



Summons to and
Agenda for a
Meeting on
**Thursday, 18th
September, 2025**
at **10.00 am**



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
SESSIONS HOUSE
MAIDSTONE

Wednesday, 10 September 2025

To: All Members of the County Council

A meeting of the County Council will be held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ on Thursday, 18th September, 2025 at **10.00 am** to deal with the following business. **The meeting is scheduled to end by 4.30 pm.**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025 and, if in order, to be approved as a correct record **(Pages 1 - 18)**
4. Corporate Parenting Panel - Minutes for noting **(Pages 19 - 24)**
5. Chairman's Announcements
6. Questions
7. Report by Leader of the Council
8. Draft Strategic Statement - Reforming Kent **(Pages 25 - 44)**
9. Senior Management Structure **(Pages 45 - 64)**
10. Quarterly Performance Report - Q4 **(Pages 65 - 144)**
11. Treasury Management Outturn 2024-25 (to follow)
12. Annual Report of Urgent Decisions - 2024-25 **(Pages 145 - 152)**
13. Motions for Time Limited Debate **(Pages 153 - 160)**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Watts', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end.

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 10 July 2025.

PRESENT: Mr J Baker, Mr O Bradshaw, Mr A Brady, Mr M Brice, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr C Burwash, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr B Collins, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr J Defriend, Mr S Dixon, Mr M Ellis, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr L Evans, Mr P Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, Mr S Heaver, M J Henderson, Mr C Hespe, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mrs S Hudson, Mr S Jeffery, Ms L Kemkaran, Ms I Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Mr M Logen, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Mr J Moreland, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr M Munday, Ms C Nolan, Mr P Osborne, Mrs C Palmer, Mr R Palmer, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Mr T Prater, Ms A Randall, Mr H Rayner, Mr A Ricketts, Ms C Russell, Mr G R Samme, Mr C Sefton, Mr D Sian, Mr M J Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Dr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr R Waters, Mr N Wibberley, Mr N Williams, Mrs P Williams and Mr D Wimble

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager) and Mr B Watts (General Counsel)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies for Absence
(Item 1)

The Democratic Services Manager reported apologies from Mr Barrett, Mr Black, Mr Chapman, Mr Lehmann, Mr Kennedy, Mr Mallon, Mr Taylor, Mr Truder, and Mr Webb.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda
(Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2025 and, if in order, to be approved as a correct record
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4. Corporate Parenting Panel - Minutes for noting
(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting on 18 February 2025 be noted.

5. Chairman's Announcements
(Item 5)

Birthday Honours List

- (1) The Chairman formally congratulated all those who received an Honour in His Majesty The King's Birthday Honours List which was announced in June.

Charities

- (2) The Chairman looked forward to supporting two local Kent based charities, SATEDA and the Young Lives Foundation, during his year as Chairman.
- (3) The Chairman invited Marylka Gowlland and Lauren Croud from SATEDA, and Stephen Gray from the Young Lives Foundation, to introduce their charities and provide a brief overview on how they provided support to women, children and young people in Kent.

6. Questions
(Item 6)

In accordance with Sections 14.15 to 14.22 of the Constitution, 16 questions were submitted by the deadline and 16 questions were put to the Executive. 9 questions were asked and replies given. A record of all questions and answers is available [online](#) with the papers for this meeting.

7. Report by Leader of the Council
(Item 7)

- (1) Ms Kemkaran referred to the last County Council meeting where she provided an introduction to the Administration's intentions to save money, and highlighted a number of propositions which would be brought forward over the coming months. The savings identified by the newly established cabinet portfolio, the Department of Local Government Efficiency (DOLGE) would be reflected in the Administration's forthcoming Strategic Statement.
- (2) The Leader proposed to cut Member Allowances by 5% and reallocate £202,500 into Member Grants. This would result in an extra £2,500 for each Councillor to spend in his or her division.

- (3) The Leader spoke about the Council's overall financial position. Since May the level of debt had reduced by approximately £16million and the Administration intended to reduce this further by March 2026. One of the largest areas of expenditure where the Leader would try to find savings was within Home to School Transport. She said a future increase in capital spending could be avoided by cancelling the Council's Net Zero renewable energy programme of property modifications, saving £32million over four years, as well as the vehicle fleet transition to electric vehicles which would save a further £7.5million by 2030. The Leader believed a saving of up to £180,000 could be made by cancelling membership subscriptions.
- (4) In relation to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) the Leader wrote to the Minister requesting that the deadline for a full business case be pushed back from November 2025 to March 2026. Although still awaiting an official response the verbal response had not been positive.
- (5) In the light of LGR, the Leader had reviewed previous decisions regarding the headquarters building in Maidstone and wished to stop the proposed sale of Sessions House. She said this would avoid borrowing £14million and mean a relatively small sum of money would be spent fixing immediate issues. Detailed proposals would come forward to future meetings. The coffee cart in Sessions House had been recommissioned and it was planned, long term, to make it available to the public for hire and generate revenue for the Council. The Leader referred to the limited office space and said she was working closely with the Chief Executive to implement an office repopulation plan. The projected figures indicated that by the end of this financial year office based capacity would have increased by 500 desks.
- (6) In relation to supporting businesses, the Leader was convening a twin event in the Autumn to highlight the importance of Eurostar services returning to Ashford and Ebbsfleet stations in Kent. The event would bring together local business owners, key service providers and local councillors and MPs to showcase what Kent had to offer. Ms Kemkaran was looking forward to working with the Employment Task Force to support people into work or training in Kent and Medway.
- (7) Savings would be made in integrated children's services by bringing children's care homes back in-house and the purchase of four properties. This would enable costs to be controlled whilst still protecting and caring for children in care. A saving of £1.5million would be made over two financial years from April 2026, and there was an opportunity to increase this by opening further facilities in future years. The Leader had written to the Home Secretary about insufficient funding for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who then became care leavers.
- (8) Turning to the county's roads, the Leader had written to the Minister to request that profit from the increase in toll charges at the Dartford Crossing be diverted to the Council's highways budget, considering Kent was the country's gateway to Europe. The £79.3million in the Council's capital

budget for roads and highways assets was more than £10million higher than last year, and the highest in four years. As well as tackling potholes the Council was doing large patch repairs to fill multiple potholes in one go.

- (9) Finally, the Leader commented that much progress had been made but there was still much more to do. She said she was determined to continue the upward trajectory and serve the people of Kent.
- (10) Mr Hook, Leader of the Opposition, commented on the importance of council meetings to discuss issues openly and make informed decisions, and said a verbal report was not adequate when it came to policy changes. Mr Hook referred to DOLGE and the absence of a written report to explain its purpose and direction. He commented on a pattern of behaviour that created false impressions and referred in particular to false claims about libraries. He said concerns should be put on a meeting agenda so that issues could be rationally explored in public and advised upon by the Council's expert officers.
- (11) Turning to Home to School Transport Mr Hook said this was an area where the Executive had caused concern amongst residents. He explained that Home to School Transport was for children who, for example, lived in villages with no school, lived in towns where schools were not close to where people lived, or for children with special needs or disabilities. Mr Hook said the Liberal Democrat Group had made suggestions for many years for more efficient models of delivering the scheme.
- (12) Regarding adult social care Mr Hook highlighted that residential nursing accounted for £235million of the annual KCC budget. He said a growth of 17% had been seen every year for the last eight years and he invited the Leader to explain the Administration's growth forecast of only 3%. Mr Hook explained there was £325million worth of social care contracts due for renewal before April 2026 and stressed that it was time for the Leader to take a close interest in adult social care.
- (13) Mr Hook was astonished that the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Cabinet Committee had still not met, and commented that the Council, alongside the 13 other councils in Kent, needed to play an active role in shaping proposals in time for the Government's November deadline. He questioned what analysis had been done and how the public would be involved.
- (14) On Net Zero Mr Hook said there was overwhelming evidence that climate change was a danger to everyone's future. He said Net Zero was a statutory obligation and was needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. He questioned why it was not on the agenda of the next Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee.
- (15) Regarding the future of Sessions House he said the Leader's comments were against previous advice received from officers and future plans should be publicly discussed in detail at a future committee meeting.

- (16) Mr Hood, on behalf of the Green Group, spoke about the the roles of the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the national Reform UK Party and that they should be distinct. He said for many years opposition members had highlighted the unacceptable costs of Home to School Transport and had been urging the Administration to consider alternative ways to manage it cost-effectively and efficiently.
- (17) Mr Hood made reference to the financial decline of the Council and said there had yet to be any significant changes to avert it. He referred to cancelled committee meetings and working groups, and changes to Cabinet Members since their appointment less than two months ago.
- (18) Regarding libraries, Mr Hood questioned whether the relevant Cabinet Member agreed with the previous Administration's Deputy Leader that Kent had too many libraries. He said his group believed that libraries were part of the fabric of communities and would fight strongly to protect them.
- (19) Turning to Net Zero he referred to the proposed spending cuts outlined by the Leader and commented that expenditure of this kind invariably resulted in long-term savings and improved resilience in the event of extreme weather events. He said modernising the Council's estate would bring long-term benefits and cut energy prices.
- (20) Mr Hood turned to devolution which he said was needed for Kent in areas such as public transport, reversing the skills gap, and transforming Kent's economy. He referred to the efficiencies that would be made by combining resources into larger councils but was against the idea of one person controlling an enormous budget with almost no scrutiny. He said it was imperative that engagement took place with the public and the case be made for a bespoke devolution settlement if that was the wish of Kent residents. The Green Group had previously promoted an assembly for Kent as the best option to deliver devolution and maintained that view. Mr Hood commented on the religious diversity in Kent and that every resident should be represented.
- (21) Mr Rayner, the Leader of the Conservative Group, commented that Sessions House was a significant financial black hole for the Council, and had been for some time. He referred to the previous Administration's intentions to address the matter and said he would be looking very carefully at the costs involved, when they were available, in continuing to run Sessions House.
- (22) The Conservative Group supported a reduction in capital debt as well as the ongoing arrangements regarding the Employment Task Force. Mr Rayner wished the Administration well in applying to the government for funding from the Dartford Crossing. He was pleased that the plans for Integrated Children's Services (which began under the previous Administration) continued, as well as capital gains tax support for farmers. Mr Rayner welcomed more detail on the Leader's Net Zero announcement and said he

would scrutinise the figures carefully when they were brought to the relevant committee.

- (23) Mr Brady, the Leader of the Labour Group, spoke about LGR and a more efficient form of local government in the form of one council being accountable for all services. He questioned whether the Administration had been told whether it should support devolution or be against it.
- (24) Regarding the sale of Sessions House Mr Brady said this was a soundbite without detail. He referred to the building as a money pit and said it would cost £27million to maintain the building over a 10 year period and that figure did not include modernisation or refurbishment.
- (25) Mr Brady stated that moving integrated residential care in-house was a Kent Labour Group proposal included in its 2025 alternative budget. He said Net Zero supported residents and businesses to save money and created demand for local jobs, attracted investment, reduced overall long-term costs to the Council and improved Kent residents' health.
- (26) Mr Brady commented on Home to School Transport which he said needed to be looked at with care and consideration so as not to worry children, parents and families. The Kent Labour Group proposed voluntary personal transport budgets in its alternative budget which was taken up by the last Administration and saved the Council £2million per year. The Labour Group also promoted working with schools on a school bus proposal which, along with independent travel training, produced savings. Mr Brady asked what the Administration was going to do.
- (27) Mr Brady referred to inaccurate statements about recruitment spend, working from home and the support given to Kent's looked after children, as well as inaccurate statements made in relation to libraries. He commented on recent changes within the Cabinet and criticised the leadership of the Administration whilst referencing the Nolan Principles of Public Life. Mr Brady expressed his disappointment, along with that of Kent residents', at the Leader's announcements.
- (28) Ms Kemkaran responded to points made by the Group Leaders. She agreed that meetings were important but emphasised that verbal reports were also important in developing ideas and policy. She disagreed with comments that people were losing confidence in Reform UK and explained that a recent poll had disputed that. The Leader responded to comments made about a LGR referendum and referred to the Brexit referendum in 2016 which had since been slowly overturned.
- (29) Regarding Sessions House, the Leader said she had been assured that the building could be made warm, welcoming and safe, and it would cost less than an office move to Invicta House. She said the facts and figures spoke for themselves.

- (30) Regarding Net Zero, the Office for Budget Responsibility had indicated that it was going to cost £830billion to implement and the Leader said the country, and the county of Kent, could not afford that. She stressed that residents did not want to pay for something that may or may not yield money in the future. People voted for Reform UK because the party had different ideas and promised to put residents' best interests first.
- (31) Finally, the Leader referred to recent press coverage regarding libraries and said she would report back to Members through the appropriate channels.
- (32) RESOLVED that the Leader's report be noted.

8. **Member Allowances Scheme** (Item 8)

- (1) Ms Kemkaran proposed, and Mr Collins seconded the motion that:

"The County Council is asked to:

- a) Note the report of the Member Remuneration Panel and thank the Panel Members for their work; and
- b) Agree the Member's Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A, incorporating:
 - i. A reduction of 5% to the Basic Allowance.
 - ii. A reduction of 5% to the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, with all other SRAs being reduced in accordance with the scheme.
 - iii. A reduction in 5% to the Dependent's Carers' Allowance.
 - iv. An increase in the allowance for Co-opted Members of the Governance and Audit Committee to £1,700, and an entitlement to the Carer's Allowance."

- 2) Mr Brady proposed and Ms Nolan seconded the following amendment:

"The County Council is asked to:

- a) Note the report of the Member Remuneration Panel and thank the Panel Members for their work; and
- b) Agree the Member's Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A (**as amended**), incorporating:
 - i A reduction of 5% to the Basic Allowance.
 - ii A reduction of ~~5%~~ **10%** to the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, with all other SRAs being reduced in accordance with the scheme.
 - ~~iii A reduction in 5% to the Dependent's Carers' Allowance.~~
 - iv An increase in the allowance for Co-opted Members of the Governance and Audit Committee to £1,700, and an entitlement to the Carer's Allowance.
- c) Recommend that the Member Remuneration Panel (MRP), as part of advising on the 4 year Allowances Scheme to be developed for 2026**

onwards, be asked to consider and report on the removal of Special Responsibility Allowances for Deputy Cabinet Committee members - on the basis that this role is discretionary, not replicated at other Kent Councils and they do not have the same formal responsibilities or accountabilities that other SRA recipients.”

- 3) Following the debate, the Chairman put the amended motion in paragraph 2 to the vote and the voting was as follows.

For (6)

Mr A Brady, Mr S Heaver, Mr M A J Hood, Mr S Jeffery, Ms C Nolan, Mr P Stepto

Against (48)

Mr J Baker, Mr O Bradshaw, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr C Burwash, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr B Collins, Mr J Defriend, Mr S Dixon, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr L Evans, Mr P Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, Mr J Henderson, Mr C Hespe, Ms L Kemkaran, Miss I Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Mr M Logen, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr P Osborne, Mrs C Palmer, Mr R Palmer, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Ms A Randall, Mr D Sian, Mr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr R Waters, Mr N Wibberley, Mrs P Williams and Mr D Wimble

Abstain (16)

Mr M Brice, Mrs T Dean MBE, Mr M Ellis, Mr A J Hook, Mrs S Hudson, Mr J Moreland, Mr M Munday, Mr T Prater, Mr H Rayner, Mr A Ricketts, Ms C Russell, Mr G R Samme, Mr C Sefton, Mr M J Sole, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Mr N Williams

Motion lost.

- 4) Mr Hook proposed and Mr Streatfeild seconded the following amendment:

“The County Council is asked to:

- a) Note the report of the Member Remuneration Panel and thank the Panel Members for their work; and
- b) Agree the Member’s Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A (**as amended**), incorporating:
 - i A reduction of 5% to the Basic Allowance.
 - ii A reduction of 5% to the Leader’s Special Responsibility Allowance, with all other SRAs being reduced in accordance with the scheme.
 - iii ~~A reduction in 5% to the~~ **As recommended by the Independent Review Panel, an adjustment of** Dependent’s Carers’ Allowance **from a maximum £13.47 per hour to a maximum £13.98 per hour, payable only on production of receipts.**

- iv An increase in the allowance for Co-opted Members of the Governance and Audit Committee to £1,700, and an entitlement to the Carer's Allowance.
 - c) Agree that all money saved from the reductions above to be applied to increase the Combined Members Grants fund available to all KCC members equally."
- 5) The proposer and seconder of the original motion agreed to the amendment, which became the substantive motion:

"The County Council is asked to:

 - a) Note the report of the Member Remuneration Panel and thank the Panel Members for their work; and
 - b) Agree the Member's Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A (as amended), incorporating:
 - i A reduction of 5% to the Basic Allowance.
 - ii A reduction of 5% to the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, with all other SRAs being reduced in accordance with the scheme.
 - iii As recommended by the Independent Review Panel, an adjustment of Dependent's Carers' Allowance from a maximum £13.47 per hour to a maximum £13.98 per hour, payable only on production of receipts.
 - iv An increase in the allowance for Co-opted Members of the Governance and Audit Committee to £1,700, and an entitlement to the Carer's Allowance.
 - c) Agree that all money saved from the reductions above to be applied to increase the Combined Members Grants fund available to all KCC members equally."
- 6) Mr Rayner proposed and Ms Russell seconded the following amendment:

"The County Council is asked to:

- a) Note the report of the Member Remuneration Panel and thank the Panel Members for their work; and
- b) Agree the Member's Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A (as amended), incorporating:
 - i A reduction of 5% to the Basic Allowance.
 - ii A reduction of 5% to the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, with all other SRAs being reduced in accordance with the scheme.
 - iii As recommended by the Independent Review Panel, an adjustment of Dependent's Carers' Allowance from a maximum £13.47 per hour to a maximum £13.98 per hour, payable only on production of receipts.
 - iv An increase in the allowance for Co-opted Members of the Governance and Audit Committee to £1,700, and an entitlement to the Carer's Allowance.

- c) Agree that all money saved from the reductions above to be applied to increase the Combined Members Grants fund available to all KCC members equally.
 - d) Recommend that the Member Remuneration Panel (MRP), as part of advising on the 4 year Scheme to be developed for 2026 onwards, be asked to consider and report on application of Basic Allowance reductions/penalties on the basis of attendance records (e.g. a 25% reduction where attendance falls below 75% of expected attendance).
- 7) Following the debate, the Chairman put the amended motion in paragraph 6 to the vote and the voting was as follows.

For (8)

Mr S Heaver, Mr M A J Hood, Mrs S Hudson, Mr S Jeffery, Mr H Rayner, Ms C Russell, Mr P Stepto, Mr N Williams

Against (54)

Mr J Baker, Mr O Bradshaw, Mr M Brice, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr C Burwash, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr B Collins, Mr J Defriend, Mr S Dixon, Mr M Ellis, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr L Evans, Mr P Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, Mr J Henderson, Mr C Hespe, Ms L Kemkaran, Miss I Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Mr M Logen, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr P Osborne, Mrs C Palmer, Mr R Palmer, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Ms A Randall, Mr A Ricketts, Mr G R Samme, Mr D Sian, Mr M J Sole, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Mr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr R Waters, Mr N Wibberley, Mrs P Williams and Mr D Wimble

Abstain (8)

Mr A Brady, Mrs T Dean MBE, Mr A J Hook, Mr J Moreland, Mr M Munday, Ms C Nolan, Mr T Prater, Mr C Sefton

Motion lost.

- 8) Following the debate, the Chairman put the substantive motion (as amended) in paragraph 5 to the vote and the voting was as follows.

For (69)

Mr J Baker, Mr O Bradshaw, Mr A Brady, Mr M Brice, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr B Collins, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr J Defriend, Mr S Dixon, Mr M Ellis, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr L Evans, Mr P Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, Mr S Heaver, Mr J Henderson, Mr C Hespe, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mrs S Hudson, Mr S Jeffery, Ms L Kemkaran, Miss I

Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Mr M Logen, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Mr J Moreland, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr M Munday, Ms C Nolan, Mr P Osborne, Mrs C Palmer, Mr R Palmer, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Mr T Prater, Ms A Randall, Mr H Rayner, Mr A Ricketts, Ms C Russell, Mr G R Samme, Mr D Sian, Mr C Sefton, Mr M J Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Mr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr R Waters, Mr N Wibberley, Mr N Williams, Mrs P Williams and Mr D Wimble

Against (0)

Abstain (1)

Mr C Burwash

Motion carried.

9) RESOLVED that Council:

- a) Notes the report of the Member Remuneration Panel and thank the Panel Members for their work; and
- b) Agrees the Member's Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A (as amended), incorporating:
 - i A reduction of 5% to the Basic Allowance.
 - ii A reduction of 5% to the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, with all other SRAs being reduced in accordance with the scheme.
 - iii As recommended by the Independent Review Panel, an adjustment of Dependent's Carers' Allowance from a maximum £13.47 per hour to a maximum £13.98 per hour, payable only on production of receipts.
 - iv An increase in the allowance for Co-opted Members of the Governance and Audit Committee to £1,700, and an entitlement to the Carer's Allowance.
- c) Agrees that all money saved from the reductions above to be applied to increase the Combined Members Grants fund available to all KCC members equally.

9. Motions for Time Limited Debate

(Item 9)

The Chairman left the meeting and the Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

Motion for Time Limited Debate 1 – Preventing violence against women and girls

1) Mr Hood proposed, and Mr Jeffery seconded the motion that:

“This Council resolves the following:

1. Call on the Executive to develop a broader and comprehensive VAWG Strategy which should include the introduction of public awareness campaigns and bystander training to challenge problematic behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs. This strategy should outline concrete steps to increase the safety of women and girls, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations.
2. Promote a Women's Night-Time Safety Charter through effective working with District and Borough Councils and Kent Police. This activity should support engagement with local businesses, especially bars, pubs, and taxi services, encouraging them to commit to safer practices, including better training for staff and drivers to ensure women's safety.
3. Call on the Executive to work with the District and Borough Councils, via mechanisms such as the Kent Community Safety Partnership, to encourage the use of Licensing Tools to enhance the safety of women and girls across the whole of Kent. This includes implementing additional measures such as improved driver safety checks, the introduction of clear driver identification signage in taxis, and ensuring safe transportation options are readily available for women at night.
4. Call on the Executive and responsible Senior Officers to make women's safety central to our responses to planning applications as a statutory consultee. This should include ensuring that the safety of women and girls will be a key consideration in Kent Highways responses to planning applications, ensuring that public spaces are designed with safety in mind. This includes improved lighting, more accessible public transport routes, and the creation of safe public spaces that encourage women to feel comfortable and secure in all parts of Kent.
5. Agree an ongoing commitment to be a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation and agree to promote the opportunities for any Members to serve as a White Ribbon Champion.
6. Note a key White Ribbon UK message; that it is vital to promote the concept of men and boys working to end violence against women.
7. Recognise that this ongoing accreditation will demonstrate our commitment to tackling violence and abuse and fostering an inclusive culture of respect and equality in the community."

2) Mrs Dean proposed and Mr Hook seconded the following amendment:

"This Council resolves the following:

1. Call on the Executive to develop a broader and comprehensive VAWG Strategy which should include the introduction of public awareness campaigns and bystander training to challenge problematic behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs. This strategy should outline concrete steps to increase the safety of women and girls, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations.
2. Promote a Women's Night-Time Safety Charter through effective working with District and Borough Councils and Kent Police. This activity should support engagement with local businesses, especially

bars, pubs, and taxi services, encouraging them to commit to safer practices, including better training for staff and drivers to ensure women's safety.

3. Call on the Executive to work with the District and Borough Councils, via mechanisms such as the Kent Community Safety Partnership, to encourage the use of Licensing Tools to enhance the safety of women and girls across the whole of Kent. This includes implementing additional measures such as improved driver safety checks, the introduction of clear driver identification signage in taxis, and ensuring safe transportation options are readily available for women at night.
4. Call on the Executive and responsible Senior Officers to make women's safety central to our responses to planning applications as a statutory consultee. This should include ensuring that the safety of women and girls will be a key consideration in Kent Highways responses to planning applications, ensuring that public spaces are designed with safety in mind. This includes improved lighting, more accessible public transport routes, and the creation of safe public spaces that encourage women to feel comfortable and secure in all parts of Kent.
5. Agree an ongoing commitment to be a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation and agree to promote the opportunities for any Members to serve as a White Ribbon Champion.
6. Note a key White Ribbon UK message; that it is vital to promote the concept of men and boys working to end violence against women.
7. Recognise that this ongoing accreditation will demonstrate our commitment to tackling violence and abuse and fostering an inclusive culture of respect and equality in the community.
8. Investigate the process and setting up of a programme for school targeting boys and their attitudes to relationships and abuse."

- 3) The proposer and seconder of the original motion agreed to the amendment, which became the substantive motion:

"This Council resolves the following:

1. Call on the Executive to develop a broader and comprehensive VAWG Strategy which should include the introduction of public awareness campaigns and bystander training to challenge problematic behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs. This strategy should outline concrete steps to increase the safety of women and girls, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations.
2. Promote a Women's Night-Time Safety Charter through effective working with District and Borough Councils and Kent Police. This activity should support engagement with local businesses, especially bars, pubs, and taxi services, encouraging them to commit to safer practices, including better training for staff and drivers to ensure women's safety.
3. Call on the Executive to work with the District and Borough Councils, via mechanisms such as the Kent Community Safety Partnership, to

encourage the use of Licensing Tools to enhance the safety of women and girls across the whole of Kent. This includes implementing additional measures such as improved driver safety checks, the introduction of clear driver identification signage in taxis, and ensuring safe transportation options are readily available for women at night.

4. Call on the Executive and responsible Senior Officers to make women's safety central to our responses to planning applications as a statutory consultee. This should include ensuring that the safety of women and girls will be a key consideration in Kent Highways responses to planning applications, ensuring that public spaces are designed with safety in mind. This includes improved lighting, more accessible public transport routes, and the creation of safe public spaces that encourage women to feel comfortable and secure in all parts of Kent.
 5. Agree an ongoing commitment to be a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation and agree to promote the opportunities for any Members to serve as a White Ribbon Champion.
 6. Note a key White Ribbon UK message; that it is vital to promote the concept of men and boys working to end violence against women.
 7. Recognise that this ongoing accreditation will demonstrate our commitment to tackling violence and abuse and fostering an inclusive culture of respect and equality in the community.
 8. Investigate the process and setting up of a programme for school targeting boys and their attitudes to relationships and abuse."
- 4) Following the debate, the Vice-Chairman put the substantive motion (as amended) in paragraph 3 to the vote and the voting was as follows.

For (22)

Mr A Brady, Mr M Brice, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr M Ellis, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mr S Jeffery, Miss I Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Ms C Nolan, Mr J Moreland, Mr M Munday, Mr T Prater, Mr H Rayner, Mr A Ricketts, Ms C Russell, Mr G R Samme, Mr C Sefton, Mr M J Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Mr N Wibberley

Against (41)

Mr J Baker, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr C Burwash, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr B Collins, Mr S Dixon, Ms S Emberson, Mr L Evans, Mr P Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, M J Henderson, Mr C Hespe, Ms L Kemkaran, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Mr M Logen, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr P Osborne, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Ms A Randall, Mr D Sian, Mr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr R Waters, Mr N Williams, Mrs P Williams and Mr D Wimble

Abstain (3)

Mr O Bradshaw, Mr J Defriend, Mr J Eustace

Motion Lost.

Motion for Time Limited Debate 2 – Improving KCC’s Blue Badge System

5) Mr Hook proposed, and Mr Streatfeild seconded the motion that:

“Council resolves to:

- a) Express its appreciation for the busy, hardworking team who deal with Blue Badge applications.
- b) Request that the application of the Blue Badge rules and the determination of Blue Badge applications should be as generous as possible to residents making Blue Badge applications, so far as the law permits.
- c) Request that a comprehensive report on the waiting times for Blue Badge applications and how this can be improved be provided to the appropriate Committee.
- d) Request that the Executive write on behalf of the Council to government asking for necessary changes to be made to legislation governing Blue Badges so that the three-year rule is abolished and, in particular, that cancer patients and other residents suffering from short-term compromised mobility may be supported with a Blue Badge.”

6) Mrs Morton proposed, and Mr Mulvihill seconded the following amendment:

“Council resolves to:

- a) Express its appreciation for the busy, hardworking team who deal with Blue Badge applications.
- b) Request that the application of the Blue Badge rules and the determination of Blue Badge applications ~~should be as generous as possible to residents making Blue Badge applications, so far as the law permits.~~ **continues to be carried out in full accordance with the specifications set down in law.**
- c) Request that a comprehensive report on the waiting times for Blue Badge applications and how this can be improved be provided to the appropriate Committee.
- d) Request that the **Leader and her** Executive **consider** ~~writing~~ **on** behalf of the Council to **the Department for Transport asking that the Equality Impact Assessment of the legislation governing Blue Badges be refreshed, and that if any amendments are made to include short-term use of a Blue Badge, a new ring-fenced grant be provided by the Department for Transport to support its implementation.** ~~government asking for necessary changes to be made to legislation governing Blue Badges so that the three-year rule is abolished and, in particular, that cancer patients and other residents suffering from short-term compromised mobility may be supported with a Blue Badge.~~

7) Following the debate, the Vice-Chairman put the amendment in paragraph 6 to the vote and the voting was as follows.

For (44)

Mr J Baker, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr B Collins, Mr J Defriend, Mr S Dixon, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr L Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, Mr J Henderson, Mr C Hespe, Ms L Kemkaran, Miss I Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Mr M Logen, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr P Osborne, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Ms A Randall, Mr H Rayner, Mr D Sian, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr R Waters, Mr N Wibberley, Mr N Williams, Mrs P Williams and Mr D Wimble

Against (16)

Mr M Brice, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr M Ellis, Mr P Evans, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mr S Jeffery, Mr J Moreland, Mr M Munday, Mr T Prater, Mr A Ricketts, Ms C Russell, Mr G R Samme, Mr C Sefton, Mr M J Sole, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE

Abstain (5)

Mr A Brady, Mr O Bradshaw, Mr C Burwash, Ms C Nolan, Mr G Sturley

Motion carried.

8) The amended motion in paragraph 6 became the substantive motion:

“Council resolves to:

- a) Express its appreciation for the busy, hardworking team who deal with Blue Badge applications.
- b) Request that the application of the Blue Badge rules and the determination of Blue Badge applications continues to be carried out in full accordance with the specifications set down in law.
- c) Request that a comprehensive report on the waiting times for Blue Badge applications and how this can be improved be provided to the appropriate Committee.
- d) Request that the Leader and her Executive consider writing on behalf of the Council to the Department for Transport asking that the Equality Impact Assessment of the legislation governing Blue Badges be refreshed, and that if any amendments are made to include short-term use of a Blue Badge, a new ring-fenced grant be provided by the Department for Transport to support its implementation.”

9) The Vice-Chairman put the substantive motion (as amended) in paragraph 8 to the vote and the voting was as follows.

For (65)

Mr J Baker, Mr O Bradshaw, Mr A Brady, Mr M Brice, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr C Burwash, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr B Collins, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr J Defriend, Mr S Dixon, Mr M Ellis, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr L

Evans, Mr P Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, Mr J Henderson, Mr C Hespe, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mr S Jeffery, Ms L Kemkaran, Miss I Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Mr M Logen, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Mr J Moreland, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr M Munday, Ms C Nolan, Mr P Osborne, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Mr T Prater, Ms A Randall, Mr H Rayner, Mr A Ricketts, Ms C Russell, Mr G R Samme, Mr D Sian, Mr C Sefton, Mr M J Sole, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Mr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr R Waters, Mr N Wibberley, Mr N Williams, Mrs P Williams and Mr D Wimble

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

Motion carried.

10) RESOLVED that:

Council resolves to:

- a) Express its appreciation for the busy, hardworking team who deal with Blue Badge applications.
- b) Request that the application of the Blue Badge rules and the determination of Blue Badge applications continues to be carried out in full accordance with the specifications set down in law.
- c) Request that a comprehensive report on the waiting times for Blue Badge applications and how this can be improved be provided to the appropriate Committee.
- d) Request that the Leader and her Executive consider writing on behalf of the Council to the Department for Transport asking that the Equality Impact Assessment of the legislation governing Blue Badges be refreshed, and that if any amendments are made to include short-term use of a Blue Badge, a new ring-fenced grant be provided by the Department for Transport to support its implementation.

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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL– 01 April 2025

MINUTES of the meeting held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Shellina Prendergast (Chair), Gary Cooke, Dylan Jeffrey, Sarah Hamilton, Sarah Hammond, Caroline Smith, Ingrid Crisan, Tracy Scott, Stephen Gray, Dan Bride, Kayleigh Leonard and Tom Byrne.

ALSO PRESENT: Sue Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services).

IN ATTENDANCE: Joanne Carpenter (Participation and Engagement Manager), Alice Gleave (Interim Assistant Director for SEND Operations), Leemya McKeown (Assistant Director, Safeguarding Professional Standards and Quality Assurance), Kevin Kasaven (Director of Children's Countywide Services), Roxanne Hills (Designated Nurse for Looked after Children) and Georgia Humphreys (Democratic Services Officer).

Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies had been received from Mr Brazier, Mr Love, Mr Bartlett, Mr Horton, Mr Passmore, Mr Beaney and Ms Sayer for whom Ms Hills was present as substitute.

Ms Hamilton, Ms Bride and Ms Scott were in attendance virtually.

Chair's Announcements

1. The Chair asked the Chairman of the Council to mention the young people who attended Parliament to address issues of importance and the hard work of the apprentices at the last meeting of the County Council.
2. The Chair shared that the Vice-Chairman had recently invited unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) from the Maple Rise Reception Centre on a local litter pick and to a birdwatching club meeting.
3. The Chair commended the work of Mr Cooke, who was invited to address the Panel. Mr Cooke reflected on his time as a Councillor and as a Corporate Parent.

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2025

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

Participation Team update

1. Ms Carpenter, Participation and Engagement Manager, CYPE, and her team introduced the report and gave an overview of its content.
2. Ms Carpenter introduced Karmel, an apprentice, to the Panel and asked that the apprentices attend the next meeting of the Panel to discuss their meeting in Parliament. Additionally, noting that Nathan, an apprentice, had finished his assessment level three, achieving distinctions.
3. There was no longer a requirement for Maths and English GCSE's to achieve the Apprenticeship Framework Qualification, this would allow more young people to take part in the qualification.
4. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Ms Carpenter explained that the service had good links with Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN), there was a joint project to celebrate Kent Refugee Week.
 - b. Ms Carpenter shared that it was found that young people had concerns over independence. These included:
 - i. the ability to drive, young people were to be taken to Bluewater Shopping Centre to an experience where those aged over 14 can try driving on a track.
 - ii. travelling independently, parents and carers had anxiety at the thought of their young people travelling alone, the team had planned to take the young people to London over the summer.
 - iii. being safe when alone at night and being able to navigate Google Maps.
 - iv. concerns about life post-18 years of age.
 - c. Ms Carpenter shared that all of the data collated from the adoption group's work with Kooth was brought back to Adoption Partnership South East for use for wider work and training for parents.

RESOLVED that the Panel noted the update.

Verbal Update by the Cabinet Member

1. Mrs Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, gave a verbal update on the following:
 - a. A thematic review of young people in the justice service was undertaken. In Kent it found many cases of good practice of youth justice services, as well as some areas of further work, there was a link between young people being out of school and entering into the justice system. The challenge that had arisen from this was to increase inclusive practices in schools to limit exclusions.

- b. In February 2025, eight members from the Kent Youth Parliament attended the Youth Parliament Debate in the House of Commons, alongside more than 300 young people from across Britain and British overseas territories. They debated on topics such as: a raise in National Minimum Wage for those aged under 22 years of age, more political education in schools, lowering the voting age to 16, affordable public transport and free period products. The young people voted to prioritise period dignity and lowering the voting age as their campaigns. Four Kent Youth MP's spoke in the debate and one member of the Kent Youth Parliament was chosen to represent the South East and deliver closing speech for the parliamentary literacy debate.
 - c. Mrs Chandler shared that an Ofsted inspection of Sunrise Children's Home had been undertaken in February 2025, it was rated outstanding in all categories. Mrs Chandler shared her congratulations to staff.
2. In response to comments and questions it was said:
- a. The Chair requested that links to the debates be included in the minutes.
 - i. Period dignity: [UK Youth Parliament - Debate - Period dignity - 28/02/2025 - YouTube](#)
 - ii. Political literacy: [UK Youth Parliament - Debate - Political literacy - 28/02/2025](#)
 - iii. Voting age: [UK Youth Parliament - Debate - Voting age - 28/02/2025](#)
 - iv. Living wage: [UK Youth Parliament - Debate - Living wage - 28/02/2025](#)
 - v. Public transport: [UK Youth Parliament - Debate - Public transport - 28/02/2025 - YouTube](#)

RESOLVED that the Panel noted the update.

Children in Care Scorecard 6 month update

- 1. Ms McKeown, Assistant Director, Professional Standards & Quality Assurance, CYPE, presented on this item.
- 2. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Social workers had the opportunity earn more money as agency staff, which had the possibility of making the KCC benefits package seem less desirable. The Children's Wellbeing in Schools Bill, proposed an alternative way to work with SEND children, a qualified social worker would not be needed in all situations.
 - b. Mr Kasaven explained that declining numbers in social workers was a national trend.

- c. Ms Leonard believed that young people had struggled to focus on employment opportunities as they were worried about other aspects of adult life.
- d. Ms Hammond noted that green levels in staffing had not yet been achieved, in order to try and combat the low levels, there were countermeasures put in place such as limits on how many times and where staff could move job's within the service. Ms Crisan added that the Government had introduced a ruling which required social workers to work within a Local Authority for three years before they could become a locum social worker.
- e. Ms McKeown was to come back to the Panel with the figures, excluding data related to Kent's UASC population.
- f. Panel members noted that the transition period for young people was extremely significant.
- g. There was effort going into 'growing' additional apprentices as on average, they were more likely to stay within the service for a longer period of time.

RESOLVED that the Panel noted the update.

Children in care with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- 1. Ms Gleave, Interim Assistant Director for SEND Operations, introduced the report and gave an overview of its content.
- 2. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Ms Hammond said that children from other authorities placed in Kent caused a significant extra expense for the Council. Moreover, 1/3 of Kent children had SEND needs, compared to 75% of looked after children placed in Kent. Additionally, any additional costs relating to looked after children were the financial responsibility of Kent.
 - b. Ms Gleave was to work with the SEN inclusion team to look into why figures for reduced timetables were higher and bring an update to the Panel at future meeting.
 - c. Ms Hammond explained that Kent used more independent special schools than any other authority, and therefore it was not practical to adopt a strategy that involved the use of more independent special schools. Ms Gleave added that schools supported and scrutinised each other and questioned issues such as reduced timetables, this enabled Head Teachers and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO's) to have a positive, working relationship.
 - d. Ms Hammond explained that there was an effort to ensure all new Members of the KCC were properly informed of their duties as Corporate Parents.

RESOLVED that the Panel noted the work of the Virtual School and SEND in supporting its young people.

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From: Linden Kemkaran, Leader
Amanda Beer, Chief Executive

To: **County Council – 18 September 2025**

Subject: Draft of the Council's Strategy, ***Reforming Kent 2025-2028***.

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary:

Reforming Kent 2025-2028 is the Council's new draft Council Strategy, replacing the previous administration's Strategy, *Framing Kent's Future*. The strategy is presented to County Council in draft form and the final draft will be brought back to the Council in November for approval. It sets out the challenges facing the Council over the next 3 years and the aims and objectives of the administration to meet these.

Recommendations:

County Council is asked to:

- (1) **Comment on** the draft Council Strategy, *Reforming Kent 2025-2028*.
-

1. Introduction

- 1.1 *Reforming Kent, 2025-2028* (appendix1) replaces the previous administration's strategy, *Framing Kent's Future* and sets out the aims and objectives of the administration within the context of the local government policy landscape and the legacy inherited. It is a three-year strategy given the implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the proposed creation of new council structures in Kent and Medway in 2028. It is, however, still strong in its ambition to ensure that Kent's residents feel they are heard, the services they receive are good value and that the Council is standing up for the residents of Kent on those areas which matter most to them.

2. ***Reforming Kent, 2025-2028***

- 2.1 The document is not intended as an exhaustive list of everything the Council does but is focused on establishing a reformed council, the ambitions we want to meet and the objectives and priorities that will be delivered.
- 2.2 The Strategy is focused on 4 aims that are structured around the areas of greatest challenge and opportunity and each of these are supported by a number of objectives and priorities.

The four aims are:

- Putting Kent Residents First

- Reforming Kent County Council
- Supporting Residents that need help
- Building Better Communities

For each of the objectives the document sets out the local context, why this matters to Kent, whilst outlining the priorities the Council will address.

3. Next Steps and timeline

- 3.1 Following County Council, amendments will be made to the document, and further drafting will take place to reflect wider engagement. The draft will also be placed on the KCC website and be promoted for comments.
- 3.2 The final strategy will be brought back to County Council for approval on November 6th and following this there will need to be a review of other Council strategies and policies to ensure they align. Any changes to these will be taken through the usual governance routes.
- 3.3 The final strategy will set out how we will measure success against the aims and objectives. This will need to include a review of the Quarterly Performance Report and the Council's Business plan to ensure they align to the strategy.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. County Council is asked to :

(1) **Comment on** the draft Council Strategy, Reforming Kent 2025-2028.

5. Relevant Director:

David Whittle, Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance – david.whittle@kent.gov.uk

6. Background Documents

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Reforming Kent, 2025-2028

Reforming Kent 2025-2028

FOREWORD

On 1st May 2025, Reform UK won 57 out of 81 seats which gave us overall control of Kent County Council.

My fellow members and I campaigned on a promise that we would come in with fresh eyes and fire in our bellies and be unapologetic in our mission to put the people of Kent right at the heart of every decision that we make.

We are here to represent you and to make decisions that benefit you. We are here to be advocates for those in need, young and old, and to make sure that those in the middle, on whose shoulders the financial burden increasingly rests, know that we spend their money as carefully as we spend our own.

KCC's main challenge is how to do more, with less. We are facing big challenges.

As a population we are getting older. Couples are not having as many babies as they used to. The social fabric of our towns and villages has been altered by years of uncontrolled immigration and overspill from London. Crime is high, and trust is at an all-time low.

Kent has been pressured into building more and more houses. More children are being diagnosed with special educational needs and crime typically goes unsolved.

There is an increased perception that the welfare system is too generous and is open to abuse with people divided into 'workers or shirkers'.

It's no wonder we are all feeling the pressure and that KCC is in debt.

But we are determined to turn it around.

As Leader, I'm putting efficiency first and have tasked a new Cabinet team with special responsibility for Local Government Efficiency with the job of carrying out a full examination of all Council procedures, procurement and employment.

As for looking after our vulnerable people and in the continued absence of a joined-up plan from Central Government, we will take a preventative approach, investing in services that reduce dependency that help people stay healthy and independent for longer. Our Adult Social Care team will embrace AI and digital tools to deliver smarter, more responsive support.

