KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee held at Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 24th September, 2026.

PRESENT: Mr O Bradshaw, Mr S Dixon, Mr L Evans (Chair), Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr A Kennedy, Mr A Kibble, Mr R Mayall, Miss D Morton (Substitute for Mr T Mole), Ms C Nolan, Mr A Ricketts and Mrs S Roots

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs G Foster, Mr J Henderson, Mr M Mulvihill and Mrs C Palmer

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr C Beale (Senior Commissioner), Miss M Bundy (Democratic Services Officer), Mr B Campbell (Commissioning Manager), Dr A Ghosh (Director of Public Health), Ms H Gillivan (Director for Adults and Integrated Commissioning), Ms H Groombridge (ASCH Performance Manager), Ms S Hill (Director of Operations (Long Term Support)), Ms R Lozanova (Commissioner), Ms M Stirrup (Head of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards), Mr M Thomas-Sam (Director of Operations (Short Term Support)), Mrs V Tovey (Assistant Director of Integrated Commissioning), Ms G Walton (Assistant Director (Adults Commissioning and Partnerships)) and Ms H Woodland (Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

89. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item. 2)

Apologies were received from Mr Shonk and Mr Mole, for whom Miss Morton was substituting.

90. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the agenda
(Item. 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

91. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2026
(Item. 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 08 July 2026 were a correct record and they be signed by the Chairman.

92. Verbal Updates by Cabinet Members, Director of Public Health and Corporate Director
(Item. 5)

1. Georgia Foster, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, provided a verbal update on the following:

a) Mrs Foster reported on visits to Hedgerows Short Break Centre in Staplehurst and MedEquip, highlighting the important support provided to adults with learning disabilities and enabling people to remain in their own homes.

b) Members were encouraged to promote the Kent Connect to Support website and the Know How to Start campaign, which provided residents with information, advice and access to support services.

c) Mrs Foster updated Members on the national Big Conversation on Care consultation led by Baroness Casey and highlighted opportunities for future engagement on the future of adult social care.

d) Finally, Mrs Foster advised that the procurement phase of the recommissioning of Older Persons Residential and Nursing Services had been completed and that mobilisation activity was underway, with new contractual arrangements expected to commence in January 2027.

2. Jamie Henderson, Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Public Health, provided a verbal update on the following:

a) Mr Henderson reported on a visit to Porchlight, one of the providers delivering the Live Well Kent and Medway service and highlighted the positive impact of the support available to people experiencing mental health challenges and homelessness.

b) Mr Henderson highlighted activity associated with World Suicide Prevention Day and promoted the Release the Pressure service and local Safe Havens available across Kent.

c) Mr Henderson provided updates on Know Your Numbers Week and Sexual Health Awareness Week, highlighting media campaigns, the importance of preventative health interventions and access to local services.

d) Mr Henderson encouraged residents to participate in the forthcoming Stoptober campaign and outlined the health and financial benefits associated with stopping smoking.

e) Finally, Mr Henderson highlighted public health messaging relating to winter preparedness, including flu vaccination uptake and efforts to improve childhood Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination rates across Kent and Medway.

3. Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health, provided a verbal update on the following:

a) Dr Ghosh advised that planning was underway to consider longer-term resilience issues, including summer preparedness and water resilience.

b) An update was provided on the forthcoming Health and Wellbeing Board meeting and the ongoing work to strengthen the Board's strategic role as the principal partnership forum for health and wellbeing across Kent.

c) Dr Ghosh reported on work taking place in Ashford, Faversham and Sevenoaks as part of the Age Friendly Communities Programme, including the development of local action plans, grant funding opportunities and volunteer ambassador schemes.

d) Dr Ghosh advised that a stroke prevention pilot would commence in Dartford and Gravesham, focused on the early identification of atrial fibrillation and preventative interventions.

e) Members were informed that a carers needs assessment had recently been completed and would help inform future commissioning arrangements and partnership working to support unpaid carers.

f) Updates were provided on substance misuse services, gambling harms initiatives, sexual health commissioning arrangements and the Kent Marmot Coastal Programme.

g) Finally, Dr Ghosh reported on the publication of a Secondary Age Children's Health Needs Assessment focusing on emotional wellbeing and mental health.

4. Helen Woodland, Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health, provided an update on the following:

a) Ms Woodland reported on positive engagement with health partners and outlined work being undertaken to reset and strengthen partnership arrangements through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

b) Ms Woodland advised that a joint review of mental health, learning disability and autism pathways would commence during the autumn in collaboration with Medway Council.

c) Updates were provided on work with NHS partners to improve hospital discharge arrangements, including the development of a Home First pilot with Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust.

d) Ms Woodland highlighted the Kent Care Awards and praised the contribution of care staff across the county.

e) Members were reminded of the forthcoming Kent Registered Managers Conference and its role in strengthening engagement with the care market.

f) Ms Woodland thanked commissioning and operational staff for their work in establishing the new equipment contract with MedEquip and highlighted the significant scale of the service in supporting people to remain independent.

g) Finally, Ms Woodland highlighted progress in workforce development, including the successful completion of social work and occupational therapy apprenticeship programmes and the recruitment of additional apprentices.

5. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussion covered the following:

    a) Ms Woodland explained that governance arrangements relating to the Better Care Fund (BCF) were being reviewed and that oversight would be strengthened through reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

    b) A Member raised concern that sixth-form students were not currently included within the meningitis vaccination programme. In response, Dr Ghosh outlined lessons learned from the Kent outbreak and explained that vaccination policy was determined nationally based on epidemiological evidence. He stated that further consideration of extending eligibility to sixth form students may take place in the future.

    c) Helen Gillivan, Director of Adults and Integrated Commissioning, advised that provider notifications had recently been issued in relation to the recommissioning of Older Persons Residential and Nursing Services and that further information on market participation would be available once the procurement process had concluded.

6. RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee note the verbal updates.

93. Adult Social Care Performance Dashboard
(Item. 6)

1. The item was introduced by Mrs Foster and the report was introduced by Helen Groombridge, Adult Social Care and Health Performance Manager, who provided an overview of Adult Social Care performance during Quarter 1 2026/27. Members were advised that three key performance indicators were rated green, two were rated amber and two were rated red. Performance remained stable across a number of areas, including assessment waiting times and review activity. Strong outcomes continued to be achieved through enablement services and support remained focused on helping people maintain their independence within their communities.

2. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussion covered the following:

    a) Sydney Hill, Director of Operations (Long-Term Support), explained that the reduction in Care Needs Assessments reflected the increased use of preventative interventions, information and advice, equipment provision and enablement services. She emphasised that demand had not reduced by that people's needs were increasingly being met through alternative support pathways before a full assessment became necessary.

    b) Ms Hill advised that increases in safeguarding referrals had been linked in part to periods of extreme weather and wider national events. Work continued to ensure referrals were proportionate and that alternative reporting pathways were available where concerns did not meet safeguarding thresholds.

c) Michael Thomas-Sam, Director of Operations (Short-Term Support), advised that direct payments remained a longstanding policy objective, promoting greater choice and control for service users. He explained that the increase in uptake among older people was not the result of a specific initiative targeting that age group but reflected the assessment process and the availability of direct payments as an option.

3. RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee note the performance of adult social care services in Quarter 1 2026/27.

94. Public Health Performance Dashboard

(Item. 7)

1. The report was introduced by Victoria Tovey, Assistant Director of Integrated Commissioning, who provided an overview of Quarter 1 2026/27 performance across Public Health commissioned services. She reported that six indicators were RAG rated green, four amber and two red. Ms Tovey advised that temporary reductions in performance had been anticipated following significant service transformation and provider changes across a number of commissioned services.

2. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussion covered the following:

   a) Chris Beale, Senior Commissioner, advised that the reduction in National Health Service (NHS) Health Check activity had occurred during the transition to a new delivery model under which Kent County Council (KCC) now held direct relationships with General Practitioner (GP) providers. He reported that invitation levels had returned to previous levels during Quarter 2 and that work continued with GP practices and the Local Medical Committee to increase uptake. Ms Tovey added that bringing the service in-house had enabled savings to be achieved and additional health checks to be delivered within the available budget. Mr Henderson also highlighted that he had supported promotional activity to increase awareness and uptake of the programme.

   b) Ms Tovey stated that work was underway to ensure equitable access to NHS Health Checks across Kent, including in coastal and other priority areas. Measures included collaboration between GP practices, targeted outreach activity, and partnerships with pharmacies to address gaps in provision. Mr Beale added that a prioritisation programme was being developed to improve uptake in areas of greatest need following the transition to the new delivery model.

   c) Ms Tovey clarified that A Better Life (ABL) delivered health improvement services alongside district partners in West and North Kent. She also reported that new pilot initiatives had been launched within Accident and Emergency (A&E) settings to encourage participation in health improvement services.

   d) Mr Beale explained that dedicated outreach activity was available through NHS Health Checks and One You Kent services, with additional

targeted support for smoking cessation and work underway to increase engagement in areas of deprivation.

3. RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee note the performance of Public Health commissioned services in Quarter 1 2026/2027.

95. 26/00056 - Community Wellbeing Service for Adults with Sensory Needs
(Item. 8)

1. The item was introduced by Mrs Foster, who outlined proposals to recommission the Community Wellbeing Service for Adults with Sensory Needs and approve a three-month extension to the current contract to facilitate procurement and mobilisation. Georgina Walton, Assistant Director (Prevention), introduced the report and highlighted the importance of maintaining a dedicated specialist service for people with sensory impairments. She explained that extensive engagement and co-production had demonstrated the need to retain specialist sensory expertise and ensure the services remained accessible, person-centred and well connected to wider community support.

2. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussion covered the following:

   a) Ms Walton confirmed that the proposed extension would not reduce service provision and was intended solely to facilitate procurement and implementation of the new contract. It was not anticipated that the extension would result in increased costs.

   b) Ms Walton clarified that projected demand data reflected differences in district population sizes and demographic trends rather than variations in service quality or availability. She also confirmed that the service formed part of the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Care Act.

   c) Members welcomed the quality of the information contained the report and highlighted the value of the evidence provided.

3. RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee endorse the proposed decision to:

   a) APPROVE the commissioning of a new Community Wellbeing Service for Adults with Sensory Needs;
   b) APPROVE a three-month extension on the current Community Wellbeing Service for Adults with Sensory Needs contract, to enable effective mobilisation and transition to the new service;
   c) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to take relevant actions to secure and manage the three-month extension; negotiate, finalise the terms of, and (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) award the contract for the Community Wellbeing Service for Adults with Sensory Needs;
   d) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and S151 Officer) to exercise any approved contract extensions;

e) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and S151 Officer), to accept and deploy any additional external funding secured during the lifetime of the contract to enhance the approved service, provided this does not create any unfunded financial commitment for the Council: and
f) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to enter relevant contracts or other legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

96. 26/00057 - Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia
(Item. 9)

1. The item was introduced by Mrs Foster, who outlined proposals to recommission the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia through a Strategic Partner and Service Delivery Network model and approve a six-month extension to existing contracts. Ms Walton introduced the report and highlighted the preventative nature of the service, which supported approximately 41,500 residents during 2025. She explained that the new model would create a single access route whilst retaining specialist support.

2. RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee endorse the proposed decision to:

   a) APPROVE the commissioning of a new Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia;
   b) APPROVE a six-month extension on the current Wellbeing Services in the Community Contracts to enable effective mobilisation and transition to the new service;
   c) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to take relevant actions to secure and manage the six-month extension; negotiate, finalise the terms of, and (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) award the contract for the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia;
   d) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and S151 Officer), to exercise any approved contract extensions;
   e) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and S151 Officer), to accept and deploy any additional external funding secured during the lifetime of the contract to enhance the approved service, provided this does not create any unfunded financial commitment for the Council: and
   f) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to enter relevant contracts or other legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

97. 26/00058 - Mental Health Assessment Service
(Item. 10)

1. The item was introduced by Mrs Foster, who highlighted the Council's statutory responsibilities in relation to Mental Health Assessments under Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) arrangements and outlined proposals to recommission the service. Ben Campbell, Commissioning Manager, introduced the report and explained that the recommissioning would ensure continued delivery of statutory responsibilities and improve outcomes for vulnerable residents.

2. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussion covered the following:

    a) Mr Campbell advised that the service would be procured within the existing budget and that recent changes to the definition of deprivation of liberty were expected to reduce the number of mental health assessments required. While this was anticipated to reduce overall costs, the financial implications remained uncertain and would be considered through engagement with the market as part of the procurement process.

3. RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee endorse the proposed decision to:

    a) APPROVE the recommissioning of a new DoLS Mental Health Assessment Service and confirm the current contractual arrangements, including the approved contract modification which will enable procurement and mobilisation of the new service;
    b) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to take relevant actions to negotiate, finalise the terms of, and (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) award the contract for the Mental Health Assessment Service;
    c) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the S151 Officer) to exercise any approved contract extensions; and
    d) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to enter relevant contracts or other legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

98. 26/00059 - Section 75 Legal Partnership Agreement
(Item. 11)

1. The item was introduced by Mrs Foster, who outlined proposals to enter into a revised Section 75 Partnership Agreement with the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, providing an updated governance framework for the Better Care Fund (BCF). Ms Gillivan introduced the report and highlighted that the revised agreement strengthened governance arrangements, clarified responsibilities between organisations and supported effective partnership working between KCC and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

2. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussion covered the following:

    a) Members sought assurance that the Committee's role in scrutinising health and care matters would not be diminished by the introduction of the new wellbeing board arrangements and asked how the Committee's

involvement would be maintained. The Chairman advised that further clarification would be sought regarding future reporting and scrutiny arrangements.

3. RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee endorse the proposed decision to:

   a) ENTER into a revised Section 75 Partnership Agreement with the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board; and
   b) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to take relevant actions to finalise the necessary legal agreements and sign the Section 75 Partnership Agreement on behalf of Kent County Council.

99. Work Programme
(Item. 12)

RESOLVED to note the Work Programme.