

# MEDWAY COUNCIL CAPITAL STRATEGY 2026/27

## Introduction

This year's update of the Capital Strategy has been written with one focus in mind: providing the best possible support for our residents most in need.

Despite a change in local government on the horizon, involving a reorganisation of local councils nationally, Medway's vision remains clear, and we continue to be ambitious to create a place where people can thrive and be proud of.

Medway has been on a monumental journey since it became a unitary authority in 1998. It is a place which provides opportunities for families to flourish and businesses to successfully grow. Medway's rich heritage is celebrated and visited from far afield, providing a welcome boost to the local economy.

Medway is a great place to live, work, learn and visit, and through this strategy, which aligns with the One Medway Council Plan, we want to continue expanding on this.

Medway's Capital Strategy is increasingly important; it touches on how we will overcome financial challenges and use the funding we have to meet the demand on our statutory services, such as social care, housing and education, as well as fundamentally planning Medway's approach to funding and maintaining infrastructure and assets, from schools to heritage attractions.

Medway is on a journey to becoming financially sustainable, making careful day-to-day spending decisions, and this strategy complements that work by outlining opportunities for long-term investments. This includes building and operating a care facility on Council-owned land through Care for Medway and the delivery of 150 properties to provide high quality and cost-effective temporary accommodation to meet the needs of those facing homelessness in Medway.

We will continue making careful decisions and doing all we can to ensure our residents are provided with the services and excellent support they need and deserve.

**Councillor Vince Maple**  
**Leader of Medway Council**

## Our vision and ambitions

In May 2024 Full Council adopted the new One Medway Council Plan 2024-28, setting our vision, ambitions and priorities along with the Performance Indicators that are used to track our performance. This Plan acts as the primary framework for setting the direction and vision of the Council over the medium term.

The Plan set out our vision: Medway – a place that people are proud of. Medway is recognised as a great place to live, work, learn and visit, where all people thrive. To achieve that vision, the plan sets out five interconnected strategic priorities:

- Delivering quality social care and community services
- Benefiting from good education, quality jobs and a growing economy
- Enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities
- Improving health and wellbeing for all
- Living in good quality and affordable homes.

The delivery of our vision and priorities is underpinned by our Values and Behaviours:

- Proud to be Medway
- Caring
- Respectful
- Trusted
- Ambitious for Medway
- Collaborative.

## Funding the delivery of the One Medway Council Plan

Delivering on our ambitious plan means balancing investment across our c£500million+ annual revenue budget and c£230m+ capital programme over the medium term.

Local authorities are required to separate income and expenditure on revenue activities from that on capital activities. In this context, revenue relates to our day-to-day expenditure including salaries and wages, running costs such as fuel, utility bills and service contract payments; generally, revenue expenditure is consumed in less than a year. Like all local authorities, we fund revenue expenditure through revenue income sources including council tax, revenue grants and income from fees and charges. Where local authorities spend money on purchasing or building new assets such as land and buildings, or on improving their existing assets to extend their usable life i.e. through refurbishment, then this is capital expenditure and must be funded from capital income sources such as capital receipts and borrowing.

Since 2016/17 the government has given local authorities the power to use capital receipts from the disposal of property, plant and equipment assets (excluding Right to Buy receipts)



on the revenue costs of transformation projects that would generate ongoing savings in the revenue budget. Medway Council's use of this flexibility has been approved by Full Council alongside the budget in each year since, and in March 2025 the Government extended this flexibility until 31 March 2030. Councils which secure the support of the government through the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) scheme are typically supported through a capitalisation direction, which allows them to borrow to fund revenue budget shortfalls. For 2024/25 the Government has confirmed its agreement to a capitalisation for the sum required to balance the budget and outturn, of £20.239million. The Government has also confirmed it is ' minded to' agree a capitalisation for £18.484million required to balance the revenue budget for 2025/26.

This Strategy articulates the Council's aspirations to make capital investments to support the delivery of new assets and the investment required to maintain our existing asset portfolio to enable us to deliver on the new Council Plan. The Strategy also seeks to predict the availability of capital resources and therefore aims to provide Members with a framework within which to agree investment priorities for inclusion in the Capital Programme. This will be approved by Full Council alongside the annual budget for 2026/27 in February 2026.

Most of the Council's vital work to deliver the priorities in the Council Plan, including supporting residents through adult social care, children's and education services, homelessness services and the delivery of front line, cultural and community services, is funded through our revenue budget. The Medium Term Financial Outlook 2025-2030, published in August 2025 articulates the scale of the demand and cost pressures these services are facing, alongside the innovation and transformation in progress for the Council to work towards mitigating these pressures and delivering a balanced revenue budget over the medium term.

## Identifying and prioritising capital investment

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code requires councils to produce a capital strategy that demonstrates how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the delivery of the organisation's priorities. CIPFA's Capital Strategy Guidance 2021 steers local authorities to taking a whole organisation approach when meeting this requirement, recognising that identifying and prioritising investment to deliver the agreed outcomes while also taking account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability is not the responsibility of Finance alone. This Capital Strategy has been developed alongside service managers and the Corporate Management Team and aims to articulate the aspirations and priorities of Members for capital investment, alongside the availability of funding and affordability constraints.

Capital investment requirements and opportunities are identified through the budget setting process, which begins each year in the Summer to produce the Medium Term Financial Outlook and refresh of this strategy in the Summer/Autumn, and culminates in the presentation of the capital and revenue budgets to Cabinet and Full Council in February. The

formal process for approval of the final revenue budget and capital programme is set out in the Council's Constitution, chapter 4.03, the budget and policy framework rules.

While the Cabinet is responsible for ensuring the delivery of the capital programme within budgets set, additions to the programme are subject to approval from Full Council. Our approved capital programme reflects investment commitments over a multi-year period, and unlike the revenue budget which rarely changes once approved in February, the capital programme is regularly amended with additions and virements routinely progressed in-year as external funding is announced, or as business cases are considered by Members.

The scale of the capital programme proposed to Members is determined by the following:

- The level of aspiration and risk appetite of the organisation to shape Medway the place,
- The level of investment required to maintain our operational assets to ensure the continued delivery of services,
- The funding available, and
- The revenue implications of the capital expenditure, both positive and negative.

The reduction in grant funding, increasing cost of borrowing and limited availability of capital receipts means that there is a significant gap between our capital aspirations as articulated in this strategy and the scale of the capital programme that will be deliverable in the near future. The prioritisation of the available resources is a matter for Members on the advice of officers, and this strategy represents a key tool in that decision making process.

Local government finances continue to be stretched to breaking point, with Medway Council one of 30 local authorities that had to seek the support of the government through Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) in 2025/26. The local government funding settlement for 2025/26 was the seventh consecutive one-year settlement and this, along with interest rates



remaining higher than projected, and significant revenue budget pressures have made long term planning for investment exceptionally difficult in recent years. This Strategy therefore has a relatively short timeframe, seeking to articulate capital investment aspirations and priorities over the period of the new Council Plan, to the end of the 2028/29 financial year. The Government confirmed that in 2026/27 it will bring forward the first multi-year settlement in a decade in its Spending Review in June 2025, as well as consulting on reforms to the distribution of funding between local authorities over the Summer. The Spending Review set out capital investment in a new Affordable Homes Programme (£39billion nationally) and a fourth round of the Local Authority Housing Fund (£950million). The Government has also confirmed that the Ministry of Homes, Communities and Local Government will be publishing a local government finance policy statement before the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, with the latter to be published 'earlier', expected in November 2025. We await these publications for details of the impact of any of these announcements on Medway Council's capital programme.

# Investment priority 1: Delivering quality social care and community services

Demographic changes, areas of high deprivation and, most recently, the cost-of-living crisis mean that more people in Medway than ever are in need of support from care and social support services. The One Medway Council Plan is clear that ensuring that the most vulnerable in our community are cared for and supported is one of the most important roles of the Council. The Council's activities and services in this area are primarily funded from revenue, and seek to achieve the following:

- Provide effective, targeted **support for our most vulnerable residents** to enable them to fulfil their potential and improve their quality of life.
- Support people of all ages to live the most happy, healthy, independent life possible, utilising **assistive technologies**.
- Ensure that services support **children in care** to thrive, fulfil their potential, build meaningful relationships and make good transitions to adulthood, so that they can live as independent lives as possible in their communities.
- Provide **creative, cultural and community services and facilities** across Medway that everyone can access and benefit from.
- Support our **children and young people** to ensure they are safe, secure and stable.
- Support all **adults**, including those living with disability or physical or mental illness to live independently and stay safe.
- Ensure that people in Medway live independent and fulfilled lives into an **active older age**.

We are committed to delivering and improving our social care and community services, and the Medium Term Financial Outlook includes proposals to continue revenue investment to grow capacity and transform service delivery, alongside funding the increasing demand and rising cost of packages of care across adults and children's social care.

Alongside social care, the Council provides a huge range of services within our communities, from libraries and community hubs to children's centres, sports centres, theatres, events and festivals. We are especially proud of our important place in our nation's history and our rich heritage including the country's second oldest cathedral, tallest and best-preserved Norman Castle, Historic Dockyard Chatham, our connections with Charles Dickens, and much more. Each year we welcome more than 5 million tourists. Over the coming years, we aim to enhance Medway's reputation as a beacon in the South East for year-round cultural and festival celebrations and activities ranging from the Sweeps and Dickensian Christmas festivals to Medway Pride and the annual Gaming Festival. While revenue expenditure in delivering this priority is primarily focussed on social care, capital investment in the current programme is focused on community services with significant investment agreed in the last two years both to refurbish existing assets and to deliver new facilities for our residents.

## Summary investment requirements: social care and community services

Current capital programme	Total cost £000	Remaining budget £000	R1 forecast £000	R1 forecast variance £000
Children's Assessment Unit	319	165	165	0
Aut Even Redevelopment	1,113	1,092	1,092	0
Library Improvement Fund	460	448	448	0
English Heritage Local Management Agreement	1,250	123	123	0
Splashes Replacement Scheme	22,789	639	0	(639)
Hoo Sports Centre Works	311	286	286	0
Splashpad at the Strand	250	165	165	0
Lawn Tennis Association - Strand and Maidstone Road Courts Renovation	176	82	82	0
Dickens Chalet Restoration	100	100	100	0
Sports Centre Improvements	1,500	1,297	1,297	0
Brook Theatre Refurbishment	21,322	20,243	20,243	0
<b>Total current capital programme:</b>	<b>49,590</b>	<b>24,639</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>(639)</b>

Future capital aspirations/requirements	Total cost £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 - 2029/30 £000	2030/31 + £000
Care for Medway – see also Innovation Park Medway in priority 2*	37,000		37,000	
Delivery of hydro pool room in Parklands	TBC			
Library building condition programme	TBC			
Integrated Hubs programme – delivery of hub in each town	3,500		3,500	
Central Theatre Refurbishment	6,000	1,000	5,000	
Medway Archives Centre works to increase physical storage space	3,300	300	3,000	
Improvements to facilities at the Strand	1,500	375	1,125	
Active Parks developments	800	200	600	
Football 3G pitch investment	2,000	500	1,500	
Sports pavilion investments	1,200	300	900	
<b>Total future capital aspirations/requirements:</b>	<b>55,300</b>	<b>2,675</b>	<b>52,625</b>	<b>0</b>

\* In July 2025, Cabinet recommended this scheme to Council and the addition will be considered by Full Council in October 2025.

## Heritage and cultural facilities

Medway Council proudly stewards a rich portfolio of heritage and cultural assets that play a vital role in shaping the area's identity, supporting the local economy, and enriching community life.

The **Brook Theatre**, a Grade II listed building and valued community asset, is undergoing a

major refurbishment to ensure it remains fit for purpose and supports Chatham's evening and weekend economy. The £20.322million scheme, funded through council borrowing and grants from the Levelling Up and Future High Streets Funds is expected to complete in Spring 2027.

The **Central Theatre** continues to be a cornerstone of Medway's cultural offer, hosting a diverse programme of performances. Its strategic location within Chatham's Central Creative Quarter positions it for future investment to enhance its role in the town centre's regeneration and night-time economy.

The **Central Theatre** is in need of refurbishment to fix ceiling damage, structural issues from water ingress, deteriorated walls and floors, failing fixture and fittings in publicly accessible, backstage and staff areas. A scheme estimated to cost £6million would allow for works including roof replacement, internal repairs, replacement furnishing and equipment and improved finishes alongside accessibility and technical upgrades, such as better audio systems to ensure the facility is fit for the future.

