

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

Thursday, 11th September, 2025

10.00 am

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

AGENDA

GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

Thursday, 11 September 2025 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

Ask for: **Maya Bundy**
Telephone: **03000 416072**

Membership (13)

Reform UK (9): Mr P Thomas (Chairman), Mr J Defriend (Vice-Chair),
Mr O Bradshaw, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr W Chapman, Mr S Dixon,
Mr R Ford, Mr B Fryer and Mr D Sian

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr M J Sole

Conservative (1): Mr N Williams

Green (1): Mr P Stepto

Labour (1): Ms C Nolan

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

- 1 Introduction/Webcast announcements
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
- 4 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2025 (Pages 1 - 6)
- 5 Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corporate Director
- 6 Performance Dashboard (Pages 7 - 24)
- 7 Kent and Medway Business Fund Monitoring Q4 2024-25 (Pages 25 - 38)
- 8 KMEF- Ambition 3- Secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth (Pages 39 - 46)
- 9 Active Kent and Medway Report (Pages 47 - 52)

- 10 25/00076- Kent and Medway Business Fund- No Use Empty (Pages 53 - 94)
- 11 25/00074- Reallocation of Getting Building Funding (Non Key Decision) (Pages 95 - 108)
- 12 Prevention- Growth and Communities (Pages 109 - 118)
- 13 Protecting the Communities and Economy of Kent (Pages 119 - 126)
- 14 Lower Thames Crossing- Economic Impact (Pages 127 - 132)
- 15 Work Programme 2025/26 (Pages 133 - 136)

EXEMPT ITEMS

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

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Wednesday, 3 September 2025

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 1 July 2025.

PRESENT: Mr O Bradshaw, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr W Chapman, Mr S Dixon, Mr B Fryer, Ms C Nolan, Mr D Sian, Mr M J Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr P Thomas, Mr N Williams and Mr J Defriend

ALSO PRESENT: M J Henderson, Mr P King and Mr P Webb

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities), Ms H Savage (Democratic Services Officer), Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr J Pearson (Head of Libraries Registration and Archives), Mr M Reeves (Project Manager), Mr S Samson (Head of Economy), Mr M Wagner (Chief Analyst) and Miss M Bundy (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chair

(Item 2)

1. Mr Paul Thomas was nominated by the Leader to be the Chair of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.
2. The Committee agreed this nomination and Mr Thomas was declared Chair of the Committee.
3. RESOLVED that Mr Paul Thomas be elected as Chair of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

(Item 3)

1. Mr Sian proposed, and Mr Dixon seconded that Mr James Defriend be elected as Vice- Chair of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.
2. As there were no further nominations, the Chair declared Mr James Defriend as Vice- Chair of the Committee.
3. RESOLVED that Mr James Defriend be elected as Vice- Chair of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.

3. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 4)

Note: Since the agenda was published, there had been an update in Committee Membership that Mr James Defriend had joined the Committee and filled the Reform vacancy.

No apologies or substitutes were received.

4. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item 5)

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2025
(Item 6)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2025 be approved as a correct record.

6. Kent County Council - Introduction to Growth and Communities Division
(Item 7)

1. The item was introduced by Mr Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community & Regulatory Services, and Mr Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration. The report was introduced by Mrs Stephanie Holt- Castle, Director of Growth and Communities, who provided an overview and introduction to the Growth and Communities Division and established the existing scope of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.
2. In response to comments and questions from Members the discussion covered the following:
 - Verbal updates were not an item on the agenda and directorate newsletters had been circulated by officers to Members which included detailed information on services.
 - There was a default rate for the Kent & Medway Business Fund that was very low. A performance report on the Kent & Medway Business Fund was scheduled every six months on the Cabinet Committee work programme.
 - KCC, in partnership with various intelligence experts and agencies were running a successful pilot to tackle Waste Crime in one district within Kent.
3. RESOLVED to note the report.

7. Performance Dashboard
(Item 8)

1. The report was presented by Mr Matthew Wagner, Chief Analyst, which included the performance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity indicators for Quarter 4 of 2024/25. Mr Wagner provided a brief overview of performance whereby 19 of the 24 KPIs were RAG rated green, 5 were amber, and none were red. He also highlighted the 10 new indicators that had been added across the report and the 4 that had been removed.
2. In response to comments and questions from guests and Members the discussion covered the following:
 - The target for EC12, relating to 'visitor economy' encompassed a broad range of businesses that Visit Kent supported. The KPI was narrowly missed, primarily due to contracting delays.
3. RESOLVED to note the performance report for Quarter 4 of 2024/25.

8. 25/00043 - Old Rectory Business Centre Management Contract (Item 9)

1. Mr King and Mr Mark Reeves, Project Manager, introduced the report regarding the next steps for the Old Rectory Business Centre in Northfleet. A previous decision had been taken to dispose of the site as a going concern with a 9-month contract extension put in place that was due to expire in August 2025. The report proposed an extension of the current management contract and procurement of management services to November 2026 whilst the disposal decision continues to be progressed.
2. In response to comments and questions from Members the discussion covered the following:
 - The decision to dispose of the asset as a going concern was endorsed at a previous meeting of the Cabinet Committee and taken by the Cabinet Member, following a wider options appraisal and consideration of KCC's financial circumstances. Due to the complexities of disposing it as a going concern a 15 month extension was now being proposed to take forward the original decision.
 - A motion was explored, as initially proposed by Ms Nolan and seconded by Mr Stepto, to recommend to the Cabinet Member that the tenants are asked if they wished to form a management company themselves and that alternative options to the disposal of the site be explored - following discussions among the Committee and the provision of clarifications from Officers as to the decision details and assurances from the Cabinet Member that the comments would be noted and taken into account as part of the decision-making, the Members were satisfied to proceed without a formal recommendation on this point.
 - Further comments were also noted on the protection of individual tenant's agreements and the potential lower financial return for KCC, if the site proceeds to be sold as a going concern, in line with the existing decision.
 - Members were assured that selling the site as a going concern ensured that the contract would protect the existing tenants and the site's status as a business centre. The benefit of this offsets the one- off capital gained by KCC from a potential outright sale.
 - Ms Nolan proposed, but found no seconder for, a specific recommendation that option 2 (as set out in the reports) be explored further.
3. RESOLVED that the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee made comments and endorsed the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration to:
 - APPROVE the extension of current contractual arrangements for three months from (1 September 2025) to (30 November 2025) and undertake a procurement process to secure management services for a further 12 months with extension clauses to 30 November 2026 to allow time to undertake the disposal and ensure that any new owner has the option of an existing management company in place.
 - CONFIRM the decision to dispose of the Old Rectory Business Centre in Northfleet as a going concern as detailed in decision 24/00083. Page 47 Agenda Item 9
 - DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities, working with the Director for Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration to exercise relevant

contract extensions and oversight of a procurement process and enter into relevant contracts or legal agreements.

- DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth and Communities to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision to extend and reprocur management services; as shown at Appendix A

9. 25/00046 - Get Kent & Medway Working Plan

(Item 10)

1. Mr King and Mr Samson, Head of Economy, introduced the report and gave an overview of the Government- funded joint plan that was under development with Medway Council, the Integrated Care Board and Jobcentre Plus. An overview was provided of the challenges and opportunities related to health conditions, economic inactivity and skills. The report also highlighted the data-driven approach to address the needs of those with long- term health conditions, caring responsibilities and young people classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
2. In response to comments and questions from guests and Members the discussion covered the following:
 - Mr Samson detailed the strategy to support employers into engaging with schools as a work in progress and acknowledged the higher proportion of home- educated students in Kent than in other local authority areas, who may be possibly missing out on careers education.
 - Connect to Work had recently been launched to support 9,000 people across Kent and Medway into work through supported employment.
 - As part of the plan to address barriers to employment, a cohesive approach that integrated work experience throughout the school process to increase student and employer interaction was being developed nationally.
 - Factors to explain variation in employment statistics between districts were identified e.g. student population, elderly residents etc.
 - Success indicators for this plan would include a reduction in economically inactive residents and an increase in secure employment and training opportunities.
 - It was acknowledged that coastal and certain rural areas were disproportionately affected by low employment rates due in part to poor transport links.
 - The Plan was commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions and resource was required to deliver it. The Connect to Work programme and the Skills Bootcamp programme would contribute to meeting some of the objectives set out in the plan.
3. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration to:
 - APPROVE and ADOPT the Get Kent and Medway Working Plan on behalf of Kent County Council. Other partner organisations (Medway Council, the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board and Jobcentre Plus) will also be taking the Plan through their own approval processes.
 - DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth & Communities in consultation with the Director for Public Health; Corporate Director for Children, Young People & Education; Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal

Regeneration; Page 69 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health; and Cabinet Member for Education & Skills to sign off the final plan.

- DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth & Communities in consultation with the Director for Public Health; Corporate Director for Children, Young People & Education; the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration; Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health; and Cabinet Member for Education & Skills to refresh and/or make revisions to the Plan as appropriate during the lifetime of the plan.
- DELEGATE authority to the Director Growth & Communities in consultation with the Director for Public Health, and Corporate Director for Children, Young People & Education to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A

10. 25/00005 - Integrated Work and Health Strategy for Kent and Medway

(Item 11)

1. Mr King introduced the report and provided an update on the development of the Integrated Health and Work Strategy for Kent and Medway which aimed to address issues linked to economic inactivity related to long- term health conditions.
2. Mr Samson explained that a similar paper would be considered by the Adult Social Care & Public Health Cabinet Committee as well as organisations such as Medway Council and the Integrated Care Partnership. He established key elements of the implementation plan, including building employer confidence, skills and training priority, anchor institutions and keeping workforces healthy.
3. In response to comments and questions from guests and Members the discussion covered the following:
 - Members praised the report and comments were acknowledged on the benefits of flexible working arrangements.
 - In the report, the term 'job carving' referred to the match between the skillset of an individual and the needs of an employer when it comes to shaping job roles.
4. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration to:
 - APPROVE and ADOPT the Kent and Medway Integrated Work and Health Strategy on behalf of Kent County Council. Other partner organisations (Medway Council, the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board) will also be taking the Plan through their own approval processes.
 - DELEGATE authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Director of Growth and Communities, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health and Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration, to sign off the final plan, refresh and/or make revisions to the Plan as appropriate during the lifetime of the plan.
 - DELEGATE authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Director of Growth & Communities, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

11. Work Programme 2025/26

(Item 12)

1. It was acknowledged that a Programme for Member visits to Kent districts would be discussed at agenda setting meetings.
2. RESOLVED to note the Work Programme.

From: Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration

Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 11 September 2025

Subject: Performance Dashboard

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance Dashboard shows the performance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity indicators for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

23 of the 30 KPIs reported this Quarter achieved target and are RAG rated Green. Five KPIs were below target but did achieve floor standard and are RAG rated Amber. No KPIs were below floor standard. Two new KPIs for 2025/26 are not reported within the dashboard as these programmes only commenced in Quarter 2.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance report for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Part of the role of Cabinet Committees is to review the performance of those functions of the Council that fall within its remit. To support this role, Performance Dashboards are regularly reported to each Cabinet Committee throughout the year, and this is the first report for the 2025/26 financial year.

2. Performance Dashboard

- 2.1. The current Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance dashboard provides results up to the end of June 2025 and is attached in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. The Dashboard provides a progress report on performance for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2025/26 which were presented to Committee in July 2025. The Dashboard also includes a range of activity indicators which help give context to the KPIs.
- 2.3. KPIs are presented with RAG (Red/Amber/Green) alerts to show performance in the Quarter. Details of how the alerts are generated are outlined in the Guidance Notes, included with the Dashboard in Appendix 1.

3. Growth & Communities - Economy

- 3.1. The number of properties brought back to use through No Use Empty (NUE) over the 12 months to September 2024 was 391, which is slightly below the target of 400. The target for the number of businesses assisted via the Kent and Medway Growth Hub was exceeded for both those provided with light/medium support and those receiving intensive support. The three new Visitor economy KPIs are all on or exceeding their targets. Two new KPIs, one concerning loan funding to local SMEs and the other regarding entrepreneurship mentoring are both above target. The final two economy indicators did not commence until Quarter 2.

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

- 4.1 Visits to libraries continued to climb steadily during Quarter 1, with a 1% increase in visitors compared to Quarter 1, 2024/25. This growth in footfall is particularly reflected in attendance at LRA's events and activities, which have seen an increase of 9% in attendees in comparison with the same quarter last year. There were over 53,700 attendees to over 4,670 events, which included a range of Easter activities for children and families during the school holidays. This quarter also saw us mark the 80th anniversary of VE day on 8th May with activities and displays across the county, including more than 800 people visiting Hythe Library.
- 4.2 Physical book issues fell by 1% in comparison with Quarter 1, 2024/25. This decrease was a result of a sharp drop in April, with issues increasing in May and June compared to the same months in 2024.
- 4.3 A problem with the eBook platform, Libby, following the server migration earlier in the year meant that customers were unable to sign in without verifying their PINs. This had an adverse impact on eBook issues which fell for the first time, by 2%. The situation has been resolved and we would expect to see eBook issues increasing again in the next quarter. eAudiobook issues continue to grow and have increased by 10% in comparison with Quarter 1 last year.
- 4.4 The library survey was carried out during April and May 2025, and received 8,613 responses from library users. A positive highlight is that customer satisfaction with Kent Libraries was 95%, which is 1 percentage point above target.
- 4.5 The team at Kent Archives experienced a busy start to the year with an increase of 27% in visits compared to Quarter 1, 2024/25. The increased physical usage is balanced to some extent by a drop in remote enquiries of 11%. The team continue to promote the archive collection to encourage more visitors. The lunchtime talks continue to increase in popularity, with the result that Andrew Mayfield's talk on the community archaeology dig at Mote Park Old House had to be relocated to Sessions House in order to accommodate the number of attendees.
- 4.6 Ceremonies teams were kept busy during Quarter 1 with an increase of 3% in marriage and civil partnership ceremonies in comparison with the same period last year. However, the number of citizens welcomed to the UK fell by 8%, with 1,083 new citizens attending a ceremony during Quarter 1.

- 4.7 4,263 death registration appointments were completed, representing an increase of 8% on Quarter 1 last year, equivalent to 301 additional appointments. Birth registrations continue to remain steady, decreasing by 2% on Quarter 1 2024/25. Customer satisfaction with Registration was 96% for Quarter 1, meeting the target that was set for the service.
- 4.8 Looking ahead to Quarter 2, the Summer Reading Challenge, Story Garden, was launched on 5 July 2025 and, at the time of writing this report, has seen increased participation in comparison with the same stage of the Challenge last year.

5. Growth & Communities – Community Protection

- 5.1 The KPIs in this section performed strongly with six out of eight KPIs exceeding their targets in Quarter 1. The KPI on percentage of priority 1 food, feed and consumer products sample tests reported to clients within 5 working days, was slightly under target; due to some products needing to be sent to a partner laboratory for more precise testing which can take longer than the target of 5 working days. The number of residents attending safeguarding from financial abuse presentation meetings, was also under target, but this was due to a focus during the quarter on doorstep crime where team resources are put towards this rather than holding and promoting financial abuse meetings.

6 Growth & Communities – Innovation & Business Intelligence

- 6.1 Both KPIs met target for Quarter 1, although for the percentage of the most vulnerable victims of scams recorded on the National Scams Hub supported by Community Protection (CP01), it remains challenging to identify victims so numbers are low but, when identified, they are supported.

7 Growth & Communities – Planning Applications

- 7.1 Both KPIs under this section continued to meet target.

8 Growth & Communities – Strategic Development and Place

- 8.1 The percentage of developer contributions secured against total contributions sought (section 106) met target this quarter with 100% achievement.
- 8.2 The two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) KPIs were below target, the first was the percentage of PRoW faults reported online, which has maintained a performance in the high 80s for some time, against a challenging target of 92%. For the other, the median number of days to resolve priority faults on public rights of way network, this had been meeting target for some time, but can increase in the summer when there are additional reports made, and occasional delays in updating some faults on the system has been identified and action is being taken to address this.

9. Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance report for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

Contact details:

Report Author: Matthew Wagner
Chief Analyst
Chief Executive's Department
03000 416559
Matthew.Wagner@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle
Director for Growth and Communities
03000 412064
stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk

Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance Dashboard

Financial Year 2025/26

Results up to end of June 2025

Produced by Kent Analytics

Guidance Notes

RAG RATINGS

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

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

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

Activity Indicators

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

Key Performance Indicators Summary

Economy	RAG
EC05: Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty	AMBER
EC10: Businesses assisted via Kent and Medway Growth Hub contract	GREEN
EC11: Businesses assisted through intensive support provided via the Growth Hub contract	GREEN
EC12: Number of visitor economy businesses supported*	GREEN
EC13: Number of inward investment projects secured*	GREEN
EC14: Number of jobs created or safeguarded*	GREEN
EC15: Amount of loan funding awarded to local SMEs by the Kent & Medway Business Fund	GREEN
EC16: Number of people supported to access employment by the Connect to Work programme	**
EC17: Number of people supported with upskilling through a Skills Bootcamp programme	**
EC18: Number of new people receiving entrepreneurship mentoring support from Kent Foundation	GREEN

* Through the visitor economy and inward investment contract

** Reporting to commence in Quarter 2 now contracts in place

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

Appendix 1

Community Protection	RAG
CST02: % of Lessons Learnt Domestic Homicide Review attendees rating the event as good or better	GREEN
CST03: Percentage of service users who report feeling safer due to warden support	GREEN
COR02: Coroners' inquests held within 12 months of the date on which the coroner is notified of the death	GREEN
KSS02: Percentage of priority 1 food, feed and consumer products sample tests reported to clients within 5 working days	AMBER
KSS03: Percentage of independent proficiency tests rated as "good" or "satisfactory"	GREEN
TS05: Number of residents attending safeguarding from financial abuse presentation meetings	AMBER
TS06: Completed visits carried out by Trading Standards to higher-risk premises	GREEN
TS07: Number of engagements with businesses and partners aimed at preventing age restricted sales and reducing youth harm	GREEN

Innovation & Business Intelligence	RAG
CP01: Percentage of the most vulnerable victims of scams recorded on the National Scams Hub supported by Public Protection	GREEN
CP02: Percentage of trader applications to the 'Trading Standards Checked' scheme processed within 10 working days	GREEN

Planning Applications	RAG
PAG01: Percentage of planning applications determined to meet DLUHC performance standards	GREEN
PAG02: Percentage of statutory planning consultee responses submitted to the local planning authority within 21 days (Minerals & Waste)	GREEN

Strategic Development and Place	RAG
DC08: Developer contributions secured against total contributions sought (section 106)	GREEN
PROW14: Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online	AMBER
PROW16: Median number of days to resolve priority faults on public rights of way network (rolling 12-months)	AMBER

Appendix 1

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities - Economy	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Paul King

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	RAG	Target	Floor
EC05	Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty (rolling 12 months)	567	493	422	449	391	AMBER	400	360
EC10	Businesses assisted via Kent and Medway Growth Hub contract (Year to Date)	251	419	574	797	209	GREEN	177	150
EC11	Businesses assisted through intensive support provided via the Growth Hub contract (Year to Date)	11	32	42	79	22	GREEN	9	8
EC12	Number of visitor economy businesses supported* (Cumulative from start of project 1.11.24)	**			390	468	GREEN	300	250
EC13	Number of inward investment projects secured* (Cumulative from start of project 1.11.24)				18	24	GREEN	17	13
EC14	Number of jobs created or safeguarded* (Cumulative from start of project 1.11.24)				379	840	GREEN	676	540

* Through visitor economy and inward investment contract

** It was not possible to report on these indicators until Quarter 4, 2024/25 due to delays in agreeing funding.

EC05 – Although this dipped below target in Quarter 1, there remains a strong pipeline of projects due for completion in 2025/26.

EC13 & 14 – Following extensions to contracts, these two targets are now updated from what was presented to Committee in July. The revisions to the year-end (March 2026) targets are as follows: EC13: Target (43), Floor (34); EC14: Target (1,333), Floor (1,066).

Appendix 1

Division		Director				Cabinet Member			
Growth & Communities - Economy		Stephanie Holt-Castle				Paul King			
Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	RAG	Target	Floor
EC15	Amount of loan funding awarded to local SMEs by the Kent & Medway Business Fund	New indicators in 2025/26				£1.97m	GREEN	£0.75m	£0.5m
EC16	Number of people supported to access employment by the Connect to Work programme					See note below			
EC17	Number of people supported with upskilling through a Skills Bootcamp programme								
EC18	Number of new people receiving entrepreneurship mentoring support from Kent Foundation					12	GREEN	9	7

EC16 - The Connect to Work programme went live in Quarter 2, so reporting will commence from this quarter onwards

EC17 - Contracts still needed to be put in place with providers during Quarter 1, but this is now complete.

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

Quarterly KPIs

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	RAG	Target	Floor
LRA06	Customer satisfaction with Registration Services	97%	96%	96%	96%	96%	GREEN	96%	91%
LRA15	Total number of customers attending events in Libraries and Archives	49,447	54,564	48,772	60,907	53,752	GREEN	50,100	45,100
LRA17	Number of volunteer hours adding extra value to the LRA service	7,777	7,645	8,099	7,992	7,989	GREEN	7,900	7,100

Jun-25 (Q4): LRA06 – 609 customers were surveyed, 584 were satisfied.

Annual KPIs

Ref	Performance Indicators	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	RAG	Target 2024/25	Floor 2024/25
LRA12	Customer satisfaction with libraries	83%	94%	94%	95%	95%	GREEN	94%	90%
LRA13	Customer satisfaction with archives	No Survey	97%	98%	100%	98%	GREEN	96%	91%

2024/25: LRA12 – 8,613 surveyed, 8,183 satisfied; LRA13 – 117 surveyed, 115 satisfied.

