

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 6th May, 2026

10.00 am

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





AGENDA

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 6 May 2026, at 10.00 am
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone

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

Membership (13)

Reform UK (8):	Mr P Chamberlain (Chairman), Mr N Wibberley (Vice-Chair), Mr W Chapman, Ms S Emberson, Mr L Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr M Mulvihill and Mrs B Porter
Liberal Democrat (1):	Mr A J Hook
Restore Britain (1):	Mr D Burns
Green (1):	Mr M A J Hood
Conservative (1):	Mr H Rayner

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

- 1 Apologies and Substitutes
- 2 Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2026 (Pages 1 - 6)
- 4 Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department (Pages 7 - 24)

- 5 26/00016 - Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) 2026-2029 - Delivery Plans
(To Follow)
- 6 Resilience Update (Pages 25 - 36)
- 7 Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests (Pages 37 - 42)
- 8 Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy (Pages 43 - 64)
- 9 26/00027 - Infrastructure Condition Survey Programme (Pages 65 - 82)
- 10 Work Programme 2026 (Pages 83 - 84)
- 11 26/00022 - Freehold Disposals Programme 2026-27 (Pages 85 - 114)
- 12 26/00021 - Biodiversity Net Gain Pilot Scheme at Preston Hill (Pages 115 - 154)

Motion to exclude the press and public for exempt business

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

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(Exempt documents feature within some items. As appropriate, the Committee may resolve to exclude the press and public as set out above.)

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive
03000 416814

Monday, 27 April 2026

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 11 March 2026

PRESENT: Mr P Chamberlain (Vice-Chair), Mr W Chapman, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Finch, Mr M A J Hood, Mr M Mulvihill, Mrs B Porter, Mr H Rayner, Mr N Wibberley and Mr M Paul

ALSO PRESENT: Mr B Collins and Mr C Hespe

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms L Adam (Operations and Client Relationships Manager), Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy), Mrs A Beer (Chief Executive), Mrs C Head (Head of Finance Operations), Mr M Scrivener (Head of Risk and Delivery Assurance), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance), Ms L Gannon (Director of Technology), Ms C Maynard (Chief Procurement Officer), Ms H Savage (Democratic Services Officer), James Church (Chief Information Security Officer) and Ms R Anderson (Head of Business Information, Strategy and Assurance)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**43. Election of Chair**

(Item 2)

1. Mr Paul Chamberlain was nominated by the Leader to be the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and this was agreed by the Committee. In light of this nomination the position of Vice-Chairman became vacant. The Chairman asked for proposals for the election of Vice-Chairman.
2. Mr Chapman proposed, and Mr Finch seconded, that Mr Nick Wibberley be elected Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee
3. RESOLVED that Mr Chamberlain be elected Chairman of the Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee, and Mr Nick Wibberley be elected Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee.

44. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 3)

Apologies were received from Mr Evans and Mr Hook. Mr Paul was present as substitute for Mr Evans.

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

(Item 4)

There were no declarations of interest.

46. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2026

(Item 5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2026 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

47. Risk Management: Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's Departments

(Item 6)

1. Mr Brian Collins (Deputy Leader) and Mr Mike Hand (Risk and Delivery Assurance Officer) introduced the report on Risk Management. Mr Hand explained that the annual report presented the strategic risks on KCC's Corporate Risk Register relevant to this Committee.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members the discussion included the following:
 - (a) In relation to Risk CRR0053 (Asset Management and Degradation and associated impacts, linked to Capital Programme affordability), a Member raised concerns about the impact of budget decisions on the Council's ability to maintain its asset base and expressed concern that insufficient maintenance funding could result in assets deteriorating and being placed into the disposal programme. Mr Collins responded that steps had been taken to improve the Council's financial position, including reducing long-term debt, and that budgets remained subject to review and adjustment. Mrs Cath Head (Head of Finance Operations) advised that the backlog maintenance figure in 2021–22 was £165 million and noted that inflation would need to be added to reflect subsequent years.
 - (b) Members referred to Risk CRR0059 (Risk of significant adverse variance to the level of savings and income agreed in KCC's budget), noting concerns about the adequacy of reserves to manage potential pressures, particularly in adult social care. A Member asked what contingency arrangements were in place should external pressures worsen, referring to rising inflation, international events affecting oil and gas prices, and the potential impact on Council services and costs. Mr Collins acknowledged the global situation and stated that recent movements in oil prices had eased slightly. He advised that the Administration was aware of the risks, holding ongoing discussions, and committed to maintaining a stable financial trajectory.
3. RESOLVED to note the report.

48. Key Performance Indicator Review for 2026/27: Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's Departments

(Item 7)

1. Mr Matt Wagner (Chief Analyst) introduced the report on the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Review for 2026/27 relating to the Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's Departments. He advised that, as part of this year's review, particular focus was given to improving performance management

arrangements across KCC and ensuring that KPIs supported the delivery of value for money. A key outcome of the review was the introduction of a new proposed KPI section for the Commercial and Procurement Division. Mr Wagner highlighted the new Local Outcomes Framework published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in mid February which sets out outcome based performance measures linked to national priorities delivered locally by councils. It was proposed that a further paper be brought to the Committee's July meeting to map the Local Outcomes Framework metrics against existing KPIs, activity indicators and the quarterly performance report.

2. Further to questions and comments from Members the discussion included the following:
 - (a) Asked about the removal of KPIs CS13 and CS14 relating to average speed of answer and KPI CS01 relating to customer satisfaction scores, Mr Wagner explained that the changes were linked to the transition to a new contact centre contract commencing in April. He explained that average speed of answer would not be measured under the new contract, but alternative indicators were in place to monitor responsiveness and quality. He advised that customer satisfaction was now monitored through a more detailed quality scorecard, measured through KPIs CS06A and CS06B, which provided a more comprehensive assessment of call quality for both in hours and out of hours calls. Mr Wagner clarified that the proposed KPIs had been streamlined to reduce duplication and reflect contractual monitoring arrangements.
 - (b) A Member commented on the KPI relating to the percentage of complaints responded to within timescales, noting that current performance stood at 69% against a proposed target of 85%. She expressed hope that appropriate resources would be allocated to support improvement in this area and enhance residents' experience.
3. RESOLVED to note the KPIs and targets proposed for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department for 2026/2027 and to note that a further paper on the Local Outcomes Framework be brought to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee in July.

49. Implementation of the Commercial Strategy - Feedback on Supplier Day *(Item 8)*

1. Mr Chris Hespe (Cabinet Member for Local Government Efficiency) introduced the report on the implementation of the Commercial Strategy and highlighted the importance of the event held on 27 January 2026. He stated that Kent County Council spent approximately £1.47billion per year on third party contracts. He thanked Ms Maynard and her team for delivering a well run and successful event which was attended by over 300 businesses, the majority of which were Kent based SMEs and VCSEs.
2. Ms Claire Maynard (Chief Procurement Officer) confirmed that engagement from local suppliers had been positive. She reiterated the Council's objective of increasing the proportion of spend with SMEs and Kent based suppliers and emphasised the importance of understanding supplier needs to support this

aim. She advised that feedback from the event would inform future engagement and highlighted the importance of continuing to reach both existing and prospective suppliers.

3. Mr Collins highlighted that the event had been delivered at no cost to the Council and congratulated those involved. Asked whether similar events were planned for the future, Ms Maynard responded that feedback from suppliers had indicated strong support for further events. She confirmed that events would remain cost neutral and while further events were planned, dates had not yet been set.
4. RESOLVED to note the report.

50. Biodiversity Net Gain Overview

(Item 9)

1. Mr Brian Collins and Ms Rebecca Anderson (Head of Business Information, Strategy and Assurance) introduced the report which provided an overview of Biodiversity Net Gain units and how Kent County Council could potentially use part of its land portfolio to create habitats capable of generating BNG units for sale. Ms Anderson outlined that planning legislation requires developers to deliver a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity value as part of new developments, resulting in higher quality habitats for wildlife. She explained that a range of delivery models were being considered, from in house provision to fully outsourced arrangements. Each option would be assessed using critical success factors and a weighted scoring approach, as detailed in the report. Ms Anderson confirmed that specific sites would be brought back to the Committee for consideration.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members the discussion included the following:
 - (a) A Member commented that the detailed implications would be important, particularly in balancing biodiversity objectives with public access where sites such as country parks might be involved. He asked whether there was potential to combine biodiversity net gain with other uses, such as solar farms on closed landfill sites, and suggested that dual use sites could deliver benefits for successor councils. Ms Anderson responded that, when assessing sites, all potential options would be considered. She advised that sites would need to be of sufficient size to support multiple uses and that viability, sustainability, and value for money would be key factors in determining how sites were used.
3. RESOLVED to note the report.

51. 26/00012 - Microsoft 365 Licences Enterprise Agreement and Azure Consumption 2026 – 2029

(Item 10)

1. Mr Collins and Ms Lisa Gannon (Director of Technology) introduced the report concerning the renewal of the Microsoft 365 Licences Enterprise Agreement and Azure Consumption contract for the period 2026–2029. Ms Gannon

explained that the Council renewed its Microsoft contract every three years and that the agreement covered a substantial proportion of the Council's technology infrastructure. She advised that Microsoft pricing was standard and publicly set, with licences purchased through a reseller who provided advice to ensure the most cost effective mix of licences. Licence usage was reviewed annually, with a full contractual renewal required every three years.

2. Further to questions and comments from Members the discussion included the following:
 - (a) A Member raised concerns regarding the proposed contract period extending beyond March 2028 in the context of potential local government reorganisation (LGR). Mr Collins responded that the Administration was mindful of the risks associated with LGR but noted that there was currently uncertainty regarding the timetable and outcome. He stated that contracts needed to be negotiated on the basis that the Council continued to operate as the decision making authority until formal change occurred. Mr Whittle explained that once a Structural Change Order was approved by Parliament, the Secretary of State would issue Section 24 directions limiting councils' decision making powers without reference to shadow authorities. Until such directions were issued, the Council was required to continue operating as normal. Officers confirmed that provisions enabling novation or transfer to successor authorities were included in contracts.
 - (b) Ms Gannon advised that the available commercial options were a one year or three year contract, with a one year contract being significantly more expensive. She added that successor authorities would still need Microsoft infrastructure during the vesting period and that the transition of ICT systems could take several years, meaning the expenditure would not be wasted.
3. RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee endorses the proposed decision to:
 1. enter into a new Microsoft licencing agreement for 3 years to meet KCC business and Infrastructure licensing requirements – including the Microsoft Azure Consumption; and
 2. delegate authority to the Director of Technology, in consultation with the Deputy Leader to take all necessary actions, including but not limited to, undertaking negotiations, finalising terms, entering into any required contracts or legal agreements, and executing all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement this decision.

52. Work Programme

(Item 11)

RESOLVED to note the Work Programme subject to the addition of 'Information Governance' to the May agenda, and 'Government's Local Outcomes Framework' being added to the July agenda.

53. 26/00002 - Extension for Kent County Council's insurance arrangements

(Item 12)

1. Mr Collins and Mrs Cath Head (Head of Finance Operations) introduced the report on the extension of Kent County Council's insurance arrangements. Mrs Head advised that the Council's current insurance agreement was due to expire at the end of December 2026. She explained that, due to the impending local government reorganisation, it was anticipated that running a competitive tender at this time would be unlikely to achieve value for money. The report therefore sought approval to extend the existing insurance contract by two years, to December 2028. She noted that the extension would ensure the Council remained insured beyond the anticipated "go live" date for LGR and an exit arrangement would be built into the contract to allow KCC to exit in April 2028, should this be required.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members the discussion included the following:
 - (a) A Member reiterated earlier points regarding the importance of ensuring appropriate contractual provisions in the event of LGR, particularly given the nature of insurance contracts. He expressed concern that changes to the Council's asset base following reorganisation could affect insurance arrangements and stressed the importance that provisions be in place to avoid payment of premiums beyond the period for which cover was required, including appropriate cessation or return of premiums if KCC ceased to exist.
3. RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee endorses the proposed decision to:
 - (a) Extend the Council's current insurance arrangements for a further two years, through to 31st December 2028.
 - (b) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of Kent County Council to, take relevant actions, including but not limited to negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations or other legal agreements, as required, to implement the decision.

54. Cyber Security *(Item 13)*

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

(Open Access to Minutes)

1. Mr Collins, Ms Gannon and Mr James Church introduced the report, which outlined the annual cyber security position for the Committee. Mr Church explained the actions being taken to manage cyber security risks and highlighted the importance of staff training and awareness.
2. RESOLVED to note the report.

From: Linden Kemkaran, Leader of the Council
Brian Collins, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
Amanda Beer, Chief Executive Officer

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 6 May 2026

Subject: Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department (CED) and Deputy Chief Executive's Department (DCED), shows performance against targets set for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

24 of the 30 KPIs achieved target for the latest month reported and were RAG rated Green, three were below target but did achieve the floor standard (Amber), and three did not achieve the floor standard (Red).

Recommendation:

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance position for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department.

1. Introduction

1.1. Part of the role of Cabinet Committees is to review the performance of the functions of the Council that fall within the remit of the Cabinet Committee. To support this role, performance dashboards are regularly reported to each Cabinet Committee throughout the year. This is the third report for the 2025/26 financial year.

2. Performance Dashboard

2.1. This Performance Dashboard for CED and DCED provides results up to February 2026 and is attached in Appendix 1.

2.2. The Dashboard provides a progress report on performance against target for the 30 KPIs for 2025/26. The Dashboard also includes a range of activity indicators which help give context to the KPIs.

2.3. KPIs are presented with RAG alerts to show progress against targets. Details of how the alerts are generated are outlined in the Guidance Notes, included with the Dashboard in Appendix 1.

2.4. Of the 30 KPIs, the latest RAG status is as follows:

- Twenty-four are rated Green – the target was achieved or exceeded.
- Three were rated Amber – performance achieved or exceeded the expected floor standard but did not meet the target for Green.
- Three are rated Red – performance did not meet the expected floor standard. These are:
 - FN06: Percentage of sundry debt due to KCC under 6 months old
 - GL03: Data Protection Act Subject Access Requests (SARs) completed within statutory timescales.
 - CS07: Complaints responded to in timescale

3. Recommendation

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance position for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department.

4. Contact details

Report Author:

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Chief Analyst
Chief Executive's Department
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Relevant Director:

David Whittle
Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance
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Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department

Financial Year 2025/26

Results up to Dec-Feb 2026

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Produced by Kent Analytics



Guidance Notes

Key Performance Indicators

All Key Performance Indicators are provided with RAG (Red/Amber/Green) ratings.

RAG ratings are based on Targets and Floor Standards brought before the Cabinet Committee in July 2025.

Where relevant, RAG ratings are given for both the latest month and year to date (YTD).

RAG Ratings

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

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

Activity Indicators

Activity Indicators representing demand levels are also included in the report. They are not given a RAG rating, instead where appropriate, they are tracked within an expected range represented by Upper and Lower Thresholds. The Alert provided for Activity Indicators is whether results are within the expected range or not. Results can either be in expected range (**Yes**) or they could be **Above** or **Below**. Expected activity thresholds are based on previous years' trends.

When activity indicators do not have expected thresholds, they are shown in the report to provide context for the Key Performance Indicators. In such cases the activity indicators are simply shown with comparison to activity for the previous year.

Key Performance Indicator Summary

Finance	Latest RAG	YTD RAG
FN06: Percentage of sundry debt due to KCC under 6 months old	RED	N/A
FN07: Invoices received by Accounts Payable within 30 days of KCC received date	AMBER	GREEN
FN08: Invoices received on time by Accounts Payable processed within 30 days	GREEN	RED
FN11: Percentage of financial assessments completed within 15 days of referral	GREEN	AMBER
FN12: Percentage of working days aggregate bank balance is in credit	GREEN	AMBER
FN13: Percentage of working days average credit rating for internally managed cash portfolio is no lower than AA	GREEN	GREEN
FN14: Percentage of third-party insurance claims resolved within the designated timescales	GREEN	GREEN
FN15: Statement of accounts (draft & final) published within deadlines	N/A	GREEN
FN16: Publication of budget proposals for Cabinet Committees / Cabinet / County Council		GREEN

Governance, Law & Democracy	Latest RAG	YTD RAG
GL01: Council and Committee papers published at least five days before meetings	GREEN	AMBER
GL02: Freedom of Information Act requests completed within 20 working days	AMBER	RED
GL03: Subject Access Requests (SARs) completed within statutory timescales	RED	RED

Marketing and Resident Experience	Latest RAG	YTD RAG
CS01: Callers who rate the advisors in Contact Point as good	GREEN	GREEN
CS04a: Daytime calls to Contact Point answered	GREEN	GREEN
CS04b: Out of hours calls to Contact Point answered	AMBER	GREEN
CS06a: Daytime calls achieving 85% of quality scorecard	GREEN	GREEN
CS06b: Out of hours calls achieving 85% of quality scorecard	GREEN	GREEN
CS07: Complaints responded to in timescale	RED	RED

Human Resource and Organisational Development	Latest RAG	YTD RAG
HR09: Training evaluated by participants as having delivered stated learning outcomes	GREEN	GREEN
HR10: Training evaluated by participants as having delivered stated learning outcomes	GREEN	GREEN

Health and Safety	Latest RAG	YTD RAG
HR25: Completed corporate themed Health and Safety audits sent within timescale	GREEN	GREEN

Technology	Latest RAG	YTD RAG
ICT01: Calls to ICT Help Desk resolved at the first point of contact	GREEN	GREEN
ICT02: Positive feedback rating with the ICT help desk	GREEN	GREEN
ICT03: Working hours where Kent Public Sector Network is available to staff	GREEN	GREEN
ICT04: Working hours where ICT Services available to staff	GREEN	GREEN
ICT05: Working hours where email is available to staff	GREEN	GREEN

Infrastructure	Latest RAG	YTD RAG
PI01: Rent due to KCC outstanding over 60 days	GREEN	N/a
PI05: Percentage of scheduled Planned Preventative Maintenance completed by due date	GREEN	GREEN
PI06: Percentage of reactive help desk tasks completed by due date	GREEN	GREEN
PI07: Percentage of help desk calls answered within timescale	GREEN	GREEN

Chief Executive's Department

Service Area	Responsible Officer	Cabinet Member
Finance	Brendan Arnold (Corporate Director)	Brian Collins

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Month RAG	YTD	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Year
FN06	Percentage of sundry debt due to KCC under 6 months old	24%	35%	36%	31%	RED	n/a		70%	65%	34%
FN07	Invoices received by Accounts Payable within 30 days of KCC received date	86%	81%	86%	84%	AMBER	86%	GREEN	85%	80%	85%
FN08	Percentage of invoices received on time by Accounts Payable processed within 30 days*	48%	95%	95%	99%	GREEN	84%	RED	98%	95%	96%
FN11	Percentage of financial assessments completed within 15 days of referral**	91%	95%	94%	91%	GREEN	89%	AMBER	90%	85%	88%
FN12	Percentage of working days aggregate bank balance is in credit (Incl. £1m agreed overdraft)	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	99%	AMBER	100%	90%	99%
FN13	Percentage of working days average credit rating for internally managed cash portfolio is no lower than AA	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	100%	GREEN	100%	90%	100%
FN14	Percentage of third-party insurance claims resolved within the designated timescales	100%	99%	99%	99%	GREEN	99%	GREEN	95%	85%	99%
FN15	Final statement of accounts publishing deadline	27/02/2026 Deadline met						GREEN	Date met	Date not met	N/a
FN16	Publication of final budget proposals for Cabinet and County Council consideration	21/01/2026 Cabinet and 04/02/2026 County Council deadlines met						GREEN	Date met	Date not met	N/a

*Annual performance of all invoice payments can be found here: [Annual performance of payments - Kent County Council](#)

** April & May Targets are 60% and Floors are 45% due to the Annual Reassessment process. This also means the YTD and previous year values are calculated from June.

FN06 – There are currently 52 outstanding invoices over £100,000 which are over 6 months overdue, these 52 invoices total £24,555K (74.8% of debt value over 6 months). 44 relate to health debt. The Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board faces severe financial challenges and KCC has agreed with the ICB to go to mediation on these issues (as they relate to KCC as both creditor and debtor) and the precise mechanisms for achieving this are being worked through.

FN07 – 908 invoices were received by the accounts payable team after 30 days during February resulting in the target being missed for that month. The year to date performance remains above target.

FN08 – A move to a new Oracle cloud system during August caused some delays and reporting issues resulting in the below floor standard performance for the year to date, the monthly performance has since recovered, and the target was met in February.

FN11 – This KPI is now meeting target after lower performance due to high volumes earlier in the year.

FN12 – There has been two occasions this year when the KCC account has been overdrawn. Firstly, due to an internal processing issue at NatWest Bank, a transfer from the Pension Fund to KCC on 30/05/2025 was not completed as expected. As a result, the KCC account appeared overdrawn over the weekend. However, no costs were incurred, as NatWest Bank has reversed all associated charges. The second occasion was also over a weekend, when a same day payment raised on 01/08/2025 was not notified to Treasury and therefore not funded. Despite this we have achieved 99% compliance with this KPI over the year so far.

Finance Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Year to date	Prev. Yr Feb-25
FN06b	Value of debt due to KCC (£000s)	41,552	49,009	50,774	47,769	N/a	45,426
FN07b	Number of invoices received by KCC	7,978	7,016	7,703	5,858	73,381	93,383
FN11b	Number of financial assessments received	921	761	774	734	9,097	7,623
FN14b	Number of insurance claims resolved	78	94	188	310	1,567	1,644

FN14b – The increase in January and February was largely due to pothole claims.