The **Rochester Corn Exchange**, a Grade I listed building, offers an elegant venue for weddings, corporate events, and community gatherings. Recent investment has strengthened its role in Medway's cultural infrastructure, supporting both heritage preservation and economic activity.

**Chatham Creative Quarters** is the foundation of Medway's cultural placemaking strategy, dividing Chatham into four distinct zones—Old High Street Intra, Central, Historic Dockyard, and Maritime. This framework supports creative clustering, infrastructure, and skills development, and is central to Medway's role in the Thames Estuary Production Corridor. It aims to attract investment, foster engagement, and celebrate Chatham's identity through arts, education, and innovation.

Medway's designation as an **Arts Council England Priority Place** recognises its potential for increased cultural investment. This status supports efforts to strengthen infrastructure, broaden participation, and nurture creative talent, aligning with Medway's ambition to embed culture in regeneration.

### **Heritage Assets and Conservation**

Medway is one of nine areas selected for the **National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Place Programme**, supporting long-term, place-based investment in heritage-led regeneration and community pride. The Council owns and manages several key heritage sites:

- **Rochester Castle**, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, remains under English Heritage guardianship. The Council will continue to manage this iconic asset and renew the local management agreement.
- **Temple Manor**, Grade I listed and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is being prepared for disposal following Cabinet approval. Discussions are underway to return management to English Heritage.

- **Upnor Castle**, owned by The Crown Estate and managed locally by the Council under English Heritage guardianship. Cabinet agreed in March 2025 to open conversations with English Heritage to discuss future management arrangements.
- **Eastgate House**, a Grade I listed Elizabethan townhouse, reopened in 2017 following major restoration. It now hosts exhibitions, events, and weddings, with its historic interiors and gardens, including Dickens Chalet, offering a unique cultural experience.
- **Dickens Chalet**, also Grade I listed, is a nationally significant literary heritage asset. £100,000 has been allocated toward its restoration, with total costs estimated at over £800,000.
- **Rochester Guildhall Museum**, built in 1687 and featured in *Great Expectations*, received recent investment to create the Dickens Gallery. A small balance remains for further improvements.
- The **Medway Archives Centre** in Strood is a vital resource for exploring the history of Medway's people, places, and institutions. It holds unique archival and published records with visitors using the centre to research family history, local geography, architecture, and social and literary heritage. Accredited by the UK Archive Service, the centre offers expert guidance, research services, and opportunities to donate or deposit materials. **Medway Archives Centre** is facing critical storage limitations, with existing capacity nearing its limit. To address this, an options appraisal will be undertaken over the next 12 months to explore sustainable solutions for expansion or reconfiguration and it is projected that investment of c£3.300million will be necessary. We aim to secure support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help develop and deliver this strategic review, ensuring the centre can continue to preserve and provide access to Medway's rich historical collections.

The capital programme supports ongoing conservation works, including new interpretation at Upnor Castle and replacement of entrance stairs at Rochester Castle. Renewal of local management agreements would require joint investment of up to £120,000 annually.

## Integrated Community Hubs and Libraries

Through a programme of investment over multiple years we have transformed seven of our libraries into Community Hubs, improving face to face access for our residents to a range of facilities and services, to make enquiries, report issues and apply and pay for services. Plans are currently in development for the next phase of this journey to ensure we provide access to even more services, in the right locations across Medway to meet the needs of our residents moving forward.

The Integrated Hubs programme forms a key component of the Medway 2.0 Delivery Plan and is designed to transform how services are delivered to residents. The initiative aims to consolidate multiple Council and partner services into modern, accessible hubs that prioritise resident needs over existing organisational structures. This resident-centric approach will break down silos, improve efficiency, and create a seamless experience for residents. A Strategic Group, consisting of senior council officers and relevant Portfolio

Holders provides governance and oversight to ensure alignment with Medway's regeneration ambitions. The programme's primary goal is to redesign services around the resident, ensuring that delivery is intuitive, integrated, and responsive. This includes embedding community safety into the hub model, leveraging data from digital reporting tools, and fostering collaboration with partners such as the Police.



There is an ambition to deliver the first Integrated Hub in Gillingham, although opportunities to deliver in other areas of Medway will be considered if suitable properties or sites become available. Engagement with residents is central to the service design process, ensuring that solutions reflect local priorities. The hubs will also support wider regeneration initiatives, such as the "Love Gillingham" project, by co-locating community services with cultural and wellness spaces. Delivering the Integrated Hubs programme will require significant capital investment in property acquisition, refurbishment, and fit out. Several potential sites are under consideration, including Marlborough Annex, former retail units, and existing council-leased buildings such as Kingsley House.

Options are being evaluated for suitability, availability, and potential for mixed-use development, including affordable housing. Funding opportunities will be explored through government programmes and allocations from national spending reviews and capital receipts. There are a wide range of potential approaches to deliver the Integrated Hubs programme, with vastly differing timeframes and levels of capital investment requirements; from reconfiguring an existing building to creating a brand new, bespoke, facility from the ground up. Options and proposals will be submitted to the Strategic Group and Corporate Landlord Board, with Finance colleagues advising on the capital requirements and funding options.

Alongside the development of the integrated hubs, it will be necessary to invest in maintaining and enhancing the condition of the Council's libraries, in line with the Council's Property Asset Management Strategy.

## Sports and Leisure

We are immensely proud of our sport and leisure offer, providing facilities across Medway through four sports centres, two dedicated football centres and the Strand Leisure Park.

In July 2025 Cozenton Park Sports Centre celebrated its first anniversary, providing high-quality facilities for Medway's families to enjoy including a leisure pool with features for children of all ages, four lane swimming and a state of the art gym and fitness studio. The membership target was set at 1,000 new members within its first financial year; this target is being continuously increased, with a current 2,985 members.

The Cozenton Park scheme was delivered with an underspend of more than £2m, which is now being invested in a range of improvements across our other sports centres. Completed works include refurbishment of the sports hall including a new sports hall flooring at Strood Sports Centre, refurbishment of wet side changing facilities at Medway Park, and energy efficiency improvements at Hoo Sports Centre. Further works programmed include an extension to the gym at Medway Park; refurbished wet side changing facilities at Strood and Hoo Sports Centres, and new, enlarged exercise studios at Medway Park and Strood. The capital investment supports the Council's stated ambition for the facilities to operate on a financially sustainable footing without the requirement for annual subsidy. It is projected that this total investment of £2million is enabling a programme of enhancements to ensure these facilities continue to meet customer needs and achieve the Council's aspirations for income in a highly competitive market.



A Member-led task force was established in 2024 with the objective of improving the Strand as a vibrant, modern urban park which can ultimately achieve green flag status. Investment of £1.5million would be required to achieve this ambition, funding a series of modern community-focused improvements, including improved play features, outdoor activity areas, a multi-sport play zone and upgrades to the swimming pool. Developer contributions were used to fund investment of £300,000 in the Strand to deliver a new children's splashpad water feature. The splashpad was installed for Summer 2025 and this free facility has been very well received. Eight tennis courts were renovated at The Strand in Gillingham and Maidstone Road Sports Ground in Chatham, with Lawn Tennis Association investment of £174,158 helping ensure that quality facilities are available for the local community.

Multi-sport Playzones have been successfully funded through partnership with the Football Foundation and will be placed within The Strand, Maidstone Road and Deangate Ridge parks, offering improved multisport all weather court facilities in those areas and to support our ambition of increasing and designating Active Parks, utilising developer contributions of £234,058 and football foundation match funding £694,488.

Sport England has chosen Medway as an official 'Active Place', with its aim to get Medway moving and to address inequalities in activity levels across Medway. By being named an

Active Place, Medway will become a priority for Sport England funding and will seek to develop a number of Active Parks, encouraging greater physical activity through a mix of traditional and non-traditional activities. Investment of £200,000 per year (£800,000 in this strategy) would support the development of these Active Parks and to ensure the Council is best placed to leverage external funding.

In recent years Medway's sports team have worked with the Football Foundation to improve pitch quality through investment in 3G pitches and associated facilities in Medway. In 2021 we opened a new full-size 3G pitch and pavilion at Watling Park football centre, funded by a £900,000 grant from the Football Foundation and investment of £400,000 from the Council. The facility has exceeded expectations for usage and provides high-quality training and match play facilities. Investment of £2million over the course of this strategy would enable the Council to replicate this facility at other appropriate venues across Medway to meet rising demand for pitches in the area.

The sports team is also working in partnership with the Football Foundation, Kent FA and our local Medway football leagues to improve the standard of 63 grass football pitches (for both youth and adults) across 17 Council football sites in Medway. The Football Foundation has offered Medway a grant of £600,579 via our football leagues to fund these improvements and the Council has committed £276,477 to the programmes. This funding will be spent on improving these grass football pitches over the next six years.

Pavillion improvements to support sport across Medway; previous work with football foundation saw a brand new pavilion installed at Watling Park for £550,000. Benchmarking the cost for a new facility, several facilities need minor or major improvements rather than full redevelopment, a full assessment will need to be implemented to identify the need, a budget of £300,000 per annum (£1.2million) would be required to support this plan over the next five years and potentially unlock funding through Active Place or other potential initiatives.

## Children's Social Care

In July 2024 the Cabinet agreed the redevelopment of the Aut Even site as a specialist 5-bedroom home for young people with Learning Disabilities, Autism and neurodiversity. The £1.113million scheme will provide specialist residential provision for Medway, ensuring much needed high quality local capacity and allowing children to either remain in Medway or move back from other areas. This redesign will significantly improve the availability of placements, addressing the shortage and better aiding the expanding number of children in need. Improved quality of care, sensory and hydrotherapy facilities will benefit children with complex disabilities. Sustainable operations, including an ecological heating and cooling system decreases both construction costs and environmental impact. The restored garden will create a safe, stimulating, and therapeutic environment for children, promoting their well-being. The scheme is primarily funded from a grant from the Department for Education's Regional Care Cooperative of £1,013,000 with the Council's contribution of £200,000 funded from borrowing. Following a tender process, a contractor has been

appointed and work is underway with a view to completing the scheme in March 2026.

The addition of a hydro pool room in the Parklands facility would enable Children's Services to provide water therapy for children who have short breaks, and would support the facility to achieve an outstanding Ofsted rating.

## Adult Social Care – 'Care for Medway'

The Council is facing a shortage of care home provision and new care home placements, which is driving up the average bed cost and our expenditure on older people's care is increasing as demand outstrips supply. The challenges around capacity will only increase. In Medway for older people within dementia, there is a predicted 38% increase between 2023 and 2040. Service data indicates a rising prevalence of dementia in care home users, and the number of people with dementia in Medway is predicted to rise by 46% between 2019 and 2030.

The 2024/25 revenue budget and the Financial Improvement and Transformation (FIT) Plan included revenue investment of £500,000 in the development of 'Care for Medway', a new project aiming to deliver in-house residential care for adults in Medway. Providing a dedicated care facility would demonstrate our commitment to supporting vulnerable members of the community and would bring economic benefits for Medway as a whole, including job creation and the supply chain by supporting local businesses that provide goods and services to the facility.

In February 2025 the Cabinet considered an initial proposal for a Medway Council owned and operated care home and agreed to commission an in-depth analysis of costs associated with building and operating a care facility on existing Council owned land. In July 2025 the outcomes of the feasibility study were reported to the Cabinet and the Cabinet agreed to progress with developing a Medway Council owned and operated care home at the Innovation Park Medway (IPM) South site. Cabinet recommended to Council that c£44million be added to the capital programme to deliver the facility along with the whole of the IPM southern site masterplan.



## Investment priority 2: Benefitting from good education, quality jobs and a growing economy

We want to give local people the best chances to reach their full potential and are committed to creating and fostering opportunities and environments where they can thrive. Through our capital programme we work to ensure there are enough school places to meet the needs of Medway's growing population, while our revenue budget focusses on ensuring all Medway's young people have access to good-quality education and on the provision of quality learning and training that enables people of all ages to achieve. This work includes:

- Ensuring all children and young people access a high-quality, **inclusive education**.
- Working with business partners to ensure **education and skills development** supports children, young people and adults to lead successful lives, and secure employment opportunities, with targeted support for the unemployed and vulnerable groups.
- Developing a **strong mixed economy** which provides **training and work opportunities** that support career development, increasing high value businesses and expanding high quality employment.
- Developing Medway's reputation as a home for **creative, cultural, and green industries** to support a growing economy, maximising our national recognition as a **Priority Place for culture and heritage**.
- Supporting the growth and diversification of business in our **town centres**, reflecting the importance of placemaking and regeneration.