Our young people in care (which due to our legal obligations, must include unaccompanied asylum-seeking children whose costs are fully met by the Home Office), will be gradually moved out of privately run care homes into homes owned and run by KCC. This removes KCC's dependence on an increasingly expensive private sector and allows us to spend less money to look after these children to our own high standards.

To ensure our teachers receive the support they deserve, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) will prioritise prevention, early intervention, and reintegration pathways. By being closely aligned with schools, PRUs will provide targeted support for disruptive pupils who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

We will also work with the PCC to ban smartphones in Kent's schools, allowing children to concentrate on their lessons, develop meaningful, face-to-face friendships and remain free of the pressures of online life for the majority of each day.

There will be new emphasis on personal responsibility and helping people to make sound choices that lead to better life outcomes. We do not believe that adults should be infantilised or treated as potential victims. KCC is here to help, not to take over residents' lives.

You will notice a change of messaging in our public health, education and social care literature to reflect our new, empowering approach.

If someone is in receipt of taxpayers' money for whatever reason, they will be made aware of that fact and encouraged to use that money wisely and frugally.

As Leader I will continue to push back against central government if I feel that the policies do not align with my own vision of what's best for Kent.

I want to remove unnecessary bureaucracy and form ticking associated with DEI and find more meaningful ways for the council to meet its Public Sector Equality duties.

On the environment we will replace the Net Zero 2030 target with an energy efficiency plan focused on financial returns and investigate opportunities to create additional revenue streams, and we will rescind the County Council's climate emergency declaration which is stifling debate.

We'll lobby government to promote Dungeness as the right site for a small nuclear reactor and we'll work with water companies to clean up our seas and rivers, develop a long-term water resources plan for Kent and ensure that drainage works to prevent flooding.

Our coastal communities, ignored for so long will benefit from a targeted Kent & Medway Business Fund for startups, high-growth, or fast-growing businesses and we'll tackle inequalities that are especially pronounced in our seaside towns that can damage hard working families' access to secure employment.

Kent's farmers will have our full support. We value their year-round hard work that delivers food security for us all and protects our precious greenbelt, agricultural land and natural wildlife habitats.

Our roads are used by all of us, every single day so to improve road quality we'll remove obstacles and inefficiencies across Kent's highways and work directly with local contractors and suppliers stripping away wasteful overheads and duplication to increase productivity.

My first decision as Leader to fly only the flags of Kent, St George and the Union on the exterior of County Hall is further proof that under my tenure, every single person is represented and nobody is left out.

My vision for Kent is that of a happy, thriving and tolerant society built on merit rather than enforced diversity targets. One unified county, proud of its history and optimistic for its future. A place where the residents feel safer, healthier and wealthier knowing that their political representatives try to get the best value for every pound spent.

A green and pleasant 'garden of England' where farmers feel valued in ensuring our food security, where they are recognised as custodians of the countryside *protecting our land* from excessively large solar farms and housing developments.

A county that makes the most of its unique position as the gateway into our nation and also out to the rest of the world.

In short, because Kent boasts historical buildings, picturesque towns and villages, bustling shopping centres, rolling green hills, burgeoning vineyards, excellent restaurants and pubs, miles of stunning coastline plus fast access to London, it's easily one of the best counties in the UK in which to live, work and visit.

Linden Kemkaran

Leader, Kent County Council

Introduction:

This strategy sets out our vision for Kent from 2025-2028. It is shorter in timeframe due to the Governments proposals for local government reorganisation and the creation of new council structures in Kent and Medway in 2028. However, this shortened timeframe does not weaken or limit our ambition for Kent or for Kent County Council.

This document is not intended as an exhaustive list of everything the Council does but is focused on establishing a reformed council, the ambitions we want to meet and the objectives and priorities we will deliver.

The scale of the challenges facing our country and our county today, and in the future, require the council and our administration to be agile to the changing circumstances which we face. As such, Reforming Kent is considered a live document, and as an administration we will update as necessary through Cabinet to ensure it remains relevant and useful for our residents, our partners and our staff.

OUR VISION:

Kent is a place where the residents feel safer, healthier and wealthier and know that their political representatives try to get the best value for every pound spent.

OUR COMMITMENTS TO OUR RESIDENTS ARE THAT WE WILL:

- ✓ Keep council tax increases as low as possible but will maintain the quality-of-service provision.
- ✓ Ask the difficult questions and challenge long held assumptions within the county council.
- ✓ Not accept the status quo where it fails our residents whether as service users or taxpayers.
- ✓ Have a ruthless focus on value for money, cost efficiency and common sense.
- ✓ Expect those who we support to respect the services and monies provided to them.
- ✓ Reward those who work hard and achieve on merit rather than tick boxes.

Additional commitments and policies may be made over the life of this document as circumstances change and as we ensure that we can achieve our financial plan and deliver against our efficiency review.

Reforming Kent – summary diagram:



AIM 1: PUTTING KENT RESIDENTS FIRST

Our objectives

1. **Make sure the people of Kent are heard, from local town halls right through to Parliament:** The victory for Reform UK in the local elections was driven by a growing sense of exasperation of a state failing to listen to the legitimate concerns and needs of its citizens over the way their taxes are being used, and the diminishing quality of services they are receiving in return. Successive Governments of all political persuasions have taken Kent for granted for too long. KCC is only one part of the public sector that needs reform, but Reform UK Kent will do all we can by bringing the people's voice to the fore in the decisions made in town halls, county hall, and in Parliament.

Our priorities will be to:

- Continue to work with partners at both local, regional, and the national level to resist the inappropriate placement of large-scale asylum provision in unsuitable areas in Kent - particularly where public services are already under significant pressure - and push for reform of the asylum system to remove these concerns from our local communities.
 - Lobby government to ensure that Kent does not continue to be unfairly burdened by illegal migrants and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and that dispersal is fairly distributed across the country.
 - Push back on excessively high levels of new housing proposed and inappropriate solar farm development planned for Kent which is threatening the character of many local communities.
2. **Work with the government to find long-term solutions to the challenges at the border:** It is the clear responsibility of the U.K. government to manage the border at the Kent short straits. The repeated failure of the UK Government to stop the small boats crossings directly impacts Kent's residents and security but also undermines our county's reputation nationally and internationally. Operation BROCK, the use of the M20 to hold HGVs when there is disruption at the border, impinges on many Kent residents' quality of life, but it also harms our county's economy and economic competitiveness. We will hold the government to account to deliver its obligations to the residents of Kent to better manage the border; in doing so, we also pledge to do whatever KCC can as both a highways and social care authority, to support their efforts.

Our priorities will be to:

- Ensure the Home Office manages the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) dispersal scheme in a timely and effective manner, so as not to place an unsafe burden on KCC Children's Services, impacting our capacity to support Kent children.
- Work with the Department for Transport, and our partners in Kent to find a long-term solution to Operation BROCK, which does not impact on Kent residents or businesses day-to-day.
- Ensure that the introduction of EES, the EU Entry-Exit Visa Scheme, operates in such a way that does not add a significant additional burden to the Kent road network, and does not require semi-permanent emergency arrangements to be put in place.

3. **Seek fair funding from Government which properly recognises Kent's unique needs:** The pressure on KCC services from being the strategic council for the UK's gateway to Europe is a significant, additional, and unique burden on Kent council taxpayers which we believe is not fairly recognised or compensated for by the Government. Whether it is foreign HGVs on our roads or the impact of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children on our children's social services, the cost to Kent is both direct in what it costs the county council, and indirect given the wider strain it places on our budgets and services. That needs to be acknowledged and better reflected in the support the Government provides to KCC.

Our priorities will be to:

- Respond to the Government proposals to change grant distribution to local government – ensuring more money is provided to address Kent's needs.
- Lobby at national level for a revised, needs-based funding formula for children's social care that recognises the burden from Other Local Authorities placing so many of their Looked After Children into Kent.
- Call on Government to support a fairer, more sustainable funding model for road maintenance, one that allows for planning and prevention rather than just emergency fixes.
- Make the case to Government for Kent to receive its fair share of funding currently being taken by the government from the Dartford Crossing and from the HGV Road User Levy collected from foreign HGV's coming through the Kent Ports.

4. **Stand up for the interests of all Kent residents in Local Government**

Reorganisation: The government's policy of undertaking a wholesale Local Government Reorganisation – merging the District Councils and County Council to form a new single-tier unitary Councils - is a huge and costly distraction to the real business of running local councils and delivering high quality services. We are sceptical that local government reorganisation in Kent will yield the anticipated savings and benefits expected by Government. Indeed, to the contrary, we expect it will harm service quality whilst placing huge additional increases in Kent residents' council tax to fund it.

Our priorities will be to:

- We will continue to push Government to ensure that residents interests are at the heart of LGR and that the resident voice is embedded in our proposals through local networks.
- Engage transparently and respectfully in the LGR process with all councils in Kent and Medway, even where we disagree on LGR proposals, so all partners act in the best interests of Kent and Medway residents.
- Ensure that continuity of service provision and service quality is not put at risk by any LGR proposals, either through the development of LGR proposals, or through the implementation of any changes imposed on Kent by the Government.

5. **Support local businesses to attract investment and create job opportunities for people in Kent:**

The public sector cannot be sustainable without a thriving and growing private sector economy to fund it, at national or local level. The failure to deliver economic growth drives higher demand for public services, which in turn

become more reliant on an ever-smaller and ever more strained private sector economy to fund them. Every area in the country needs to support economic growth to break this downward spiral in our economy and our public services. In Kent, this means supporting local businesses, the vast majority of which are small to medium-sized enterprises to create the jobs, attract investment and upskill our workforce to drive economic growth.

Our priorities will be to:

- We will back major infrastructure projects – which bring new skilled jobs into Kent - such as the Port of Dover 2050 initiative to drive investment into the county and utilise Kent's unique geographical position.
- We will deliver the Get Kent and Medway Working Plan to reduce the 21% of the Kent working age population who are economically inactive, and through the Connect to Work programme, help up to 2900 residents who are facing barriers to employment receive personalised coaching and support to find work.
- We will lobby the Government to mandate the reuse of the high-speed international train stations at Ebbsfleet International and Ashford International so as to maximise the economic and travel benefits and end the scandal of this critical infrastructure lying dormant and unused.

6. **Protect our countryside and give strong support to Kent's farmers and rural pursuits and communities:** Kent has a large population and densely populated towns, but it remains in the hearts and minds of many of its residents, businesses and visitors an historic rural county. This is drawn from not only our county's unique character, but also our national and international reputation as the Garden of England. It is imperative that we protect our rural heritage, rural businesses and rural communities and support them to thrive. Kent must not only exist to serve the needs and overspill from a growing London population.

Our priorities will be to:

- Resist Government plans to cover agricultural land in solar farms.
- Work with District and Borough Councils to resist inappropriate developments on the edges of towns and villages.
- Support rural public transport.
- Work with Kent Police to ensure patrols in rural crime hotspots.

AIM 2: REFORMING KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Our objectives

1. **Deliver improvements to the visible services that matter most to the majority of Kent residents:** Given the demand pressures on social care an ever increasing proportion of the KCC budget has been spent on an ever smaller number of high-need individuals in both adults and children's social care. Whilst KCC is legally obliged to meet the needs of the vulnerable, it cannot be right that this comes at the expense of services to the majority of Kent residents who fund KCC through their council tax. If KCC's role and spend is to be valued by the majority of its residents, they must see and feel more benefit from it.

Our priorities will be to:

- Through the budget setting process, ensuring a fairer proportion of new monies are invested in visible community services, which have been underfunded due to central government's inability to find long-term solutions for social care.
- Ensure that KCC only takes on the responsibilities which residents expect it to and which are in the best interests of Kent. The delivery of government programmes, even when directly funded, places additional pressures on the KCC management and support services, whilst distracting KCC from its core purpose.
- Improve performance management arrangements for all KCC services by reviewing current key performance indicators and targets, and develop a range of productivity measures for each KCC service, so we can target improving productivity and drive value for money.

2. **Reduce the KCC debt burden, releasing more monies back into front line services:** KCC's debt burden is significant at over £700m. This debt has been accrued over many decades by the decisions of previous political administrations. Whilst it is possible for KCC to service this debt, in doing so, it takes away vital monies from day-to-day frontline services to the tune of almost £80m a year. That is money that Kent residents need invested back into their frontline services. We do not accept that there is a need to increase the debt burden in order to facilitate and support the KCC capital budget. A better balance must be achieved.

Our priorities will be to:

- Continue to drive down KCC's overall debt burden, through a focus on debt management, asset sales and strict control of new capital expenditure.
- Ring fence any released debt servicing monies to visible community and infrastructure services through the KCC budget process.
- Maximise the use of external funding to support the capital programme, additional new KCC borrowing will be the absolute exception.

3. **Make every penny count, using a common-sense approach and DOLGE to find efficiency savings and income generation opportunities:** Many public sector organisations lose focus and expand beyond their core purpose through the layering of new activities from local politicians and governments. Nothing is ever stopped or closed only new, often unfunded, burdens are added. Because public sector budgets are guaranteed by taxation, the public sector also doesn't have the inherent drive found in the private sector to ruthlessly manage costs. The guaranteed funding of the public sector through taxation makes it inherently different to the private sector, where organisations must manage costs and take decisive action to control them. Through our Department of Local Government Efficiency, we will systematically look at every penny of KCC spend, taking learning and best practice from the private

sector to drive us to better control of costs, wherever possible. No saving is too small for an organisation facing the financial pressures KCC is facing, and we will rigorously look at each KCC department to determine if the cost base is justified by the service outcomes.

Our priorities will be to:

- Systematically undertake a review of all KCC contracts and assess whether they are delivering value for money and are fit for purpose, and reopening contract negotiations where they are not we are in a position to do so.
- Review contract management arrangements in all services across the council ensuring that there is sufficient focus and rigour on managing contracts once they've been agreed, and taking remedial action where providers are not delivering to the standards expected.
- We will use technology, AI and automation to ensure services are innovative and strip out excessive cost and time.
- We will look for new income generation opportunities from KCC services, and continue to support the 100% wholly owned KCC trading company – Commercial Services Group – to operate independently and commercially within the market, providing a strong dividend return to KCC.

4. **Use Kent's buying power to support local jobs and keep investment in the county:** KCC is a huge purchaser of goods and services, with an annual procured spend of £1.47bn. This presents an opportunity to support jobs and businesses in the Kent economy. The recently introduced changes in procurement law to broaden our supplier base with Kent businesses, keeping more of KCC's money in the local Kent economy. The voluntary and community sector plays an important role as both a service provider and a core pillar of Kent's wider civic society and we will look to strengthen our engagement and partnership with the sector. Where the market is unable to meet KCC service requirements at an affordable price, we will look at the available in-house options for ensuring service delivery.

Our priorities will be to:

- Encourage more Kent based businesses to bid for KCC contracts, with an associated increase in KCC spend staying within Kent.
- Maximise the opportunities within the Procurement Act to minimise barriers to entry for SMEs in bidding for KCC goods and services and use Social Value to drive additional benefits for local Kent communities.
- Explore opportunities to work with partners voluntary and community sector to improve the lives of residents and design services that meet their needs.

5. **Ensure the council focusses on delivering better outcomes that make a difference, not just manging process:** One of the greatest frustrations of residents is that when they want better and more responsive delivery from their public services, politicians at national and local level just offer up changed processes rather than real change. But even more frustratingly, we know these frustrations are felt as equally by our staff, who come to work to make a difference to the residents and communities they serve, not be wrapped up in unnecessary box ticking that simply gets in the way of them doing their job. We will continue to invest in our staff development, ensuring they are fully supported in delivering vital services in often challenging environment,

and removing barriers to real change. We will continue to meet our commitments under the Public Sector Equality Duty but want to do so in a more meaningful way that has wider public, partner and staff support.

Our priorities will be to:

- We will ensure that we have the right people in the right roles to deliver against our ambitions and meet the future challenges – ensuring there is meritocracy, fairness and equality in recruitment.
- We will review governance arrangements to ensure they are as streamlined as possible, reducing bureaucracy to free up staff to focus on service delivery.
- Continually review staff numbers, structures and salaries to ensure every role has a real impact for the residents of Kent, and through the People Strategy continue to invest in staff training and professionalism.
- We will devise a new set of Corporate Equality Objectives when the current objectives expire, and ensure our policies which support the Public Sector Equality Duty are fit for purpose.

6. **Scrap unattainable Net Zero 2030 and focus environment policy on direct benefits to Kent residents:** The rush to declare a climate emergency and the introduction of Net Zero targets in councils, without any thought as to the practicality or financial burden they placed on hard pressed council taxpayers was a mistake. Instead of taking a pragmatic approach needed by residents and businesses to cope with increasing costs of energy in heating their homes or running their businesses, it overly focused on carbon emissions targets which have little meaningful value to the daily lives of Kent residents. We want to refocus our approach to the environment with a stronger focus on adapting to changes in our weather, stronger environmental stewardship, visible improvements and a focus on the resident.

Our priorities will be to:

- We will rescind the County Councils Climate Emergency Declaration of 2019, which is scaring young people, adversely impacting on small businesses and stifling debate.
- We will bring forward a new Energy and Low Emissions Strategy that focusses on delivering long-term practical solutions for affordable energy and support to Kent residents.
- We will ensure there is an effective waste management and recycling service that is value for money and improves rates of recycling through a simpler and efficient process.
- We will move our focus onto helping businesses and residents adapt to our changing climate by conserving water and other natural resources.

AIM 3: SUPPORTING RESIDENTS THAT NEED HELP

Our objectives

1. **Embed a greater focus on prevention and early intervention and empowering people to take personal responsibility:** The increasing withdrawal of universal preventative and early-intervention services, whilst understandable given budget pressures, has begun to bite public services as demand soars and needs grow. These needs may have been met better and more affordably had an early intervention approach been in place. It is also right for people to take personal responsibility for their own lives and preventative services can support people to make choices that improve their health but also empower them, reducing

dependency on the state in the longer term. The short term approach has been a false economy and does not deliver best value for the taxpayer in the longer term.

Our priorities will be to:

- Give families access to the right support, intervening early to ensure wherever possible families can stay together and reducing the number of children that go into care.
- Where it is financially viable, we will invest in prevention. We will also campaign for this area to receive direct funding, especially for prevention in social care.
- Put in place practical measures that improve people's lives, intervening early to support people to help themselves and make sensible life choices without a nanny state attitude

2. **Ensure every child has the chance to grow up safe and secure, free from online harm:** Ensuring our children grow up in a safe and secure environment is an ever-increasing challenge, whether they are cared for by their parents, their wider family or the local authority. Increasingly pervasive influences from the internet, social media and peer pressure means many of our children are exposed to risks and dangers that were inconceivable just a couple of decades ago. This impacts on their mental health and drives demand for health services and disability benefits, ruining their life chances and burdening the taxpayer with excessive and unnecessary costs. Protecting childhood is critical to making sure the next generation can live a happy and fulfilling life and ensuring a safe and stable society in the decades to come.

Our priorities will be to:

- Reinstate parenting hubs to support families and help them stay together.
- Encourage parents to feed children a health nutritious diet, give them plenty of fresh air and exercise and reduce screen time to an absolute minimum.
- Work with the PCC to ban smartphones in Kent's schools, allowing children to concentrate on their lessons, and protect them from online pressures.
- We will support Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) to prioritise prevention, early intervention, and reintegration. Through close alignment with schools, PRUs will provide targeted support for disruptive pupils without and EHCP.
- Work with schools to lobby central government to redraft the curriculum to encourage rigorous teaching in the core skills of reading, writing and maths and drive out ideological social trends.
- To ensure our teachers receive the support they deserve, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) will prioritise prevention, early intervention, and reintegration pathways. By being closely aligned with schools, PRUs will provide targeted support for disruptive pupils who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

3. **To deliver good care for our most vulnerable because they deserve to be treated with dignity:** Social care services have been failed by successive governments with the absence of a coherent and sustainably funded plan to meet the vast challenges faced. Complexity of need has increased alongside the demographic pressures of an ageing population and adult social care services in particular, continue to place increasing pressure on the Council's budget. The system has simply not been modernised to catch up with the growing demand or to deliver the type of support people want. With the right support people can live independently for longer, keeping people out of residential care and in their own homes. This not only

offers greater quality of life but costs far less to the taxpayer. The use of technology is woefully underutilised both in terms of supporting people's independence and streamlining assessment processes. Outdated and costly care is not delivering the support people deserve and must be reformed, fit for the 21st Century.

Our priorities will be to:

- Look at options to use AI and tech to create efficient assessment processes, that speed up getting the right support to people as quickly and as effectively as possible.
- We will bring some Children's homes capacity back in house, where it makes financial sense, to ensure we are not paying inflated prices set by some providers.

We will work with our local workforce, providers and VCSE to ensure good care and the right support is available at a local level.

4. **Work with care providers and the NHS to ensure that the care system is more sustainable and joined up:** The demand pressures that KCC services are facing are also faced by our partners in the NHS. We want to work with our NHS partners to ensure a more joined approach to meeting the needs of our local residents. Our residents quality of life should not be compromised by the failures of successive national governments to develop a sustainable care system, which works seamlessly with the health system. We will work closely with our NHS partners to develop a local care system that is built around collaboration and partnership, not duplication and inefficiency and ensure that the resident's needs are at the heart of this.

Our priorities will be to:

- We will improve our engagement and relationship with care providers, so that both commissioners and providers can work together to ensure care markets are more sustainable.
- We will work with our partners in the NHS to develop a stronger joint commissioning programme across a range of services where we have shared clients or are commissioning from the same providers.
- We will review how Disabled Facilities Grants are managed to ensure they are accessible, fair, and responsive to people's needs, and ensuring residents are not passed around between different KCC and District authorities.
- We will hold the Government to account to ensure any recommendations from the Casey Review are funded, sensible, and subject to consultation, including any proposal for a National Care Service.

5. **Recognise and support the dedication of our county's unpaid carers:** The family is the backbone of a compassionate and caring society. Nowhere is that more evident than in the love, dedication, and support that family carers provide on an unpaid basis, often sacrificing the quality of their own life to meet the needs of their loved ones. This informal care reduces the care burden on the council exponentially, and the role of adults and young carers should be recognised, supported and celebrated given their selfless contribution.

Our priorities will be to:

- Refresh the KCC Carers strategy, and seek to join up our support for carers across health and housing services.

- Better engage with carers support groups around the support and recognition carers can be provided.
- Ensure that the life chances of young carers are not inhibited by their caring responsibilities – and they continue to enjoy the benefits of childhood.
- Work with District and Borough Councils to support planning applications for 'granny annexes' for families wishing to care for older relatives at home and lobby ministers to explore tax breaks for adult carers who do this.

6. **Improve processes and outcomes for our SEND services while tackling the unsustainable growth in demand:** We will continue to improve our SEND service, ensuring that those families and young people who are eligible for SEND support receive it in a timely, efficient, and professional manner. At the same time we must also reduce the demands placed on the SEND budget given the existential pressure it places on the wider KCC budget, including increasingly the adult social care budget, as children with SEND need transition to adulthood. This demand is driven by a national crisis in SEND demand, which must be urgently addressed by the government, given the systemic challenges it is placing not just on children's services budgets, but on those of the NHS, schools and home to school transport as well.

Our priorities will be to:

- Focus investment on prevention and early intervention.
- Deliver SEND services by increasing local provision, by expanding Specialist Resource Units.
- Improve the timeliness of undertaking EHCPs and communicating progress transparently and effectively with families waiting for decisions, utilising tools such as AI to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Examine each SEND diagnosis to ensure it reaches the threshold for KCC funding
- Continually review the Home to Transport delivery systems to ensure best value for taxpayer money. Enlarge the provision of Personal Transport Budgets so that parents can take responsibility for getting their child to and from school.
- Help parents to properly understand and fulfil their obligations and responsibilities towards their own children before turning to KCC for assistance.

AIM 4: BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES

Objectives

1. **Support Kent Police to keep our communities safe:** The first responsibility of the state is to keep its citizens safe, yet an increasing sense of lawlessness is blighting many of our local communities. Often it is the cumulative impact of lower-level crimes, such as anti-social behaviour and shoplifting, which often goes unaddressed and unpunished, which harms the day-to-day quality of life in our local communities. At the same time, our overstretched police officers are being asked to do more, with less, whilst under an unreasonable level of scrutiny which disempowers them from doing their job and seeks to erode public trust in our police. KCC will re-invigorate its strategic partnership with Kent Police.

Our priorities will be to:

- KCC will re-invigorate its strategic partnership with Kent Police, recognising that the KCC and Kent Police working together are a powerful force for good in our county.

- Refresh the Kent Community Safety Plan so there is a stronger focus on anti-social behaviour and work with local Crime and Disorder Reduction Units to design local interventions that have local community support.
- Lobby the Government for more funding for Kent Police to cover the additional burdens placed on Kent Police from policing the border, the current funding of which is insufficient from Government.
- Working with our partners and the VCSE sector, focus on tackling domestic abuse and violence against woman and girls, which is prevalent in too many of our communities
- We will support the role of our Community Wardens within our local communities but ensure this is refocussed on the areas that matter most to our residents, with a renewed focus on community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour.

- 2. Tackle inequality blighting many of our coastal communities:** Differences between areas of Kent contribute to the county's unique and special character. However, differences born of increasing inequality and social deprivation, especially between some of Kent's coastal communities and the rest of the county, has grown to unacceptable levels. In too many coastal communities employment, health and housing outcomes are considerably poorer. This cycle of decline is then compounded through inappropriate placements of vulnerable people i.e. children in care, former prisoners, asylum seekers from other areas into those local communities, increasing community numbers and placing additional burden on local public services. We have to end this cycle of decline in our poorest coastal communities.

Our priorities will be to:

- Enable local business to flourish, supporting economic growth and jobs - increasing the number of Kent and Medway Business Fund loans and targeting our coastal communities.
- Support the work of KCC Public Health to focus on 'Marmot' model intervention work in our coastal communities.
- Reinstate parenting hubs to support families and help them stay together.
- Put pressure on Kent Police to prioritise patrols in seaside areas to prevent anti-social behaviour.

- 3. Listen to communities and stand firm against excessively large housing and solar farm developments:** When local residents complain about new housing or solar farm developments in their areas, it isn't out of inherent NIMBYism, it is because they know the impact such developments will have on their local community. Kent has taken a huge amount of new housing in recent years, driven by central government algorithms and targets, with no reference to local circumstances or character. Too much new housing is of poor design and without the necessary infrastructure to support a decent quality of life, and often filled by London Borough overspill rather than local Kent residents. Whilst recognising that people need homes, there is no point in building new homes that destroy existing local communities.

Our priorities will be to:

- Reduce London overspill into Kent
- Ensure developers install vital infrastructure to support communities and community identity, rather than just bland dormitory estates
- Work with local planning authorities to examine how more housing can be reserved for people with ties to the area.

4. Improve the quality of roads and work to reduce delays from roadworks:

Nowhere is the decline in the civic realm more obvious than in the decline of our road infrastructure over recent years. Too many Kent residents' daily lives are blighted by potholes and endless roadworks, whilst the delay and unpredictability in travel times has a direct economic impact on many Kent businesses. We will reform Kent's roads by filling potholes, resurfacing roads and exploring every new and innovative technology that is available to improve the quality of our road assets across Kent. We will also lobby the government to reform the operation of the highways permit scheme to remove the ability of the utility companies to self-declaring road works as emergencies, which inhibits the ability of KCC as the Highways Authority to coordinate and manage works in a way that minimises the impact on residents and businesses.

Our priorities will be to:

- We will continue and expand investment in our roads through delivering a huge maintenance programme across Kent's roads.
- Empower our local highways staff who know their local roads to take the necessary action to improve the quality of roads that most impact local residents and communities.
- Lobby government for reform of the highways permit scheme to stop utility companies excessive use of the 'emergency works' provisions to avoid seeking permits from KCC as the highways authority to dig up the road.

5. Ensure that the infrastructure needs of the county to support economic growth and quality of life are fully in place:

The scale of the growth Kent has faced over recent years has been unprecedented, which has placed significant pressure on the county's social and physical infrastructure. The failure to deliver 'infrastructure first' has not only materially harmed the quality of life, placing pressure on GPs, school and roads, but it has an economic impact on businesses who need certainty in terms staff availability, travel times and energy infrastructure to plan and invest for growth. We must break this cycle of insufficient infrastructure being delivered only after the pressure has become acute.

Our priorities will be to:

- Building on the Kent and Medway Infrastructure Framework, ensure the new Spatial Development Strategy fully captures Kent's strategic infrastructure needs and delivers a requirement into the planning system to deliver infrastructure first
- Establish a Future Energy Forum which brings together all relevant parties to identify the Kent's future energy requirements and lobby the Government to take the action now to ensure those future energy needs are met.
- Call on the Government to use the National Infrastructure Commission to undertake an independent assessment of the future infrastructure requirements on Kent given its importance of the Gateway to Europe and outline funding routes for this nationally critical infrastructure.

6. Protect our Kent environment with practical, affordable and visible

improvements: Kent is a county of contrasts, from historic cities and market towns, to beautiful villages and countryside, our environment is often the key reason so many people want to live, work and visit our county. However, the traditional Kent landscape is increasingly under threat. Our traditional high streets risk becoming areas where people don't want to spend their time or money. Our roadside verges are increasingly covered in litter and debris which leaves the impression that the no

agency is taking responsibility or delivering basic services. Our beaches and coastline have been under threat from sewage discharges. Whilst KCC may not always be the responsible body for these issues, our strategic role in Kent calls on us to convene, work with and hold to account all partners to improve our environment.

Our priorities will be to:

- Tackle the blight of litter and debris left in Kent's roadside verges – irrespective of which agency is responsible – we need a joint action across all agencies.
- Lobby the government and regulator to take stronger action to stop waste discharge into the sea which harms our coastline and visitor economy.
- Work with partners to tackle criminal fly tipping and other environmental crime, which blights rural communities and is often linked to organised crime.
- Support the regeneration and economic vibrancy of our high streets, in particular supporting planning authorities in resisting more conversions of office accommodation into residential dwellings.

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By: Linden Kemkaran, Leader of the Council
Amanda Beer, Chief Executive Officer

To: County Council

Date: 18 September 2025

Subject: Senior Management Structure

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out Personnel Committee's recommendation to proceed with amendments to the senior management structure of the Council, to enable recruitment to the post of Deputy Chief Executive. It outlines a structured approach to refining the operating model of the corporate departments to better support the organisation's changing strategic needs and evolving operating context.

Recommendations:

County Council is asked to:

1. AGREE the proposed changes to the senior management structure.
2. AGREE the deletion of the General Counsel and Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development posts.
3. AGREE the change in report line for the Director of Infrastructure from the Deputy Chief Executive to the Chief Executive.
4. AGREE that the Head of Law be designated Monitoring Officer within the new structure, to take effect upon implementation of the revised structure.
5. NOTE the change in report lines for the Head of Law to the Chief Executive; Head of Commercial and Procurement to the Deputy Chief Executive; Assistant Director People to the Deputy Chief Executive; the Head of Health and Safety to the Director of Infrastructure and the Head of People Strategy to the Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance.
6. INSTRUCT the Monitoring Officer to advise on and propose changes to the Constitution to give effect to any changes agreed by this paper.
7. DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive to take relevant actions and make required arrangements in line with the Constitutional Personnel Management Rules to implement the revised structure, as required to implement the Council's decision.

1. Background

- 1.1 The current top tier structure has been in place since the reintroduction of the Chief Executive post in May 2022, with only a small number of minor alterations since then. Following Amanda Beer's appointment as Chief Executive in November 2023, after a four-month period as interim Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive post, which she held, has been vacant with all the report lines and responsibilities being discharged by the Chief Executive.
- 1.2 In the autumn of 2024, plans were being put in place which would see Kent and Medway apply to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) in January 2025. During the same period, significant changes to the operating model and top tier structures were being considered but were put on hold pending the DPP decision. Once the government announced the region would not be included in the DPP, elections were reinstated and it was felt an inappropriate moment to implement the planned changes.
- 1.3 The proposals for the top tier restructure were therefore halted with no decision about any further change required after the election.

2. Context

- 2.1 The challenges and opportunities for the Authority have never been greater. The new Administration is committed to transforming Kent County Council. This aim aligns with other strategic ambitions and imperatives including delivering visible improvements to services; achieving efficiencies identified by the DOLGE team; expanding the use of technology and AI; and designing and delivering a clear and achievable prevention agenda.
- 2.2 These ambitions will need substantial input and clear focus from the Chief Executive and will be realised more quickly and sustainably through the effective working with providers and partners, led by the most senior officer. The size and complexity of the organisation requires an enabling structure to ensure that the Chief Executive can fulfil their internal and external responsibilities effectively.
- 2.3 There are also external challenges to be met, including ongoing financial pressures; increasing demand for and cost of services; considering how pressures on our service delivery and budgets caused by changes in our partner organisations can be resisted. Most significantly, Local Government Reorganisation is a key challenge. It is essential that the Chief Executive is supported by a senior team and structure to allow the postholder to concentrate on the strategic imperatives. The recruitment of a Deputy Chief Executive is a critical step in this.
- 2.4 KCC will need to be a leaner organisation, capable of harnessing and leveraging its scale in terms of service delivery. The corporate core will need to provide a service offer enabling and supporting services on a 'One Council' basis, freeing services to focus on practice, service quality and resident/client outcomes. This will be an important priority for the Deputy

Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive's Department will be refined to better support the organisation's evolving operating context and strategic focus.

- 2.5 The proposed action outlined in this paper also strengthens the Chief Executive's ability to focus on the key requirement of the role – to ensure that Kent residents receive the highest quality services possible within the financial envelope available. Streamlining the number of direct reports will enable the Chief Executive to maintain and further develop strong working relationships with the service Corporate Directors.
- 2.6 The sections below in this paper outline the aims of the proposed change and details a proposed approach.

3 Overarching Aims

- 3.1 **Support for the new Chief Executive.** Refining the Deputy Chief Executive Department aims to build a strong framework and additional capacity to effectively support the new Chief Executive allowing them to focus on the strategic priorities of the Council and the transformation required in response to the new Administration and the external challenges and opportunities.
- 3.2 **Reduced costs and enhanced efficiency.** The proposal achieves a reduction in costs through a streamlined top tier structure. This is essential given both the extreme financial pressures and the need for all levels of the organisation to contribute to savings.
- 3.3 **Retention and recruitment in advance of Local Government Reorganisation.** The strengthened model will build strong succession capability in preparation for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and offer flexibility for the new Unitary Authorities in Kent. It will also help with the retention and recruitment of senior staff in the run up to unitarisation.
- 3.4 **Provide options for organisational continuity.** The proposal allows for potential organisational continuity and the retention of critical Kent specific knowledge.
- 3.5 **Flexibility in relation to external context.** The proposal assumes Local Government Reorganisation progresses according to the current government timeline. However, if there are adjustments to LGR in Kent, the revised structure will still be a relevant and a valuable improvement to senior level capacity and efficiency.

4. The Proposal

- 4.1 This section of the paper outlines proposed changes where functional activity within the Deputy Chief Executive Department will be re-focused to re-instate direct reporting lines to the currently vacant Deputy Chief Executive role. The structural adjustment builds on strengthened capacity models within Governance, Law and Democratic Services and the Human Resources and Organisation Development and will result in the removal of two strategic lead posts, one in Governance, Law and Democratic

Services (General Counsel) and the other in Human Resources & Organisation Development (Director of Human Resources & Organisation Development).

- 4.2 These changes will enable a ringfenced Member recruitment process for the Deputy Chief Executive post providing the opportunity for continuity in leadership and strategic support to the new Chief Executive.
- 4.3 The new model for Governance, Law and Democracy will see a new Head of Governance role established and the existing Head of Law post, currently covered on an interim basis, will become a direct report to the Chief Executive and will be recruited to. It is proposed that this postholder will be designated as the Authority's Monitoring Officer. As required in the constitution, the Chair of Standards Committee has been consulted on the proposed process and will be consulted on the individual appointment to the Monitoring Officer (Head of Law) post when the structure is implemented.
- 4.4 In HR/OD, the Assistant Director – People role will be reviewed and expanded and will report directly to the Deputy Chief Executive. The Head of People Strategy will report to the Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance.
- 4.5 The report line for the Director Infrastructure will move from the Deputy Chief Executive to the Chief Executive. This, along with the move of the Head of People Strategy, outlined in paragraph 4.4 of this report, means that all the key functions involved in working to the Chief Executive on the design and implementation of LGR (Policy, including HR policy, Finance, Legal and Assets) sit on the same management team.
- 4.6 In other changes which the County Council is invited to note, the Head of Strategic Reset Programme (SRP) will take responsibility for the new Central Programme Management Office (CPMO). The Head of Health and Safety role will move from HR/OD to be managed by the Director of Infrastructure and the Head of Commercial and Procurement will move from temporary line management by the Corporate Director Finance to align with other services in the Deputy Chief Executive's Department.
- 4.7 The Job Description for the Deputy Chief Executive role, and the Head of Law where the Monitoring Officer responsibilities will sit are attached in Appendix 1.
- 4.8 Reporting arrangements will be adjusted, and functional activity will be realigned to reflect the revised structure. A proposed organisational structure chart including indicative grades for the new and revised roles, is provided in Appendix 2. The current structure is also shown in this Appendix.
- 4.9 In accordance with the Constitution the top tier structure of the Authority is determined by the County Council. Personnel Committee at its meeting on 3 September reviewed the detail and agreed to recommend this structure to County Council.

5. The Process

- 5.1 As well as a small number of changes in report lines and amendments to job descriptions, achieving the proposed changes will require the displacement of two top tier posts, the Director of HR/OD and the General Counsel. Informal engagement and communication has taken place with all those where job descriptions are revised and/or there will be new line management reporting arrangements.
- 5.2 Following the decision by Personnel Committee to recommend this change to County Council, formal individual consultation has been undertaken with the two individuals impacted by the deletion of their posts.
- 5.3 The individual consultation response supported the proposal. The fact that the proposed change recognises the reality of the capacity pressure in the General Counsel role and seeks to address that was welcomed. Comments were included about the importance of the role of HR in the organisation and the need for this to be maintained following the deletion of the Director of HR/OD and on the need for a very close working relationship between the Head of People Strategy and the Assistant Director - People Operations and between that Assistant Director and the Head of Health and Safety. It will be important that the new model is implemented in a way that ensures these objectives are achieved and no impediments to this are envisaged.
- 5.4 The response also suggested that two roles that were intended to report to the Head of Governance are moved to the Head of Law. The two posts in question provide direct support to the Monitoring Officer in relation all matters regarding the Constitution. Personnel Committee agreed that any minor changes resulting from the consultation exercise be delegated to the Chief Executive in advance of County Council debate and decision. This suggested change has been agreed by the Chief Executive.
- 5.5 Subject to County Council approval, the subsequent process would be managed in accordance with our established HR procedures. This would include the ringfenced recruitment to the vacant Deputy Chief Executive role, with the two holders of the existing displaced posts being invited to submit an expression of interest in the role. In accordance with the Constitution, the appointment decision would be made by a Member Appointment panel of Personnel Committee. If an appointment is made, it is intended to have the new model largely in place for October 2025.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 Following a screening of the equality impact of this proposal it is deemed there is no impact.

7 Financial Impact

- 7.1 The Deputy Chief Executive role remains within the existing budget provision. In view of the ongoing financial challenges facing the Authority, cost savings will be realised through the removal of the Director of HR/OD and General Counsel roles. While there will be additional costs associated

with the creation of the Head of Governance role and the anticipated grade uplift to the Assistant Director - People post, overall these changes will realise savings.

- 7.2 Initially there will be a minimum annual saving of £115k and from 2028 onwards annual savings are projected to exceed £250,000. Where applicable, redundancy costs would be met by the Workforce Reduction Fund and would have no impact on the revenue budget, but pension strain costs are included in the financial impact assessment of savings

8 Recommendations

County Council is asked to:

1. AGREE the proposed changes to the senior management structure.
2. AGREE the deletion of the General Counsel and Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development posts.
3. AGREE the change in report line for the Director of Infrastructure from the Deputy Chief Executive to the Chief Executive.
4. AGREE that the Head of Law be designated Monitoring Officer within the new structure, to take effect upon implementation of the revised structure.
5. NOTE the change in report lines for the Head of Law to the Chief Executive; Head of Commercial and Procurement to the Deputy Chief Executive; Assistant Director People to the Deputy Chief Executive; the Head of Health and Safety to the Director of Infrastructure and the Head of People Strategy to the Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance.
6. INSTRUCT the Monitoring Officer to advise on and propose changes to the Constitution to give effect to any changes agreed by this paper.
7. DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive to take relevant actions and make required arrangements in line with the Constitutional Personnel Management Rules to implement the revised structure, as required to implement the Council's decision.

Author:

Amanda Beer
Chief Executive

Appendix 1: Job Descriptions:
Deputy Chief Executive
Head of Law

Appendix 2: Current Structure Chart
Proposed structure chart

Directorate:	Deputy Chief Executive
Unit/Section:	
Grade:	KR19 KSQ
Responsible to:	Chief Executive Officer

Purpose of the Job:

To be the Deputy to the Council's Chief Executive Officer.

Act as Senior Responsible Officer for the Strategic Reset Programme Lead and direct the strategic and operational delivery of a range of professional business support activities ensuring they fully support the Council's Framing Kent's Future Strategic Plan and all council service strategies to enable effective service delivery by all directorates to the people of Kent.

The Deputy Chief Executive will link the strategic, operational and tactical aspects of key central functions that support the Council and combine the strategic and business plans with business operating systems, the operating model and the organisational structure to drive performance improvement and enable effective service delivery by all Directorates.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- As a member of the Corporate Management team the post holder will work within the KCC Organisational Responsibilities for Senior Officers. In addition, Directors and Corporate Directors will work collaboratively together to make strategic decisions on the most effective use of the Council's agreed budget, resources and policies and enhance the reputation of Kent as a place as well as Kent County Council as the democratic agent of change in the region.
- As Senior Responsible Officer for the Strategic Reset Programme, provide leadership on a range of prioritised activity across the Council to deliver the Strategic Statement ambitions, the delivery of budget saving delivery plans, the wider transformation agenda and improve the efficiency and the performance of the council.
- Direct the development of Council wide policy, cross service strategy and joint working on key issues in relation to; Technology; HR/OD; Commercial & Procurement; the central Programme Management Office and Marketing and Resident Experience to support the effective strategic management of the County Council.

