

Record of Cabinet decisions

Tuesday, 11 March 2025

7.00pm to 9.09pm

Date of publication: 13 March 2025

**Subject to call-in these decisions will be effective from 21 March 2025
The record of decisions is subject to approval at the next meeting of the Cabinet**

Present:	Councillor Vince Maple	Leader of the Council
	Councillor Teresa Murray	Deputy Leader of the Council
	Councillor Tracy Coombs	Portfolio Holder for Education
	Councillor Nina Gurung	Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure
	Councillor Harinder Mahil	Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment
	Councillor Alex Paterson	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement
	Councillor Adam Price	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (including statutory responsibility)
Councillor Zoë Van Dyke	Portfolio Holder for Business Management	

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive
Adam Bryan, Director of Place
Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive
Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer
David Reynolds, Head of Revenue Accounts

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Curry and Louwella Prenter.

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

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Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

Record of decisions

The record of the meeting held on 11 February 2025, was agreed by the Cabinet and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

Update on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

Background:

The report provided the Cabinet with an update on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and set out the next steps on developing plans for LGR in Kent and Medway.

Devolution, which was a separate process, would involve the transfer of additional powers to local communities. Medway and the areas across Kent had not been successful in their request to join the Devolution Priority Programme. Congratulations were given to neighbouring Essex and Sussex whose applications had been accepted.

The Government had written to all local authorities in two-tier areas to invite them to work towards becoming part of a new unitary authority area. While Medway was already a unitary authority, the other areas in Kent currently had a two-tier system.

The first key milestone was 21 March 2025, which was the deadline for an initial declaration to be submitted to the Government. While this submission would not include detailed plans, the aim was for the 14 councils in Kent and Medway to have a collective position.

The creation of a single council for the whole of Kent and Medway was not considered to be viable and the prevailing view across the area was that three or four unitary authorities should be created. Medway favoured the establishment of four councils. Medway would be making its own submission as well as being part of a joint Kent and Medway submission. It would be made clear that there was no merit in creating a single council for the whole area and that there was no need for any parts of Kent and Medway to be joined with any areas in neighbouring counties for the purposes of creating the new councils.

Engagement would take place over the next few months with residents and stakeholders and the Minister of State for Local Government and Devolution would be taken up on his offer of a visit.

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A second deadline of 28 November 2025 would require a more detailed submission to be made to the Government setting out proposed boundaries of new local authority areas. The Government had advised that these new authority areas should each contain populations of around 500,000. As Kent and Medway had a combined population of around 2million, Medway considered that the creation of four authorities would be needed.

The changes proposed were considered to be more significant than the local government changes that had taken place 50 years previously and it was anticipated that they would support improving quality of life and outcomes for local areas. Thanks were given to senior officers for the work they had undertaken on LGR and Devolution to date. It was noted that resources had been set aside by Medway Council to support the work and that support offered by the Government would also be taken up. It was emphasised that Medway Council would continue with business as usual until the new authorities were fully operational. It was considered that the Government had made a strong case for Devolution and LGR and the Council wanted to take the opportunities provided by Devolution.

While decisions to be taken by Medway Council in relation to LGR and Devolution were executive decisions, the proposals would also be considered by Full Council. A special meeting of the Council would take place in early November 2025 ahead of Cabinet making a final decision on 18 November, ahead of the 28 November submission deadline.

It was anticipated that the new authorities would be established in shadow form from May 2027 with the new authorities and an elected Mayor for Kent and Medway being fully established and replacing the existing councils from May 2028. As Medway Council would cease to exist after May 2028, it was considered unlikely that the Council elections currently due to take place in May 2027, would be held.

The report noted that in line with rule 15.11 of Chapter 4, Part 5 of the Constitution, call-in could be waived where any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. In this case, the deadline for the Council to submit an interim plan setting out draft proposals for a single tier of local government in Kent and Medway to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was 21 March 2025. On this occasion it was proposed that the call-in period be waived to enable this deadline to be met. The Chairperson of the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed that the decisions proposed were reasonable in all the circumstances and to them being treated as a matter of urgency and to waive call-in. The Chairperson was thanked by the Cabinet for his agreement to waive call-in.

The Cabinet noted the update on devolution and local government reorganisation in Kent and Medway.

33/2025

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to submit an interim plan setting out draft proposals for a single tier of local government in Kent and Medway to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and

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Local Government by 21 March 2025.

- 34/2025** **The Cabinet agreed that decision No. 33/2025 was considered urgent and would therefore not be subject to call in.**
- 35/2025** **The Cabinet agreed that the Council would seek to advance the argument for the creation of four unitary authorities for the region of Kent and anticipated that final decision making would be made through an informative meeting of full Council with the final decision, regarding the submission of final proposals to Government, to be made by the Cabinet, in November 2025.**

Reasons:

The Government had provided information on its expectations regarding engagement and consultation on local government reorganisation. The Council would work with other Kent local authorities to ensure a consistent approach throughout the county, including the governance arrangements.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Background:

The report presented the Cabinet with Medway's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The Plan outlined a long-term strategy for developing cycling, walking, and wheeling networks in Medway, supporting future investment in Active Travel.

