

## **GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 11 September 2025.

PRESENT: Mr P Thomas (Chairman), Mr J Defriend (Vice-Chair), Mr P Chamberlain, Mr W Chapman, Mr S Dixon, Mr R Ford, Mr B Fryer, Ms C Nolan, Mr D Sian, Mr M J Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr H Rayner (Substitute for Mr N Williams) and Mr B Black (Substitute for Mr O Bradshaw)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P King, Mr P Webb and Mr J Henderson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr S Samson (Head of Economy), Mr S Grimshaw (Strategic Programme Manager), Mr M Wagner (Chief Analyst), Mr M Riley (Project Manager), Ms S Berdo (Strategic Programme Manager), Mr M Rolfe (Head of Community Protection), Mr T Marchant (Head of Strategic Development and Place), Mrs S Nurden (Kent and Medway Economic Partnership's Strategic Programme Manager), Mrs S Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities), Mr J Pearson (Head of Libraries Registration and Archives), Ms G Humphreys (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr J Ratcliffe (Transport Strategy Manager)

### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

#### **12. Apologies and Substitutes**

*(Item 2)*

Apologies were received from Mr Bradshaw and Mr Williams.

Mr Black was present as a substitute for Mr Bradshaw and Mr Rayner was present as a substitute for Mr Williams.

#### **13. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda**

*(Item 3)*

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **14. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2025**

*(Item 4)*

1. In relation to Item 9 of the previous meeting- *Old Rectory Business Centre Management Contract*- an update was provided on the timeline and intention to retender the Business Centre management contract.
2. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2025 be approved as a correct record.

## **15. Verbal Updates – Cabinet Members and Corporate Director**

*(Item 5)*

1. Mr Paul King, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration, provided an update on the following:
  - (a) Options were being explored on reinvestment into Kent's visitor economy, following the demise of Visit Kent and its parent company GoToPlaces, including collaboration with stakeholders.
  - (b) The Kent & Medway Connect to Work supported employment programme was in operation. KCC had recently been allocated an additional £400,000 for 2025-26 to extend delivery and support a further 113 people to start the programme during the financial year.
  - (c) 12 training providers had been appointed to deliver 60 skills bootcamps across Kent and Medway. Since July, 137 learners had enrolled and a bespoke construction course linked to Lower Thames Crossing was planned for November, with a possible second course in February.
  - (d) In May, the No Use Empty (NUE) scheme received a Special Recognition Award after returning over 8,700 long term empty properties back into use since 2005. Recent visits included projects in Dover and Thanet, as well as to the opening of The Old Wine Warehouse in Ramsgate, which had been transformed into three distinct spaces with support from NUE and the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF).
  - (e) The KMBF scheme offered interest- free loans of up to £600k to support business growth. Since April, 11 loans to local businesses had been recommended for approval across various sectors, including automotive, technology support and life sciences.
  - (f) Significant progress had been made on implementing the Kent and Medway Economic Framework (KMEF) strategy, supported by residual funding from the close of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). Efforts were focussed on five overarching ambitions and projects included the Kent and Medway Local Growth Plan, Innovation Partnership and Bring Back Eurostar campaign.
  - (g) The Get Kent and Medway Working Plan was a new strategy addressing health, work and skills which had been developed by KCC's economy team and funded by the Department of Work and Pensions. Key focus areas included young people, unemployed women and those with long- term health conditions.
  - (h) The 'Bring Back Eurostar' event, due to take place on 26 September, would highlight the economic impact of unused stations on the local economy and set out why the service should be restored to Kent.
  - (i) In August, Mr King met with Ms Caroline Hallett, Director of the Kent Foundation, a charity that works to support young entrepreneurs across Kent. He also met with several inspiring entrepreneurs including the young founder of a fashion brand in Gravesend.
  - (j) KCC continued to work with partners in France, Belgium and the Netherlands through the Straits Committee to support cross- border collaboration. Current work included support for the Bring Back Eurostar campaign and developing business and innovation links in the food and drink sector. Mr King recently met with the Committee team and 16 Dutch planners and economic officers also visited Folkestone and Dover to study development plans, high- speed rail impact and the Port of Dover's 2050 masterplan.