- Work effectively with Elected Members and Senior Officers in developing and implementing plans and strategies that meet the county's current and future needs.
- Ensure delivery of effective and integrated professional support services and related strategies for Human Resources and Organisation Development; Infrastructure; Technology; Marketing and Resident Experience; Legal Services; Strategic Reset Programme including the Central Programme Management Office, are aligned to service and strategic outcomes.
- To provide strategic and operational leadership to deliver and embed a One Council approach across all Directorates for support activity processes and procedures to ensure consistency and assurance in line with the operating model.
- Support the Chief Executive, through both Directorate strategies and activities and personal involvement, in leading and developing relationships with key stakeholders in government, business and the communities in Kent, creating partnership to influence views and decisions for Kent's benefit.
- Responsible for a significant budget and ensuring value for money is achieved as a result of transformation and efficiencies.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

Organisational Responsibilities

All corporate directors, directors and senior managers have an explicit responsibility to deliver the collective agenda of the Council. These are fundamental elements of their role not an addition and are summarised as follows:

Whole Council

- Seek to improve the lives of all residents in Kent and economy of Kent
- Act as corporate parent to the Council's looked after children
- Take an active role in promoting and ensuring the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding are met.
- Understand, communicate and contribute to the delivery of KCC's strategic aims
- Meet statutory obligations and promote and ensure compliance with policies and procedures and the Council's Code of Conduct (Kent Code).
- Advise elected members and support the democratic process
- Promote the Council brand and enhance the overall reputation of the Council
- Understand and monitor the measures of performance, including customer insight, which define successful outcomes for KCC services
- Maintain and ensure a relentless focus on the customer
- Act to support the Council-wide need to deliver services within budget, thereby avoiding an overspend that could damage the financial viability of the Council
- Overcome professional and service silos to achieve the County Council's objectives.

Integration of Services

- Focus resources where they have the biggest impact
- Deliver services that are flexible and adaptable
- Integrate services within KCC and work with partner agencies to ensure a seamless customer experience
- Fully and inclusively engage all staff in the delivery of services, demonstrating the Council's leadership values and competencies.

Embedding Commissioning and Engaging relevant markets

- Establish an outcome focused organisation
- Meet the financial regulations and standing orders of KCC
- Challenge the status quo and engage with the market to constantly improve
- Ensure all services are delivered effectively and efficiently
- Proactively and continuously seek to improve service delivery
- Proactively manage risk to avoid inertia whilst not exposing the Council to needless and avoidable challenge or loss

Managing Change

- Understand and support the Authority's overall change agenda
- Deliver required outcomes of service specific change on time and to budget
- Understand the quality of staff, support their development, nurture those with talent
- Identify the skills for the future and the level of staff through robust workforce planning
- Identify and deal with underperformance.
- Deliver to agreed budget and income targets.

Kent County Council

Person Specification: *Deputy Chief Executive*

The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Management or Professional qualification. • Evidence of continuing professional development. • Educated to degree level or equivalent.
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive experience at senior management level in local government and/or in other large complex organisations. • Experience of working in a politically led organisation. • Extensive experience of effectively managing and delivering a range of key services within budget in a technical, commercial business environment. • Extensive experience of implementing business strategies and plans • Experience of advanced business planning and budgeting and a proven track record showing commercial acumen. • Experience of strategic planning and business development in a multi-faceted and complex • Proven track record of management of multi disciplined senior staff., providing performance management and continuous improvement across the services.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to manage a complex workload to meet strategic goals and deadlines, managing potentially conflicting priorities. • Excellent influencing, negotiating and interpersonal skills with people at all levels, internally and externally. • Creative and able to develop innovative solutions to new and intransigent problems. • Excellent leadership skills • Political understanding and astuteness. • Solid grasp of data analysis and performance metrics • The ability to directly influence and contribute to business strategy at a senior level. • Proven ability to operate at a strategic level, leading and embedding change and driving performance
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth knowledge and understanding of the national policy context, strategic challenges and operational

	<p>realities of services provided by this post</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and appreciation of the service requirements in political environment and the ability to manage within a political infrastructure
KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make <p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p>Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p>Curious - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p>Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</p> <p>Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p>Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p>Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making</p> <p>(If this document is being used for recruitment purposes, examples of Behaviours which support the Kent Values will need to be demonstrated within the context of this post)</p>

Directorate:	Chief Executive Directorate
Unit/Section:	
Grade:	KR16 KSN (subject to evaluation)
Responsible to:	Chief Executive Officer

Purpose of the Job:

Discharge the statutory duties of the Monitoring Officer for Kent County Council in line with KCC's Constitution to ensure the Council fulfils its lawful obligations, statutory duties and performs its functions and activities in accordance with the law.

Responsible for overseeing all legal matters within the organisation, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations and providing strategic legal advice to senior management. Reporting to the Chief Executive, the post holder will be required to navigate complex legal and organisational issues while mitigating risk.

Commission any required legal services ensuring cost effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness. Lead on the provision of strategic advice and guidance to the Cabinet and CMT on all matters relating to the management of and delivery of services by KCC.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- As senior professional adviser, direct and oversee the provision of high quality legal advice to the Council.
- Lead the commissioning of legal services on behalf of the council, monitor the delivery of these services and act as Client for all legal commissioned services.
- Ensure that the delivery of internal and external legal services to the Council continually improve through the deployment of technological and process changes to increase efficiency, effectiveness and value for money.
- Manage and develop the internal legal team and support the Assistant Head of Law on major issues and inquiries.
- Lead on the development of a draft Annual Governance Statement for the approval of the statutory officers, Leader of the Council and Governance and Audit Committee.
- Act as legal advisor to Members, Chief Executive and senior officers on all aspects of the governance of both current and new KCC companies e.g. LATCOs, Trusts and other wholly/jointly owned arrangements.

- Develop and implement legal strategies, policies, and procedures to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Conduct legal research and analysis to stay updated on changes in laws and regulations that may impact the organisation.
- Continuously and actively review all services provided by the Division to identify how best to commission for the future delivery including driving innovation, identifying priority outcomes and ensuring the most effective and efficient delivery methods are employed.
- Where the Monitoring Officer is engaged, oversee the responses to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, ensuring proactive and reactive steps taken as a result of any contact from the LGSCO.

Organisational Responsibilities

All corporate directors, directors and senior managers have an explicit responsibility to deliver the collective agenda of the Council. These are fundamental elements of their role not an addition and are summarised as follows:

Whole Council

- Seek to improve the lives of all residents in Kent and economy of Kent
- Act as corporate parent to the Council's looked after children
- Take an active role in promoting and ensuring the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding are met.
- Understand, communicate and contribute to the delivery of KCC's strategic aims
- Meet statutory obligations and promote and ensure compliance with policies and procedures and the Council's Code of Conduct (Kent Code).
- Advise elected members and support the democratic process
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- Establish an outcome focused organisation
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- Proactively manage risk to avoid inertia whilst not exposing the Council to needless and avoidable challenge or loss

Managing Change

- Understand and support the Authority's overall change agenda
- Deliver required outcomes of service specific change on time and to budget
- Understand the quality of staff, support their development, nurture those with talent
- Identify the skills for the future and the level of staff through robust workforce planning
- Identify and deal with underperformance.
- Deliver to agreed budget and income targets.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

Kent County Council

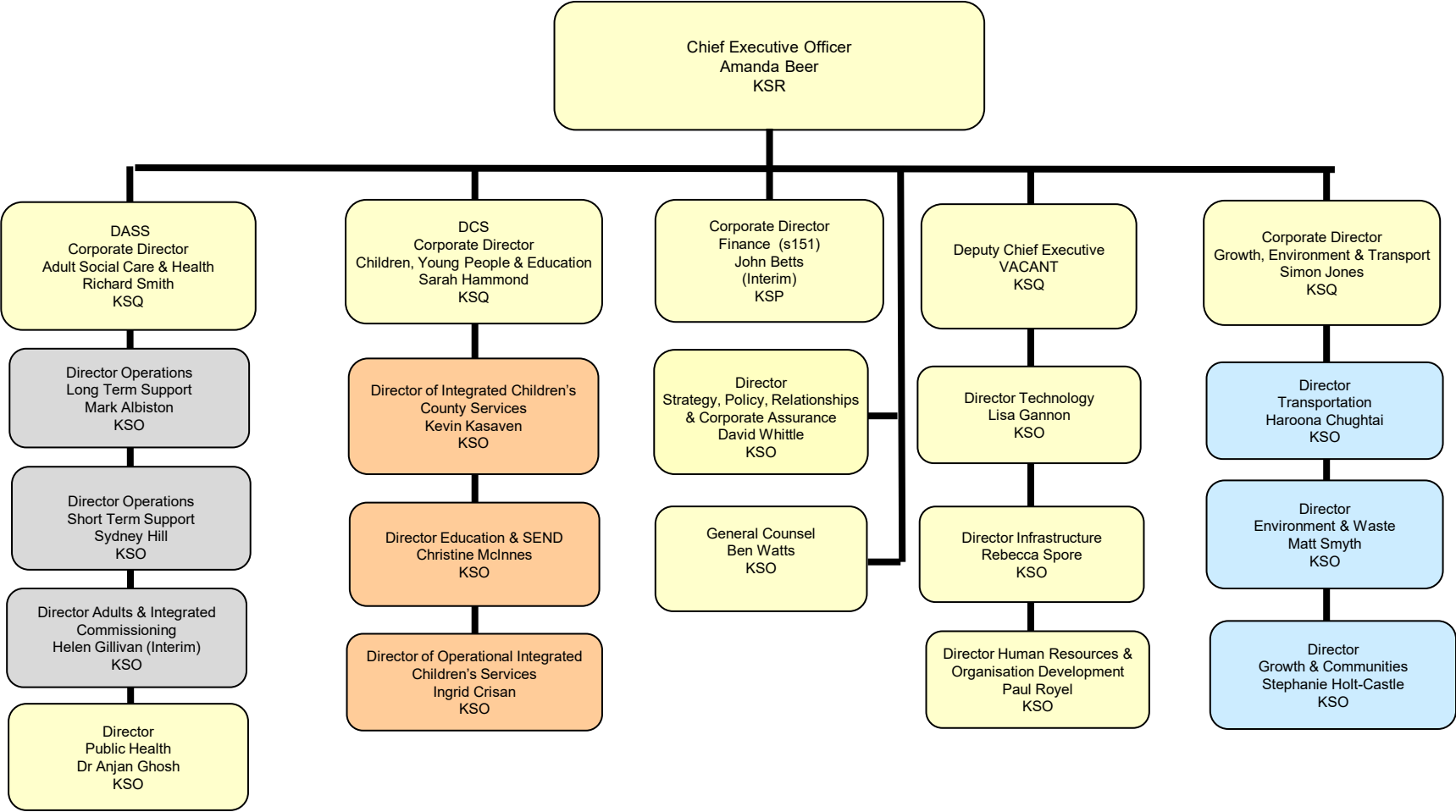
Person Specification: *Head of Law*

The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

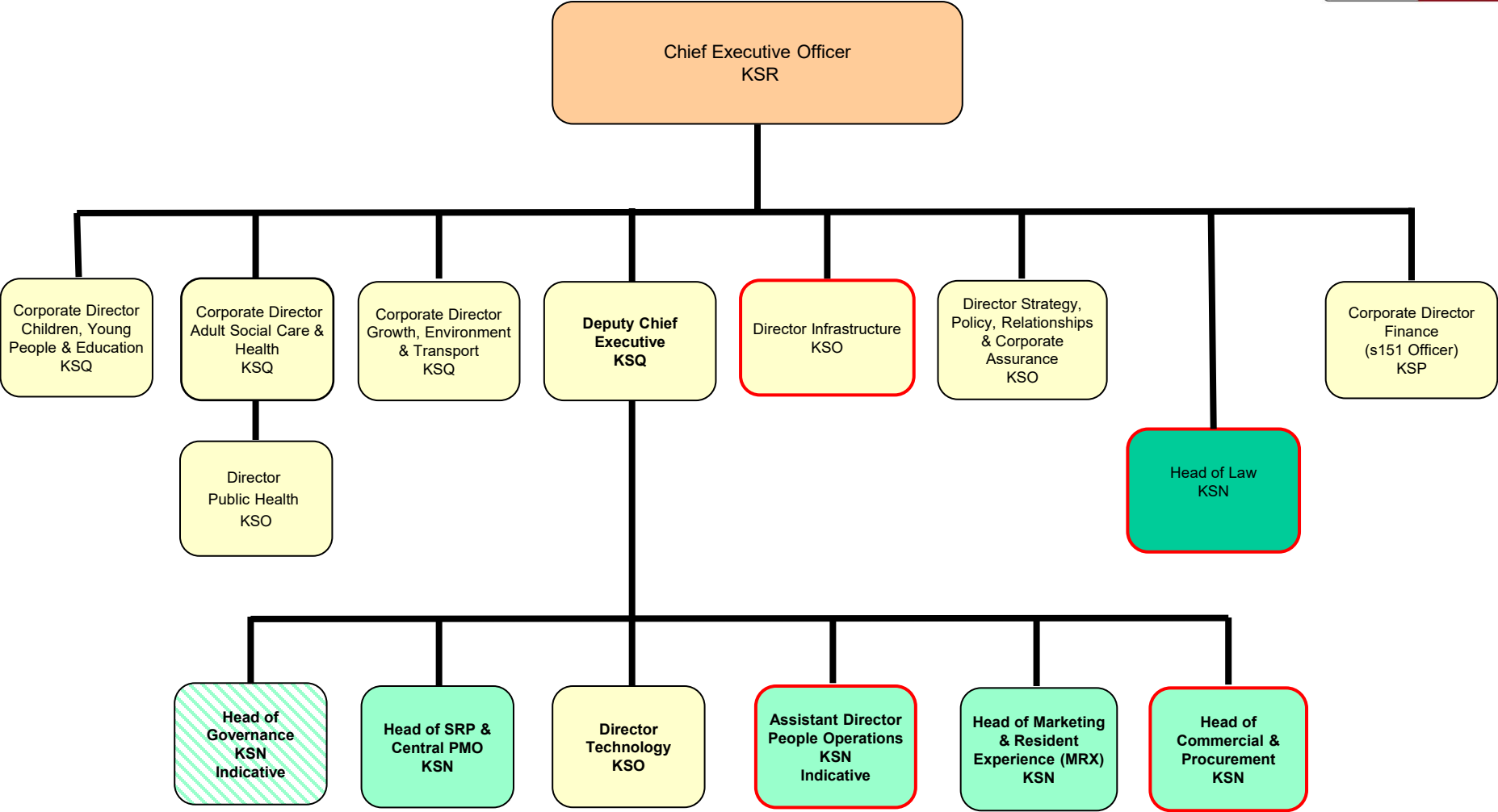
Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.




	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<p>Qualified Solicitor / Lawyer.</p> <p>Membership of a relevant professional body.</p> <p>Evidence of continuing professional development</p>
EXPERIENCE	<p>Extensive experience and successful track record of strong senior management in local government and/or other large and complex organisation.</p> <p>Extensive experience of effectively managing and delivering a range of key services within budget in a technical, commercial business environment.</p> <p>Extensive experience and successful track record of achieving solutions to enable delivery of a diverse range of services in partnership with other bodies both internal and external.</p>
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<p>Able to establish strong positive relationships across the organisation at all levels including a relationship of both personal and professional credibility and trust with elected Members.</p> <p>Able to balance the need to ensure compliance, and be prepared to robustly challenge any activity that places that in doubt, with taking an appropriate and proportionate approach to risk.</p> <p>Able to establish strong positive relationships across partner and other external organisations that command professional confidence and enable effective delivery of services.</p> <p>Able to influence and negotiate at a strategic professional and political level both locally and nationally in order to ensure the best interests of the Council are met.</p> <p>Able to demonstrate a high level of personal resilience and focus in order to ensure the delivery of excellent services to the public.</p>

	<p>Highly developed communication and presentation skills.</p> <p>Well-developed understanding of the varied needs of all customers and communities who access KCC services and how to engage them</p>
KNOWLEDGE	<p>In-depth knowledge and understanding of the national policy context, strategic challenges and operational realities of services provided by this post</p>
KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make <p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p>Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p>Curious - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p>Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</p> <p>Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p>Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p>Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making</p> <p>(If this document is being used for recruitment purposes, examples of Behaviours which support the Kent Values will need to be demonstrated within the context of this post)</p>



CMT
Member of the Corporate Management Team



-  Member of the Corporate Management Team
-  Change in reporting line
-  New post

From: Linden Kemkaran – Leader of the Council
Amanda Beer – Chief Executive Officer

To: County Council – 18 September 2025

Decision No: n/a

Subject: **Year-end Quarterly Performance Report, 2024/25**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This is the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) for Kent County Council covering the last quarter of the financial year ending 31 March 2025. The report presents information for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity measures across the Council Directorates, and a summary of the Corporate Risk Register

Of the 38 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained within the QPR, 19 achieved target (Green), nine achieved or exceeded the floor standard but did not meet target (Amber). 10 KPIs did not meet the floor standard (Red).

Recommendation(s): The County Council is asked to NOTE the Performance Report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) is a key mechanism within the Performance Management Framework for the Council. The report summary for Quarter 4, 2024/25 is attached at Appendix 1, and includes data up to the end of March 2025.
- 1.2. The 2024/25 QPR includes 38 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) where results are assessed against Targets set at the start of the financial year.

2. Quarter 4 Performance Report

- 2.1. Results for KPIs compared to Target are assessed using a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) status.
- 2.2. Of the 38 KPIs included in the report, the latest RAG status are as follows:
 - 19 are rated Green (two more than Quarter 4 last year) - the target was achieved or exceeded.
 - 9 are rated Amber (two fewer than Quarter 4 last year) – performance achieved or exceeded the expected floor standard but did not meet target.
 - 10 are rated Red (the same as Quarter 4 last year) – performance did not meet the expected floor standard.

2.3. The 10 indicators where the RAG rating is Red, are in:

- Customer Services
 - Percentage of complaints responded to within timescale
- Governance and Law
 - Percentage of Freedom of Information Act (Fol) requests completed within 20 working days
 - Percentage of Data Protection Act (DPA) Subject Access requests completed within statutory timescales
- Children, Young People and Education (Education & Skills)
 - Percentage of Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks
 - Percentage of pupils (with EHCP's) being placed in independent or out of county special schools
- Children, Young People and Education (Integrated Children's Services)
 - Percentage of case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers
 - Percentage of foster care placements which are in-house or with relatives and friends (excluding UASC)
 - Number of foster households
- Adult Social Care
 - Proportion of new Care Needs Assessments delivered within 28 days
 - Percentage of KCC supported people in residential or nursing care where the CQC rating is Good or Outstanding.

2.4. With regards to Direction of Travel, which identifies any significant trend over the past six quarters, 11 indicators show a positive trend (two more than Quarter 4 last year), 23 are stable or with no clear trend (three more than Quarter 4 last year), and four are showing a negative trend (five fewer than the same Quarter last year).

3. Commentary

3.1. This report shows some improvement in the position reported last year. Most notably, with two additional Green KPIs, two more indicators with an improving Direction of Travel, and five fewer showing a worsening trend. That being said, there are still 10 KPIs rated Red, which is the same as the previous year, with eight of these also being Red rated last year.

- 3.2. The performance indicators giving greatest concern remain closely aligned with the services where the financial strains and demand are most acute (particularly Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, children in care placements and Adult Social Care). Initial requests for Education Health & Care Plans remain high. In Adult Social Care, the numbers of people requiring ongoing support continues to increase, especially those with a mental health need, and safeguarding enquiries also continue on an upward trajectory. We are also seeing numbers of Freedom of Information and Subject Access requests at historic highs.
- 3.3. It is important to note that this demand-led pressure on services in Kent continues to be reported by many upper tier local authorities across the country. As NHS providers struggle to meet demand and catch up with significant waiting lists, there is a knock-on effect on adult social care services, whilst the social care provider market continues to be fragile given workforce and inflationary pressures. The need for the Government to implement a sustainable funding model for adult social care is imperative if all local authority services are not to face ongoing financial and capacity pressures. Weather related demand and market pressures are impacting on the quality of the road network at national level.
- 3.4. Moving back to the situation in Kent, it is important to consider in more detail the 10 KPIs rated as Red. The Red KPIs come under three broad categories – Council-wide; Children, Young People and Education; and Adult Social Care.
- 3.5. Council-wide Red KPIs:
- Percentage of complaints responded to within timescale (stable / no clear trend)
 - Percentage of Freedom Information Requests completed within 20 working days (stable / no clear trend)
 - Percentage of Subject Access Requests completed within timescale (improving trend)

These KPIs involve Directorates working with the central Customer Experience and Information Resilience teams. The level of demand and complexity of some of these requests and the other concurrent pressures on services has in-part led to continuing challenges with meeting response times, although performance for responding to Freedom of Information and Subject Access requests has been improving. There is also an issue of dealing with a backlog of older cases, meaning it is not always possible to prioritise new requests over those which have been waiting longer which also impacts on KPI performance.

3.6. Children, Young People and Education Red KPIs:

- Percentage of Education, Health and Care plans issued within 20 weeks (improving trend)

This KPI is on an improving trend and is measured on performance over the last 12 months, meaning recent improvements can take time to fully show up in the reported data. This is perhaps best shown by performance for the single month of March when 82% of plans were issued within timescale which exceeded the target.

- Percentage of pupils (with EHCP's) being placed in independent or out of county special schools (stable / no clear trend)

Although this KPI is not far away from its floor standard, it has been impacted by a delay in the provision of two new special schools in Kent, which may now only open in September 2027 as a result of DfE decision making. The SEND service continues to aim to support more children with EHCPs in mainstream settings and ensuring maintained special school places are targeted at those children with the most complex needs.

- Percentage of case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers (stable / no clear trend)

This KPI is only slightly below its floor standard. It is expected to improve following additions to the workforce over the summer and into the autumn.

- Percentage of foster care placements which are in-house or with relatives and friends, excluding UASC (stable / no clear trend), **and**
- Number of foster households (worsening trend)

Performance against the first measure is impacted by the availability of in-house foster placements which is a national issue. In December 2024, 12 in-house fostering beds were released from a UASC scheme and are now available for other children. Given this change in availability there should be a gradual improvement in this performance measure going forward.

Kent Fostering is part of a cluster of Local Authorities who received DfE funding to support a national approach to the recruitment and retention of Local Authority Foster Carers. A recruitment hub, Fostering Southeast, launched on 8th July 2024, followed by national recruitment activity, encouraging people to foster for their Local Authority. Additional DfE funding was secured to develop the Mockingbird Scheme - part of a support package to retain our existing foster carers. This should help improve performance on these measures.

Additional actions are being taken to increase the number of fostering households including increased information events and recruitment stands at large community events, specific campaigns using social media and use of the "refer a friend" payment to encourage existing foster carers to support recruitment of family and friends to join Kent Fostering

3.7. Adult Social Care Red KPIs:

- Percentage of new Care Needs Assessments delivered within 28 days (stable / no clear trend)

Performance has been impacted by a focus on completing assessments for people who had been waiting for a longer period of time, which in turn impacted on this measure, keeping it below the 75% floor standard and RAG Rated Red

- Percentage of KCC supported people in residential or nursing care where the CQC rating is Good or Outstanding (stable / no clear trend)

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regularly inspect residential and nursing homes, sharing findings alongside an overall rating for the service. Following inspections reported during Quarter 4, 72% of people supported in residential or nursing care were in a provision that was rated Good or Outstanding by CQC, meaning this was below the floor standard of 75%.

- 3.8. Finally, and for balance, it is worth noting the many positive aspects in the report. The percentage of calls to Contact Point that were answered achieved its highest performance of the year in the last quarter, and the speed of answer is faster than expectations. The target for homes brought back to market through the No Use Empty scheme was exceeded in every quarter last year. Emergency highway incidents attended within 2 hours of notification, achieved its challenging 98% target for the first time in over a year. Less than 1% of our municipal waste is taken to landfill. The Percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting over 12 months continues to be well ahead of target having been rated red at times last year. The rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system is now better than target and on an improving trend having been rated Amber previously. Repeat referrals to children's social care continue to be within target, on an improving trend. 98% of young people with a learning disability are in settled accommodation. Only 3% of people who have their contact resolved by Adult Social Care then find they must make contact again within 3 months. And in relation to public health, the number of eligible people receiving an NHS Health Check, and successful completions of drug and alcohol treatment continue to increase above their target level.

4. Recommendation(s)

The County Council is asked to NOTE the Performance Report.

5. Contact details

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Kent County Council

Quarterly Performance Report

Quarter 4

2024/25

Produced by: Kent Analytics
E-mail: performance@kent.gov.uk
Phone: 03000 416205



Key to KPI Ratings used

This report includes 38 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), where progress is assessed against Targets which are set at the start of the financial year. Progress against Target is assessed by RAG (Red/Amber/Green) ratings. Progress is also assessed in terms of Direction of Travel (DoT) using arrows. Direction of Travel is based on regression analysis across the **whole** timeframe shown in the KPI graphs (six quarters).

GREEN	Target has been achieved or exceeded
AMBER	Floor Standard* achieved but Target has not been met
RED	Floor Standard* has not been achieved
↗	Performance is improving (positive trend)
↘	Performance is worsening (negative trend)
⇒	Performance has remained stable or shows no clear trend

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

Key to Activity Indicator Graphs

Alongside the Key Performance Indicators, this report includes a number of Activity Indicators which present demand levels for services or other contextual information.

Graphs for activity indicators are shown either with national benchmarks or in many cases with Upper and Lower Thresholds which represent the range activity is expected to fall within. Thresholds are based on past trends and other benchmark information.

If activity falls outside of the Thresholds, this is an indication that demand has risen above or below expectations and this may have consequences for the council in terms of additional or reduced costs.

Activity is closely monitored as part of the overall management information to ensure the council reacts appropriately to changing levels of demand.

Executive Summary

In Quarter 4, 2024/25, 19 of the 38 indicators are rated as Green, on or ahead of target (**two more** than Quarter 4 last year). Nine indicators reached or exceeded the floor standard and are rated Amber (**two fewer** than Quarter 4 last year), with 10 indicators not achieving the floor standard and so RAG rated Red (**the same** as Quarter 4 last year). Eleven indicators were showing an improving trend (two more than Quarter 4 last year), with four showing a worsening trend (five fewer than Quarter 4 last year).

The performance indicators giving greatest concern remain closely aligned with the services where the financial strains and demand are most acute (particularly those KPIs which have a link to cost in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, children in care placements and Adult Social Care). Due to this being a reflective report on the last Quarter, performance may not always correspond to what people are experiencing at the current time, particularly when demand fluctuates on a seasonal basis, such as for Highways indicators.

	G	A	R	↑	⇒	↓
Customer Services	2		1		2	1
Governance and Law			2	1	1	
Growth, Economic Development & Communities	1	1			2	
Environment and Transport	5	1		1	4	1
Children, Young People and Education (<i>Education & Skills</i>)	2	1	2	3	2	
Children, Young People and Education (<i>Integrated Children's Services</i>)	3	2	3	1	5	2
Adult Social Care	3	1	2	2	4	
Public Health ¹	3	3		3	3	
TOTAL	19	9	10	11	23	4

¹ In the Quarter 4 report which went to Cabinet in July, one Public Health KPI was shown to have a downward direction of travel, however this should have shown a stable / no clear trend and has been amended for this report.

Customer Services – Satisfaction with Contact Point advisors continues to meet target. The percentage of phone calls answered has improved to move further ahead of target. The percentage of complaints responded to within timescale remains below floor standard and so is RAG rated Red.

<u>Customer Services KPIs</u>	RAG rating		DoT
	Q4 24/25	Q4 23/24	
% of callers to Contact Point who rated the advisor who dealt with their call as good	GREEN	GREEN	↓
% of phone calls to Contact Point which were answered	GREEN	GREEN	⇒
% of complaints responded to within timescale	RED	RED	⇒

Governance and Law - Freedom of Information (FOI) / Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests responded to in timescale, and Data Protection Act Subject Access requests completed within timescale, remain at some of the highest levels of performance seen for these indicators, but both remain below floor standards.

<u>Governance and Law KPIs</u>	RAG rating		DoT
	Q4 24/25	Q4 23/24	
% of Freedom of Information Act (Fol) requests completed within 20 working days	RED	RED	⇒
% of Data Protection Act (DPA) Subject Access requests completed within statutory timescales	RED	RED	↑

Growth, Economic Development & Communities – The number of properties brought back into active use through the No Use Empty programme remains above target. The amount of Developer Contributions secured as a percentage of amount sought remains above its floor standard but below target.

<u>Growth, Economic Development & Communities KPIs</u>	RAG rating		DoT
	Q4 24/25	Q4 23/24	
Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty (NUE)	GREEN	GREEN	⇒
Section 106 developer contributions secured as a percentage of amount sought	AMBER	AMBER	⇒

Environment & Transport - One Highways' KPI failed to meet its target, but it remained above floor standard. This was routine highway repairs reported by residents that were completed within 28 days. All other Highways' KPIs met or exceeded target, as did municipal waste recycled or converted to energy, and greenhouse gas emissions produced by KCC.

<u>Environment & Transport KPIs</u>	RAG rating		DoT
	Q4 24/25	Q4 23/24	
% of routine pothole repairs completed within 28 days	GREEN	GREEN	⇒
% of routine highway repairs reported by residents completed within 28 days	AMBER	AMBER	⇒
% of emergency highway incidents attended within 2 hours of notification	GREEN	AMBER	⇒
% of public enquiries for Highways maintenance reported online	GREEN	New KPI in 24/25	⇒
% of municipal waste recycled or converted to energy and not taken to landfill – rolling 12 months	GREEN	GREEN	↓
Greenhouse Gas emissions from KCC estate (excluding schools) in tonnes – rolling 12 months	GREEN	GREEN	↑

Education & Skills – Completion of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments in timescale remained below floor standard, but with a fast improving direction of travel. Annual EHCP reviews waiting over 12 months is ahead of target and on an improving trend. Pupils with EHCPs who are placed in independent or out of county special schools remains below its floor standard. Permanent pupil exclusions remained on its floor standard. The rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system is on an improving trend and is ahead target.

<u>Education & Skills KPIs</u>	RAG rating		DoT
	Q4 24/25	Q4 23/24	
% of Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks – rolling 12 months	RED	RED	↑
% of annual EHCP reviews waiting over 12 months	GREEN	GREEN	↑
% of pupils (with EHCP's) being placed in independent or out of county special schools	RED	RED	⇒
% of pupils permanently excluded from school – rolling 12 months	AMBER	AMBER	⇒
Rate of first-time entrants to youth justice system – rolling 12 months	GREEN	New KPI in 24/25	↑

Integrated Children's Services – Three of the eight indicators met target. Two of the three Red KPIs are reflective of a national issue regarding foster care, with the other Red and the two Amber KPIs being influenced by the financial and workload pressures within the services.

<u>Integrated Children's Services</u>	RAG rating		DoT
	Q4 24/25	Q4 23/24	
% of Early Help cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to social care teams within 3 months	GREEN	GREEN	⇒
% of case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers	RED	RED	⇒
% of children social care referrals that were repeat referrals within 12 months	GREEN	GREEN	↑
% of foster care placements which are in-house or with relatives and friends (excluding UASC)	RED	RED	⇒
Number of foster households	RED	New KPI in 24/25	↓
% of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	AMBER	AMBER	⇒
Percentage of reviews completed within timescale by the Strengthening Independence Service (18-25)	AMBER	New KPIs in 24/25	↓
Percentage of Learning Disability Young People in Settled Accommodation	GREEN		⇒

Adult Social Care – Three of the six KPIs are on or above target, including one which was rated Red last year showing a significant turnaround. Two KPIs are rated Red this year, one of which was also Red last year, namely, the Proportion of new Care Needs Assessments delivered within 28 days. The other Red KPI is the percentage of KCC supported people in residential or nursing care where the CQC rating is Good or Outstanding; this has fallen below its floor standard following unfavourable CQC care home inspections.

<u>Adult Social Care KPIs</u>	RAG rating		DoT
	Q4 24/25	Q4 23/24	
% of people who have their contact resolved by ASCH but then make contact again within 3 months	GREEN	GREEN	⇒
Proportion of new Care Needs Assessments delivered within 28 days	RED	RED	⇒
% of people receiving a long-term community service who receive Direct Payments	AMBER	AMBER	↑
Proportion of older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services	GREEN	AMBER	⇒
Long Term support needs of older people (65 and over) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000	GREEN	RED	↑
% of KCC supported people in residential or nursing care where the CQC rating is Good or Outstanding	RED	AMBER	⇒

Public Health – Three out of the six KPIs exceeded target with two of these on a positive trend. The number of adults accessing structured substance misuse treatment is below target but on an improving trend.

Public Health KPIs	RAG rating		DoT
	Latest	Previous	
Number of eligible people receiving an NHS Health Check – rolling 12 months	GREEN	GREEN	⬆
Number of mandated universal checks delivered by the health visiting service – rolling 12 months	AMBER	AMBER	⇒
% of all new first-time patients (at any clinic) receiving a full sexual health screen (excluding online referrals)	AMBER	New KPs in 24/25	⇒
Number of Adults accessing structured substance misuse treatment during a rolling 12-month period	AMBER		⬆
Successful completion of drug and alcohol treatment	GREEN	GREEN	⬆
% of Live Well clients who would recommend the service to family, friends or someone in a similar situation	GREEN	GREEN	⇒

Customer Services						
Cabinet Member	Linden Kemkaran (from Quarter 1, 2025/26)					
Corporate Director	Amanda Beer					
KPI Summary	GREEN	AMBER	RED	↑	⇒	↓
	2		1		2	1

Customer contact through Contact Point (KCC's call centre) is provided via a strategic partnership, whilst Digital services are provided by KCC. In Quarter 4, the percentage of callers who rated their advisor as good continued to meet the target of 97%. The percentage of calls which were answered by Contact Point improved, moving further above target.

The activity indicator on average speed of answer remains quicker than expectations for calls to all services at 41 seconds, with the average speed of answer for priority services at 20 seconds also being lower than expectations. Average call handling time at 6 minutes 15 seconds is slightly higher than an aim of 6 minutes 4 seconds.

Contact Point received 9% more calls compared to the previous Quarter (Oct-Dec) and 6% fewer calls than Quarter 4 last year. The 12 months to March 2025 saw a 5% decrease in calls compared to the 12 months to March 2024, continuing the long-term trend of fewer calls as people have increasingly used the kent.gov website instead of calling contact point.

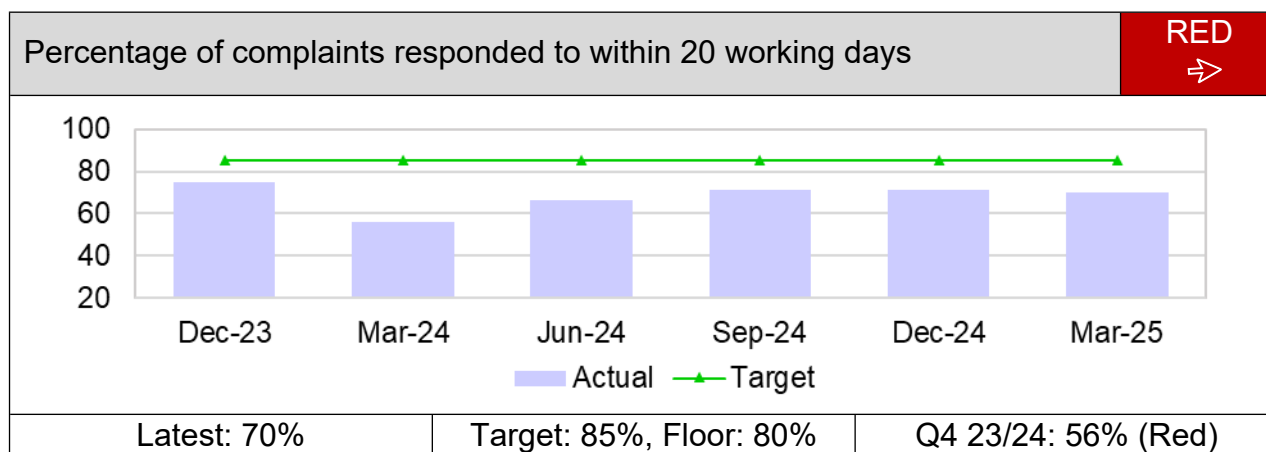
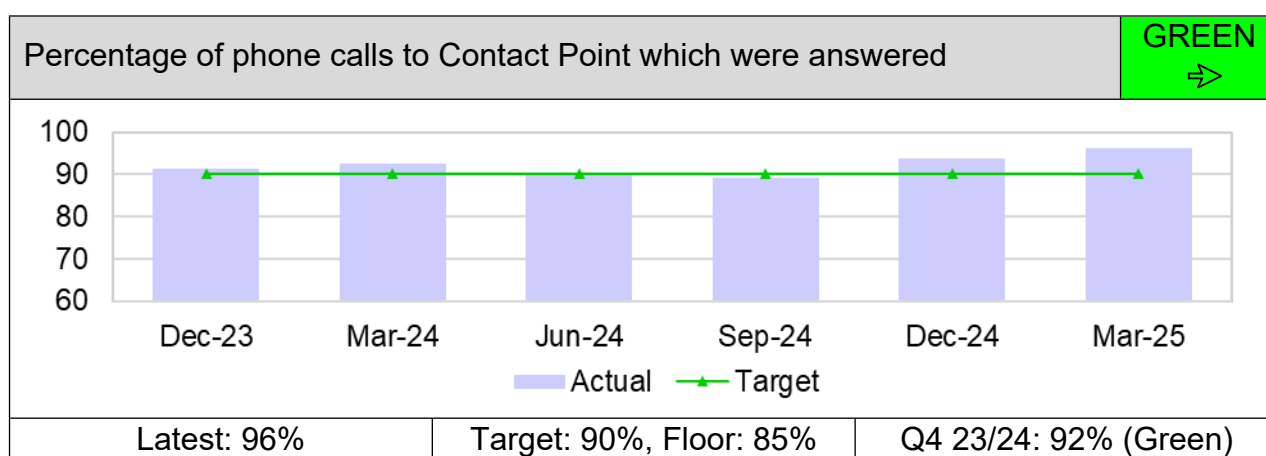
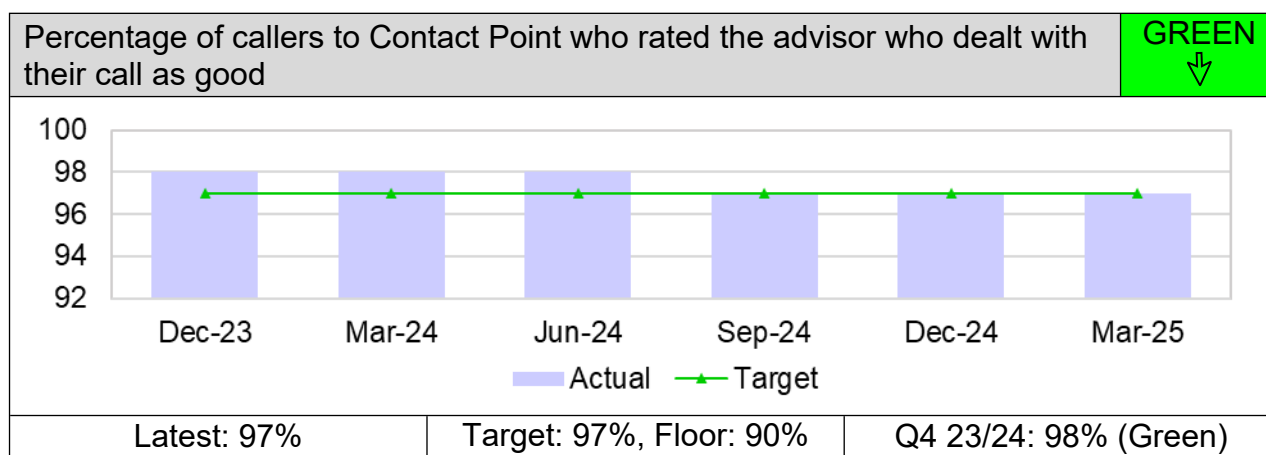
The number of visits (sessions) to the kent.gov.uk website was slightly lower than the same quarter the previous year. The most visited pages continue to be those relating to Household Waste Recycling Centres which account for about a third of all visits.

Quarter 4 saw a small decrease in the volume of complaints received compared to the same quarter last year. Annually, volumes in 2024/25 saw a small decrease of 4% on the previous year.

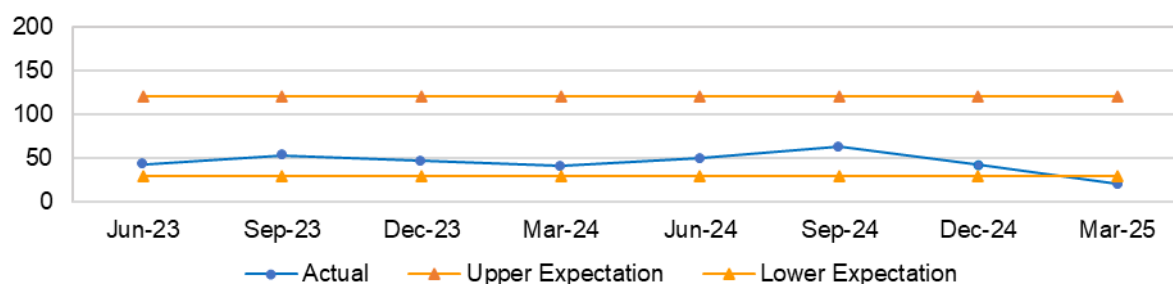
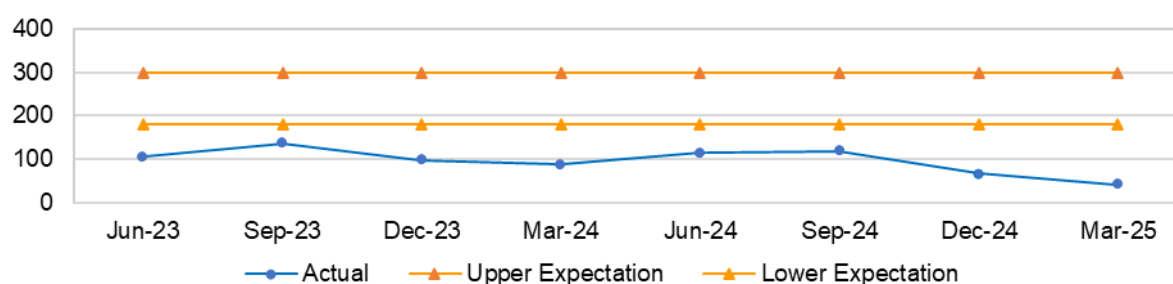
In terms of Directorate performance, the majority of complaints were received by the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate who responded to 92% within timescale, the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department, together achieved 82%, just below the 85% target. ASCH responded to 53% of complaints within timescale, however it must be noted that any agreed extensions to investigate complex cases, while agreed with the customer, will be recorded as late. CYPE saw varying levels of performance for Quarter 4 across different services. Children's Services responded to 76% of complaints within timescale, however the SEN division achieved only 9% in timescale.