The Plan aimed to encourage and facilitate Medway residents to undertake more journeys by active modes of transport, particularly for shorter journeys. A number of priority cycling and walking routes had been identified for development.

The report had previously been considered by the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2025 and its comments were set out in section 7 of the report.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken and was attached at Appendix B to the report.

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the comments of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 7 of the report.

- 36/2025** **The Cabinet agreed the adoption of Medway's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, as set out at Appendix A to the report.**

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Reasons:

The LCWIP aligns with existing and emerging policies and strategies and provides a long-term commitment to walking and cycling in Medway. The Plan will support the uptake of Active Travel and establishes the case for future investment in Medway's cycling, walking and wheeling networks.

Regional Care Co-Operative Update

Background:

The report provided the Cabinet with an update on the progress with the development of the Regional Care Cooperative (RCC) Pathfinder. This was a Department for Education (DfE) funded project to encourage Local Authorities (LAs) to work together more closely on the commissioning and procurement of placements for looked after children.

In July 2024, the Cabinet had agreed to join the RCC Pathfinder and enter into relevant discussions and collaborations with DfE/other LAs as appropriate. It was also requested that an update report be presented to Cabinet when the full design of the RCC had been agreed which would provide further detail of the agreements reached and the legal and financial implications.

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the progress on the capital funding award given to the Council from the Regional Care Cooperative.

The Cabinet noted the current work in development across the South East Regional Care Cooperative.

The Cabinet noted opportunities for more capital funding in 2025/26 and the consideration of match funding or using existing capital buildings as the Council's contribution.

Reasons:

Medway can benefit by working collaboratively on selected areas of development with other SE Local Authorities. Other South East authorities had agreed to join and being part of the RCC opened Medway up to further collaboration and funding opportunities over the next 2 years.

Following consideration of a report at the Cabinet meeting held on 30 July 2024, the Cabinet asked to receive a further report on the development of the RCC when more detailed information about the implications and opportunities of the project for Medway Council was available ([Decision 125/2024 referred](#)).

Town Centres Board - Revised Terms of Reference

Background:

The report requested that the Cabinet revise the Terms of Reference for the Town Centres Board (TCB) and to declassify the TCB as a Cabinet Advisory Group.

The revised Terms of Reference refined the membership of the Board to ensure comprehensive representation at senior officer level and clarified the protocol for deputisation. It also updated the executive support arrangements for the Board.

Decision number:

Decision:

37/2025

The Cabinet approved a revised Terms of Reference for the Town Centres Board, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

38/2025

The Cabinet agreed to declassify the Town Centres Board as a Cabinet Advisory Group.

Reasons:

To update the Town Centres Board Terms of Reference to refine the membership of the group to ensure comprehensive representation at senior officer level, clarify the protocol for deputisation and to update the executive support arrangements for the Board. Declassification as a Cabinet Advisory Group would assist to reduce associated administrative processes.

Household Support Fund

Background:

The report provided the Cabinet with proposals for the use of the Household Support Fund (HSF) for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 to ensure the grant was disbursed in full to Medway's residents.

The report explained that since November 2020, the Government had continued to provide financial support to vulnerable children and families via local authorities, with this being named the HSF from 30 September 2021.

The Government had confirmed that the HSF would continue for the 2024/25 financial year, with £742million nationally for the scheme. At the time of preparing the report, the Government was yet to confirm individual local authority allocations or publish conditions and guidance for the scheme.

Decision number:

Decision:

39/2025

The Cabinet agreed the proposals set out in section 5 of the report as the Council's approach to delivering the Household Support

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Fund in 2025/26 and agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise and implement these proposals.

40/2025

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to amend the proposals to ensure the Household Support Fund was disbursed in full to benefit Medway's residents:

- i) Where amendment was necessary to meet the Government's conditions for the use of the grant set down in guidance published after the date of this decision.**
- ii) Where amendment was necessary to ensure the grant could be disbursed in full, including introducing further proposals to reach eligible residents.**
- iii) Where amendment was necessary to ensure the activity in the proposals could be delivered within the total grant allocated to Medway Council.**

41/2025

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to provide a delivery plan to the Department for Work and Pensions in accordance with the conditions and guidance associated with the Household Support Fund.