We have sustained investment both in the revenue budget and capital programme in recent years in attracting and supporting business and we have an ambition to accelerate economic growth in Medway to benefit every neighbourhood. The Draft Budget for 2026/27 reflects increased revenue investment in staffing to support economic development and our town centres, alongside increased council funding for Medway Adult Education to retain the service following a reduction in the level of grant funding available.

By 2041 Medway will have successfully grown its economy, gaining competitiveness from its strategic location, and securing and developing its diverse business base and attracting inward investment in a range of employment sites.

### Summary investment requirements: education, jobs and the economy

Current capital programme	Total approved cost £000	Remaining budget £000	R1 forecast £000	R1 forecast variance £000
Basic Needs Primary	1,102	458	458	0
Basic Needs Secondary	14,040	8,886	8,886	0
Schools Condition Programme	7,242	668	668	0
Schools Devolved Capital	117	117	117	0

Current capital programme	Total approved cost £000	Remaining budget £000	R1 forecast £000	R1 forecast variance £000
SEND Strategy	18,528	8,096	7,888	(207)
Country Parks Car Park Charges	171	114	114	0
Pentagon Future Capital Works	2,534	2,400	2,400	0
Innovation Park Medway: Sustainable Development Options	253	253	253	0
Innovation Park Medway: IPM North	1,376	1,376	1,376	0
Innovation Park Medway: IPM South	639	639	639	0
Digital Equipment Medway Adult Education	145	34	34	0
Chatham Town Centre Section 106 Works	259	52	52	0
Rochester Riverside	2,514	289	289	0
Debenhams Redevelopment	18,609	18,347	18,347	0
Rural England Prosperity	377	304	304	0
<b>Total current capital programme:</b>	<b>67,906</b>	<b>42,032</b>	<b>41,825</b>	<b>(207)</b>

Additional capital aspirations/requirements	Total cost £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 - 2029/30 £000	2030/31 + £000
Brompton Academy (Secondary) – Gillingham 2027	6,000	6,000		
Greenvale Primary – Chatham 2032	4,000			4,000
Fort Pitt expansion (Secondary) – Rochester 2030	5,000			5,000
Resourced provision at a selective school TBC (Secondary) – Location TBC 2030	2,750			2,750
2FE expansion or new school (Primary) TBC – Gillingham/Rainham 2026	10-12,000	10-12,000		
Expansion and relocation of Chattenden Primary School – Hoo Peninsula 2028	10-12,000		10-12,000	
Expansion and relocation of High Halstow Primary School – Hoo Peninsula 2029	10-12,000		10-12,000	
New 2FE Primary School – Strood 2029	10-12,000		10-12,000	
Expansion of Riverside Primary School by 1FE – Gillingham/Rainham 2029	4-5,000		4-5,000	
New 6-8FE Secondary School – Capstone Valley 2030	40-50,000			40-50,000
New 6FE Secondary School – Hoo Peninsula 2030	40-45,000			40-50,000
New Road expansion (Primary) – Chatham 2030	4-5,000			4-5,000
6x 1FE expansion at selective schools, or 1x 6FE satellite annexe (Secondary) – Location TBC 2030	30-36,000			30-36,000
New 8FE Secondary School – Strood 2030	45-50,000			45-50,000
New 1FE Primary School at Land South of Rochester Road – Strood 2031	8-10,000			8-10,000
Greenvale Primary 1FE expansion – Chatham 2032	4-5,000			4-5,000
Expansion of Temple Mill Primary School by 1FE –	4-5,000			4-5,000

<b>Additional capital aspirations/requirements</b>	<b>Total cost £000</b>	<b>2026/27 £000</b>	<b>2027/28 - 2029/30 £000</b>	<b>2030/31 + £000</b>
Strood 2032/33				
Either 1 new 3FE Primary School, or 2 new 2FE Primary Schools – Hoo Peninsula 2032, 2035	15-18,000			15-18,000
New 2FE Primary School – Strood 2035	10-12,000			10-12,000
Expansion at either Lordswood Primary or Kingfisher Primary – Capstone Valley 2036	4-5,000			4-5,000
New 1FE Primary School with 2FE core facilities – Capstone Valley 2036	8-10,000			8-10,000
New 2FE Primary School – Capstone Valley 2040	10-12,000			10-12,000
Innovation Park Medway Southern Site – see also Care for Medway in priority 1*	7,000		7,000	
<b>Total additional capital aspirations/requirements:</b>	<b>290,750- 340,750</b>	<b>16-18,000</b>	<b>41-48,000</b>	<b>233,750- 279,750</b>

\* In July 2025, Cabinet recommended this scheme to Council and the addition will be considered by Full Council in October 2025.

## Delivering school places and improving the condition of school buildings

School places are funded primarily from a mixture of government grant and Section 106 developer contributions paid by housing developers to provide for pupils from new developments. In 2025 the Department for Education announced Basic Need capital grant allocations to support the creation of places over the next two years; with Medway's allocation of £15.601million for 2026/27, and £9.896million for 2027/28. The 2025/26 allocation, announced previously, was £94,000. Grant funding is added to the capital programme as required to deliver places in line with the School Place Planning Strategy.

In May 2022, as part of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27, Cabinet approved the School Place Planning Strategy Principles. In April 2023, the principles were expanded to include a section on selection. These guidelines ensure that any changes are based upon improving schools and raising standards, so that the Council meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient good school places. The Strategy sets out how the Council monitors the drivers for increasing need for school places (primarily the birth rate, and families and children moving into or out of the area) and what steps we take if demand for school places is increasing. Though yet to be formally approved, Medway's emerging Local Plan highlights the need for approximately 25,000 additional homes across Medway by 2041. The future publication of the Local Plan is expected to increase the rate of housebuilding. It is expected that the total population will increase to over 300,000 in that time.

The Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27 was approved by Cabinet and Council in August 2025 and sets out the following areas of investment:

**Primary schools:** The current capital programme includes investment of £19million in primary provision including a new school as part of the East Hill development, and projects to expand Hoo St Werburgh, and New Road Primary. These expansions are being funded with basic need allocations, but s106 developer contributions will be used, where available, to offset the use of the grant. This is most significant at East Hill, where £4.2million in s016 contributions is expected. The strategy also sets out a proposed future expansion at Greenvale Primary, but funding for this is not yet available. Future expansions and new schools will be required under the Local Plan. Current estimates are for up to seven new primary schools, two existing schools relocated and expanded on new sites, and up to five expansions at current schools. These will primarily be funded through s106 contributions. However, it is likely that some form of borrowing will be needed to provide funding ahead of contributions being received.

**Secondary schools:** The strategy sets out an expansion at Strood Academy, estimated to cost £6m. It also adds an extra £500,000 to the co-ed adaptation projects at Chatham Grammar, Fort Pitt Grammar, and Holcombe Grammar. There are proposed future expansions at Brompton Academy (non-selective) and Fort Pitt (selective). These are reliant on future funding, and so will be brought forward when this becomes available. Under the local plan, up to three new non-selective secondary schools will be required. There is also expected to be a corresponding demand for selective places. This would either be six one-form-of-entry expansions, or one six-form-of entry satellite annexe of an existing school. It is not possible to open new selective schools.



**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities places:** The government has allocated Medway £4,837,957 in high needs funding for 2025/26. There is currently £7,449,345 of SEND funding available from previous allocations, including Safety Valve Intervention funding. This provides a total of £12,287,302. The current strategy sets out a programme of £28.2million of

investment in SEND places. Cabinet have approved a commitment to borrow up to £16.21million to cover the shortfall. However, it is expected that future allocations of SEND grant funding will reduce or eliminate the need to borrow. It is expected that there will be a shortfall of secondary and post-16 places for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). It is proposed to expand Danecourt to create a secondary phase. This will free up places at Abbey Court and Bradfields, and reduce out of area placements. The expansion is estimated to cost £20-25million, but the reduction in out of area placements will have a cost avoidance of up to £12million per year when Danecourt is full. There are also proposed new resourced provisions at Napier Primary,

St Margarets Juniors, All Saints Primary, Chatham Grammar, and additional funding for the resourced provision at Leigh Academy Rainham. As part of the expansion at Hoo St Werburgh Primary, it is proposed to move and expand the Marlborough Centre.

**Condition programme:** Local authorities are responsible for the condition of maintained schools, to ensure that they are safe, warm, dry, and provide secure learning environments with the condition programme funded by an annual grant from the Department for Education. As the number of maintained schools falls this grant is reduced, however the cost of maintenance is increasing over time. The grant for 2025/26 stands at £775,464, restricting spend and meaning projects have to be prioritised and delayed, with the school estate deteriorating as a result.

## Economic development and town centres

Medway is home to around 8,915 businesses and the area's economy was worth £7.7billion in 2023, with a growth rate significantly (c4%) ahead of the rest of the UK. However, recent years have been very challenging for the local, national, and global economy. There have been rapid and significant changes in employment practices and commercial land needs, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, global instability and political changes. The development of our new Local Plan continues with the consultation on our draft plan (Regulation 19) closing on 11 August 2025. The plan aims to boost Medway's economic performance, identifying new employment sites, redevelopment and investment opportunities across the area.

### **Innovation Park Medway**

The Innovation Park Medway project set out to remodel the operational Rochester Airport to enable up to 60,000m<sup>2</sup> of innovative new office and industrial space to the north-west and south of the airport. The IPM is a high-quality environment and location for high value technology industries, engineering, manufacturing and knowledge intensive industries. This cluster of high-tech companies share similar skills, infrastructure, ambition and drive and offer opportunities for collaboration, innovation and skills retention. The core ambition for the IPM is to create a high-quality public realm with collaborative spaces supportive of innovation. However, in February 2024 the Cabinet made the decision to pause delivery and expenditure on the project. A review of development options for the site was reported to Cabinet in the March 2025 reflecting how the market has changed since the original masterplan was created. Northern site will be delivered under a development agreement and will be a mix of Industrial and Mid-Tech and Southern site will be a care home and retirement units. This resulted in the removal of £34.170million from the IPM budget. Following July 2025's cabinet decision, if approved by Cabinet the Southern Site will be delivered as part of the care for Medway programme with a capital budget of £7million within the total up to £44million Cabinet have recommended.

### **The Rural England Prosperity Fund**

This will seek to address challenges within Medway's rural areas. The reprofiled allocation

will support projects designed to improve rural access infrastructure and establish a rural hub, with works expected to be finalised by the end of March 2026.

### **Chatham Town Centre Works**

Working with the Chatham Town Centre Forum we have directed investment from developer contributions towards top priorities for improving the town centre agreed with the Chatham Town Centre Forum. The current capital programme includes remaining funding earmarked to look at the introduction of a Business Improvement District, which if successful, would allow businesses to make improvements to the public realm and to the town centre's business operational activities.

### **Rochester Riverside**

Since the introduction of Growing Places Fund (GPF) loan funding in 2015, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership awarded Medway Council over £8m of loan funding including £4.4million for Rochester Riverside. Rochester Riverside is managed in partnership by Medway Council and Homes England, with both organisations having invested substantial funds in site assembly, flood defences, remediation and engineering works to enable the site's detailed redevelopment and it is a flagship project in our regeneration programme. The scheme is transforming a 50-acre brownfield site into a new destination for the area, with 502 homes provided so far in the first three phases, along with a new primary school, a new plaza with shops and a hotel and public open space including a river walkway. The next phase of the development is underway and due to complete summer 2026, comprising 154 homes located directly to the south of the third phase. A further two phases were also granted detailed planning permission in 2025.



## Investment priority 3: Enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities

The place where we live affects our health, well-being and happiness, and residents young and old often tell us that safety and cleanliness in Medway are their priorities.

