

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 22 July 2025.

PRESENT: Mr B Collins, Mrs B Fordham, Mr M Fraser Moat, Ms L Kemkaran, Mr P King, Miss D Morton, Mrs C Palmer, Mr P Webb, Mr D Wimble and Mr P Osborne

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Hammond (Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education), Mrs A Beer (Chief Executive), Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy), Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Ms S Hill (Director Adult Social Care), McKay (Acting Chief Accountant), Dr E Schwartz (Deputy Director Public Health) and Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### **102. Apologies**

*(Item 1)*

No apologies were received.

#### **103. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the agenda**

*(Item 2)*

No declarations of interest were received

#### **104. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 March 2025**

*(Item 3)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 4 March 2025 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

#### **105. Cabinet Member Updates**

*(Item 4)*

##### **1. Miss Diane Morton, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, provided an update on the following:**

- a) On 9 July, Miss Morton attended and spoke at a KCC-hosted engagement event for adult and children's home care providers. The event marked the beginning of discussions on the future of the Council's Care and Support in the Home contract, which was due to expire in 2027. It formed part of the early engagement to shape the next phase of home care delivery in Kent. The event provided valuable insight from providers on what was working well, where there were gaps, and the barriers to effective service delivery. This feedback would directly inform the development of a new commissioning approach. The focus was not solely on a new contract, but on transforming collaborative

working to improve outcomes for people who draw on care and support. It was a positive event.

- b) On 2 July, a visit was made to Gravesham Place, one of Kent's four Integrated Care Centres. The visit included engagement with staff and residents and provided an opportunity to observe the work being delivered on site. Discussions also took place around the role of technology-enabled care in supporting independent living. Plans were underway to establish a dedicated support pod at the centre, offering residents access to advice, referrals, and guidance on digital tools. Further visits to the remaining centres were scheduled for later in the summer as part of a wider programme of engagement.
- c) On 13 June, the Chairman, Richard Palmer, and Miss Morton hosted a Carers Week coffee morning at Sessions House in support of the Someone's Listening campaign. Approximately 18 carers and cared-for individuals attended. The event provided an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the vital role of unpaid carers across Kent. Chris Jeffery, Co-Chair of the Kent Carers' Strategy Group, delivered a short address highlighting the theme of hidden carers in the workforce; individuals balancing employment with caring responsibilities, often without formal recognition or support. Attendees were signposted to available advice and carers' assessments via the Council's website. The event formed part of wider efforts to raise awareness of carers' needs and promote access to support across Kent.
- d) Alcohol Awareness Week took place from 7 to 13 July. This year's theme focused on the relationship between alcohol use and work-related stress.
- e) Shared Lives Week took place from 23 to 27 June. The campaign encouraged residents to consider becoming Shared Lives carers, offering support from their own homes to adults who need care and companionship.
- f) Learning Disability Week took place from 19 to 25 June. In partnership with Mencap, the Council supported national efforts to challenge misconceptions and share real-life stories of people living with learning disabilities.
- g) As part of Learning Disability Week, an art exhibition was held in the Stone Hall at Sessions House, showcasing work by individuals with learning disabilities. Selected pieces will be displayed in the Cabinet Member's office. Further information on this and other awareness campaigns is available on the Council's News and Features page.

**2. Mr Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, provided an update on the following:**

- 1. The Libraries, Registration and Archives service had achieved excellent satisfaction survey results:
  - Libraries: 95%
  - Registration: 96%

