the level of need itself. Improving data quality and coordination is key to ensuring fair, effective support for all children and young people.

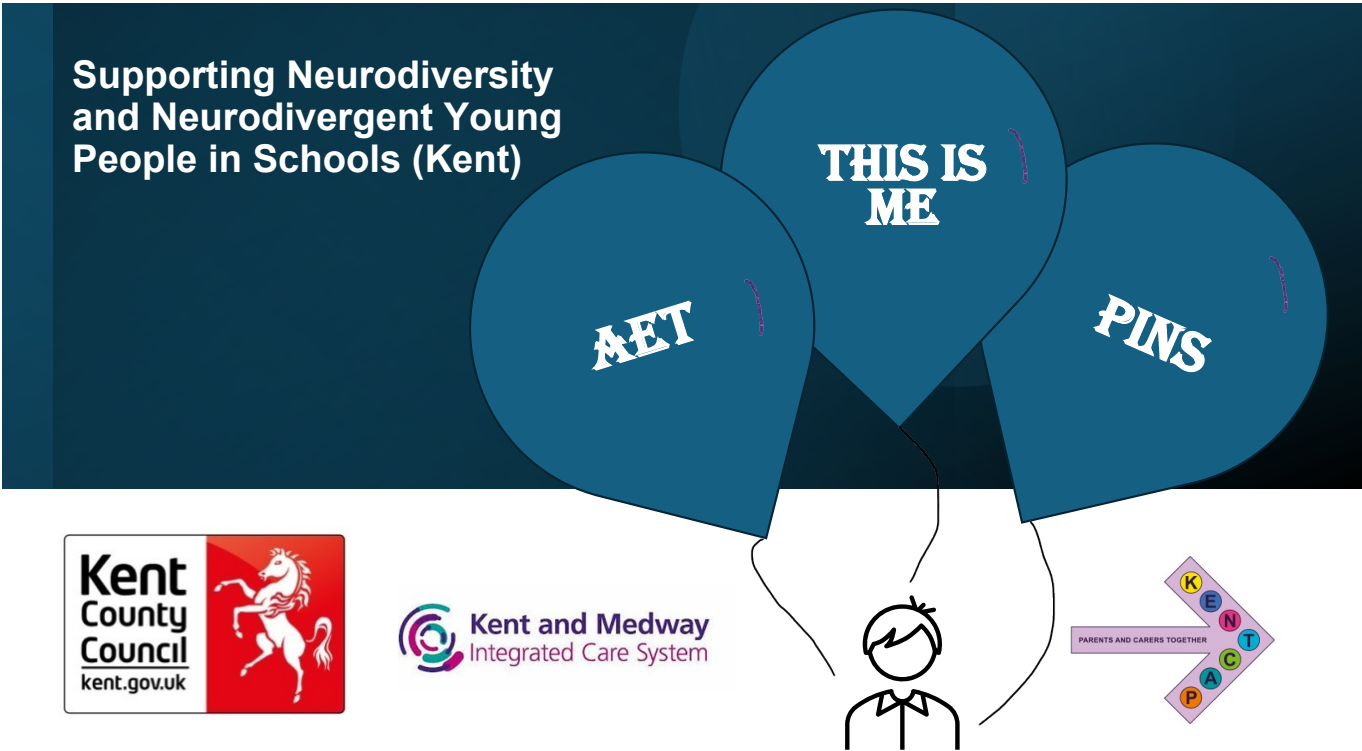
Further detail about these challenges and proposals for how to address them more effectively are expected in the pending DfE policy updates- expected Autumn 2025. The SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan (DfE, 2023) commits to greater standardisation and transparency through the introduction of a national banding framework, consistent EHCP templates, and

strengthened local inclusion partnerships. These initiatives aim to improve consistency, but their success will depend on coherent implementation, workforce development, and effective data integration.

Dr. Alison Ekins, Director of SEND Valley Invicta Academy Trust
Kristina Yates, Former principal of Turner Free School Kent and Independent consultant specializing in SEND.
October 2025

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Appendix 3 – Supporting neurodiversity in Kent



Supporting Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent Young People in Schools (Kent)



Autism Education Trust (AET) 2022-present is a workforce development package/autism training and frameworks (KCC) being offered to all mainstream settings, from Early Years to Post 16. It pre-dates PINS, and is a KCC-led initiative to support schools around inclusion of autistic/neurodivergent pupils.