In Quarter 4, collectively we responded to 70% of complaints in the timescale, this is an improvement on last year's figure of 56% in the same quarter, and a minor decrease on the previous quarter, where 71% were answered in timescale. **The complaints team continues to work with services and managers to support their teams in responding to complaints, particularly where there are areas with backlogs.**

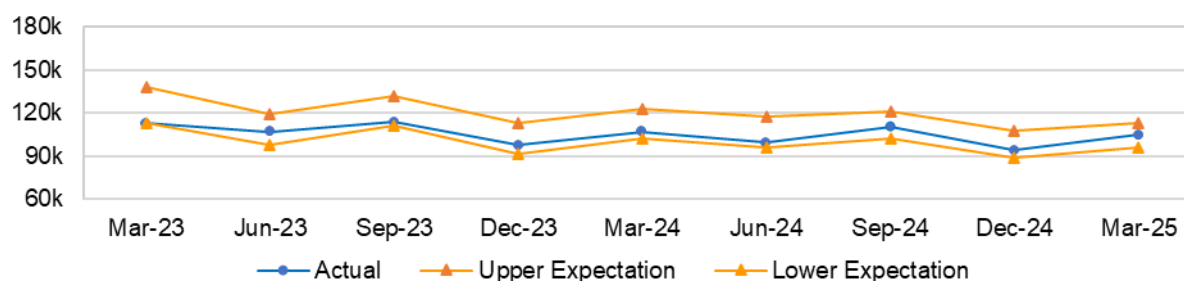
Key Performance Indicators



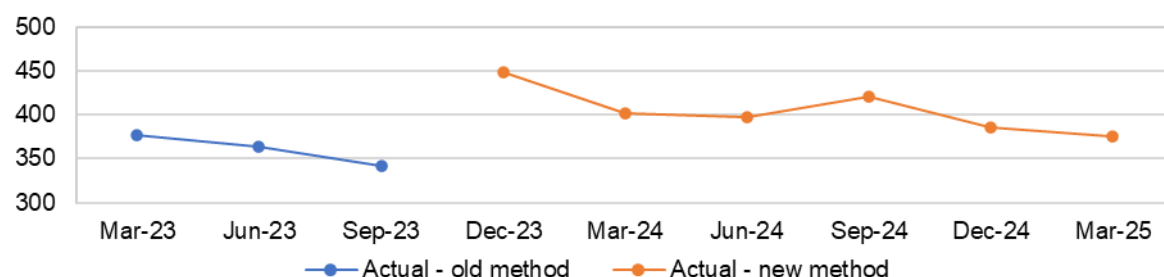
Activity indicators

Average speed of answer (ASA) by Contact Point in seconds – **priority services**Average speed of answer (ASA) by Contact Point in seconds – **all services**

Number of phone calls responded to by Contact Point – Quarterly

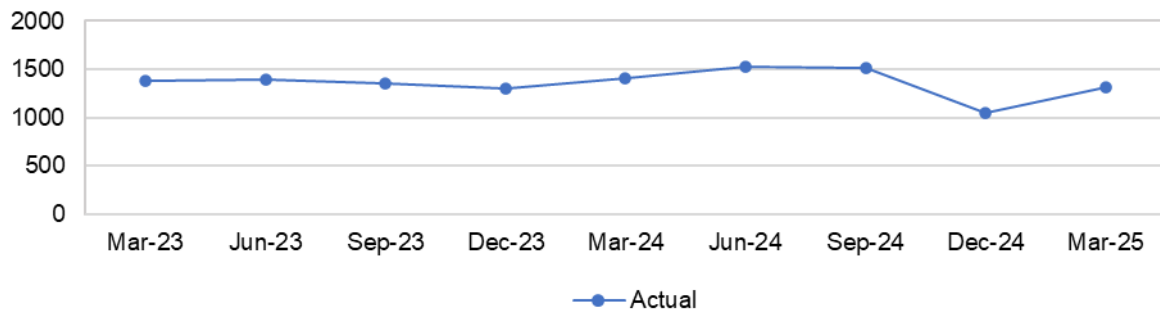


Average Contact Point call handling time in seconds – Quarterly

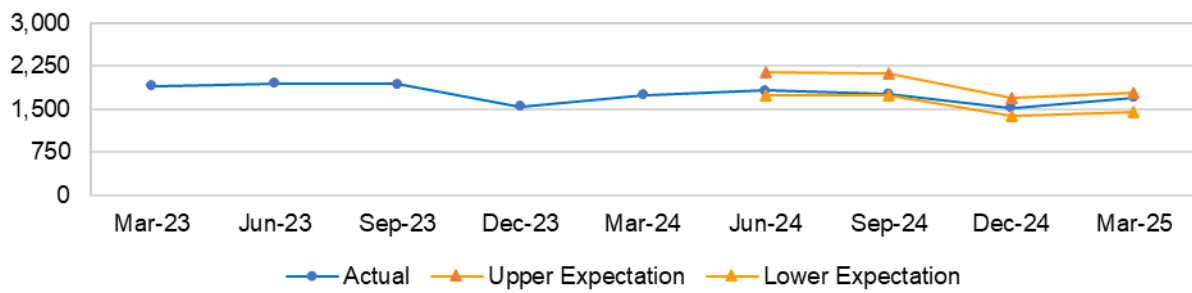


Agilisys changed the way call handling time was recorded from November 2023, by adding a set automatic aftercall time (the period of time immediately after completing the contact with a customer but where more work is required to finalise the transaction: e.g. entering details such as comments about the conversation, follow-up actions, etc). This has contributed to increased handling time in the Quarters from December 2023.

Number of complaints received - Quarterly



Number of visits (sessions) to the KCC website (in thousands) – Quarterly



Customer Services – Call Activity

Number of phone calls to Contact Point (thousands)

Contact Point received 9% more calls compared to the previous Quarter and 6% fewer calls than Quarter 4 last year. The 12 months to March 2025 saw a 5% decrease in calls compared to the 12 months to March 2024.

Service area	Apr – Jun 24	Jul – Sep 24	Oct – Dec 24	Jan – Mar 25	12m to Mar 24	12m to Mar 25
Adult Social Care	24	25	24	27	100	100
Integrated Children's Services	18	19	19	18	76	75
Highways	13	13	11	11	60	49
Blue Badges	12	13	9	9	40	43
Schools and Early Years	8	9	6	8	32	30
Transport Services	6	12	6	7	36	32
Registrations	5	5	6	6	24	22
Waste and Recycling	8	8	5	6	28	27
Libraries and Archives	5	6	5	5	22	20
Main line	3	3	3	3	12	12
Adult Education	3	7	3	3	19	16
Other Services	2	2	1	3	8	8
Driver improvement	2	2	2	2	9	8
KSAS*	2	1	1	1	7	5
Total Calls (thousands)	111	125	101	110	472	447

Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.

* Kent Support and Assistance Service

Customer Services – Complaints Monitoring

In Quarter 4 complaint volumes increased by 25% on the previous quarter, however volumes are in line with the same quarter last year, and 2024/25 saw a drop of 4% compared to the previous year.

For Quarter 4, 50% of complaints for CYPE were for SEN related services. The majority of Highways and Transportation complaints related to Street works / Highways Management, and 10% for Public Transport. For ASCH, Blue Badge complaints accounted for 18% of all cases.

Service	12 mths to Mar 24	12 mths to Mar 25		Quarter to Dec 24	Quarter to Mar 25
Highways and Transportation	2,567	2,267		422	522
Adult Social Care & Health	997	1,064		250	259
Integrated Children's Services	384	432		122	149
SEN	617	627		92	177
Environment and Waste	404	428		72	75
Growth & Communities (incl. Libraries, Registrations and Archives)	187	240		42	58
Education & Young People's Services	153	147		22	27
Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department	226	129		20	33
Adult Education	58	59		5	12
Total Complaints	5,593	5,393		1,047	1,312

Customer Services – Digital Take-up

The table below shows the digital/online or automated transaction completions for key service areas where there are ways to complete other than online.

Transaction type	Online Apr 24 – Jun 24	Online Jul 24 – Sep 24	Online Oct 24 – Dec 24	Online Jan 25 – Mar 25	Total Transactions Last 12 Months
Renew a library book*	80%	83%	85%	83%	1,027,806
Report a Highways Fault	70%	64%	64%	73%	104,967
Book a Driver Improvement Course	91%	91%	87%	88%	46,258
Apply for or renew a Blue Badge	86%	88%	87%	92%	21,745
Book a Birth Registration appointment	92%	92%	91%	92%	18,014
Apply for a Concessionary Bus Pass	76%	78%	78%	78%	18,403
Report a Public Right of Way Fault	87%	87%	88%	88%	7,240
Apply for a HWRC recycling voucher	100%	99%	100%	100%	6,389

* Library issue renewals transaction data is based on individual loan items and not count of borrowers.

Governance, Law & Democracy

Cabinet Member	Brian Collins (from Quarter 1, 2025/26)
Corporate Director	Amanda Beer

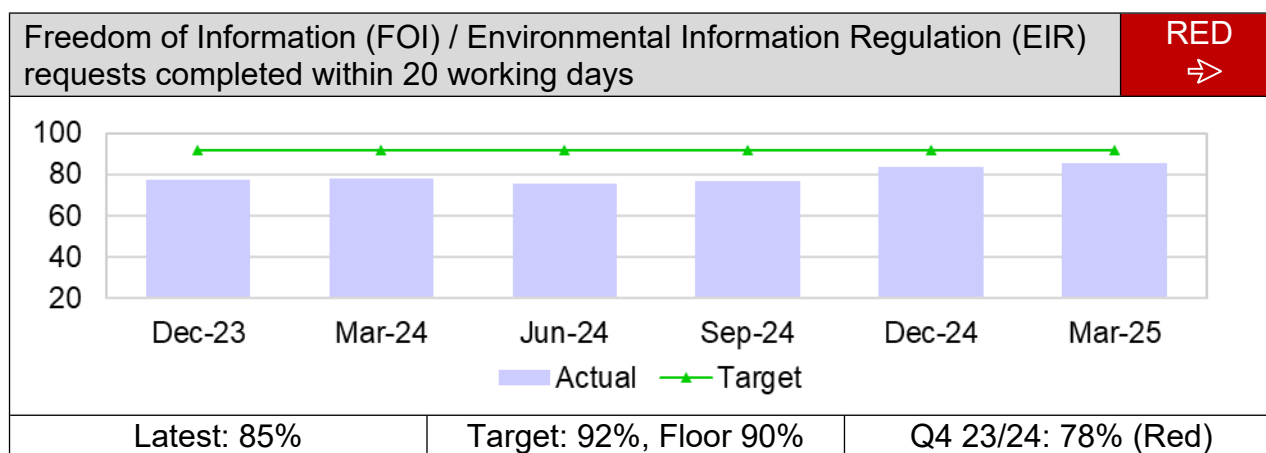
KPI Summary	GREEN	AMBER	RED	⬆️	⇒	⬇️
			2	1	1	

The completion within timescale of both Freedom of Information (FOI) / Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, and Subject Access requests made under Article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulations, remained below their floor standards, but the improved performance seen last quarter was sustained.

The percentage of FOI / EIR requests completed within timescale, maintained its highest level of performance in over four years in this quarter. This is due to a concerted effort by staff and a greater awareness across KCC of outstanding requests following the reintroduction of a weekly report to the Corporate Management Team. No Directorate achieved target over the year, with the best performing being the Chief Executive's Department with 85% completed in timescale. The highest number of requests (953) was received by the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate. The total number of requests remains historically high.

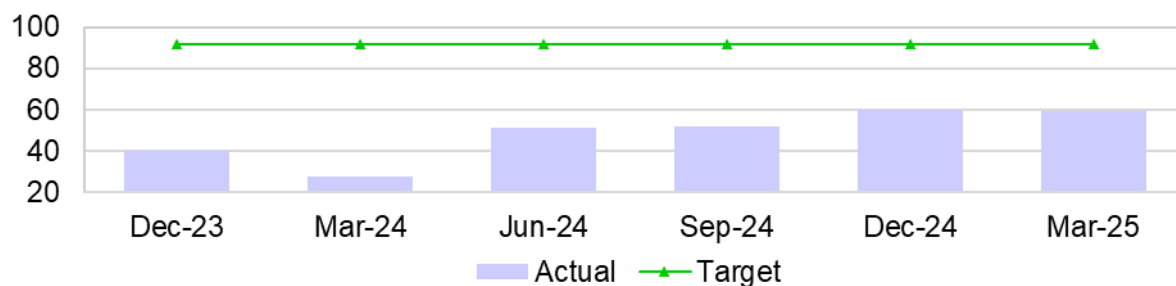
For Subject Access Requests (SARs), the improvement in performance was also sustained for the final quarter of the year. Over the year, more than 80% of requests came under the Children, Young People and Education Directorate. Reasons for delays in responding to requests include lack of resources, particularly in some operational teams, as well as delays in updating information on specific systems. The total number of requests also remains historically high.

Key Performance Indicators



Subject Access requests, made under Art 15 of the General Data Protection Regulations, completed within statutory timescales

RED
⬆



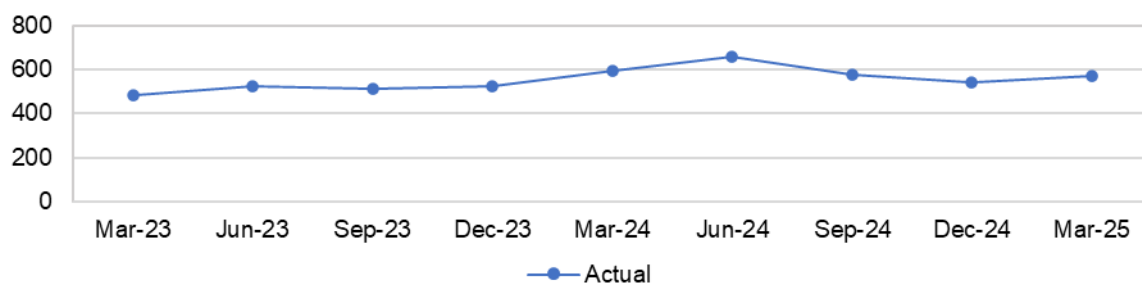
Latest: 59%

Target: 90%, Floor 85%

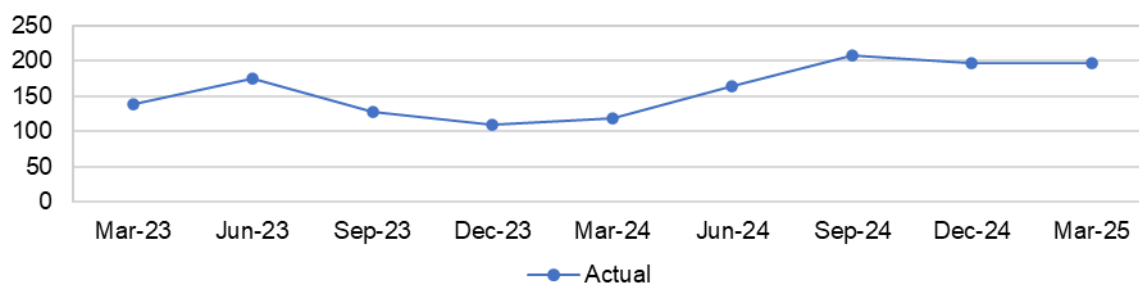
Q4 23/24: 28% (Red)

Activity indicators

FOI/EIR requests responded to – by Quarter



Data Protection Act Subject Access requests responded to – by Quarter



Growth, Economic Development & Communities

Cabinet Members	Paul King, Paul Webb (from Quarter 1, 2025/26)
Corporate Director	Simon Jones

KPI Summary	GREEN	AMBER	RED	↑	⇒	↓
	1	1			2	

Support for Business

KCC continued to use funds from the Government's Regional Growth Fund (RGF) to create and sustain employment opportunities in Kent.

The Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec) 2024/25 monitoring cycle of the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) recorded a net increase of 3.60 FTE, which follows a net decrease of 19.81 FTE jobs in Q2 2024/25 (Jul-Sep), and an increase of 31.0 FTE jobs in Quarter 1. In the year to the end of Quarter 3, the total net increase in job creation is 29.99 FTE, covering both jobs created and safeguarded. The decrease in the last quarter and the relatively modest increase this quarter may be reflective of the impact of the UK Government budget as businesses have fed back that the additional national insurance and other increased costs have impacted on their ability to retain and hire new staff.

Since the reopening of the KMBF Loan Schemes on 21st November 2023 until 31st March 2025, 412 pre-applications have been received to a value of over £42.0m. Approximately 35% of pre-applications were not approved and therefore not invited to submit a full application during this period. There are a variety of reasons for those pre-application rejections: the most common being a lack of information provided by the applicant to assess their proposals for business growth; a lack of innovation, contribution to net zero and/or impact on local supply chains; and the inclusion of ineligible expenditure. These could have been resolved by applicants reviewing the Guidance Notes. It should be noted that many rejected applicants, utilised the feedback provided positively and resubmitted a second pre-application, which they are permitted to do and have subsequently been approved. The Business Investment Team have taken remedial action to address this pre-application failure rate and are measuring its impact regularly, and offer an initial meeting online with the business, prior to them submitting their pre-application.

At the time of writing, 24 pre-applications are still active and 13 full applications to the value of £2.98m are currently being processed, with a further 15 pre-applications invited to submit a full application to a value just over £1.66m. The remaining 9 pre-applications are at various stages within the pre-application assessment process. The Kent & Medway Investment Advisory Board (IAB) have had eleven companies present to it so far with nine approved to the value of £2.3m, and two deferred, pending the provision of further information. Of the nine approved, three approved applicants later declined their loan offer. The Kent & Medway IAB Sub-Group (SBB) have had 40 companies present to them to date with 33 approved and seven rejected. The total value of the SBB approved applications is £2.49m. The total value of investments approved to date and either paid or in the process of being paid by the KMBF across both schemes is £3.4m for 35 applications.

Economy

During Quarter 4, the formal transfer of responsibilities from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to KCC concluded with a required Deed of Variation and Transition Agreement being signed by the relevant local authorities and the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government.

The Economy Team continued to work with Medway Council to carry out monitoring of the legacy capital programmes (Local Growth Fund (LGF), Getting Building Fund (GBF) and Growing Places Fund (GPF)).

KCC continued to manage the contract for the Kent & Medway Growth Hub and received confirmation that the service will continue for the 2025/26 financial year, meaning a procurement process will be launched in Quarter 1.

A first annual progress update on the delivery of the Phase 1 Implementation Plan for the Kent & Medway Economic Framework was provided to KCC's Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee in March 2025 including information on the Kent & Medway Innovation Partnership, the Strategic Partnership for Health & Economy, the 'Bring Back Eurostar' campaign, making preparations for government-funded 'Connect to Work' supported employment programme, Skills Bootcamps programme and the Made Smarter South East programme led by Surrey County Council.

Developer Investment Team

The trend of relatively low levels of planning applications continued in Quarter 4 with a total of 21 being received in the three months. The drop is believed to be connected to proposed changes to the planning system being brought about through the [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) introduced last month, as developers awaited news on potential reforms to speed up delivery of UK housebuilding.

A total of fourteen s106 legal agreements have been completed securing £3.56m with a 95.3% success ratio against the amounts originally requested. Larger applications included in this quarter include land at Barwick Road, Dover (120 dwellings) and land at Moat Road, Headcorn (115 dwellings). The main reason for missing the 98% success ratio target is attributed to a brownfield development site at Grenham Lodge, Manston Road East, in Ramsgate, which was subject to viability issues. The District Council did not seek any affordable housing contributions for the same reason.

Resources are currently stretched as the team (along with specialists from the affected KCC service areas) defend the County Council's mitigation requirements at three concurrent live appeals. The [s106B appeal](#) for Chilmington Green (up to 5,750 homes) recommenced on the 14th April following the Inspector falling ill earlier in the year. The inquiry will run until the 2nd May. Officers also continue to be involved in the appeal for the [Highsted Park](#) application, East of Sittingbourne (two applications totalling 8,400 homes). The application was called in by the Secretary of State prior to it being determined by Swale Borough Council. The appeal is scheduled for 12 weeks, sitting in sessions between March and July of this year.

Finally, KCC is objecting to a 3,500 home development at Northfleet Harbourside due to the impact on a key minerals wharf facility on the River Thames serving the wider Kent housebuilding market.

Mineral and Waste Policy Team

KCC is objecting to a 3,500 home and commercial and leisure development at Northfleet Harbourside due to the impact on a key minerals wharf facility on the River Thames serving the wider Kent and London housebuilding market. The application was called in by the Secretary of State and is scheduled for 5 weeks, sitting in sessions between May and June of this year.

No Use Empty

In Quarter 4, a total of 86 long term empty properties were made fit for occupation through the No Use Empty (NUE) Programme, bringing the total over the last nine months to 449, and the total since the programme began in 2005 to 8,693.

The total NUE investment in converting derelict properties has increased to £109.8m (£63.5m from KCC recycled loans and £46.3m from private sector leverage). A further eight new applications were received during Quarter 4 adding to the twenty-eight reported last Quarter making a total of thirty-six applications for loan support. Twenty-nine of these are approved and in contract. Seven are approved and awaiting final legal completion and registration of security.

NUE were awarded £2.5m under the SELEP Growing Places Fund (GPF) to convert additional derelict properties which is fully allocated. The target is to return 18 empty commercial units back into use and create 36 new homes. A total of 18 projects have been approved at the end of Quarter 4 and these will return 23 empty commercial units back into use (19 completed) and create 52 homes (52 completed).

KCC Treasury have made available £28m for NUE to bring forward empty/derelict sites with planning permission for new builds. Following the recycling of £19.3m loan repayments at the end of Quarter 4, the number of new homes funded is 290 across eight Kent districts and 24 business units in Dover. A total of 24 projects have been approved at the end of Quarter 4 of which 23 are in contract. There remains a strong pipeline of projects across all NUE schemes.

Going forward, in February 2025 the KMBF Investment Advisory Board confirmed support for NUE to borrow up to £6m from the fund to make use of currently uncommitted monies to provide short-term secured loans to create new commercial workspace across the county. KMBF and NUE are in the process of sorting through governance arrangements and seeking legal advice to ensure financial compliance.

NUE will attend and present at the National Empty Homes Conference in Birmingham in May 2025 which will also mark the 20th anniversary of NUE.

Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA)

2024/25 proved to be another positive and eventful year for LRA, marked by significant progress. Libraries saw continued increases in visits, alongside higher usage of public PCs, Wi-Fi, and the e-library services. Attendance at events and activities also expanded, and notably the Know Your Neighbourhood project in Thanet which was focused on creating events to combat social isolation and loneliness within the district resulted in a 54% increase in event attendance at Thanet's libraries over the year. Across the county, over 18,400 children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge, with Kent enjoying the highest rate of joiners in the South East, and the Archives Lunchtime Talks programme continued to draw packed audiences at Kent History and Library Centre.

Registration services experienced marked growth as well, with more ceremonies conducted (7,271 in total across the year) and a rise in the number of citizens welcomed through our celebratory citizenship events.

Over 796,500 visits to Kent's Libraries in Quarter 4 represents a 1% increase on the same period in 2023/24, while attendance to events and activities increased by 26% with over 60,900 adults and children enjoying a wide range of events to bring communities together and enhance wellbeing. Canterbury Library (The Beaney) was in the spotlight on 25 February 2025 when Her Majesty The Queen visited to unveil a statue of Aphra Benn outside the building, followed by a tour of the library.

Library issues have decreased overall by 2% in comparison with Quarter 4 2023/24, with physical issues falling by 5%, but e-Book and e-Audiobook issues increasing by 7%. Work is being carried out within the service to improve physical issues, through further staff training on stock management, a review of the stock collection policy and events such as community days to promote library services, together with the exploration of the legacy of the Know Your Neighbourhood project which resulted in increased usage of Thanet Libraries.

Quarter 4 was also a busy period for the Archive service, with 855 visitors to the Search Room representing a 35% increase on Quarter 4 2023/24. The team have carried out extensive outreach across the year, promoting the service at Ramsgate Tunnels, Dreamland Heritage Trust Local History Day, and a National Sporting Heritage Day at Mid Kent College, as well as attending conferences at Maidstone's Brompton Barracks and Canterbury Cathedral. Remote enquiries to the service have also increased in Quarter 4 by 3% on the same period in 2023/24.

The Kent Ceremonies Team delivered 851 marriage and civil partnership ceremonies during Quarter 4, representing a 7% increase on Quarter 4 last year, while the number of citizens welcomed to the UK increased by 10% for the same comparison periods, with 1,216 citizens celebrating their British citizenship.

The number of birth registration appointments delivered fell by 4% in Quarter 4 in comparison with the same period in 2023/24, while the number of death registration appointments rose by 2%. Customer satisfaction with the Registration service for Quarter 4 was 96%, reflecting the continued dedication and support of the teams to providing excellent customer service at key moments during people's lives.

Active Kent and Medway (AK&M)

In February it was confirmed that two places in Kent would be included in phase one of Sport England's place-based expansion programme, which seeks to take a whole system approach to connecting the least active, and those facing the greatest inequalities of opportunities, to being more active. Sport England has committed £250 million to this programme which runs until 2028, a part of which (£180 million) will be invested into revenue and capital programmes in 80 places across England, including Thanet and Gravesham, to supercharge activity.

We will also be seeing further investment into the county as part of phase two of this programme in 2025/26.

This quarter also saw AK&M deliver our annual Primary PE conference at the Kent Events Centre, which saw 108 different schools from across the county represented.

Our Department for Education funded Opening School Facilities programme has come to an end after three years. 33 schools have benefitted from over £1m of investment for projects to enable extracurricular and community activity on school sites. These have included the establishment of a new gymnastics club at March Academy in Folkestone - which is now self-sustaining and the creation of bike storage facilities at Dame Janet Primary School in Thanet in support of active travel for students.

Community Safety

Focus areas during this period for the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) continued to be the cost of living, assisting with food banks, warm hubs and supporting residents to access grants and funds. This includes signposting residents that are eligible for Winter Fuel Payments and Pension credit.

KCC Community Wardens are also assisting residents and communities in relation to Mental Health, loneliness and isolation, homelessness, environmental and financial crime (fraud and loan sharks), anti-social behaviour and scams. Wardens continue to deliver the social prescribing model, 'Positive Wellbeing', across the service as part of their wider offer of support to residents and communities.

The service has been establishing themselves within a number of new deployment areas under its new geographical allocation policy (GAP) working with residents to identify gaps in services and assist in setting up community-based clubs and events. The service's webpage has been updated to show where wardens are now allocated. A small number of parish councils have taken up the offer of a sponsorship arrangement to fund warden services within their area which would not otherwise be prioritised by the GAP. The sponsorship allows KCC to increase the service's capacity beyond its budget limitations.

As part of the Kent Community Safety Trust's (KCST) role in sharing good practice and facilitating joint working, the team produces and circulates monthly E-Bulletins with the latest community safety updates and any relevant news, publications, and legislation which is circulated to over 200 practitioners across the county.

The KCST obtained funding for a trainer to deliver training sessions on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). During Quarter 4, two sessions took place, one focused on victim blaming and rape myths and the other on what community interventions might work, with over 90 professionals in attendance across the two sessions. The poll results for the March session are not available but in January 96% rated the session as excellent or very good (rising to 100% if good is included).

Trading Standards

Complex Investigations - In Operation Blackboard, three men were prosecuted for fraudulently reducing 2 million miles from 23 high-mileage vehicles using fake logbooks and MOT certificates. They received suspended sentences, community service, and were ordered to pay compensation. Operation Fable identified criminal business practices, including unauthorised vehicle use and retaining payments without completing work. Guilty pleas were entered, with sentencing in May.

Safeguarding and Community Engagement – In 2024/25, the Safeguarding team conducted 173 interventions, saving victims from losing over £431,917. They organized six Doorstep Crime Awareness events and engaged with 1,303 residents through 39 presentations. Progress was made with Kent Police on taking a more strategic lead for Doorstep Crime.

Business Advice and Compliance - Officers attended National Construction Panel meetings. The team is working with the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) on the construction products panel to help businesses comply in the steel industry, one of our officers chairs this national panel. Two new primary authority companies, London Nootropics and Nature Plus, were onboarded this quarter.

Officers also attended the national Age Verification Panel. The Local Vape Action (LVA), the national vape compliance project piloted in Kent, has been successful in Tunbridge Wells borough which saw a decrease in the number of illegal sales, and is now being set up in Ashford borough for launch in May. As part of the work with business they sent 40 advice letters to businesses regarding vape recycling.

Food and Animal Health – In Quarter 4, the animal health team collaborated with Kent Police Rural task force for joint operations and engaged with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and DEFRA on cases of Bluetongue and Avian Influenza. The Sheep Worrying campaign, launched in February, received over 200,000 views by March.

Consumer and Public Safety – The team identified a new nicotine strips/film product which was raised nationally as it has no age restriction controls. The Vape team completed 1,024 visits in 2024/25, seizing 25,516 vapes and 4,000 nicotine pouches. This quarter they sent 483 emails and 300 letters to businesses regarding the ban on single-use disposable vapes.

Ports Team – In Quarter 4, the team detected 81,828 unsafe/non-compliant products, including unlicensed medicinal products, Hydroquinone, and counterfeit items. They took part in Operation Sandhead with Border Force intervening in 30-40 consignments a day at Dover Eastern Docks, which also provided good networking opportunities. The team is now located in Dover District Council offices and sit with the port health team which is beneficial to both.

Legal Proceedings - There were 10 cases within the court system, with six going to Crown Court. The legal team also processed criminal cases for the Counter Fraud Team (three) and provided services to the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller Unit on processing orders to disband illegal encampments (three).

Creative and Cultural Economy Service

Kent Film Office - In Quarter 4, the film office handled 105 filming requests and 137 related enquiries. We logged 71.5 filming days bringing an estimated £676K direct spend into Kent & Medway economies. Highlights for the quarter included: feature films The Family Plan 2 and Animol; TV series MobLand; and a Toyota Corolla Commercial.

Creative Economy - There are 8,900 creative industry jobs in Kent and 37.2% are in IT, software & computer services. The 6,195 creative enterprises in Kent in 2024 account for 9.6% of all enterprises. Create South East programme is a regional programme led by Kent County Council, it supports higher growth creative businesses to secure investment. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport have extended this flagship programme by another year with funding of £425,000 allowing the programme to support another 40 businesses.

By the end of Quarter 4, 209 expressions of interest have led to 113 creative businesses receiving a package of support that included intensive mentoring, business planning, pitch development and introductions to investors. Four businesses have already achieved additional investment.

Placemaking - As an area facing high levels of deprivation, significant health inequalities, and limited engagement with arts and culture, Sheppey would benefit from targeted intervention to ensure equitable access. To further this, a bid has been submitted to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for the Locally Unlocking Culture for Inclusive Access (LUCIA) fund. The bid process was led by the Culture and Creative Economy Team through a series of online meetings with partners and a community engagement event on 24 February at the Criterion Blue Town.

Ongoing work continues to engage Local Authorities with the Cultural Planning Toolkit which provides tools to embed cultural provision in new build and regeneration projects; this was researched and written in partnership with Creative Estuary and Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). Significant headway has been made with Royal Tunbridge Wells to integrate model policies into the Town Centre Plan. The relationship between Creative Estuary and TCPA continues to explore ways to engage planners in the toolkit.

Playground - Playground is a programme of creativity for young children and their families taking place in libraries, Family Hubs and other venues across Kent. Playground is a partnership between Kent County Council's Culture and Creative Economy Service and Kent Libraries and achieved National Portfolio Organisation status with Arts Council England in April 2023.

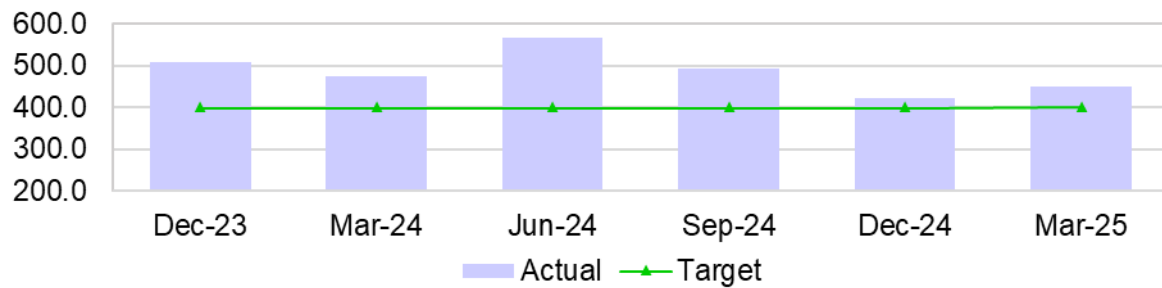
In Quarter 4 we delivered 118 Baby Playground sessions with 1,972 participants; 23 Family Playground sessions with 437 participants; 71 Playground specialist sessions with SEND families with 525 participants. In 2024/25, the total number of specialist sessions delivered was 170 (target 48) with 1,218 participants (target 187). Due to significant demand, with increasing referrals from the NHS, it has been necessary to initiate a waiting list. We plan to run some additional one-off specialist sessions in the summer of 2025 to enable children on the waiting list to experience Playground.

Playground was commissioned to deliver sessions in Finland which attracted considerable Finnish press coverage. We have also been commissioned to take Baby Playground to the [Artground](#) in Singapore in summer 25. We have submitted a proposal to Maidstone Museum who have indicated their interest in hosting sessions from autumn 2025.

Key Performance Indicators

Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty (NUE) – Rolling 12-month total

GREEN
⇒



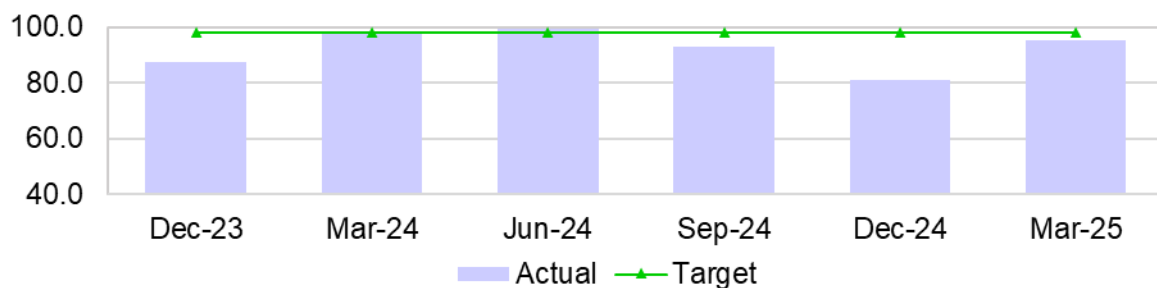
Latest: 449

Target: 400, Floor 360

Q4 23/24: 474 (Green)

S106 developer contributions secured as a percentage of amount sought

AMBER
⇒



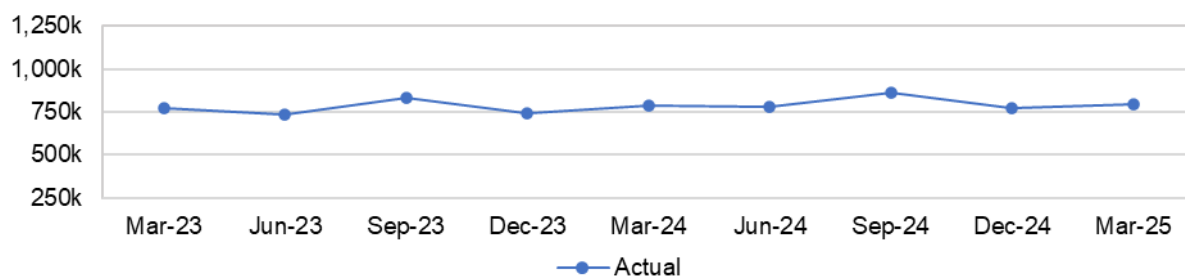
Latest: 95.3%

Target: 98%, Floor 85%

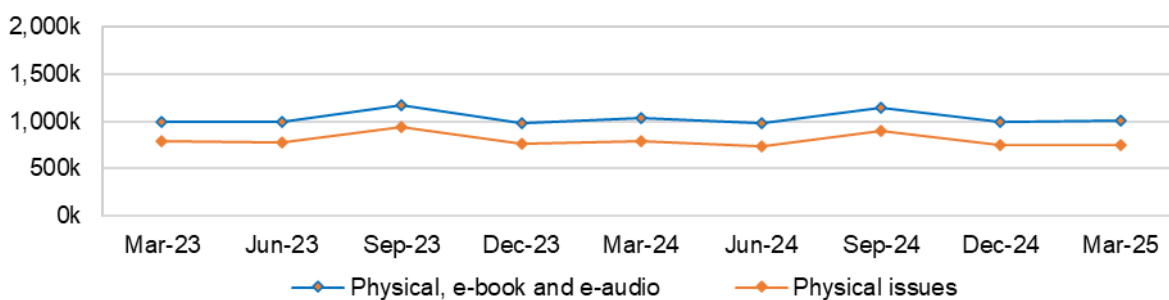
Previous: 97.9% (Amber)

Activity indicators

Total number of physical visits to Kent libraries



Total number of book issues from Kent libraries



Environment and Transport

Cabinet Members	David Wimble, Peter Osborne (from Quarter 1, 2025/26)
Corporate Director	Simon Jones

KPI Summary	GREEN	AMBER	RED	↑	⇒	↓
	5	1	-	1	4	1

Highways

In Quarter 4 the RAG ratings for the four Highways KPIs show 3 Greens (pothole repairs, emergency incidents and enquiries made online) and 1 Amber (routine faults).

Pothole repairs

Empowering KCC Highways staff to address minor and urgent repairs has directly resulted in quicker responses to customer inquiries. For Quarter 4, the service responded to 97% of pothole repairs within the target timescale, giving a Green RAG rating, with 6,338 potholes repaired out of a possible 6,513. **We continue to monitor performance at the monthly Contract Board meetings to ensure performance remains on target.**

Emergency incidents

We have successfully achieved a Green RAG rating of 98% for attendance at Emergency Incidents within 2 hours of notification, with 807 successful responses out of 822. Although the service narrowly fell short of obtaining a Green RAG rating in previous quarters, all incidents were safely resolved. **These outcomes demonstrate an improvement compared to the 2023/24 period, and we are dedicated to sustaining and enhancing this positive trajectory.**

Routine Faults

We addressed 18,005 reported repair faults in Quarter 4, completing 15,076 within the target timeframe. This performance yields an Amber RAG rating of 84%, with impacts from cold and icy weather in early January, and then storm Herminia at the end of the month. While we achieved a Green RAG rating in Quarter 2, we were just one percentage point shy of this target in both Quarter 1 and Quarter 3. **We are actively pursuing performance improvements through discussions and pilot programs with the Contract Board and the Strategic Partnership Board.**

Public Enquiries

The total number of customer contacts regarding highway issues in Quarter 4 was down on last year's totals with 45,577, (compared to 58,838, for the same period last year). 25,372 of these were identified as faults requiring action by front line teams (compared to 33,896 for the same period last year), both are down largely due to better weather during the winter compared to the previous year.

At the end of Quarter 4, there were 6,894 open enquiries (work in progress) which compares to 12,432 at the same time last year, reflecting the more manageable workload in several parts of the business, which is unusual during the winter period and represents a significant improvement from where this has been in previous years.

Online fault reporting

Use of the online fault reporting tool remains high with 72.4% of all enquiries in Quarter 4 coming directly from the public via the tool which is a similar level to the same period last year.

Work to encourage more online reporting has been ongoing for several years and we have seen an increased take up of around 15% when compared to the same quarter in 2019/20. This has also contributed to a near halving of the number of calls to the highway's helpline over the same period. Work on a new and improved fault reporting tool (using KCC's existing platform) has been given the go ahead and it is hoped this will go live for pothole and streetlight enquiries by the summer and for other highway services soon after.

Street Works

Pressure from utilities companies on the teams remains high with ongoing high levels of emergency works and road space at a premium with some areas booked out for up to two years in advance. Works that would normally be coordinated to be undertaken during School holidays will need to be completed during term time as there is simply not enough time within the holidays to meet the level of demand that street works are seeing. We will collaborate closely with these utility companies to proactively establish robust communication channels for all our stakeholders including residents, schools and businesses.

A 12-month trial is due to commence with 1Spatial to use geo spatial software to produce red book compliant Traffic management plans with the aim to reduce the number of road closures. We are expecting the trial to start in June, which will be run and managed by 1Spatial in collaboration with the street works teams and utility companies. 1Spatial will provide regular updates on outcomes and successes, where the software shows that works can be carried out with reduced traffic management followed by a liaison with the relevant works promoter. 1Spatial will also liaise with utility companies to share their findings; assuming the trial shows positive results, it is expected that the utilities will see the benefits of the software and will engage with 1Spatial to continue with its use.

Road Safety

The casualty figures for Quarter 4 show an overall increase of 142 casualties compared to the same quarter the previous year and a small decrease of two compared with the same quarter in 2019/20. For those casualties that were killed or seriously injured (KSI), these were up by 42 overall compared to the previous year and up by 48 compared to the same quarter in 2019/20. Comparing historical records with those completed so far across this quarter, the highest contributory factor causing these is "not looking properly", with only one record given a "possible poor or defective road surface" from the attending officer.

Quarter 4											
2024/25				2023/24				2019/20			
Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
9	189	686	884	15	141	586	742	2	148	738	888

(Based on the latest data received from Kent Police)

Safer Active Journeys Team

Bikeability training ended on a high in 2024/25, seeing a 12% increase on delivery from the previous year. The KCC team and the framework of training providers have all worked hard to increase our capacity to deliver and we hope to continue seeing this increase when we look at the academic year figures in the summer. In total, 9,278 children received their core Level 1 and Level 2 Bikeability training. In addition, over 1,000 children received Learn to Ride training, 1,300 received Balance Bike training, and 78 secondary school children completed their Level 3 training.

Adult cycle training is picking up as the warmer weather arrives and the team are working with wider KCC colleagues looking at team cycle training days, bike loans to encourage moving car business miles to cycle miles and also working on launching a cycle training venue at Betteshanger Country Park.

The number of live school crossing patrol sites active at the end of this quarter remains steady at 84, with 18 current vacancies out for recruitment at the start of April. We are working with our colleagues in Highway Improvements in making some improvements to our school crossing patrol sites, such as installing a zebra crossing.

We are hoping to increase our team of pedestrian trainers in the next quarter to improve on delivery of our pedestrian training scheme for Key Stage 1 children this financial year.

A record number of schools are participating in Living Streets “Walk Once a Week” (WoW) scheme. This is an active travel initiative that aims to reduce the number of cars used to travel to/from the school entrance each day. The WoW scheme incentivising travelling actively by recording and awarding “active journeys” – like walking, using a Park and Stride location, scooting, cycling etc. We now have 29 schools engaged and are hoping to increase this number next school year.

Active Travel Intervention Team

School Streets launched at St Peter’s Methodist Primary in Canterbury on 28th April and Brunswick House in Maidstone on 19th May. Both schools will benefit from road safety and active travel initiatives including Scootability, Learn to Ride and Bikeability. The Consolidated Active Travel Fund has allocated KCC a revenue allocation of £1,304,625 for delivery of schemes / initiatives between April 2025 to September 2026. Districts and Boroughs have been offered the opportunity to request funding for Capability Building and Behaviour Change activities, which will be prioritised among partners and stakeholders.

Eighteen bikes have been provided to Maidstone and Darent Valley hospital staff for commuting, and through partnership with Cycling UK, we are able to offer regular pop-up Dr Bike sessions at both NHS sites to promote active travel.

We have worked with Sustrans, the Police and Cyclopark to redesign and deliver barriers along part of NCN177 (National Cycle Network, Route 177) to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, providing access to all legitimate users of the NCN177.