- Archives: 98%
2. National recognition was received at the Libraries Connected Awards, where Sue Carmichael won in the Reading category for her work with reading groups and individuals with learning disabilities.
  3. Thanet Library had secured an additional year of national funding for the *Know Your Neighbourhood* scheme, aimed at reducing loneliness through library-led activities.
  4. Dover Library was scheduled to return to the newly refurbished Dover Discovery Centre by the end of the summer.
  5. Several children's libraries had been upgraded using developer contributions, including Hive House Library in Gravesend, West Malling Library, and Tonbridge.
  6. Libraries were currently developing the Summer Reading Challenge for children aged 4 to 11. This year's theme, *Storey Garden*, focused on creating magical spaces that combined the joy of reading with the wellbeing benefits of connecting with nature.
  7. The Tunbridge Wells Library, located in the Amelia Scott Centre, recently welcomed its millionth customer; a young family registering the birth of their six-day-old daughter.
  8. The Archives team had launched the 2025 Lunchtime Talk programme, which explored Kent's rich and diverse history.
  9. Summer remained the peak period for ceremonies, with the Registration team set to attend hundreds of venues across the county to deliver weddings and civil partnerships, contributing to the creation of memorable occasions for couples.
  10. Active Kent and Medway successfully secured £589,000 to support targeted work in Thanet and Gravesham, aimed at building physically active communities. The team were preparing a further investment application to extend the programme to Swale and Medway. Development of the Everyday Active Schools programme continued, engaging with primary schools across Kent to promote physical activity among young children. In addition, all 12 districts had been supported to develop Local Football Facility Plans, which would inform future investment priorities through the Football Foundation.
  11. On 24 June, a 28-mile section of the King Charles III England Coast Path was officially opened on the Isle of Sheppey, providing enhanced access for residents and visitors. This formed part of the planned 2,700-mile national trail around England's coastline, which upon completion would become the world's longest managed trail. The opening was marked by a Natural England hosted event at the Island Works venue in Sheerness.

12. The Coroners and Justice Act 2009 order 2025 merged four coronal jurisdictions in Kent and Medway into a single jurisdiction
13. Kent Scientific Services, in partnership with Hampshire County Council's laboratory, secured a £5 million contract for scientific analysis at the Port of Felixstowe. The five-year contract would provide a future income stream to Kent County Council.
14. The Trading Standards Victim Safeguarding Team delivered a Doorstep Crime Awareness Week in Swale, visiting 1,900 homes to raise awareness of doorstep fraud and provide preventative advice. Trading Standards also supported start-up businesses to ensure product safety and legal compliance. Positive feedback was received from a local craft business, highlighting the value of the officer's guidance and support in helping them establish their enterprise.
15. Community Wardens prepared to support local events throughout the school holiday period. Five parish councils expressed interest in expanding the service within their communities by funding warden activities. Additionally, initial discussions were held with a major transport sector business regarding potential commercial sponsorship.

**3. Mr Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Communities, provided an update on the following:**

- (a) The Kent and Medway Connect to Work programme was officially launched on 30 June. Supported by a £34 million grant from the Department for Work and Pensions, the programme aimed to assist 9,119 individuals with long-term health conditions, disabilities, or disadvantages to find or sustain employment over the next five years. On the day of the launch, 88 expressions of interest were received from prospective participants.
- (b) The Economy Team secured £1.8 million from the Department for Education to deliver a Skills Bootcamps programme in Kent and Medway. Thirteen training providers were appointed to deliver 60 short courses of up to 16 weeks, supporting 600 learners aged 19 and over to gain new skills in key sectors including agri-food, construction, health and social care, early years, retail, and the creative industries. The programme offered the opportunity to secure job interviews for unemployed participants and upskilling opportunities for those in work.
- (c) The Economy Team had developed the Get Kent and Medway Working Plan, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. The plan, which was to be signed off by KCC, Medway Council, the Integrated Care Board, and Jobcentre Plus, aimed to address economic inactivity, map existing provision, and propose actions to improve employment and skills support. It also incorporated the new integrated strategy for work and health, developed jointly with Medway Council and the Integrated Care System.

