

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Wimble- Cabinet Member for Economic
Development & Special Projects

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00010

Executive Decision – key

26/00010– Kent and Medway Business Fund – 2026 - Revised Loan Offer

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Special Projects, I agree to:

1. APPROVE the improvements and changes to the loan offer, terms, and eligibility criteria for the Kent & Medway Business Fund (KMBF), to take effect from 1 April 2026.
2. APPROVE the continued governance and administration arrangements for the KMBF, including the delegation of authority to the Director of Growth & Communities (and Head of Economy where appropriate) to approve individual loan and equity investment decisions in accordance with the Officers' Scheme of Delegation
3. CONFIRM that the scheme will continue to operate until March 2032 under the approvals granted by DLUHC/MHCLG.

Reasons for decision:

Following a review of the current scheme performance, the Investment Advisory Board and its Sub-Group overseeing the fund agreed a proposed future loan offer, terms and eligibility for the Kent & Medway Business Fund, in line with the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act. This change requires a key decision.

Financial implications:

- Running the Kent & Medway Business Fund costs about £670,000 a year, which covers staff, legal work, appraisals, and ongoing monitoring of businesses that receive loans. These costs are fully paid back to KCC by the Fund.
- To make sure the scheme pays for itself, KCC has set a 10% administration fee for every approved loan. Financial checks showed that this fee is affordable for businesses, especially because the loans are interest-free.
- The Fund also charges a management fee, and together these fees ensure the loan scheme is self-funding.
- The maximum loan amount has been set at £750,000 to meet the rules of the Subsidy Control Act 2025.

Legal implications:

- The approval from DLUHC allows KCC to continue to manage the recycled KMBF/RGF Investments and to provide loans to local businesses until March 2032.
- The upper loan limit of £750,000 is capped at this figure to ensure compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2025

Equalities implications:

Positive impacts:

The fund is open to all businesses across Kent and Medway and is designed to be easy to access through clear information and multiple referral routes. Materials and events are inclusive and accessible, with alternative formats, reasonable adjustments and accessible online content available. Funding decisions are based only on the strength of the business case and financial viability, in line with equality duties.

Negative Impacts:

None

Data Protection implications:

An existing privacy notice covers the operation of the KMBF. This has been reviewed as part of the Business Investment Teams cyclical review of its process maps and guides. It has been determined that no new data protection issues will arise from the proposed processing of new loan applications at a higher value.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision was considered and endorsed by the Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 10 March 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

To close the Fund and return the recycled money to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This option was dismissed, as the funds are better utilised to support growth, increase productivity and job creation/protection within Kent & Medway.

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

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Signed

Date