

Cabinet

26 August 2025

Kent and Medway Integrated Work and Health Strategy – Addendum Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Teresa Murray, Deputy Leader of the Council

Report from: David Whiting, Director of Public Health

Authors: Aeilish Geldenhuys, Strategic Head of Service, Public Health
Jacqui Moore, Kent and Medway Integrated Care System
Prevention Lead

Summary

This addendum sets out the draft minutes of discussion of the report by the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 August 2025.

1. **Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- 1.1. The Strategic Head of Service for Public Health, accompanied by the Kent and Medway Integrated Care System Prevention Lead and the Head of Skills, Employment and Adult Education, introduced the report which presented the draft Kent and Medway Integrated Work and Health Strategy for comment.
- 1.2. Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:
- 1.3. **Embedding across the Council** – in response to a question about how the Local Get Kent and Medway Working Plan and the strategy could be embedded across the Council and with businesses, officers explained that the Medway Skills Partnership Board was internally focussed and included representation from key services across the Council focussing on key skills issues and was being very well supported and contributed to.
- 1.4. **Working with partners and businesses** – in response to a question about how the Council was working with partners and businesses to drive the ambitions forward, officers explained that there had been extensive consultation with businesses in the development of the strategy and recognised that the work the Council did with local businesses was key in supporting them. This includes knowledge, training and developing bespoke business skill plans, in order for them to have confidence to employ people with health conditions and demonstrating, through strong examples, what

huge value is added by doing so. The Council was also exploring opportunities to support businesses through sharing policies and processes.

- 1.5. **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** – in response to a question about the impact of LGR on the strategy's progress, officers explained that this had been a Kent and Medway wide piece of work with buy in across the relevant organisations, therefore it was believed the strategy would be carried forward through LGR. There was a new Strategic Partnership for Health and Economy which was co-chaired by the Director of Public Health at Medway, Deputy Director of Public Health in Kent, plus the Chair of the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, which included district representation.
- 1.6. **Consultation and engagement** – concern was raised about the level of participation in engagement activity of the strategy. Officers confirmed that there had been significant work undertaken in relation to consultation which ranged from online surveys, various focus groups, stakeholder activity, individual interviews and targeted work for the seldom heard groups. They added that engagement would continue through a lived experience reference group allied to the Strategic Partnership for Health and the Economy as the landscape evolved and so there would be a continuum.
- 1.7. **Sustainability of employment placements** – concern was raised regarding the risk of employments breaking down once support was withdrawn. Officers explained that through the Connect to Work programme, a large scale employment scheme that had launched in June 2025, support was provided to employers and Individual Placement Support (IPS) to provide in-work support for up to three years. Job coaches ensured everything was set up and embedded to ensure longevity of employment and support would remain or be reintroduced where necessary.
- 1.8. **Learning** – in response to a question about what learning had been made from the process, officers explained that the strategy had been developed iteratively over a long period of approximately 18 months and throughout the aspirations had not significantly changed. The biggest challenge was now putting the strategy into action but there was lots of commitment to do so. The person-centred approach to the strategy was very much welcomed.
- 1.9. **Decision:**

The Committee recommended the Kent and Medway Integrated Work and Health Strategy 2025-30, as set out at Appendix 3 to the report, to the Cabinet for approval.