Reasons:

The Household Support Fund (HSF) is fully grant funded by the Department of Work and Pensions to support vulnerable households. The Government had confirmed that the HSF would continue for the 2025/26 financial year but was yet to confirm individual local authority allocations or publish conditions and guidance for the scheme. There had been no indications from the Government that the scheme for 2025/26 would be different than the scheme for 2024/25. Agreeing broadly consistent proposals with those in place for 2024/25, along with delegations to officers to amend, finalise and implement these proposals would enable officers to mobilise the scheme quickly when allocations and conditions were confirmed, and would therefore ensure continuity of support to vulnerable residents in Medway.

Innovation Park Medway Next Steps

Background:

The report provided the Cabinet with a summary of the development options work undertaken since delivery at Innovation Park Medway (IPM) was paused in February 2024. This pause had been due to both issues that needed to be addressed and there being limited demand, which had been partly caused by changed working patterns following the Covid-19 pandemic.

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The report recommended the best long-term opportunities for IPM to ensure the most sustainable future for the sites and to achieve the outcomes envisaged from the sites in response to market changes. For the northern site, a mix of industrial and mid-tech uses was proposed, while the proposed option for the southern site was a care home and retirement units.

It was announced that, subject to legal agreements, a short lease would be granted on 12 acres of land at the northern site to help support a BAE Systems multi million pound upgrade in Medway. The business was planning to invest £220million for a state of the art factory and significant renovation of their existing premises. This was due to create around 300 high quality jobs over the next five years in addition to an existing 1,700 strong existing workforce.

The Exempt Appendices to the report set out a review of development options and details of the lease agreed for the southern site.

***Decision
number:***

Decision:

42/2025 **The Cabinet approved the recommended option for a mix of industrial and Mid-Tech for the Northern Site (Option 3), as detailed at paragraph 4.7 of the report.**

43/2025 **The Cabinet agreed the recommended option(s) for a viable care home and retirement units for the Southern Site with the alternative of Mid-Tech to be retained as a second option, as detailed at paragraph 4.8 of the report.**

44/2025 **The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, to commence work to procure a development partner(s) for Innovation Park Medway sites via a public works contract procurement route.**

The Cabinet noted that two new capital codes would be created to fund the new delivery options for both Northern and Southern sites. New and reduced and refined project costs, including salaries is £2,015,300 (7 years total, 2 years to get a development agreement (DA) in place and 5 years to manage the DA). The funding would be distributed from the existing IPM codes via virements under the Director of Place's delegated authority.

The Cabinet noted that budget allowance had also been made to accommodate works required to make the sites more appealing to a development partner, bringing the remaining works to the next milestone, oversight of the various contract defects periods, as well as ensuring ongoing site security.

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- 45/2025** **The Cabinet agreed to the principle of the removal of the IPM capital codes that were no longer appropriate to the new delivery options from the capital programme, once the 2024/25 financial year accounting was completed and associated virements had taken place.**
- 46/2025** **The Cabinet approved officers to proceed with steps to revoke the Local Development Order and associated planning documents in accordance with legislation and initiate discussions with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) to revoke theirs.**
- 47/2025** **As the value of the proposed rent for interim use of Northern site exceeded delegated levels, the Cabinet approved officers to instruct Solicitors to draft and permit the completion of a Lease based on the terms agreed.**

Reasons:

The recommendations were required to ensure that the sites would be brought forward in a manner that suits the evolving needs of businesses in Medway along with ensuring that the sites would be delivered in the most sustainable manner. The interim lease proposed would enable the site to generate income and support the development of a local business whilst the recommendations were being implemented.

Property Review Operational Properties

Background:

The report presented the Cabinet with phase 2 of the property review in relation to those operational property assets which had been identified as either:

- i) Suitable for being declared surplus, so that they can potentially be disposed of, or in the case of the Upper Mount Car park disposed of or appropriated for other Council uses, all following appropriate consultation with stakeholders, including the Council's Corporate Landlord Board.
- ii) Requiring consultation concerning their future, with the results of this consultation being brought to a future Cabinet meeting, so that Cabinet could decide the way forward.

The report had previously been considered by the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny on 26 February 2025 and its comments were set out in Appendix 5 to the report.

It was noted that the St George's Centre would not be disposed of until a new Council Chamber was available and that the appropriate conversations and due diligence would be undertaken prior to any disposal.

In relation to Hopewell Drive Business Centre, it was clarified that the ambition was for it to be sold as an ongoing concern so that existing leaseholders could continue

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with their leases. Appropriate engagement was taking place, including with unions that had premises within the Centre.

The Exempt Appendices to the report set out a list of car parks and other properties that are proposed for disposal and / or closure.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken and was attached at Appendix 4 to the report.

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the comments of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Appendix 5 to the report within the supplementary agenda.

