

**GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET
COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 10th March, 2026

10.00 am

Council Chamber





AGENDA

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 10 March 2026 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone.

Ask for: **James Willis**
Telephone: **03000 417831**

Membership (13)

Reform (8):	Mr J Defriend (Chair), Mr T Mallon (Vice Chair), Mr B Fryer, Mr R Waters, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Mr D Sian and Mr A Thorp
Labour (1):	Mr A Brady
Liberal Democrat (1):	Mr T Prater
Green (1):	Mr M Hood
Conservative (1):	Mrs S Hudson
Independent Group (1):	Mr P Thomas

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

- 1 Introduction/Webcast announcement
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Minutes of the meeting held on 13.01.2026 (Pages 1 - 30)
- 5 Decision taken between Cabinet Committee Meetings - 26/0003 Concessionary Travel Cards - Contract Extension (Pages 31 - 32)
- 6 Verbal Updates
- 7 Performance Dashboard (Pages 33 - 66)
- 8 Strategic Risk Register (Pages 67 - 82)
- 9 KMEF-Ambition 4 Economic Opportunities (Pages 83 - 90)
- 10 Kent Biodiversity Report (Pages 91 - 134)

- 11 EV Charging Report (Pages 135 - 142)
- 12 Kent Community Wardens Impact Report (Pages 143 - 154)
- 13 Kent Design Guide (Pages 155 - 176)
- 14 26/00007 - Heritage Conservation Strategy Amendment (Pages 177 - 236)
- 15 26/00008 - Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (Pages 237 - 290)
- 16 26/00010 - Kent & Medway Business Fund 2026 - Revised Loan Offer (Pages 291 - 304)
- 17 26/00011 - Cliff Collapse - Road of Remembrance, Folkestone (Pages 305 - 318)
- 18 Work Programme (Pages 319 - 322)

Motion to Exclude the Press and Public

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

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

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive
03000 416814

Monday, 2 March 2026

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 13 January 2026.

PRESENT: Mr James Defriend (Chair), Mr Thomas Mallon (Vice-Chair), Mr Alister Brady, Mr Tim Prater, Mr Paul Thomas, Mr Ryan Waters, Mr Martin Paul, Mrs Beverley Porter, Mr Dodger Sian, Mr Terry Mole (Substitute), Mr Ben Fryer, Mr Mark Hood and Mrs Sarah Hudson.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr Brian Collins (Deputy Leader of the Council), Mr Paul Webb (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) , Mr Paul King (Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Special Projects) , Mr David Wimble (Virtually Cabinet Member for Economic Developments and Special Projects) , Mr Peter Osborne (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) , Mr Spencer Dixon (Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) , Mr Jamie Henderson (Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Environment and Coastal Regeneration) and Mrs Mary Lawes (Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Simon Jones (Virtually Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport), Mrs Stephanie Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities), Mr Steve Samson (Head of Economy), Mr Tom Marchant (Head of Strategic Development and Place), Mr Andrew Loosemore (Interim Director of Highways and Transport) , Mr Matthew Smyth (Director of Environment and Waste) , Mr Shane Bushell (Head of Service for Public Transport) , Mr Matthew Wagner (Chief Analyst), Mr Ben Hudson (Energy and Adaptations Manager) Mrs Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure) Mr Dave Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy) Mr Kevin Tilson (Finance Business Partner) Mr Robin Hadley (Soft Landscape Asset Manager) Mrs Sarah Nurden (Strategic Programme Manager) Mr Colin Finch (Strategic Programme Manager for Infrastructure) Mrs Pauline Harmer (Senior Highways Manager) Mrs Victora Soames (Senior Project Manager) Mr Hugh D'Alton (Strategic Programme Manager) Mrs Helen Shulver (Assistant Director Resource Management and Circular Economy) Mr Steve Pay (Planning and Operations Manager) Mr Joseph Ratcliffe (Transport Strategy Manager) Mr Tim Read (Head of Transportation) Mr James Pearson (Head of Libraries and ,Registration and Archives) and Mr J Willis (Democratic Service Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

46. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

1. Mr Thorp sent apologies. Mr Mole was the allocated substitute.

a) The Clerk highlighted the changes in the Membership in accordance with paragraph 6.5 of the constitution as detailed in section 18 (public arrangements). Overall membership would now see a reduction from 17 Members to 13 Members.

b) Mr Prater expressed concern regarding the revised figures and the consequent effect on Members' ability to undertake effective scrutiny of the decision presented to them. He requested that the Leader reconsider the decision in light of these issues. The Chair acknowledged the concerns raised and advised that he would refer the matter to the Leader of the Council for further consideration.

47. Declarations of Interest

(Item 3)

No declarations of interest were received.

48. Minutes of the meetings held on 04/11/2025 (Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee) and 11/11/2025 (Growth, Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee)

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held 04/11/2024 of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee and on the 11/11/2025 Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee were a correct record and that a paper copy be signed by the Chair.

49. Verbal Update by Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors

(Item 5)

Paul Webb (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services), Paul King (Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Special Projects), David Wimble (Cabinet Member for Economic Developments and Special Projects), Peter Osborne (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) Provided an update on the Following:

1. Mr Osborne, delivered his verbal update, recent events encompassed:

- a) Updated on the continued salt gritting of Kents roads, in addition to the road's drainage teams clearing of 65,000 gullies since April 2025. In addition, 35,000 pot holes had been filled.
- b) A provisional grant of £48 million capital and £42 million revenue from the DfT (Department for Transport) had been received and would aid in the continued improvements of Kents bus networks, additionally a multiyear funding settlement for walking and cycling of £1.6 million revenue, and £ 5.2 million capital for 2026-27 was also discussed.
- c) The Highways long term maintenance contract with partners Ringway would commence in May. The contract was valued at £50 million per year, and repairs would be expected to be completed at a faster rate than previously recorded. £30 million had been invested in the road resurfacing programme, and a capital highway's maintenance grant of £56 million was being received this year (2026-

27). In addition, a further £274 million pounds was to be invested into the network over the next four years.

- d) Additional investments to pre-school road safety training would look to reach over 4,000 children and older drivers throughout Kent. The discussion was summarised with the announcement that Kent Highways had been nominated for a national award for most improved performance.

2. Mr King, Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Special projects gave his first update of the new collated portfolio:

- a) Thanked KCC officers for the swift response observed during the recent water outages that had impacted Tunbridge Wells and surrounding areas. Mr King further outlined how the new revised portfolio would aim to drive economic revitalization, stimulate investment and job creation within Kent's coastal areas. The Cabinet Member looked forward to future collaborative work that will benefit the people of Kent.
- b) Highlighted KCC's £93 million annual spend on waste disposal that had seen around 660,000 tonnes of material pass through household waste recycling centres and transfer stations.
- c) The Cabinet Member highlighted the opportunities being explored to improve enhanced recycling outcomes in the discussed areas by improving better economical benefits through resource efficiency and costs savings.

3. Mr Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services updated Members on his respective portfolio:

- a) The Committee acknowledged an update on the high level of activity experienced by the Trading Standards team over the festive period. It was reported that a new TikTok channel had been launched, aimed at informing the public of the significant hazards associated with counterfeit goods and provided guidance on the key indicators to consider when purchasing items to ensure that they were genuine and safe.
- b) The same team were also heavily involved with the BBC's Scam Safe week initiatives and had attended a road show at Ditton community Centre, offering further advice and information to the general public.
- c) Trading Standards prosecutions had seen three fraudsters convicted for crimes related to solar energy sales.
- d) Dartford Borough Council Environmental Health team had been working in partnership with colleagues from KCC's Trading Standards team to offer formal advice to business under the statutory and primary authority scheme.
- e) The Committee was advised that the Trading Standards team had achieved significant success in intercepting and seizing illegal vapes that had entered via Kent's ports.

- f) Two Trading Standards apprenticeship positions had been secured through government funding to support the continuation of the team's robust enforcement activity.
- g) Kent Scientific services continued to provide food and feed testing and would be currently supporting the National Food Crime Unit.
- h) Library and registration services had also observed a busy festive period.
- i) Community Wardens had continued to support the community, notably those impacted by the local water outages seen in the across the County.
- j) The sale of Polhill gypsy and Romany traveller site was set to conclude by the end of January and would bring in a small capital receipt. The John Downton Awards celebrated their 25th and final year with 453 entries across 36 schools having been submitted. This included six SEN schools. The panel was to be chaired by Carrie Wallace. All submitted artworks would be showcased online with the awards ceremony occurring at County Hall in mid-February.
- k) The Cabinet Member shared the positive news of the recent opening of Dover's Discovery Centre, which includes Library, Adult Education, Family Services, Good Day Programme and Dover District Museum. Kent libraries and Education would be joining forces to promote reading for all ages, as part of the National Year of reading 2026. This is a national approach due to national data that shows a countrywide decrease in literacy rates and people reading. Library co-location projects in January will see the completion of works and re-opening of Temple Hill and Cranbrook Libraries which will see co-location with Family Hubs. Further works in Sittingbourne are in progress and, Queensborough and Cliftonville libraries will see works start soon with target completion during the first quarter of 2026.
- l) The Senior Coroner welcomed the High Sheriff of Kent to Oakwood House in Maidstone to observe the facilities dedicated to the coronial judicial functions in Kent and Medway.

4. Mr Wimble, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects provided an update on the following:

- a) Mr Wimble discussed aspects of his new role as Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects. Mr Wimble thanked officers for their support in his previous Cabinet role.
- b) Following the successful event that KCC organised in September last year, last week the Cabinet Member had attended an event marking the 30th anniversary of international rail services starting in Ashford. Ashford Borough Council organised the event which had again brought together local authorities, partners and stakeholders along with local businesses and potential train operators to keep up the momentum about the urgent need to see international rail services return to Kent.. The inaugural meeting of the Kent stations working group took place in December and would continue to make the business case and public interest case for the reinstatement of stopping services in Ashford and Ebbsfleet.

- c) The Cabinet Member discussed Brand Kent's desire to create a joint vision for investment and tourism to market Kent as a place to live, work and visit. Following the liquidation of Visit Kent and Locate in Kent in September last year, a small in-house team had been recruited to KCC to drive forward the county's visitor economy and attract inward investment. While the team has only been in place for a few weeks, they have hit the ground running and are currently working with local industry partners to ensure the service meets the needs of local visitor economy businesses and continues to promote opportunities for the private sector to invest in the county.
- d) An update on skills boot camps was provided which discussed the 220 learners that had now commenced and had been in attendance of the bootcamp course since the launch in July. 62 people had now fully completed a course. 24 attendees had already secured a job as a direct result of a guaranteed job interview at the end of their course. Courses cover construction, social care and creative industries including 2 courses run with the Lower Thames crossing at the new skills hub in Gravesend. The Department for Education (DfE) had also shown support, and it was anticipated that a funding allocation of £1.5m for the programme to continue in 2026-27 would be received.
- e) Strategic health work had continued with the implementation of the Get Kent & Medway Working plan, which was among the first of 5 plans published of the 41 nationally. KCC, Medway Council, the NHS and Job centre plus had been turning this plan and the 'Kent & Medway Work & Health strategy' into activities and current work would focus on the provision of clear online resources to support local employers and businesses, provide toolkits for stakeholders to summarise the health, work and skills landscape and working to co-locate employment support in health settings.
- f) Over 500 people had now signed up to receive support from the Connect to Work programme which helped disadvantaged people into work through a supported employment model that provided up to 12 months support. 55 people had commenced work and reported first earnings. It was expected that the overall figure would rise significantly in the coming months.
- g) The Committee received an update on the Special Projects portfolio, with particular reference to three priority initiatives. The Cabinet Members discussed ongoing energy-related projects, including exploration of a new nuclear option for Dungeness power station, as well as the development of a clear strategic vision for solar energy in Kent, that would encompass both rooftop solar installations and the utilisation of suitable brownfield sites.
- h) The final special projects item discussed would be the introduction of an environmental tax on lorries entering the UK. The scheme would be similar to the Swiss environment model and look to target lorries entering Kent via the port of Dover. How the tax was collected and invested were to be discussed further once the model had been fully explored.

5. In response to comments and questions from Members, the discussion covered the following:

- a) Members asked for reassurances on the provision of the latest and most popular published works for the community and raised if a reduction in the budget for buying books was to occur. Members further queried on the matter of the installation of solar panels on buildings and what mechanisms would be in place to ensure that this occurred. Finally, Members asked on how the environmental tax could be implemented, how the tax would benefit the Council and if central government, who governed the national highways would implement this with an internal border and aid in the mitigation of large delays on the roads.
- b) Mr Wimble responded to the concerns raised by Members on how his updated special projects could be delivered. Mr Wimble would be looking to update at the upcoming Cabinet Committee and expand further on all future projects' trajectories.
- c) Members asked for clarification on the funding that had been received from central government, Mr Osborne responded that £48 million capital had been secured for bus support, with £42 million revenues on buses. Highways were £30 million in 2025. Current year had seen an award of £56 million and over the next four years an investment of £274 million would be targeted.
- d) Concerns were raised on the role and previous cuts to Community Wardens. The respective Cabinet Member responded that the previous administration had reduced wardens in half (from 70 to 35). Recent Parish Council funding had allowed for the recruitment of two new wardens with the current administration looking to expand further.
- e) Clarification on how the percentage of population in an area impacted on the availability of Community Wardens were discussed. Mr Webb acknowledged there was likely a need to review the proportion of population to warden's ratio. Mrs Holt-Castle referenced the geographical allocation policy agreed by a previous committee and suggested this could be encompassed as part of a paper on Wardens' activity within each borough already on forward plan of the Cabinet Committee.
- f) A Member discussed the ongoing issues impacting flooding in the Albert Reed Gardens in Maidstone., whilst the Member thanked the Cabinet Member for their response to flooding there was a desire to have a further discussion on the obstructed sight lines that had been reported to KCC previously and where current responsibilities lay. Mr Osborne acknowledged the issue and was happy to meet with the Member to discuss further.
- g) It was queried if the family hub would be available immediately at the Temple Hill library after it reopens on the 28th of January. Mr Webb acknowledged the request and would seek to update the Member once more details on the family hub reopening were known. Members asked if the locations discussed in Kent would be limited to just Libraries/family hubs. Mr Webb discussed that locations would be reviewed to determine what additional activities could take place, additional locations in KCC portfolios would also be reviewed to see how delivery for activities could be coordinated.

- h) Members praised Mr Osborne's response to the storm events that had impacted in early January the Folkestone and surrounding coastal communities. Whilst some clean-up operations were still ongoing, Members noted that the overall response from KCC and its partners had been excellent.
- i) It was requested that recirculated papers would include a clear summary of the Community Wardens key activities, roles, responsibilities, and demonstrable outcomes be provided to Members. Capturing current work would support both the case for maintaining current staffing levels and any future proposals to increase them. Documentation would provide useful evidence for similar initiatives when preparing business cases or funding justifications in the future.

RESOLVED to note the Verbal Updates

50. Final Draft Budget

(Item 6)

Paul Webb (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services), Paul King (Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Special Projects), David Wimble (Cabinet Member for Economic Developments and Special Projects), Peter Osborne (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) with support from Dave Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy) and Kevin Tilson (Finance Business Partner, Growth, Environment and Transport)

1. Dave Shipton updated the Cabinet Committee on the following aspects of the GET Draft budget:

- a) The draft budget balances a significant increase spend of £179.5 Million and had signified an 11.7% in spending. The figure also balanced the reversal of £28 million of savings seen from previous years. Spending pressures were partly offset by the impact of net changes in reserves of £14.7 Million and £ 61.7 million of new and full year effect savings plans and £14.6million of income generation.
- b) Mr Shipton added that once the discussed elements were considered, there was a net increase of spending of £ 116.5 Million (up 7.6%). Net increase was funded by a combination of funds from central government and local government. Capital programme also included a near £500 million increase over the 10-year period but would be entirely funded from external source or from within already approved borrowing in the existing capital programme. No new borrowing was raised.
- c) The majority of the capital programme was directed towards investment in school buildings, highways asset management, and the maintenance and improvement of other council-owned facilities. Mr Shipton highlighted the £21.7 million increases related to the Growth, Environment and Transport portfolios.
- d) Highlighted the key components that Members needed to be aware of when setting a budget such as local government finance settlement and Council tax arrangements.

- e) Officers urged caution in understating the risk captured within the draft budget. Aspects such as the significant pressures seen in areas such as Adult Social Care (£90 million) and Children's Social Care (£50 million) provisions, whilst not part of the discussed portfolio, the discussed functions still impacted the wider budget as a whole. Deterioration to GETs asset stock was flagged as a significant risk to the GET portfolio. Mr Collins praised the work Mr Shipton and colleagues had completed in delivering the draft budget.

2) In response to the presented Draft Budget, Members asked the following:

- a) Members discussed the highlighted spending growth pressure but queried if the provision of future increase of waste tonnage (984,0000) was correct as building targets had stagnated. Mr Tilson responded that the provision was included in the budget for demographic-driven increases in waste tonnages and was based on modelling linked to new housebuilding. The discussed assumptions were reviewed annually, with budgets adjusted for any under- or over-delivery. For 2026–27, slower-than-expected housing growth had resulted in the removal of approximately 5,000 tonnes from the forecast. This had ensured the medium-term plan reflected expected tonnage changes alongside evolving recycling targets.
- b) The £660,000 on street car parking was raised by Members who specifically queried on how the County Council would recoup this cost and enforce the issue further into the future throughout the County. Mr Osborne responded that since publication a number of funds had been recovered from district partners with discussion continuing. Simon Jones further confirmed that a wider conversation with Districts and Boroughs was underway to target a collaborative approach that would make the service more efficient in the future.
- c) The Kent Travel saver was discussed and Members asked if any increases in cost were to be observed going forward. Mr Bushell responded that considerations for reviewing the Kent Travel saver would be undertaken with officers exploring the wider issues and implications throughout KCC. Officers would bring further information on the initiative back to the Committee at a later date.
- d) Clarity on the library's material fund was sought as the reported direction of spend and future spends remained unclear. Mr Pearson confirmed that the materials fund covered all forms of book material. There had been a small one-off reduction to the materials fund, but this was to be offset by the use of Section 106 developer contributions. Mr Pearson also confirmed there was despite that still a healthy materials fund of over £900,000 to cover books and supporting resources and confirmed that new popular bestsellers would be covered as part of KCC's new stock buying.
- e) Members questioned the awaiting confirmation (Section 2.6.6) of the Bus Services Improvements Plan (BSIP grant). Mr Bushell confirmed that the item would be presented back to the committee for discussion once the funding proposal had been received in March.

- f) Questions on exploring the property portfolio as an alternative funding stream from potential assets were mooted. Members noted that the budget appeared to be constrained and potentially be easily impacted by unforeseen events.
- g) Mr Shipton responded that discussions on income from KCC's properties lay likely within the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee scope. Mr Shipton further expanded upon the Section 25 assurance statement, elements of risk that impacted and the overall robustness of estimates that are calculated to alleviate concerns. An independent statement would be given by the Chief Finance Officer at full Council for wider discussions and considerations.
- h) Members asked for further clarity on the option of an increased premium paid by parents to the Kent travel Scheme. Members were concerned on the figures produced for the Highways Investment Budget and the perceived size of increase on the associated budget. Officers explained the role of capital grants and their application to the totals in detail. It was suggested that once the full budget was approved further investigations would take place. Members suggested a Direct Debit option to spread the cost be applied.
- i) It was outlined that pavements and highways would require an additional £110 million a year to maintain. Members discussed the declining state of both assets and queried on what could be done to close the budget gaps and improve both assets. The respective Cabinet Member responded that once the full Department for Transport (DfT) budgets were in place and realised, actions to address this would then commence.
- j) Concerns were raised on the potential removal of documentation from the KCC archive pages and if this was potentially part of a wider cost cutting scheme. Mr Ratcliffe suggested that budgetary cuts had not been responsible for documentation being made unavailable. The officer would look to investigate further.
- k) Clarification on the Medium-term financial plan (MTFP) viability of being balanced over three years were flagged. Mr Shipton responded that the position had been compared against the government's multi-year settlement, which had left a remaining gap to be addressed.
- l) While the requirement to set a balanced budget had applied only to the forthcoming financial year, good practice required a consideration of the medium-term outlook when balancing the 2026–27 budget. It was deemed acceptable for the medium-term plan to show a gap, provided it was clear that this would need to be closed through further savings, income generation, cost-avoidance measures, or future council tax decisions. The plan was illustrative, as was stated at the outset.
- m) The savings incorporated into the budget from recycling were based on the additional work currently being undertaken with District and Borough Councils, particularly in relation to food-waste collection. Several authorities had recorded significant increases in food-waste capture notably up to 25% in some areas. As a result of this work there was an achieved saving of approximately £600,000.

- n) Further initiatives were underway to improve recycling performance in flatted properties and to reduce contamination which had also carried a cost within the recycling budget. Through the Kent Resource Partnership which had brought together all 13 Kent authorities, Officers were exploring initiatives and opportunities on a borough-by-borough basis to support improved local recycling performance and deliver additional efficiencies.
- o) Members referenced a past paper that had previously been presented and had indicated an assumed £16 million cost by 2028 which related to future waste-management requirements. At the same time, the current budget had included a proposed saving of £1.75 million, based on anticipated reductions in emissions arising from higher recycling rates. Members agreed that the saving line was clear but noted that trying to identify the section of the budget where the corresponding future £16 million requirement referred to in the earlier paper, had been reflected or costed.
- p) The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) impact falls in Quarter 4 of Year 3 of the MTFP. At current stage it had been budgeted for one quarter of the potential risk in 2027–28, with the full financial impact expected to materialise in the year immediately following the current MTFP period.
- q) Focus had been on increased recycling levels and reducing the exposure that the function could face when the scheme takes effect. Current work was ongoing and would continue throughout next year. Officers would then be in a position to set out the revised level of risk or liability in Year 3 of the next MTFP and would be brought forward when Cabinet meets again at this time next year.
- r) Members queried the included £400,000 reduction in staffing cost that had equated to a 1% saving. The papers had stated that this reflected a 1% allocation against the GET net staffing budget, with each director required to review their service structures, examine vacant posts for potential deletion, and consider existing vacancy-management targets and capacity. Members asked how many staff posts did the £400,000 reduction represent.
- s) Officers responded that operational staff would always be replaced. When a member of staff left through natural attrition, the post would be reviewed to determine whether it needed to be re-filled. Officers suggested that this was the extent of the commitment at this stage.
- t) Concerns were raised on the potential increased cost of the Kent Travel Scheme, and the risks associated with the income generated from car parks. Efficiency savings to libraries were highlighted by the Cabinet Member (Auto terminals) as an already successfully implemented cost measure. Similar initiatives were also underway.

RESOLVED to note the Draft Budget

51. Performance Dashboard

(Item 7)

Matt Wagner, (Chief Analyst); and Simon Jones (Corporate Director for Growth, Environment & Transport) were in attendance for this item

1) Mr Wagner introduced the report. The report covered the periods of September to October 2025. The performance dashboard was the first combined view of the two preceding Cabinet Committees.

- a) 38 of 44 KPIs included within the report were RAG (Red, Amber and Green) rated Green, it was noted that there was five RAG rated amber.
- b) The solitary red KPI represented *'Emergency incidents attended to within 2 hours'* The discussed red KPI had seen a decrease due to the impact of storm Benjamin that had occurred in October and subsequent impacts on the ability to resource and respond in a timely manner. The service had held and would continue to hold regular meetings with contractors at an area level to discuss areas of concern and lessons learned to aid in the improvement of the KPI.
- c) The five amber KPI captured *'Percentage of priority 1 food, feed and consumer products sample tests reported to clients within 5 working days'* (Community Protection) , *'Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online'* (Strategic Development and Place) , *'Enquiries requiring a response, responded to within 28 days including completed in 28 days'* , *'Percentage of highway enquiries reported through the online fault reporting tool Highways'* (Highways and Transport) and *'Municipal waste recycled and composted'* (Environment and Circular economy)
- d) Overall green KPIs had represented 86% of the overall picture and indicated a solid on or ahead of target trajectory, five rated amber and one rated red closed out the reporting periods overall picture.

2) In response to comments and questions from Members and guests, discussion covered the following:

- a) Members noted the changes to HT02 from *'Faults reported by the public completed in 28 days'* to *'All inquiries requiring a response to within 28 days.'*
- b) Mr Loosemore explained that the previous descriptor had not provided a true representation of what the KPI reflected and that the new wording would give a more accurate representation.
- c) HT08 capturing *'emergency response within two hours'*, Members raised concerns on the Council's capacity to deal with emergency Incidents, Officers raised that the failure of this KPI was due to the capacity issues impacted by recent storm events. Officers further discussed how resources would be allocated on prioritised events.
- d) A decline in DT01 *'Percentage of highways inquiries reported through the online tool'* from green to amber was noted. Further investigation was required to understand the small decline seen in the KPI.

- e) Officers explained to Members the rationale of the removal of a number of KPIs associated with household recycling centres and wood converted to biomass. The removal had been seen as a way to not reward the use of waste energy in a bid to reduce the Councils' overall emissions and retained a focus on increasing recycling and reuse targets.
- f) Members asked for further updates on why KPIs associated with volunteer hours had been lowered. Officers would look to provide further expanded rationale outside the meeting once checked

RESOLVED to note the Performance Dashboard.

52. Gravesend - Tilbury Ferry Petition Update (Item 8)

Peter Osborne (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport), Andrew Loosemore (Interim Director of Highways and Transport), Shane Bushell (Client Transport Manager) and Steve Pay (Public Transport Planning and Operations Manager) were in attendance for this item

1. Mr Osborne presented the following aspects of the update:

- a) The Gravesend-Tilbury ferry service had ceased operations in April 2024 following Thurrock Council's withdrawal of its funding contribution. Kent County Council had subsequently provided temporary sole funding to ensure that passengers received appropriate notice of the closure. At present, no budget provision existed to reinstate the service.
- b) Any future re-establishment would require the identification of new funding sources. Kent County Council continued to support the Thames Estuary Growth Board, which was leading work to assess options for restoring the ferry, either as a commercially viable service or through a suitable partnership-funding arrangement.

2. In response to comments and questions from Members and guests, discussion covered the following:

- a) It was confirmed that there had not been any signs of support received from the Thames Estuary Group on the reintroduction of the ferry crossing. It was suggested that the level of funding required to reinstate the crossing would likely to be beyond the reach of one singular organisation and even if reinstated would likely require a significant subsidy to continue to be viable.
- b) The Cabinet Member expanded upon the exploration of alternative funding sources, whether through collaboration within the group or from external partners. Options included examining potential Thames Crossing-related revenues and opportunities arising from future local development. Mr Osborne

urged caution and suggested that at this stage no assurance about when or whether the ferry service would be reinstated could be made.

- c) Members raised Thurrock Councils current local plan consultation and suggested the Kent County Council look to submit a response and cooperate in any potential future negotiations.
- d) It was determined the Thames Estuary Growth Board had now disbanded (Late December 2025) due to a lack of public funding. Members highlighted that the discussion brought to Committee specifically had targeted the discussions between KCC and the TEGB.
- e) It was suggested that the paper presented be withdrawn, updated and brought back at the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee. In addition, Members discussed that the presented report did not capture the concerns raised from the initial petition.
- f) Members also asked that when the report returns a concise capital costing of costs of return to service, ferry acquisition and other budgetary constraints that may require partnered support be captured.
- g) The Chair agreed that the item would return with a corrected and updated revised report at the next available opportunity.

RESOLVED to note the Report

53. Highway Verge Improvements for Biodiversity-Report (Item 9)

Peter Osborne (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) Andrew Loosemore (Interim Director of Highways and Transport) and Robin Hadley (Asset Manager) were in attendance for this item

1. Officers briefed Members on the associated report and requested any feedback from Members, aspects captured included:

- a) Concerns were raised on the accidental destruction of a number of orchids on Bluebell Hill by contractors, Members suggested some improved signage be implemented to prevent similar incidents occurring. Officers acknowledged concerns but did raise that due to the difficult locations of sites that signage may be difficult to implement and conversely there was a desire to not advertise the location of sensitive areas to the wider public.
- b) The Vice-Chair raised the discussion of foliage growth upon roundabouts (Ebbsfleet locale) and how this could potentially be a health and safety issue for road users. Officers acknowledged the concerns and highlighted the targeted wildflower installation in conjunction with the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation once underway, would be assessed on safety grounds.

- c) In relation to Swanscombe and Greenhithe, a significant portion of the area was designated as a Site of Special Interest (SSI), with the remainder falling within the development corridor (Swanscombe Heritage Park). Members asked how collaboration could be strengthened between KCC and Swanscombe Council to support visitors.
- d) Mr Hadley acknowledged the request and discussed the current involvement of activities; a communication plan could be rolled out to talk to locals and asked for Members involvement in the initiative.
- e) Members sought assurances that Members of the committee would be involved with the Plan Bee initiative. The Cabinet Member for Environment and officers confirmed that this was agreeable.
- f) Officers confirmed the process for dealing with invasive plant species such as giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed. New build verge improvements were also a concern raised by Members.
- g) In terms of local planning applications, KCC had provided an ecological advisory service to every planning authority in the county. Biodiversity officers would review applications and advise on the ecological considerations of any proposed schemes.
- h) KCC had published the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy in November. This had set out KCC's strategic priorities for nature recovery and had provided a spatial framework that included a mapping tool that planning authorities could use to inform their local plans. This would help guide decisions on land use, site allocations, and the delivery of ecological outcomes across the county.

RESOLVED to note the Report

54. Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (ELES) Amendments-Report (Item 10)

Jamie Henderson (Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Environment and Coastal Regeneration) and Ben Hudson (Energy and Climate Change Manager) were in attendance for this item

1. Mr Hudson presented the item and discussed the following aspects to Members

- a) The Energy and Low Emission Strategy (E-LES) was adopted in 2020 by a wide range of public-sector partners, including all 14 local authorities, the NHS, the Kent Chamber of Commerce and the Kent Housing Group. It offered a comprehensive strategy that sets out how Kent would meet national targets and policies whilst supporting the transition to a clean and resilient economy. The strategy would be delivered through a partnership approach and was overseen by the Kent and Medway Environment Group.

- b) The process of updating the implementation plan began in February last year and included consultation with all Kent and Medway partners and had encompassed Districts, Boroughs, and the KCC Environment Board. The revised plan had deliberately focused on priorities that were impactful, achievable, and relevant, and reflected the evolving policy and funding considerations across all 14 partner organisations and not solely KCC.

RESOLVED to note the Report

55. KMEF-Ambition 1-Enable Innovative, Productive and Creative Businesses-Report
(Item 11)

Jamie Henderson (Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Environment and Coastal Regeneration) Steve Samson (Head of Economy) and Sarah Nurden (Strategic Programme Manager - KMEP) were in attendance for this item.

1.Mr Samson presented the item with background aspects presented to the Members

- a) The Kent and Medway Economic Framework was a jointly developed strategic document agreed in March 2024. It had been produced through collaboration between all local authorities in the County, the private sector and business community through the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP), other key organisations included universities and further education colleges. It reflected a shared commitment across key partners to support and guide economic development in Kent and Medway.
- b) The report outlined the five ambitions within Kent and Medway which had encompassed: supporting businesses and encouraging innovation, improving skills and employment, supporting infrastructure for growth, and economic opportunity for all communities and promoting Kent and Medway as places to invest, visit and conduct business.
- c) Officers provided a further update on activities under the economic strategy. It was recognised that the strategy was not a funded programme in itself, but rather a framework through which partners across Kent and Medway work collaboratively to secure external investment and deliver shared priorities. The Council would continue to work with a range of organisations to identify and pursue funding opportunities to support delivery.
- d) It was reported that the ongoing collaboration with universities and other regional partners was underway to prepare a joint bid to central government that would aim to secure funding to support the development and growth of innovation clusters. The update formed part of the Committee's regular monitoring of progress against the strategy's ambitions and action areas.

- e) Reference was made to the Kent and Medway Business Fund. The loan scheme was administered by Kent County Council and provided loan financing to small businesses across the County to support business growth and aid in job creation.

2. In response to comments and questions from Members, discussion covered the following:

- a) Members asked how aspects were measured specifically those aspects that have been successful. Officers acknowledged how broad the framework was and as an example discussed how a focus on business support could be measured through the Kent and Medway growth hub service to capture the number of businesses that had received support.
- b) Officers emphasised the importance of clearly demonstrating the impact of the strategy's work, particularly in relation to measurable outcomes such as employment creation. The Member commented that, as an example, an ambition was to see 300 people employed through a particular policy or programme, reporting should enable Members to understand if progress had remained on track.
- c) Members discussed the recent closure of Visit Kent and how the current 'Brand Kent' sat within the overall picture of Kent tourism frameworks. Officers responded that the tourism body of work discussed had now been brought in-house under the new Grow in Kent banner.
- d) The team's activities had included improving the number of businesses attracted to the County and the development of a pipeline of interested companies that could align with objective one of the economic frameworks. Performance in the discussed areas would be monitored accordingly. Similarly, the Visit Kent data that related to visitor economy metrics and business engagement was to be captured under ambition five of the framework.
- e) Members queried if supporting material could be provided to Members for when they were engaged in the wider communities. This would aid local business to be better informed of what opportunities were available to potential applicants. Officers highlighted the use the Connect to work, Growth Hub, Skills Bootcamps and the Visitor Economy Service as options to be considered.
- f) Officers confirmed that the Economy Team would aim to make a summary available to all Members. The team had engaged with businesses and partners and had ensured that the related information was readily available. This had allowed the team to discuss innovation with businesses and aid in highlighting related areas such as skills or workforce challenges. Having the information to hand had ensured that everyone would be aware of the full range of support and opportunities available collectively.

RESOLVED to note the Report

56. Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) - Report *(Item 12)*

Jamie Henderson (Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Environment and Coastal Regeneration) Colin Finch (Strategic Programme Manager for Infrastructure (GET)) was in attendance for this item

1. Mr Finch presented the item by highlighting that:

- a) KCC had a statutory obligation to produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). The statement would set out the financial transactions related to developer contributions, specifically detailing the amounts secured, received, and spent during the preceding financial year.
- b) The report was structured around three principal categories of developer contributions. The most significant of these was Section 106 contributions. As shown in Table 1 at paragraph 2.5, the report provided a breakdown of the funding secured, received, and spent across each KCC service area.
- c) For 2024/25, the total amount secured for KCC services through developer contributions was £31.7 million. The amount received in-year was £23.4 million and represented funding that was now being fully banked from developments that were currently progressed and becoming occupied. In total, £17 million had been invested by KCC into infrastructure to support and enable the growth of new and expanding communities.
- d) Officers also discussed the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). There were five CIL-charging authorities in the County, but only one, Folkestone & Hythe District Council provided KCC with a regular and predictable stream of CIL income. KCC received 35% of their annual CIL revenue, and in the reporting period this amounted to £547,000. All of the funding had now been allocated, through policy decisions, to support the delivery of the new waste transfer station required to serve the district.
- e) Developer contributions were also secured and delivered through Section 278 agreements. These relate to highway improvements that developers undertake directly on the public highway network. The value of these works was demonstrated through financial bonds attached to each Section 278 agreement. The bonds reflected the cost of the infrastructure being delivered by the developer. During the reporting year, the total value of bonds secured had amounted to £12.7 million.
- f) The future spending and priorities balance had increased from £119 million to £126 million over the financial year. It was not unusual for funding to be held at this level, as a number of major infrastructure requirements associated with growth carried significant costs. Notably, substantial allocations were being retained for the Sturry Link Road (£6.8 million) and for the expansion of Chilmington Green Secondary School, alongside several other projects detailed within the report.
- g) Officers added that while the IFS was a useful tool for setting out what had been secured, it was important to recognise that secured contributions represented only a snapshot in time. Actual delivery and spending profiles would inevitably

evolve as developments progressed, and infrastructure programmes moved forward.

- h) On average, over the past five years, KCC had received £33.4 million per year in developer contributions and represented a significant and ongoing contribution to KCC's overall budget. Officers raised that a series of district-level meetings involving district and county members had taken place. These sessions were designed to set out the scale of growth taking place in each area and highlighted any local issues arising from that growth and explained the associated infrastructure that would be required to support it.

2. In response to comments and questions from Members, discussion covered the following:

- a) Developer contributions for Dartford were noted to be the lowest in the County, however Dartford itself had seen a significant population increase. Members raised concerns that the existing infrastructure present would struggle under such pressures as population growth and demand.
- b) Officers clarified how contributions were secured and encapsulated in the policy of the developer contributions guide. It was further accentuated that Dartford was a Community Infrastructure Levy authority, and this had impacted the amount of influence the County Council had on securing developer contributions.
- c) The level of developer contributions could be impacted due to financial viability issues of a proposed development. Many of these cases had arisen on brownfield sites, where developers had been permitted to submit a viability appraisal. Such appraisals could demonstrate that making the full contribution request would make the scheme unviable.
- d) National legislation relating to viability allows developers to retain a profit margin of 15–20% which could result in the County not securing all of the mitigation it had requested.
- e) In relation to the £126 million of unspent Section 106 contributions, Members queried if funds were received and held by KCC and if invested, what the level of return was being generated from the investment and if inflationary pressures had been factored into Section 106 contributions.
- f) In response officers addressed how inflation was captured through Section 106 agreements. In instances where KCC are a direct party to the agreement and where work jointly took place with the district, KCC ensured that indexation was applied within the S106 legal agreement.
- g) The charges set out in the Developer Contributions Guide were based on a cost position as of Quarter 1, 2022. Indexation was then applied from that baseline date up to the date the contribution was actually paid. The mechanism would be secured through the legal agreement linked to the relevant planning application.
- h) Once funding had been received it would be placed into an interest-bearing account. Most S106 agreements specify that contributions must be held in such

an account. The detailed arrangements for how interest was applied and accounted for would sit with finance colleagues. Officers highlighted that it was the understanding that all S106 monies would be held in interest-bearing accounts in line with legal requirements.

RESOLVED to note the Report

57. 25/00088 - Highways Enforcement Policies
(Item 13)

Peter Osborne (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) Andrew Loosemore (Interim Director of Highways and Transport) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Osborne introduced the following key decision

- a) The Cabinet Member proposed to introduce two new Highways Enforcement Policies. These policies enabled the County Council to act against landowners and utility companies that had breached legislation or significantly disrupted the management of the highway network. Enforcement would only be used as a last resort, when all other avenues to resolve the issue had been exhausted.
- b) The primary aims of the discussed policies was to improve road safety, reduce delays, and ensure fairness and transparency on how highway-related non-compliance was managed.

2. In response to comments and questions from Members, the discussion covered the following:

- a) Members discussed examples of long-term infrastructure disruptions and failures by developers. Officers acknowledged the concerns and examples raised but did suggest that each individual case had its complexities and legal issues that would need to be addressed separately.
- b) The proposal was welcomed by Members especially if the policy was to be used to deal with ongoing issues with utilities companies and their impact on the roads of Kent. Members suggested that with the aid of the policy KCC could be far more robust with required timeframes for expected repairs and disruptions to the public.
- c) It was suggested that the defect list be reviewed to encompass the actions of reinstatement and if reinstatement works were deemed inadequate after a repair and that the associated contractor be summoned to amend the repair to a satisfactory standard.
- d) The Cabinet Member echoed the concerns and acknowledged the wider examples Members had shared. Officers echoed suggestions that the key decision would allow KCC to be more robust in challenging developers.
- e) On the discussion of fixed penalty notices (FPN), KCC currently issued FPNs and carried out inspections of all utility works at various stages. The new

proposed approach, if KCC intended to pursue prosecution, would not issue an FPN as this removed the legal basis for further actions. Instead KCC would begin collecting evidence against the utility company and build a formal case.

- f) KCC's approach had focused on issuing FPNs but would now shift to seeking to take enforcement actions further where necessary. Officers anticipated that the number of prosecutions would remain relatively low, as the primary objective was to send a clear message that would ultimately drive compliance and improve performance across the sector.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agree to:

- a) To approve and adopt a new enforcement policy enabling Kent County Council (KCC) to take enforcement action against land owners to ensure highways users are not put at risk from non-compliance under relevant statutory provisions.
- b) To approve and adopt a new street works enforcement policy enabling KCC to take relevant enforcement action up to and including prosecution against utility companies and other entities for non-compliance failures under relevant statutory provisions

58. 25/00110 - A28 Sturry Link Road
(Item 14)

Peter Osborne (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) Andrew Loosemore (Interim Director of Highways and Transport) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Osborne presented the Key Decision to Members for consideration, aspects to be considered were:

- a) The A28 Sturry Link Road would be a critical piece of infrastructure required to reduce congestion and to support new housing and economic growth in Canterbury and East Kent. Although substantial funding had already been secured through developer contributions and government grants, a funding gap had remained.
- b) To address the funding gap, the County Council was seeking support from the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Bill Fund. Securing funding would assist in mitigating the financial risk to the Council and ensured that the project could proceed without delay. A decision on the funding application was expected later in the month (January 2026).

2. In response to comments and questions from Members, the discussion covered the following:

- a) Members queried that the link road project being dependent on a £9.8 million funding contribution from Homes England and if funding was not secured, or if a shortfall arises, would County Council propose to address the deficit through future Section 106 developer contributions. The Cabinet Member suggested that a shortfall was unlikely but had instructed officers to explore all options.
- b) Officers updated that the grant had successfully passed the next stage of their approvals process. Officials from the Ministry of housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) were present at that meeting. The proposal had now been passed to MHCLG for formal approval. Officers expected a decision within the next five to ten days, and the indications at the current stage remained positive.
- c) In Addition, officers responded to the £9.8 million funding gap that Members had referenced. Officers clarified that the figure did not represent the full value of the grant being requested. Homes England had applied their own contingency allowances, and their assessments did not include indexation when calculating the funding gap.
- d) KCC budgets had captured an anticipated level of indexation that would be expected to be met through developer contributions. As a result, Homes England had considered a grant value of up to £24 million, which would significantly offset the gap and reduce the overall financial risk to the County Council.
- e) Frustrations were shared on the lack of progress made with Network Rail in light of the works occurring around the Sturry train station location. Impacts to the local traffic were emphasised and included environmental concerns on the possibilities of the River Stour being impacted by building runoffs. Members asked for support in holding National Rail to account for the impacts that continued to disrupt the Sturry and Broad Oak areas.
- f) Officers highlighted the six planning conditions that related specifically to environmental matters, particularly those associated with the River Stour. Officers would be working through the process of preparing and submitting the necessary documentation to enable these conditions to be formally discharged. This included providing the evidence required to satisfy the expectations of the Environment Agency and other relevant stakeholders involved in the overall assessment.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agree to:

- a) Give approval to progress the construction of the Sturry Link Road A28 roundabout and associated works utilising banked S106 funding in order to implement the planning permission for the scheme.
- b) Subject to a successful Homes England bid, delegate to the Corporate Director of Finance (S151 Officer), the authority to accept Brownfield, Infrastructure and

Land (BIL) funding from Homes England to deliver the A28 Sturry Link Road viaduct.

- c) Confirm that other decisions in Record of Decision 18/00027 and 23/00066 remain extant.
- d) Approval for any other further decisions required to allow the scheme to proceed through construction to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

59. 25/00104 - Folkestone Library Long Term Location

(Item 15)

Mr Brian Collins (Deputy leader of the Council) with Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Stephanie Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities), Hugh D'Alton (Strategic Programme Manager) and James Pearson (Head of Libraries, and Registration & Archives) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Collins presented the key item to the Members; the following was discussed:

- a) Outlined the ongoing holding costs for keeping Grace Hill and the sites current state of disrepair which had remained unchanged since December 2022. It was highlighted that this had placed significant financial pressure on the Council.
- b) Restoring Grace Hill to even a basic, habitable condition would likely require substantial expenditure. The Deputy Leader discussed that as a Council there was a responsibility to balance investment and spending across the entire County, not just at one locale.
- c) Following the closure of the Grace Hill Library in 2022, a temporary library facility was established opposite the original site to ensure continuity of service for residents.
- d) The temporary library had been in place opposite Grace Hill along with other measures since its closure in 2022. The library did not provide residents with the experience or resource levels expected of a fully operating library in the Town Centre. It had also lacked a proper adult section and a proper children's section, and although staff on site were working extremely hard the limitations of the premises had remained very restricted in delivery of offer.
- e) If the option of returning the library to the Grace Hill building was to be pursued, there would be no immediate reinstatement of services. The Deputy Leader suggested that in reality and under favourable conditions, it would likely take around three years before the building could reopen and that was only if such an investment were financially viable for the Council to pursue.
- f) The Council had agreed to look for alternative location for a temporary service in the town centre where the full-service offer could be delivered. The best site found was the former Woolworths building, 14 Sandgate Road, as a potential

site for delivering library services. This option had offered a significant opportunity. It would provide the people of Folkestone with a dedicated, fully equipped library and included a complete adult section and a complete children's section. Adult Education Services would also move into the location and align with the administration's commitment to creating spaces that offer more than a just traditional library provision and ensure that the Folkestone has a full town centre offering.

- g) The Deputy Leader acknowledged that passions were understandably running high among some residents of Folkestone and acknowledged and respected those feelings. While the intention was for the Grace Hill site to go to auction in February, that process had not yet taken place. The door was therefore not fully closed to any offers to purchase the building.
- h) The Deputy Leader elaborated that there were still time and opportunities for individuals or organisations to come forward with alternative proposals for the future of the former Grace Hill Library building. Any viable option that benefited the community could still be considered before the auction process was finalised.

2. In response to comments and questions from Members and guests, discussion covered the following:

- a) Members discussed how historically, the library service had always been delivered solely from the ground floor. There had never been a requirement for users to go upstairs or downstairs to access library services. This was the basis of the community proposal for the future use of Grace Hill: that the library would continue to operate exclusively on the ground floor, with the upper and lower floors would be repurposed for other community-led activities
- b) The Deputy Leader responded that the statement of the Grace Hill building being inherently superior to the alternative simply because the alternative is "all on one floor" did not hold. From a library-service perspective, both buildings were effectively equivalent. The service at Grace Hill had always been delivered entirely on a single level. Members also highlighted the move of Adult Education from their current property to a higher rent property in view of the Grace Hill library as a cost increase that lacked rationale. It was further noted that the Grace Hill Library had occupied two floors, with the local history collections accommodated on the upper level.
- c) Members further queried the £2.9 Million pound cost of repairs being an accurate and concise figure and raised concerns on the how the new lease at Sandgate Road for 15 years had not been brought via referral before a committee. The pedestrianisation of the new library location would also impact those with limited mobility to access the site as 'drop-off and pick up options were limited in the area.
- d) Break clauses within the temporary library lease were raised as a mechanism that could enable and allow a Creative Folkestone-led, community-based bid to take over the Grace Hill site, generate income, and take responsibility for the building's ongoing upkeep. Members added that the absence of any commercial

bids in response to previous tender invitations for the Grace Hill site could indicate limited commercial value or interest in developing the property.

- e) Mr Prater suggested that a hybrid approach could be taken with partners if they would put forward a bid that aimed to protect the Council from any revenue costs associated with that building. The proposal would support a consultation process to identify and secure funding for a full refurbishment and redevelopment of the site, bringing it up to a modern, fit-for-purpose standard. Importantly, their timeline extended through to 2030, which would provide the necessary space for that work to be fully planned and delivered. Such an approach would not only enable the community to explore a long-term vision for the building but would also safeguard the Council's asset in the meantime.
- f) The Deputy Leader acknowledged the proposal but elaborated on the current state of the Grace Hill site after his recent visit. The property was a listed (Grade II) building which also complicated matters. Issues on water ingress, roof repairs and hazardous mould were discussed. Ongoing security and holding costs also remained a notable outlay for the Council.
- g) Members noted the administration's recent renewed investment in County Hall and suggested that a similar approach could be applied to Grace Hill. It was suggested that the Grace Hill Library building had originally been gifted to the people of Folkestone in 1888 as a beacon of learning and opportunity, and therefore some Members questioned whether it should be considered KCC's asset to dispose of. The Member urged KCC to work collaboratively with Creative Folkestone and the Save Folkestone Library groups to facilitate a sustainable solution. Mr Brady confirmed his support for Option 2A, which proposed working with these groups to retain the Folkestone Library service at the Grace Hill site.
- h) Mr Brady proposed that a covenant be placed on the Grace Hill site; this proposal was seconded by Mrs Hudson. Mr Brady explained that, should Members decide not to support Option 2A which would seek to retain the building and continue working with Creative Folkestone and the Save Folkestone Library – Grace Hill campaign—then, in the event that the Council proceeds with a sale, a covenant should be applied. This covenant would ensure that the building remained in community use for the benefit of the residents of Folkestone.
- i) Members discussed the proposals set out in the amendment and suggested that it would be helpful to Members to provide some clarity on the Council's disposal policy and the relevant processes that were applied.
- j) Officers highlighted that the amendment being proposed would not align with the Council's Freehold Disposal Policy, and any decision would therefore need to be considered within the context of that policy. The Council had clear obligations regarding secure and prudent investment, and although there were circumstances in which wider social or community benefits could be considered, these must be carefully assessed as part of the decision-making process.
- k) Officers suggested that it was important to highlight the position regarding a potential auction. As referenced in the exempt paper's financial figures. Any

reserve would be informed by an up-to-date valuation and agreed in consultation with the auctioneers to ensure it was appropriate and compliant with KCC's policy requirements.

- l) Members acknowledged the clarification but suggested that the Committees role should be to set and challenge policies. Officers addressed the point and reminded the committee that the Council had adopted the Freehold disposal policy.
- m) Additional caution was urged by officers on the implications associated with application a covenant to the property. While such a covenant could protect the facility—unless it were later varied or removed—it would also affect who may be able to come forward for the property at auction. It would likely influence the value of the building and could limit the range of potential bidders and the types of proposals they might bring forward
- n) Officers reminded Members that the Grace Hill building was a listed building. Any change of use to a purpose not already permitted under current planning regulations would require planning consent. Additionally, any works that affected the historic fabric of the building would require listed building consent. These matters would fall under the jurisdiction of Folkestone & Hythe District Council, as they are the local planning authority. Kent County Council did not hold planning authority in the discussed context.
- o) The vote for Mr Bradys proposal was taken. Members requested the voting be recorded in the minutes.

For (4)

Mr Brady, Mrs Hudson, Mr Prater and Mr Hood

Against (6)

Mr Defriend, Mr Waters, Mr Paul, Mrs Porter, Mr Sian and Mr Mole.

Abstain (3)

Mr Thomas, Mr Mallon and Mr Fryer

The Chair noted that the proposal was unsuccessful.

- p) The Deputy Leader reiterated that the property would likely proceed to auction. However, it was emphasised again that the opportunity for organisations such as Creative Folkestone remained open, adding that the option had not been closed. Extensive discussions had already taken place with the organisation, and if they were still able to bring forward proposals the Council would remain receptive to discussions.
- q) Mrs Hudson expressed her strong opposition to the sale of the Grace Hill site and suggested that KCC should explore opportunities to work with the wider Folkestone community in order to identify a sustainable future for Grace Hill.

- r) Mrs Hudson proposed a vote on option 2A, the proposal was that the Council would accept Creative Folkestone's intention to work towards an alternative, grant-funded vision for the future of the Grace Hill building. During an undetermined period, the temporary library service would continue to operate from 14 Sandgate Road, on the basis that once the Grace Hill building had been brought back to life and made fully fit for purpose, the library service would return to the Grace Hill site.

3. In response to the Members concerns the Deputy Leader Discussed the following:

- a) Highlighted that the potential holding costs associated with the Grace Hill site for any interested party could amount to approximately £300,000–£500,000 over a three- to five-year period.
- b) It was important to bring Members back to the content of the paper, which sets out the extensive background to the Grace Hill and Folkestone Library matter—covering the original closure, the establishment of the temporary library, and the findings from the public consultation.
- c) The criteria by which KCC would assess proposals had been identified at a very early stage. These criteria were included within the public consultation materials and had remained consistent throughout the entire process. Documentation had been in the public domain for a significant period of time.
- d) The January 2025 key decision authorised work to identify and establish an alternative temporary library provision. This had led to the work on the temporary facility at 14 Sandgate Road and this was in direct response to views expressed as part of the public consultation as outlined in the January 2025 decision.
- e) Officers further explained how the January 2025 key decision had given all parties a clear road map for the commencement of the asset of community value process and the Councils future intentions. Officers confirmed that all community groups that had shown an interest had been contacted.
- f) The paper provided to Members had captured the appraised proposals as formally articulated to officers. Officers had engaged extensively with Creative Folkestone, and there was detailed dialogue regarding the condition of the Grace Hill building. KCC had provided information on the building itself and on the way in which KCC constructed and managed its property budgets. In addition, discussions were held regarding the service requirements that would need to be met.
- g) Officers discussed that engagement had taken place thoroughly, and it had taken place continuously since the January 2025 decision. The paper evaluated the proposal as it had been submitted. It was raised that Members may have heard speculation today that goes beyond what is included in the formal submission, but the Council could only appraise what had been written and what had been formally provided for County Council consideration.
- h) Notable concerns were raised regarding the ability of any community group to meet the ongoing holding costs associated with the Grace Hill site.

4. Members acknowledged the response from officers and in addition responded:

- a) Raised that no face-to-face meeting has taken place between Creative Folkestone and Cabinet Members. The Cabinet Member responded to the concerns and confirmed that that they were not correct. The KCC Presentation delivered and shared with the press was perceived as poor timing. disparity in the administration's approach to the Grace Hill building compared with its approach to this building here. Member urges support for option 2A, using a temporary library location and with a view of restoring Grace Hill.
- b) Returning to Mrs Hudson's proposal, which had been seconded by Mr Prater, Members requested the voting be recorded in the minutes. The vote was recorded as follows:

For (5)

Mr Brady, Mrs Hudson, Mr Hood, Mr Prater and Mr Thomas.

Against (6)

Mr Defriend, Mr Waters, Mr Paul, Mrs Porter, Mr Sian and Mr Mole.

Abstain (2)

Mr Fry and Mr Mallon

The Chair noted the second proposal was unsuccessful.

- c) Mr Thomas proposed that the decision be split and that the disposal of the Grace Hill site be deferred from auction for a period of two months to allow for further investigation. Mrs Hudson seconded the proposal. Members requested the voting be recorded in the minutes.. The vote was recorded as follows:

For (3)

Mr Thomas, Mr Hood, and Mrs Hudson.

Against (9)

Mr Brady, Mr Prater, Mr Defriend, Mr Fryer, Mr Waters, Mr Paul, Mrs Porter, Mr Sian and Mr Mole.

Abstain (1)

Mr Mallon

The Chair noted the third proposal was unsuccessful.

- d) Mrs Lawes as a local representative of Folkestone's, discussed the desire to keep the site but acknowledged the considerable costs involved. The Member

further added that herself and Cllr Baker had met directly with representatives from the Creative Foundation in the creative quarter to discuss the situation.

- e) Members suggested modifying proposal 2A to allow Creative Folkestone enough space and time to come back to the council with a full proposal that would satisfy the Council's concerns.
- f) The Deputy Leader noted the proposal but suggested that the timeframes to auction were incredibly tight and that if an organisation could make a multi-million-pound commitment over a number of years it could be looked at. It was highlighted that the period for offers to come forward had been extensive, and those parties had not made themselves visible to the Council or at this time shown any interest in acquiring the Grace Hill site.
- g) A final vote was proposed by Mr Brady and seconded by Mr Prater, The Chair clarified that this was to vote for the endorsement of option 1A and would close out the discussion. Members requested the voting be recorded in the minutes.

For (8)

Mr Defriend, Mr Mallon, Mr Fryer, Mr Waters, Mr Paul, Mrs Porter, Mr Sian and Mr Mole.

Against (4)

Mr Brady, Mr Hood, Mrs Hudson and Mr Prater.

Abstain (1)

Mr Thomas

The Chair noted the final position.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

That the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services agree to:

- a) Reaffirm the Council's commitment to delivering a sustainable, comprehensive town-centre Library and Registration Service in Folkestone.
- b) Note the outcome of the 2 Grace Hill Asset of Community Value and marketing process, including the outcome of the KCC evaluation of Creative Folkestone's proposal alongside other options for the library service.
- c) Confirm 14 Sandgate Road as the location of the Folkestone town centre Library and Registration service for the foreseeable future.
- d) Confirm that the Council remains open to considering the location of the library service as part of its ongoing estates management best practice. With the next review now likely to take place in late 2028.

- e) Confirm that the Council will progress with open market disposal of the Grace Hill building.
- f) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in liaison with the Deputy Leader, to finalise terms and enter contracts necessary to implement the decision regarding the Grace Hill building and the Sandgate Road building

60. Work Programme

(Item 16)

The work programme was noted.

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From: Peter Osborne Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: **Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 10
March 2026**

Decision No: N/A – For information only

Subject: **Decisions taken between Cabinet Committee Meetings –
Concessionary Travel Card- contract extension**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: County-wide

Summary: This report informs the Cabinet Committee of a decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport between scheduled meetings, in accordance with the Council's constitution.

Decision 26/00003 approved a two-year extension to the contract for the processing of concessionary travel cards. While the decision could have been taken through the standard Cabinet Committee process, doing so would have created an unacceptable risk of statutory service failure due to the time-critical nature of the contract extension

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note that decision 26/00003 to approve a contract award for the processing of concessionary travel cards was taken between meetings of the Cabinet Committee in accordance with the process set out in the Council's constitution.

1. Introduction

1.1

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport has taken decision 26/00003 as it could not reasonably be deferred due to the reasons set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3 below.

2. Background to decision

2.1 The Council delivers statutory concessionary travel schemes which require continuous processing of applications and card production, meaning there can be no interruption to service provision.

2.2 The existing contract is delivered through a framework agreement which requires confirmation of the extension by 20 March 2026. Alternative options

were considered but dismissed due to the absence of suitable alternative frameworks and insufficient time to procure a new contract.