- (d) The Kent and Medway Business Fund continued to support local business growth and job creation. Since April 2025, five loans had been approved for companies in sectors including automotive services, vending, assistive technology, training, and life sciences.
- (e) Procurement was completed for a new provider to operate the Kent and Medway Growth Hub, funded by the Department for Business and Trade. The hub continued to serve as a central access point for business support services, assisting approximately 1,500 businesses annually.
- (f) The award-winning No Use Empty Scheme marked its 20th year of operation and received multiple accolades, including recognition at the National Empty Homes Conference. Since 2005, the scheme returned 8,693 empty properties to use for Kent families.
- (g) Engagement with partner organisations continued, including a meeting with Visit Kent, which provided one-to-one support to 85 businesses in leisure, hospitality, accommodation, and visitor attractions since the start of the year, contributing to the promotion of Kent's visitor economy.
- (h) The Big Kent Weekend was successfully delivered, attracting over 137,000 ballot entries for visits to more than 100 local tourist attractions, boosting local tourism and encouraging repeat visits.
- (i) In the first quarter of the financial year, Locate in Kent supported three new business establishments and facilitated three relocations within the county, resulting in the creation of 99 new jobs.
- (j) Work continued under the Kent and Medway Economic Framework, including the establishment of innovation partnerships between higher education and business, support for the rollout of the Made Smarter Southeast programme to help manufacturers adopt new technologies, and ongoing activity related to the Bring Back Eurostar campaign, with preparations underway for an autumn event.
- (k) The Developer Investment Team experienced a significant increase in planning activity during Quarter 1, receiving 45 applications, double the volume of recent quarters, and which was further attributed to due to greater clarity provided by the new Planning and Infrastructure Bill. Ten agreements were completed, securing £3.84 million. Major applications included 650 dwellings at Scocles Road, Minster-on-Sea (approved on appeal), and 141 dwellings at Canterbury Road, West Cliffs, Ramsgate.
- (l) Resources were stretched as the Council defended its mitigation requirements at three live planning appeals. The S106B appeal for Chilmington Green (up to 5,750 homes) resumed on 14 April following a delay and concluded on 2 May. The Council was also involved in the Highsted Park appeal (8,400 homes), east of Sittingbourne, which was called in by the Secretary of State and extended to 14 weeks, with sessions running from March to October.

(m) The Council objected to a proposed 3,500-home development at Northfleet Harbourside due to its impact on a key mineral waste facility on the River Thames, which was vital to Kent's housebuilding market. The associated inquiry faced delays due to public rights of way issues and was extended from July to September. Appreciation was expressed to all teams for their continued hard work during this busy period.

**4. Mr David Wimble, Cabinet Member for Environment, provided an update on the following:**

- (a) An update was provided on the Kent environment portfolio, which included services such as waste management and recycling, natural environment, coastal flood and water management, country parks, countryside partnerships, energy security, resilience, and heritage conservation. The Cabinet Member highlighted the breadth and impact of the portfolio and emphasised the importance of collaboration with stakeholders including district councils, government departments, the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, the National Farmers Union (NFU), and Kent Wildlife Trust. A commitment was made to fostering collective action across partners, businesses, and communities
- (b) Kent's first Local Nature Recovery Strategy neared completion, following consultation with over 1,000 stakeholders. The consultation reports were published, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) confirmed funding for Kent County Council to deliver the strategy.
- (c) The Heritage Conservation Team published a new booklet to commemorate 20 years of community archaeology. The publication was supported by a recent dig at Windmill Hill, Gravesend, where over 100 volunteers and school children participated in exploring and learning about Victorian remains.
- (d) Kent County Council supported 158 schools in joining the National Education Nature Park initiative to promote biodiversity. Collectively, the schools secured over £275,000 from the Department for Education to transform outdoor spaces across school grounds, reflecting the Council's commitment to educating the next generation.
- (e) Kent County Council collaborated with district and borough councils to support homeowners in installing solar panels through the collective buying scheme, Solar Together. To date, nearly 3,500 rooftop solar systems were installed, with additional registrations received over the summer for installations later in the year.
- (f) Kent County Council worked in partnership with district and borough councils to increase household food waste collection for composting. Initiatives in Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, Canterbury, and Maidstone led to improvements in food recycling rates of up to 22%, benefiting the environment and delivering savings for Kent taxpayers.