This is Me (2024 to present) is a health-initiated (but increasingly integrated) early intervention approach for neurodivergent children and young people. Schools with parents to co-produce a Needs Summary, which leads to the deliver of greater understanding of an individuals needs. This then leads to direct interventions for neurodivergent children and young people, and their families.

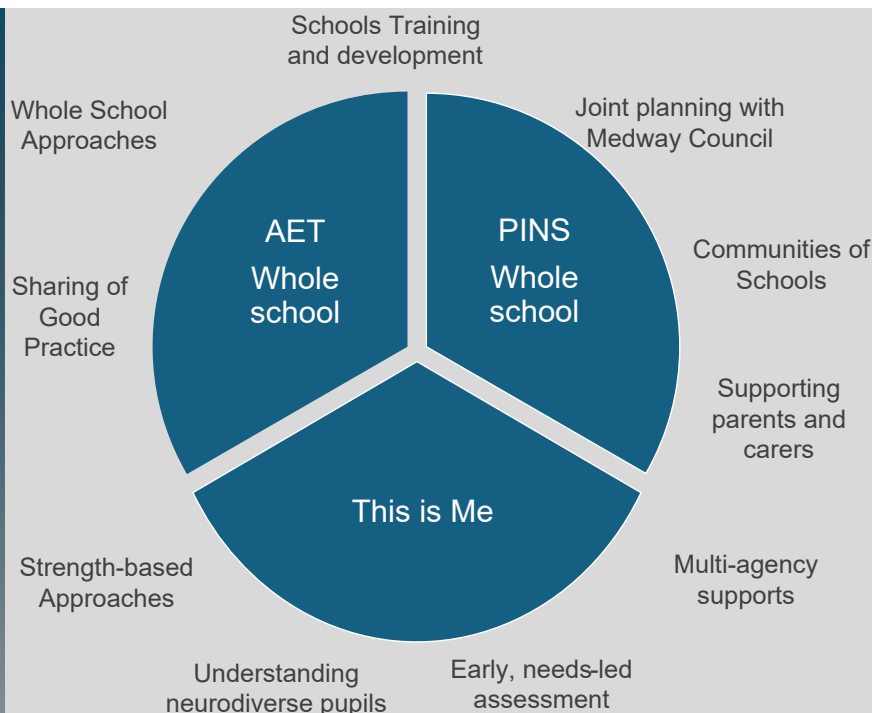
PINS



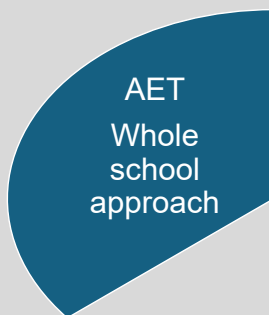
Partnership for Inclusion in Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) (Jan 2024 to present) is a national initiative from the DfE and NHSE in partnership. Similarly to AET it's aimed at workforce development in schools (explicitly not for direct interventions with pupils). 38 schools in Maidstone and now Swale have been involved; we're using the learning for the schools localities approach.

Wider linking to future **Outcomes Framework**, yearly measurement and public site of outcomes

Supporting Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent Young People in Schools (Kent)



Supporting Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent Young People in Schools (Kent)



- Ensure consistent approach to training and information linked to school improvement
- Ensure that there is a single consistent message around Autism and neurodiversity across Kent. This reinforces that there is a long-term investment from KCC in this programme and building the cultural change around supporting more autistic pupils in mainstream.

	Making Sense of Autism	Good Autism Practice	Other Modules	Delegates
Early Years	278	15	10	2,424
School Age	453	100	41	17,779
Post 16	49	9	0	722
Total	780	124	51	11,252

Aet have trained **208,509** delegates since 2022.
Kent has trained **11%** of all their delegates.