- 2.3 Any delay arising from the standard decision-making process could have prevented timely contract confirmation, creating a risk of statutory service failure and potential impact on approximately 280,000 service users. On this basis, the operational and legal risks of delay were judged to outweigh the governance risk of taking the decision between meetings.

Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note that decision 26/00003 to approve a contract award for the processing of concessionary travel cards was taken between meetings of the Cabinet Committee in accordance with the process set out in the Council's constitution.

4. Background Documents

- [Decision - 26/0003 - Concessionary Travel Cards - Contract extension](#)

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From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
 David Wimble, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Special Projects
 Paul King, Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration & Special Projects
 Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
 Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 10 March 2026

Subject: Performance Dashboard

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee Performance Dashboard shows performance against targets set for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This is the fourth dashboard for 2025/26 and includes data up to December 2025.

Thirty-eight of the 44 KPIs achieved target for latest performance and are RAG rated Green. Five KPIs are below target but did achieve the floor standard and are RAG rated Amber. One KPI is below its floor standard and is RAG rated Red.

KPIs and targets proposed for reporting 2026/27 performance are included in this report.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the Performance Dashboard, and COMMENT on the KPIs and targets proposed for 2026/27

1. Introduction

1.1. Part of the role of Cabinet Committees is to review the performance of the functions of the Council that fall within the remit of the Committee. To support this role, Performance Dashboards are regularly reported to Cabinet Committees throughout the year, with the most recent report having come before this Committee in January.

2. Performance Dashboard

2.1. The Dashboard provides a progress report on performance against targets for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2025/26. The current Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee Performance Dashboard is attached as Appendix 1.

2.2. The current Dashboard provides results up to the end of December 2025.

- 2.3. KPIs are presented with RAG (Red/Amber/Green) ratings to show progress against targets. Details of how the ratings are generated are outlined in the Guidance Notes, included with the Dashboard in Appendix 1.
- 2.4. The one Red KPI is EC18 - Number of new people receiving entrepreneurship mentoring support from Kent Foundation. This was slightly below its floor standard at the end of December, but activity picked up in January meaning this KPI was then back on track to meet its year-end target.
- 2.5. The Amber KPIs in the report are shared between, Economy, Community Protection, Strategic Development and Place, Highways and Transportation, and Environment and Circular Economy. Further details on these Amber KPIs and comments on their performance can be found in Appendix 1.

3. KPIs and targets for 2026/27

- 3.1 KPIs and targets proposed for 2026/27 are shown in Appendix 2. These have gone through a rigorous review process. Of particular note is an expanded range of Highways and Transportation indicators.

4. Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the Performance Dashboard, and COMMENT on the KPIs and targets proposed for 2026/27

5. Contact details

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Growth, Environment and Transport Performance Dashboard

Financial Year 2025/26

Results up to end of December 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 Expectations. The Alert provided for Activity Indicators is whether they are in expected range or not. Results can either be in expected range (**In Line**) or they could be **Above** or **Below**.

Key Performance Indicators Summary

Economy	RAG
EC05: Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty	GREEN
EC10: Businesses assisted via Kent and Medway Growth Hub contract	GREEN
EC11: Businesses assisted through intensive support provided via the Growth Hub contract	GREEN
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	AMBER
EC17: Number of people supported with upskilling through a Skills Bootcamp programme	GREEN
EC18: Number of new people receiving entrepreneurship mentoring support from Kent Foundation	RED

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

* Following the closure of Visit Kent and Locate in Kent in September 2025, KCC is no longer able to report on these KPIs in future. A new delivery model, with a small in-house team, is being put in place and KPIs will be agreed as soon as possible between KCC, Medway Council and local industry stakeholders

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	GREEN
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)	GREEN

Highways & Transportation	Monthly RAG	YTD RAG
HT01 : Reported potholes repaired in 28 calendar days (routine works not programmed)	GREEN	GREEN
HT02 : Enquiries requiring a response, responded to within 28 days lic completed in 28 calendar days	AMBER	AMBER
HT08 : Emergency incidents attended to within 2 hours	GREEN	AMBER
HT12 : Streetlights, illuminated signs and bollards repaired in 28 calendar days	GREEN	GREEN
DT01 : Percentage of highway enquiries reported through the online fault reporting tool Highways Maintenance completed online	GREEN	GREEN
DT03 : Percentage of concessionary bus pass applications completed online	GREEN	GREEN
DT04 : Percentage of speed awareness courses booking completed online	GREEN	GREEN

Environment & Circular Economy	RAG
WM01 : Municipal waste recycled and composted	AMBER
WM11 : Municipal waste diverted from landfill	GREEN
WM03 : Waste recycled and composted at HWRCs	GREEN
WM08 : Overall score for mystery shopper assessment of HWRCs	GREEN
WM10 : Customer satisfaction with HWRCs	GREEN
EW2 : Greenhouse Gas emissions from KCC estate (excluding schools)	GREEN
EW1 : Percentage of statutory planning consultee responses submitted within 21 days	GREEN

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

Ref	Performance Indicators	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	Sep-25 (Q2)	Dec-25 (Q3)	RAG	Target	Floor
EC05	Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty (rolling 12 months)	422	449	391	400	401	GREEN	400	360
EC10	Businesses assisted via Kent and Medway Growth Hub contract (Year to Date)	574	797	209	560	1,035	GREEN	796	677
EC11	Businesses assisted through intensive support provided via the Growth Hub contract (Year to Date)	42	79	22	37	71	GREEN	52	44
EC12	Number of visitor economy businesses supported (Cumulative from start of project 1.11.24)	*	390	468	468	**	GREEN	400	360
EC13	Number of inward investment projects secured (Cumulative from start of project 1.11.24)		18	24	26	**	GREEN	25	20
EC14	Number of jobs created or safeguarded (Cumulative from start of project 1.11.24)		379	840	1,280	**	GREEN	895	716

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

** Following the closure of Visit Kent and Locate in Kent in September 2025, KCC is no longer able to report on these KPIs. A new delivery model, with in-house visitor economy and inward investment functions and a new Brand Kent team, is now in place with the KPIs proposed for 2026/27 in this paper.

Division		Director				Cabinet Member			
Growth & Communities - Economy		Stephanie Holt-Castle				Paul King			
Ref	Performance Indicators (quarterly figures are cumulative)	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 YTD (Q1)	Sep-25 (Q2)	Dec-25 (Q3)	RAG	Target	Floor
EC15	Amount of loan funding awarded to local SMEs by the Kent & Medway Business Fund (Year to Date)	New indicators in 2025/26		£1.97 m	£2.30m	£2.84m	GREEN	£2.25m	£1.5m
EC16	Number of people supported to access employment by the Connect to Work programme - Kent only (Year to Date)			*	271	514	AMBER	643	450
EC17	Number of people supported with upskilling through a Skills Bootcamp programme (Year to Date)			210	878	GREEN	300	210	
EC18	Number of new people receiving entrepreneurship mentoring support from Kent Foundation (Year to Date)			12	31	39	RED	50	42

* The Connect to Work and Skills Bootcamp programmes did not go live until Quarter 2, so there was no reporting for Quarter 1.

** Not available at time of reporting

EC16 – Activity is expected to pick up in Quarter 4, with actions in place to meet the year-end target.

EC18 – Although this was below floor standard at the end of Quarter 3, activity picked up in January with 11 new people receiving mentoring, and it is expected that the end of year target will be reached.

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

Quarterly KPIs

Ref	Performance Indicators	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	RAG	Target	Floor
LRA06	Customer satisfaction with Registration Services	96%	96%	96%	97%	97%	GREEN	96%	91%
LRA15	Total number of customers attending events in Libraries and Archives	48,772	60,907	57,292	69,304	52,760	GREEN	49,300	44,300
LRA17	Number of volunteer hours adding extra value to the LRA service	8,099	7,992	8,342	8,365	8,219	GREEN	8,200	7,400

Dec-25 (Q3): LRA06 – 1,515 customers were surveyed, 1,462 were satisfied.

Annual KPIs

Ref	Performance Indicators	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	RAG	Target 2025/26	Floor 2025/26
LRA12	Customer satisfaction with libraries	94%	94%	95%	95%	*	GREEN	94%	90%
LRA13	Customer satisfaction with archives	97%	98%	100%	98%	96%	GREEN	96%	91%

* Survey takes place in Quarter 4

2024/25: LRA12 – 8,613 surveyed, 8,183 satisfied

2025/26: LRA13 – 134 surveyed, 129 were satisfied

Activity indicators (Quarterly)

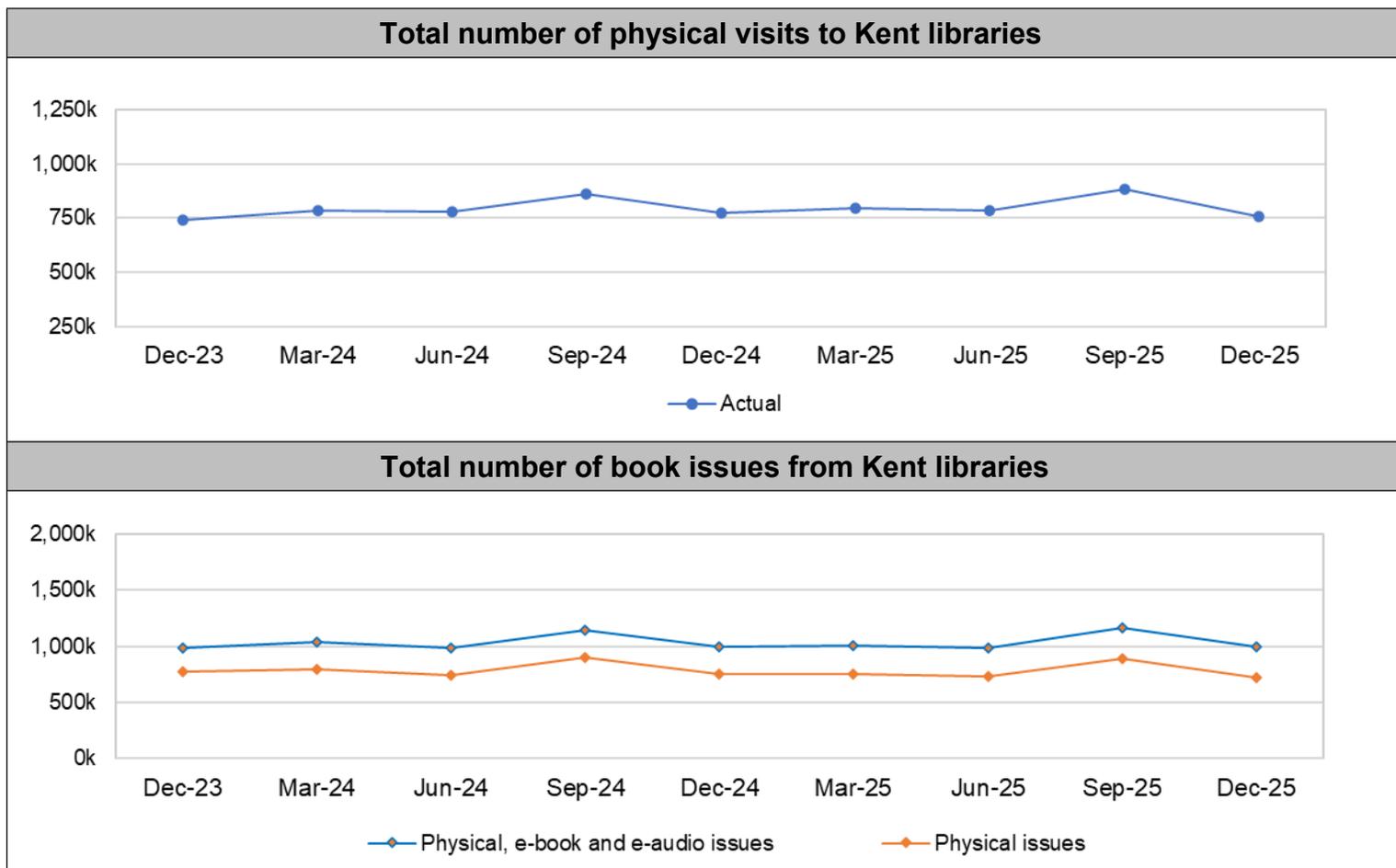
Ref	Activity Indicators (Quarterly totals)	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	In expected range?	Expected Activity	
								Upper	Lower
LRA01	Number of visits to libraries (including mobiles) (000s)	772	797	787	884	755	Yes	779	740
LRA02b	Physical, e-book and e-audio issues (000s)	998	1,009	983	1,160	992	Above	988	938
LRA04	Number of wedding, civil partnership and citizenship ceremonies carried out by KCC Officers	1,469	915	2,165	2,821	1,501	Above	1,500	1,400
LRA25	Number of archive enquiries answered	New Indicator		2,329	2,256	1,762	Above	1,700	1,600

LRA02b – A 3% overall increase in issues was forecast for 2025/26, reflecting the slowing decline in physical issues alongside continued growth in e-issues. Forecasts for Quarter 3 are typically more conservative as this is the quietest period across LRA. However, the successful reopening of Dover Discovery Centre in August contributed to a 16% increase in issues for this library in comparison with Quarter 3, 2024/25, while across the county eBook and eAudiobook issues have risen by 9%. The decline in physical issues will also be due to the temporary closure of several libraries for co-location works, however we have seen a shift towards online and alternative ways to access books which has compensated for this. These factors combined have pushed overall issue numbers above the expected target for this quarter.

LRA04 – The total number of ceremonies delivered in Quarter 3 was one above the upper activity forecast. This reflects accurate forecasting and steady demand for registration services during this period, and we are pleased to have slightly exceeded the upper target.

LRA25 – As with libraries, Archives are traditionally quieter in the lead-up to Christmas, and forecasts also accounted for the planned two-week service closure in December to support essential cataloguing work. Although enquiries fell by 2% compared with Quarter 3 2024/25, this was a smaller decrease than the 4% expected based on previous trends.

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



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

Ref	Performance Indicators	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	Sep-25 (Q2)	Dec-25 (Q3)	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%	98%	*	100%	98%	GREEN	90%	81%
CST03	Percentage of service users who report feeling safer due to warden support**	84%	95%	74%	90%	71%	79%	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%	94%	92%	94%	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).

2025/26: CST02 – 261 reviews, 257 rated events as good or better. CST03 – 156 surveys were returned, 124 responses indicated the service user felt safer. COR02 – 706 inquests held, 662 held within 12 months of notification of death.

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

Ref	Performance Indicators	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	Sep-25 (Q2)	Dec-25 (Q3)	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	96%	96%	91%	89%	93%	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.	74%	79%	89%	83%	80%	84%	GREEN	75%	67%
TS05	Number of residents attending safeguarding from financial abuse presentation meetings	New indicators in 2025/26		337	478	310	1126	GREEN	1125	990
TS06	Completed visits carried out by Trading Standards to higher-risk premises			104	95	115	314	GREEN	135	90
TS07	Number of engagements with businesses and partners aimed at preventing age restricted sales and reducing youth harm			299	228	103	630	GREEN	360	315

2025/26: KSS02 – 2,135 samples tested, 1,947 reported within 5 working days; KSS03 – 165 tests rated, 139 rated as good or satisfactory

KSS02 – In some cases, products needed to be sent to a partner laboratory for more precise testing which can take longer than the target of 5 working days. The team have now developed an in-house method to avoid having to do this, with the expected improvement already evident in performance for December 2025.

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

Ref	Performance Indicators	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	Sep-25 (Q2)	Dec-25 (Q3)	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%	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%

Page 47

* No additional victims recorded

2025/26: CP01 – 4 people supported. CP02 – 151 trader applications processed, 151 were within 10 working days

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

Ref	Performance Indicators	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	Sep-25 (Q2)	Dec-25 (Q3)	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)	84%	84%	92%	100%	98%	96%	GREEN	90%	80%

2025/26: PAG01 – 109 planning applications, all of which met Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government performance standard; PAG02 – 235 responses, 226 of which were within 21 days.

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

Ref	Performance Indicators	Dec-24 (Q3)	Mar-25 (Q4)	Jun-25 (Q1)	Sep-25 (Q2)	Dec-25 (Q3)	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
DC08	Developer contributions secured against total contributions sought (section 106)	80.9%	95.3%	100%	96.9%	97.7%	98%	GREEN	98%	85%
PROW14	Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online	88%	88%	87%	85%	88%	87%	AMBER	92%	86%
PROW16	Median number of days to resolve priority faults on public rights of way network (rolling 12-month figure)	8	8	14	9	8	N/A*	GREEN	10	15

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

2025/26: DC08 - £14.8m secured; PROW14 – 4,850 faults reported, 4,207 were online; PROW16 – 146 priority faults resolved.

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

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Highways & Transportation	Simon Jones	Peter Osborne

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Month RAG	Year to Date	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Yr
HT01	Reported potholes repaired in 28 days, of those becoming due	90%	91%	88%	95%	GREEN	92%	GREEN	90%	80%	96%
HT02	All enquiries requiring a response, responded to within 28 days	80%	83%	84%	85%	AMBER	81%	AMBER	90%	80%	88%
HT08	Emergency incidents attended to within 2 hours	98%	91%	97%	98%	GREEN	97%	AMBER	98%	95%	97%

Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Year to Date	In expected range?	<u>Expected Range</u> Upper Lower	
HT01b	Number of potholes due to be repaired in the month	1,276	1,582	1,551	2,011	13,591	Above	10,400	6,800
HT02b	Enquiries reported by the public due for completion in 28 calendar days	3,374	3,758	3,049	3,769	37,047	Yes	44,400	34,300
HT08b	Emergency incidents attended in the month	169	179	311	220	1,684	Yes	1,800	1,200

HT01b – The number of potholes requiring repair continues to be at a level above the expected range, at 5,144 in Quarter 3 this year compared to 3,243 in the same quarter last year. On top of adverse weather (4 named storms) and other surface damage caused, this may be partly due to the new reporting tool available for potholes, on top of a higher baseline amount of incoming enquiries throughout the year. Despite this, teams have continued to meet the target aided by KCC Highways staff who are now able to address minor and urgent repairs directly, along with additionally allocated resources through the Reforming Kent’s Roads programme.

HT02 – The performance for reported faults completed on time is continuing to increase each month. Service delivery in this area is effectively service-wide, including bus stops, dead animals, planning information, potholes and more. In order to reach the target, each service manager continues to hold monthly performance meetings dedicated to highlighting improvements and actions to take in order to increase this result.

HT08 – Attendance to emergency incidents within target timescale has improved each month, only narrowing missing the current target for the year to date despite the high number of total incidents. The team continue to meet with the contractor at an area level in order to improve these responses and lessons learned for future occurrences with the aim to improve this KPI further moving forward.

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Highways & Transportation	Simon Jones	Peter Osborne

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Month RAG	Year to Date	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Yr
HT12	Streetlights, illuminated signs and bollards repaired within timescale*	96%	97%	96%	94%	GREEN	95%	GREEN	90%	80%	93%
DT01	Percentage of highway enquiries reported by the public using our online fault reporting tool	64%	63%	67%	68%	GREEN	67%	GREEN	65%	60%	68%
DT03	Percentage of concessionary bus pass applications completed online	76%	80%	78%	83%	GREEN	79%	GREEN	75%	65%	77%
DT04	Percentage of speed awareness courses bookings completed online	90%	89%	88%	89%	GREEN	90%	GREEN	85%	75%	89%

* For priority jobs this is 28 calendar days

Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Year to Date	In expected range?	<u>Expected Range</u> Upper Lower	
HT06	Number of new enquiries requiring further action (total new faults)	6,896	6,513	5,833	5,956	57,376	Below	72,700	60,700
HT07	Work in Progress (active enquiries/jobs) - end of month snapshot	6,415	6,198	6,017	6,501	N/a	Yes	7,900	6,300
HT13	Street work permit applications and change requests submitted	12,128	13,045	11,600	9,939	105,388	Yes	121,600	99,500

HT06 – The volume of new enquiries requiring further action continues to be below the expected range, in thanks to the ability for KCC Highways staff to address minor or urgent repairs directly. Currently, this number is approximately 4% lower this quarter compared to this quarter last year with the three most frequently requested services excluding emergencies through public enquiries are: Potholes, Streetlighting, and Footpaths & Pavements.

HT13 – Between April and December 2025, 31,302 permits were issued to KCC (39% of total permits), and 48,564 permits were issued to non-KCC bodies (61%).

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Environment & Circular Economy	Simon Jones	Paul King

Key Performance Indicators - Rolling 12 months except WM08 (Quarterly) and WM10 (Half-yearly)

Ref	Indicator description	Nov-24	Feb-25	May-25	Aug-25	Nov-25	RAG	Target	Floor
WM01	Municipal waste* recycled and composted	43%	42%	42%	42%	42%	AMBER	50%	42%
WM11	Municipal waste diverted from landfill	99.2%	99.2%	99.1%	99.6%	99.6%	GREEN	99%	95%
WM03	Waste recycled and composted at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)	50%	50%	50%	48%	51%	GREEN	50%	45%
WM08	Overall score for mystery shopper assessment of Household Waste Recycling Centres	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%	GREEN	97%	90%
WM10	Customers satisfied with HWRCs	Dec-24 97%	No Survey	Jun-25 96%	No Survey	Dec-25 96%	GREEN	95%	90%

* Municipal waste is collected by Districts, and by KCC via HWRCs.

WM01 –. The 50% target for this KPI is within the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Strategy agreed by the Kent Resource Partnership (KCC and district councils). The requirements of simpler recycling come into place in March 2026, and it is anticipated that recycling rates will gradually increase as all Waste Collection Authorities must comply.

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Environment & Circular Economy	Simon Jones	Paul King

Activity Indicators (Rolling 12 months)

Ref	Indicator description	Nov-24	Feb-25	May-25	Aug-25	Nov-25	In expected range?	Expected Range Upper Lower	
WM05	Waste tonnage collected by District Councils	561,368	560,291	555,635	551,945	552,251	Yes	570,000	550,000
WM06	Waste tonnage collected at HWRCs	112,586	114,978	118,367	118,490	118,073	Yes	125,000	105,000
05+06	Total waste tonnage collected	673,954	675,269	674,002	670,435	670,324	Yes	695,000	655,000
WM12	Household residual (non-recyclable) waste (Kg/HH)	525	526	522	522	515	Below	530	525
WM13	Reuse at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)	158	170	193	209	217	Yes	450	150

WM12 – Lower than expected residual waste per household is a positive sign, as this means less non-recyclable waste is being produced per household.

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Environment & Circular Economy	Simon Jones	Paul King

Key Performance Indicator (rolling 12-month total, reported one Quarter in arrears)

Ref	Indicator description	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	RAG	Target	Floor
EW2	Greenhouse Gas emissions from KCC's overall estate and operations (excluding schools) in tonnes	10,985	10,323	10,388	10,252	9,613	9,290	GREEN	9,914	10,906

EW2 – The greenhouse gas emission target for Quarter 2, 2025/26 has been met with total greenhouse gas emissions of 9,290 tCO₂e compared to a target of 9,914 tCO₂e.

There have been positive reductions across the KCC estate and Kent Highways in quarter 2025/26, including reductions in streetlighting consumption, reduced consumption from our buildings (e.g. Invicta House) and an increase in solar net exports to the grid which are all contributing to driving emissions down.

Key Performance Indicators (monthly)

Ref	Indicator description	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
EW1	Percentage of statutory planning consultee responses submitted within 21 days	89%	88%	91%	94%	97%	91%	GREEN	90%	80%

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Growth, Environment and Transport proposed KPIs and Activity indicators for 2026/2027

Growth and Communities

Community Protection KPIs

Ref	Indicator description	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Floor	2026/27 Target	2026/27 Floor
CP02	Percentage of trader applications to Community Protection's 'Trading Standards Checked' scheme processed within 10 working days.	100%	90%	100%	90%
CST02	Percentage of Lessons Learnt Domestic Abuse Related Death Review Seminar attendees rating the event as Good, Very Good or Excellent.	90%	81%	90%	81%
CST03	Percentage of service users who report feeling safer due to warden support.	70%	65%	70%	65%
COR02	Coroners' inquests held within 12 months of the date on which the coroner is notified of the death	75%	65%	75%	65%
KSS02	Percentages of priority 1 food, feed and consumer products samples reported to clients within 5 working days	93%	88%	93%	88%
KSS03	Percentage of external independent proficiency tests rated as "good" or "satisfactory" with a statistical Z score of 2 or less.	75%	67%	75%	67%
TS05	Number of residents attending financial abuse safeguarding presentation meetings delivered by Trading Standards and/or Community Wardens	125	110	1,500	1,320
TS06	Programmed visits to risk rated premises	180	120	180	120
TS07	Number of engagements with businesses and partners aimed at preventing age restricted sales and reducing youth harm	480	420	480	420

Indicators removed for 2026/27

Ref	Indicator description	Reason
CP01	Percentage of the most vulnerable victims of scams recorded on the National Scams Hub visited and supported by Community Protection	The National Scams Team are responsible for identification of victims. The numbers of victims identified has remained very low, with none being identified in some quarters resulting in a null return for the KPI. Where victims have been identified however, all have been supported by the Community Protection team.

Economy KPIs

Ref	Indicator description	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Floor	2026/27 Target	2026/27 Floor
EC05	Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty (Rolling 12 months)	400	360	400	360
EC10	Businesses assisted via Kent and Medway Growth Hub contract (light and medium touch)	1,236	1,050	1,368	1,200
EC11	Businesses assisted through intensive support provided via Growth Hub contract (high intensity)	112	95	120	100
EC12	Number of visitor economy businesses supported through 'Grow in Kent' team	400	360	400 200 ^a	360 150 ^a
EC13	Number of inward investment projects secured through 'Grow in Kent' team	10	8	10 5 ^a	8 4 ^a
EC14	Number of jobs created or safeguarded through 'Grow in Kent' team	375	300	375 200 ^a	300 150 ^a
EC15	Amount of loan funding awarded to local SMEs by the Kent & Medway Business Fund	£3m	£2m	£3m	£2m
EC19 (NEW)	Number of jobs to be protected or created by KMBF beneficiary companies	New for 2026/27		145	110
EC20 (NEW)	Private sector leverage related to KMBF			£3.5m	£2.7m
EC16	Number of people provided with supported employment services by the Connect to Work programme	1,290	900	2,310	2,000
EC17	Number of people supported with upskilling through a Skills Bootcamp programme	500	350	500 400 ^b	350 300 ^b
EC21 (NEW)	Number of people securing employment, enhanced new roles or self-employment outcome through the Skills Bootcamp programme	New for 2026/27		150	110
EC18	Number of new people receiving entrepreneurship mentoring support from Kent Foundation	60	50	60	50

^a The Grow in Kent team (EC12, EC13 & EC14) is significantly smaller than the Locate in Kent / Visit Kent teams it replaces, and targets have been adjusted accordingly.

^b The target for EC17 has been reduced in line with reduced funding from the Department for Education for this work in 2026/27.

LRA KPIs

Ref	Indicator description	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Floor	2026/27 Target	2026/27 Floor
LRA06	Customer satisfaction with Registration services	96%	91%	96%	91%
LRA12	Customer satisfaction with Libraries	94%	90%	94%	90%
LRA13	Customer satisfaction with Archives	96%	91%	96%	91%
LRA15	Total number of customers attending physical and virtual Libraries and Archives events	204,500	183,900	204,500	183,900
LRA17	Number of volunteer hours adding extra value to the service	31,700	28,700	34,100	30,600

LRA Activity indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Expected	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2026/27 Total
LRA01	Number of visits to libraries (including mobiles) (000s)	Upper	791	889	784	808	3272
		Lower	752	844	744	768	3108
LRA02	Number of items issued (including prisons and all e-items) (000s)	Upper	986	1163	952	1018	4119
		Lower	937	1105	904	968	3914
LRA04a	Number of weddings and civil partnership ceremonies carried out by KCC Officers in Kent	Upper	2050	2700	1320	840	6910
		Lower	1850	2430	1190	760	6230
LRA25	Number of archive enquiries answered	Upper	2360	2290	1750	2400	8800
		Lower	2120	2070	1580	2170	7940

Planning Applications KPIs

Ref	Indicator description	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Floor	2026/27 Target	2026/27 Floor
PAG01	Percentage of planning applications determined to meet DLUHC performance standards	100%	90%	100%	90%

Ref	Indicator description	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Floor	2026/27 Target	2026/27 Floor
PAG02	Percentage of statutory planning consultee responses submitted to the local planning authority within 21 days (Minerals & Waste)	90%	80%	90%	80%

Strategic Development & Place KPIs

Ref	Indicator description	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Floor	2026/27 Target	2026/27 Floor
DC08	S106 Developer contributions secured against total contributions sought	98%	85%	96%	85%
PROW16	Median number of days to resolve priority faults on public rights of way network (rolling 12-month figure)	10	15	10	14

Indicators removed for 2026/27

Ref	Indicator description	Reason
PROW14	Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online	This KPI has maintained performance around 85%-88% for some time showing the vast majority of people are reporting faults online. There is likely to remain some people who will prefer other means to contact the service, so any future change is likely to be minimal.

Environment and Circular Economy

Resource Management and Circular Economy

Key Performance Indicators – rolling 12 months

Ref	Indicator Description	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Floor	2026/27 Target	2026/27 Floor
WM01	Municipal waste recycled and composted	50%	42%	50%	42%
WM11	Municipal waste diverted from landfill	99%	95%	99%	95%
WM03	Percentage of waste recycled, reused and composted at HWRCs	50%	45%	50%	45%
WM08	Mystery Shopping at Household Waste Recycling Centre Services	97%	90%	97%	90%
WM10	Customer satisfaction with HWRCs	95%	90%	95%	90%

Activity indicators (rolling 12 months)

Ref	Indicator description	Expected	2025/26 Total	2026/27 Total
WM05	Waste tonnage collected by district councils	Upper	570,000	565,000
		Lower	550,000	545,000
WM06	Tonnage managed through HWRC	Upper	125,000	125,000
		Lower	105,000	105,000
WM05+06	Total Waste Tonnage	Upper	695,000	690,000
		Lower	655,000	650,000
WM12	Household residual (non-recyclable) waste (Kg/HH)	Upper	530	530
		Lower	525	525
WM13	Reuse at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) - tonnage	Upper	450	300
		Lower	150	150

Other ECE Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Floor	2026/27 Target	2026/27 Floor
EW2	Greenhouse Gas emissions (KCC estate/services and Traded Companies) in tonnes	9,756 (Q3 2025/26)	10,732 (Q3 2025/26)	Tbc	Tbc
EW1	Percentage of statutory planning consultee responses submitted to the local planning authority within 21 days (Flood & Water management)	90%	80%	90%	80%
EW3 (NEW)	Number of trees planted as part of Plan Tree	New for 2026/27		Tbc	Tbc
EW4 (NEW)	Percentage of local planning authority requests for advice from the Heritage Service responded to within 21 days			90%	80%
EW5 (NEW)	Percentage of local planning authority requests for advice from the Ecological Advice Service responded to within 21 days			90%	80%

Page 62

Highways and Transportation

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	25/26 Latest Dec-25 (YTD)	25/26 Target	25/26 Floor	26/27 Target	26/27 Floor
HT01	All potholes repaired in 28 days (Ringway, Local Highways Maintenance Support Contract, Stewards, Inspector)	92%	90%	80%	90%	80%
HT02	All enquiries across H&T logged by the fault reporting tool and the contact centre, requiring a response and completed in 28 calendar days	81%	90%	80%	90%	80%

Ref	Indicator description	25/26 Latest Dec-25 (YTD)	25/26 Target	25/26 Floor	26/27 Target	26/27 Floor
HT08	Emergency incidents attended to within 2 hours	97%	98%	95%	98%	95%
HT12	Streetlights/illuminated signs/bollards repaired in 28 calendar days	95%	90%	80%	90%	80%85%
DT01	Percentage of public enquiries for Highways maintenance reported online	67%	65%	60%	65%	60%
DT03	Percentage of concessionary bus pass applications completed online	79%	75%	65%	75%	65%
HT15	Percentage of all streetlights on and functioning correctly (NEW)	New KPIs			98%	95%
HT17	Drainage - Emergency & Urgent incidents attended to on time (NEW)				95%	85%
HT18	Drainage - Risk Based cleansing completed on time (NEW)				95%	85%
HT19	Percentage of Winter Service Runs completed on time (NEW)				98%	88%
HT20	Percentage of structures (bridges, tunnels, walls) visual condition inspections completed within financial year (NEW)				90%	80%
HT21	Percentage of High-Speed Road (e.g. A249, A229) programmed sites completed on time (NEW)				100%	95%
HT22	Percentage of planned preservation road surfacing works completed to program (HTMC) (NEW)				95%	85%
HT23	Percentage of planned renewal road surfacing works completed to program (RARC) (NEW)				95%	85%
HT24	Percentage of planned footway surfacing works completed to program (NEW)				95%	85%
HT25	Highway Statutory Safety Inspections completed on time (NEW)				90%	80%

Activity indicators 2026/27 (based on long term averages)

Ref	Indicator description	Expected	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
HT01b	Number of potholes due to be repaired in the month	Upper	4,800	2,550	3,050	4,550
		Lower	3,150	1,700	1,950	2,900
HT02b	Enquiries reported by the public due for completion in the month	Upper	14,800	14,700	14,900	19,600
		Lower	11,500	11,400	11,400	15,200
DT03b	Number of concessionary bus pass applications received (NEW)	Upper	1,689	1,750	1,365	1,760
		Lower	1,380	1,430	1,120	1,435
HT06	Number of new enquiries not requiring action within 28 days	Upper	24,200	23,500	25,000	33,300
		Lower	20,300	19,600	20,800	27,900
HT07	Work in Progress (all outstanding enquiries waiting action)	Upper	7,300	6,600	7,900	8,700
		Lower	5,800	5,300	6,300	6,900
HT08b	Emergency incidents attended	Upper	600	480	720	1,080
		Lower	400	320	480	720
HT12b	Number of Streetlights/illuminated signs/bollards repaired in 28 calendar days	Upper	1060	1,105	1,330	1,330
		Lower	865	900	1080	1080
HT13	Street works permit applications submitted	Upper	41,900	40,000	39,700	44,100
		Lower	34,300	32,700	32,500	36,000
HT17b	Number of Drainage Emergency & Urgent incidents attended (NEW)	Upper	50	75	150	125
		Lower	20	20	100	50
HT18b	Number of gullies cleansed (risk based cleansing programme) (NEW)	Upper	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc
		Lower	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc

Ref	Indicator description	Expected	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
HT19b	Number of Winter Service Runs completed on time (NEW)	Upper	0	0	800	900
		Lower	0	0	600	650
HT21b	Number of High-Speed Road sites undertaken in the month (NEW)	Upper	30	25	0	0
		Lower	20	15	0	0
HT22b	Number of planned preservation road surfacing works (NEW)	Annual	95			
HT23b	Number of planned renewal road surfacing works in the programme (NEW)	Annual	40			
HT24b	Number of planned footway surfacing works in the programme (NEW)	Annual	75			
HT25b	Number of Statutory Safety Inspections due in month (NEW)	Upper	15,750	19,100	17,550	18,800
		Lower	15,250	19,100	17,050	18,800
HT27	Total number of contacts made by the public (NEW)	Upper	42,500	45,000	40,000	60,000
		Lower	32,500	35,000	30,000	40,000
DT01b	Total number of all enquiries received in a month by the contact centre, fault reporting tool and HT staff	Upper	25,000	25,000	25,000	35,000
		Lower	15,000	15,000	15,000	25,000

Ref	Indicator description	Reason
DT04	Percentage of speed awareness courses bookings completed online	Online take-up is of limited public interest. Can still be reported internally for management information.

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From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport
Paul King, Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Special Projects
Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
David Wimble, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects
Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 10 March 2026

Subject: **Risk Management: Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This paper presents the strategic risks relating to the Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee, comprising of three risks on the Corporate Risk Register that fall within the relevant Cabinet portfolios, plus a summary of key risks from within the Growth, Environment and Transport directorate.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT** on the risks presented.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Risk management is a key element of the Council's internal control framework and the requirement to maintain risk registers ensures that potential risks that may prevent the Authority from achieving its objectives are identified and controlled.

- 1.2 Corporate and Directorate risks are reported to Cabinet Committees annually and contain strategic or cross-cutting risks that potentially affect several functions across the Growth, Environment & Transport directorate, and often have wider potential interdependencies with other services across the Council and external parties.
- 1.3 Corporate Directors also lead or coordinate mitigating actions in conjunction with other Directors across the organisation to manage risks featuring on the Corporate Risk Register.
- 1.4 The majority of these risks, or at least aspects of them, will have been discussed in depth at the relevant Cabinet Committee(s) throughout the year, demonstrating that risk considerations are embedded within core business.
- 1.5 A standard reporting format is used to facilitate the gathering of consistent risk information and a 5x5 matrix is used to rank the scale of risk in terms of likelihood of occurrence and impact. Firstly, the current level of risk is assessed, taking into account any controls already in place to mitigate the risk. If the current level of risk is deemed unacceptable, a residual 'target' risk level is set and further mitigating actions introduced, with the aim of reducing the risk to a tolerable and realistic level. If the current level of risk is acceptable, the target risk level will match the current rating.
- 1.6 The numeric score in itself is less significant than its importance in enabling categorisation of risks and prioritisation of any management actions. Further information on KCC risk management methodologies can be found in the risk management guidance on the 'KNet' intranet site.

2. Growth, Environment and Transport led Corporate Risks

- 2.1 The Corporate Director for the Growth, Environment and Transport directorate is the lead, on behalf of the Corporate Management Team, for several of the Council's corporate risks that fall within the relevant Cabinet portfolios. The risks are regularly reviewed by directorate and divisional senior officers in consultation with the Corporate Risk and Delivery Assurance function.
- 2.2 There are three corporate risks of particular relevance to this Committee. A summary, including changes over the past year, are outlined below, with more detail of the risks and their mitigations contained in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 These risks were presented to Cabinet along with the entire Corporate Risk Register on 8 January 2026. In addition, the risk register was presented to Governance and Audit Committee for assurance on 28 January 2026.

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
CRR0003	Securing resources to aid economic growth and enabling infrastructure.	High (20)	High (16)
<p>The Council actively seeks to secure the resources/funding necessary to provide the infrastructure required to support growth, which often need to be bid for in very tight timescales and are increasingly subject to the drive to deliver economic impact, housing and employment outputs.</p> <p>The risk specifically highlights gaps in funding at local level between the overall costs of the infrastructure required and the Council's ability to secure sufficient funds through the current funding systems, including Section 106 contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy and other growth levers and the consequential impacts.</p> <p>KCC has led the development of a Kent and Medway Economic Framework with partners, setting out a high-level strategy that will guide activity to support the sustainable growth of the county's economy through to 2030. One key ambition is to "secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth, supporting joint work across Kent and Medway to maintain a dynamic understanding of the county's infrastructure needs, and making the case for investment in its national connectivity infrastructure and the resilience of local business-critical infrastructure."</p> <p>Other mitigating controls are in place such as the Local Transport Plan 5, the updated Developer Contributions Guide and the Kent Design Guide is being refreshed to ensure consistency with national policy and legislation supporting the delivery of high-quality design in new development. These controls have enabled a stable risk rating, although this remains High due to the resources/funding constraints.</p>			

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
CRR0052	Adaptation of KCC services to the impacts of a changing climate. <i>(Risk revised)</i>	High (16)	Medium (12)
<p>This risk has been revised to ensure it relates to the adaptation of the services the Council provides to the impacts of a changing climate, including seasonal weather events and increased severe weather incidents, periods of prolonged dry weather and a lack of water and increased risks of flooding during periods of high rainfall.</p> <p>There is the need to embed environmental considerations in our operating model and meet our environmental commitments.</p> <p>The KCC Strategic Statement 'Reforming Kent' focuses on adapting to changes in our weather, stronger environmental stewardship, visible improvements and a focus on the resident. This is ensured by a number of strategies, including the Environment Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Plan. These plans set the</p>			

strategic direction for the Council from 2025-28 to embed adaptation into its assets and services. Successful delivery of the plan will not be without risk, particularly as it will rely in part on securing external funding, as well as being delivered by staff across the organisation that are required to embed the work into their day-to-day operations in a time of considerable resource constraint.

The risk has remained in a stable position over the past year with a current rating of High. Work is ongoing to achieve the target risk rating of Medium as the environmental strategies are implemented.

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
CRR0042	Border fluidity, infrastructure and resilience. <i>(Current risk rating reduced to Medium and target risk rating reduced to Low)</i>	Medium (9)	Low (6)

The UK operates a full, external border as a sovereign nation and controls are now placed on the movement of goods and people between the UK and the EU.

New border controls for people, including the Entry/Exit System (EES) which sees non-EU citizens fingerprinted and photographed at borders, were implemented in October 2025. There is a phased approach to implementation, with checks commencing at a 10% level, applicable only to freight traffic, and are increasing to 100% checks for all traffic over the following 6 months to April 2026. These increased checks pose a risk to local and County-wide highways, as well as potential impacts on the local economy.

The KCC Resilience team have undertaken various internal resilience activities to plan for and prepare responses to potential impacts arising. They have also undertaken several external multi-partnership activities to ensure preparedness and collaborative working is sufficient to mitigate foreseen risks.

The risk rating has been reduced to Medium over the past year which reflects the preparation work completed by KCC and its partners, however the uncertainty of impacts when passenger traffic checks increase remain. The risk profile is being regularly monitored as the percentage of checks increases.

3. Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate risk profile

3.1 The GET directorate risk register contains eight risks and a summary of these risks is shown below. The risks have been subjected to an in-year review by the Directorate Leadership Team.

3.2 Since Spring 2025, one new risk has been added to the GET Directorate Risk Register, GT0034 – Market capacity and competition. This risk relates to the

challenging market conditions compounded by the cost-of-living crisis and inflation, competition and availability of workforce and materials for both KCC and its suppliers.

- 3.3 One risk has been withdrawn from the GET Directorate Risk Register in the past year, GT0026 - Net Zero and insufficiency of funding. This was following adoption of the new KCC Strategic Statement ‘Reforming Kent’ and Objective 6 – Scrap unattainable Net Zero 2030 and focus environment policy on direct benefits to Kent residents.

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
GT0025	Capital investment and asset management.	High (25)	High (16)
<p>This risk relates to financial pressures in maintaining and improving Kent highways and all assets including structures and bridges. The increase in costs of backlog of works results in challenges to the sufficiency of capital funding for highways asset management and infrastructure.</p> <p>More external funding will need to be secured, which presents risks related to resources required to develop feasibility/bids for these, alongside any “abortive costs” if bids are not successful, plus the sometimes onerous and challenging grant conditions that come with the funding that could expose KCC to financial risk.</p> <p>Shortfalls in capital funding that impact on the KCC estate can also present implications for services in the directorate that operate from KCC buildings.</p> <p>An ever-increasing risk is the annual shortfall in funding to achieve “steady state” in terms of asset management and the impact of significant inflationary and spending growth pressures in recent years. Actions continue to source additional capital funding with ongoing oversight within the directorate.</p> <p>The risk remains at the highest level due to the ongoing funding constraints, backlog costs and spending growth pressures.</p>			

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
GT0036	UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UKETS).	High (20)	High (16)
<p>This risk relates to the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UKETS) that went live on 1 January 2021, replacing the UK’s participation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.</p> <p>The UKETS applies to regulated activities which result in greenhouse gas emissions, including combustion of waste for fuel recovery. New legislation is set to be introduced in</p>			

April 2028 to incorporate Energy from Waste Activities into UKETS, and costs will then become applicable to KCC due to waste disposal responsibilities. Based upon the 2023/24 forecast, expenditure cost pressures may be as high as £19m per annum.

Officers are continuing engagement with Kent Enviropower Limited and wider industry bodies to clarify ramifications of the UK trading scheme, as well as working with district partners to promote increased recycling rates and therefore reduce the waste applicable under the UKETS.

The risk continues to remain at a high level with no changes to profile over the past year.

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
GT0031	Recruitment and retention challenges for key roles.	High (20)	High (16)

This risk relates to the directorate's recruitment shortfalls and retention challenges and has remained high over the past year.

There are a number of key or specialist roles across the directorate for which the postholders often have skillsets that are transferrable to other sectors, which presents risks to the recruitment and retention of suitably trained and experienced staff. It is particularly challenging to compete with salary demands for some key specialist roles.

The risk carries potential consequences for workforce capacity, capability and morale. Mitigating controls in place include workforce and succession planning as part of Managers' Personal Development and Action Plans, a Directorate Organisational Development Group and a reward and recognition approach as part of the KCC Employment Offer.

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
GT0020	Identification, planning and delivery of Medium-Term Financial Plan targets.	High (20)	High (16)

This risk relates to the directorate's responsibilities to the MTFP and has continued to remain high over the past year due to increasingly challenging financial pressures, particularly with significant levels of savings still to be achieved across the Authority.

The directorate is required to make its contribution to the challenging savings targets required by the Council over the medium term. There is a reduced ability for the directorate to mitigate year-on-year, but the directorate participates fully in financial monitoring processes and has developed savings and income proposals that have been fed into the MTFP that require timely decision-making to ensure successful delivery. Key projects are monitored and managed by the GET Directorate Leadership Team.

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
GT0027	Provision of suitable ICT systems and reliance on KCC technology projects.	Medium (12)	Medium (12)
<p>The directorate is increasingly reliant on information held electronically and would be impacted by staff being unable to continue working remotely due to equipment or network failure. Business Continuity Plans have been updated to include plans to mitigate against this risk and equipment is upgraded when available and necessary.</p> <p>This risk profile and rating have remained stable over the past year.</p>			

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
GT0021	Availability and quality of resources provided to the directorate.	Medium (12)	Medium (12)
<p>The directorate liaises regularly with other organisational departments to ensure they can provide expert support and advice to services at the right time. However, it is acknowledged that there are capacity challenges elsewhere across the organisation that can impact on the level and timeliness of support available. The risk has therefore remained at a medium level over the past year.</p> <p>The Directorate Leadership Team is also continually liaising with KCC commissioners on any issues regarding performance of service providers (e.g. KCC Local Authority trading companies or outsourced services), and the directorate's services are increasingly being involved as key stakeholders in matters of strategy and service design.</p>			

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
GT0034	Market capacity and competition. <i>(New Risk)</i>	Medium (12)	Medium (8)
<p>This is a new risk added to the GET Directorate Risk Register within the past year. It focuses on challenging market conditions causing a lack of sustainability and an inability to meet growing demand.</p> <p>The risk has been rated as Medium due to the mitigating controls in place, including the use of a supply and demand tool, Contract Management Review Group, robust checking of suppliers and the KCC Commercial and Procurement tools available.</p>			

Risk Reference	Risk Title	Current Rating	Target Rating
GT0001	Health and Safety considerations.	Medium (10)	Medium (10)

Services across the directorate need to pay due regard to potential health and safety issues due to the nature of the work they undertake, and this risk has remained static over the past year.

Recommendations from health & safety reviews are monitored, with any improvements made as required. Sound health & safety systems are maintained at waste sites, including reviews of any accidents or near misses, while services work with Facilities Management regarding regular risk assessments of directorate sites and testing for hazards.

A Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board for the directorate is in place and has the responsibility of ongoing review of the priority areas for action, including reporting mechanisms.

4. Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT** on the risks presented in this report.

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Relevant Corporate Director:

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Appendix 1 - Growth, Environment and Transport Led Corporate Risks

Risk Register - Corporate Risk Register

Current Risk Level Summary

Green	0	Amber	1	Red	2	Total	3
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Current Risk Level Changes

0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	1	1
0	0	1	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Event	Assigned To	Last Review date	Next Review				
CRR0003	Securing resources to aid economic growth and enabling infrastructure	Simon Jones	30/01/2026	30/04/2026				
<p>The inability to secure sufficient funding, including contributions from development, to deliver the infrastructure necessary to support growth may require gap funding in order for KCC to fulfil its statutory duties.</p> <p>Deferral of developer contributions and/or elongated planning consents leads to delayed or compromised infrastructure.</p>								
Cause	Consequence	Current Risk	Previous Current Risk	Control / Action	Control / Action	Target Date	Target Risk	
<p>The economy in Kent & Medway has been impacted by various global events, and the impact could be disproportionate across the county (e.g. in coastal areas).</p> <p>The Kent & Medway Economic Framework was developed and aims to act as a stimulus for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.</p> <p>The Council actively seeks to secure the resources/funding necessary to provide the infrastructure and programmes required to support growth, but these are often difficult to secure.</p> <p>At a local level there is often a significant gap between the</p>	<p>Key opportunities for growth missed.</p> <p>The Council finds it increasingly difficult to fund services and match-fund infrastructure across Kent and fully mitigate the overall impact of housing growth on KCC services and therefore communities.</p> <p>Kent becomes a less attractive location for inward investment, business and tourism.</p> <p>Our ability to deliver an enabling infrastructure becomes constrained.</p> <p>Reputational risk associated with delayed delivery of infrastructure required.</p>	High 20 Major (5) Likely (4)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kent Design Guide to be refreshed to ensure consistency with national policy and legislation supporting the delivery of high-quality design in new development. Local Transport Plan 5 approved by County Council and due to commence. Multi-agency Kent and Medway Employment Task Force continues to operate to tackle skills gaps, evidenced by the Local Skills Improvement Plan and support current and future labour market needs through developing the 'Get Kent & Medway Working Plan' and delivering the new 'Connect to Work' and 'Skills Bootcamps' programmes to help reduce economic inactivity and support local employers to tackle skills gaps. 	<p>Tom Marchant</p> <p>Lee Burchill</p> <p>Steve Samson</p>	<p>A -Accepted</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p>	<p>31/03/2026</p>	High 16 Serious (4) Likely (4)

Risk Register - Corporate Risk Register

<p>overall costs of the infrastructure required and the Council's ability to secure sufficient funds through the current funding systems, including Section 106 contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy and other growth levers.</p> <p>Government spending restraint and evolving priorities may result in essential infrastructure programmes being delayed or cancelled.</p> <p>Central Government is now targeting funding for local growth programmes at Mayoral Combined Authority areas rather than counties. This now presents a significant risk of lack of financial resource for several years to support economic development activity in Kent & Medway, with the county being excluded from government funding resources.</p> <p>The challenge is becoming more acute with organisations such as Visit Kent and Locate in Kent going into liquidation due to significant cuts in public funding over the years.</p>	<p>Additional revenue costs incurred due to infrastructure delays and operational costs increasing.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent & Medway Economic Framework Work continues the implementation plan for the Kent & Medway Framework with KCC, KMEP subgroups and local stakeholders for taking forward the ambitions and action areas set out in the framework including developing a prioritised economic and infrastructure projects pipeline (as part of an emerging Local Growth Plan) to focus and secure future funding resource and inform government of priorities. A new round of Growing Places Fund (capital loans) is being prepared to support projects that contribute to economic growth with a view to launching a first call for projects during 2026-27. • Specific business support packages, including the Kent & Medway Business Fund, Recover Pivot & Scale, Kent & Medway Growth Hub signposting, advice and events etc. • Strong engagement of private sector through Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP), Business Advisory Board, Kent Developer Group, KMEP Sector Groups, Team Kent work etc. • Kent & Medway Economic Framework Implementation Plan progressed. • Monitoring of socio-economic data and trends and development of responses to changed economic trends through Kent & Medway Economic Dashboard and new KMEP work stream data sets. • Work to deliver and grow new in-house visitor economy and inward investment services to continue to promote the county to visitors, to attract businesses to the county and bring in additional revenue for local companies. Regular contract monitoring and reporting to ensure businesses are supported. 	<p>Steve Samson</p> <p>Steve Samson</p> <p>Steve Samson</p> <p>Steve Samson</p> <p>Steve Samson</p> <p>Steve Samson</p>	<p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p>		
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying government through the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership and other stakeholders to highlight Kent & Medway's exclusion from Growth programmes and funding. 	Steve Samson	Control		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that KCC continues to take a strategic leadership role for the Kent & Medway Functional Economic Area and to liaise with key government departments to make the case for specific resource allocations to tackle barriers to growth in Kent (& Medway) despite Kent not being part of the Devolution Priority Programme. 	Steve Samson	Control		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams across the Growth, Environment and Transport directorate work with each individual District on the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan including priorities for spending CIL receipts (where applicable) and Section 106 contributions to mitigate the impact of growth on County Council infrastructure and services. 	Tom Marchant	Control		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to Government consultations on proposals to reform the planning system in England, including the measures set out within the Planning and Infrastructure Act and its provisions relating to the new duty to prepare Spatial Development Strategies. 	Tom Marchant	Control		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Mapping Platform has been successfully piloted in East Kent and will now be delivered across Kent and Medway setting out the infrastructure needed to deliver planned growth. 	Tom Marchant	Control		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KCC Developer Contributions Guide has been updated and adopted. 	Tom Marchant	Control		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular dialogue with government departments. 	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Control		

Risk Register - Corporate Risk Register

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">MasterGov (DEF Software) is used to track developer contributions from the Council's initial request for developer contributions through to the issue of invoice for payment and provides the evidence base to support the annual preparation of the Infrastructure Funding Statement.	Stephanie Holt-Castle	Control		
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Risk Register - Corporate Risk Register

Risk Ref	CRR0052	Risk Title and Event	Assigned To	Last Review da	Next Review			
		Adaptation of KCC services to the impacts of a changing climate	Simon Jones	25/11/2025	25/02/2026			
<p>There is a risk that a failure to adapt KCC services to a changing climate leads to adverse impacts on and increased costs to the Council, as a result of damage to or loss of physical and financial assets, staff sickness and lower productivity, transport disruption, and others.</p>								
Cause	Consequence	Current Risk	Previous Current Risk	Control / Action	Control / Action	Target Date	Target Risk	
<p>Seasonal weather events and increased severe weather incidents, including periods of prolonged dry weather and a lack of water and increased risks of flooding during periods of high rainfall.</p> <p>A lack of adaptation by the Council services (including those delivered and commissioned by KCC) to a changing climate as a result of inadequate planning and a lack of resourcing.</p>	<p>KCC bears significant financial costs due to the destruction/deterioration of its assets and services.</p>	High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of the KCC Climate Change Adaptation Plan (including service level climate change adaptation risks and incorporating climate adaptation into project and BAU activity delivery, etc.). 	Liz Milne	Control	Medium	
		16			12			Serious (4)
	<p>Services responsible for the safety and wellbeing of staff and the general public are placed under greater demand for their services, resulting in greater expenditure and lower productivity.</p>	<p>Kent's residents experience a decline in the quality of services that KCC provides across the county, leading to customer dissatisfaction and reputational damage.</p>	Likely (4)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building environmental risks into KCC project work and the delivery of the KCC Environment Plan. The KCC Strategic Statement focuses on adapting to changes in our weather, stronger environmental stewardship, visible improvements and a focus on the resident. 	Helen Shulver	Control	Possible (3)
							Matthew Smyth	Control
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of various strategies, including the Kent Environment Strategy, Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Water Resources Plan. 	Matthew Smyth	Control	
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estate rationalisation and building in additional measures to reduce the risk of impact from a changing climate. 	Rebecca Spore	Control	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISO 14001 accreditation (the international standard for Environmental Management Systems) implemented and maintained 	Matthew Williams	Control		

Risk Register - Corporate Risk Register

Risk Ref	CRR0042	Risk Title and Event	Assigned To	Last Review date	Next Review		
		Border fluidity, infrastructure and resilience	Simon Jones	08/12/2025	08/03/2026		
<p>That changes in border customs, checking and processing routinely disrupt local communities and both the strategic and local road networks.</p> <p>That the Government does not provide sufficient capital and revenue financial support to departments, agencies, local authorities, infrastructure stakeholders and responding agencies required to address the necessary infrastructure, legislation and controls to ensure a long term plan for frictionless border movements.</p>							
Cause	Consequence	Current Risk	Previous Current Risk	Control / Action	Control / Action	Target Date	Target Risk
<p>Changes at the UK border with Europe means additional controls now exist on the movement of goods and people between the UK and the EU.</p> <p>The UK Government and the EU have introduced new border controls and further changes are being introduced including the new Entry/Exit System (EES) and European Travel Information and Authorisation system (ETIAS).</p> <p>KCC has been working with partners at a local and national level to assess potential implications for the county and prepare for various scenarios.</p> <p>KCC is reliant on coherent, coordinated governance and information across Government to aid the Kent & Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) locally in planning our contingency arrangements</p>	<p>Significant slowdown in the existing flow of goods and people through border controls leads to long delays at Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.</p> <p>Impacts on the strategic & local road networks as a result of Operation Brock and other traffic management measures, leading to an increase in local and pan Kent road journey times, impacting communities and businesses.</p> <p>Significant detrimental impact on the county's economic competitiveness, attractiveness for inward investment and quality of life for Kent residents.</p> <p>Shortages and delays may impact local / national supply chains.</p> <p>Interruption and effect on business services, both statutory and discretionary, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult's / children's social care staff making visits in 	<p>Medium</p> <p>9</p> <p>Significant (3)</p> <p>Possible (3)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update elected members regularly, including committee briefings. Engagement with Government departments at a strategic level, regarding EES and long-term border resilience. Work with KMRF partner agencies to update & maintain multi-agency plans & capabilities relating to border disruption. Established an internal meeting structure, linked to the Cross Directorate Resilience Forum, to ensure KCC is prepared for EES implementation, including business continuity. Ensure the KCC Resilience Training & Exercising Programme covers the testing of EES plans / capabilities. Work with Government departments to secure funding to support EES preparations / response. Coordinate planning & preparations for EES implementation with KMRF partners, in KCC's role as lead agency for EES (planning & response). Work with central Government, National Highways, and ports to develop short, medium and long term plans & capabilities for border resilience, including infrastructure and technological solutions. 	<p>Simon Jones</p> <p>Simon Jones</p> <p>Andy Jeffery</p> <p>Andy Jeffery</p> <p>Andy Jeffery</p> <p>Andy Jeffery</p> <p>Andy Jeffery</p>	<p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Control</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>6</p> <p>Significant (3)</p> <p>Unlikely (2)</p>

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From: David Wimble, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects

Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee

Subject: Implementation of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework - Ambition 4

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 4. It sets out the high-level key actions that have taken place recently and the future activity planned to support sustainable growth of Kent & Medway's economy, through to 2030. This one of a series of updates on 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 Partnership](#)¹ (KMEP) approved the publication of the [Kent & Medway Economic Framework](#) (KMEF). 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:
 1. Enable innovative, productive and creative businesses
 2. Widen opportunities and unlock talent
 3. Secure resilient infrastructure for planned sustainable growth
 4. Place economic opportunity at the centre of community wellbeing and prosperity
 5. Create diverse, distinctive and vibrant places.