Service Area	Responsible Officer	Cabinet Members
Governance, Law & Democracy	Ben Watts (Deputy Chief Executive)	Linden Kemkaran / Brian Collins

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Month RAG	YTD	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Year
GL01	Council and Committee papers published at least five clear days before meetings	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	99%	AMBER	100%	96%	99%
GL02	Freedom of Information (FOI) / Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests completed within 20 working days	87%	88%	83%	86%	91%	AMBER	86%	RED	92%	90%	80%
GL03	Data Protection Act Subject Access Requests (SARs) completed within timescales	75%	59%	66%	41%	73%	RED	61%	RED	90%	85%	56%

GL01 – The Amber RAG for the year to date, was caused by one meeting in June, namely an urgent meeting of the Personnel Committee - Member Appointment panel where there wasn't sufficient time to publish in five clear days.

GL02 – Performance for the year to date remains higher than the previous year, with performance for February just one percentage point below target and the highest monthly performance since November 2019. The number of requests responded to remains well above the expected level. All Directorates continue to achieve performance levels of over 80% this year, with the best performing being the Chief Executive's Department, and Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate, both with 88% completed in timescale this year. The highest number of requests completed (993) has been in the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate.

GL03 – Similarly to GL02, performance has been higher than the previous year, though still below floor standard. The majority of requests come under the Children, Young People and Education Directorate, with this being 76% of all requests this year. The majority of overdue requests relate to SEN, and the total number of requests remains historically high. Resources have been moved within the Information, Resilience and Transparency team to help improve this KPI. The Information Commissioner's Office is currently monitoring KCC's performance.

Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	YTD	In expected range?	Expected Activity		Prev. Yr Feb-25
									Upper	Lower	
GL01b	Committee meetings	13	17	11	13	6	110		N/a		137
GL02b	Freedom of Information requests responded to	255	209	234	233	218	2,592	Above	2,053	1,687	2,147
GL03b	Data Protection Act Subject Access requests responded to	76	66	59	63	78	811	Above	587	477	707

Deputy Chief Executive's Department

Service Area	Responsible Officer	Cabinet Member
Marketing and Resident Experience	Christina Starte (Head of Service)	Linden Kemkaran

Key Performance Indicators - Monthly

Ref	Indicator description	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Month RAG	YTD	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Year
CS01	Percentage of callers who rate the advisors in Contact Point as good	98%	97%	98%	97%	GREEN	97%	GREEN	97%	90%	97%
CS04a	Percentage of daytime calls to Contact Point answered*	98%	97%	95%	98%	GREEN	94%	GREEN	90%	85%	92%
CS04b	Percentage of out of hours calls to Contact Point answered*	94%	92%	93%	92%	AMBER	95%	GREEN	95%	90%	95%
CS06a	Percentage of daytime calls achieving 85% of quality scorecard	76%	75%	73%	74%	GREEN	75%	GREEN	70%	65%	75%
CS06b	Percentage of out of hours calls achieving 85% of quality scorecard	75%	75%	74%	75%	GREEN	76%	GREEN	70%	65%	77%

* CS04a/b - Please note that these figures can vary to those reported for the Agilisys contract, as that contract allows for days of exceptionally high call volumes to be discounted from the KPI calculation. The KPI reported here includes **all** days, with none discounted regardless of call volumes.

CS04b – Performance has been impacted by increased calls due to above average rainfall which causes emergency issues with drainage and temporary traffic light failures. Out of hours particularly in February was affected by staff attrition due to the change in contracts from Agilisys to Capita.

Activity Indicators (Monthly)

Ref	Indicator description	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	YTD 25/26	In expected range?	Expected Range Upper Lower		Prev. Yr Feb-25
CS08	Number of calls answered by Contact Point	34,600	30,654	28,427	37,893	33,147	370,639	Yes	421,000	349,000	374,082
CS12	Number of visits to the KCC website, kent.gov (000s)	535	462	439	596	463	5,800	Below	7,120	5,840	6,187
CS13	Average speed of answer (ASA) by Contact Point - priority services (seconds)	24	10	10	19	9	25	Below	120	30	50
CS14	Average speed of answer (ASA) by Contact Point - all services (seconds)	65	17	26	47	22	69	Below	300	180	114

CS12 - The year-to-date figure for recorded number of visits (sessions) to the kent.gov.uk website was impacted by an outage to Google analytics meaning no data was recorded for a period of 6 days in September. The most visited pages continue to be those relating to Household Waste Recycling Centres which accounted for over 40% of visits to the website

CS13 & CS14 – Average speed of answer below the lower threshold for this indicator shows calls are being answered promptly.

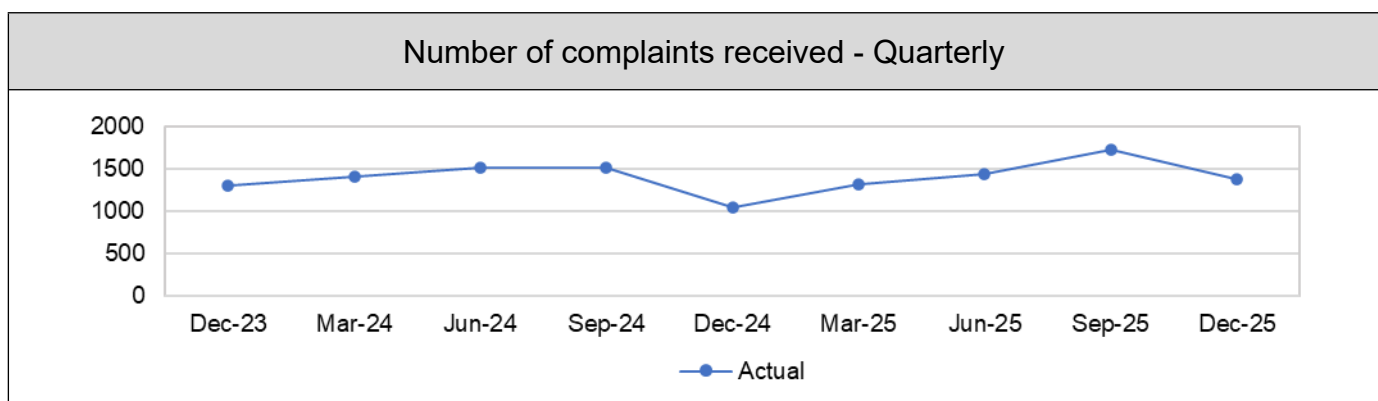
Key Performance Indicator – Quarterly

Ref	Indicator description	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Qtr RAG	YTD	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Year
CS07	Percentage of complaints responded to in timescale	70%	71%	71%	54%	RED	66%	RED	85%	80%	70%

CS07 – Performance against this KPI can be impacted by both the complaints team and the services across the council who are required to draft responses. In addition to the usual pressure among services, performance was also affected by earlier resourcing pressures within the complaints team, which led to slower than usual acknowledgement and progression of cases. The team is now fully staffed, though time will be needed for new colleagues to fully embed and for backlogs to be cleared. This particularly affected CYPE, where existing backlogs were further exacerbated

In Quarter 3, complaint volumes decreased by 21% compared with the previous quarter but were 31% higher than the same quarter last year. Over the 12 months to December, there was a 7% increase in complaints compared with the previous year. While volumes naturally fell following the usual peak seen in September, we are still seeing an overall upward trend in complaints being received.

Across Directorates, the highest number of complaints was received by the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate (GET), which responded to 75% within the 20-working-day timescale. The Chief Executive’s Department and Deputy Chief Executive’s Department together achieved 79% within timescale. Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) responded to 48% of complaints within timescale; however, agreed extensions for complex cases, even when formally agreed with the customer, are still recorded as late. Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) responded to 12% of complaints within timescale. A reduction in overdue cases was seen during the quarter as the complaints team worked closely with services to close long-standing complaints, resulting in 119 more complaints being closed than received in Quarter 3.



Service Area	Responsible Officer	Cabinet Member
Human Resources and Organisational Development	Diane Christie (Assistant Director)	Brian Collins

Key Performance Indicators – Monthly

Ref	Indicator description	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Month RAG	YTD	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev Year
HR09	Live learning events evaluated by participants as having delivered stated learning outcomes	98.8%	99.4%	99.5%	98.4%	GREEN	99%	GREEN	97%	95%	99%
HR10	E-learning training evaluated by participants as having delivered stated learning outcomes	100%	99.7%	99.8%	99.7%	GREEN	99%	GREEN	97%	95%	New KPI

Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	In expected range?	Expected Range Upper Lower		Prev. Yr Feb-25
HR12	Number of current change activities being supported	57	58	58	59	63	Below	90	80	52
HR13	Total number of e-learning training programmes completed (YTD)	54,404	71,493	79,818	89,019	96,910	Above	77,917	64,167	79,922
HR16	Number of registered users of Kent Rewards	23,181	23,252	23,287	21,770	21,790	Yes	23,000	19,000	22,886
HR21	Number of current people management cases being supported	194	196	212	218	211	Above	100	90	155
HR23	Percentage of staff who have completed all 3 mandatory learning events	93%	93%	93%	94%	96%	Above	90%	85%	93%
HR24	Total number of live learning events delivered (YTD)	777	861	981	1,090	1,144	Yes	1,375	917	New Indicator

HR12 – Whilst the volume of change activity was lower than anticipated in Quarter 3 and 4, the scale and complexity required a similar level of resources. Change activity is driven by the wider business and fluctuates monthly, with some activities spanning multiple months. The complexity of these activities varies significantly, requiring different levels of resources and knowledge.

HR13 - During phase 1 of the Oracle Cloud Programme, all finance and procurement learners were required to watch an introductory video before they could gain access to the new system - this requirement resulted in a significant rise in course completions earlier in the year. In November, ASCH asked all of their staff to undertake the Finance Assessment and Income suite of e-learning courses, which led to a higher return for that month than expected. In January, corporate communications went out regarding our approach to pay, including the requirement to be compliant with all mandatory training which subsequently led to an increase in completions. This impact can also be seen in HR23.

HR21 - Case activity is driven by requests from Managers and fluctuates from month to month. We have seen the number of cases rise in Quarter 3 and 4 by a significant number. The high level indicates that managers are continuing to take a robust approach and managing cases through the appropriate channels with HR support and advice

Service Area	Responsible Officer	Cabinet Member
Health and Safety	Jonty Tindall (Head of Service)	Brian Collins

Key Performance Indicators – Quarterly

Ref	Indicator description	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Qtr RAG	YTD	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Year
HR25	Percentage of corporate themed Health and Safety audits sent in 7 days	100%	100%	100%	99%	GREEN	100%	GREEN	95%	85%	100%

Service Area	Responsible Officer	Cabinet Member
Technology	Lisa Gannon (Director)	Brian Collins

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Month RAG	Year to Date	Year RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Year
ICT01	Calls to ICT Help Desk resolved at the first point of contact	86%	86%	87%	84%	GREEN	87%	GREEN	70%	65%	79%
ICT02	Positive feedback rating with the ICT help desk	97%	96%	97%	96%	GREEN	96%	GREEN	95%	90%	96%
ICT03	Working hours where Kent Public Sector Network is available to staff	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	100%	GREEN	99.8%	99.0%	100%
ICT04	Working hours where ICT Services are available to staff	99.9%	100%	99.8%	100%	GREEN	99.8%	GREEN	99.0%	98.0%	99.7%
ICT05	Working hours where email is available to staff	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	100%	GREEN	99.0%	98.0%	100%

Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Year to Date	Prev. Yr. Feb-25
ICT01b	Calls to ICT Help Desk	4,636	4,266	4,942	4,032	56,833	83,844
ICT02b	Feedback responses provided for ICT Help Desk	851	785	1,035	805	9,905	15,749

ICT01b & 02b - Over the past three years, the service has worked to modernise ICT service delivery, including enhancements to self-service functionality and the refresh of end-user technology, increasing automation and reducing issues associated with an aging technical estate. Improvements to user onboarding through weekly inductions enable early identification and resolution of issues, while TechBars provide accessible face-to-face support and broaden engagement with ICT services. The introduction of a new telephony platform, including a callback facility, has further improved accessibility by reducing time spent waiting in call queues. Collectively, these changes have contributed to a reduction in inbound Service Desk calls; however, overall demand remains high, reflecting a shift towards more proactive and efficient channels rather than a reduction in workload.

Service Area	Responsible Officer	Cabinet Member
Infrastructure	Rebecca Spore (Director)	Brian Collins

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Month RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Year
PI01	Percentage of rent due to KCC outstanding over 60 days (including rent deferment invoices)	0.8%	0.6%	1.2%	2.7%	1.0%	GREEN	5%	10%	3.1%

Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Year to Date	Prev. Yr. Feb-25
PI01b	Total rent invoiced (£000s)	193	23	696	160	708	4,442	4,362
PI03c	Capital receipts banked (£000s)	1,453	1,445	5	1,828	535	7,705	25,576

Service Area	Responsible Officer	Cabinet Member
Infrastructure	Rebecca Spore (Director)	Brian Collins

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Month RAG	YTD	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Year
PI05	Percentage of scheduled Planned Preventative Maintenance completed by due date	95%	97%	94%	96%	GREEN	97%	GREEN	90%	80%	98%
PI06	Percentage of reactive help desk tasks completed by due date	91%	94%	94%	90%	GREEN	93%	GREEN	80%	71%	93%
PI07	Percentage of help desk calls answered within timescale	99%	100%	99%	99%	GREEN	100%	GREEN	90%	85%	99%

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Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Year to Date	Prev. Yr. Jan-25
PI05b	Number of Planned Preventative Maintenance tasks responded to	2,259	3,279	2,809	2,253	2,278	24,789	25,420
PI06b	Number of reactive tasks responded to	935	983	912	684	955	8,956	7,663
PI07b	Number of help desk calls responded to	284	351	353	224	392	3,012	3,238

From: Brian Collins, Deputy Leader
Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee - 6 May 2026

Subject: Resilience Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All - Countywide

Summary: This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Resilience and Emergency Planning Service in planning for, responding to, and recovering from incidents across the county over the past four months.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Resilience and Emergency Planning Service is responsible for ensuring Kent County Council (KCC) meets its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). As a Category 1 responder, KCC has seven duties to fulfil, spanning planning for, responding to, and recovering from incidents and emergencies affecting KCC and other responding agencies in the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) (of which KCC is a member).
- 1.2 As outlined in the [LGA Councillors Guide to Civil Resilience](#), officers must develop the operational expertise to manage crises effectively. For councillors, it means stepping confidently into a political leadership role – before, during, and after emergencies. Officers and councillors have distinct roles, but they're most powerful when they complement each other.
- 1.3 The Local Government Association (LGA) also offers specific guidance for senior councillors with executive responsibilities, including cabinet members and committee chairs on their role in supporting civil resilience.

2. Recent Incidents

- 2.1 KCC operates a number of on-call incident response roles, coordinated by the Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO). The DEPO is the single point of contact for other agencies to request KCC involvement in the response to an

incident. The DEPO is also responsible for alerting other local authorities and voluntary sector organisations, should either of those sectors also be required.

2.2 Over the course of the year, the DEPO will respond to and receive alerts about a range of incidents or threats, including flood / weather warnings, border traffic issues, pollution events, and disruption to infrastructure. Three of the most significant incidents from the past 6 months are outlined below.

2.3 **Kent water disruption, 6 January 2026**

2.3.1 On Tuesday 6 January 2026, further water disruption occurred in the South Tunbridge Wells area, linked to issues with the Blackhurst Reservoir. A decision was taken to stand up a Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) and a Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) in response to the ongoing water outage, led by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), with KCC attending alongside other responding agencies.

2.3.2 On Saturday 10 January, it became apparent that the disruption was spreading across the county due to issues with Southern Water infrastructure. This forced Southern Water to cease bulk water transfers to the South East Water system, resulting in customers across mid-Kent experiencing a loss of supply. The number of customers off supply varied on a daily basis but was usually in the 5,000-20,000 range.

2.3.3 Due to the increase in affected areas beyond one district and with the agreement of TWBC, KCC took the lead on the response, and a Major Incident was declared. A Media and Comms Cell and a Vulnerable People and Communities Cell (both chaired by KCC) were established to manage specific aspects of the response.

2.3.4 Supplies eventually returned across the county by 19 January 2026.

2.3.5 KCC services involved in the response to this incident included Resilience and Emergency Planning, Public Health, Highways, Education, Social Care (Adults and Children's), Infrastructure, and Communications (MRX).

2.3.6 KCC ran an internal debrief after the incident. Areas to be strengthened included elements of staff resourcing, data processing, and internal comms. Good practice identified included cross-directorate collaboration, rapid mobilisation, and the engagement with the Media and Comms and Vulnerable People and Communities Cells. The recommendations have been included in the new Resilience Lessons Identified process, and progress of their implementation will be tracked through both the Cross Directorate Resilience Forum (CDRF) and individual Directorate Resilience Groups.

2.3.7 A multi-agency debrief for the December and January water outages took place in March 2026. Areas for improvement included MP engagement, staff resourcing, information sharing, alternative water provision, and communications. Good practice identified covered Category 1 responding agency liaison, the use of frequently asked questions (FAQs), and support to health settings. The recommendations have been included in the KMRF Lessons Identified process, and progress of their implementation will be tracked through both the KMRF Lessons Identified Group, and the KMRF Delivery Board.

2.3.8 The KCC Short Focussed Inquiry reviewing both water outages is currently ongoing and is scheduled to report back to the Scrutiny Committee in May 2026.

2.4 **Canterbury Meningitis Outbreak – 15 March 2026**

2.4.1 On Sunday 15 March, KMRF partners were alerted to an outbreak of meningitis in Canterbury. The lead agency for the incident was UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), but they tasked the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) to manage command and control meetings. Whilst the NHS could resource the TCG meetings, they requested KCC Public Health to chair and manage SCG meetings. KCC agreed to the request, and the Director of Public Health and Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) shared the chairing duties. A Media and Comms Cell were also set up, chaired by KCC MRX.

2.4.2 A Major Incident was declared for the response.

2.4.3 Alongside the KMRF structures, UKHSA activated their national Incident Management Team multi-agency structure, which KCC Public Health also attended. KCC also activated extraordinary meetings of the Cross Directorate Resilience Forum to manage the internal response.

2.4.4 KCC services involved included The Resilience and Emergency Planning Service (REPS), Public Health, MRX, Education, Coroners, and Social Care (Adults and Children's).

2.4.5 The incident response was stood down on Thursday 26 March. An internal KCC debrief is scheduled for 30 April, followed by a multi-agency debrief at the end of April. The Head of Resilience and Emergency Planning will provide a verbal update on the internal debrief at Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 6 May.

2.5 Installation of the Archbishop of Canterbury – 25 March 2026

2.5.1 On 25 March, the ceremonial installation of the Archbishop of Canterbury took place in Canterbury Cathedral. The Lord Lieutenant and KCC Leader were among the guests at the service, alongside members of the Royal Family and senior politicians.

2.5.2 A full multi-agency operation was set-up as a contingency should any incidents arise. The Strategic and Tactical Coordination centres, hosted by Kent Police, were opened and responding agencies, including KCC, attended.

2.5.3 The day was a useful test of partner capabilities and relationship building. KCC also took the opportunity to do a limited test of our new Airwave radio capability.

3. Member briefing sessions

- 3.1 The Resilience and Emergency Planning Service has continued to run briefing sessions for all members on the duties placed upon KCC under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), what that means in practice for the authority, and the role of officers and elected members in planning for, responding to, and recovering from incidents in Kent and Medway.
- 3.2 As highlighted at previous meetings of this committee, part of the learning from the Grenfell Tower fire incident is the culture of local authorities recognising the importance of resilience.
- 3.3 Elected members are part of this, and this training is an important part of improving members' awareness of their role before, during, and after an incident.
- 3.4 We have now held six-member briefing sessions since October 2025, and 72% of members have attended.
- 3.5 Whilst the presentation, the accompanying Handbook, and key links have been provided on the Member SharePoint area, all members are strongly encouraged to prioritise attending a briefing session to validate their knowledge, and to have an opportunity to raise questions or issues with officers.
- 3.6 Further sessions are being arranged in April and May 2026, to ensure 100% of members can attend.

4. Exercise Troy

- 4.1 Exercise Troy, a cyber incident simulation held in October 2025 (see Appendix A for details of the scenario), has now been fully evaluated, and the lessons learned have been incorporated into a wider lesson learned programme. As part of this work, clear actions have been developed and assigned to relevant individuals and services.
- 4.2 The resulting plan was presented at the most recent Cross Directorate Resilience Forum and will be circulated to all teams and services to support ongoing improvement as part of the new Resilience Lessons Identified process. Progress against these actions will be reviewed as a standing agenda item at both the Cross Directorate Resilience Forum and individual Directorate Resilience Groups.
- 4.3 Fourteen key recommendations were identified from the exercise which focused on:
- Ensuring that all BCP plans are up to date with regular review process and contact details – The new Business Continuity Planning (BCP) system that has been adopted includes this functionality and is due to be audited as part of the council's audit programme to provide assurance as to the use of the system.
 - The creation of guidance and communication protocols - The delivery of this action requires input/ actions from a number of teams across the council. Progress on these has been delayed as a result of the need to move to response for a number of recent incidents but is being progressed to develop the necessary guidance for services.
 - Review of the contact centre capacity and contingency arrangements - Following the mobilisation of the new provider this will be developed further.
 - Develop and reconfirm protocols in relation to office occupancy during system outages. The facilities management team are reviewing processes
 - Further training and increased awareness in relation to Business Continuity Plans and responsibilities – an Organisational Resilience eLearning course has been drafted which includes a section on Business Continuity to be added to the councils online training system 'Delta' when finalised. Current communication and engagement routes will continue to be used and further developed including the use of KNET, specific and corporate exercises and the use of existing forums.
 - Enhance the lessons learnt process – a formal process has been implemented which is now a standing item at the cross-directorate groups

4.4 The need for an increased awareness of business continuity plans

4.4.1 REPS has reviewed the training materials and supporting documents for the Business Continuity system (Meridian) to ensure they are accessible and fit for purpose. Updates have also been made to the information and tools available on KNet. In addition, REPS Head of Service will be meeting individually with teams that have not yet begun developing their plans in the system, to identify where further support may be needed.