2. In response to comments and questions from Members, the discussion covered the following:
  - (a) It was confirmed that Members would be invited to the Bring Back Eurostar Event on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September.
  - (b) KCC's work with Borough Councils was ongoing, with the shared goal of highlighting the 'Bring Back Euro Trains' group's petition at the Bring Back Eurostar event.
3. Mr Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, provided an update on the following:
  - (a) On the 15 August, Community Wardens in Thanet organised a multi- agency community safety engagement event in Birchington. This was attended by residents, Kent Police, Trading Standards, Citizens Advice and Age UK.
  - (b) Mr Webb paid tribute to Senior Coroner Roger Hatch who retired at the end of June after over 20 years of service to Kent families. He also welcomed Ian Potter, who had been appointed as Area Coroner for Kent and Medway.
  - (c) Trading Standards Operations Manager Clive Phillips was recognised for his work as Deputy Chair of the Kent and Medway Multi- Agency Approach to Fraud Panel by the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate.
  - (d) Kent Trading Standards supported a national operation targeting a London warehouse that seized over 25 tonnes of unsafe and counterfeit goods, intended to be supplied to the retail market.
  - (e) The Trading Standards vape team carried out an operation at a mini market in Snodland that resulted in the discovery of illegal vape products leading to an arrest and uncovering of crystal meth.
  - (f) Concerning the Registration service, 2,907 ceremonies had been delivered across 200 venues in Kent in 2025 so far, an increase of 0.4% from the previous year.
  - (g) West Malling library was to reopen on the 9 September following refurbishment. Stanhope library would reopen on the 15 September following works to co- locate the family centre to enhance service delivery as part of the Kent Community project. Further co- locations were planned.
  - (h) Active Kent and Medway's impact report from the Opening Schools Facilities Project highlighted how schools had supported physical and mental wellbeing by opening facilities outside teaching hours. The report set out participating schools, examples and guidance for other schools.
  - (i) The next round of Free Access for National Sports People (FANS) small grant funding had just opened, offering free off-peak access to leisure centres and small grants to support talented athletes.
4. Mr Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) provided an update on the following:
  - (a) Mr Jones welcomed that parish funding was now being received for some community warden posts. Negotiations with the service's first commercial partner for additional funding for wardens had also reached an advanced stage.
  - (b) Trading Standards officers had been addressing an issue in East Kent whereby underground electric cables were interfering with telephone services, breaching electromagnetic compatibility regulations. The power cable owners

had now agreed to significantly invest in their relocation to improve service performance for residents.

- (c) Mr Jones provided an overview of this year's Summer Reading Challenge, highlighting its success both operationally and in terms of community engagement. The challenge, themed Story Garden, involved nearly 18,000 children across the county, led to over 2,500 new library memberships, and contributed positively to reading levels and capabilities among children in Kent.
- (d) Mr Jones outlined the temporary solutions in place as part of the long- term plans to restore library services in Folkestone. This included the temporary site on Sandgate road, which was able to provide residents the full range of library services in one location. Proposals for the former Grace Hill property were expected by the end of October, to be reported back on to committee in 2026.
- (e) The annual Library, Registrations and Archives annual survey, sent out in April, received over 8,500 responses. The overall satisfaction rate stood at circa 95% and Mr Jones congratulated the service on the high response rate and positive feedback received. Registration surveys sent to customers in attendance of birth or death appointments and marriage or civil partnerships, also returned a satisfaction rate in excess of 95%.
- (f) An active travel Kent and Medway conference was to be held on 15 October at the Detling Event Centre and was aimed at professionals working across health, leisure, local government and physical activity sectors. The event's keynote speakers would include Lisa Dodd and Sarah Philpot and all Members were welcomed to attend.