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 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 Kent and Medway Business Advisory Board (BAB), and a range of local partners and stakeholders.
- 2.2 For each of the five ambitions, a private sector board member and a local authority officer acts as a Thematic Lead for the ambition, helping to oversee the implementation of the KMEF and direct the team's activities.
- 2.3 The information below outlines the focus of the work to date against the ambition 4 of the KMEF: 'Place economic opportunity at the centre of community wellbeing and prosperity'. The four action areas under this ambition are:
 - Ensuring that everyone who wants a job can find work
 - Developing a strategic partnership for health and the economy
 - Building links between anchors of growth, key investments and community opportunity
 - Embedding economic opportunity at the centre of local regeneration
- 2.4 This paper provides short updates on:
 - The Connect to Work Programme
 - The Get Kent & Medway Working Plan
 - The Strategic Partnership for Health & Economy
 - Early work with local Anchor Institutions
 - Programmes that are contributing to local regeneration across the county

3. Action Area 13 - Ensuring that everyone who wants a job can find work:

- 3.1 Kent County Council is currently delivering Wave 6 of Skills Bootcamps across the following sectors: creative, construction, early years/schools, health and social care, and retail. We have created over 600 learner places, with a target to achieve at least 500 filled. So far, 350 learners have enrolled.
- 3.2 Of the 350 starters, 170 learners have completed their Bootcamp. Among those who have completed, 90 learners have already progressed into a new job, moved into an enhanced role with new responsibilities, or—if self-employed—secured new contracts as a direct result of the Skills Bootcamps.
- 3.3 The programme continues to be highly popular, with many courses receiving strong application numbers—particularly those in creative industries, construction, and early years/schools. Learner satisfaction also remains exceptionally high, with a 98% satisfaction rate, based on 80 responses. This represents a 50% response rate from learners who have completed the programme.
- 3.4 Key highlights and common strengths
 - Overall learner satisfaction: 98%
 - 100% of learners reported gaining new skills or understanding (a key DfE KPI)

- 100% felt the teaching methods were effective
 - 100% felt supported by tutors and staff throughout the Bootcamp
 - 100% said the Bootcamp helped them develop skills for the workplace, future employment, or self-employment
 - 100% received information on safeguarding procedures during the Bootcamp
- 3.5 We are now preparing programmes with our existing providers for Wave 7 Skills Bootcamps. We have received £1.5 million in funding, which represents a 20% reduction compared with Wave 6. We will be offering at least 400 learner places, as directed by the DfE, and we are exploring the addition of the agricultural sector. The new programme will run from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.
- 3.6 The recently published [Get Kent & Medway Working Plan](#) confirmed that of the 215,000 people in the county who are currently economically inactive, 56,667 cannot work due to a long term health condition and 74,413 due to caring responsibilities. Not only does this impact negatively upon people's own lives, but skills gaps and vacancy rates among local employers are exacerbated, hindering business growth.
- 3.7 This action area is broad and cannot be achieved by a single programme or organisation but rather requires a system-wide approach to tackling economic inactivity in Kent & Medway. A number of programmes and activities are, however, underway to support people who are keen to work, to access employment opportunities.
- 3.8 The [Thrive Programme](#) was co-created by a number of local partners and delivered by East Kent Colleges Group towards the end of 2025 in Margate and Swale. Thrive provided support over a period 12 weeks to help people who had been out of work for some time due to sickness regain confidence and skills to improve their employability. The courses covered digital skills, personal development and confidence building activities and work experience. There are plans to build on the success of initial courses and run them in additional locations.
- 3.9 [Connect to Work](#) is a flagship supported employment programme funded by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and managed by Local Authorities. KCC is the accountable body for the Kent & Medway programme which will provide support to over 9,000 individuals to access and remain in work. Target groups include people with long term health conditions, disabilities and a range of disadvantaged groups including ex-offenders, people at risk of homelessness and care experienced young people. Kent was among the first four areas in the UK to launch at the end of June 2025 and by the end of January 2026 over 700 people had started on the programme with 80 first earnings reported (i.e. job secured) through the monitoring system. A recent [article in South East Business](#) reports on one of the first scheme participants to secure a new role with a local employer. As the programme continues, there will be many other similar success stories to share.
- 3.10 To further support this action area, KCC is working with partners to map local programmes that can help people into work and support local businesses with addressing their skills gaps and filling vacancies. Resources for employers will

be made available on the Kent & Medway Growth Hub Website while resident-facing information will feature on various local websites and social prescribing platforms.

- 3.11 In order to help young people with their career aspirations, this workstream is also making links to activities delivered by the [Kent & Medway Careers Hub](#) and The Education People whose [Kent choices website](#) provides detailed information about career pathways in different industry sectors and live apprenticeship vacancies.
- 3.12 The success of Action Area 13 is being tracked using data from Connect to Work and other programmes to enable KCC to monitor how many local people are being supported into sustainable employment.

4. Action Area 14 - Developing a strategic partnership for health and the economy:

- 4.1 The rationale for this action area is based on the proven relationship between health outcomes and economic outcomes whereby some 40% of the determinants affecting people's health and wellbeing are socio-economic and include those directly related to education, employment and income. In turn, local firms need access to a skilled and healthy workforce to be able to thrive and grow.
- 4.2 The Kent & Medway Strategic Partnership for Health & Economy was established in October 2024 and brings together key local stakeholders working in the fields of health and economic development. Membership includes public health, the NHS, the voluntary / community sector, private sector (in particular through business membership organisations), the Department for Work & Pensions (Jobcentre+) and also representation for people with lived experience. The group reports into the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) and the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).
- 4.3 The group supports the implementation of KMEF Ambition 4 and relevant parts of the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Strategy as well as specifically providing oversight of the delivery of the [Kent & Medway Work & Health Strategy](#) (Also see Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee paper, July 2025: [Integrated Work & Health Strategy](#)) which is a key part of the delivery of shared objectives. Various task and finish groups have been organised to take forward actions in recent months.
- 4.4 The partnership also supports improved integration and connectivity of programmes across the local health and employment system and provides expert advice and guidance on key areas of joint work.
- 4.5 Recent activity supported by the SPHE includes:
 - Actively shaping the **Get Kent & Medway Work Plan** and **Work & Health Strategy** action plans which will directly deliver against this KMEF action area.
 - A Task & Finish Group focusing on **employer engagement** with the aim of helping local businesses to support people with long term health conditions and to keep their current workforce healthy. A number of business-facing

pages are being added to the Kent & Medway Growth Hub website with work and health content, including employer support resources, inclusive recruitment guidance, wellbeing tools and related materials.

- A subgroup to consider actions that can improve access to locally produced healthy food through **supply chain development** activity.
- Scoping potential **pilot projects** to support local businesses by providing, for example, access for SMEs with limited in-house capacity to human resources and occupational health services and evaluating the effectiveness of transport to work schemes
- Carrying out a **lived-experience deep dive** into priority cohorts such as young people currently not in education, employment or training (NEETs).
- Planning and promoting the February 2026 **Kent & Medway Summit on Employment, Skills and Health**, a county-wide partnership event focused on strengthening integration across the work, health and skills system.

4.6 Ongoing priorities for the partnership include making links between programmes and activities delivered across Kent & Medway to support the health and work agenda and finding ways to expand and roll out successful programmes in new locations across the county.

5. Action Area 15 – Building links between anchors of growth, key investments and community opportunity:

5.1 This action area is broad in nature, but a number of activities are underway to support anchor institutions (large employers) in the county with undertaking activities that benefit local people and smaller businesses.

5.2 Early work has begun with HR services within a number of large local employers including KCC, Medway Council and some larger businesses to identify good practice in recruitment and retention. The aim is to produce a series of case studies that could encourage smaller local businesses to develop more inclusive employment practices as a way to tackle skills gaps and boost productivity through reducing time lost to sickness and ill health.

5.3 KCC itself is also exploring ways to enhance social value activity through its own supply chain to make use of additional flexibilities brought about by the new Procurement Act. The Economy team has worked with the procurement team to see how businesses bidding for KCC contracts can be encouraged to consider how they might, for example, provide apprenticeship opportunities for local people or ensure that they adopt inclusive employment practices. The recent supplier day in January 2026, was one way of enabling local firms to better understand how to bid for work with KCC itself as an anchor institution.

5.4 Work is also being undertaken by the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce to help local firms, and therefore the local workforce, to be better prepared to access supply chain opportunities through major investment schemes such as the Lower Thames Crossing, the Gatwick Northern Runway expansion and the Sealink renewable energy projects. Workshops throughout 2026 and across the county are being planned to help local firms to get 'bid-ready'.

6. Action Area 16 – Embedding economic opportunity at the centre of local regeneration

- 6.1 A number of wider programmes and activities are actively contributing to the aims of this action area to support economic development and regeneration activities in parts of the county where the need is greatest.
- 6.2 **Connect to Work** delivery is using data on unemployment, ill health and deprivation to target support to areas of greatest need in Kent. The team is working with the District Councils to ensure that Connect to Work employment support is targeted at areas of particular need such as the High Street ward in Maidstone or co-located with services that support vulnerable residents in Gravesend.
- 6.3 **Skills Bootcamps** courses are being delivered in places such as Herne Bay and Swale to provide opportunities for local people who have been out of the job market to gain new skills and secure a guaranteed job interview, and often employment on completion of a course.
- 6.4 The **No Use Empty** scheme continues to bring empty residential properties back into use in areas of relative deprivation, lifting formally derelict areas in places such as Folkestone and reducing the negative impacts for local communities such as reducing antisocial behaviour.
- 6.5 The new in-house **Visit Kent** team is working on a coastal Kent visitor economy campaign for 2026 to counter some of the recent negative media coverage associated with the county’s coastal towns. The campaign aims to boost visitor numbers and drive footfall in Kent’s coastal towns which will increase spend in the area making a contribution to local business growth and employment prospects.
- 6.6 The **Kent & Medway Business Fund** continues to loan money to businesses based in local highstreets with recent applications approved from companies wishing to expand their activities in Chatham town centre, Swanley and Deal.
- 6.7 The **Kent & Medway Growth Hub** has been tasked with running a series of online workshops in March 2026 for high street-based businesses in recognition of the challenges faced across the county’s high streets in recent years. Topics include attracting more customers, excellence in customer service, adapting and successful promotion techniques.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This report has provided a brief overview of some of the progress in implementing Ambition 4 of the Kent and Medway Economic Framework. Significant work is underway with more future activity planned to support sustainable growth of Kent & Medway’s economy, through to 2030.

8. Contact details:

Report Authors: Steve Samson	Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle Job title: Director of Growth &
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From: Paul King, Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Special Projects

Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee meeting on 10th March 2026

Subject: Kent County Council's Draft Biodiversity Duty Report 2020-2025

Non-Key decision

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: None – this is a new duty on local authorities.

Future Pathway of report: None – Biodiversity Duty report will be published

Electoral Division: All electoral divisions

Summary: The biodiversity duty is a legal requirement for public authorities in the UK to actively consider, conserve, and enhance biodiversity when exercising their functions. The Environment Act 2021 strengthened the duty, requiring Local Authorities to publish a biodiversity report every five years. The first reporting period covers 1st January 2020 – 31st December 2025 and provides a summary of the actions taken to comply with the biodiversity duty. The draft report demonstrates the breadth of biodiversity enhancement activity that is being delivered as part of the day-to-day operational activity of services and directorates. The draft report also highlights the continued commitment to biodiversity and nature recovery for the future. The report must be published by April 2026.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note and endorse the draft biodiversity duty report.

1. Introduction

1.1 The biodiversity duty is a legal requirement for public authorities in the UK to actively consider, conserve, and enhance biodiversity when exercising their functions. The Environment Act 2021 strengthened this duty for public authorities, requires them to not only conserve biodiversity but to actively enhance it and create a more sustainable and resilient natural environment, by integrating biodiversity into the existing operation framework.

1.2 The strengthen biodiversity now requires:

- Consideration of what the authority can do to conserve and enhance

- Agreement of policies and specific objectives to enhance biodiversity, based on those considerations.
 - Action to deliver these policies and achieve the objectives.
- 1.3 More detail on complying with the biodiversity can be found online at [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK](#).
- 1.4 Local authorities (excluding parish councils) and local planning authorities must publish a biodiversity report, with the first reporting period up to the end of 2025. After this, the end date of each reporting period must be within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period. The purpose of the biodiversity report is to:
- Help everyone understand how we are collectively meeting shared goals to conserve and enhance biodiversity
 - Allow you to showcase the action you're taking to improve biodiversity
 - Show other authorities and the general public what they can do for nature recovery and share good practice
- 1.5 More detail on the requirements of the biodiversity report can be found online at [Reporting your biodiversity duty actions - GOV.UK](#)
- 1.6 At the introduction of the strengthened biodiversity duty in 2021, Kent County Council stated its policies, objectives and actions through the Kent Biodiversity Strategy, Plan Bee Action Plan and Plan Tree Strategy. Work relating to these areas in the period 2020-2025 is described in the biodiversity duty report, along with many wider actions that have been carried out by Kent County Council, all contributing the enhancement and conservation of biodiversity. The report covers the period 2020 to 2025.

2. What is presented in the report

- 2.1 By law, the report must include:
- A summary of the action taken to comply with the biodiversity duty
 - Plans to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period (2026-2031)
 - Any other information you consider appropriate
 - Actions carried out to meet BNG obligations
 - Details of resulting biodiversity gain plans
 - Plans to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period (2026-2031)
- 2.2 Consequently the report is divided into three parts: an introduction; a review of the period 2020-2025; and a look forward to ambitions for 2026-2031. Action taken (and to be taken) is framed around:
- Policies, strategies, frameworks and processes that guide and steer our priorities and the manner in which we deliver our services.
 - Delivery against Kent County Council biodiversity priorities.
 - Partnership work for nature recovery

- Estate management for the benefit of biodiversity
- Biodiversity Net Gain delivery and consideration of biodiversity in planning

2.3 The report has been compiled with information gathered from a wide range of services and teams across Kent County Council, ranging from the Natural Environment and Coast Team, Country Parks and Countryside Management Partnerships to Flood and Water Management, Highways and Transportation, Public Rights of Way, Libraries and Kent County Council estate, but this is not an exhaustive list. This shows that biodiversity is something integrated across the authority and not an additional add on. Biodiversity supports many of the services the authority provides. The report will be published on the Kent County Council website by April 2026. The biodiversity duty report will:

- Help everyone understand how we are meeting the shared goals to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Showcase the action we're taking to improve biodiversity
- Share good practice and experience with other authorities

3. Biodiversity Duty Report highlights

3.1 Key achievements featured within the report include:

1. **300,000 trees** have been planted as a result of the authority's tree establishment strategy, Plan Tree, and its associated partnership during the period 2021 to 2025.
2. **£1 million for tree planting** has been secured by Kent County Council from the Local Authority Treescape Fund between 2021 and 2025.
3. **Innovative methods for urban tree planting** to improve outcomes for newly planted trees have been trialled, including the Miyawaki method, which is now being utilised on various sites.
4. **450km of highway verge managed to support habitat for pollinators.** An officer has been seconded to Kent County Council from Bumblebee Conservation Trust during the reporting period to lead and support work relating to Plan Bee.
5. **Natural flood management delivered alongside new habitat**, with the creation of wetlands and installation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
6. **15 environmental projects worth £2.82 million** enabled by the Kent Downs National Landscape team between 2021 and 2025 with Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes fund.
7. **543ha of land managed for nature** by Kent County Council's country parks.

8. **1.25 million people engaging with nature** at Kent County Council Country Parks in 2024/25.
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10. **Publication of England's 18th Local Nature Recovery Strategy** in November 2025, following 2 years of development with the participation of over 1,000 individuals, providing a strong foundation for future partnership-led action.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The coordination of the biodiversity duty report is undertaken by a member of staff, so there is no additional financial pressures from its production.
- 4.2 Actions outline in the biodiversity duty report for the period 2026-2031 are items already planned and budgeted for – they do not represent any new or future financial burden on Kent County Council.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Kent County Council has a statutory duty to publish a Biodiversity Duty Report every five years. The report must be published 12 weeks after the end of the reporting period.

6. Equalities implications

- 6.1 The report itself will not require an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), however it contains information about many projects and initiatives which individually will have their own EqIAs.

7. Other corporate implications

- 7.1 There are no specific implications on other areas of Kent County Council. However, reporting and compiling the evidence to support the duty report requires support from other areas of Kent County Council. There are no expectations for any additional spending as biodiversity enhancement is expected to be integrated into the existing operational framework.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Kent County Council has a statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to produce a Biodiversity Duty Report covering a five year period. The report sets out the activity undertaken across the council to actively enhance and create a sustainable natural environment.

8.2 The report demonstrates the breadth of biodiversity enhancement activity that is being delivered as part of the day-to-day operational activity of services and directorates. The report also highlights the continued commitment by Kent County Council to biodiversity and nature recovery.

9. Recommendation(s): - The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to note and endorse the draft Kent County Council Biodiversity Duty report.

10. Contact details

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Kent County Council's Biodiversity Duty Report 2020-2025

Draft February 2026

CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, COASTAL REGENERATION AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Why have we published a Biodiversity Duty report
- 1.2 Overview of Kent and the County Council
- 1.3 How has this report been compiled
- 1.4 Kent County Council Biodiversity Report 2020 to 2025 key headlines

PART TWO - REVIEW OF ACTION TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL IN PERIOD 2020 to 2025

- 2.1 Policies, strategies, frameworks and processes
- 2.2 Monitoring and evaluation of delivery against Kent County Council biodiversity priorities
- 2.3 Monitoring and evaluation of partnership work for nature recovery
- 2.4 Monitoring and evaluation of estate management for the benefit of biodiversity
- 2.5 Monitoring and evaluation of Biodiversity Net Gain delivery and consideration of biodiversity in planning

PART THREE - HOW KENT COUNTY COUNCIL INTENDS TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY IN PERIOD 2026-2031

- 3.1 New and revisions to policies, strategies, frameworks and processes during 2026-2031
- 3.2 Delivery against Kent County Council biodiversity priorities 2026-2031
- 3.3 Partnership working 2026-2031
- 3.4 Kent County Council estate management for the benefit of biodiversity in 2026-2031
- 3.5 Biodiversity Net Gain delivery in 2026-2031

**FOREWORD BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL CABINET
MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, COASTAL
REGENERATION AND SPECIAL PROJECTS**

DRAFT

PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why have we published a Biodiversity Duty report

The biodiversity duty is a legal requirement for public authorities in the UK to actively consider, conserve, and enhance biodiversity when exercising their functions. The 2021 Environment Act strengthened this duty, requiring public authorities to:

- consider what you can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration
- act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives

More detail on complying with the biodiversity can be found online at [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK](#).

Local authorities (excluding parish councils) and local planning authorities must publish a biodiversity report, with the first reporting period up to the end of 2025. After this, the end date of each reporting period must be within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period. The purpose of the biodiversity report is to:

- help everyone understand how we are collectively meeting shared goals to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- allow you to showcase the action you're taking to improve biodiversity
- show other authorities and the general public what they can do for nature recovery and share good practice

More detail on the requirements of the biodiversity report can be found online at [Reporting your biodiversity duty actions - GOV.UK](#)

Biodiversity provides us with many services' fundamental to our quality of life, maintaining:

- Life, e.g. regulating atmosphere; providing clean water and air and fertile soil; helping tackle climate change and flood management.
- Economy, e.g. providing food, fuel and construction materials; contributing to the attractiveness of the places we live, work and visit.
- Well-being, e.g. inspiring outdoor exercise and recreation; providing a free commodity to be enjoyed by all.

To these ends, the work described below, carried out by Kent County Council, is important both directly for biodiversity but also for all of us in terms of our health, economy and quality of life.

At the introduction of the strengthen biodiversity duty in 2021, Kent County Council stated its policies, objectives and actions through the Kent Biodiversity Strategy, Plan Bee Action Plan and Plan Tree Strategy. Work relating to these areas in the intervening period is described in this report along with many wider actions that have

been carried out by Kent County Council, all contributing the enhancement and conservation of biodiversity. The report covers the period 2020 to 2025.

1.2 Overview of Kent and the County Council

Kent County Council is one of the largest local authorities in England, with an annual budget of over £1 billion and serving a population of 1.6 million.

The county has a wide array of wildlife and habitats which contribute to the rich landscape of the county. Kent County Council is able to make improvements for biodiversity through land management on its estate, the range of services which it provides and the strategies and plans that it is responsible for.

Kent has a rich and varied biodiversity resource, with globally rare habitats such as the vegetated shingle of Dungeness, our ancient chalk grasslands and the marine chalk reef habitats around our coast. This wealth of habitats supports over 3,400 rare and threatened species, with some of these nationally rare and species only found in Kent within the UK.

When examining an area of this scale, and considering biodiversity, it is important to look at natural and functional areas, rather than those defined by administrative boundaries. The National Character Areas established by Natural England, follow natural lines in the landscape, defined by a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity. The National Character Areas for Kent comprise the following, but more detail can be found in Part 2 of the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

1.2.1 Greater Thames Estuary (NCA81)

The coastal habitats here, including mudflats and saltmarsh, are internationally important for their biodiversity interest, and support large numbers of overwintering and breeding wetland birds, rare plant and invertebrate species, and diverse marine wildlife. There is a contrast between the wild and remote coastal marshes and the industrial and urban developments, which are highly visible in the low-lying landscape. Previously developed land can regularly be found and in many areas this has turned into open mosaic habitat with rare plants and nationally rare invertebrate species.

1.2.2 North Kent Plain (NCA113)

This is the strip of land between the Thames Estuary to the north and the chalk of the Kent Downs to the south. It is a very productive agricultural area with predominantly high-quality, fertile loam soils, characterised by arable use. Traditional orchards, soft fruits and other horticultural crops grow in central and eastern areas, giving rise to name 'Garden of England'. There is an extensive area of ancient woodland around Blean, designated a Special Area of Conservation for sub-Atlantic and medio-European oak or oak-hornbeam forests.

1.2.3 North Downs (NCA119)

This chain of chalk hills extends from north west Kent, across the county and ends dramatically at the internationally renowned White Cliffs of Dover. The coast is of international significance with a Special Area of Conservation designation due to the rare maritime cliff communities found within the cliff face and on clifftops. The area includes all of Kent's chalk streams, an international rare habitat. These are the Nailbourne and Little Stour, Dour, North and South Streams in the Stour Catchment, the Great Stour below Wye, and the Middle and Lower Darent.

1.2.4 Wealden Greensand (NCA120)

The long, curved belt of the Wealden Greensand runs across Kent, parallel to the North Downs, around a quarter of the area is made up of extensive belts of woodland – both ancient mixed woods and more recent conifer plantations. In contrast, the area also features more open areas of heath on acidic soils, river valleys and mixed farming, including areas of fruit growing. A coastal stretch extends from Folkestone to Hythe, with a heavily developed hinterland. As a result, most of the coastline is protected by coastal defences. The exception is Copt Point, where the eroding cliffs are designated for wildlife and geology.

1.2.5 Low Weald (NCA 121)

This broad, low-lying clay vale is generally wet and woody. Ponds are commonly found and it is dissected by flood plains. Gill woodland is a particular feature and a valuable habitat, being scarce elsewhere in the south-east of England. The area is important for biodiversity, being rated among the most important in England for richness of bat species, Bullfinch and Lesser spotted Woodpecker, and several plants, including Spiked Rampion.

1.2.6 High Weald (NCA122)

This south west strip of Kent lies below the Low Weald and comprises ridged and faulted sandstone featuring a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads. Over a quarter of the area is covered by woodland, including gill woodland. Exposed sandstone outcrops along the wooded gills provide a nationally rare habitat and support an array of ferns, bryophytes and lichens.

1.2.6 Romney Marshes (NCA 123)

An open landscape of reclaimed, low-lying marshland, Romney Marshes is bounded to the south and east by the English Channel. The extensive marshes of the hinterland, now a mixture of arable and grazing land dissected by an extensive network of ditches and watercourses, support a rich flora and fauna. Dungeness is an area of international importance for its geomorphology, plants, invertebrates and birds. Home to some of the UK's rarest species, it is designated a National Nature Reserve, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

1.3 How has this report been compiled

The information in this report was gathered from a wide range of services and teams across Kent County Council, ranging from the Natural Environment and Coast Team, Country Parks and Countryside Management Partnerships to Flood and Water Management, Highways and Transportation, Public Rights of Way and Kent County Council Estate, but this is not an exhaustive list. This shows that biodiversity is something integrated across the authority and not an additional add on. Biodiversity supports many of the services the authority provides.

1.4 Kent County Council Biodiversity Report 2020 to 2025 key headlines

Below are ten of the top achievements led by Kent County Council for 2020 to 2025, as featured in more detail throughout this report:

1. **300,000 trees** have been planted as a result of the authority's tree establishment strategy, Plan Tree, and its associated partnership during the period 2021 to 2025.
2. **£1 million for tree planting** has been secured by Kent County Council from the Local Authority Treescape Fund between 2021 and 2025.
3. **Innovative methods for urban tree planting** to improve outcomes for newly planted trees have been trialled, including the Miyawaki method, which is now being utilised on various sites.
4. **450km of highway verge managed to support habitat for pollinators.** An officer has been seconded to Kent County Council from Bumblebee Conservation Trust during the reporting period to lead and support work relating to Plan Bee.
5. **Natural flood management delivered alongside new habitat**, with the creation of wetlands and installation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
6. **15 environmental projects worth £2.82 million** enabled by the Kent Downs National Landscape team between 2021 and 2025 with Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes fund.
7. **543ha of land managed for nature** by Kent County Council's country parks.
8. **1.25 million people engaging with nature** at Kent County Council Country Parks in 2024/25.
9. **360 ponds created and restored** by Kent Countryside Management Partnerships through the Natural England District Level Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts (2018 to date).

10. **Publication of England's 18th Local Nature Recovery Strategy** in November 2025, following 2 years of development with the participation of over 1,000 individuals, providing a strong foundation for future partnership-led action.

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PART TWO - REVIEW OF ACTION TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL IN PERIOD 2020 to 2025

2.1 Policies, strategies, frameworks and processes

During the reporting period, a number of strategic approaches and commitments to biodiversity have been adopted; others, that were already in place, influenced the direction of the council's work and the delivery of its services. These are discussed in the section below. They are presented in the following groupings, in order of publication during the report period:

- strategies and plans specifically related to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.
- environmental strategies and plans contributing to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.
- other council strategies and plans which include provision for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

Kent County Council strategies and plans specifically related to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

2.1.1 Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020

Kent County Council hosts the Kent Nature Partnership, a strategic coordinating body, with an Executive level Board featuring a wide range of partners. In 2020, the Partnership, coordinated by Kent County Council, published the [Kent Biodiversity Strategy](#) with the following goals:

- rich and growing terrestrial biodiversity, underpinned by more resilient and coherent ecological networks and healthy, well-functioning ecosystems.
- clean, plentiful and biologically diverse freshwater and intertidal ecosystems underpinned by implementation of a catchment based approach.
- contribution to reversing the loss of marine biodiversity and delivering clean, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas through good management.
- widest possible range of ages and backgrounds will be benefiting from the mental and physical health benefits of the natural environment; and we will have inspired the next generation to take on guardianship of the county's biodiversity.

Kent County Council adopted the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy as its strategic framework for the maintenance, restoration and creation of biodiversity. The Strategy itself was owned by the Kent Nature Partnership's delivery partners and much of what was delivered in the county after 2020 for nature was framed around the objectives and targets of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy.

2.1.2 Kent's Plan Bee 2022

In November 2022, Kent County Council republished [Kent's Plan Bee](#), first adopted in 2019. Kent's Plan Bee is the county council's pollinator action plan, developed by the council to take the lead and encourage local communities to improve the food sources and general habitat for pollinators in Kent. Pollinators such as bees, wasps, butterflies, moths and hoverflies are vital for our food, economy and environment and we must act to reverse their rapid decline.

The purpose of the plan is to:

- make the council a community leader in action for pollinators
- ensure that pollinators' needs are always considered throughout our work and services
- put the conservation of pollinators and their habitats at the heart of our land management and planning
- make the council a significant contributor to the recovery of pollinator populations.

The republished Plan Bee added action on monitoring to its commitments, which now are to:

1. manage the land it owns, controls and influences in a way which benefits pollinators' habitat and forage.
2. work with partners across the county to better protect pollinators and improve the habitats on which they rely.
3. raise awareness of the importance of pollinators and the need to safeguard these vital insects, mobilising the people of Kent to take their own action within communities, workplaces, schools and homes.
4. monitor and evaluate its action for pollinators, so that we understand the impact of our efforts and direct continued action and resources to where they are most needed.

2.1.3 Kent's Plan Tree 2022

In 2019, Kent County Council made a commitment to oversee the establishment of 1.5 million new trees, one for every head of population in Kent. In 2022, the council published [Plan Tree](#), the strategy under which this target and that of 19% tree canopy cover in the county by 2050 would be delivered.

Through extending tree cover in Kent and delivering the strategy, the council aims to deliver the following objectives:

- Contribute to Kent County Council's, and the county's, net zero targets.
- Reduce and reverse the trend of decline in nature and loss of trees.
- Tackle the multiple threats to our trees.
- Deliver nature-based solutions to some of the county's challenges.
- Provide enhanced and improved recreation and amenity.
- Address the decline in trees outside woodland and decline in urban trees.

- Realise the economic benefits.
- Increase our knowledge and provide better protection.

The strategy also sets out some specific actions that Kent County Council will take to progress delivery of the ambitions and objectives of Plan Tree. These actions focus on:

- Delivering against the tree establishment target.
- Exemplar provision for trees on our own estate.
- Improving protection to trees in Kent.
- Improving our understanding of Kent's trees.
- Developing the Kent carbon offset market for unavoidable emissions.

The intention is that Plan Tree will be delivered by working in partnership with (but not limited to) district and borough and town and parish councils, the Kent Downs and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Units, the county's Countryside Management Partnerships, Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission, and environmental charities. We will look to bring together local communities, schools, businesses, and landowners to collaborate on tree establishment projects.

2.1.4 Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025

In 2023, Kent County Council was appointed responsible authority for the development of the [Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#), which sets out the county's priorities for nature recovery and the recommended actions to deliver them. This spatially framed Strategy also identifies where in the county this action should be targeted to deliver the greatest outcomes for habitats and species. Following publication in November 2025, the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy replaces the Kent Biodiversity Strategy.

The Strategy recognises that in order for the county's nature to respond and adapt to the increasing challenges of climate change, as well as the other pressures and challenges it faces, the Lawton principles must be applied. The Strategy reframes these slightly to provide a hierarchy for action – better, bigger, more and joined up.

In applying these principles across the Strategy, it not only support the recovery of nature but also ensure that our habitats and species have the ability and space to respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change, by enabling dynamic habitats and increasing their resilience. It also means that there is room for nature alongside the many competing demands for land in our county, and that the many pressures facing nature are tackled with a more strategic and ecosystem-led approach.

The overarching principles of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy are as follows:

- **Better** – improve the quality of our existing habitats and ensure they are in a healthy and functioning state by applying and resourcing better and appropriate management of them. We also need to better conserve and safeguard what we already have.

- **Bigger** – increase the size of our most valuable and important habitat sites, not only extending but buffering them, to protect them from the pressures of human influences.
- **More** – through habitat restoration and creation, establish new, nature-rich sites that not only provide more space for nature but also provide connectivity between existing core sites.
- **Joined up** – enhance connections between, and join up, sites, by improving the quality of the land between them, creating new physical corridors and establishing stepping stones.
- **Nature-based solutions** – work with nature and use natural processes to tackle some of the socio-economic challenges our county faces, maximising the benefits of nature recovery.
- **Land management and land use** – increase the number of landowners, land managers and farmers using nature-friendly and habitat-sensitive land management and land-use practices, recognising the crucial role they play in helping to deliver a better, more coherent and resilient wildlife network across the county.

The Kent and Medway Nature Recovery Strategy has 10 ambitions for nature recovery around which the more detailed priorities and potential measures are structured:

1. **Connectivity** – High-quality habitats are connected at both a county and local scale, providing more linked natural space for nature to thrive in and a landscape that wildlife can move through and adapt to change in.
2. **Nature-based solutions** – Through safeguarding, management and restoration of the county’s ecosystems, we enhance our resilience to climate change, deliver environmental improvements, address health and societal inequalities, and promote wellbeing, while advancing nature recovery.
3. **Land management and land use** – Land management and land use throughout Kent and Medway not only meets the economic and social needs of the county but also delivers nature recovery gains.
4. **Grasslands** – Our existing grasslands are conserved, with appropriate management returned, to restore, connect and extend these habitats to deliver high-quality, species-rich areas across the county.
5. **Successional habitats** – The structural diversity of open mosaic (brownfield) habitat found on previously developed land and low-level scrub is safeguarded from loss and damage, for the benefit of species that rely on early successional habitats.
6. **Woodland, trees and hedgerows** – Kent and Medway’s native woodland, trees and hedgerows are safeguarded from loss and under appropriate and active management, delivering robust ground flora and soil structures. A mixture of natural regeneration and new establishment improves connectivity and provides an even greater contribution to climate change mitigation and resilience.
7. **Freshwater** – Our freshwater habitats are clean, sufficient and stable, in a healthy and good ecological state that supports an abundance and diversity of species. Catchments’ functions are restored to deliver a connected mosaic of wet habitats, improving water quality and managing flood risk across the county.
8. **Urban** – Nature plays a central role in shaping the county’s built-up environments, with wildlife benefiting from a network of connected green, blue

and grey spaces, which also provide nature-based solutions to the environmental challenges of urban areas.

9. **Coast** – Coastal and estuarine areas are allowed to evolve, with natural processes and progression restored, to enable them to adapt and be resilient to climate change. Habitat succession is managed strategically and holistically, to minimise loss and support a range of high-functioning, connected coastal habitats.
10. **Species** – Habitat management, restoration, extension or creation is specifically targeted to halt the decline, and support the recovery, of the Strategy's priority and threatened species and in doing so, reduces the risk of losing species through extinction from the county.

Throughout the two year development phase over 1,000 people participated in face to face in workshops and other engagement events designed to ensure all stakeholders and future delivery partners had an active role in designing the priorities and measures for the county's nature and identifying where in the county they would deliver the widest benefits. Following, a public consultation, the Strategy was launched in November 2025 with an event attended by over 200 people. The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy being the 18th of 48 strategies to be published across England.

Kent County Council environmental strategies and plans contributing to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

2.1.5 Kent and Medway Low Emissions Strategy 2020

The [Kent and Medway Low Emissions Strategy](#), published in 2020, is a partnership strategy for how Kent County Council, in partnership with Medway Council and the Kent district councils, will respond to national targets and policies to drive a clean, resilient economy across the county.

Under priority eight on green infrastructure, the strategy aims to develop a multi-functional, natural capital opportunity and investment programme, which focuses on environmental projects that store carbon, increase climate change resilience, improve air quality and soil health and increase biodiversity.

2.1.6 Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2021-2026

The National Landscape Unit is employed through and hosted by Kent County Council and works on behalf of the Government and the Joint Advisory Committee for the Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly Kent Downs AONB).

The Kent Downs National Landscape Covers around a third of Kent's land area. Kent County Council is sits on the Joint Advisory Committee of the High Weald National Landscape but does not host it.

The [Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan](#) was drawn up to ensure that the natural beauty and special character of the landscape and vitality of the communities are recognised, valued, enhanced and strengthened.

2.1.7 Kent Country Parks Strategy 2023

Kent County Council run nine Country Parks and its [Country Parks Strategy 2023-28](#) was published in 2023.

The vision for the Kent Country Parks Service is “To provide an inspirational, accessible and sustainable countryside experience for all Kent’s residents and visitors”. This vision is supported by strategic aims, including to “provide a Country Park network of well-connected high quality and biodiverse greenspace across Kent”.

2.1.8 Environment Plan 2025

Kent County Council’s [Environment Plan](#), published in 2025, identifies six environmental goals (below) that are being embedding in its services. The aim is also to enable and inspiring all parts of the community to work together to deliver environmental step change.

- Goal 1: Deliver green energy and reduce carbon emissions
- Goal 2: Adapt to our changing climate
- Goal 3: Reduce flood risk and manage water resources effectively
- Goal 4: Protect and improve the natural and built environment
- Goal 5: Manage resources through a circular economy
- Goal 6: Conserve and promote Kent’s natural beauty and heritage

Under goal 4, the authority aims to drive nature protection and recovery across the county, reduce air pollution, ensure that our habitats are abundant with wildlife and plants and drive environmentally sustainable development. And under goal 6, ensure that Kent’s historical environment is sustained for future generations and promote public engagement with our unique countryside and natural beauty.

2.1.9 Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025

The Council’s [Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#), adopted in 2025, recognises that whilst adapting to climate change is not the primary reason for restoring nature, it is one of many co-benefits that arises from doing so. Consequently the Plan notes that by delivering on activities to restore nature through partnership work, Kent County Council can help upscale the county’s climate resilience. It therefore includes the action to “deliver climate change adaptation benefits through nature recovery activities.

2.1.10 Environmental Impact Assessment process 2025

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EnvIA) pilot was initiated in early 2025, soon after formal agreement of Kent County Council's Environment Plan. The initiative derives specifically from the stated intention to embed the Plan's aim and six goals into decision-making. The aim of the piloted process is to:

- ensure that decision making complies with Kent County Council's environment strategies to manage risk effectively and secure benefits
- increase prominence of environment within decision making to normalise this as an integral topic
- ensure that decision makers can make well-informed decisions, based on full facts about impacts and trade-offs

The assessment includes a number of biodiversity considerations, including impacts/opportunities against Kent County Council's biodiversity priorities.

The pilot has concluded its first phase. More information on next steps for the assessment process are outlined in part 3.

2.1.11 Sustainable procurement toolkit 2025

During 2025, Kent County Council drafted a Sustainable Procurement Toolkit to support procurement teams and service areas within Kent County Council and within Kent's district and borough authorities. The overall objective is to improve the environmental quality of contracts. The toolkit includes specific reference to biodiversity considerations within procurement.

The Toolkit is currently going through a validation phase. More information on next steps for the assessment process are outlined in part 3.

Other Kent County Council strategies and plans which include provision for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

2.1.12 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018

Kent County Council's [Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#) (2018-2028), while largely focussed on improving access, has a number of actions that consider, protect and enhance biodiversity, including:

- prioritise maintenance on those PROW providing access to natural greenspace.
- support volunteering in greenspace and on PROW network. Tackle health disadvantage by promoting access to the natural environment and green space, beyond urban areas, providing connectivity to nature and cultural landscapes.
- work with stakeholders to create places where people are not impeded in undertaking physical activity, accessing nature.

- develop access which does not conflict with nature conservation interest and support mitigation measures which may require recreational pressure to be diverted from sensitive sites.
- working with stakeholders to minimise impact of use on sensitive areas i.e. SSSI and scheduled monuments.

2.1.13 Framing Kent's Future 2022

[Framing Kent's Future](#) was the council's strategic plan published in 2022 and in place until late 2025. The strategy prioritised economic recovery, infrastructure development, environmental protection and improved health and social care services.

Priority 3 Environmental Step Change, provided the council's strategic priorities with many specifically focused on biodiversity:

- work with districts to produce harder and stronger action plans under air quality management areas where they are required.
- improve access for our residents to green and natural spaces especially in urban and deprived areas and through our Public Rights of Way network to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.
- continue our work establishing new trees across the county to deliver Plan Tree's ambitions of 1.5 million trees and a 19% canopy cover over the next ten years to support the recovery of wildlife, provide nature-based climate solutions, and enrich people's lives.
- work with Districts to deliver quality biodiversity net gain across the county's developments and land management that makes a meaningful contribution to the recovery and enhancement of nature in Kent.
- lead the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent and Medway, which will identify priorities for the restoration of biodiversity, map existing valuable areas of nature and make specific proposals to create or improve habitat and wider environmental goals.
- be a community leader in action for pollinators and develop Kent County Council's own estate for the benefit of these vital insects.
- work with partners to protect and enhance Kent's coastlines, focusing on schemes that will make our coastal environments attractive, safe, and sustainable for both our residents and our wildlife.
- continue to work with our commissioning partners to create the infrastructure and jobs that enable us to reprocess waste materials and produce energy within the county, in order to maintain a closed loop local economy.

2.1.14 Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024

Policies to protect, enhance and restore biodiversity are included within the Development Management policies of the [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39](#), adopted in March 2025.

2.1.15 Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy 2024

Tackling the wider determinants to prevent ill health is a central part of the [Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy](#) and the natural environment is a big part of the wider determinants which have a positive impact on people's health. Wider determinants include everything from clean air and water to time spent in nature and having regular access to nature.

The Strategy notes that the Integrated Care Partnership, including Kent Public Health, will “plan, develop and regenerate in a way that improves quality of life for new and existing communities – across built and natural infrastructures, including housing, transport and the local environment”.

2.1.16 Reforming Kent 2025

In November 2025, a new strategic statement was agreed by the County Council – [Reforming Kent](#). This statement includes:

- protection of the countryside
- a focus on environmental policy of direct benefit to residents
- protection of the Kent environment with practical, affordable and visible improvements

2.2. Monitoring and evaluation of delivery against Kent County Council biodiversity priorities

This section describes work carried out across Kent County Council services during years 2020 to 2025.

2.2.1 Addressing the decline of pollinators – Plan Bee

Plan Bee has had a dedicated officer during the past five years, seconded to the Natural Environment and Coast Team from Bumblebee Conservation Trust. In addition to supporting council services to reduce their impacts on pollinators and take opportunities to enhance habitats for these insects, the Plan Bee Officer has also begun a programme of surveying and monitoring to determine what impact Plan Bee efforts are having and to assist in directing resources and time to where the greatest impacts will be realised. The officer has also promoted Plan Bee widely, including through events such as the Kent County Show. Below highlights some key outcomes of Plan Bee over the past five years.

Verge management:

- Have now introduced a tiered approach to when rural verges are cut, depending on the potential biodiversity and value for pollinators of the verge, balanced against the need for highway safety. Instead of cutting rural verges once a year during June and July, they are now once in spring and once in autumn, to allow

wildflowers to flower in summer to benefit pollinating bees and insects. Also cut at different times to help provide a succession of wildflowers over many months, so pollinators have food plants to feed upon for longer and can use our road verges to move between habitats. This is providing a network of 450km more stable habitat for pollinators across the county.

- For our urban verges, looking at how the highways service can effectively, easily and cheaply, improve biodiversity on a small number of large urban verges.

Actions include

- seeing how quickly nutrient rich verges can become successful low nutrient wildflower sites
 - trying plug planting and seeding with customised mixes to help speed up the colonisation of wildflower species on some verges
 - with developers, discussing and encouraging wildflower seed mixes or wildflower turfing instead of traditional grass seed and turfing.
 - reduction of number of cuts in urban areas from six to four where verges have bulbs planted, with typically first two cuts avoided in order to allow the bulbs to flower and store energy for the next season.
- Along Fastrack's dedicated and shared bus route in the Dartford area, 10 pollinator road verges were established. Further to this pollinator planting is the creation of the bee bus, a double decker on the route featuring the Shril Carder Bee and promoting Kent's Plan Bee.
 - 123 Roadside Nature Reserves, supported by a Kent Highways partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust.
 - Additional special measures to benefit pollinators take place on parts of the highway network where Roadside Nature Reserves or SSSI's dictate a different management.
 - Alternatives for weed control trialled however, no viable, effective, affordable and environmentally friendly alternatives have yet been found. Work continues on this - contract renewals may present opportunities to further explore pesticide use reduction and trial alternatives.

Waste management sites:

- Species-rich grassland and trees for the benefit of pollinators were included in landscaping for the newly opened Allington Household Waste Recycling Centre (2022).
- Management for the closed landfill site, Shaw Grange (near Charing), will provide for pollinators by including sheltering and overwintering habitat and increasing the number of flowering, pollen rich plants.

Country park sites:

- Kent County Council's country parks are managed for the benefit of biodiversity, and pollinators are an integral part of this activity with grassland areas managed to maintain flowering plants and grasses diversity and optimum soil conditions.
- Brockhill Country Park (Hythe) habitat specifically managed for the benefit of solitary bees, providing foraging and nesting opportunities.

- A program of monitoring of wildflowers on more than 56 hectares of grassland sites managed by Kent County Council Country Parks was undertaken, to assess their condition and to inform management.
- 20,000 mixed species were planted that will improve the food supply for pollinators.

Supporting others take action:

- Publication of the Plan Bee blueprint, focussing on the range of actions that could be taken at the local level and assisting in the development of a district/borough pollinator action plan.
- Publication of the [Community Pollinator Toolkit](#), primarily aimed at anyone who may be managing small areas of land and wish to enhance them in some way for pollinators and other wildlife - there are ideas inside that can work at different scales, from a window box to a playing field. It contains a wide variety of suggested actions together with links to more detailed information and organisations who can help.

Outreach:

- Plan Bee's outreach includes 2,000 followers on Facebook and over 2,000 also receiving the [quarterly newsletter](#). Both provide advice on action to take and information of pollinator activities..
- Over 5,000 people took part in the [public perception survey](#) in 2021 to help the authority determine the level of understanding and inform what support and advice was needed.
- Ongoing promotion Plantlife's No Mow May campaign, resulting in continued engagement of Kent residents, with hundreds pledging on a Kent register to not cut their grass. A review of [No Mow May in Kent](#) shows the increased and continued commitment to the campaign from the county, including:
 - 307 residents participating in 2024, a 19% increase on previous year.
 - 15 organisations participating in 2024, double that of the previous year.
 - 141,841m² of area pledged, equivalent to 543 tennis courts, a 7.8% increase on previous year.
 - 36 Kent County Council sites preserving 300 hectares of wildflower-rich grassland.
 - 450km of road verges in rural and urban areas unmown throughout May by Kent Highways.
 - Six country parks contributed 565,500m² of wildflower meadows and grasslands.
- Development of the [Pollinator Challenge](#) for the Kent Children's University, a 12-month programme of pollinator-themed activities and learning for children aged 5 to 14.
- Online Plan Bee summits in 2020, 2021 and 2022.
- Publication of [Pollinators of Kent](#), a guide to the insects that pollinate our crops, ornamental plants and wildflowers. It features some basic information on the different types of pollinator, how to photograph them and what to look out for at different times of the year.

Awards:

- Kent's Plan Bee was named by the government as a Bees Needs Champion in 2023 for its exceptional work in supporting our pollinators that are essential to our biodiversity. The Bees' Needs Champion is a government award, coordinated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, that recognises and celebrates examples of exceptional initiatives undertaken by local authorities, community groups, farmers and businesses to support pollinators.

2.2.2 Increasing tree canopy cover in county – Plan Tree

Work is overseen by the Plan Tree Strategy Officer, with additional staff resource provided by external funding. Below highlights some key outcomes of Plan Tree since 2021.

Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund:

- Successful bid to the fund in 2022 for £299,642 to secure additional staff to the Plan Tree team until 2025 to lead partnership projects and funding bids to deliver against the Plan Tree planting targets.
- Land suitability and availability have been the biggest challenge, however this work has been successful because the staff resources of the Plan Tree team has enabled them to guide landowners through the entire process, minimising hassle and fitting planting projects into their already busy lives.

Local Authority Treescape Fund:

- Four successful Kent County Council bids, totalling £1 million, were secured between 2021 and 2025.
- Over 120 sites were utilised, including schools, public, and private sites, and farmer clusters.

Trees Outside Woodland project:

- Kent County Council was a key partner in the Trees Outside Woodland action research programme 2020–25. The project was funded by HM Government and delivered in partnership with The Tree Council, Natural England, Defra, and four other local authorities. The aim was to contribute to a reversal of the declines in trees outside woodland, helping to meet local and national targets for tree cover.
- Kent County Council has explored barriers to urban tree establishment and trialled innovative methods to improve outcomes for newly planted trees. These included 11 sites of Miyawaki planting of 6,655 trees, natural regeneration trials at four sites.
- The project also tested capital grant funding for new and established local community tree nurseries; explored tree distribution models over three years, focusing cost and tree survival rate; tested incentivise planting, with different engagement approaches; and tested natural tree regeneration for verges adjacent to the highway.

- Findings were rapidly incorporated into existing grant schemes, such as the Local Authority Treescapes Fund. Evidence gathered through the programme Kent County Council was part of, is now the largest dataset in the UK on non-woodland trees and is due to be made open source for the benefit of future research.

Delivery against Plan Tree planting target:

- The cumulative total for planting up to 2024/2025 is now 376,113 trees, planting at a rate of over 60,000 trees a year. If this planting rate is maintained, the target of 1.5 million new trees by 2050 will be achieved.
- Achievement of target is dependent on maintaining the same level of grant funding to support planting activity and the closure of the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund, Local Authority Treescapes Fund and Urban Tree Challenge Fund – all the main sources of funding for Kent to date – does present a notable challenge to continuing this level of tree establishment in the county.
- Tree planting has also been supported by funding from Tree Council, Network Rail, Social Value Exchange, Tree Production Capital Grant and Kent County Council Member's Grant.

Restoring Elms to the Kent landscape:

- The authority has been working with partners from Forest Research, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Making Space for Nature, Butterfly Conservation, Countryside Management Partnerships, Essex County Council, Farmer Clusters, and the Lees Court Estate to develop planting strategies.
- Work on recording White-letter Hairstreak butterfly to guide efforts in reintroducing disease-resistant elm cultivars across Kent and supporting ten farms in East Kent Downs where White-letter Hairstreak colonies exist. Notably, new sightings of the Large Tortoiseshell butterfly were reported, indicating a comeback in areas with surviving elm trees.
- Partnership working with NIAB Cambridge to conduct trials into micropropagation using protocols provided by Trevor Fenning at Forest Research, tailored to a Dutch elm disease-resistant clone from Kent.
- In planting season 204/25, 400 Dutch-elm disease resistant feathers were planted.
- In 2025, expression of interest submitted to Species Recovery Programme for a proposal supporting the recovery Dusky Lemon Sallow moth using disease resistant Elms. Invited to submit full proposal in 2026.

2.2.3 Restoration of chalk grassland

Kent County Council secured National Lottery Heritage funding for the project Old Chalk New Downs, running 2017 to 2022, covering 10,000 hectares, working with multiple landowners to improve chalk grassland. This is a threatened habitat rich in wildflowers and butterflies, which Kent is very important for, but has been lost on a large scale owing to lack of appropriate management needed for its maintenance

and retention. The project vision was to deliver a more coherent and connected chalk habitat landscape across the North Downs, addressing habitat fragmentation and degradation.

The project achieved this through:

- Increasing and improving chalk habitats' size, extent and condition
- Linking existing habitat patches by creating habitat corridors, buffers and steppingstones
- Ensuring the restoration and protection of the historic landscape to re-connect and protect the threatened habitats and increase biodiversity in the scheme area.
- Restoring other habitats which are vital for chalk grassland to thrive, particularly hedgerows, which can prevent erosion of chalk grassland by stabilising the soil and minimising run off.

Project outcomes included:

- 22 sites using connectivity grants issued by the project, using the HLF funding, to carry out restoration work.
- 16 land management packages drawn up, each agreed with landowners for 10 years to improve the quality and quantity of chalk downland.
- 33 sites across the project area to restore and better manage downland habitats which included chalk downlands, lowland meadows and woodlands.
- 7,423 metres of hedgerow replanted, planted from scratch and repaired and field hedgerow condition surveys carried out.

2.2.4 Nature-based solutions

Natural flood management techniques offer a relatively low-cost option to manage flood risk in rural areas, where landowners are willing to provide land and maintain them. These schemes often present a win-win opportunity for both communities and for biodiversity. Projects delivered during the period 2020 to 2025 by Kent County Council are detailed below.

St Katherines School

In June 2019, St Katherines School in Snodland, experienced extensive flooding causing damage to 18 classrooms, toilets, corridors and the library. A large attenuation basin and swale were built to intercept the surface water, store it and allow it to naturally infiltrate to ground. Spoil from the basin and swale were used to landscape the school creating amenity, education and biodiversity interest within the school grounds and seeded with a native seed mix. Rain gardens were built around the building and planted with a mixture of native shrubs.

Hildenborough and Grosvenor Park

In Grosvenor Park and Hilbert Woods, natural flood management methods were used to reduce flood risk to properties downstream. Leaky dams were constructed, mimicking the structures built by beavers, to hold back water and create ponding on

rivers and watercourses. The structure allows a flow of water to continuously pass underneath it, however when the stream experiences high flows these are held back by the structure slowing the flow of water. A large wetland area created by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council within Grosvenor Park, provides a natural flood management benefit by capturing surface water from the surrounding area. During intensive rainfall, run off from the parkland and the surrounding urban area would quickly make its way into the stream and fast flows within the stream could cause flooding downstream. The wetland area helps to hold some of this run-off releasing it slowly.

Snipeshill Flood Attenuation Scheme

Snipeshill experienced regular surface water flood events, with internal flooding to properties occurring during 1 in 2-year rainfall events. The greenspace adjacent to Prince Charles Avenue and Canterbury Road in Sittingbourne lies within a depression of the landscape, with surface water naturally collecting in this area before reaching properties and the A2 Canterbury Road. The existing highway drainage network and surface water sewer which serves the area was quickly overwhelmed in high rainfall events or when low rainfall events occurred in close succession. To reduce the risk of surface water flooding Kent County Council developed a design that integrates sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), biodiversity improvements, and aesthetic enhancements. The scheme includes a 1.26million litre infiltration basin and two roadside swale features which divert water from the highway to the basin. Wildflower planting and the addition of trees has added biodiversity value to the space which was previously amenity grassland.

Doddington Natural Flood Management

Natural flood management was used to reduce run-off within the steep catchment upstream of Doddington where 6 properties had previously flooded. A retention pond was created within an arable field and over 1500m of hedging and buffer strip was planted and created around arable and pasture fields. The project has provided better protection against flooding whilst reducing silt runoff from the fields, hedging and buffer strip along the field create important margins for biodiversity and wildlife corridors.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in Schools

In June and July 2024, SuDS planters were installed in schools to reduce the amount of surface water from roof drainage entering combined sewer systems. SuDS planters intercept roof surface water run-off before connecting to the drainage network at a reduced flow rate. Reducing surface water flows into the combined system helps to alleviate pressure on the existing drainage infrastructure which may be overwhelmed during heavy rainfall. The planters were planted with wildlife friendly plants to add biodiversity value and educational interest to the school.

Nutrient Neutrality

Kent County Council as catchment coordinator for the Stour catchment is working in partnership to address the nutrient impacts on the Stodmarsh National Nature

Reserve. Kent County Council has developed the Nutrient Neutrality Strategy for the catchment and is working with all stakeholders to develop mitigation schemes which can address the nutrient loading.

2.2.5 Access to nature

Kent County Council is responsible for a number of services that recognise and promote the benefits of access to nature. These are outlined below.

Country Parks

Kent County Council manage nine country parks with the strategic vision: “To provide an inspirational, accessible and sustainable countryside experience for all Kent’s residents and visitors.” and the supporting aim to “Provide a Country Park network of well-connected high quality and biodiverse greenspace across Kent”.

Access to nature outcomes for 2024/25 included:

- 1.25 million visitors
- 9,788 people attended events
- 1,600 volunteer days totalling 9,596 hours on heritage and conservation works
- 3,800 children attended education visits led by the education rangers
- 82 delegates trained in Forest School Level 1 and 3
- 1,980 people attended a meeting, community event or party in at park venues
- 21,000 people took part in the Park Run events

Explore Kent

Explore Kent is a Kent County Council led initiative that promotes outdoor activity and engagement with Kent’s natural environment. It works across public, private, and voluntary sectors to encourage residents and visitors to explore the county’s coastlines, countryside, parks, and public rights of way. Explore Kent aligns with public health, active travel, and environmental goals.

Explore Kent promotes has a strong digital presence with 165,000+ website visitors and 15,000 route PDF downloads in 2025.

Kent Green Action and Greener Kent

This was county-wide movement which came out of 2019 Year of Green Action. Kent Green Action encouraged individuals and groups to take climate and nature-positive actions, this included community clean-ups, tree planting, and biodiversity workshops. This campaign has now been wrapped up in the broader Greener Kent.

Greener Kent is a broader umbrella for Kent County Council’s environmental engagement, supporting climate resilience, nature recovery, and community empowerment. The Greener Kent campaign’s focus is on educating, advising and raising awareness around the environment and sustainability, boosting community engagement with sustainability actions and achieving the goals outlined in the Kent

County Council Environment Plan. This includes activities that connect people to nature:

- Tree planting - every planting season, the campaign has helped to recruit volunteers for the tree planting season. The campaign also supports recognition of different tree species, tree care knowledge and encourages community engagement through events.
- Promotion of national and citizen science campaigns including: No Mow May, the Big Garden Birdwatch, the annual Big Butterfly Count and Pollinator Monitoring Scheme Flower-Insect Timed Count.
- Green Spaces - promoting the use and maintenance of green spaces, parks, and nature reserves to support local wildlife and provide recreational areas for residents.