4.4.2 The REPS Team is also planning a renewed messaging campaign to support promotion of the system, aligned with Business Continuity and Resilience Awareness Week (18–22 May).

4.5 The importance of realistic and relevant scenarios; the value of using learning from past incidents; the value of staff wellbeing

4.5.1 Development of the Business Continuity programme for 2026 has begun, which will focus on the theme of Pandemic. The programme will explore the impacts on staff resourcing and the effects on workforce wellbeing. It will draw on learning from the Covid-19 response, insights from the national exercise conducted in the autumn (Pegasus), and any further lessons captured through the recent meningitis outbreak debrief.

5. Kent and Medway Resilience Forum engagement

5.1 KCC is a proactive and engaged member of the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF). A key part of this is the provision of KCC staff (along with Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service staff) to the multi-agency Kent Resilience Team (KRT). The KRT is the central team that coordinates the work of the KMRF, ensuring partners work together as part of their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act to collaborate, coordinate, and develop plans to respond to incidents.

5.2 The KMRF structure is made up of the core Strategic and Delivery Boards, four standing groups, and numerous working groups. Appendix C outlines how KCC engages with each of these.

5.3 KCC regularly sends delegates on courses provided by the KMRF as part of the annual Training and Exercising Programme. The 2026/27 programme has just been released, and KCC emergency response staff have been scheduled to attend a wide range of courses over the next year, in order to maintain competency in their roles.

5.4 The next significant engagement that KCC will undertake with KMRF partners will be Ex Salvus, a multi-agency multi-part exercise taking place throughout 2026. The aim of the exercise is to explore and critically challenge KMRF

partners and stakeholders' resources and capabilities to manage the secondary impacts of mass evacuation at an event site.

5.4.1 This will be achieved by: validating Control Room training through a live call; running a no-notice stand-up of the Strategic and Tactical Co-ordination Groups to validate KMRF Command Training; providing a simulation briefing for KMRF partners and stakeholders to test organisational preparedness, capabilities and constraints; and testing casualty tracking with SECAMB and the NHS through a live casualty management exercise, including the roles of and information-sharing arrangements between the Survivor Reception Centre, Casualty Bureau, Friends and Family Centre, and Casualty Tracker.

5.4.1 KCC is involved in the planning for the exercise and is leading the humanitarian assistance workstream.

5.4.2 KCC is also advocating for an observer programme, to allow KCC senior officers and key elected members to understand KMRF preparations.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The work of the Resilience and Emergency Planning Service is wide-ranging and spans all services. While the Service plans on the basis that the risks it helps to mitigate—through planning, capability development, training, exercising and embedding lessons identified—may not materialise, experience in Kent and elsewhere continues to demonstrate the value of effective preparation.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

10. Background Documents

10.1 Local Government Association – [A Councillor's Guide to Civil Resilience](https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-guide-civil-resilience#part-a-supporting-senior-councillors)
<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-guide-civil-resilience#part-a-supporting-senior-councillors>

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix A – Ex Troy scenario overview
11.2 Appendix B– KCC engagement with KMRF groups

12. Contact details

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Appendix A – Ex Troy Scenario Overview

- Exercise Troy simulates a major cyber incident to test KCC's resilience and preparedness. The scenario begins with a targeted phishing email sent to hundreds of staff, designed to appear as a legitimate communication about annual leave. This email contained a malicious link, which, when clicked by several employees, triggers a ransomware attack that disrupts access to critical council systems.
- As the incident unfolds, the council face escalating challenges. Key services (including social care, payroll, HR, and customer-facing portals) become inaccessible due to data encryption. The public quickly notice service disruptions, leading to an increase in contact centre activity and media interest. Technology teams respond by investigating the breach, issuing communications to staff, and implementing precautionary system shutdowns to contain the threat.
- The exercise progresses to a stage where systems remain offline for an extended period, with partial restoration only possible through offline backups. A ransom demand is made public, increasing scrutiny from both the media and affected residents.
- The exercise concludes with systems only partially restored, prompting the council to implement a phased recovery plan. Proactive measures are taken to address and correct misinformation spreading on social media.

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Appendix B – KCC engagement with KMRF groups

Group	KCC staff attending
Executive Board	Attend
Delivery Board	Chair and attend
Risk Assessment Group	Chair and attend
Command, Control, and Coordination	Attend
Emergency Plans and Capabilities Group	Attend
Training and Exercise Group	Attend
Lessons Identified Lessons Learnt Group	Attend
Long Term Risk and Horizon Scanning Group	Vice-chair and attend
Death Management Group	Attend
Mass Fatalities	Chair and attend
Inland Pollution Group	Chair and attend
Severe Weather Group	Attend
Humanitarian Assistance	Chair and attend
Utilities	Attend
Community Resilience	Attend
Media and Comms	Chair and attend
Business Continuity	Chair
Kent Voluntary Sector Emergency Group	Attend
Resilient Telecoms	Attend
Fuel	Chair and attend
National Power Outage	Attend
Local Authority Emergency Planning Group	Vice-chair and attend

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From: Benjamin Watts, Deputy Chief Executive

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 6 May 2026

Subject: Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Following discussions with Members, this report provides some of the further information requested in relation to KCC's performance in handling Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and Subject Access Requests (SARs). It also identifies the key pressures affecting statutory compliance and sets out the ongoing work to improve performance.

Recommendation:

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE this report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following a briefing for the Committee in March 2026 which covered the legislative background and the challenges in responding to Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests, Members requested a further paper be brought to this meeting to quantify some of the pressures and to explain the work being undertaken to improve compliance.
- 1.2 The below challenges to statutory compliance were highlighted as part of the briefing:
- Increasing volumes of requests, placing sustained pressure on teams.
 - Greater complexity, including a rise in requests generated or expanded through AI tools.
 - Limited capacity within operational delivery units and the Information Governance team.
 - Low prioritisation of requests in operational areas, where other statutory duties carry stronger and more immediate need for action and/or enforcement risks.
 - Requests increasingly used as a substitute route for complaints, adding further strain on resources.
- 1.3 It is important to note that the significant improvements and those planned are within existing resource levels which have not been increased in line with the growth in volume/activity.

2. Freedom of Information Requests

- 2.1 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), KCC is required to provide the requested information within the statutory timescale of 20 working days.

2.2 Whilst resources haven't gone up, the volume of FOI/EIR requests has increased significantly over the last five years, particularly in 2025/26. Despite this, partly because of a range of improvement activity, the percentage of requests closed within statutory timescales has improved, rising from around 76% to 88.5%. Whilst this represents a sustained improvement, it is below the ICO's benchmark for 95% compliance.

Year	Volume	Proportion
2021/22	1966	76.2%
2022/23	1738	76.9%
2023/24	2159	75.9%
2024/25	2344	80.0%
2025/26	3003	88.5%

2.3 In 2025/26 nearly 40% of the 3003 requests were for the Growth, Environment and Transportation directorate. The next largest area was the Children, Young People and Education directorate, these combined represent nearly 60% of activity.

Directorate	Volume	Proportion
Growth, Environment and Transportation	1155	38.5%
Children, Young People and Education	639	21.3%
Deputy Chief Executive's Department	546	18.2%
Chief Executive's Department	371	12.4%
Adult Social Care Services and Health	292	9.7%

2.4 A small number of divisions account for a large proportion of requests. The five divisions which receive the most requests represent nearly 59% of activity.

Division	Volume	Proportion
Highways and Transportation (GET)	708	23.6%
Education (CYPE)	337	11.2%
Governance, Law and Democracy (DCED)	328	10.9%
Finance (CED)	205	6.8%
Growth and Communities (GET)	190	6.3%

2.5 In 2025/26, 2657 of the 3003 requests were completed within statutory timescales (20 working days or less). Of the remaining 346 requests:

- 122 cases (35%) were completed on Day 21 – 25. This significant proportion of cases narrowly miss compliance. If these cases had been completed on time, this would have improved compliance to 92.5%.
- 148 cases (43%) were completed on Day 26 – 40. This grouping represents systemic delay, not just minor slippage and is driving overall non-compliance.
- 76 cases (22%) exceeded 40 working days. Whilst these long running cases represent a relatively small subset of cases; they disproportionately increase reputational risk and management effort as they are strongly correlated with internal reviews and complaints to the ICO.

These late cases (21+ working days) are mainly associated with the high-volume divisions listed in 2.4.

- 2.6 Requests submitted via email or the online form account for 99.5% of all requests in 2025/26; email alone represents over 75% of all requests. We will be exploring the return on redirecting a proportion of email correspondence to the online form which may reduce handling times and improve consistency.

Request Type	Volume	Proportion
Email	2339	75.87%
Online Form	728	23.61%
Phone	15	0.49%
Letter	1	0.03%

- 2.7 FOI/EIR requests continue to rise at pace, with a significant concentration of requests within a small number of high-volume directorates and divisions. While performance has improved markedly in recent years, particularly in 2025/26, compliance remains below the ICO’s benchmark and is increasingly impacted by systemic delays rather than isolated cases.
- 2.8 Following the work in previous years, we continue to explore a number of relatively small operational improvements that could deliver meaningful gain particularly by addressing marginal late cases and encouraging greater use of the online request form. We continue to look at proactive publication of information as a mechanism to manage requests and the relationship with AI searching capacity on internet searches would seem to improve outcomes for those looking for information.

3. Subject Access Requests

- 3.1 Under UK GDPR, KCC is required to respond to a Subject Access Request (SAR) without undue delay and within one month of receipt; this is extendable by a further two months for complex requests. An automatic one-month extension has been applied to all SEN SARs received by KCC due to their complexity.
- 3.2 The volume of requests has risen sharply especially in the last two years. Whilst performance has improved since 2023/24 even with heavier workloads; it is significantly below the ICO’s benchmark of 85%.

Year	Volume	Closed in Timescale
2021/22	580	62.6%
2022/23	551	64.6%
2023/24	536	45.3%

2024/25	756	55.7%
2025/26	886	61.3%

3.3 In 2025/26, a total of 886 Subject Access Requests were received across the organisation. The majority of requests were received by the Children, Young People and Education directorate which also had the lowest percentage of cases closed within the statutory timescale. Directorates with lower numbers of requests were generally able to respond within timescales more consistently.

Directorate	Volume	Closed in Timescale
Children, Young People and Education	682	57.3%
Adult Social Care Services and Health	107	66.4%
Deputy Chief Executive's Department	61	82.0%
Chief Executive Department	29	75.9%
Growth, Environment and Transportation	7	100.0%

3.4 Demand is heavily concentrated in a small number of divisions. Specialist Children Services, Education, and Older Persons / Physical Disability account for over 80% of all cases.

Division	Volume	Closed in Timescale
Specialist Children Services (CYPE)	518	62%
Education (CYPE)	144	37%
Older Persons / Physical Disability (ASCH)	85	71%

The Information Governance team are working with CYPE to improve performance within the resources available.

3.5 As of March 2026, there was an organisation wide backlog of 55 cases:

- 53 were up to six months overdue including 23 which were due to be completed by the end of 2025.
- 2 cases were more than six months overdue.

3.6 In July 2025, KCC was invited by the ICO to participate in its Care Experience Pilot due to concerns about KCC's compliance in responding to SARs. The pilot project is aimed at improving access to records for those with care experience. It also provides the Council with the opportunity to take steps to improve its general SARs compliance. At the time of invitation, SARs compliance was at 53%.

3.7 In 2025, KCC received 49 SARs related to care-experienced young people; 73.5% (36 cases) were closed within the statutory timeline. Of the 36 cases:

- 25 had a deadline extension due to complexity
- 22 needed files to be retrieved and scanned from the archive centre
- 10 required redactions

3.8 CYPE has put in place the following measures to support the SARs process for care-experienced young people:

- All SARs for care leavers are managed by a dedicated point of contact within the 18+ Care Leaver Service, ensuring consistency and expertise in handling these requests.
- The Participation & Engagement team is working with the Children in Care services, the Independent Reviewing Officer, Young Adult Council and 18+ service on developing a new format for providing information to care leavers at an earlier stage to enhance their experience by providing more meaningful information at the age of 18, as part of their transition to adulthood.

3.9 Whilst KCC has made some progress in improving SAR performance against a backdrop of rising demand, compliance remains below regulatory expectations. Participation in the ICO Care Experience Pilot and the targeted measures introduced for care-experienced young people are positive steps, showing that focused ownership and process improvement can deliver better outcomes.

4. Proposals to improve compliance

4.1 Current arrangements are under sustained pressure and further improvement is required to ensure compliance, manage reputational and regulatory risk, and uphold individuals' statutory rights.

4.2 Five targeted proposals are set out below to support this activity:

Improve directorate ownership and accountability

FOI & SAR compliance is only routinely monitored by this Committee as part of the performance dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department. It is proposed that FOI & SAR data is included in the quarterly performance reports taken to each Cabinet Committee going forward so that each Committee has increased oversight for FOI & SAR compliance in their respective areas. This will also introduce clearer ownership of FOI/SAR performance at a directorate level.

Improve training and support for operational staff

Staff are currently required to undertake two mandatory e-learning courses, Introduction to Information Governance and GDPR: Data Protection Essentials, every two years. Subject to CMT approval, we are looking to consolidate this training into one mandatory e-learning course to specifically cover the legal obligations and importance of timeliness relating to FOIs & SARs in addition to wider information governance, data protection and cyber security training.

Develop action plan for marginal late cases

A significant proportion of FOI/EIR cases narrowly miss compliance. During quarter one of 2026/27, we are developing an action plan to identify small improvements in resourcing, triage or escalation which could quickly recover these into "on time" performance.

Expand standard responses and proactive publication

Working with the IG Leads, we will look to identify high-frequency FOI/EIR themes and:

- Develop reusable response templates to expedite the provision of compliant responses
- Proactively publish regularly requested datasets and explanations.
- Signpost requestors to already-published information.

Drive greater use of the online request form

We will look to actively redirect FOI/EIR requests from email to the corporate online form through clearer guidance on the website and automated email responses.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Demand for FOI/EIR and SARs continues to increase. While FOI/EIR performance has improved, compliance remains below the ICO benchmark, and SAR performance continues to present regulatory and reputational risk. The proposals in this report focus on strengthening accountability, improving staff capability, addressing marginal late cases, and reducing avoidable demand. Together, these measures aim to improve statutory compliance, manage risk and ensure timely access to information.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE this report.

6. Contact Details

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To: Policy & Resources Committee, 6th May 2026

Subject: Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2029
 Year Two Update 2025-2026

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway: ICS DivMT, 14th April 2026
 ASCH DMT, 14th April 2026

Future Pathway: None

Summary: This paper gives a summary of progress against the Kent and Medway Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2029 in its second year of delivery, focussing on Kent County Council and Partnership projects. This covers a broad range of areas across the domestic abuse agenda including:

Early Intervention & Prevention:

- Domestic Abuse Awareness Campaigns
- Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website
- KCC as a White Ribbon Organisation
- Professional Training
- Domestic Abuse Champions

Immediate Needs:

- MARAC Hub change programme
- Reaching out to schools
- Operation Encompass
- Responding to CAPVA
- Temporary Accommodation Research Project

Recovery:

- Differentiating Parental Conflict from Abuse
- The impact of abuse on mental health
- Suicide & Domestic Abuse
- Recognising the experts

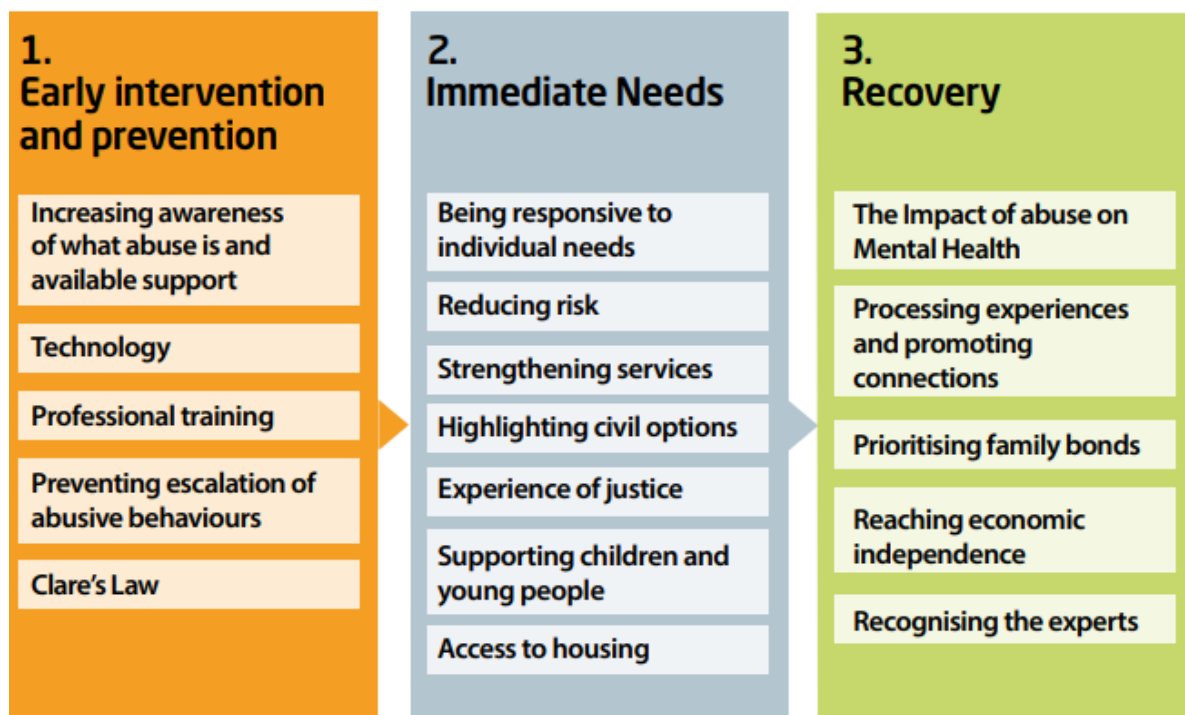
Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee are asked to:

1. **Note** progress made against the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy and make recommendations on future delivery plan direction.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy is a partnership document overseen by the Kent and Medway Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group.
- 1.2 The strategy embodies the approach of its 20 partners to *‘reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, and ensure that where domestic abuse takes place, all those affected get the right support, quickly’*. It was launched in 2024, following endorsement at Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee where an annual report was requested.
- 1.3 The strategy includes both statutory requirements for tier one local authorities to support people accessing safe accommodation services, and commitments across the partnership to support people impacted by domestic abuse in Kent and Medway. The strategy continues to develop a coordinated community response to improving the experiences of those impacted by abuse across each stage of their experience, making commitments against early intervention and prevention, immediate need, and recovery.

Figure 1 - Strategy Pillars & Commitments



- 1.4 A review of the Strategy will take place in 2027/8 to assess whether it continues to meet the needs of the partnership and should remain in place for its full 5-year span, or whether an update or new strategy is necessary.
- 1.5 The Summary Strategy and full Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 – 2029 are attached as **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**.

2. Delivering against our Strategy

- 2.1 To support the strategy the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group (Executive Group) oversee a delivery plan managed by the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships Team and discharged via the governance structure.
- 2.2 The delivery plan is drafted annually in partnership with Medway Council and in coordination with each of the partners of the Executive Group. This process focusses on creating a user friendly and responsive plan, allocating actions to subgroups within the governance structure. An update against each pillar or strategy is provided to the Executive Group on a rotating quarterly basis.

Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Partnership

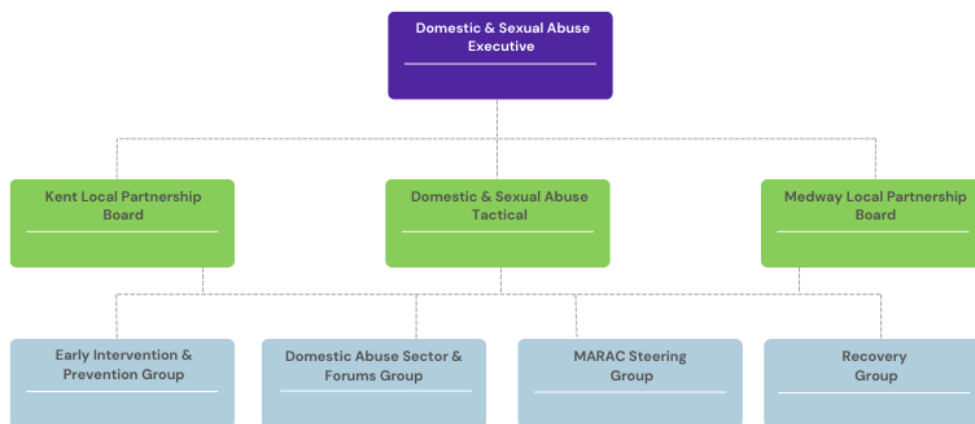


Figure 2 - Domestic Abuse Partnership Governance Structure

3. Early Intervention & Prevention

- 3.1 The first section is about our collective ambition to challenge negative societal attitudes and stigma linked to discussing abuse, increasing awareness, reducing the escalation of abusive behaviours, and encouraging conversation and education. There are 25 'Early Intervention and Prevention' commitments in the Strategy, the following are key projects delivered in 2025/6 within this area of work.