Active Travel Infrastructure

Active Travel funded projects are continuing to be developed through the design and construction phase with several projects having now been completed such as walking, wheeling and cycling improvements on A2034 Cheriton Rd, Folkestone and in Faversham along with cross town improvements still in construction in Sevenoaks Town. We are working closely with Active Travel England on design assurance procedures and have received further funding grants totalling £7.64m. There are also several S106 Developer contribution schemes at various phases of development such as Kent Street road widening near Kings Hill, Tonbridge & Malling which is in construction. Monitoring and evaluation of completed, existing and proposed schemes is a significant area of work for the Team.

Safer Speeds and Enforcement Team

A report on the outcome of trial temporary average speed cameras has been finalised and the results have determined the scheme successful. Work is now underway to seek funding through appropriate channels to enable possible continuation of the project.

Work continues to secure a new contract for safety camera equipment and maintenance after 31st August 2025, and this was heard at the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 25th February 2025 with the resolution to procure new contracts through national frameworks.

The new average speed camera system is operational on the A20 at Farningham following investigations after a series of speed-related personal injury crashes. Data continues to show good compliance with the speed limit.

The team also continued to deliver minibuss assessments and training, mostly to school minibuss drivers, as well as delivering key messages to business who have fleets of vehicles and how improving driving standards can improve overall efficiencies for their business.

Kent Driver Education Team

Demand for course spaces over the Christmas and for the first few weeks into the New Year period is generally lower than the rest of the year. However, this then picks up again by mid-January and most spaces were fully booked for the majority of courses up to two months out.

The 1,186 courses delivered in Quarter 4 is similar to the same period last year when 1,148 courses were delivered, but the overall yearly figures show an increase from 4,329 last year to 4,627 this year.

After the successful completion of the New National Speed Awareness Course (NSAC) training, all NDORS Licenced Trainers now deliver this course. The KCC Instructors have also completed National Motorway Training for three more trainers. They are currently delivering On-Road Coach training for three trainers in April which will assist with the lack of course spaces due to recent loss of qualified Advanced Driving Instructors for the Safe and Considerate Driving Course.

There has been a drop off in availability of some trainers, as they are working for multiple course providers, which has led to reduced capacity of course spaces. Subsequently, more trainers will need to be recruited to meet the current demand.

Safer Road Users Team

During this quarter, the Team delivered the following:

- 'Road Safety Club' (RSC) intervention to 8,836 Primary School Pupils across 65 different schools.
- Eco warriors event including facilitation for 60 year 6 pupils.
- Canterbury Christchurch University road safety towards public services qualification for 25 students.
- Train the Trainer partnership saw Police staff delivering 20 of our assemblies with 713 pupils reached.
- Road Sense Programme delivery to Year 7 pupils at 21 schools, reaching 3,645 pupils.
- Road Sense Programme delivery to Year 9 pupils at 20 schools, reaching 3,512 pupils
- Young Driver & Passenger Course delivery to Years 12 & 13 at 20 schools, reaching 2,282 pupils
- Mature Road User sessions with 6 sessions delivered reaching 140 older road users.
- Online Mobile Phone Campaign delivered
- Organic social media; January reach 196.4K, February reach 690.2K and March reach 9K

Crash Remedial Measures & Local Transport Plan (LTP)

The 2025/26 Crash Remedial Measures (CRM) Cluster Site programme has now been established and a total of 80 locations met the threshold for being considered a cluster site this year, down seven on last year. The team have identified approximately 36 locations for remedial interventions across Kent. These CRM schemes range from minor signing and lining improvements to junction redesigns. The schemes are currently being designed at specific locations around the County where engineering solutions have been assessed to be able to reduce the risk of collisions occurring.

In addition to the Cluster Site programme, the Highway Improvements Team (HIT) are also carrying out analysis of routes and junctions that have been identified as 'high risk' by a series of factors that identify them as having a higher than 'normal' level of collisions compared with similar sites. Schemes are progressed through the design and associated engagement process for delivery next financial year. This cluster, junction and route review work forms a suite of Crash Remedial Measures (CRM) carried out by the authority in line with our Vision Zero approach to eliminating road fatalities by 2050.

The team have recently completed delivery of some large-scale CRM and Local Transport Plan projects. The new Zebra Crossing at Loose Road, Maidstone has been well received by the local community as has the new footway on the A26 from Three Elms Lane to Haywards Farm Shop.

The HIT are also continuing to work with elected officials, members and parishes to assist them in delivering items that have been prioritised within their local Highway Improvement Plans. The HIT is currently tasking their small but focussed Community Engagement teams to support parishes in their efforts to realise highway improvements that their communities are promoting. A high number of parishes are now engaging with the HIT to develop their own prioritised Highways Improvement Plans (HIPs). Almost 90% of parishes now have their own HIPs. We continue to issue a road safety

and active travel group Newsletter to build upon our positive engagement with our parishes.

The team continue to support Speedwatch activity, school travel plans and business grants. The team have continued with regular dialogue to look at targeting their enforcement efforts based on representations received and on speed data. A bi-monthly meeting now takes place with Kent Police, the Kent Police Speedwatch Co-ordinator and officers in the Highway Improvements Team where Speedwatch results are reviewed and discussed.

Traffic Management

Enforcement of Moving Traffic Offences have now operated for over six months at Beaver Rd, Ashford, having been introduced on 23 September 2024. Over this period, we have observed the volume of warning notices issued drop by more than 50%, however, the volume of Penalty Charges Notices (PCNs) issued has increased now that the warning notice period has ended. We will continue to monitor and may see a peak in PCNs before they begin to fall. Other enforcement locations remain 'quiet' except for the introduction of the Clive Road Bus Gate Gravesend which in its first three months of operation has seen 6,000 warning notices and over 4,000 PCNs issued. There has been a very strong decline over this period in warning notices by 60%, however, it is too early to monitor an exact trend with PCNs, despite a 10% reduction between February and March. Future potential enforcement locations are posted on our Moving Traffic Enforcement consultation hub on the Let's Talk Kent consultation page.

The Network Innovation team are working on developing Kent's strategy for the delivery of on-street charging infrastructure. KCC recently signed the grant letter for over £12m capital funding from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI). This will support the delivery of electric vehicle chargers for those residents without access to off-street parking and driveways. The team are now in the procurement process with contract award expected late summer and first installations of LEVI funded chargers expected at the end of 2025 or early 2026.

Local Growth Fund (LGF) Transport Capital Projects

KCC is now the Accountable Body for £128m of Government funding from rounds one to three of the LGF. There are currently two high risk projects: Sturry Link Road and the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (ITP). For Sturry Link Road project, the design and build contract has been signed and the contractor is progressing with the detail design. For Maidstone ITP, a review of the design for the remaining schemes and available budget including developer contributions is ongoing.

Transport Strategy

KCC has been continuing to roll out its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme utilising funding awards in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This has seen the delivery of a number of bus interventions such as three new bus priority schemes, a variety of fares interventions including the suppression of KCC Travel Saver costs for Kent families, the award of community transport grants and a number of highway interventions to help with reliability. The funding also continues to be vital in supporting the Kent bus network where a significant number of services across the county would no longer be operating without its existence. Recognising Kent's updated Bus Service Improvement Plan and having met all other requirements of the DfT, Kent have been awarded a further £12m of Capital and £11m of Revenue funding in 2025/26. This funding, which is now collectively referred to as the "Bus Grant" will enable us to

continue to deliver initiatives consistent with the Kent BSIP in the coming year whilst ensuring that we can continue to maintain services that are now requiring of public subsidy.

The challenges impacting the sustainability of services for operators have not gone away and Bus Grant funding is now supporting more than 60 services that would otherwise not be running at a cost of over £6m per year. Bus Grant funding is only secure until the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

Resource Management & Circular Economy

The KPI target on diversion of waste from landfill continues to be met, with 99.2% of waste over the last 12 months being recycled, composted, or used for energy generation. The total volume of waste collected continues to increase, mostly due to increased volumes at HWRCs, but remains within expectations overall. Kerbside waste volumes are 9% above pre-pandemic levels with HWRC volumes increasing, but still 24% below pre-pandemic. The total volume of waste collected is similar to pre-pandemic levels.

Energy and Climate Change

The greenhouse gas emission target for Quarter 3, 2024/25 has been met with a total of 10,389 tCO₂e of greenhouse gas emissions compared with the target of 10,570 tCO₂e.

Although the target has been met, compared to last quarter, we saw an increase in the total greenhouse gas emissions for the first time since reporting began. Although only a small increase, this will require closer monitoring moving forward.

Sites which are not managed under KCC's facilities management contract have seen an increase in electricity and gas consumption, and our Traded Services have added new brands to their portfolio which have contributed to the increased total greenhouse gas emissions seen in Quarter 3. The contributions that the solar farms are having in reducing KCC's emissions continue to be positive.

All Kent and Medway Local Authorities, including Kent County Council (KCC), continue to promote iChoosr's *Solar Together* opportunity. Participating households and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) can benefit from competitive prices, due to the collective purchasing model, and greater energy independence.

In the 12 months to March 2025, installations for Phase 3 were completed, and installations for Phase 4 began. More than 600 low-carbon technology installations took place in this time period.

For Phase 4 only, more than 5,170 solar panels, totalling over 2.2MW of capacity, were installed in the 12 months to March 2025. These Solar PV systems are estimated to help households and SMEs avoid 477 tonnes CO₂e in the first year after installation, with expected system lifetimes of around 25 years.

From 2020 to March 2025, over 3,600 *Solar Together Kent* installations were completed. Residents have invested around £30.48 million into 15MW of generating capacity and additional battery storage. Collectively, these Solar PV systems are estimated to help avoid over 3,450 tonnes CO₂e in their first year of operation, with expected system lifetimes of around 25 years.

Promotion of Phase 5 is underway. Registrations opened online in March 2025 and will close in the Summer. Further information can be found on the [KCC website](#).

Natural Environment and Coast

Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

In Quarter 4, the public consultation on the draft Strategy was undertaken. The 8-week consultation launched on 16 January 2025, and ran until the 12 March 2025. The consultation invited residents, stakeholders and other interested parties to provide views on the draft Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

During the consultation period, the Making Space for Nature team held over 40 drop-in sessions at various locations around the county to allow people to come and discuss the Strategy in person. These included libraries in every borough, County Hall, museums, farmers markets, country parks, nature reserves, as well as farming-sector meetings and a farming exhibition show. The team engaged with over 500 people at these drop-in sessions. There were also 11 online sector focused online briefing sessions, attended by 188 and recordings of the briefing sessions had over 170 viewings.

356 consultation responses were received and work is now focussed on analysing the feedback and using this to inform the finalisation of the Strategy. The work remains on track for publication in summer 2025.

Over the past year, well in excess of 1,000 individuals have been engaged in the development of the Strategy. There were 678 individuals participating through the 20 workshops held, representing 284 different organisations, bodies, affiliations etc.

It is also worth noting that despite a very tight timeline for delivery all milestones have been met by the target date and work is on track for publication in summer 2025 as planned.

Further information on the Strategy can be found online at www.makingspacefornature.org.uk

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Ecological Advice Service

Work continues in supporting the county's local planning authorities (LPAs) in discharging the requirements for BNG. The latest guidance for the county's LPAs and others involved in the delivery of BNG recommends criteria for defining what is considered to be "significant on-site habitat" in Kent and Medway, outlining when the relevant planning authority is likely to expect such habitats to be maintained and monitored (with monitoring reports submitted periodically to the LPA) for a period of at least 30 years. For more detail see [Defining significant on-site habitat for Kent and Medway | Making Space For Nature Kent](#).

The ecological advice service continues to provide support to all Local Planning Authorities on their development management, with advice increasingly required in respect of BNG following the extension of requirements to all sites.

In the past year the service has developed and published four guidance documents on BNG for the county, ensuring that there is a consistent and clear approach in Kent and Medway of this new planning requirement. Training has also been provided to all

planning officers and planning committee members. A monthly BNG surgery has been established for any planning officers to drop in with questions and queries. The BNG sites register has also been updated and improved.

The Ecological Advice Service is now extended to provide professional advice to all planning authorities in the county, including Medway Council. In 2024/25, ecological advice was provided on 2,397 planning applications. Within this, the service provided advice on 582 biodiversity net gain submissions.

All BNG resources can be found at [Biodiversity Net Gain for Kent and Medway | Making Space For Nature Kent](#).

Kent's Plan Bee

The past six months has seen the new Plan Bee officer establishing the newly focussed role. Extending the post from 2 days per week to full time provides increased capacity that will allow a focus on survey and monitoring to determine what impact our efforts are having and assist us in directing resources and time to where the greatest impacts will be realised. It will also allow Kent to become involved in more strategic work and extend the ambitions beyond our own estate.

Work has included:

- Visiting and advising on possible actions for six of our Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- Promoting Kent's Plan Bee at six public events, including the Kent County Show.
- Establishing survey methods and protocols and designing a monitoring plan for 2025, with the intention of surveying key KCC sites to determine whether interventions are having an impact and to identify other measures that may be required. Other sites outside the KCC estate will also be included in the survey work
- A practice-run of rapid method for surveying grassland wildflowers at Trosley ahead of full surveying program for all Country Parks (and other relevant sites) in 2025.
- Improving reporting accuracy of KCC areas contributing to No Mow May/biodiversity enhancement.
- Gathering KCC pesticide usage data ahead of developing annual reporting system.
- Publication of three documents, intended to support the work that Plan Bee is undertaking in terms of encouraging others to design their own actions for pollinators, whether that be district action plans, interventions at the community level to help pollinators or contributing to survey efforts These were:
 - Pollinators of Kent County Council
 - Kent's Plan Bee blueprint for lower tier authorities
 - Community pollinator toolkit

Prior to the new officer's start, the team's Graduate Biodiversity Officers also ran another successful No Mow May campaign for the county in 2024, which saw 324 pledges from residents and organisations, a 19% increase from 2023. These pledges cover a total area of 141,841 m² of land, including approximately 300 hectares of wildflower-rich grassland not mown by KCC, including contributions from country parks, highways, and estate-owned sites. The Graduates have also maintained Plan Bee's social media outreach, with just short of 2,000 followers now on Facebook. Statistics show that in the past year there has been higher engagement, improved interest in

content, more frequent engagement and a positive trend in follower growth. They have also produced the quarterly newsletter, received by over 2180 people.

Kent Plan Tree

March sees the end of the 2024/25 planting season, so this is an appropriate time to reflect on achievements in this past year:

Plan Tree Activities:

- **Fruit Tree Planting:** Since April 2024, Plan Tree have planted 119 fruit trees from the National Fruit Collection. Locations included two primary schools, two SEND learning centres, and a community kitchen garden.
- **Elm Heritage Kent Group:** Hosted the second meeting to develop planting strategies with representatives 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.
- **Spearheaded efforts to support colonies of the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly** across ten farms in the East Kent Downs. Notably, new sightings of the Large Tortoiseshell butterfly were reported, indicating a comeback in areas with surviving elm trees.
- **Micropropagation Trials:** Services agreement with NIAB Cambridge to conduct initial trials into micropropagation using protocols provided by Trevor Fenning at Forest Research, tailored to a Dutch elm disease-resistant clone from Kent.
- **Established a new working group to coordinate efforts and monitor deer density and movement patterns across Kent.**
- **Formed a new working group to repeat the Canopy Cover Assessment,** last completed in 2019/20, to monitor progress. Kent Plan Tree aims to extend tree cover by 1.5 million new trees and increase the county's average canopy cover to 19%.
- **Working on development of National Lottery Heritage Fund project bid.**

Funding success:

Successfully doubled our annual bid to £300k for the planting season ending March 2025, securing funding for:

- 230 Standards
- 400 Dutch-elm disease resistant Feathers (young trees)
- 13,000 Whips (very young trees)
- Three years of maintenance and other capital items.

Through four rounds of funding, KCC has successfully secured a total of £1 million from the Local Authority Treescape Fund (LATF).

Community Engagement and Planting Efforts:

- **National Tree Week:** By November 2024, Plan Tree had made significant progress with 162 adult volunteers and 205 school children planting 10,980 trees across 14 sites funded by LATF round 3.
- **Delivered educational programmes in schools and community centres to raise awareness about the importance of tree planting and conservation.**
- **Worked with Gravesham Borough Council, Medway Council, Thanet District Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Dartford District Council, Canterbury City Council, and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to plant an additional 13,500 trees in the new year for LATF round 4.**
- **Community Tree Nurseries:** Works at Medway Council's Cozenton Nursery are finally underway. Plan Tree helped their greenspace team win £75k through the Tree Production Capital Grant for a tree nursery and community allotments.

Achievements to date:

- Tree Planting Success: Successfully planted and claimed all trees promised through LATF rounds 3 (10,755) and 4 (13,630). Members and Local Councillors funded, networked, supported, attended and volunteered at numerous planting events.
- Across all departments, KCC enabled 149,945 tree plantings this year.
- The Social Value Exchange initiative saw 100,000 trees planted by Countrystyle Recycling Ltd at Pleasant Farm to meet procurement commitments in their contract with KCC.
- The Countryside Management Partnerships played a crucial role in delivering volunteer planting days.

The cumulative total is now 376,113 trees since 2019/20, planting at a rate of over 60,000 trees a year. Together, we are on track to achieve Kent's goal of extending tree cover by 1.5 million new trees!

Challenges:

DEFRA announced in January 2025 that the two-year Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF) would conclude on 31 March 2025. And the Forestry Commission announced in March 2025 that the LATF and Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) would not re-open for new applications.

We have been reliant on these grants to support our Plan Tree work and this poses a risk to future work and the Plan Tree ambitions. However, we understand that DEFRA is working to find new ways to support trees outside woodlands for the 2025/26 planting season.

Kent Country Parks

We had a busy winter managing our SSSI woodland and grasslands. Coppicing was carried out at both Shorne Woods and Lullingstone, with the reintroduction of a ride network through the woodland at Trosley. Shorne Woods also saw the last year of major tree planting for the biodiversity enhancement project aiming to link habitats through the woodland with almost 20,000 trees planted over the past three years. Our conservation grazing programmes go from strength to strength, with herds of goats helping to reduce scrub on the incredibly rare chalk grassland of both Trosley and Preston Hill and with cattle grazing due at Shorne Woods, Teston Bridge, Manor Park and Preston Hill over the spring and summer. At Brockhill we teamed up with The Woodland Trust and the local Rotary Club to plant trees around the lake. The North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve is ready for launch as a King's Series National Nature Reserve on the 30th May at Shorne Woods Country Park. Keeping Country Parks accessible has been a key theme this year with achievements in 2024/25 including -

- 9,788 people attending events
- 219 volunteers helping out across the parks with conservation and countryside care
- 2,600 junior park runners
- 19,000 adult runners in our park runs
- 1.24 million visits

We continue to improve our offer to disabled visitors, evidenced by mobility specialists Clinique Mobility being *"incredibly impressed"* by the efforts at Shorne Woods Country Park. praising our *"dedication to making the park accessible for those with mobility and sensory needs"* and calling it a *"welcoming and inclusive experience for all visitors."*

Countryside Management Partnerships (CMPs)

Kent CMPs have planted over 15,000 trees in partnership with Kent Plan Tree and other groups and organisations. Kent CMPs have delivered 41 ponds for the Natural England District Level Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts in 2024/25. Examples of projects delivered across Kent include two training courses in the Canterbury District for groups managing open spaces, on habitat management and meadow creation and management. Three Grey to Green projects in schools aiming to make grey areas in school grounds greener and wildlife friendly. Completion of the Layered Landscapes and All The Small Things, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) funded projects. Six volunteering task days a week across Kent & Bexley plus multiple health & wellbeing projects connecting people with nature such as the Forest Time intervention programme working with disadvantaged families. Management Site Plans written for several sites across Gravesham, contributing towards the new North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve. Habitat improvement works delivered across 12 districts, examples are : Ruxley Gravel Pits scrub and reed removal, White Hill scrub removal working in collaboration with Butterfly Conservation and Kent Down National Landscape, reduction of invasive laurel and rhododendron from ancient woodlands in the High Weald. Six Trainee placements were offered and filled in 24/25 (5 in CMPs and 1 in Parks).

Explore Kent

Explore Kent's digital channels which promote the great outdoors, continued to see strong engagement. At the end of Quarter 4, Explore Kent had over 7k followers on Instagram, over 11.3k followers on Facebook, 231 followers on LinkedIn, 551 followers on TikTok and 22.2k followers on X. Our website explorekent.org had over 67.5k clicks and 3,542 route guide downloads. The new Facebook and Instagram channels for the Southeast Coast Path have continued to see growth with 1,090 followers on Facebook and 332 followers on Instagram.

In January, 43 partners attended the quarterly Green Social Prescribing (GSP) Network with guest speakers from Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust. During Quarter 4 we have also developed a new logo for the network designed to promote GSP opportunities within Kent & Medway.

In partnership with KCC's Public Rights of Way team, Explore Kent have created a new [step-by-step video guide](#) for how the public can report problems with a right of way using their online reporting tool.

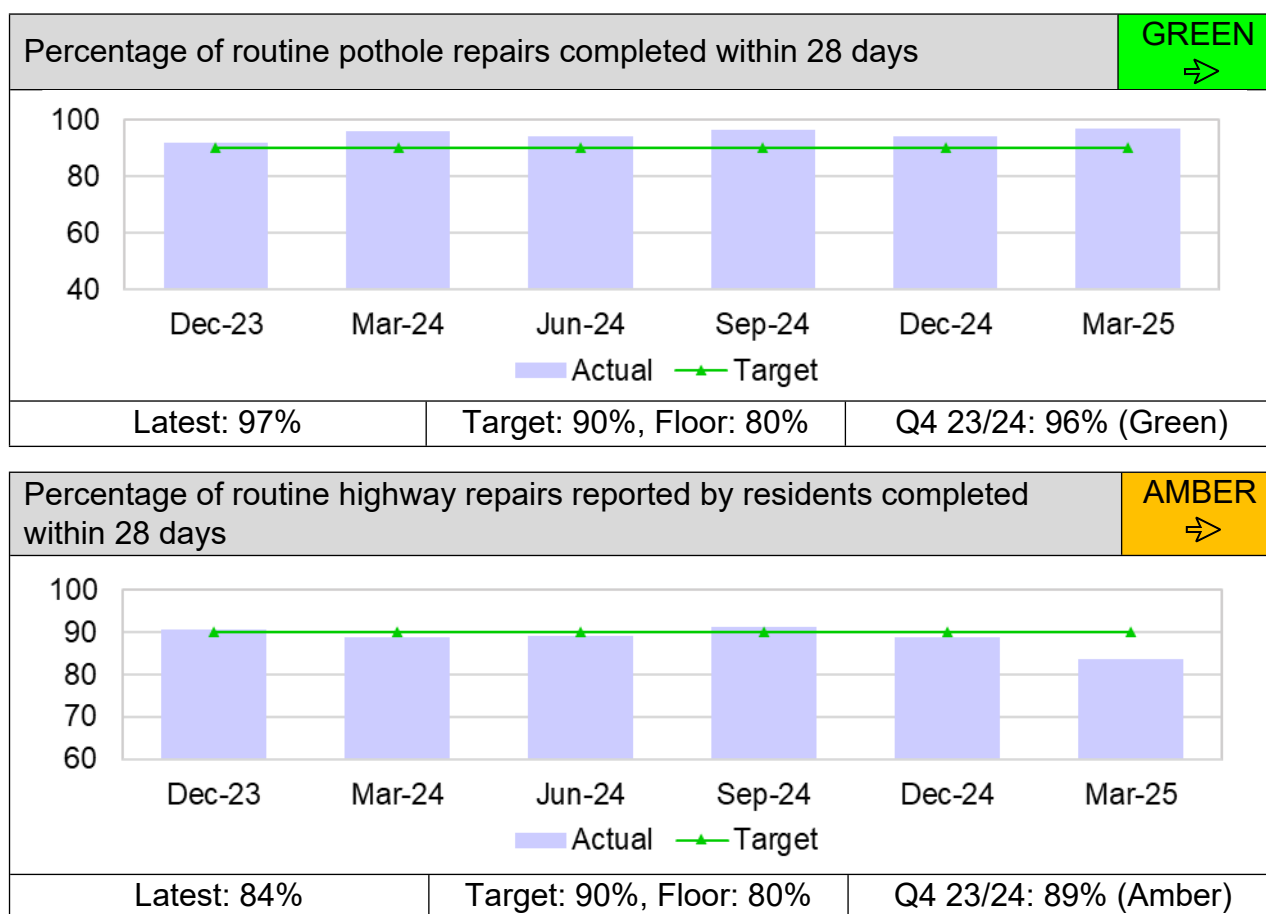
Quarter 4 has seen two new active travel maps developed – Medway and Dartford. Explore Kent have also developed some [case studies](#) showcasing how Kent residents have incorporated active travel within their daily lives.

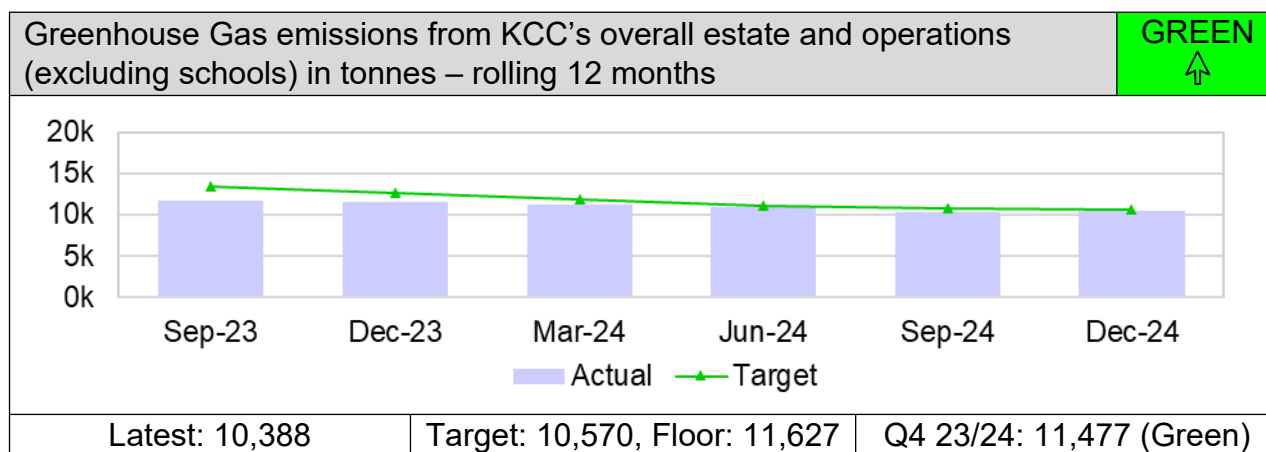
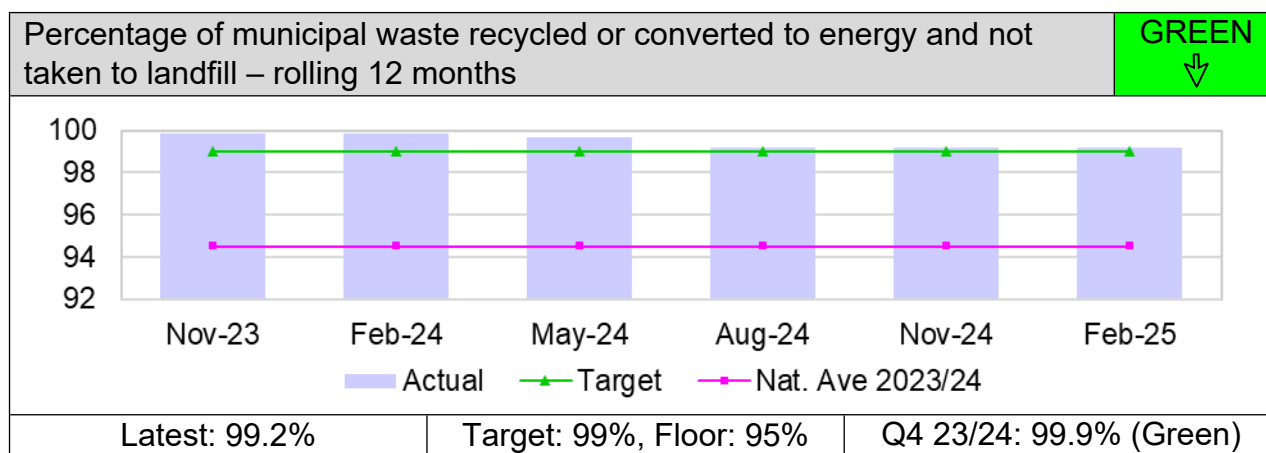
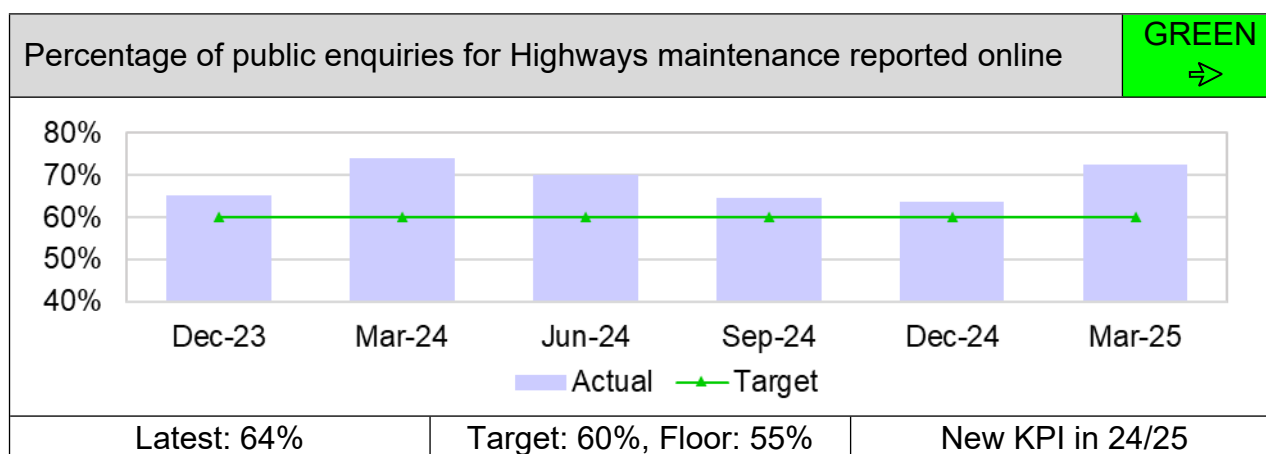
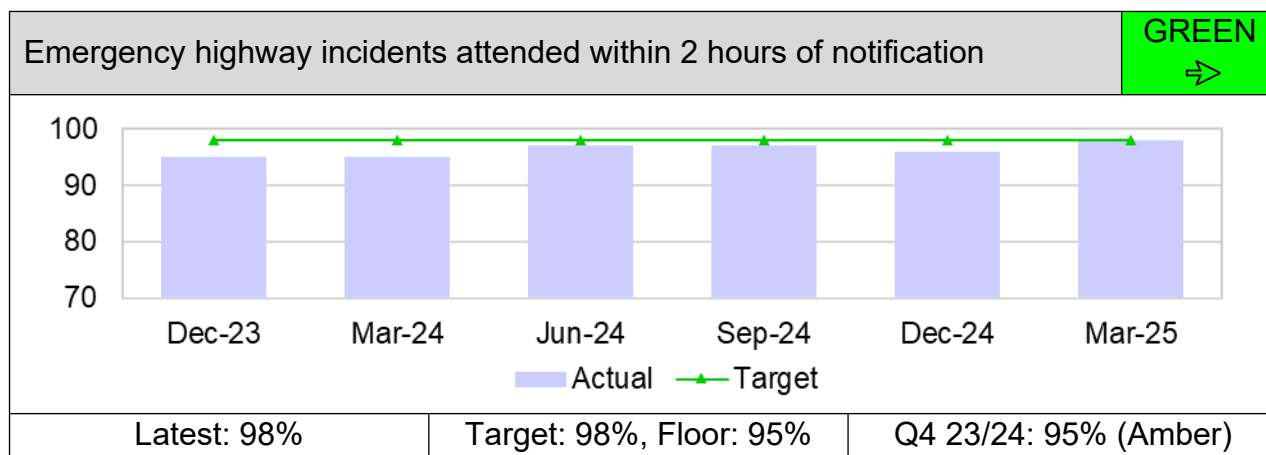
During Quarter 4, we designed two interpretation boards for Gravesend and Northfleet station detailing the walking route to the new King Charles III England Coast Path coastal path. This was financed through a successful bid to the Southeastern Customer and Community Improvement Fund. Explore Kent have also been working with Valley Invicta Primary School in Kings Hill to design a map for children with autism.

Our Farming in Protected Landscapes funded project with Kent Community Rail Partnership completed in March. The project aimed to promote access to the North Downs Way (NDW) National Trail, encouraging people to travel by rail. We had four interpretation boards installed at Charing, Lenham, Hollingbourne and Harrietsham which showcases the route from the station to the trail and how people can complete a linear walk and return by rail. We also ran a campaign with KM Media, with radio ads on kmfm Maidstone and Ashford, and printed ads in The Kent Messenger and The Kentish Express. The project ended with a guided walk which attracted 31 walkers. We conducted a survey and results showed:

- 33% had never been to the NDW before
- 90% said they would return to the NDW by rail
- 73% stated the walk had a 'very positive' effect on their mental wellbeing, with 23% saying it had a 'positive' effect.

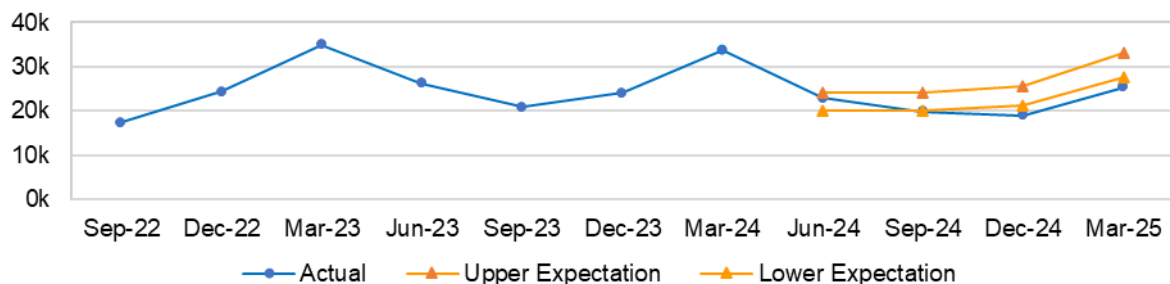
Key Performance Indicators



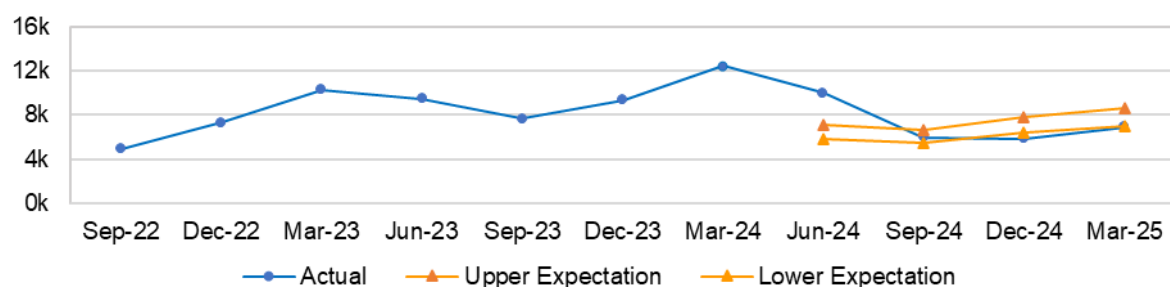


Activity indicators

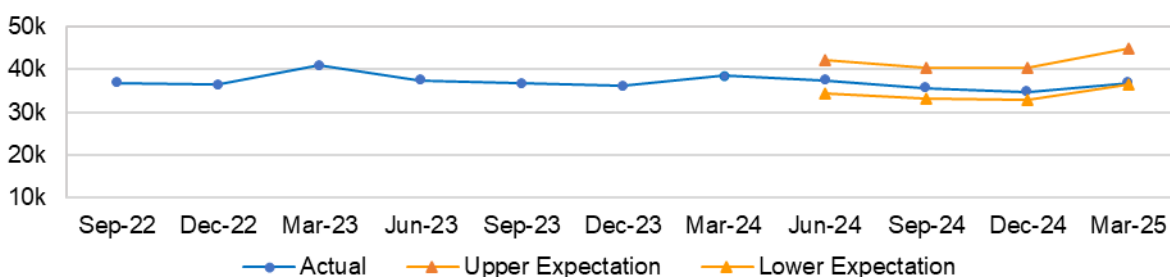
Number of Highways enquiries raised for action – by Quarter



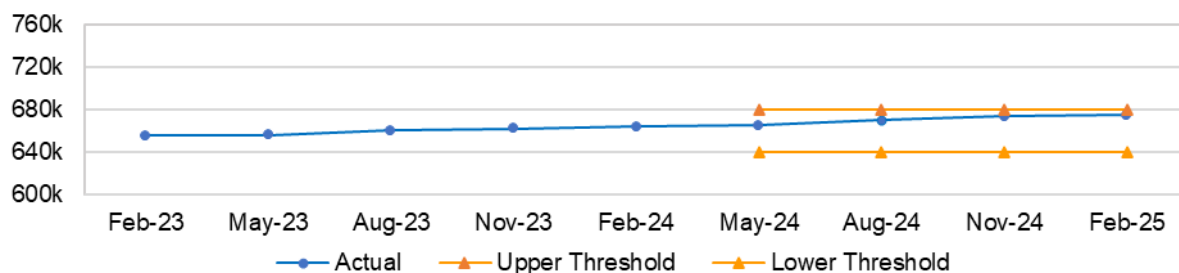
Highways Work in Progress (active enquires/jobs)



Number of street work permit applications and change requests submitted



Total municipal waste tonnage collected – rolling 12 months



Children, Young People and Education (*Education and Skills*)

Cabinet Members	Beverley Fordham (from Quarter 1, 2025/26)
Corporate Director	Sarah Hammond

KPI	GREEN	AMBER	RED	↑	⇒	↓
Summary	2	1	2	3	2	

Schools

From 1st September 2024, Ofsted inspections of state-funded schools no longer included a judgement on overall effectiveness, and outcomes of ungraded inspections no longer refer to the previous good or outstanding grade. Reports now include four grades across the existing sub-categories: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership & management. The outcome of an Ofsted consultation on changes to its inspection model will be published in the summer. Ofsted intends for these changes to come into effect in November 2025 and will pause inspections in the autumn term until then. Report cards will replace the current judgement areas and grades and will be based on a 5-point scale for different evaluation areas with a short summary of the inspectors' findings.

Key issues from recent inspections include governance, curriculum adaptation and outcomes over time. The Education People (TEP) briefings continue to provide regular updates and advice to school leaders in these areas, whilst signposting support and guidance. Specific training is available to schools in line with current key issues.

On primary offer day more than 90% of Kent pupils have been offered their first-preference school, and 98% have been offered one of their three preferred schools for September 2025. For Year 7 places at secondary schools this autumn, 79% were offered their first preference, and 95% received an offer from one of their three preferred schools.

Early Years

The overall effectiveness outcome grade for Early Years Providers Ofsted inspections remains. In Kent, 97% (524 out of 539) childcare settings on non-domestic premises are graded good or better which is one percentage point below national. During January, February and March, for early years group settings, The Education People (TEP) continued to support all settings through Annual Conversations, prioritising those due an Ofsted inspection, making clear recommendations where appropriate and offering the 'Securing Good' programme to those in their inspection and not meeting at least Good Ofsted grade descriptors. Settings with Requires Improvement or Inadequate judgements received targeted and bespoke support, with support for plans of action and follow up visits as required. New settings were also offered support in readiness for their first inspection.

The Early Years and Childcare Service, working in partnership with KCC Management Information (MI) and Finance, continue to implement the Government's New Free Entitlements and Wraparound Provision initiatives. In the Spring term, 13,636 codes had been issued to working parents of children aged between 9 months to two-years, of which, 12,638 have been validated by KCC, meaning a validation rate of 93% which is similar to the national figure.

In the 2025 Spring term, the take up of Free for Two claims against those potentially eligible on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) list decreased to 60.0% with 2,447 children being funded compared to 72.6% last spring. To assist future planning, parents who are eligible but do not take up a place continue to be contacted and asked why.

The Early Years and Childcare Service moved apace with the implementation of the KCC Early Years Review, Area Three: *Implement the Revised Model of Universal Support*, and Area Four: *Develop Ordinarily Available Provision*. Plans for these were firmly in place by the end of March in readiness for implementation in April.

Continuing, established and regular communications and interactions with the Early Years and Childcare Sector also took place, including:

- Quarterly meetings with the Provider Association
- Scheduled termly (six times annually) generic Early Years and Childcare Bulletin, with communications in-between these being sent when appropriate and necessary with ongoing contact with individual providers as required
- Three times a year, county-wide round of briefing and networking sessions

The Early Years and Childcare Service's Threads of Success training offer continues to be delivered principally on virtual platforms, as recruitment and retention challenges continue to make it very difficult for providers to attend face-to-face training, even when this is funded and therefore free for providers to attend.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Based on the rolling 12-month average to March 2025, 48% of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) were issued within 20 weeks excluding exceptions (967 out of 2,007). As recent performance continues to improve, the rolling 12-month average will also improve but with a lag. In the single month of March, 82% of plans (107 out of 131) were issued within timescale, which exceeded the target.

The percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting over 12 months remains at 35%, fifteen percentage points better than the target of 50%.

The percentage of pupils with EHCPs being placed in independent or out of county special schools, at 10.9%, remains higher than the target of 9.0% and did not achieve the floor standard.

The Secondary Phase Transfer completion rates by the statutory deadline improved to 97.5% this year, compared to 93% in 2024 and circa 50% the year before.

Assessment teams have continued to reduce over-timescale requests, with no case currently over 25 weeks old and only 5 cases over 22 weeks, at time of reporting. This indicates that high assessment completion results should continue, supporting improved annual rolling averages.

Kent continues to feel the effect of the delayed provision of two new special schools, leading to a continued over-reliance on independent specialist provision to compensate. Both schools were anticipated to open in September 2025 but have been delayed until September 2027 as a result of DfE decision making. Improved placement decisions are seeking to ensure efficient use of this resource. For example, analysis of Phase Transfer activity for the 2025 intake has identified that KCC made 41 fewer specialist placement decisions than forecast. This was a result of 69 **more** independent placements, and 110 **fewer** maintained special placements than expected. This indicates that overall decision making around specialist placements is reaching more settled levels, but officers are still unable to place a sufficient number of these children in maintained settings, as a result of insufficient capacity.

Wider Early Help

Ninety-seven pupils were permanently excluded during the rolling 12-month period to 31st March 2025, which equates to 0.04% of the school population. This is below the latest published (2022/23) national average of 0.11%. Thirty were issued to 'primary' phase pupils and 67 to 'secondary' phase pupils. Tonbridge and Malling, Dartford and Maidstone were the districts with the highest level of permanent exclusions.

