

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Brian Collins, Deputy Leader

DECISION NUMBER:

25/00057

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Property Accommodation Strategy – Strategic Headquarters (SHQ)

Decision:

The Deputy Leader to agree to:

1. **AGREE** to discontinue with the Preferred Option as set out decision 24/00100;
2. Given the proposed Local Government Reorganisation timetable indicated by Government **CONFIRM** Sessions House will continue to be the strategic headquarters for KCC for the remaining life of the Authority
3. **ALLOCATE** £4m from the 2025-34 approved capital budget to enable the essential and urgent backlog maintenance works at Sessions House to be completed
4. **WITHDRAW** from the sale of Sessions House and Albert Street car park with immediate effect
5. **DISPOSE** of Invicta House and the associated car park as soon as practical to reduce holding costs and liabilities for the Council.
6. **REALIGN** the capital and revenue budget as required to enable the above to be implemented.
7. **DELEGATE** authority to The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader to, authorise the execution of necessary contractual and land agreements required to implement the above.

Reason(s) for decision:

Following a change in administration and confirmation of the indicative Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) timetable, the Administration has reconsidered the current property strategy relating to KCC Strategic Headquarters (SHQ).

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill sets out the Government's intention in more detail which will see the abolition of two-tier government by April 2028. Whilst no directions have specifically been made in respect of Kent, based on the current timeline. KCC would be replaced by its successor organisation in April 2028.

The revised strategic drivers context of LGR time frames were identified by the new administration in July 2025 :

1. Reduce capital borrowing requirements in the short term
2. Keep Sessions House heritage legacy for a future administration
3. Ensure future flexibility to increase office estate capacity
4. Meet minimum legal obligations for warm, safe & dry and heritage conservation

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Reports on the extant Key Decision (24/00100) were taken to the following Committees:

Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 11th September 2020
Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 6th November 2020
Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 13th July 2021
Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 24th March 2022
Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 23rd November 2022
Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 26th July 2023
Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 27th November 2024

This Proposed Decision is to be consider by Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 10 September 2025

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

A number of alternatives were considered which are set out in the Policy Resources committee reports from July 2023 and November 2024 that included consideration of a number of options.

The following options were considered and rejected

1. **Option 1 - Current Option (2024 Key Decision)** – Progress as planned with the current 2024 Key Decision option to enhance the utilisation of Invicta House and Dispose of Sessions House and the Albert Street Car Park.
2. **Option 2a - Retain some presence in Sessions with all Red and Amber backlog works undertaken** – Retain Sessions House and Albert Street Car Park with limited compliance & condition works (Red & Amber Only) and dispose of Invicta House + Car Park
3. **Option 3 – Disposal of Sessions House** and Albert Street Car Park (with deferred completion arrangement up to April 2028 as per terms agreed) and **disposal of Invicta House and car park** (with short term leaseback of parking only until 2028)
4. **Option 4 – Retain Sessions House & Retain Invicta House** with limited compliance & condition works (Red & Amber Only)

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