- (g) Kent County Council continued its commitment to reuse by introducing a new reuse container at New Romney Household Waste Recycling Centre. Additionally, a visit was made to the recycling centre in Allington, which was set to open Kent's first purpose-built reuse shop this autumn, an initiative with potential for wider expansion across the county.
- (h) Trosley Country Park and Shorne Woods Country Park were included in the newly designated North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve, announced in March 2025. The designation followed two years of collaboration between 12 partner organisations to protect over 20 kilometres of nationally and environmentally significant landscapes.
- (i) Since taking on the portfolio, Mr Wimble noted that the team had demonstrated strong passion and dedication in protecting and enhancing the Kent environment. Their work over recent months had focused on improving residents' quality of life by linking environmental initiatives with economic growth and public health, areas of significant importance to the Cabinet Member.
- (j) The Council prepared to lobby the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to promote Dungeness as a potential site for small modular reactors. This proposal aimed to support the generation of low-carbon electricity, create local employment opportunities, and protect vulnerable farmland by keeping it within the food production chain.
- (k) Mr Wimble also made reference to two groups that had been established within the Council. The first was the Kent Solar Forum, which brought together action groups opposing greenfield solar developments. The other was a Kent Water Forum which brought together key stakeholders from the water supply and environmental sectors. The forum aimed to strengthen accountability for the condition of coastal and inland waters across the county.
- (l) A series of visits were planned over the summer to observe the delivery of services by the team and to explore how their work supports economic growth and public health across Kent. A report on these visits was scheduled to be presented at a future meeting.

**5. Mrs Beverely Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, provided an update on the following:**

- (a) An update was provided on the activities undertaken by the Cabinet Member over the past six weeks. Appreciation was expressed to officers and staff for their support and patience during this initial period. Time was dedicated to gaining a comprehensive understanding of the portfolio, engaging with teams, and identifying opportunities for improvement. This approach informed the development of initiatives aligned with the values and ambitions of Reform UK. A clear commitment was reaffirmed to improving educational outcomes for

children, including those with special educational needs, with a focus on early intervention and community-based support.

- (b) Although the end-of-term period provided limited opportunities for school visits, a number of visits were scheduled for September. A visit was made to Broome Hill Bank School in Hextable, near Swanley, which was set to play a key role in the expansion of specialist local provision under the Council's broader strategy. The school, led by Headteacher Mr Stephen Ackerley, supported 167 pupils aged 11 to 19 with communication and interaction needs, including autism spectrum disorder and speech, language and communication challenges. It offered small class sizes and a range of accredited qualifications. The visit highlighted the school's inclusive and nurturing environment, strong leadership, and the pride students take in their community. With its proposed expansion, Broome Hill Bank was well positioned to deliver improved outcomes for children in Dartford and stands as a model of how community-embedded specialist provision could foster academic achievement, life skills, and a sense of belonging. The school was central to delivering the Council's commitment to ensuring children received the right support in the right place at the right time.
- (c) A visit was made to the Community Learning and Skills (CLS) Centre on 17 July to observe developments in adult education. The current academic year saw a shift in funding focus towards learning that supported both skills development and wellbeing. During the visit, a Functional Skills Maths class was observed, highlighting the importance of second-chance learning for young people who did not achieve expected outcomes during their school years. The students demonstrated strong engagement and commitment, and the staff showed clear dedication to supporting learners aged 16 and over in building confidence, independence, and life skills. The visit reaffirmed a commitment to prioritising functional skills, whether delivered as standalone qualifications or integrated into broader skills-based programmes, as a vital part of preparing young people for employment, further education, and independent living.
- (d) A visit was made to Dartford Library to explore how programmes within the Education and Skills portfolio could be accessed through the library network. The visit revealed the evolving role of libraries in supporting young people, particularly through a dedicated study space for young library members. The calm, purpose-built environment provides access to free Wi-Fi, public computers, printing and scanning facilities, and a wide range of educational resources. It offered vital support to students who may have lacked suitable study spaces at home. The initiative also exemplified how libraries were adapting to meet the changing needs of the community and demonstrated the potential for cross-departmental collaboration to improve outcomes for young people. The visit reaffirmed a commitment to enhancing library-based provision through additional resources, strategic partnerships, and outreach. Dartford Library, and libraries more broadly, were recognised as essential community assets, serving not only as places for books but as hubs for learning, aspiration, and opportunity.