48/2025 **The Cabinet declared surplus the properties which were listed in the table contained in paragraph 4.6 of the report and listed in more detail in the Exempt Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.**

49/2025 **The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Corporate Landlord Board (CLB), to dispose of the properties, listed in the table contained in paragraph 4.6 of this report or in the case of Upper Mount Car park, to dispose of it, or appropriate it for other Council uses and agreed the method of disposal for each property, in order to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable.**

50/2025 **The Cabinet requested officers to undertake consultation concerning the future of the properties listed in the table contained in paragraph 4.7 to the report, including discussions with the relevant Parish Councils and adjoining stakeholders concerning the public toilets with the aim of these facilities remaining available for use. The results of this consultation would be brought to a future Cabinet meeting, so that Cabinet could then decide the way forward.**

51/2025 **The Cabinet agreed to authorise the Council's legal department to conclude the resultant contractual documents.**

The Cabinet noted the progress on the property review so far.

Reasons:

To act on the recommendations which the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) made in its report dated January 2024.

To generate revenue savings and capital receipts for the Council, whilst avoiding future capital spend on properties, for example on required maintenance. This would help the Council to be more financially sustainable.

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To free up properties, which could be disposed of and in some cases these properties could be used by the private and third sectors to deliver development, including much needed housing.

Gateway 3 Contract Award: Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Assessments

Background:

The report sought the Cabinet's permission to award the procurement of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Assessments Contract.

The Exempt Appendix to the report contained the financial analysis of the tenders received.

Decision number: ***Decision:***

52/2025 **The Cabinet agreed to award the contract to South East Memory Assessment Services Ltd (SEMAS), as they had been evaluated as the most advantageous against the Council's award criteria, as per the evaluation table contained within 2.1 of the Exempt Appendix.**

Reasons:

The award of the contract will enable the Council to continue the provision of the DOLS assessments service sourcing from the most economically advantageous provider.

Gateway 3 Contract Award: Medway Integrated Sexual Health Service (including HIV Treatment Services)

Background:

The report sought permission from the Cabinet to award the procurement of the Medway Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) Contract.

An Exempt Appendix 1 to the report contained a breakdown of the financial analysis in respect of this procurement project.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken and was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

Decision number: ***Decision:***

53/2025 **The Cabinet is recommended to award the contract to Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust as they had been evaluated as meeting the Council's award criteria, as per the evaluation spreadsheet contained within 2.1 of the Exempt**

Appendix 1 to the report.

Reasons:

To enable the continuation of the provision of sexual health services. Commissioners are satisfied with the incumbent's delivery of the current contract and are confident they will deliver against the new service requirements.

Gateway 3 Contract Award: Medway Integrated Community Equipment Service (MICES) Recommissioning

Background:

The report sought the Cabinet's permission to award the procurement of the MICES Contract.

An Exempt Appendix to the report contained financial analysis in respect of this procurement project.

Decision number:

Decision:

54/2025

The Cabinet agreed to award the contract to Medequip Assistive Technology, as they had been evaluated as the most economically advantageous against the Council's award criteria, as per the evaluation spreadsheet contained within 2.1 of the Exempt Appendix.

Reasons:

The procurement of the MICES contract will deliver a service that will enable the following:

- i) Supply, deliver, fit, install, adjust, repair, refurbish, reuse, collect, decontaminate, recycle and dispose of items of equipment requested by authorised prescribers.
- ii) Procuring equipment (both standard and complex) including specialist paediatric and adult equipment as requested by authorised prescribers. The equipment will meet all current standards and guidance as set by the Medical and Healthcare Product Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and identified within the NHS Controls Assurance Standards.
- iii) They will also provide onsite training and technical advice, working with practitioners/ clinicians, attending joint visits and advising clinicians on all aspects of minor adaptations and any specific technicalities around all supplied equipment.
- iv) Delivering the correct items of equipment identified for daily living to service users on a short or long-term loan basis to service users' homes within specified timescales as instructed by the prescriber or an authorised officer.

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- v) Support the patients long term plan by helping more people to live independently at home for longer by:
- bringing together different professionals to coordinate better care for the individual service user.
 - developing more rapid community response teams to prevent unnecessary hospitalisation.
 - speed up home discharges.
 - improve carer's equipment support.
 - give people more say about the care they receive and where they receive it, particularly towards the end of their lives.
 - to support the delivery of the NHS personalisation agenda and the social care services use of personal budgets.
 - to deliver a service that meets the requirements of the Children and families Act 2014, which includes equipment provision in health and social care services for eligible children, young adults and the general population of Medway.
 - to improve and maintain health and wellbeing through increased independence, choice, control, dignity and quality of life.
 - to support the delivery of end-of-life care in a care environment chosen by the patient.
 - to collect equipment from the service user's home or community setting when no longer required.
 - reduce carbon footprint and environmental impact through recycling and using local resources.
 - to coordinate service planning through a multi-agency or multi-disciplinary plan that offers a timely, flexible, prompt and responsive service.

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Leader of the Council

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Date

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