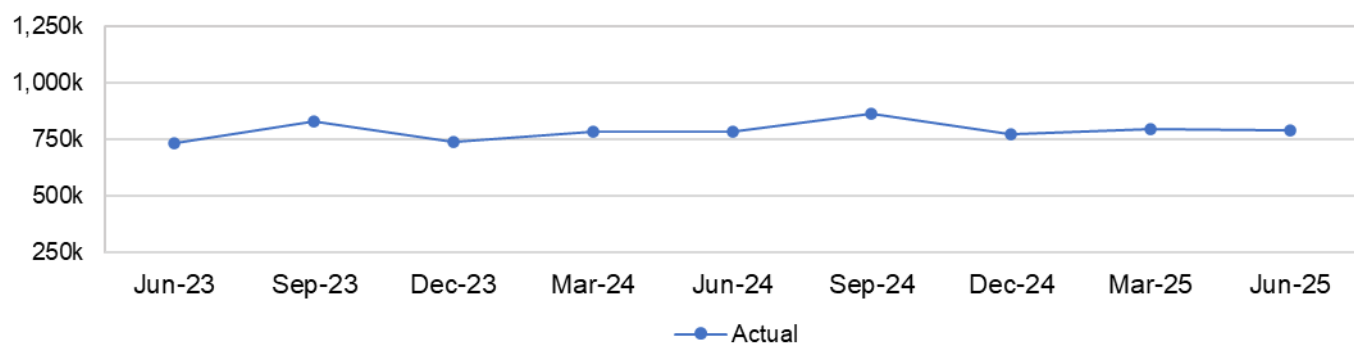
Activity indicators (Quarterly)

Ref	Activity Indicators (Quarterly totals)	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Value vs Expected	<u>Expected Activity</u>	
								Upper	Lower
LRA01	Number of visits to libraries (including mobiles) (000s)	781	862	772	797	787	In line	789	750
LRA02b	Physical, e-book and e-audio (000s)	983	1,144	998	1,009	983	In line	1,004	954
LRA04	Number of wedding, civil partnership and citizenship ceremonies carried out by KCC Officers	2,199	2,983	1,469	915	2,165	In line	2,200	2,100
LRA25	Number of archive enquiries answered	New Indicator				2,207	Above	2,100	2,000

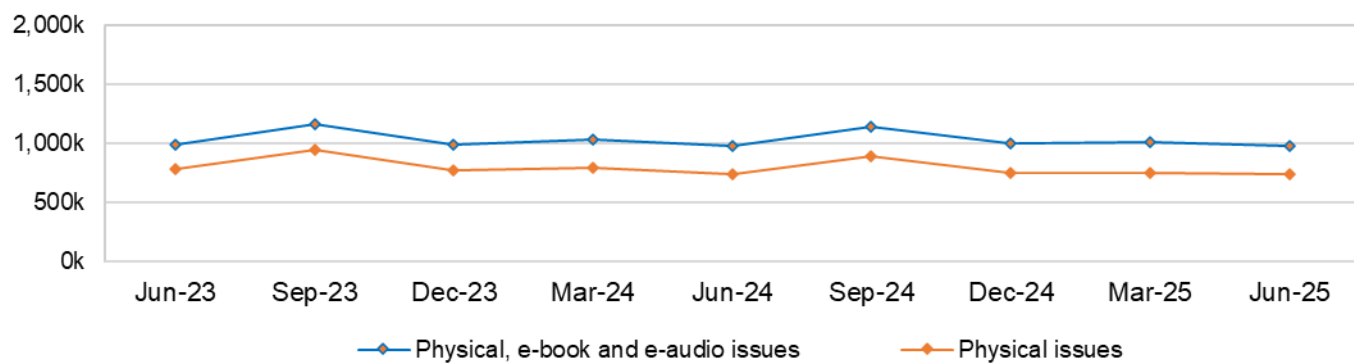
LRA25 - Visits to the Archive Search Room continue to rise, with an increase of 27% compared to the same quarter last year. Outreach work by the team in the form of attendances to heritage days and the free lunchtime talks to promote the collection is having a positive effect.

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

Total number of physical visits to Kent libraries



Total number of book issues from Kent libraries



Appendix 1

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Community Protection	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Paul Webb

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
CST02	Percentage of Lessons Learnt Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Seminar attendees rating the event as Good or better.	100%	*	100%	100%	98%	98%	GREEN	90%	81%
CST03	Percentage of service users who report feeling safer due to warden support**	85%	87%	84%	95%	74%	74%	GREEN	70%	65%
COR02	Coroners' inquests held within 12 months of the date on which the coroner is notified of the death	New indicator in 2025/26				95%	95%	GREEN	75%	65%

* No seminars were held.

** Figures exclude those surveyed who indicated the warden support was not applicable to safety; this has revised figures previously reported (Jun-24 to Mar-25).

Jun-25: CST02 – 144 reviews, 140 rated the event as good or better. CST03 – 43 surveys were returned, 32 responses indicated the service user felt safer. COR02 – 267 inquests held, 253 held within 12 months of notification of death.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Community Protection	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Paul Webb

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
KSS02	Percentage of priority 1 food, feed and consumer products sample tests reported to clients within 5 working days	93%	95%	96%	96%	91%	91%	AMBER	93%	88%
KSS03	Percentage of external independent proficiency tests rated as “good” or “satisfactory” with a statistical Z score of 2 or less.	90%	82%	74%	79%	89%*	89%	GREEN	75%	67%
TS05	Number of residents attending safeguarding from financial abuse presentation meetings	New indicators in 2025/26				337	337	AMBER	375	330
TS06	Completed visits carried out by Trading Standards to higher-risk premises					104	104	GREEN	45	30
TS07	Number of engagements with businesses and partners aimed at preventing age restricted sales and reducing youth harm					299	299	GREEN	120	105

* Based on April and May data only.

Jun-25: KSS02 – 539 samples tested, 490 reported within 5 working days; KSS03 (Apr to May 25 – 45 tests rated, 40 rated as good or satisfactory;

KSS02 – In some cases, products need to be sent to a partner laboratory for more precise testing which can take longer than the target of 5 working days. There has been an increase in these cases recently.

TS05 – This KPI was under target primarily due to holding a doorstep crime week during this quarter; this is where a team of Trading Standards officers engage with residents, banks and the community. In preparation for and during this week, team resources are put towards this rather than holding and promoting financial abuse meetings. If we were to add in our Doorstep Crime awareness week our number of engagements with the public would stand at over 2,660.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Innovation & Business Intelligence	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Paul Webb

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
CP01	Percentage of the most vulnerable victims of scams recorded on the National Scams Hub supported by Community Protection	100%	100%	*	*	100%	100%	GREEN	90%	80%
CP02	Percentage of trader applications to Community Protection’s ‘Trading Standards Checked’ scheme processed within 10 working days (<i>excluding those requiring enhanced checks by external organisations</i>).	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	100%	90%

* No additional victims recorded

Jun-25 (Q1): CP01 – 2 people supported. CP02 – 36 trader applications processed, 36 were within 10 working days

CP01 - The drop observed since Quarter 2 in 2024 has been influenced by the ever-changing nature of scams, and the tactics used by criminals, pose a constant challenge. Scammers persistently adapt to avoid detection, making it difficult for the National Scams Team to consistently gather intelligence, which can lead to fewer victims being identified.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Planning Applications	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Paul Webb

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q4)	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
PAG01	Percentage of planning applications determined to meet DLUHC performance standards	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	100%	90%
PAG02	Percentage of statutory planning consultee responses submitted to the local planning authority within 21 days (Minerals & Waste)	100%	89%	84%	84%	92%	92%	GREEN	90%	80%

Jun-25: PAG01 – 38 planning applications, all of which met Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government performance standard;
PAG02 – 86 responses, 79 of which were within 21 days.

Division	Director	Cabinet Member
Growth & Communities – Strategic Development & Place	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Paul Webb

Ref	Performance Indicators	Jun-24 (Q1)	Sep-24 (Q2)	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q4)	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
DC08	Developer contributions secured against total contributions sought (section 106)	99.6%	93.2%	80.9%	95.3%	100%	100%	GREEN	98%	85%
PROW14	Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online	87%	87%	88%	88%	87%	87%	AMBER	92%	86%
PROW16	Median number of days to resolve priority faults on public rights of way network (rolling 12-month figure)	9	8	8	8	14	*	AMBER	10	15

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

Jun-25: DC08 - £3.8m secured; PROW14 – 1,913 faults reported, 1,669 were online; PROW16 – 58 priority faults resolved.

PROW14 – The target remains a deliberately challenging one which has increased over time as performance has improved. However, there remains a number of people who prefer to use other means to contact the council regarding public rights of way issues, rather than go online.

PROW16 - The Indicator has moved into Amber. This reflects the general increase in reporting levels through the summer months, many of which relate to vegetation growth. In addition, we have identified occasional delays in the administration of updating the corrective work on some faults on the system, meaning the actual position may not be as bad as appears from the data. This issue is being worked on, and we expect an improvement in Quarter 2.

From: **Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration**

Simon Jones - Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee

Subject: **Kent and Medway Business Fund Bi-Annual Monitoring – Q4 2024-25**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

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

Since 2012, the number of new and protected jobs recorded up to the end of Q4 2024/25 is 5,252.72 (increase of 94.72 since the last report), consisting of 3,849.42 new jobs (increase of 90.42 since last report) and 1,403.30 protected jobs (increase of 4.30 since last report). The average cost per job is £1,032.20 (see Paragraph 5).

The total cumulative loan repayments to the end of Q4 2024/25 of the value of £41,266,851 (increase of £402,635 since last report) have been received. These repayments are being recycled through the Kent and Medway Business Fund to enable KCC to continue to offer financial support for new investment.

Out of the 110 loans being reported, 69.0 % are rated as Green or Amber (increase of 2% since the last report), 31.0% of loans are rated Red (a decrease of 2% since the last report) (see Paragraph 3.1).

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

1. Background Information

- 1.1 Since January 2017, KCC has used the recycled KMBF and RGF loan repayments to enable the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) to provide loans and equity investments ranging between £50,000-£600,000 to eligible businesses across Kent and Medway (origins of the scheme Annex One). The majority of funding recipients received 0% interest loans, with a repayment period of up to five years. The recycled RGF loan repayments are also used to finance the Kent Life Sciences Fund (KLSF), a sub-programme of the KMBF scheme. This provides equity investments

predominantly in the life science sector. A summary of the equity investments can be found in Section 4 of this report.

- 1.2 All applications to the KMBF scheme undergo due diligence inquiries from an independent financial appraiser and KCC Finance colleagues before being examined by the Investment Advisory Board (IAB) and its Sub-Group. There are three KCC Councillors who currently sit on the Boards who also chair the main IAB and Sub-Groups. Most of the members of this Board come from the private sector, including Finance and Banking, Manufacturing, and the Scientific and Creative Industries. Once an application has been reviewed by the Board, it makes a recommendation to KCC to Approve or Reject the project and what conditions should be set if funding is approved. KCC officers review the Recommendation, and approval is made by either the Director of Growth and Communities or the Head of Economy, in line with the Officer Scheme of Delegation.
- 1.3 The scheme uses Bevan Brittan LLP, Antony Collins Solicitors LLP, and Freeths Ltd to provide advice on contracts and on insolvency issues and to work with the KCC Business Investment Team to recover the maximum amount of loan value. KCC Internal Audit oversees the investment procedures and processes and advise on other matters related to the use of the funds. A KCC Internal Audit report in 2022 identified one High Risk, three Medium Risks and two Low Risks related to the Kent and Medway Business Fund. This report was extensively discussed at the Governance and Audit Committee in October 2022. Following on from this meeting a plan of action was agreed with the support of the Corporate Director Finance and KCC Finance colleagues.
- 1.4 In order to reduce the risk of default, KCC requires applicants to provide some form of security, whether through assets, property, or personal guarantees for all loans over £100,000. For loans between £26,000 and £99,999, security is not taken as standard but may still be requested commensurate with the risk assessment of the application.
- 1.5 Where businesses find it difficult to repay the loans, KCC can offer to restructure their debt to support further business growth and resume repayments. In cases of non-engagement, KCC pursues loan recovery through Security or Personal Guarantees, where applicable (see Paragraph 2.1).
- 1.6 Working with an independent financial appraiser and KCC Finance colleagues, KCC has established a Debt Recovery Working Group, a sub-group of the IAB, chaired by the Cabinet Member, to advise on technical issues related to the recovery of existing investments (see Paragraph 2.1).
- 1.7 The previous contracts with the Government ended on the 31 March 2023. After a successful negotiation with Government to retain the funds, details of the proposed new arrangements for the recycled KMBF/RGF investments were presented and discussed at the September 2023 meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee and a new Key Decision was subsequently agreed by the Cabinet Member (23/00088).

2. Update on Government Funded KCC Business Investment Schemes

2.1 Within the KMBF scheme there are no district allocations and all applications as assessed against the scheme's eligibility criteria and commercial viability. The table below shows the total funding committed in loan and equity investments, broken down by local authority area, the number of jobs created/protected and private sector investment (leverage) cumulatively as of the 31 March 2025.

Local Authority	Funding per Local Authority £	Private Investment £	No. of Businesses	No. of Jobs Created	No. of Jobs Protected	Total Jobs
Ashford	£2,042,500	£1,904,707	25	55.11	29.38	84.49
Canterbury	£10,782,680	£12,296,220	69	1466.11	88.24	1554.35
Dartford	£2,430,115	£2,238,578	16	137.84	50.19	188.03
Dover	£15,511,183	£15,019,772	56	441.21	161.29	602.50
Folkestone & Hythe	£6,912,468	£10,433,471	34	233.61	124.72	358.33
Gravesham	£881,062	£843,375	5	54.50	60.00	114.50
Maidstone	£5,116,473	£5,094,603	29	140.80	83.67	224.47
Medway	£5,573,591	£4,528,299	36	244.04	149.97	394.01
Rother	£136,250	£136,250	3	33.87	3.00	36.87
Sevenoaks	£1,053,000	£980,222	11	54.35	19.27	73.62
Swale	£7,784,202	£19,165,108	28	284.77	281.97	566.74
Thanet	£8,951,256	£11,667,224.29	66	419.85	285.91	705.76
Thurrock	£881,700	£1,421,356	4	72.00	12.53	84.53
Tonbridge & Malling	£1,583,509.50	£1,632,798	15	55.73	26.20	81.93
Tunbridge Wells	£2,350,721	£2,371,632	20	150.40	22.96	173.36
Wealden	£200,000	£200,000	1	5.23	4.00	9.23
Total	£72,190,711	£89,933,614	418	3849.42	1403.30	5252.72

2.2 All businesses are still required to complete a monitoring return as part of their loan agreements with the County Council, and these must include employment contracts and copies of payroll as evidence for jobs created and protected. The cumulative total of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs that have been created or protected is 5,252.70 FTE as of 31 March 2025. In its positive decision on the future use of the recycled KMBF/RGF investments (see Paragraph 1.7) the Government confirmed that KCC has exceeded agreed jobs targets laid down in its contracts.

2.3 The cumulative amount of repayments expected to the end of Q4 2024/25 was £48,060,884.89, excluding those already written off as bad debt this is then reduced to £41,266,851.39. The actual amount receipted by the end of Q4 2024/25 was £41,154,784.86, which represents an achievement of 85.6%.

3. Loan Monitoring

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

- Green Risk Status: full return received and no outstanding issues;

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

3.2 Out of the 110 being reported on during the monitoring period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025, 76 (69.0%) of returns were flagged as Green or Amber. The value of those loans was £14,486,276. Of the total number monitored during the period, 11 businesses (loan value £852,000) identified were in the Red Category B (Nil or incomplete monitoring return) and 23 businesses (loan value £4,561,020) were identified as Red Category C (Non-achievement of key milestones/targets).

3.3 98 businesses (no change since last report) have had loans which are in Category A (Bad Debt) with a value of £14,886,422 (no change since last report) of which £4,377,883 (no change since last report) has so far been recovered. The total of funds not yet recovered is therefore £10,508,539 (no change since last report) which equates to 14.5% of the total loan and equity investments made to date. This includes businesses which KCC is still actively pursuing to repay the debt and where further debt recovery is still possible (£5,233,946). The total value of KMBF/RGF loans where debt recovery is no longer possible is £5,521,886, such a determination is reached in line with KCC Financial Regulations. Any bad debts incurred during the normal course of business investment (loans and equity) are attributed as a loss to the Fund rather than to the County Council. The County Council's liability is limited to instances of KCC's misadministration of the Fund.

4. Equity Investments

4.1 Between 2013 and 2016 KCC made equity investments via the KCC RGF Bespoke Equity Fund (KRBEF) and the Discovery Park Technology Investment Fund (DPTIF) in 19 businesses at a cumulative initial value of £9,387,417 at the time the respective equity investments were made. KCC has fully exited from one business and partially exited from another business.

4.2 In January 2017 the Kent Life Sciences Fund (KLSF) was established with the aim of making equity investments in companies with game-changing medical technologies and advanced therapeutics. This sector was targeted because of its high growth potential and the opportunities it offered to build upon the facilities offered by Discovery Park, Kent Science Park and the Kent based universities. KCC has committed equity investments to nine businesses at a cumulative initial value of £4,999,730. KLSF is funded from recycled KMBF/RGF loan repayments.

4.3 In making these equity investments, KCC determined its role as a "patient investor" and it is anticipated the Council will not accrue a positive return from most of the businesses for a further three to five years. Maven Cognition (formerly Newable) and NCL Technology Ventures (NCL) have been appointed by KCC to manage, monitor, and oversee these investments. Both contractors work with the businesses in receipt of our equity investments to design an appropriate exit strategy for each investment. Quarterly reports on the performance of all the equity investments are provided to the KMBF Investment Advisory Board (chaired by a KCC Member) and an annual report is provided to KCC Finance for audit purposes as part of the reporting on companies in which KCC has an interest.

- 4.4 Two companies were jointly funded by DPTIF/KLSF. KCC has fully exited from one company, and it is no longer monitored, and nine companies are categorised as Category A (Bad Debt) (see Paragraph 4.5).
- 4.5 Maven and NCL have designated eight of KCC's equity investments as having Green Risk Status, four as Amber Risk Status and four as Red Risk Status (total initial value £2,952,500). Nine of KCC's equity investments (total initial value £4,475,210) are designated as Category A (Bad Debt) as of 31 March 2025. Again, such determination is reached in line with KCC Financial Regulations, and represents a loss to the Fund rather than the County Council
- 4.6 To mitigate the potential impact of the current economic conditions on companies in receipt of equity funding, KCC has been working with Maven and NCL to ensure that the innovative companies in which KCC invested have received specialist support and assistance.

5. Cost per Job

- 5.1 In terms of the unrecovered funds, the cost per job is £1,051.24. This is calculation based on dividing Total Unrecovered Debt by Total Jobs.
- 5.2 In terms of the total loan and equity awarded by the KMBF/RGF schemes the average "cost" per job is £12,958.43 in comparison with the national average for Regional Growth Fund Schemes of £37,400 per job (over the first four RGF rounds according to the 2014 National Audit Office report on the Regional Growth Fund).

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The capital costs of loan and equity investments are sourced from current and future recycled loan and equity investments from the KMBF/RGF schemes.
- 6.2 The annual cost to KCC of administering the KMBF scheme (inc. staff, legal, appraisal and monitoring costs) is £670,000 per annum, in addition KCC have made significant changes in recent months to reduce operating cost The revenue costs of this activity have been funded from two sources: a) a management charge of up to 10% levied from the fund on the value of all investments made to companies; and b) an administrative charge of 10% levied from the companies on the value of all loans since November 2023. This makes the scheme self-funding, meaning that the combined administration and management charges cover the direct costs of the scheme

7. Legal

- 7.1 KCC had two contracts with Government's Department for Business & Trade, both ended on the 31 March 2023. A recent decision by the Government's Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government mandated that all the recycled KMBF/RGF funds are to be managed by KCC as either a loan or equity scheme for a 10-year period, until 2032.
- 7.2 KCC also has legal agreements with the company undertaking independent financial appraisals, two legal companies (see Paragraph 1.6) and the two companies managing the equity portfolio (see Paragraph 4.3).

8. Policy Framework

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

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

9. Equalities implications

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

9.2 The EqIA is kept under review.

10. Data protection

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

11. Recommendation

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

12. Appendices

- **Annex One – Origins of the Scheme**
- **Equalities impact assessment**

13. Contact details

Report Author:

Martyn Riley
Project Manager
Tel: 03000 417161
martyn.riley@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Stephanie Holt-Castle
Director for Growth and Communities
Tel: 03000 412064
stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk

Annex One – Origins of the Scheme

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

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

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

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

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

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

The Kent and Medway Business Fund -2023

Responsible Officer

Susan Berdo - GT GC

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

Service Redesign

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Economy

Responsible Head of Service

Steve Samson - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

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

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

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

Section B – Evidence

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

Yes

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

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

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

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

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

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From: Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration

Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee

Subject: Implementation of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework Ambition 3

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: All KCC electoral divisions

Summary: This report provides an overview of the progress in implementing the Kent and Medway Economic Framework Ambition 3. It sets out the high-level key actions that have taken place to date and the future activity planned to support sustainable growth of Kent & Medway's economy, through to 2030. This one of a regular series deep dives into the framework's five ambitions.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 In April 2024, the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership¹ (KMEP) approved the publication of the *Kent and Medway Economic Framework (KMEF)*². This a medium-term strategy that looks to guide actions that support the growth and prosperity of the region (functional economic area) through to 2030.
- 1.2 The Framework focuses on three overarching objectives (Productivity, Sustainability and Inclusivity) which sit above five ambitions for delivery, these being:
 - Enable innovative, productive and creative businesses
 - Widen opportunities and unlock talent
 - Secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth
 - Place economic opportunity at the centre of community wellbeing and prosperity

¹ KMEP is the local growth board for this area, and its membership includes Kent County Council, Medway Council, all district councils' leaders, businesses, universities and colleges. Its website is www.kmep.org.uk

² KMEF can be read at: [Kent & Medway Economic Framework](#)

- Create diverse, distinctive and vibrant places.

2. Implementation

- 2.1 Since publication, the KCC Economy Team (which acts as the KMEP Secretariat) has been working to implement the KMEF ambitions in partnership with the KMEP Board Members, the Business Advisory Board (BAB), and partners.
- 2.2 For each of the five ambitions, a private sector board member and a local authority officer have been appointed to act as a Thematic Lead for the ambition, helping to oversee the implementation of the KMEF and direct the team's activities. These thematic leads are as follows:

Ambition	Private sector lead	Local Authority lead
Enable innovative, productive and creative businesses	Tudor Price – CEO, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	Steve Samson – KCC Head of Economy
Widen opportunities and unlock talent	Simon Cook - Mid-Kent College Principal	Dan Ratcliff, Medway Council's Head of Skills, Employment and Adult Education
Secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth	Vince Lucas - Director, VA Rail	Tom Marchant, KCC Head of Strategic Development & Place
Place economic opportunity at the centre of community renewal and prosperity	Nick Fenton, Locate in Kent & Kent Developers' Group	Andrew Osborne, Ashford BC's Head of Economic Development
Create diverse, distinctive and vibrant places	Miranda Chapman - MD, Pillory Barn	Adam Bryan, Medway Council's Director of Place

- 2.3 The information below outlines the focus of the work to date against the ambition 3 of the KMEF.

3. Ambition 3: Secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth

- 3.1 The third ambition of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework focuses on securing the infrastructure that Kent and Medway needs to support long-term sustainable growth. This will include action at national as well as local level, recognising the county's stock of nationally-important infrastructure assets.
- 3.2 There are four action areas that fit within this ambition. These are:

- Maximising the benefit of international connectivity
- Understanding our infrastructure needs and developing new solutions
- Ensuring that Kent and Medway's digital infrastructure meets the dynamic evolution of business need and technology development
- Supporting Kent and Medway's energy potential

3.3 Work since January 2025 by the KMEP Board Members and the KMEP Secretariat has focussed primarily on:

- Bringing Back Eurostar Services to Ashford and Ebbsfleet International railway stations
- Lobbying for the Lower Thames Crossing project to proceed.
- Working with the Port of Dover on their Short Straits Cluster, and gaining Government attention to their Green Shipping Project.
- Creating an investible infrastructure pipeline to feed into central government.

Bringing Back Eurostar Services to Ashford and Ebbsfleet International railway stations

3.4 Kent and Medway have benefited from international rail services for 24 years from 1996 through to 2020; these were paused by Eurostar during the pandemic, but are woven into the local economy with businesses having located to the area and built European customers and connections following decades of use. A key priority for KMEP is to see these services return.

3.5 KMEP partners have sought the resumption of Eurostar services to Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International, as a partner within the Bring Back Eurostar Group. KMEP held meetings with both Eurostar's General Secretary and Chief Strategic Partnerships Officer, and with senior Department for Transport civil servants in late 2024 to emphasise how the profitability arguments (used as the original reason for the temporary suspension of services) no longer hold true.

3.6 KMEP and its Bring Back Eurostar Group has ongoing liaison with local MPs, securing their support in raising this matter. This resulted in Ministerial statements to the House of Commons; in January 2025, Sir Keir Starmer responded to Sojan Joesph, MP for Ashford's question saying: *'I know this is an issue of considerable frustration to his constituents. The decision in question is ultimately for Eurostar, but we are keen to see international services reinstated to Ashford as soon as possible'*

3.7 On 23rd May 2025, KMEP hosted a Eurostar briefing to which all MPs were invited. The MPs were asked to encourage the Government to:

- Commit to intervening to secure a return of services as soon as possible by lowering the barriers for operators such as facilitating access to the high speed line and supporting partners and infrastructure
- Establish a working group immediately to develop the public interest case with local partners and determine the powers government can use to ensure a return of services.