3.2 Increasing Awareness

3.3 The Know, See, Speak Out Campaign

3.3.1 The [Know, See, Speak Out](#) multiagency campaign aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse across Kent and Medway, engaging hundreds of individuals, businesses and organisations, helping them to:

- **Know** more about domestic abuse by undertaking training
- **See** what action they can take such as sharing our [campaign resources](#)
- **Speak Out** by signposting people to services

3.3.2 Social media assets were shared by numerous organisations, ensuring that as a partnership we are facilitating clear consistent messaging expanding understanding of domestic abuse and the routes to support.

3.3.3 This year the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships team delivered a high impact regional media moment on the risks of 'love bombing', driven by powerful survivor testimony and expert partnership voices. Coverage on BBC Radio Kent and BBC Southeast expanded our reach, strengthening public understanding of coercive control and encouraging earlier recognition and help-seeking.

3.4 The 16 Days of Activism

3.4.1 The 16 Days of Activism takes place from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and White Ribbon Day, and runs to 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

3.4.2 This year we delivered a multichannel [awareness campaign](#) across Kent & Medway, including 5,500+ posters distributed to schools, health settings, public spaces, transport hubs and partner organisations. Education settings were a major focus: 155 secondary schools and PRUs received 1,570 posters, ensuring young people, staff and safeguarding leads had visible access to information about domestic abuse support. Strong strategic partnerships with Southeastern, Southern Water, NHS Kent & Medway, Kent FA and others further increased visibility through poster placement, vinyl stickers, targeted sector based activity.

3.4.3 The campaign was amplified through extensive social media delivery, supported by a structured content calendar, survivor led stories and readymade campaign assets. This resulted in 3.3 million organic reach, 16,563 interactions, and 826 mentions across social platforms. Press engagement included Heart FM coverage, White Ribbon Day features and a community safety podcast. Partner engagement remained high, with campaign updates shared through newsletter networks across local authority, health, youth, education and community sectors

3.4.4 To further increase knowledge and confidence around domestic abuse, we delivered the '6 Steps to Ending Abuse' professional webinar series. Sessions were delivered by agencies across the partnership and covered key topics including safe enquiry, risk assessment, perpetrator work, young people's experiences, and service pathways. Across the series, there were 1,100

registrations and 600 attendees. Participant feedback highlighted high quality presentations, impactful survivor testimony, practical demonstrations, and effective use of real-life case studies - reinforcing the value of the sessions in strengthening professional understanding and practice.

3.5 Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website

3.5.1 During the year, we developed a new Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services website to meet a clear need: a well-functioning, easy-to-use and accessible platform that supports those affected by domestic abuse and those seeking to support them. The site was coproduced with survivor voice ambassadors, children and young people, and partners, whose feedback shaped its tone, navigation, content layout and safety features such as the quick exit button.

3.5.2 The website launched in the summer 2025, accompanied by targeted communications to partners, including an autumn mailout directing all secondary schools to new children and young people's webpages and resources, and a website focused newsletter. The result is a well received, user tested central hub for domestic abuse information, support, training and resources - praised for its clear layout, supportive tone, ease of use, survivor centred language, strong accessibility features and ease of navigation by survivors and professional partners, as well as its clarity, accessibility and shareability by children and young people. To date, around 5,000 users have accessed the website, with the most viewed pages being the home page, the get support near you section, and the campaigns page.

3.6 Domestic Abuse Partnership Newsletter

3.6.1 A regular '[Domestic Abuse Support in Kent and Medway Newsletter](#)' continues to provide consistent messaging, updates and resources to support our shared work to prevent domestic abuse and improve outcomes for survivors. This year, distribution increased to 1,700 recipients, and several special 'spotlight' editions were published, focusing on topics such as Carers and Domestic Abuse, the MARAC Hub Change Programme, the launch of the new domestic abuse website, and the importance of structured risk assessments.

3.7 White Ribbon Accreditation

3.7.1 KCC are proud to be a [White Ribbon accredited organisation](#). White Ribbon encourages people, especially men and boys, to take action and change behaviour individually or collectively to end male violence against women and girls. Their mission is for all men to fulfil the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women.

3.7.2 The White Ribbon Working Group led by the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships team have been encouraging individuals and organisations to make consistent choices and actions to support this year's white ribbon theme of "*We Speak Up*" - encouraging men to challenge sexism, misogyny and harmful behaviours in everyday situations. This aims to drive a cultural shift in our

attitude towards preventing abuse. Members of the working group have attended meetings across the organisation some of which include, a GET DLT Staff Engagement Session, Refer Kent Networking Forum & ASCH Community Team. This has had a positive response, with more people signing up to become White Ribbon Ambassadors and Champions.

3.7.3 On the 25th of November, White Ribbon Day, 95 people joined “This White Ribbon Day We Speak Up - Silence isn’t safe”, a webinar encouraging men and boys to think about how they can help end violence towards women. A stall was also erected in Sessions House to engage staff in conversations about the White Ribbon mission.

3.8 Professional Training

3.9 Adult Social Care Domestic Abuse Training

3.9.1 In 2026, work was undertaken to redesign domestic abuse training for Adult Social Care staff to ensure the content was up to date and focussed on the intersection between domestic abuse and individuals with care and support needs. The new Adults Domestic Abuse training course was created in partnership with the Learning & Development Team and Adults Social Care. This collaborative approach produced a robust programme that strengthens practitioner knowledge and confidence when supporting adults experiencing domestic abuse. The new training offer is a valuable addition to the wider domestic abuse training pathway and reflects our shared commitment to improving outcomes and promoting consistent, informed practice across the workforce.

3.10 DASH Training for Children’s Social Care

3.10.1 Following an internal audit carried out to assess our multiagency response to children as victims in their own right a need was identified for greater awareness of Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment practice across children’s social care. To address this the DASH will be included as part of a new Domestic Abuse Assessment Tool and a comprehensive full day DASH training has been procured for 1,200 people to include social workers, early help, the Front Door, Child Protection Conference Chairs, Family Hubs and Youth Justice teams. By offering specialist training across the workforce, but delivered primarily within district teams, we are enabling shared learning and consistent understanding. This will ensure a more systematic approach to risk, prompting safer action planning and decision making with families, ultimately offering greater protection for children experiencing domestic abuse within their households.

3.11 Kent Community Domestic Abuse Champions

3.11.1 To support the learning available to staff across the partnership and to external organisations the Domestic Abuse Projects and Partnerships Team

have produced a free Kent Community Domestic Abuse Champions programme. This programme provides 2.5 hours of high quality domestic abuse training to anyone who lives or works in Kent. This enables us to build a community of people who know how to ask about abuse, and know how to help.

3.11.2 The Kent Domestic Abuse Champions Scheme has proved popular, with monthly sessions often fully booked. To date there are just over 300 Champions in Kent, 98% of whom say they were very satisfied or satisfied with the training. We have also been able to provide bespoke sessions for organisations, and been lucky to engage NHS Primary Care staff, Kent Football Association, and Voluntary Community Sector Organisations in developing networks of Champions within their organisations.

3.11.3 The Champions are supported by regular Communities of Practice, bringing together training updates, opportunities to network with fellow Champions, and the chance to hear from domestic abuse Survivor Ambassadors who generously share their experiences to enhance understanding of abuse and generate deeper, more informed practice across the workforce.

3.11.4 There are DA Champions who, since completing the training are now part of the Survivor Voice Ambassadors Programme.

3.11.5 The programme has been successful in attracting grant funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Crime Reduction Grant – this has provided a Champions Pack for each trainee so that they can identify themselves to their networks as a safe person to talk to.

3.12 End Domestic Abuse Webinar Series

3.12.1 The "[End Domestic Abuse](#)" [learning webinar series](#) provides a comprehensive, year-round programme of free professional development for practitioners. To date, the series has delivered sessions on key topics including victim blaming and permissive language, recognising stalking and its link with domestic abuse, domestic abuse in later life, supporting survivors with complex and co-occurring needs, understanding and preventing domestic and sexual abuse of men, suicide prevention and economic abuse. Together, these webinars have attracted 1,350 registrations and nearly 700 attendees, demonstrating strong and consistent engagement across the workforce.

3. 13 Preventing Escalation of Abusive Behaviours

3.13.1 To equip professionals across multiple agencies in Kent and Medway with the skills and confidence to recognise and respond more effectively to people using abusive behaviour webinars have been provided on a number of topics – these included:

- Working with Perpetrators – Starting Change: delivered by CDAP
- Working with Perpetrators – What Works: delivered by Interventions Alliance

- Holding Perpetrators to Account: delivered by Kent & Medway's Domestic Abuse Partnership Teams
- Victim or Perpetrator – What to do if you're not sure?: delivered by the Men's IDVA Service and Kent Domestic Abuse Partnership Team

3.13.2 The webinars engaged people in learning that turns the focus onto a perpetrators responsibility for the abuse and the ways professionals can hold them to account, marking a crucial shift away from victim centric working.

3.13.3 A [new page](#) has also been added to the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services website to engage those using abusive behaviour. The content looks at where someone concerned about their behaviour can access help, gives advice and resources to stop the abuse, and learn how to make positive changes.

4. Immediate Need

4.1 By immediate needs we mean the services, interventions and support that people need whilst domestic abuse is occurring and in the immediate aftermath.

4.2 These services and responses may help with managing risk and increasing safety, but people may also need support with practical issues such as access to housing accessing civil orders. Within this section we also look at housing and safe accommodation services with commitments to support improved responses.

4.3 There are 64 'Immediate Needs' commitments in the Strategy, the following are key projects within this area of work undertaken in 2025/6.

4.4 Being Responsive to Individual Needs

4.4.1 Projects under being responsive to individual needs look to address barriers to access so that anyone experiencing abuse feels they are able to access support that aligns with their experiences. Projects have included working to raise awareness of options to support those with No Recourse to Public Funds by inviting Project 17 to the Local Partnership Board to explore the issue and increase confidence in creating safe avenues to support.

4.4.2 We have also sought to strengthen links with community groups, faith groups and leaders to expand on opportunities for partnership. To do this a letter was sent to faith based organisations and groups across Kent and Medway to raise awareness of how faith can be used as a tactic of abuse, how faith groups can ensure they are safe places for anyone experiencing abuse and to invite them to join the 16 Days of Action Campaign.

4.4.3 Pets also form a vital lifeline for many people experiencing abuse, to raise awareness of that refuges in Kent can accept pets social media posts were created. Specialist training has also been offered. Kent Public Health and the Centre for Animal Inclusive Practice delivered two training days on recognising

and responding to the abuse of animals as a tactic of coercive control and pets as a protective factor.

4.5 Reducing Risk

4.6 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference Hub

4.6.1 A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a safeguarding forum to discuss how to help people experiencing domestic abuse who are at high risk of murder or serious harm. The process enables agency-specific research to be shared, and actions allocated to increase the safety of adult and child victims of abuse to create a joint safety plan. A new MARAC Hub Process, with increased staffing and an online Case Management System which allows quick information sharing and action planning, went live in April 2025 following extensive multiagency engagement.

4.6.2 An initial evaluation of the implementation and early adoption of the new MARAC Hub model highlighted good practice, the success of the online referral form and ability to share research before meetings to increase responsiveness. The report did however highlight issues in consistent understanding of processes and aims, with issues stemming from limited licence availability and poor uptake of action planning and professionals meetings before the MARAC meeting. This has been addressed through a comprehensive action plan, the success of which will be monitored by the MARAC Steering Group and a secondary review to be undertaken in October 2026.

4.6.3 The Domestic Abuse Research Programme, within KCC's Kent Analytics Team won the Local Area Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA) Research Impact Award in March 2026 for 'Best Use of Local Area Research', recognising their three-month evaluation of the new MARAC Hub Model.

4.7 Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews

4.7.1 The Strategy identifies working with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Safeguarding Boards to ensure that learnings from Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Children's Safeguarding Practice reviews are supported. Alongside working with these boards to offer domestic abuse expertise to the review process and take forward actions to embed learning from reviews the CSP held five Domestic Homicide Review learning events in 2025-6 with over 750 attendees.

4.7.2 Events focused on counter-allegations, reflecting challenges seen in several DHRs where victim-perpetrator identities were unclear or misidentified; caring dynamics and dementia, including specialist input from Aberystwyth University, the impact on mothers separated from their children, a factor identified in multiple DA-linked suicides, and featured guest speakers Liz Hanlon and Dr Rachael Grey, examined coercive control alongside co-occurring conditions, with contributions from LookAhead and Kent Police as well as identifying the difference between carer breakdown and domestic abuse. The webinars bring

together experts, give families a space to speak about their loved ones, and highlight how the partnership can learn from cases where a life has been lost.

4.8 Strengthening Services

- 4.8.1 Providing support and advice to victims of domestic abuse is a priority for KCC and other organisations across the county. Through the Kent and Medway multi-agency governance groups, we are collaborating with partners to recommission the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service. Market engagement with stakeholders, Survivor Voice Ambassadors and domestic abuse services has taken place to ensure the Service Specification reflects the needs of families experiencing domestic abuse.
- 4.8.2 The new Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service has been successful in attracting broad partnership engagement and funding to ensure that an equitable, high quality service with a single point of access will be available across Kent. Work will be ongoing in 2026/7 to commission the new service.
- 4.8.3 There were also a number of community and safe accommodation services commissioned to work alongside the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) umbrella in 2025/6 that are detailed below.

4.9 Cyber Sanctuary – responding to technology facilitated abuse

- 4.9.1 In 2025/26 we strengthened domestic abuse services by developing and launching the Cyber Sanctuary, which began accepting referrals in February 2026. This innovative offer responds to a gap in provision and enhances Kent's safe accommodation support by addressing cyberstalking, online harassment, and technology-facilitated coercive control; forms of abuse that are becoming increasingly common.
- 4.9.2 The service builds on the SAFER Scheme, where improved security and support allows victims to stay safely in their own homes and 97% of referrals disclosed both domestic abuse and stalking. Insights from Survivor Voice Ambassadors and Domestic Homicide Reviews highlighted the serious risks linked to online surveillance and reinforced the need for specialist cyber-focused support.
- 4.9.3 The Cyber Sanctuary provides face to face cyber risk assessments, practical help with devices, accounts, privacy settings, and home technology, as well as guidance on evidence collection and crime reporting. Professional training will also improve awareness and early identification of technology facilitated abuse.

4.10 Domestic Abuse Navigator's for Integrated Children's Services

- 4.10.1 The Domestic Abuse Navigator programme delivers bookable consultation sessions, providing practitioners with accessible, timely support on individual cases. These consultations assist staff in identifying and accessing the most appropriate specialist services available across Kent, ensuring that victims receive the right intervention at the right time.

4.10.2 In addition to case-specific advice, the Domestic Abuse Navigator offers expert guidance on key areas of practice, including:

- **Legal frameworks**, helping practitioners understand available protective measures and statutory responsibilities.
- **Risk management**, supporting staff to assess, interpret, and respond to both immediate and cumulative risks within a case.
- **Navigating support pathways**, ensuring practitioners are confident in referring into local, specialist, and multi-agency services.

4.10.3 Consultation sessions are staffed by an appropriately trained, experienced, and professionally supervised domestic abuse specialist, ensuring high-quality, evidence-informed support. The Navigator will also promote consistent best practice, strengthen professional confidence, and enhance partnership working across Integrated Children's Services.

4.11 Highlighting Civil Options

4.11.1 In 2025/26 we strengthened the availability of clear, accessible information for survivors by publishing updated content on the [Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website](#). The new sections provide comprehensive guidance on legal and protective orders, including how these measures can safeguard victims and what actions to take if a breach occurs. This update aims to raise awareness of the civil options available to people experiencing domestic abuse and to support a consistent, victim centred approach when responding to breaches. By improving access to reliable information, the website now better empowers survivors to understand their rights, seek protection, and feel confident in navigating the legal processes designed to keep them safe.

4.12 Experiences of Justice

4.12.1 As part of our Year Two commitments to improving Experiences of Justice, we have continued to promote training, policies, and practice guidance that strengthen practitioners' ability to identify coercive behaviour, understand typologies of abuse, and respond safely to counter-allegations. This included delivering a dedicated session on counter-allegations at a Domestic Homicide Review Learning Event and providing training to Family Hub teams, where research on the prevalence of counter allegations was presented alongside practical ways to identify and respond. We further advanced this agenda through the End Domestic Abuse Learning Webinars, *Victim or Perpetrator – How to Tell the Difference*, which addressed the negative experiences of victims who are wrongly identified as perpetrators or where language mutualises responsibility.

4.12.2 Alongside workforce development, we strengthened public-facing resources by enhancing the "[Am I Being Abused?](#)" page on the Kent & Medway Domestic

Abuse Services website to help individuals recognise signs of coercive control. Collectively, these measures aim to upskill professionals to correctly identify abuse, avoid undermining victims' experiences, and ensure survivors achieve fairer and more supportive outcomes across the justice system.

4.13 Supporting Children & Young People

4.13.1 Children and young people are victims of domestic abuse in their own right and what they have seen, heard, felt and lived with can have long-lasting impacts on their mental health and the way they experience life. In 2025/6 a number of projects initiatives have been added enhanced our offer for children and young people.

4.14 Reaching Out to Schools

4.14.1 Schools play a vital role as trusted, everyday points of contact for families, often being the agency with the deepest insight into a child's lived experience. As part of the commitment to strengthening support for children experiencing domestic abuse, we delivered a countywide project to equip all secondary schools and PRUs in Kent with high-quality information and resources.

4.14.2 At the start of the autumn term, each setting received a pack of domestic abuse awareness posters accompanied by a safeguarding-focused letter highlighting the increased risks some pupils may face during school holidays and outlining the support available through the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Partnership. The materials provide clear signposting for young people, parents, and staff, and promote access to training, policy support, and specialist services.

4.14.3 By ensuring schools have the tools, information, and pathways they need, this project strengthens their ability to recognise abuse, respond safely, and support the ongoing safety and wellbeing of the young people and families they serve.

4.15 Kent Youth County Council – Staying Safe Working Group DA Leaflet

4.15.1 We worked with the Kent Youth County Council Staying Safe working group and KCC's i-Thrive and Participation Team, to coproduce a domestic abuse flyer, which will help young people recognise different types and signs of abuse, understand how to support a friend safely and confidentially, and access key helplines and further support through the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse website.

4.16 Healing Together – Kent Family Hubs take the Lead

4.16.1 This year the Healing Together Programme was expanded. Healing Together is a trauma-informed, evidence-based intervention that helps children and young people affected by domestic abuse by using simple, body-based tools to support safety and emotional regulation. Funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner enabled 42 frontline practitioners across Kent and Medway to be

trained. To build long-term capacity, practitioners across education, health, and social care were offered the training to deliver the programme.

- 4.16.2 A key development has been the formal adoption of Healing Together as part of the Kent Family Hubs core offer, making Kent one of the first local authorities to embed the programme system-wide. As a result, trauma-informed approaches are becoming more integrated into everyday practice, strengthening early intervention and improving support for children impacted by domestic abuse.

4.17 New Guidance on Operation Encompass

- 4.17.1 Operation Encompass is a police-to-school safeguarding system that alerts a child's school when the child has been involved in or exposed to a domestic abuse incident. While previous Kent guidance mainly focused on how schools receive these notifications, it left a significant gap around what schools should do next.

- 4.17.2 To address this, a comprehensive new guidance document has been jointly developed by the Domestic Abuse Projects and Partnerships Team and Kent Police, in consultation with the Kent Multiagency Safeguarding Children's Partnership (KMSCP) Education Safeguarding Group

- 4.17.3 This updated guidance focuses on supporting schools to take safe, informed and practical action once a notification is received. The document offers step-by-step instructions, practical safeguarding approaches, and trauma-informed responses. It also includes frequently asked questions about how children experience domestic abuse, guidance on whether and when to speak with parents, and advice on how to support the child sensitively within the school environment. In addition, the guidance covers practical matters such as accessing additional training, ensuring appropriate information-sharing and record-keeping, and embedding Operation Encompass into existing safeguarding processes.

4.18 Responding to Child or Adolescent to Parent Abuse

- 4.18.1 To reflect the recommendations made in a recent Domestic Homicide Review, a new multi-agency Child or Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) guide has been developed to address a gap in local guidance and practice.

- 4.18.2 The guide focuses on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the whole family, parents, siblings, and the child using harmful behaviours, recognising CAPVA as a complex form of hidden harm that requires robust but trauma-informed responses. It emphasises that all members of the family may be at risk, outlines the importance of sensitive disclosure-enabled practice, and provides clear pathways for safeguarding, assessment, and multi-agency support. The guidance highlights the need to balance effective risk management with a compassionate, developmentally informed understanding of the child's behaviour, ensuring that interventions safeguard victims while also supporting the young person to reduce harm and access appropriate help.

4.18.3 This was launched at an Integrated Children's Services Communities of Practice, was publicised via the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Newsletter and is publicly accessible via the [Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services](#) website.

4.19 Access to Housing

4.20 Understanding the Use of Temporary Accommodation

4.20.1 Following the 2023 Needs Assessment recommendation to understand the drivers behind victims/survivors entering temporary accommodation rather than specialist safe accommodation, the Kent Domestic Abuse Research Programme conducted qualitative engagement with 36 professionals across Kent & Medway through interviews, focus groups and surveys.