Supporting Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent Young People in Schools (Kent)

PINS Whole school Approach

- The PINS programme is testing a new model for supporting good outcomes in mainstream schools for Neurodivergent pupils and strengthening parent/carer and school partnerships.
- The DfE and NHS England aim is that there will be guidance, and a possible strategy produced after September 2026
- Bringing Education and Health partners together to underpin truly connected normal everyday practice in schools.

Maidstone March 2024 – March 2025

- 20 schools in Maidstone took part in PINS;
- 826 staff members were trained
- 208 training sessions were delivered in just six months

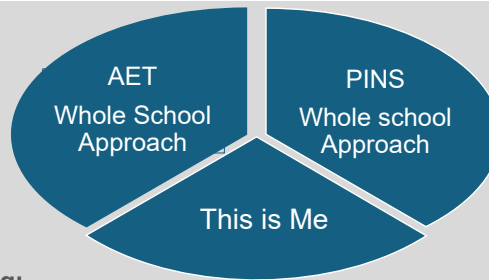
DfE and NHS England described Kent Model as the '**art of the possible**'

Supporting Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent Young People in Schools (Kent)

- **This is Me** is a health-initiated (but increasingly integrated) early intervention approach for neurodivergent children and young people.
- It's delivering direct interventions to neurodivergent children and young people, the first stage through education with advice and guidance from health, and if that does not work health staff act as a point of escalation.

This is Me

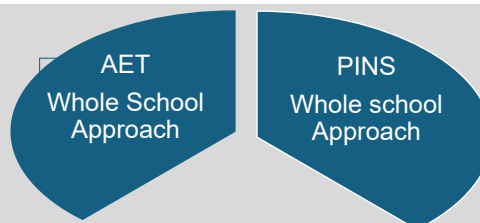
Supporting Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent Young People in Schools (Kent)



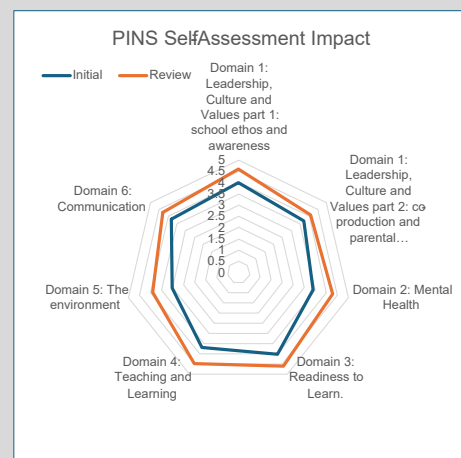
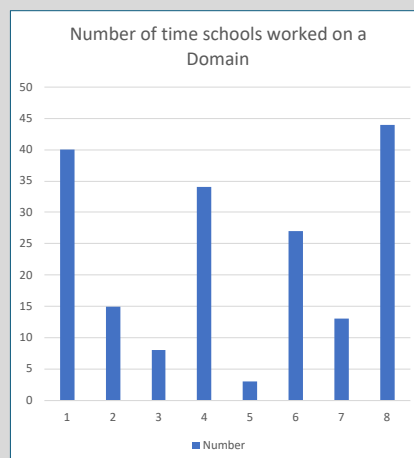
Learning:

- Whole School Approaches
- Co production value of parent and pupil voice in designing supports
- Connected Agency Working – shared approaches and understanding
- Community – education settings, parents and pupils providing peer support
- Core training and understanding – Speech and Language (Balanced System, Sensory and Physical Impacts, Information Processing - Classroom approaches)

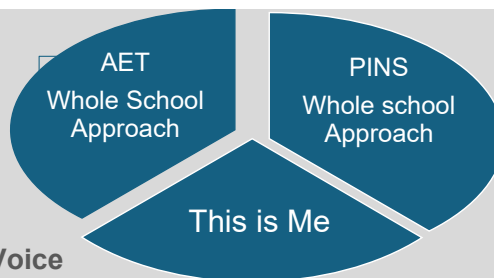
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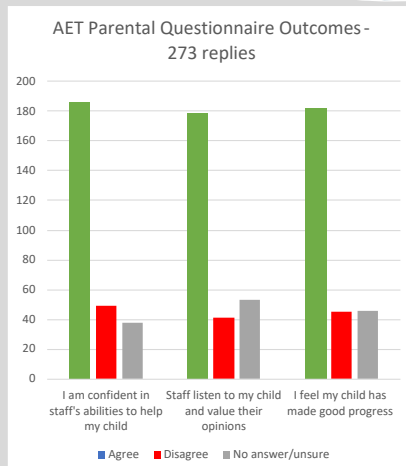
Schools Self Assessment