Greener Kent works with schools and community organisations to promote active travel and outdoor learning. In 2024-25, the Greener Kent Schools programme supported schools in developing a climate action plan; this included a whole term of support dedicated to actions for nature restoration, that schools could include in their plans.

The Greener Kent campaign is also supported by Kent County Council's library service, with public awareness events covering themes of nature and biodiversity among others.

Green Social Prescribing

Kent County Council also promotes and advocates green social prescribing, connecting people with nature-based activities to support mental health and wellbeing. Work has included:

- Collaborations with NHS partners, GPs, and link workers
- Mapping areas of poor mental health against accessible green/blue spaces
- Piloting digital platforms for self-referral to outdoor activities
- Supporting interventions like Wilder Wellbeing with Kent Wildlife Trust

In 2025, Kent County Council secured a Health and Nature Fund grant with the aims of:

- Supporting preventative mental health interventions
- Encouraging community engagement with nature
- Addressing health inequalities, particularly in coastal regions

To support this work, the authority has appointed two Health and Nature Officers. The project will offer grants between £2,000 and £10,000 to support green and blue space interventions that promote mental health and wellbeing across Kent. Applications are welcomed by organisations delivering nature-based activities that improve preventative mental health outcomes. A Level 3 Certificate in Nature-based Practice is also being provided, in partnership with Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC.

2.3 Monitoring and evaluation of partnership work for nature recovery

2.3.1 Kent Nature Partnership

Kent County Council hosts and provides officer support and funding for the [Kent Nature Partnership](#), a strategic coordinating body, with an executive level Board featuring a wide range of partners. These partners work together to deliver the priorities set out in the 2020 [Kent Biodiversity Strategy](#).

In 2022, the Partnership published its [State of nature in Kent report](#), a collaboration of the county's leading species and habitat experts, assessing trends and data and reporting on how Kent's nature is fairing in the face of some major challenges.

2.3.2 Countryside Management Partnerships

Kent's [Countryside Management Partnerships](#) help manage habitat and landscapes and link communities to those areas. Although hosted by Kent County Council with small annual grants, they are expected to be mainly self-sufficient and do this by securing funding and income. Volunteering is also key to the success of these partnerships. All partnerships have an ongoing programme of work – some of the key items for 2020-2025 are detailed below.

Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership –

- Creation of 87 ponds and restoration of 107, delivering great crested newt habitat for Natural England's district level licensing scheme between 2018 and 2025.
- Creation of a fish pass next to a substantial weir on the river Great Stour near Wye, allowing a greater number of fish to move up and down the river unimpeded and freeing passage for ten miles from Canterbury to Wye.
- Creation of a major meander in the river Great Stour section within in Victoria Park, Ashford, removing silt and encouraging a more natural river system.

Kent High Weald Partnership –

- Management and support of 150 hectares of local nature reserves and greenspaces in the Kent High Weald area for biodiversity and for community engagement and access. This has largely involved restoring woodland habitat through the control of invasive species and creating a healthier ecosystem through increasing structural diversity. Conserved and enhance areas of heathland, grassland and wetland, delivered by a team of local volunteers who are out twice a week all year round.
- Since 2020, created or restored 40 ponds, planted thousands of new trees and enhanced the biodiversity of urban areas through planting pollinator friendly plants and sewing wildlife seeds in urban greenspaces.

- Delivery of a programme of community engagement including volunteer opportunities for people to help their local biodiversity, learning events such as guided walks and training, outdoor education and forest school offer plus nature-based wellbeing programmes and a community allotment.

North West Kent Countryside Partnership -

- Management of a diverse range of nature reserves, river corridors, and community green spaces. Chalk stream and river habitat restoration, controlling invasive non-native species, improving water quality, and enhancing riparian vegetation to support aquatic biodiversity.
- Chalk grassland conservation, with scrub encroachment management and increase of wildflower diversity to benefit pollinators and specialist species such as the Chalkhill Blue butterfly.
- Weekly volunteering opportunities, public events, citizen science surveys, training and educational workshops.

Medway Valley Countryside Partnership –

- Volunteer groups work on weekly tasks to carry out conservation work on a diverse range of green spaces.
- Other work undertaken include species surveying, management plans and control of invasive non-native species.
- Citizen science projects and educational activities for all ages to reconnect people with nature.

Pond creation and restoration –

From September 2018 to April 2025 the Kent Countryside Management Partnerships have created 147 ponds and restored 213, a total of 360 ponds. This work has been done through the Natural England District Level Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts with money coming from developers through the planning system. Ponds are a minimum of 150m² and benefit a range of species. Nationally, Kent has had the greatest success with around 50% of ponds evidencing Great Crested Newts presence through eDNA monitoring in the first few years after work.

2.3.3 Kent Downs National Landscape Unit

Within an area as large and varied as the Kent Downs, there are many hundreds of individuals and organisations which have a role in managing the landscape, supporting local business and communities and enabling quiet recreation. Together the [Kent Downs Protected Landscape unit](#) plays a central, pivotal and convening role in realising the strategic vision for the Protected Landscape and overseeing the Management Plan.

The unit's work covers a much broader remit than nature – however, some examples of the unit's work between 2020 and 2025 for biodiversity include:

- Kent Downs National Landscape administered Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes fund from 2021 and through this funded 115 projects worth £2,820,244 up to March 2025. These projects achieve outcomes for people, place, climate and nature.
- Key partner in the Old Chalk New Downs project (see previous section for details).
- Key partner in the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme. Supported by over £5 million in funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Defra, and 13 partner organisations, the scheme has left a lasting legacy for both people and nature. Over the course of the project, significant strides were made in restoring wildlife habitats such as internationally important chalk grasslands.

2.3.4 Data, monitoring and designations

When conducting work for nature recovery and biodiversity, it's important to have a baseline of how nature is doing in the county. The Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre collects, collates and shares information about the county's species and habitats. Kent County Council regularly utilises this resource and makes an annual contribution towards the funding of the centre.

Kent County Council also makes an annual contribution to Kent Wildlife Trust for its maintenance of the Local Wildlife Site register and its management of Roadside Nature Reserves.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation of estate management for the benefit of biodiversity

2.4.1 Country Parks

All of the nine country parks have five-year management plans with the aim to keep all protected land in good condition. Two of the parks are part of the new North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve which alongside adjacent land contains internationally important habitat. Three contain significant areas of land designated by Natural England as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and three are Local Wildlife Sites.

Land management for the benefit of biodiversity in the past five years includes:

- 543ha of land under positive management across 9 sites
- 51% of the land managed is nationally important SSSI or National Nature Reserve
- 600 ancient/veteran/notable trees under active management
- 20,000 mixed species planted to improve the food supply for pollinators
- Over 20 ponds are managed across the nine sites
- 7km of ride network managed with connected glades that link the areas of coppice

- Grassland grazing, coppicing and invasive species control underway
- Ten year woodland management plans for the woodland works
- Between 2022 and 2025, improvements to the woodland understorey at Shorne Woods County Park and connection of all pockets of woodland - an area of 32ha.
- Annual coppicing of 3.5ha of Sweet Chestnut across four sites annually on an 18-year rotation. All cut timber is used to heat the visitor centres or sold to the public as firewood.

2.4.2 Landfill sites

Kent County Council owns several closed landfill sites, with others in third party ownership. Some of these sites are still monitored by Kent County Council under waste regulations but have become good areas for wildlife. Pegwell Bay, Broomfield, Cryalls Lane, Tovil and Shaw Grange each have their own land management plans for biodiversity.

Shaw Grange near Charing is monitored on a regular basis and is significant from a biodiversity perspective as it contains grassland with low nutrient input, making it particularly good for wild flowers and butterflies. The main area of landfill has been capped by a geosynthetic clay liner and seeded with a meadow mix. Over the years, native saplings have been planted, reptile hibernacula installed, and a sown wildflower area created. The site is cut and collected annually, save for two areas that receive a biennial cut on rotation. This regime has seen an increase in pyramidal orchids for the yearly cut areas, and better conditions for overwintering species in the biennial areas.

2.4.3 Highways

The Kent Highways team manage the verges and trees in line with the ambitions of Plan Bee and Plan Tree. Consequently, their estate management activities are covered in section 2.2 under these two strategic priorities for Kent County Council.

In addition, Kent Highways have moved the rural hedge cutting from autumn to winter months, so berries remain on hedgerows for longer for winter-feeding birds. Most urban hedge cutting already takes place in autumn and winter. The Highways team identify the berry holding hedges, which we cut in summer, to see if we can delay cutting to the winter if this will still keep the roads and footpaths safe for users and clear of vegetation obstruction.

2.4.4 Libraries

Kent County Council libraries, run a variety of projects supporting biodiversity, though their green spaces and reading gardens, these include:

- Charing Library, Ashford - a wildlife garden with insect friendly wild plants for children and adults to enjoy and to look out for and record insects they see.
- Borough Green, Tonbridge - Reading Garden with a Bee friendly theme.

- New Ash Green, Sevenoaks - Sensory reading space, using recycled materials.
- Whitstable, Canterbury - decking and plants, a great space for class visits.

Many other libraries have courtyard gardens, grass areas and planting for pollinators.

The value of these areas goes beyond the direct value to biodiversity; these areas provide a place for people to connect with nature. This is particularly important for people who don't have gardens or access to greenspace near their homes.

Libraries are in a great position to reinforce messages about biodiversity by promoting further information on wildlife in the county and opportunities to get involved. Some Kent County Council libraries have also run children's activities focused around making bug hotels and planting beans and seeds.

2.4.5 Public Rights of Way and Access Service

Kent is blessed with a network of 6,900Km of public rights of way, footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic, providing unparalleled access to Kent's countryside and coast.

While public rights of way are highways first and must be passable at all times of year, they are often also nature rich corridors or have the potential to be so. The activities of the Public Rights of Way and Access Service are undertaken, mindful of the need to do no harm to nature when executing works through undertaking ecological assessments, investigations and seeking additional guidance where necessary.

The cutting height for vegetation clearance and the type of clearance undertaken takes account of ecology. Heavy scrub clearance and any hedge cutting is completed outside of bird nesting season. Fallen trees which are cleared are stacked nearby as habitat piles.

The projects that perhaps deliver most in respect of the nature recovery have focussed on the improvement of public rights of way and specifically surfacing in areas that are particularly sensitive/ vulnerable to footfall. For example, improvements to the footpath on the White Cliffs Dover and the King Charles III England Coast Path meant that footfall would be largely constrained to the surfaced path protecting the highly valuable grassland of the Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SSSI.

2.4.6 Wider estate

Kent County Council owns land but also leases land out. A lot of this is hard standing or built up, but there are many areas which are suitable for wildlife. Some areas of Kent County Council estate are designated as Local Wildlife Sites or SSSI, meaning that any management needs to be carried out according to the guidance for these sites.

Many areas have grazing licences for horses' sheep and cattle which also present great opportunities for wildlife. Other areas have become covered in scrub or woodland, bringing additional benefits to wildlife, as previously developed land can offer particular benefits when nature starts to take over.

2.5 Monitoring and evaluation of Biodiversity Net Gain delivery and consideration of biodiversity in planning

2.5.1 Biodiversity net gain

Biodiversity net gain is a relatively new mandatory requirement that aims to make sure that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity.

During 2022, the Kent Nature Partnership (with funding from Kent County Council) commissioned a viability assessment of biodiversity net gain across Kent. The commission primarily focused on assessing the high-level viability of a range of development typologies at 10%, 15% and 20% biodiversity net gain targets both on and offsite based on a series of evidence based inputs. The purpose of the assessment was allow the county's planning authorities to understand whether targeting a higher biodiversity net gain than the statutory minimum of 10% is potentially viable in Kent.

During the preparation time allowed to planning authorities ahead of biodiversity net gains implementation, Kent County Council brought together all the county's planning authorities to fund, with the Defra biodiversity net gain grant, a shared Biodiversity Net Gain Officer who was hosted by the authority 2023-2025. During the time, the following collaborative items of work were delivered:

- Biodiversity Net Gain guidance for Kent and Medway
- Kent Biodiversity Net Gain site register
- Biodiversity Net Gain statement for Kent and Medway
- An interim guide for strategic significance
- A guide to defining significant on-site habitat for Kent and Medway
- Training for planning officers and planning committees

Following publication of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy in November 20205, a guide for how to use the strategy and its mapping in identifying the strategic significance uplift for biodiversity net gain has been published by Kent County Council in its role as responsible authority for the Strategy.

Kent County Council has a statutory duty to achieve biodiversity net gain if for its own developments. At present these are mainly school development proposals and the biodiversity net gain if for these sites has primarily consisted of on-site tree planting and landscaping, secured by planning condition. Where this has not proved achievable, off site credit solutions have been approved.

2.5.2 Biodiversity in planning

Kent County Council runs the Ecological Advice Service, providing professional ecological advice to all the county's planning authorities, including Kent County Council's own planning service, Medway Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation and also supporting these authorities to deliver against the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement for all new development.

In 2024-25, ecological advice was provided on 2,397 planning applications, including expert support on 582 biodiversity net gain submissions.

The Ecological Advice Service not only ensures that the county's planning authorities meet their statutory and legislative requirements for wildlife and biodiversity net gain, but also makes sure that gains are meaningful and directed to where there most needed and that other added value and features are recommended as delivered through development, such as native planting in landscaping and wildlife features built into the building design.

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PART THREE - HOW KENT COUNTY COUNCIL INTENDS TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY IN PERIOD 2026-2031

3.1 New and revisions to policies, strategies, frameworks and processes during 2026-2031

Many of the council's policies, strategies, frameworks and processes will remain in place during the next five year period. With Local Government Reform on the horizon, it is not possible to state with any degree of certainty the future plans for these and particular those with plan periods running out before 2031. Where changes are anticipated, these are detailed to the best of our knowledge below.

3.1.1 Kent's Plan Bee

The council's pollinator action plan will be reviewed to determine whether appropriate to reframe the plan within the context of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and potentially use the plan as a framework for driving action for the priority pollinator species identified in the Kent & Medway Nature Recovery Strategy, as well as the priorities and measures of the Strategy for key pollinator habitats.

3.1.2 Kent's Plan Tree

The council's tree establishment strategy will be reviewed to determine whether appropriate to reframe it within the context of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and potentially use the strategy as a framework for driving action for woodlands, trees and hedgerow priorities and measures.

3.1.3 Kent's Plan Sea

Kent County Council is leading on strategic work for our coastal and marine environment, by working across the county in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders and delivery partners.

Plan Sea will be a plan for the restoration and recovery of the county's marine and coastal habitats, developed by Kent County Council. It is currently under development but it is anticipated to provide a delivery framework for coastal and marine priorities and measures of Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Publication is planned for 2027.

3.1.4 Planning and Drainage policy

Kent County Council's Planning and Drainage policy which sets out how SuDS should be delivered within the Kent, will be updated in 2026/27 to reflect the update National Planning Policy Framework and technical standards.

3.1.5 Water Resources Strategy

A Water Resources Strategy for Kent is currently in development, with publication planned for 2027. The Strategy will consider the long term demands and how this can be met, whilst protecting water as a resource for a healthy and biodiverse environment.

3.1.6 Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan

During 2026, the Kent Downs National Landscape team will conclude and publish their management plan review. As a planning authority, Kent County Council will support this process and adopt the management plan once finalised.

3.1.7 Environmental Impact Assessment process

Work will continue on refining the authority's Environmental Impact Assessment (EnvIA) process, with adoption and roll out of this tool expected within the next reporting period.

3.1.8 Sustainable procurement toolkit

In 2026, the Sustainable Procurement Toolkit will be finalised and adopted by Kent County Council and Kent's district and borough authorities.

3.2 Delivery against Kent County Council biodiversity priorities 2026-2031

Kent County Council's various environmental strategies and plans set out our plans for action over the next five year period and our wider ambitions which the authority will continue to deliver against. The below outlines some of the known actions for 2026-2031.

3.2.1 Delivering nature recovery at a landscape scale

Following publication of the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy in late 2025, work by Kent County Council in its responsible authority role will now focus on delivery. This will include:

- Kent County Council Nature Recovery Team facilitating the delivery of Strategy by working with stakeholders and delivery partners, supporting project and funding bid development.
- Establishment of targets for nature recovery in Kent and Medway.
- Development of a monitoring and reporting approach for the Strategy priorities and measures.

- Establishment of the Kent Nature Partnership as an Executive for the Strategy's delivery.
- Working with the county's planning authorities, to ensure the Strategy is embedded within planning decisions and local plans and to support them in delivering on the Strategy themselves, in fulfilling their biodiversity duty requirements.
- North Kent Conservation Grazing Project, supporting the delivery of grassland ambition and priorities of Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy by addressing two barriers to the introduction of conservation grazing - the necessary infrastructure (fencing) and connecting graziers to land owners/managers.
- Supporting farmers, landowners, community groups, wildlife organisations and other key partners to embed the ambitions of the Strategy within their land management and land use planning and functions.

Kent County Council's priorities biodiversity for the next five years will be aligned with those of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and include:

- Connectivity – high-quality habitats are connected at both a county and local scale, providing more linked natural space for nature to thrive in and a landscape that wildlife can move through and adapt to change in.
- Nature-based solutions – through safeguarding, management and restoration of the county's ecosystems, we enhance our resilience to climate change, deliver environmental improvements, address health and societal inequalities, and promote wellbeing, while advancing nature recovery.
- Land management and land use – land management and land use throughout Kent and Medway not only meets the economic and social needs of the county but also delivers nature recovery gains.
- Grasslands – our existing grasslands are conserved, with appropriate management returned, to restore, connect and extend these habitats to deliver high-quality, species-rich areas across the county
- Successional habitats – the structural diversity of open mosaic (brownfield) habitat found on previously developed land and low-level scrub is safeguarded from loss and damage, for the benefit of species that rely on early successional habitats.
- Woodland, trees and hedgerows – Kent and Medway's native woodland, trees and hedgerows are safeguarded from loss and under appropriate and active management, delivering robust ground flora and soil structures. A mixture of natural regeneration and new establishment improves connectivity and provides an even greater contribution to climate change mitigation and resilience.
- Freshwater – our freshwater habitats are clean, sufficient and stable, in a healthy and good ecological state that supports an abundance and diversity of species. Catchments' functions are restored to deliver a connected mosaic of wet habitats, improving water quality and managing flood risk across the county.
- Urban – nature plays a central role in shaping the county's built-up environments, with wildlife benefiting from a network of connected green, blue and grey spaces, which also provide nature-based solutions to the environmental challenges of urban areas

- Coast – coastal and estuarine areas are allowed to evolve, with natural processes and progression restored, to enable them to adapt and be resilient to climate change. Habitat succession is managed strategically and holistically, to minimise loss and support a range of high functioning, connected coastal habitats.
- Species – habitat management, restoration, extension or creation is specifically targeted to halt the decline, and support the recovery, of the Strategy’s priority and threatened species and in doing so, reduces the risk of losing species through extinction from the county.

The Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy is for organisations and groups across Kent and Medway to deliver, but Kent County Council will work with stakeholders to help to facilitate delivery where needed and will also be embedding the Strategy across the Kent County Council initiatives and services.

3.2.2 Addressing the decline of pollinators – Plan Bee

Plan Bee will continue estate surveys and during the five year period deliver a monitoring report based on this annual surveys, with recommendations on new, revised and continued measures for county council owned land.

Following publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, work will also focus on land outside the council’s control, to develop projects that will support the recovery of the Strategy’s pollinator priority species.

3.2.3 Increasing tree canopy cover in county – Plan Tree

Continuing the restoration of Elms to the landscape will be a continued priority for the Plan Tree strategy. This will also deliver against the Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority to “return the ecological function provided by native trees previously prolific in Kent, by restoring those lost to disease, pests, climate change and drought”.

Projects will include:

- Folkestone Elms and White Letter Hairstreak project, in partnership with Butterfly Conservation.
- Supporting Tunbridge Wells & Rusthall Commons on an elm planting project.
- Phase 2 of disease resistance Elms cultivation project with Niam Cambridge.
- Saving the Dusky Lemon moth project (if successful at securing funding from Species Recovery Fund).
- Network Rail Community Tree Grant planting in 2026 of 240 Elms.

Maintenance, beating up, monitoring and reporting of trees planted in previous years will be ongoing for three years after planting. Any sites not meeting 75% survival rate will be restocked as and when appropriate.

Other priorities for the next five years for Plan Tree includes:

- Strengthening partnerships and mobilising private sector investment in Kent's green economy to enhance financial stability and encourage responsible investment.
- Preparing for water, carbon, and nature-positive projects, scaling up successful initiatives, and attracting buyers and investors, including support for sustainable farming practices.
- Understanding deer populations to protect young trees and promote forest health.
- Collaborating with the Tree Council, International Tree Foundation, TreeApp, and One Tree Planted to leverage additional resources.
- Encouraging urban tree planting to enhance green spaces in our communities.

3.2.4 Nature-based solutions

Kent County Council will continue to seek to develop and deliver small and large schemes which can deliver flood risk management and biodiversity improvements. Flood Risk Management schemes including the development of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and nature based solutions within the urban catchments of Folkestone, Swanley, Snodland and Gravesend will be developed 2026 onwards.

On water resources management, Kent County Council will be:

- Working with sports clubs to manage surface water flooding and pilot water harvesting for irrigation.
- Conducting water audits within schools and sports clubs to reduce water consumption.
- Installing SuDS in schools.
- Grey water harvesting retrofitting on council estate.

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy and biodiversity net gain now present further opportunities to integrate natural flood management and sustainable drainage with measures to deliver ecological improvements. Nature based solutions is an area of the strategy that strongly crosses over with flood risk management.

3.2.5 Access to nature

Ongoing work to promote access to nature whilst supporting biodiversity will continue alongside the following two projects:

- Public Rights of Way and England Coast Path projects that improve accessibility and protect sensitive habitats
- Green prescribing project - future plans include grant coordination and toolkit development, with the aim to make nature-based wellbeing support digitally accessible, inclusive, and easy to navigate for both individuals and health professionals.

3.3 Partnership working 2026-2031

3.3.1 Kent Nature Partnership

Working with the partners, the Kent Nature Partnership will be reformed in 2026 as an Executive for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy's delivery. The Executive will:

- Prioritise potential LNRS projects that would benefit from responsible authority's facilitation and strategic focus.
- Identify alignment of strategic LNRS projects with other priorities in county, that may result in investment financing opportunities.
- Identify opportunities to scale-up projects strategically across county.
- Champion and advocate to gain strategic support across county.
- Identify exemplar projects, best practice etc to be replicated across county.
- Receive reports and consider progress.
- Revise LNRS delivery priorities as appropriate, in light of monitoring.

Under the Partnership banner, Kent County Council will also develop over the next few years the following in support of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy's delivery:

- LNRS green finance & investment "hub" – aiming to connect projects to public and private funding sources, connect similar projects across county and broker projects, supporting projects into private finance and funding arrangements.
- LNRS monitoring - collation of monitoring to report on:
 - habitat creation and restoration
 - management and protection actions
 - specific actions for priority species
 - levels of private investment.
- LNRS comms and engagement – to promote and raise awareness of the strategy, promote funding/investment and project opportunities and promote progress against LNRS priorities.

3.3.2 Countryside management partnerships

Notable work streams and projects for the countryside management partnerships during 2026-2031 include:

- Stour Valley Restore - Kentish Stour Partnership are currently leading on an application for an Area Based Scheme grant of £1.6 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund . The scheme brings together over 30 partners, most of which are looking to deliver for biodiversity; majority of the delivery would occur over 5 years from 2028. Hedgerow Heroes project - Kent High Weald Partnership will be helping bring back lost hedgerows by working with CPRE.
- Kent High Weald Partnership will be working with Tunbridge Well Borough Council on local climate action to help restore nature and biodiversity in the Borough.

- North West Kent Partnership will be expanding habitat restoration projects, particularly in chalk streams and grasslands, improving water quality, and enhancing biodiversity.
- Medway Valley Countryside Partnership will be taking forward hedgerow and water quality projects and work within the new North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve.

3.4 Kent County Council estate management for the benefit of biodiversity in 2026-2031

Many of the areas described earlier in the report will be continued, however this delivery will be difficult in some cases with uncertainty of funding and strained local authority budgets. This is why the partnership working described elsewhere in the report and the exploration of green finance to bring in private money will be increasingly important.

For everything from country parks to closed landfill sites and the wider Kent County Council estate, the big opportunity going forward will be in linking to the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, with the aim to establish connectivity between these Kent County Council sites and neighbouring landowners to provide a bigger network of corridors for wildlife.

3.5 Biodiversity Net Gain delivery in 2026-2031

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy will have a critical role in ensuring that future biodiversity net gain makes a meaningful contribution and is directed to where this contribution is most needed. The Strategy is designed to support the delivery of offsite biodiversity net gain, with strategic significance uplift incentive . This is likely to be a key driver for nature recovery and support bigger and more joined-up areas in which our wildlife can thrive.

From: Peter Osborne – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Simon Jones - Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee 10th March 2026

Subject: Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Kent

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: NA

Future Pathway of report: No further reports scheduled

Electoral Division: Kent wide

Summary: This report provides an overview of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging in Kent and will outline:

- The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund
- Existing EV charging projects in Kent
- Other EV charging technologies
- Wider context for plug in vehicles

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and our approach to delivery of the LEVI project.

1. The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund

- 1.1 In February 2023, the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) published their regional allocation of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding, of which Kent County Council (KCC), as a Tier 1 authority, was allocated £12,081,000 of ring-fenced capital funds to influence the deployment of residential electric vehicle charging. This should primarily focus on on-street locations.
- 1.2 The £12,081,000 allocation to KCC will act as a match funding contribution towards the total cost of installing the EV charging infrastructure with the private sector investing the rest of the required capital funding.
- 1.3 In addition, £1,900,600 of revenue funds were granted to KCC to provide staffing to develop a countywide approach to EV charging and delivering the LEVI project. KCC has received permission from OZEV to spread this cost over 8 years.
- 1.4 The allocation to KCC made it the largest LEVI project in England for a Local Authority. The project will be delivered without drawing on funding from KCC.

- 1.5 The focus of the LEVI fund is to help deliver a step change in the deployment of local, primarily low power, on-street charging infrastructure to accelerate the commercialisation of, and investment in, the local charging infrastructure sector.
- 1.6 The Contract Notices for this opportunity were published on 25th November 2024. Over sixty expressions of interest were received in total, and a thorough procurement process was undertaken with the deadline for final tenders of 8th September 2025.
- 1.7 Using the ringfenced LEVI capital fund, a contribution of £1,000 per location (£1,500 where highway buildouts are required) will be made towards the cost of providing the infrastructure. This funding will be paid to the operator upon receipt of suitable evidence that sites have been delivered to the required specification. Any capital funds remaining will be allocated to future EV charger deployments as the market develops.
- 1.8 There are mechanisms in place, such as margin caps, time of use charging and other incentives that will help keep the cost of charging accessible for end users.
- 1.9 In February 2026, contracts were signed with Urban Fox, part of the Balfour Beatty Group as the operator to install and manage the infrastructure.
- 1.10 Urban Fox will take on the financial responsibility for investing into Kent and taking responsibility for the ongoing operation and maintenance costs. The project will provide jobs and investment into Kent during the contract term with additional value added in the investment into Kent's local electrical grid.
- 1.11 KCC will receive remuneration from the contract over 20 years, as outlined in the relevant clauses in the concession contract with Urban Fox
- 1.12 Responsibility for the ongoing management of the project lies within the Network Innovation Team in H&T with project oversight responsibility with the Head of Transportation.
- 1.13 The first year's rollout has been indicatively designed using resident suggestions alongside multiple data sources considering propensity for off-street parking, future growth, the existing network and location details of existing EV's registered in Kent, to name a few. The network is designed to be equitable and cover all areas of Kent. A map of the first 150 locations has been provided in the Appendix to this report. Locations have been selected to avoid property frontages where possible to minimise disruption to residents.
- 1.14 It is intended that each location will have an initial 2 sockets available (2 x bays) so as to minimise parking disruption in the early phases. Passive provision will be provided where appropriate enabling the majority of the civils works to take place at once. As utilisation and local demand increases, additional chargepoints can then be easily fitted, reducing the project cost and preventing additional disruption from further excavation in the road.
- 1.15 The vast majority of the chargers installed will be dual 7kw units with some 11kw and 22kw included where appropriate. Although the exact chargers

selected will evolve with technological advances, a few images have been included in the Appendices of chargers we anticipate installing.

- 1.16 Each location will be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order which includes a public consultation. Installations will take place on a rolling basis and Urban Fox has employed an Engagement Officer to help KCC work with local communities and answer any questions they may have.
- 1.17 Residents and businesses are encouraged to visit KCC’s website to suggest locations for chargers and keep up to date with the latest news about the project www.kent.gov.uk/onstreetev. To date, around 800 locations have been proposed by Kent residents as part of this engagement exercise.

2. Existing EV Charging Projects in Kent

- 2.1 KCC has previously delivered smaller, more targeted deployments of EV charging infrastructure:

The Rapid Taxi Charger Project	<p>Description: Installed 24 x 50 kw rapid chargers for the taxi community to encourage a switch to EV across the county.</p> <p>Status: Operational</p> <p>Funding: This project was entirely funded by Government grant and private sector investment.</p>
The Parish Charger Network	<p>Description: Installed 70 x 7kWh chargers in Parish communities across Kent.</p> <p>Status: Operational</p> <p>Funding: This project was funded through Government grant.</p>
Ultra Rapid Charging Hubs	<p>Description: A project looking to create ultra rapid EV charging hubs on KCC owned land along the Strategic Road Network including A roads.</p> <p>Status: In development with colleagues in Infrastructure.</p> <p>Funding: The project will be funded by private sector partners.</p>

3. Other EV charging technologies

- 3.1 **Cable Gullies** - There has been some media attention on Cable Gullies or Cross Pavement Gullies over the last year. Officers have been looking at this situation closely and engaging with other Local Authorities and central Government on the matter.
- 3.2 Officers are currently awaiting an article update from the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) with regards to their IET 01 (2024) guidance note and how it should be interpreted with regards to simultaneous touch electrocution risk.
- 3.3 Furthermore, the Government is expected to pass secondary legislation to remove the need for planning permission when installing a home charger that

requires a cable gully. This is anticipated to come into effect later in 2026, removing some cost and time delays associated with any cable gully installation. It should be noted that the relevant highway permissions, purchase and installation costs and ongoing liability considerations for the charging cables would still apply.

- 3.4 It is expected that KCC will be able to take a decision as to whether to proceed with a limited scale gully trial later in 2026.
- 3.5 **Trojan Home** – KCC are working with Trojan Energy on a small-scale trial to test their Trojan Home product, allowing homeowners to utilise their home electricity tariffs. The Trojan Home product is regulated like any other on street installation and at the time of writing, 10 installations have taken place with a small expansion to that trial anticipated. Residents can visit KCC's website to [find out more](#).

4. Wider context for providing charging infrastructure.

- 4.1 The latest available data to Q3 2025 identifies 42,537 licenced plug-in vehicles that are registered in Kent, representing 4% of the registered cars and LGVs in the county. Since 2020, plug-in vehicle ownership has increased by 390% at an average of 10.24% each quarter. Note that this does not account for vehicles registered elsewhere but travelling through Kent, or any lease vehicles that have been registered elsewhere, so the actual number of EVs on Kent roads will be higher.
- 4.2 Nationally, new vehicles with a plug (either full battery electric or plug-in hybrid) accounted for 34.5% of new vehicle sales in 2025.
- **Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs):** 23.4% market share (473,348 units).
 - **Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs):** 11.1% market share (225,143 units).
- 4.3 Kent has an estimated 700,949 dwellings with around 40% not having access to off-street parking. Some residents have access to parking but not necessarily the ability to install home charging facilities.
- 4.4 New developments are obligated to provide chargers as part of Building Regulations, updated in 2022.

5. Policy Framework

- 5.1 The introduction of Local Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure supports the following:
- Building Better Communities – Ensure that the infrastructure needs of the County to support economic growth and quality of life are fully in place.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the contents of the report our approach to delivery of the LEVI project.

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1. Appendices

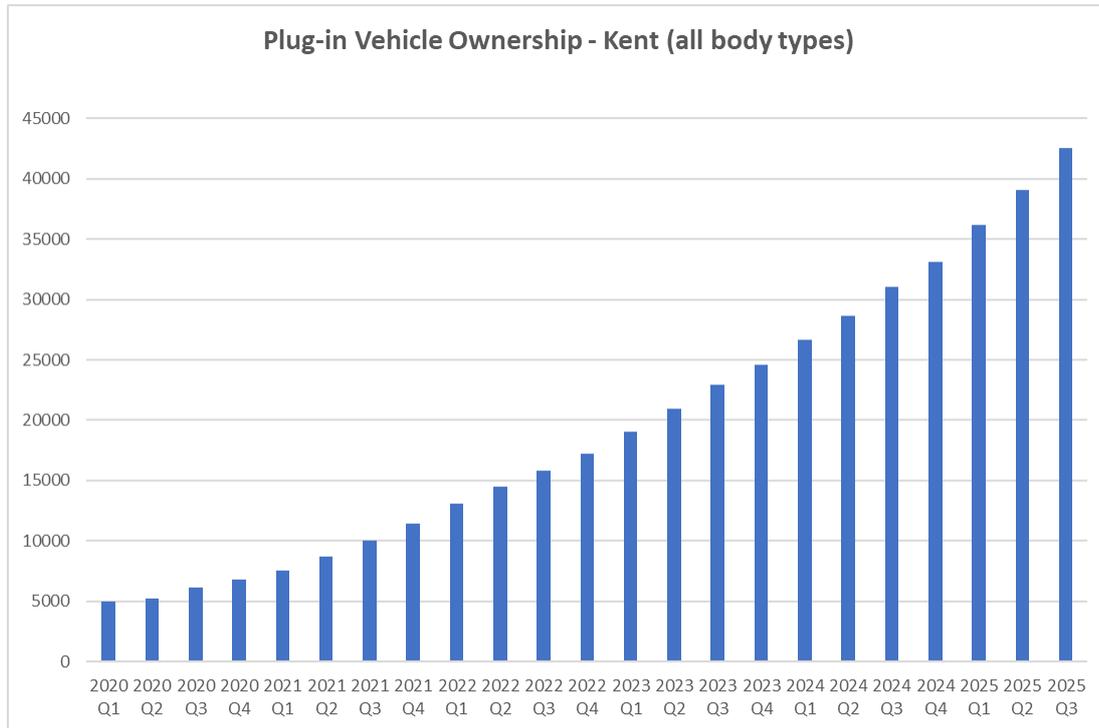


Figure 1 - Plug-In Vehicle Ownership - Kent

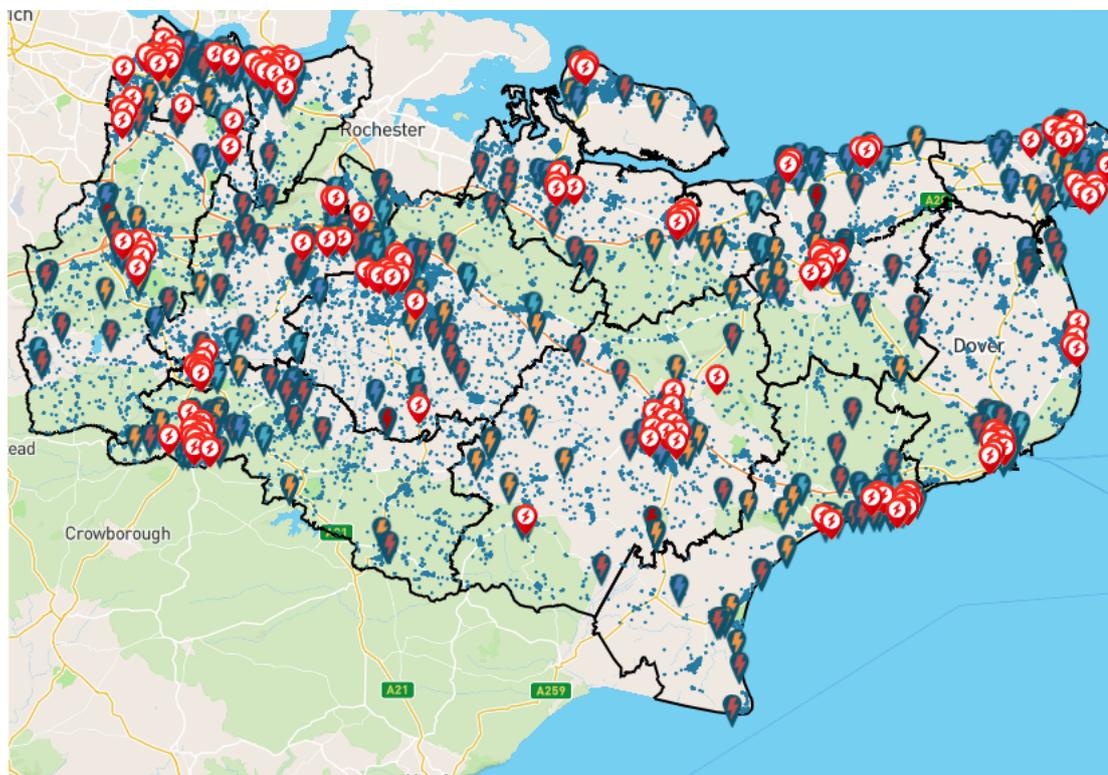


Figure 2 - Map of year 1 locations for the LEVI Project. Note: Red flags represent new locations, blue flags represent existing chargers in Kent



Figure 3 - Examples of on street chargers anticipated to be used in the LEVI project.

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

Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 10 March 2026

Subject: An update on the KCC Community Warden Service and its impact

Key decision: No

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report provides an update on the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS), detailing its evolution, current operating model (including the Geographical Allocation Policy), and the impacts of recent changes on service delivery. The scope also discusses the variety of work undertaken by the service and the positive outcomes it generates, particularly in maintaining community safety and supporting vulnerable residents.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and provide comments on the impact of the service and the update provided.

1. Introduction

1.1 For over two decades, the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) has been a cornerstone of community safety and wellbeing across the county. While its remit and staffing levels have had to adapt in response to financial pressures, the service's reputation and value have remained unequivocal. Partners, parish councils and residents consistently highlight the vital role wardens play in strengthening communities and supporting vulnerable people. This report sets out the current position of the service, the difference it continues to make, and the opportunities ahead to further enhance its impact.

2. Background

2.1 The Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) was established in 2002. It is a proactive, uniformed and highly visible service that supports the council in meeting statutory responsibilities relating to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006), and the Care Act 2014.

2.2 In February 2023, the County Council approved the 2023/24 planned budget which took account of the challenging financial circumstances KCC was

operating within. One of the services identified to make savings was KCWS and a £1m budget reduction for the service was agreed.

- 2.3 Following the [public consultation \(July - October 2023\)](#), the Council committed to redesigning the service in a way that preserved its core strengths: a wide remit supporting residents and communities, early identification of issues, and a proactive, community-based approach that remains highly valued.
- 2.4 The redesigned model saw a reduction in staffing by almost half but ensured a continued presence across all 12 districts with six teams covering two districts each and a minimum staffing level set to maintain consistent delivery.
- 2.5 To maximise impact, [team sizes](#) (see page 10 of linked report) were enhanced in districts with higher evidenced need, ensuring proportionate coverage within the overall warden limit. Wardens are now allocated to specific wards at a ratio of roughly 1 per 6,000–12,000 residents, enabling focused, targeted work rather than attempting full district coverage.
- 2.6 A [Geographical Allocation Policy](#) (GAP) underpins these changes, using a range of data and indicators of need, agreed through public consultation and debated at the [January 2024 Cabinet Committee](#), to identify districts requiring enhanced teams, and then, with partner insight, prioritising the highest-need wards for warden deployment. This ensures resources are directed where they can deliver the greatest benefit. The GAP was finalised and rolled out in late 2024, with transitions to new deployment areas completed by early 2025.

3. Reforming Kent 2025-2028

- 3.1 The new [strategic statement](#) for KCC sets out key aims, with many aspects directly and indirectly relevant to KCWS.
- 3.2 Support for rural areas is part of Aim 1. Prioritisation of areas for warden coverage includes how rural it is, with the GAP including a score for 'rurality'¹. Some of the most rural areas covered are the wards Rolvenden & Tenterden West and Upper Weald in Ashford district, and East Downs in Swale. Wardens help farmers with problems like fly tipping and rural crime, and also work closely with Kent Police's Rural Task Force.
- 3.3 The service has contributed to Aim 2 by supporting KCC's financial sustainability, delivering £1 million in savings over the past two years. The majority of the KCWS budget provides warden salaries, and this saving of almost half required significant reductions in staffing. Numbers were decreased from 70 to 38 uniformed wardens². Management and administrative functions were streamlined to protect frontline delivery³. Feedback from stakeholders, partners and evaluation activity consistently shows that where KCWS operates, it provides strong value for money and ensures resources are used effectively. Alongside these efficiencies, the service continues to actively explore opportunities to enhance financial resilience including sponsorship

¹ [Urban Rural Areas in Kent & Medway](#)

² Includes six operational team leaders (TL).

³ Reduced from three managers to one (an Operational Manager); and one Business Coordinator.

arrangements and partnership-funded posts to further extend its reach within current budget constraints.

- 3.4 Additionally, KCWS receives referrals from KCC Adult Social Care (ASC), with 471 being received across 2024 and 2025. These referrals are often requests for a warden to undertake a welfare check, advise on potential care needs, or facilitate engagement where social services have struggled. Referrers note that they would need to undertake this work themselves otherwise, and therefore KCWS is contributing to mitigations for ASC's demand and financial pressures.
- 3.5 Reforming Kent's third aim focuses on supporting residents who need help, a commitment that aligns closely with the core preventative and early-intervention role of the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS). Wardens work proactively to identify vulnerabilities early, equip residents to improve their circumstances, and help them to build the confidence they need so that they are empowered to take personal responsibility. They provide tailored support to those experiencing issues such as loneliness, financial pressure or wider wellbeing challenges. Many of the people they help are older or vulnerable, with over half being pension-age, and 12% having caring responsibilities. This area of support was something respondents of the public consultation showed strong support for, with 28% stating they would seek support from KCC ASC if they were to no longer have a warden⁴. As a result, additional weighting was applied to these indicators in the GAP.
- 3.6 Community Wardens also support children and young people through schools and youth groups, modelling [pro-social behaviour](#). Each year, they help deliver [Safety in Action](#), giving Year 6 pupils important safety messages to prepare them for school transition. KCWS teams undertake other projects, like the Dartford and Gravesham Team's [Duke of Cornwall awards](#), which help young people become safe, caring and resilient members of their communities.
- 3.7 Reforming Kent's fourth aim is to build better communities, and this links directly to KCWS's founding purpose of community safety. The service helps address low-level crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) through deterrence, prevention and by working with partners including Trading Standards and Kent Police. The GAP included data on anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, and scams to assist prioritisation, alongside information from partners and their focus areas, to make the best use of public resources.
- 3.8 Wardens also support communities during challenging times, such as emergencies and severe weather. They run projects that bring people together and improve wellbeing for all ages. KCWS targets support in several coastal areas, enabled by the GAP which led to bigger team sizes in districts with higher need, meaning more wardens in the east of the county.

4. Service Activity, Data and Impact

Delivering High-Impact, Targeted Support Across Kent

- 4.1 The Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) continues to deliver **significant preventative and early intervention impact** despite reduced resources. The

⁴ [010d0e58634ce0f62a53d0c5547d0d20 Appendix 1 - Consultation Report.pdf](#)

implementation of the new case management system (CMS) in early 2024 has transformed how the service records, understands and demonstrates its value.

- 4.2 Across 2024 and 2025, the CMS captured **over 1,300 partner referrals**, with the largest proportions coming from Adult Social Care (34%), health partners (19%) and district, parish and community safety teams (10%). These referrals combined with the wardens' proactive work translated into **nearly 4,900 tasks in 2024 and around 4,200 tasks in 2025**, all focussed on individual resident support. (see below for breakdown). Although the 2025 total reflects the reduced staffing levels following the 2023/24 and 2024/25 budget reduction, the overall drop in activity (around 15%) is **significantly smaller than the reduction in workforce capacity**. This suggests the redesigned model including the GAP is enabling wardens to **spend more time delivering frontline support where it matters most**.

Providing meaningful, Personalised Support

- 4.3 The CMS data shows the breadth and depth of support KCWS provides:
- **45%** of tasks involved practical, hands on support⁵
 - **56%** included reassurance and welfare checks
 - **27%** involved personalised advice or signposting
 - **28%** supported access to public or community services

- 4.4 Across more than **9,000 tasks**, only **1,366 onward referrals** were required. This shows that KCWS can spot problems early and support people before they need help from adult social care, police, health services, local councils or other services.

Delivering Measurable Outcomes for Residents

- 4.5 Survey feedback demonstrates the tangible difference wardens make:
- **69%** of residents felt safer
 - **53%** felt more confident going out locally
 - **77%** accessed services they previously didn't know about⁶
 - **80%** were supported to access services they had struggled to reach
- 4.6 This addresses a well understood national issue⁷: many vulnerable people miss out on essential support due to lack of awareness or difficulty navigating systems. Wardens help to bridge that gap by giving residents access to the information and support they need to address issues themselves, empowering them to take action and to improve their quality of life.

Reducing Loneliness and Improving Wellbeing

- 4.7 KCWS has long been recognised as a key contributor to reducing loneliness and social isolation⁸ which can have a significant negative impact on health, increasing pressures on public services⁹. Following the Interreg¹⁰ pilot (2020–

⁵ E.g. Arranging for food parcels, providing/fitting doorstep crime deterrents.

⁶ E.g. This can include identifying eligibility to certain benefits and grants, housing, and local voluntary organisations such as foodbanks and support groups.

⁷ [Vulnerable people missing out on benefits due to online tool, charity claims - BBC News](#)

⁸ https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/215269/Loneliness-and-social-isolation-select-committee-report-March-2019.pdf (para.3.2.6)

⁹ <https://www.socialfinance.org.uk/evidence/investing-to-tackle-loneliness-a-discussion-paper>

¹⁰ An EU funding programme.

22)¹¹, where a 'Community Connector' role was successfully demonstrated and fulfilled by wardens, the 'Positive Wellbeing' (PW) model enabled structured one to one support, social prescribing, and [measurable outcomes](#). Evaluations have noted KCWS being particularly effective due to their unique role, proactive approach, and community presence creating a trust and rapport that can overcome barriers to engagement. Between January and October 2025:

- 74 referrals were received
- 25 residents completed the PW journey
- Participants reported a **46% reduction in loneliness**, **58% improvement in life satisfaction**, and **68% increase in the number of people they feel close to or can depend on**.

4.8 These results demonstrate how KCWS uniquely combines **local presence, trusted relationships and a preventative approach** to support people in ways statutory services cannot easily replicate.

Strengthening Community Safety and Resilience

4.9 KCWS also contributes significantly to wider community safety and resilience at a local community level. In 2024/25, wardens recorded:

- **2,569 activities related to ASB** (from being a visible deterrent, to gathering intelligence, partnership working or supporting schools and families to address challenging behaviours).
- **Over 1,000 activities relating to road safety**

4.10 In late 2025, enhancements to the CMS expanded data capture to community-level issues using the [OSARA](#) problem solving model delivered with Kent Police. In Q3 2025 alone, **more than 1,500 community-level tasks** were recorded, reaching an estimated **20,000 residents**. These included visible patrols, scam awareness sessions, multi-agency events, and actions to address low level crime and ASB.

Preventative Value and Social Return on Investment (SROI)

4.11 Quantifying preventative impact is inherently complex and even more so for a service like the community wardens, with their broad but desirable skillset. Nevertheless KCWS has continued to pursue repeated attempts at evaluation. A 2023 Social Return on Investment (SROI) study demonstrated a return of £3.14–£3.34 for every £1 invested¹², using outcomes such as feeling happier, safer and less worried. While SROIs do not equate directly to financial savings, they provide strong evidence of the wider societal value the service creates.

4.12 This aligns with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), which highlights both the challenges in evidencing prevention and the importance of community based services particularly those providing good information, safer neighbourhoods, and interventions addressing loneliness and isolation^{13, 14}.

¹¹

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk:9071/documents/s115772/Community%20Wardens%20and%20Positive%20Wellbeing%20Report.pdf> (para 3.8, 3.9)

¹² A cautious interpretation of the SROI was recommended due to limitations of the approach and the data used.

¹³ <https://www.scie.org.uk/integrated-care/prevention-in-social-care/>

¹⁴ [Marczak, J, et al. 2019. Evaluating Social Care Prevention in England: Challenges and Opportunities. Journal of Long-Term Care, \(2019\), pp. 206–217.](#)

KCWS directly delivers in each of these areas. Evaluation attempts have highlighted that in services such as the wardens, qualitative data and case studies are an important tool.

Case Studies and Real-Life Examples

4.13 The KCWS has a wide variety of ways it supports residents and communities, with each team and warden drawing flexibly upon their broad skillset in response to their communities' and residents' specific needs. Below are some examples of the type of work happening across all the teams.

Fostering community connections and wellbeing:

4.14 In our Maidstone and Tonbridge & Malling team, a group was set up to help carers meet others and build support networks. One attendee said it was "really important" because it helped with loneliness and encouraged them to get out after losing their partner. More stories from the group can be seen in the video in the background documents section.

- As previously mentioned, by early 2025 the KCWS moved to new areas based on the GAP priorities. Some places kept their wardens due to evidenced need, but others like Fant in Maidstone, had a warden for the first time. The warden had to build new relationships and trust from scratch. Over the year, these links have grown stronger, and Fant is now seeing real benefits, from one-to-one support to new walking and games groups. One resident said, "your support and active help... has been a godsend."

Community safety

- - KCWS teams work with the police, communities, businesses, schools, and parish councils to address low-level crime and anti-social behaviour. Their visible, uniformed presence helps deter problems, and their strong local knowledge supports intelligence gathering. For example, a warden in Sevenoaks worked closely with local businesses and schools, collating incidents and descriptions of those involved. Through her local knowledge and school relationships, she was able to speak on the topic in a school assembly, direct support and put in place action to deter future issues .
- During Halloween, wardens in Swale worked with Kent Police to keep people safe. They helped make sure everyone who wanted to celebrate could do so, and those who didn't could stay undisturbed by giving out "no trick-or-treat" posters. If any concerns were raised, wardens passed this information to police officers, who were then able to act quickly.

Helping residents and communities be more resilient:

4.18 KCWS connects residents to useful services, information, and support. This includes giving talks on how to spot scams, avoid rogue traders, and stay safe. In August 2025, wardens in the Canterbury and Thanet team organised a multi-agency event in Birchington so residents could meet different services all in one place. The event was a huge success and benefit to both agencies and residents, with an estimated 100-120 residents in attendance. Wardens also help younger people learn important life skills, such as through the Dartford and Gravesham team's work on the [Water Smart Project](#) to improve water safety awareness amongst children and young people in the area.

- Additionally, support is provided to communities during emergencies. For example, during recent water supply problems in west Kent, wardens from Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Dartford and Gravesham worked with Kent Fire and Rescue Service and other partners. They delivered bottled water and carried out welfare checks on vulnerable residents in a number of areas. Wardens in Ashford also supported those affected by recent flood water.

Supporting the vulnerable:

- A warden from the Folkestone and Hythe team supported a resident who was struggling to access benefits and get onto the housing list. With some guidance, he joined the local library, used the computers there, contacted the DWP, and applied for housing near his dad. The warden also referred him to the Kent Enablement Team, where he completed a 12-week programme that helped build his confidence and independence. He then joined a craft workshop at the library, made great progress, and stayed involved in the community. He now goes to coffee mornings, has a case worker for extra support, and is excited to join another craft group.

5 Extending the Service's reach and Innovation

- 5.1 The new operating model for the service was consciously designed to be scalable so that, if resources became available, the council could look again at its provision. This prompted enquires from local parish and town councils as to how they may fund a warden to retain the service in their area. Work followed with Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and parish councils to explore the feasibility, and the commercial and legal arrangements required were established.
- 5.2 A sponsorship programme was developed allowing partners to fund a warden (from one day per week to a full time post), and this was promoted with the support of KALC during 2025. This is allowing the service to reach more residents and communities within KCC's current financial limitations. Several parish councils are now actively funding wardens in their areas, which has enabled us to expand our coverage and increase our capacity. Further enquiries from other parishes and partners are in discussion for 2026/27. The early feedback has been encouraging:

"We really really do appreciate the service and are happy in principle to pay for it."

"We buy in the service three days a week, [our warden] is employed by KCC... and that works extremely well." David Hall, Bearsted Parish Council.

- 5.3 In addition to the above parish council sponsorship, the service is currently working with a commercial transport provider and looking opportunities to collaborate. Discussions are at an advanced stage.
- 5.4 Furthermore in spite of the challenging circumstances surrounding grant provision, the service continues to explore opportunities to bolster the service and increase the reach of the community wardens.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Following the changes and associated staffing reductions in 2024/25 to realise the £1 million saving from KCWS's budget, the resultant redundancies led to pension liabilities in the region of £160k. These liabilities have been smoothed utilising the general KCC reserve, enabling the service to account for the costs over the three financial years from 2024/25 to 2026/27. In 2027/28, the pension liability transfers to the Kent Pension Fund and as such, a remaining £57k is listed within the MTFP for removal from the service's budget.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 KCWS was set up as part of the County Council's response to the statutory responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006). Section 6 of the 1998 Act requires the responsible authorities (commonly referred to collectively as a Community Safety Partnership (CSP)) in a local government area to work together in formulating and implementing strategies to tackle local crime and disorder in the area.

- 7.2 KCWS's role in communities beyond crime and disorder supports KCC in delivering its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. [Section 1 Promoting individual well-being](#) places the general duty on a local authority to promote individual well-being. Additionally, [Section 2 Preventing needs for care and support](#) states that a local authority must have regard to;

2 a - the importance of identifying services, facilities and resources already available in the authority's area and the extent to which the authority could involve or make use of them in performing that duty.

2 b – the importance of identifying adults in the authority's area with needs for care and support which are not being met (by the authority or otherwise).

8 Equalities implications

- 8.1 Previous [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (EqIA) for the service show that key demographics represented in the client base include; the elderly; females; people with a disability or long-term impairment; and those with carer's responsibilities. The GAP included indicators to mitigate the impact of the last change to the service.

9 Data Protection Implications

- 9.1 A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) was undertaken as part of the case management system project and was in place prior to its development and implementation. The relating [privacy notice](#) is available on kent.gov.

10 Other corporate implications

- 10.1 KCWS proactively supports the work of:
- Trading Standards by engaging with and supporting scam victims on the service's behalf.

- Adult Social Care and Health through taking direct work requests for welfare visits, engagement with hard-to-reach residents and supporting residents to live safely and independently. Additionally, supporting the aims of the [ASC Prevention Framework](#) and its approach to preventative support, promoting wellbeing and working with partners. This is now particularly important due to the September 2025 decision of [savings being made within ASC Wellbeing commissioning](#), with [funding being ceased or reduced for community navigation and community services](#). KCWS are working closely with ASC to mitigate the impact of these changes.
- Public Health through their contribution to the GET Integrated Care System (ICS) delivery plan to improve health and wellbeing with the commitment/measure of 'facilitating residents' access to community resources, activities and services that improve personal wellbeing'. Also by delivering the Positive Wellbeing model which addresses wider determinants of health i.e. loneliness and social isolation.
- Emergency Planning; as part of the Council's response to emergency situations such as flooding, during the Covid 19 pandemic, and the recent water outages.
- Children, Young People and Education through work with schools, colleges, youth groups and the younger residents in the communities served. Wardens deter anti-social behaviour and model [pro-social behaviour](#) for adolescents.

11 Conclusions

- 11.1 Despite sustained financial pressures and significant changes to its operating model, the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) continues to deliver unique preventative value for Kent's communities. Its deep local presence, trusted relationships, and ability to work seamlessly across agencies enable it to address vulnerabilities early, reduce demand on frontline services, and strengthen community resilience.
- 11.2 KCWS demonstrates measurable impact across Kent's strategic priorities and is well-positioned to play an even greater role with regards to the renewed focus on community safety, and in supporting KCC's long-term transformation and financial sustainability. The service's strong preventative foundations, proven adaptability, and growing opportunities such as sponsorship and expanded partnership working provide a platform for continued innovation and extended reach.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and provide comments on the impact of the service and the update provided.

12 Appendices

Appendix-A: Supporting evidence of KCWS's impact.

13 Contact details

<p>Report Author: Shafick Peerbux Head of Community Safety 03000 413431 shafick.peerbux@kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle Director of Growth and Communities 03000 412064 stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk</p>
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Appendix-A

Supporting evidence of KCWS's impact

[Video of a KCWS community wellbeing project - Carers Group](#)

[Video of a KCWS led multi-agency - community resilience project](#)

[Video for the Positive Wellbeing intervention delivered by KCWS](#)

[KCWS Sponsorship promotional video](#)

Examples of feedback from the 2023 public consultation:

“A community warden is so important as a way to help people to get help and support they need a friendly face that they know they can talk to.” (Representative of a local community group or residents’ association)

“They help people feel safe. They explain how worries can be helped by explaining the help available and who to contact. Being prepared to listen no rush they really do care.”

“The warden service is a lifeline for many residents. With the reduction in other services; social services, mental health support, social care services, the wardens very much fill the gap. They support the vulnerable and isolated, foster community cohesion and wellbeing, help residents access other public services, and deliver community safety and resilience.” (Parish / Town / Borough / District Council representative)

“The community warden is available for any issues in the local area. Is aware of any anti-social behaviour or criminal activity. Also a contact for the lonely or isolated. He works closely with our local police officer and PCSO who cover much larger area.”

