

# **Record of Cabinet decisions**

**Tuesday, 23 September 2025**

**7.00pm to 8.52pm**

**Date of publication: 25 September 2025**

**Subject to call-in these decisions will be effective from 3 October 2025**  
**The record of decisions is subject to approval at the next meeting of the Cabinet**

<b>Present:</b>	Councillor Vince Maple	Leader of the Council
	Councillor Teresa Murray	Deputy Leader of the Council
	Councillor Tracy Coombs	Portfolio Holder for Education
	Councillor Simon Curry	Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration
	Councillor Nina Gurung	Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure
	Councillor Harinder Mahil	Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment
	Councillor Alex Paterson	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement
	Councillor Louwella Prenter	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness
	Councillor Adam Price	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (including statutory responsibility)
	Councillor Zoë Van Dyke	Portfolio Holder for Business Management
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Adam Bryan, Director of Place	
	Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive	
	Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance	
	Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer	
	Phil Watts, Chief Operating Officer	

## **Apologies for absence**

There were none.

## **Record of decisions**

The record of the meeting held on 26 August 2025, was agreed by the Cabinet and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

## **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests**

### Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

### Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

### Other interests

There were none.

## **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader said that the Baton of Hope had made its journey through Kent and Medway on 22 September. The Medway leg had started at Mid Kent College and concluded at Rochester Castle and Cathedral. The Baton initiative had been started by individuals who had personal experience of the impact of suicide. Thanks were given to the Baton bearers and to the Medway Public Health team, Kent Fire and Rescue and local voluntary and community sector organisations. It was recognised that Kent County Council had also been involved in the Baton bearing and it was hoped that there would continue to be joint working between Medway Council and Kent County Council on the joint Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Medway had just hosted a visit by the Heritage Place Panel. The Panel was of strategic importance and had been looking at work of the Council, community partners and others as Medway moved forward as a heritage place. Members who had participated in the events were thanked. Historic England were supporting the development of Medway's Heritage Strategy as well as funding a three year programme of work to continue the legacy of the Chatham Intra High Street Heritage Action Zone programme.

Medway had been chosen by Historic England to host two full days of an Historic Places Panel visit. The visit recognised Medway's strong track record around heritage led regeneration and the organisations that played an active role in regeneration. The Historic Places Panel had been asked to consider how these groups could become more sustainable and be supported to play a pivotal role in driving community led regeneration up to and beyond Local Government Reorganisation. The local stakeholders, MPs and a number of Council services were thanked for organising the visit. The Panel was due to make recommendations to inform future business planning, strategic approaches, policy and developmental management.

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The Council had flown the St George's flag at Gun Wharf in recognition of women's England rugby team who were due to play Canada in the final of the Rugby World Cup the following weekend. The flag raising event had been attended by a number of women rugby players. Best wishes were given to the team ahead of the match.

### **Questions to the Cabinet**

13 Member questions and 1 public question were taken as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

### **Responses**

It was noted that all questions responses would be reported for information at the next meeting.

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

#### **Background:**

The report provided an update on progress made since the Secretary of State had invited areas in England to submit proposals for local government reorganisation and invited the Cabinet to consider developing a full business case for a Medway proposal.

The Leaders of local authorities in Kent had voted to progress two models to be developed into full business cases. However, it was clear that the models chosen did not have the unequivocal support of all the local authorities. In recent days Kent County Council had announced it would be developing its own model to a full case and other councils may follow with their different preferences, resulting in multiple business cases being submitted to MHCLG.

The Medway option was based on boundary criteria proposed by government. It had been developed from first principles, adopting an approach that carefully considered established communities and definitive boundaries. There was a need to consider the specific impact of proposals on Medway as well as the health and social care implications of the creation of new unitary authorities.

It was recognised that Local Government reorganisation was a once in a lifetime opportunity. There had been positive and constructive engagement with the current 13 other authorities across Kent.

#### **Decision number:**

#### **Decision:**

**133/2025**

**The Cabinet agreed to progress the Medway option (option 4d) to a full business case and engage external support to assist with producing the business case.**

**134/2025      The Cabinet agreed to engage the current provider, (to the Kent and Medway authorities collectively) KPMG as the lead, with others (if necessary), to support the Medway option.**

**Reasons:**

To enable proper consideration of the Medway option for the reorganisation of local government in Kent and request external support in producing a business case for option 4d based on boundary criteria proposed by government.

**Capital Strategy 2026/27**

**Background:**

The report presented the Capital Strategy for 2026/27 and beyond, which set out the Council's priorities for capital investment to deliver its strategic aims in line with the Council Plan, and the process for formulating the capital programme.

The Capital Strategy, set out at Appendix 1 to the report, was to be viewed in conjunction with the Medium Term Financial Outlook 2025-30 and the Council Plan to integrate budget setting with service planning and ensure that priorities and funding were matched.