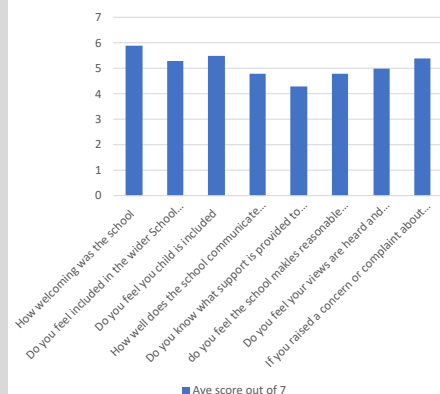
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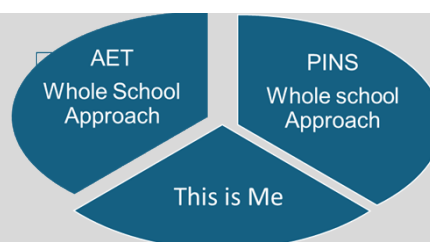
Parent Voice



188 parents answered on average (PINS1 Maidstone)



Supporting Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent Young People in Schools (Kent)



Pupil Voice

- **Peer Awareness:** Educate my peers about autism
- **Professional Knowledge:** Teachers needs to know the signs so they can help
- **Safe Spaces:** More safe spaces for anxious children
- **Language:** When taking things literally, by accident, I mean no offence
- **Sensory:** Don't force people to wear the blazers (they're uncomfortable)
- **Movement:** Understand that when we fidget it doesn't mean we're not focusing
- **Time:** Don't move on from tasks until everyone is done
- **Recognition and Understanding:** Don't compare us to other autistic people.
- **Ways To Engage Us:** Ask what would help rather than just assuming or not doing anything

Supporting Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent Young People in Schools (Kent)

What PINS Phase 1 Schools said...

PINS Whole school Approach

PINS allowed us to support our collaborative approach as a federation.

PINS allowed us to support our collaborative approach as a federation.

Relationship building with new colleagues and making links with other professionals, particularly health.

The menu of support has helped us to pull out “are we doing everything we can?”

Through the children we have learnt that they want more say in their own classroom environments.

Our adults have a much better understanding of the individuals’ needs of ND children.

Access to training would not have been offered otherwise

Having Frances come and work alongside us has helped us engage with our parents of ND children.

Reciprocity – this is an area of focus that has had a big impact.

Staff confidence has improved. Our PACT group is now starting to be led by the parent of a ND child.

You need someone to drive the work for PINS within your school.

By: Anna Taylor, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny)

To: Scrutiny Committee, 25 November 2025

Subject: 25/00101 - Kent County Council Local Government Reorganisation:
Strategic Business Case Submission to Government

Summary: Ahead of the final submission to Government, the Scrutiny Committee is asked to discuss and note KCC's Strategic Business Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway.

1. Introduction

- a. KCC's Strategic Business Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway was presented to Cabinet on 19 November 2025. Cabinet were asked to approve the Business Case and delegate authority to the Chief Executive to take the necessary actions to submit the proposal to Government by the 28 November deadline.
- b. The proposed submission can be viewed via the Cabinet agenda papers: [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 19th November, 2025, 10.00 am](#). Final papers will be published alongside this Scrutiny Committee agenda as a supplement pending the Cabinet decision on the 19th November.

2. Recommendation

- a. The Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and make any comments on the Local Government Reorganisation submission.

3. Attached documents

To follow.