4.20.2 The insight work explored:

- Why victim/survivors may choose temporary accommodation over refuge or other safe accommodation
- Barriers, challenges, and successes in housing victim/survivors
- Potential system improvements to better support safe and appropriate housing outcomes

4.20.3 The research found that victims and survivors enter temporary accommodation rather than refuge due to a desire to maintain routine, concerns about shared living, stigma around refuge and fears about how refuge might affect future housing options. Alongside these personal considerations, system-level issues also play a significant role, including limited availability of refuge spaces, complex referral and assessment processes, and inconsistent communication across agencies. These factors can make temporary accommodation the more immediate option at the point of crisis, meaning that victims are not then able to access the expert support available in safe accommodation for both them and their children.

4.20.4 To address the report's findings a workshop brought together experts in housing and domestic abuse from across the county to develop an action plan. This plan now sits with the Local Partnership Board. Early successes include providing licences for Routes to Support, the national database for live refuge vacancies, to every district in Kent supporting another referral processes and the development of a guide for victims and survivors on their housing options.

4.21 Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation

4.22 DAHA accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse. By becoming DAHA accredited, housing providers implement and embed an effective domestic abuse response that keeps survivors safe and holds perpetrators to account. KCC made a grant available to all District, Borough, and City councils in Kent to maintain DAHA membership for the third year to support a strong and consistent housing response.

- 4.23 There are eight priority areas including policies and procedures, publicity and awareness raising, safety-led case management, survivor-led support, staff development and perpetrator accountability. Working collectively the domestic abuse coordinators and DAHA leads for each council are sharing resources to maximise our impact, tackle challenges together and deliver solutions. This work has resulted in increased training across housing teams, the development of champion schemes, introduction of trauma informed support pathways and increasing awareness through clear information on local authority websites.
- 4.24 This year the first member of the group underwent accreditation, with Swale Borough Council achieving a Gold Award. Several other districts are now nearing the accreditation stage, showcasing the work that has been undertaken to improve systems and prioritise the needs of those experiencing abuse.

5. Recovery

- 5.1 Domestic abuse and the associated trauma can have a significant impact on the people affected. There can be damaging long and short-term physical, mental, emotional, and psychological health impacts on adults and children. These repercussions remain long after the immediate safety needs have been met.
- 5.2 The Partnership want Kent & Medway to be a place where people have the opportunity to thrive, to recover from the harm, heal and build resilience.
- 5.3 There are 22 'Recovery' commitments in the strategy, the following are key projects within this area of work.

5.4 Prioritising family bonds

- 5.4.1 A multiagency project was initiated to develop the Parental Conflict and Domestic Abuse Tool, designed to help practitioners distinguish between coercive control, where power is held and abused by one person, and parental conflict, where power is broadly equal but communication is poor and unhealthy conflict is poorly resolved.
- 5.4.2 This was initiated after feedback from providers highlighted that the language used in some referrals described abusive behaviours as parental conflict, leading to domestic abuse cases being inappropriately directed to parental conflict interventions.
- 5.4.3 The tool supports safe, evidence-based decision-making by prompting practitioners to consider the motive and impact behind behaviours, enabling clearer professional challenge and ensuring individuals are directed to the correct pathway.

5.5 The impact of abuse on mental health

5.5.1 Between 60 and 70% of women seeking mental health support have experienced domestic abuse.¹ This means that promoting better understanding of domestic abuse and trauma-informed practice within mental healthcare settings is essential.

5.2 Introducing Mental Health Navigators

5.2.1 In 2024/25 45% of those accessing refuge services in Kent (240 adults) were noted as having an additional mental health need. A gap was identified, where survivors with complex mental health needs were unable to take up refuge accommodation due to the difficulty in accessing appropriate support. Where they were able to take up placements, the lack of access to specialist mental health support can lead to disengagement from broader support services. Survivors may struggle to engage with move-on planning and other transitional support, which can delay their progression out of refuge accommodation.

5.2.2. An additional project has been designed to address this gap, employing two Recovery and Pathways Workers in conjunction with Live Well Kent and Medway to deliver a targeted, evidence-based, trauma-informed offer that strengthens the emotional wellbeing and recovery of survivors. This role will deliver therapeutic mental health interventions to those in safe accommodation, working with the domestic abuse support providers to develop support plans, offer advocacy and support the development of integrated care pathways. Recruitment is currently underway with the project aiming to embed in 2026/27.

5.3 Enhanced Therapeutic Support

5.3.1 Enhanced Therapeutic Support (ETS) provides an annual pot of funding to each of the existing KIDAS providers, enabling them to purchase additional trauma-informed support. This includes access to enhanced counselling designed to reduce barriers for survivors with additional mental health needs who may otherwise struggle to access refuge. The funding also allows providers to offer a wide range of therapeutic interventions, such as yoga, art therapy and other wellbeing-focused activities, ensuring support can meet broader recovery needs.

5.3.2 Demand for this support has increased. In Kent, the definition of safe accommodation has expanded beyond traditional refuge settings to also include survivors who have had the Safe Accommodation For Eligible Residents (SAFER) scheme applied to their property. This shift has broadened the range of survivors eligible for support and increased the volume of those accessing safe accommodation pathways.

¹ [The Road to Recovery: Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Domestic Abuse Survivors. An Inquiry into Domestic Abuse and Mental Health by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence and Abuse](#)

5.3.3 To reflect the growth in demand, the scope and the ETS funding available to domestic abuse providers has been increased, ensuring providers are equipped to meet the evolving needs of survivors across the county.

5.4 Suicide and Domestic Abuse

5.4.1 Kent continues to lead the national conversation highlighting the link between domestic abuse and suicide. Research led by the Suicide Prevention team in Public Health has identified that 33% (280 out of 847) suspected suicides in Kent and Medway between Jan 2018 and Sept 2024 have been impacted by domestic abuse. This includes victims, perpetrators and a group of individuals who were known to Kent Police as both victims and perpetrators.

5.4.2 Kent Public Health has now funded a project to further understand and support victims of domestic abuse bereaved by a perpetrator's suicide. The threat of suicide is often used as part of the tactic of abuse, to control a victim's response and ability to leave. However, when someone who has used coercive and controlling abuse does take their own life the dynamic left behind is complex, and specialist support for the victim of abuse hasn't previously been available.

5.4.3 A partnership led by The Dot's, with Rising Sun and PARO has engaged lived experience leads and two therapists, to support people bereaved through domestic abuse-related suicide through weekly online groups and one-one support. This work has identified key themes including blame directed at survivors, complex grief for a partner who was also a perpetrator, children's confusion, significant gaps in services, and a lack of language or public narratives to describe this experience. Early learning points to the need for public resources that name this form of bereavement, training for DA and mental health professionals on coercive control-suicide dynamics and tools for survivors who need continued gentle, flexible support formats.

5.5 Recognising the experts

5.6 Survivor Voice Ambassadors

5.6.1 The experts in domestic abuse are those people who are living or have lived through abusive experiences. The Partnership are continuing to be led by the voices of those who have experienced abuse.

5.6.2 By sharing their experiences with the Domestic Abuse Research Programme in Kent and Medway, giving their ideas and their time 16 Survivor Voice Ambassadors are influencing and co-designing services, policies, projects, training and more.

5.6.3 Their voices are included to bring alive press articles, social media posts and training materials; ensuring their experiences are front and centre in our work, guiding partners, and practitioners to remain focussed on the importance of responding to their needs. Survivor Voice Ambassadors also helped to develop the new Kent & Medway Partnership Domestic Abuse Services Website, are key

in the Domestic Abuse Champion's Communities of Practice and input into the domestic abuse service recommissioning.

5.6.4 The Domestic Abuse Research Programme, within KCC's Kent Analytics team won the Local Area Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA) Research Impact Award in March 2026 for 'Most Engaging Communication of the Local Area Research or Analysis', in recognition for their work on the Survivor Voice Ambassadors Programme: Embedding lived experience in Domestic Abuse policy, training and public communication.

5.7 Post Separation Abuse

5.7.1 A campaign was developed through the Recovery Group to raise awareness of post-separation abuse, challenging the victim-blaming narrative of "*why doesn't she just leave?*" and highlighting the dangers associated with leaving an abusive relationship. Kent Survivor Voice Ambassadors generously shared their experiences, which informed the creation of a series of social media assets. The campaign drew attention to the reality that economic abuse often continues long after separation, and that post-separation abuse commonly includes stalking, harassment, manipulation of children, and online tracking. It also emphasised that the point of leaving is frequently the period of **highest risk of harm**.

6. Measuring Success - Activity Indicators

6.1 To achieve the ambitions set out in the strategy, progress against the delivery plan and a suite of activity indicators are being monitored through the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Executive Group. Quantitative measurements in this complex area must always be applied with caution but paired with qualitative learning can help us identify progress.

6.2 Kent Analytics have developed a Microsoft Power BI dashboard which contains the activity indicators data provided by data source owners across the Partnership. This report is interactive and updated dynamically every quarter. Access to the dashboard is restricted to key nominated partners across the Partnership and a Memorandum of Understanding around the use of the dashboard is in place with them.

6.3 An update on the activity indicators is provided at each Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Executive Group.

7. Conclusion

7.1 This is a five-year strategy which embodies our approach to tackling domestic abuse and our work to 'reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, and ensure that where domestic abuse takes place, all those affected get the right support, quickly.' In year two of delivery a comprehensive delivery plan has been advanced alongside

a Domestic Abuse Activity Indicator Dashboard to help the Kent & Medway Executive Group to monitor activity.

7.2 Under **Early Intervention & Prevention** work has been undertaken to increase awareness of domestic abuse and the services available through the multiagency Know, See, Speak Out campaign and 16 Days of Action workstream. This has fostered new strategic partnerships, delivered the '6 Steps to Ending Abuse' webinar series during the 16 Days of Action and a monthly End Domestic Abuse Learning Webinar. Over 5,000 posters were distributed to schools, health settings transport hubs and public spaces and the Partnership newsletter is delivered to over 1,700 recipients. The Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website, coproduced with Survivor Voice Ambassadors and Children and Young People who had experienced abuse, launched in August 2025 and has been praised for its clear layout, supportive tone, ease of use, survivor centred language. The White Ribbon working group have been working to involve men in taking a stand against abuse to drive a cultural shift in attitudes towards domestic abuse.

7.3 To support professionals across our services to be domestic abuse informed, take opportunities to identify risk and use trauma informed approaches providing a variety of training opportunities has remained a key theme. The Adult Social Care Domestic Abuse Delta training package was rewritten to focus on the intersection of care and support needs and domestic abuse whilst a series of webinars were produced to reflect learning identified through Domestic Homicide Reviews.

7.4 Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment has been procured for 1200 staff across Children's Services ensuring that a firm understanding of the risks posed by a perpetrator informs our safeguarding response. The Kent Domestic Abuse Champions Programme completed its first year, training 283 individuals from diverse backgrounds, professions, and vocations across the county. These Champions serve as trusted points of contact within their networks, helping to bridge the gap between danger and essential support.

7.5 To hold perpetrators of abuse to account multiple training sessions have been offered throughout the year on topics related to supporting and disrupting behaviour to promote safety for victims of abuse. The new Domestic Abuse Services Website content also addresses perpetrators directly promoting referrals to behaviour change services and resources to stop the abuse.

7.6 For **Immediate Need** there has been work undertaken to ensure services were responsible to individual need. Projects focused on being responsive to individual needs aim to remove barriers to support by increasing awareness of available options, strengthening partnerships with community and faith groups, and ensuring that support feels safe and relevant to all who may need it. This has included work on No Recourse to Public Funds, outreach to faith communities, promotion of pet-friendly refuge spaces, and specialist training on the role of animals in coercive control.

7.7 To reduce risk a comprehensive action plan was created following the initial MARAC Hub Change Programme review, this resulted in increasing licences by a

third, creating district time slots and making amendments to the Case Management System. Strengthening services has included innovative projects such as the Cyber Sanctuary which recognises the growing threat of technology facilitated abuse by providing face to face cyber risk assessments and the Domestic Abuse Navigators programme which helps professionals across Integrated Children's Services to access expert case advice.

7.8 To support Children & Young People affected by abuse all secondary schools have received domestic abuse awareness posters was shared with schools, along with a safeguarding-focused letter outlining heightened holiday risks and the support available through the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Partnership. Guides on Operation Encompass and Child or Adolescent to Parent Violence have been created to support consistent, safe and empathetic responses to children who have experienced an incident of domestic abuse and/or are exhibiting harmful behaviours at home. Kent Family Hubs have also integrated the Healing Together programme into their core offer, ensuring that more children who have experienced abuse can access the body-based tools that support emotional regulation.

7.9 Promoting access to housing the Kent Domestic Abuse Research Programme explored why victims and survivors often enter temporary accommodation prompting the development of an action plan now held by the Local Partnership Board while the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation working group have brought together all our District, Borough and City councils to work towards the accreditation.

7.10 To meet commitments under **Recovery** a tool to differentiate Parental Conflict and Domestic Abuse has been under development to promote safe, evidence-based decision-making. A project to introduce Mental Health Navigators to deliver therapeutic interventions and help survivors in safe accommodation to navigate pathways to find the most appropriate support. Enhanced Therapeutic Support has been expanded to ensure those residing in homes where SAFER has been implemented are able to access the services provided. Kent Public Health has also funded a project to further understand and support victims of domestic abuse bereaved by a perpetrator's suicide.

7.11 To recognise the experts, survivors' voices continue to lead the Partnership's work, with 16 Survivor Voice Ambassadors sharing their experiences to shape services, policies, projects, and training. Their input informs communications, training materials, the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services website, the Champions' Communities of Practice, and the wider recommissioning of domestic abuse services, ensuring that lived experience remains central to all partnership activity.

7.12 There has been significant activity from across the partnership against each of the strategy pillars. Whilst this report has focussed on multiagency and KCC led projects significant progress has also been made by agencies across the Partnership.

8. Policy & Resources Committee are asked to:

1. **Note** progress made against the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy and make recommendations on future delivery plan direction.

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11. Appendices:

Appendix A: The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Summary Strategy

[Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy](#)

Appendix B: Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 – 2029

[Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-2023: Summary](#)

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From: Brian Collins, Deputy Leader
Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee - 6 May 2026

Subject: Infrastructure Condition Survey Programme

Decision no: 26/00027

Key Decision: *It involves expenditure or savings of maximum £1m, significant effects on two or more electoral divisions.*

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All divisions

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: The report provides an update on the Council's current understanding of the condition of the corporate estate and associated condition spend backlog. It also sets out the next steps associated with the procurement of future condition surveys for both the corporate (circa 360 properties) and education estate (circa 350 properties)

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Deputy Leader in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Kent County Council operates on a corporate landlord model; this means that most of the corporate property estate is managed centrally by the Infrastructure directorate along with the management of the council's property responsibilities in relation to KCC's education estate. Some specialist asset portfolios where service is integrated with assets are managed by Directorates, though any action or decisions relating to them must be agreed with the Infrastructure Directorate.
- 1.2. Infrastructure ensures that management adheres to best practice and complies with Council's statutory duties, DFE guidance and requirements in relation to schools and the aims of KCC's adopted Asset Management Strategy 2024-2030.

- 1.3. The Council has a requirement for condition surveys to be carried out across all corporate buildings and its school estate to provide a comprehensive audit of all present assets and their condition which are essential to:
- Inform capital and revenue investment prioritisation, resource and risk allocation.
 - Provide assurance in respect of compliance and health and safety risks to identify maintenance issues before they become major, expensive repairs, supporting a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach – therefore reducing the risk of building closures.
 - Inform depreciation and insurance assumptions.
 - Ensure that current condition assessments are available to inform budgeting returns to central government (such as the Department for Education for schools).
 - Ensure that Kent is in the best possible place to respond to any funding programmes that may be available.
- 1.4. These surveys inform prioritisation of limited capital enhancement budgets and support the maintenance of Warm Safe and Dry (WS&D) standards and minimising unplanned building closures due to condition issues.
- 1.5. The last programmed condition surveys were conducted in 2019-2022 and covered circa 70% of the corporate estate at the time.
- 1.6. Since this time, due to limited capital enhancement budgets, the overall condition of the estate is believed to have declined. In addition, transformation activity such as the Kent Communities Programme, has led to a change in the size and nature of the corporate estate.
- 1.7. This report provides an update on the current understanding of the condition of the corporate estate based on the previous surveys. The understanding in relation to the school's estate will be presented to the CYPE cabinet committee. The report also sets out the Council's intention in respect of updating condition survey data as part of ongoing estate management activity.

2. Background

- 2.1. Due to the volume of surveys required the Council commissions surveys via suitable qualified contractors. In addition to the corporate estate the Council is responsible for large numbers of schools across the County which are also managed by Infrastructure.
- 2.2. As a result of the total number of assets under management, it is preferable for the Council to commission via several separate providers to ensure adequate resourcing.
- 2.3. The Council must therefore give a clear specification which details the methodology and best practice to be adopted as part of surveys, and the format of return to ensure compatibility with asset management software.

2.4. During the last round of condition surveys, it was identified that information would need to be updated on a 3–5-year cycle to ensure the evidence base for decision taking remained robust, hence, the intention to recommence the programme in 2026. To ensure that the programme can be delivered within the current financial parameters it is proposed to update the surveys over a number of years.

2.5. Condition surveys serve several key purposes as set out above which include:

2.5.1. Verify the Council's understanding of building layouts to ensure any unregulated changes can be formalised separately – this is key to ensuring control over the estate and providing accurate information for accounting and audit purposes.

2.5.2. Identify any dangerous defects or health and safety issues which require immediate rectification.

2.5.3. Capture via photographic evidence and written information a clear picture of the building's condition.

2.5.4. Rank defects by severity and priority in line with nationally adopted best practice from central government, the A-D 1-4 rankings.

2.5.5. Identify and cost the works needed to rectify all identified defects to provide an accurate indication of the level of dilapidation of the Council estate.

2.5.6. Prioritise the spend, resources and risk required over the next 10-year period to comply with the Council's approach to asset management i.e. Warm Safe and Dry – minimising unplanned closures due to building failure.

Inform central government spending allocations (such as the returns required by the DFE) and funding programmes.

The difference between 2.5.5 and 2.5.6 should be noted as significant. It is the difference between the level of work and expenditure to return the estate to a good condition, addressing all elements of backlog maintenance per industry best practice and the level of expenditure to maintain the estate per the Council's current adopted strategy of Warm Safe and Dry through periodic investment.

2.6. The intention to recommence the programme this year aligns with the Council's planned transition to a new asset management system which has the facility for contractors to directly input information – avoiding administrative double handling and risk of errors introduced in upload – leading to a more efficient and robust process.

A key decision is required to support the future programme of condition surveys. While in-year expenditure is likely to fall within the limits of officer delegations, the aggregate spend with individual consultants over a multi-year period may exceed £1m and therefore requires a Key Decision.

3. Current condition of the Corporate Estate

3.1. It is important to distinguish between the total backlog condition figure, which represents the cost of addressing all known defects to return the estate to a good overall condition in line with industry best practice, and the Council's adopted approach of maintaining assets to a Warm, Safe and Dry standard. Under the Warm Safe and Dry approach, investment is targeted at

safety-critical and compliance-related issues necessary to keep buildings operational, rather than addressing all elements of deterioration. While this approach has supported business continuity where possible in the short term, it has resulted in non-urgent works being deferred, contributing to the ongoing growth of the backlog condition liability over time.

- 3.2. The Council's adopted capital budget for periodic enhancement of the corporate estate is the Modernisation of Assets (MOA) budget, expenditure in nominal terms over the financial years since the 2021/22 surveys is outlined below:

(Nominal terms)	Modernisation of Assets Spend
2021/22 Outturn	£5,441,564.13
2022/23 Outturn	£11,375,268.92
2023/24 Outturn	£3,338,256.99
2024/25 Outturn	£5,757,653.39
2025/26 Forecast*	c£10.9m*
Total	c£36,812,740.39
	<i>*Subject to final accounts</i>

It should be noted that MOA is capital funding and the accounting rules apply to the definitions of capital and revenue e.g. a minor patch repair on a roof is revenue but a full roof replacement is allocated as capital.

- 3.3. The total 10-year corporate condition spend requirement from 2021/22 information was c.£165m, while required spend is not linear in nature, a requirement of around c.£16.5m pa to return the estate to a good and serviceable condition. The £165m 2021/22 projection if inflated by BCIS metrics to Q1 2026 prices would now equate to c£197m.
- 3.4. Due to budgetary constraints, over the last five years the Council has only spent c.44% of the above requirement, a shortfall of c.£46m. This expenditure has been necessarily directed towards works which prioritise Warm Safe and Dry standards, rather than taking a proactive approach to improving the condition of the estate. Non-urgent works is being deferred, even where timely intervention would represent a net cost reduction.
- 3.5. While this approach has maximised the likelihood of buildings remaining open and compliant, it has resulted in a continued degradation of the estate and therefore it is not believed the overall condition expenditure requirement will have reduced since 2021/22 levels, despite intervention to maintain Warm Safe and Dry status where possible. It is therefore likely that the backlog maintenance is greater than the £197m estimate above.
- 3.6. The Council has increasingly sought to factor in backlog condition avoidance into strategic asset business cases i.e. where buildings can be exited and disposed of the total backlog condition spend has a positive impact on MOA budgetary pressures.
- 3.7. While there has been some reduction in the scale of the corporate estate since 2021/22, c50 property disposals, this is not sufficient to bridge the growing gap between total backlog and available budgets. In addition, while the vacant

property estate is managed by Infrastructure it is not managed to Warm Safe and Dry standards due to the fact it is not occupied, therefore represents a marginal to nil reduction to MOA pressures.