RESOLVED to note the updates.

## **16. Performance Dashboard**

*(Item 6)*

1. The report was presented by Mr Matthew Wagner, Chief Analyst, which set out the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity indicators for Quarter 1 of 2025/26. Mr Wagner provided a brief overview of performance whereby 23 of the 30 KPIs were RAG rated green, 5 were amber and none were red. The remaining KPIs were to be reported on in the Quarter 2 performance report.

RESOLVED to note the performance report for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

## **17. Kent and Medway Business Fund Monitoring Q4 2024-25**

*(Item 7)*

1. The item was introduced by Mr Paul King, followed by the Strategic Programme Manager, Ms Susan Berdo, who introduced the report and provided a short presentation that is appended to these minutes.
2. Mr Martyn Riley, Project Manager, delivered an overview of the report that covered KCC's monitoring of businesses that received loans and equity from Government- funded Business Investment Schemes, including the KMBF and the former Regional Growth Fund (RGF). Of the 110 loans reported, 69% were RAG rated green or amber and 31% were red.
3. In response to comments and questions from Members the discussion covered the following:

- a) Safeguarding was put in place in preparation for any changes resulting from future Local Government Reorganisation.
- b) Mr Riley confirmed a £7 million debt write- off, which was detailed on page 27 of the report.
- c) Funding allocation was based on the number of private business applications that were both suitable and eligible, which led to an imbalance across districts. Ms Berdo assured the Committee that more detailed statistics could be provided through a wider briefing or newsletter.

RESOLVED to note the report.

## **18. KMEF- Ambition 3- Secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth** (Item 8)

- 1. The report was introduced by Mrs Sarah Nurden, KMEP and BAB Manager, who provided an overview of the progress in implementing the KMEF Ambition 3.
- 2. Mrs Nurden also delivered an update on the activity of the Bring Back Eurostar group, Lower Thames Crossing and supporting the maritime sector in contributing to coastal regeneration. The development of a local growth plan was ongoing, subject to the allocation of further investment.
- 3. In response to comments and questions from Members the discussion covered the following:
  - a) Concerning the economic viability of the requested power supply increase to support Dover, assurance was given that the issue would be included within the consultation response to the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan.
  - b) Mr King recognised the national and regional electricity challenges alongside the variety of potential solutions and assured the Committee that energy was an area of focus moving forward.
  - c) An ongoing business case of approximately £50 million to expand the number of freight trains travelling through the Eurotunnel from four a day experienced limitations due to current physical infrastructure. Further conversations were underway due to the cross- continental potential, but progression could be reliant on investment from external parties.
  - d) Mrs Nurden clarified the distinction between two Eurostar-focused groups, identifying one as a cross-body economic and business partnership with access to KMEP and various MPs, and the other as an independently formed lobbying group conveying the views of residents and local businesses.
  - e) Mr King confirmed the cooperation of the French side of the project and clarified their ability to source their energy was through nuclear power stations located near the French port.

RESOLVED to note the report.

## **19. Active Kent and Medway Report** (Item 9)

*Mrs Liz Davidson, Active Kent and Medway Partnership Director, was in attendance for this item.*

1. The report was introduced by Mrs Liz Davidson, Active Kent and Medway Partnership Director, who provided an overview of the role of the Active Kent and Medway service in providing strategic leadership, direction and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity in Kent. She explained the funding was allocated through an external grant from Sport England, providing investment for Gravesham, Thanet, Swale and Medway. Plans for future investment applications were also outlined by Mrs Davidson.

RESOLVED to note the report.