4. Background documents

[Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 19th November, 2025, 10.00 am](#)

[Issue details - 25/00101 - Kent County Council Local Government Reorganisation: Strategic Business Case Submission to Government](#)

Contact Details

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From: Wayne Chapman, Chairman, Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee

To: Scrutiny Committee – 25 November 2025

Subject: Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee Annual Report

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the work of the Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee for the period November 2024 – November 2025.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee Annual Report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee's (KFRWMC) operates within Kent County Council's (KCC) overview and scrutiny function, alongside the Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 The KFRWMC is tasked with reviewing and scrutinising the exercise of flood risk management and coastal erosion functions by risk management authorities in Kent. These authorities include KCC as the lead local flood authority and highway authority; the Environment Agency; district councils; internal drainage boards; and water companies.
- 1.3 As required in KCC's Constitution, the Annual Report is presented to the Scrutiny Committee for noting, providing an opportunity for the KFRWMC to raise awareness of the scrutiny activity it has undertaken, scrutiny it intends to undertake in the future and to flag up any particular points of concern where required.
- 1.4 As the KFRWMC performs a scrutiny function on behalf of KCC, the Scrutiny Committee is not being asked to scrutinise their activities or scrutinise flood risk management more generally as part of this item.
- 1.5 This marks the Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee's (KFRWMC) first Annual Report to the Scrutiny Committee since the May 2025 election. The Committee has convened three times since its last report to Scrutiny on 4 December 2024, with meetings held in February, July, and October 2025.

- 1.6 The April 2025 meeting of the Committee was postponed due to KCC's elections. The next scheduled meeting will take place on 4th March 2026. Additionally, this document also captures the proceedings of the final Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee meeting of 2024.
- 1.7 Mr Wayne Chapman was elected Chair of the Committee at the July 2025 KFRWMC meeting. Mr Chapman succeeded Mr Tony Hills, who served as Chair during this report's timeframes of November 2024 through to February 2025.
- 1.8 The Committee currently comprises seven Members: five Reform UK, one Liberal Democrat, and one from the Green Group. A significant number of district councillors are also invited to attend the Committee's meetings.
- 1.9 The topics covered during this period were:
- Southern Water – Clean Rivers and Seas Taskforce
 - South East Water – Water Resources Management Plan
 - South East Water – Overview of Services
 - Environment Agency – Management of water quality
 - Environment Agency – Introduction to new members
 - Environment Agency and Met Office Alerts and Warnings
 - Met Office - Climate Change
 - KCC Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
 - The role of Internal Drainage Boards

2. Committee meeting on 20 November 2024

2.1 Environment Agency - River Basin Management Plans (RBMP)

The Environment Agency addressed the Committee:

- a. Functions of RBMPs, to set the legally binding locally specific environmental objectives that underpin water regulation, including permitting and planning activities.
- b. Investment programmes and future opportunities.
- c. Aims of RBMPs to enhance nature, deliver the environmental objectives that contribute towards net zero, explain what can be funded in line with the government's current policy and funding and business cases for the investment needed.
- d. An overview of the two catchments, South East and Thames, which encompassed Kent.

- e. Waterbody classifications across Kent, with it noted that none were classified 'Good' due to a one out all out policy.
- f. Catchment based approach and role of Catchment Coordinators.
- g. A summary of fish flow schemes delivered in Kent; and
- h. Partnership project delivery by default approach.

2.2 Met Office - Alerts and Warnings

The contents of the presentation included:

- a. Review of weather in winter 2022/23, summer 2023 and autumn 2023 to September.
- b. Storm Ciarán, with it noted that the highest wind speed (78mph) had been record in Kent at Langdon Bay and that in excess of 40mm of rainfall had been experienced in many areas.
- c. Storm preparation including warnings and future concerns.
- d. Role of the Met Office in warning, informing and civil contingencies, including the National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS);
- e. Weather warning criteria.
- f. Severe Weather Framework that included
- g. Flood Guidance Statement (FGS), as a 5-day outlook at whether any flooding was expected across England and Wales; and
- h. November 2023 to January 2024 3-month outlook of weather events.

3. Committee meeting on 5 February 2025

3.1 The Role of Internal Drainage Boards (IDB)

The Committee received the presentation:

- a. Managing water across North Kent and the role of the internal drainage board; and
- b. How funding was used and distributed in supporting the role of internal drainage boards noting the income and expenditures of the organisation.