**6. Mrs Christine Palmer, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, provided an update on the following:**

- (a) The Families First initiative, a government-led programme received a share of £550 million in national funding, with Kent County Council allocated approximately £6 million over two years. Families First aimed to place families at the centre of early intervention and support services, tailored to individual needs. The programme would support children aged 0–18, and up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities, through a multi-disciplinary approach designed to deliver the right support at the right time throughout a child's development.
- (b) An update was provided on the plans to bring children's homes back in-house. The first property purchase had been completed, with three additional homes in progress. These homes would accommodate two to three children with complex needs, offering tailored, small-scale care. The initiative aimed to improve outcomes while reducing high external placement costs, with potential for future expansion if successful.
- (c) On 9 July, Mrs Palmer attended the Virtual School awards ceremony, celebrating the achievements of young people supported through pupil premium funding from the Department for Education. The event was a powerful reminder of the challenges many pupils face and the importance of targeted support. The Virtual School, led by Director Tony Duran, adopted a pupil-centred and inclusive approach, with students actively involved in shaping their learning experiences. This engagement has helped evolve the programme to better meet individual needs.
- (d) A letter was sent to the Home Secretary regarding delays in processing asylum claims for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children turning 18, and a further letter was issued concerning prolonged status decisions for care leavers. These delays were highlighted as barriers to young people seeking employment and independence.
- (e) The Council had been successful in its acquisition of Department for Education match-funded capital grants to develop provision for children with complex mental health needs and challenging behaviour. The funding, awarded on a 50:50 basis, would support targeted investment in specialist services
- (f) On 19 July, Mrs Palmer attended the KCC Youth Council, where young people presented plans to lobby on key issues, including travel. The event demonstrated strong collaboration and engagement among participants. In addition, Project Athena was highlighted as a forthcoming initiative, with up to £2 million of Department for Education funding expected to support targeted youth programmes.
- (g) Correspondence was due to be sent to the Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Children and

Families), Janet Davey, to highlight the achievements of the team within Children's Services and to commend the exceptional work being undertaken. The communication would also raise concerns regarding delays in status determinations and propose consideration of a cap on the number of independent fostering agencies operating in Kent.

- (h) All heads of service within the portfolio had been met, and thanks were extended to the Director and officers within Integrated Children's Services for their ongoing guidance and support.

**7. Mr Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, provided an update on the following:**

- (a) Operation Brock had been deployed to manage summer holiday traffic. It was confirmed that the "no permit, no entry" scheme at the Port of Dover would remain in place to deter HGV drivers from bypassing the queue. It was emphasised that Brock must only be used in exceptional circumstances and for the shortest duration possible. Both the Leader and the Cabinet Member were committed to reducing reliance on Brock and pursuing a long-term solution.
- (b) The B226 Galley Hill Road in Swanscombe, Dartford remained closed following the significant collapse in 2023 and would remain closed until at least 2027. Work was ongoing with consultants to undertake further ground investigations. Funding continued to be a challenge, and alternative sources were being explored, including the newly established His Majesty's Government Structures Fund.
- (c) The Road of Remembrance in Folkestone remained closed due to a landslip originating from private land. Work was underway to develop a solution to stabilise the embankment, although complex funding and legal issues were still to be resolved. In the interim, arrangements had been made with a local company to operate a Road of Remembrance shuttle service.
- (d) It was confirmed that the procurement process for the new Highways Term Maintenance contract would be completed in preparation for the service to commence on 1 May 2026. The contract was recognised as critical to ensuring the Authority met its statutory highway duties. Thanks were extended to the team for their hard work throughout the process.
- (e) the recent warm and dry weather had resulted in a reduction in drainage, pothole, and street lighting enquiries. However, there had been a corresponding increase in enquiries relating to grass, weeds, and trees.
- (f) It was reported that by the end of July, grass cutting teams would have completed their fourth cut of the year. Each cycle covered over 3 million square metres of grass, equivalent to approximately 420 football pitches. The main rural verge swathe cut was completed in June, alongside the first weed

spray of the year. The second weed spray was scheduled for the end of August.