4. Future condition survey programme

- 4.1. As noted above the Council is now coming up for 5 years since the conclusion of the last condition survey programme, therefore information in respect of both the condition of the estate and financial backlog is out of date and no longer forms a robust basis for future decision taking.
- 4.2. It is therefore intended to recommence the programme starting in Q3 2026. This programme will cover both the corporate estate and maintained education estate.
- 4.3. Due to the size of the estate and volume of surveys required it is anticipated that multiple contractors will be commissioned to carry out batches of surveys, with buildings prioritised based on:
 - When they were last surveyed.
 - Awareness of asset changes or degradations since 2021/22.
 - Upcoming asset strategy decisions.
- 4.4. Due to the involvement of multiple contractors, the clear specification of process, detail, and format of return is imperative. Technical elements of the specification follow industry and central government best practices and are therefore well defined.
- 4.5. The Council is at the point of transitioning to a new asset management system, with capability for direct contractor input. Therefore, work is currently underway to ensure the final specification includes direct integration into the asset management system – avoiding unnecessary administrative double handling, and the introduction of errors in upload.
- 4.6. The Council has access to some contractors via the established Consultancy Framework which represents a Public Contract Regulations (PCR) compliant route to market, with value for money demonstrated as part of the establishment of the framework. To ensure value for money, and due to the bespoke nature of some requirements, it is intended to procure the majority of work via a framework tender.
- 4.7. Depending on the volume of work and capacity of consultants it may be necessary to bring others onboard via alternative PCR compliant routes which demonstrate value for money.
- 4.8. Based on knowledge of the estate and previous programmes it is considered that from a volume and cost basis work will be split broadly 1/3 corporate estate, and 2/3 maintained education estate.
- 4.9. While consideration was given to working with a single supplier to deliver the programme, the level of resource required and geographic spread across the County would increase the risk of the programme not being delivered to the

pace required. By progressing with a framework tender the Council is able to work with approved suppliers while ensuring competitive tension is maintained.

5. Local Government Reorganisation

- 5.1. Given the potential proximity to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), with a decision from the Secretary of State anticipated in July 2026 at the time of this report, consideration was given to a 'do nothing' scenario. This is not recommended.
- 5.2. Assuming the government does not change its timetable, it is anticipated that the Council in its current form will continue to exist until April 2028. Therefore, there will be a two-year period, at least, during which property decisions will need to be taken in the context of constrained budgets. The lack of up-to-date information on the condition of the corporate estate exacerbates the risk of unplanned and unmanaged building closures impacting front-line service delivery.
- 5.3. As LGR transitional dates approach the Council will also play a key role in facilitating the managed and orderly transition of asset ownership to newly created Council(s). Correct and accurate information on the condition of the estate is essential to this process.
- 5.4. In addition, up-to-date asset information plays a key role in wider transformation activity which will be delivered over forthcoming years, including informing business cases for co-location initiatives across the County.

6. Options considered

6.1. Option 1: Do nothing / delay surveys until Local Government Reorganisation

Under this option the Council would continue to rely on ageing condition data until the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation is confirmed. This would avoid short term revenue expenditure but would materially increase the risk of unplanned building failure, reactive and inefficient use of capital budgets, and disruption to service delivery as the Council would continue to rely on outdated information, contrary to estate management best practice and the expectations/requirements of the DFE in relation to schools. This would also increase the risk of associated with the identification of building deterioration (including compliance, defects and health and safety risks) which can lead to unplanned building closures within short term or health and safety issues not being dealt with swiftly. This option is not recommended.

6.2. Option 2: Ad hoc or tender for single supplier

This would risk inconsistent data formats, increased administrative burden for system uploads, and reduced comparability of results. Given the size and geographic spread of the estate, a single supplier is unlikely to have sufficient capacity to deliver the programme within required timescales – This option is not recommended.

6.3. Option 3: Procure condition surveys via multiple consultants via Procurement Act 2023 (PA23) / PCR compliant routes

Allows efficient compliant route to market via tested frameworks and existing contractual arrangements. This approach enables the Council to define a consistent specification and reporting format, ensures data comparability and system integration. By working with multiple pre-qualified contractors, the Council is able to ensure value for money, consistency of return and enable delivery at pace – This option is recommended.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Annual spend is currently identified in core budgets with £750k revenue expenditure in education budgets and £400k in corporate budgets.
- 7.2. Length of programme: The programme will continue subject to existing budget approvals, with the decision to be revisited periodically every 3 years, or earlier subject to strategic changes in the management of the estate such as Local Government Reform.
- 7.3. Condition surveys will inform good estate management decisions supporting the Council's best value obligations.
- 7.4. While the programme represents an annual revenue commitment, already provided for within existing budgets, the availability of accurate and current condition data supports more effective targeting of the Council's capital maintenance budgets and reduces reliance on reactive and emergency works, which are typically higher cost and more disruptive.
- 7.5. The programme therefore plays a key role in supporting the Council's best value obligations by enabling preventative intervention where possible and reducing the financial and operational risks associated with unmanaged asset failure.
- 7.6. The programme also provides an accurate view of the backlog of the public estate as required by the DFE and informs the allocation of resources.
- 7.7. It should be noted that due to mobilisation the programme is unlikely to start before the Summer. Should other funding streams be available these would be utilised ahead of the base budget allocations.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. Legal support will be procured via Legal Services to support any contracts which are required. Contracts will be awarded via a PA23 / PCR compliant route in full compliance with Spending the Council's Money policy.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and identified no direct equalities implications arising from this decision. The EqIA will be updated as required as the project progresses.

10. Data Protection Implications

- 10.1. As part of this approval process Data Protection regulations will be observed.
- 10.2. Access to buildings will need to be facilitated which will be managed and coordinated by Infrastructure.
- 10.3. A Data Protection Implication Assessment (DPIA) screener has confirmed that there are no DPIA implications and that a further DPIA assessment is not required in respect of this decision.

11. Other corporate implications

- 11.1. The condition and maintenance of the corporate estate have a direct implication for the Council's place-based service delivery. The recommencement of the condition survey programme will identify priority repairs and inform future decision taking to ensure the Council meets its Warm Safe and Dry standard for the maintenance of the estate.
- 11.2. It also reduces the risk of unplanned building closures and supports the identification of building defects, compliance and health and safety issues which can have a significant impact on service delivery and public confidence for services users of both the corporate and school estate.
- 11.3. Failure to deliver the information required by the DFE may limit KCC's ability to secure and apply for funding.

12. Governance

- 12.1. Delegations will be granted to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader to award contracts necessary to deliver the programme within the financial limits set out in this paper and approved budgets.
- 12.2. Oversight of the condition survey programme will be maintained through existing Infrastructure governance arrangements, with key outcomes and emerging risks reported as appropriate through member briefings and future committee reports. The refreshed condition data will directly inform subsequent asset and capital investment decisions that are subject to member approval, ensuring continued transparency and democratic oversight.

13. Conclusions

13.1. This report provides a high-level update on the current status of the Council's corporate estate based on historic condition surveys conducted 5 years ago and the level of expenditure since these were conducted.

13.2. It highlights the importance of the Council maintaining up to date records on the condition of the estate, and the steps to be taken to recommence the condition survey programme commencing in Q3 2026. In the context of an ageing estate, constrained capital resources, maintaining an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the condition of the Council's assets is essential.

13.3. The condition survey programme represents a proportionate and necessary step to manage risk, protect service delivery, and support informed decision-making. Endorsement of the proposed approach will ensure the Council is better placed to meet its statutory responsibilities, deliver best value, and plan effectively for the future.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Deputy Leader in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

14. Appendices

14.1. Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

14.2. Appendix B – EQIA

15. Contact details

Report Author: Jo Taylor	Director: Rebecca Spore
Job title: Head of Capital and Strategic Programmes	Job title: Director of Infrastructure
Telephone number: 03000 416757	Telephone number: 03000 416716
Email address: joanne.taylor@kent.gov.uk	Email address: Rebecca.spore@kent.gov.uk

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Brian Collins, Deputy Leader

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00027

Executive Decision – key**26/00027 – Infrastructure Condition Survey Programme**

Decision:

The Deputy Leader to agree to:

- 1) The establishment of a condition survey programme to ascertain the current condition status of property assets within the Council's education and corporate estate and inform future decision taking; and
- 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, to take necessary actions, including but not limited to, entering into contracts and other legal agreements as required to deliver the programme in line with approved budgets.

Reasons for decision:

An up to date understanding of the condition of the Council's estate Schools (circa 350) and Corporate (circa 360) is essential to:

- inform capital and revenue investment prioritisation, resource and risk allocation.
- provide assurance in respect of compliance and health and safety risks.
- to identify maintenance issues before they become major, expensive repairs supporting a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach – therefore reducing the risk of building closures.
- inform depreciation and insurance assumptions.
- ensure that current condition assessments are available to inform budgeting returns to central government (such as the Department for Education for schools).
- ensure that Kent is in the best possible place to respond to any funding programmes that may be available.

Current condition data will also support wider asset management objectives by enabling maintenance backlog to be factored into business cases for better outcomes.

In addition, robust condition information will strengthen the Council's ability to seek external funding by clearly evidencing the scale and nature of the maintenance backlog.

Total expenditure over the life of the programme with individual contractors may exceed £1m and therefore a key decision is being sought in line with the Council's constitution. Any expenditure will come from existing approved budgets.

Financial implications:

Annual spend: £400k Corporate Estate and £750k schools revenue expenditure, within existing budgetary approvals and budget allocations.

Length of programme: The programme is a rolling programme subject to existing budget approvals and the allocation of resources, with the decision to be revisited periodically every 3 years, or earlier subject to strategic changes in the management of the estate such as Local Government Reform.

Condition surveys will inform good estate management decisions supporting the Council's best value obligations and decision making in relation to resources allocation and risk.

The information from the condition surveys also informs the central government assessment in relation to the condition of the public estate and national funding.

Legal implications:

Legal support will be procured via Legal Services to support any contracts which are required. Contracts will be awarded via a Procurement Act 2023 (PA23) / Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) compliant route, in full compliance with Spending the Council's Money policy.

Equalities implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and identified no direct equalities implications arising from this decision.

Data Protection implications:

As part of this approval process Data Protection regulations will be observed.

A Data Protection Implication Assessment (DPIA) screener has confirmed that there are no DPIA implications and that a further DPIA assessment is not required in respect of this decision.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered at the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 6th May 2026. on 6 May 2026.

No division member consultation carried out as impacts all divisions.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Option 1: Do nothing / delay surveys until Local Government Reorganisation – Rejected.

Option 2: Ad hoc or tender for single supplier – *Rejected*.

Option 3: Procure condition surveys via multiple consultants via PA23 / PCR compliant routes – ***Recommended option***.

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

.....

Signed

.....

Date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Infrastructure Condition Survey Programme

Responsible Officer

Susannah Adams - DCED INF

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

Jo Taylor - DCED INF

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Strategic and Corporate Services

Responsible Service

Infrastructure

Responsible Head of Service

Jo Taylor - DCED INF

Responsible Director

Rebecca Spore - DCED I

Aims and Objectives

KCC have a requirement for condition surveys to be carried out across all KCC buildings to provide KCC with a comprehensive audit of all present assets. They shall identify all works necessary to achieve and maintain a safe and secure strategic estate management including costings of all surveyed elements.

The condition surveys will include; Measured Surveys including updated drawings, Mechanical Inspection Surveys, Roof Surveys (via drones), Site Plans identifying hard and soft Landscape and access to an adequate information management system to review the data in a suitable and user friendly format.

The preference would be to have a call-off with competition from an external framework (Fusion 21: Construction Consultancy Services Framework – Lot 9: Facilities Management Consultancy

Section B – Evidence

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

Yes

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

No

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Not Applicable
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
This will be a programme of condition surveys of the KCC buildings
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients
No
Staff
Staff/Volunteers
Residents/Communities/Citizens
No
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
No
Details of Positive Impacts
Not Applicable
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable

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

Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

<u>Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee Work Programme</u>			
Category	Meeting date	Item	Work Type
Future	02 July 2026	Commercial and Procurement Division's Performance and Governance Update Report	Report
Future	02 July 2026	Contract Extensions for KIDAS, SASS and SAFER Single Point of Access	Key Decision
Future	02 July 2026	Government's Local Outcomes Framework	Report
Future	02 July 2026	Social Value Policy	Key Decision
Future	02 July 2026	DOLGE Strategy	Report
Future	02 July 2026	Regular Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	Update report
Future	22 September 2026	Asset Management Strategy	Report
Future	22 September 2026	Freehold Property Assets Disposal Policy (tbc)	Report
Future	22 September 2026	Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service contract	Key Decision
Future	22 September 2026	Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and	Report
Future	22 September 2026	Cyber Security	Report

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REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE

From: Brian Collins, Deputy Leader
Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee - 6 May 2026

Subject: Freehold Disposals Programme 2026-27

Decision no: 26/00022

Key Decision: *Yes, the decision affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions and involves capital receipts & savings of over £1m*

Classification: **Unrestricted report with exempt appendix B and C, not for publication under the Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 refers - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

Past Pathway of report: None

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All / County-wide

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report sets out the proposed Freehold Disposals Programme for 2026–27, providing a programme-based framework for the disposal of surplus land and property assets to support the Council’s fiduciary duties, and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Deputy Leader in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council holds over 16,000 property and land assets, which have been acquired over many years for its operational purposes, supporting the delivery of its policies and services.
- 1.2 As a public authority funded by taxpayers, when Kent County Council no longer has a use or purpose for holding a property asset (such as changes to

service delivery models, strategic direction and so forth), it has a fiduciary duty to dispose of the asset, often resulting in revenue savings and capital receipts. These capital receipts can then be used to support the Council's priorities, future service delivery plans, and its medium-term financial plan (MTFP).

- 1.3 Since financial year 2021/22 to 2024/25 KCC has raised over £57m in disposing of surplus property assets, including nearly £22m in the last year, almost doubling previous years' annual outturn. Whilst 2025/26 was a challenging year for Local Government, the property market and Kent County Council, an outturn of £27m was achieved with a pipeline of disposals in the next 12 months estimated to achieve in the region of £17m.
- 1.4 The scale and frequency of disposals have evolved and with this increase, the historic approach no longer provides the most effective governance framework. It has become clear that a whole programme approach provides greater transparency, strategic oversight, but an increased pace and efficiency of delivery rather than a piecemeal approach.
- 1.5 It is proposed that the 2026/27 Freehold Disposals Programme is set out in this report for consideration to:
 - Set out the whole disposals programme envisaged for 2026/27, subject to changes arising from the Council's operational, financial, administrative and legislative requirements.
 - Provide a decision framework to improve the agility of decision making, whilst accounting for legislative and transitional requirements during a period of change and responses to property market changes.

2. Key Considerations of an Asset's Disposal

- 2.1 **The asset is surplus:** Disposal is required where the Council no longer needs a property for operational purposes. In these circumstances, the Council has a fiduciary duty to minimise holding costs and realise value to support its priorities. The governance process involves assessing whether an asset continues to serve a clear purpose, whether it can be reused, reappropriated, or retained for a future requirement, or, where no such purpose exists, whether it should be declared surplus to reduce estate costs and generate capital receipts.
- 2.2 **The decision to dispose:** If a property is declared surplus a decision is made to dispose of it. There are many routes for a disposal, and these have been set out in KCC's current Freehold Disposals Policy. The primary legislation that needs to be considered in every disposal proposition is s123 Local Government Act 1972, where Local Authorities are required to obtain "best consideration" and this remains the baseline consideration in every freehold disposal decision, even where other factors are to be included within it.
- 2.3 **KCC Governance limits:** KCC's Constitution and more specifically its "Property Management Protocol" provide delegation of terms for disposal to the Director of Infrastructure, provided the value of the disposal transaction is under £1m. Where the value exceeds this delegated limit, an appropriate Cabinet Member decision is needed. Despite rises in property values, this £1m

limit has remained the same for over 10 years. As a consequence, more assets have required a Cabinet Member decision.

- 2.4 **Best Consideration:** To determine a best consideration baseline of an asset, KCC will obtain an open market valuation. An open marketing process such as sale by private treaty, tender or auction is used to ensure that best consideration is achieved. Appropriate consideration is given to best consideration within the disposals programme.
- 2.5 **Consultation:** Apart from the disposal of public open space, there is no statutory requirement to publicly consult, although the Council may sometimes consult or issue public notices where they may support considerations to proceed with a disposal and or are legally required. The Constitution requires Local Division Members to be notified of the intention to dispose of an asset in their area, with any views fed back to the decision maker.
- 2.6 **Planning:** Whilst planning potential or consent may influence the value potential of an asset, it is not necessarily a requirement for decision consideration, unless there is a relatable council policy.
- 2.7 **Education Statutory Requirements:** Before an asset previously used for an educational purpose can be disposed, statutory processes may need following and these are assessed.
- 2.8 **Assets of Community Value:** Many of KCC's assets are nominated under Localism Act provisions. Where an asset is determined to be so, KCC follows the prescribed disposal process. This can have holding cost implications and will often influence a disposal strategy. The legislation in respect of this is currently being strengthened under new government legislation in the Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.
- 2.9 **Other legal or statutory requirements:** The Council has acquired property for many purposes and different legislation e.g. Compulsory Purchase which may introduce risk and process.

3. Key Considerations of a Disposal Programme

- 3.1 **The Pipeline of Surplus Assets:** A disposal pipeline is developed from surplus real estate assets identified as a result of the Council's asset review process. The pipeline may also contain assets that have not yet been declared surplus but are likely to become surplus due to service change / development.
- 3.2 **Asset Disposal Requirements:** Each asset has its own challenges before it can be brought to market including title, covenant, planning, legislative and legal matters. This strongly influences when the marketing process can start.
- 3.3 **The Property Market:** The market cycle can move up and down based upon finance availability, economic sentiment, supply and demand factors, planning requirements etc. The market influences the likely value and achievability of a sale and therefore the disposal programme performance.

- 3.4 **Timing Matters and Pace:** There are a variety of factors that will determine pace and delivery which include due diligence and preparation for sale work, necessary legislative steps, route to market and the basis of a disposal, whether from straight auction, unconditional sale to conditional sale. These matters will be assessed at the outset to build the programme and then kept under review until disposal.
- 3.5 **Optimising Value vs. Mitigating Cost/Risk:** Once an asset is surplus and unused, unless a “meanwhile use” can be achieved, holding costs are to protect future value and ensure the site is held safely. The costs are funded from revenue. Where there is potential for an enhanced receipt, managing cost and risk during the holding period may result in a net positive position.
- 3.6 **Risk Management:** Both holding an estate of assets and disposing of assets presents financial, physical, legal and management risk. The property disposal process must be risk managed and risks mitigated, as far as possible. Given the value and nature of property assets they can quickly become a liability. Risk factors of holding property are strong drivers to disposing as quickly as possible with appropriate management interventions in place until disposal is achieved.
- 3.7 **Local Government Reorganisation:** At the time of drafting specific requirements are unknown but as the position becomes clearer and a process on the treatment of disposals is laid down, KCC will adhere to these mandated requirements. This may likely impact on the programme’s deliverability through addition process and timing requirements.

4. A Wholesale Programme Approach - Option 1 (proposal to be progressed)

- 4.1 The Council’s ability to respond to the market when making disposals has lessened over the years. The scale, frequency and strategic role of disposals have evolved, and the historic approach no longer provides the most effective governance framework.
- 4.2 Whilst delegated limits for disposals by the Director of Infrastructure remains at £1m, property values have increased considerably resulting in more Cabinet Member decisions being required.
- 4.3 Local authority disposals are subject to legislation including provisions within the Academies Act and Localism Act, requiring additional steps before a disposal process can commence. A programme approach enables the Council to act in an agile manner reprofiling the programme to provide greater financial resilience.
- 4.4 Moving to a programme decision approach offers wider visibility, strategic oversight and transparency regarding the programme as a whole.
- 4.5 The 2026/27 Disposal Programme set out in this report provides a comprehensive overview to the Decision Maker of all assets planned for disposal in the coming year. Where assets are likely to breach the £1m Cabinet Member threshold, the decision provides appropriate delegations to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to agree

disposal terms. This will reset the Council's ability to respond with more programme pace, transparency and more visible accountability.

- 4.6 This approach does not derogate from KCC's statutory and fiduciary duties to obtain best consideration and be compliant with its own Constitutional and policy requirements. The usual checks and balances of obtaining valuations, marketing openly and even-handedly etc. will remain.
- 4.7 A progress report will be brought to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on a bi-annual basis to update on the status on the delivery of the programme. Should any asset, not listed in the programme in appendix B and exempt appendix C be brought forward that is expected to have a value greater than £1million, this will subject to a separate key decision process.

5. Alternatives Considered and Discounted/ Discarded

- 5.1 **Option 2 - No Change:** The present arrangement whereby the programme is agreed and overseen by the Cabinet Member with all disposal decisions made on a piecemeal basis according to value and constitutional delegated limits is no longer considered effective and continuing on this basis is likely to impact on the Council's ability to release capital from its surplus assets and likely adversely affect the holding risk of surplus assets with a reduction in pace of delivery.
- 5.2 **Option 3 - Cease the Disposals Programme:** The Council's MTFP identifies the receipts from disposals as an essential component to financing KCC's investment in the delivery of its services. Holding instead of selling surplus assets would mean that the Council would need to find alternative funding and risks of holding surplus unused assets would increase.
- 5.3 **Option 4 - Increase delegated limits for disposal decisions but retain the current programme framework:** This would likely improve the speed on which decisions can be taken and improve response times to the market. However, given other factors and particularly the advantages of transparency, clarity and comprehension of the whole, this is less attractive than the Wholesale Programme Approach.