- Invest in the two Kent international stations so that they are maintained to a functional standard and have the new EU Entry Exit System ready for a return of international rail services.
- 3.8 Also in May, a meeting was held by KCC and KMEP with the National Wealth Fund to specifically discuss investment that could help to bring international rail back to the county, focusing on EES. In October 2025, the new Entry/Exit System (EES) - a new automated border management system – will be implemented by the European Union to enhance security and streamline travel for non-EU nationals entering and exiting the wider EU. A key benefit of resuming services to the Kent stations is that the majority of the infrastructure is already in place, lying dormant until services resume. However, the new EES system will require some modifications to the stations, and hence conversations were held to explore funding possibilities.
- 3.9 Members of KMEP's Bring Back Eurostar Group have also reached out to the potential new operators on the line, as there is a possibility that Eurostar will not be a monopoly provider of international rail services in the future. Conversations stressed the profitability for the operators in calling at Kent's stations. A number of operators submitted applications requesting that the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) directs Eurostar (the Depot Facility Owner) to enter into Depot Access Agreements for the Temple Mills International depot. The ORR is now assessing these applications based on detailed representations and an independent capacity study.
- 3.10 KMEP's Bring Back Eurostar Group has also had ongoing discussions with counterparts in mainland Europe (such as Hauts-de-France) regarding intermediate stations, as, like Kent, they have seen Eurostar suspend services to regional stations (such as Calais-Fréthun). Working closely with French partners may be beneficial as the French national government is a major stakeholder in Eurostar, primarily through its national rail operator, SNCF (which holds a 55% ownership stake in Eurostar International Limited).
- 3.11 A [public interest case](#), written by Mark Welch (KCC Transport Planner) with contributions from other partners, was sent by KMEP to the Ministerial Team and the local MPs.
- 3.12 A media campaign is also being coordinated by the Bring Back Eurostar Group. This includes a [third campaign video](#), which features business interviews and explore the long-term economic impact of the suspension of international rail services.
- 3.13 Finally, work is progressing to organise a significant media event in Ashford and Ebbsfleet stations at the end of September under the direction of the KCC Leader to publicise the call for Eurostar to return to Kent.

Lobbying for the Lower Thames Crossing project to proceed

- 3.14 On the roads network, KMEP recognises the importance of the international trade corridor between the continent and the Midlands and the North. Keeping the M2, M20, and A282/M25 running smoothly, and minimising the use of

Operation Brock doesn't only assist international trade, but also enables residents and businesses to move freely around the county and unlocks local economic growth. Consequently, KMEP has been lobbying for the Lower Thames Crossing project to proceed. This lobbying has been in the form of letters and emails sent to the Government and National Highways, formal submissions during the planning process as an 'interested party', and liaising with the Port of Dover.

- 3.15 These topics have also been raised and explored through the Kent Business Advisory Board (BAB). For example, the businesses were asked to register their support on National Highways' [interactive map of support](#).
- 3.16 KMEP was delighted that the Government officially granted development consent for the Lower Thames Crossing project in March 25. This decision was made by the Secretary of State for Transport following a comprehensive examination conducted by the Planning Inspectorate. Work is underway to ensure that local businesses and young people can benefit from the supply chain and job opportunities that accompany such a significant infrastructure project.

Working with the Port of Dover on their Short Straits Cluster & gaining Government attention to their Green Shipping Project

- 3.17 Sarah Nurden (KMEP Manager & KCC Economy Lead) was a panellist at the Coastal Powerhouse Short Straits Event on 25th June 2025. This event celebrated the launch of the Short Straits Cluster, which is a maritime initiative designed to foster collaboration, innovation, and economic growth across one of the UK's most strategically vital gateways.
- 3.18 The cluster brings together key stakeholders from both sides of the English Channel—including the Port of Dover, Port of Calais, DFDS, and regional authorities—to address shared challenges and opportunities in the Short Straits region (an area in which KCC is also actively working with neighbouring regions across the Channel through its own 'Straits Committee' activity). Its focus areas include:
- Green shipping and decarbonisation
 - Skills development and recruitment
 - Digital transformation
 - Port masterplanning
 - Growth and investment
- 3.19 The Port of Dover is critical, not only to Kent & Medway, but to the whole of UK. £144bn of trade in goods and 33% of UK-EU trade goes through the Port. In addition, 1.3m tourist vehicles use the Port every year.
- 3.20 The Green Shipping Project, led by the Port, seeks to bring electric ferries to serve UK-EU shipping routes for the first time. Dover is the optimal place to make such an investment as the shortest strait between the UK and mainland Europe. For reference, there are other nations that use electric ferries such as the Denmark's E-Ferry Ellen, that operates between the Danish islands of Ærø and Als, and Bastø Electric in Norway, so it is tested technology.

3.21 £100m of investment is required for the Green Shipping Project to succeed. The project will deliver a host of benefits, including a 8% reduction in the UK's carbon emission from the maritime sector and providing a range of new employment opportunities in this emerging sector.

3.22 The issue is that Kent's electricity network is not fit for purpose. The Grid does not supply enough energy to the town of Dover for the Port to then connect to, whether electric ferries or multiple existing cruise liners. Here are some facts and figures:

- Currently, 8 megawatts of electricity feed the port and that supports all the lights, security, berths, trains, etc.
- However, if the Port were to cold-iron (i.e. allow emergency equipment, refrigeration, cooling, heating, lighting and other equipment to receive continuous electric power while a ship loads or unloads its cargo) or shore-power a cruise ship, each ship would take somewhere between 7 and 15 megawatts. The Port can physically provide berthage for three cruise ships at any one time. There is insufficient energy supply in the area, however, to shore-power these ships reducing the ability of the port to hold multiple vessels simultaneously.
- If the Port wanted to recharge a ferry that was fully electric, that will require between 30 and 35 megawatts per vessel.
- Ignoring the energy requirements for electric vehicles (cars and trucks), the Port will need somewhere north of 100 megawatts, maybe up to 160 megawatts in the future. That is a **2,000%** increase in energy supply required.

3.23 The Green Shipping Project asks the Government to invest in the energy network, so sufficient power is delivered to Dover. This aligns with the Industrial's Strategy theme about energy supply and supporting the foundational industries³.

3.24 The KMEP Manager has introduced the Port of Dover's Engineering Director to key personnel in the Government department Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the National Wealth Fund, so that discussions can occur with the intention that appropriate support may be forthcoming from central Government.

Creating an infrastructure pipeline, aligned to MHCLG needs

3.25 The Green Shipping Project is one of a number of projects that would provide significant benefits to the region and wider UK if Government funding were granted.

3.26 Back in February 25, KMEP liaised with its partners and created an investment/infrastructure pipeline in short order at the request of MHCLG. This pipeline includes over 80 projects that will unlock significant employment

³ Foundational industries are recognised by government as providing critical inputs and infrastructure to support the eight sectors highlighted in the 'Invest 2035' Industrial Strategy. The foundational industries are: [Chemicals](#), [Critical minerals](#), [Composites](#), [Construction](#), [Energy networks](#), [Materials](#), Ports and Steel.

opportunities, as and when they are taken forward. Locate in Kent has subsequently been asked to take this initial pipeline and refine it, in light of the subsequent Industrial Strategy Publication, so it creates a compelling story for investment in to Kent and Medway. The intention is that this pipeline accompanies the forthcoming Local Growth Plan, which is being drafted by KCC as the KMEP Secretariat, and will be submitted to the Government by the end of the calendar year.

4. Next steps and Conclusions

4.1 KMEP will continue to concentrate on the projects listed above, but will also do a deep dive into the energy-related matters to understand how grid connections are required to secure and deliver development in the local area. A presentation will be given to the KMEP board in November.

4.2 This report has provided an overview of the progress in implementing Ambition 3 within the Kent and Medway Economic Framework. Much work is underway, and more future activity is planned to support sustainable growth of Kent & Medway's economy, through to 2030.

Contact details:

Report Authors: Sarah Nurden Job title: KMEP and BAB Manager in KCC Economy Team Telephone number: 03000 416518 Email address: sarah.nurden@kent.gov.uk	Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle Job title: Director of Growth & Communities Telephone number: 03000 412064 Email address: stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk
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From: **Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services**
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: **Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 11 September 2025**

Subject: **Active Kent and Medway update on Place Partnership Programme**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: Principally Westcourt and North Northfleet divisions in Gravesham but with wider reach, and Thanet district in its entirety. Expected to cover Swale district in due course.

Summary: Active Kent and Medway is the hosted service that provides strategic leadership, direction and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity across the county. Active Kent and Medway has been hosted by Kent County Council continuously since March 2006 and promotes the physical, mental, and social benefits associated with being active.

Active Kent & Medway is externally funded and received a grant for the 2022 – 2027 period from Sport England of £3,452,950 to support the delivery of [Move Together - ActiveKent](#) – the countywide strategy for sport and physical activity.

In November 2023, Sport England announced its intention to invest £250 million of National Lottery and exchequer funding over the next five years into place- based work, with £190 million ringfenced for targeted work in up to 80 places in England identified as highest need.

Active Kent and Medway is delighted to confirm that it has secured initial investment for two areas of Kent (Gravesham and Thanet), with two further applications for Medway and Swale currently under consideration.

It should also be noted that there are capital investment opportunities associated with this funding programme for these places.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Committee is asked to note this report for information.

1. Background

- 1.1. Active Kent and Medway (AKM) is one of 43 Active Partnerships in England. The principal funders are Sport England and Kent County Council (KCC) via a Public Health Grant, whose strategies and priority outcomes set the direction of its work and activity.
- 1.2. Formally the partnership was known as Kent Sport, and served as the Sports Development Unit for KCC. It is now a hosted service of KCC, with an independent Board, accountable for providing strategic leadership, direction, performance oversight and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity across the county.
- 1.3. AKM's vision is 'more people, more active, more often', with a mission to 'change and improve lives through sport and physical activity'.
- 1.4. In order to achieve this, AKM aims to increase participation in sport and physical activity with a focus on encouraging the least active of Kent and Medway's 1.9 million residents to become more active. This is achieved through the promotion of the associated personal and public health benefits and targeting resources where data demonstrates need is greatest, especially at those from under-represented groups including women, older people, people living with a disability or long-term health condition, ethnically diverse communities and people from lower socio-economic groups.
- 1.5. AKM engages with partners and networks across the county including those in health, adult social care, community safety, housing, and transport as well as governing bodies of sport, clubs, school sports networks, charities, leisure providers and local authorities, to provide opportunities for everyone to get involved in sport and physical activity for enjoyment as well as wider health and social outcomes.
- 1.6. Move Together (Kent's Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity) focuses on taking a place-based approach to:

Connecting Communities – bringing people together and harnessing sport and physical activity's unique ability to make places better to live

Health and Wellbeing - working in partnership and enabling everyone to benefit physically and mentally from an active lifestyle

Providing Positive Experiences for Children and Young People – helping children and young people to enjoy being active and creating the right foundations for a long, active and healthy life

Supporting Sport - helping local organisations to better understand their community and to deliver activities appropriate to people's needs and motivations

Active Environments – creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

2. The Place Partnership Programme

- 2.1. In November 2023, Sport England announced it would be investing £250 million of lottery and exchequer funding into place-based work. This investment is focused on areas identified as having high levels of inactivity, social need, and health inequalities. The approach is part of a broader strategy to address the disparities in physical activity levels and promote healthier lifestyles among communities which need it most.
- 2.2. The £250 million investment aims to support local communities by creating opportunities for physical activity and sport. £190 million has been ringfenced for work in the 80 places across England identified as having the highest need. Each selected area is in the top 10% of the country for inactivity and deprivation, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions. This funding will be distributed through the Place Partnerships programme, which builds on previous local delivery pilots.
- 2.3. Sport England's approach is place-based, meaning it focuses on the needs and assets of each individual community. By partnering with local organisations, leaders, and Active Partnerships like Active Kent and Medway, the programme aims to address the barriers to physical activity and create tailored solutions. This includes leveraging local resources such as parks, community centres, and sports clubs to foster active lifestyles, as well as working with communities themselves to create sustainable solutions.
- 2.4. The Place Partnership Programme aims to offer significant benefit across a wide range of policy areas from health and education to community safety and employment. Engaging a wide range of partners at a local level will be critical to its success and this is a current area of focus for Active Kent and Medway as it builds local place partnerships.
- 2.5. AKM is delighted to share that two places in Kent have successfully secured initial investment in the first phase of this programme. The two places are Gravesham (the wards of Westcourt and North Northfleet) and Thanet in its entirety. Initial “development awards” for the first 12 months of work in each place have been secured and these are for £232k and £366k respectively.
- 2.6. The initial development awards are a pre-cursor to a full award and designed to facilitate the setting up of the local place partnership boards and some early test and learn projects in each place. Including the development award, indicatively there will be up to £1.6 million of investment available to each place between now and March 2028. There will also be an opportunity to bid for capital funding and there is up to £80 million available across the 80 planned place partnerships.
- 2.7. Work to establish the local Place Partnership Boards in Gravesham and Thanet is underway, with representatives from the district councils, local voluntary sector infrastructure organisations, public health, the NHS, education and leisure sectors all engaged. There will also be opportunities from the autumn onwards for local Members to engage with the Place Partnership Programme through consultation events, providing insights into the challenges facing their

locality and representing the interests of KCC and the communities local Members represent.

- 2.8. Test and learn projects have been initiated, including a “drop in” park based summer activity programme for young people in Thanet, which has seen regular attendance of over 40 participants per session.
- 2.9. Conversations are underway in Gravesham and Thanet regarding support for local capital projects including Cascades Leisure Centre and the redevelopment of Jackey Bakers recreation space respectively.
- 2.10. Work has also commenced on the refresh of playing pitch and indoor facilities strategies – supported by place partnership funding – to help inform data-led local plans moving forwards.
- 2.11. It should also be noted that investment into a further 27 Place Partnerships will be confirmed later in 2025. AKM has submitted solicited applications for two places – Medway and Swale - and is awaiting the outcome of these.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. Current revenue budget is nil.
- 3.2. AKM is hosted by KCC and in addition to this support, currently receives £734.5k per annum (£3,452,950 over five years) of external funding from Sport England to support the delivery of Move Together – the localised iteration of Uniting the Movement, the national strategy for Sport and Physical Activity. Alongside this Active Kent and Medway also receives £300k per annum in funding via a KCC Public Health Grant. Funding which covers all direct costs to KCC relating to the hosting of AKM.
- 3.3. There are no match funding requirements for these grants, however, KCC does provide hosting to AKM to which there is a cost in terms of the corporate overheads that are charged/allocated to all services.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 AKM is an unincorporated body and not a legal entity in its own right – hence any grants relating to this programme will need to be accepted by KCC on behalf of the partnership and reviewed by the S151 Officer or Chief Internal Audit Officer.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been submitted. The evidence reviewed in undertaking the EQIA suggests that there is no potential for discrimination and all appropriate measures have been taken to advance equality and foster good relations between the protected groups.

6. Data Protection Impact Assessment

- 6.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) Has been undertaken. Minimal risk has been identified, and mitigations are in place.

7. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Committee is asked to note this report for information.

8 Background Documents

- 8.1 Sport England - Uniting the Movement
8.2 Active Kent and Medway - Move Together - ActiveKent

9 Contact details

Report Author:
Liz Davidson
Partnership Director
Active Kent and Medway
03000 423044
liz.davidson@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:
Stephanie Holt- Castle
Director Growth and Communities
03000 412064
stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk

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From: Paul King, Cabinet Member, Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration
Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee
11 September 2025

Subject: **Kent & Medway Business Fund – No Use Empty (KMBF-NUE)**

Key Decision: 25/00076

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Kent County Council (KCC) launched the No Use Empty (NUE) initiative in 2005 in East Kent. Following the success of NUE in East Kent, the initiative was rolled out across Kent in 2008/09 and is now delivered by KCC in partnership with all 12 district and borough councils.

The primary aim of the initiative is to improve the physical urban environment in Kent by bringing long-term empty properties back into use as quality housing accommodation through a range of interventions.

NUE operates a loan scheme providing short term secured loans registered as a first or second charge. On repayment of the loan, funds are recycled to the next project.

The Initiative has evolved and operates the following schemes: NUE Residential, NUE New Build, NUE Commercial and more recently NUE funded a pilot project known as The Tridax Business Park creating 24 Business Units.

In addition to this NUE is helping to deliver increased Council Tax receipts and collection of Business Rates.

KMBF-NUE are seeking Cabinet approval for up £6m of Kent and Medway Business Funds (KMBF) being made available to No Use Empty (NUE) Commercial scheme to still achieve the outcomes of the KMBF schemes in terms of boosting employment and economic growth within Kent, as well as generating income for KCC, both through interest payments/management fee and increasing business rate growth.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration to:

- (a) AGREE to up to £6m from the Kent & Medway Business Loan Fund (KMBF) being made available for No Use Empty (NUE) to administer short term secured loans to support specific NUE Commercial projects which would provide wider economic and employment opportunities and benefits as well as generating income, through interest payments. The value of an individual loan under this proposal is likely to be more than the £600k cap on loans which are administered by the KMBF team; and
- (b) DELEGATE to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Section 151 officer or the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance for approval to spend: and
- (c) DELEGATE to the Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport to take appropriate actions, including but not limited to, entering into legal agreements (loan agreements and legal charges), consider and approve requests which may require consent and discharge of legal charges, as necessary to implement this decision as shown at Appendix A.

1. Background Information

- 1.1. The primary aim of the NUE Initiative is to improve the physical urban environment in Kent by bringing long-term empty properties back into use as quality housing accommodation.
- 1.2. Delivered by KCC in partnership with all twelve district councils NUE has won several national awards and in May 2025 received a Special Recognition Award at the national Empty Homes conference in Birmingham to mark its 20th year and is recognised as the longest running empty property scheme in UK.
- 1.3. The Initiative has evolved and operates the following secured short-term loan (recycling) schemes:
 - NUE Residential (Capital Programme)
 - NUE New Build (KCC Treasury Management Investment Strategy)
 - NUE Commercial (Growing Places Funding)
- 1.4. A summary of achievements for each of the above schemes is at **Appendix 1**

2. Business Units

- 2.1 NUE delivered a pilot project known as The Tridax Business Park at Honeywood Parkway, Whitfield, Dover, creating 24 new business units which completed at the end of December 2023.
- 2.2 The project was funded from investment funds which NUE internally borrowed from KCC Treasury for which NUE are tasked with making a return on investment (currently 4%) and secured the loan as a 1st charge on the site.
- 2.3 The project has been an immense success. Demand has been such that the units could have been sold three times over compared to the total available for sale. All the business units are sold except for three retained by the developer.

NUE received full repayment of the £1.7m loan plus interest and application fees charged. The final payment was made on 12 January 2024.

- 2.4 A summary of the Tridax Business Park project is at **Appendix 2**
- 2.5 Suitable workspace is in short supply across the county and demand for similar units in all the districts within Kent is high. The NUE model has proven phenomenally successful in creating modern work space to meet the needs of local firms as well as enhancing the commercial property offer to attract businesses to Kent.
- 2.6 NUE welcomes the opportunity to provide Cabinet with an update on the initiative and gain Cabinet support for the approval for NUE to access and administer under delegated authority £6m KMBF funds to support specific NUE Commercial projects.

3. The Proposal (KMBF-NUE)

- 3.1 NUE will use the allocation of up to £6m to provide short term loans secured as a first charge for a maximum of 3 years to support specific NUE Commercial projects to deliver more business units/workspace, similar to the Tridax project, which would provide wider economic and employment opportunities and benefits as well as generating income, through interest payments, for the KMBF fund managed and administered by KCC.
- 3.2 There would be no loss to KMBF as once the loan NUE has administered plus interest is repaid this will replenish the KMBF loan fund.
- 3.3 From a marketing point of view, when the business units are sufficiently progressed and ready to be sold/leased, there is the potential opportunity for the KMBF loan fund to be publicised and to welcome new applications from those businesses who may be looking to start up, expand and create jobs and if successful receive a KMBF loan. NUE are the enabler and KMBF can then come on board with their loan support.
- 3.4 The value of each individual loan is expected to be up to £2m per project. This is beyond the £600k maximum loan KMBF can award. It is for this reason the delegation of authority to enter into a loan agreement and legal charge document under this proposal needs to sit with the Corporate Director for Growth and Communities.
- 3.5 The KMBF Investment Advisory Board, under its Terms of Reference would be fully sighted on the KMBF-NUE applications, which the NUE team will process (seeking support from Finance in line with current KMBF procedures) and subject to the Investment Advisory Board's recommendation and subsequent logged Record of Decision. Once loan contracts are in place the NUE team will liaise with the KMBF team to administer and process subsequent loan payments to the borrower, which will be released on a phased basis and subject to NUE monitoring.

4. Options considered and rejected

- 4.1 Do maximum – to proceed as planned with Treasury Investment funding which will reduce the funding available for new build residential homes if up to £6m of the £28m was ring fenced for the creation of new business units.

5. Potential Projects

- 5.1 NUE is currently aware of two potential projects that may go live within the next 3–6 months. Due to business confidentiality, further details cannot be disclosed at this stage.
- 5.2 These are projects that NUE would look to support in the first instance, subject to formal applications being received and supported with relevant documentation which will include a Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) valuation report to substantiate current land value and future gross development values. These projects could be considered alongside other applications.
- 5.3 NUE will work with KMBF on marketing and promoting the new KMBF NUE offer and the Kent & Medway Business Fund to potential purchasers/ingoing tenants, to maximise outputs.

6. Internal Support

- 6.1 The KMBF Investment Advisory Board (IAB) has endorsed the proposed KMBF-NUE scheme and KCC's finance department has confirmed that it is feasible from a financial and operational perspective. The NUE presentation to KMBF IAB is at **Appendix 3**

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There is one NUE team responsible for the NUE Residential, NUE New Build and NUE Commercial. Revenue costs are £1.2m and expected income (Application Fees/ Interest) of an offsetting £1.2m to ensure this valued service is not only self-financing but generates additional income for KCC through increased Council Tax and Business Rates.

Breakdown of 25/26 expected costs.

Staff inc. Travel, Training	£212,499
Legal Services	£139,460
Website	£1,200
Empty Homes Membership	£795
Treasury Return on Investment	£925,667
Application Fees	(£111,809)
Interest Collected	(£1,167,812)
Total	£0

- 7.2 The proposal is not designed to benefit NUE further financially as there is minimal impact on the capacity of the NUE team to take forward 2-3 additional projects. The legal costs associated with the KMBF NUE loan will be recovered from the applicant by charging an application fee of 1% + VAT of the sum borrowed (based the NUE new build scheme).
- 7.3 The proposal is in the spirit of more collaborative working within the Economy division, maximising opportunities to greater benefit of the division and ultimately Kent Businesses supporting regeneration and growth/job opportunities as outlined in the Kent & Medway Economic Framework which highlights the importance in ensuring the county has the right supply of high quality commercial and industrial space available to tackle the current shortages, The construction phase and ongoing maintenance requirements would also provide opportunities for local supply chains.
- 7.4 There are currently no other sources of funding available to NUE, which is predominantly supporting residential projects. NUE has only been able to deliver its main NUE Commercial project via the former SELEP-administered Growing Places Fund which is now exhausted.
- 7.5 The proposed £6m of will be drawn down by NUE from the KMBF budget when required. All NUE Commercial loans made will be to fund businesses and not individuals in their personal capacity.