Examples of recent feedback from referring agencies (2025/26):

Referrer:

1. KCC Adult social care
2. NHS Dementia coordinator
3. Local voluntary group

How did KCWS assist your agency on this occasion?

1. Assisted us in engaging with hard-to-reach-residents.
2. Provided one-to-one support to our clients which we believe KCWS are best placed to provide.
3. Provided one-to-one support to our clients which we believe KCWS are best placed to provide.

How satisfied were you with the work undertaken by KCWS in response to your referral?

1. Very satisfied
2. Very satisfied
3. Very satisfied

If KCWS were unable to accept this referral, what would your alternatives have been?

1. A welfare visit would need to have been undertaken by Adult Social Care Connect.
2. We have tried other's, and no one has been able to offer the support you have.
3. We would have continued to support and we still will do that, however the input of KCWS was us asking for help in an area we are not experienced in. (*N.B. Conflict with neighbour, including an assault.*)

Please include any other comments or additional explanation of previous answers you would like to make here:

1. The Community Warden service is invaluable. The outcome is that Adult Social Care Connect were able to get a quick response on the situation and will update ASCC should needs be identified in the future. This has saved a lot of time for ASCC who would normally have had to undertake a welfare check and the person may not have been at home and then had to re-visit.
2. Can not thank you enough, this gentleman is such a worry, and without intervention, and support, I don't believe their [sic] would be a positive outcome for him.
3. I have had previous interactions with KCWS and always, without exception found them willing and helpful. This was no exception. The speed of returning my calls and the meeting with client was amazing service, thank you so much.

From: **David Wimble, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Special Projects**

Simon Jones, Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport

To: **Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee - 10 March 2026**

Subject: **Kent Design Guide**

Classification: **Unrestricted Past Pathway of report:** Growth,

Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee – 17th

November 2020

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Summary: This paper updates Cabinet Committee on development progress of the refreshed Kent Design Guide and the next elements of activity to launch the guide.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse the current approach and note the next steps for publication of the refreshed Kent Design Guide.

Electoral Division: County Wide

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A refreshed Kent Design Guide in digital format is in the final stages of development to replace the 2005 printed version. The refreshed guide aims to create a single, shared online framework of policy and guidance that sets quality standards for new homes and neighbourhoods being built in Kent. The Kent Design Guide framework is intended to work alongside the National Design Guide published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).¹
- 1.2 A Cabinet Committee paper was presented to GEDCCC on 17th November 2020 to advise on the wider aspects of Design in Kent's Built Environment² and the steps that were being taken to promote and progress the subject. The project was subsequently then paused following a re-evaluation of its priority and uncertainty around the direction of national policy.
- 1.3 The existing National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) covers design through Chapter 14 "Achieving well designed places"³. Specifically paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that "*Development that is not well designed should be refused,*

¹ [National Design Guide – October 2019, updated January 2021 – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#)

² [Design in Kent's Built Environment - Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee 17 November 2020](#)

³ [National Planning Policy Framework - 12. Achieving well-designed places - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design ⁵⁴, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes. “

- 1.4 The change in national government in 2024 resulted in a period of uncertainty as to how design in planning would be approached. However, it is now clear that guidance at a more local level remains an important component in assessing planning applications. As part of its measures for planning reform, the government has released two consultations, one to update the NPPF and a second on a proposed [Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance](#). Through the [NPPF consultation](#) it is intended that the current paragraph 14 will be updated and include key design principles that a development should adhere to. The design principles of the NPPF reflect the seven features of well-designed places proposed in the proposed Design and Placemaking Practice Guidance. The principle that development should be in accordance with local policies remains and it is therefore appropriate and relevant to be updating our guidance at this time.
- 1.5 The creation of the guide to date has required a significant input from Kent's Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), in particular to assemble detailed design codes for their neighbourhoods and / or for specific development sites in their districts but also to ensure that the new Kent Design Guide is up to date, legible, intuitive and ultimately of value to all stakeholders.

2. Kent Design Guide

- 2.1 KCC has worked in partnership with Design South East over the past 18 months to organise a series of workshops, meetings and surveys to ensure that the eventual product offers a stakeholder led solution. The workshops considered the question of how the county's public and private sector could deliver higher design quality more consistently, particularly in housing development.
- 2.2 Collectively, local authorities, developers, housebuilders, agents, consultants, and statutory consultees concluded that there are several ways to achieve meaningful design guidance for Kent's built environment. The suggestions made in these discussions have been incorporated into the new guide.
- 2.3 The new guide is entirely digital and although KCC has been the lead authority in its production, importantly the guide will be hosted externally to reflect its position as guidance for the county council **and** our partner boroughs, districts and statutory undertakers. Whilst not a policy in its own right, it provides a framework for KCC and other stakeholder policy documents. Once available, it will be offered to partner Local Planning Authorities to consider the need for planning applications to comply with its content through the adoption of Local Plans.
- 2.4 Designing the new Guide as an entirely web-based product allows for content to be updated in a far easier and immediate way. With such a depth and breadth of content it became apparent with the 2005 version that policies, practice and legislation change with such frequency that a more adaptable product was needed. Much of the new website has now been populated with content from a range of KCC services and external stakeholders including Kent Police and Kent Planning Officers Group representing the Districts' and Boroughs' Planning Authorities. This engagement will continue throughout the life of the Guide. Images and examples of best practice can also be updated and changed as they become available.

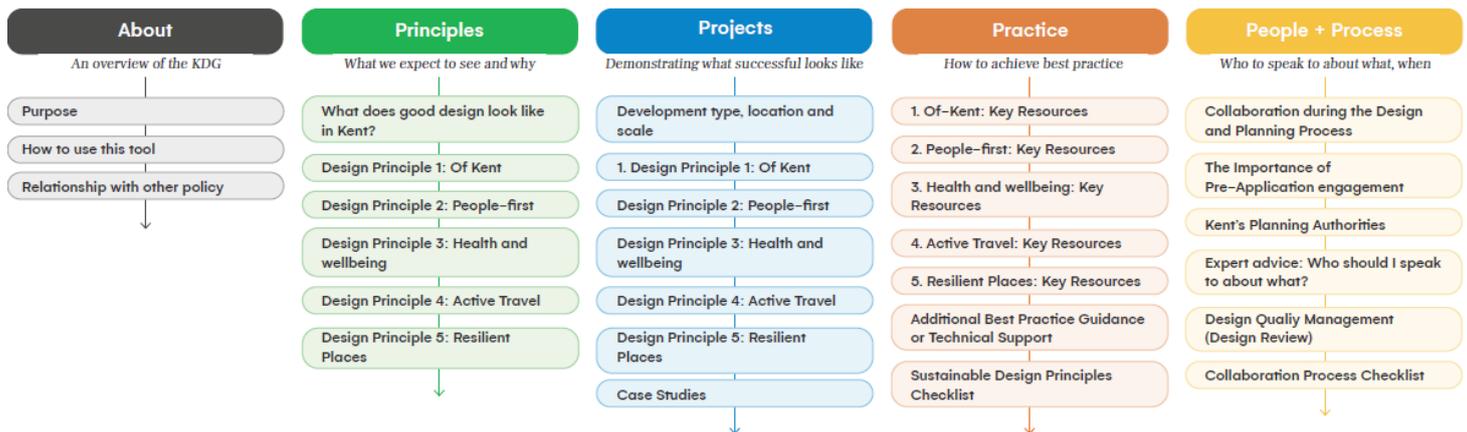
3. How will it work

3.1 The objectives of the new Guide are that it is clear, up to date, technically informative, interactive and easy to navigate. There will be five main “Areas” to navigate from; About, Principles, Projects, Practice, People & Processes.

3.2 To take each in turn;

- About – Provides an overview of the Guide and how to use it
 - Principles - Sets out what we expect to see within five identified “Key Design Principles” that relate to those proposed in the proposed NPPF.
 - Projects - Demonstrates what good practice looks like.
 - Practice - Provides specific policy or best practice guidance on how to achieve best practice.
- People and Process – Information on who to talk to about what and when.

3.3 The image below provides an illustrative example of the proposed website structure and how the page will look, having five main “Areas” to navigate.



3.4 The proposed layout of the guide includes five Key Design Principles that the Projects and Practice areas align to. Users can therefore review a specific Key Design Principle, then can look at projects and examples of that principle in the Projects area. Subsequently, users can then review any policy and good practice guidance in the Practice area, making the journey and search for information uniform and intuitive.

3.5 The five Key Design Principles are;

1.	Of Kent (Identity & Built Form)	Demonstrating the various and unique local design, landscape and historic characteristics, features and vernaculars “Of Kent” to be followed.
2.	People First (Liveability)	Demonstrating design concepts that put “people first” such as the need for privacy, security, space and sustainability. Putting community life first and foremost.
3.	Health and Well Being (Public Space)	Provides design information for living standards, dealing with ageing populations, accessibility and social and community cohesion.
4.	Active Kent (Movement)	Demonstrates design that is well connected and facilitates active lifestyles and walkable communities

		as well as the need for access to green space , recreation and sport.
5.	Resilient Places (Nature & Climate)	Promotes use of sustainable materials, energy efficiency and protection of our natural environment and resources.

3.6 It is important to note that the Guide is proposed as a framework for guidance and policy within Kent but is not in itself a policy. It will instead act as a home for guidance and policy and any KCC policy contained within it will have to have gone through its own governance procedures and approvals from Members.

4. Next Steps

4.1 The project is now in its final stage of compilation. Policies, guidance and content have been collated and the next stage of the process will be to upload to the new site. There will then be a period of soft testing with stakeholders before a formal launch expected in the summer of this year. Initially some areas will have limited content as they may require their own formal routes of governance or that they remain in production. Officers will ensure that sufficient content is included to make it useful, informative and effective from the outset.

4.2 Following the go live date and subject to any spending constraints, a formal launch will be arranged with press notifications and publicity to all stakeholders, including elected members, design consultants, architects, planners, LPAs, developers, housebuilders and Parish Councils.

4.3 Content will then be reviewed, added and deleted on a regular annual basis to ensure it remains up to date, relevant and useful. Ad hoc immediate amendments may also be required should new policies get adopted.

4.4 Appendix 2 to this report provides a slide presentation summary of the project provided by our consultant partner Design South East.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The costs of getting the project to this stage have been incorporated within the core budget of the Strategic Development and Place Group within the Growth and Communities division of Growth, Environment and Transport (GET). Future costs associated with website hosting and other directly linked costs are provided within the annual core budget. Periodic updates to the Guide are expected to amount to approximately £300 per year for web hosting and an annual allowance of £1,100 for any GET pages that would need updating in the future. The overall commitment for future updates relating to changes to policy or guidance would expect to be covered by the respective KCC service area or external partner to which the amend relates. No cost for a launch event has been allocated due to the current spending restrictions.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning applications to be compliant with local design standards and guidance. It is therefore incumbent upon authorities to ensure that such policies are available. The guide also provides a useful framework to ensure that any policy or guidance referring to legal requirements is available and easily accessible.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 An existing EQIA is in place for the current Kent Design Guide and has been updated for the refresh and attached to this report.

8. Data Protection Implications

- 8.1 A DPIA is completed due to the publishing of service area contact details.

9. Other Corporate Implications

- 9.1 The Design Guide is a collaborative project requiring input from multiple disciplines and KCC service areas. Whilst the Strategic Development and Place Group (SDP) retain overall accountability for coordinating the project, those services and stakeholders providing content retain ownership and accountability for it. Notwithstanding that, it is expected that the Development Investment Team (DIT) within SDP will retain a coordinating role with annual reviews of content and the general management of the external hosting and upkeep of the Guide. There is strong interconnectivity between developer contributions and built design requirements required to make sustainable place-making. For this reason the DIT will retain an overarching coordination role of both areas.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 The project will support officers at KCC & other Local Planning Authorities, design teams (e.g. architects) and landowners/developers/builders through the provision of consistent, clear and accessible design and placemaking guidance.
- 10.2 The refreshed Kent Design Guide will create a single, shared online resource that sets **quality standards** for **new homes and neighbourhoods** being built in Kent, focusing on the design and planning process helping to maintain Kent as an attractive, desirable and sustainable place to live.

11. Recommendation

8.1 Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse the current approach and note the next steps for publication of the refreshed Kent Design Guide

12. Background Documents

Appendix 1, Existing [Kent Design Guide](#)
Appendix 2, Supporting Design South East presentation slides
Appendix 3, EQIA

13. Contact Details

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Kent Design Guide: Mock-up

Cabinet Presentation - 10 March 2026

1. Proposal: Interactive Design Guide for Kent

Purpose

To create a single, shared online guide that sets **quality standards** for **new homes and neighbourhoods** being built in Kent, focusing on the design and planning process.

Page 10

What it is

- An interactive, public-facing website
- Used by officers (KCC & Local Authorities), design teams (e.g. architects) and landowners/developers/builders
- Supports consistent, clear and accessible design and placemaking guidance



2. The Problem: Current Challenges

- **Outdated:** existing guide (2005) is over 20 years old.
- **Fragmented:** guidance spread across multiple separate pdf documents uploaded to KCC website.
- **Static:** difficult to update (changing policy/best-practice, innovation, stakeholder requirements).
- **Unintuitive:** lack of hierarchy, hard to navigate.
- **Under-utilised:** inconsistent use across council and developer teams/not used as intended (if at all).

This can **increase costs and delivery time** for developers, whist **reducing workload efficiency** for officers.

Outdated / Fragmented



Hard to navigate & apply



Inconsistent use



Poor design outcomes /
missed policy aims

3. Problem Solving: Stakeholder Engagement

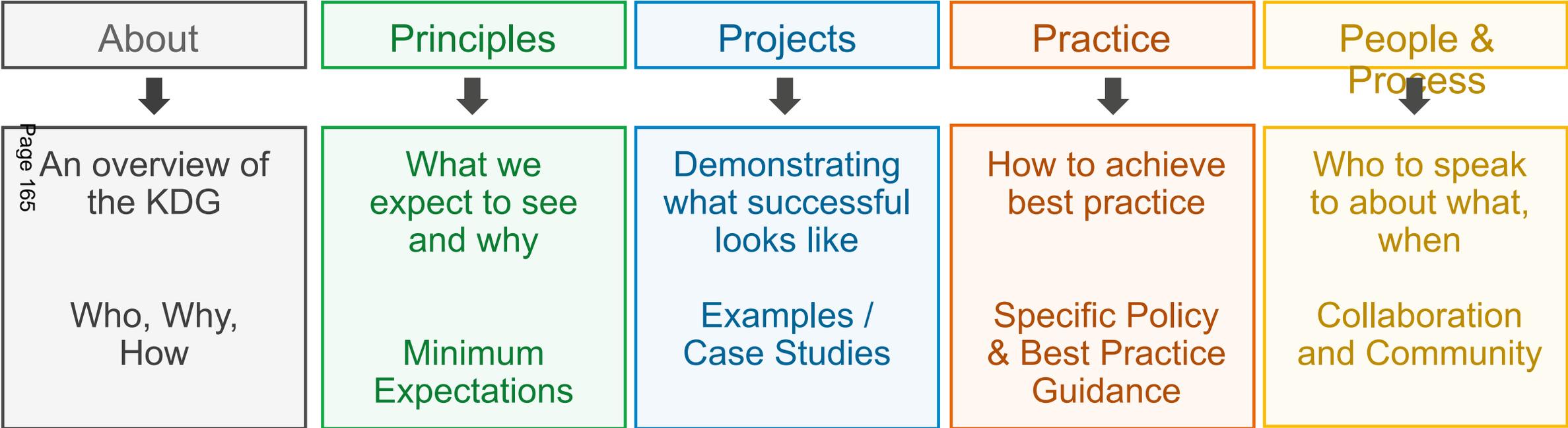
- Workshops, meetings, surveys
- Stakeholders have invested time in process
- Expectation management regarding outcomes
- Stakeholder-led solution proposed

Page 164



4. Proposed Solution: Interactive Design Guide

A clear, updated, interactive and easy to navigate guide.

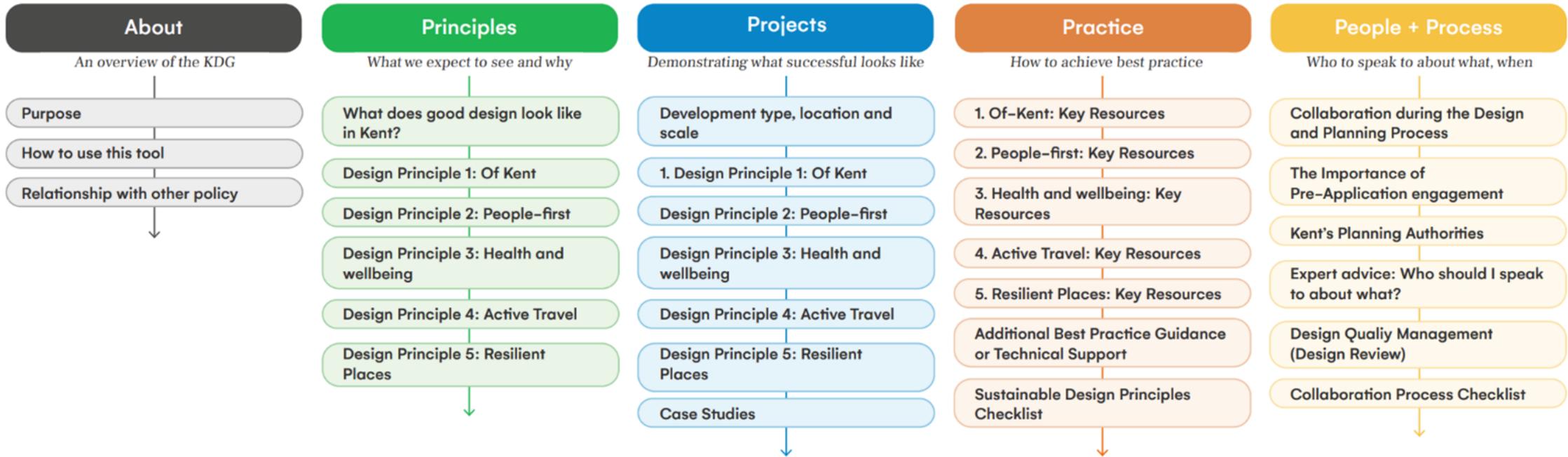


Page 165

Website structure/content overview: Illustrative wireframe diagram only – not final design

5. Website Structure

Page 166



An overview - who this is for, who owns it, why it exists and what it focuses on. To support the navigational journey of each user, clarity on how to use the website is included. How the KDG should be read with other policy/guidance is outlined early on.

Setting the scene - what does good design look like in Kent? It is something that meets those design principles. This section demonstrates the importance of sustainability/climate in Kent and outlines clear shared goals for design quality setting.

Acknowledging the varied developments in Kent - what applies, where? This section provides clarity on what is expected of applicant teams, dependant of their development type, location and scale. It includes case studies to provide clarity on

Providing the tools to deliver the Sustainable Design Principles via a best practice design process. This section includes a hierarchy of links to policy/guidance/best practice resource. This content is in support of LDA policy helping

Emphasising the importance of collaboration in a best practice design and planning process. This section connects KCC, the LPAs and applicants to enable effective collaboration. It highlights which KCC officers/departments can provide

6. Kent Design Principles

The five Key Design Principles are:

1 - Of Kent: Design for Kent's Identity - Landscape, Heritage, and Character

Demonstrating the various and unique local design characteristics, features and vernaculars "Of Kent" to be followed.

2 – People First: Support Sociable, Inclusive, and Resilient Communities

Demonstrating design concepts that put “people first” such as the need for privacy, security, space and sustainability.

3 – Health and Well Being: Promote Health, Nature, and Active Living

Provides design information for living standards, dealing with ageing populations, accessibility and social and community cohesion.

4 – Active Kent: Enable Connected, Accessible, and Low-Carbon Mobility

Demonstrates design the facilitates active lifestyles and walkable communities as well as the expectations around access to green space, recreation and sport.

5 – Resilient Places: Deliver Sustainable, Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Places

Promotes use of sustainable materials, energy efficiency and protection of our natural environment and resources.

About	Principles	Projects	Practice	People & Process
Purpose		Type, Location & Scale		Collaboration during the Design and Planning Process
How to use this tool		Design Principle 1: Of Kent		The Importance of Pre-Application engagement
Relationship with other policy		Design Principle 2: People First		Kent's Planning Authorities
Page 168 		Design Principle 3: Health and Wellbeing		Expert advice: Who should I speak to about what?
		Design Principle 4: Active Travel		Design Quality Management (Design Review)
		Design Principle 5: Resilient Places		Collaboration Process Checklist 
		Case Studies 		

Background 'wow' images of exemplar Kent developments

Example drop-downs on homepage. Illustrative wireframe diagram only, colours indicative – not final design

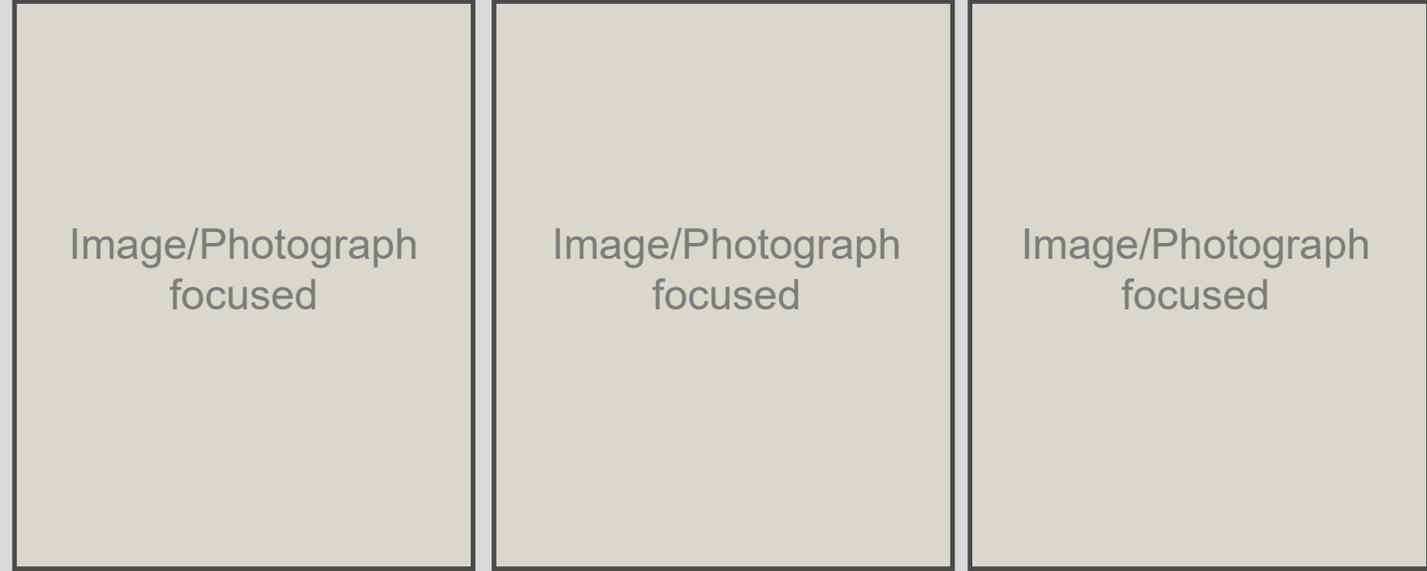
Case Studies

Filter:

Type	Location	Scale
Housing	Town Centre	1-9 homes

Case Study Name

- Key information
- Notable response/approach to Kent Design Principles
 - Of Kent
 - People First
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Active Travel
 - Resilient Places
- Interactive links to relevant information in 'Practice' and 'People & Process' sections
- Key lessons learned



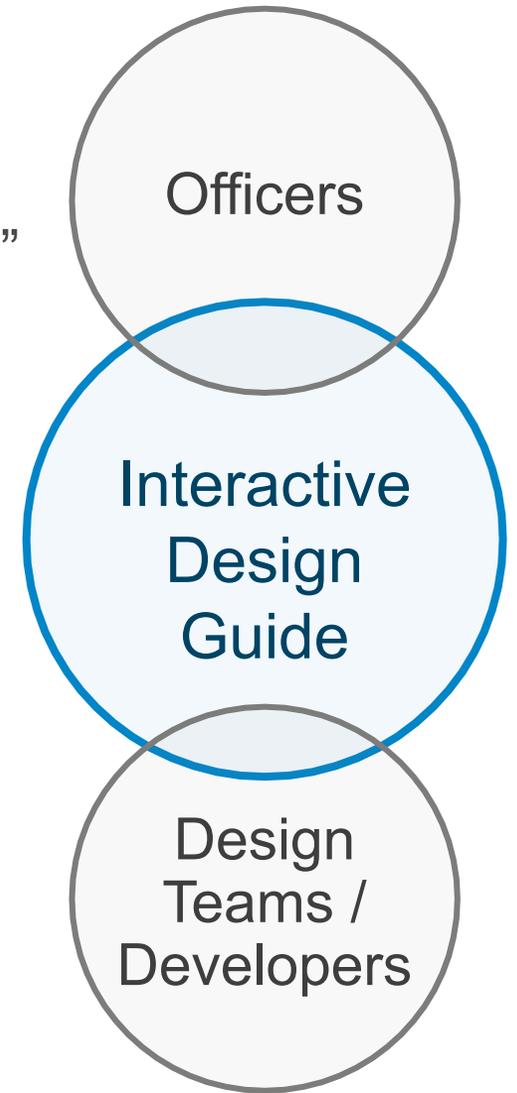
Example contents page (case studies). Illustrative wireframe diagram only, colours indicative – not final design

7. Scenario 1: How Officers Would Use It

“When meeting with a developer who is seeking pre-application advice...”

1. Clear process for multidisciplinary collaboration set out in guide
2. Officers check emerging proposal against the design guide
3. Rationale is clearly evidenced against guide’s core principles, referencing case studies/best practice
4. Officer has confidence when decision making
5. Developer builds using agreed standards
6. Better quality homes and neighbourhoods for Kent residents

Clarifies expectations, enhances collaboration, equips officers with tools to promote high quality places.

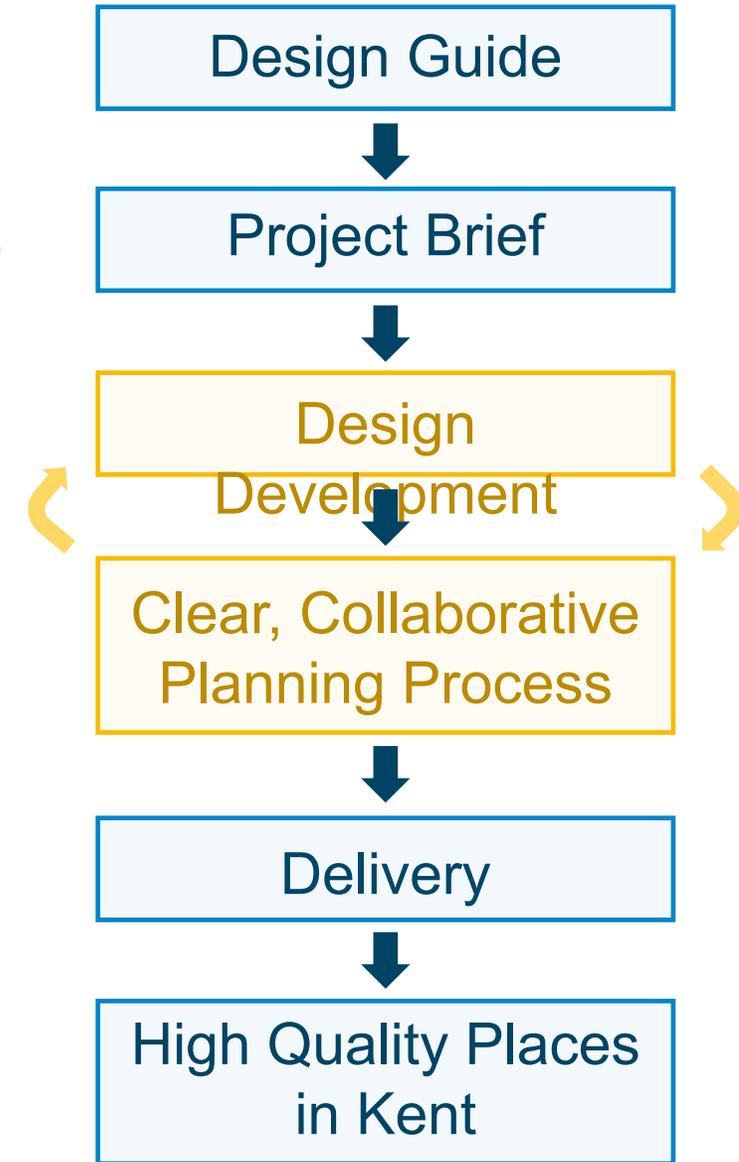


8. Scenario 2: How Developers Would Use It

“When buying land/writing a design brief for a new development...”

1. Developer refers to design guide and is clear on Kent’s expectation
2. Associated costs are factored in early on
3. Design team’s brief is deliverable against guide’s core principles
4. Collaborative planning process with key stakeholders, including communities
5. Developer builds using agreed standards
6. Better quality homes and neighbourhoods for Kent residents

Clarifies expectations, enhances collaboration, speeds up delivery of high-quality places.



9. Draft Prototype

- First iteration
- Prototype
- Draft status
- Established framework
- Updates needed to reflect stakeholder feedback
- Strategy for governance and management

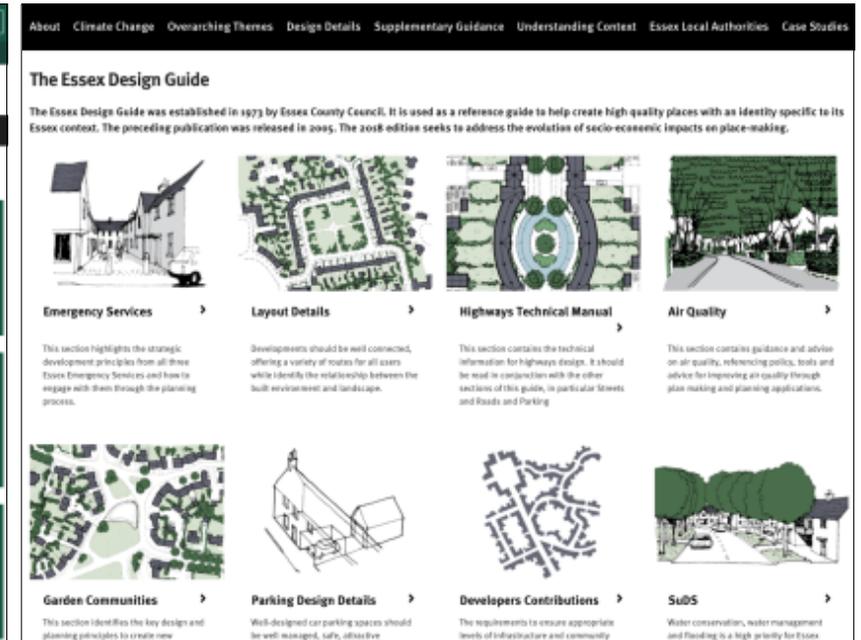
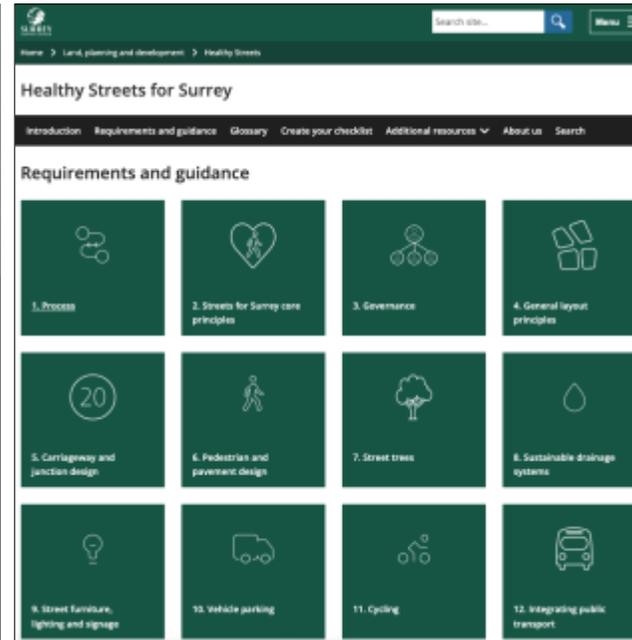
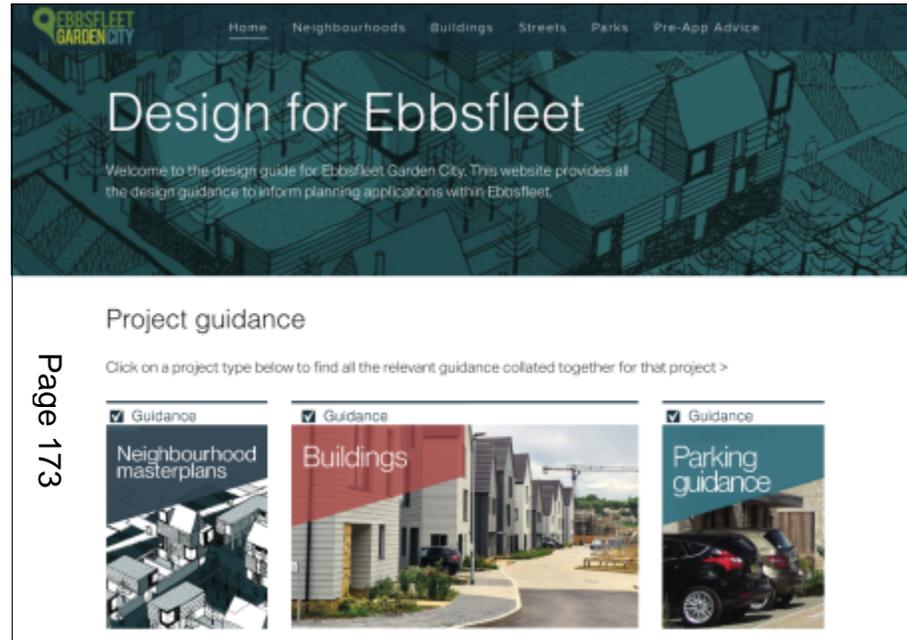
Page 172



Purpose

This site has been created for all those involved in the design, planning and development process in Kent and Medway. Above all, it communicates key guidance on **placemaking** for the county, to encourage development that is

10. Interactive Design Guide: Examples



Ebbsfleet Design Guide

Healthy Streets for Surrey

The Essex Design Guide

11. Benefits and Next Steps

Benefits

- Co-created guide to meet stakeholder needs
- Shared expectations for new homes/neighbourhoods
- Clearer standards for developers/design teams
- Additional quality management tool for KCC/Local Authority officers (regardless of LGR outcomes)
- Improved accessibility/navigation/usability

What this is not

- Not a full redesign of council branding
- Not high-cost software/web development (draft website exists)

Next steps

- Compile guide content (mix of existing, revised and new)
- Update draft website prototype
- Test with target audience
- Launch the Kent Design Guide website
- Continued content development and management in collaboration with key stakeholders

Thank you

Page 175

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From: Paul King, Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration & Special Projects

Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee - 10 March 2026

Subject: Heritage Conservation Strategy – revised following Executive Decision

Decision no: 26/00007

Key Decision: *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions*

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: Cranbrook, Elham Valley, Gravesham Rural, Herne Village and Sturry, Gravesham Rural, Margate, Sandwich, Sevenoaks Rural, Tenterden.

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report presents a revised Heritage Conservation Strategy (Appendix 1) which has been updated following the Executive Decision 2nd August 2024 which stated:

1. KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets, and that
2. The Heritage Conservation Strategy is updated to this effect.

In addition, the Strategy has been updated to include provision for a statutory Historic Environment Record for Kent as set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and to take account of KCC's changed policy on climate change.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration & Special Projects in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee with a revised Heritage Conservation Strategy (Appendix 1) following the Executive

Decision 24/000068 on 2nd August 2024 which stated that 1) KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets, and further, that 2) the Heritage Conservation Strategy is updated to this effect.

- 1.2 The original Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Strategy was adopted in 2022 after it was discussed and endorsed by members at the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee meeting on 17 March 2022. Preparation of the strategy was informed by a Member Working Group and public consultation was undertaken in late 2021.
- 1.3 The Executive Decision by KCC to divest itself of its eight historic windmills was taken on the basis that it would allow alternative ownership arrangements to be explored, with the aim of reducing KCC's long term financial obligations. For background, more detail on the decision is provided in Appendix 2.
- 1.4 In addition, the Strategy has been updated to include provision for a statutory Historic Environment Record for Kent as set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and to take account of KCC's changed policy on climate change.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 To implement the executive decision for KCC to divest its windmills, ensuring their sustainable future as community assets, while supporting volunteer groups and maintaining any mills that cannot be divested.
- 2.2 To ensure that the strategy is updated for new statutory requirements.
- 2.3 To reflect the change in KCC's approach to climate change which has shifted to focus on resilience and adaptation for heritage assets, updating objectives to address climate-related risks and future-proof conservation efforts.

3. How the Heritage Conservation Strategy has been updated to reflect the windmill policy changes.

- 3.1 The August 2024 decision required an update of the Heritage Conservation Strategy, published 2022, to reflect this change in policy (https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/205075/Heritage-Conservation-Strategy.pdf).
- 3.2 A new objective has been added to section 6 of the strategy, which is concerned with managing KCC-owned heritage assets:

Objective 6: KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets [also SA3].
- 3.3 If it is not possible to divest some of the windmills, KCC will need to continue to maintain and manage them in line with listed building and health and safety

legislation and with the awareness that active mills tend to have reduced structural and maintenance problems. Consequently, the original objective that dealt with KCC's management of these assets has been retained with the slight amendment that this will only apply to the mills which remain in KCC ownership and management:

Objective 7: For any windmills remaining in KCC ownership and management, follow a management approach so that:

- i) Mills capable of milling flour (Drapers Mill, Margate, and Cranbrook Mill) remain able to do so.
 - ii) The weatherproofing programme will be undertaken as needed on a rolling cycle.
 - iii) Static mills will be returned to visual completeness subject to funding
 - iv) Static mills will be made active wherever possible. [Also Strategic Aim 3].
- 3.4 It is not considered appropriate for KCC itself to set up a trust to own and manage the windmills so the original objective to explore alternative funding mechanisms for the windmills, including setting up a charitable Trust. is removed.
- 3.5 Recognising that it will be vital for KCC's relationship with the volunteer windmill groups (essential to maintaining the mills and making them accessible for visitors and the local community) to be strengthened and that support will be provided to the mill groups and other interested parties during the divestment process, the objective which covered this is amended to:

Objective 8: KCC's relationship with the windmill volunteer groups will be strengthened and the groups and other interested parties will be supported through the divestment process [Also Strategic Aim 3].

4. Other amendments to the Heritage Conservation Strategy

- 4.1 KCC recognises that our changing climate will continue to affect the county's historic environment. The Council is no longer operating under a formal climate emergency declaration but remains committed to understanding and managing the risks posed by a changing climate. Our focus is therefore on resilience and adaptation, ensuring that heritage assets can withstand and respond to future environmental challenges. Strategic Aim 5 and objectives 21 and 22 have been amended to reflect this approach:

Strategic Aim 5 Contribute to KCC's action to address climate change and adaptation.

Objective 21: Work with partners to develop approaches that improve the resilience of heritage assets to climate-related impacts.

Objective 22: Assess, with partners, the vulnerability of Kent's historic environment to climate change and create an adaptation framework to guide future conservation efforts.

4.2 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Article 212) requires the County Council as relevant authority to maintain the Historic Environment Record for its area. The legislative and policy background section of the Strategy has been updated to reflect this, and Objective 4 has been amended (see below) to include the requirement. Guidance detailing what the requirement will involve is expected in due course.

4.3 *Objective 4:* Continue to maintain and enhance the Kent HER, to meet the requirements of LUR Act 2023 and the NPPF and underpin decision-making in planning and development management [also Strategic Aim 2]

5. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

5.1 Not updating the Heritage Conservation Strategy was considered but rejected due to strong support from members and senior management and the need to align with the Executive Decision

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The cost of updating the strategy is limited to staff time and minor redesign of the final document. There would be a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay saving of up to £150k pa (plus service/Corporate Landlord costs of approximately £23k pa) once all assets are divested and once all arrangements are finalised.

7. Equalities implications

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) has been prepared and is included in the Background Documents.

8. Governance

8.1 The Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, or another Officer as required by the Corporate Director will inherit the main delegations in this decision.

9. Conclusions

9.1 The Heritage Conservation Strategy has been updated firstly to reflect Executive Decision 24/000068 which stated that:

1. KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets, and that
2. The Heritage Conservation Strategy is updated to this effect.

9.2 Secondly, the Strategy has been updated to cover the requirement which is set out in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 for KCC to maintain the Historic Environment Record for its area and thirdly to reflect KCC's changed position on a climate change emergency.

10. Recommendation

10.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration & Special Projects in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document.

11. Background Documents

- Appendix 1: Updated Heritage Conservation Strategy
- Appendix 2: Background information on Executive Decision 24/000068 – windmill divestment
- Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

12. Contact details

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Paul King, Cabinet Member for Environment,
Coastal Regeneration & Special Projects

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00007

Executive Decision – key

26/00007 – Heritage Conservation Strategy

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration & Special Projects. I agree to the proposed amendments to the Heritage Conservation Strategy and delegate authority to review, refresh and/or make revisions to the strategy on an annual basis where changes do not require additional governance, to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, or another Officer as required by the Corporate Director.

Reasons for decision:

The Heritage Conservation Strategy is being updated mainly to implement an Executive Decision requiring Kent County Council to divest its windmills as sustainable community assets, reduce long-term costs, and comply with new legal requirements. The update also ensures the strategy remains aligned with current priorities and legal obligations.

Financial implications:

The cost of updating the strategy is limited to staff time and minor redesign of the final document.

There would be a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay saving of up to £150k pa (plus service/Corporate Landlord costs of approximately £23k pa) once all assets are divested and once all arrangements are finalised.

Legal implications:

None at this stage to update the Strategy.

Equalities implications:

Depending on the nature of the divestment methods chosen, older people could be disproportionately impacted upon.

The revised strategy and information on divestment will be disseminated in accessible formats in order to ensure that people of all groups can learn about the future process of divestment and participate in any opportunities offered.

Data Protection implications:

None

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 10 March 2026

This version of the PROD is included in the agenda pack for committee members to review ahead of the meeting.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Not updating the Heritage Conservation Strategy was considered but rejected due to strong support from members and senior management and the need to align with the Executive Decision

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

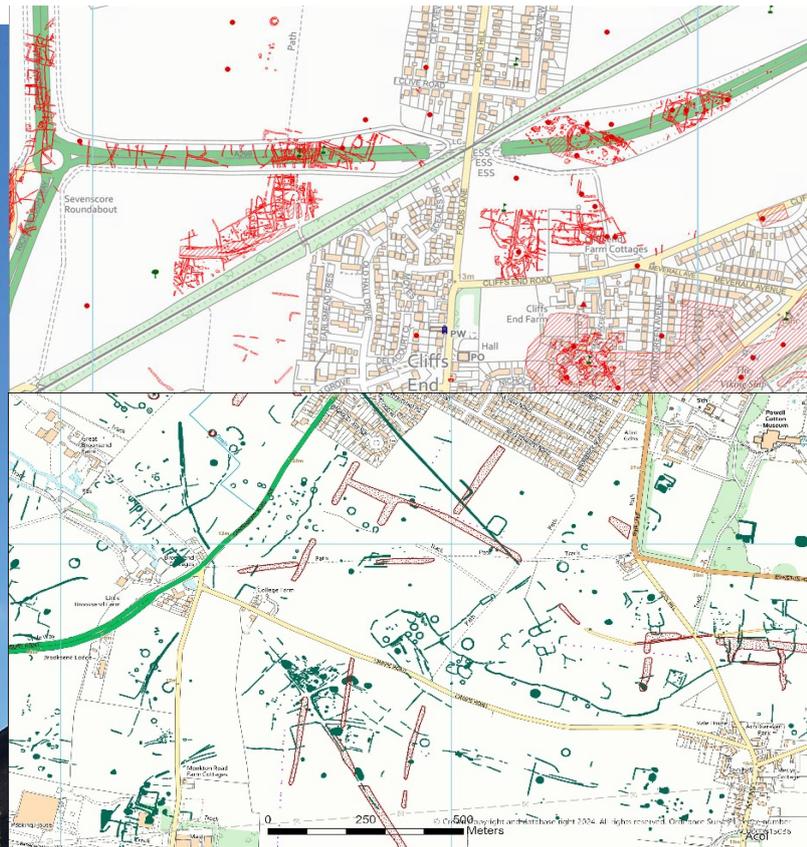
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Signed

.....

Date

Kent Heritage Conservation Strategy (Revised 2025) DRAFT



kent.gov.uk/heritageconservationstrategy



Heritage Conservation Strategy
 March 2022 (Revised 2025)

Foreword1

1. Introduction2
 Legislative and policy background4
 Proposed Vision and Strategic Aims6

2. Our Heritage Achievements.....7

3. Our Opportunities8

4. Our Challenges11

5. Strategic Aim 1
 Continue to improve the high quality and timely historic environment advice provided to KCC, local authorities and other bodies involved in growth and change based on accessible and up to date information and understanding14
 Archaeology and development14
 Historic built environment advice14
 The Kent Historic Environment Record15

6. Strategic Aim 2
 Ensure, working with new and existing partners, that KCC’s historic assets are conserved, enhanced, enjoyed and valued by Kent’s residents and visitors.....16
 KCC-owned heritage assets16
 Windmills17
 Archaeological archives.....19

7. Strategic Aim 3
 Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of Kent’s rich heritage and increase involvement in heritage activities amongst its local communities22
 Community archaeology.....22
 Metal detecting searching and chance discoveries24
 Supporting the development of robust heritage strategies27

8. Strategic Aim 4
 Work towards the service becoming more financially self-sustaining28
 Benchmarking and resourcing28

9. Strategic Aim 5
 Contribute to KCC’s action to address climate change and adaptation29

10. Our objectives at a glance30

11. How we will deliver this strategy – our medium-term plan32

Foreword

Kent's heritage is one of our county's greatest strengths. It shapes our identity, enriches our communities, and gives future generations a clear link to the stories that built this place we call home. Protecting it isn't just about preservation—it's about pride, participation, and keeping our shared history alive.

In my role as Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration & Special Projects, I'm committed to a practical, people-focused approach. That means supporting our dedicated heritage teams, who do exceptional work every day, and making sure they have the tools they need to continue delivering national-level expertise and care. Kent County Council has a unique responsibility to safeguard, manage and champion this heritage, and this strategy sets out how we will do that together.

But the future of Kent's heritage depends on more than organisational effort—it depends on partnership. Our volunteers, local groups, landowners, district councils, and residents play an essential role. I want to strengthen those relationships and make it easier for communities to get involved wherever it's helpful and meaningful.

Heritage is something to be enjoyed, not just safeguarded. Whether through local projects, community archaeology, digital resources, open days, or hands-on volunteering, I want more people to feel connected to the extraordinary history on their doorstep. When residents are involved, our heritage becomes not only better protected—but better understood and valued.

This strategy is about working together, being sensible with resources, and ensuring Kent's nationally important heritage remains a source of pride, learning and inspiration. I look forward to building that future with you.

1. Introduction

1.1 This strategy sets out a vision for the future direction of Kent County Council’s approach to heritage conservation as implemented by the Heritage Conservation Service. It presents the context within which KCC operates, our strategic aims and objectives for the service, and the means by which these will be delivered. Public consultation on the strategy was undertaken in autumn 2021 and the amended strategy was adopted by Kent County Council at the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee in March 2022. A further public consultation was undertaken in winter 2023/24 on a proposed amendment to the County Council’s approach to its historic windmills. Revised objectives are set out below under Strategic Aim 2.



Figure 1 Canterbury World Heritage Site (Courtesy of Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral).
Photograph by David King

1.2 Our heritage can be defined as “all that has been passed to us by previous generations. It is all around us. It is in the houses we live in, our places of work, the transport we use, our places of worship, our parks and gardens, the places we go to for our sport and social life, in the ground beneath our feet, in the shape of our landscape and in the placing and arrangement of our fields, villages, towns and cities. Heritage is also found in our moveable possessions, from our national treasures in our museums, to our own family heirlooms, and in the intangible such as our history, traditions, legends and language.” (Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/generalintro/heritage-conservation-defined/>). The aspect of heritage primarily dealt with by the County Council’s Heritage Conservation Service is the historic environment

which is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as “All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora”.

In order to manage our heritage effectively and pragmatically we need to understand its significance and agree policies to guide decision-making.

1.3 Kent, named after the Roman term for its Iron Age inhabitants “the Cantiaci”, has an extremely rich and varied heritage (also known as the historic environment). In such an intensively occupied county the physical environment is substantially the product of human activity, shaped by agriculture, industry, and settlement over the millennia, including reclaimed marshland, grazed downs, and managed woodland. Kent has featured prominently in the history of England and its close proximity to the continental mainland has resulted in it having a special place in our understanding of how England has related to Europe since prehistoric times, which continues to the present day. Heritage assets within the county range from the internationally important, such as the Swanscombe Skull site (the oldest such remains found in Britain), Canterbury Cathedral and St Augustine’s Abbey World Heritage Site and Dover Castle (known as the ‘key to the kingdom’), to undesignated milestones or historic lamp posts. All of these assets whether designated or not add character to our landscapes and towns and reveal the lives of former residents of Kent. For some periods of our past, before written records were routinely kept, and for people who are underrepresented in recorded history, material culture is the only means of understanding how people lived and changed the environment around them.

1.4 Natural erosion and ploughing and other agricultural processes can harm archaeological sites and historic landscapes, but conservation is possible through sensitive management, often delivered through environmental stewardship agreements. Kent’s growth agenda gives rise to major development pressure but also fantastic archaeological discoveries and opportunities to conserve outstanding historic buildings. Careful management of this often fragile and vulnerable resource is needed and opportunities for heritage-led regeneration and development-related benefits for heritage assets must be seized. The character of Kent’s historic environment can contribute greatly to the development of Kent’s sense of place and identity to underpin successful growth, and forms an important resource for education, leisure, and tourism. KCC’s Heritage Conservation Service has a key strategic role in helping to safeguard, manage and make accessible this heritage for present and future generations.

World Heritage Site	1
Scheduled Monuments	360
Listed Buildings	17,349
Registered Park and Gardens	61
Conservation Areas	493
Historic Parks and Gardens	398
Historic Environment Record monuments	99,307

Table 1 Table showing designated and non-designated heritage assets in Kent.

1.5 KCC has a key role to play in the conservation of Kent’s heritage but we are far from the only actor. Historic England is the government’s statutory advisor on the historic environment; it is responsible for identifying and designating heritage assets of national significance and manages change at such sites. It also supports local partners with specialist advice and guidance. Local authorities are responsible for implementing planning law and policy. KCC’s Heritage Conservation Service advises Kent local authorities on the impact of development proposals on Kent’s heritage (primarily on archaeological and landscape matters). Local planning authorities also designate and manage Conservation Areas and develop heritage management policies and strategies in their Local Plans. Landowners and householders manage their own heritage assets in accordance with national legislation and national and local policies. A host of community groups support the conservation of Kent’s heritage with projects and initiatives of their own.

1.6 Within this network of stakeholders and partners, KCC’s main role is to manage heritage assets in our ownership, provide an advice service to other stakeholders (in particular local planning authorities), manage the Historic Environment Record (HER) - the main strategic information resource for Kent’s historic environment and help the wider community access and enjoy Kent’s heritage through a range of community initiatives.

Legislative and policy background

1.7 The Heritage Conservation Service operates within conventions, legislation and policy at international, national and local levels.

- The UK is a signatory of the 1992 Valletta Treaty (European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised)), which aims to protect European archaeological heritage.

1. Introduction continued

- The work of the service is carried out within the general legislative framework of the UK. The main relevant legislation covering the team's historic environment advice and the management of KCC's own heritage assets is the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 and the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986. Its work in relation to the Treasure process is covered by the Treasure Act 1996. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Article 212) requires the County Council as relevant authority to maintain the Historic Environment Record for its area.
- Work carried out at the windmills is also covered by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- The team operates under the National Planning Policy Framework (updated 2025) and in particular chapter 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' and the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Kent County Council's Environment Plan 2025 sets out the following goals which the Heritage Conservation Strategy will help deliver where appropriate.

- Goal 1: Deliver green energy and reduce carbon emissions.
- Goal 2: Adapt to our changing climate.
- Goal 3: Reduce flood risk and manage water resources effectively.
- Goal 4: Protect and improve the natural and built environment.
- Goal 5: Manage resources through a circular economy.
- Goal 6: Conserve and promote Kent's natural beauty and heritage.



Figure 2 Volunteers excavating Randall Manor medieval manor house within Shorne Woods Country Park.

Proposed Vision and Strategic Aims

1.8 The proposed Vision for Heritage Conservation is to:

Realise the substantial benefits and opportunities of Kent's rich heritage through its conservation, enhancement, and enjoyment by all.

1.9 Underpinning this are five proposed Strategic Aims:

Strategic Aim 1 - Continue to improve the high quality and timely historic environment advice, based on accessible and up to date information and understanding, provided to KCC, local authorities and other bodies involved in growth and change.

Strategic Aim 2 - Ensure, working with new and existing partners, that KCC's historic assets are conserved, enhanced, enjoyed and valued by Kent's residents and visitors.

Strategic Aim 3 - Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of Kent's rich heritage and increase involvement in heritage activities amongst its local communities.

Strategic Aim 4 - Work towards the service becoming more financially self-sustaining.

Strategic Aim 5 - contribute to KCC's action to address climate change and adaptation.

1.10 In order to further the Strategic Aims, each is accompanied by Objectives. In several cases the objectives relate to more than one Aim, so they have been placed under one aim with cross references to the others where relevant.

2. Our Heritage Achievements

2.1 Achievements of the Heritage Conservation service include:

- Completion of the Dover Heritage Strategy (winner of RTPI South East award for Excellence in Planning for Built Heritage), used by DDC to help secure £4.27 million NLHF funding,
- Completion of the consultation draft of the Folkestone and Hythe Heritage Strategy,
- Dover Urban Archaeological Database and archaeological characterisation completed and highly praised as excellent by Historic England,
- An innovative Archaeological Notification Areas project, which will help developers and planners by providing information up front and digitally, notification area datasets now delivered to twelve Local Planning Authorities,
- Continuing to deliver archaeological advice service to planners and developers as construction continues at pace,
- Delivering community archaeology programmes in innovative ways and modelling good practice for local groups,
- Substantial capital works undertaken at KCC's historic windmills,
- Successful recent Historic England audit of the Historic Environment Record (HER).



Figure 3 Heritage Conservation officer monitoring Lower Thames Crossing fieldwork during the Covid lockdown 2021 (Oxford Archaeology).

3. Our Opportunities

3.1 The historic environment in Kent offers a great resource for sustaining and enhancing the quality of life in the county. Heritage can inspire the regeneration of an area, complementing and supporting economic development. This can help produce higher quality and more sustainable development that is successfully integrated into the life of the county. The historic environment can also play a key role in social regeneration, well-being and in Kent's arts and cultural scene.

3.2 Key opportunities offered by Kent's heritage include:

Creating a sense of place. Whether in an urban or rural environment, the historic environment creates a 'sense of place'. The buildings, open spaces, historic features and patterns of roads and lanes define the character of settlements. It is therefore important that any change is sensitive to this character, adding to and developing distinctiveness rather than diminishing it and creating uniformity or blandness. The historic environment can hold meanings and memories for a community that go beyond the architectural, archaeological or historical importance of designated assets.

Re-use of heritage assets. Re-using existing heritage assets (most commonly historic buildings) can provide an effective way to retain historic character while conserving building resources and achieving sustainability. Guidance (see 4.2 below) demonstrates that historic structures, settlements and landscapes can in fact be more resilient in the face of climate change, and more energy efficient than some modern structures and settlements. This has also been considered in the Historic England report 'There's no Place Like Old Homes: re-use and Recycle to Reduce Carbon' (Historic England 2019).



Figure 4 Deal castle is one of the finest Tudor artillery castles in England.

Attracting business and commercial activities. Heritage and a historic sense of place help to attract investment, businesses and commercial activity. Research quoted by Heritage Counts 2016 found that of 100 businesses surveyed one in four agreed that the historic environment is an important factor in deciding where to locate and was as important as road access. Research by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2013 confirmed that innovative new businesses flourish in places that possess a good stock of historic distinctive buildings (https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/new_ideas_old_buildings_2013.pdf). It also found that independent retail and leisure businesses seek to cluster in historic areas of towns and cities thereby adding to the distinctive sense of place and attracting more successful businesses. The HLF also found that businesses which occupy listed buildings generate £13,000 extra Gross Valued Added per business per year. Creative and cultural industries are particularly attracted to historic buildings because they are smaller, more flexible and cost-effective: they are 29% more likely to be found in a Listed Building than in a non-listed building (Heritage Counts 2016 and HLF 2013).

Adding value to new development. Heritage-led regeneration adds value to development projects. It is striking that in most towns it is the heritage-led developments that are among the most prestigious and financially valuable (Dover Heritage Strategy 2013).

In areas that had received investment in the historic environment, approximately one in five visitors in a survey of 1,000 stated they spent more in an area after investment in the historic environment than they did before. One in four businesses stated that the historic environment investment had directly led to an increase in business turnover (AMION and Locum Consulting 2010).