The total of 97 permanent exclusions continues a downward trend since June 2024, when 105 pupils were permanently excluded. This decline is largely attributed to a notable reduction in 'secondary' phase permanent exclusions, which fell from 81 (12-months to June 2024) to 67 (12 months to March 2025). In contrast, the number of primary phase permanent exclusions has increased during the same period (24 pupils for the 12-months to June 2024 compared to 30 for the 12 months to March 2025).

Kent PRU and Attendance Service (KPAS) continues its work regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions. Common themes are identified, and additional processes developed to support schools to ensure all interventions are exhausted and exclusion remains a last resort as detailed in the DfE guidance on suspensions and exclusions issued in August 2024. Link Education Improvement Advisors (EIAs) support schools and regular training is provided to senior leaders, governing boards and academy trustees across the county's schools to ensure all cases of permanent exclusion are thoroughly scrutinised, as well as promoting the use of timely data to address cases where suspensions are occurring on a regular basis. KPAS also supports the work of CATIE (Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education) and continues to implement the new DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' which became statutory in August 2024.

The work of KPAS continues to be a key feature throughout the local authority, as such 'Inclusion for Success' was the topic of the recent Spring Headteachers Briefings with presentations on inclusion practises and resources for schools on Relational Approaches by Virtual School Kent (VSK) and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) Toolkit by The Education People (TEP). In addition, good practice case studies were presented by representatives from primary, secondary & special schools & Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and the PINS project (Partnership for inclusion of neurodiversity in schools).

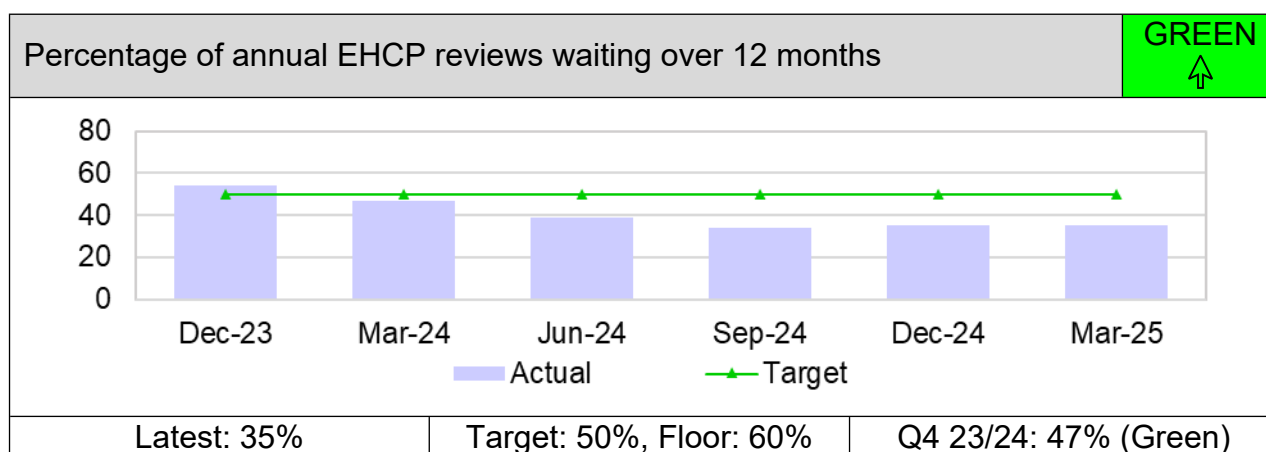
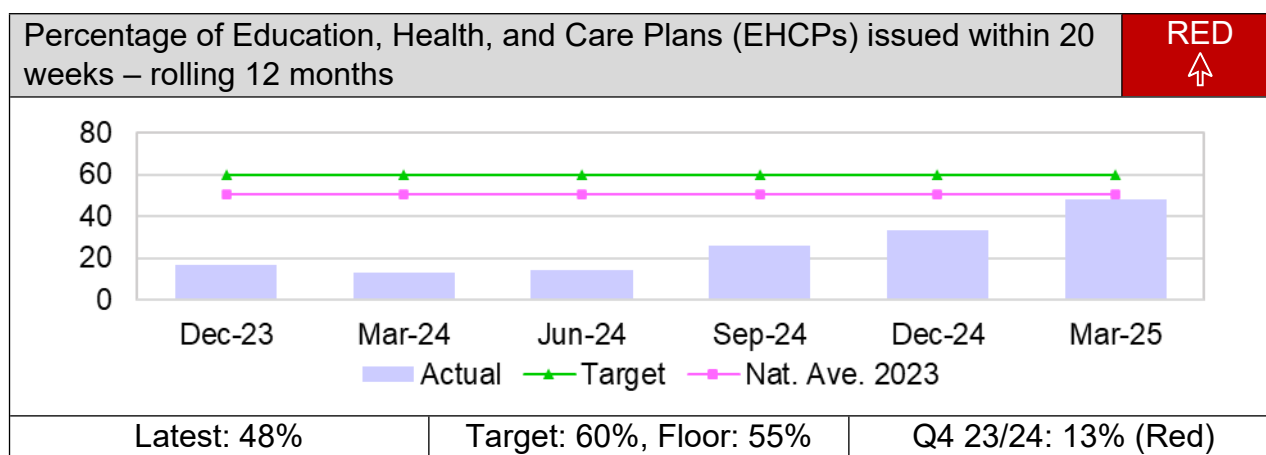
School attendance will be the theme for the Integrated Children's Service conference in June and was an agenda item at a recent Directorate Management Team (DMT) meeting. KPAS are currently fully involved in the Action Learning Sets being run by the DfE, focused on improving attendance, and have presented in DfE good practice webinars.

The First-Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System per 100,000 in March 2025 was 176 (rolling 12-month figure) which equates to 286 young people. This remains the lowest level reported since March 2023.

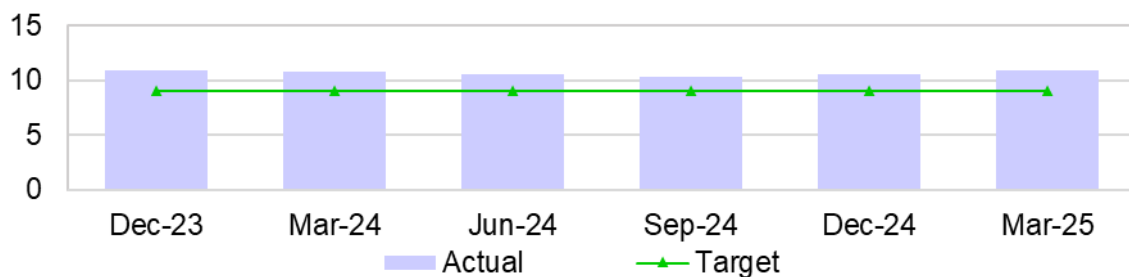
Kent Youth Justice and Adolescent Early Help continue to embed and develop, with Kent Police, a range of effective and appropriate interventions and outcomes for children who can be dealt with by an out of court process. The current trend of low First Time Entrants (FTEs) reflects the high confidence of the Police in those approaches.

It is too early to predict what impact on First Time Entrants the updated national child gravity matrix (a system for scoring offences) will have on First Time Entrants. We continue, within the partnership, to adapt and respond to national change to ensure our practice remains effective and proportionate to reduce children's entry into the justice system, and to prevent their offending and reoffending.

Key Performance Indicators



Percentage of pupils (with EHCP's) being placed in independent or out of county special schools

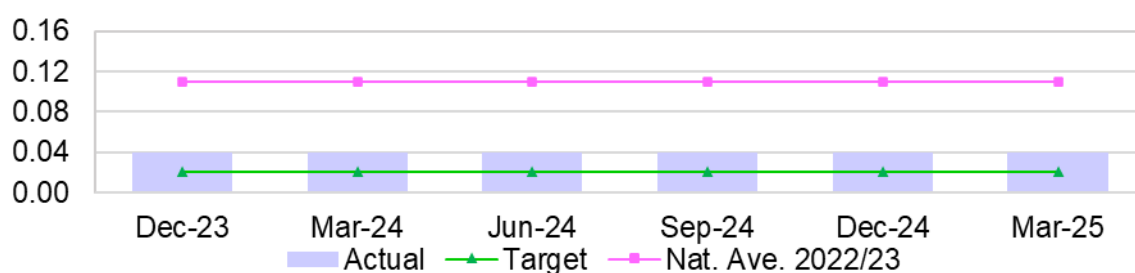
RED

Latest: 10.9%

Target: 9.0%, Floor: 10.5%

Q4 23/24: 10.8% (Red)

Percentage of pupils permanently excluded from school – rolling 12 months

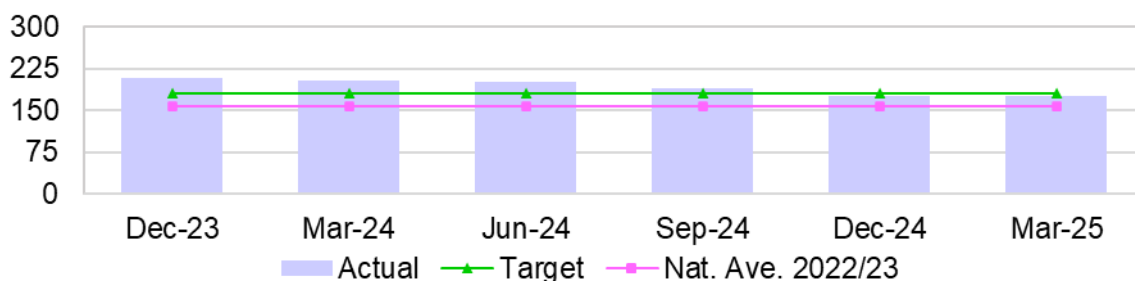
AMBER

Latest: 0.04%

Target: 0.02%, Floor: 0.04%

Q4 23/24: 0.04% (Amber)

Rate of first-time entrants to youth justice system per 100,000 (aged 10-17) – rolling 12 months

GREEN

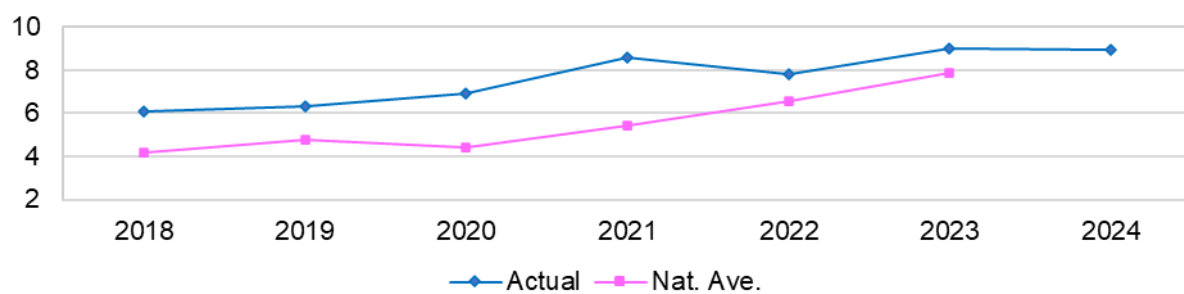
Latest: 176

Target: 180 Floor: 240

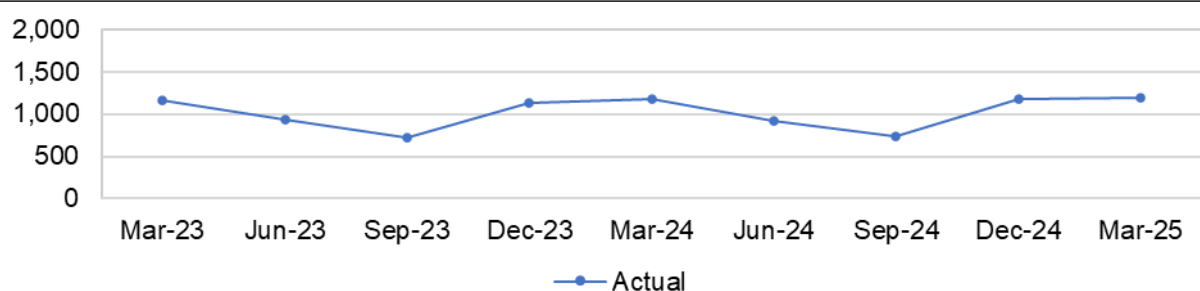
New KPI in 24/25

Activity indicators

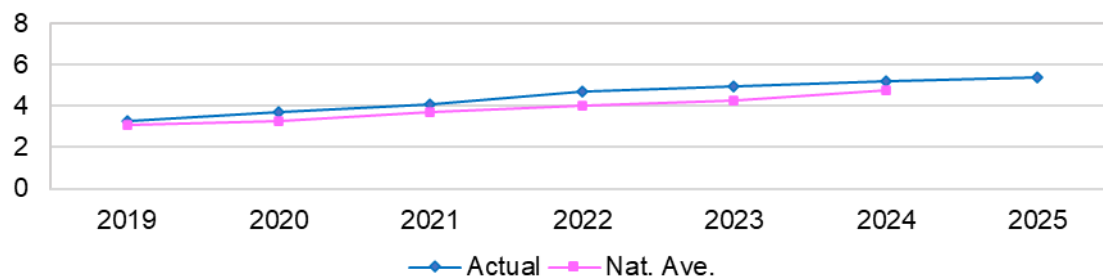
Number of initial requests for statutory assessment (for an EHC plan) per 1,000 aged 0-25



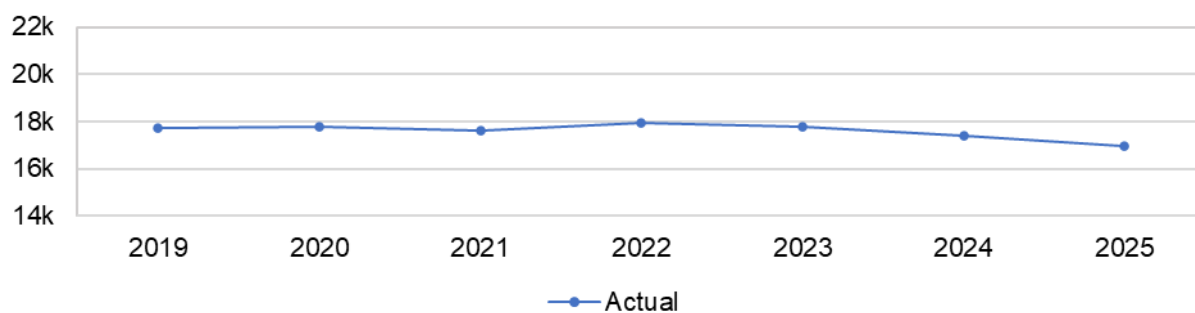
Number of initial requests for statutory assessment for an EHC plan (Quarterly)



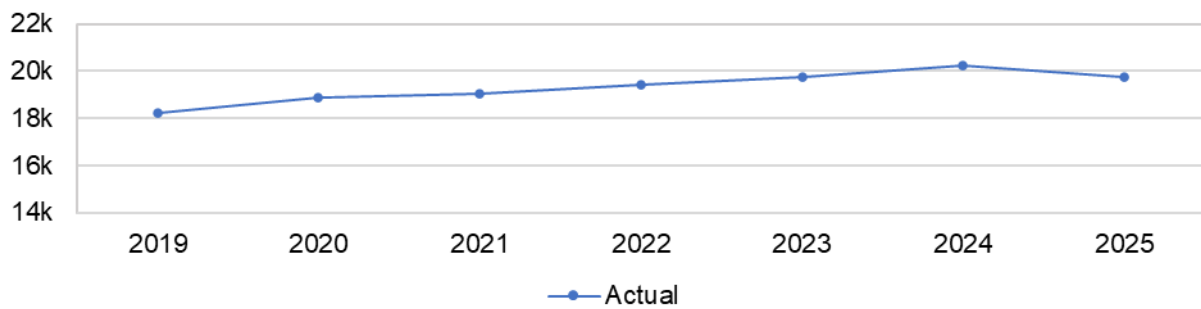
Percentage of pupils with an EHCP



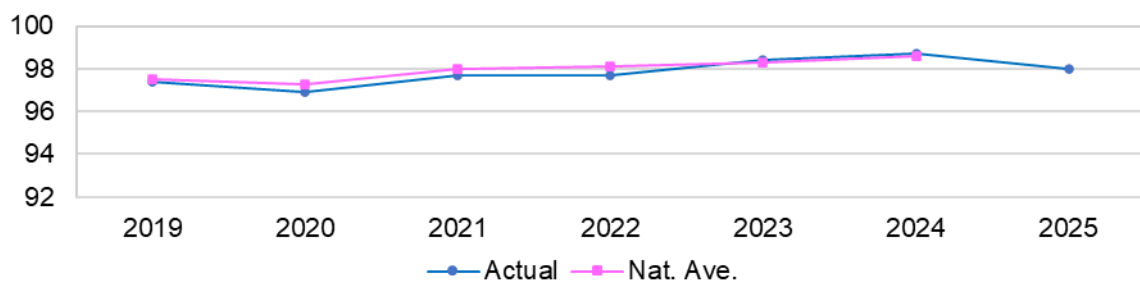
Number of pupils in Reception year (Kent state funded schools)



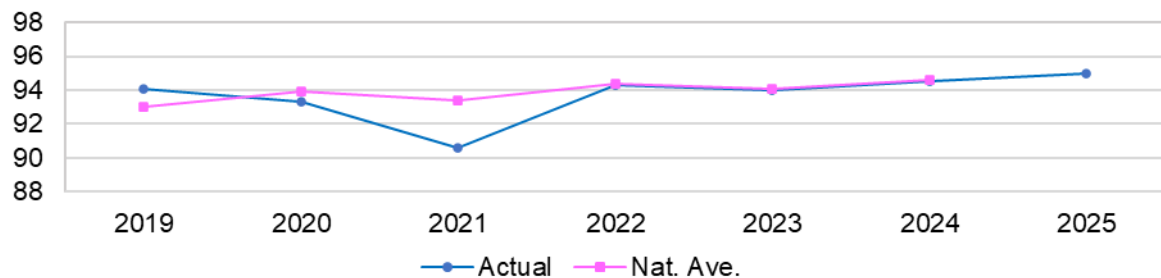
Number of pupils in Year 7 (Kent state funded schools)



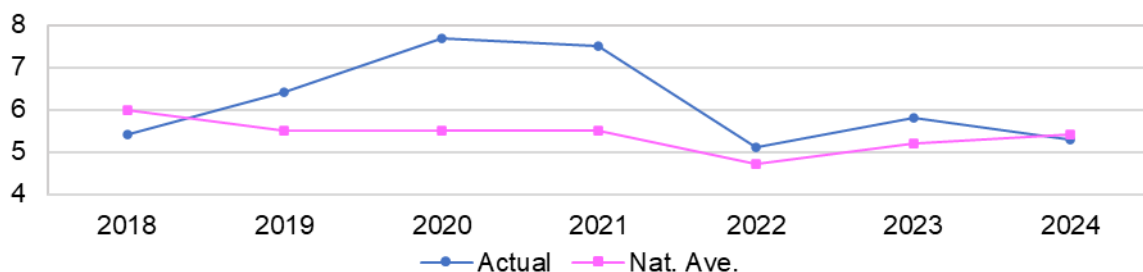
Percentage of Primary school applicants offered one of top three preferences



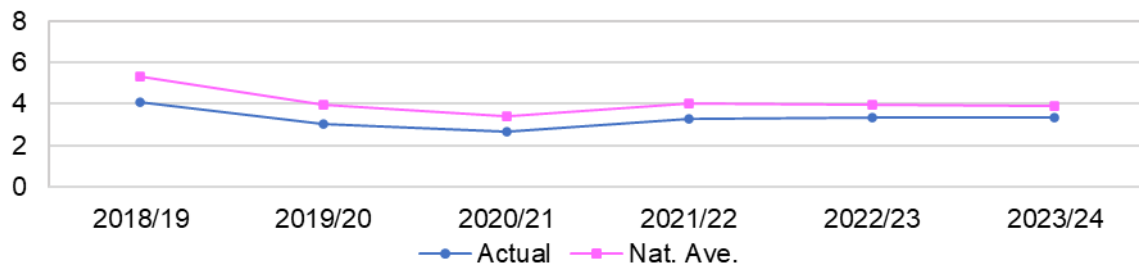
Percentage of Secondary school applicants offered one of top three preferences



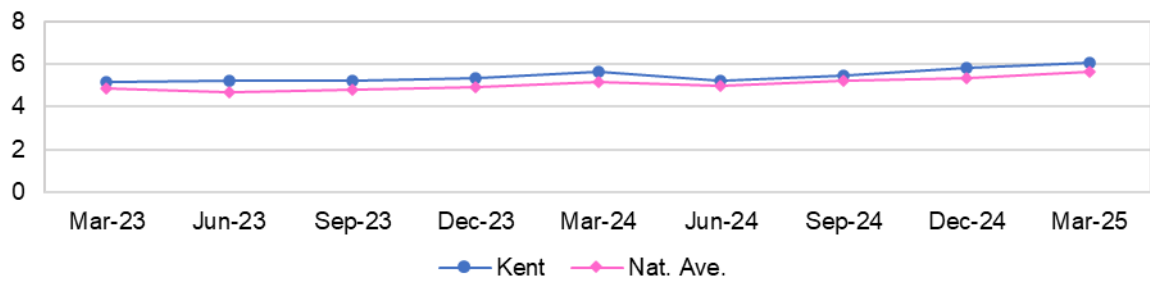
Percentage of 16-17 years olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) or whose activity is Not Known



Percentage of 16-18 year olds who start an apprenticeship



Percentage of 18-24 year olds claiming Universal Credit



Children, Young People and Education (*Integrated Children's Services*)

Cabinet Members	Christine Palmer (from Quarter 1, 2025/26)
Corporate Director	Sarah Hammond

KPI	GREEN	AMBER	RED	↑	⇒	↓
Summary	3	2	3	1	5	2

Early Help

At the end of March 2025, there were 2,175 family cases open to Early Help units, providing support for 4,411 children and young people under the age of 18. This is a 5.5% decrease in the number of families supported when compared to the end of the previous Quarter (2,301), and 19.3% fewer families than Quarter 4 last year (2,695).

The performance measure for 'Percentage of Early Help cases closed with outcomes achieved returning to Early Help or Children's Social Work teams within 3 months was 14.9%, a slight reduction from the previous Quarter (15.0%) and achieving the target of being 15.0% or lower.

Children's Social Care - Staffing and Caseloads

On 31st March 2025, the number of open cases (including those for care leavers above the age of 18) was 11,371, an increase of 172 children and young people when compared to the end of the previous Quarter (11,199).

There were 5,929 referrals to children's social care services in the Quarter, an 8.8% reduction when compared to the previous Quarter (6,499) and 4.3% lower than Quarter 4 last year (6,193). The rate of re-referrals within 12 months for the 12 months to March 2025 was 21.9%, compared to 22.2% the previous Quarter, continuing to achieve the target of 25.0% or lower. This compares to the England average of 22.4% for 2023/24.

The percentage of case-holding social worker posts held by permanent qualified social workers employed by Kent County Council is 74.5%, which has reduced from 75.2% in December 2024 and is below the floor standard of 75.0%. Data over several years demonstrates that there is a pattern of experiencing a reduction of Social Workers at certain points during the year aligned with the cycle of recruitment. The Approach Social Work programme (previously called Frontline) has expanded and by September 2025, up to twenty Social Workers will have completed their training and joined the workforce. Frontline have advised that KCC may acquire a fifth pod of 5 trainees from September 2025 which will generate up to twenty-five Social Workers in September 2026. Nineteen Social Work Step-Up Students completed their training in March 2025 and will join the workforce over the summer of 2025. Additionally, 39 newly qualified Social Workers have been offered places from September 2025.

Child Protection

On 31st March 2025, there were 1,151 children subject to a child protection plan, an increase of 47 children from the end of the previous Quarter (1,104). The rate per 10,000 children (aged 0-17) was 33.0, which remains below the last published rate for England of 41.6 (31st March 2024).

Children in Care

The number of non-UASC children in care increased by 33 in the Quarter to 1,443.

The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in care decreased by 86 to 458, with some of these young people awaiting transfer to another local authority under the National Transfer Scheme. The number of children in care placed in Kent by other local authorities (OLA) decreased by 29 children over the Quarter to 1,202.

Status	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25
Non-UASC	1458	1438	1430	1410	1443
UASC	492	434	476	544	458
Total	1950	1872	1906	1954	1901
Gender					
Male	1276	1220	1248	1291	1218
Female	671	648	655	659	678
Non-binary	3	4	3	4	5
Age Group					
0 to 4	238	238	244	246	271
5 to 9	232	227	230	220	226
10 to 15	659	632	617	627	616
16 to 17	821	775	815	861	788
Ethnicity					
White	1334	1310	1305	1268	1272
Mixed	107	107	113	108	120
Asian	29	28	26	30	36
Black	117	118	105	139	149
Other	363	309	357	409	324

The percentage of Children in Care (excluding UASC) placed in KCC in-house foster care or with family/friends has remained below the floor standard of 75.0%.

Performance for this measure was 73.0% for the 12 months to March 2025, compared to 73.2% at the end of the previous quarter. Performance against this measure is impacted by the availability of in-house foster placements which is a national issue.

Since the legal judgement of July 2023, KCC has had between 35-40 in-house fostering beds available for unaccompanied children under the age of 16 years being cared for whilst awaiting transfer on the National Transfer Scheme. The number of in-house fostering beds required was reviewed following the opening of the KCC Children's homes and supported accommodation. In December 2024, 12 in-house fostering beds were released from the UASC scheme and are now available for other children. Given this change in availability there should be a gradual improvement in this performance measure going forward. The number of foster beds available for the UASC scheme is reviewed on a monthly basis with consideration given to usage and predicted demand.

Kent Fostering is part of a cluster of Local Authorities who received DfE funding to support a national approach to the recruitment and retention of Local Authority Foster Carers. A recruitment hub, Fostering Southeast, launched on 8th July 2024, followed by national recruitment activity, encouraging people to foster for their Local Authority. Additional DfE funding was secured to develop the Mockingbird Scheme - part of a support package to retain our existing foster carers. The scheme launched in October 2024 with the first two Mockingbird 'constellations' now live for South Kent and East Kent, which sees hub foster carers supporting other foster carers.

The ambition is to have four Mockingbird hub foster care constellations, one in each area of Kent, and the recruitment for a North Kent and West Kent foster carer hub is taking place. DfE funding for both the Recruitment Hub and Mockingbird has been awarded for a further 12-month period to cover 2025/26.

An additional performance measure regarding the number of fostering households was added to this report to reflect the priority of recruiting and retaining foster carers. As of 31st March 2025, there were 595 approved fostering households, 84 of whom are approved Kinship Foster Carers. Actions taken to increase the number of fostering households include increased information events and recruitment stands at large community events, specific campaigns using social media and use of the “refer a friend” payment to encourage existing foster carers to support recruitment of family and friends to join Kent Fostering. Part of the recruitment strategy will be to look to our existing KCC staff group, to promote becoming a foster carer and completing the initial work on whether KCC can become a “Fostering Friendly” employer. Legal advice will inform the development of a policy prior to presenting to the Corporate Director for a decision on implementation. The service is at the initial stages of developing a “Create a Room” project, to support existing approved foster carers to create an additional bedroom for fostering, through supporting either dividing an existing room, converting a garage, having a small extension or loft conversion.

From 1st April 2024, Kinship assessment and support services were centralised, with both functions moving into the fostering service to improve the offer to all types of kinship carers including Special Guardians and Kinship (Connected Person) Foster Carers. The aim of the service is to increase the numbers of children safely placed with family and friends within their community network and reduce those needing a mainstream foster placement.

Care Leavers

The number of care leavers at the end of March 2025 was 2,015, a decrease of 20 from the previous Quarter. Of the 2,015 care leavers, 1,066 (52.9%) were non-UASC care leavers and 949 (47.1%) were UASC. The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training, at 56.3% remained below the target of 65.0% but has improved since the previous quarter (53.6%). A number of our unaccompanied young people remain without status, having entered the country after 23rd July 2023 and impacted by the Immigration Bill (2023). This cohort of unaccompanied care leavers, with no status, are not able to remain in education or gain employment when they reach the age of 18, impacting upon the overall numbers in education, training and employment. The Home Office confirmed unaccompanied children who entered the country during this period will have their applications prioritised, which should then lead to an improvement against the target.

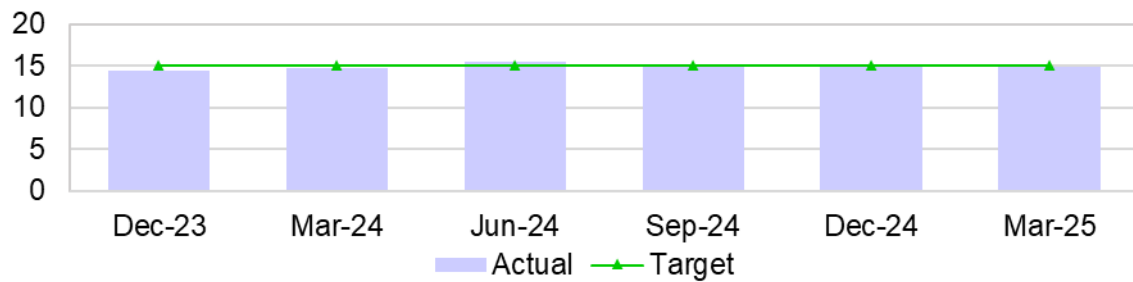
Strengthening Independence Service

Two additional measures were added to this report for 2024/25 to cover the Strengthening Independence Service within CYPE and their support for 18–25-year-olds with a disability. For the 12 months to March 2025, the percentage of reviews completed within timescale was 60.1%, an increase from the performance at the end of Quarter 3 (59.1%) but still below the Target of 65.0%. The percentage of young people with a learning disability in Settled Accommodation is 98.0%, exceeding the 95.0% target. The 18-25 service moved from the Children, Young People and Education Directorate to the Adult Social Care and Health Directorate on 1st April 2025 so future reporting on this area will be included within this section of the QPR.

Key Performance Indicators

Percentage of Early Help cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to Early Help or Children's Social Work teams within 3 months

GREEN
⇒



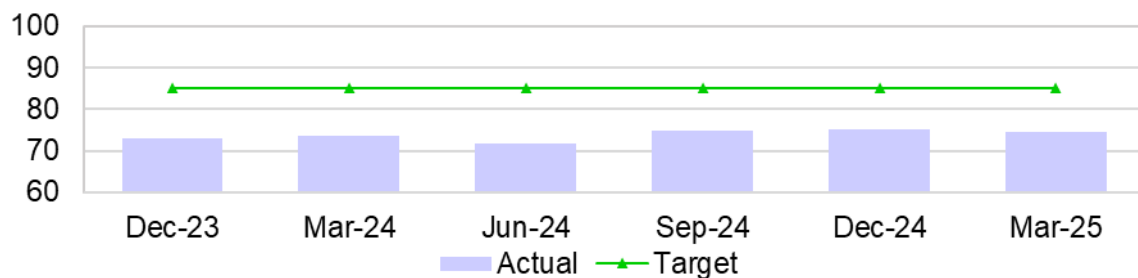
Latest: 14.9%

Target: 15%, Floor: 20%

Q4 23/24: 14.8% (Green)

Percentage of case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers

RED
⇒



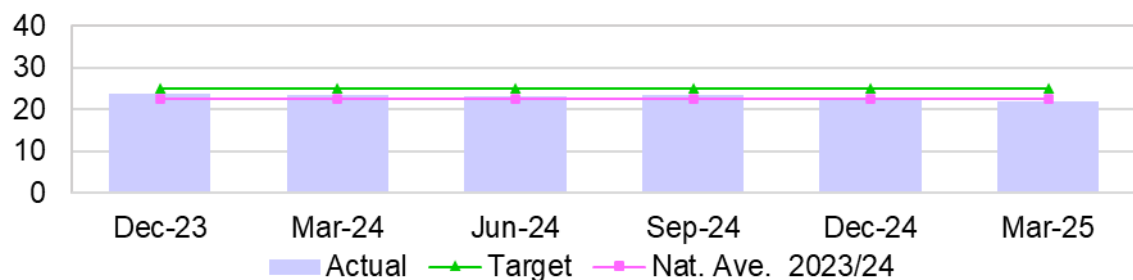
Latest: 74.5%

Target: 85%, Floor 75%

Q4 23/24: 73.6% (Red)

Percentage of children's social care referrals that were repeat referrals within 12 months

GREEN
⇑



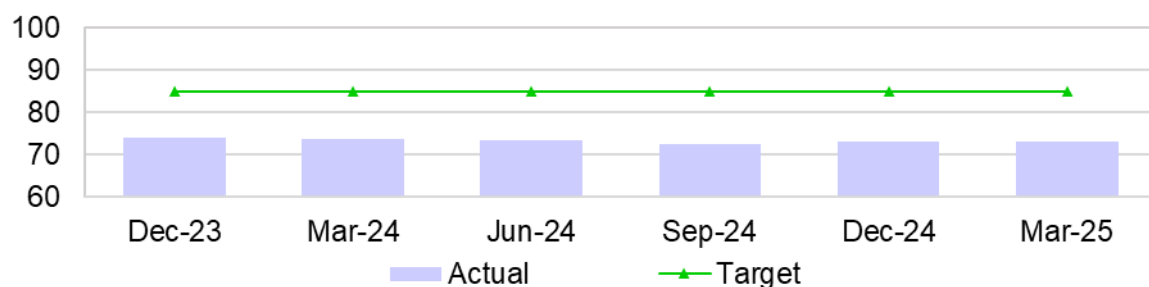
Latest: 21.9%

Target: 25%, Floor 30%

Q4 23/24: 23.5% (Green)

Percentage foster care placements which are in-house or with relatives and friends (excluding UASC)

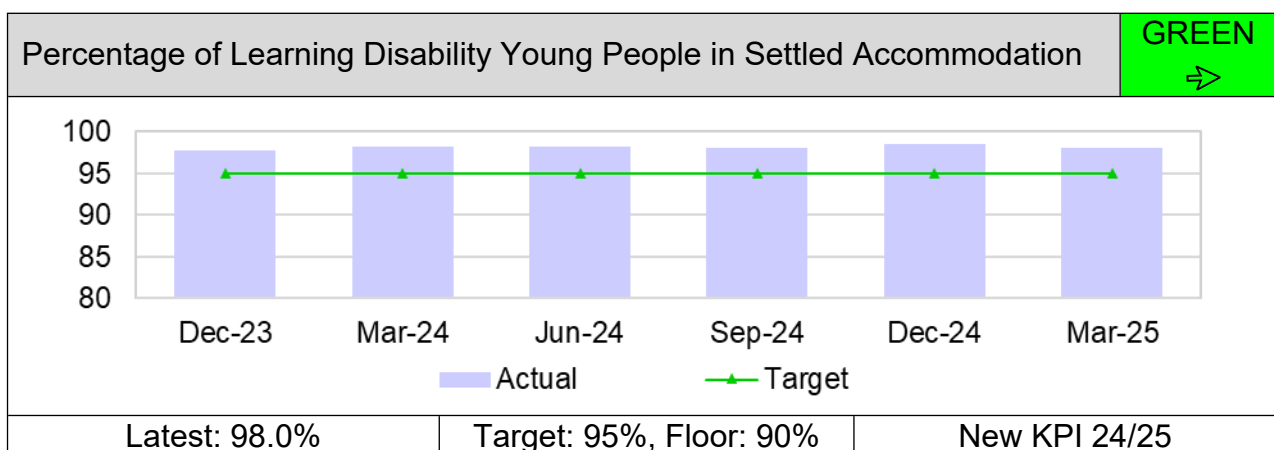
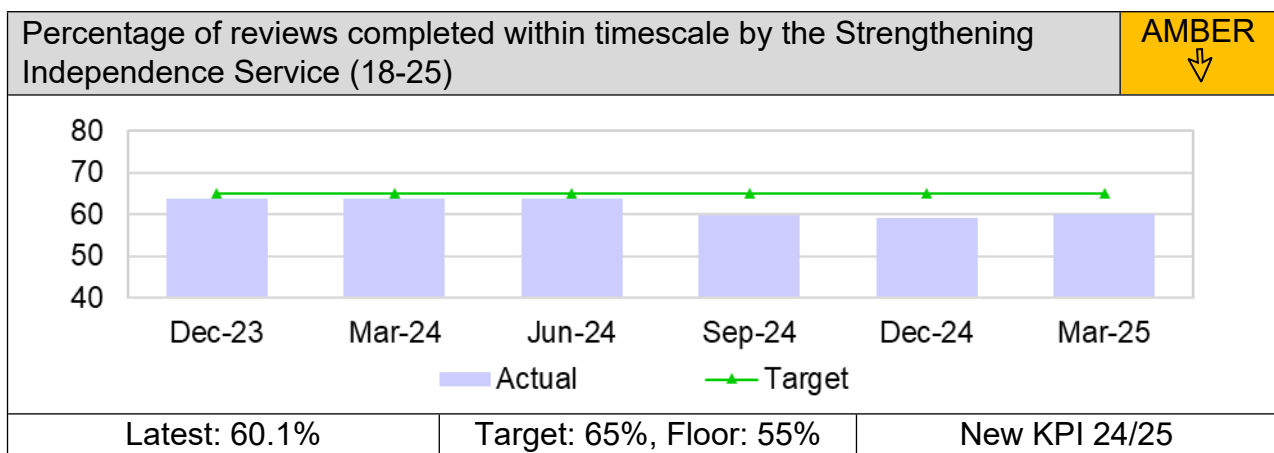
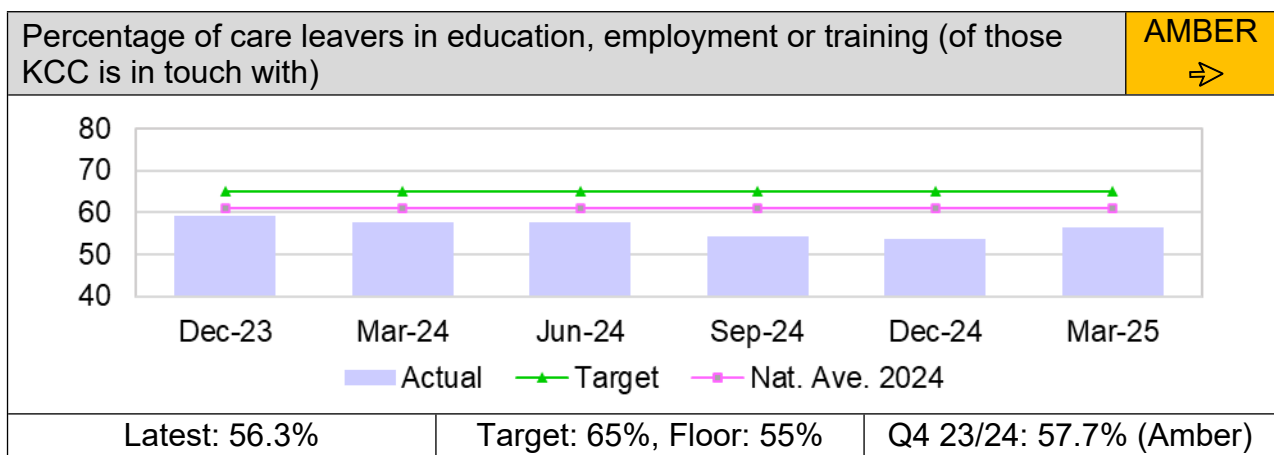
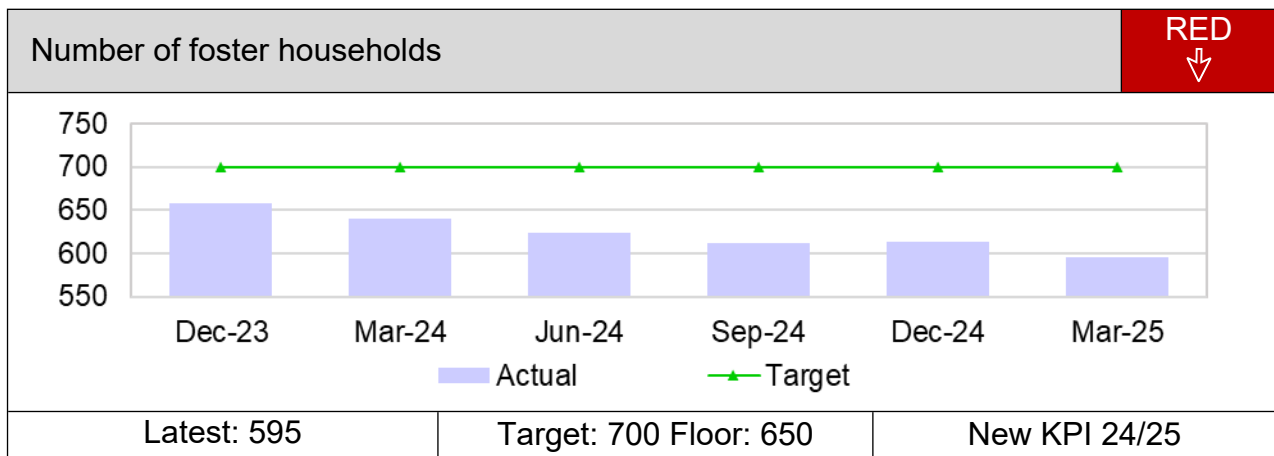
RED
⇒



Latest: 73.0%

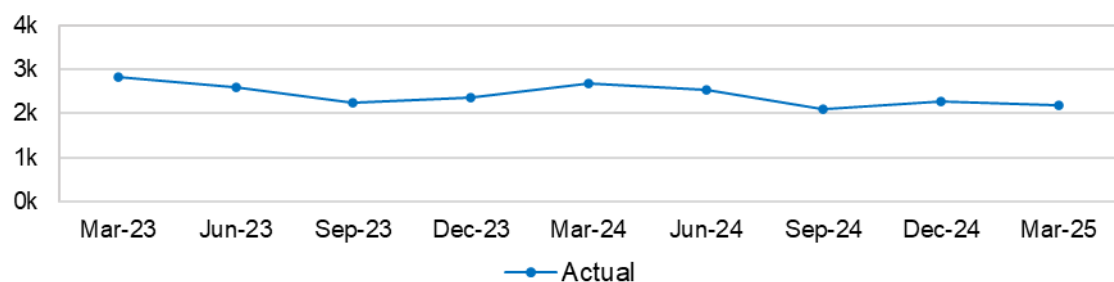
Target: 85%, Floor: 75%

Q4 23/24: 73.9% (Red)