8. Legal

- 8.1 A robust application process is in operation for the secured loans including independent risk assessments conducted by the NUE team.
- 8.2 Under delegated authority a Loan Approval Form is prepared, signed by the Strategic Programme Manager and Director for Growth and Communities. This form is used to instruct the KCC appointed legal services provider (Bevan Brittan LLP) to draw up Loan Facility Agreement and Legal Charge documents. The Loan Approval Form instructs the KCC appointed legal services provider to remove KCC charge on repayment of loans. It is proposed the Corporate Director for Growth and Communities will sign the Loan Approval Form associated with loans for the creation of Business Units under the KMBF-NUE proposal.
- 8.3 The loans approved adhere to KCC Financial delegations of responsibility for spend.
- 8.4 The Subsidy Control Act will be taken into account when considering each loan application.

- 8.5 Legal advice was obtained to confirm that recycled KMBF funding could be used to support a KMBF-NUE scheme, as the proposed approach aligns broadly with the objectives of the original KMBF programme.

9. Policy Framework

9.1 NUE supports:

Framing Kent's Future 2022-26

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/framing-kents-future>

Priority 1 Levelling Up Kent - Our commitment is to support the Kent economy to be resilient and successfully adapt to the challenges and opportunities it faces over the coming years.

Securing Kent's Future:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s121235/Securing%20Kents%20Future%20-%20Budget%20Recovery%20Strategy.pdf>

The decision does not place any additional financial burden on KCC as KMBF-NUE will be delivered with external funds and generate an income stream.

Kent & Medway Economic Framework:

Action Area 4: Supporting the conditions for growth by responding to local need for workspace.

10. Equalities Implications

- 9.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for NUE completed by the Strategic Programme Manager and signed off by KCC Equality Team - 31 January 2023 and kept under review.

11. Data Protection

- 11.1 KMBF-NUE have completed a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) reference no 603 for this proposal which is awaiting review and approval.

12. NUE Privacy Notice

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/access-to-information/gdpr-privacy-notice/economic-development/no-use-empty-scheme-privacy-notice>

13. Recommendation

12.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration to:

- (a) AGREE to up to £6m from the Kent & Medway Business Loan Fund (KMBF) being made available for No Use Empty (NUE) to administer short term secured loans to support specific NUE Commercial projects which would provide wider economic and employment opportunities and benefits as well as generating income, through interest payments. The value of an individual loan under this proposal is likely to be more than the £600k cap on loans which are administered by the KMBF team; and
- (b) DELEGATE to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Section 151 officer or the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance as appropriate for approval to spend: and
- (c) DELEGATE to the Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport to take appropriate actions, including but not limited to, entering into legal agreements (loan agreements and legal charges), consider and approve requests which may require consent and discharge of legal charges, as necessary to implement this decision as shown at Appendix A.

14. Appendices:

Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix 1 - Summary of NUE achievements to date for each scheme

Appendix 2 - Tridax Business Park

Appendix 3 – KMBF IAB Away Day

Equality Impact Assessment

Background documents:

- NUE Record of key decision: 15 March 2023:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk:9071/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2689>
- Treasury Investment Strategy Appendix M of the Budget Book 2024-25.
Page 140:
https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/164010/Budget-Book-2024-25.pdf

15. Contact details.

Report Author: Steve Grimshaw

Lead officer: Steve Grimshaw

Strategic Programme Manager

Phone number: 0300 417 084

E-mail: steve.grimshaw@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle

Growth & Communities

Phone number: 07920 108 843

E-mail: Stephanie.Holt-Castle@kent.gov.uk

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Paul King
Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal
Regeneration

DECISION NO:

25/00076

For publication**Key decision: YES****Subject Matter / Title of Decision:****Decision:**

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration is asked to

- (a) AGREE to up to £6m from the Kent & Medway Business Loan Fund (KMBF) being made available for No Use Empty (NUE) to administer short term secured loans to support specific NUE Commercial projects which would provide wider economic and employment opportunities and benefits as well as generating income, through interest payments. The value of an individual loan under this proposal is likely to be more than the £600k cap on loans which are administered by the KMBF team; and
- (b) DELEGATE to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Section 151 officer or the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance as appropriate for approval to spend: and
- (c) DELEGATE to the Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport to take appropriate actions, including but not limited to, entering into legal agreements (loan agreements and legal charges), consider and approve requests which may require consent and discharge of legal charges, as necessary to implement this decision as shown at Appendix A.

Reason(s) for decision:

For approval for up to £6m of Kent and Medway Business Funds (KMBF) being made available to No Use Empty (NUE) Commercial scheme to still achieve the outcomes of the KMBF schemes in terms of boosting employment and economic growth within Kent, as well as generating income for KCC, both through interest payments/management fee and increasing business rate growth.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

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

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do maximum – to proceed as planned with Treasury Investment funding which will reduce the funding available for new build residential homes of up to £6m of the £28m was ring fenced for the creation of new business units.

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

.....
signed

.....
date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

No Use Empty - Kent Empty Property Initiative

Responsible Officer

Steve Grimshaw - GT GC

Type of Activity**Service Change**

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility**Directorate**

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Growth & Communities

Responsible Head of Service

Nigel Smith - GT GC

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle - GT GC

Aims and Objectives

Access to short term secured loans to bring empty properties back into use.

The primary aim of the No Use Empty Initiative is to improve the physical urban environment in Kent, by bringing empty properties back into use as quality housing accommodation and to raise awareness of the issues surrounding empty properties, highlighting the problems they cause to local communities.

There are no changes to the characteristics of the current EQIA approved.

Given that the target group for loans offered to individual financial status and company background are risk assessed on their affordability of the loan. There is low risk if any negative impacts upon groups with protected characteristics.

KCC and team members are committed to ensuring that current and potential business clients will not be discriminated against on the grounds of social circumstance, gender, race, disability, sexuality, age, religion/belief or any other protected characteristic. All partners comply with and practice equal opportunities procedures.

To continually improve our service we offer to clients/businesses we will seek to capture some equality data from the applicants when they apply for a loan as part of the application process about the protected characteristics of individuals directly in the initiative. This will be at the applicant's discretion as to

whether they wish to divulge this information. On the data received, we will focus on utilising the information to improve our service.

Beneficiaries

Kent Businesses, individuals and residents all benefit from this initiative. Vulnerable adults have also benefitted from the initiative by offering long term residential facilities and short-term placements providing positive support towards independent living to adults with mild learning difficulties.

NUE is delivered by Kent County Council in partnership with 12 Kent districts and Medway Council.

There is no applicable data that covers equalities issues within the specific industries targeted by the NUE initiative. The beneficiary clients/businesses are defined externally.

Section B – Evidence

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

Yes

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

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

This project is being delivered by Kent County Council in partnership with twelve the 12 Kent Districts and Medway Council.

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

Given that the target group for loans offered to individuals financial status and company background are risk assessed on their affordability of the loan. There is a low risk of any negative impacts upon groups with protected characteristics.

KCC and team members are committed to ensuring that current and potential business clients will not be discriminated against on the grounds of social circumstances, gender, race, disability, sexuality, age,

religion/belief or any other protected characteristic. All partners comply with and practice equal opportunities procedures

Kent Businesses, individuals and residents all benefit from the scheme. Vulnerable adults have also benefitted from the scheme by offering long-term residential facilities and short-term placements providing positive support towards independent living to adults with mild learning disabilities.

This project is being delivered by Kent County Council in partnership with 12 Kent districts.

The longer term aims of the NUE project positively impacts on the growth of SMEs and individuals in Kent by enabling them to secure a loan to renovate an empty property to bring back into use to provide much needed housing, creating jobs and improving the environment for Kent residents.

It is not envisaged that there will be any adverse long term effects on any protected characteristics as a result of NUE. Some equalities data will be collected (where applicants choose to answer monitoring data) and reviewed throughout the project life time in order to monitor the involvement of all our clients.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Applicable

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not Applicable

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

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

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

No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

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Appendix 1 – Summary of NUE achievements to date for each scheme

NUE Residential

NUE has a proven track record returning 8,773 long-term empty properties back into use across the County to the decent home standard (data to Q1 2025-26)

Q2 data July – September 2025 will be available once verified during October 2025.

Long term empty means those dwellings that have been unoccupied or substantially unfurnished for over six months.

NUE DATA	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total All Years
Ashford	0	0	0	0	0	5	7	0	0	1	2	2	11	1	6	5	1	16	7	15	2	81
Canterbury	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	4	0	11	0	40	6	10	0	0	8	0	0	0	93
Dartford	0	0	0	57	113	98	123	104	104	96	100	97	56	96	86	79	48	72	35	90	16	1,470
Dover	16	39	17	27	33	36	33	44	41	32	48	40	30	24	34	43	6	30	13	30	0	616
Folkestone & Hythe	52	34	50	26	47	32	34	45	36	29	55	81	84	70	48	78	44	50	42	76	12	1,025
Gravesham	0	0	0	75	56	31	50	54	58	45	34	30	19	13	10	24	9	4	48	53	6	619
Maidstone	0	0	0	18	24	29	12	106	99	132	59	39	21	15	53	19	35	30	13	24	19	747
Sevenoaks	0	0	0	4	20	20	17	15	27	12	7	16	17	8	17	10	0	26	18	17	0	251
Swale	12	14	12	3	33	37	33	63	84	86	71	79	2	45	116	36	97	0	193	0	0	1,016
Thanet	68	83	90	92	90	108	117	113	120	119	122	169	138	140	159	161	178	153	89	119	25	2,453
Tonbridge & Malling	0	0	0	5	9	5	9	12	18	18	7	14	12	0	0	0	2	3	16	19	0	149
Tunbridge Wells	0	0	0	20	13	10	14	27	20	17	22	14	9	28	12	7	8	26	0	6	0	253
Total All Districts	148	170	169	341	438	411	449	583	611	587	538	581	439	446	551	462	428	418	474	449	80	8,773

Note from 2005-2008, NUE only covered: Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, Swale and Thanet (County wide from 2008-09)

NUE on average is returning 479 long-term empty properties back into use per annum (based on performance over the last 10 years).

Data is provided to NUE Team on a quarterly basis two weeks after the end of the last month in that quarter.

For clarity this excludes investment activity which is focused on new builds.

Summary NUE Residential (Countywide Investment) – 19 August 2025

NUE Recyclable Loans (£5m original investment)

NUE INTERVENTION	INVESTMENT			PROPERTY VALUES			HOMES BACK INTO USE			KCC COUNCIL TAX		
Local Authority Name	Total KCC NUE Loan	Public & Private Sector Investment	Total Investment	Original Value of Properties	Future Value of Properties	Increase in Value of Properties	Current Empty Residential Units	Future Residential Units	NUE New Homes Created	Current Council Tax Per Year (Average C)	Additional Council Tax Per Year (Average C)	Total Annual Council Tax Collected
Ashford	£1,155,000	£1,132,413	£2,287,413	£3,818,000	£7,585,000	£3,767,000	9	27	18	£12,887	£25,773	£38,660
Canterbury	£1,830,000	£4,370,164	£6,200,164	£5,844,000	£14,732,000	£8,888,000	25	64	39	£35,796	£55,842	£91,638
Dartford	£1,206,000	£734,246	£1,940,246	£6,159,000	£8,012,000	£1,853,000	13	42	29	£18,614	£41,523	£60,137
Dover	£15,926,302	£10,824,750	£26,751,052	£25,982,800	£56,592,000	£30,609,200	84	366	282	£120,275	£403,779	£524,053
Folkestone & Hythe	£16,873,727	£8,635,764	£25,509,491	£28,519,500	£56,137,700	£27,433,200	71	310	239	£503,797	£342,210	£846,007
Gravesham	£1,287,500	£792,447	£2,079,947	£3,588,500	£5,614,500	£2,026,000	4	37	33	£5,727	£47,251	£52,978
Maidstone	£1,747,388	£1,018,367	£2,765,755	£3,363,800	£6,549,800	£3,186,000	4	47	43	£5,727	£61,569	£67,296
Sevenoaks	£679,000	£1,289,424	£1,968,424	£4,974,000	£7,244,000	£2,270,000	16	26	10	£22,909	£14,318	£37,228
Swale	£4,743,500	£2,430,085	£7,173,585	£9,402,750	£17,690,100	£8,787,350	29	127	98	£41,523	£140,320	£181,844
Tenby	£17,522,100	£17,663,350	£35,185,450	£38,986,750	£82,396,750	£43,410,000	177	488	311	£252,004	£441,007	£693,011
Canterbury and Maidstone	£395,000	£501,049	£896,049	£2,020,000	£3,450,000	£1,430,000	8	16	8	£11,455	£11,455	£22,909
Canterbury Wells	£2,582,156	£2,209,841	£4,791,997	£9,363,000	£16,357,000	£6,994,000	26	52	26	£37,228	£37,228	£74,456
Total Kent	£65,947,672	£51,601,901	£117,549,573	£142,022,100	£282,360,850	£140,653,750	466	1,602	1,136	£1,067,942	£1,622,275	£2,690,217

The total KCC NUE Loan includes loans operated under the Affordable Homes (2012-15) project co-funded with HCA and Growing Places Funds (SELEP) for NUE Residential and NUE Commercial Phase I and Phase II.

New Homes Created are a result of converting larger empty properties with planning permission for residential use.

The additional Council Tax receipts of £1.6m generated because of New Homes Created.

The net number of empty homes brought back into use were included in the New Homes Bonus allocations (80% districts/20% KCC)

Future property values recorded from RICS valuation at time of application.

Note this table excludes KCC Treasury funded projects.

Long-term vacant dwellings by local authority district (Kent) from 2020

Key
Decrease
Increase

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Soucre: Council Tax Base (CTB)						
Local Authority Name	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change
Ashford	543	681	386	328	697	369
Canterbury	796	813	718	967	953	-14
Dartford	283	252	237	267	253	-14
Dover	725	601	527	806	762	-44
Folkestone & Hythe	619	656	709	827	943	116
Gravesham	326	270	283	224	285	61
Maidstone	537	500	521	614	624	10
Sevenoaks	435	294	280	371	363	-8
Swale	541	469	402	484	501	17
Thanet	1,129	877	866	1,143	1,185	42
Tonbridge and Malling	370	356	373	489	413	-76
Tunbridge Wells	494	435	462	512	521	9
Total Kent	6,798	6,204	5,764	7,032	7,500	468
Change		-594	-440	1,268	468	

South East Positions	Rank 2024	Rank 2023	Change in Position
Tonbridge and Malling	11	55	44
Dover	12	64	52
Canterbury	15	62	47
Thanet	18	63	45
Dartford	23	30	7
Sevenoaks	26	49	23
Tunbridge Wells	34	38	4
Maidstone	35	50	15
Swale	38	47	9
Gravesham	44	8	-36
Folkestone & Hythe	60	56	-4
Ashford	64	9	-55

This table above shows the number of long-term empty properties in Kent since 2020 as you can see the figures are going up.

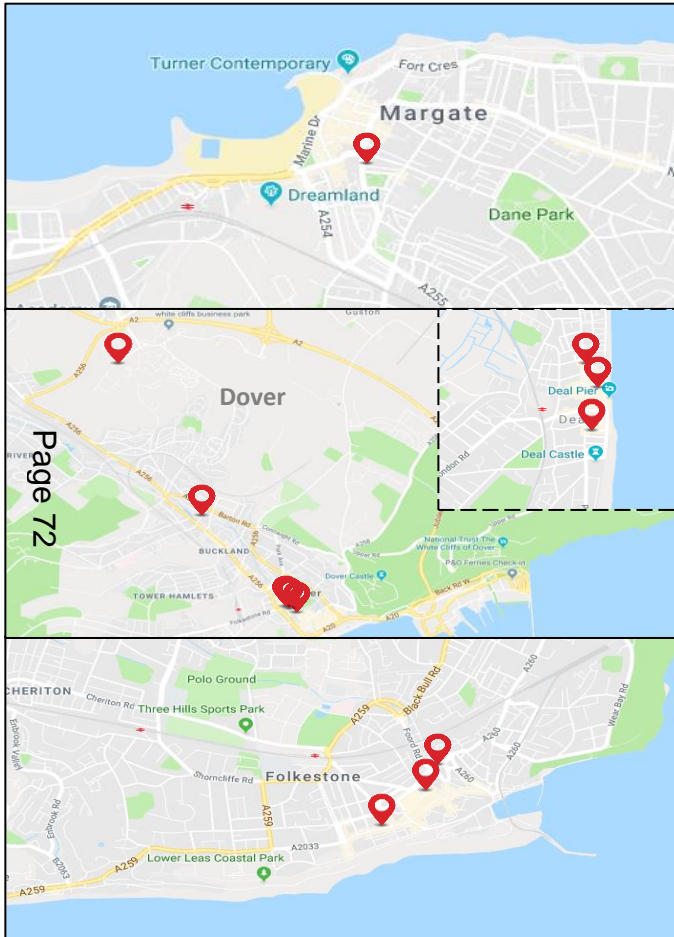
On average over the last 10 years NUE returns 479 properties back into use per annum

So, if there was no NUE, then we suspect the County Picture would be quite a different story and the levels of investment we have attracted would not have been possible.

The table to the right shows how the Kent Districts have fared compared to the 68 Councils which are identified as being in the South-East

Comparing 2024 rankings with 2023, you can see that 9 of the 12 Kent districts have improved in the rankings.

NUE Commercial Phase I – Completed (2018-2020)



TARGET: To return a total of **8 EMPTY COMMERCIAL UNITS** back into use and create **28 RESIDENTIAL HOMES** – GROWING PLACED FUND Awarded £1M

Commercial Units	Residential Homes	Total	GPF £	LEVERAGE £	TOTAL £
2	1	Deal	85,000	410,000	495,000
9	16	Dover	595,000	1,667,000	2,262,000
2	6	Folkestone	280,000	1,140,000	1,420,000
2	5	Margate	40,000	311,867	351,867
15	28	Investment	1,000,000	£3,528,867	4,528,867

Completions:

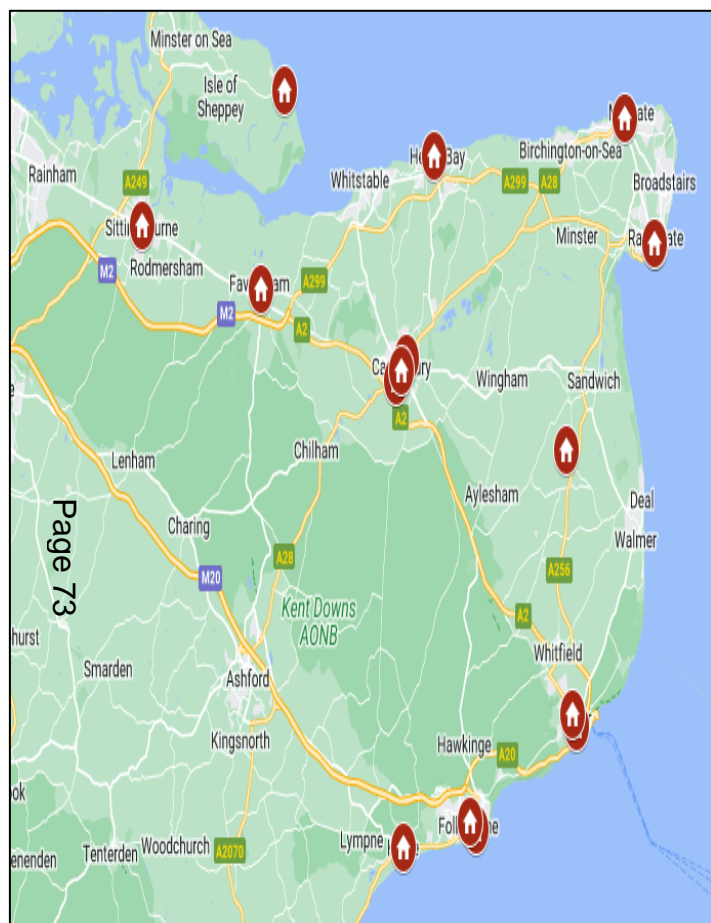
15 Commercial Units
28 Residential Homes

Repayment to GPF:

£800k repaid 31 March 2022
£200k repaid 31 March 2023

Commercial Properties back into use include a Beauty Salon, Delicatessen, 2-3 Restaurants, Recruitment Agency, Marketing Suite for Property Sales, Office Space, Pizza Room for Micro Brewery, retail units for local independent traders.

NUE Commercial Phase II – (2021-2026) In Progress



TARGET: To return a total of 18 EMPTY COMMERCIAL UNITS back into use and create 36 RESIDENTIAL HOMES – GROWING PLACES FUND Awarded £2M

Commercial Units	Residential Homes	Total Districts	GPF £	LEVERAGE £	TOTAL £
5	18	Canterbury	455,000	455,000	910,000
3	3	Dover	320,000	315,000	635,000
3	11	Folkestone	495,000	2,038,572	2,533,572
2	4	Swale	205,000	916,918	1,121,918
9	16	Thanet	525,000	2,483,500	3,008,500
22	52	Investment	2,000,000	6,208,990	8,208,990

Contracted/Completed:
22 Commercial Units – 21 completed
52 Residential Homes – 52 completed

Repayment to GPF:
£2m due by 31 March 2029

Commercial Properties back into use include Old Wine Warehouse (flex workspace, a café area and a cellar bar and performance space), General Store with a Post Office, Fish and Chip Take Away/Restaurant, Café, 3 x Take Aways and retail units for local independent traders. Final project restoration of the Admiral Owen, Sandwich due to complete Summer 2026.

Examples of projects supported NUE Commercial Phase I

Sandgate Road, Folkestone		Former Walmer Castle Pub, Westgate on Sea, Margate
<p>This was a three-storey retail unit with a large single storey rear addition. It closed in 2017 and remained empty until the new owner acquired it. The ground floor comprises a large lock up shop with the upper parts offering basic ancillary storage space. Planning permission has been granted for change of use and creation of 2 flats. The commercial space is now a beauty salon employing 9 staff. The flats are completed to decent homes standard and rented to local people. KCC have a 1st charge secured.</p>		<p>This former public house was acquired by the Greek community in 2016 and following planning permission has been transformed to provide: 3 residential flats, a community space, and a Greek restaurant. Like many pubs which have closed this one breathes new life, and the business employs 3 staff. KCC have a 1st charge secured.</p>
		
		
Empty: 1 Years	Former Pharmacy	Empty: 10 months
Residential Units: 2	Occupied	Residential Units: 3
Commercial Units: 1	9 Jobs	Commercial Units: 1
Project Cost: £990k	Private Funds: £540k	Project Cost: £172.8k
GPF Funds: £200k	NUE Loan: £250k	NUE Loan: £51.2k / GPF Funds: £30k

Examples of projects supported NUE Commercial Phase II

Preston Street, Faversham - 1 x Commercial / 6 x Residential

NUE provided a total loan of £650k including £100k from GPF Funds to Ratio Developments Ltd to create six stunning apartments in Preston Street, Faversham.

The building was originally arranged as a ground floor lock up commercial unit with offices on the ground and first floor. Planning was granted in June 2021 to convert the building into 6 self-contained flats (1 under permitted development). A commercial unit has also been retained and refurbished on the ground floor.

The loan was repaid in full 29 November 2023..



Folkestone Town Centre



1 x Commercial / 8 x Residential

NUE have provided a loan of £64,000 from the Growing Places Fund, and a top up loan of £120,000 from Folkestone & Hythe DC Top Up Funds to help fund the total refurbishment costs of £362,500 to bring this empty shop in the heart of Folkestone Town Centre back into use following the acquisition of the freehold by the new owner.

The 8 self-contained apartments are completed.