Durability of regeneration. Where new development is effectively integrated into existing settlement, by complementing existing character and materials, it is likely to prove more economically and socially durable. Retaining existing buildings among new build allows a varied street scene and can permit a wider range of occupiers; retaining historic features helps connect older people with the new community by providing reference points in space and memory.

Heritage contribution to the economy. In the year before the COVID-19 pandemic the heritage sector directly or indirectly supported more than 89,000 jobs in south-east England. Heritage employment grew almost twice as fast as the rest of the economy between 2011 and 2019. England's heritage sector generated a GVA greater than the security industry, defence industry, aerospace industry and the arts and culture industry in the UK (Source: Historic England).

The role of tourism in Kent's economy. The tourism industry is an important sector providing 67,000 jobs and contributing over £1.4 billion to the Kent economy (Kent County Council 2020).

Heritage tourism generates benefits in the local economy (Historic England 2016). A TNS study estimates that 32 per cent (£15.3bn) of the average annual spend from domestic and international tourism in the UK between 2011 and 2014 is attributable to activities broadly defined as heritage-related activities (TNS 2015).

Visiting heritage generates money for the local economy - for every £1 spent as part of a heritage visit, 32p is spent on site and the remaining 68p is spent in local businesses: restaurants, cafés, hotels and shops (HLF 2010).

Improved public health and well-being. The link between heritage and well-being is now well established (e.g. 'Wellbeing and the Historic Environment, Historic England 2018). There is presently an ongoing shift from an acute and hospital-centred, illness-based system to a person-centric, health-based system that will rely upon individual and community assets. As such, heritage can play an important role in the contribution of the arts to person-centred, place-based care through means such as arts-on-prescription activities, cultural venues and community programmes. The historic environment, archaeology and heritage form part of our experience of being human and can provide individual as well as collective opportunities to engage with arts and culture whilst having positive effects on our physical and mental health and wellbeing in the process.



Figure 5 Barrow group volunteers.

4. Our Challenges

4.1 Kent's heritage is vulnerable in a number of different ways. Some of these are a result of natural processes but most are due to human action or inaction. The vulnerability of an asset is not only related to direct impacts but also to actions that affect the setting of the asset.



Figure 6 Chillenden windmill, blown down in 2003, now re-built.

4.2 Key challenges facing Kent's historic environment include:

Natural Processes. Heritage assets can be highly vulnerable to coastal erosion as many were specifically located for their access to the sea e.g. sea defences, military sites or quays and 'hards' for landing boats. The vulnerability can be in the form of direct erosion of the monument or the burying of the monument by material deposition. Sea level change leading to inundation or salt level changes also threatens heritage assets as do changes in hydrology.

Climate change. The effect of humans on the environment can be traced over millennia but the unprecedented rate of recent change will inevitably impact on Kent's heritage with increased flash flooding, sea-level rise, rapid soaking and drying of waterlogged deposits, wind and lightning strikes impacting our fragile historic structures. Historic England has produced guidance ('Climate Change and the Historic Environment', 2008) that reviews the threats to the historic environment posed by climate change. More recent information can be found in 'Climate Change Adaptation Report' (Historic England, 2024). We are working with the University of Waterloo, Canada, to assess the impacts of climate change on Kent's heritage assets; further assessment will be undertaken as funding becomes available.

Rural activities. A range of rural activities have the potential to impact on heritage assets including ploughing (especially deep ploughing), machinery



Figure 7 Chillenden mill after restoration.

movement, changes in the local farming regime (e.g. a change from pasture to arable cultivation, removal of hedgerows or construction of new infrastructure). The increased leisure use of the countryside can also damage heritage sites, particularly when this involves increased vehicle access (e.g. mountain biking, motorbikes or off-road vehicles).

New infrastructure. The increasing population of Kent and the new development required to house it requires ever more support in the form of pipelines and sewers, roads, rail, power and water infrastructure. The impact of this on the historic environment will be assessed and mitigated and a balance sought between essential construction and conservation of important assets.

Development. The greatest impact on Kent's heritage arises from new development. KCC estimates that between 2019 and 2039 approximately 225,000 new dwellings will be built in Kent and Medway. In addition to this, commercial, leisure, minerals and waste and other development must be considered. Construction activities can directly affect buried archaeological remains through the excavation of new foundations, services, remodelling of land, removal of topsoil in advance of development, piling works and from the operation of plant. Permitted development rights have the further potential for unmonitored impacts on heritage assets.

Policy weaknesses and changes. Current approaches to protecting heritage concentrate on nationally important assets meaning that regionally or locally important assets can remain vulnerable. At the time of writing this strategy, planning reforms have been proposed that may leave Kent's heritage more vulnerable, due to a process of zoning land that may not have been assessed for its heritage potential. It is important that local people continue to be involved in decision-making and that a strong evidence base informs any zoning of land.

Crime. Heritage assets are vulnerable to a range of types of criminal activity including arson, theft by metal detecting (known as 'night-hawking'), vandalism and graffiti, trespass and anti-social activities.



Figure 8 Placed deposits of animal bones, including cattle skulls, in the ditch of the Ramsgate causewayed enclosure.

5. Strategic Aim 1

Continue to improve the high quality and timely historic environment advice provided to KCC, local authorities and other bodies involved in growth and change based on accessible and up to date information and understanding.

Archaeology and development

5.1 Through its Archaeology and Development team, Heritage Conservation provides archaeological advice services to all of Kent's Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) including Medway Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, via Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

5.2 The Archaeology and Development team carries out about 3,500 appraisals each year. Most of these are for planning applications and many require ongoing archaeological support. In addition, the team provides heritage support to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and 'Garden Town' developments, and on local plan allocations. Monitoring the standard of archaeological work on development sites can be a time-consuming element of the process.

Objective 1. Continue to provide an archaeological service to Kent's planning authorities, developers and householders [also Strategic Aim 3].

Objective 2. Explore and determine the potential for requiring archaeological contractors who undertake archaeological assessments or fieldwork on KCC development-related projects to be Registered Archaeological Organisations.

Historic built environment advice

5.3 As most districts have their own Conservation Officer covering built heritage, the Heritage Conservation Service provides advice on the historic built environment only to the County Council. The KCC Conservation Architect advises on key strategic infrastructure projects and county council determined applications including developments relating to schools to ensure that heritage assets are protected and enhanced where possible. This advice is most effective when given at an early stage in the design process.

Objective 3. Continue to provide a historic built environment advice service on County Council and strategic matters in Kent [also Strategic Aim 3].

The Kent Historic Environment Record

5.4 The Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) is a database of over 91,000 heritage assets and features in Kent linked to a GIS mapping system. It includes designated assets such as Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments as well as non-designated assets such as archaeological sites, non-listed historic buildings, parks, and gardens etc. It is used for development management, research, education, and tourism purposes. The HER (formerly known as the Sites and Monuments Record before historic buildings were added to the record) was formally adopted by KCC in 1995.

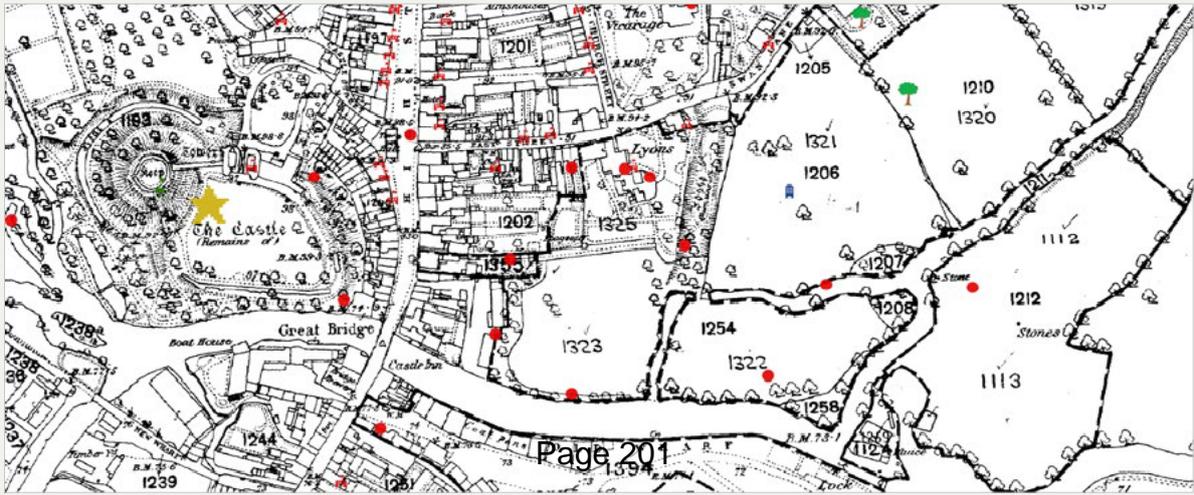
5.5 The HER is identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the prime source of heritage information. The Kent HER is the only HER for the whole county and is used by all local authorities, Medway Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation. The Levelling-up and Regeneration (LUR) Act 2023 (Article 212) requires Kent County Council as relevant authority to maintain the HER for its area. Guidance is expected shortly.

Objective 4: Continue to maintain and enhance the Kent HER, to meet the requirements of LUR Act 2023 and the NPPF and underpin decision-making in planning and development management [also Strategic Aim 2, Strategic Aim 3].

Case Study: The Kent Historic Environment Record (HER)

The Kent HER is a database of over 91,000 historic buildings, archaeological sites and discoveries and landscapes across Kent. It contains discoveries dating from the Palaeolithic period (up to 1m years ago) to the Cold War and is used by researchers, developers, community projects and the public to learn more about Kent’s outstanding heritage. It is available to view online at www.kent.gov.uk/HER where it is accompanied by historic maps and aerial photographs as well as pages on different themes in Kent’s past, some written by the HER volunteer team. During the COVID 2020 lockdown period, the website had 176,000 page views - its highest ever and another 103,000 via the Heritage Gateway.

Heritage maps



6. Strategic Aim 2

Ensure, working with new and existing partners, that KCC's historic assets are conserved, enhanced, enjoyed and valued by Kent's residents and visitors.

KCC-owned heritage assets

6.1 Kent County Council owns and is responsible for a large number of diverse heritage assets including historic school buildings, archaeological monuments, milestones, war memorials and historic street paving. These play a vital role in the character of Kent. Information about the important heritage assets which KCC owns is spread amongst several databases (HER, K2 and Highways service owned) and the assets are under day-to-day management of different parts of the County Council. Information on the location and significance of heritage assets is not always available to relevant KCC officers or contractors and it is possible for heritage assets to be accidentally damaged. We will work with other departments in KCC to coordinate information on heritage assets and increase awareness of this fragile resource.

6.2 The Kent Highways Heritage Protocol is a document jointly produced by KCC Heritage Conservation and Highways officers, the Kent Conservation Officers Group, and Kent Design. Originally adopted in 2001, it was updated in 2011 and is currently being revised. It looks beyond the statutory requirement to conserve individual assets to consider Heritage Sensitive Situations, defined as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. It is thus a source of guidance for Kent's Highways officers, developers, and others engaged in designing and maintaining Kent's current and future highway assets.

Kent County Council's approach to managing the county's highway network is set out in its Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP). This includes, at Action 1.17, Completing work with district conservation teams to refine and finalise the Kent Highways Heritage Protocol, to ensure that we strike the right balance between conservation, affordability, lifecycle cost and future maintainability considerations in highway maintenance. In addition, the recently introduced Technical Approval Process referenced in the HAMP applies the same principles to new and renewed highway assets.

Objective 5: Work across KCC to coordinate information on heritage assets and finalise the Kent Highways Heritage protocol.

Windmills

6.3 Kent County Council owns and is responsible for the preservation of eight historic windmills which are exceptional in terms of their high listing grades, their historic and regional significance, their architectural and technological excellence, and their mechanical completeness.

Location, Name	Type	Constructed	Designation	Date Listed	Acquired by KCC
Chillenden Mill	Post	1868 (rebuilt 2005)	Grade II*	11/10/1963	1958
Cranbrook, Union Mill	Smock	1814	Grade I	09/06/1952	1960
Herne Mill	Smock	Inscribed 1789	Grade I	29/09/1951	1984
Margate, Drapers Mill	Smock	1845	Grade II*	22/02/1973	1968
Meopham Mill	Smock	c1819	Grade II*	22/08/1952	1958
Stelling Minnis, Davison's Mill	Smock	1866	Grade I	29/12/1966	1970
West Kingsdown Mill	Smock	1805? Moved here 1880	Grade II	01/06/1967	1958
Wittersham, Stocks Mill	Post	Inscribed 1781	Grade II*	04/06/1952	1979

6.4 Kent County Council's approach to the management of the windmills it owns is set out below:

- To maintain in full working order those mills that are in the best condition.
- To make the mills weatherproof and watertight so that those which are incomplete can be returned to working order over the long term, as funds become available.
- To keep those that are visually complete in an intact condition for as long as possible.
- To ensure all the windmills and their sites are made safe for the visiting public, adjacent residents, passers-by, and the volunteer teams and members of staff who use them.

Case Study: Windmills conservation programme

The Kent Windmills Programme was developed in 2019 to weatherproof and safeguard the eight historic windmills owned by Kent County Council. Each windmill is managed by a locally based team of volunteers who ensure the buildings are accessible to visitors during the spring and summer months. In 2020, KCC’s capital works programme funded a comprehensive scheme of repairs at West Kingsdown Mill which was featured on ITV Meridian News in March 2021. Repair works in progress include the construction of a new reeving stage at Meopham Mill, supported by a £25,000 grant from Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Emergency Fund. KCC’s capital programme is funding major repairs at Cranbrook’s Grade I listed Union Windmill (see image), involving the construction of a new 8-bladed fantail and four new sweeps. The aim is for Cranbrook Mill to be capable of milling flour by wind power again by the end of 2021.



6. Strategic Aim 2 continued

6.5 Five of the mills are ‘active’ in that their sweeps and fantails turn regularly, two are currently ‘static’ with no regularly working parts and one is being restored. The active mills are Union Mill, Cranbrook; Drapers Mill, Margate; Chillenden Mill; Stelling Minnis Mill and Meopham Mill. The static mills are Wittersham and West Kingsdown. A management approach of returning the mills to an active state where possible and stabilisation where not has been implemented very successfully. Meopham Mill was fully restored in 2025 and restoration of Heme Mill is underway. Management of the mills is only possible with the help of many volunteers in the windmill groups who assist with maintenance tasks and open the mills to the public.

6.6 In 2024, following a public consultation, the Cabinet member for Environment decided that KCC should divest itself of the windmills subject to ensuring that they have a sustainable future as community assets (Executive decision 24/000068). A fair and open process for divestment will be agreed; the method could potentially include freehold divestment, divestment through long lease or other appropriate means to achieve the executive decision.

Objective 6: KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets [also SA3].

Objective 7: *For any windmills remaining in KCC ownership and management, follow a management approach so that:*

- i) *Mills capable of milling flour (Drapers Mill, Margate, and Cranbrook Mill) remain able to do so.*
- ii) *The weatherproofing programme will be undertaken as needed on a rolling cycle.*
- iii) *Static mills will be returned to visual completeness subject to funding.*
- iv) *Static mills will be made active wherever possible. [also Strategic Aim 3].*

Objective 8: KCC’s relationship with the windmill volunteer groups will be strengthened and the groups and other interested parties will be supported through the divestment process [also Strategic Aim 3].

Archaeological archives

6.7 Archaeological archives are produced during archaeological fieldwork. They consist of a small sample of the material that was recovered - the pottery, metalwork, stone, bone, environmental samples and so on - and are retained permanently to act as a resource for further research. The research may be carried out to check the conclusions of the original excavators or to research new aspects of archaeology that were not considered during the original project. They include important objects which could be displayed in museums

6. Strategic Aim 2 continued
or galleries.

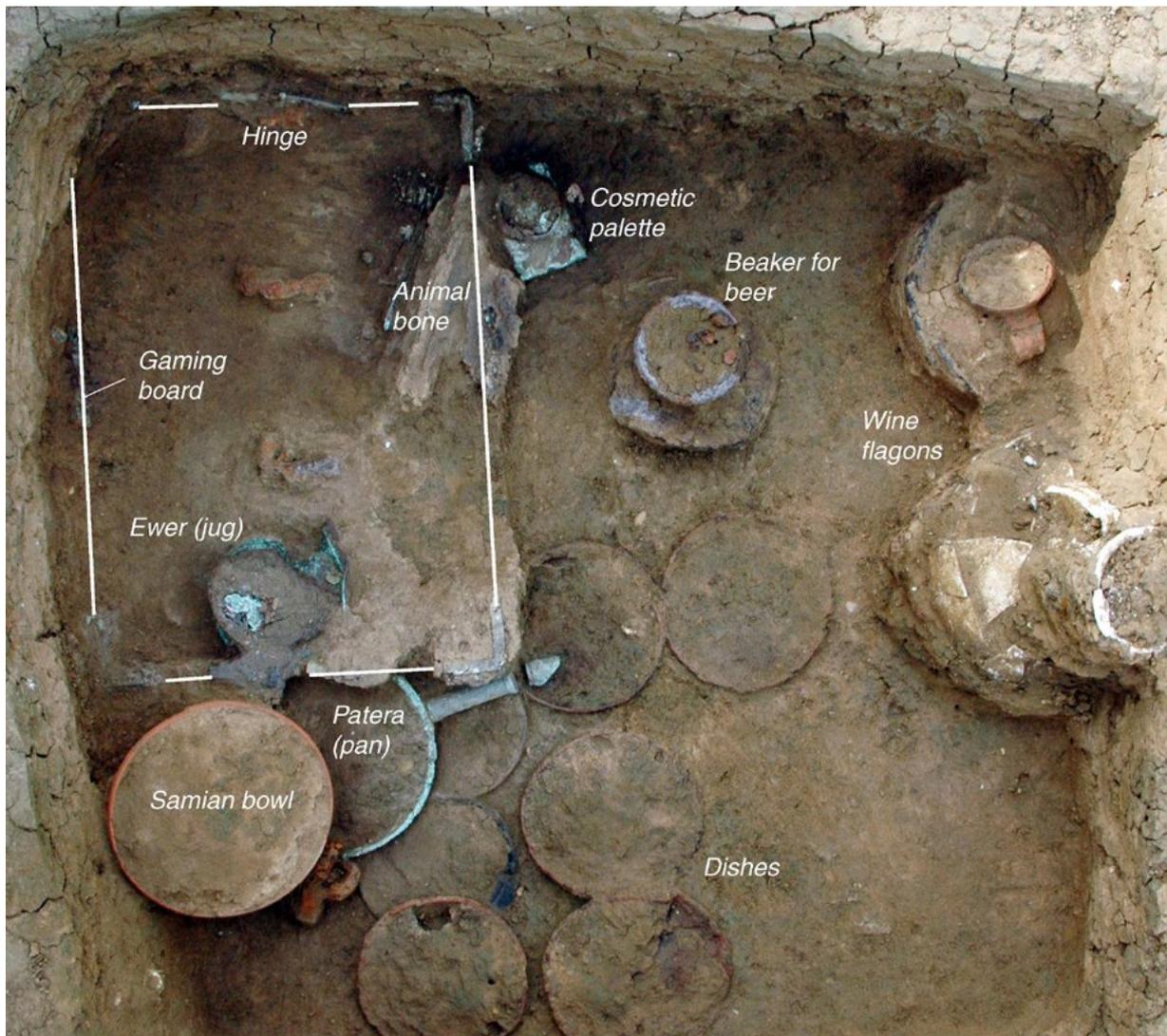


Figure 9 Archaeological archives: Roman vessels found during A2 widening (Courtesy of Oxford Archaeology).

6.8 In Kent, most archaeological archives will be generated by projects required as part of the development management process, but they will also include community excavations. Traditionally, archaeological archives are deposited in museums but in Kent almost all the museums are full and will no longer accept them. The archives are currently mostly retained by the original excavators.

6.9 KCC is the owner of more than 2,500 boxes of archive material deriving primarily from the High Speed 1 Channel Tunnel Rail Link project and has a direct responsibility to find a home for them. KCC is also responsible for the long-term deposition of archives from KCC road schemes and other development. KCC is keen to continue working with partners to develop a solution for all Kent's archives, as the retention and deposition of archaeological archives is regarded as national good practice and KCC also requires this in its archaeological specifications. As the main archaeological curator for Kent, KCC has a responsibility to help find a solution to the archives problem and improve access to information.

6.10 An assessment of archaeological archives has been undertaken - in 2020 this consists of approximately 23,000 boxes of material from Kent and Medway (based on a detailed 2015 assessment with a multiplier applied for time passed). Options for storage and display have been considered. The most cost-effective system (at time of writing) available for bulk archives is the Deepstore facility in Cheshire. However, conditions there are not currently suitable for specialist materials e.g. metalwork, textiles etc. so a separate facility would be needed for these materials. Discussions will be held with neighbouring authorities and Kent's museums and archaeological contractors to identify an approach to the specialist store. A project will be developed to make information on artefacts available online including a virtual gallery.

Objective 9: Assess options for the display and long-term storage of archaeological archives and ensure the KCC-held archives are placed in an appropriate repository [also SA3].



Figure 10 Anglo-Saxon brooch found at Saltwood Tunnel during archaeological excavations for HS1.

7. Strategic Aim 3

Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of Kent's rich heritage and increase involvement in heritage activities amongst its local communities.

Community archaeology

7.1 Since 2006 the Heritage Conservation team has employed a community archaeologist usually through external funding. Highly successful Heritage Lottery Fund projects have been carried out at Shorne Woods Country Park (Shorne Heritage Project and Shorne HubCAP) and around Cobham (Cobham Landscape Detectives). The Community Archaeologist has been involved in a number of other projects across the county, some developed through the Heritage Conservation Service, and some developed by others with the service providing community archaeology expertise. These have included:

- Footsteps of Caesar Project - survey and excavation with the University of Leicester at Ebbsfleet (Thanet) and Worth. Focused on a site discovered on KCC's East Kent Access Road that is considered to connect with the invasion by Caesar.
- Command of the Heights - community excavation at Fort Amherst, Chatham for Medway Council.
- Rose Hill House - excavation of a 18th to 20th century house in Sittingbourne that involved direct participation of more than 300 primary school children from the adjacent school (as part of the Woodland Wildlife Hidden Histories project).
- Royal Military Canal - survey works to support advance work for a new cycle path with Ashford Borough Council.
- Boxley Warren Heritage project - running archaeology activities for the project for the Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership.
- Valley of Visions (Medway Valley), Darent Valley and Fifth Continent (Romney Marsh) - providing community archaeology support and activities for three landscape partnership schemes.
- Repton pond project at Cobham Hall - survey and excavation of a Repton pond feature at Cobham Hall, working on behalf of the Cobham Hall Heritage Trust.

7.2 There are enormous benefits from community archaeology for participants in terms of well-being and health but there are problems in securing sustainable funding to facilitate activities. It is also important to realise the public benefit of development-led archaeological work through improved information sharing and heritage interpretation, including local display of artefacts and public art. Similarly, the online HER, well-managed social media channels and publications allow a wide range of people to be aware of and contribute to knowledge of Kent's heritage.

Case Study: The 'Fifth Continent' Landscape Partnership Scheme Project

Since 2017 KCC has been providing community archaeology activities for the 'Fifth Continent' landscape partnership project, managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Three projects are being carried out that involve working with volunteers - studying the original location of the port of Romney, researching the history of churches on the Marsh, and helping landowners to manage their heritage assets. Over 100 volunteers have taken part in the heritage activities which include excavation, surveys and research.



Objective 10: Promote understanding and enjoyment of Kent's heritage using multiple media channels including digital media (the online HER, KCC website and social media), print media (publications and press releases), with partners and through direct experience (community archaeology) [also Strategic Aim 2].

Objective 11: Develop and deliver a community engagement strategy and communication plan for the Heritage Conservation team [also Strategic Aim 2].



Figure 11 Shorne Woods Archaeology Group volunteers uncovering a section of the narrow gauge railway at the Country Park.

Metal detecting searching and chance discoveries

7.3 Since the 1990s, metal detecting has become a widely adopted hobby in England. It is covered by the legal requirements of the Treasure Act 1996 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/24/contents>) and also a voluntary recording scheme, the Portable Antiquities Scheme (<https://finds.org.uk/>). The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) is overseen by the British Museum and run by Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs), who are hosted mainly by county councils, or county museums where they exist. Funding for this service is provided by a grant from the British Museum. The service is discretionary in terms of recording finds on the PAS database but there is a statutory role, alongside the coroners' service, in relation to reporting finds of Treasure under the Treasure Act. Additionally, in recent years, two other collecting hobbies have gained popularity; 'mudlarking', where riverine foreshore or estuary areas are searched with or without detecting equipment, and magnet fishing where magnets are used to collect mostly iron objects from waterways.



Figure 12 Objects discovered in Kent (Elham Cross, Matilda of Cornhill seal matrix) and recorded by the KCC Finds Liaison Officer.

7.4 Such hobbies can foster physical health, engagement with heritage, and in some cases provide valuable archaeological information. However, they also provide challenges that must be considered. All the hobbies mentioned above risk inadvertently, and occasionally deliberately, breaching the requirements of the Treasure Act and also legal requirements for access to land, particularly where members of the public are not aware of restrictions. Many finds of historical interest can go unreported and are sometimes sold. There can also be significant safety concerns such as the obstruction of waterways by magnet fishing or the discovery of unexploded ordinance (UXO) in the pursuit of artefact recovery.

7.5 Extensive outreach by archaeologists has taken place over the past three decades to help mitigate some of the above, particularly in the fields of best practice and recording of objects. The most recent policy document, [Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales](#), was published by the PAS in 2017.

7.6 For the reasons outlined above it is proposed that metal detecting will only be undertaken on KCC owned land as part of an archaeological investigation or to search for a specific lost object. KCC should retain ownership of all finds found on its property in perpetuity except in certain circumstances (e.g. recent loss of a personal possession) which will be set out on the KCC website.

Objective 12: Agree and adopt a policy that metal detecting and ‘by eye’ searches will only be undertaken on KCC owned land as part of an approved project [also SA2].

Objective 13: Agree and adopt a policy that KCC should retain ownership of all finds found on its property in perpetuity unless special exemptions apply (e.g. loss of personal possession) [also SA2].

Objective 14: Agree and adopt a policy (to be discussed with river and coastal authorities) that magnet fishing will not be allowed on KCC owned land [also SA2].

Objective 15: KCC will work with coastal landowners to consider the benefits of a permit system for metal detecting in coastal and riverine foreshore areas.

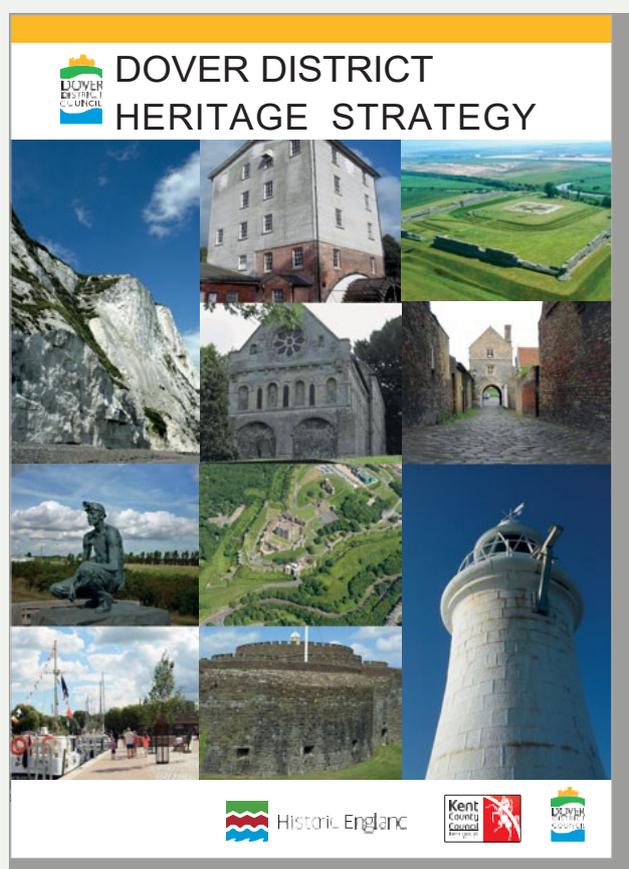
Supporting the development of robust heritage strategies

7.7 The NPPF guides Local Plans to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The Heritage Conservation Service has worked with Dover District Council to produce the Dover District Heritage Strategy, which received a Royal Town Planning Institute South East award for planning excellence and is recognised by Dover District Council as having brought in millions of pounds in investment. A similar draft strategy has been prepared by KCC Heritage Conservation for Folkestone and Hythe District Council, and the service is contributing to other approaches to heritage strategies which are being followed by other local authorities such as Swale and Tunbridge Wells. Such strategies encourage the use of the historic environment in place-making and in seeking opportunities for public benefit and community value in development proposals. We will explore with partners whether preparation of a county-wide heritage strategy would bring benefits of scale and cost savings.

Objective 16: Explore developing a county level Kent Heritage Strategy to assist district authorities who could draw upon it as a framework for their own strategies as many issues and themes are commonly held [also SA1].

Case Study: Dover Heritage Strategy

In 2013 (updated in 2020) Dover District Council published the Dover Heritage Strategy, the result of a multi-year collaboration with KCC. The strategy was commissioned by Dover District Council and English Heritage to ensure that Dover's outstanding heritage plays its full part in life in the District in the future. It contains recommendations to ensure that decisions are taken based on a full understanding of the significance of Dover's heritage assets and to help shape decision-making. The strategy was awarded the RTP1 South East award for Excellence in Planning for Built Heritage) and has been used by Dover District Council to help secure £4.27 million NLHF funding.



8. Strategic Aim 4

Work towards the service becoming more financially self-sustaining.

Benchmarking and resourcing

8.1 In 2019, KCC Heritage Conservation carried out a benchmarking survey with equivalent teams across the south-east of England. This concluded that:

- i) in comparison with other curatorial services KCC Heritage Conservation is comparatively under-resourced for both its development management team and its Historic Environment Record team and;
- ii) there is scope for increasing income generation, particularly by charging for some aspects of the development management service and for Priority Searches for HER information.

Objective 17. Develop a cost recovery strategy for providing archaeological advice to developers for major planning applications and NSIP proposals [also SA1].

Objective 18. Develop a cost recovery strategy for the creation of HER records as a result of development related fieldwork [also SA1, SA3].

Objective 19: Determine and secure a funded approach to built historic environment advice [also SA1, SA2].

Objective 20: Develop a strategy to systematically review and monitor progress towards greater financial sustainability [also SA1, SA2, SA3].

9. Strategic Aim 5

Contribute to KCC's action to address climate change and adaptation.

9.1 Adapting to climate change is a priority for Kent County Council. Kent County Council recognises that our changing climate will continue to affect the county's historic environment. While the Council is no longer operating under a formal climate emergency declaration, we remain committed to understanding and managing the risks posed by a changing climate. Our focus is on resilience and adaptation, ensuring that heritage assets can withstand and respond to future environmental challenges.

Objective 21: Work with partners to develop approaches that improve the resilience of heritage assets to climate-related impacts.

With partners and subject to funding, we will investigate the likely impacts of climate change on Kent's heritage assets. This includes gathering the best available evidence on climate projections, identifying and quantifying potential risks, and assessing the vulnerability of different asset types. We will prioritise actions based on the severity and timing of these impacts and develop strategies to adapt and manage change effectively. An initial assessment was completed this year in an innovative project by the University of Waterloo, Canada. Further assessment will be undertaken in due course.

Objective 22: Assess, with partners, the vulnerability of Kent's historic environment to climate change and create an adaptation framework to guide future conservation efforts.

10. Our objectives at a glance

Strategic Aim 1

Continue to improve the high quality and timely historic environment advice provided to KCC, local authorities and other bodies involved in growth and change based on accessible and up to date information and understanding.

Objective 1. Continue to provide an archaeological service to Kent's planning authorities, developers and householders [also SA3].

Objective 2. Explore and determine the potential for requiring archaeological contractors who undertake archaeological assessments or fieldwork on KCC projects to be Registered Archaeological Organisations.

Objective 3. Continue to provide a historic built environment advice service on County Council and strategic matters in Kent [also SA3].

Objective 4: Continue to maintain and enhance the Kent HER, to meet the requirements of the LUR Act 2023 and NPPF and underpin decision-making in planning and development management [also SA2, SA3].

Strategic Aim 2

Ensure, working with new and existing partners, that KCC's historic assets are conserved, enhanced, enjoyed and valued by Kent's residents and visitors.

Objective 5. Work across KCC to coordinate information on heritage assets and finalise the Kent Highways Heritage protocol.

Objective 6. KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets [also SA3].

Objective 7. *For any windmills remaining in KCC ownership and management, follow a management approach so that:*

i) Mills capable of milling flour (Drapers Mill, Margate, and Cranbrook Mill) remain able to do so.

ii) The weatherproofing programme will be undertaken as needed on a rolling cycle.

iii) Static mills will be returned to visual completeness subject to funding

iv) Static mills will be made active wherever possible

[also SA3].

Objective 8. KCC's relationship with the windmill volunteer groups will be strengthened and the groups and other interested parties will be supported through the divestment process. [also SA3].

Objective 9. Assess options for the display and long-term storage of archaeological archives and ensure the KCC-held archives are placed in an appropriate repository [also SA3].

Strategic Aim 3

Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of Kent's rich heritage and increase involvement in heritage activities amongst its local communities.

Objective 10. Promote understanding and enjoyment of Kent's heritage using multiple media channels including digital media (the online HER, KCC website and social media), print media (publications and press releases) and through direct experience (community archaeology) [also SA2].

Objective 11. Develop a community engagement strategy and communication plan for the Heritage Conservation team [also SA2].

Objective 12. Agree and adopt a policy that metal detecting and 'by eye' searches will only be undertaken on KCC owned land as part of an approved project [also SA2].

Objective 13: Agree and adopt a policy that KCC should retain ownership of all finds found on its property in perpetuity unless special exemptions apply [also SA2].

Objective 14: Agree and adopt a policy (to be discussed with river and coastal authorities) that magnet fishing will not be allowed on KCC owned land [also SA2].

Objective 15: KCC will work with coastal landowners to consider the benefits of a permit system for metal detecting in coastal and riverine foreshore areas.

Objective 16: Explore developing a county level Kent Heritage Strategy to assist district authorities who could draw upon it as a framework for their own strategies as many issues and themes are commonly held [also SA1].

Strategic Aim 4

Work towards the service becoming more financially self-sustaining.

Objective 17. Develop a cost recovery strategy for providing archaeological advice to developers for major planning applications and NSIP proposals [also SA1].

Objective 18. Develop a cost recovery strategy for the creation of HER records as a result of development related fieldwork [also SA1, SA3].

Objective 19: Determine and secure a funded approach to built historic environment advice [also SA1, SA2].

Objective 20: Develop a strategy to systematically review and monitor progress towards greater financial sustainability [also SA1, SA2, SA3].

Strategic Aim 5

Contribute to KCC's action to address climate change and adaptation.

Objective 21. Work with partners to develop approaches that improve the resilience of heritage assets to climate-related impacts.

Objective 22. Assess, with partners, the vulnerability of Kent's historic environment to climate change and create an adaptation framework to

guide future conservation efforts.

11. How we will deliver this strategy – our medium-term plan

Strategic Aim 1

Continue to improve the high quality and timely historic environment advice provided to KCC, local authorities and other bodies involved in growth and change based on accessible and up to date information and understanding.

What (objective)	Why (rationale)	By when (timescale)	What will success look like?
Objective 1. Continue to provide an archaeological service to Kent’s planning authorities, developers and householders [also SA3].	Requirement of NPPF and other policy (see 1.7-1.9)	Ongoing	Targets met; heritage protected.
Objective 2. Explore and determine the potential for requiring archaeological contractors who undertake archaeological assessments or fieldwork on KCC projects to be Registered Archaeological Organisations.	Improve standards in commercial fieldwork and reduce time spent commenting on WSIs and reports.	Prepare report by December 2026.	Decision taken.
Objective 3. Continue to provide a historic built environment advice service on County Council and strategic matters in Kent [also SA3].	Requirement of NPPF and other policy (see 1.7-1.9)	Ongoing	Targets met; heritage protected.
Objective 4. Continue to maintain and enhance the Kent HER, to meet the requirements of the LUR Act 2023 and NPPF and underpin decision-making in planning and development management [also SA2, SA3].	Requirement of NPPF and other policy (see 1.7-1.9)	Ongoing	2025 HER Audit Action Plan implemented according to schedule. Ensure HER meets appropriate standard when LUR Act guidance published.

Strategic Aim 2

Ensure, working with new and existing partners, that KCC’s historic assets are conserved, enhanced, enjoyed and valued by Kent’s residents and visitors.

What (objective)	Why (rationale)	By when (timescale)	What will success look like?
<p>Objective 5. Work across KCC to coordinate information on heritage assets and finalise the Kent Highways Heritage protocol.</p>	<p>To conserve heritage assets in line with statutory requirements and good practice, and to provide guidance on developing designs and maintenance solutions which balance heritage conservation with cost and other relevant factors.</p>	<p>Draft proposal by 2026</p>	<p>Heritage assets conserved and managed effectively.</p>
<p>Objective 6. KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets [also SA3].</p>	<p>Reduce long-term maintenance and capital costs for KCC. Increase potential for funding from other sources. Meet listed building requirements and ensure community inclusion.</p>	<p>Divestment approach prepared by March 2026.</p>	<p>Divestment of the windmills is achieved where possible and the windmills are maintained in good active condition as community assets.</p>
<p>Objective 7: For any windmills remaining in KCC ownership and management, follow a management approach so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Mills capable of milling flour (Drapers Mill, Margate, and Cranbrook Mill) remain able to do so. ii) The weatherproofing programme will be undertaken as needed on a rolling cycle. iii) Static mills will be returned to visual completeness subject to funding iv) Static mills will be made active wherever possible [also SA3]. 	<p>To conserve heritage assets in line with statutory requirements and good practice and manage them in most cost-effective way.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Heritage assets conserved and managed effectively.</p>

Strategic Aim 2 continued

What (objective)	Why (rationale)	By when (timescale)	What will success look like?
<p>Objective 8. KCC’s relationship with the windmill volunteer groups will be strengthened and the groups and other interested parties will be supported through the divestment process. [also SA3].</p>	<p>Volunteer groups contribute to heritage asset management and community is involved.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer groups involved in day-to-day mill management and developing future approaches.</p>
<p>Objective 9. Assess options for the display and long-term storage of archaeological archives and ensure the KCC-held archives are placed in an appropriate repository [also SA3].</p>	<p>To conserve heritage and environmental assets for the benefit of Kent residents.</p> <p>Appropriate management of heritage assets in line with NPPF.</p>	<p>Catalogue HS1 archive by December 2026.</p> <p>Prepare project plan for deposition and where appropriate display of KCC held archaeological archives by March 2027.</p> <p>Agree plan for Kent wide approach to deposition and display of archaeological archives by 2027.</p>	<p>KCC held archaeological archives deposited in secure repository by 2028.</p>
<p>Objective 10. Promote understanding and enjoyment of Kent’s heritage using multiple media channels including digital media (the online HER, KCC website and social media), print media (publications and press releases) and through direct experience (community archaeology) [also SA2].</p>	<p>Increase awareness and understanding of Kent’s heritage and KCC’s role in conserving it.</p>	<p>Continue to promote heritage through multiple media channels; see also Objective 11 on the following page.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of heritage and KCC’s role.</p>

Strategic Aim 3

Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of Kent’s rich heritage and increase involvement in heritage activities amongst its local communities.

What (objective)	Why (rationale)	By when (timescale)	What will success look like?
Objective 11. Develop a Community Engagement strategy and Communication Plan for the Heritage Conservation team [also SA2].	Increase awareness and understanding of Kent’s heritage and KCC’s role in conserving it.	Draft Community Engagement strategy and Communication Plan by December 2026	Communication strategy prepared and agreed.
Objective 12. Agree and adopt a policy that metal detecting and ‘by eye’ searches will only be undertaken on KCC owned land as part of an approved project [also SA2].	Provide clarity for searchers and KCC officers.	Stakeholder consultation undertaken and policy agreed by December 2026.	Clarification of policy and policy acted upon.
Objective 13. Agree and adopt a policy that KCC should retain ownership of all finds found on its property in perpetuity unless special exemptions apply [also SA2].	To conserve heritage assets for the benefit of Kent residents.	To be included in consultation and policy for Objective 12.	Heritage assets conserved.
Objective 14. Agree and adopt a policy (to be discussed with river and coastal authorities) that magnet fishing will not be allowed on KCC owned land [also SA2].	Conservation of heritage assets and Health & Safety considerations.	To be included in policy for Objective 12.	Heritage assets are conserved and public safety maintained.
Objective 15. KCC will work with coastal landowners to consider the benefits of a permit system for metal detecting in coastal and riverine foreshore areas.	Provide clarity for searchers and KCC officers.	Report prepared by December 2026.	Public consultation undertaken and policy agreed.
Objective 16. Explore developing a county level Kent Heritage Strategy to assist district authorities who could draw upon it as a framework for their own strategies as many issues and themes are commonly held [also SA1].	Requirement of NPPF and other policy (see 1.7-1.9) To ensure a strategic approach to heritage conservation across the county.	Develop project outline & seek resources by December 2026.	Project outline prepared and decision taken as to whether to proceed.

Strategic Aim 4

Work towards the service becoming more financially self-sustaining.

What (objective)	Why (rationale)	By when (timescale)	What will success look like?
Objective 17. Develop a cost recovery strategy for providing archaeological advice to developers for major planning applications and NSIP proposals [also SA1].	To improve sustainability of service and provide stability in capacity to meet service.	Develop draft strategy and undertake stakeholder consultation by December 2026.	Heritage Conservation service is more financially sustainable and stability of capacity improved.
Objective 18. Develop a cost recovery strategy for the creation of HER records as a result of development related fieldwork [also SA1, SA3].	To improve sustainability of service and provide stability in capacity to meet service commitments.	Develop draft strategy and undertake stakeholder consultation by December 2026.	Heritage Conservation service is more sustainable and Historic Environment Record backlog is reduced.
Objective 19. Determine and secure a funded approach to built historic environment advice [also SA1, SA2].	To improve sustainability of service and provide stability in capacity to meet service commitments.	Develop draft strategy by December 2026.	Heritage Conservation service is more sustainable.
Objective 20. Develop a strategy to systematically review and monitor progress towards greater financial sustainability [also SA1, SA2, SA3].	To assess effectiveness of cost recovery strategy.	Review strategy by December 2027	Effectiveness of cost recovery strategy is assessed and improvements made as required.

Strategic Aim 5

Contribute to KCC’s action to address climate change and adaptation.

What (objective)	Why (rationale)	By when (timescale)	What will success look like?
Objective 21. Work with partners to develop approaches that improve the resilience of heritage assets to climate-related impacts.	To help mitigate the effects of climate change.	Prepare draft strategy and action plan by 2027.	Strategy prepared actions agreed.
Objective 22. Assess, with partners, the vulnerability of Kent’s historic environment to climate change and create an adaptation framework to guide future conservation efforts.	To provide information to help guide decision-making.	Prepare, subject to funding, draft assessment by 2027.	Assessment prepared.

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Appendix 2 Background information to Executive decision 24/000068 – windmill divestment

- 1.1 KCC owns eight historic windmills having saved them from destruction in the 1970s and 1980s as owner of last resort. Financial responsibility for the maintenance and management of these eight windmill properties rests solely with KCC, apart from small-scale investment by the mill groups. The annual cost to the Council of maintaining the windmills portfolio in a safe structural and mechanical condition is considerable. Management of the mills is only possible, however, through the work of the Friends volunteer groups who carry out small scale maintenance tasks, operate the mills and open them to the public.
- 1.2 A strategic review of KCC's windmill assets was undertaken in 2022-23 (as part of a wider review of KCC's assets) by a task and finish group comprising officers from Infrastructure, Environment and Circular Economy and Finance (see report for ETCC on 15 11 2023). Five key considerations were evaluated:
 - A) The heritage value of the windmills,
 - B) Current arrangements for managing the windmills,
 - C) The potential for divestment of the windmills,
 - D) The potential for alternative uses for the windmills,
 - E) KCC's current financial situation.
- 1.3 Divestment of each of the eight sites was identified as the most financially advantageous option for KCC. This could allow KCC to save the annual costs associated with maintaining the buildings in a safe and accessible condition.
- 1.4 As divestment of the mills would be a change to the policy set out in the adopted Heritage Conservation Strategy, a public consultation was undertaken which ran for nine weeks from 28 November 2023 until 29 January 2024. The consultation invited residents, windmill and heritage volunteer groups, and other interested parties to provide views on the proposal to seek alternative arrangements for the ownership of these windmills.
- 1.5 The consultation, which received 2,330 responses, showed minimal public support for divestment of the mills - further details on the consultation and its findings can be found at <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/windmills-consultation>
- 1.6 The consultation results were considered alongside an options appraisal of:
 - Do nothing - rejected because it did not address the cost burden to KCC
 - Retain the windmills but reduce the financial input - rejected because options for income generation were limited.
 - KCC divests itself of the windmills – determined as the recommended option, owing to the reduction of future capital expenditure – then estimated at a total of £657,700 minimum for ongoing maintenance and minor repairs. over a five-year period from 2024 to 2029. In the long term if all the windmills were divested there would be savings to the revenue budget of between approximately £124,000 and £220,000 per annum

- 1.7 Consequently, on 2nd August 2024 the Cabinet Member for Environment took the decision that 1) KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets and 2) the Heritage Conservation Strategy is updated to reflect this. The decision was taken on the basis that it would allow alternative ownership arrangements for the eight historic windmills which KCC owns to be explored, with the aim of reducing KCC's long term financial obligations. It was noted that the council is sensitive to the importance that communities and volunteers place on windmills and wish to work with those who are committed to them to secure their future. More detail on the decision is available from <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=2892>
- 1.8 Officers have been exploring the most effective way to divest, based on the local circumstances of each windmill, and mitigating as far as possible the concerns raised during the consultation. Considering the unique character of each windmill, as detailed in Table 1 below, it is expected that each mill will require its own tailored divestment pathway. A fair and open process for divestment will be agreed; the method could potentially include freehold divestment, divestment through long lease or other appropriate means to achieve the executive decision. Interest will be invited from any suitable party, encouraging proposals for long-term stewardship and community benefit to safeguard the windmills' future. Initial meetings have been held with the volunteer mill groups, tenants and significant interested parties. Future management of the mills could involve the establishment of one or more charitable trusts; however, this is dependent on proposals received and the evaluation process to ensure any proposals for sustainable

Table 1 – Characteristics of the windmills

Windmill	999-year lease/ restrictive covenant	Within another property or surrounded by another property	Mill building only in freehold	Vehicle access [*restricted]	Mill volunteer group
Chillenden	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Davison's, Stelling Minnis	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Drapers, Margate	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Herne	No	No	No	Yes*	Yes
Meopham	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes

Stocks, Wittersham	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Union Mill, Cranbrook	No	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes
West Kingsdown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	No

1.9 Work will continue to identify the most effective way to divest, based on the local circumstances of each windmill, and mitigating as far as possible the concerns raised during the consultation. Support will be provided to the volunteer mill groups, tenants and other interested parties. A divestment plan will be brought back to Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee for information and discussion.

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Heritage Conservation Strategy - Divestment of KCC Windmills Policy Change

Responsible Officer

Dyson, Lis - GT - ECE

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

Helen Shulver - GT - ECE

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Heritage Conservation / Environment and Circular Economy

Responsible Head of Service

Helen Shulver - GT - ECE

Responsible Director

Matthew Smyth - GT - ECE

Aims and Objectives

We are proposing to make changes to the Kent Heritage Conservation Strategy which would allow KCC to consider options for alternative ownership arrangements and/or financial responsibility for our eight windmills.

We are proposing to find alternative arrangements for each windmill separately because the current arrangements vary from site to site.

The windmills are all prominent rural or urban landmarks and highly graded designated (listed) buildings. As such, they are currently maintained in a condition that allows them to remain accessible to the general public to visit for educational and recreational purposes. However, KCC is facing a large increase in the cost of services, fuelled by high inflation, market conditions and increasing demands on its services from growth in the number of households and complexity of needs, which means that it needs to find ways to save money and has resulted in KCC proposing a change to ownership of these windmills.

There are no laws that say we must continue to own historic sites like windmills. However, as the current owner of the windmills, we do have a statutory duty to keep them safe, weatherproof, and

preserve their unique character and appearance. If KCC does not do this, Historic England could put the windmills on its "At Risk" list, and/or enforcement action could be taken by the Local Planning Authority.

No regular staff are employed to open the windmills to the public. Instead, through management agreements, locally based volunteer teams give up their spare time on scheduled open days to admit and guide visitors around the sites and buildings.

The proposed change to the ownership arrangements would mean that the ownership of each windmill may change to a local interest group, a private company or individual.

There could be a loss of amenity, volunteering and educational opportunities as future public access and enjoyment of these windmills is dependent on whoever takes on the responsibility for them. It may therefore indirectly affect other members of the community. This includes people who live near the mills, as well as others who live in other parts of Kent, or further afield, who plan to travel and visit the mills on scheduled open days when they are fully accessible

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?

Full public consultation undertaken between 28th November 2023 and 29th January 2024.
Users registered with Let's talk Kent who had expressed an interest in being kept informed of consultation regarding 'Arts and culture' and 'Environment and countryside' (8,559 people)
Users registered with Let's talk Kent who participated in the 2021 Heritage Conservation Strategy consultation and asked to be kept informed (258 people).
The seven local volunteer groups currently connected with the windmills.
Members of the communities in which these windmills stand.
Other Kent residents in or around these communities as well as further afield.
Key stakeholders at a national level including members of societies and groups with a stated interest in the subject.
Key stakeholders at an international level including members of societies and groups with a stated interest in the subject

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

No

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

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

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

are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
The data currently available nationally indicates that windmill sites such as these can be equally well cared for by groups based in the communities in which they are located, as they can by local authorities.
These groups tend to be charitable trusts or charitable incorporated companies set up with the twin aims of protecting the historic fabric of these buildings and ensuring they remain publicly accessible for educational and recreational purposes.
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
All of the volunteer teams potentially affected by the proposal are composed of people of retirement age, for whom the process of volunteering at the windmill sites might be a key focus of their weekly routine.
This may provide them with a sense of purpose and social connection. The potential loss of these opportunities could have a negative impact on their mental and physical health.
Mitigating Actions for Age
It would be important to manage the change in relationship between KCC and the volunteer teams, to minimise any negative impacts on the volunteers' wellbeing
This would include keeping them informed of the changes, providing them with opportunities to ask questions, and addressing any concerns they may have
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Lis Dyson
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 Environment, Coastal Regeneration & Special Projects

Simon Jones: Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee -10th March 2026

Subject: Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026 - 2031

Key decision 2600008

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Not applicable

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet member Decision

Electoral Division: All electoral divisions

Summary:

Kent County Council, in collaboration with the 12 district, borough and city councils through the Kent Resource Partnership (KRP), has developed the third Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026–2031.

This strategy sets out a clear delivery framework that responds to current national legislative reforms including Extended Producer Responsibility (2025), Simpler Recycling (2026), the Deposit Return Scheme (2027) and the Emissions Trading Scheme (2028) alongside local priorities such as delivering cost-effective services and supporting Kent’s transition to a circular economy.

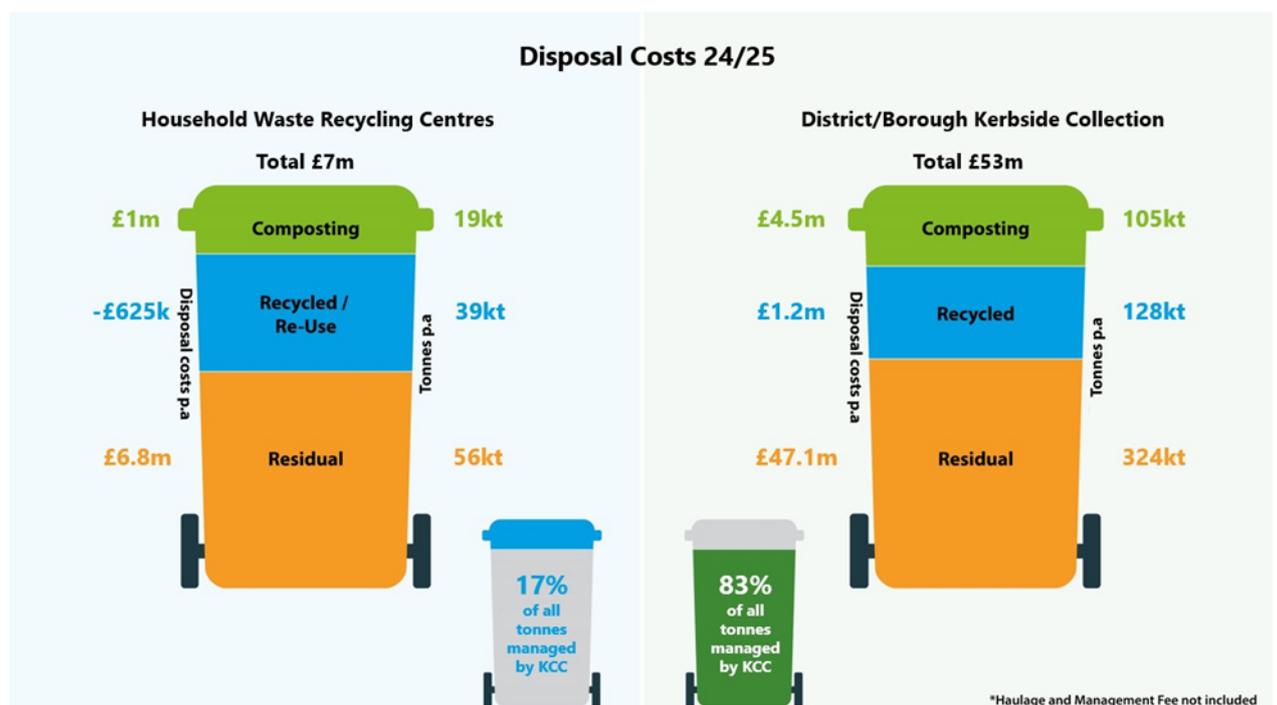
Kent faces a critical juncture in waste management. Rising disposal costs, new national legislation and the upcoming Emissions Trading Scheme will significantly increase financial pressures on KCC as the waste disposal authority if action is not taken. Endorsing the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026–2031 signals a clear commitment to a whole-system approach that focuses on reducing residual waste, increasing recycling and preparing services for local government reorganisation. This strategy and the associated action that it drives is essential to protect the Kent taxpayer and meet statutory obligations while simultaneously delivering environmental benefits.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed strategy provides clarity of direction for the Kent Resource Partnership over the next five years, a clear jointly adopted mandate for continued and renewed partnership action, going beyond just compliance with legislation, to achieve greater efficiency and effective management of household waste and prepare waste services for local government reorganisation.
- 1.2 Kent County Council is the household Waste Disposal Authority for Kent and has responsibility for disposing of the waste collected by the borough and district authorities and for running 19 household waste recycling centres across Kent for householders to dispose of their waste material.
- 1.3 District, city and borough councils are the Waste Collection Authorities in Kent and are responsible for collecting household waste from the kerbside and delivering it to KCC for disposal.
- 1.4 83% of the household waste disposed of in Kent is collected by the Waste Collection Authorities at the kerbside. This means that KCC has limited direct control over both the quantity and quality of most of the recyclables entering the system.
- 1.5 In 2024/25 KCC spent £53m disposing of the waste collected from the kerbside by the Waste Collection Authorities.



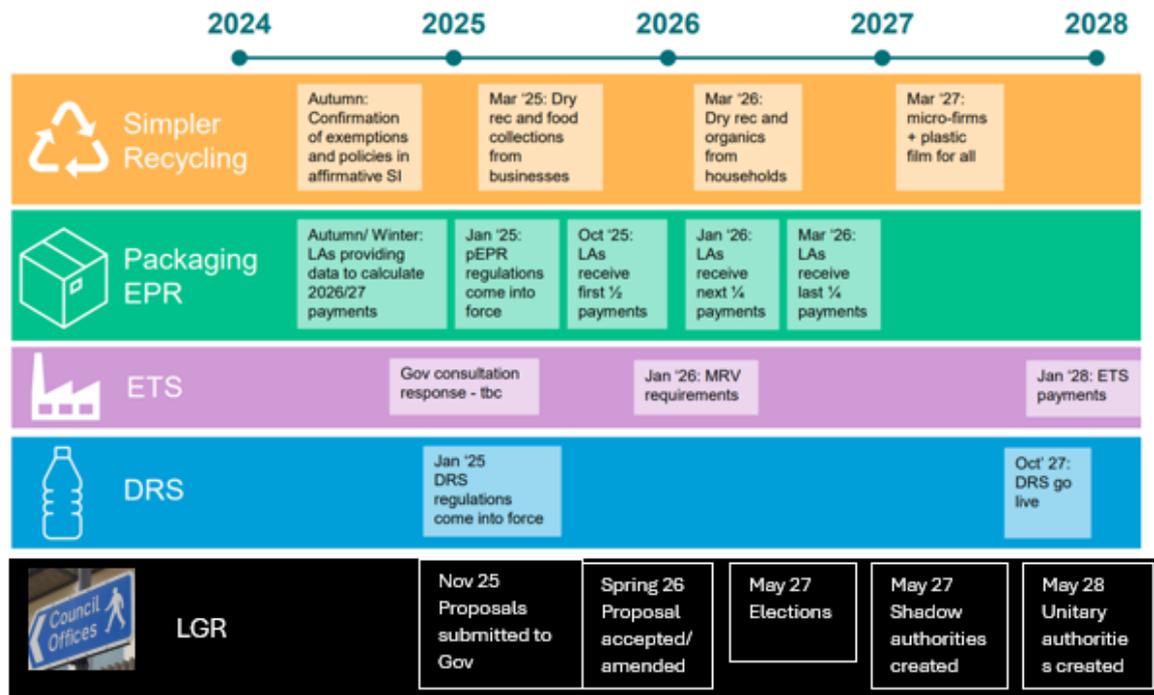
- 1.6 Of the £53m spent, almost £48m was on the processing of residual waste – waste that cannot be recycled, composted or reused. This includes waste contaminated with non recyclable materials or waste that has been incorrectly separated prior to collection making it unsuitable for recycling or composting.
- 1.7 Diverting just 10% of residual waste to recycling could save over £6m per year.