**20. 25/00076- Kent and Medway Business Fund- No Use Empty**  
(Item 10)

1. The item was introduced by Mr King, who praised the NUE scheme's work to bring longer- term empty properties back into use at no additional cost to Kent County Council.
2. Mr Steve Grimshaw, Strategic Programme Manager, introduced the report which included the background and evolution of the NUE initiative and the three strands it currently operates: NUE Residential, New Build and the NUE Commercial schemes. He also highlighted the successes of the Tridax Business Park project intended to be replicated under the KMBF NUE Commercial strand outlined in the report.
3. Mr Grimshaw explained the Cabinet Committee was being asked to endorse the decision for a loan of up to £6 million from the Kent and Medway Business Loan Fund to be made available to the NUE scheme and for delegation to be made to the Corporate Director.
4. In response to comments and questions from Members the discussion covered the following:
  - a) Mr Grimshaw clarified that the scheme aimed to maximise unused KMBF funding. He emphasised that the NUE schemes drew from distinct funding pots, ensuring that one scheme does not impact the deliverability of the other.
  - b) Of the £100 million lent across all NUE schemes, the default rate was £143,000, the last default being in 2011.

RESOLVED that the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee made comments and endorsed the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration to:

- a) AGREE to up to £6m from the Kent & Medway Business Loan Fund (KMBF) being made available for No Use Empty (NUE) to administer short term secured loans to support specific NUE Commercial projects which would provide wider economic and employment opportunities and benefits as well as generating income, through interest payments. The value of an individual loan under this proposal is likely to be more than the £600k cap on loans which are administered by the KMBF team; and
- b) DELEGATE to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Section 151 officer or the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance for approval to spend: and
- c) DELEGATE to the Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport to take appropriate actions, including but not limited to, entering into legal agreements (loan agreements and legal charges), consider and approve

requests which may require consent and discharge of legal charges, as necessary to implement this decision as shown at Appendix A.

**21. 25/00074- Reallocation of Getting Building Funding (Non-Key Decision)**  
(Item 11)

1. The report was introduced by Mrs Nurden who detailed the background on the need to reallocate £300,000 of Getting Building Fund money to the Bearsted Road Project from the Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2 project due to unforeseen delays from the latter.

RESOLVED that the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee considered and endorsed the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Coastal Regeneration to:

- a) AGREE to reallocate the Getting Building Funding (GBF), originally awarded to Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2, to the A249 Bearsted Road Project.
- b) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth & Communities, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

**22. Prevention- Growth and Communities**  
(Item 12)

*Mr Ian Baugh, Head of Business Development and Mrs Rebecca Law, Business Innovation Manager, were in attendance for this item.*

1. The item was introduced by Mr Webb, who gave an overview of the role that GET services play in the prevention of demand for social care, health and children's services.
2. Mrs Rebecca Law, Business Innovation Manager, introduced the report and gave a short presentation, including a 3- minute video, which is appended to these minutes.
3. In response to comments and questions from Members, the discussion covered the following:
  - a. Concerning section 3.2.7 of the report, Mr King assured the Committee that he would be meeting BDUK to discuss issues with rural broadband rollout in Kent.

RESOLVED to note the report.

**23. Protecting the Communities and Economy of Kent**  
(Item 13)

1. The report was introduced by Mr Webb, which set out how services provided by Kent County Council from within the Growth and Communities Division protected residents and businesses within the County from harm.
2. Mr Mark Rolfe, Head of Community Protection, also provided updates on the 'Teacher in your Pocket' and primary authority schemes that had taken place following the publication of the report.

3. In response to comments and questions from Members the discussion covered the following:
  - a) Kent Scientific Services had no cost implications for KCC. The running cost of the Trading Standards Checks scheme was also part offset by income from traders fees.
  - b) Mr Rolfe detailed the various resources that address the ongoing issue of vaping in Kent including heightened laboratory testing, a vaping enforcement unit and increased surveillance at the Port of Dover.
  - c) Clarification was provided by Mr Jones in response to Member's concerns on the definition of 'anti- social behaviour' and how it related to the scope of the Cabinet Committee.
  - d) Mr Rolfe provided an overview of how anti- social behaviour was addressed, including the roles of community wardens as a uniformed community presence and the Kent Community Safety Partnership, comprised of public sector organisations which tackle the issue at a district level.
  - e) Proposed plans to raise awareness within young people on the risks of tanning and sunbeds were welcomed, particularly in light of the increase in unregulated tanning products identified by Trading Standards Checks.