Works were completed May 2024 on the commercial space which is now open as a coffee and waffles shop in memory of Will Brown Jnr (applicants' son) who passed away in a tragic accident December 2023.

NUE have collaborated with the applicant on previous projects.

The Promenade, Leysdown on Sea

NUE provided a loan of £125,000 from the Growing Places Fund to contribute to the total project costs of £267,000 to bring this former Pub back into use.

Swale Borough Council granted permission in April 2020 for change of use of a former Public House into a Fish and Chip Take Away/Restaurant with a bar and conversion of existing first floor into 3 self-contained flats.

Works have completed on the property which had been empty for 3 years and is now compliant as the property did not conform to current regulations and was below the required energy efficiency ratings.

The property was completed in time for late Summer 2022.

1 x Commercial / 3 Residential



NUE New Build

The following is an extract from the internal report from NUE to Treasury Investment Team to provide an update on performance to 31st March 2025.

Treasury Investment - NUE Derelict Sites (£28m)

1. 1. With the construction industry experiencing challenging times, the NUE initiative has become increasingly important as we continue our work to regenerate local communities and further support the Kent economy.
1. 2. The original allocation of £12m (20/21) was quickly exhausted due to the unprecedented demand for the new loan product. Incremental increases in subsequent years of £4m agreed with Treasury and the recycling of loans already repaid has allowed NUE to bring forward more projects. NUE has a current allocation of £28m as agreed with James Graham, Pension Fund and Treasury Investments Manager on 27 July 2024.
1. 3. NUE have approved loans to the value of £44m supporting 290 new build residential homes (£42.2m) and 24 business units (£1.8m) as of 31st March 2025.
1. 4. A total of 201 new build residential homes and 24 business units have been completed as of 31st March 2025. Following the sale or re-finance of these properties, NUE have received £19.3m in loan repayments to 31st March 2025. NUE are expecting a further £1.5m of loan repayments before 30th June 2025 for units which are sold subject to completion with solicitors.
1. 5. The table below records: loans approved which also includes those projects which are in phased stages (total of 10) or projects receiving additional funds due to the increased costs of materials during the pandemic (total of 2), value of loans (includes recycled funds) and number of units (residential and business) being supported by financial year.

Financial Year	NUE New Builds			Business Units Supported
	Loans Approved	Value Approved	Residential Units Supported	
20/21	21	£11,047,000	100	-
21/22	14	£6,212,250	39	-
22/23	23	£9,134,000	52	24
23/24	19	£7,476,500	35	-
24/25	24	£10,127,000	64	
Total	101	£43,996,750	290	24

1. 6. The residential projects are varied ranging from single houses, bungalows, 2-3 houses and apartment blocks all of which are in 9 of the 12 Kent districts, primarily in our coastal regions. The business units supported relate to our pilot project at Honeywood Parkway Whitfield, Dover which has been completed and fully repaid.

Some examples of our new builds are below:

**Lorne Road, Ramsgate
6 x 2 bed houses**



**Former site of Alma Public House,
Swanscombe – 13 homes**



Former Deal Police Station – 3 x 3 bed terraced houses + 2 x 4 bed houses to rear



**Lower Road, Faversham
3 new houses**



**Albert Road, Dover –
7 self-contained flats**






**Former Railway Bell, River, Dover
12 new homes**



**High Halden, Ashford
3 new homes apartments**



Land at Radnor Park Road, Folkestone	14 self-contained units
<p>Local developers Livingston Homes Ltd acquired the former Royal Victoria Hospital in 2020. The hospital opened in 1890 and closed in 2012 when the East Kent Hospitals University Foundation trust deemed the site surplus to its needs. It remained dormant until the developer converted the main building into residential apartments following planning approval granted by Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC) in November 2020. (This was not funded by NUE).</p> <p>NUE assisted with an interest bearing loan released in two phases following further approval granted to demolish the redundant outbuildings and erect two residential blocks. This consists of 14 self-contained units (10 x 2 bed flats and 4 x 1 bed flats). There are 8 apartments in block one and 6 apartments in block two.</p> <p>FHDC acquired the site and have made the home available for let through their Housing Waiting List at Affordable rents. The units have an energy efficient rating of EPC B.</p> <p>The loan and interest were repaid 25 Jan 2023 and FHDC have acquired the site.</p>	
 <p>Works In Progress – rear of property (Block 1)</p>	 <p>Completed – front of property (Block 2)</p>
<p>Total Loan - £810,000 (Phase 1 - £330k /Phase 2 - £440k)</p> <p>Cost of Works - £ 1,310,000</p>	
<p>Project Timescales – 18 months</p> <p>Loan repaid January 2023</p>	

Ottaway House, Dover	8 self-contained units
<p>As part of their commitment to provide more affordable housing across the district, Dover District Council (DDC) employed Martello Building Consultancy as Employers Agent and Karlee Construction Limited whom provided a turn-key, off the shelf development to construct eight self-contained flats on Folkestone Road in Dover.</p> <p>The properties are let on a short-term basis at affordable rents and provides interim housing for local people facing homelessness, while a more permanent solution to their housing needs can be found.</p> <p>The scheme is part of an ambitious programme by DDC to build up to 500 new affordable homes across the district. NUE provided a loan of £480k towards the project which has been repaid following handover..</p>	
	
<p>Total Loan - £480,000</p> <p>Cost of Works - £ 830,000</p>	
<p>Project Timescales – 9 months</p> <p>Loan repaid January 2021</p>	

Appendix 2 - Tridax Business Park

NUE piloted a project using Treasury Investment funds to facilitate the construction of 24 business units at Honeywood Parkway, Whitfield, Dover which began in April 2022. NUE worked with Tridax Ltd to support the construction, having previously collaborated with the company on residential projects.

This is now a flagship project making a positive contribution to the economy of Dover.

The site was acquired for £900,000 plus VAT in July 2021.

Planning was approved by Dover District Council on 29 September 2021. This replaced the original planning approved which was for a gym and a drive thru coffee shop.

All the units are of the same dimensions, although some have been constructed as 'multiple unit bespoke' finished. Typical floor area if each unit is 11.2m by 7.75m, Floor to ceiling at ground level is 3m and at first floor level 2.7m.

Each block of seven units has an overall external length of 56.58m and external depth of 12m. All units are:

- serviced by an electrical supply and ducted for fibre optics up to the boundary of each unit. They will be constructed to 'shell' arrangement which will be a watertight/sealed unit.
- insulated – with panels to walls and ceilings.
- a ready to use building with lockable windows/doors.
- single power supplied or three phase.
- fully installed with a first floor (not mezzanine) with unenclosed staircase.
- have a toilet/kitchenette facility at ground floor level.

Demand for the units was phenomenal, with interested buyers outnumbering the available units 3 to 1. All units were sold except the three remaining units, which are retained by the developer for rental income.

The Business Park has become its own community thanks to the variety of businesses now located here which include Little Miracles (Hairdressers), Catus Graphics, Eythorne Builders, PJC Electrical, Cinque Port Construction, D Relf Dance Studio, R&R Group - Builders, Glasshouse Design & Glazing, Rebus Planning and Tridax Ltd - Civil & Architectural Consultants to name but a few.

Widem Logistics, a Belgian owned freight forwarding, and logistics company chose the site for its location and proximity to Dover Docks and motorway connections.

There are a total of 111 employees working across all the businesses located here of which approximately 10% are a direct result of the business relocating or expanding.

The total project costs were: £2.8m

NUE agreed with Tridax Ltd to commence repayment of the loan from the sale of the sixth business unit so that the project was fully funded.

The NUE loan (£1.7m) was provided in phased stages and repaid in full by 12 January 2024.

Date	Timeline	NUE Loan
July 2021	Site Acquired	£700,000
March 2022	Phase I Development	£280,000
May 2022	Phase II Development	£500,000
September 2022	Phase III Development	£500,000
	Total	£1,780,000

NUE generated income of £183,692 from interest charged and £17,800 from the initial application fee giving a total of £ 201,492, which equates to a return of 11.32% over 30 months.

Some images of Tridax Business Park, Honeywood Parkway, Whitfield



Proposal

No Use Empty (NUE) to internally borrow up to £6m from the recycled Regional Growth Funds which are being utilised to deliver the Kent & Medway Business Fund (KMBF) to support specific NUE Commercial projects covering Kent & Medway

Steve Grimshaw



**Widem Logistics, Tridax Business Park,
Honeywood Parkway, Dover**

NUE – Self Financing from New Builds

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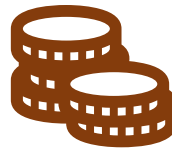


Adelaide Road, Eythorne, Dover – 5 new builds



Ashford Road, High Halden, Ashford – 9 new builds

**£12m >>> £28m KCC
investment – interest
bearing loans**



New Homes, New Council Tax receipts



Outcomes

KCC invested **£5m**
Recycled interest
free loans
£60.8m



13
Adopted by all
twelve district
Councils
in Kent & Medway

8,501 Empty properties

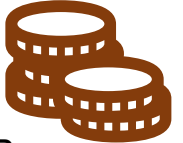
brought back into use



£163m

**NUE Investment Value
Including £41m New Build**

£61m Leverage
(private investors and developers)
Access to **£11.5m** New Homes Bonus

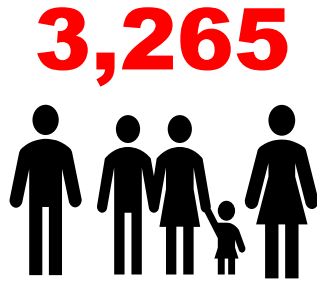


NUE helped to create **1,046** new homes generating
£1.6m per annum additional Council Tax receipts



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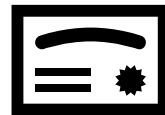
1,902 Jobs
safeguarded



People housed



NUE is cost effective
Delivering increasing performance year on year



NUE is nationally recognised for best practice
supported by national charity Empty Homes

www.nue.org.uk

For more information and
report an empty property

NUE has introduced



Top Up Loans



Interest bearing loans for larger sites



Owner occupiers Loan in Thanet



**Training programmes
provided**



INSIDE
HOUSING



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

**UK HOUSING
AWARDS 2022
FINALIST**

As well as creating new homes to help address the housing shortage. NUE has helped improve the urban environment in Kent and has improved the social well-being of the local economy.

NUE Proposal

Explore the opportunity for No Use Empty (NUE) to internally borrow up to £6m from the recycled Regional Growth Funds which are being utilised to deliver the Kent & Medway Business Fund (KMBF) to support specific NUE Commercial projects which would provide wider economic and employment opportunities and benefits as well as generating income, through interest payments for the KMBF fund managed and administered by KCC.

TRIDAX Business Park, Whitfield, Dover

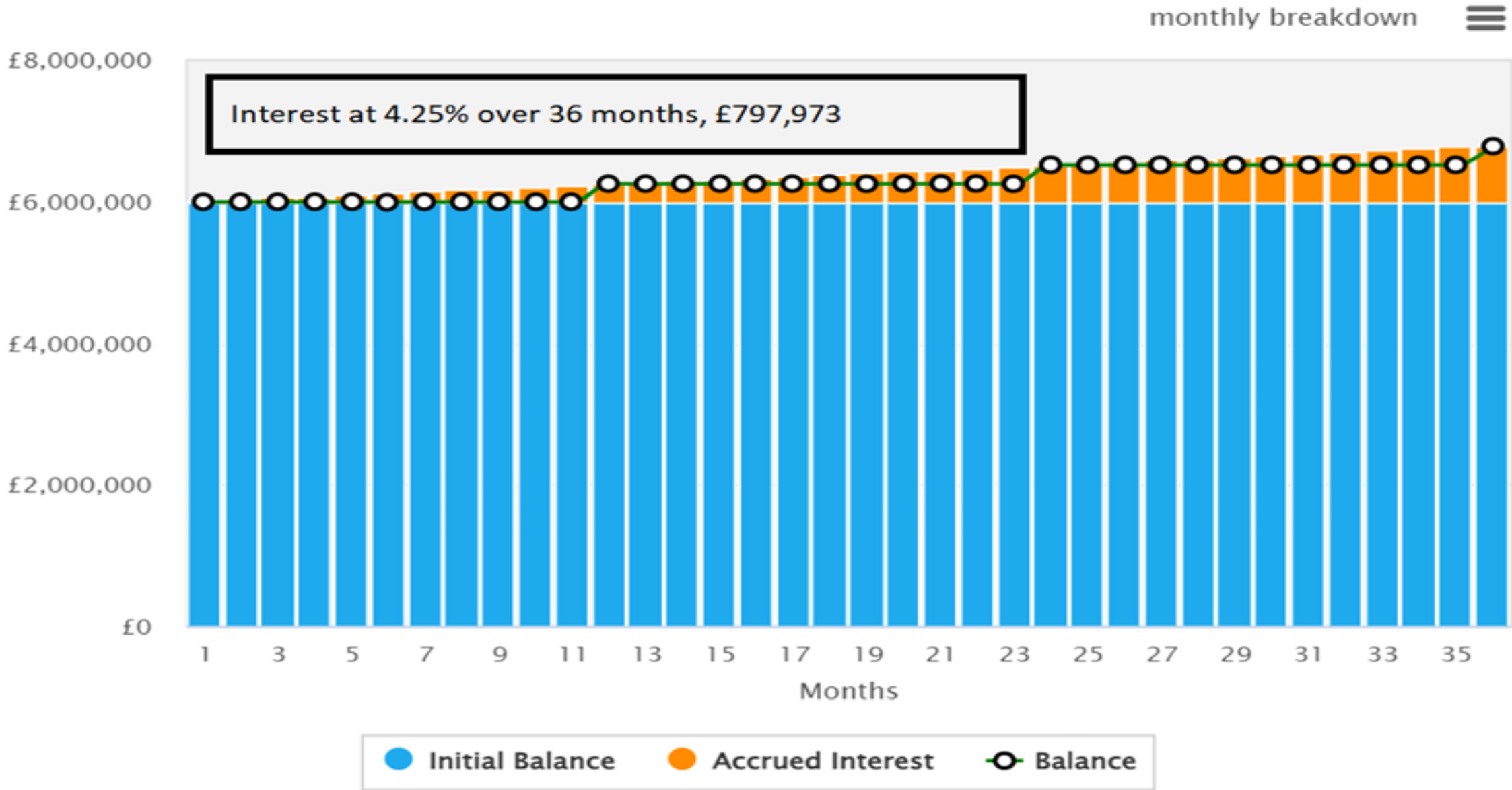


Support for NUE Proposal

- ▶ NUE to internally borrow funds from the KMBF scheme to support specific NUE Commercial projects.
- ▶ NUE proven track record for delivery of projects and financial management.
- ▶ £94M loans awarded - £57M loans repaid to date (Bad Debt £143k dates from 2011).
- ▶ **Seeking to borrow up to £6m (e.g. £2m per project) - only draw funds from KMBF when needed.**
- ▶ No loss of interest to KMBF fund.
- ▶ No impact on KMBF funds allocated for use in future years.
- ▶ NUE to provide short term secured interest bearing loans - max 3 years and charge up to 10% interest on the loans.
- ▶ ROI for KMBF and replenish KMBF loan pot.
- ▶ NUE to administer applications and report back.
- ▶ NUE administration covered by application fee.
- ▶ Seeking support for the proposal to be discussed and approved at the KMBF away day.

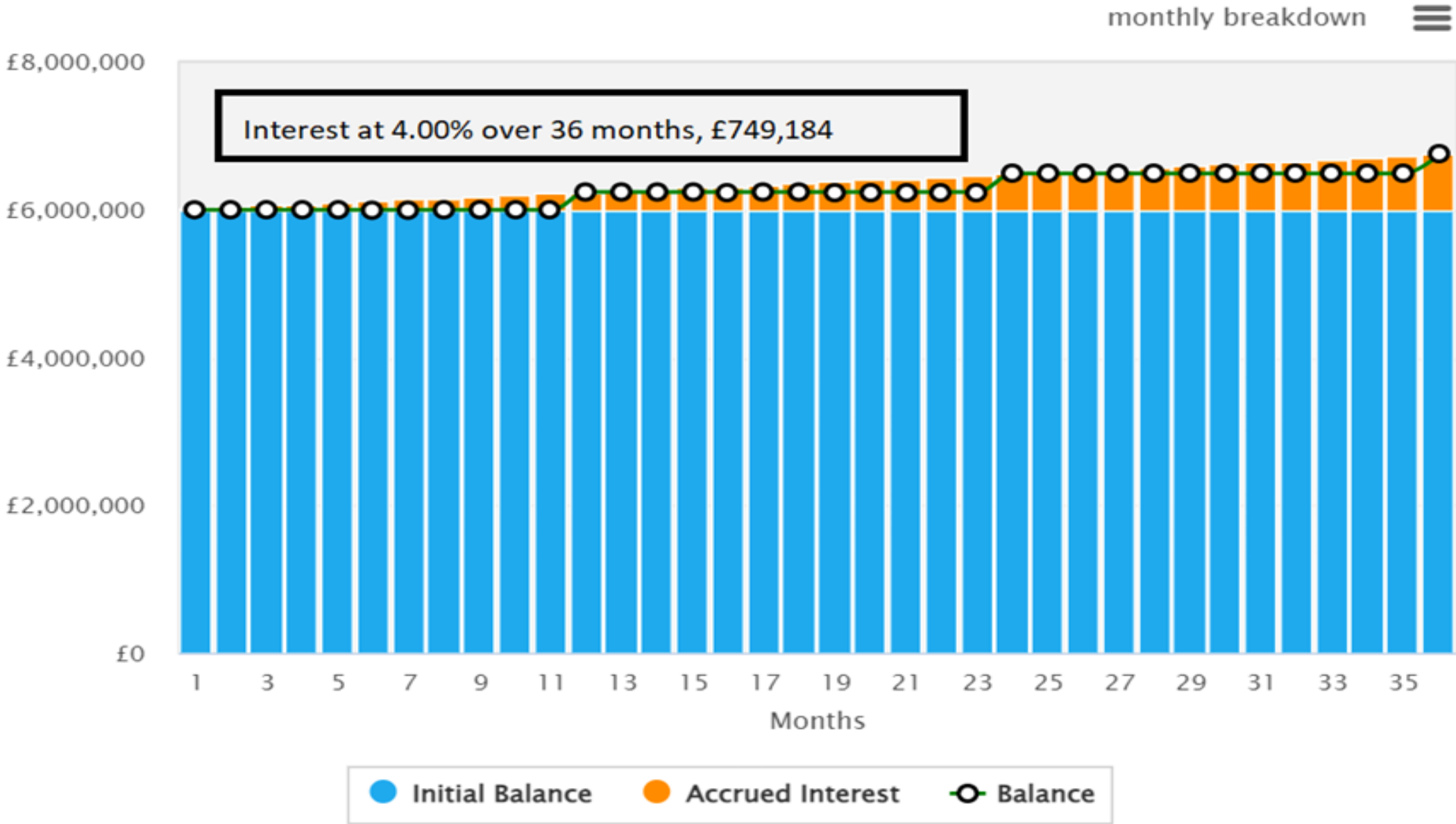
KMBF - £6m ROR Interest 4.25% p.a. if left in bank

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KMBF - £6m ROR Interest 4% p.a. if left in bank

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Potential KMBF Pot - 3 Years On using 4.25% comparable

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Financial Year	Funds Drawn From KMBF to NUE	Interest Achieved Based On 8% (drawn to end of contract term)	Interest Achieved Based On 9% (drawn to end of contract term)	Interest Achieved Based On 10% (drawn to end of contract term)
Qtr 1 25/26	£0	£0	£0	£0
Qtr 2 25/26	£500,000	£110,000	£123,750	£137,500
Qtr 3 25/26	£750,000	£150,000	£168,750	£187,500
Qtr 4 25/26	£1,000,000	£180,000	£202,500	£225,000
Qtr 1 26/27	£1,000,000	£160,000	£180,000	£200,000
Qtr 2 26/27	£1,000,000	£140,000	£157,500	£175,000
Qtr 3 26/27	£1,000,000	£120,000	£135,000	£150,000
Qtr 4 26/27	£750,000	£75,000	£84,375	£93,750
Qtr 1 27/28	£0	£0	£0	£0
Qtr 2 27/28	£0	£0	£0	£0
Qtr 3 27/28	£0	£0	£0	£0
Qtr 4 27/28	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total	£6,000,000	£935,000	£1,051,875	£1,168,750
KMBF Interest 4.25%		£797,973	£797,973	£797,973
Extra Interest on NUE Loans		£137,027	£253,902	£370,777
Interest expected on diminishing £6M KMBF pot as NUE drawdown		£278,994	£278,994	£278,994
All interest earned at end of Year 3		£1,213,994	£1,330,869	£1,447,744
Plus original loan drawn		£6,000,000	£6,000,000	£6,000,000
KMBF Bank Account (example)		£7,213,994	£7,330,869	£7,447,744

**KMBF: £6,000,000
IN BANK**

**VALUE IF UNTOUCHED
£6,797,973
AFTER 3 YEARS**

**NUE PROPOSAL
AFTER 3 YEARS**

**KMBF: £7,213,894
IN BANK**

**POTENTIAL EXTRA
£416,021**

**NUE INTEREST PLUS KMBF INTEREST
ON DIMINISHING LOAN POT**

Potential KMBF Pot - 3 Years On using 4.00% comparable

Financial Year	Funds Drawn From KMBF to NUE	Interest Achieved Based On 8% (drawn to end of contract term)	Interest Achieved Based On 9% (drawn to end of contract term)	Interest Achieved Based On 10% (drawn to end of contract term)
Qtr 1 25/26	£0	£0	£0	£0
Qtr 2 25/26	£500,000	£110,000	£123,750	£137,500
Qtr 3 25/26	£750,000	£150,000	£168,750	£187,500
Qtr 4 25/26	£1,000,000	£180,000	£202,500	£225,000
Qtr 1 26/27	£1,000,000	£160,000	£180,000	£200,000
Qtr 2 26/27	£1,000,000	£140,000	£157,500	£175,000
Qtr 3 26/27	£1,000,000	£120,000	£135,000	£150,000
Qtr 4 26/27	£750,000	£75,000	£84,375	£93,750
Qtr 1 27/28	£0	£0	£0	£0
Qtr 2 27/28	£0	£0	£0	£0
Qtr 3 27/28	£0	£0	£0	£0
Qtr 4 27/28	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total	£6,000,000	£935,000	£1,051,875	£1,168,750
KMBF Interest 4.00%		£749,184	£749,184	£749,184
Extra Interest on NUE Loans		£185,816	£302,691	£419,566
Interest expected on diminishing £6M KMBF pot as NUE drawdown		£261,676	£261,676	£261,676
All interest earned at end of Year 3		£1,196,676	£1,313,551	£1,430,426
Plus original loan drawn		£6,000,000	£6,000,000	£6,000,000
KMBF Bank Account (example)		£7,196,676	£7,313,551	£7,430,426

**KMBF: £6,000,000
IN BANK**

**VALUE IF UNTOUCHED
£6,749,184
AFTER 3 YEARS**

**NUE PROPOSAL
AFTER 3 YEARS**

**KMBF: £7,196,676
IN BANK**

**POTENTIAL EXTRA
£447,492**

**NUE INTEREST PLUS KMBF INTEREST
ON DIMINISHING LOAN POT**

Example Project

- ▶ Pre-Loan application the borrower would be seeking advice from local district authority regarding planning consent.
- ▶ Borrower acquires the site (planning approved/or subject to approval).
- ▶ The site must be unencumbered to allow KCC to take 1st and only charge on title.
- ▶ A 2nd charge could potentially be allowed but only with KCC holding a Deed of Priority for the loan amount, interest due and all associated costs, should there be a need to recover the loan.
- ▶ RICS Valuation to confirm current value, future value of units, rental income, an indication regarding cost of works.
- ▶ RICS Valuation is paid for by the borrower and must note the interests of KCC in the report document.
- ▶ RICS Valuation to be supported with quotes for works from a tendering process.
- ▶ ID, Insolvency and Company Checks undertaken.
- ▶ Bevan Brittan provide report on Title for security to Strategic Programme Manager.
- ▶ Title Enquiries raised with the borrower's solicitor.
- ▶ Evidence of insurance policies noting KCC as an interested party and as first loss payee to be verified by Bevan Brittan.
- ▶ Application is review by minimum of 3 individuals (NUE Team) and Loan approved (under delegated authority).
- ▶ Loan released in staged payments (not to exceed 80% of the current loan to value).
- ▶ Monitoring/Site visits and evidence of spend before next drawdown.
- ▶ Loan is on interest bearing terms (to be agreed) over a maximum term of 36 months. Default Rate +2% of interest.
- ▶ Interest charged from date of drawdown of funds and collected on final repayment of loan.