- 1.8 The 2025 waste composition analysis suggests that 52% of residual waste could be recyclable.
- 1.9 There are a number of factors that contribute to the levels of recycling that are achieved including:
- Waste collection authority service design – how often recycling is collected, what services are offered and what waste separation requirements there are
 - Contamination levels – the presence of back sacks, food, textiles or other non-recyclables in the waste presented for recycling
 - Resident behaviour – correct separation and presentation of waste requires resident engagement and motivation
 - Housing types – flats and areas with a large percentage of rented properties often have lower participation rates and higher contamination rates
 - Legislative requirements – UK legislation currently specifies that Waste Collection Authorities must collect two types of recyclable materials (paper/card and glass) separately from the rest of the household waste, but critically not how much of this waste they must collect
- 1.10 Kent's overall recycling rate has hovered around 41–44% for the past decade, showing very little upward movement since about 2014–15. Before COVID, the rate was already plateauing near 42%, and despite fluctuations in landfill and energy recovery, recycling performance from kerbside collections has remained largely static since then.
- 1.11 To mitigate the budget pressures of rising disposal costs and achieve more efficient and effective waste management that both reduces residual waste and drives up recycling requires a whole system approach. Only by working in partnership with the 12 district, borough and city councils, will we be able to reduce kerbside waste and divert more to recycling, composting and reuse. The Kent joint municipal waste management strategy (strapline to be added) is at the heart of this partnership.

2. Background and drivers for change

2.1

Figure 1 : National picture |



KCC faces escalating costs to meet its statutory duty to dispose of household waste. From January 2028, Energy from Waste facilities will fall under the UK Emissions Trading Scheme, adding an estimated £16 million annually to disposal costs if residual waste tonnages remain unchanged. Simpler Recycling (2026), the Deposit Return Scheme (2027) will reshape collection systems and funding models. The Kent Joint Municipal Waste Strategy positions Kent to mitigate these risks in the most efficient way and to maximise leverage from new funding streams such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

- 2.1.1 The Kent Resource Partnership has a long history (approx. 20 years) of collaboration and successful waste initiatives, including lobbying for legislative change. Membership of the KRP includes KCC as the waste disposal authority and the 12 district, borough and city councils (excluding Medway). Each partner authority provides a financial contribution to a single projects budget that enables countywide action, avoids duplication of project resources and focuses on whole system operational efficiencies.
- 2.1.2 The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 required councils in two-tier areas to produce joint waste management strategies. The first joint waste strategy was adopted by all 13 councils in 2007. An interim revision was completed in 2018 with an end date of 2020/21.
- 2.1.3 Although revision was planned, ongoing operational challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with several years of uncertainty over planned Government waste reforms delayed the revision and this is now overdue.
- 2.1.4 More recently, the emerging plans to deliver Local Government Reorganisation makes it more critical to ensure clarity of focus for waste management services in the next five years. Continuing to drive forwards efficiencies and consistency

in waste management systems and services across collection and disposal will create the conditions for a successful transition to new authority structures.

- 2.1.5 Until 2018-19, Kent had been delivering small year-on-year improvements, reducing residual waste per household and increasing recycling rates, with an excellent record of reducing landfilled waste to a very low level.
- 2.1.6 Since the pandemic and in line with the national average, performance has declined. However, Kent's performance has declined more sharply than similar authorities in the south east, whose performance has seen a recovery towards pre-pandemic levels. This reduced performance has a direct impact on the cost of waste disposal, with lower recycling rates meaning more of Kent's waste is disposed of by incineration (energy from waste). Gate fees for recycling and composting waste are almost five times lower than for incineration (energy from waste) per tonne.
- 2.1.7 From 2028, new legislation will bring waste sent to energy from waste facilities under the Emissions Trading Scheme, introducing a carbon tax on fossil-based materials. Early estimates suggest this could add millions of pounds to KCCs annual disposal costs. However, the exact scope and tax levels remain uncertain, so the full financial impact is not yet known.

2.2 **A refreshed approach**

- 2.2.1 2025 marked the start of a four-year period of legislative change in the waste sector requiring changes to frontline service offers and bringing forward new financial mechanisms. In response, Kent Resource Partnership has refreshed its remit to address the immediate and future challenges and opportunities for household waste management.
- 2.2.2 2025 also saw the establishment of the Kent and Medway Environment Members Board, bringing together environmental and waste services under a single governance structure for the first time. Joint opportunities include greater resource efficiency, reducing carbon emissions and preventing environmental pollution.
- 2.2.3 Appointing a new strategic lead for the Kent Resource Partnership in January 2025, enabled the partnership to revisit its purpose and direction and complete the refresh of the joint strategy. A series of workshops and stakeholder engagement sessions were held late spring/summer to inform the development of the strategy. (See Appendix B)
- 2.2.4 Key aims of the refreshed strategy:
 1. Operational Excellence – Efficient, sustainable waste collection and disposal.
 2. Circular Economy Pathway – Retain material value, create green jobs, and reduce carbon emissions.
 3. Behaviour Change – Evidence-led campaigns to reduce waste and contamination.
 4. Transition to Unitary System – Align governance and services for efficiency.

The refreshed strategy will be supported by an annual delivery plan that will outline the key actions that will take place in order to deliver and measure improvement and success.

- 2.2.5 In addition, the receipt of packaging Extended Producer Responsibility funding created an opportunity for KCC to direct some officer resource to develop and deliver a programme of resident engagement and behaviour change projects based on new evidence and data collected. The objective was to capture recyclable waste that is being lost to incineration (energy from waste providing opportunities to reduce disposal costs).
- 2.2.6 A behaviour change ‘nudge’ intervention designed by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Behaviour Change unit, had been piloted in late 2024 and had achieved early success in two districts by engaging more residents to separate and recycle their food waste rather than dispose of it in their residual waste. This success discussed and shared through the KRP, encouraged other collection authorities to engage, and by the autumn of 2025 food waste capture had consistently increased by over 20% across six districts. By 31st March 2026, all ten Districts that offer a separate food waste recycling service will have delivered this intervention. Food waste that is collected and disposed of separately costs KCC £11 per tonne compared to the c£120 per tonne cost of disposal of residual waste and therefore the savings to KCC through this successful project have been substantial. Due to this the project is expected to pay back on the investment in under one year and demonstrates what is achievable through coordinated partnership working.
- 2.2.7 This project success confirmed that behaviour change should be one of the key aims of the refreshed joint strategy, recognising that residents play an important role and enable waste collection services to be more successful in delivering improved recycling performance and reducing residual waste.
- 2.2.8 Expertise was sought to develop a behaviour change approach in more detail, to both inform and complement the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. KCC contracted the Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP) Behaviour Change unit to carry out additional research and co-design a five-year behaviour change strategy. This complementary strategy is complete and will inform future KRP projects and activity.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost of developing the strategy is limited to officer time spent engaging and consulting stakeholders and drafting the document along with minimal design costs ahead of publication.
- 3.2 Approving and adopting the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is a strategic commitment only. This decision does not authorise immediate changes to KCC’s service delivery. While the strategy will be implemented through the Kent Resource Partnership and overseen by the Kent & Medway Environment Members Board, any changes to KCC services, budgets, or contractual arrangements arising from delivery will remain subject to KCC’s own governance processes.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 This strategy and its delivery through the Kent Resource Partnership meets the statutory requirements of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, which requires joint waste management strategies to be agreed and delivered in two-tier authority areas.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 An Equality Impacts Screening Assessment has been completed, and no significant positive or negative equality impacts have been identified. This strategy does not require changes to delivered services.
- 5.2 All future projects, communications and resident engagement initiatives implemented to deliver this strategy will be assessed for equality impacts at the design stage by the lead officer and any changes to service delivery or contractual commitments that meet the key decision threshold will remain subject to KCC's own governance processes

6. Other corporate implications

- 6.1 Successful delivery through the Kent Resource Partnership, is expected to reduce the tonnage of residual household waste received for disposal, which will enable Kent County Council to reduce disposal costs, including mitigating the additional financial pressures of new legislation such as the Emissions Trading Scheme, expected in 2028. Savings delivered will contribute to meeting challenging future budgets or offsetting budget pressures from other services.

7. Governance

- 7.1 Delivery of the strategy will be carried out by the Kent Resource Partnership, reporting to the Kent and Medway Environment Members Board (and where required Kent Joint Chief Executives and/or Kent Leaders).
- 7.2 The Strategy will be published externally and communicated to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- 7.3 Approving and adopting the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is a strategic commitment only. This decision does not authorise immediate changes to KCC's service delivery. While the strategy will be implemented through the Kent Resource Partnership and overseen by the Kent & Medway Environment Members Board, any changes to KCC services, budgets, or contractual arrangements arising from delivery will remain subject to KCC's own governance processes,

Conclusions

Endorsing the strategy will make a clear commitment by Kent County Council to contribute positively and proactively to the Kent Resource Partnership, to deliver a whole system approach to managing household waste, reduce environmental impacts and deliver efficient and effective waste management services for Kent's residents.

9. Recommendation(s):

9.1 Cabinet Committee –

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

Background Documents

10.1 Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026 - 2031

11. Contact details

Report Author:

Deborah Kapaj
Strategic Lead for the Kent Resource
Partnership

03000 410237

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Relevant Director:

Matt Smyth
Director for Environment and Circular
Economy

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Appendix B

Various stakeholders and groups received presentations, engaged in discussions or were invited to provide feedback on earlier drafts to shape the joint strategy, this included:

Joint Kent Chiefs
Kent & Medway Environment Members Board

Kent Economic Development Officers Group
Kent Housing Group
Kent Resource Partnership Officer Group
Kent & Medway Climate Change Network
Kent & Medway Environment Group
Kent & Medway Waste Practitioners Group (waste crime enforcement)

KCC Adult Social Care Commissioning team
KCC Environment teams
KCC Public Health
KCC Resource Management & Circular Economy team

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Paul King, Cabinet Member for Coastal
Regeneration, Environment & Special Projects

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00008

Executive Decision – key

26/00008 – Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026 – 2031

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Coastal Regeneration, Environment & Special Projects, I agree to:

ADOPT the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026 – 2031 as KCC’s formal commitment to the partnership approach, subject to formal endorsement by all other partner authorities through their governance processes

DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport or other officer as required by the Corporate Director to review the Strategy on an annual basis and revise the strategy where changes do not require additional governance.

DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Coastal Regeneration, Environment and Special Projects, to take the actions required to support the Kent Resource Partnership with the implementation of the strategy, subject to the Councils decision-making process.

Reasons for decision:

It is a statutory requirement of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 for two-tier council areas to produce joint waste management strategies.

The current strategy review and update is overdue.

Financial implications

The cost of developing the strategy is limited to officer time spent engaging and consulting stakeholders and drafting the document along with minimal design costs ahead of publication.

Approving and adopting the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is a strategic commitment only. This decision does not authorise immediate changes to KCC’s service delivery. While the strategy will be implemented through the Kent Resource Partnership and overseen by the Kent & Medway Environment Members

Board, any changes to KCC services, budgets, or contractual arrangements arising from delivery will remain subject to KCC's own governance processes.

Legal implications:

Under the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, it is a statutory requirement for all local authorities in two-tier areas to have a joint waste management strategy and there is a risk of non-compliance if the strategy is not updated. Once the strategy is agreed and published, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will be notified.

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impacts Screening Assessment has been completed, and no significant positive or negative equality impacts have been identified. This strategy does not require changes to delivered services

Data Protection implications:

Not applicable - No personal data was collected or used to inform the revision of the strategy.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

This version of the PROD is included in the agenda pack for committee members to review ahead of the meeting.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

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

.....
Signed

.....
Date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy

Responsible Officer

Deborah Tuffey - GT ECE

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

Helen Shulver - GT ECE

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Resource Management and Circular Economy (hosts KRP Strategic Lead)

Responsible Head of Service

Helen Shulver - GT ECE

Responsible Director

Matthew Smyth - GT ECE

Aims and Objectives

The aim is to identify any equality considerations or impacts that need to be taken account of in drafting the revised strategy, which encompasses partnership aims and objectives, which will contribute to a circular economy in Kent. This revision is being undertaken on behalf of Kent Resource Partnership (made up of KCC and the 12 district, borough and city councils who collect, manage and dispose of household waste)

Outcome of analysis: some positive impacts identified for Age, Disabled - mobility and Carers.
No adverse impacts identified for any protected characteristics.

Each project and/or communication campaign developed to implement the strategy, will be assessed for equality impacts separately at the design/planning stage.

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?
<p>Consultation of the draft strategy included:</p> <p>Joint Kent Chief Executives</p> <p>Kent and Medway Climate Change Network</p> <p>Kent and Medway Environment Group</p> <p>Kent and Medway Environment Members Board</p> <p>Kent Economic Development Officers Group</p> <p>Kent Resource Partnership Officers Group</p> <p>Kent Housing Group</p> <p>KCC Public Health</p> <p>KCC Adult Social Care Commissioners</p> <p>Resource Management and Circular Economy management team</p> <p>KCC staff groups (November 2025 and January 2026)</p>
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?
<p>Service Users/clients</p> <p>Service users/clients</p>
<p>Staff</p> <p>No</p>
<p>Residents/Communities/Citizens</p> <p>Residents/communities/citizens</p>
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 general actions plans will aim to support residents to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle more of their waste and as a result may help residents achieve financial savings.</p> <p>Likely positive impacts for the age-elderly/disabled-mobility/carers/age-young people or families with no transport: improve access to reuse and recycling services (e.g. through raising awareness of the Kent-wide doorstep collection service for donating goods and benefitting charities - supporting those who would find it difficult to take items to a household waste recycling centres or charity shops)</p> <p>Promoting community repair cafes - to support all residents to keep their items in use longer and avoid spending money on new items.</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

Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026 - 2031

The Kent Resource Partnership is made up of the thirteen local authorities in Kent. These are the district, borough and city councils of Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Gravesham, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells and Kent County Council

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Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Background
- National and local policy
- Current services
- Performance to date
 - Projected growth and impacts
- Opportunities and challenges
- Setting the future direction
 - Vision
 - Strategic Aims
 - Measuring success
- Glossary of terms
- Appendix 1 - Summary of waste legislation
- Appendix 2 - Opportunities and challenges

Introduction

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As Chair of the Kent and Medway Environment Members Board, I am proud to introduce the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for 2026–2031. This strategy comes at a pivotal moment for Kent. It sets out how we will respond to the most significant changes in waste policy for a generation, alongside preparations for local government reorganisation, while continuing to deliver services that protect our environment and provide best value for Kent residents.

Over the next five years, these changes will reshape how we collect, treat, and fund waste services. They also create opportunities to do things differently; to reduce waste, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and make better use of resources, moving beyond recycling. This will require a bold, innovative and collaborative approach.

Kent has already taken important steps towards a circular economy. Through the Kent Resource Partnership, we have launched reuse shops at Household Waste Recycling Centres, supported community repair cafés, and piloted community initiatives that keep valuable items in use and out of the waste stream. These successes show what can be achieved when councils, businesses, and residents work together.

This strategy builds on that progress, with a stronger focus on helping residents understand the value and impact of their actions, by supporting community-led initiatives, and extending existing partnerships with business and the social sector. By doing so, we will not only reduce waste but also create local jobs, support skills development, and help residents save money.

Success will depend on all of us working together and embracing these changes, to create a cleaner, greener Kent for future generations.

Our vision is clear: a county where waste is reduced by keeping resources in use for longer, where communities are empowered to recycle, reuse and repair, and every household plays a part in protecting our environment. I invite you to join us in making this vision a reality.

Councillor Clive English

Chairman of the Kent and Medway Environment Members Board

Background

The Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is a collaborative framework developed by the Kent Resource Partnership, which includes Kent County Council and the 12 district councils. Its

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purpose is to guide how household waste is managed across Kent, with a focus on sustainability, efficiency, and compliance with national legislation.

The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 requires councils in two-tier areas (like Kent) to produce joint waste management strategies. This legal requirement ensures that waste disposal authorities and waste collection authorities work together to meet landfill diversion targets and reduce environmental impact when managing household waste.

The first [Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy](#) was adopted by all 13 councils in 2007, with an interim revision issued in 2018. This Strategy sought to achieve strategic collaboration across the 13 councils aligning waste policies and practices, to reduce landfill usage and increase

The current Strategy ended in 2020/21, with development of a revised Strategy planned, and then delayed, due to the ongoing operational challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and several years of significant waste reforms being planned with limited detail on the legislative requirements.

During 2024, the value and remit of the Kent Resource Partnership was endorsed by Kent Leaders and Chief Executives and in January 2025, a Strategic Lead was appointed, to re-establish the governance, partnership priorities and delivery structure, including development of this interim strategy. This strategy will provide clarity of direction for the partnership in the years leading up to and post local government reorganisation, which is expected to be implemented from 2028.

2025 also heralded the start of a four-year period of implementation of significant legislative and policy change in England (Figure 1), including new financial mechanisms, that pave the way forwards and are designed to accelerate local action to deliver a circular economy. The impact of these changes locally and collectively is yet to be fully understood and remains under review by the partnership.

Now is the time to act. Working in partnership to deliver a system-wide approach to waste management, in line with the national circular economy goals, which is essential to deliver greater value for the Kent taxpayer, environmental benefits and local economic opportunities. Delivering well-targeted projects, interventions and campaigns that engage more residents and businesses to act, to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle, and ensure the correct disposal of all wastes, including items not collected at the kerbside.

This will promote a shift in attitudes towards waste, reducing the throw away culture, which along with commercial sector innovations and new approaches to product lifecycles, will ultimately lead to changes in the way waste and recycling services are designed, delivered and funded.

This strategy sets the foundation for that transformation in Kent, also preparing services for the transition to unitary governance and provides a framework for partnership delivery to 2030 to positively contribute towards achieving a circular economy in Kent in the future.

National Policy

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Under current waste legislation, local authorities in England must collect and dispose of household waste, and do so responsibly and safely, maintaining accurate documentation (duty of care). This includes the separate collection of paper, metal, plastic and glass (where practicable), applying the waste hierarchy, with a preference to reduce, reuse and recycle. This aims to achieve nationally set targets to reduce residual waste, increase recycling rates and minimise waste to landfill. (Appendix 1)

Recent waste reforms introduce several key policies (see figure 1) that are reshaping the cost, structure and operational requirements for local authorities:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR):** From 2025, packaging producers pay into a scheme, intended to cover the net costs of managing household packaging waste. This is providing significant funding and could provide financial relief to local authorities for packaging-related waste.
- **Simpler Recycling:** Mandates consistent collection of core materials (glass, metal, plastic, paper/card, food and garden waste) across businesses (2025) and households (2026), with collection of plastic wrappers/films from 2027. For household waste collections, this legislation specifies that food waste is to be collected weekly. While this aims to increase the range of materials captured, it also introduces capital and ongoing revenue costs for new containers, vehicles and staffing.
- **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS):** Expected October 2027, introduces a refundable deposit on single-use drinks containers between 150 millilitres and 3 litres made from PET plastic or metal. Retailers must charge this deposit, host return points (exemptions apply) and pay back the deposit for each container returned. This is expected to reduce the amount and value of packaging recovered from the kerbside, and in turn increase packaging recycling (gate fees) and reduce collections efficiency.
- **Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS):** From 2026, incineration and energy from waste facilities must begin to monitor and report their greenhouse gas emissions. From 2028, these emissions will have to be paid for, as an incentive to decarbonise. This will increase the cost of disposal of waste by incineration or energy from waste, further incentivising recycling and waste prevention.

On 1 December 2025, Defra published the revised Environmental Improvement Plan for England emphasising the need for partnership action. Within chapter 3: Circular Economy, Goal 5: Waste, it states 'We will minimise waste by designing it out of the system, reusing and recycling materials wherever possible' and 'Removing criminal threats to a circular economy'. This introduces Environment Act interim targets to 2030 for residual waste and per capita targets for residual municipal food, plastic, paper and card, metal and glass wastes, with commitments to reduce illegal waste sites and fly tipping incidents over the same period.

Defra is set to publish the long-awaited UK Circular Economy Strategy early in 2026, signalling a pivotal shift in policy aimed at embedding circularity into national and business sustainability

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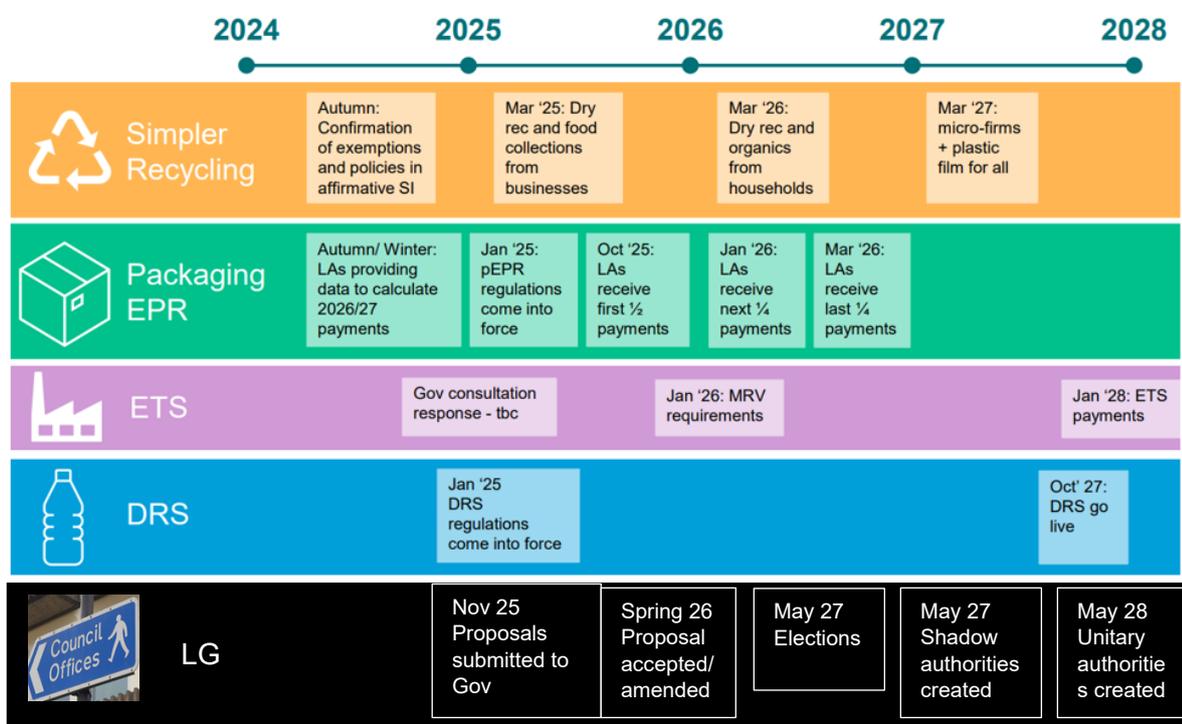
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strategies. This is set to expand upon the 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS), which introduced the policies now being implemented through new legislation.

Figure 1 : National picture



Local Policy

The [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039](#) (adopted March 2025) plays a significant role in shaping local waste management services, providing the waste planning strategy and development policies that are used in determining planning applications for new, or the expansion of existing, waste management and treatment infrastructure.

The plan's strategic objectives for waste management and relevant policy provisions underpins the partnership's commitment to managing waste sustainably in Kent:

- by applying the waste hierarchy to minimise overall household waste arisings and recover more value from discarded materials,
- ensuring waste operations prevent adverse impacts on health and the local environment,
- seeking to manage Kent waste arisings within the county or at the nearest available facility, achieving operational cost efficiencies and wider benefits such as local employment and reduced carbon emissions from transport and,
- ensure that all development is designed in accordance with circular economy principles.

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Current services

Each waste collection authority determines the frequency of collection of waste and recycling services, including charges to residents for specific services or for waste containers. Councils also offer on request collection services, such as clinical waste and bulky waste services.

As shown in Table 1, waste collections and frequency are broadly aligned with Simpler Recycling requirements with service changes planned by two collection authorities in 2026.

Table 1 Waste collection services provided

Waste Collection Authority	Residual waste	Paper & card recycling	Mixed packaging recycling	Food waste	Garden waste (charged for service)
Ashford BC Maidstone BC Swale BC (Joint contract)	Fortnightly	Fortnightly (With other mixed packaging)	Fortnightly	Weekly/ Mix of charged for or free food caddies	Fortnightly
Canterbury CC (LA Traded company)	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Weekly/ Charges for food caddies	Fortnightly
Dartford BC (Contracted service)	Weekly	Fortnightly (With other mixed packaging)	Fortnightly	No separate food waste collection##	Fortnightly
Dover DC and Folkestone & Hythe DC (Joint contract)	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Weekly/ Charges for food caddies	Fortnightly
Gravesham BC (in-house service)	Fortnightly	Fortnightly (With other mixed packaging)	Fortnightly	Weekly/ Free food caddies	Fortnightly
Sevenoaks DC (in-house service)	Weekly#	Weekly#	Weekly#	No separate food waste collection##	Fortnightly
Thanet DC	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Weekly/	Fortnightly

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(in-house service)				Free food caddies	
Tonbridge & Malling BC and Tunbridge Wells BC (Joint contract)	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Weekly/ Free food caddies	Fortnightly

#Service frequency changes from weekly to fortnightly are expected during 2026

##Food waste to be collected separately and weekly from 2026 (Implementation dates set by each local authority)

As the county's disposal authority Kent County Council operates six waste transfer stations, which receives household waste (recycling and residual) collected at the kerbside.

In addition, [19 Household Waste Recycling Centres](#) are provided for Kent residents to bring household waste, including DIY waste for safe disposal, recycling or reuse, also helping to mitigate fly tipping. These sites provide multiple separate waste collection bays or containers, to maximise recycling and reuse. Some sites accept hazardous wastes such as oil, batteries, chemicals and asbestos, providing householders with a safe disposal option, helping to prevent environmental pollution.

Multiple contracts are in place to get best value from the various waste streams ensuring waste is sorted and processed to maximise re-use, recycling, composting and energy recovery, with a continued drive to minimise the waste processed by the energy from waste plant.

The remaining residual waste is sent to the energy from waste plant at Allington, which generates electricity, avoiding landfill for almost all household waste collected and disposed of.

Locations managing household waste in Kent

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Key

●	Household Waste Recycling Centre (KCC managed)
●	Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre (KCC managed)
●	Waste Transfer Station (privately managed)

Fly tipping and littering (also termed waste crime)

All district, borough and city councils have statutory duties to enforce littering and individual (small-scale) fly tipping offences. These duties include clearing waste from public land and public spaces, investigating incidents to identify those responsible and to impose fines or prosecute where appropriate/able to do so.

If fly tipping is significant, involving multiple loads in a single location, usually more than 20 tonnes or where it is believed the waste is known or suspected to be hazardous waste, the incident(s) will be referred to the Environment Agency, which also has enforcement powers and duties, and will determine the action to be taken.

Performance to date

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Since April 2008, local authorities in England have been required to report data to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which enables monitoring of the following datasets; Residual waste per household (kg/hh), recycling and composting rate (%), municipal waste to landfill (%) and the number of fly tipping incidents reported and actions taken.

These datasets provided a focus of the previous joint strategy which included Kent-wide targets, performance up to 2023-24 is summarised below.

Residual waste per household¹

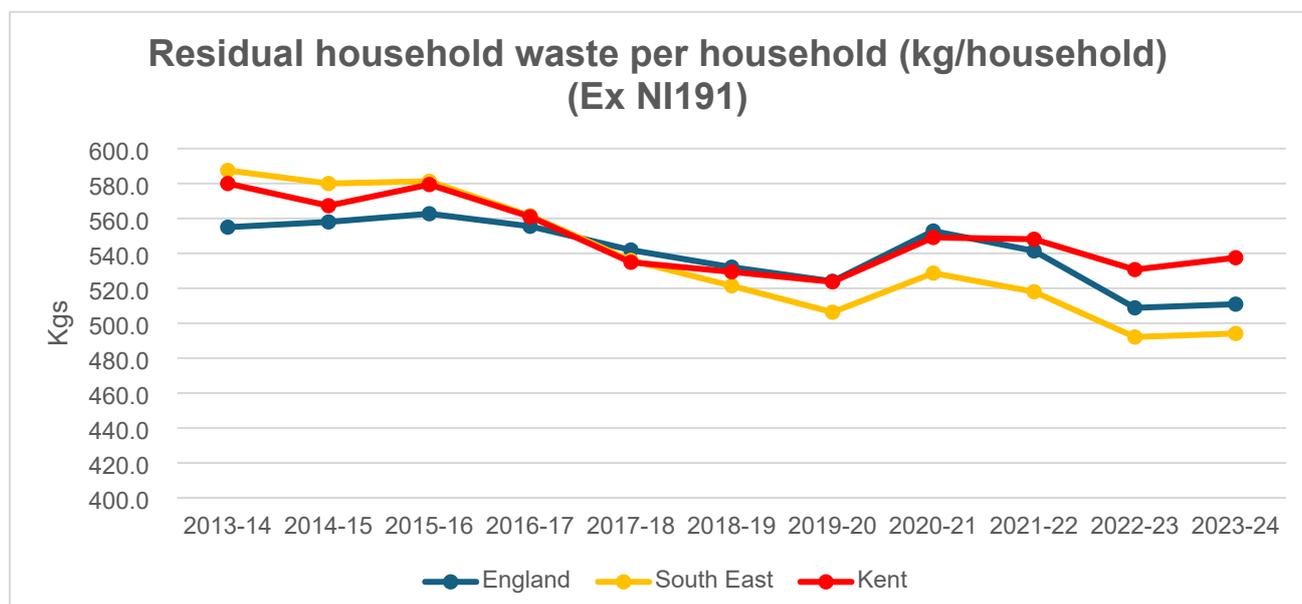
Reducing the amount of residual waste per household is the desired trend.

Reviewing trends over the last 10 years, *residual waste per household* in Kent had been steadily reducing until 2020-21, the first year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, when household waste increased. This gave rise to significant shifts in household habits and waste arisings, continuing after national lockdowns had ended, this includes increased online shopping and more people working from home. By 2023-24 residual waste had not returned to pre-pandemic levels and Kent is now underperforming compared with national and regional trends, which have seen reductions to below pre-pandemic levels.

Positively, four Kent Districts⁶ have achieved reductions in residual waste per household (between 7% and 20%) below 2018-19 levels.

Figure 2: Trends for residual household waste per household

Kent County average compared to average for south east and all- England authorities (ex-National indicator 191)



Previous strategy target (2018): A year-on-year reduction to Kent-wide residual household waste per household tonnage.

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Area	2018-19 Baseline	Performance at 2020-21 (compared to 2018-19)	Performance at 2023-24 (compared to 2018-19)
Kent	529 kg/hh	549 kg/hh Increase of 20kg/hh	537.5kg/hh Increase of 8.5kg/hh
South-east region	521kg/hh	529kg/hh Increase of 8kg/hh	494kg/hh Decrease of 27kg/hh
All-England	532kg/hh	553kg/hh Increase of 21kg/hh	511kg/hh Decrease of 21kg/hh

Reuse, recycling and composting rates¹

Increasing the percentage of household waste that is reused, recycled and composted in Kent is the desired trend.

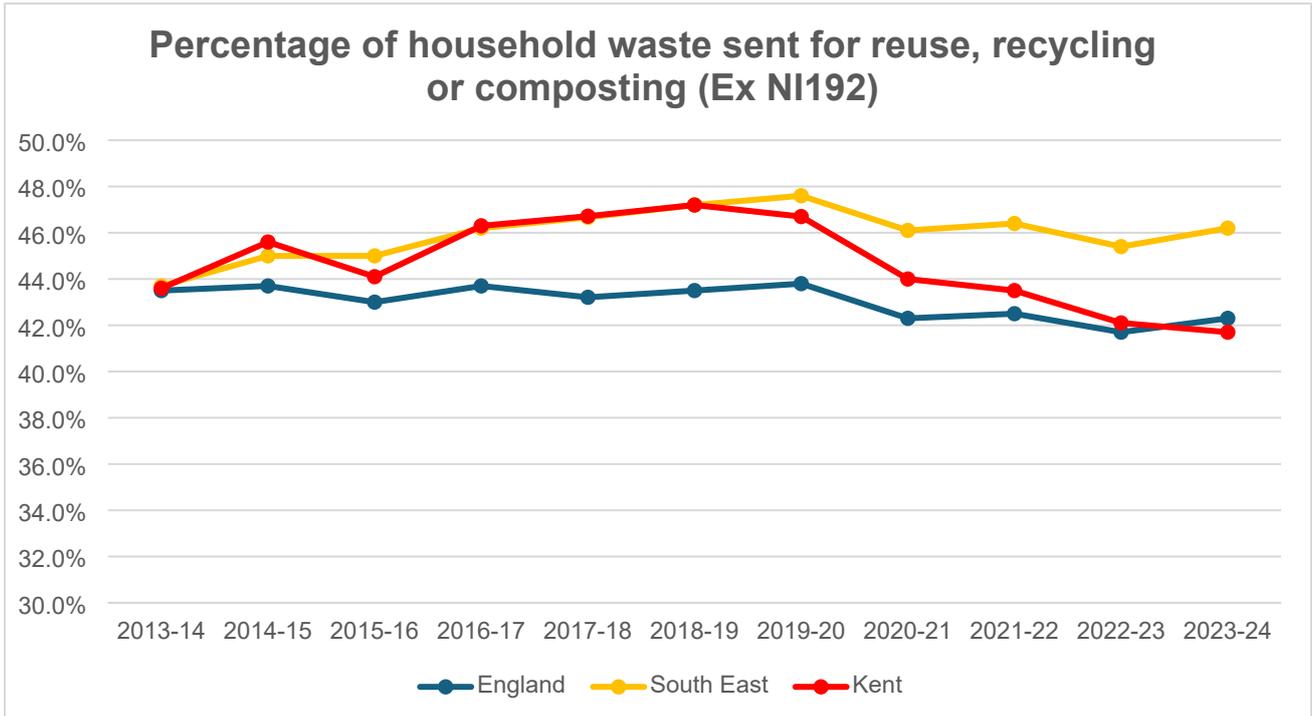
Like many authorities in England, *reuse, recycling and composting rates* have stagnated over the last 10 years. 2018-19 marked the peak for Kent’s average recycling rate at 47.2% followed by a sharper decline than other similar authorities in the south east. By 2023-24 Kent’s average recycling rate had fallen to below the all-England average for the first time in a decade, indicating a need for a renewed focus on recycling initiatives, drawing on the best practice of high-performing authorities in England who have achieved recycling rates above 60%.

Over the same period three Districts⁷ have been successful in increasing their recycling rates (by an additional 1%,4% and 6%) outperforming the England and south-east region.

Figure 3: Trends in reuse, recycling and composting rates

Kent County compared to average for south east and all- England authorities (ex-National Indicator 192)

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Previous strategy target (2018): To recycle or compost at least 50% of household waste.

Area	2018-19 Baseline	Performance at 2020-21 (compared to 2018-19)	Performance at 2023-24 (compared to 2018-19)
Kent	47.2%	44%	41.7% (-5.5%)
South-east region	47.2%	46.1%	46.2% (-1%)
All-England	43.5%	42.3%	42.3% (-1.2%)

Municipal waste to landfill¹

Reducing the amount of municipal waste sent to landfill is the desired trend.

In contrast, Kent has achieved an exemplary low level of *municipal waste to landfill*, outperforming both national and regional averages. Almost all residual waste is sent to an energy from waste plant, generating electricity, which is fed into the national grid or used to power the facility. This disposal route lowers the level of harmful greenhouse gas emissions compared to landfill, especially methane gas. Despite this success, more needs to be done to reduce valuable resources being lost

Footnote 1 Source data [Local authority collected waste management - annual results - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results)

Footnote 2 Source data [Population forecasts - Kent County Council](https://www.kent.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-and-democracy/council-and-democracy/council-and-democracy/council-and-democracy/population-forecasts-kent-county-council) KCC Housing Led Forecast 2021

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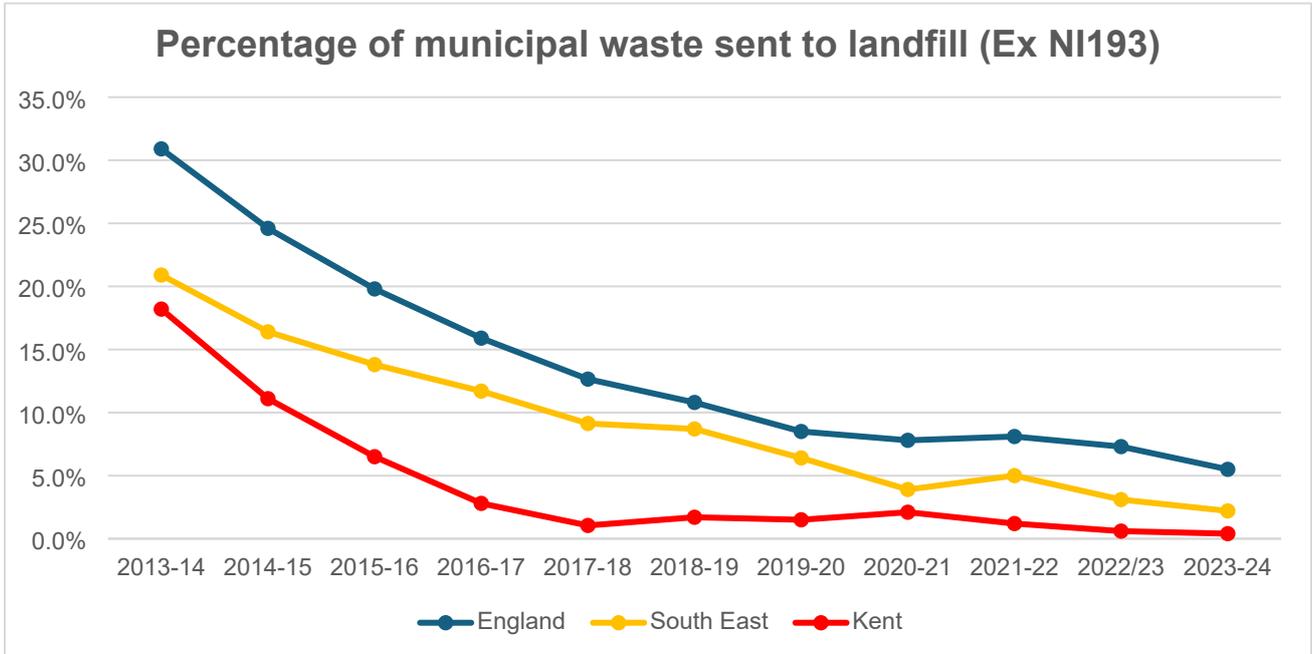
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through this treatment method, prioritising action to reduce waste and to reuse and repair materials, in addition to increasing the recycling and composting rate.

Figure 4: Trends for municipal waste sent to landfill

Kent County compared to average for south east and all- England authorities (ex-National indicator 193)



Previous strategy target (2018): Ensure no more than 2% of Kent’s municipal waste ends up in landfill.

Area	2018-19 Baseline	Performance at 2020-21 (compared to 2018-19)	Performance at 2023-24 (compared to 2018-19)
Kent	2%	2.1%	0.4% (-1.6%)
South-east region	9%	3.9%	2.2% (-5.1%)
All-England	11%	7.8%	5.5% (-5.5%)

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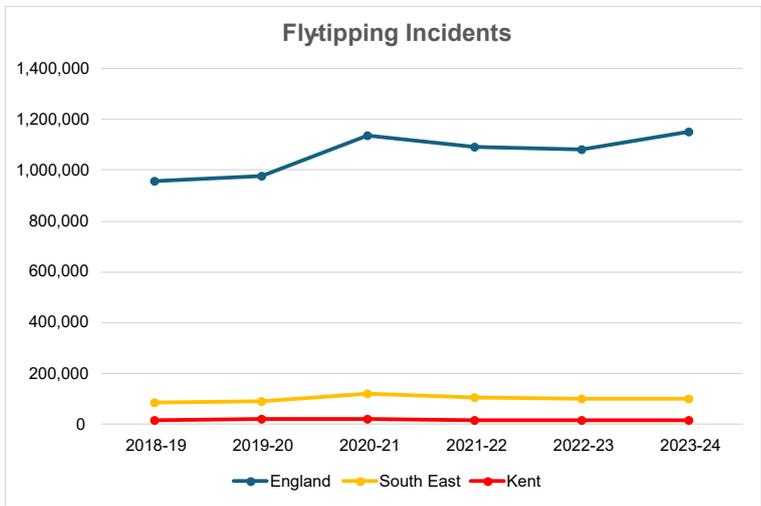
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Fly tipping⁴

Reducing the total tonnage and the number of fly tipping incidents involving waste from households is the desired trend.

Most of the fly tipping that is reported nationally involves waste from households, with the majority dumped on highways, footpaths and council-owned land. Over the past 10 years the number of incidents reported by local authorities in Kent has increased from just over 12,500 incidents in 2013-14 to 14,540 in 2023-24, with a peak of 19,470 incidents in 2019-20. This trend contrasts to the south east and national trends, which shows incidents are increasing and at a much higher rate nationally. This perhaps reflects the success of the multi-agency partnership approach in Kent, supported by a dedicated intelligence analyst, committed to disrupting this illegal activity and wherever possible, using the full enforcement powers available.

Figure 5 Number of fly tipping incidents reported by local authorities



Number of fly tipping incidents

Area	2018-19 Baseline	Performance at 2020-21	Performance at 2023-24
Kent	16,909	18,714	14,540
South-east region	84,479	121,283	101,694
All-England	957,157	1,138,347	1,152,617

Factors influencing performance

There are multiple factors influencing the amount of household waste arising and recycling rates. These include but are not limited to collection type and frequencies, demographics, population

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growth, rurality, housing types and consumer confidence, and these factors also play a part in influencing resident perceptions of waste management and levels of engagement, which impact the ability to achieve the desired performance levels.

In response to legislative and economic influences, packaging manufacturers have changed material type or density over time, reducing the complexity of packaging materials and for some items reducing the weight, so that similar volumes of packaging items collected for recycling weigh less than they did in the past. This is most apparent in plastic drinks bottles. This is further influenced by the Extended Producer Regulations for Packaging, which provides a financial incentive to reduce the type or amount of packaging placed on the market.

Food waste adds significantly to the weight of residual waste collected and this valuable resource is lost if not separated by residents for recycling. In the 10 Districts who already offer a food waste recycling service, participation rates in food waste recycling have been low both in Kent and nationally, compared to participation in packaging recycling.

To be successful local authority waste services rely on residents to act on information provided, to correctly separate their waste and use the correct disposal route for other wastes not accepted at the kerbside. Resident engagement requires continuous and consistent efforts to remain effective, especially in areas of high residential transience, such as those with a higher proportion of rented properties and flats or significant student populations.

How we compare

Comparing Kent's performance to other counties in the south-east, such as Essex and Hampshire, who have similar population size and number of households, shows that residual waste per household in Kent has not returned to lower levels as quickly as these counties.

Figure 6: Trends for residual household waste per household (Kent and comparator authorities)

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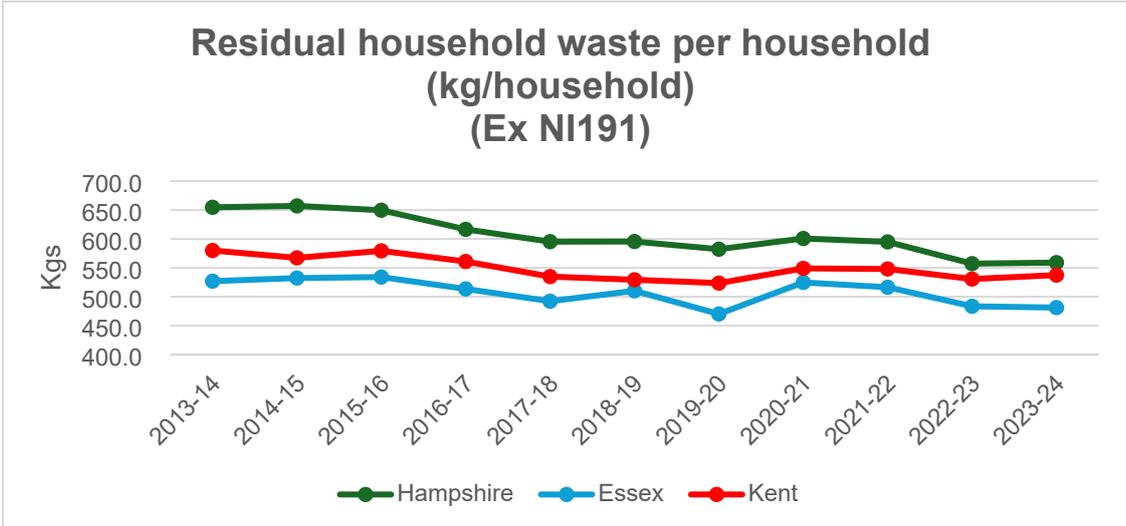
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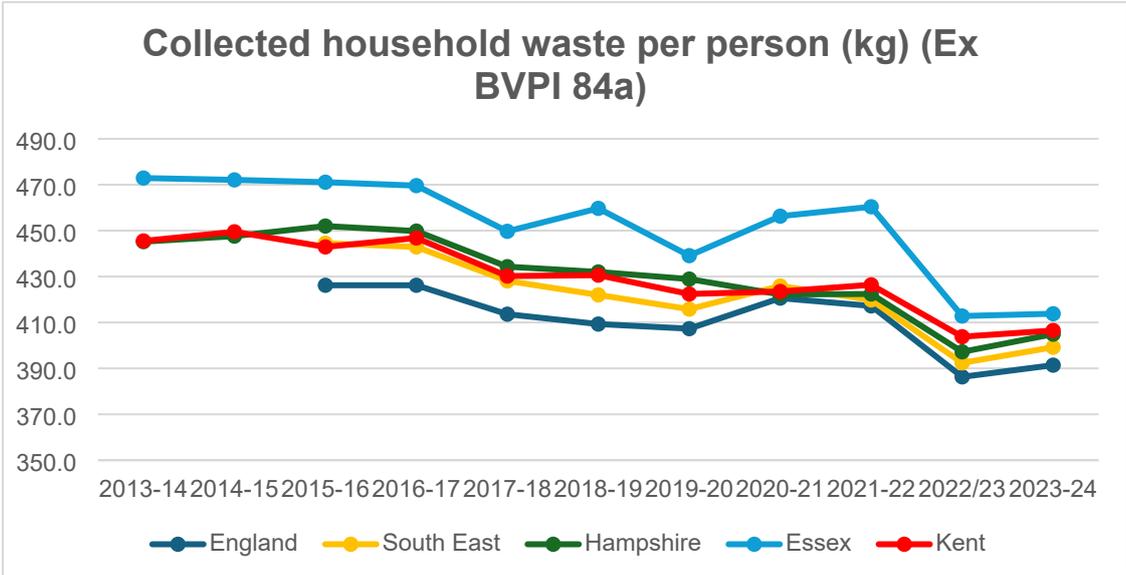
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In 2023/24 Kent’s per capita waste generation (406.5kg total waste per person) was slightly lower than that of Essex (414kg), suggesting relatively better waste minimisation efforts, and marginally higher than Hampshire (405kg), which may reflect differences in population behaviour and service models. As can be seen in Figure 6, Kent and the comparator authorities Essex and Hampshire are higher than the south east and England averages, confirming more needs to be done to reduce total household waste arising.

Figure 7: Trends for total collected household waste per person



Note: data for England and the south east are not available prior to 2025-26

Packaging recycling rates are similar across the three counties, whereas Essex have a higher rate for food and garden waste at 25% compared to 20% for Kent and 17% for Hampshire. Higher rates

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of garden and food waste recycled are also common factors for local authorities achieving the highest recycling rates in England of over 60%.

In exploring these differences, it was noted that Essex County Council had successfully trialed a food waste recycling initiative. This led to a trial in the Dover and Folkestone & Hythe Districts in autumn 2024, increasing food waste captured between 11% and 14% with a subsequent roll-out to a further six districts during 2025. This campaign has seen food recycling increase by over 20% on average, compared to the previous year, across the eight participating districts.

Contamination of mixed packaging recycling ranges differs due to collection method. In 2023-24, for co-mingled packaging recycling collections (including paper and card), contamination rates ranged from 11% to 15% with food, textiles and wet paper being frequent contaminants.

For twin-stream packaging recycling collections (excluding paper and card), contamination rates ranged from 7% to 19% with general waste (black bags), other mixed (hard) plastics and mixed/shredded paper as the frequent contaminants.

Projected growth and impacts²

Kent is expected to see an increase in population of 96,600 people and an increase of 55,000 dwellings by 2030. If total household waste generation remains at the 2023/24 level of 955 kg per household, this could result in an additional 52,525 tonnes of waste per year.

Managing an additional 52,525 tonnes of waste annually will have substantial cost implications, these costs will increase further from 2028, with the expansion of the scope of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme to encompass greenhouse gas emissions from Energy from Waste (EfW) processes such as the plant at Allington, which treats Kent's residual waste.

This level of growth will place significant pressure on existing waste collection, treatment, and disposal infrastructure, requiring co-ordinated investment and planning across the partnership to ensure that sufficient collection regimes are in place and that infrastructure both existing and planned, is sufficient to manage this increase.

To manage the projected waste growth and associated costs, Kent will need to consider:

- Building new and or expanded waste facilities.
- Investing in recycling infrastructure to reduce reliance on incineration.
- Enhancing waste prevention and reuse initiatives to curb per-household waste generation.
- Using data and evidence to design more impactful communications and behaviour change interventions that encourage more residents to reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Leveraging Extended Producer Regulation funding to offset costs of packaging waste management.

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- Monitoring Emissions Trading Scheme developments to anticipate future incineration cost increases and explore alternatives like carbon capture or heat network integration.

The opportunities and challenges

This strategy has been informed by:

- a series of stakeholder engagement sessions
- knowledge of existing and new legislation planned
- existing data trends and insight
- new data and insight collected during 2025

This identified a range of opportunities and challenges (listed in Appendix 2), some of which will be used to develop future annual partnership action plans.

The additional data and insight collected in 2025 has expanded the range of available data to use to design new behaviour change interventions, inform and assess the impact of projects, and ultimately measure the return on the investment of finance and staff resources.

The data includes:

- Current collection and disposal service baseline costs and carbon impacts, and modelling to show the likely impacts on costs, recycling rates and overall levels of household waste due to Simpler Recycling and Deposit Return Scheme legislation
- Waste composition audit and analysis of collected residual and food waste across all districts
- Resident food waste survey (countywide)
- Behaviour change research, comparing Kent with national data and insights
- Trends in fly tipping

The analysis of this data has concluded a continued focus on achieving efficient service delivery, including developing new service offers that mitigate the costs of planned legislation changes and prepare waste services for local government reorganisation. Essential to this is engaging Kent residents and wider partners to make positive changes that unlock the environmental and economic advantages of delivering a circular economy. Some of the conclusions drawn from this analysis is provided in more detail here:

Modelling of future legislation (Deposit Return Scheme 2027) indicates a likely negative impact on packaging recycling rates at the kerbside. This is due to drinks bottles and cans (plastic and metal) proposed to be captured separately through return points, reducing both the tonnage and relative value of recycled packaging collected at the kerbside. This tonnage loss is unlikely to be offset, by the addition of flexible plastics and films due to be collected through Simpler Recycling legislation in the same year.

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This will likely create waste disposal cost pressures, as gate fees for recycling increase, based on the change to the quality and commercial value of dry mixed packaging recycling collected.

With energy from waste (EfW) processes planned to be brought within the scope of the Emissions Trading Scheme in 2028, a sharp focus is needed on the types of materials within the residual waste, that produce the most greenhouse gas emissions. There will be a carbon price applied to these emissions, impacting disposal costs, with increases forecast in the £millions. Higher greenhouse gas emitting materials, such as textiles and plastics accounts for 25.7% of the current residual waste stream³ and diverting these items from residual waste will need to be targeted through improvement projects considering waste minimisation, reuse, repair and options that further increase the capture of recyclable materials, as a high proportion of these materials are still within the residual waste stream.

Kent County Council's revised disposal strategy complements this strategy and aims to significantly reduce the amount of household waste sent for incineration (energy from waste), to reduce or mitigate the increasing costs of residual waste disposal, including impacts of legislation due to be implemented (refer to National Policy section). Investing funds to influence resident behaviours is being prioritised, initially targeting food waste as the largest proportion of recyclable material in residual waste by weight. To be successful, requires initiatives delivered through partnership action.

A waste composition audit in 2025, sampling waste across all local authority areas, confirmed that up to 52% of Kent's residual household waste could be recycled, in addition to the recycling that is already captured (when including all materials to be separately collected under Simpler Recycling legislation). It also identified that 63% of food waste currently collected separately is avoidable food waste, such as cooked food or fruit and vegetables that have spoiled. To be successful in achieving improved recycling rates of recyclable packaging and food, much more needs to be done to encourage and support residents to reduce the waste they produce and separate waste correctly. By wasting less, especially food, will also help residents to save money.

[The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#), supported by their behavioural science specialist subsidiary - [Behaviour Change](#) - were commissioned to complete research to understand Kent residents' attitudes and behaviours towards waste and recycling and compare this with national data. This research concluded that recycling behaviours are influenced by a mix of practical, emotional and informational barriers. It confirmed that Kent residents are largely satisfied with their services, although there are key areas for improvement, such as food waste services. Some residents reported lacking trust in their local council and do not actively seek out council information to inform their recycling decisions, which leads to incorrect disposal choices. A lack of feedback on what happens to waste after collection, or a perceived lack of care by collection crews, also negatively affects residents' sense of worthwhileness and this reduces the personal motivation needed to correctly separate waste for recycling.

In recent years, fly tipping has continued to increase, with criminals perceiving it is a low risk-high profit activity, with the level of penalties not delivering an effective deterrent. Nationally, there has been an increase in unlicensed traders collecting waste illegally, many advertising on social media, with householders drawn in by offers to dispose of waste at low cost, coupled with limited awareness of their duty of care responsibilities, to check that companies are licensed to remove

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household waste.

There has also been an increase in the number of larger sites, where multiple loads of waste are being deposited, most likely the result of serious organised crime. The ability to act on these locally is limited, as these cases require lengthy and complex multi-agency approaches, and the use of enforcement powers only available to the Environment Agency. A multi-agency approach to disrupt fly tipping and illegal waste activities continues and is deemed an effective approach, until legislative and other system-wide changes are introduced.

These insights highlight the importance of continued partnership working to develop countywide initiatives, coupled with a holistic approach to transforming waste systems and services, prioritising and focusing efforts through a few strategic aims, outlined below.

Setting the future direction

The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) will lead the transformation of waste services in Kent, to a circular, low-carbon, waste system that protects the environment, delivers best value, and empowers communities to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle through inclusive, efficient, and innovative services.

By retaining the value of material resources flowing through Kent, we will generate green jobs, support skills and training, and deliver economic, environmental, and wellbeing benefits for local communities and beyond.

We will deliver integrated, high-performing, efficient waste and resource services across Kent, through collaboration, innovation, evidence-based decision-making, investment in infrastructure, and by engaging and supporting residents to make sustainable choices.

The partnership is committed to developing plans framed by four strategic aims:

1. Delivery of operational excellence

- Delivery of efficient, sustainable, high-quality waste collection and disposal services.
- Collaborate across tiers and with private/public partners
- Reduce costs through efficiency and resource optimisation
- Work towards the removal of any barriers to waste minimisation, recycling, reuse and repair

2. Supporting a pathway to a Circular Economy

- Support sustainable economic growth
- Create and raise awareness of green job opportunities
- Promote efficient use of resources, retaining their highest value
- Accelerate the transition to net zero emissions

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- Continue to minimise landfill
- Increase recycling performance

3. Improving performance through behaviour change

- Foster behavioural change through evidence-led education and communication
- Ensure services are accessible, equitable, and responsive
- Promote and support local reuse and repair initiatives
- Educate residents about their duty of care to reduce the environmental damage caused by the fly tipping of household waste

4. Support the transition to unitary waste management system(s)

- Enable strategic planning and investment by consolidating governance and accountability
- Enhance data integration and performance monitoring across the waste value chain
- Progress opportunities to align collection and disposal services to reduce duplication and improve service delivery

Delivery of aims

Aim 1 Delivery of operational excellence

Current position:

Seven District/Borough councils have joint procurement contracts and continue to seek added value from these.