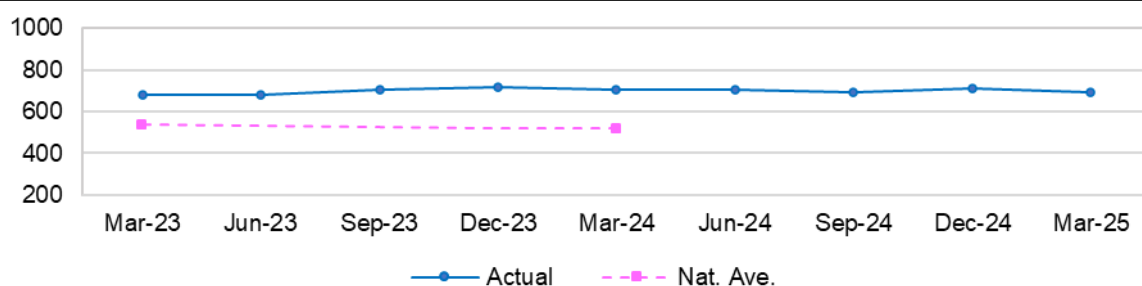


Activity indicators

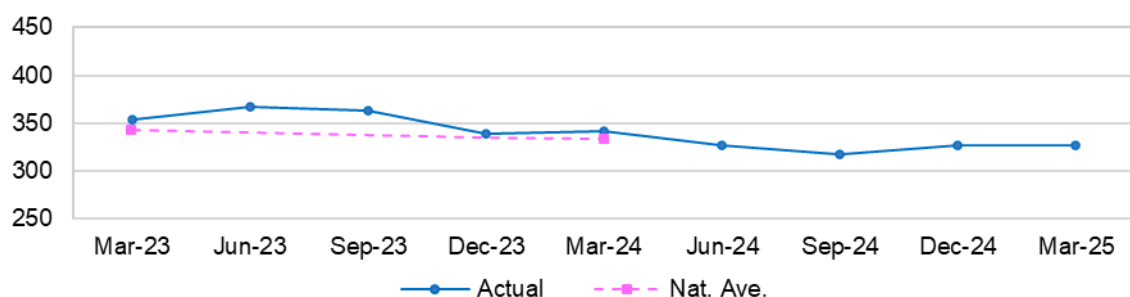
Number of open Early Help cases managed by Units



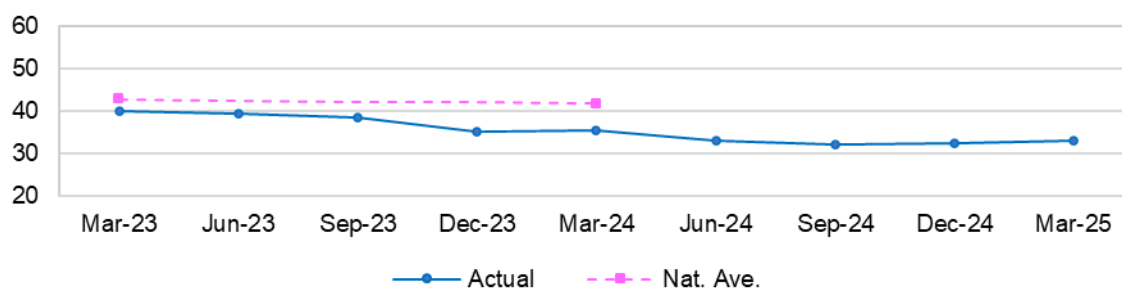
Rate of CSW referrals per 10,000 population aged under 18 – rolling 12 months



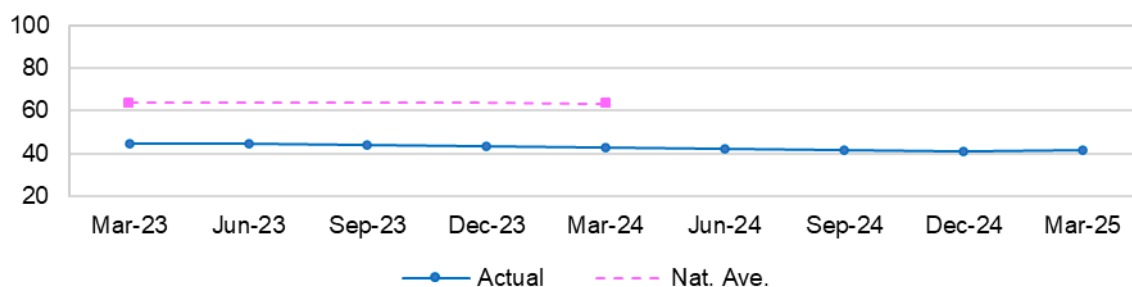
CSW caseload per 10,000 child population – snapshot at Quarter end



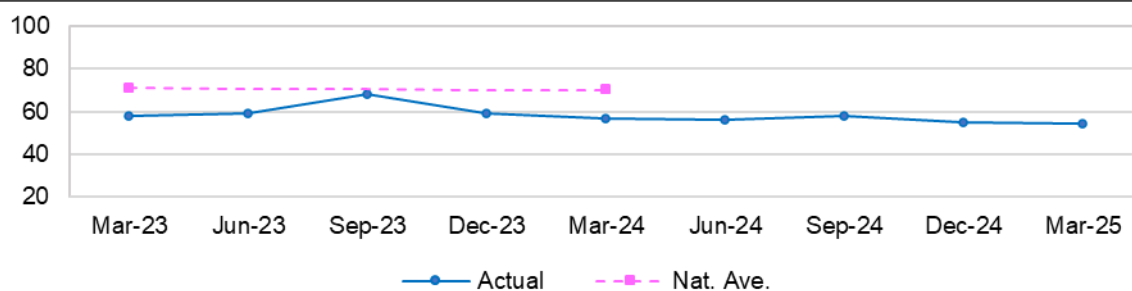
Rate of children with Child Protection Plans per 10,000 child population – snapshot at Quarter end



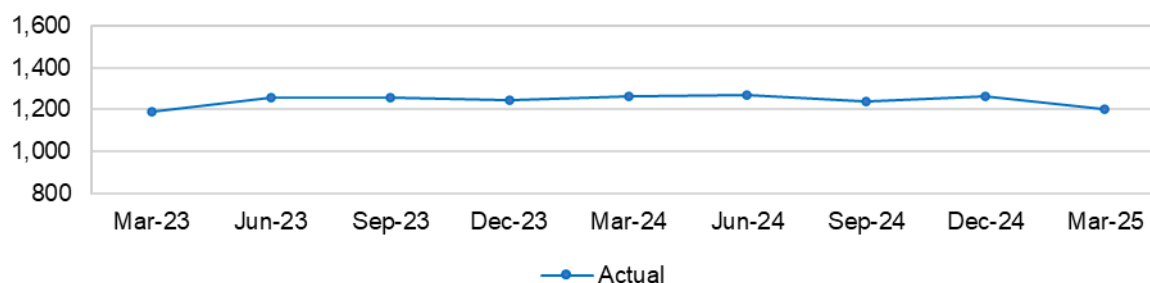
Rate of Children in Care (excluding UASC) per 10,000 child population – snapshot at Quarter end



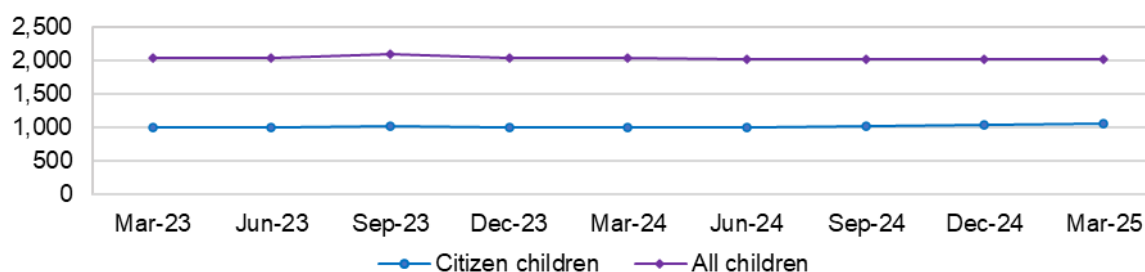
Rate of Children in Care (including UASC) per 10,000 child population – snapshot at Quarter end



Number of other local authority children in care placed into Kent – snapshot at Quarter end



Number of care leavers as at Quarter end



Adult Social Care						
Cabinet Member	Diane Morton (from Quarter 1, 2025/26)					
Corporate Director	Richard Smith					
KPI Summary	GREEN	AMBER	RED	↑	⇒	↓
	3	1	2	2	4	

Contacts

In Quarter 4, Adult Social Care (ASC) received 44,950 contacts. When someone makes contact with ASC, the officer receiving the contact will attempt to resolve any issues – whether that be through offering information and advice, signposting to external agencies or exploring options of further care and support, with the key aim of someone not having to make a 'repeat' contact. In Quarter 4, 3% of contacts were from people who had made contact within the preceding 3 months, a one percentage point improvement on the previous quarter. This means the measure is RAG Rated Green for a second consecutive quarter, within the 5% target.

ASC Connect teams are organising regular in-person sessions in the community to facilitate conversations and provide appropriate support. The number of contacts that have been resolved by ASC Connect has improved and systems continue to be streamlined to meet individuals' needs.

Assessments

Quarter 4 saw 4,499 requests for Care Needs Assessments, a 7% increase on the previous quarter. Despite this increase in demand, fewer people were awaiting an assessment at the end of Quarter 4 when compared to Quarter 3, with Adult social care completing more assessments than were incoming for the fourth consecutive quarter.

4,510 Care Needs Assessments were completed in Quarter 4, a 5% increase on the previous quarter's total. The proportion on Care Needs Assessments that were delivered within 28 days fell by one percentage point to **73%**, continuing a downward trend for this measure. In Quarter 4, the service focused on completing assessments for people who had been waiting for a longer period of time, which in turn impacted on this measure, keeping it below the 85% target and RAG Rated Red.

Assessments for carers are carried out jointly by adult social care and commissioned Carers Organisations in Kent. In Quarter 4, 687 carers assessments were completed with 661 requested in the quarter.

Following changes to the client recording system, Carers Organisations are now able to more accurately reflect their work in the way they record information. The development of a 'Carers Referral' now enables a view of signposting and other work outside of just the Carers Assessment itself. Due to this change, the volumes of Carer Assessments both incoming and completed have fallen but it should be noted that the overall rate of referral and activity within the Carer Organisations remains at a high level in Quarter 4, with ASC having involvement with over 1,700 carers in the quarter. In the same quarter last year, 1,500 carers were supported

Care and Support Plans

Following the completion of a care needs assessment, people who are assessed as eligible for care and support will receive a care and support plan, detailing how their needs will be met and the types of services available to them. At the end of Quarter 4, 17,218 people had an active care and support plan. The number of people with an active care and support plan at the end of the quarter has remained at a similar level throughout this financial year. This is true of people supported by both ASC and people aged 18-25 with the Strengthening Independence Service (Children's, Young People and Education Directorate). The Quarter 4 figure for this metric is the highest number of people supported at the end of a quarter for at least 2 years.

Once a person's needs are deemed eligible and they have a care and support plan in place, they may receive a support package delivered in a residential or nursing setting or within their own home. In Quarter 4, 2,407 new packages of care were arranged at an average weekly cost of £699. The most common provision provided was Homecare (31%), followed by a short-term residential services (30%).

Reviews of the Care and Support Plan (C&SP)

Care and support plans are reviewed 8 weeks after being put into place (first review) and then annually thereafter (annual review). The total number of reviews needing to be completed fell for the 5th consecutive quarter. In Quarter 4, the number of individuals requiring a first review decreased to 1,784, while those needing an annual review dropped to 5,050. Since the end of the previous financial year, this represents a 37% reduction in first reviews and a 16% reduction in annual reviews. These improvements reflect the focused efforts of the adult social care teams in completing care and support plan reviews. During Quarter 4, a total of 4,537 reviews were completed—1,971 were first reviews and 2,566 were ongoing reviews. Notably, this marks the highest number of ongoing reviews completed in a single quarter in over five quarters.

Enablement

Enablement services may be offered by adult social care to a person requiring support. The aim of these services are to encourage a person's independence with the setting of goals and through promoting their strengths. In Quarter 4, 2,319 people were supported by Kent Enablement at Home (KEaH), the highest quarterly figure seen since before the pandemic, as activity continues to grow quarter on quarter. 1,964 people started the service in Quarter 4, 44% more than the same quarter last year. The number of people starting the service and receiving enablement has increased since the change in the external provider of enablement to KEaH.

A short-term provision in a nursing or residential setting provides adult social care with an opportunity to assess an individual's long-term needs over time, ensuring support is delivered in the least restrictive and most appropriate way, this includes those on a hospital discharge pathway. Over the last three quarters, the number of people in short-term beds at the end of the quarter has remained steady at around 1,400, similar to the start of 2023/24 but 23% higher than the end of that year. In 2024/25, in terms of new starts, there were between 900 and 1,100 new provisions initiated each quarter. In contrast, during the previous financial year, only one quarter reached 900 service starts.

Hospital Discharge Pathway

Following a hospital stay, adult social care prioritises the ability of a person to remain as independent as possible on their return home and to minimise the risk of readmittance to hospital. In Quarter 4, 86% of older people (65 and older) were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement services. This measure has now risen above its target of 85% and is now RAG Rated Green. Adult social care aims to support individuals to remain in their own homes whenever appropriate. Effective reablement services play a key role in achieving this, increasing the likelihood that people receiving support can live independently.

Direct Payments

A Direct Payment from ASC may be made to a person to help them to meet their needs. Such a provision can aid in helping a person to maintain their independence and give them control over the support that they receive as part of their care and support plan. The proportion of people in receipt of a direct payment remained at 26% in Quarter 4, below the target of 30% but above a floor standard of 24%. 193 people started a direct payment in Quarter 4, a figure similar to that in recent quarters. 3,123 people were in receipt of a direct payment in the quarter, with carers' direct payments continuing to rise throughout the financial year.

Residential and Nursing care

If a person's needs cannot be met in their own home, it may be assessed that their needs will be met best in a residential or nursing setting. In Quarter 4, 548 per 100,000 people aged 65 or over, had their long-term support needs met by admission to a residential or nursing care home. Note, this rate relates to the number **starting** these types of placements each quarter and mirrors the current methodology used in the national Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework. This key performance indicator has remained below a target of 588 per 100,000 for the whole financial year 2024/25. Throughout the year, community provisions and non-residential settings have grown as a likely outcome for a person needing support aged 65 or over.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regularly inspect residential and nursing homes, sharing findings alongside an overall rating for the service. In Quarter 4, 72% of people supported in residential or nursing care were in a provision that was rated Good or Outstanding by CQC. This measure is below the floor standard of 75% and is now RAG Rated Red.

West and North Kent operational colleagues have been working with CQC following a number of inspections across these areas that had resulted in 'requires improvement' inspection outcomes. The Market Support Team is working closely with care homes to help them implement their action plans for addressing quality concerns; this includes ongoing monitoring in care homes with identified issues, and supporting providers to improve both the quality of care and their Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings. It is important to note that when a care home has completed their action plan and made necessary improvements, there can be a delay in CQC reinspecting the home and reviewing the rating.

Mental Health needs

The number of people accessing adult social care provision with a mental health need increased again in Quarter 4 to 1,586. This continues a trend of the last two financial years. The 3% upward movement in the two most recent quarters is the largest increase we have recorded quarter on quarter in the past two financial years.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

The number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) applications received in Quarter 4 was near record levels for KCC, with 2,756 applications received between January and March of 2025. Adult social care completed 2,616 applications in the quarter, the highest tally of the financial year. Adult social care continues to see an increase in the number of applications received, with 12% more applications in financial year 2024/25 when compared to 2023/24.

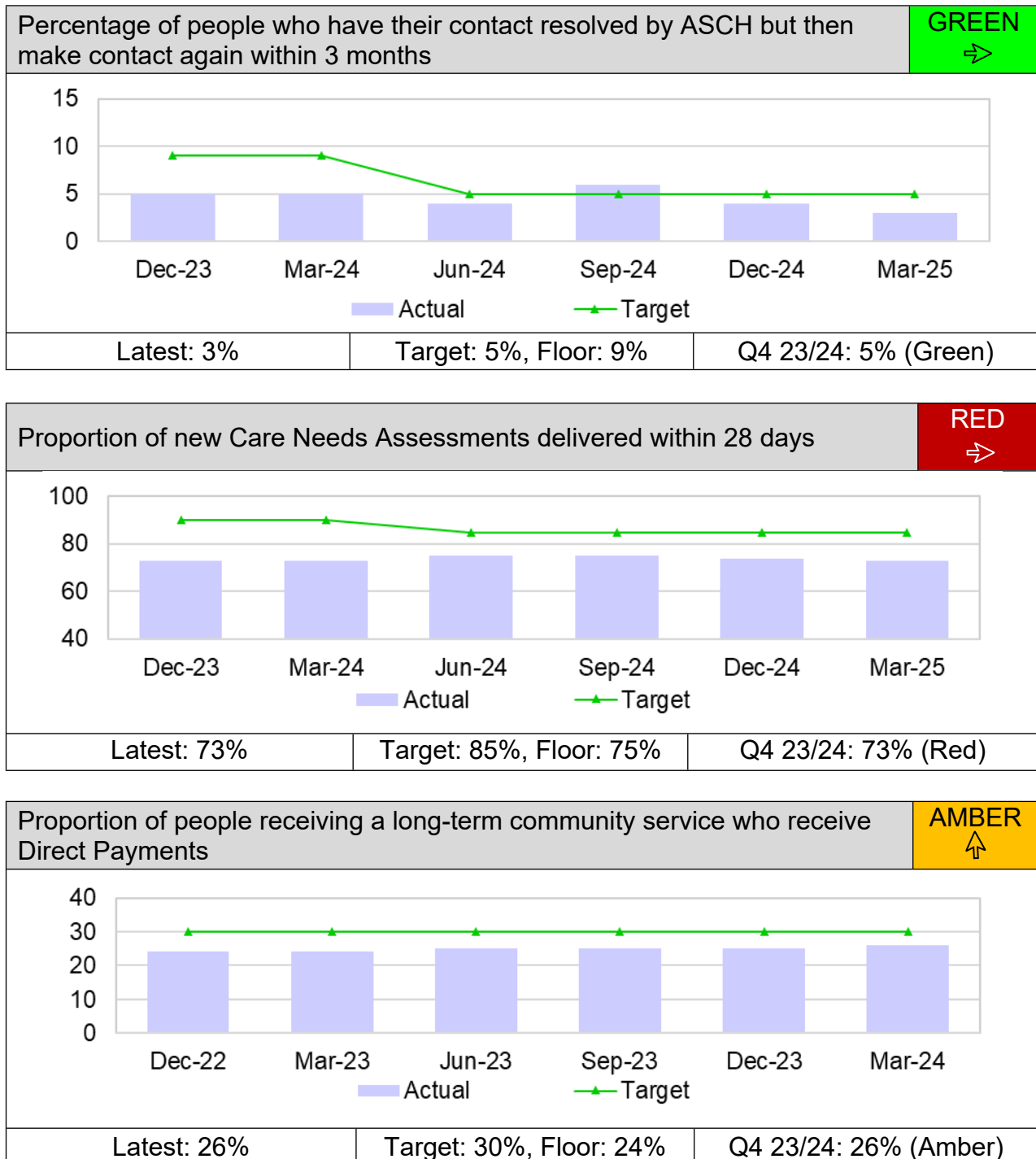
The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Service delivered more assessments due to an increased availability of resource. A review of our Best Interest Assessors (professionals who assess and determine the best interests of individuals lacking mental capacity to make specific decisions), has been completed and work is underway to see if this can be built upon.

Safeguarding

If someone is concerned about the risk to a person with care and support needs they can report it as a Safeguarding Concern to adult social care. In Quarter 4, 5,974 safeguarding concerns were received, the highest quarterly figure and a continuation of an increasing trend. Overall, 22,518 concerns were received in 2024/25, compared to 19,321 in 2023/24 – representing a 16.5% increase year on year. Where the criteria is met, a section 42 safeguarding enquiry will be carried out. The number of enquiries open on the last day of the quarter increased by 3% - the same proportional increase as the number of concerns received. Quarter 4 saw 6,154 pieces of safeguarding work closed – a quarterly high, and a figure that is 25% higher than the same quarter last year. Over the financial year 2024/25, 22,928 closures of safeguarding work occurred, compared to 17,665 in 2023/24 – an increase of 29.7%.

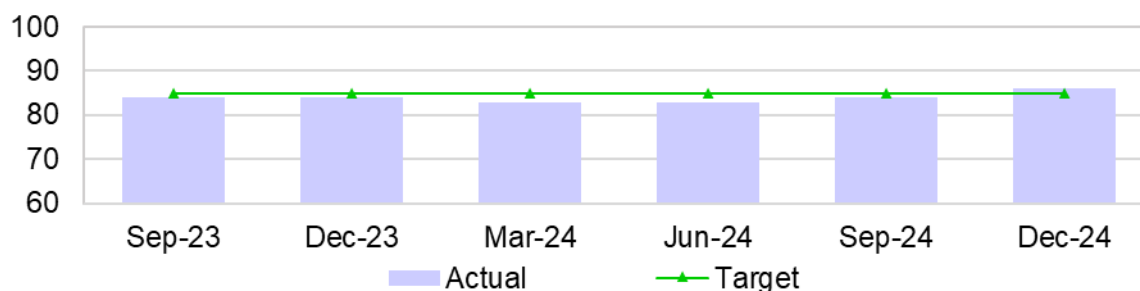
Once a safeguarding enquiry has come to an end, the risk to a person following intervention is assessed. 30% of people who had their Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiry concluded in Quarter 4 had 'risk removed' as a result of adult social care intervention – an increase of 3 percentage points when compared to the previous quarter. It is not always possible to remove a risk but there was also a reduction in the proportion of instances where 'risk remained' – falling 2 percentage points (to 11%) compared to Quarter 3.

Key Performance Indicators



Proportion of older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services

GREEN
⇒



Latest: 86%

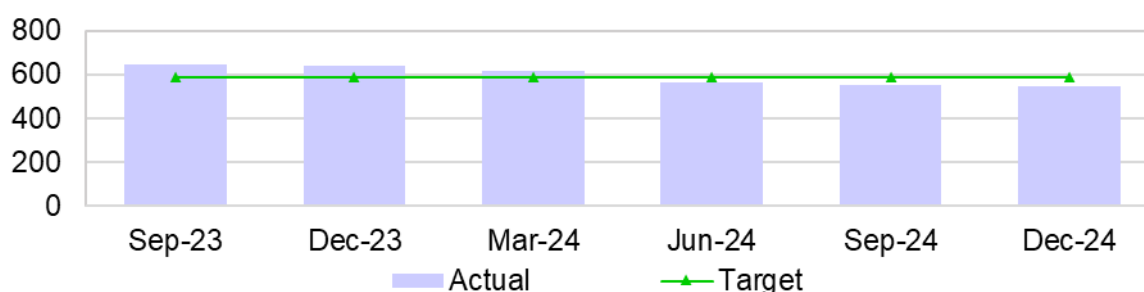
Target: 85%, Floor: 80%

Q4 23/24: 84% (Amber)

Reporting is based on the date in the Quarter that the hospital discharge occurs, with the 91 days commencing from that point.

Long Term support needs of older people (65 and over) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 (Better Care Fund)

GREEN
⬆



Latest: 548

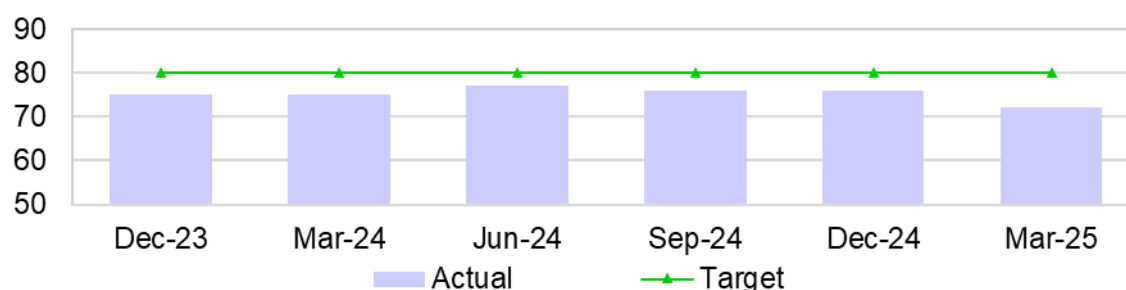
Target: 588, Floor: 617

Q4 23/24: 626 (Red)

To ensure consistent comparison with previous Quarters by removing seasonality, this KPI is reported on a 12-month rolling basis and one Quarter in arrears

Percentage of KCC supported people in residential or nursing care where the CQC rating is Good or Outstanding

RED
⇒



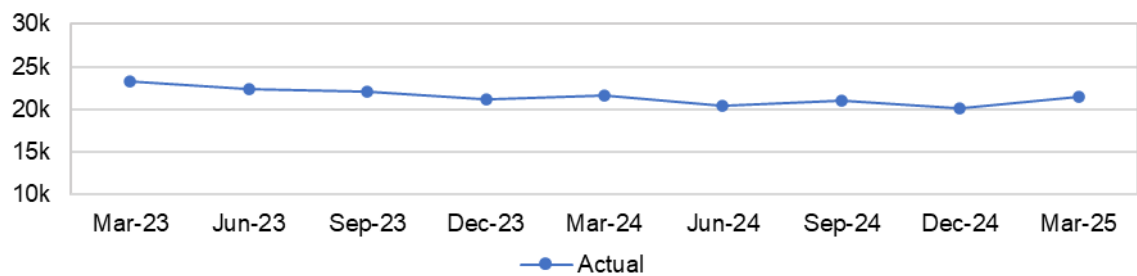
Latest: 72%

Target: 80%, Floor: 75%

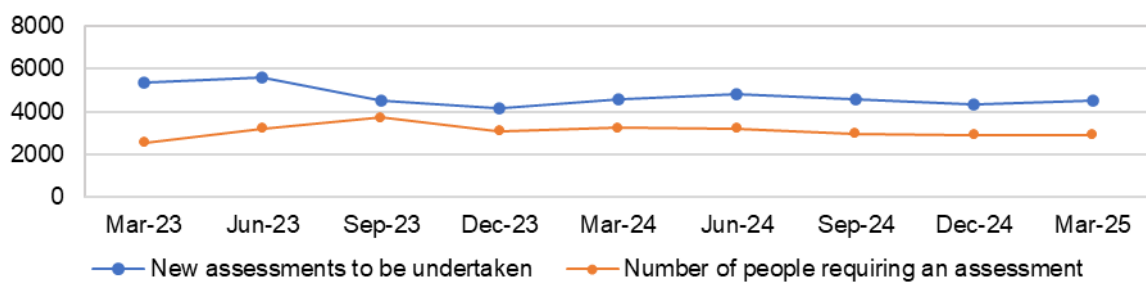
Previous: 76% (Amber)

Activity indicators

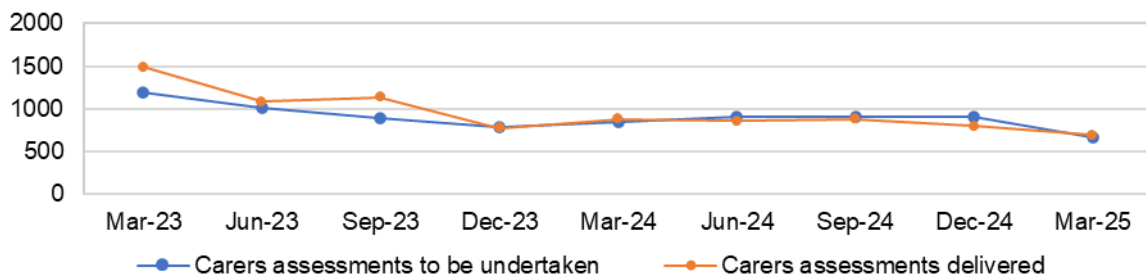
Number of people making contact with ASCH



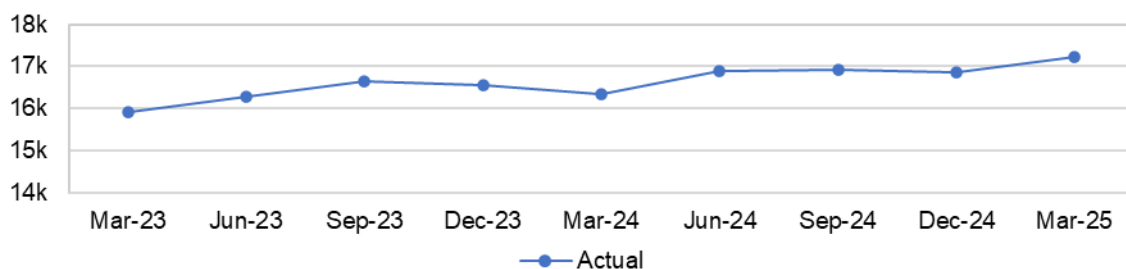
Number of new Care Needs Assessments to be undertaken and the number of people requiring a Care needs Assessment on the last day of the quarter



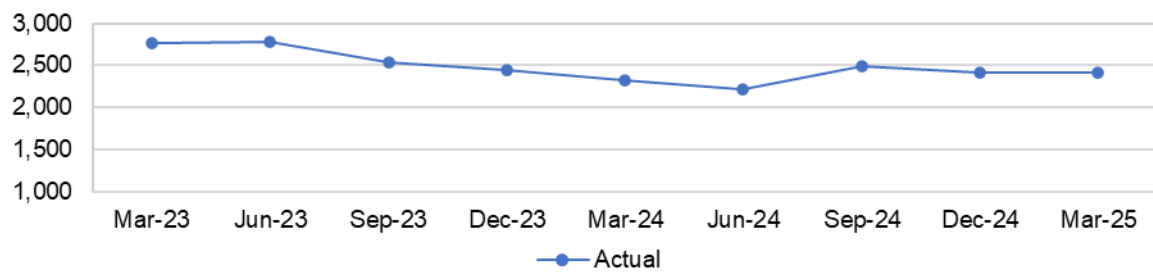
The number of new Carers' assessments to be undertaken and the number delivered



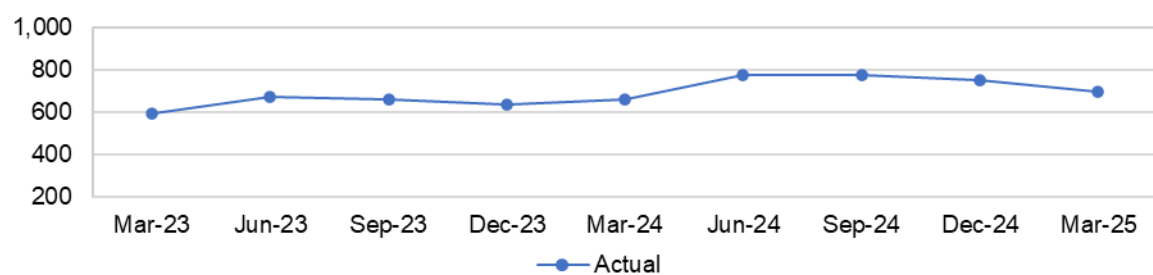
Number of people with an active Care & Support Plan at the end of the Quarter



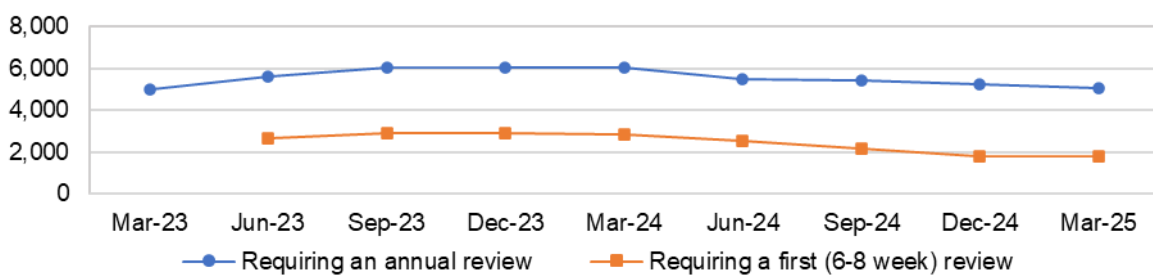
Number of new support packages being arranged for people in the Quarter



Average cost (£s per week) of new support packages arranged for people in the Quarter

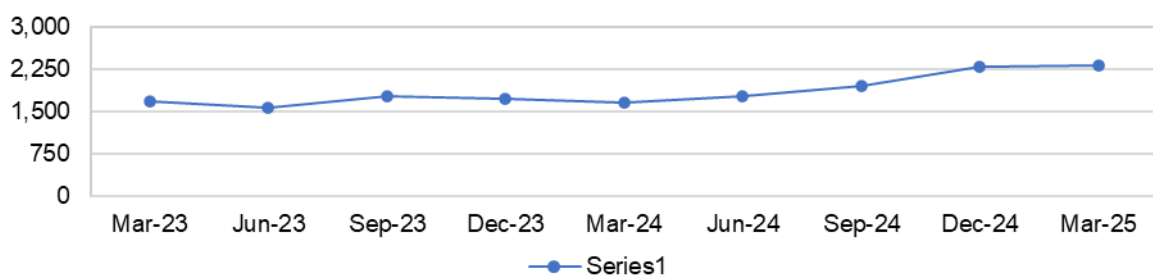


Number of people requiring a review to be completed on the last day of the Quarter

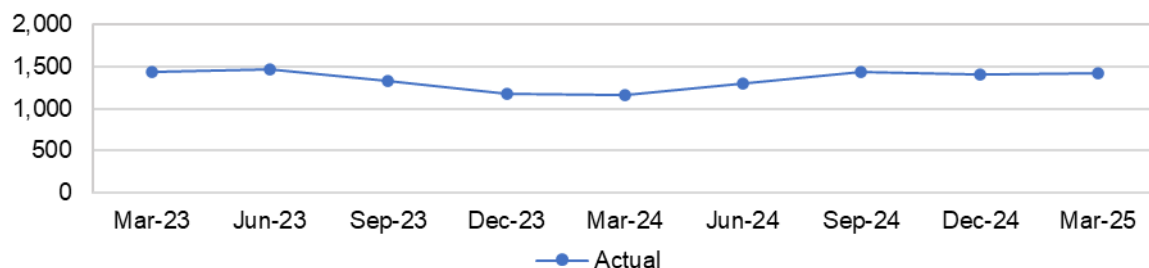


Data for requiring a first (6-8 week) review, added in Jun-23

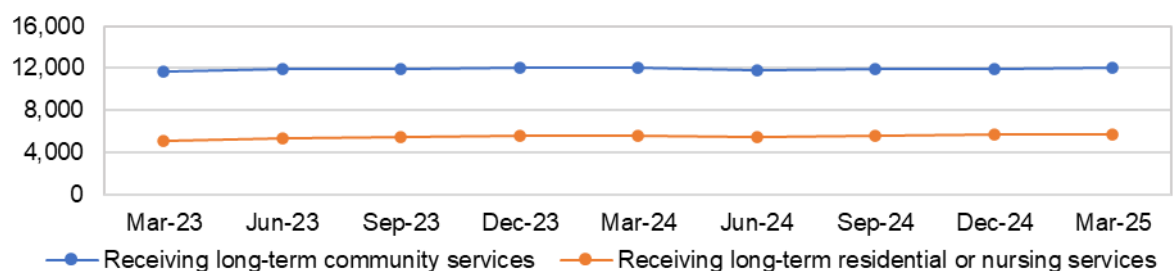
Number of people in Kent Enablement at Home (KeaH)



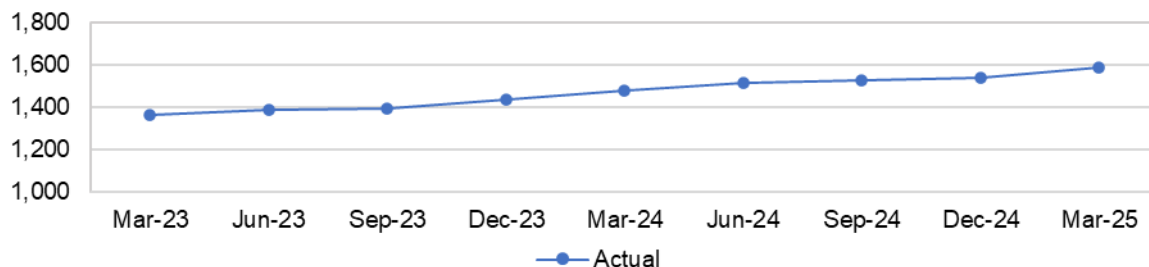
Number of people in Short Term Beds during the Quarter



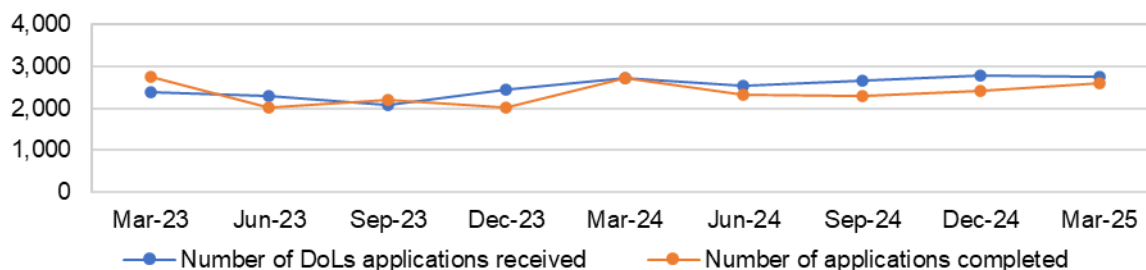
Number of people in Long Term Services



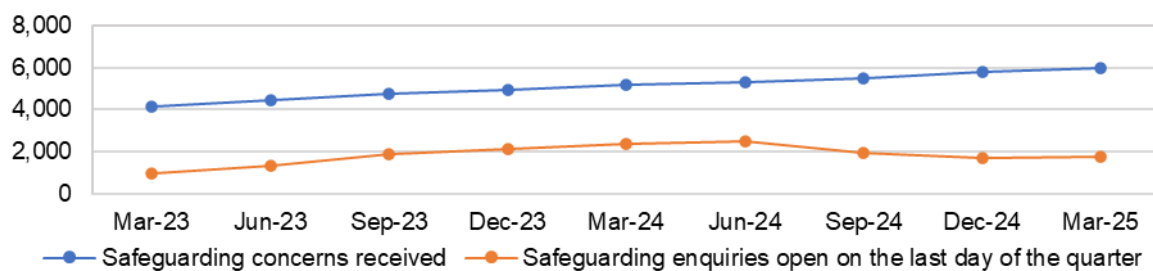
Number of People accessing ASCH Services who have a Mental Health Need



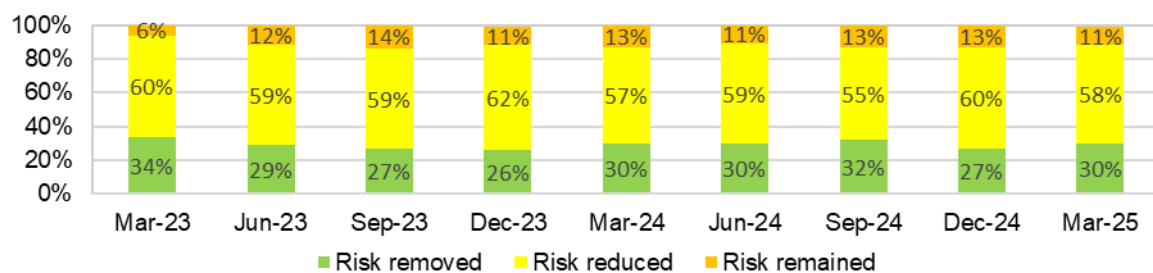
Number of DoLS applications received and completed



Number of safeguarding concerns received and enquiries open



Outcome of concluded Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries where a risk was identified



Public Health						
Cabinet Member	Diane Morton (from Quarter 1, 2025/26)					
Director	Anjan Ghosh					
KPI Summary	GREEN	AMBER	RED	⬆	⇒	⬇
	3	3		3	3	

NHS Health Checks

In Quarter 4, there were 8,831 NHS Health Checks delivered to the eligible population in Kent. This represents an increase of 15% (+1,153) from the 7,678 checks delivered in the previous quarter, in line with anticipated seasonal trends. In the 12-month rolling period ending in Quarter 4, the service delivered 33,487 checks, exceeding the target of 31,000 checks. This continues the year-on-year increase of Health Checks following the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Health Visiting

In Quarter 4, the Health Visiting service completed 16,275 out of 18,489 scheduled health and wellbeing reviews, achieving a completion rate of 88.0%. Three of the five mandated health and wellbeing reviews met or exceeded their respective targets. The proportion of New Birth health and wellbeing reviews completed within 10–14 days was 94.0%, slightly below the 95% target. However, 98.7% of those due were completed within 30 days. The proportion of Antenatal health and wellbeing reviews completed this quarter was 47.2%, slightly below the 50% target. During the antenatal period, families continue to benefit from support through midwifery services and Family Hubs. Over the 12-month rolling period ending in Quarter 4, the service completed 66,696 mandated universal health and wellbeing reviews compared to a target of 68,000 (Amber), which was 87.2% of the 76,501 due. This is in line with the previous year's performance, where 66,846 reviews were conducted (87.1% of those due).

It should be noted that KCC has excelled in health visiting performance compared to other Local Authorities in the South East region, according to the most recent data (Q4, 2023/24) from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). This highlights a consistent dedication to monitoring and supporting child development at early stages, with current positive recruitment expected to support service delivery and outcomes.

Sexual Health Service

In Quarter 4, 96.9% of first-time patients were **offered** a full sexual health screen at the Integrated Sexual Health service, and 66.7% of first-time patients **accepted**, which continued the improvement in performance towards the 72% target. Across the Sexual Health service this quarter, there were 15,039 attendances at sexual health clinics, 10,753 kits being ordered from the online STI Testing Service, 2,649 packs of condoms issued to under 25s via the Kent condom programme, and 718 issuances of Emergency Oral Contraception via Community Pharmacies for under 30s. The Sexual Health Team has begun to plan a strategy for sexual health, taking into account national policy plans and local need determined through the Kent Sexual Health Needs Assessment. The team continues to support providers to improve acceptance rates.

Drug and Alcohol Services

The Adult Community Drug and Alcohol Services data for Quarter 4 had not been released at the time of reporting. The latest available data (Quarter 3, 2024/25) shows that 28.2% of clients (1,570 of 5,566) successfully completed structured treatment in the 12-month rolling period, exceeding the 25% target. Regarding the substance groups, the service is currently meeting its target for successful completions among *opiate* users. The successful completion rates for *alcohol* and *alcohol and non-opiate* users are slightly below target, while other non-opiate user completions are below the floor standard. However, the substance group targets are ambitious, particularly for *non-opiate* users, and Kent's performance exceeds both the regional and national performance for all substance groups. The providers are reviewing their crack cocaine-specific interventions and developing a new Ketamine clinical pathway aimed at improving performance in this area.