RESOLVED to note the report.

#### **24. Lower Thames Crossing- Economic Impact** (Item 14)

1. The item was introduced by Mr King, followed by Mr Steve Samson, Head of Economy, who introduced the report that provided an overview of the funding and anticipated economic benefits resulting from the Lower Thames Crossing.
2. In response to comments and questions from Members, the discussion covered the following:
  - a) Mr King assured the Committee that he would be monitoring the demographics of workers employed by contractors to ensure opportunities for local workers.
  - b) In response to a Member's concerns about potential commercial land in the Lower Thames Crossing Area being diverted to housing, Mr King agreed the potential risk and informed the Committee that procurement contracts for employers were let by central government.

RESOLVED to note the report.

#### **25. Work Programme 2025/26** (Item 15)

RESOLVED to note the work programme.

**Growth Economic Development &  
Communities Cabinet Committee**

**11 September 2025**

**Susan Berdo and Martyn Riley**



# Kent & Medway Business Fund (Standard)

## Offers £100k to £600k

Approved Loan Funding

*Since February 2024 to August 2025*



# Kent & Medway Business Fund Small Business Boost Offers £26k to £99k

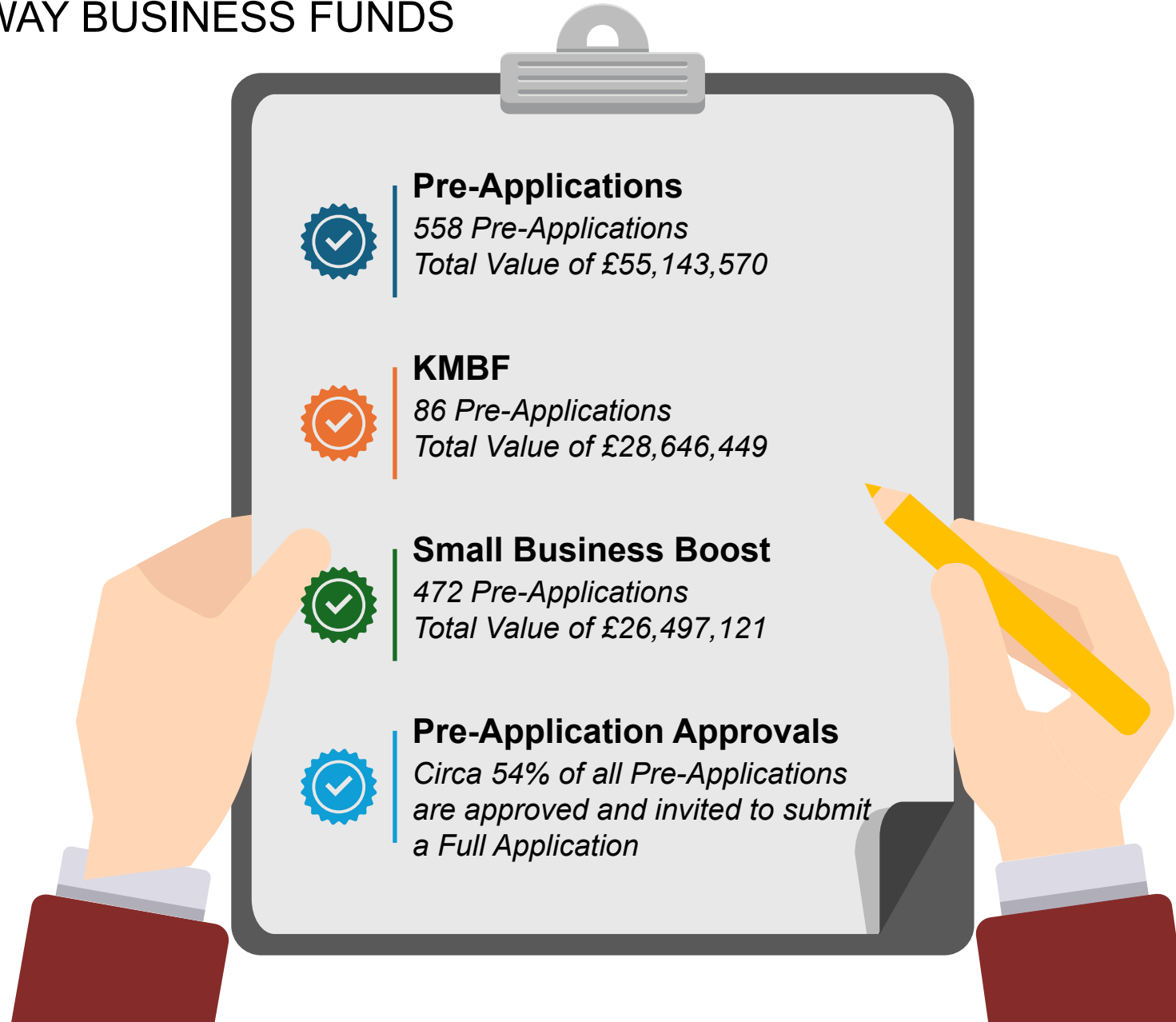
Approved Loan Funding

*Since February 2024 to August 2025*



# MARKET IMPACT AND INTEREST

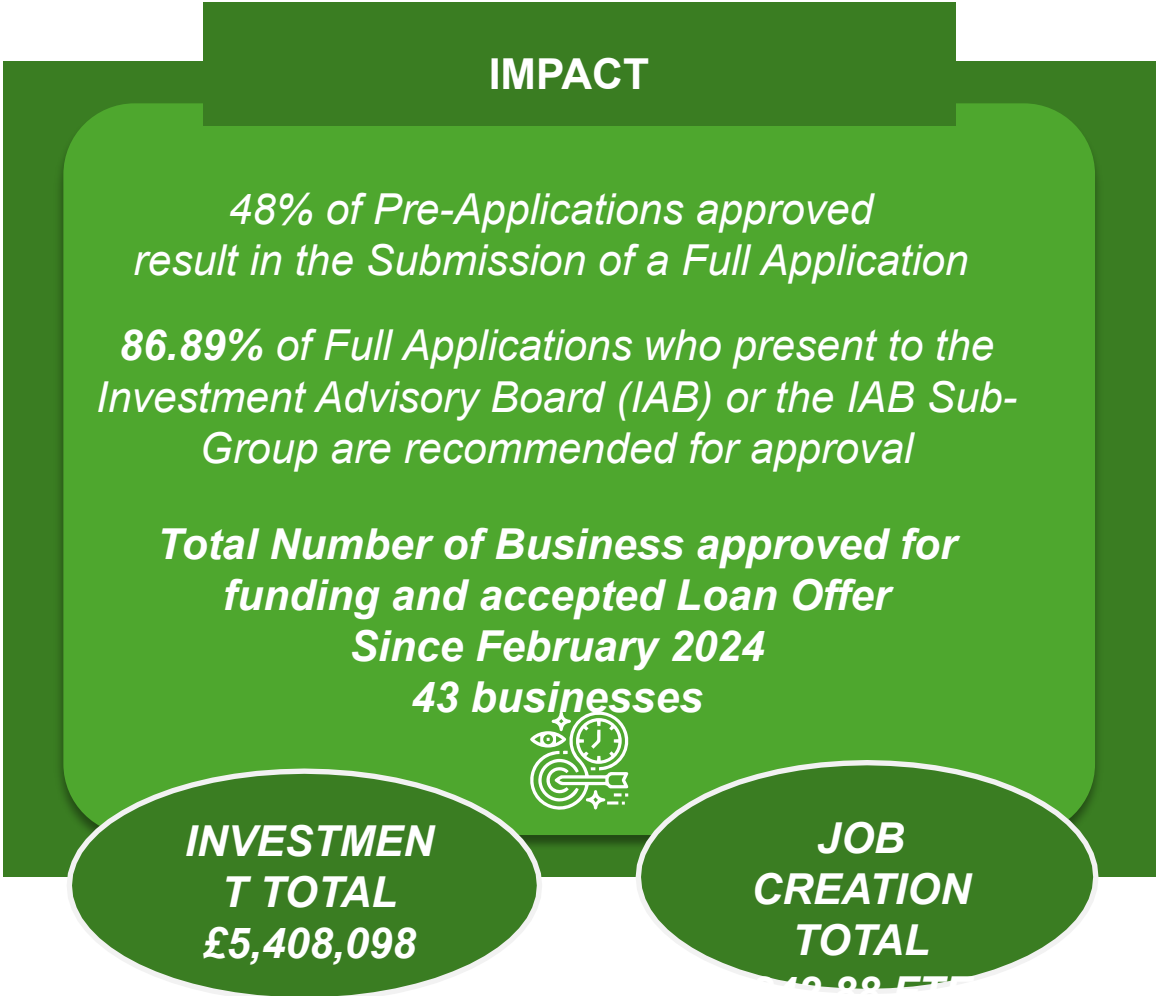
## THE KENT & MEDWAY BUSINESS FUNDS



# INVESTMENT IMPACT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH

## THE KENT & MEDWAY BUSINESS FUNDS

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# Investment Geographic Split

The Kent & Medway Business Fund

Legal completion/Loan Monies Paid

Legal Completion Awaited

## KMBF EAST

*Box City Group Ltd  
Defined Wine Ltd  
Jobmatcha Ltd  
Kentish Condiments  
Particology Ltd  
Timescape Adventures Ltd*

(6)



## SBB EAST

*Alliance Building Company  
Bears Ice Cream Company  
Biowaived Limited  
Commar Services Ltd  
Docke Fermentation  
Exroid Technology Limited  
Green Hub Recycling  
Horizonscan Limited  
PanelPride Ltd  