- (g) On 23 June, International Women in Engineering Day was celebrated under the theme *Together We Engineer*, recognising the impact and contributions of women engineers. The occasion was marked by appreciation for the talented women engineers within the teams, and thanks were extended for their continued dedication and efforts.
- (h) Positive feedback was shared from a resident regarding recent works on Spitfire Way, Hawkins. The resident commended the team for the quality of the resurfacing, the clear advance signage, and the well-managed diversions during the overnight works. The road was described as significantly improved and now a pleasure to drive. While it was acknowledged that further work remains, the feedback reflected the tangible impact of recent efforts. Thanks were extended to all Highways and Transport teams for their continued commitment and hard work.

**8. Mr Matthew Fraser Moat, Cabinet Member for Local Government Efficiency, provided an update on the following:**

- (a) Thanks were extended to the Leader for the opportunity to establish a new department. The newly formed team of three had adopted a three-year project approach, with a primary focus on improving processes, efficiency, and promoting joined-up thinking and innovation. The initial action taken was to redirect funds by reducing members' allowances and transferring the savings into members' grants, thereby setting a clear direction of travel. Since then, with support from officers, the team had reviewed various aspects of the council's operations, including IT systems, particularly the finance systems and Oracle upgrade, procurement processes, supplier arrangements, Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCOs), and the property portfolio. The overarching aim was future cost avoidance, with a view to positively impacting the 2026/27 budget and beyond. The approach would involve collaboration with Cabinet Members and officers to develop proposals for consideration through the relevant Cabinet Committees. A number of proposals were expected to be brought forward over the coming weeks, with a more detailed update to be provided at the next opportunity.

**9. Mr Brian Collins, Deputy Leader, provided an update on the following:**

- (a) It was reported that one of the initial observations upon appointment was the presence of abandoned IT equipment within Sessions House. This prompted further inquiry into asset management practices and led to the identification of an existing device recycling scheme, delivered as part of the Financial Hardship Programme. The scheme facilitates the responsible recycling of unwanted IT equipment from Kent County Council, as well as from local businesses, charities, and residents. Equipment that cannot be reused or refurbished is processed under a zero landfill policy, supporting both environmental sustainability and social value objectives. Since April 2023, the

scheme has generated approximately £180,000 in income. These funds have been reinvested into wider digital inclusion initiatives, including the distribution of devices to individuals and families experiencing financial hardship. The scheme exemplifies a proactive and joined-up approach to resource efficiency, corporate responsibility, and community support.

- (b) Four properties had been released for progression to auction in September, with the intention of generating capital receipts for the Council. The sale of a separate property had been concluded, yielding £1.4 million to support delivery of the Council's capital programme.

It was also confirmed that the first phase of staff moves from Invicta House to Sessions House had commenced, with the restaurant re-opened and offering a coffee service.

- (c) It was confirmed that the capital project at Dover Discovery Centre was progressing towards completion over the summer. The building, located in the heart of Dover, would accommodate a range of Kent County Council services including Children's Services, the library, Community Learning and Skills, and Adult Services. The facility also included a theatre space, and preparations were underway to initiate a process to secure a new tenant for that space.
- (d) The Capital Projects team were working to deliver additional places at two High Needs schools in Dover, Whitfield and The Beacon, to support learners in Kent from September
- (e) At an auction held in the recent week, proceeds of just over £30,000 were generated from the sale of artwork previously stored in the basement, marking the release of another asset.
- (f) KCC was selected as an exemplar authority for IT piloting and rollout of Microsoft's AI tool, Co-Pilot. Phase one of the rollout commenced last year, with phase two underway. Microsoft had recognised the work of the Technology Digital team as best practice. Co-Pilot had also helped reduce the administrative burden on frontline staff, enabling more time for direct service delivery. Feedback from staff highlighted significant improvements in efficiency, with tasks such as summarising case notes and drafting reports completed in minutes. The tool also supported email prioritisation, action tracking, and enhanced communication with residents.
- (g) Gratitude was expressed to all who had contributed to the transition of the new administration.