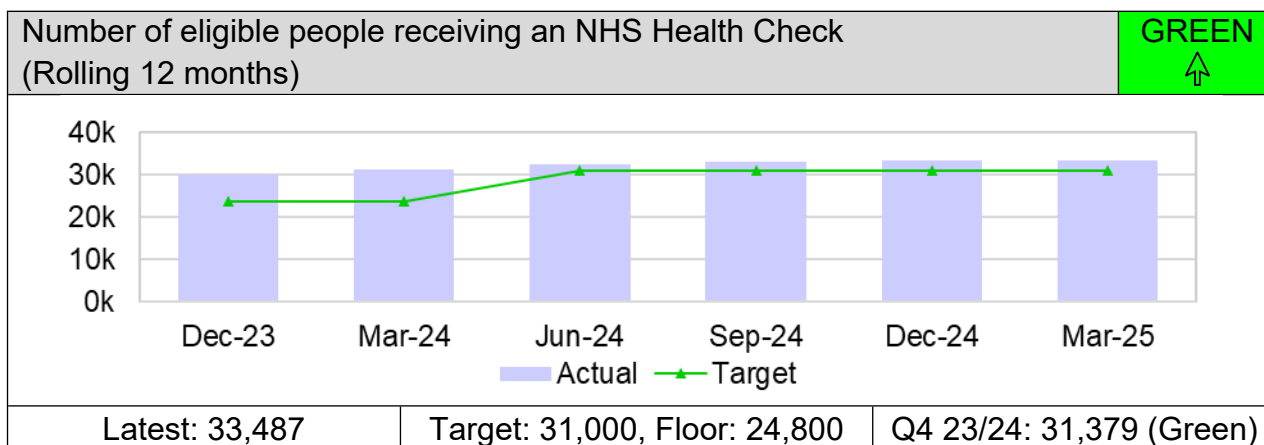
Whilst the previous focus on improving the number of people accessing structured treatment remains, in 2025/26 there will be an additional focus on quality including: ensuring the retention of people in structured treatment for at least 12 weeks, and increasing the number of people showing 'substantial progress' whilst still in treatment (i.e., reducing substance use, entering employment, or securing housing).

In early April, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) confirmed their award of grant funding to KCC for 2025/26, linked to the 10-year national drug and alcohol strategy – 'From Harm to Hope'. This funding will enable many areas of grant-funded activity to continue for the 2025/26 financial year.

Live Well Kent and Medway

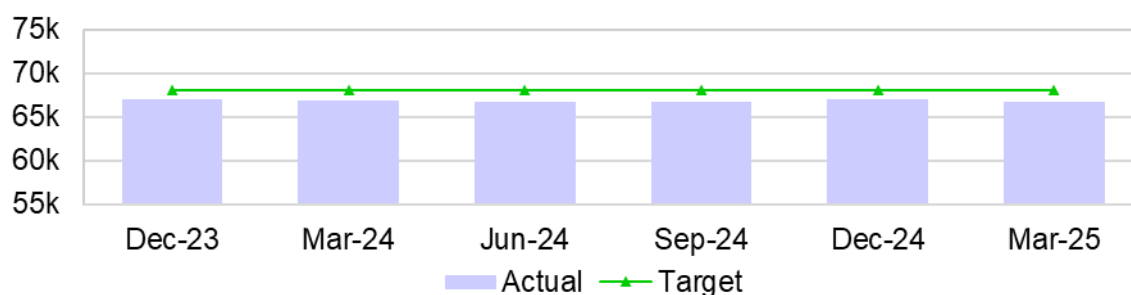
In Quarter 4, Live Well Kent and Medway (LWKM) experienced a significant increase in the number of referrals compared to the previous quarter, from 1,621 to 2,080 – an increase of 28.3%, which was attributed to its integration into the Mental Health Transformation programme. The increase has prompted continuous adaptation in service delivery to maintain high standards and achieve wellbeing goals. Despite the increased demand, LWKM has successfully upheld the quality of its services, with many people accessing the service reporting positive progress towards their personal goals (98%) and maintaining or improving in their DIALOG scale score (88%).

Performance Indicators



Number of mandated universal checks delivered by the health visiting service (Rolling 12 months)

AMBER



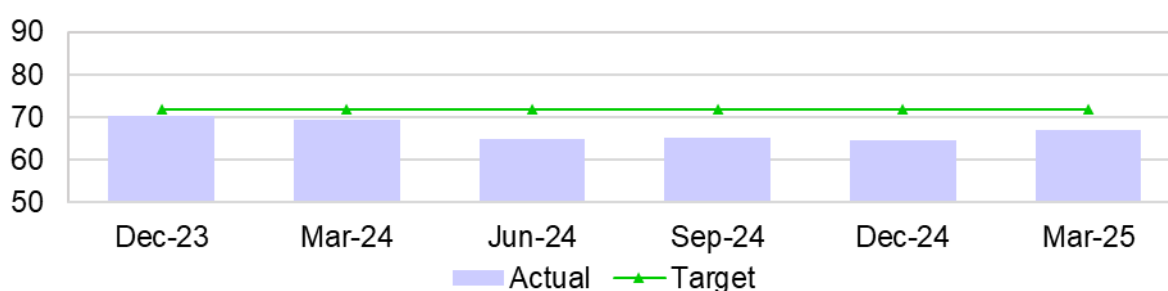
Latest: 66,696

Target: 68,000, Floor: 54,400

Q4 23/24: 66,846 (Amber)

Percentage of all new first-time patients (at any clinic) receiving a full sexual health screen (excluding online referrals)

AMBER



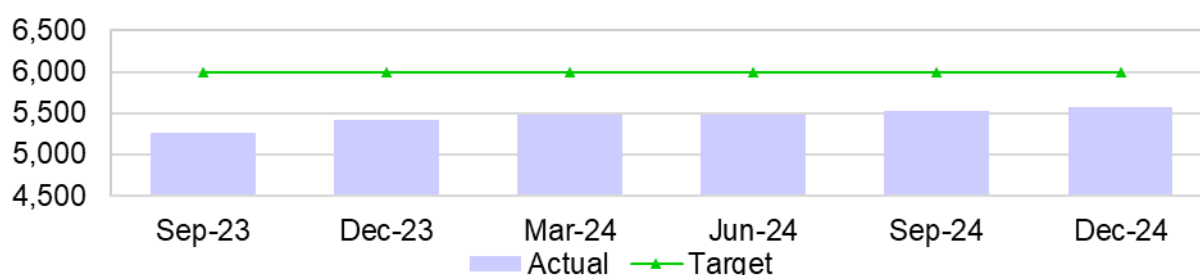
Latest: 67%

Target: 72%, Floor: 58%

New KPI 24/25

Number of Adults accessing structured substance misuse treatment during a rolling 12-month period

AMBER



Latest: 5,566

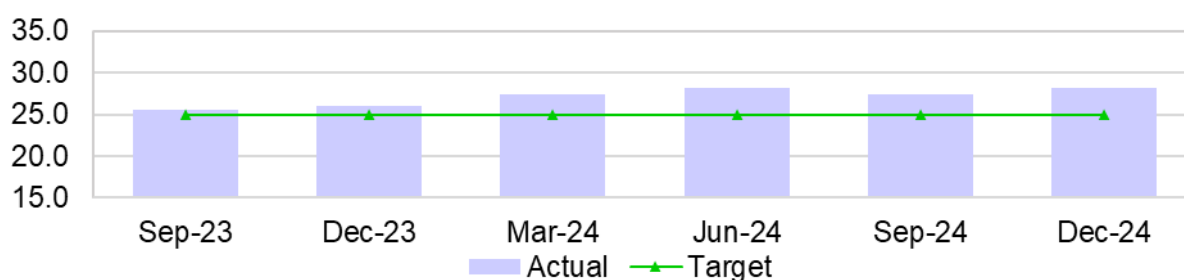
Target: 5,998, Floor: 5,000

New KPI 24/25

No data for Mar-25 available at time of reporting

Successful completion of drug and alcohol treatment – rolling 12 months

GREEN



Latest: 28.2%

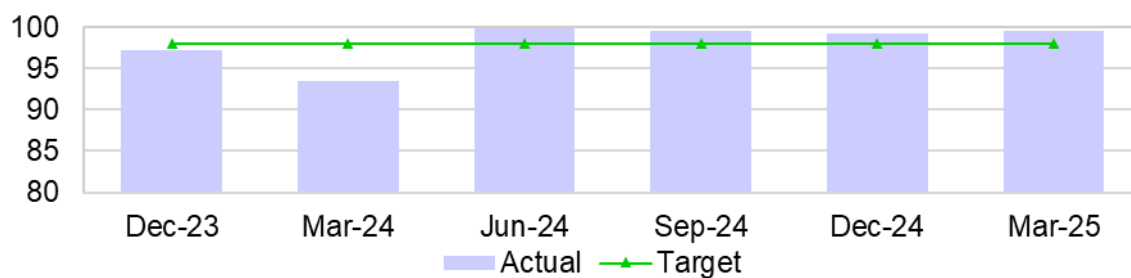
Target: 25%, Floor: 20%

Q4 23/24: 27.4% (Green)

No data for Mar-25 available at time of reporting

Percentage of Live Well clients who would recommend the service to family, friends, or someone in a similar situation

GREEN
⇒



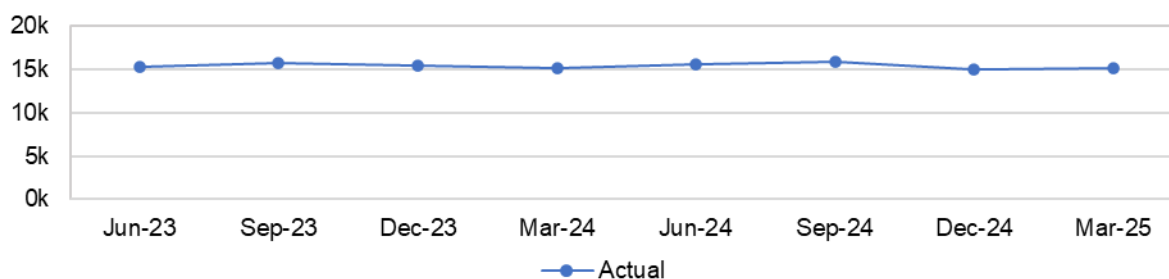
Latest: 99.5%

Target: 98%, Floor: 91%

Q4 23/24: 93.5% (Amber)

Activity indicators

Number of attendances at KCC commissioned Sexual Health Clinics



Corporate Risk Register – Overview

The Council, along with the local government sector, continues to operate in an increasingly difficult financial and operating environment, which carries significant risk implications for the achievement of the Authority's objectives.

The table below shows the number of corporate risks² in each risk level (based on the risk score) in May 2025, compared with February 2025.

	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Current risk level February 2025	0	5	12
Current risk level May 2025	0	5	13

KEY CHANGES DURING LAST QUARTER

New Risks

CRR0066: ASCH recommissioning programme (High)

A risk escalated from the Integrated Commissioning Risk Register. This risk recognises the challenges associated with recommissioning of four large contracts with time constraints, including ensuring that the new contracts support the service needs and ambitions

The recommissioning programme sits within the council's Strategic Reset Programme, and regularly reports on progress, blockers, and risks to the SRP board. (This risk was included in the February 2025 count, but details of the risk were not available until after publication of the previous report.)

CRR0067: SEND Delivery Improvement (Medium), and

CRR0068: Delivery Against Safety Valve Agreement (High)

These are newly raised records and identifiers, but not new risk items.

Previously there was a strong rationale to combine the aspects of SEND improvement and High Needs Funding block deficit, managed under risk 'CRR0056'. These have now been separated across two risks in order to reflect their evolution and differentiate between their current risk profiles. Risks created February 2025.

Risks Withdrawn

CRR0056: SEND Delivery Improvement and High Needs Funding shortfall

Two new risks (CRR0067 and CRR0068, as above) have been raised to differentiate between the SEND improvement delivery and funding aspects. This risk was therefore withdrawn February 2025.

² Corporate risks are those risks, which if they occurred, would have a major impact on the organisation or delivery of its priorities. Corporate risks also include cross-cutting risks that impact across directorates

MITIGATING ACTIONS

The Corporate Risk Register mitigations are regularly reviewed for their continued relevance and urgency, and new mitigations introduced as required.

Updates have been provided for 22 actions to mitigate elements of corporate risks that were due for completion or review up to May 2025. These are summarised below.

Due Date for Review or Completion	Actions Completed / Closed	Actions Partially complete	Actions subject to Regular Review	Actions Outstanding
Up to and including May 2025	10	2	6	4

CRR0003: Securing resources to aid economic recovery and enabling infrastructure (High)

Complete

Implementation plan for Kent & Medway Economic Framework

A Phase 1 implementation plan has been implemented for Kent & Medway Economic Framework with Kent & Medway Economic Partnership 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 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 2025/26.

Action Outstanding.

Kent Design Guide to be refreshed and published to ensure consistency with national policy and legislation supporting the delivery of high-quality design in new development. (Previous target date 31/03/25. Refreshed target date 31/07/25).

CRR0009: Future financial and operating environment for Local Government (High)

Partially Complete

Developing better scrutiny of spending bids and more detailed savings plans, to improve the overall robustness of the budget setting process, thereby improving financial resilience. (Previous target date 31/03/25. Target date now 30/09/25).

CRR0014: Cyber Information Security Resilience (High)

Action Outstanding

Reviewing visibility of the Group's risk profile regarding cyber security, to provide reassurance that the use of any shared resources or other interdependencies from a cyber perspective are continually understood. The completion date has been extended to June 2025 to enable discussions to conclude.

CRR0015: Sustainability of the Social Care Market (High)Complete

Recommendations from the external consultant report in regard to cost of care, contract models and joint commissioning have been considered and integrated into the commissioning approach.

CRR0039: Information Governance (Medium)

No actions due for completion this quarter

CRR0042: Border fluidity, infrastructure and regulatory arrangements (High)Regular Review**Planning with Government**

The organisation is continuing to communicate with Government to develop short, medium and long-term plans for border resilience, looking at infrastructure and technological solutions.

Regular Review**Preparation for impacts**

The organisation continues to prepare for two separate but interconnected schemes that will affect non-EU citizens travelling to most EU countries; the EU Entry/Exit System (EES – implementation date TBC) and the EU European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). Regular presentations continue to be given to Members on potential impacts relating to people and goods that will follow implementation of the EU Entry/Exit System. The due date for this action has temporarily been removed due to EES being postponed until newly required EU legislation has been introduced and notice of a new implementation date is provided.

CRR0045: Maintaining effective governance and decision making in a challenging financial and operating environment (High)

No actions due for completion this quarter

CRR0049: Fraud and Error (Medium)Complete**Commissioning and Procurement process**

All tendering specification now includes a requirement for the tenderer to provide details on what procedures they have in place to prevent fraud from occurring within the contract, both in service delivery and invoicing into KCC. Ongoing support in evaluating these procedures will be obtained from the Counter Fraud Team as part of the overall evaluation process.

CRR0052: Adaption of KCC Services to Climate Change impacts (High)Regular Review**Delivery of the KCC Climate Change Adaptation Plan**

Delivery of the KCC Climate Change Adaptation Plan will be monitored regularly and will include service level climate change adaptation risks and incorporate climate adaptation into project and Business As Usual activity.

Regular Review**Organisation-wide environmental risk management**

The Environment team will be continuing to support the organisation to build environmental risks into KCC project work and the delivery of the KCC Environment Plan.

CRR0053: Asset Management and Degradation and associated impacts, linked to Capital Programme affordability (High)Action Outstanding

Schools Financial Threshold - Papers to Secretary of State seeking approval to increase school financial thresholds. Due to the change of Government and the time lapsed, the consultation with the Schools Forum will start again. Target date set for April 2026

CRR0058: Capacity & capability of the workforce (High)Regular Review

Exit and retention surveys have commenced, with data collection to continue to ensure a sufficient sample size to draw conclusions and determine next steps.

Action Outstanding

Pay Strategy – Pay strategy review to ensure it remains competitive and sustainable for the future. The target date was originally set for March 2025, however the review will now take place after the strategy is in place for a full year, with a new target date of April 2026.

CRR0059: Significant failure to bring forecast budget overspend under control within budget level assumed. (High)Partially Complete**Maximise scope of effective scrutiny by all Members**

A Governance Working Party has been implemented and has met regularly. The group originally anticipated reporting to County Council in 2024 but is now due to report in 2025.

CRR0063: Capacity to accommodate and care for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking (UAS) Children (Medium)

No actions due for completion this quarter

CRR0064: Risk of Failing to Deliver Effective Adult Social Care Services (High)Complete

Redesign and redeployment of workforce. ASC have set out plans for redesign and redeployment of workforce around two key areas of practice:

- (a) prevention, early intervention, and short-term support
- (b) long term support and adult safeguarding.

CRR0065: Implementation of fit-for-purpose Oracle Cloud system (Medium)Complete

A User Acceptance Testing (UAT) plan is in place stating what resource is required and when. The plan will be monitored to ensure it is effective.

Complete

Transition / change management planning has completed with a Business Readiness Group set up.

Complete

Internal communications resource has been recruited, a KNet page has been set up and regular updates and key messages provided.

These 3 controls will continue to be monitored throughout phase 1 to ensure effectiveness.

CRR0066: ASCH recommissioning programme (High)Complete

Development of an open framework approach to allow more new providers to join

Complete

Engagement with the care sector regarding specifications and proposed contract terms

Complete

Activities in place to restrict the use of off-framework placements.

CRR0067: SEND Delivery Improvement (Medium)Regular Review

Delivery of SEND Improvement Programme, which includes delivery of requirements detailed in the Kent Accelerated Progress Plan. Target date agreed, reflecting anticipated next inspection timeline.

CRR0068: Delivery Against Safety Valve Agreement (High)

No actions due for completion this quarter

From: Linden Kemkaran – Leader of the Council

To: County Council – 18 September 2025

Subject: **Annual Report on Urgent Decisions taken by the Executive – 2024-25**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The Constitution requires that the Leader of the Council reports urgent Executive Decisions to County Council on an annual basis.

Recommendation: The Council is asked to note the report.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Constitution makes provision, under Sections 12.32 and 12.33, for the use of urgency procedures as part of Executive decision-making, complying with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.
2. In accordance with Section 12.37 of the Constitution, this paper serves as the required annual report to Council providing details of when urgency procedures have been used. The purpose of this report is to supply a collated list of urgent decisions and draw Members' attention to those instances when urgency has been necessary. The period covered by the report is 5 September 2024 to 10 September 2025.
3. Detailed consideration of these decisions and the related areas of Council business is the responsibility of the Cabinet Committees and the Scrutiny Committee. The relevant Cabinet Committee will have considered these urgent decisions following their implementation, including receiving reports on the urgency and reasons why pre-decision consideration was not possible when applicable. The Scrutiny Committee is the appropriate forum for any detailed consideration or Scrutiny of any urgent or out of cycle decisions. Should further consideration of any of these issues be desired, Members are asked to liaise with Democratic Services and the relevant Committee Chairs to explore adding them to their work programmes.
4. Since 5 September 2024, **six** decisions were taken via the urgency procedures detailed in the Constitution and the Executive Arrangements Legislation during the timeframe covered by this Annual Report to Council. **One** of these decisions was

semi-urgent and **five** were progressed via the full statutory urgency process allowing for immediate implementation. Table 1 below shows the number of decisions that have been taken via the urgency procedure from July 2021 to 9 September 2025.

5. Table 1: Number of urgent and semi-urgent decisions taken since 2021

	15 July 2021- 1 July 2022	14 July 2022- 6 July 2023	7 July 2023- 4 September 2024	5 September 2024- 9 September 2025
Urgent	6	3	6	5
Semi-urgent	8	7	5	1
Covid urgent	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Covid Semi-urgent	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	14	10	11	6

6. This report sets out the key information of each of those decisions taken between early September 2024 and early September 2025: the decision-maker; the date and brief summary of the decision; the type of urgency process used and the reason for urgency.
7. The responsibility for determining whether urgency procedures are appropriate sits with the Decision-maker (Cabinet or Cabinet Member) - providing that that relevant Senior Officer (commonly the Corporate Director for the relevant Directorate) confirms that the decision cannot be reasonably deferred, taking account of any relevant professional advice. The urgency legislation and constitutional arrangements also require that the use of urgency procedure be agreed by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee – such agreement relates only to the urgency requirement, not the merits or otherwise of any decision. Taking account of the Officer and Non-Executive views noted above, the Decision-maker must be satisfied themselves that the use of urgency is correct at the point they make the decision.

The key reasons for the use of urgency procedure

8. In previous years, a common reason for the use of urgency procedure has been the limited timeframes in which KCC was required to respond to directives imposed by central Government or to enter into agreements. Responding to these issues and related governance advice through the Annual Governance Statement and engagement with Governance, Law & Democracy teams, the Directorates have made significant progress in ensuring appropriate planning is in place to commence decision making preparations and notice periods earlier where these situations may be anticipated and as a consequence, the number of urgent decisions has diminished. On occasion, these scenarios cannot be avoided where initial notice of any requirement for KCC to act or respond is given at very late notice. An example of this, where KCC could not make any relevant preparations to avoid using urgency procedures, was the Devolution Priority Programme application process.

9. Common reasons for urgent decisions in this report period were contractual challenges or changing situations resulting in tighter than anticipated commissioning timeframes. This is indicative, to an extent, of the challenge involved in meshing the complex and dynamic commissioning process with the lengthy and open Executive Decision-making arrangements, as dictated by legislation.

Urgency arrangements

10. Generally, deferral of implementation should be the starting point of consideration of how to manage decision-timing challenges but, where this is not viable or has significant negative consequences, the Executive may opt to use urgency to ensure progression.
11. The Executive, when required, uses two types of urgent decision - permitted under the relevant legislation and detailed in the Constitution. These are:
- the General Exception route, which is referred to in KCC documentation as 'semi-urgent' because it involves compliance with all normal decision-making processes, but the notice of the proposed decision will have been published on the list of Forthcoming Executive Decisions (FED) for more than 5 but fewer than 28 days; and
 - Cases of Special Urgency, referred to as Statutory Urgency Process or 'full urgency' in KCC. These decisions are subject to a process of requiring agreement by the decision-maker, the relevant senior officer and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee that urgency is necessary, followed by consultation with relevant non-Executive Members where possible. Such decisions may be implemented immediately, without advance notice on the FED and they are not subject to call-in.
12. To clarify the terminology further, 'urgency' relates to viability of adherence to the lengthy timeframes set out in the relevant Executive Arrangements regulations, which prioritise transparency and public notice periods over dynamic activity. From a practical perspective, implementation of a decision with fewer than six weeks' notice requires some form of urgency process, and a decision requiring implementation with fewer than two weeks' notice requires a fully urgent decision. While efforts are always made to provide long-term notice of all substantive Executive activity through effective planning and governance arrangements, it is vital that the Council has the capacity and agility to respond to changing circumstances and fast-paced situations when necessary.
13. The list provided below for Members' information has been organised into urgent decisions (Full Statutory Urgency), followed by semi-urgent decisions.

Urgent Executive Decisions – 5 September 2024 to 10 September 2025

1. 24/00075 - Chilmington Green Secondary School

Decision by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services on 6 September 2024.

Urgency process:

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation.

Summary:

Chilmington Green Secondary School opened in September 2023 in temporary accommodation. The Department for Education (DfE) was delivering the new school premises, which should be operational in September 2025. Issues arose in relation to the legal responsibility for the funding, this dispute had to be resolved promptly in order to ensure the opening of the new school in September 2025.

Reason for Urgency:

To respond to the contractual dispute within required timeframes so as to ensure the opening of this essential secondary school in time for the new academic year.

2. 24/00087 - Household waste recycling centre and waste transfer station operation, management and haulage contracts

Decision by KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment on 23 September 2024.

Urgency process

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation.

Summary:

In July 2024, when the Cabinet Member for Environment took a decision to re-procure contracts for operation, management, and haulage services of household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) and co-located waste transfer stations (WTS) in East, Mid and West Kent, the intention was that the new contracts would be awarded in Spring 2025 and, following a six-month mobilization, would commence from November 2025.

Since taking this decision, the initial market engagement identified significant financial risks concerning the proposed six-month mobilisation period that would lead to an increased procurement cost. It was therefore recommended that the contracts be extended. The extensions were on the same terms and conditions and could be met from existing budgets. However, as notice on the current contracts had been served, the contract extensions needed to be agreed urgently to ensure continuity of this statutory service and avoid additional mobilisation costs.

Reason for Urgency:

The current contracts were due to expire in October 2025. New contracts are being procured and need to be in place when the current ones expire in order to ensure the uninterrupted provision of this statutory service.

3. 25/0002 - English Devolution White Paper - KCC response to Government

Decision by KCC's Cabinet on 10 January 2025.

Urgency process

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation.

Summary:

Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16 December 2024, the Government proposed to establish a Devolution Priority Programme for a limited number of areas which wished to access the benefits of both devolution and local government reorganisation as quickly as possible. The deadline for applications to the programme was 10 January 2025.

The decision to request Kent and Medway be included in the Devolution Priority Programme is a matter for the Executive pursuant to section 7 of the KCC Constitution and the relevant legislation.

Taking account of views put forward by Members during an Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 9 January 2025, the Cabinet determined that the benefits of joining the Devolution Priority Programme were significant and that KCC should apply.

Reason for Urgency:

The deadline for applications to the Programme was 10 January 2025 which, taking account of the limited notice provided to KCC, did not allow for any other decision timescale other than full urgency.

4. 25/00036 - Expansion of Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy, Green Street Green Rd Dartford DA1 1RB, by 2 FE, increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 240 places per year group to 300 places per year group

Decision by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on 21 March 2025.

Urgency process:

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation.

Summary:

The proposal to expand Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy was developed because the Kent Commissioning Plan 2024/2028 indicated that there will be a shortfall in year 7 places in the Dartford and Swanley non-selective planning group.

The Academy agreed to offer 300 places from 2026, subject to a physical expansion. This proposal sought to facilitate the expansion by building a standalone block and enable various internal and external works. The Academy's trust, senior leadership team and governors agreed to consult on this proposal to expand the school and enlarge the secondary provision within the school by the addition of 60 places per school year.

Reason for Urgency:

Through an administrative error, primarily due to the complexity of this decision, the deadline for submission of this decision prior to the pre-election period was missed. The decision had to be taken via the urgent decision process to ensure the current project plan and timescales for completion could be maintained.

5. 25/00055 - Kent Community Equipment Service - Direct Award of contract under Framework Y24008

Decision by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on 31 July 2025.

Urgency process

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation.

Summary:

The Council has a statutory obligation to provide the community equipment service to support people with health and/or social care needs following discharge from hospital.

The Kent Community Equipment Service ("KCES") plays an essential role for both Health and Social Care in meeting the needs of Kent residents, and has a significant impact on the smooth functioning of acute and community health services. Failure, even for a relatively brief period of time, of the KCES could have severe and far-reaching consequences for people who use the service.

The timelines for securing continued service delivery did not allow for compliance with normal Executive Decision-making notice periods and arrangements; it was therefore proposed to award the contract directly, under the Framework Y24008, for the delivery of the Community Equipment Service.

Reason for Urgency:

The decision to award the contract could not be reasonably deferred because failure of the KCES contract, and therefore not having continuity of service provision, would detrimentally impact: the Council's ability to deliver against their statutory duties; delay hospital discharge; increase hospital admission; be a real risk to individuals and therefore safeguarding; increase pressure on Mental Health and Carers' services; and have a potential impact on increased costs to the health and social care sector. The timelines for securing continued service delivery did not allow for

compliance with normal Executive Decision-making notice periods and arrangements.

Semi-Urgent Executive Decisions - 5 September 2024 to 10 September 2025

1. 25/00035 - Aylesford Tow Path Improvements/embankment reinforcement

Decision by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on 19 March 2025.

Urgency:

Semi-urgent decision.

Summary:

In September 2023, Active Travel England (ATE) proposed awarding a further capital grant to Highway Authorities, extending the Tranche 4 funding previously provided. Previous schemes that narrowly missed successful funding could be re-submitted. The Aylesford Tow Path was selected to be put forward for re-submission. A key decision was required to secure the funding and delivery of the scheme.

Reason for Urgency:

The terms and conditions of the ATE grant required the funding to be spent by March 2026. Due to long lead times for materials, deferring the decision would put this funding at risk.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to note the report.

Background Documents (listed in date order)

Urgent Executive Decisions – FED entries Records of Decision and published Reports:

[24/00075 - Chilmington Green Secondary School](#)

[24/00087 - Household waste recycling centre and waste transfer station operation, management and haulage contracts](#)

[25/0002 - English Devolution White Paper - KCC response to Government](#)

[25/00036 - Expansion of Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy, Green Street Green Rd](#)

[Dartford DA1 1RB, by 2 FE, increasing the Published Admission Number \(PAN\) from 240 places per year group to 300 places per year group](#)

[25/00055 - Kent Community Equipment Service - Direct Award of contract under Framework Y24008](#)

Semi-Urgent Executive Decisions – FED entries Records of Decision and published Reports:

[25/00035 - Aylesford Tow Path Improvements/embankment reinforcement](#)

Report Authors and Relevant Director

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Motion for Time Limited Debate: Rescinding the KCC Climate Emergency Declaration

Proposer – Mr Chris Hespe
Secunder – Mr Paul Chamberlain

Background information provided by the Reform UK Group

Introduction

1. Kent County Council declared a 'climate emergency' in 2019. Since then, The Council has had no discernible effect on the world's climate. However, the impact of this designation has been that KCC has endorsed the unproven view of anthropogenic (human-induced) climate change, pushed that narrative through its policies and practices such as in procurement to the detriment of small, local suppliers; scared numerous young people, and had the effect of disallowing proper and reasoned debate on alternative viewpoints.

Settled Science?

2. It is often stated that anthropogenic climate change is 'settled science' and that the whole scientific community believes it. However, this is far from the case. The World Climate Declaration of 2022, signed initially by 1,900 of the world's top scientists, stated that 'there is no climate emergency'. Many Geologists, Solar Physicists and Electro-Magnetic Engineers dispute the common narrative. Bodies such as The Heartland Institute, The Science and Public Policy Institute, the Wall Street Journal and The Washington Times push hard for the alternative perspectives to be heard, however the Western World is censoring such debate, including Ofcom in the UK, with the implications on stifling debate by all the major media outlets in the UK. Other organisations expressing scepticism of the anthropogenic climate change narrative include Climatism, The CO2 Coalition, The Greening Earth Society, the Global Climate Coalition, the Global Warming Policy Foundation, the Institute of Public Affairs and the International Policy Network. Until recently, even Twitter/X censored alternative scientific viewpoints. The rise in that censorship has resulted in a scientific community only receiving funding if it pursues research that supports the anthropogenic climate change narrative. Also, bodies such as the EU's Copernicus have been established with the set aim to 'prove' and push the narrative.

3. However, there are numerous bodies and growing evidence that the anthropogenic climate change narrative is overblown. These include works by Tony Heller, Patrick Moore (founder of Greenpeace), Nobel Prize-winner Richard Lindzen and Martin Durkin (see 'Climate: The Movie'). Clear evidence shows that bodies pushing the anthropogenic climate change narrative have used inaccurate data; have extrapolated trends irregularly and have even allowed misinterpretation of data. These bodies include NASA, NOAA and individuals pushing the climate narrative such as Al Gore, Michael Mann and John Kerry. However, the censorship industry in the West disallows proper debate on their false claims. Globally, The USA, China and India, which are deemed to be major contributors to climate change, are all sceptical of the science supporting climate alarmism. KCC would wish to allow sensible debate on the topic of climate change.

A Changing Climate

4. The world's climate has always changed. Much is cyclical eg Milankovitch Cycles. Even though throughout modern history there have been numerous climate scares (eg in the 1970s it was believed by the scientific community that the world was heading into a new Ice Age), the current ideology is that the world is heating, and global bodies such as the World Health Authority have even stated the term 'global boiling'. The baseline for such statements of comparison is 1850, or the commencement of the industrial revolution; and with it humankind's associated increase in emissions that cause a greenhouse effect. However, the world is exiting a mini ice age and therefore some warming should be expected.

5. In the UK, we are constantly hearing about new weather records being broken. However, the World Meteorological Association has deemed 80% of the UK's measuring devices to be unfit for purpose. More than 50% of temperature readings are taken adjacent to airport runways (which hold heat) and many more are in city 'heat islands'. The introduction of new measuring devices and the positioning of these vis a vis the ground has been shown to skew readings by up to 0.6 degrees Celsius.

6. Taking a longer-term historical perspective, the world is still very cool, being within the lower quartile of temperatures over the past 400 million years or so.

The world has been warmer than currently in a number of eras in recent history, including Minoan, Roman and Medieval times. It is widely believed that in Roman times, the world was two degrees Celsius warmer than now. A warming world should not be seen as a bad thing. There are ten times more deaths from cold than warmth, and throughout history it has been shown clearly that periods of warmth are more productive and developmental for humans.

Carbon Dioxide

7. The anthropogenic climate change theory states that Carbon Dioxide is a greenhouse gas and therefore acts to trap heat. There is some long-standing evidence that this is the case, however CO₂ has a saturation point, so that every additional molecule of the gas in the atmosphere has a reduced effect. CO₂ is a trace gas, essential for life on earth. The amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere is 0.04% (ie one twenty-fifth of one per cent); and mankind only produces 3% of the world's CO₂. It has to be asked why climate catastrophists are only concerned with the 3% and not the 97% that is naturally occurring.

The UK produces 0.77% of the world's CO₂ emissions (ie less than one per cent), so even if harm from CO₂ was accepted, Kent's contribution to global climate would be so small as to be unmeasurable.

8. CO₂ levels in the Earth's atmosphere have risen from the dangerously low level of 230 parts per million in the 1850s to the current 420 parts per million. Over that time period, this is a minute change, which can be pictorially compared to it being the equivalent of adding one person to a full Royal Albert Hall. Historically, current CO₂ levels are very low indeed. Levels have been 13 times higher in the world's past. In the 1850's with the level of CO₂ in the atmosphere being 230 parts per million, this was dangerously low for the planet, as it is widely accepted that at 150 parts per million, life on Earth would cease. CO₂ is beneficial to life in creating a greener world. In the past 50 years, it has resulted in the greening of more than 15% of the Earth's surface which was previously desert or scrubland, and it results in increased crop yields, thus helping to feed the world.

9. The largest greenhouse gas though is not CO₂, but rather water vapour, making up more than 90% of the world's atmosphere, Yet, there is no clamour for this greenhouse gas to be controlled).

Untruths and Misconceptions

10. There are a number of factors other than cyclical trends that would appear to be drivers of any changing climate. They include the shifting magnetic pole, solar activity (the number of sun spots) and the extent of volcanic activity. However, humankind has no influence over any of these. Perhaps the most significant likely driver of climate change is solar activity. The sun is 30,000 times the size of the Earth, but few references are made in studies to the effect of low solar activity on shifts of the Jetstream to meridional pattern and away from zonal pattern. The impact of this shift is to see heat plumes from the South pulled Northwards (as happened in the heatwave of 2022) and cold air from the Arctic dragged Southwards, as in the freezing weather in central Europe of the same year. The role of volcanoes in affecting weather patterns is commonly ignored, particularly the sea heating caused by underwater volcanic eruptions and the 'greenhouse' emissions/water vapour expelled over land.

11. There have been numerous untruths and misconceptions spread by 'climate alarmists' in recent years. These include the decline in Polar Bear numbers and the mass bleaching of coral reefs (both of which are not supported evidentially); the slicing away of major glaciers due to global warming ('calving' is an annual and natural occurrence); a rising sea-level (the sea level worldwide continues to rise at 3-4 mm per year, as it has done for the past 200 years, even though CO₂ emissions have increased), and the Antarctic Ice Cap melting (the reality is that the Ice extent has increased by 22% since 2016 and is greater than in 1966 – Heller A et al 2024). Over the past 120 years, there has been a 90% fall in the number of deaths caused by extreme weather conditions, demonstrating human civilisation's ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

12. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an international body which produces and compiles scientific research on climate change. It produces two documents at regular intervals: one scientific compendium, and a shorter 'political' document. The scientific compendium is rarely radical, even stating that there has been no discernible increase in the number or severity of extreme weather events including droughts, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires and heat and cold extremes. However, the politically-produced shorter document meant for wider dissemination tends to doctor and catastrophise the

messages for the general public. There have been numerous scientists who have left or refused to work for the IPCC as they do not agree with the political messaging that it is attempting to push.

13. Noting the above, there are simply too many anomalies evident in the climate catastrophism ideology for KCC, as a serious body, to continue with its declaration of 'climate emergency'.

Freedoms and Liberties

14. There is a growing perception of what a society with Net Zero CO2 emissions would have to look like, and it is increasingly feared that the 'climate emergency' is being pushed as a means to increase state control over people's lives. Whether by introducing 15-minute cities to reduce transport movements; planned reductions in car ownership in city areas; forced reduced consumption of red meat (with the consequences this has for farming, land use and ultimately food security), reduced consumption of goods, and possibly the introduction of 'carbon budgets' giving individuals limited allowances for flights and clothing purchase. These agendas, pushed hard by governments, have been deemed by those concerned with individual liberty and freedom as 'anti-human', are being pushed hard by bodies such as the C40 Group of worldwide cities, the World Health Authority, the United Nations (through its Agenda 30 with its 17 sustainability goals) and the government's Climate Change Committee. It is worth noting that none of these organisations has been elected into power.

15. In addition to impacting on our freedoms, accepting this 'climate catastrophism' has financial consequences as well. In the UK, the Labour government has agreed to fund £9.4 billion to unproven science carbon capture, usage and storage plants in the North-West, North-East and in Wales; has agreed to £11.6 billion of International Climate Finance, and provides huge subsidies to push renewable (but unreliable) wind and solar energy, costing everyone in the UK significant amounts of money. The Labour government spent a record £3.5 billion on climate finance in 2024/25. The cost of achieving Net Zero has been estimated to be £800 billion for the UK.

Motion:

This Council resolves to:

- (a) be open-minded but sceptical of anthropogenic climate change.
- (b) welcome open and inclusive debate on the topic.
- (c) always consider ways to enhance the County's energy security and welcome a mixed economy of provision.
- (d) consider any energy scheme proposal with an analysis of its business case; which should consider economic, social and environmental impacts and consequences.
- (e) rescind the prior declaration of a Climate Emergency

Sources:

Paras 1 – 3

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Motion for Time Limited Debate – Environmental Action within Kent

Proposer: Mr Stuart Jeffery

Seconded: Mr Paul Stepto

Background Information provided by the Green Group

Glyphosate is a pesticide often used by local authorities to manage unwanted vegetation in public places. In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a part of the World Health Organisation, classified glyphosate as a group 2A, indicating that it is “probably carcinogenic to humans” and that there was “strong evidence for genotoxicity”.¹ The use of glyphosate raises serious concerns about its environmental impact as well as the potential health risks to humans and animals.

Verges managed for biodiversity are vital habitats for pollinating insects. They also help to reverse pollinator decline and contribute to healthier landscapes. Due to this, it is important that the correct measures are taken to educate individuals on how best to maintain the verges.

Kent County Council introduced the Plan Bee initiative which set out a plan on how Kent residents, businesses and voluntary groups could help protect bees and other pollinators who are essential to Kent’s biodiversity. The strategy previously won The Bees’ Needs Champion, a national award coordinated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for exceptional work.²

This Council resolves the following:

- 1) Call on the Cabinet Member for Environment to introduce and promote a new initiative which would allow residents to adopt their streets, to reduce the use of glyphosate to control weeds to areas which are not adopted.
- 2) Call on the Cabinet Member for Environment to work with the responsible Officers to investigate and consider alternatives to glyphosate.
- 3) Request that all verges which are managed for biodiversity improvements are marked with a bee symbol to ensure they are easily recognised and avoided by contractors and are not accidentally mowed.
- 4) Recognise the exceptional work that KCC Officers have undertaken to develop and manage the Plan Bee initiative to protect Kent’s biodiversity, and the work of residents in engaging with the initiative.
- 5) Call on the Cabinet Member for Environment to work with the responsible Officers to investigate ways to make it easier for residents to adopt verges with an agreement to enhance and improve the biodiversity in them.
- 6) Ask that the Executive agree an ongoing commitment to fund the Plan Bee initiative.

¹ [IARC Monograph on Glyphosate – IARC](#)

² [Kent’s Plan Bee awarded Bees’ Needs Champion status - News & Features - Kent County Council](#)

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Motion for Time Limited Debate – Vaccinations

Proposer: Mr Antony Hook

Seconded: Mr Colin Sefton

Background information provided by the Liberal Democrat Group:

It is important for the Council to urge Kent residents, and in doing so support the KCC's Director of Public Health, to get the relevant vaccines when required. In 2019, The World Health Organization (WHO) listed vaccine hesitancy as one of the biggest threats to global health.¹ Vaccines undergo rigorous safety testing before being introduced and once implemented are constantly monitored in the UK by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for side effects. If enough people are vaccinated, it is more difficult for diseases to spread to those who cannot have vaccines, creating 'herd immunity' and protecting the whole community. Diseases such as smallpox, polio and tetanus have either been eradicated or are now rarely seen as a result of vaccines.

In England, the number of children receiving their MMR vaccine has fallen and as a consequence the diseases measles and mumps are appearing again throughout the country. These diseases can lead to life-threatening conditions like meningitis and can cause hearing loss. If 95% of children receive the MMR vaccine, this would stop measles spreading completely, however if fewer than 90% of children are vaccinated measles, mumps and rubella can spread quickly.² Since 2021, England has failed to reach the national coverage statistic of 95% for the MMR vaccine³ and in addition, not a single childhood vaccine reached the desired target in England last year.⁴

In line with the national picture, the percentage of children receiving their MMR vaccine has decreased in recent years in Kent, falling well below the targets needed to eradicate measles. Since the introduction of the MMR vaccine, cases of measles have reduced each year to a very low number, however due to the declining number of people getting their vaccine, an urgent uptake in the injection is now required to prevent the outbreak of the highly contagious infection. KCC's Director of Public Health and NHS Kent & Medway's Chief Medical Officer recently urged parents and carers to check if their child has had both doses of the MMR vaccine and to ignore misinformation about this life-saving jab. In January 2026, the NHS will be rolling out the MMRV vaccine, which will gradually replace the MMR

¹ The World Health Organisation (2019), *Ten threats to global health in 2019*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019/>

² NHS, *Why vaccination is important and the safest way to protect yourself*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/why-vaccination-is-important-and-the-safest-way-to-protect-yourself/>

³ NHS (September 2023), *Childhood Vaccination Coverage Statistics, England, 2022-23*. *Childhood Vaccination Coverage Statistics, England, 2022-23*. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-immunisation-statistics/england-2022-23/6in-1-vaccine-mmrv-vaccine>

⁴ ITV News (August 2025), *No childhood vaccine reached herd immunity target in England last year*. Available at: <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-08-28/no-childhood-vaccine-reached-herd-immunity-target-in-england-last-year>

vaccine. This will be universally offered and provide children protection from measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox).

To support the current and future health of Kent residents, the Council should encourage all residents to be up to date with their routine vaccinations to give them, their family, and their communities the best protection. In particular, the Council should encourage families to ensure that children are up to date with the current MMR vaccine and in future, the MMRV vaccine.

Motion:

The County Council resolves to:

- Encourage Kent residents to ensure that they are up to date with medically recommended vaccinations and in particular, support the Director of Public Health in encouraging an uptake in the MMR vaccination (and future MMRV vaccine) to prevent an outbreak of measles and mumps.
- Request the Leader of the Council to write to all Kent Primary School Leaders highlighting the measles and mumps public health concern in Kent.
- Request the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care to publicise and promote getting vaccinations during WHO World Immunization Week (24th – 30th April 2026) via the KCC Press Office.