Pickle Goods Ltd  
Ramsgate Arts Club CIC  
Salt Training Limited  
That Nail Place Ltd*

(13)



# Investment Geographic Split

The Kent & Medway Business Fund

Legal completion/Loan Monies Paid

Legal Completion Awaited

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## KMBF Mid/North

*1<sup>st</sup> Bus Stop  
Kesson Physiotherapy Ltd  
South- East Climbing (Chatham)*

(3)



## SBB Mid/North

*Agape Health Care Investments  
Limited  
Elevey Ltd  
JRS Early Years Ltd  
Leiach Electrical Contractors Ltd  
Oceans Green Dry Cleaners  
Limited  
Peninsula Care Ltd  
SIM Motorsport Ltd  
Sustainable Garden Solutions Ltd*

(8)



# Investment Geographic Split

The Kent & Medway Business Funds – Legal completion/Loan Monies Paid

Black Saucers.

## KMBF West

Shwen Shwen  
Vital Parts Ltd

(2)



## SBB West

All About Homecare Limited  
Black Saucers Ltd  
Corkk Ltd  
Craft'd Bus Ltd  
George Wareham t/a Wareham  
Wholesale  
I-Track Direct Ltd  
Pips Pooches Limited  
Tamu Homes Supported  
The Miller and Cotton Ltd  
Yomo Finance Limited  
Viviplu Limited

(11)