Marketing of available funds via NUE/KMBF - NUE Team will be responsible for liaising with potential applicants and will discuss availability of funds, process to follow etc

FLOWCHART – NUE PROCESS ON PRE-RECEIPT AND ON RECEIPT OF LOAN APPLICATION



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Pre-Loan application the borrower would be seeking advice from local district authority regarding planning consent.

Potential projects identified:

Direct contact to NUE Team, (potential known developers with track record). signposting from KMBF, signposting from districts

NUE Team carry out site visits, discuss application requirements. This would cover (not exhaustive):
Proof of ownership (Title Docs, TR1)
Security, Additional Funds, Insurance, RICS Report, Quotes, ID, Details of acting solicitors (if applicable)

Application received with supporting documents. NUE Team instruct KCC Legal Services Provider to open a file and undertake conflict searches – if clear – to then review Land Registry Title to flag early any issues requiring further investigation.

NUE Team provide feedback to applicant on progress and clarify any outstanding issues to resolve. This is where the insurance required can be quantified following KCC Legal Services Provider input.

KCC Legal Services Provider will inform the NUE Team of the insurance cover required. This would include site (if required), Contractors Insurance and if any indemnity insurance is required

NUE Team review supporting documents (not exhaustive): ID cross checking details to Passports, read through the RICS reports for valuations, quotes to ensure comparable for works required.

NUE Team undertake a variety of checks (not exhaustive) Insolvency Checks, Director Checks, Companies House, Land Registry, Review Company Accounts,

NUE Team meet to discuss the application in detail and confirm that there is sufficient information now available to commence the formal Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is carried out by a minimum of 3 KCC Officers. This is normally the NUE Team with when required input from district/or finance.

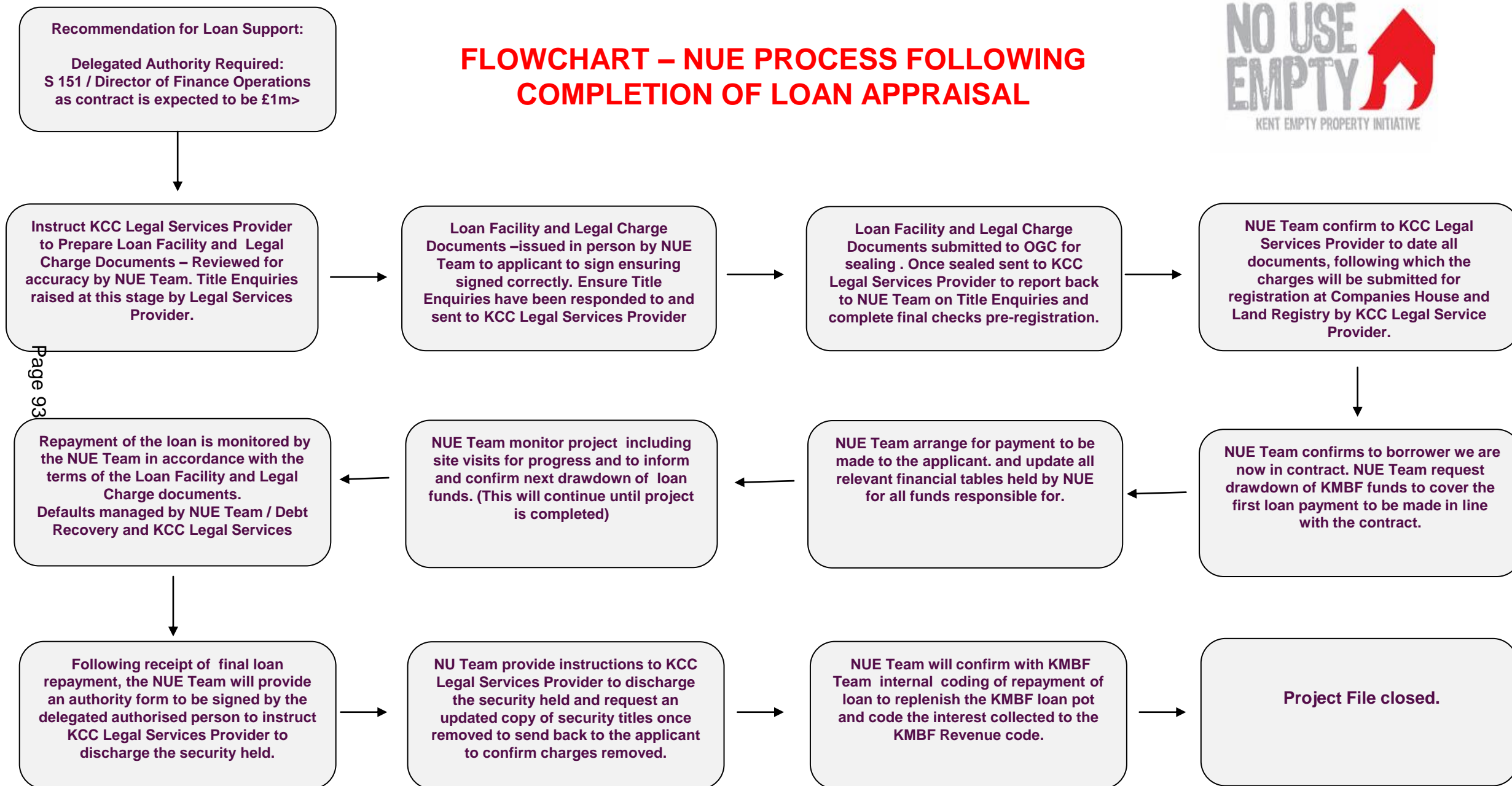
Decision to approve/not approve

If approved NUE Team prepare a summary of the project, including location, details of loan, security in the form of a "Recommend For Loan Approval Form" which also acts as the formal instruction to KCC Legal Services Provider.

Recommendation for Loan Support:

Delegated Authority Required: S 151 / Director of Finance Operations as contract is expected to be £1m>

FLOWCHART – NUE PROCESS FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF LOAN APPRAISAL



Thank You

steve.grimshaw@kent.gov.uk

Strategic Programme Manager
03000 417084

www.nue.org.uk



Q&A

From: Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration

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

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee 11 September 2025

Subject: Reallocation of Getting Building Funding

Key decision 25/00074

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division:

- Geoffrey Samme, Maidstone Northeast division
- Spencer Dixon, Maidstone Rural North division

Summary:

This paper sets out a need to reallocate £300,000 of Getting Building Fund money to the Bearsted Road Project from the Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 project due to unforeseen delays with the latter.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration to:

1. AGREE to reallocate the Getting Building Funding (GBF), originally awarded to Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2, to the A249 Bearsted Road Project.
- 2.. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth & Communities, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

1. Background

- 1.1 Getting Building Funding (GBF) was announced by the Government in June 2020. The funding was part of the then Government's plan to deliver upgrades to local infrastructure, boost skills, and help fuel an economic recovery by investing in shovel-ready housing and infrastructure projects, creating jobs and supporting economic recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 1.2 The previous Government decided that the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) would allocate the funding with their approval. In total, the Government provided £85m of GBF to SELEP in 2020.
- 1.3 In summer 2023, SELEP announced that there was £2.05m of unallocated GBF available to bid for. Projects had to be shovel-ready capital projects which would deliver in 12 months. Business cases for Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 and the A249 Bearsted Road Project were amongst those submitted for consideration.
- 1.4 SELEP Accountability Board met and considered the business cases submitted from across their area (Essex through to East Sussex).
- 1.5 On 12 January 2024, the SELEP Accountability Board agreed to “the award of £300,000 GBF to Kent County Council for the Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 project which has been assessed as offering High value for money with a Medium/High certainty of achieving this, subject to receipt of Government approval of project inclusion within the GBF programme, and agree that the GBF funding can be retained against the project for a maximum period of 12 months to 31 January 2025.”
- 1.6 The GBF had to be spent in accordance with the business case, which is available here: **Maidstone-Business-Suite-Phase-2.pdf**
- 1.7 The A249 Bearsted Road project was not awarded funding, but was placed on SELEP’s reserve list of projects, were more GBF to become available.

2. Project Progress

- 2.1 Regular monitoring of the GBF programme is now undertaken by KCC which has become the accountable body for the SELEP legacy capital programmes following the closure of SELEP.
- 2.2 In late 2024, the project promoter requested a project extension to 31 July 2025 which was agreed by Central Government. However, due to unforeseen delays beyond the control of the project promoter, this milestone was not able to be met.
- 2.3 Consequently, deliverability concerns and project risks were discussed by senior KCC officers (from GET and Finance Departments). It was recommended that the GBF funding be re-allocated to the A249 Bearsted Project, a project on SELEP’s original reserve list.
- 2.4 The A249 Bearsted Road project commenced in August 2025 for a period of up to 15 months, ensuring prompt spend of the grant funding. It also aligns with the original aims of the GBF, as it will unlock development at the Kent Medical Campus Enterprise Zone. The site is restricted to 75% build out without improved highway capacity (from the Bearsted Road scheme and M20 Junction 7). This is a key employment site for the county and will create 3,700 highly skilled jobs, including specialised research and development – an area key to boosting productivity. The reallocation of funding will also continue to benefit businesses and communities in the original intended borough.

3. Options

- 3.1 If Kent County Council were to choose to not reallocate the funding to a project on SELEP's original reserve project list, the GBF would either
- (i) be retained for the Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 project until such time as it could be delivered (currently not known); or
 - (ii) returned to central government.

4. Alignment to KCC Strategies:

- 4.1 **Framing Kent's Future 2022-2026** - The award of GBF to Kent-based projects supports KCC achieve its Levelling up Kent, Infrastructure for communities, and Environmental step change key priorities.
- 4.2 **Securing Kent's Future** - The recommendation is compliant with the Strategic Statement in the context of the significant financial challenges that the Council is facing. The A249 Bearsted Road Project is managed by KCC. The reallocation of funding towards this project will reduce potential cost pressures on KCC
- 4.3 **Kent & Medway Economic Framework** - supporting the conditions for growth

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The reallocation of GBF to the A249 Bearsted Road scheme will enable scheme delivery to continue as planned and provide £300,000 towards the £10.8m construction contract. The use of the funding for this project will avoid the money being returned to central government.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The award report for the A249 construction contract was signed in July 2025; and the completion of the contracts is imminent with construction commencing on 18th August 2025.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 The completion of the A249 Bearsted Road project will make travel in Maidstone better for all groups of the population, reducing journey times and delays for residents including those with protected characteristics.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Re-allocating GBF funding to the Bearsted Road project retains money for investment in the county which will contribute to economic growth and bring about numerous benefits for the local area.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration to:

1. AGREE to reallocate the Getting Building Funding (GBF), originally awarded to Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2, to the A249 Bearsted Road Project.
- 2.. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth & Communities, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

10. Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
Equality Impact Assessment

11. Contact details:

Lead officer: Sarah Nurden
Job title: KMEP & BAB Manager
Phone number: [+443000416518](tel:+443000416518)
E-mail: sarah.nurden@kent.gov.uk

Lead Director: Steph Holt-Castle
Job title: Director of Growth & Communities
Phone number: [+443000417076](tel:+443000417076)
E-mail: Stephanie.Holt-Castle@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Paul King
Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal
Regeneration

DECISION NO:

25/00074

For publication**Key decision: YES****Subject Matter / Title of Decision:** Reallocation of Getting Building Funding**Decision:**

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration is asked to

1. AGREE to reallocate the Getting Building Funding (GBF), originally awarded to Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2, to the A249 Bearsted Road Project.
- 2.. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth & Communities, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

KCC has recently taken on the ongoing monitoring and management of legacy capital programmes previously administered by South East Local Enterprise Partnership. Key Decision 24/00103 outlines the governance arrangements that would apply. However, these did not give specific authority for reallocation of funding to other projects so wanted a new decision is needed to reallocate funding the Bearsted Road project.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Public consultation for the A249 Bearsted Road was carried out in 2018.

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

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

If Kent County Council were to choose to not reallocate the funding to a project on SELEP's original reserve project list, the GBF would either

- (i) be retained for the Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 project until such time as it could be delivered (currently not known); or
- (ii) returned to central government.

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

.....
signed

.....
date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Bearsted Road Improvement Maidstone

Responsible Officer

Emma Palmer - GT TRA

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

Tim Read - GT TRA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Colin Shorter - GT TRA

Responsible Head of Service

Tim Read - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Haroona Chughtai - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

Project Overview and Background:

The scheme involves the signalisation of the A249 Bearsted Road roundabout and the enlargement and signalisation of Bearsted Road/New Cut Road roundabout. Smart technology will be employed to ease congestion, improve traffic flow and accommodate traffic associated with the Kent Medical Campus Enterprise Zone and growth in the town centre and Borough of Maidstone (Kent County Council, 2017). Additionally, to improve pedestrian experiences and safety improved footways will be provided with enhanced tactile crossing points.

The Kent Medical Campus Maidstone, A249 Bearsted Road roundabout and Bearsted Road/New Cut Road roundabout junction improvement was submitted as one of two priority schemes in Kent for funding support through the Department for Transport (DfT) National Productivity Investment Fund (Kent County Council, 2017a). An allocation of £4.0M towards the scheme was announced on the 19th October 2017 (Kent County Council, 2017b), this was combined with £5.4M National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) allocated to KCC in financial year 2017 and Developer Contributions of £1.92M (inclusive of £420k in-kind land gift) (Kent County Council, 2017).

The main objectives and anticipated benefits of the scheme comprise:

- Upgrade two junctions on the A249 Bearsted Road and New Cut Road roundabouts;
- Accommodate increased traffic volume from Kent Medical Campus;
- Support the redevelopment of the nearby Newnham Court Shopping Village;
- Ease congestion;
- Improve traffic flow into Maidstone;
- Unlock economic growth and job creation opportunities;
- Enable the delivery of housing development;
- Improve walking and crossing facilities;
- Improve air quality and/or reduce CO2 emissions; and
- Incentivising skills and apprentices.

The scheme proposes to significantly upgrade two junctions on the Local Road Network close to M20 J7 in Maidstone and install Smart Technology on the A249 Bearsted Road, a local strategic link into Maidstone.

The Kent Medical Campus Maidstone, situated on the northern arm of the Bearsted Road/New Cut Road roundabout, is a centre for care, health, science and education. It offers 1,000,000 ft2 of flexible accommodation and has the potential to create over 4,000 jobs. By 2027, it is expected to contribute £147 million annual Gross Value Added to the Kent and Medway economy. This makes it a key employment site for the county and promotes specialised research and development, which is crucial for boosting productivity (Kent County Council, 2017). The space is already being occupied by various businesses, including KIMS Hospital, Cygnet Healthcare and Care UK, with four plots still available for development. The scheme will improve capacity and traffic flow so that the increased volume from the Kent Medical Campus can be accommodated.

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership's (SELEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) explicitly refers to the role of Kent Medical Campus in attracting businesses of all sizes in the medical technology industry to the region. Both the life sciences and healthcare sectors are central to SELEP achieving its objectives to increase productivity and innovation, create private sector jobs, increase the number of knowledge-based workers, and raise skills levels. Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC) adopted Economic Development Strategy (EDS), sets out how future growth and prosperity of the borough will be supported. Working in partnership with MBC, KCC is determined to see local people benefit from new jobs, increasing prosperity and sustainable growth (Kent County Council, 2017).

Traffic modelling has identified the need to mitigate the traffic generated from housing growth in the town centre and to the south of the Borough. The scheme has been designed to support the planned housing growth in Maidstone and the redevelopment of the adjacent Newnham Court Shopping Village. The proposal is continued to be fully supported by the Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the Balance 2024. The plan emphasises improvements to Bearsted Road junctions as a priority for Maidstone Town Centre.

EQIA Overview:

In addition to the benefits that all users will gain from this scheme, individuals with certain protected characteristics should also experience additional advantages. The protected characteristics expected to see improvements include:

- Age (increased connectivity for individuals with reduced mobility and greater confidence in both walking and cycling options)
- Disability (inclusive facilities to increase accessibility to services and confidence in both walking and cycling routes)
- Pregnancy and maternity (improved pedestrian environment and safety)
- Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion (improvements to public realm could reduce fear

of hate crimes for vulnerable groups)

In the construction phase some protected characteristics may experience some negative impacts. These protected characteristics include:

- Age (construction works may cause confusion and anxiety due to temporary service changes and diversion routes)
- Disability (noise from construction could cause anxiety for some disabled individuals, and unfamiliar diversion routes may be challenging for visually impaired users)
- Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion (diversion routes with inadequate lighting might affect a users' sense of safety)
- Pregnancy and Maternity (temporary footpath closures could be challenging for pregnant individuals and people with young children, increasing the likelihood of tripping)

The appropriate mitigation actions are outlined in the below sections.

Section B – Evidence

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

No

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

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Public Consultation took place for residents in October/November 2018. The sessions were well attended and the feedback received was recorded and minor alterations to the design were made to reflect those comments. Delays caused by COVID & various funding challenges allowed the design to undergo a full review, with the outcome being the current, more robust layout providing the dual carriageway & greatly improved pedestrian links.

Discussions with the KCC Diversity Team confirmed that an EQIA would be required and which protected groups should be considered in the EQI Screening. The KCC Diversity Team reviewed the EQI Screening document and agreed the content of this EQIA.

There has been on-going reports and discussions at the Maidstone Joint Transport Board meetings. In between the Joint Transport Board meetings responses to queries from members of public and local members have been responded accordingly. Newsletters, including the most recent August 2025 edition, are distributed to the public to provide updates on the scheme.

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

Yes

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

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

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
<p>In addition to the positive impacts identified for all residents and users of the scheme, specific positive impacts have been identified for the following protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity <input type="checkbox"/> Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion <p>Age:</p> <p>The scheme will widen and enhance pavement and crossing points. Since these walking routes are frequently used by older and younger people, especially for school commutes, the improvements to access and facilities will boost confidence in walking and cycling. This, in turn, will encourage greater use of these routes for learning, education , leisure and health.</p> <p>Enhancements in the infrastructure, such as improved pedestrian crossings, will greatly enhance user experience. This will lead to increased usage, improved traffic safety, reduced fear of crime and greater confidence in making independent journeys for school, social activities, recreation and travel to essential services. The clear and well-signed routes will help prevent confusion in new areas, which is often experienced by both young and older people.</p> <p>The schemes will improve connections to The Crematorium, Shopping Village & KIMS, meaning that those with decreased mobility will be able to travel more directly and easily. This will increase access to the service and subsequently increase access to vital hub locations.</p> <p>Disability:</p> <p>The design will incorporate inclusive facilities accessible to disabled users. The scheme will enhance connections to The Crematorium, Shopping Village & KIMS allowing those with limited mobility to travel more directly and easily. Additionally, widening of the pavement will improve accessibility for individuals in wheelchairs. This will increase access to the service and subsequently increase access to vital hub locations. The clear and well-signed routes will help uncertainty in new areas often experienced by disabled people.</p> <p>Pedestrian crossings will also be upgraded. Improvements in infrastructure such as improved pedestrian crossings will significantly improve the user experience, leading to increased use, improved traffic safety, reduced fear of crime and increased confidence to make independent journeys for school, social, recreation and travel to essential services.</p> <p>Cycle routes are often infrequently used by disabled people with mild to moderate disabilities due to a lack of accessible facilities. Improvements to access and facilities will increase confidence in the routes and use for learning, education, leisure, and health.</p> <p>Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion:</p>

The schemes would provide public realm improvements through enhanced footways and lighting which could improve feeling of safety for women, transgender and non-binary individuals, ethnic minorities and people of different faiths who could be subject to hate crimes

Pregnancy and maternity:

The Schemes will include improvements to pavements, pedestrian crossings, and highway surfaces. Therefore, there will be a decreased risk of falls or injury, that may disproportionately impact pregnant women. Widening footways will also benefit parents with prams and pushchairs.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Age

Construction could result in temporary closure, & diversion of footpaths for users, this may result in uneven footway surfaces which could increase the chance of tripping in young and older pedestrians.

During construction, pedestrians and road users may have to find alternative and more lengthy routes to access services (such as hospital, schools, public transport etc.). If access to services and access to transport is disrupted it could disproportionately impact elderly people's health and wellbeing as they may stop attending social groups, being active or attending health appointments.

Noise disruption from the construction works could cause anxiety and confusion for some older and younger people.

Mitigating Actions for Age

☐ A safety audit was completed at the design and construction stage in August 2019. NMU audits will be undertaken to ensure due consideration is given to all road users.

☐ The design will meet all statutory requirements including the Equality Act 2010, with all good practices in mind.

☐ Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure they can access and use the highway safely during the construction works.

☐ The design will meet all statutory requirements including the Equality Act 2010, with all good practices in mind.

☐ Access to services kept clear with ramps where required.

☐ Construction sites and diversion routes to follow health and safety regulation.

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Colin Shorter

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

Yes

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

The construction phase will result in temporary closures of footpaths, for road users including pedestrians & cyclists.

This may temporarily disrupt access to essential services for disability groups meaning alternative, lengthier

routes may be required.

Construction works can cause major obstructions on key walking routes and unexpected changes to the 'landscape' for blind and partially sighted people.

Noise disruption from the construction works could cause anxiety and confusion for some disabled people.

Mitigating actions for Disability

- ☐ A safety audit was completed at the design and construction stage in August 2019. NMU audits will be undertaken to ensure due consideration is given to all road users.
- ☐ Ensure designs are carried out in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which gives guidance based on current legislation for non-motorised users (NMU) and those with disabilities.
- ☐ The design will meet recommended guidance from the Department for Transport on inclusive mobility, the Kent Design Guide and associated standard details.
- ☐ The need for the schemes has been identified through assessment by KCC in partnership with local District development and transport strategies.
- ☐ Risk assessment to be completed for affected groups prior to construction.
- ☐ The design will meet all statutory requirements including the Equality Act 2010, with all good practices in mind.
- ☐ Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure they can access and use the highway safely during the construction works.
- ☐ The design will meet all statutory requirements including the Equality Act 2010, with all good practices in mind.
- ☐ Access to services kept clear with ramps where required.
- ☐ Construction sites and diversion routes to follow health and safety regulation.

Responsible Officer for Disability

Colin Shorter

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Sex

During construction, women may feel unsafe using diversions away from usual walking or cycling routes or waiting in temporary structures or adjacent to construction sites due to fear of crime.

Mitigating actions for Sex

- ☐ Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings, where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure users can access and use the highway safely during the construction works.
- ☐ Ensure appropriate, lit diversion routes are chosen and well signed during the construction works.

Responsible Officer for Sex

Colin Shorter

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

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Yes

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

During construction, individuals that identify as women may feel unsafe using diversions away from usual walking or cycling routes due to fear of crime.

Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

<p>☐ Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure residents can access and use the walkway safely during the construction works.</p> <p>☐ Ensure appropriate, lit diversion routes are chosen and well signed during the construction works.</p>
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Colin Shorter
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
Yes
Negative impacts for Race
During construction, communication barriers could cause confusion and anxiety for different ethnic groups in relation to the construction works due to the potential for a language barrier. Ethnic minority individuals may feel unsafe using diversions away from usual walking or cycling routes due to fear of crime.
Mitigating actions for Race
<p>☐ Public engagement materials during construction to be available in alternative languages on request.</p> <p>☐ Ensure appropriate, lit diversion routes are chosen and well signed during the construction works.</p>
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Colin Shorter
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
Yes
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Individuals of different faiths may feel unsafe using diversions away from usual walking or cycling routes sites due to fear of crime.
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
<p>☐ Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure residents can access and use the walkway safely during the construction works.</p> <p>☐ Ensure appropriate, lit diversion routes are chosen and well signed during the construction works.</p>
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Colin Shorter
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Yes
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Individuals from a sexual orientation minority may feel unsafe using diversions away from usual walking or cycling routes sites due to fear of crime.
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
<p>☐ Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure residents can access and use the walkway safely during the construction works.</p> <p>☐ Ensure appropriate, lit diversion routes are chosen and well signed during the construction works.</p>
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Colin Shorter
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Yes
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
During construction there is an increased risk of falls if pregnant women are walking unfamiliar routes and increased walking distances. Unfamiliar routes could prove difficult for individuals travelling with young children or pushchairs.
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
☐ Construction sites and diversion routes to follow health and safety regulations. Diversion routes to be appropriately lit and well signed with ramped access to services as required.
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Colin Shorter
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
Yes
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
During construction, diversion and major construction work could impact on travel plans if works are not known in advance. Additionally, construction works and changes to the site area could affect planning for independent travel with client groups.
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
☐ Public engagement, via letter drops, websites, social media, and public meetings where appropriate, to ensure all users are aware of construction works/programme and any temporary access arrangements to ensure they can access and use the highway safely during the construction works.
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Colin Shorter

From: Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration

Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee - 11 September 2025

Subject: Prevention in Growth, Environment and Transport

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: n/a

Future Pathway of report: n/a

Electoral Division: All Divisions

Summary: This paper provides an overview of the role that Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) services play in the prevention of demand for social care, health and children's services. This paper will explain and demonstrate how these services support the Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) Prevention Framework, the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy, KCC's strategic objective set out in Securing Kent's Future which prioritised 'New Models of Care and Support' and the NHS 10 Year Health Plan.

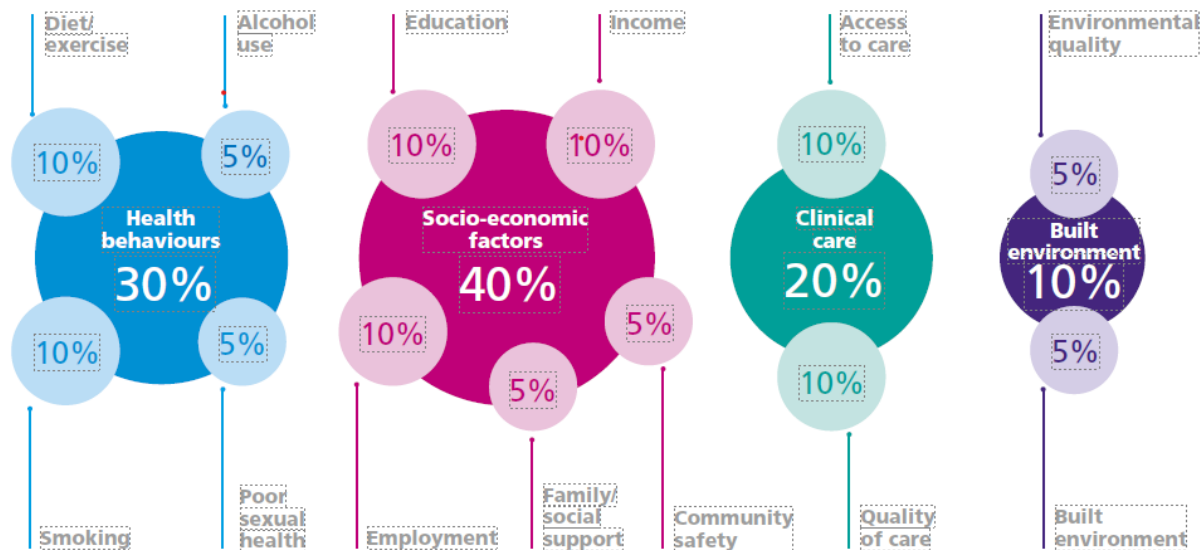
GET services allow our residents to live happier, healthier lives in resilient, connected communities that will, in the short, medium and long term, lead to a reduction in demand for costly Adult Social Care & Health, Children & Young People and NHS services.

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

1. Introduction

- 1.1 "Prevention is about helping people stay healthy, happy and independent for as long as possible. This means reducing the chances of problems from arising in the first place and, when they do, supporting people to manage them as effectively as possible." Department of Health and Social Care 2018.
- 1.2 Kent County Council has a statutory duty under The Care Act (2014) to prevent, reduce and delay the development of needs for care and support by promoting individual wellbeing and ensuring that people can live as independently as possible.

- 1.3 There are a wide range of things that determine someone's health and wellbeing. Clinical care determines 20 percent of someone's health and wellbeing. The remaining 80 percent of factors that affect health are called the wider determinants of health. The image below shows the factors that affect health and to what extent.



Based on: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, US County health rankings model 2014
www.countyhealthrankings.org/sites/default/files/media/document/CHRR_2014_Key_Findings.pdf

- 1.4 GET services play a fundamental role in positively contributing to the 80 percent of factors that affect the health and wellbeing of the population of Kent. GET services that play a particular role include, but are not limited to;

- Highways and Transportation
- Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
- Community Safety
- Trading Standards
- Libraries, Registration & Archives
- Economy
- Culture & Creative Economy
- Gypsy and Romany Traveller Residents' Service
- Planning
- Public Rights of Way
- Country Parks and Countryside Partnerships
- Kent's Broadband Programme
- Waste Services and Kent Resource Partnership
- Natural Environment and Coast
- Active Kent and Medway

- 1.5 [Video about GET and Prevention](#) - this short (3min 30s) video shows how GET impacts the lives of all Kent residents and supports positive health outcomes and health creation.

- 1.6 Health Creation is the process through which individuals and communities gain a sense of purpose, hope and control over their own lives and immediate

environment. When this happens, their health and wellbeing are enhanced. The concept is built around 3Cs:

- Control: Having influence over one's life and environment.
- Contact: Building meaningful relationships and connections.
- Confidence: Developing self-belief and resilience.

2. Key Strategies and Policies

- 2.1 National and local policy is shifting towards a focus on health creation to reduce demand for health and social care services by prioritising prevention, early intervention, and community-based support. There are a number of local current strategies and future opportunities to strengthen resilience, improve wellbeing, and reduce long-term service dependency.
- 2.2 KCC's current Strategic Statement, [Framing Kent's Future](#), sets out four priorities for the Council over the period 2022-26. It requires all Directorates, at an operational level, to prioritise the 'New Models of Care and Support' objective as a collective. At the time of writing this report, the emerging Strategic Statement is not yet sighted.
- 2.3 KCC acknowledges that it is more effective and efficient to work as one organisation and with partners to prevent care needs occurring or increasing. To help achieve this, an [Adult Social Care Prevention Framework 2025-2035](#) has been drafted that sets out KCC's ambition to help more people in Kent live fulfilled, healthy and independent lives now and in the future. It sets out the 'Principle of prevention first'. GET services played an active role in contributing towards this Framework.
- 2.4 The [Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy](#) (ICS) sets out a vision to "work together to make health and wellbeing better than any partner can do alone." The ICS acknowledges that the wider determinants of health, for example education, housing, environment, transport, employment and community safety, have the greatest impact on our health. GET services again played an active role in contributing towards this Framework.
- 2.5 The [NHS 10 Year Health Plan for England](#) proposes a radical shift from sickness to prevention.
- 2.6 The [Kent and Medway Integrated Work and Health Strategy 2025-30](#) has been developed collaboratively between the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP). It was presented to the last meeting (1st July) of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee, and subsequently adopted by the County Council. This joint initiative reflects a shared commitment to improving the health and productivity of our workforce, benefiting businesses and organisations and the local community.
- 2.7 The Government acknowledges through the [Cassey Commission](#) that Adult Social Care and Health in England is facing unprecedented challenges due to rising demand, increased costs of care and support and budget pressures. Adopting a prevention-first approach has emerged as a one of the sustainable

solutions, helping people live independently while easing the financial strain on local authorities, benefiting both residents and providers. The plethora of recent reports on prevention including the joint report published by the Local Government Association [Earlier action and support: The case for prevention in adult social care and beyond](#) underlines this fact.

- 2.8 The [Kent Marmot Coastal Region Programme](#) is a pioneering initiative led by KCC Public Health in partnership with the Institute of Health Equity at University College London. It aims to reduce entrenched health inequalities in Kent's coastal communities by addressing the social determinants of health through a whole-systems, place-based approach. The programme covers Swale, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, and Ashford. A range of GET services play a central role supporting the initial programme focus on work and health, and skills for work.
- 2.9 Demand for adult social care support in Kent is expected to increase by 9% in the next five years.¹ This increase in demand for health and care services is driven by demographic pressures, high rates of unemployment, increasing mental health needs and a growing number of safeguarding referrals.
- Mental health support needs in Kent will rise by 44% in 5 years.¹
 - Youth unemployment in Kent is 5.9% higher than the national rate.² Thanet has the highest youth unemployment rate in the South East at 11.4%.²
 - The number of older people aged 65+ in Kent is expected to rise by 28% in the next decade, with those over 85 increasing by 53% by 2035. If no action is taken, by 2035 the costs associated with meeting the needs of the over 65s alone will rise by at least 48%.³
 - According to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) cohort model developed by Whole Systems Partnership in collaboration with KCC Public Health, we expect in Kent an increase of 17.9% of people with dementia between 2022 and 2027.
 - Over 10 years to 2023, male life expectancy inequality in England increased to 10.5 years; for females it widened to 8.3 years.⁴ These life expectancy trends are reflected in Kent, especially in coastal and deprived areas.⁵
- 2.10 There is strong evidence for actions which could prevent or delay the development of dementia. The largest risk factors for the development of dementia are hearing loss, education, smoking, social isolation and depression. Modelling indicates dementia prevalence could be reduced by 40% by acting on these and other modifiable risk factors.

3. Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) Services

- 3.1 Through a wide range of place-based and regulatory services, GET plays an important role in supporting the wider determinants of health and reducing demand on overstretched health and social care services. GET services have proven economic and social benefits as illustrated by the wealth of studies around housing, leisure and cultural services, regulatory services and transport and highways.⁶ The studies all point to a need to invest in place services and to work as one Council, one organisation, together with partners, to support happy

and healthy lives and subsequently prevent, reduce and delay demand for health and social care services in the future.

3.2 Below are some examples that demonstrate the role that GET services play in Kent County Council's approach to prevention.

- 3.2.1 Economy function – a strong economy and access to good jobs are vital for good population health and wellbeing. Secure, fairly paid employment improves physical and mental wellbeing, reduces health inequalities, and lowers demand on health and social care services. Conversely, unemployment and poor-quality work contribute to poorer health outcomes, social exclusion, and increased public service costs. Promoting inclusive economic growth is therefore a key public health priority.

As of 2025, 27% of economic inactivity among Kent residents aged 16–64 is due to long-term health conditions, a rate higher than the South East average.⁷

- 3.2.2 Country Parks - parks and open spaces are vital public health assets. They promote physical activity, reduce stress, and improve mental wellbeing. Their accessibility supports health equity, particularly for disadvantaged communities. These spaces reduce demand for public health and social care services and play a key role in fostering community cohesion.

Several studies have calculated the benefits of parks and open spaces for the economy, the health of local communities and for the environment. One study, conducted by the Fields in Trust Charity, suggests that parks and green spaces have been estimated to save the NHS around £111 million per year based solely on a reduction in GP visits.⁸

- 3.2.3 Explore Kent, Active Kent and Medway, Public Rights of Way, Highways and Transportation all enable and encourage people to be more active. To walk or cycle to school or work can deliver many benefits such as improved physical and mental health, more social connections and environmental benefits. The Department for Transport carried out research that found a “total benefit” of between £479 and £641 per year for each individual cycling more often, instead of driving.⁶

- 3.2.4 Library Service - libraries are vital community assets for public health. They provide safe, inclusive spaces that support learning, mental wellbeing, reduce social isolation, and promote digital and health literacy. Libraries offer trusted, non-clinical environments for early intervention, self-care, skills development and community engagement. A 2023 report titled ‘Libraries for living, and for living better’ estimates that library services in England can generate social benefits to their communities to a value of at least £3.4bn per year.⁹

- 3.2.5 Trading Standards (TS) – this service plays a vital role in protecting public health by ensuring consumer products are safe, food is correctly

labelled, and age-restricted goods are not sold to children. TS also disrupts illicit trade, supports legitimate businesses, and helps reduce pressure on health and social care services.

In 2024, a major enforcement operation across Maidstone, Sittingbourne and Dover led to the seizure of over 150,000 illegal cigarettes, 75kg of hand-rolling tobacco, nicotine pouches and hundreds of illicit vapes, significantly reducing health risks and criminal activity.

The now national 'Local Vape Action' partnership was initially trialled in Tunbridge Wells and has since been started in Ashford. This project brings together retailers, local authorities and the Police to prevent sales of illicit goods and sales to children. The initiative focuses on preventing underage sales through education, enforcement, and engagement, with early results showing reduced illegal sales and strong public support.

In addition, TS provides business advice and promotes fair trading, contributing to healthier environments, consumer protection, and economic resilience.

- 3.2.6 Trading Standards Checked – doorstep crime is a serious issue in Kent, particularly affecting older, socially excluded and lonely adults. In 2024, victims in Kent lost an average of £15,700 each.¹⁰ Most victims are aged 65 and over, with 18% aged 80+, and many live alone or have physical or cognitive impairments.

The impact is severe: when defrauded in this way, victims are 2½ times more likely to die or go into residential care than their non-defrauded peers within two years.¹¹ Many suffer long-term psychological harm, including depression, anxiety, and loss of confidence. The broader UK cost of doorstep crime is estimated at £1.3 billion annually, excluding health and social care costs.¹¹

Kent County Council's [Trading Standards Checked scheme](#) helps reduce doorstep crime. Whilst it is not known how many victims of this crime would require KCC funded care it must be recognised that they will have been defrauded of some or all of their assets and therefore are more likely to qualify for KCC funded care.

- 3.2.7 Broadband - universal access to broadband is essential for improving public health outcomes in Kent. It enables digital inclusion, supports remote healthcare, reduces isolation, and improves access to education, employment, and public services. According to Ofcom's Connected Nations Data¹², as of January 2025, 76.4% of homes and businesses across Kent can access a gigabit-capable connection. Our ongoing work with the telecoms providers is crucial to improve connectivity in both urban and rural areas for equitable access to telehealth, digital care and supporting the wider determinants of health.

3.2.8 Strategic Planning and Infrastructure – this function is essential in ensuring well-designed community infrastructure, such as community hubs, transport networks, health centres, green space etc, which promotes good health, enables prevention and improves access to care and services. As a strategic function, it plays a key role in aligning investment, housing, transport, and economic development to address the wider determinants of health. A new 'Principal Planning for Health Officer', jointly funded by KCC Public Health, Strategic Planning and Active Kent and Medway, will ensure places and spaces in Kent are well designed, sustainable and positively impact on the health and wellbeing of communities.

3.2.9 Many services in GET contribute to tackling loneliness and social isolation, which have profound impacts on health and are increasingly recognised as public health priorities in the UK. These issues significantly increase risks of depression, physical illness, and health inequalities - especially among older adults and vulnerable groups. Addressing them through community engagement, social prescribing, place-based services and targeted support improves wellbeing and reduces pressure on health and social care systems.

Libraries, Community Wardens, Active Kent and Medway, Creative and Cultural Economy, Broadband, Positive Wellbeing, Country Parks and Countryside Partnerships, Public Rights of Way, Highways and Transportation are just some of the services that promote and enable social connectedness in the heart of Kent communities.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Evidence, research and strategic policy at a national level all point towards prevention as the best and most effective way to tackle rising demand and rising public sector costs.

Kent County Council's Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) services are central to delivering effective prevention and promoting public health across the county. By addressing the wider determinants of health such as employment, environment, infrastructure, safety, and social connectedness, GET services reduce demand on overstretched health and social care systems and improve long-term outcomes for residents.

The evidence presented demonstrates that investing in place-based and regulatory services not only enhances wellbeing but also contributes to economic resilience and service sustainability. As demand continues to rise and resources remain constrained, a whole-system, preventative approach rooted in collaboration, data-driven planning, and community engagement is essential.

GET will continue to work across the Council and with partners to embed prevention in all policies and services, ensuring Kent's communities are supported to live healthier, happier, and more independent lives.

5. Recommendation

Recommendation:

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

6. Contact details

Report Author:	Relevant Director:
Rebecca Law Business Innovation Manager	Stephanie Holt-Castle Director Growth & Communities
03000 413389	03000 412064
Rebecca.Law@kent.gov.uk	Stephanie.Holt-Castle@kent.gov.uk

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- 2 [Kent & Medway Economic Dashboard](#) – KCC Kent Analytics, May 25.
- 3 [Adult Social Care Prevention Framework 2025 - 2035 \(Draft\)](#) – KCC Adult Social Care and Health, June 2025.
- 4 [Health Inequalities Dashboard: statistical commentary](#) - GOV.UK, May 2025.
- 5 [Cabinet Committee Report - Health Inequalities – An overview on the differences in the wider determinants of health and health outcomes across Kent](#) - Dr Ellen Schwartz Deputy Director of Public Health, Tami Sonubi Senior Public Health Intelligence Analyst Pam McConnell Business Support Officer, January 2024.
- 6 [Demonstrating the beneficial impact of local government spending](#) – a report by Shared Intelligence, Nov 2019.
- 7 [Health and Wellbeing Board Report - Kent and Medway Integrated Work and Health Strategy](#) - Aeilish Geldenhuys, Strategic Head of Service, Public Health Daniel Ratcliff, Head of Skills, Employment and Adult Education Jacqui Moore, ICS Prevention Lead, June 2025.
- 8 [Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces](#) - Fields in Trust Wellbeing Valuation research, 2018.
- 9 [Libraries for Living, and for Living Better](#) – University of East Anglia Creative, UEA and Health Economics Consulting, June 2023.

- 10 [Cabinet Committee Report - Trading Standards Checked](#) - Rebecca Law, Business Innovation Manager, March 25.
- 11 [Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers \(ACTSO\) - Summary of Doorstep Crime Report to National Tasking Group](#) (downloads a document) – Ruth Andrews, May 2014.
- 12 [Broadband Coverage and Speed Test Statistics for Kent](#), thinkbroadband.com, January 2025.

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From: Paul Webb – Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Simon Jones – Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport.

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee

Subject: Protecting the Communities and Economy of Kent

Past Pathway of report: None

Future Pathway of report: None

Electoral Division: All

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out how services provided by Kent County Council from within the Growth and Communities Division protect residents and businesses within the County from harm.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and make any comments to the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Whilst Kent is recognised as a great place to live, visit and operate a business from, there are issues which have the potential bring about harm to residents and businesses.
- 1.2 Some of those issues can be mitigated by helping people understand the risk and giving them the tools to protect themselves. Some, however, require more direct intervention due to their nature.
- 1.3 This report will set out how various aspects of life and doing business in Kent are protected from harm by our services, much of which is otherwise not visible to the public nor all of the county's businesses.

2. Consumers

- 2.1 All of us, in our daily lives, fulfil the role of a consumer. Businesses, too, act in that capacity.
- 2.2 The risk of harm to consumers falls predominately into two categories, the risk of physical harm and the risk of economic harm, from being defrauded.
- 2.3 KCC's Trading Standards Team have the duty to enforce the law in relation to the sale of dangerous goods to consumers. The Team operate at all levels of

- 2.4 the supply chain from retail outlets, including internet based sellers, through wholesalers to manufacturers and importers.
- 2.5 A key aspect of this service delivery is for our Trading Standards officers to work with and support businesses who want to do the right thing, which is the vast majority. Expert officers provide advice and guidance to help businesses comply with the law.
- 2.6 Occasionally a business chooses not to follow the advice given and breaks the law, meaning that dangerous goods can be on the market. Our Trading Standards Team have very significant legal powers to have dangerous goods removed from the consumer market and, if appropriate, to prosecute offenders.
- 2.7 The greatest protection is secured when businesses comply with the law. Trading Standards' approach, therefore, is to work with businesses to bring about legal compliance. There are many methods of doing this ranging from a quiet, informal conversation through the serving of formal compliance notices and ranging up to prosecution, including restraint and seizure of financial assets gained through criminality. Whilst the option to prosecute is important and necessary as a deterrent, this option is reserved for the most serious or repetitive offending. Prosecution does not always bring about the end of illegal behaviours whereas many of the other methods used do.
- 2.8 Most consumers, given access to correct, up to date information, are capable of protecting themselves from harm. Our Innovation and Business Intelligence Communications Team undertake significant activity to ensure that consumers in Kent have that information whether it be about food safety recalls or scams that are being perpetrated within The County. The team have over 73,000 followers and, in 2024/25, their posts were seen by Kent residents over 20 million times. Each 'warn and inform' alert was seen by over 40,000 people and, in a survey, 72% of Kent residents said that these alerts helped them avoid being scammed.
- 2.9 Members are encouraged to follow the 'Kent Protect' various social media content and to share that content with residents and businesses in their divisions.

3. Vulnerable consumers

- 3.1 Within the wide group of consumers generally, is a smaller subset of consumers who would be considered as being vulnerable. Vulnerability may take many forms including age (young and old), health, disability and social exclusion.
- 3.2 It is recognised that socially excluded and lonely adults are at significantly higher risk of falling prey to dishonest businesses and that, when defrauded in this way, are 2.4 times more likely to die or go into residential care than their non-defrauded peers⁽¹⁾. Fraud is now the county's most prevalent crime. The average age of mail scam victims is 74⁽¹⁾. Over half of people over the age of 65 believe they have been the target of a scam⁽¹⁾. As well as being devastating for the individual concerned and their family, this can also have a direct impact on the County Council's adult social care provision and budgets. Whilst it is not

(1) age uk - scamming and its effect on vulnerable individuals

- 3.3 known how many of these victims would require KCC funded care it must be recognised that they will have been defrauded of some or all of their assets and therefore are more likely to qualify for KCC funded care.
- 3.4 Trading Standards employs two dedicated Safeguarding Officers who work across Kent, actively engaging with target groups of residents to warn and inform them about known scams and the tactics used by fraudsters. In doing so they provide those residents with the knowledge they need to recognise when they are at risk of being defrauded and also of how to prevent this happening.
- 3.5 Those officers also engage with residents who have been victims of this crime to prevent any further frauds taking place. In 2024/25 173 interventions of this type took place saving victims £431,917.
- 3.6 Our Community Wardens, in the communities they serve, visit and engage with those who are at risk of becoming victims. Data from a nationally funded scheme identifies individuals who may be being targeted by remote fraud (like fake prize draws). Wardens carry out visits to warn and advise residents and also to signpost local facilities to combat loneliness, which is a known cause of people falling victim in this type of fraud. Lonely and socially isolated older adults are 3½ times more likely to enter local authority funded residential care⁽²⁾. The health impacts of social isolation are recognised as being equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes per day.
- 3.7 The Communications Team described at 2.6 offer a product which they have developed in-house called 'TEPO' (TEacher in your POcket) which is designed to allow family members and care professionals to help vulnerable consumers have the information they need to stay safe. The product is video based and is intended for the family member or care professional to show a video to the person they are supporting and to spark a conversation. Current videos on offer are around electrical safety in the home (including keeping warm safely), how to say no to doorstep crime and help with stopping smoking.