6. Draft Programme

- 6.1 In 2026/27 the proposed programme has identified 45 assets for disposal. This may change through the year if a Council reuse of an asset is determined, or assets become surplus in year. Where new surplus assets are likely to exceed the delegated disposal limit, separate decisions will be sought in line with constitutional requirements.
- 6.2 The Programme's total target value is to generate £49m of capital receipts with projected holding cost savings in the region of over half a million. The number of assets which are likely to generate less than £1 million (and would therefore ordinarily fall within limits delegated to the Director of Infrastructure) is 13 and the number of assets likely to generate over £1m (and would ordinarily require a Cabinet Member decision) is 6.

6.3 A list of the assets proposed for the programme are set out in appendix B. The table provides an overall actual/estimated value contribution estimate.

6.4 Programme Outturn:

YEAR	YEAR SALES AGREED	RECEIPT DELIVERED
2026/27	£29m	£17m
2027/28	£15m	£17m
2028/29	£5m	£15m

6.5 The outturn above is an estimate of when assets are likely to sell against when the capital receipt is likely to be received by KCC. Receipts can be delayed because the asset was sold towards the end of a cycle and will therefore need to be moved into the following financial year, the sale offer accepted was conditional on planning, finance matters, the market’s performance or some other reason. A programme, whilst reported cyclically within financial years is ongoing with work being undertaken to move the pipeline of assets.

6.6 Exempt appendix C (Detail for Assets over £1m) sets out more details and description of valuable assets as separate proformas. These assets would be most likely to require Cabinet Member decision and so this additional information has been provided. Assets that have already received approval from a Cabinet Member and were reported to previous Policy and Resources Committees in prior years have not been included here. The appendix is exempt as it contains confidential detailed information that is commercially sensitive. Note some assets are valued at under £1m but have been included as there could be a greater risk that the market may take an optimistic view as to their value with a potential of them receiving offers over the delegated decision threshold.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 Appendix B sets out the proposed assets which subject to the surplus declaration KCC intend to bring forward for disposal during the course of 26/27. As set out above the actual receipts of disposals is dependent on the nature of the transaction and has been profiled over a 3-year period.

7.2 Capital receipts are required to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the delivery of the Councils capital programme. Any proceeds are reinvested in the Councils Priorities as agreed by Full Council. A programme approach enables KCC to respond with more agility which provides a greater level of certainty in relation to receipts.

7.3 Disposing of assets that are surplus to the Councils requirements reduces the financial cost and liabilities associated with holding vacant property that would otherwise fall to the revenue budget.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 KCC, as all local authorities has a fiduciary duty to its taxpayers to mitigate risk and cost liability such as holding costs for unused property and should not be holding assets for no purpose. To be clear, Councils can hold assets empty with a future purpose such as a requirement, development etc. Once a property is declared surplus however, then there is no holding purpose.
- 8.2 Local Authorities are bound to s123 Local Government Act 1972 in the disposal of assets. This requires Councils to obtain “best consideration”. This does not have to be financially defined by “best price” although this would be a common benchmark to determine such. The Freehold Disposals Policy recognises non-monetary returns as valid to consider under the General Disposals Consent Order 2003, however these considerations would have to be fully justified and evaluated before consideration.
- 8.3 The delivery of the disposals process includes the engagement of Legal Advisors at the beginning through to the end of the disposal of an asset.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and identified no direct equalities implications arising from this decision.
- 9.2. For each asset disposal, the equalities impact will be assessed at the time that a decision is taken and included for consideration by the decision maker.

10. Data Protection Implications

- 10.1. A Data Protection Implication Assessment (DPIA) screener has been performed and has confirmed that there are no DPIA implications and that a further DPIA assessment is not required in respect of this decision.
- 10.2. In the handling of marketing/conveyancing for each site Data Protection regulations will be observed.
- 10.3. Sites will be inspected prior to disposal to ensure that no sensitive material remains on site.

11. Other corporate implications

- 11.1. This decision will not impact other areas of the Council’s work negatively. It should generate capital receipts which will be used to fund KCC’s priorities including investment capital for statutory services and service development and realignment programmes.
- 11.2. Note that service changes and emerging new requirements may require property assets for delivery and while assets may be declared surplus and entered into the programme for disposal, before any final decision is taken to

proceed with disposal, a step check to determine whether an asset may be required is made so that opportunities for necessary reuse are not lost.

12. Governance

- 12.1 Approval of the Freehold Disposals Programme 2026/27 establishes a programme-based decision-making framework for the disposal of assets included within the programme.
- 12.2 Where an asset is included within the approved programme and has been confirmed as surplus to operational requirements, no separate Key Decision is required for the disposal of that asset. Disposals may be progressed under delegated authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and relevant Cabinet Members as required, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, Property Management Protocol and statutory requirements.
- 12.3 For transparency and forward planning, the programme may include assets where disposal is dependent upon one or more prerequisite Key Decisions relating to service provision. In such cases, inclusion within the programme does not remove the requirement for those Key decisions to be taken, and disposal activity will not proceed until surplus status has been confirmed.
- 12.4 Once all prerequisite Key Decisions have been completed and surplus status confirmed, the disposal may proceed under the approved programme framework without the need for an additional disposal Key Decision.
- 12.5 Should any asset, not listed in the programme be brought forward that is expected to have a value greater than £1million, this will subject to a separate key decision process.

13. Conclusions

- 13.1. The Freehold Disposals Programme for 2026–27 decision approach, responds to the increasing scale and complexity of property disposals whilst supporting the Council's fiduciary duties, capital receipts and Medium-Term Financial Plan. The proposed programme approach improves transparency, pace and efficiency in decision-making, provides clearer oversight of the disposal pipeline and associated risks while remaining fully compliant with statutory, constitutional and best consideration requirements.
- 13.2. KCC has no operational requirement to retain sites detailed within the Freehold Disposals Programme for 2026–27.
- 13.3. The sale of the assets will result in capital receipts which will be reinvested in KCC's priority projects and programmes.
- 13.4. The disposal of the property will remove holding costs associated with the property easing pressure on revenue budgets.

- 13.5. Disposal of assets within the programme will be subject to ensuring a surplus status has not changed, all necessary governance to ensure compliance with statutory requirements including Asset of Community Value legislation and any requirements following Local Government Reorganisation directions.
-

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Deputy Leader in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

14. Background Documents

- 14.1. [KCC Freehold Asset Disposal Policy](#)
- 14.2. Property Management Protocol – See section 13 of [KCC Constitution](#) - Financial Procedures

15. Appendices

- 15.1. Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- 15.2. Exempt Appendix B - Programme overview
- 15.3. Exempt Appendix C – Site Specific Information for assets over £1m
- 15.4. Appendix D - Equalities Impact Assessment

16. Contact details

<p>Report Author:</p> <p>Mark Cheverton Head of Real Estate Telephone number: 03000 415940 Email address: mark.cheverton@kent.gov.uk</p> <p>Daniel Parkes Principal Surveyor – Disposals, Acquisitions & Investments Telephone number: 03000 41 79 55 Email address: Daniel.Parkes@kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Director:</p> <p>Rebecca Spore Director of Infrastructure Telephone number: 03000 41 67 16 Email address: Rebecca.Spore@kent.gov.uk</p>
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Brian Collins, Deputy Leader

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00022

Executive Decision – key

26/00022 – Kent County Council’s Freehold Disposal Programme 2026/2027

Decision:

As Deputy Leader, I agree to:

1. APPROVE the Kent County Council Freehold Disposal programme 2026/2027, and;
2. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and relevant Cabinet Members as required, to implement the approved programme, including but not limited to, agreeing all necessary disposal terms and entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

Reasons for decision:

Kent County Council has a fiduciary duty to manage its land and property assets efficiently and to dispose of assets that are no longer required for operational purposes. The proposed Freehold Disposals Programme 2026–27 provides a transparent, strategic and programme-based framework for managing disposals at scale, reflecting the increased frequency, value and complexity of property transactions.

Approval of a single annual programme:

- Strengthens democratic accountability and oversight;
- Provides clarity on the financial and strategic impact of disposals;
- Improves the pace and efficiency of decision-making; and
- Ensures alignment with the Council’s Asset Management Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The capital receipts from the Disposals Programme will fund the priorities set out in the Medium-term financial plan (MTFP) and make revenue savings against Kent County Council’s surplus estate assets.

Financial implications:

Approval of the programme itself has no direct financial implications.

Delivery of the programme will generate capital receipts to support the Council's capital programme and MTFP. It will also result in revenue savings through the removal of holding and management costs associated with surplus assets.

There are currently holding costs associated with the sites contained within the programme in excess of £500,000 per annum.

Financial information relating to individual assets is commercially sensitive and is therefore contained within exempt appendices to associated reports.

Legal implications:

Property asset disposals are governed by statute, particularly s123 Local Government Act 1972.

Assets are prepared for disposal, and any legal requirements or implications are considered to ensure a compliant disposal. During this programme it is likely that KCC may be subject to Local Government Reorganisation requirements. Once these are known, KCC will ensure it complies.

KCC will adhere to all relevant legislation and legal process pertaining to disposal of assets by a Local Authority; individual disposals will be supported by appropriate legal advice and support via KCC's Legal Services department.

Equalities implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and identified no direct equalities implications arising from the decision.

Further Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIAs) will be undertaken for each disposal site as sites are taken forward.

Data Protection implications:

A Data Protection Implication Assessment (DPIA) screener has been performed and has confirmed that there are no DPIA implications and that a further DPIA assessment is not required in respect of this decision.

In the handling of marketing/conveyancing for each site Data Protection regulations will be observed.

Sites will be inspected prior to disposal to ensure that no sensitive material remains on site.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 6 May 2026.

This is a county-wide programme. Prior to an individual asset being disposed of, the views of the Local Member are and will be sought and reported to the decision taker, in accordance with the Property Management Protocol within the Constitution.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Other options considered were to:

- Progress with a programme approach to disposals - *Recommended*
- Consider disposals on a piecemeal basis – *Discounted*
- Cease the delivery of the Disposal programme – *Discounted*
- Increase delegated limits for disposal decisions but retain the current programme framework - *Discounted*.

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

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Signed

.....
Date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Freehold Disposals Programme 2026-2027

Responsible Officer

Mark Cheverton - DCED INF

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

Mark Cheverton - DCED INF

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Strategic and Corporate Services

Responsible Service

Directorate of Infrastructure

Responsible Head of Service

Mark Cheverton - DCED INF

Responsible Director

Rebecca Spore - DCED I

Aims and Objectives

This is a programme of proposed disposal of property assets. The disposal of assets is governed by the Local Government Act s123 and other associated instruments and legislation, but effectively where assets are surplus, that KCC disposes of them within this legislative framework, its Freehold Disposal Policy, Asset Management Strategy etc.

The sale of each asset will be assessed in terms of equalities impact, though it will be the service need that drives this impact for each asset. Note that before a sale proceeds on any asset, there is consideration on whether there remains no use for it.

Aims/Objectives

- Remove assets from the portfolio where there is no identified KCC use
- Reduce expenditure on redundant assets in line with KCC's fiduciary duty and freeing up revenue for redirection to priority services.
- Raise Capital Receipts for reinvestment into KCC's priorities
- Improve transparency on KCC's annual disposal programme (A programme is already delivered annually)
- Improve pace of delivery

Recommendation No additional negative impact over the present programme is anticipated. Given improved pace of delivery, making savings and raising investment, these could present opportunities to improve equalities impacts elsewhere across KCC.
Section B – Evidence
Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?
Yes
It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?
Yes
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Not Applicable
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
As mentioned this is a delivery programme proposal on the sale of assets (which exists already). The assets are identified surplus by KCC and where the services have completed their own EQIAs. Where there are new requirements and assets are options for reuse or a disposal is to take place, an EQIA for each asset will be completed.
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients
No
Staff
No
Residents/Communities/Citizens
Residents/communities/citizens
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
Saving revenue / raising investment income COULD be used to improve equality impacts across KCC.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

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

DECISION REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE

From: Brian Collins, Deputy Leader

Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 6 May 2026

Subject: Biodiversity net gain pilot scheme at Preston Hill

Decision no: 26/00021

Key Decision: *Yes, it involves expenditure or savings of maximum £1m and contracts in excess of 20 years.*

Classification: **Unrestricted report with exempt Appendix A**, *not for publication under the Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 refers - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).*

Past Pathway of report: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 11 March 2026

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Sevenoaks North & Darent Valley - Local Member: Marc Logen (Reform UK)

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report sets out proposals for Kent County Council (KCC) to develop and deliver a biodiversity net gain (BNG) scheme on vacant land at Preston Hill as a pilot. The pilot aims to generate sustainable income through the sale of BNG units while enhancing biodiversity on KCC freehold land.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Deputy Leader in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix B).

1. Introduction

1.1. Following a change in property arrangements some of the fields at Preston Hill, located off Eynsford Road in Dartford, are now vacant. There is no KCC operational requirement for the site and therefore a number of options have been considered to maximise the value of the site and to minimise revenue costs which fall to the County Council as set out in section 2 Following

assessment, it has been identified that the most appropriate use of the site is the generation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units to create an income stream. This report therefore considers the available options and how this could be delivered.

- 1.2. Biodiversity net gain (BNG) offers landowners, in this case KCC, an opportunity to generate income by assessing their land's ecological value and improving it by creating or enhancing habitats, resulting in BNG units that can be sold to developers who need off-site gains to meet their statutory 10% biodiversity uplift requirement.
- 1.3. BNG could provide a long-term income stream for KCC and support environmental stewardship, whilst maintaining ownership and control of the site/land and best lends itself to hard-to-develop sites, such as green belt land, or areas with difficult topography, which typically have low disposal value. From KCC's perspective, BNG creates an opportunity to enhance habitats, such as grassland, woodland, wetlands, or hedgerows on land and have those improvements formally recognised and valued.

1.4 **Site context:**

Preston Hill was acquired by KCC in 1938 and forms part of KCC's wider landholding in the area including five agricultural fields which sit adjacent to Lullingstone country park. Two of these fields are currently subject to an agricultural tenancy originally granted in 1944, which remains active on a rolling basis and can be terminated by KCC subject to notice. A further agricultural lease, issued in 1992, was surrendered in 2023 following a change in circumstances and the land is now vacant and available for alternative use as set out by the blue shaded area in Appendix C. The former tenanted farmland at Preston Hill, located off Eynsford Road in Dartford, extends to approximately 37 acres / 15 hectares and lies adjacent to the existing country park. The location and extent of the site which is subject to this Decision are shown in Appendix C (Site Plan). Preston Hill is a site of natural and scientific interest, which is designated as part of the Otford to Shoreham Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Initial assessments indicate that the site has the potential to deliver up to 90 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units, subject to detailed ecological survey, design, and legal securing.

1.5 The key considerations for BNG credit generation are:

- BNG requires a 30-year commitment to the ongoing management of any habitat created.
- Expenditure will be required to create BNG habitats, noting that this investment is dealt with differently in the options.
- Income received is subject to the successful sale of BNG units and requires a sales mechanism.
- Any changes in national planning legislation relating to BNG requirements may impact on demand for units.

2. Options considered

2.1. **Options considered:** Seven options were assessed in the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Preston Hill site, ranging from doing nothing to leasing or managing the site for BNG delivery, with four options carried forward to the Full Business Case (FBC) as set out below. Key options included:

- Do nothing (option 1) – under this option KCC holds a vacant site, with the revenue costs and liabilities associated with this.
- Lease whole site to a 3rd party for a rental income (option 2) – e.g. a grazing tenant. Due to the topography and status of the site there are limited alternative uses. Whilst this option will minimise holding costs any income is likely to be minimal.
- Sell site (option 3) - The topography and the challenging site characteristics are reflected in the valuation and development options for the site. This option will minimise holding costs and development costs.
- Options 4-7 sets out different models that could be adopted for the generation of BNG units These options all delivered a greater return than options 1-3 and were therefore carried forward for consideration in the next stage of the business case and are considered further in section 2.4.

2.2 Options 1,2 and 3 were dismissed. Exempt Appendix A sets out more detail in relation to the consideration of these options.

2.3. Options considered further for the generation of BNG units:

There are a number of ways that KCC could generate biodiversity net gain units from Preston hill. BNG units were discussed at the Policy and Resources Cabinet committee on the 11 March 2026 and a copy of the previous report with further information regarding BNG units and how they operate can be found in Appendix E. The following models were considered as part of the options appraisal:

Option 4: Lease the site to an outsourced party to generate and sell BNG units with no/ limited risk to the council in return for a rental payment focused on best commercial return. This option is based on a third party (commercial operator focused on maximising financial return) taking on via a lease the liability and risk of investment costs associated with generating units and unit sale with payments made (typically 50% of income) to the Council after a trigger point is met (low risk, modest income).

Option 5: Lease to outsourced party - a multi stakeholder partnership with a focus to deliver a range of nature-based solutions, increasing the quality and quantity of ecosystem services delivered through environmental uplift. The income stream and risk for option 5 is shared amongst the stakeholders within the partnership. This option assumes that capital grants are secured to fund any capital investment (shared risk, moderate income).

Option 6: Form a partnership with Kent Commercial Services (CSG). CSG uses a combination of internal and subcontracted resources to manage the full process of site identification, feasibility, implementation and then ongoing monitoring and management including the sale of units. CSG and KCC split

the net income after costs are deducted. KCC is able to retain BNG units for internal usage at a reduced market rate (low risk, higher income potential).

Option 7: KCC self-delivery. Under this option, KCC would directly manage the land and sell Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units. To do so, KCC would need to recruit additional capacity to fulfil this role. Research suggests that 1x Ecologist (part-time), 1x Project Officer (part-time), 1 x admin support (part time) and 1x Land operative for management of Preston Hill. This would increase KCC’s operational risk, ongoing liability, and staffing costs. KCC would also need to identify and allocate upfront capital funding to support delivery. While this option presents the highest overall risk, it also offers the greatest potential income return (high risk, highest income potential).

2.4 A set of weighted Critical Success Factors (CSFs) were applied to assess each delivery option through a structured scoring matrix.

The assessment places primary emphasis on:

Assessment area	% weighting
Financial return	45
Scalability	20
Non-financial benefits	20
Deliverability and risk	10
KCC use of BNG units for KCC delivered projects	5

Each CSF was scored on a 1–5 scale, with the results presented in a scoring matrix to enable a consistent and transparent comparison of options. The scoring matrix balances risk, income potential and strategic alignment with option 6 scoring the highest.

Option	Score	% Weighted Score
Option 4	13	2.50 (50%)
Option 5	15	2.95 (59%)
Option 6	18	3.05 (61%)
Option 7	16	2.50 (50%)

2.5 Considerations of options 4-7

Option 4: Lease to outsourced commercial operator

- Land would be under agreement for 30 years.
- Risk that units sold will be under minimum threshold of units sold to trigger payments to KCC and therefore impacting KCC’s income potential.
- Initial investment factored into the cost model with no investment required by KCC.
- Income generation is dependent on units being sold.

Option 5: Lease to via a partnership operator

- Land would be under agreement for 30 years.
- Commercial viability is less compared to option 6 and 7.
- Scalability of project is limited.
- Income generation is dependent on units being sold.

Option 6: Lease via a partnership with CSG

- Land would be under agreement for 30 years.
- Income generation is dependent on units being sold.
- Initial investment factored into the cost model with no investment required by KCC.
- Financial benefit retained in KCC and Commercial Services Group (CSG).

Option 7: KCC self-delivery

- Land would be committed for 30 years.
- Initial upfront costs for staffing, capital and marketing. Plus, ongoing staffing and maintenance costs.
- Income generation is dependent on units being sold.
- No capital or revenue funding available to support this model in Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

2.6 Business case outcome

Based on the assessment of the options it is proposed that option 6 provides the best opportunity for KCC in terms of income and risk. It is proposed that this option is taken forward, subject to a pilot being undertaken at the Preston Hill former tenant farm fields site for a period of 18 months to assess its effectiveness. Should the pilot demonstrate that Option 6 is unsuccessful, KCC will go to open market and enter into a new agreement with another outsourced party subject to discussion at Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and a further Key Decision if appropriate.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. BNG provides an opportunity for KCC to generate income into the council.
- 3.2. Whilst habitat creation will require upfront expenditure; these costs will be fully met by an outsourced delivery partner.
- 3.3. Any income to KCC will depend on the successful sale of BNG units, with KCC receiving an agreed percentage share after accounting for cost considerations.
- 3.4. Further financial details are contained within exempt Appendix A.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1. A number of legal implications will need to be considered before BNG units can be sold:

4.1.1. **Statutory powers and lawful basis** - KCC must be able to demonstrate a clear statutory power to operate a BNG habitat bank and sell units.

4.1.2 **30-year commitment** - Legally secure habitat delivery and management for a minimum of 30 years.

4.1.3 **Registration and exclusivity of units** - Sites must be registered on Natural England's Biodiversity Gain Site Register.

4.2 For any lease, sale or contract for a BNG unit, external legal advisors will be appointed in consultation with KCC legal services.

5. Equalities implications

5.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and identified no direct equalities implications arising from the decision.

6. Data Protection implications

6.1. A Data Protection Implication Assessment (DPIA) screener has been performed and has confirmed that there are no DPIA implications and that a further DPIA assessment is not required in respect of this decision.