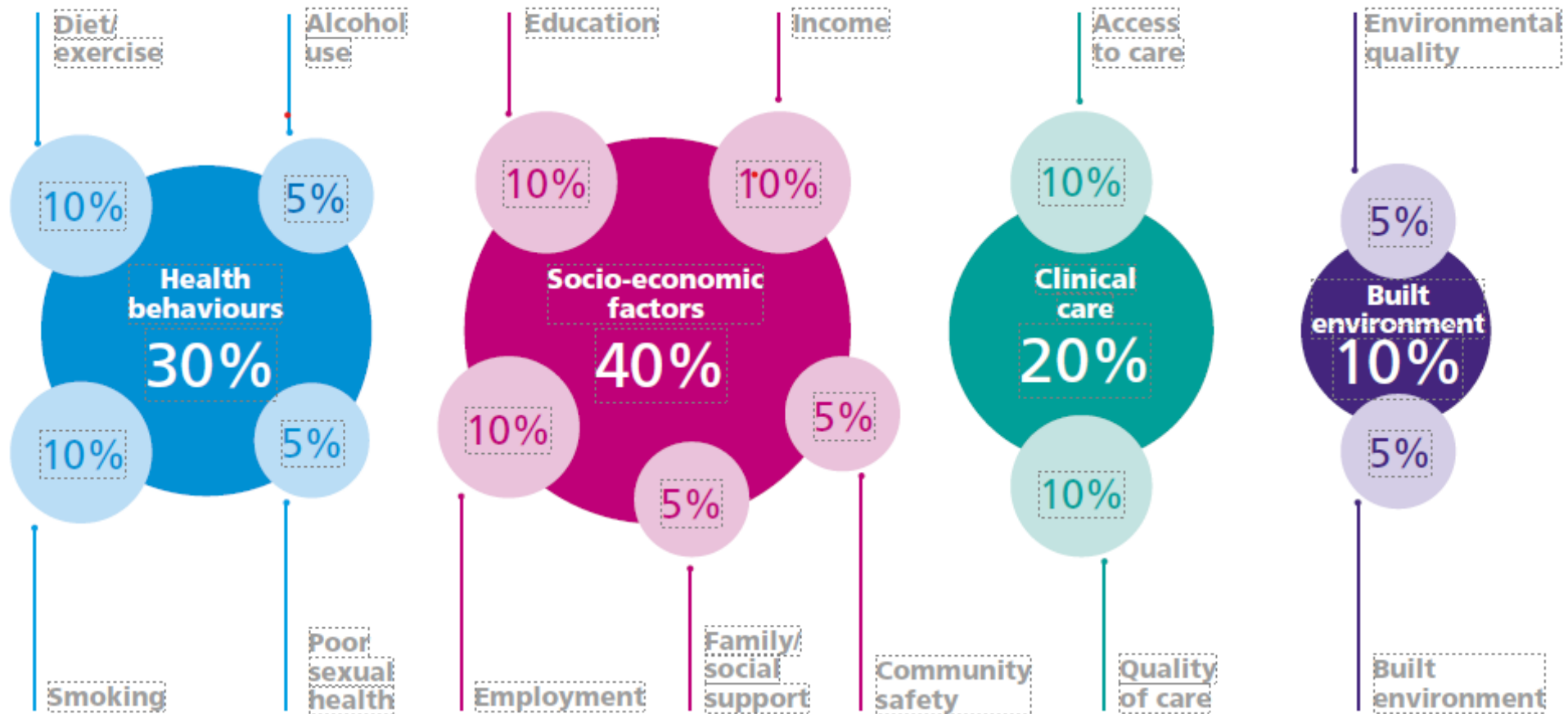


# The role of Growth, Environment and Transport services in prevention and supporting health and wellbeing.

September 2025

# The Wider Determinants of Health

There are a wide range of things that determine someone's health and wellbeing, with clinical care only accounting for 20 per cent of the impact. We call the factors that affect health, the wider determinants of health.



Based on: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, US County health rankings model 2014  
[www.countyhealthrankings.org/sites/default/files/media/document/CHRR\\_2014\\_Key\\_Findings.paf](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/sites/default/files/media/document/CHRR_2014_Key_Findings.paf)