- **Create child-friendly communities** which ensure all people in Medway will feel safe and live free from harm and abuse.
- **Celebrate the individuality of all parts of the Medway community**, ensuring services, events and activities reflect and support the diverse communities of Medway.
- Provide improved **opportunities to walk, cycle, use public transport** and electric vehicles, **reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality**.
- Engage Medway's residents in ensuring Medway is clean and well maintained. Protect and enhance **Medway's river, green spaces and environmental assets** as a means of effectively tackling climate change.
- Develop and facilitate **easy-to-use and simple digital solutions** for residents to access services and **engage with the public sector**.

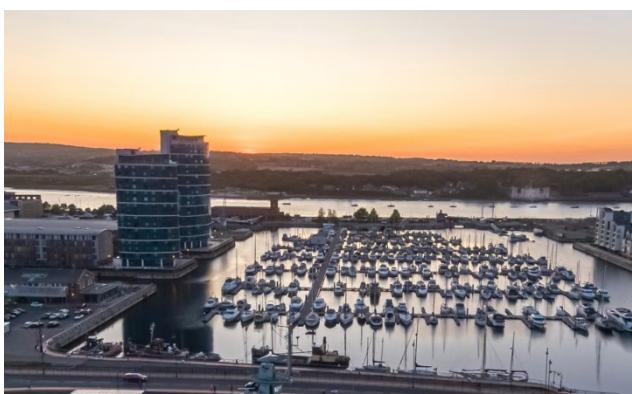
Ensuring Medway is a child-friendly place is much more than a discrete revenue or capital expenditure line in our budget, instead we are working to embed this approach in how we design and deliver all of our services. We created Child-Friendly Medway as a platform for children and young people's voices to be heard and responded to; prioritising listening to children and young people. In support of this work, through the revenue budget, we have provided free activities such as reading projects to support the Council's literacy strategy, ran a wide range of free events for young people including the Mini Youth Games and soft play to promote early years development.

Celebrating and maximising the benefits afforded by our significant river frontage and vibrant greenspaces is a priority for capital investment, while through the revenue budget we support and deliver a wide range of festivals, events and activities to celebrate the individuality of all parts of Medway and this work is supported elsewhere in this capital strategy as we work to maintain and develop the cultural, heritage and leisure facilities across Medway.

Helping residents and visitors to visit and explore, move around and through Medway safely while reducing our impact on the climate is a key focus of both our current capital programme and our investment plans for the future.

We are committed to providing access to our services through digital solutions so good that people choose to use them over other means of access. We are also committed to the

transformation of our services to support our journey to financial sustainability, with significant investment in right-sizing and transforming services through the existing revenue budget and out over the medium term.



## Summary investment requirements: clean, green, safe and connected communities

Scheme	Total cost £000	Remaining budget £000	R1 forecast £000	R1 forecast variance £000
<b>Current capital programme:</b>				
Waste Fleet Replacement Scheme	12,000	7,851	7,851	0
Food Waste Collection Grant	504	504	504	0
LED Lantern Replacement Scheme	11,155	622	622	0
Enforcement Cameras	2,019	38	38	0
Potholes	13,691	3,273	3,273	0
Medway Tunnel	18,525	5,031	5,031	0
Horsted Gyratory and Pedestrian Improvements	212	64	64	0
Design and Resurfacing	17,768	10	10	0
Structures and Tunnels	4,974	35	35	0
Highways Maintenance LTP3	32,233	2,057	2,057	0
Controlled Parking Zones	50	28	28	0
Integrated Transport LTP3	22,375	2,699	2,699	0
Mierscourt Road Junction with A2	197	181	181	0
A228 Peninsula Way / Main Road Junction	347	347	347	0
Integrated Transport Section 106 Minor Schemes	719	653	653	0
CCTV	223	43	43	0
Active Travel	670	670	670	0
Medway City Estate Connectivity	3,674	89	89	0
Traffic Signal System Upgrades	562	478	478	0
Horsted Valley Environmental Enhancement	194	25	25	0
Rainham Play	230	18	18	0
Hook Meadows Works	47	44	44	0
Berengrave Nature Reserve Ecological Improvements	169	39	39	0
Jackson Field and Victoria Gardens Greenspaces	117	49	49	0
Eastgate House Gardens Improvements	20	10	10	0
Play Parks Refurbishment	724	52	52	0
Cozenton Park and Chalk Pit Allotments	377	220	220	0
Temple Marsh Open Space	1,233	1,180	1,180	0
Town Hall Gardens	393	278	278	0
Deangate Community Parkland	951	951	951	0
Riverside Country Park	195	186	186	0
Esplanade and Jacksons Field Section 106	601	494	494	0
<b>Total current capital programme:</b>	<b>147,150</b>	<b>28,219</b>	<b>28,219</b>	<b>0</b>

Additional capital aspirations/requirements	Total cost £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 - 2029/30 £000	2030/31 + £000
Greenspace development funding (for wards which will not benefit from S106 funding availability)	1,200	300	900	
Play equipment modernisation	1,000	250	750	
Creation of new allotments (part of Climate Change action plan)	450	150	300	
Tree-planting programme (part of Climate Change action plan)	450	150	300	
Cozenton Park community garden green hub	200	200		
Kennel Build	470	470		
Minimising unlawful activity in Parks and Greenspaces	200	200		
Safer Healthier Streets Tranche 3 and 4 (20 school streets and 20 moving traffic enforcement sites)	2,520	910	1,610	
Carriageway Patching - top up to improve network condition	2,412	603	1,809	
Multihog Patch Planer/Thermal Road Repair	165	165		
Footway Resurfacing	350	350		
Street Furniture (Signs, Bollards etc)	35	35		
Highway Infrastructure Contract Preliminary Costs	500	500		
On-Street EV Charging	2,412	2,412		
Skid Sites	150	150		
<b>Total additional capital aspirations/requirements</b>	<b>12,514</b>	<b>6,845</b>	<b>5,669</b>	<b>0</b>

## Highways and transport

Medway's Highway Network is our largest and most valuable publicly owned asset, with a current replacement value of £2billion. It connects residents to schools, businesses, and places of interest, and is central to the social, environmental, and economic wellbeing of the area.

In August 2022, Cabinet approved the Highways Asset Management Strategy 2022–2027. This strategy outlines how we monitor and manage the network to deliver the level of service expected by residents and visitors. Our priorities include ensuring road user safety, providing predictable and timely journeys, maximising accessibility, and maintaining assets in serviceable condition. We work towards these priorities in alignment with wider Council objectives, such as economic growth, environmental sustainability, and value for money.

During the 2024/25 financial year, we invested £19.3million in our highways; £13.6million of revenue and £5.7million capital funding, including £565,000 in one-off pothole funding and £401,000 redirected from the HS2 scheme via the Department for Transport. This funding support the completion of 12 road resurfacing schemes, road marking and street sign

replacements, maintenance of highway structures, drainage improvements, street lighting upgrades, crash barrier and skid policy site maintenance and the installation of a pedestrian crossing on Horsted Way.

Across the period of this Capital Strategy, our investment aspirations and priorities are as follows:

**Carriageway Patching – top-up to improve network condition:** While the level of grant funding currently received (and anticipated in future years) is sufficient to enable us to deliver reactive repairs and maintain the network in its existing state, an additional top up funded from Council resources of £1million would support a shift towards preventative maintenance, aiming to:

- Deliver targeted patching to improve structural integrity,
- Prevent deeper deterioration, reducing future costs, and
- Support safer, smoother journeys.

**Multihog Patch Planer / Thermal Road Repair:** Investment of £165,000 would enable the service to procure maintenance machinery to deliver preventative maintenance and high quality repairs at a lower, as it would reduce reliance on hired equipment. This would also enable year-round operations and improve scheduling flexibility and productivity.

**Footway Resurfacing:** Investment of £350,000 is required to prevent a backlog of footway repairs and ensure footway standards are maintained, to protect vulnerable users and ensure a balanced, inclusive transport network in Medway.

**Street Furniture (Signs, Bollards, etc.):** Essential elements of our highways infrastructure require renewal to ensure safety and clarity across the network, and investment of £35,000 is required to enable the service to deliver a programme of replacements.

**Highways Infrastructure Contract Prelims:** It is necessary for the Council to ensure the provision of facilities and equipment to support the contractor to successfully deliver the Highways Infrastructure Contract, including access to depot and office facilities and a salt barn to support winter maintenance operations, known as Preliminary Costs. Investment of £500,000 is required to fund capital elements of these Preliminary Costs in 2026/27.

**Medway Tunnel:** The Medway Tunnel is vital to traffic flow across the region. In the past works to ensure the condition of the tunnel have been funded via a grant from the Department for Transport, which the Council supplemented with £500,000 per year funding from capital receipts. The current capital programme includes £5million funding planned works to the CCTV, variable message signs and drainage and ventilation improvements.

**Street Lighting:** Over £11 million has been invested in converting street lighting to energy-efficient LED lanterns, with approximately 4,600 columns and 21,500 lanterns having been converted, resulting in reduced energy costs and carbon emissions. The current capital

programme includes works to replace illuminated signs and bollards following the discontinuation of fluorescent tubes.

**Active Travel:** Through the Government's Active Travel Fund, Medway delivered new cycle lanes, additional cycle racks and the widening of 11 miles of public footpaths. The current capital programme includes £670,000 of remaining grant funding supporting the delivery of priority walking and cycling schemes to support the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.



**On-Street EV Charging:** The Council has been approved to receive a £2.412million capital grant from the Government through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) capital scheme, which will be added to the Capital Programme once the Government's final review has concluded. This will fund a project to deliver on-street EV charging infrastructure

across Medway. Following procurement works are expected to begin in 2026/27 to provide infrastructure to support Medway's 45,000 residents without off-road parking to convert to electric vehicles.

**Skid Sites:** Skid sites are critical for vehicle control and accident prevention in adverse conditions and it will be necessary to invest £150,000 to restore and upgrade skid sites in Medway.

## Waste Management

In July 2023 the Council agreed to add £17million to the capital programme to fund the replacement of the Refuse Collection Vehicle Fleet. Following a procurement exercise, orders for the new vehicles were placed over the summer, delivery took place in Q4 2024/25 with the last phase of deliveries taking place in 2025/26. Based on the successful tender, the service achieved a significant underspend on this scheme of c£5million. It will now be necessary to replace the Street Cleansing Fleet with an estimated investment requirement of £5million.

The 2024/25 revenue budget included investment of £200,000 to develop a new Waste Strategy to ensure the Council can meet the upcoming changes in regulation in this area and deliver an efficient and effective service within available budgets into the medium term. We have engaged WRAP to produce a Waste Improvement Plan, culminating in the production of a new 21st Century Waste Strategy, this work will commence in mid-September 2025 and is anticipated to make a significant saving on the £200k allocated for this work. From 2026 there is a requirement to collect food waste recycling from flats. This is projected to require investment of £500,000 and work on this is well underway. During 2025 the service successfully implemented the proposal to charge residents who opt for a second garden waste bin and the projected income is well on the way to being achieved. It is also likely that it will be necessary to invest further in our waste management and disposal arrangements to

meet requirements around containerisation of waste and to support the operations working alongside our Joint Venture partners Medway Norse.

## Enforcement

### Safer, Healthier Streets

As part of the renewed emphasis on quality of life and place shaping in local neighbourhoods, Medway Council is focused on building a better-connected transport network to ensure everyone can get to where they need to go reliably and safely. The Council is doing this by investing in its Safer Healthier Streets programme.

In the Summer of 2023, the Council was granted powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. These powers enable the use of video analytics and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras to identify and issue Penalty Charge Notices to drivers committing moving traffic contraventions, including driving in cycle lanes, banned turns, restricted access and stopping in yellow box junctions. This will help manage the road network and improve safety and traffic flow at specific locations and along key corridors. These enforcement powers have also enabled the introduction of School Streets.



Application for the powers to enforce Moving Traffic Enforcement was made by Medway Council and accepted by the Department for Transport. On 27 June 2023 this was laid before the Parliamentary, Business and Legislation (PBL) Committee and approved. These powers for Medway came into force on 22 July 2023. Tranche 1 of the Safer Healthier Street programme, we successfully implemented 10 existing restrictions for ANPR enforcement that went live on 5 February 2024. In July 2024 Cabinet agreed to progress to implementing a further 16 locations with the current capital programme funding the installation of cameras agree all scheme and any physical infrastructure improvements required. These moving traffic tranche 2 locations have been successfully implemented and went live in February 2025. A further 9 School Streets are well on the way for implementation during the first quarter of 2026.

