

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Wimble

Cabinet Member for Economic Development and
Special Projects

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00033

Executive Decision – Key**26/00033 – Grow in Kent – Extension of Service**

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects, I agree to continue the in-house Visitor Economy and Inward Investment Service for Kent and Medway, specifically:

- a) APPROVE the continuation of the existing in-house provision model for the delivery of Visitor Economy and Inward Investment services, delivered through the Grow in Kent team, beyond 31 March 2027.
- b) APPROVE the use of approved Kent County Council budgets and any relevant external funding or income to support the continued delivery of the in-house service.
- c) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the S151 officer, to agree, finalise and manage all funding arrangements associated with the continued delivery of the service.
- d) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take all necessary actions, including (but not limited to), negotiating, finalising terms and entering into contracts or other legal agreements, and amending or terminating those agreements as required to implement the decision and maintain the continued delivery of the service.

This delegation ensures continuity of delivery pending the outcome and implementation of Local Government Reorganisation and devolution arrangements, recognising that no final service model or governance structure has yet been determined for successor authorities.

Reasons for decision:

The decision is required to provide continuity of the Grow in Kent service beyond 31 March 2027, avoiding disruption to visitor economy and inward investment activity while Local Government Reorganisation and devolution arrangements are developed. It will protect recent progress, maintain specialist capacity and

stakeholder confidence, and ensure Kent and Medway continue to have a coordinated service to support economic growth, place promotion and investment attraction.

Financial implications:

The core, minimal viable service is currently funded through a combination of contributions from:

- Kent County Council (£405,000 per annum)
- Medway Council (£71,000 per annum).

Alongside this, £140,000 of external income from industry stakeholders is supporting additional activity above the core service to enhance business support and promotional activity.

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken, and no adverse impacts have been identified

The continuation of the service is expected to have a positive impact on equalities by supporting job creation, promoting inclusive economic growth and increasing access to employment and business opportunities across Kent and Medway for all groups of people.

Data Protection implications:

The service requires the collection and management of data relating to businesses, stakeholders, partners and consumers, including visitors and residents. All activity will be undertaken in compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, with appropriate data governance, security measures and protocols in place. No significant data protection risks have been identified.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision was considered and endorsed at the Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 7th July 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Cease provision of the service. This option was rejected as stopping the service would remove coordinated visitor economy and inward investment support, reducing strategic leadership, investment attraction, competitiveness and economic activity.

Scale back the current service. This option was rejected because the service is already operating at capacity and further reductions would limit its impact, weaken strategic delivery and market presence, risk partner confidence, and fail to achieve the required economic outcomes.

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

None

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Signed

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Date