## **106. 25/00037 - Finance Monitoring & Outturn Report** (Item 5)

*Dave Shipton (Head of Finance, Policy, Planning, Strategy) was in attendance for this item*

1. Mr Collins (Deputy Leader of Kent County Council) introduced the report that provided details of the outturn position for the financial year 2024-25. The Year ended with a with a revenue overspend of £20.2 million, representing 1.4% of the £1.43 billion budget. The overspend was primarily driven by pressures in Adult Social Care and Health, which accounted for £46.4 million, and reflected national trends across county councils. Approximately 40% of the overspend related to undelivered savings, much of which was expected to be achieved in future years.

Additional pressures were noted in Growth, Environment and Transport, due to changes in the national concessionary travel scheme and increased waste and highways costs. These were partially offset by underspends in Children's Services, particularly in Home to School Transport, and in non-attributable costs, where higher investment returns and lower borrowing costs contributed to a £14 million underspend.

Schools delegated budgets overspent by £30.3 million, driven by rising demand for Special Educational Needs provision, increasing the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit to £97.5 million. This remained under review through the Department for Education's Safety Valve programme, with further government proposals expected in the autumn.

The capital programme experienced significant slippage, with £253 million spent against a £429 million approved budget, and £185 million rephased into future years due to project delays.

2. Mr Shipton reminded Cabinet of the challenges in forecasting demand-led services. As part of the approved budget strategy for 2024–25, it was agreed that no centrally held contingency would be maintained. Consequently, any variance in demand forecasts would be absorbed by the General Reserve. This approach was adopted to improve transparency and to reinforce to managers that no central contingency was available. The associated risk was acknowledged, and the General Reserve was strengthened accordingly.
3. RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to:
  - a) NOTE the capital and revenue outturn position for 2024-25
  - b) AGREE that £0.6m is rolled forward to fund existing criteria (see Roll forward requests)
  - c) AGREE the drawing down from General Fund Reserves to fund the 2024-25 overspend
  - d) AGREE the capital slippage/re-phasing from 2024-25 will be added to the 2025-26 and later years capital budgets (as per Section 4)
  - e) NOTE the review of the capital programme (as per Section 4)

- f) AGREE the proposed capital cash limit changes (as per Section 4)
- g) AGREE the changes made as a result of the Reserves Review (see Reserves)

**107. Quarter 4 Performance**  
(Item 6)

*David Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance) was in attendance for this item*

1. Mr Whittle outlined the report for Quarter 4 (Q4, 2024/25) which covered the period January to March, prior to the May county elections. Of the 38 KPIs reported, 19 were rated Green (an increase of two), 9 Amber (a decrease of three), and 10 Red (an increase of one). With regards to Direction of Travel, 11 indicators showed a positive trend (the same as the previous Quarter), 22 were stable or with no clear trend (one more than the previous Quarter), and five were showing a negative trend (one fewer than the previous Quarter). Mr Whittle addressed the 10 KPIs that were rated RED, 5 of which had been rated Red for at least six consecutive quarters, though several showed marked improvement compared to the previous year. FOI and SAR volumes remained at historic highs, and EHCP timeliness continued to improve. No KPIs were rated Red under Growth, Economic Development and Communities, Environment and Transport, or Public Health portfolios. Mr Whittle drew Cabinet's attention to strong performance in several areas, including: Emergency highway incidents attended within two hours (98% target met), Municipal waste to landfill (less than 1%), NHS Health Checks uptake and Drug and alcohol treatment completions exceeding targets. Furthermore, Mr Whittle set out the proposed KPI changes for 2025-2026, which were detailed in appendix 2 of the report.

Mr Whittle informed Cabinet that the Government had published a draft Local Government Outcomes Framework. The Chief Analyst and Analytics Team were assessing its implications, with any proposed changes to be brought back to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

2. RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to:

NOTE the Quarter 4 Performance Report and the actions being taken to address areas where performance is not as targeted, and the proposed indicators for 2025/26.