- c. How the amalgamation of the North Kent Marshes Water Level Management Board has enabled a more unified voice, leading to improved financial planning, more effective sharing of resources, and enhanced access to funding opportunities.
- d. Discussed how the IDB would take a holistic approach to future water level management.
- e. The local authority's role and impacts in water management and how the 'wise use of water' had taken a positive data driven collaborative approach; and
- f. Summarised Kent County Councils (KCC) lead position in supporting future water management strategies and infrastructure planning.

3.2. Environment Agency -Managing Water Quality

The Committee received the Environment Agency's presentation:

- a. Highlighted the designated bathing areas across Kent, along with the current monitoring status and the annually published classification criteria used to assess water quality; and
- b. Emphasised the duty of care to inform the public of water quality monitoring results, while noting that not all beaches are officially designated as bathing waters under current regulations.
- c. Bathing water classifications were expanded upon with a particular focus on the impact of Enterococci and Escherichia Coli bacteria.
- d. Improvements in Kents bathing waters had indicated that 92% had met the minimum standard of sufficient. 2024s results showed that 85% had achieved the highest standard of good and excellent.
- e. Sources of pollution and what actions presently and in the future that the Environment Agency would take; and
- f. Discussed the planned actions for 2025 including the additional monitoring of surrounding of impacted areas and Microbial source tracking.
- g. The priority bathing waters of 2025 were named as, St Marys Bay, Littlestone, Dymchurch, Deal and Folkestone.
- h. Members were briefed on the submission process for proposed new bathing waters which included the criteria required for designation under current regulatory frameworks.

3.3 Met Office - Changing Weather Risks

The Committee received a presentation. The contents of presentation included:

- a. An overview of the global average of temperatures from 1850-2024 was provided, with a particular focus on the impact to the United Kingdom during the period of 1961-2020; and
- b. The impact of extreme heat and extreme weather events that had been observed at a global, regional and local level.
- c. Future temperature changes throughout the Summer and Winter were highlighted, with the modelling on 2020-39 and 2060-2079 trajectories being of particular note.
- d. Climate impact on coastal, fluvial and surface water flooding was discussed with supplemental information on the projected precipitation rates of 2020-2039 and 2060-2070 being provided.
- e. Sea level rise and glacial isostatic adjustment impact on the United Kingdom and the regional impact to Kent that could potentially occur during a rise of sea levels.
- f. The increase of wildfires, storm events and destructive infrastructure impacts were discussed; and
- g. Links were provided to the Met office's Climate Data Portal (CDP) and the Local Authority Climate Service (LACS).

4. Committee meeting on 7 July 2025

4.1 Environment agency and Met Office Alerts and warnings and KCC Severe Response Activity

The contents of the presentation included:

- a. The impact of named storm and storm-like events that had occurred in the first part of 2025.
- b. A breakout of the report differentiating KCC, the Environment Agency and Met Office; and
- c. Members agreed on the formal breaking out of the report for partner agencies to attend and present a more tailored response and allow for more robust questioning.

- d. An overview of flood zones 1 and 2 and the recommendation to make the reporting more comprehensive in the specific areas it was to cover.
- e. All Members agreed that all major external partners should be present at November's Committee as July had seen significant flooding in the coastal regions of Kent and a significant amount of water supply impacts throughout the Summer.

5. Committee meeting on 29 October 2025

5.1 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

The verbal update was presented to the committee:

- a. Explained the role of Kent County Council as the local lead flood authority and its respective areas of authority.
- b. Highlighted the 2024-2034 third local strategy that was built upon past strategies and lessons learnt.
- c. The targets of improving the safety and wellbeing of Kents residents being a catalyst of the current trajectory of the management strategy.
- d. The Committee discussed the role of Section 19 flood investigations following flooding events, including how the data collected is used to inform future mitigation strategies and improve infrastructure resilience.
- e. The impacts of recent flooding in Headcorn, Swanley, Gravesend, Folkestone, and Snodland were examined in detail and highlighted local challenges and response efforts; and
- f. Discussed the ongoing collaborative efforts with Southern Water, Department for Environment, Food and Rural affairs (DEFRA), and the Environment Agency that had aimed at enhancing flood resilience and water management across Kent. Particular attention was given to the continued work with the National Flood Forum (NFF), which had played a key role in community engagement and providing support for flood impacted areas.