The report set out that the Capital Strategy was a key document for the Council and formed part of the authority's financial planning arrangements alongside the Treasury Strategy, Medium Term Financial Outlook and annual capital and revenue budgets. The Capital Strategy set out how investment in both new and existing infrastructure and assets was prioritised to support the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Council Plan and supporting policy framework. It also provided an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for the future financial sustainability of the Council.

***Decision      Decision:  
number:***

**135/2025      The Cabinet agreed the Capital Strategy, setting out the Council's priorities for capital investment and providing a framework for formulating the capital programme, for approval by Full Council in February 2026.**

**Reasons:**

The Capital Strategy sets out how the Council sets its priorities for capital investment and the process for formulating the capital programme in line with the Council Plan. It is therefore an important part of the framework underpinning the budget setting process.

## **Medway Youth Justice Plan 2025-2026**

### **Background:**

The report provided details of a new Youth Justice Plan, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, which was a completely new plan in line with guidance distributed to local authorities in March 2024. The format of the plan followed guidance and headings provided by the National Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.

The report explained that the Youth Justice Plan was a strategic plan that formed part of the Policy Framework for Medway Council (Chapter 2, Article 4.1 of the Constitution). Approval of the Plan was therefore a matter for Full Council prior to formal submission to the Ministry of Justice.

The report had previously been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 August 2025 and the Cabinet thanked the Committee for its comments which were set out in section 6 of the report.

### ***Decision number:***

### ***Decision:***

**The Cabinet noted the comments of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out at section 6 of the report.**

**136/2025**

**The Cabinet agreed to recommend Full Council approve the Medway Youth Justice Plan 2025-2026.**

### **Reasons:**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requires Local Authorities to have a Youth Justice Plan, which is updated annually to set out how youth justice will be delivered locally within available resources.

## **Housing Allocations Policy Review 2025**

### **Background:**

The report introduced the draft Housing Allocations Policy 2025 which replaced the current Housing Allocations Policy, last reviewed in 2019. The Housing Allocations Policy set out how Medway Council allocated available social housing stock in the Medway area, as well as who was able to access the housing register. A summary of changes to the policy was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Draft Housing Allocations Policy had been developed in line with the Council Plan and set out the Council's contribution to meeting the aims of the Council Plan with respect to Housing. Approval of the Allocations Policy was a matter for Cabinet.

In line with Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, it is a requirement for Local Authorities to follow statutory guidance when setting out a policy for how social housing will be

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allocated. This must have regard to the Local Authorities' own Homelessness Prevention and Tenancy Strategies.

The report had previously been considered by the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 August 2025 and the Cabinet thanked the Committee for its comments which were set out in section 6 of the report.

***Decision number:***

***Decision:***

**The Cabinet noted the comments of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out at section 6 of the report.**

**137/2025**

**The Cabinet agreed the Housing Allocations Policy 2025, for adoption from 1 April 2026.**

### **Reasons:**

The Housing Allocations Policy is a statutory document and adopting the revised policy will ensure that it remains up to date and is able to respond to pressures locally.

### **Procurement Strategy 2025-2030**

#### **Background:**

The report sought approval to the 2025-2030 Procurement Strategy, set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The previous version of the Strategy had been reviewed by the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2025. Based on success to date and the Strategy coming to a natural end, the report sought to close that iteration and for a new strategy to be brought forward in late 2025.

The report had previously been considered by the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 August 2025 and the Cabinet thanked the Committee for its comments which were set out in section 7 of the report.

***Decision number:***

***Decision:***

**The Cabinet noted the comments of the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 7 of the report.**

**138/2025**

**The Cabinet approved the establishment of the 2025-2030 Procurement Strategy, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.**

**139/2025      The Cabinet agreed to annual reporting of the deliverables to the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

**Reasons:**

The proposed procurement strategy aligns to both internal ambitions and the national procurement statement. This will allow the organisation to measure and track progress in key areas of procurement.

**Open Digital Planning - Progress Report**

**Background:**

The report provided an update on the progress of Medway Council's involvement in the Open Digital Planning (ODP) programme. The update had been requested by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, to reflect the transition from early-stage research and development to the live pilot phase. The programme, funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), aimed to transform planning services through digital innovation.

The programme would be funded by MHCLG, with no additional financial burden on the Council. Funding was secure through to March 2026. Future opportunities for additional funding or expansion were being explored.

**Decision      Decision:  
number:**

**The Cabinet noted the updates and progress on the Open Digital Planning Programme.**

**Reasons:**

The update has been requested by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, to reflect the transition from early-stage research and development to the live pilot phase.

**Rochester Riverside Deed of Variation**

**Background:**

The report sought agreement to a deed of variation to the Development Agreement.