Investment of a further £2.520million would enable the consultation, design and delivery of a further two tranches, including an additional 20 school streets and 20 moving traffic enforcement sites. The schemes will help contribute to the implementation of the Council's Environment Strategy, the Sustainable Transport Strategy and the Local Transport Plan (LTP).

### Parking

Parking on footways and grass verges is banned across London, and has been since 1985, as it causes damage to pavements and verges and can be a hazard for pedestrians and vehicles

alike. The Council is considering adopting a footway parking ban in Medway and to do so it would be necessary to invest £70,000 to fund implementation costs.

Four of the Council's car parks have been converted to the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system; Blue Boar Lane, Corporation Street in and the Multi-Story car park in Rochester and the Brook in Chatham. ANPR cameras record the time vehicles arrive at the car park and ensure visitors are only charged for the exact amount of time they have been parked for when they leave. Investment of £150,000 would enable the conversion of a further series of car parks, reducing the cost of enforcement.

### **Stray Dogs Kennel**

The Council has a duty to house stray dogs and currently spends c£70,000 each year with third party kennelling facilities. Proposals are being developed to deliver and operate a facility in Medway that could meet the Council's demand and also sell services to partners including neighbouring authorities and Kent Police. It is anticipated that investment of £470,000 could deliver a facility for the Council, and that income from other users alongside the existing budgeted cost of third party delivery could repay the estimated cost of borrowing required over a period of 5 years.

## **Our natural environment - the River Medway and greenspaces**

### **Our country parks, community parks and greenspaces**

In July 2025 the Council retained its eight Green Flag Award Scheme greenspaces. Broomhill Park, Capstone Farm Country Park, Gillingham Park, Hillyfields Community Park, Riverside Country Park, The Great Lines Heritage Park, The Vines Gardens and Ranscombe Farm Reserve. The Green Flag accreditation, the international quality mark for parks and greenspaces, is testament to the hard work and dedication of the team that care for Medway's greenspaces. Great Lines Heritage Park has again achieved the Green Heritage Site Accreditation, supported by Historic England, for the management and promotion of its historic features. This demonstrates that Medway with the appropriate funds and resources can achieve a very high national standard to which its greenspaces are managed.

The current capital programme also includes more than £3.6million investment in the Council's wider parks and open spaces, including schemes to deliver a new open space at Temple Marsh, to develop and improve the Deangate Community Parkland, to convert the former nursery site at Cozenton Park into a community tree nursery, community garden and allotments, for improvements to Town Hall Gardens in Chatham and for an extensive refurbishment of the Esplanade and Jacksons Field.

We want to ensure our parks and greenspaces remain accessible to all supported by investment of £200,000. We are exploring options to ensure that access to green space remains available to the local community while helping to minimise unlawful activity in these shared spaces. Wherever possible, we seek to fund greenspace development through s106, and the greenspace development team have been very successful at attracting funding in recent years. However this is not always possible as not all wards in Medway have s106

funds that are available in those areas and not all park improvements can be funded by s106.



### **Greenspace Improvements**

We manage 1,900 hectares of open spaces and 148 urban parks across Medway and our aim is to work in partnership to protect and sustain the existing open spaces in Medway. Recent work to assess the condition of the greenspaces in the Council's portfolio has identified a backlog of works required in the region of £4.5million, including the replacement of historic retaining walls and hard infrastructure and to redevelop pavilions, changing facilities and assorted club houses/bungalows. There is also much work needed to repair and replace general greenspace infrastructure such as paths, bridges, fencing, boardwalks and signage, particularly the infrastructure that is reaching its end of life cycle. These works would create more resilience in our greenspace resources, reduce third party claims and allow a greater commercialisation of our operation.

Funding of £300,000 per year (£1.2million over the life of this strategy) would enable the Council to better target resources in wards where s106 is not available and where improvements to greenspaces are often most needed. Included in this request is the proposal for the management of Daisy Banks and Coney Banks under agreement with Kent Wildlife Trust, with the potential to extend the agreement with KWT to include Horsted Valley to support the proposed designation of this area as a Local Nature Reserve. In addition, if the Council is to achieve its aspiration of an additional six Green Flag accredited parks and greenspaces then a significant increase in greenspace funding is required as well

as the works required across the Councils other greenspaces within Medway.

**Priority play:** Our Play improvement work continues to update and renew a number of our play areas to improve the playing experience for Medway's children, with new more engaging and exciting equipment. This is currently funded through s106 contributions and so has to be targeted where s106 are available. Investment of £250,000 per year (£1million over this strategy) would allow the Council to target play improvements in areas where s106 funds were not available, often the most deprived areas of Medway where play improvements are most needed.

**Creating Allotments:** The need for new allotment space is identified in the proposed new Local Plan and the recently approved Climate Change Action Plan 2025-28. Funding of £150,000 per year (£450,000 over the life of this strategy) would assist with allotment provision such as water supply, sheds and outbuildings, hardstanding and bringing redundant plots back into use and dividing existing plots.



**Tree Planting Programme:** If the Council is to meet its Climate Change Action Plan aspiration of planting 10,000 trees over the next three years a tree planting and aftercare fund will be needed. Investment of £150,000 per year (£450,000 in this strategy) would enable site preparation, the purchase of trees, stakes and guards plus at least three years of watering aftercare.

**Cozenton Park:** Part of the ambition for the former Cozenton Park nursery site is the establishment of a Green Community Hub. The existing building on site has been assessed and the cost of renovating/upgrading is estimated at £200,000. This feeds into the wider plan for improvements to Cozenton Park, with the ambition to gain Green Flag status and develop an environmental community hub to support environment groups from the local area and a site for wider volunteer development across Medway.

### **River Walls and Piers**

The Council manages several marine assets, including a one-mile-long river wall stretching from Doust Way to the rail bridge at the Rochester Riverside development and several piers: Rochester Pier off The Esplanade and Sun Pier in Chatham, Gillingham Pier which is a draw dock harbour and the new Limehouse Landing. Additional assets comprise four sets of access steps: Horse Wash Steps near the Rochester rail bridge, Watermill Steps off Canal Road in Strood, Winget Steps at the former Civic Centre site in Strood and Chapel Steps by the Command House pub in Chatham. Public access is restricted to Chapel and Winget Steps only.

Aligned with the Council's vision of transforming into a waterfront city, efforts are underway to enhance connectivity to the River Medway and boost visitor numbers arriving by boat. A

boarding platform known as Limehouse Landing was installed in 2025 at Limehouse Wharf, Rochester Riverside and is a step free, 10-minute walk from the centre of Rochester High Street. This relatively inexpensive marine asset has enabled the return of passenger vessel services to Rochester from Queenborough, Southend, Whitstable, and London. The current capital programme includes investment of £340,000 to upgrade existing marine assets, including Sun Pier; solar lighting upgrade to improve sustainability, dry docking and repairing landing pontoons, instillation of safety barriers, repainting iron work and decking repairs to provide longer term sustainability as a blue space and increase the river offer for events including the Festival of Chatham Reach. Works to marine assets also include surface repairs to Commodores Hard public slipway at the Strand, dredging of Gillingham Pier to provide all tide landing location for passenger ships, installation of landing blocks on main slipway to facilitate Thames Barge and historic vessel maintenance, installation of disabled ramp at Limehouse Landing and intrusive survey to identify required works to bring back into operation.

An extensive programme of works to maintain the river wall at Rochester Riverside is planned for late 2025 to run until early 2027. These works will ensure long term durability of the sheet pile and protect the urban salt marshes with the three creeks to improve marine biodiversity.

All the above projects will address key areas of the Councils emerging river strategy and meet elements of the proposed local plan. Once the piers have been improved with upgraded facilities, the feasibility of a River Trust, Community Interest Company or similar concept will be explored with the long-term aim of these assets being managed by a river community led organisation with Medway Council retaining asset ownership with arm's length oversight. A comprehensive survey of the river walls across Medway is being planned for 2025/26 and will identify and prioritise repairs and improvements to prevent unplanned or reactive maintenance issues in the future.

## Investment priority 4: Improving health and wellbeing for all

Central to our vision of enabling people to thrive and realise their potential is improving the health and wellbeing of people who live and work in Medway. The One Medway Council Plan sets out the work we will do in this area:

- Empowering people to achieve good **health and wellbeing through prevention**, with access to local activities and services that will enable and support them to lead independent, active and healthy lifestyles.
- **Support families** to give their children the best start in life.
- Work collaboratively to **grow participation year on year in recreational play, sport and physical activity** as a means of promoting improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- **Work in partnership with communities and organisations** to address the issues that negatively affect health and wellbeing, making sure everyone has the opportunity to live long, healthy lives.

Together with our partners in the NHS, as part of the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board we are working to deliver the Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2028. The strategy is our blueprint for improving health and wellbeing for everyone living, working, and studying in Medway and is centred around four key aspirations; healthier longer lives for everyone, reducing poverty and inequality, safe connected and sustainable spaces and



connected communities and cohesive services. There is significant ongoing investment in the Council's revenue budget contributing to this aim, primarily funded through the Public Health Grant which totals £19.038million in 2024/25.

## Summary investment requirements: improving health and wellbeing

Scheme	Total cost £000	Remaining budget £000	R1 forecast £000	R1 forecast variance £000
<b>Current capital programme:</b>				
Family Hubs and Start 4 Life	190	54	54	0
The James Williams Healthy Living Centre	11,889	6,823	6,823	0
<b>Total current capital programme:</b>	<b>12,079</b>	<b>6,877</b>	<b>6,877</b>	<b>0</b>
Additional capital aspirations/requirements	Total cost £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 - 2029/30 £000	2030/31 + £000
Early Years Centre of Excellence Hubs	1,000	1,000		
<b>Total additional capital aspirations/requirements:</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## The James Williams Health Living Centre

Working with our partners NHS Kent, we are working to deliver a brand new Healthy Living Centre in the centre of Chatham, occupying the first floor of the Pentagon Shopping Centre, creating a hub for patients to access a greater range of services than those available in GP practices, quickly and conveniently. Both organisations are contributing to the scheme, with £11.7464million contribution from the NHS, while Medway Council is contributing £700,000 from Disabled Facilities Grants funding. We are leading on refurbishing work, transforming the first floor of the shopping centre into modern, flexible spaces, which can host a variety of clinics. Works began in the summer of 2024 and we anticipate completion in early 2026.

The new centre is being named after the late Director of Public Health, James Williams.



James was an inspirational figure and huge driving force behind improving health outcomes across Medway, as well as addressing health inequalities across the South East and we are proud that the new centre will stand as a fitting tribute to his work and aspirations.

## Family Hubs and Start for Life

The Family Hubs and Start for Life was a three-year funded programme from 2022/23 –

2024/25 overseen by the Departments for Education and Health and Social Care, supporting local authorities to develop and enhance a package of family support services delivered through a Family Hub model. The Council secured £3.8million grant funding to deliver the programme in Medway and worked with key partners from the public and voluntary and

community sector to agree priorities for this funding.

Medway Council operates four Children and Family Hubs in Strood, Chatham, Wayfield and Gillingham and a further nine Family Wellbeing Centres, which are rooms in primary school sites, which are leased by the Council to provide additional space for the delivery of services for children and families across Medway. The funding has enabled a programme of building improvements at each of the four Children and Family Hubs, focussed on improving accessibility and making the spaces more adaptable and purposeful to support them to deliver the wide range of activities the programme offers. Works to the four key hubs were completed during 2024/25 with further works to the wider eight wellbeing hubs due to be carried out in the Autumn of 2025.

### **Early Years Centre of Excellence Hubs**

There is good evidence that investing in early years services (0 to 5 years) is highly effective in terms of the impact on future health and wellbeing, so ensuring that every child in Medway has a good start in life is essential for the future health and wellbeing of people in Medway. Following the recent Early Years review, as part of our Early Years Improvement work, we are exploring the development of Early Years Centres of Excellence with initial proposals for the delivery of four, initially linked to each Family Hub, to provide hub and spoke support to Early Years providers.