Planning changes to services to meet Simpler Recycling legislation, providing recycling services to all households

Some Districts do not have in-District waste transfer station facilities, requiring collected waste to be transported out of area and/or to private sector run facilities

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Future Plans:

Short term:

- Review opportunities for consistent collections across the county, including Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable (TEEP) assessment of the recycling of paper and card, to enhance partnership work and work towards achieving or exceeding 50% recycling rate
- Investigating a system of shared risk and reward
- Take advantage of new funding and grants to invest in improving services and trial new initiatives
- Progress plans to establish new or improved waste transfer station facilities in Folkestone & Hythe District and for Dartford/Gravesham Boroughs

Long term:

- Use the opportunity of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) to further streamline services
- Explore further opportunities to reduce financial barriers for residents, achieve higher recycling rates, more reuse and less fly tipping of household waste
- Deliver efficient and effective services through a whole system approach
- More joined-up procurement and contract negotiations that seeks to deliver additional social value
- Further develop the approach to future infrastructure planning through the partnership

Aim 2 Supporting a pathway to a Circular Economy

Current position:

Ten out of twelve districts currently offer food waste collections

The county average recycling rate for 2023-24 was 41.7% with two waste collection authorities recycling over 50%, and one close to achieving 50%, six more achieved rates between 42.9% and 46.8%

KCC has been successful in securing grant funding to deliver education, re-use and repair initiatives, and continues to seek new opportunities and funding

KCC is delivering re-use shops in partnership with one of its main contractors and continues to increase the number of separate recycling streams offered at the household waste recycling centres.

Future Plans:

Short term:

- Align and adapt services to Simpler Recycling legislation

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- Dartford Borough and Sevenoaks District Councils will introduce food waste collection services for all residents
- Sevenoaks District Council will change residual waste collection frequency, which will further align with other areas in the county.
- All other authorities will introduce packaging recycling and/or food recycling services where these services are not currently offered. This will predominantly be to residents living in flats and homes of multiple occupation (HMOs).
- Take advantage of new funding and grants to invest in improving waste and recycling services

Long term:

- Preparing for the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme and Emissions Trading Scheme scope expansion
- Develop a Circular Economy roadmap for Kent
- Target the reduction of high carbon-emitting wastes in the residual waste stream to reduce the financial burdens expected from the expansion of the scope of ETS legislation in 2028

Aim 3: Improving Performance through behaviour change

Current position:

By March 2026, all Kent collection authorities currently offering a food waste service had delivered a food waste recycling campaign.

With the support of [Re:London](#), a best practice approach for communal recycling services has been used in upskilling waste and recycling officers across Kent and developing local improvement plans.

In some areas, recycling is significantly contaminated with non-recyclable wastes leading to more rejected loads, lower recycling rates and higher costs as this waste is diverted to energy from waste.

The partnership established a refreshed communications group, involving officers from all authorities. This group identify communications priorities in response to new data, insight and legislative changes and design and deliver campaigns and actions.

Kent County Council has funded the development of a five-year Behaviour Change Strategy, commissioning expertise from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Behaviour Change unit.

Future Plans:

Short term:

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- Continue to increase the capture and recycling of food waste, building on the 2025 food waste campaign
- Improve local authority managed communal recycling facilities, based on proven best practice and engage with social and private sector housing providers to deliver the same
- Trial new approaches to reduce contamination of dry mixed packaging recycling (DMR)
- Deliver a more joined-up approach to resident communications and campaigns
- Deliver targeted campaigns, such as battery safety and fly tipping prevention, to encourage residents to make good disposal choices, meet their duty of care and help reduce costs incurred by local authorities (due to fly tipping clean-up & enforcement and losses from waste fires)
- Continue to develop the re-use shops initiative and bid for funding to pilot and provide proof of concept for new re-use and repair offerings

Long term:

- Further build on successes with targeted behaviour change interventions and communications that reduce overall household waste, increases recycling and re-use
- Build on re-use and repair initiatives and campaigns to achieve mainstreamed offers

Aim 4: Support the transition to a unitary waste management system(s)

Current position:

The Kent local authority leaders have developed several blueprints, proposing the future administrative boundaries of Kent. These must be approved by Central Government, who have also set out the key milestones to be delivered as a route map to Local Government Reorganisation. The Kent Resource Partnership members have provided inputs to the process helping to identify critical risks and opportunities for waste systems and services.

Future Plans

Short term:

- Kent Resource Partnership members to play an active part in the development of the waste management system(s) under the new administrative boundaries (when known)

Long term:

- Support the implementation of the new waste management system(s)
- Develop new partnership arrangements, as required, to retain a Kent-wide focus on delivering efficient and effective services and enable new innovations

The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) will agree priorities and deliver an annual action plan, in line with the strategic aims, drawing on opportunities identified (Appendix 2) combining this with new

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information, data and insight. Projects and additional resources will be primarily funded from the KRP projects budget, supplemented where needed by securing funds from external grants.

Service changes

April 2026 Simpler Recycling – Implement packaging recycling and food waste recycling services, extending to the majority of Kent households

April 2027 Simpler Recycling – Implement collection of flexible plastic wrappings/films

2026-31 Further expansion of re-use shops at household waste recycling centres

Infrastructure

Summer 2026 Pepperhill (Gravesend) waste transfer station annexe planning submission

Autumn 2027 New waste transfer station (Folkestone & Hythe) expected operational

Autumn 2028 Pepperhill (Gravesend) waste transfer station annexe expected operational

2029 Church Marshes (Sittingbourne) household waste recycling centre relocation and redevelopment of existing waste transfer station (pending feasibility and planning stages)

2030 North Farm (Tunbridge Wells) waste transfer station relocation and household waste recycling centre redevelopment (pending feasibility and planning stages)

Resident engagement and behaviour change

Spring 2026 Campaign to educate residents on their duty of care to reduce fly tipping of household waste

2026-27 Continue food waste recycling messaging and trial behaviour change interventions; Raise awareness of the journey of waste, the benefits of recycling and what can/can't be recycled; Campaign to reduce contamination of packaging recycling/District pilot interventions

2027-28 Roll out successful pilot interventions to more Districts/Develop and pilot further interventions; Promote DRS; Target reduction of hard plastics and textiles in residual waste streams(reuse or recycling opportunities)

2028-2029 Continue to target hard to reach/engage residents and high-carbon waste streams in residual waste.

Measuring success

As outlined above, the previous strategy focused on measuring and reporting the data required by Defra (ex-National Indicators NI191, 192 and 193 plus fly tipping data). These provide long-term trends and allow Kent authorities to benchmark performance against other similar local authorities, the south-east region and all-England averages. This limited set of measures no longer satisfies the needs of the partnership or legislation introduced since 2018.

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The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy (2018) reinforced and added to existing national targets to set more ambitious recycling rates, further reduce waste sent to landfill and reduce avoidable waste, specifically targeting plastics. In the same year, the 25 Year Environment Plan was published, the first statutory Environmental Improvement Plan (further revised December 2025), followed by the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and the Environment Act 2021.

This framework introduces more ambitious targets up to 2050, relevant to waste collection and waste disposal authorities in England. These targets are summarised in Figure 7:

Figure 8 Targets set by waste legislation (England)

By 2025

! To recycle 55% of municipal waste

✓To reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill to 10% (already achieved in Kent)

By 2030

! To recycle 60% of municipal waste

✓Prevent food waste going to landfill (already achieved in Kent)

75% recycling rate for packaging waste

Reduce residual waste per capita to 437kg or less, a 24% reduction (interim target - Environmental Improvement Plan 2025)

By 2035

! To recycle 65% of municipal waste

2042

Reduce residual waste per person by 50% based on 2019 levels (287kg per capita or less)

By 2050

Eliminating avoidable waste of all kinds

The Kent Resource Partnership members will continue to meet the reporting requirements as required by Defra and commits to developing additional performance measures and targets, aligned with the aims of this strategy, as summarised in Figure 8 (These measures will be refined further as more guidance comes forward such as the measurement of pEPR 'efficient and effective' and the plans for Local Government Reorganisation).

The intention is to track local progress in influencing residents' behaviours to achieve higher levels of performance, such as reducing total and residual waste, diverting more waste to re-use and repair (where data is available) and to reduce the number of incidents of household waste that is fly tipped in Kent.

Figure 9 Monitoring achievement of the strategic aims

Strategic Aim	Action	Measure	Target
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1. Delivery of operational excellence	1a Develop improvement plans that deliver 'efficient and effective' waste management (Use pEPR assessments as the starting point for measurement)	1a pEPR measure of efficient and effective (as defined by Defra/Pack UK)	1a Maximise the level of pEPR annual payments awarded by avoiding performance-based deductions (based on efficient and effective methodology applied)
	1b Develop new waste infrastructure that allows the transfer of waste to the disposal authority, within or as close to the boundary of the District/Borough it is collected from	1b Number of collection authorities paid tipping away costs (and total £s paid)	1b Reduce the number of collection authorities eligible for 'tipping away' costs
	1c Reduce the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste	1c Measure the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste sent to energy from waste (and cost impact, £s per tonne)	1c Reduce year-on-year the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste sent to energy from waste
2. Supporting a pathway to a Circular Economy	2a Deliver services aligned with Simpler Recycling legislation 2b Develop targeted interventions that reduce overall waste collected 2c Develop targeted interventions that increase the capture of recyclable items 2d Develop infrastructure and promote options that increase the capture of items collected for reuse	2a Number of Districts/Boroughs compliant 2b Total waste collected per household and per person (2023/24 baseline 932 kg/hh and 406.5 kg/person) 2c Proportion of total household waste collected for recycling 2d Tonnage of materials diverted to re-use (from kerbside and HWRCs)	2a Compliance with Simpler Recycling (TEEP assessments completed where required) 2b Aim for year-on-year reductions (no set target) 2c Increase the proportion of total household waste that is collected for recycling** **Adjusted for DRS impacts 2d Increased reuse tonnage (at HWRC and kerbside)
3. Improving performance through behaviour change	Develop targeted interventions or campaigns that help residents to: 3a reduce the waste they produce	Number of successful interventions and campaigns delivered and the results of each Examples:	Performance target(s) set for each intervention or campaign

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	<p>3b increase the number of items reused and recycled (Prioritise food, textiles, electricals and hard plastics)</p> <p>3c correctly separate their waste to reduce contamination of recycling</p> <p>3d increase the number of items repaired</p> <p>3e fulfil their duty of care to prevent their waste being fly tipped</p>	<p>3b Tonnage of separate food waste collected and % diverted from residual (using waste composition baseline 2025)</p> <p>3b % of residual waste diverted due to increased capture of electricals, textiles and hard plastics</p> <p>3c % of recycling that is contaminated</p> <p>3d Data for repaired items not yet readily available</p> <p>3e Number of reported fly tipped incidents on public land</p>	
4. Support the transition to unitary waste management system(s)	Kent Resource Partnership proactively engages with and contributes to a whole system approach and prepares services for implementation.	To be developed as part of the Local Government Reorganisation planning process Example: Deliver expected standards of waste collection and disposal services from day one (vesting day)	To be developed as part of the Local Government Reorganisation planning process Example: No significant interruption to service delivery for residents

Glossary of terms

Circular Economy	A system where materials never become waste with benefits to the natural environment by decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. Products and materials are kept in circulation through processes such as maintenance, re-use, repair, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling and composting.
Co-mingled collection	Clean and dry mixed recycling, including paper, cardboard, plastics, metal cans and glass, collected in a single recycling container.
Commercial waste	Waste generated by businesses and commercial activities. Including from offices, schools, hospitals, shops, factories, agriculture, sport, recreation and entertainment. It also includes any business run from home such as childminding, hairdressing, beauty treatments and dog grooming. This waste may be similar to household waste but must be managed and disposed of separately.

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Communal waste/recycling	Waste services provided to properties such as flats, where waste bins are shared by several households and normally sited in a bin store or specific external location.
Composting	The degradation of organic wastes in the presence of oxygen to produce fertiliser or soil conditioner. This can either be an enclosed process (in-vessel) or operated as an 'open windrow' process.
Defra	The UK Government Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Dry mixed recycling (DMR)	Recyclable materials that are clean and dry and free from food contamination, such as paper, cardboard, metal cans, plastic containers and glass.
The Environment Agency	The Environment Agency for England was established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment (formed by the Environment Act 1995). It regulates emissions of and pollutants to air, land and water. This includes the regulation and enforcement of waste management activities.
Energy from Waste (EfW)	The conversion of waste into a useable form of energy, often heat or electricity.
Fly tipping	The illegal disposal of household, industrial, commercial or other 'controlled' waste.
Food waste	All food that is discarded by households, including uneaten cooked food, fruit and vegetable peelings, meat/fish bones and egg shells, any food that is past its 'use by' date or food that is no longer edible (stored incorrectly or for too long)
Avoidable food waste	Discarded edible food that could have been consumed. May be due to buying or cooking too much, stored incorrectly or for too long so the food is past its 'use by' date or is no longer edible/has gone off or rotted.
Green jobs	Work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative and service activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. This includes protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, conserving natural resources by reducing energy, materials and water consumption and avoidance of waste and pollution.
Greenhouse gas emissions	These are gases released by natural or man-made processes that lead to heat being trapped within the earth's atmosphere. Gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases.
Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	An individual building or part thereof, where two or more households or at least 3 individuals who constitute more than one household, share a basic amenity such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities, and the building is the occupants' main residence.
Household waste (subset of municipal waste)	Waste from domestic properties, including waste brought to Household Waste Recycling Centres, material collected for recycling and composting and street cleansing waste.
Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)	Sites operated by the waste disposal authority where residents within a specified area can bring and dispose of their household waste, in

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	particular bulky waste, normally free of charge (with some exceptions).
Kerbside collection	Any regular collection of household waste from private households, including flats (with communal waste facilities) and from commercial or industrial premises (where provided). It excludes collection services requested ad-hoc on demand.
Kent Resource Partnership	The body that is entrusted to develop and deliver the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. It is made up of senior officers reporting to a board of elected councillors, representing the 12 district, borough and city councils and Kent County Council.
Landfill sites	Areas of land in which waste is deposited, often disused quarries. Where there are no ready-made voids, the waste is deposited above ground and the landscape is contoured (known as land-raising).
Local Government Reorganisation	The process of restructuring local authorities and their boundaries in two-tier areas (a County Council and district, borough and city councils), including those with existing unitary councils. A policy being implemented by the UK Government in England intended to achieve local government savings and efficiencies.
Municipal waste (also known as LACMW - Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste)	Household and business waste collected by local authorities and which is similar in nature and composition as required by the Landfill Directive. (includes all household waste, street litter/sweepings, waste delivered to local authority managed recycling points/sites and municipal parks and gardens wastes). Local authority collected waste – definition of terms - GOV.UK
Per capita	Often used in place of per head or per person.
Product lifecycle	The four stages of a product: Introduction, growth, maturity and decline.
Recycling	The processing of waste materials into the same product or a different product. Many household wastes such as paper, cardboard, glass, metals and some plastics can be recycled.
Recovery	Obtaining value from waste through re-use, recycling, composting or other means such as anaerobic digestion(organic wastes) or energy recovery.
Residual waste	Waste that is not recycled or reused including recycling materials that are contaminated. When collected from households or commercial businesses it is often termed as 'black bag' or 'general' waste. It also includes waste taken by residents to the Household Waste Recycling Centres that cannot be recycled or reused and is segregated in the waste to energy collection containers or bays.
Re-use	Items that are designed to be used multiple times such as refillable containers, re-usable packaging and bags. This also includes items no longer of use to one person but is still fully working or in a usable condition and can be used by someone else.
Re-use, recycling and composting rate	The proportion of household waste collected by local authorities in Kent (Local authority collections and at Household Waste Recycling Centres) that is re-used, recycled or composted

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Sustainable waste management	Using material resources efficiently to reduce the amount of waste produced. Where waste is generated, dealing with it in a way that actively contributes to and balances the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations.
Twin-stream collection	Clean and dry recycling, which is separated into two streams. One for paper and cardboard and the other for mixed plastics, metal cans and glass. Each stream is collected in a separate recycling container.
Waste arisings	This is the amount of waste produced in a given area during a given period of time.
Waste Collection Authority (WCA)	A local authority charged with the collection of waste from each household in its area on a regular basis. It can also collect, if requested, commercial and industrial waste from the private sector. In England these are district, borough or city councils and Unitary Authorities.
Waste containers	Bins, caddies, boxes or bags provided to households or commercial premises for the separation and collection of different waste streams.
Waste Disposal Authority (WDA)	A local authority charged with the disposal of household waste collected in its area (by waste collection authorities or at Household Waste Recycling Centres). In England these are usually County Councils and Unitary Authorities.
Waste hierarchy	Introduced by the EU Waste Framework Directive is an abstract framework that prioritises the options for waste management. It represents a sliding scale, starting with the most preferred, highest impact option (prevent) to the least preferred, lowest impact option (disposal): Prevent→re-use→recycle→recovery→ disposal.
Waste or recycling infrastructure	Includes waste collection containers (bins/boxes/bags), vehicles, bulk containers and premises used to accept, store, sort and/or process different types of waste materials.
Waste management	The collection, sorting, treatment and disposal of waste.
Waste transfer station	A location that is permitted by the Environment Agency to accept and temporarily store municipal waste(s) delivered by waste collection vehicles, prior to bulk consolidation and onward transport via larger vehicles to a waste processing plant, energy to waste facility or landfill site.
Unitary governance	For waste services, a single local authority organisation that has a statutory duty to collect and dispose of municipal waste and deliver street cleansing and enforcement.

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Appendix 1 Summary of relevant waste legislation

Legislation / Policy	Targets and Goals (relevant to local authority duties)
Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990)	Local authorities must collect household waste and certain commercial waste on request. Apply a duty of care : waste must be stored, transported and transferred safely to authorised persons with accurate documentation.
Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011	Apply the waste hierarchy : prevention → reuse → recycling → recovery → disposal. Requirement for separate collection of paper, metal, plastic, and glass (where practicable) by 2015 At least 50% by weight of waste from households to be prepared for re-use or recycled by 2020
Controlled waste Regulations 2012	Defines household, commercial and industrial waste. Local authorities may charge for collection/disposal of certain non-domestic household waste (eg schools, hospitals, care homes)
Resources and Waste Strategy (2018) <i>(Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England)</i>	Confirmed 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020 Set a 65% recycling rate for municipal waste by 2035 and a 75% recycling rate for packaging waste by 2030 Aim to reduce municipal waste to landfill to 10% or less by 2035 All plastic packaging to be recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025 Work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030 Reiterated goal to eliminate avoidable plastic waste by 2042 and eliminate avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050 (in line with the 25 Year Plan Strategies to crack down on waste crime
25 Year Environment Plan (2018)	Ambition to eliminate all avoidable waste within the UK by 2050 Target to end avoidable plastic waste by 2042 Commitment to meet or exceed existing waste targets on landfill, reuse, and recycling (e.g. 50% recycling of household waste by 2020) Plan to develop new ambitious targets and milestones for waste reduction and resource efficiency

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	Pledge to eliminate waste crime and illegal waste sites and achieve a “substantial reduction” in litter and marine plastic pollution over the plan’s lifetime(to 2043)
Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020	Updated targets to recycle 55% of municipal waste by 2025, 60% by 2030, and 65% by 2035 Requirement to reduce landfilling of municipal waste to 10% or less by 2035 <i>(These amendments implemented the EU Circular Economy Package targets in UK law, building on the 2011 Regulations.)</i>
Environment Act 2021 (UK)	Legally binding target to halve the amount of waste per person sent to residual treatment by 2042 (compared to 2019 baseline) Overall goal is to support a shift towards less waste and more recycling Introduces new policies: Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging, Consistent Recycling collections across England(Now called Simpler Recycling); Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers.

Appendix 2 – Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities	Requirements	Actions	Realisation Timeframe	Resource Required
Countywide approach to resident engagement, communication and behaviour change	All partners participate in the KRP communications group to develop joint campaigns	Agree priority campaigns and action plans Refresh/simplify web resources Targeted behaviour change interventions based on District insight	Continuous programme, priorities agreed annually	District/County
Extended Producer Regulations for packaging (PEPR) New investment funding for packaging for all local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient and effective collections and disposal systems • Improvements to quality and quantity of material • Effective data capture and analysis • Proactive and measurable behaviour 	Completed modelling of collection systems (Ricardo) Develop incentive scheme for one system approach Apply insight	Initial funding allocated 2025/26 Ongoing (data gathering) 2-year plan to 2027	District/County

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	change campaigns	from collection and disposal data to identify improvements Current investment from KCC and KRP Working with WRAP to develop 5-year behaviour change strategy		
Simpler Recycling	Collection of core materials by March 2026 WCA: bins/vehicles/crews WDA: infrastructure/contracts for disposal	Ensure readiness of collection and disposal systems	March 2026	District/County
Flexible Plastics	Market development and readiness	Support infrastructure and introduce new collection systems	March 2027 - Future uncertainty	District/County
Deposit Return Scheme	'On-the-go' drinks containers subject to deposit Refund on return to designated point	Potential reduction in litter/street cleansing costs	October 2027	District
Local Government Reorganisation	Removal of two-tier system Creation of unitary system	KRP to feed into waste workstream	March 2028 (development from late 2025)	KRP
Increase items captured within recycling streams	Services keep pace with market and materials developments	Increase recycling offers at HWRCS Communicate clearly to residents what	Immediate and ongoing	District/County

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		can/can't be recycled at kerbside, and encourage the most cost effective and environmentally sound means of disposal for different waste materials e.g. at HWRCs, charities or community reuse and repair		
Community Repair	Public sector support for community repair, including repair café networks and linked activities	Support and develop community repair initiatives	Immediate	County
Community Re-use	Support and promote initiatives e.g. Library of Things, community and charity collection service	Implement and expand reuse programs, bid for external funding	Within 1 year	District/County
Engage more residents to adopt positive actions and behaviours	Residents become part of the solution to achieving efficient and effective services Extend reach through wider partnership approaches eg healthy eating and reducing food waste	Use demographic data and insight to inform interventions and campaigns	1-5 years	KRP
Whole System Approach	Integrated planning across waste streams A consistent approach to waste charges that encourages positive resident behaviour	Develop holistic waste management strategy Revised mechanism for sharing financial risk and reward	>3 years	District/County

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Supporting Local Businesses	Reduce, reuse, recycle initiatives Industrial/business clusters and anti-littering campaigns	Engage local authority economic development teams, BIDs and community groups	Ongoing	District/County
Influencing Planning/Housing Development	Accessing developer contributions to support waste infrastructure Develop relationships with housing teams and through Kent Housing Group Enhance Kent Design Guide	Advocate for sustainable waste practices in planning	Ongoing	District/County
Improved reporting of fly tipping (public and private land)	Identify fly tipping hotspots to enable better targeting of limited public sector resources (Environment agency/Police/Local authority enforcement teams)	Identify a single reporting or data capture mechanism within existing budgets	1-2 years	KRP and other agencies

Challenges	Requirements	Impacts	Impact Timeframe	Mitigations
Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)	Compliance with ETS regulations (encompassing energy from waste treatment process)	Financial – Estimated £12–£17m annual disposal cost increase (Government support to LA's still uncertain)	Jan 2028	Behaviour change; Lobbying (EPR); Investigating new technologies (e.g., dirty MRF, district heat)
Simpler Recycling	Separate collection of	Operational – Need for new collection	March 2026 and March	TEEP assessments;

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	paper and cardboard (2026) and flexible plastics/film (2027); Vehicles/bins upgrade	infrastructure	2027	Route optimisation; Public engagement
Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)	'On-the-go' drinks containers subject to deposit;	Collection round review to address collection inefficiencies; Disposal contract renegotiation/potential disposal cost increases	October 2027	Modelling collection impacts; Procurement strategy review; Stakeholder engagement Increased capture of organics for recycling
Disruption from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)	Strong partnership approach and coordination across new local governance structures	Operational – Service disruption, planning delays	Immediate–5 years	Cross-authority planning; Contingency frameworks; Staff training
Flexible Plastics Readiness	Market development for flexible plastics	UK market readiness gap. May require waste exports to EU Increased costs vs low tonnage capture	Immediate–5 years	Industry partnerships; Pilot schemes; Technology trials
Stretching Government Environmental Improvement Plan Targets	Meeting ambitious targets for recycling and waste reduction	Market unpredictability – plastics, textiles	Immediate– Beyond 2030	Scenario planning; Innovation funding; Policy engagement
Political Cohesiveness Risk	Unified policy direction across stakeholders	Strategic misalignment – delays in decision-making	Ongoing	Stakeholder forums; Evidence-based lobbying; Transparent reporting

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Fly tipping (also termed waste crime)	Consistent enforcement and monitoring Improved reporting	Increasing serious organized crime Environmental pollution Public dissatisfaction Agricultural losses	Ongoing	Development of digital waste tracking; Community engagement; Enforcement campaigns
Aging Disposal Infrastructure	Investment in modern facilities	Increased risk of breakdowns, inefficiencies	Ongoing	Infrastructure investment plans; Risk assessments; Maintenance upgrades
Fires in Waste Facilities and/or Collection Vehicles	Fire prevention protocols; Material handling improvements Resident communications about the safe disposal of batteries	Safety risks; Operational disruption	Ongoing	Fire risk audits; Staff training; Improved sorting and storage Explore potential of AI technology

END

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From: David Wimble, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Special Projects

Stephanie Holt-Castle, Director of Growth & Communities

To: Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee, 10 March 2026

Subject: Kent and Medway Business Fund - 2026

Key Decision: 26/00010

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: The proposed decision is that Kent County Council (KCC) agree improvements and changes to the loan terms of the Kent & Medway Business Fund (KMBF) from 1 April 2026 with a revised loan offer, terms and eligibility to businesses within Kent & Medway, following a formal review of the scheme during an Awayday of the Investment Advisory Board and its Sub-Group. The scheme will continue to be administrated in line with its approval from the Head of Regional Growth Fund (RGF), Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) (now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) received on 12 June 2023, allowing Kent County Council to continue managing the recycled KMBF/RGF investments to provide loans to local businesses until March 2032.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE** or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Special Projects on the proposed decision as set out in the Proposed Record of Decision (PRoD) (Appendix A).

1. Introduction

1.1 The Government allocated £55 million from the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) to KCC between 2011 and 2014. This funded three RGF programmes covering the whole of Kent and Medway and additional local authority areas:

- East Kent (Expansion East Kent - £35 million).
- North Kent, Medway, and Thurrock (Tiger - £14.5 million).
- West Kent (Escalate -£5.5 million).

- 1.2 These programmes operated 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. KCC's costs of administering these programmes were fully covered by an administration charge deducted from each loan and a charge to the RGF allocation.
- 1.3 Since January 2017, KCC has used the recycled KMBF\RGF investments (loan repayments and sale of shares in equity stakes) to enable the KMBF to provide new loans ranging between £26,000-£600,000 to eligible businesses across Kent and Medway in addition to a small number of equity investments managed separately by an external supplier. Most funding recipients receive interest-free loans, with a repayment period of up to five years. The recycled KMBF/RGF investments were also used to finance the Kent Life Sciences (KLS) Fund, a sub-programme of the KMBF programme, which provides equity investments in companies predominantly in the life science sector to support their growth. Since 2017, KMBF has made the following investments:
- No of Loan Investments: 161; Total Loan investment £17,693,327
 - No of Equity Investments: 9 companies; Total Equity Investment £4,350.000
 - KMBF Jobs created Full Time equivalent (FTE) 623.89
 - KMBF Jobs Protected Full Time equivalent (FTE) 135.62

2. Background

- 2.1 On 12 June 2023 the Head of Regional Growth Fund, DLUHC (now MHCLG), provided written confirmation allowing KCC to continue managing the recycled KMBF/RGF investments to provide loans to local businesses until March 2032.
- 2.2 On 16 September 2025 the members of the Investment Advisory Board (IAB) and IAB Sub-Group came together to review the historic performance of the KMBF/RGF schemes. Following the review the terms were revised to ensure continued compliance, financial sustainability and alignment with the Fund's objectives through to March 2032.
- 2.3 On 10 February 2026, the Chairs of the Investment Advisory Board and its Sub-Group considered and agreed the proposed future loan offer, terms and eligibility for the Kent & Medway Business Fund, in line with the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act. The revised scheme criteria are set out below.

Kent & Medway Business Fund (Standard)	
Offer/Terms	Eligibility
Loan Offer £100k-£750k (0% Interest)	Business Type Kent & Medway SME SME wishing to relocate to Kent & Medway Established Start-Ups (Start-Ups – need to demonstrate contracts, security, experience of the industry and ability to ensure financial viability and serviceability)
Repayment Period	Sectors

<p>Term of Loan: £100k to £600k – 5 years £601k to £750k – 8 years</p> <p>Repayment free period 6 months</p>	<p>Applications invited from all sectors PARTIAL ELIGIBLE SECTORS Primary production and processing of agricultural products. Restriction only to expenditure related to the cultivation of soil, planting, raising and harvesting crops, feeding and managing animals. The restriction does not apply to expenditure related to non-agriculture diversification or innovative activities related to agriculture i.e. new products, processes and services.</p> <p>NON-ELIGIBLE SECTORS KMBF cannot accept applications from firms active in the following sectors, as they are ineligible and cannot be considered for support: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Organisations engaged in political activity or lobbying at any level or activity of an exclusively religious nature.
<p>Match Funding/Admin Fee Match – 50% of total project costs</p> <p>Admin Fee: £100k to £600k: 10% of total loan amount £601k to £750k: 15% of total loan amount</p> <p>Early Repayment Reward: Option to repay remaining outstanding loan amount at 66 months, with 5% of the original administration fee deducted for early repayment from the remaining balance.</p>	<p>Criteria Growth (Mandatory) Increased Productivity (Mandatory) Innovation (Desirable) Supply Chain (Desirable) Environmental Improvements (Desirable) Skills Improvements (Desirable)</p>
<p>Security Security will be required for all loans but commensurate with risk. Personal Guarantees may also be required from all the directors and/or owners for at least the value of the loan capital</p>	<p>Employment Job Creation Job Protection</p>

KMBF Small Business Boost	
Offer/Terms	Eligibility
<p>Loan Offer £26k-£99k (0% Interest)</p>	<p>Business Type Kent & Medway SME SME wishing to relocate to Kent & Medway Established Start Ups</p>
<p>Repayment Period Term of loan – 5 years (following a 6-month repayment free period)</p>	<p>Sectors Applications invited from all sectors PARTIAL ELIGIBLE SECTORS Primary production and processing of agricultural products. Restriction only to expenditure related to the cultivation of soil, planting, raising and harvesting crops, feeding and managing animals. The restriction does not apply to expenditure related to non-agriculture diversification or innovative activities related to agriculture i.e. new products, processes and services.</p> <p>NON-ELIGIBLE SECTORS KMBF cannot accept applications from firms active in the following sectors, as they are ineligible and cannot be considered for support: -</p>

	•Organisations engaged in political activity or lobbying at any level or activity of an exclusively religious nature.
Match Funding/Admin Fee Match – 25% of total project costs Admin Fee – 10%	Criteria Growth (Mandatory) Increased Productivity (Mandatory) Innovation (Desirable) Supply Chain (Desirable) Environmental Improvements (Desirable) Skills Improvements (Desirable)
Security Security may be required and will depend on the output of the Council's due diligence, the recommendation received from its financial advisors and recommendation from the Investment Advisory Board Sub-Group. There is no specific loan value at which security may be required, it will be at the Council's discretion and subject to the level of risk assessment.	Employment Job Creation Job Protection

3. Options (other options considered but discarded)

- 3.1 To close the Fund and return the recycled money to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This option was dismissed, as the funds are better utilised to support growth, increase productivity and job creation/protection within Kent & Medway.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The approximate overall KCC revenue costs of administering the loan schemes are around £670,000 per annum which are fully covered by an administration fee taken from successful loan applicants. The overall administration costs are made up of staff costs, legal, due diligence/appraisal, and the ongoing monitoring costs associated with the lifespan of each individual investment held within the loan portfolio.
- 4.2 To support the relaunch of the scheme in November 2023 the Business Investment Team undertook a financial modelling exercise which assisted in determining the level at which the administration fee and management fee should be set ensuring that the total revenue costs of the scheme could be covered. This exercise determined that a figure of 10% would be appropriate, and this is applied and paid by each approved loan recipient.
- 4.3 A further modelling exercise was undertaken whereby the Business Investment Team ran a variety of loan values, through a loan template calculator, using various interest rates to ensure that the application of a 10% administration fee, paid by each approved loan recipient, was not prohibitive as the loan offer is set at 0% interest. This exercise concluded that a 10% administration fee would not be cost prohibitive due to the current rate of interest set by the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

4.4 The application of both the management fee and administration fee continues to ensure that the administration of the KMBF/RGF Investments and future KMBF loan schemes remain self-funding and operate on a cost-neutral basis to KCC.

4.5 The loan value cap at £750,000 ensures full compliance with a Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) scheme under the Subsidy Control Act 2025.

5. Legal implications

5.1 The approval from DLUHC allows KCC to continue to manage the recycled KMBF/RGF Investments and to provide loans to local businesses until March 2032.

5.2 The upper loan limit of £750,000 is capped at this figure to ensure compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2025

5.3 Investments will be internally and externally assessed via an impartial third-party appraiser, under contract with KCC, who provide an appraisal report to assist the Investment Advisory Board and Sub-Group in making recommendations to Senior Officers, in line with the office Scheme of Delegation. Such recommendations will include specific loan conditions to mitigate any default and/or loss to the KMBF/RGF recycled funds, by way of the attachment of security.

5.4 Such investments will be recommended by the Investment Advisory Board and Sub-Group and approved by either the Director of Growth and Communities or the Head of Economy in line with the Office Scheme of Delegation.

6. Equalities implications

6.1 An equality Impact Assessment EqIA is appended to this report.

7. Data Protection Implications

7.1 A DPIA assessment determined that a full DPIA was required to be completed and this has been actioned, approved and is monitored in line with the advice provided. An existing privacy notice covers the operation of the KMBF and has been reviewed as part of the Business Investment Teams cyclical review of its process maps and guides; and it has been determined that no new data protection issues will arise from the proposed processing of new loan applications at a higher value.

8. Governance

8.1 The Director of Growth and Communities will inherit the main delegations via the Officer Scheme of Delegation.

9. Conclusions

9.1 To continue to offer finance to businesses located in Kent & Medway, via loan investments with the objectives of supporting growth, increase productivity, and create /protect jobs.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE** or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Special Projects on the proposed decision as set out in the Proposed Record of Decision (PRoD) (Appendix A).

10. Background Documents

10.1 Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision.

Contact details

Report Author: Susan Berdo	Director: Stephanie Holt-Castle
Job title: Strategic Programme Manager	Job title: Director, Growth & Communities
Telephone number: 03000 417 024	Telephone number: 03000 412 064
Email address: susan.berdo@kent.gov.uk	Email address: stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Wimble Cabinet Member for Economic
Development & Special Projects

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00010

Executive Decision – key

26/00010– Kent and Medway Business Fund - 2026

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Special Projects, I agree to:

ACCEPT the improvements and changes to the loan terms of the Kent & Medway Business Fund (KMBF), to take effect from 1 April 2026. This includes adopting a revised loan offer, updated terms, and refreshed eligibility criteria for businesses within Kent and Medway,

ENDORSE the current scheme governance and administration processes.

Reasons for decision:

Following a review of the current scheme performance, the Investment Advisory Board and its Sub-Group overseeing the fund agreed a proposed future loan offer, terms and eligibility for the Kent & Medway Business Fund, in line with the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act. This change requires a key decision.

Financial implications:

- Running the Kent & Medway Business Fund costs about £670,000 a year, which covers staff, legal work, appraisals, and ongoing monitoring of businesses that receive loans. These costs are fully paid back to KCC by the Fund.
- To make sure the scheme pays for itself, KCC has set a 10% administration fee for every approved loan. Financial checks showed that this fee is affordable for businesses, especially because the loans are interest-free.
- The Fund also charges a management fee, and together these fees ensure the loan scheme is self-funding.
- The maximum loan amount has been set at £750,000 to meet the rules of the Subsidy Control Act 2025.

Legal implications:

- The approval from DLUHC allows KCC to continue to manage the recycled KMBF/RGF Investments and to provide loans to local businesses until March 2032.
- The upper loan limit of £750,000 is capped at this figure to ensure compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2025

Equalities implications:

Positive impacts:

The fund is open to all businesses across Kent and Medway and is designed to be easy to access through clear information and multiple referral routes. Materials and events are inclusive and accessible, with alternative formats, reasonable adjustments and accessible online content available. Funding decisions are based only on the strength of the business case and financial viability, in line with equality duties.

Negative Impacts:

None

Data Protection implications:

An existing privacy notice covers the operation of the KMBF. This has been reviewed as part of the Business Investment Teams cyclical review of its process maps and guides. It has been determined that no new data protection issues will arise from the proposed processing of new loan applications at a higher value.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

This version of the PROD is included in the agenda pack for committee members to review ahead of the meeting.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

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

..... ..
...

Signed

Date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Kent and Medway Business Fund - KMBF

Responsible Officer

Sue Berdo - GT GC

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

Steve Samson - GT GC

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Growth and Communities Accountability and Responsibility

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 supports 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 £750,000, and the KMBF Small Business Boost Loans (KMBF SBB) which will provide no more than 75% of finance for KMBF investment of between £26,000 and £99,000 with the remaining balance funded through private sources, including bank lending and are generally offered interest-free although arrangement charges will be levied to pay for administration cost.

The scheme also offered equity or convertible loans on a case by case basis and currently oversees a number of existing portfolios of equity investments in a range of business sectors. These portfolios are the KBREF(KCC Bespoke RGF Equity Fund) scheme, the DPTIF (Discovery Park Technology Investment Fund) and

the KLSF (Kent Life Sciences Fund) Both DPTIF (until December 2025) and KLSF were third-party arrangements with a company called NCL whereby all the shares, contracts, payments, and responsibility for selling the shares, lie outside KCC.

The current structure:

KBREF focused on innovative early-stage, high-growth potential companies across the RGF eligible area. Managed by Maven Cognition (formerly Newable Ventures) under a 3-year contract and all shares held by KCC.

DPTIF focuses on innovative early stage, high-growth companies based in Discovery Park. Managed by NCL under a 10-year partnership arrangement (ended in December 2025, KCC is winding down this fund and returning the shares to KCC ownership.

KLSF focuses on early-stage companies with medical technologies and advanced therapeutics across KMBF eligible area. Managed by NCL under a 10-year partnership arrangement (ends Jan 2028) all shares are held in the name of the partnership.

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?

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?

To deliver the scheme, Kent County Council works closely with all the Kent District Councils and with the Unitary Authority of Medway Council.

The scheme is 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 we demonstrate leadership and commitment in promoting these rights.

KCC is in regular contact with local trade bodies for the business community and the local chambers of commerce, independent business advisors, 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 Contract Framework. The Growth Hubs maintain extensive data sets to include business information for Kent and Medway, to which KCC have access. The Growth Hub reports on a regular monthly basis as part of their contracted obligations

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.

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 3 December 2025, which confirmed national statistics regarding leadership of businesses by gender.

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 2024 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 18-24 is not significant. In this regard, the KMBF scheme will offer loans to both established and early stage businesses.

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

No

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

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

No

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

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

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The scheme targets all sectors of the business community and information and application forms will be easy to access. There are multiple possible referral routes (business associations (FSB, IoD), chambers of commerce and the Growth Hub, business community groups etc.) 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.

The Standard Loan Scheme and the Small Business Boost Scheme are 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. 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 consider meeting times to suit a range of needs and will ensure that there is full disability access to enable maximum engagement and opportunity. The marketing collateral will be used as part of a wider marketing communications strategy to improve awareness and reach of the Kent and Medway Business Fund.

The scheme makes available services and takes 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)

With regard to the limited equality & diversity data that the Kent and 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. 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.

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.

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.

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
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Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities

Not Applicable

From: Peter Osborne – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Simon Jones – Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 10 March 2026

Subject: Cliff Collapse – Road of Remembrance, Folkestone

Decision no: 26/00011

Key Decision: Yes – Involves expenditure greater than £1m and affects 2 Electoral Divisions

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: John Baker – Folkestone West
Mary Lawes – Folkestone East

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary:

On 27 January 2024, a major landslip of trees and soil occurred from a cliff north of the Road of Remembrance, blocking the road. The road remains closed and there is a risk of further significant collapses with the potential to damage the road itself.

The report describes the unique complexities and challenges involved with this collapse, and explains how the authority proposes to stabilise the cliff to protect this historic road and enable it to be safely re-opened for public use. As part of that, it is necessary to seek a key decision to progress the delivery of necessary engineering works.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Road of Remembrance is an historically important road linking the Leas and harbour areas of Folkestone. It has been closed for over two years to protect road users. During that time, officers have carried out site and other investigations, in order to understand geological, stability, legal, risks and other issues, and to carry out a detailed options appraisal given the ongoing risk to the road itself.
- 1.2 The proposed engineering works are necessary to protect the road from further damage and to safely re-open this important road, and to reduce the risk of harm to residents and damage to properties at the top of the cliff and those who may chose to ignore formal closure of the road below.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 The Road of Remembrance has been closed for a prolonged period, and will remain so unless action is taken to stabilise the cliff above. It is an historically important road, central to the character of Folkestone and a vital link between the Leas and harbour areas.
- 2.2 The cliff is very unstable and there is a high risk of further significant collapses which may cause structural damage to the road itself.
- 2.3 There are potential risks to injury of persons in the event of further significant collapses.

3. Background

- 3.1 After the collapse occurred, we immediately closed the road on safety grounds to protect the public from further landslips, before removing trees and soil. The road itself remains closed since it would not be safe to re-open it given the risk of further collapses of the cliff above.
- 3.2 Whilst the road itself did not appear to need repair at that time, we were concerned about the risk of the road being damaged and taken out of service if further collapses of the cliff above were to occur, especially since the road itself is on top of a further cliff below. As such, we worked as quickly as possible to get to the point where we could stabilise the cliff above so far as that is possible without substantive engineering works.
- 3.3 A lot of technical and complex work has been carried out on site to understand cliff stability, any future risk to the road itself and what work would be necessary to protect the road and safely re-open it. Ground investigation works to assess the condition of the cliff have included:
 - topographic surveys
 - WW2 bunker survey, including a private property cellar at the top of the cliff
 - Ground Penetration Radar (GPR) survey (non-invasive method of mapping underground features)
 - geotechnical surveys of the cliff face to assess condition
 - boreholes to identify makeup of ground twenty metres below the surface
 - Cone Penetration Tests (CPT) which test the strength of the ground.

3.4 This has been an unplanned, complex situation, made more difficult by encountering a variety of unexpected challenges that we have had to overcome. These include:

- further landslips
- discovery of a protected species within the cliff, leading to in-depth ecology surveys
- archaeology teams needing to be present on site after Anglo Saxon remains were found
- protection of a war bunker that sits within the site
- close proximity of private properties at the top of the cliff
- an unexploded ordnance survey given the risk from WW2 bombs

Land ownership

3.5 The failed cliff is neither KCC-owned land nor part of the publicly maintainable highway. Normally, in these circumstances, we would seek to persuade any landowner to take necessary action to stabilise their land, so that it did not present a hazard to highway users or a risk of damage to the road itself. We investigated ownership and discovered there is no current readily identifiable person(s) to organise undertaking the required works.

Geological considerations

3.6 We have obtained expert technical advice specifically on the geological stability of the cliff which is a key factor in this matter. Of particular concern is the top of the cliff is now near vertical with an overhang, which presents an extremely high risk condition, indicative of advanced instability and a significant risk of toppling or rotational failure. In addition, further down, the cliff continues to be saturated as a result of groundwater conditions, with the extensive presence of tension cracks.

3.7 The expert advice we have received concludes that:

- Further Landslips: High likelihood of continued and potentially larger-scale cliff failures, including rotational slips and shallow translational slides, exacerbated by the near-vertical, overhanging profile.
- Toppling Failure: Significant risk of sudden detachment and collapse of the near-vertical overhanging cliff sections, posing an extreme hazard, particularly given the unpredictable behaviour of groundwater within the cliff.
- Erosion: Ongoing degradation of the cliff face due to rainfall, fluctuating groundwater pressures and weathering, exacerbating instability, particularly upper sections.
- Groundwater Pressure Build-up: Persistent or increased pore water pressure within the cliff, reducing soil strength and acting as a key trigger for failure, with the cliff's stability being highly sensitive to seasonal variations in groundwater.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

4.1 KCC has carried out a detailed options analysis. The following options were considered.

Option 1 - Do nothing

In reality, 'doing nothing' means keeping the Road of Remembrance closed for a lengthy period or permanent basis.

Further collapses, especially during the wetter and colder months of the year, will happen. The cliff has no structural support. That poses a risk to the structural integrity of the road itself and also to human life, since we can never fully prevent people (particularly children) from ignoring the road closure below.

Further collapses, particularly if they were larger in scale and/or involved the toppling over of the part or all of the overhanging crest at the top of the cliff, would also make any engineering solution more extensive and more costly. The solution would have to be redesigned with additional site investigations necessary. There is also a significant risk to properties at the top of the cliff. In one area, it is only a hedge four metres from a building that is holding the crest of the cliff together. In extremis, part of this building could fall onto the road below.

Given the structural instability and high likelihood of further collapses, some serious, this option would continue to pose a risk to those that ignore the road closure, fencing and warning signs, to occupants of properties above, and to the road itself, and so cannot be recommended.

Option 2 - Implement temporary/interim measures that fall short of full cliff stabilisation that may enable the road to be fully or partially re-opened

Officers have carefully considered whether there any other possible physical measures that could be put in place to enable the Road of Remembrance to be re-opened or partly opened, for example for one-way traffic or pedestrian/cyclist use. They have looked at whether concrete blocks/barriers and/or catch-fencing placed at the bottom of the cliff or on the road surface would provide sufficient protection for road users in the event of any further landslips.

Given the expert advice we have received on the geological instability of the cliff, we have reluctantly concluded that there is nothing we could put in place that would give us sufficient confidence that it would be safe for KCC to re-open the road to any public use. Concrete blocks and/or fencing would likely be sufficient for small landslips and rockfalls, but not for anything larger such as that outlined above. A key issue here is the difficulty of predicting the severity and mass of any potential collapse, making it very challenging to design a solution that would enable officers to have enough confidence to conclude that they could safely recommend re-opening the road. As such, this approach cannot be recommended.

Option 3 – Implement a fully designed and technically approved engineering solution to stabilise the cliff and re-open the road

Our fully designed, technical solution includes the installation of 974 stainless steel soil nails, an erosion control mat, and a mesh facing to reinforce the failed cliff. It also involves the installation of drainage assets to redirect groundwater

from the cliff face to the base of the cut. At the top of the cliff, the design involves a four metre high crest using soil nails and a shotcrete facing, ensuring that nearby properties retain their gardens and their properties are safely away from the edge. The cost of this solution is around £5m.

It is not possible to only carry out certain elements of this design in isolation since each element - matting, soil nails, weather protection and shotcrete at the crest - are necessary and complement each other in order to operate in a safe manner when completing the works, to sufficiently stabilise the cliff, and to enable the Road of Remembrance to be safely re-opened.

We have considered whether there are any other engineering design solutions such as retaining walls and other structures that could stabilise the cliff and enable the Road of Remembrance to be safely re-opened, but none would cost less than the soil nail solution, and they would take longer to deliver.

This designed solution is recommended as it would safely stabilise the cliff, remove the serious hazards posed by the exposed cliff, remove the risk of damage to the road itself, and enable the road to be safely re-opened.

Option 4 – Option 3 with a reduced design life

The Option 3 solution is the minimum designed to obtain structures and other technical approvals. We have explored whether it would be possible to change or lessen the design in any way. No changes were identified, save potentially using galvanised nails and fittings instead of stainless steel saving around £250k. However, this would significantly reduce the design life by as much as two-thirds or more. This lesser design would not have technical approval, and so cannot be recommended.

5. Discussion

- 5.1 The proposal is to proceed with the works designed and costed in Option 3. Funding is discussed in the following section of this report.
- 5.2 If the key decision is taken, we will deliver the works through our existing Road Asset Renewal Contract with GW Highways, since this contract has both appropriate contract provision and financial capacity. GW Highways and their sub-contractor have appropriate expertise and experience to deliver a project of this nature.
- 5.3 We are currently reviewing the design and costings and liaising with our supply chain and ecologists to plan delivery of these works. We are also working on necessary legal agreements. We are currently working towards mobilising on site in May with a view to starting works in the following months. The length of works is uncertain at this stage, but the current estimate is that it may take up to eleven/twelve months to complete the stabilisation works.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Unexpected emergency costs of this magnitude are not something that Highways and Transportation (H&T) can reasonably be expected to absorb.

Doing so, for this and future events, would result in a significant reduction in preventative highway maintenance with the consequential knock-on effect of more highway defects that we would need to reactively repair at higher cost.

- 6.2 The estimated cost of the necessary works is around £5m. KCC's capital budget for 2026/27, approved Full Council on 12th February, included funding for Category 1 significant unfunded highway risks (of which the Road of Remembrance collapse is one). Folkestone and Hythe District Council has also indicated it has collected on-street parking monies that can be used to contribute to the cost of these works and an amount is yet to be agreed.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 KCC's has a duty, pursuant to s. 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway. It is apparent from the narrative within this report, that the cliff's continuing instability may consequently damage the highway that KCC has a duty to maintain.

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out, and concluded that no protected groups are disproportionately affected by the proposed works. It was, however, identified that *not* carrying these works (and therefore the road remained closed for a prolonged period) could disproportionately affect disabled people given the length of alternative routes between The Leas and harbour areas.

9. Data Protection Implications

- 9.1 A DPIA is not required for this decision or proposed works. There are no foreseen data protection implications.

10. Other corporate implications

- 10.1 It is not considered that this decision will have further corporate implications to other Directorates within KCC.
- 10.2 Kent's highways are a key enabler of all services and all economic activity that takes place in Kent and therefore contribute significantly to all of the Council's strategic aims. The proposed works to stabilise the cliff, protect the Road of Remembrance and safely re-open it, given the historic and local importance of this road, will contribute significantly to local regeneration and economic growth.

11. Governance

- 11.1 Under the officer scheme of delegation, should the recommended decision be progressed, the Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport will make decisions for the ongoing delivery of the scheme, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 Expert technical advice has concluded that there is a high risk of cliff instability and further potentially large-scale collapses, particularly in respect of the overhanging top of the cliff, but also weakness lower down the cliff caused by saturation. Legal advice has concluded that KCC will likely be held liable by the courts in respect of any claim for damage or injury that occurs as a result of any further collapse, and that there is a theoretical risk of corporate manslaughter prosecution.
- 12.2 Various options have been considered, but it is recommended to proceed with a fully designed engineering design to stabilise the cliff to eliminate the risk of further significant collapses, remove legal risks and safely re-open the road, so that it can contribute to the economic wellbeing of Folkestone. The proposed works are to be funded by KCC H&T capital budget with a contribution from on-street parking funds collected by Folkestone and Hythe District Council and delivered through existing contractual arrangements.
-

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

10. Background Documents

10.1 Equality Impact Assessment

11. Appendices

Appendix A – PROD
Appendix B - EqIA

12. Contact details

Report Author: Alan Casson Job title: Strategic Asset Manager Telephone number: 03000 413563 Email: alan.casson@kent.gov.uk	Director: Andrew Loosemore Job title: Interim Director of Highways and Transport Telephone number: 03000 411652 Email: andrew.loosemore@kent.gov.uk
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Osborne - Cabinet Member for Highways and
Transport

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00011

Executive Decision – key**26/00011 – Cliff Collapse - Road of Remembrance, Folkestone**

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, I agree to give approval to progress the Road of Remembrance embankment stabilisation works scheme through to delivery as indicated below and specifically I:

-
- (a) Give approval to progress the construction of the embankment stabilisation and associated works utilising KCC capital funding as identified in the 26/27 H&T capital budget.
 - (b) Accept a contribution from Folkestone and Hythe District Council to contribute towards funding the works.
 - (c) Deliver the works via the Road Asset Renewal Contract that has provision and financial capacity to accommodate these works.
 - (d) Approval for any other further decisions required to allow the scheme to proceed through to construction to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.
-

Reasons for decision:

The Road of Remembrance is an historically important road linking the Leas and harbour areas of Folkestone. It has been closed for over two years to protect road users. The proposed engineering works are necessary to protect the road from further damage and to safely re-open this important road, and to reduce the risk of harm to residents at the top of the cliff and those who may chose to ignore formal closure of the road below.

Financial implications:

The estimated cost of the necessary works is around £5m. KCC's capital budget for 2026/27, approved Full Council on 12th February, included funding for Category 1 significant unfunded highway risks (of which the Road of Remembrance collapse is

one). Folkestone and Hythe District Council have also indicated it will be contributing to the cost of these works and amount is yet to be agreed.

Legal implications:

KCC does not have any *specific* legal duties in statute to stabilise the cliff itself. However, given KCC's duty to maintain the highway under s41 of the Highways Act 1980 and the likelihood that the cliff's instability may put the road out of repair, the proposed works are necessary to protect the road from structural damage. It is also likely that, given events so far, there may be a public law expectation that KCC will stabilise the land. It is likely that KCC would be held liable for any damage/injury that occurred in the event of a further collapse, especially given the strength of expert technical advice about cliff instability and the likelihood of significant further collapses. Though highly theoretical, there are also potential corporate manslaughter considerations.

Equalities implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and concluded that no protected groups are disproportionately affected by the proposed works. It was, however, identified that *not* carrying these works (and therefore the road remained closed for a prolonged period) could disproportionately affect disabled people given the length of alternative routes between The Leas and harbour areas.

Data Protection implications:

A DPIA is not required for this decision or proposed works. There are no foreseen data protection implications.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

This version of the PROD is included in the agenda pack for committee members to review ahead of the meeting.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

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

.....

Signed

.....

Date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Cliff Collapse - Road of Remembrance Folkestone

Responsible Officer

Alan Casson - GT TRA

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

Helen Rowe - GT TRA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

Engineering Works

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Highways and Transportation

Responsible Head of Service

Helen Rowe - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Andrew Loosemore - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

The project concerns whether or not to implement engineering works to stabilise a cliff above the Road of Remembrance in Folkestone, following a significant collapse in January 2026 which made it necessary to close the road. The EqIA aims to consider possible equality impacts cause by both proceeding with works and not.

Section B – Evidence

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

Yes

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

No

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

No

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

N/A

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
If the proposed engineering works to stabilise the embankment so that the Road of Remembrance can be safely re-opened are approved, it will mean that disabled and older people will no longer need to use a use a longer and convoluted alternative route to travel between the Leas and harbour areas.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No. Note: If Question 19a is "No", Questions 19b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Completed
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Completed
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No. Note: If Question 20a is "No", Questions 20b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Completed
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No. Note: If Question 21a is "No", Questions 21b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Completed
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No. Note: If Question 22a is "No", Questions 22b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Completed
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No. Note: If Question 23a is "No", Questions 23b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Race
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Completed
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No. Note: If Question 24a is "No", Questions 24b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Completed
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No. Note: If Question 25a is "No", Questions 25b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No. Note: If Question 26a is "No", Questions 26b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

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

Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – Proposed Draft Agenda and Work Programme (Updated January 2026)

Item	Cabinet Committee to receive item
Final Draft Budget	Annual (Jan & Nov)
Corporate Risk Register-Strategic	Annual (March)
Winter Service Policy	Annual (May and Sept 2026)
Environment Agency - Presentation	Bi-Annual (May and Sept 2026)
Southern Water - Presentation	Bi-Annual (Nov and July)
Climate Adaptation Plan	Annual (TBC 1 st Quarter 2026)
Kent and Medway Business Fund Monitoring	Bi-annual Reporting (TBC 1 st Quarter 2027)

- NB: Provisional Placements Prior to Agenda Setting
- RT= Report/Briefing/Paper (Non-Regular Occurring) KD=Key Decision

Work Programme	At each meeting
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5 th May 2026 (Agenda is Subject to Change Provisional Position Only)	
Item	Additional Comments
<i>Introduction/verbal announcement</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
<i>Apologies and Substitutes</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
<i>Declarations of Interest</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
<i>Minutes of the meeting held xxx</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
<i>Verbal Updates</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
<i>Combined Performance Dashboard</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
RT-KMEF-Ambition 5	<i>May 2026 (G&C)</i>
RT-Homes Retrofit Strategy and Action Plan	<i>May 2026</i>
RT-Environment Plan	<i>May 2026</i>
RT-Tilbury-Gravesend Ferry Crossing Progress Update	<i>TBC</i>
RT-Environment Agency - Presentation	<i>TBC</i>
RT-Winter Service Policy	<i>May 2026</i>
RT-Climate Adaption Plan	<i>May 2026</i>
RT-Lower Thames Crossing – First Brief	<i>May 2026</i>

KD-Kent Travel Saver	<i>Moved from March</i>
KD-Mineral Sites Plan and Local Development Scheme	<i>May 2026</i>
KD-Charging for Non-Statutory SUDS for Minor Applications	<i>May 2026</i>
KD-25 Year Water Resourcing Plan	<i>May 2026</i>
KD-Policy Position Statement on Solar	<i>Moved from March</i>
KD- GRT Pitch allocation Policy	<i>May 2026</i>
KD-Adoption of Plan Sea	<i>May 2026</i>

Future Options (Provisional Position Only Dates are Subject to Change)	
Item	Additional Comments
RT-Southern Water: Progression Update 6 monthly	<i>Spring /Summer 2026</i>
RT-Lower Thames Crossing – Second Brief	<i>TBC</i>
RT-Lower Thames Crossing – Third Brief	<i>TBC</i>
RT-Kent Travel Scheme Options	<i>TBC</i>
RT-Grow In Kent Update	<i>TBC</i>
KD-Regional Energy strategic Plan	<i>TBC</i>
KD-HAMP (Highway Asset Management Plan)	<i>Spring/Summer 2026</i>
KD-Southern Water Joint working	<i>TBC / Bring with Southern Water Presentation</i>
KD- Current IAA Payments to Districts and Continuous Recycling Improvements	<i>July 2026</i>
KD-LB Review	<i>TBC</i>
KD-LGR-Approach to County Wide Services	<i>Spring/Summer 2026</i>
KD-Otterpool Garden Town	<i>Spring/Summer 2026</i>
KD-Consolidated Grant (Inc BSIP and Active Travel)	<i>TBC</i>

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