Medway Council delivered Rochester Riverside as a Joint Venture Partnership with Homes England (HE), Countryside/Vistry and Hyde. Rochester Riverside was a mixed tenure regeneration scheme which had been a successful scheme so far, however unanticipated costs had been incurred against the school build when the original firm went into insolvency. Whilst construction risk was held by Vistry, it was not clear who was liable for these specific cost overruns and therefore the Joint Venture (JV) had identified a solution to mitigate the impact to all parties and not

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reduce the gross land payments to Medway Council and HE. The scale of these changes required a deed of variation to the Development Agreement.

Exempt Appendices 1 and 2 to the report, provided further information in respect of the Heads of Terms for deed of variation to the development agreement and new payment profile and calculations of impact to treasury.

***Decision  
number:***

***Decision:***

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|-----------------|---|
| <b>140/2025</b> | <b>The Cabinet agreed to vary the land payments to the new payment principles of 20% - 1 year after drawdown; 50% - at midpoint of sales programme; 30% - Final month of sales programme.</b>   |
| <b>141/2025</b> | <b>The Cabinet agreed the Heads of Terms set out within Exempt Appendix 1 to the report and agreed to grant delegated authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, to finalise the Heads of Terms and amendments to the Development Agreement.</b> |

**Reasons:**

This matter has been ongoing for some time and a resolution is now required in order for the development of Rochester Riverside to continue. The proposed reprofiling of payments means no risk of capital cost to the council or costs associated with litigation. The gross amount remains the same and enables Vistry and Hyde to absorb the school costs that were incurred by matters outside of all parties' control.

### **Award of Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Grant Funding for Former Strood Civic Centre Site and Mountbatten House**

**Background:**

The report advised that the Medway Development Company (MDC) and the Council had been successful with their bid for £6.8m from the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land (BIL) grant fund from Homes England (HE), to deliver 195 homes on the former Strood Civic Centre site, as set out at Appendix 1 (Location Plan) to the report.

In order for MDC to secure the award of grant funding the Council was required to sign the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) as the second guarantor. The report outlined the need for the grant and the associated risks to the Council, which needed to be considered, prior to the signing the GFA.

MDC had submitted a separate bid for BIL funding to HE, for Mountbatten House as set out at Appendix 1, which had passed the initial gateway and when finalised would require the same GFA as Strood Civic to be signed by the Council as a second guarantor.

## **Cabinet, 23 September 2025**

Exempt Appendices to the report provided further information in respect of the progress of the bid and the amount of grant funding expected to be awarded by Homes England and also the Brownfield, Infrastructure and Land Grant Funding Agreement relating to Strood Civic Centre.

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number:**

**Decision:**

**142/2025**

**The Cabinet approved the signing of the Grant Funding Agreements, for each site (former Strood Civic Centre and Mountbatten House), naming the Council as the second guarantor.**

**Reasons:**

Signing the GFA for the Strood Civic site unlocks a grant of £6.8m, which enables the site to be developed and a land receipt. MDC are working through the final stage, which will establish the grant award for the Mountbatten House site.

A breach of the funding agreements could result in the Council needing to payback the grant awarded. The sites and GFAs are not interdependent. It is important that the Cabinet understand the circumstances in which the grant could be subject to clawback.

If the Council does not sign the GFAs the deliverability of the sites would be impacted.

### **Gateway 1 Procurement Commencement: Basic Need (BN) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency Programme 2025-30**

**Background:**

The report sought permission to commence the procurement of the Basic Need (mainstream) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) sufficiency programme contracts 2025-30.

The Basic Need and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Education Sufficiency Programme 2025-2030 comprised of recently allocated central government funding, approved Council borrowing commitment and rollover from previous allocations, which totalled £53,406,917.

The Basic Need and SEND grant funding were ringfenced to Education for the purpose of providing additional school places, in addition, a commitment to borrow £16.21m for the Danecourt Special School project was approved by Cabinet on 26 August 2025 under decision No. 117/2025.

The Council had a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places were available for their area. Providing the school places outlined in the report would support the Council to meet this duty.

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***Decision  
number:***

***Decision:***

**143/2025**

**The Cabinet approved the commencement of the procurement to appoint professional services to undertake the feasibility, design and tender processes to contract award and to oversee the delivery of the projects listed set out at section 4.5 within Table 1 of the report.**

### **Reasons:**

Approving the recommendation will ensure Medway Council meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places in their area and the most effective and appropriate use of public funds.

Individual Gateway 3 reports will be presented to Procurement Board for each individual project at the appropriate time following the council's tender processes.

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**Leader of the Council**

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**Date**

**Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer/Vanessa Etheridge, Democratic Services Officer**

Telephone: 01634 332715/332115

Email: [democratic.services@medway.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@medway.gov.uk)