4. Protecting our borders and supply chains

- 4.1 The U.K. imports 46% of the food we all consume. No single country accounts for more than 11% of the total imported. This means that food is imported from countries that have significantly different food safety requirements to those we expect to apply in the U.K.
- 4.2 Detailed official controls are carried out at our borders by Port Health Authorities, who include Dover District Council and Ashford Borough Council. KCC's Kent Scientific Services Team carry out testing of food, feed and consumer goods to allow unsafe products to be prevented from entering the country and to facilitate the entry of safe products to feed the nation. The team carry this out for the U.K.'s biggest ports including Felixstowe, Port of London, Southampton and our own ports at Dover and the Channel Tunnel. This work is carried out on a charged for basis, with costs being levied on the importer via the relevant Port Health Authority.

(2) Social Finance (2015) Investing to tackle loneliness - a discussion paper

4.3 Examples of the unsafe food prevented from entering the country include:

- Fresh vegetables carrying excessive residues of pesticides
- Nuts containing excessive levels of Aflatoxin (a carcinogenic mould)
- Plastic cookware which leached formaldehyde into the food being prepared
- Soft drinks containing excessive colourings and non-permitted sweeteners

4.4 At the Kent ports, our Trading Standards Service has a small team of specialist officers carrying out controls on consumer goods other than food or animal feed to protect U.K. consumers and businesses from unsafe goods entering the country. This work protects the whole of the U.K. and is fully funded by grant from the Office of Product Safety and Standards, part of the Department for Business and Trade in central government.

4.5 In 2024/25 this team prevented 285,000 dangerous item entering the U.K. Examples include:

- Illegal vape devices (some of which were declared as being 'glassware')
- Nicotine pouches
- Counterfeit cosmetics
- Teeth whitening strips containing excessive hydrogen peroxide
- Children's shoes with detachable small parts causing a choking hazard
- Five tonnes of hydroquinone, a chemical used in skin lightening cosmetics but which is dangerous and illegal.

5. Protecting businesses

5.1 Successful, confident businesses are critically important to the economic prosperity of Kent.

5.2 Our Trading Standards Service has a team dedicated to supporting and protecting local businesses.

5.3 Trading Standards Officers provide advice to local businesses to help them comply with the law and also to share the wide experience the service has of how to look after customers and enhance their reputation.

5.4 For those businesses looking to trade further afield, Trading Standards operates the statutorily based 'Primary Authority' scheme. This scheme means that advice given to a company who have signed a primary authority agreement with us will be accepted nationwide, removing one of the biggest frustrations of business, that of inconsistent enforcement of the law. Primary authority work is carried out on a charged for, cost recovery basis.

5.5 Kent Scientific Services makes it's testing facilities available to businesses who do not have their own laboratories. Testing is sought to identify allergens in food, specify the nutritional content in food and animal feed, check products for

unknown contaminants and also to investigate complaints from the public about, for example, the presence of a foreign body in food.

- 5.6 Some areas of business have, over many years, developed a generic poor reputation which holds back businesses operating in that sector from growing and also restricts consumer confidence to engage businesses to carry out work. One of these business areas is the home improvement and repair sector. KCC operates a “Trading Standards Checked” membership scheme where businesses can submit themselves to an audit of themselves and then, assuming they meet the criteria, carry the badge to show consumers that they are reliable, trustworthy businesses. As well as helping those businesses, this membership scheme allows us to signpost consumers to reliable tradespeople and reduces the likelihood that those consumers will be left vulnerable to rogue trading.
- 5.7 Local, low-level anti-social behaviour (ASB) is known to have a detrimental impact on small, often retail businesses. The National Business Crime Centre has stated that “Many businesses suffer from the effects of anti-social behaviour but particularly it can impact small independent retailers. Small outlets in local communities can act as a hotspot for ASB causing mental, physical and financial harm to a business.” Some of the harms identified include higher prices for goods, higher insurance premiums and loss of investment.
- 5.8 Our Community Safety Team, including our Community Wardens, work with partners, including Kent Police, district and borough councils and local community groups, to address this issue. Community Wardens provide a uniformed presence in the communities they serve, they are embedded in their communities and know and understand where and when ASB occurs and, in many cases, the person or people engaged in it. They work with local businesses to reduce the impact and work with those at risk of committing ASB to deter and divert them from that course.
- 5.9 Tackling neighbourhood crime and ASB is one of the eight priorities of the Kent Community Safety Agreement which is coordinated by our Community Safety Team. The Team has recently been recognised by Kent Police for their work bringing partners together to develop and implement strategies and share best practice in preventing ASB.
- 5.10 For legitimate businesses to trade successfully and to grow, a level playing field is required. Whilst the vast majority of businesses are legitimate and want to do the right thing, there are a small handful who deliberately or persistently break the law, putting consumers at risk of harm and competing unfairly with those legitimate businesses in the same market. Our Trading Standards Service has the legal power to prosecute for offences within the remit given to them by parliament. This power is used sparingly and is reserved for the most serious cases. Two examples in 2025 are:
- Three people convicted of conspiracy to defraud by reducing the mileage on second-hand vehicles (by the equivalent of four round trips to the moon).

- A company and installer who supplied a dangerous electric gate which failed and caused life-changing injuries to the home owner.

6. Protecting the rural economy

- 6.1 According to the National Audit Office, the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001 is estimated to have cost the U.K. economy £8Bn, £3Bn of that being borne by the public sector and the remaining £5Bn by the private sector. Economic losses did not just relate to farming but also, and in fact more so, the many businesses who rely on open access to the countryside including hotels, pubs, restaurants and activity providers. Following that outbreak a raft of new law was introduced to manage what is permitted to be fed to livestock and also to control movement of livestock. Since that outbreak there has been at least one further outbreak of Foot and Mouth and many outbreaks of other diseases like Bluetongue and Avian Influenza. Whilst serious, none of these have caused the widespread harm that the 2001 outbreak did.
- 6.2 Enforcement of the laws that were introduced is a duty upon our Trading Standards Service. Most enforcement is carried out working in partnership with the farming community, helping them comply rather than taking formal action via enforcement.
- 6.3 It is a sad fact that the farming industry is one which has greater than average levels of mental health issues and suicide. KCC Officers working in this area are always mindful of the impact of their work on individuals and work with partners, including rural community based organisations, to provide help and support wherever possible.
- 6.4 The Innovation and Business Intelligence Communications Team have also supported farmers by running information campaigns. The latest being the 'Take the Lead' campaign, encouraging dog walkers to keep control of their dogs and reduce attacks on livestock.

7. Protecting children and young people.

- 7.1 Several types of goods are restricted by law to prevent children and young people accessing them, for very good reason. The long term risks to adults who begin smoking as children are well known and, because of them, most want to quit and three quarters of adult smokers would never have started if they had the choice again. More than four in five smokers start before the age of 20. People who start smoking before the age of 18 (the legal age to be sold cigarettes) have higher levels of nicotine dependence than those who start after the age of 21, and therefore find it harder to quit⁽³⁾.
- 7.2 Vaping is now a well known issue for children and young people with many who would never choose to try smoking becoming addicted to the toxin that is nicotine by this route. Whilst vaping has a real public health benefit in helping existing smokers to quit, it has no benefit for those who have never smoked. As well as this addiction, studies are now being published showing the potential damage caused to children's lungs by vaping.

(3) - Stopping the start: our plan to create a smokefree generation, Department for Health and Social Care

- 7.3 Access to other products, including alcohol and fireworks, as well as putting young people at risk, also have a wider impact on communities.
- 7.4 The vape and tobacco market is known to have illicit elements to it, including organised criminals selling illegal products.
- 7.5 Our Trading Standards Service, supported with funding from KCC's Public Health Service, carry out extensive work removing illegal product from the market and enforcing the law on age restricted sales by deploying young people volunteers into retail premises to attempt to buy these goods.
- 7.6 The Team also work closely with the legitimate trade to help them develop systems to avoid selling to children. The now national 'Local Vape Action' partnership was initially trialled in Tunbridge Wells and has since been started in Ashford. This project brings together retailers, local authorities and the Police to prevent sales of illicit goods and sales to children. The Team also works with schools to provide information to help teachers demonstrate the dangers to students.

8. Protecting the Public – Learning from when it goes wrong

- 8.1 Two of our services are uniquely placed to learn from situations where people have died.
- 8.2 Kent and Medway Coroners, who are supported in their independent judicial capacity by the KCC Coroner Service, are charged with investigating death where the cause of death is unknown, the death was violent or unnatural or where the death occurred in prison, police detention or other form of state detention. In the course of their investigation it is not uncommon for the Coroner to identify an issue which, if acted upon, may prevent a future death. In these circumstances the Coroner issues a 'prevention of future deaths' report and the recipients are required to consider it and respond with their proposed actions. So far in 2025, 11 have been issued by the coroners covering Kent and Medway.
- 8.3 Our Community Safety Service coordinates and delivers the legally required reviews into a death which is linked in some way to domestic abuse or violence. These reviews are victim centred and aim to see life through the eyes of the victim and their children.
- 8.4 The purpose of a DHR is to understand what lessons can be learnt from domestic abuse-related deaths and to identify and implement local and national learning to better safeguard victims of domestic abuse.
- 8.5 A thorough and detailed report is produced following the carrying out of each review and is shared with, and approved by, the Home Office who share on any identified nationally relevant learning.
- 8.6 The Team draw together the lessons identified for local learning and deliver learning events for professionals to share the details of the improvements that should be made. Commonly two to three hundred professionals attend these events. Recent themes have included:

- Counter allegations
- Caring dynamics, domestic abuse and dementia
- Parental conflict

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 KCC's services have a significant key role to play in protecting Kent residents and businesses from harm
- 9.2 Much of the activity which is undertaken to achieve that protection is not widely known and appreciated by the public or businesses, who, generally, have an understanding that something is being done, but little concept of the scale of the effort. This is as it should be. If our work is being done well then the public should not need to be concerned about the safety of the food they buy every time they shop nor about the safety of the toys they give their children to play with.
- 9.3 The type of protection demonstrated in this paper is also a key element to supporting economic activity and growth. Consumer confidence is a vital element of trade and that confidence is enhanced by the protection work carried out by KCC.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and make any comments to the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services.

Report Author: Mark Rolfe	Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle
Job title: Head of Community Protection	Job title: Director of Growth & Communities
Telephone number: 03000 410336	Telephone number: 03000 412064
Email address: mark.rolfe@kent.gov.uk	Email address: Stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk

Annex

Public Protection Social Media:



<https://www.facebook.com/publicprotection>



<https://x.com/kentprotect>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtdaM7bkuOsbFpd8CzFnyhw>



<https://nextdoor.co.uk/agency/publicprotectionkent/?i=bgyytnwddkgspyhsfqmf>

From: Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration

Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee- 11 September 2025

Subject: The Economic Benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of Report: None

Electoral Division: All KCC electoral divisions

Summary: This report provides an overview of some of the anticipated economic benefits that will result from the Lower Thames Crossing.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider the report and make comments to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration.

1. Background:

- 1.1 The [Lower Thames Crossing \(LTC\)](#) is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) being delivered by National Highways. The scheme's Development Consent Order (DCO) was given approval by the Secretary of State for Transport on 25 March 2025. The LTC will provide an entirely new road crossing of the River Thames east of London, linking the M25 in Havering, the A13 in Thurrock and the A2 in Kent (east of Gravesend). The proposal includes 14.3 miles of new road and around 50 new bridges and viaducts. The crossing beneath the River Thames will comprise of two 2.6-mile tunnels making it the longest road tunnel in the UK.
 - 1.2 Currently the Dartford Crossing is the only way to cross the Thames east of London by road. This was designed to handle 135,000 vehicles a day, but the daily average now is 150,000 – with the busiest days seeing up to 180,000 vehicles using it. Almost 40% of the vehicles using the Dartford Crossing each day are freight vehicles or Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) some 10,000 of which pass through Kent to and from the Channel ports each day. The LTC will alleviate capacity constraints at Dartford while adding resilience to the strategic road network in and around Kent, albeit when combined with other required improvements to the A2/M2 and A20/M20 corridors and connecting roads.
-

- 1.3 The total estimated cost of the project is expected to be around £10 billion. On the 16th June 2025 the UK Government announced £590 million to allow National Highways and their appointed contractors to progress with the detailed design and undertake pre-construction work. The UK Government is currently exploring different financing models to fund the remaining construction costs, and this includes opportunities for private sector investment.
- 1.4 At the earliest, construction of the Lower Thames Crossing could start in 2026 and last a total of six years. As it stands the project is anticipated to have an opening year of 2032/2033. However, these timescales could change depending upon the final funding model.
- 1.5 Increased crossing capacity and greater journey time reliability will mean that residents and businesses in Kent will have a much greater range of opportunities for work, education and leisure. The LTC will unlock growth opportunities that are currently suppressed by the unreliability of the Dartford Crossing, which has constrained productivity in the Lower Thames area.
- 1.6 Various KCC teams are working closely with the LTC team including the Economy function to ensure that the scheme benefits the county as much as possible given its unique scale and the opportunities this represents.
- 1.7 This paper focuses on the economic benefits that the LTC will bring about as a new strategic trade route between the ports of the south-east, the midlands and the north. The LTC has the potential to create jobs, upskill local people and open up new opportunities for businesses.

2. Boosting the Kent & Medway Economy:

- 2.1 In expressing support for the scheme as an interested party during the planning application stage, private sector representatives of the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) and the Kent & Medway Business Advisory Board emphasised that the LTC had the potential to:
- **Increase productivity** within local businesses reducing business travel time in and around Kent and related lost working hours.
 - **Open up new business markets** for local firms due to reduced and more reliable travel times to customers and locations in surrounding areas.
 - **Increase the workforce pool and decrease vacancy rates** by reducing a the significant barrier to recruitment of unreliable commuting journeys.
 - **Unlock growth potential** in North Kent by making the area more attractive to inward investment and expansion opportunities for existing firms.
 - **Unlock housing growth** which will support the construction sector and its local supply chains.
- 2.2 Once the LTC is in place, and assuming that wider infrastructure improvements are also made across Kent's strategic road network, local businesses will ultimately benefit from reduced congestion, a reliable new route with vastly improved journey times and enhanced connectivity to and from the East of England, Midlands and the North.

3. Inward Investment & Business Expansions:

3.1 The LTC has the potential enhance Kent's ability to attract inward investment. As detailed below, the scheme has been assessed as having likely potential of increasing Foreign Direct Investment. Given the focus, efforts and status of the Thames Estuary within which the scheme lies, local Kent businesses operating would be likely beneficiaries of new foreign investment, helping to grow existing businesses and create new markets for the establishment of new businesses.

3.2 The LTC's [Economic Appraisal Package](#) explains that:

- *“Reviews of other estuarial road crossings confirm that the presence of an estuary often leads to additional sources of market failure, as a result of congestion”. The LTC will help to overcome these challenges and enable “road-using sectors ... to benefit from the Project’s provision of a step change in cross-river accessibility.”*
- *Businesses in the clusters shown in table 1.1 below “will gain opportunities for beneficial relocations and business reorganisations and changes in travel to work patterns. Changes in location and in the intensity of land use are expected to take place to reduce costs, expand output and improve competitiveness, all of which yield productivity and labour supply benefits.”*
- *“Other businesses may relocate from places closer to London, where rising site values continue to change the optimum location for land-intensive activities. The Local North [Essex] and Local South [Kent] areas are places that would be attractive to businesses that are displaced due to factors in the land market.”*
- *“The Project is likely to result in cluster growth and greater diversification of the Local North and Local South economies as businesses relocate from south to north and vice versa across the river and change their land intensity.”* There are, therefore, risks that businesses may locate away from Kent to Essex but the reverse is also true.

Table 1.1 Business clusters in the Lower Thames area

Cluster type	Cluster name	Area
Key clusters	Transport, logistics and storage	Thurrock and Dartford
	Construction	Lower Thames area
	Business support services	Lower Thames area
	Agri-food	Kent and Essex
Emerging clusters	Creative industries	Thames Estuary
	Maintenance and sale of motor vehicles	Lower Thames area
	Robotics and advanced manufacturing	Lower Thames area
	Ceramics	Lower Thames area
	Financial and insurance services	Brentwood and Havering

- 3.3 The LTC scheme will result in significant investment being made in new infrastructure through the construction process which will benefit the local supply chain. The LTC is expected to have a multiplier effect with improved business confidence and subsequent investment making North Kent a more attractive place to do business.
- 3.4 As the project progresses, existing strategic partners of KCC will be well placed to support inward investment activity in and around Dartford and Gravesham, as well as Medway, in particular with a focus on developing existing sectors and emerging clusters.

4. Skills and Employment Opportunities:

- 4.1 During the construction phase, the LTC aims to recruit almost half its workforce locally (within 20 miles of the crossing in Kent and Essex), creating hundreds of opportunities for workers to get new qualifications, including apprenticeships and to secure skilled roles on the project.
- 4.2 A further 22,000 people on both sides of the estuary could be supported through the LTC supply chain. The project intends to source at least 20% of the workforce from the closest boroughs (Gravesham, Medway, Thurrock, Havering and Brentwood). At the project's peak, the LTC itself will directly employ around 3,000 people in a wide variety of roles.
- 4.3 The project will also support the development of green skills across the region. This will involve training people and encouraging the supply chain to make use of sustainable materials and apply new and emerging sustainable construction techniques to deliver the environmental aspirations of the scheme. The LTC project will ultimately support the creation of a workforce that is able to understand how to maintain key infrastructure in a way that does not harm the local natural environment.
- 4.4 When the LTC opens to traffic, the improved transport access will mean that a significant number of jobs and employment opportunities will suddenly be in reach of the local populations on both sides of the river. This will give local residents greater opportunity to build rewarding careers close to their homes and provide local employers with a much bigger pool from which to fill vacancies and tackle skills gaps.
- 4.5 The LTC will deliver Skills Hubs in both Gravesham and Thurrock so those residents most impacted by the project can readily access training. The Skills Hubs will help to address local skills shortages which would otherwise affect the delivery of the Lower Thames Crossing. This will clearly benefit the wider construction industry locally too. Participants in skills programmes will be guaranteed a job interview with some of the companies in the current LTC supply chain (50+ companies). A temporary skills hub will be set up in Gravesend in the Autumn 2025 with a permanent facility to follow next year.

- 4.6 KCC's Economy Team is working closely with the LTC to deliver a number of construction courses as part of the Kent Skills Bootcamps programme funded by the Department for Education. As the LTC moves into the construction phase, there is significant scope to use the Skills Bootcamps programme to train local people and secure job interviews with companies working on the scheme.
- 4.7 The Skills Hubs will focus on a number of priority groups including people who are unemployed, prison leavers, NEETs (those not in education, employment or training), military leavers, adult learners, homeless (or those at risk), women returners, care leavers and those with special educational needs. This provides an additional opportunity for KCC to make links to the new [Connect to Work](#) supported employment programme led by KCC's Economy team.
- 4.8 The LTC team is also committed to collaborative working between Local Authorities, local education providers and the supply chain to deliver a lasting skills legacy in Kent & Essex. This presents a significant opportunity to address some of the challenges set out in the recent 'Get Kent & Medway Working Plan'.

5. Supply Chain Opportunities:

- 5.1 National Highways is aiming to put local businesses including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) at the heart of the Lower Thames Crossing supply chain. It aims to spend at least £1 in every £3 of the construction budget with SMEs. An example is Syntech Biofuel, a Kent based renewable energy company that is providing biofuel to replace diesel for LTC's work at Hole Farm.
- 5.2 The LTC team is committed to organising free events and workshops with the 'Supply Chain Sustainability School' to ensure that local firms are well placed to bid for contract work. KCC and its partners have the opportunity to promote further engagement in these and other sessions to local businesses.
- 5.3 Over 5,000 businesses, including 1,200 from Kent, 1,100 from Essex and others from further afield have signed up to the Lower Thames Crossing Supply Chain Directory which have been shared with the scheme's three main delivery partners (BMJV, Balfour Beatty - roads north of the Thames, and Skanska – roads in Kent). Further work is required now the project is going ahead, to encourage further Kent companies to seek supply chain opportunities.
- 5.4 KCC and its local partners, should continue to work with the LTC to promote supply chain opportunities to local businesses to ensure maximum benefits for these firms.

6. Visitor Economy:

- 6.1 Although not a driver for the LTC project, Kent's Visitor Economy also stands to benefit once the LTC is operational. Visitor markets from neighbouring counties and boroughs would become much more accessible given shorter and more reliable journey times. Towns such as Gravesend and sites /

attractions such as Bluewater and Cyclopark will immediately benefit from larger visitor catchment areas.

- 6.2 There will be opportunities for Kent strategic partners, working with local attractions and locations to promote new itineraries and the visitor economy offer to markets in neighbouring areas (Essex, Thurrock, Southend etc.)

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The LTC is a significant infrastructure project which will provide many 'once in a lifetime' opportunities for local businesses and residents while contributing to a more productive local economy on both sides of the Thames Estuary. KCC and its partners are well-placed to promote opportunities for employment, supply chain access and inward investment in Kent to boost the local economy over the coming years.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider the report and make comments to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration.

Contact details:

Report Author: Steve Samson Job title: Head of Economy Telephone number: 03000 417167 Email address: steve.samson@kent.gov.uk	Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle Job title: Director of Growth & Communities Telephone number: 03000 412064 Email address: stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk
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**GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2025-2026**

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

11 NOVEMBER 2025 at 10am		
1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item
6	Draft Budget	Corporate Finance Paper
7	Performance Dashboard	Quarterly
8	KMEF – Ambition 2 - Widen opportunities and unlock talent (including Get K&M Working Plan)	Deep Dive
9	Regional Energy Strategic Plan Update	Subject to national consultation timelines
10	Kent Design Guide	Key Decision (Provisional)
11	Mineral Sites Plan and Local Development Scheme	Key Decision
12	Employment Task Force	A general update on key activities to date, results and future focus and plans
13	Otterpool Garden Town	Information Paper
14	Work Programme	Standing item
15 JANUARY 2026 at 10am		
1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item

6	Performance Dashboard	Quarterly
7	KMEF – Ambition 4 - Place economic opportunity at the centre of community wellbeing and prosperity	Deep Dive
8	Final Draft Budget	Corporate Finance Paper
9	Folkestone Library Long Term Location	Key Decision
10	Work Programme	Standing item
12 MARCH 2026 at 10am		
1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item
6	Kent & Medway Business Fund Monitoring	Bi-annual report
7	KMEF – Ambition 1 - Enable innovative, productive and creative businesses	Deep Dive
8	Strategic Risk Register	Annual Item
9	Work Programme	Standing item
7 MAY 2026 at 10am		
1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item
6	Performance Dashboard	Quarterly
7	KMEF – Ambition 5 - Create diverse, distinctive and vibrant places	Deep Dive
8	Work Programme	Standing item
8 JULY 2026 at 10am		
1	Intro/ Web announcement	Standing item
2	Apologies and Subs	Standing item
3	Declaration of Interest	Standing item
4	Minutes	Standing item
5	Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corp. Dir.	Standing item
6	Work Programme	Standing item

Key Decisions to be scheduled

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