

By: Ben Watts – Deputy Chief Executive
To: County Council
Date: 19 March 2026
Subject: Pay Policy Statement 2026/27
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper addresses the actions the Authority is required to make on pay as part of delivering its responsibilities under the Localism Act 2011.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the approval of the Budget in February, the Council is required under the Localism Act to agree and publish a statement regarding local pay.
- 1.2 At the budget meeting, County Council agreed to a pay award of at least 3.8% for all employees, and a £13.56 per hour minimum salary.
- 1.3 The new minimum salary, as agreed by County Council in February 2026 will result in an hourly rate of £13.56 per hour and is above both the National Living Wage and the Voluntary Living Wage which are £12.71 and £13.45 respectively.
- 1.4 As part of the new pay strategy, progression within a grade (where applicable) is subject to, and informed by, a performance assessment each year at the anniversary date of being appointed to the grade. Progression is by steps and the length of time between steps is clearly defined. Also, as part of the new pay strategy, the annual pay award will be withheld for 2026/27 if someone is not performing.
- 1.5 The Council operates a Market Premium Policy which is designed to help managers attract and retain high quality employees in a competitive recruitment market. This is done on a business case basis. Payments are reported to Personnel Committee annually.
- 1.6 The Council continually seeks to ensure that policies, procedures and payments are designed and operated in a way that treats employees lawfully and fairly. In addition, the Gender Pay Gap Report is published each year.
- 1.7 KCC's approach to pay recognises that there will be a wide variety of factors and issues that employees face. We have a range of support, employee benefits and signposting available through KNet and Kent Rewards, which is intended to offer something of value for everyone independent of grade, lifestyle or personal commitments.

- 1.8 The Pay Policy, including the performance assessment process and related increases, applies consistently to all of the County Council's employees at all grades.

2. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 is attached at Appendix 1. As in previous years, and as agreed by County Council on 29 March 2012, the statement relates to: -
- the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer which includes recruitment, increases and additions
 - the use of any performance-related pay (PRP) for chief officers and the use of bonuses, if applicable
 - the approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under or to be employed by the authority
 - the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of chief officers.

For the purpose of the Localism Act, a Chief Officer in KCC is defined as being at 'Director level. This includes the County Council's Corporate Directors and Directors.

- 2.2 The provisions of this statement do not apply to the staff of local authority schools.

3. PAY MULTIPLE

- 3.1 A pay multiple is calculated in order to measure the difference in pay between the norm and highest salary. The definition of pay multiple as defined in the 'Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency' document is the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the authority's workforce.
- 3.2 KCC's current Pay Multiple figure is 8.1:1. This excludes schools.

4. GUIDANCE

- 4.1 The policy is compliant with expectations and guidance in the Code of Recommended Practice along with supplementary updates which have been received.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 County Council note the report and approve the publication of the attached Pay Policy Statement.

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Appendix 1.

Kent County Council Pay Policy Statement 2026/2027

The Authority seeks to be able to recruit and retain staff in a way which is externally competitive and internally fair. The Kent Scheme Pay Policy applies in a consistent way from the lowest to the highest grade.

- The Pay Policy is influenced by a number of factors which include local pay bargaining, market information, market forces, economic climate, measures of inflation and budgetary position.
- The policy referred to in this Statement is relevant to Council employees generally. The scope of this Statement does not include all Terms and Conditions as some are set on a national basis. These include Teachers covered by the schoolteachers pay and conditions in (England and Wales) document, Soulbury Committee (pay only), Adult Education, National Joint Council (NJC), Joint National Council (JNC) and the National Health Service (NHS).
- The Kent Scheme pay range consists of grades KSA – KSR. Details of the pay range are at the bottom of the page.
- The details of the reward package for all Corporate Directors and Directors are published and updated on the County Council's web site.
- KCC will publish the number of people and job title by salary band. This is from £50,000 to £54,999 and then by pay bands of £5,000 thereafter. This will include elements made on a repeatable or predictable basis such as market premium payments.
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/finance-and-budget/spending/senior-staff-salaries>
- The appropriate grade for a job is established through a job evaluation process which takes into account the required level of knowledge, skills and accountability required for the role.
- The lowest point of KCC's grading structure (Grade KSA) is set such that the hourly rate is above the National Minimum Wage and marginally above the equivalent of the Living Wage Foundations Living Wage.
- Staff who are new to the organisation must be appointed at the entry point of the grade unless there are exceptional reasons to appoint higher. These must be based on a robust business case in relation to the level of knowledge, skills and experience offered by the candidate and consideration is given to the level

of salaries of the existing staff to prevent pay inequality. For senior staff, any such business case must be approved by the relevant Corporate Director.

- Council signs off the pay structure. The subsequent appointment of individuals, including those receiving salaries in excess of £100,000, is in accordance with the pay structure and the principles outlined in the pay policy.
- Staff who are promoted should be appointed to the entry point of the grade. However, their pay increase should equate to at least 2.5%.
- Progression within a grade (where applicable) is subject to, and informed by, a performance assessment each year at the anniversary of being appointed to the grade. Progression is by steps and the length of time between steps is clearly defined. A separate annual pay award is made in April of each year. This applies to all levels in the Authority and there are no additional bonus schemes for senior managers.
- The annual pay award is set following the outcome of the local pay bargaining process.
- The 'Lowest' paid employees are defined as those employees on KCC's lowest grade, KSA. They receive relevant benefits and are remunerated in the same proportionate way as others.
- The entry level salary will increase to £26,168 which equates to £13.56 per hour.
- In order to establish the pay difference and the relative change in pay levels over time, a pay multiplier can be calculated. This is the base pay level of the highest paid employee shown as a multiple of the median Kent Scheme salary. This multiplier will be published on the County Council's website annually.
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/data-about-the-council#paymultiplier>
- KCC recognises that managers need to be able to reward performance in a flexible and appropriate way to the particular circumstances.
- Managers have delegated powers to make cash awards and non-cash awards when necessary and where not covered by any other provision as defined in the Blue Book Kent Scheme Terms & Conditions.
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/jobs/careers-with-us/working-for-us>
http://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/12574/Kent-Scheme.pdf
- Should it be shown that there is specific recruitment and retention difficulties, the Market Premium Policy may be used to address these issues.

- The Council would not expect the re-engagement of an individual who has left the organisation with a redundancy, retirement or severance package.
- Policies about termination payments and employer discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme will be reviewed and published for all staff. These will be produced with the intention of only making additional payments when in the best interests of the Authority and maintaining consistency through all pay grades. This will continue to be managed through the HR & OD function and monitored by Personnel Committee.

2026/27 Kent Scheme pay scales

Grade	Entry	Middle		Top
KSA	£26,168			£26,168
KSB	£26,822			£26,822
KSC	£26,956			£27,765
KSD	£27,904			£29,020
KSE	£29,167			£30,934
KSF	£32,140			£35,035
KSG	£36,264	£38,012		£39,760
KSH	£41,782	£44,194		£46,606
KSI	£47,990	£50,718		£53,446
KSJ	£55,764	£59,150		£62,535
KSK	£63,376	£66,692		£70,007
KSL	£71,432	£75,306		£79,179
KSM	£81,015	£85,473		£89,931
KSN	£95,739	£101,647	£107,555	£113,463
KSO	£114,961	£121,458	£127,955	£134,452
KSP	£142,807	£151,202	£159,597	£167,992
KSQ	£179,579	£192,421	£205,263	£218,105
KSR	£220,526	£232,498	£244,471	£256,443