## Investment priority 5: Living in good-quality, affordable homes

Housing is an important determinant of health, wellbeing and stability. Access to affordable, safe and stable homes provides a foundation for a community that enables individuals to thrive, find employment and raise families. The Plan sets out our aspirations in this area:

- **Increase the supply of good quality, energy efficient and sustainable homes** that reflect the needs of the communities in Medway.
- Implement a **Local Plan** which reflects the needs of the communities in Medway, supporting a transition to a low-carbon future promoting affordable, energy efficient and sustainable homes.
- **Assist people with specific accommodation needs** including older people, people with disabilities, people needing specialist support and those who find themselves homeless.
- Engage with communities to identify ways to **improve streets, parks and local surroundings** which create vibrant places to live and enhance the quality of people's lives.
- **Ensure the council's housing stock is good quality**, efficient, free from damp and mould and tenants are at the heart of decision making.

Delivering our new Local Plan is a key area of focus for the Council and we have increased the level of investment to support this in the revenue budget in 2024/25 and plan to increase this again in 2025/26, along with plans to deliver the government's planning reforms. With house prices rising by nearly 25% in the last 5 years, many of our residents struggle to find decent and affordable housing to live in. We need 1,658 homes a year and 25,000 homes by 2041 to keep up with Medway's predicted population growth.

Through our new Local Plan we are working to ensure there is more affordable housing for our residents, that young people see a future in Medway by providing places to live and local jobs, to give more housing choices for older people and to ensure homes in Medway



are high quality, energy efficient and respect our local heritage.

A significant element of our revenue spend with our Joint Venture partners, Medway Norse supports our aspirations to enhance our streets, parks and local surroundings and capital investments supporting this aim are set out in Investment Priority 3, Enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities. We have sustained an ambitious programme of investment in ensuring there are sufficient new homes to meet the needs of Medway residents alongside delivering regeneration over recent years despite significant pressures on other statutory services. Our work to support a growing economy is closely linked to this aspiration and many of our investments in priority 2, benefitting from a good education, quality jobs and a growing economy will also enable the delivery of additional homes, many of which will be affordable.

## Summary investment requirements: good quality, affordable homes

Scheme	Total cost £000	Remaining budget £000	R1 forecast £000	R1 forecast variance £000
<b>Current capital programme:</b>				
Mountbatten House Purchase	3,299	386	386	0
Housing Renovation Grants	350	89	89	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	19,184	4,864	4,864	0
Temporary Accommodation Pilot	49,007	40,226	40,226	0
Housing Revenue Account	101,201	57,433	57,433	0
<b>Total current capital programme:</b>	<b>173,040</b>	<b>102,998</b>	<b>102,998</b>	<b>0</b>

Additional capital aspirations/requirements	Total cost £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 - 2029/30 £000	2030/31 + £000
No Use Empty	1,500	500	1,000	
<b>Total additional capital aspirations/requirements:</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>

## Medway Development Company (MDC) Ltd

Since the Council established MDC in 2017, the company has made substantial progress in delivering new homes and regenerating sites that were unattractive to the private sector. As a company solely owned by Medway Council, MDC's strategic objectives are closely aligned to the delivery of our One Medway Council Plan, to deliver high quality housing, support area-based regeneration, maximise financial returns, which can be reinvested into strategic priorities, identify future opportunities that will deliver homes and prosperity, enable affordable housing delivery and engender pride and make Medway a place to be proud of. MDC's 2035 business plan was approved by the MDC Shareholder Sub-committee on the 24 June 2025 which sets out medium term objectives, but also longer term revenue streams that will be generated through its private rented portfolio which it has expanded in response to a changing property market.

The key achievements of the company are outlined below:

- Planning permission secured for 734 homes.
- 375 homes have been delivered as well as 4 corporate projects.
- A further 380 homes will be delivered upon completion of the Mountbatten House, Strood Civic and Upper Mount schemes which are now progressing forwards.
- The company is forecast to deliver 29% affordable, within its delivery pipeline.
- MDC has levered in substantial grant investment into Medway. Through collaboration with the Council £27.8million has been secured and subject to approvals this is expected to increase to £32.0million.

The company is directly financed through capital loans from Medway Council, with Council approval for a total loans portfolio to deliver schemes up to £120million. The financial overview for the company is outlined below:

	24/25 £000s	25/26 £000s	26/27 £000s	27/28 £000s	28/29 £000s	29/30 £000s	30/31 £000s	31/32 £000s	32/33 £000s	33/34 £000s	34/35 £000s
Development Loan	77,405	77,923	109,827	95,064	88,085	75,007	7,754	4,076	2,779	1,331	47
PSR Loans	38,255	57,085	56,650	88,858	98,676	97,755	96,750	95,688	94,398	93,093	91,954
SO Loans	0	0	16,681	16,560	16,422	16,273	16,121	15,956	15,605	15,605	15,423
<b>Total</b>	<b>115,660</b>	<b>135,008</b>	<b>183,158</b>	<b>200,482</b>	<b>203,183</b>	<b>189,035</b>	<b>120,625</b>	<b>115,720</b>	<b>112,782</b>	<b>110,029</b>	<b>107,424</b>

As outlined in the forecast, the development loan peaks in 2026/27 and then gradually decreases as sales from Mountbatten House progress, with a further substantial reduction in 2029/30 which reflects sales from the large-scale development at Strood Civic, that has already commenced with enabling works in progress. The loan balance is expected to be virtually cleared by 2034/35. Long term investment PRS loans peak in 2028/29 and then incrementally decrease during the period shown. PRS investments will provide long term revenue streams for the Council, that will grow incrementally as the loan balance decreases and it is expected that circa 300 homes will be in long term management.

The company continues to make good progress and has adapted to market challenges by implementing a range of risk mitigation measures in consultation with the Council as sole Shareholder of the company.

## Temporary Accommodation

Households in the UK experiencing or at risk of homelessness are still increasing. Following the cost-of-living crisis we have seen rising private rents, increases in mortgage and tax rates and incoming legislative changes have seen some landlords exiting the market. We have also seen local rental rates increasing, driven by demand due to placements from out of area by London Boroughs into Medway. Nationally we see the increase in Households in Temporary Accommodation for the year ending March 2025 increasing by 11.75% in comparison to March 2024. For Medway we have seen an increase for the same period of 11.69%. Medway's net cost of providing Temporary Accommodation has increased by 53% from £3.946million in 2023/24 to £6.035million in 2024/25.

Following the approval by Full Council in January 2024 for £42million of prudential borrowing to buy approximately 150 properties to be used to provide Temporary Accommodation progress has been made, with 43 properties acquired so far. Of these, 17 are in use and 26 are undergoing works before being ready for occupation. A further 3 properties are with the Legal team and progressing through the acquisition process and several others about to be approved. We have also secured the acquisition of two large new build blocks which combined will deliver 137 properties and these are anticipated for handover by the end of November 2025. This will bring the total number of properties acquired for Temporary Accommodation to circa 183 by the end of March 2026.

## No Use Empty

No Use Empty is an initiative delivered by Kent County Council in partnership with the Kent District Councils that aims to improve the physical urban environment in Kent, by bringing empty properties back into use as quality housing accommodation and to raise awareness of the issues surrounding empty properties, highlighting the problems they cause to local communities. The scheme provides loans to help owners/developers to refurbish or convert empty homes or redundant commercial buildings to provide good quality residential accommodation. On completion properties must be made available for sale or rent. The loan fund is operated as a revolving fund, so that as loans are repaid, the money is then re-lent to support new schemes. The addition of £1.5million (£500,000 each year for three years) would enable Medway Council to use this scheme to deliver additional housing capacity.

## Social Housing and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

We are proud to be a landlord with a total of 3,028 homes for Medway residents in our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) along with an associated portfolio of garages and parking places. Valued at £200.013million as at 31 March 2025, the housing stock represents one of Council's highest value assets and its repair and maintenance is a significant liability, therefore planning for its sustainable future is important. Each year, Cabinet and Council approve the HRA budget and business plan independently of the general fund budgets, and 2025/26 is the second of a three year capital programme comprising of investment to maintain the existing stock, to provide disabled adaptations to properties where required and to deliver our ambitious new build and property acquisition programme as set out below:

	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000
Planned maintenance	8,671	5,657	9,391
Disabled adaptations	200	200	200
New build / acquisitions programme	4,500	8,875	2,225
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,371</b>	<b>14,732</b>	<b>11,816</b>

# Investment priority 6: Supporting the delivery of all Council Plan priorities and principles, and supporting our values and behaviours

The One Medway Council Plan is a commitment to our residents, partners, visitors and other stakeholders that we will prioritise the resources available to us to the delivery of our five key priorities. However, in order to deliver on those priorities, the Plan also recognises a number of principles that will inform the work we do at Medway Council:

- Financial sustainability and value for money
- Climate action
- Equality and diversity in all we do
- Child-Friendly Medway
- Working in partnership

These principles do not represent discrete services with standalone budgets, rather these are considerations in the development and delivery of all services.

We also recognise that the delivery of the ambition in the Council Plan will only be possible if those services providing support directly to our residents and shaping the places in which they live, work, learn and visit are supported by efficient and effective support services in a back-office committed to continuous transformation and improvement. To that end, in recent years our revenue budget has included a range of activity aimed at 'right-sizing' the Council's staffing teams, increasing investment in ICT and a greater package of support for services enabling them to transform delivery.

The delivery on this investment is being closely monitored through the One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan; an action plan designed to respond to the Financial Resilience Review carried out by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy at the end of 2023. It sets out our journey towards harnessing the benefits of new technologies, prioritising resources to where they are most impactful, demanding the best value for money and ensuring that our services are aligned with our partners such that together we achieve more.

We are committed to maintaining good quality services and continuing to improve the outcomes for our residents.



## Summary investment requirements: supporting all priorities and principles, and supporting our values and behaviours

Scheme	Total cost £000	Remaining budget £000	R1 forecast £000	R1 forecast variance £000
<b>Current capital programme:</b>				
Gun Wharf Building Works	901	385	385	0
Gun Wharf Improvement Works	22,263	21,399	21,399	0
Strood Riverside Phase 1 & 2	14,520	2,918	2,918	0
ICT Infrastructure Works	2,600	3	3	0
Data Centre Refurbishment	150	135	135	0
<b>Total current capital programme</b>	<b>40,435</b>	<b>24,840</b>	<b>24,840</b>	<b>0</b>

Additional capital aspirations/requirements	Total cost £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 - 2029/30 £000	2030/31 + £000
Server and Storage Hardware	1,484	514	970	
LAN and Wi-Fi Refresh	1,350	1350	0	
Backup and Resilience Solutions	520	495	25	
Networking and Firewalling	375	300	75	
CCTV and Smart Infrastructure	150	150	0	
<b>Total additional capital aspirations/requirements:</b>	<b>3,879</b>	<b>2809</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>0</b>

## Climate action

Medway Council declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and committed to reduce our carbon footprint, provide our local community with a clean, green future, and be a place that people want to work and live that has a sustainable future.

The third iteration of the Climate Change Action Plan was endorsed by Cabinet on 26 August 2025. The actions within the plan aim to reduce carbon emissions to achieve net zero by 2050 and increase resilience against the impacts of climate change for both Medway Council and Medway “the Place”. These objectives strongly align with investment priority (3) “Enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities.” Accordingly, the Capital Strategy supports the prioritisation of investment in some of the actions in the refreshed Climate Change Action Plan for example, the provision of additional allotments and tree planting. Additionally, it is anticipated that some actions within the Climate Change Action Plan will be brought forward under separate proposals seeking to attract external funding where possible.



## Our Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy

The Council owns a total of 5,011 assets including 3,873 HRA dwellings/garages with a total value of £886.151million as at 31 March 2025. The portfolio includes:

- 156 Operational buildings
- 58 Car parks
- 118 Parks and open spaces, 374 allotments, 36 heritage assets
- Retail property including the Pentagon Shopping Centre
- The Innovation Centre Medway, the Innovation Studios plus two other business unit estates
- The Investment portfolio
- Regenerations sites, including Chatham Waterfront, Rochester Riverside, Strood Riverside and the former Civic centre site.