7. Other corporate implications

7.1. None.

8. Governance

8.1. It is expected that the level of receipt/income for BNG unit at the Preston Hill pilot site could be in excess of the Director's delegated threshold of £1m.

8.2. Since developers of BNG units are required to maintain any habitats created or enhanced for a minimum of 30 years, any lease or contract arising will be in excess of the Director's delegated threshold of 20 years.

8.3. As per the Constitution and the Council's governance processes a Key Decision will therefore be required for this decision to proceed with the pilot site.

8.4. In accordance with the property management protocol the views of the local Member will be sought and reported to the Cabinet Member taking the decision.

8.5. Delegated authority is to be given to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to finalise the terms of any BNG

agreement and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement.

- 8.6. The Government has announced plans for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), aiming to abolish two-tier government by 2028. At present, KCC has not received specific guidance from Central Government about how LGR will be implemented in Kent and Medway; further details are expected between May and August 2026. Until directed otherwise, KCC remains responsible for making decisions in the best interests of Kent taxpayers.
- 8.7. When any exchange of contracts is approaching, the Director of Infrastructure will consider all relevant factors including financial considerations, any pending LGR decisions, and applicable legislation before finalising any contract agreements.
- 8.8. If at any point prior to the exchange of contracts a KCC service requirement becomes apparent, the Director of Infrastructure has the authority to withdraw from the lease or sale and reallocate the asset to a KCC service user.

9. Conclusions and Next steps

- 9.1 Following assessment of the available options, it is concluded that establishing a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) scheme represents the most effective use of the former tenanted farm fields at Preston Hill, primarily due to the income potential for KCC. Of the BNG delivery options considered, Option 6 – leasing to Commercial Services Group, is identified as the preferred approach, having achieved the highest score against the Critical Success Factors (CSF). This option provides the most appropriate balance between income generation and risk.
- 9.2. Within the next 9 months KCC intend to have an agreement in place with Commercial Services Group to implement the pilot. If this is not possible within 9 months, then KCC will go out to market to review further options for the site, which will be presented to Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and a new Key Decision sought, if appropriate.
- 9.3. Option 7 has been discounted as it requires significant upfront investment. There is no capital or revenue funding available to support this model in the (MTFP).
- 9.4. The creation and management of BNG units is a complex area and it is therefore recommended for the pilot scheme to be monitored over an 18-month period, which will inform future direction of additional sites for BNG.
- 9.5 The next phase of the project will focus on establishing robust governance and progressing delivery through an outsourced partner. A BNG Delivery working group will be established to include representatives from Infrastructure, alongside other key stakeholders as required. The working group will provide strategic oversight, ensure cross council coordination, and act as the primary decision making and assurance body for the project.

9.6 Following establishment of the working group, the preferred outsourced delivery partner will be formally engaged. The objective will be to have all legal and contractual agreements completed within 9 months.

9.7 The Working Group will be responsible for:

- Confirming the core objectives (draft suggestions in 9.8).
- Providing strategic direction, risk oversight, and assurance throughout the delivery period.
- Monitoring the performance of the outsourced partner against the core objectives set out below.
- Reviewing delivery against agreed milestones and key deliverables, which will be embedded within the contract.

9.8 Initial proposed Core Objectives to be agreed with the Outsourced Delivery Partner:

- Deliver legally secure and policy compliant Biodiversity Net Gain
- Maximise sustainable net income for the Council
- Deliver high-quality habitat creation and long-term management
- Provide strong governance, reporting, and risk management
- Deliver a successful pilot that can inform and support the Council’s wider site delivery

9.9 Performance will be reviewed at the milestone points outlined below.

Milestone point	Key deliverables
0-3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC BNG working group established. • Baseline ecology surveys completed and BNG metric confirmed with outsourced party. • MOU agreed and signed with outsourced party.
3-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat creation and habitat management plan agreed with outsourced party. • Monthly monitoring and reporting framework agreed and established. • Progress reviewed by the Working Group and shared with Asset Review Board with feedback provided.
6-9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and sales strategy agreed with outsourced party. • Market review undertaken by outsourced party to ensure pricing and sales align with demand. • Continued review of progress against deliverables by BNG Working Group and shared with Asset Review Board. • Governance, legal, and mobilisation arrangements agreed and signed with CSG (by 9 months).
9-18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site registered on England’s Biodiversity Gain Site Register. • Habitat creation commenced in line with the habitat management plan. • Marketing and Sales strategy in place and operational. • Market review updated to confirm ongoing alignment with demand.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 20 units sold in period (by 18 months). • Income derived from unit sales is confirmed with KCC. • Pilot project review undertaken to assess performance against objectives and inform future delivery.
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9.10 It is therefore proposed to delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to finalise terms of any property agreement including leases and contracts as necessary.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Deputy Leader in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix B).

10. Background documents

10.1. Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

11. Appendices

- 11.1. Exempt Appendix A - Full Business Case
- 11.2. Appendix B – PRoD
- 11.3. Appendix C - Site Plan
- 11.4. Appendix D – EqiA
- 11.5. Appendix E – Biodiversity Net Gain Report – March 2026

12. Contact details

<p>Report Authors:</p> <p>Rebecca Anderson Job title: Head of Business Information Strategy and Assurance Telephone number: 03000 41 77 31 Email address: Rebecca.Anderson2@kent.gov.uk</p> <p>Lorenzo Woodford Job title: Strategy Manager Telephone number: 03000 41 43 81 Email address: lorenzo.woodford@kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Director:</p> <p>Rebecca Spore Job title: Director of Infrastructure Telephone number: 03000 41 67 16 Email address: rebecca.spore@kent.gov.uk</p>
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Brian Collins, Deputy Leader

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00021

Executive Decision – key**26/00021 – Biodiversity net gain Pilot scheme at Preston Hill**

Decision:

As Deputy Leader, I agree to:

1. Approve the Biodiversity net gain (BNG) pilot scheme at the Preston Hill site and an arrangement with Commercial Services Group (CSG) to implement the decision in relation to the site as set out by the blue hatched area in appendix C; and
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to take necessary actions, including but not limited to, negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant leases, contract arrangements or other legal agreements, as required, to implement the decision. as necessary.

Reasons for decision:

Following a change in property arrangements some of the fields at Preston Hill, located off Eynsford Road in Dartford, are now vacant. There is no KCC operational requirement for the site and therefore a number of options have been considered to maximise the value of the site and to minimise revenue costs/ risk which fall to the County Council.

Following assessment, it has been identified that the most appropriate use of the site is the generation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units to create an income stream.

Of the BNG delivery options considered, Option 6 – leasing to an outsourced specialist delivery partner (Commercial Services Group) is identified as the preferred approach, having achieved the highest score against the Critical Success Factors (CSF). This option provides the most appropriate balance between income generation and risk.

Delivering this option is likely to require the Council to enter into leases or other contractual arrangements with third parties that may exceed 20 years in duration, and which may also bring income in excess of the £1m Director delegated authority limit, therefore requiring a key decision.

Financial implications:

Developing Biodiversity net gain (BNG) units at the Preston Hill site provides an opportunity for KCC to generate income. While habitat creation will require upfront expenditure, the recommended option will minimise any upfront or ongoing costs as

all operational costs, including habitat creation and ongoing management, will be met by the third-party provider.

KCC will receive an income share derived from the successful sale of BNG units, with an agreed percentage paid to the Council upon each sale.

Legal implications:

For any lease, sale or contract for a BNG unit and the contractual / land arrangement with the Commercial Services Group, external legal advisors will be appointed in consultation with KCC legal services.

Equalities implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and identified no direct equalities implications arising from the decision.

Data Protection implications:

A Data Protection Implication Assessment (DPIA) screener has been performed and has confirmed that there are no DPIA implications and that a further DPIA assessment is not required in respect of this decision.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 6 May 2026.

The views of the Local Member have been sought and will be reported to the Cabinet Committee and the Cabinet Member taking the decision. To date no views or comments have been received.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- Do nothing – KCC to retain site as vacant.
- Alternative KCC use – KCC to explore whether there is any alternative KCC use for site.
- Lease site – KCC to not explore BNG opportunities and lease site, likely grazing licence.
- Sell site - KCC to not explore BNG opportunities and dispose of site.
- BNG unit generation – KCC to commence with pilot scheme on Preston Hill as a BNG site - **recommended option.**

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

.....

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Signed

Date

553000

553500

163500

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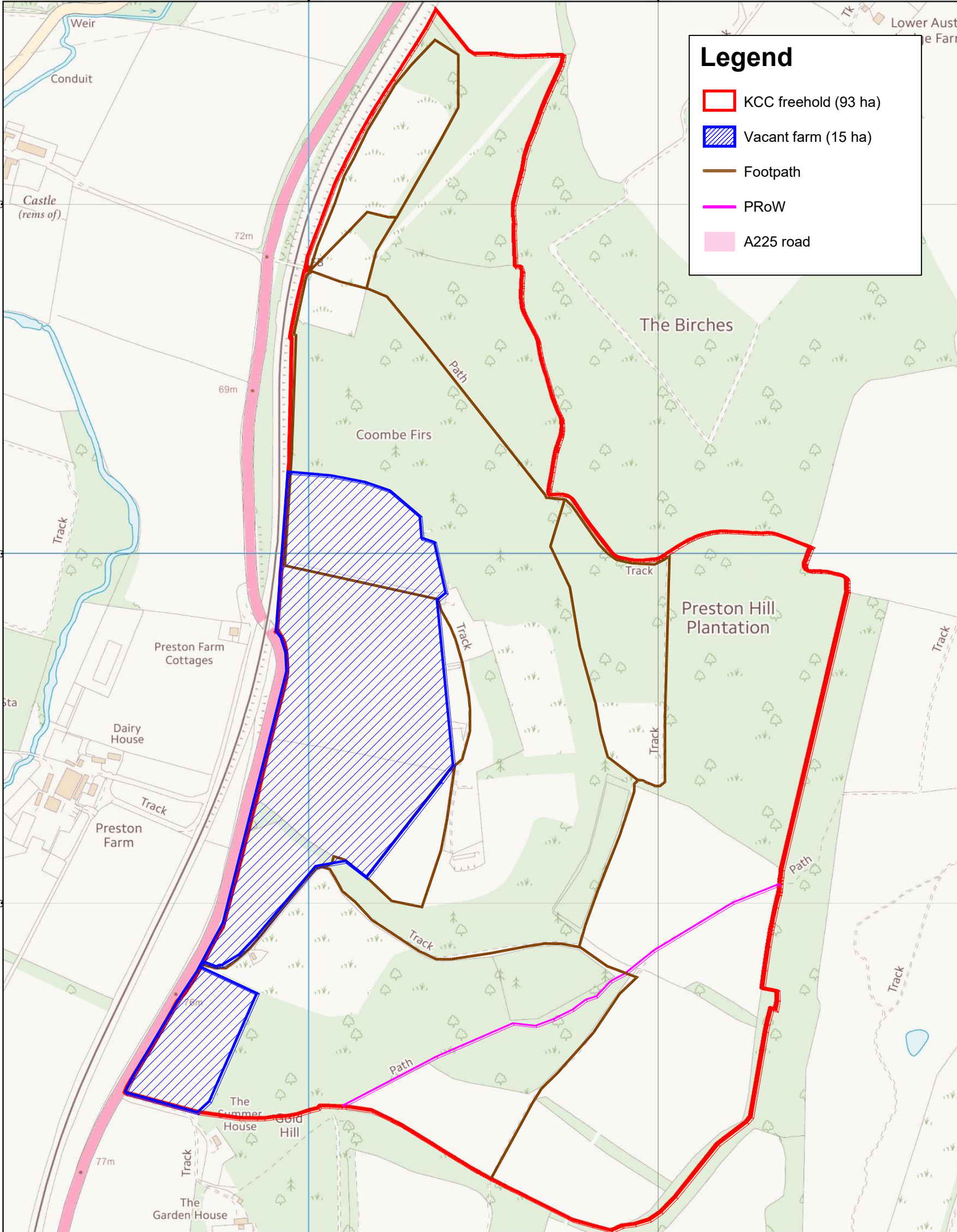
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Legend

-  KCC freehold (93 ha)
-  Vacant farm (15 ha)
-  Footpath
-  PRow
-  A225 road



PRESTON HILL COUNTRY PARK
 SHOREHAM ROAD
 SHOREHAM
 SEVENOAKS

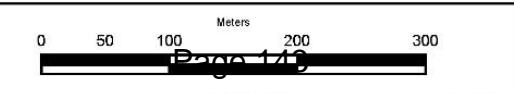
UPRN 54730100



PROPERTY AND
 INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT
 County Hall, Maidstone
 Kent ME14 1XQ
 Tel:08458 247247

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TQ5262/1E

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Authority to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain on KCC vacant land via outsourced party

Responsible Officer

Lorenzo Woodford - DCED INF

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

Rebecca Anderson - DCED INF

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

Authority to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain on KCC vacant land

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Strategic and Corporate Services

Responsible Service

DCED

Responsible Head of Service

Rebecca Anderson - DCED INF

Responsible Director

Rebecca Spore - DCED I

Aims and Objectives

This aim of the project is to consider the final options for delivering Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units at KCC sites and explores opportunities to scale a wider programme of selling units across KCC's freehold land— particularly sites that are vacant, surplus to requirements, or challenging to dispose of.

The objectives of the project are to implement a pilot for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on the ex-tenant farm fields at Preston Hill, evaluate the associated value proposition, and determine the preferred option to be taken forward in the final business case.

Section B – Evidence

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

No

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

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
We are required to consult with the local Division Members as part of the Council's constitution. As part of the key decision process, other Members of the Authority are made aware of the decision taken and are able to raise queries in respect of the proposed decision. We will take into account any feedback from the Member consultation.
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients
No
Staff
No
Residents/Communities/Citizens
Residents/communities/citizens
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
Creating habitats on this site will have a positive impact on the site due to biodiversity gain.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable

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

Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE

From: Brian Collins, Deputy Leader
Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 11 March 2026

Subject: Biodiversity Net Gain overview

Decision no: N/A

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of report: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee

Electoral Division: All - Countywide

Summary: This report is an introduction to Biodiversity Net Gain and identifies the opportunity for Kent County Council (KCC) to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units across its wider land portfolio. The aim where appropriate is to generate sustainable revenue streams while enhancing biodiversity on KCC freehold land.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE this report and comment on the proposal to use KCC sites for Biodiversity Net Gain units.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offers an opportunity for KCC to generate income by creating or improving habitats on its land. These habitats could then be leased to developers who need to fulfil the statutory requirement of a 10% increase in biodiversity.
- 1.2. BNG could provide a long-term income stream for KCC and support environmental stewardship, whilst maintaining ownership and control of the site/land. From KCC's perspective, BNG creates an opportunity to enhance habitats, such as grassland, woodland, wetlands, or hedgerows on land and have those improvements formally recognised and valued. KCC would flag hard-to-develop sites, such as green belt land, or areas with difficult topography, as they typically have low disposal value.

2. Key Considerations

2.1. The key considerations for BNG are:

- BNG requires a 30-year commitment to the ongoing management of any habitat created.
- Upfront costs will be required to create habitats, either directly through KCC, or indirectly through outsourcing.
- Income received is subject to the successful sale of BNG units.
- It will be necessary to review all sites that could potentially support a Biodiversity Net Gain project.
- The impact of any changes in national legislation relating to BNG requirements.

3. Background

- 3.1. In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).
- 3.2. The Act requires developers to deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat for wildlife than prior to the development.
- 3.3. Biodiversity value is measured and calculated using the statutory biodiversity metric¹ tool. The tool measures how many biodiversity units a habitat contains before development and calculates how many are needed to replace those lost and provide the statutory 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 3.4. If developers cannot achieve all of their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
- 3.5. For off-site gains and significant on-site gains, developers must maintain any habitats created or enhance for a minimum of 30 years and the responsibilities for this will be set out in a legal agreement.
- 3.6. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offers landowners, in this case KCC, an opportunity to generate income by assessing their land's ecological value and improving it by creating or enhancing habitats, resulting BNG units that can be sold to developers who need off-site gains to meet their statutory 10% biodiversity uplift requirement.
- 3.7. KCC owns vacant land which could be utilised to create habitats to generate income. Eligible sites may include hard-to-develop areas, such as green belt land or sites with difficult topography or are otherwise challenging. Selling BNG

¹ The BNG metric tool is the statutory calculator used to measure changes in habitat value, converting habitat areas and features into standardised 'biodiversity units' to demonstrate whether a development achieves the required biodiversity net gain.

units can provide a long-term income stream, support environmental enhancement and maintenance, whilst maintaining ownership and control of the land. It is also a financially sustainable way to secure sites for longer term consideration for future use or development

3.8. Selling BNG units aligns with KCC's Asset Management Strategy and Reforming Kent's Future, supporting objectives to:

- Maximise income from underutilised assets.
- Deliver environmental benefits and statutory compliance.
- Reduce reliance on core budgets and external funding.

4. Options considered and associated risk

4.1. KCC will assess multiple approaches for delivering BNG, from in-house provision to fully outsourced models. Each option will be assessed using critical success factors with a weighted scoring system.

4.2. **Assessment Framework: Critical Success Factors (CSF)**

Each option will be evaluated using a structured scoring matrix against the following CSFs:

4.2.1. **Scalability** - The extent to which the option allows for expansion of BNG delivery across other KCC sites.

4.2.2 **Financial Return** - Assessment of short and long-term financial benefits including:

- Upfront costs and/or receipts
- Income potential
- Expenditure over 30 years
- Capital receipt versus BNG unit sale opportunity

4.2.3 **Non-Financial Benefit (Environmental)** - Evaluation of ecological outcomes, contribution to nature recovery, biodiversity uplift, and alignment with KCC's environmental objectives.

4.2.4 **KCC Use of BNG units for Projects** - How well the option supports KCC's internal demand for BNG units (e.g. school projects).

4.2.5 **Deliverability / Risk** - Assessment of:

- Feasibility
- Complexity
- Legal and regulatory considerations
- Market uncertainty
- Operational, financial, and environmental risks
- Long-term management obligations

1.1. **Associated risks for consideration**

- Land would be committed for 30 years.
- Income generation is dependent on units being sold.
- Changes to Environment Act 2021
- Changes to National Policies which could impact delivery of BNG.
- Deferred income model

5. **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offers an opportunity for KCC to generate income.
- 5.2 Expenditure will be required to create habitats, either directly through KCC or indirectly through outsourcing.
- 5.3 Any income generated is subject to the successful sale of BNG units.

6 **Legal implications**

- 6.1 A number of legal implications will need to be considered before BNG units can be sold:

1.1.1. **Statutory powers and lawful basis** - KCC must be able to demonstrate a clear statutory power to operate a BNG habitat bank and sell units.

1.1.2. **Dual role conflict: regulator and seller** - Conflict of interest management is a legal implication to be considered. Where KCC determines planning applications as decision-maker and sells BNG units as provider.

1.1.3. **Restrictions on using Section 106 with own land** – KCC cannot usually enter into a Section 106 agreement with itself in its dual role as planning authority and landowner.

6.1.4 **30-year commitment** - Legally secure habitat delivery and management for a minimum of 30 years.

6.1.5 **Registration and exclusivity of units** - Sites must be registered on Natural England's Biodiversity Gain Site Register.

- 6.2 For any lease, sale or contract for a BNG unit, external legal advisors will be appointed in consultation with KCC legal services.

7. **Equalities implications**

- 7.1. No decision is required at this stage and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) is not necessary.

8. Data Protection Implications

- 8.1. No decision is required at this stage and therefore an assessment of Data Protection implications is not required at this time.

9. Other corporate implications

- 9.1. None.

10. Governance

- 10.1. It is expected that the level of receipt/income for each BNG unit or site could be in excess of the Director's delegated threshold.
- 10.2. Since developers are required to maintain any habitats created or enhanced for a minimum of 30 years, any lease or contract arising will be in excess of the Director's delegated threshold.
- 10.3. As per the Constitution and the Council's governance processes, Key Decisions will therefore be required for BNG transactions. These may be sought per site, as a collective grouped decision, or as a programme decision which gives authority to Director of Infrastructure within agreed limits. The best approach is to be determined.
- 10.4. In accordance with the property management protocol the views of the local Member, in each instance, will be sought and reported to the Cabinet Member taking the decision.
- 10.5. Delegated authority is to be given to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to finalise the terms of any BNG agreement and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement.
- 10.6. The Government has announced plans for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), aiming to abolish two-tier government by 2028. At present, KCC has not received specific guidance from Central Government about how LGR will be implemented in Kent and Medway; further details are expected between May and August 2026. Until directed otherwise, KCC remains responsible for making decisions in the best interests of Kent taxpayers.
- 10.7. When any exchange of contracts is approaching, the Director of Infrastructure will consider all relevant factors including financial considerations, any pending LGR decisions, and applicable legislation before finalising any contract agreements.
- 10.8. If at any point prior to the exchange of contracts a KCC service requirement becomes apparent, the Director of Infrastructure has the authority to withdraw from the lease or sale and reallocate the asset to a KCC service user.

11. Next steps and Conclusions

11.1. The next steps are:

- To decide whether KCC selling BNG units is a viable option for the council.
- To review commercial viability and commitment.
- To develop each option further.
- To develop Business Case which explores piloting programme.
- Return to Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee in May 2026 for Key Decision on pilot scheme

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE this report and comment on the proposal to use KCC sites for Biodiversity Net Gain units.

12. Background documents

12.1. Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/schedule/7A>

13. Contact details

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