5.2 South East Water - Overview of Services

South East Water presented to the committee an overview of services:

- a. Provided the new Members an overview of South East Waters current functions throughout Kent.
- b. Discussed the water resource management plan for 2025-2030 and the adaptive planning that would be used to deliver critical resources.

- c. Addressed the current supply-demand balance for water resources in Kent and outlined the key challenges anticipated in the coming years.
- d. Acknowledged concerns on current hosepipe bans, water extraction and the role of Temporary use Bans (TUBs); and
- e. The actions in place to reduce leaks and the discovery of leaks incorporating the response time goals, costs and technologies that had been utilised to aid in bringing repair timeframes down.
- f. Presenters provided a detailed brief on South East Waters response to water supply impacts that had occurred in Herne Bay, Whitstable and Sea salter during the period of July 1-8th. This included a breakdown of the response, lesson learnt and aspects of compensation.
- g. Future investments, the priority register, compensation arrangements and the enhancement expenditure for 2025-2030 for the entirety of Kent were presented and discussed.

5.3 Southern Water - Clean Rivers and Sea Taskforce

Southern Water presented to the Members an introduction to the Clean Rivers and Sea Taskforce:

- a. Discussed the history of the Clean Rivers and Sea Taskforce since its establishment in 2021.
- b. Storm overflows, the optimisation of infrastructure, fixing illegal connections and the installation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as current and future goals were noted.
- c. The Kent storm overflow reduction plan for 2025-30 was introduced to Members.
- d. The 2027 regulatory targets were presented and would focus particularly on improving water quality in shellfish waters, environmentally sensitive sites, and bathing waters
- e. Importance of the partnership of southern water and KCC was highlighted with a particular focus on joint Kent Highways SuDS programme. The collaboration would aim to enhance surface water management, reduce flood risk, and integrate sustainable infrastructure solutions across the county's road network.
- f. The Committee acknowledged recent successes in Kent, including the installation of SuDS in Margate, infrastructure improvements at Whitstable Library, and the complex rerouting of surface water in Faversham. These projects were highlighted as examples of effective collaboration and technical innovation in managing flood risk and enhancing local resilience; and
- g. The continued success of Centaur AI technology in managing flow through automated penstock floodgates. Its deployment would contribute to a predicted 20% reduction in spills at Tankerton Circus and a 30% reduction

at Diamond Road, both in Whitstable. These outcomes had demonstrated the effectiveness of smart infrastructure in enhancing flood resilience and environmental protection.

- h. Future investments of £1.5 billion to reduce storm overflows between 2025-35 and the prioritising of green solutions with the continued optimisation of existing assets closed out the presentation.

5.4 Environment Agency - Introduction of Services

The Environment Agency presented and introduction of services that captured:

- a. Provided Members with a general overview of the Environment Agency's role and functions, including its responsibilities in flood risk management, environmental regulation, water quality monitoring, and supporting sustainable development across Kent.
- b. Discussed the establishment of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCC) and the work undertaken with partners to address flood and coastal erosion risk management; and
- c. The role of the Volunteer Community Flood Wardens (VCW) and the support they can provide before, during and after flood events, and the awareness provided for Kents communities.
- d. A detailed look at the Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme highlighted the £36 million pound partnership project to reduce flood risk to over 1800 homes and 575 non-residential properties; and how
- e. The Property Flood Resilience (PFR) was to target a number of properties throughout Kent and help strengthen flood awareness in those impacted communities.
- f. The importance of River Basin Management Plans in shaping regional water quality and ecological outcomes. Members also discussed the broader scope of the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP), which outlined environmental improvement commitments by water companies and included measures to reduce pollution, enhance biodiversity, and support long-term sustainability across Kent's water systems.
- g. Regulatory oversight discussions captured the Environment Agency's role in managing water abstraction, effluent discharges, and agricultural runoff. Members were briefed on how the agency enforces compliance, monitors environmental impacts, and supports sustainable water resource management across the county.
- h. The Environment Agency partnership with KCC would continue to focus on key aspects that impact the residents of Kent.