Asset Category	No. of Assets	Cost / Valuation £000	Depreciation / Disposal £000	Net Book Value £000
Council Dwellings (HRA)	3,028	195,237	0	195,237
Other Land and Buildings				
- Offices	5	9,423	(61)	9,362
- Depots	5	8,449	(110)	8,338
- Libraries / Community Hubs	8	7,471	(188)	7,283
- Schools Related Assets	85	118,007	(3,573)	114,434
- Parks and Open Spaces	33	15,493	(915)	14,578
- Community Centres	10	6,960	(173)	6,787
- Land / Allotments	29	3,662	(173)	3,489
- Shops/Commercial	32	35,237	(248)	34,989
- Service Provision	65	37,331	(991)	36,340
- Memorials / Religious	12	6,436	(883)	5,553
- Infrastructure / Highways	1	18	0	18
- Car Parks	58	39,040	(440)	38,600
- Public Conveniences	16	1,874	(64)	1,809
- Sports / Leisure	45	87,547	(1,382)	86,165
- Theatres	2	11,263	(949)	10,315
- HRA Garages	845	4,776	0	4,776
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	36	21,161	(12,773)	8,388
Community Assets				
- Parks and Open Spaces	118	6,070	(16)	6,054
- Land / Allotments	374	2,972	(9)	2,962
- Sports / Leisure	1	66	(2)	65
- Memorials / Religious	8	17	0	17
Rights of Use Assets	34	2,750	0	2,750
Infrastructure and Highways	57	424,883	(245,233)	179,650
Heritage Assets	36	23,839	0	23,839
Investment Properties	15	19,087	0	19,087

Asset Category	No. of Assets	Cost / Valuation £000	Depreciation / Disposal £000	Net Book Value £000
Intangible Assets	7	3,158	(3,146)	12
Assets Held For Sale	1	15,910	0	15,910
Surplus Assets	42	28,238	(142)	28,097
Assets under construction	3	21,246	0	21,246
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>5,011</b>	<b>1,157,622</b>	<b>(271,471)</b>	<b>886,151</b>

Since 2018, a total of 47 general fund properties have been declared surplus to operational requirements and have been disposed of, delivering capital receipts of £12.570million.

In October 2024 the Cabinet approved our updated Property Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029. The Strategy has been prepared in the context of changing patterns of property usage and values following the Covid-19 pandemic and the significant financial pressures the Council faces. The Strategy seeks to ensure that the Council's property portfolio is reshaped to best support the vision, priorities and objectives in the new Council Plan with the following key aims:

- Ensuring our property portfolio enables us to best serve our residents,
- Maximising opportunities and income,
- Considering cost on the essential maintenance needs of our remaining buildings,
- Complying with statutory regulations,
- Tackling climate change and uses less energy, -
- Enabling efficient team-working,
- Enabling efficient cross-organisation working, including the One Public Estate initiative, and
- Enabling the closure of buildings that we no longer need.

At the same meeting, the Cabinet agreed to declare a series of 49 non-operational properties as surplus and to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Corporate Landlord Board (CLB) to agree the method of disposal for each property and to dispose of the properties in order to obtain the best price reasonably obtainable:

- Land to the South- east of the end of Northdane Way Lordswood.
- Land at 126-150 Chatham Hill.
- Warren Wood Social Club, Rochester.
- Rainham District Shopping Centre.
- Industrial Estate - Railway Street, Gillingham.
- Indoor Bowls Club, Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham.
- Gillingham Business Park.
- Northbank House, Sir Thomas Longley Road, Rochester.
- Ground Floor Shop 23-25 High Street Brompton.
- Britton Farm Shopping Centre, High Street, Gillingham.
- Former Fire Station and Public Toilets Arches, New Cut, Chatham.

- Unit 1 Court Farm Industrial Estate, Cwmbran, Gwent Wales.
- Unit 1 Cherry Trees Court, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire.
- Vantage Point, Holborough Road, Snodland, Kent.
- Eldon Road, Aycliffe Industrial Estate, Newton Aycliffe.
- Saxon Business Park, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.
- Suffolk Business Park, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.
- Unit 5 Deans Industrial Estate, Livingstone, Scotland.
- 19 Lords Fold, Rainford, Merseyside.
- Unit A1 Boothroyds Way, Pontefract, West Yorkshire.
- Viking Park, Whitehill, Bordon, Hampshire.
- Temple Manor, Knight Road, Strood, Rochester.
- Site of 121-129 The Brook, Chatham.
- Capstone Farm, Capstone Road, Farmland adjacent to Capstone Farm Country Park, Chatham.
- Eastcourt & Mariners Fields Farmland adjacent to Riverside Country Park, Gillingham.
- Land and building rear of 70 Maidstone Road, Rochester.
- Stirling Sports Centre, Maidstone Road, Rochester.
- Eastgate Cottage, High Street, Rochester.
- Land at Abbotts Court Farm, Bredhurst, Gillingham.
- Gillingham Golf Club, Woodlands Road, Gillingham.

That report estimated the value of the assets agreed for disposal at £34.873million.

On the 11 March 2025, the Cabinet approved the Council's operational portfolio review, which considered 72 car parks and 792 other operational properties. The review considered the required cost of maintenance, the nature of services delivered from each site, usage and running costs and alongside Members aspirations for the future of service delivery, this review will inform the shape of the operational portfolio moving forward. This review continues to report to Members on the outcomes and decision requests, aiming to ensure we consolidate investment in the operation and maintenance of properties that best suit the Council's operations to meet the needs of residents. We recognised it was necessary to increase the capacity in our Property Services team to deliver on this ambitious strategy, and Council agreed to additional resources included in the 2025/26 revenue and capital budgets in February 2025.

## Maintaining our operational buildings

The Council's annual revenue budget includes circa £6.6million for the Facilities Maintenance Services delivered by our Joint Venture partner, Medway Norse and circa £450,000 as an annual contribution to the Building Repairs and Maintenance Fund (BRMF).

During 2023 a series of full condition surveys were completed across our property portfolio, however considering the reviews underway to reshape that portfolio, we have developed a maintenance strategy that will prioritise expenditure to those assets that will be retained. During the current financial year (2025/26), this has seen us reducing expenditure through

the BRMF to that necessary to ensure emergency compliance, building safety, and works critical to support our income generating services, while we develop our investment plans for the portfolio over the medium term.

For future financial years we aim to use the BRMF apportioned to capital and revenue appropriately. Our investment and maintenance programme will ensure capital is directed to ensure our estate remains operational, efficient, and compliant to best support the delivery of the new Asset Management Strategy and Council Plan.

## Gun Wharf

Gun Wharf has been the Council's main headquarters since our formation in 2008, and as a Grade II listed building the fabric of the building has remained unaltered. In November 2023 it was confirmed that reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) had been found in some areas of the roof requiring significant repair works. In February 2024 the Council agreed to add £22million to the capital programme to deliver a programme of essential repairs and improvements and a major refurbishment is now planned to maximise the use of space and support the council to transform service delivery. Alongside this project we will relocate the Council's CCTV control centre at the former Civic Centre site in Strood which is occupied by the Council's company and provider Kyndi into Gun Wharf in 2025, relocate the Council Chamber from the St Georges Centre, and in the longer term, relocate Children's Services from Broadside. The works will create shared office spaces for team working and flexible workstations including hot-desking and deliver energy efficiency improvements.

## ICT infrastructure renewals

Medway Council continues to advance its vision that residents, visitors, and staff can interact with Council services seamlessly, securely, and efficiently. Our Digital, Data and Technology Strategy remains central to this ambition, ensuring that every Council employee has immediate access to the information and tools they need to make informed decisions and deliver outstanding public services.

Over the past five years, strategic investment in ICT infrastructure has transformed the Council's digital landscape. The hybrid infrastructure model, anchored by resilient on-site data centres at Gun Wharf and the West Service Building (our resilience back-up), has delivered 99.95% service uptime, enabling uninterrupted operations across critical services. This reliability has been particularly vital during periods of disruption, including the COVID-19 pandemic and recent RAAC-related challenges at Gun Wharf.

Enhancements to Wi-Fi, telephony, and connectivity have strengthened internal collaboration and improved public engagement. The adoption of cloud-based services and modern contact centre tools has further streamlined service delivery, aligning with our commitment to accessible, resident-focused transformation.

Cybersecurity remains a cornerstone of our strategy. Investments in firewalls, encryption, and endpoint protection have significantly reduced risk exposure and ensured compliance with national standards, including the National Cyber Security Centre's Cyber Essentials

framework. These measures safeguard sensitive data and maintain public trust in our digital services.

Looking ahead, the Council is embarking on a structured five-year ICT Infrastructure Refresh Programme (2026–2031). This initiative will replace end-of-life systems, modernise core infrastructure, and support the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme. The phased approach prioritises critical systems, aligns with budget cycles, and minimises service disruption.

The programme is projected to require investment of £3.879million, and would deliver the following key objectives:

- **Enabling digital innovation:** Modern infrastructure will support the adoption of new technologies that enhance service delivery, promote self-service, and improve customer experience, which are all core goals of the Medway 2.0 Delivery Plan.
- **Supporting organisational transformation:** Scalable and inter-operable systems will facilitate cross-authority collaboration and prepare the Council for future structural changes and Local Government Reorganisation.
- **Maintaining compliance and security:** Infrastructure upgrades will ensure continued alignment with legal, regulatory, and data protection standards.
- **Improving operational efficiency:** Replacing legacy systems will reduce maintenance overheads, boost performance and support agile working.
- **Delivering value for money:** Strategic investment will reduce long-term costs, support income generation through hosted services and ensure continuity of operations.

To ensure successful delivery, the Council will implement a robust governance framework incorporating best practices in project management, assurance, and risk control. Risks such as supply chain delays, budget overruns, and cybersecurity threats during transition have been identified and mitigated through proactive planning and contingency measures.

It is proposed that the programme could be funded through a combination of borrowing and flexible use of capital receipts, with some elements expected to deliver ongoing revenue savings. This investment is essential to maintain momentum from previous infrastructure improvements and to position Medway Council for secure, sustainable, and digitally capable service delivery through 2031 and beyond.

## Funding

There are a variety of funding sources and financing options available to meet the Council's capital expenditure requirements, most of which feature to a greater or lesser extent in funding the current capital programme. These are explained and the advantages, disadvantages, conditions and opportunities associated with each explored in this strategy.

### External Grant Funding

Though government revenue grant funding for local authorities has reduced dramatically

since 2010, capital funding has continued to support regeneration, highways and to a lesser extent, school place delivery requirements. Just under £52million (23%) of the current capital programme is funded from Government grant. While government grant support for revenue expenditure has been reducing dramatically over many years, there is still grant funding available for capital expenditure. Some of this comes to local authorities automatically through the financial settlement, however the majority have to be accessed through a bidding process. Some of this funding has conditions attached regarding what it can be spent on, whilst other allocations are not ring-fenced. As Central Government makes future funding announcement and grant determinations are issued, these funds will be added to the programme in accordance with the Council's constitutional governance arrangements.

## Developer Contributions

The development of new housing increases the number of people living in an area, and with that the demand on local services, such as schools, health services, parks, and transport. The planning system recognises the need to address the impacts arising from development, and can use legal obligations, agreements and unilateral undertakings to secure acceptable development. Developer contributions therefore are intended to make development acceptable which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. The Council's current policy in respect of developer contributions is set out in the Medway Local Plan 2003, supplemented by the Medway Guide to Developer Contributions 2018. Section 106 of the 1990 Act provides that anyone with an interest in land may enter into a planning obligation, which is enforceable by a local planning authority. An obligation may be created by agreement or by the party with an interest in the land making a unilateral undertaking.

Obligations may:

- Restrict the development or use of land;
- Require operations to be carried out in, on, under or over the land;
- Require the land to be used in any specified way; or
- Require payments to be made to the local planning authority, either in a single sum or periodically.

Obligations run with the land and, providing all parties with an interest in the land enter into the agreement, affect everyone with an interest in it, including successors in title and are registered as Local Land Charges. Where an obligation requires payments to the local authority, these can be made in the form of a lump sum, an endowment, or as phased payments related to dates, events or triggers, i.e. the delivery of a specific number or proportion of properties, making the receipt of this income very difficult to forecast. In addition, developer contributions include a clause stating the deadline for expenditure of contributions; the developer can request repayment of the contributions (plus interest) if the council fails to deliver on the obligations in the agreement by this deadline. From 1 April 2017 new S106 agreements usually specify a five year deadline for spend; prior to this date a 10 year deadline was the norm. The Planning Service reports quarterly to Planning Committee on developer contributions. These reports list information on S106 contributions

received, and obligations included in all S106 agreements completed in that quarter. The Council also reports on developer contributions in its annual Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement, both of which are published each December for the preceding financial year. Table 6 outlines the current position of our capital Section 106 contributions.