5.5 KCC Severe Weather Response

The report presented to Committee included

- a. An update on the impacts of weather from the July to September Periods was presented; and
- b. Discussed the 12 weather alerts that occurred between July and September. Ten of which comprised of Thunderstorm (6), Heath Health (2), Wind Warning (1) and Fog Warning (1).
- c. The Committee reviewed three recent test events of the Thames Barrier that had been undertaken as part of its routine operational readiness checks and discussed the implications of the barrier's operation for Kent as a county.
- d. In addition, Members were briefed on the Area Incident Teams (AIT) response actions during minor flood events, highlighting their rapid deployment, coordination with local authorities and effectiveness in mitigating impacts across vulnerable areas.
- e. Future concerns and KCC's role in responding to severe weather events were raised by Members.

6. Future activities

- 6.1 The Committee will continue to discuss areas of concern raised by the electorate. Members will also receive regular updates from external agencies, along with reports on KCC's internal responses to severe weather and be briefed on the ongoing measures taken to mitigate flood impacts. Engagement with District and Borough Councils would be further strengthened, as the Committee welcomes the ongoing involvement of these key partners.
- 6.2 The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for 4 March 2026, with planned business including but not limited to:
 - Southern Water – Investment 2025-30 and Kent initiatives
 - Southern Water – Overview of the Installation of Sustainable Drainage (SuDs)
 - Environment Agency – How water quality is managed
 - Affinity Water – Water Resources Management Plan
 - Environment Agency River Basin Management Plans
 - (KCC) Drains Update
 - Role of Internal Drainage Boards updated for 2026 (IDBs)
 - Environment Agency and Met Office Alerts and Warnings

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee will continue to fulfil its overview and scrutiny functions. A concerted effort has been made to enhance the agenda, ensuring that regular reports are presented to the Committee to better inform and educate Members and guests.

- 7.2 The Committee's role will continue to focus on addressing the threat of flooding and severe weather events that impact Kent's communities and infrastructure.

8. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee Annual Report.

9. Background Documents

None

10. Contact Details

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By: Anna Taylor, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny)
To: Scrutiny Committee
Subject: Work Programme

Summary: This report gives details of the proposed work programme for the Scrutiny Committee and gives members some.

1. Introduction

- a) Any Member of the Council is entitled to give notice that they wish an item relevant to the functions of the Committee (which is not an excluded matter) to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting. On receipt of such a request the item will be included for discussion at the next available agenda setting meeting.
- b) The definition of an excluded matter referenced above is:
 - a. Any matter relating to a planning or licensing decision,
 - b. Any matter relating to a person in respect of which that person has a right of recourse to a review of right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment,
 - c. Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included in the agenda or discussion at a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
- c) The Scrutiny Committee has the ability to 'call-in' decisions made by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members. Any two Members from more than one Political Group may give notice within five clear working days from the publication of a decision taken of their wish to call-in the decision.

2. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and note the report.

Contact Details

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Work Programme - Scrutiny Committee November 2025

Items identified for upcoming meetings

Date requested	Item
September 2025	VAT & Business Rates on private school fees

Work Programme

22 January 2026	
Item	Item background
Final Draft Budget and MTFP	
Budget Monitoring	
Home to School Transport (non SEND)	
What does it cost to support a successful sustainable SEND system?	Finance & CYPE

1 April 2026	
Item	Item background
Is the Health Service in Kent supporting a successful sustainable SEND system?	

13 May 2026	
Item	Item background
How are Kent Schools supporting a sustainable SEND system?	

18 June 2026	
Item	Item background
One year on	Leader Report one year on.
Budget Monitoring year end?	
What must KCC do to support a successful sustainable SEND system?	

Provisional Future Items

July 2026 – Scrutiny Committee meeting as Crime and Disorder Committee

November 2026 – Kent Flood Risk Management Committee Annual Report

January 2027 – Final Draft Budget & Budget Monitoring half yearly

June 2027 – Budget Monitoring year end

July 2027 – Scrutiny Committee meeting as Crime and Disorder Committee