Since this sum represents income that is dependent on all development being delivered as planned, a cautious view is generally taken when formulating the capital programme, so that no schemes anticipated to be funded through developer contributions are added before there is reasonable certainty as to the receipt and timing of payments due. The exception to this is in terms of schools, as it is not necessarily possible to wait until a development has been built out before we must deliver the school that serves that community. This means that we must incur expenditure in advance of the funding being received, and this represents a risk to the Council. This potential future income represents both a challenge for the Council in working to accelerate development in the area, and an opportunity to shape how development in the area is mitigated for the benefit of residents.

In the current economic climate and in the face of rising delivery costs, many developers are reviewing the viability of schemes already agreed through the planning process. Across the country, some developers are seeking to renegotiate agreements with their Local Authorities to reduce the level of developer contributions. Though this is generally limited to development agreed on brownfield sites where developers may face additional costs relating to demolition, decontamination and land raising, this represents a risk to this income moving forward.

Category of Section 106 Contributions	Balance at 31/03/2025 £000	Agreed S106 £000	Projected Balance £000	Current Committed £000	Funds Available £000
Community Facilities	211	815	1,026	10	1,016
Highways, Footways and Street Furniture	1,539	4,681	6,220	584	5,637
Environmental Services	6	248	253	0	253
Education / Schools	3,949	16,533	20,482	332	20,150
Early Help, Youth and Inclusion	5	92	97	0	97
Adult Social Care	6	0	6	0	6
Strategic Property and Energy	43	0	43	0	43
S106 Open spaces	2,365	4,842	7,207	1,444	5,764
S106 Great Lines Heritage Park	32	67	99	0	99
S106 Play Equipment	44	0	44	44	0
S106 Public Realm	184	327	511	1	510
Safer Communities Operations	0	405	405	0	405
Housing	0	786	786	0	786
Sport, Leisure Tourism & Heritage	184	884	1,068	142	926
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,566</b>	<b>29,680</b>	<b>38,247</b>	<b>2,557</b>	<b>35,690</b>

\* This includes sums in respect of agreements made for future developments, some of which have yet

to commence. There is therefore a risk that these projections may not be realised if developments do not go ahead or S106 agreements are renegotiated.

## Capital Receipts

A capital receipt represents the income received from the sale or disposal of an asset. The general principle is that such receipts should not be used to fund revenue expenditure, however from 2016/17 Local authorities were given the power to use capital receipts (excluding 'right to buy' receipts) on the revenue costs of transformational projects, with this flexibility extended until the end of the 2022/30 financial year in March 2025. In determining whether expenditure should be allowable under this new flexibility, the Council would be expected to deliver ongoing savings to the revenue budget as a result of the investment. It would have to demonstrate transformed public services, with reduced demand or reduced unit costs. Each year we have published a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, setting out how we intend to use this flexibility in the coming year, for Council approval alongside the Budget in February.

Chapter 3, Part 4, Section 8.33 the Council's Constitution sets out that the Director of Place has delegated authority to manage the Council's land and property resources in compliance with current legislation and Council policy. This includes the authority to agree terms for the disposal or purchase of property and accept the highest tender/offer, provided that the relevant assistant director is satisfied it is the best price reasonably obtainable. This power is subject to the financial limits delegated to the director at Chapter 3, Part 5, Section 5.1, which set out the following:

### *Land acquisition and disposal*

- *Acquisition: Unlimited authority for the Chief Executive and Directors to act on all acquisitions for which there is provision within the capital or revenue budget approved by Full Council and which are not contrary to the policy framework.*
- *Disposal: Authority for the Chief Executive and Directors to act – up to £500,000 – on the disposal of assets within their areas of responsibility. Disposals above this value to be agreed by Cabinet, with disposals above £1,000,000 to be reported to the next Council meeting for information.*

The current capital programme assumes the use of £2.223million of capital receipts, with the source of those receipts set out below.

	<b>Capital Receipts as at 31 March 2025 £000s</b>	<b>2025/26 £000s</b>	<b>2026/27 £000s</b>	<b>2027/28 £000s</b>
Total forecast capital receipts	(2,908)	(10,383)	(47,566)	(3,529)

As set out in Investment Priority 6, in October 2024 the Cabinet approved the new Property Asset Management Strategy and the results of a property review, and in doing so agreed to declare a series of 49 non-operational properties as surplus and to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Corporate Landlord Board (CLB) to agree the

method of disposal for each property and to dispose of the properties in order to obtain the best price reasonably obtainable. The report estimated the value of the assets agreed for disposal at £34.873million. In March 2025, the Cabinet approved the operational portfolio review, which considered 72 car parks and 792 other operational properties with outcomes and decision requests being brought forward to Members in due course.

The estimated capital receipts and savings as a result of disposing of the properties which were identified in the review of non-operational and operational properties are set out in the table below:

Time Period	Amount	Ongoing Revenue savings pa *	One off Capital savings (from reducing required maintenance.)
Sales completed so far in 2025/26	£2,096,000	£45,534	£0
Predicted sales for the remainder of 2025/26	£7,159,150	£94,323	£0
Predicted sales for 2026/27	£25,992,250	£1,200,893	£130,297
Predicted sales to complete 2027/28 onwards	£6,327,815	£519,461	£4,649,776
<b>Total</b>	<b>£41,575,215</b>	<b>£1,860,231</b>	<b>£4,780,073</b>

\*Based on reduced running costs and using the Capital receipts to pay off debt at 7.9% pa, less the loss of net rental income, after management costs.

Whilst there is confidence that the target of £4million per year is achievable through this programme, the ability to achieve the larger amounts will depend on retaining staff, the economy and the interest from existing tenants and other buyers.

At this stage, no decisions have been made as to the use of these receipts and Members will be presented with options in due course, funding expenditure in the existing capital programme currently funded by borrowing, funding the capitalisation direction the Council has secured through the EFS scheme or funding new capital investment plans.

## Revenue Funding

Services may use their revenue budgets to fund capital expenditure, but the current policy is that this only happens in exceptional circumstances, typically where the conditions and requirements of a particular ring-fenced revenue grant are best service by incurring capital expenditure on the creation or enhancement of fixed assets.

## Prudential Borrowing

Where local authorities are unable to fund capital expenditure from external sources, such as capital receipts, grants and other external contributions, they can take out borrowing, however this is regulated. The Local Government Act 2003 refers to affordability and the requirement that local authorities in England and Wales keep under review the amount of money they can borrow for capital investment. Part 1 of the Act requires local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code in the exercise of its duties.

The code requires that: *"The local authority shall ensure that all of its capital and investment*

*plans and borrowing are prudent and sustainable. In doing so, it will take into account its arrangements for the repayment of debt (including through the MRP / repayment of loans fund) and consideration of risk and the impact, and potential impact, on the authority's overall fiscal sustainability. While indicators for sustainability are required to be set over a minimum three year rolling period, indicators should be set in line with a capital strategy and asset management plan that is sustainable over the longer term. Where statutorily ring-fenced resources such as the HRA or Police Fund exist, the indicators should be separately set for these areas."* The Council's prudential indicators can be found in the Council's Treasury Strategy.

In principle, the Council aims to only borrow to fund capital investment where it can be demonstrated that the repayments and interest incurred on the loan are affordable to the revenue budget. This generally means that prudential borrowing is limited to 'invest to save' schemes, i.e. those schemes which are expected to produce savings and/or additional income that will, as a minimum, fund the costs of borrowing. A business case would need to be prepared, with the support of the Corporate Accountancy team, to demonstrate the overall prudence, affordability and sustainability of the total borrowing requested. The impact of this borrowing will be measured against the prudential indicators required by CIPFA's Prudential Code. It is delegated to the Chief Operating Officer to determine whether the borrowing should be from internal cash balances or whether to enter into additional external borrowing.

## Leasing

The Chief Operating Officer may enter into finance leasing agreements to fund capital expenditure on behalf of services. However, a full option appraisal and comparison of other funding sources should be made first and the Chief Operating Officer must be certain that leasing provides the best value for money method of funding the scheme. Under the Prudential Code, finance leasing agreements are counted against the overall borrowing levels when looking at the prudence of the authority's borrowing.

## Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the Council's ability to achieve its objectives and to execute its strategies successfully. Through a risk management process, risks should be identified, and the potential consequences evaluated, with a view to determining the most effective action to manage them. The aim of such action is to reduce the likelihood of adverse risk events occurring, minimise the severity of their consequences if they do occur and to consider whether risk can be transferred to other parties. The Council's project management methodology requires that each project should have its own risk register to manage operational risk, however this section of the Capital Strategy focusses on strategic risks to the Council, resulting from its capital investment activity. This is presented below.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Financial risks impacting on the capital programme	<p>Credit risk: the risk that the company delivering the capital scheme becomes insolvent.</p> <p>Liquidity risk: the risk that cash flows could be affected by delays, inflation, interest rates or exchange rates.</p> <p>Fraud, error and corruption.</p>	<p>The Council exercises due diligence in the award of contracts.</p> <p>Mitigated by sound budget monitoring and treasury management.</p> <p>The Council has robust controls in place over procurement, project management and financial management.</p>	CII
Legal and regulatory risk affecting delivery of capital schemes	<p>Capital Schemes must comply with legislation, e.g.: DDA, as well as Council policies, contract procedure rules and financial regulations. There is a risk that changes in laws or regulation make a capital project more expensive or time consuming to complete, make it no longer cost effective or make it inadvisable or even illegal.</p>	<p>Before incurring capital expenditure or making capital investments, the Council will understand the powers under which the investment is made. Changes to relevant legislation and regulation will be kept under review and factored into any capital bidding and monitoring processes.</p>	CII
Capacity constraints to deliver an ambitious capital programme	<p>The Council has embarked upon an extensive and ambitious programme of regeneration. It is also a very lean organisation and whilst it employs skilled, professional officers, they do not have the capacity to deliver this programme at pace and on their own</p>	<p>The Capital Strategy relies on working with a broad range of partners, to share risk and reward through a 'mixed economy' of self-delivery, partnerships with the private sector and alternative delivery vehicles such as our joint ventures with Norse and our own Medway Development Company.</p>	BIII
Capital receipts	<p>A significant proportion of the Capital Programme is funded from capital receipts; if the Council does not achieve the required receipts, the programme</p>	<p>Close monitoring of the programmes anticipated to deliver capital receipts, and careful management of the delivery of those schemes funded from</p>	CIII

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
	may either need to be curtailed or refinanced.	receipts.	
Medway Development Company activity	MDC schemes planned may not generate the revenue income or the capital receipts assumed in the Council's budget.	Skilled and experienced staff within the company and at the Council are focused on the production of high-quality business cases, leading to the selection and delivery of schemes that will perform well. Close monitoring of the programme and careful management of the delivery are supported by scrutiny from senior officers and Members.	CIII
Local Plan adoption	The adoption of a sound local plan is essential to many of the council's regeneration ambitions. If a Local Plan including new housing on the Hoo Peninsula is not adopted, it could result in unplanned and uncontrolled development across Medway.	The Council's Planning Service have been working on a new Local Plan, Future Medway, which will cover the period up to 2037. The Plan has been subject to public consultation and will follow a governance process with Member approvals to ensure the plan submitted will be sufficient.	CII
Overspends due to increasing costs	The cost of delivering capital works is rising, due to increased costs of construction materials, higher staffing costs and increasing energy prices. This risks translating into overspends across construction delivery schemes.	Close monitoring of the programme and where possible, value engineering to contain costs within agreed budgets.	All
Availability of external income	Significant elements of the capital programme are funded year on year through external income sources, including specific	Close monitoring of developer contributions agreed, received, and included within the capital programme including	BIII

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
	grants and developer contributions. This strategy assumes funding through developer contributions will enable the delivery of capital works to meet the needs of residents, however funding in advance of receipt of developer contributions being received presents a risk should the developments tied to the funding not be completed.	through quarterly budget monitoring reports.	
Robustness of business cases	Member decisions to add schemes to the capital programme, especially those funded through borrowing, are made based on business cases developed by Council officers. It is essential therefore that business cases put forward are based on sound understanding of likely costs and where relevant, income and a robust assessment of risk.	All Member decision reports include an assessment of the implications of the decision, including financial, legal and climate impacts and a risk assessment.	BII
<b>Likelihood</b>		<b>Impact:</b>	
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely Rare		I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor	