

Regeneration Culture & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 December 2025

Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paterson, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety,
Highways and Enforcement

Summary

This annual report provides an account of the role of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement. It details their ambitions for their areas of responsibility, how they have and will undertake political challenge and leadership and what their priorities and ambitions are for the year ahead.

1. Recommendation

1.1. The Committee are asked to note the report.

2. Budget and policy framework

2.1 The areas within the terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered by the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, as set out in the Council's constitution are:

- All Wardens
- CCTV
- Community Safety Partnership (CSP)
- Enforcement Hubs
- Highways
- Licensing (Executive Functions Only)
- Parking Enforcement
- Parking Strategy
- Regulation – Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Enforcement (Executive Functions Only)
- Road Safety
- Street Lighting
- Traffic Management
- Transport Strategy

2.2 Note: The following services fall within the Resources Portfolio, in relation to the CSP:

- Tobacco control, excluding smoking cessation services
- Community safety aspects of alcohol and drug misuse
- Public health aspects of promotion of community safety, violence prevention and response.

2.3 The CSP is made up of the following responsible authorities –

- Medway Council
- Kent Police
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS)
- The Probation Service
- Integrated Care Board (ICB).

3. Background

3.1 Medway's Local Transport Plan (2011-2026) sets out our overarching transport strategy and includes priorities and objectives for highway maintenance, active travel (walking and cycling), public transport, road safety and infrastructure capacity. The Council receives an annual capital grant from central government for delivering transport infrastructure improvements across Medway in accordance with these priorities, supported by more detailed plans and strategies for walking, cycling and road safety. In 2025, the Department for Transport provided local authorities with a revenue grant so they can build their capability and capacity to deliver ambitious transport schemes and to develop and update Local Transport Plans. Work on a new Local Transport Plan for 2027-2041 continues, with an initial round of consultation and engagement completed in November 2025. A baseline assessment report will comprise a summary of the current conditions for transport in Medway and provide a reference point for the development of the vision and objectives that will underpin the new Local Transport Plan.

3.2 The current Local Transport Plan has continued to deliver on its priority for travel safety, most notably with the completion of a second phase of infrastructure upgrades at Luton Road, Chatham. This project has introduced road calming measures, helping to reduce vehicle speeds and dominance and improve the environment for pedestrians. Whilst the focus of the scheme has been to reduce road casualties and support safe road use, we have also enhanced the built environment by improving and rationalising street furniture and introducing soft landscaping and street trees. Collectively, these measures demonstrate a holistic approach to transport infrastructure, supporting safer and healthier communities.

3.3 Our ongoing road safety education workstreams provide lessons to Medway schools across all key stages, alongside an extensive programme of road safety initiatives and promotional activity. We have facilitated the delivery of the Streetwise Theatre in Education initiative, and promoted seasonal

campaigns such as 'Be Bright, Be Seen' and Drink/Drug Drive awareness. Our School Crossing Patrol Service has expanded and now comprises twenty-two patrols helping our young people travel to school safely.

- 3.4 In March 2024 the Council received a funding allocation from the Department for Transport's Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant. A multi-year programme to replace obsolete equipment is underway, which will help to resolve maintenance and reliability issues. The upgrade of obsolete traffic signal detection has been completed, and we will now fine tune traffic signals on key routes to better reflect current traffic conditions. In addition, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras now enforce traffic restrictions, signs and road markings at twenty-five locations across Medway. Both projects align with One Medway Council Plan priorities, making our roads safer and less congested, and supporting the public transport network.
- 3.5 I oversee the management and enforcement of fifty-six flat surface car parks and two multi storey car parks, together with on-street parking controls and bus lanes. Further details on parking enforcement in Medway are provided at appendix 1. I recognise the role of safe, accessible parking in supporting our urban centres, but at the same time understand how our approach to car parking could help manage traffic on our road network and promote sustainable travel. Over the coming months, we will undertake a thorough and strategic assessment of Medway's parking policies. This work, which will also consider the issue of footway parking, will aim to ensure we have a fair, efficient, and sustainable approach to parking management across Medway.
- 3.6 Community Safety and Enforcement covers a wide range of services and teams which I have listed in appendix 1 with an outline of activities carried out in the last year.
- 3.7 I oversee one of the largest and most valuable council managed assets, that has a replacement value of around £2billion. Medway's highway network is an essential link that serves every one of us, every day, connecting communities and businesses and encouraging economic growth, whilst being accessible for all modes of transport.
- 3.8 In line with our Highways Asset Management Strategy; which defines how our highway services are delivered and how they support Medway Council's wider policies and priorities, we take part in the annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) Survey. This survey captures public perceptions of the services we provide and enables us to benchmark our performance against other authorities. Through our Asset Management Strategy, we are able to manage the highway network and its assets both strategically and tactically, ensuring that we can carry out preventative maintenance wherever possible.
- 3.9 In March 2025, we secured £2,140,000 in Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capital Funding. This investment is enabling the rollout of on-street EV charging facilities, designed to support residents without access to off-road parking by providing convenient, affordable, and accessible charging options. By delivering this infrastructure, we aim to give residents the confidence to

transition to electric vehicles. The tender process will be launched shortly, with contract award anticipated early in the new financial year. The concession contract will run for 15 years, making it essential to appoint a charge point operator with the capacity to deliver significant private investment. The chosen operator must provide a reliable, user-friendly, and accessible charging network with affordable tariffs, while also ensuring a percentage of net profit is shared with the council.

- 3.10 With the current Highway Infrastructure Contract with Volker Highways due to expire on 31 July 2027, preparations are already underway to review the contract landscape and begin shaping the requirements for a new Contract to take effect from 1 August 2027. Following a competitive tender process, CJ Founds Group has been appointed to support the Highways Service in this review. Their role is to ensure that the new contract delivers value for money while considering whether it should remain a single term maintenance contract or be divided into specialist lots.
- 3.11 The Highways Service has received an additional £1.289m in Highway Maintenance Block funding this financial year, increasing the total allocation for maintaining highway assets to £5,023,000. This extra funding has enabled our teams to address clusters of defects across the highway network which, while not meeting the formal intervention criteria for repair, created the visual impression of a deteriorating network. By tackling these areas proactively, we are helping to improve the overall appearance and resilience of the network.
- 3.12 Following the successful conversion of more than 25,500 lighting columns to LED and the installation of remote monitoring equipment, we have been able to implement dimming regimes across the network, resulting in significant reductions in energy costs. Building on this achievement, work is now underway to convert illuminated signs and bollards, in response to the discontinuation of compact fluorescent lamps.
- 3.13 AI technology has been introduced within the Highways Service to enhance the efficiency of highway inspections and the monitoring of repairs. Route Reports 4G cameras have been fitted to the inspection fleet, enabling the identification of defects across the highway network, including precise measurements such as depth. The data collected is helping to build a comprehensive picture of defects; both those that meet intervention criteria and those that do not, allowing the team to plan and deliver appropriate reactive and preventative maintenance. In addition, the system can detect faded road markings. As a result, the team has moved away from a cyclical road marking regime to a reactive approach, which is already delivering cost savings.
- 3.14 Thermal Road repairs returned to Medway 3 more times this financial year to carry out repairs through recycling in-situ material. Thermal road repair is a low emission, zero waste permanent repair solution which repairs various defects such as cracking and potholes. The asphalt is heated and recycled in-situ with a minimal amount of new material added to create a seamless, longer-lasting repair.

- 3.15 Work is underway to meet the Department for Transport's objective of digitising all Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs). This initiative will support smarter traffic management and enable the operation of connected and automated vehicles (CAVs). A review of suitable systems has already been completed, and we remain on track to meet the implementation deadline. Once in place, the digital platform will provide a single, authoritative source of information for TROs and TTROs, ensuring consistency and accessibility for the future.
- 3.16 Work is progressing rapidly to prepare for consultation on the introduction of a Lane Rental Scheme in Medway. Roadworks, whether short or long in duration, inevitably cause disruption to network users. The lane rental approach will allow us to apply a daily charge to utilities undertaking works on strategic routes. The purpose of the scheme is to incentivise utilities to properly resource their works, minimise disruption, and ensure reinstatements are completed to a high standard the first time, avoiding the need for costly remedial repairs. It is anticipated that the scheme, already operating successfully in Kent, will give us greater control over the roadworks that cause the most disruption.

4. Providing political leadership and challenge

- 4.1 I have a regular 1:1 meeting with the Council's Deputy Director for Place and with the Head of Service for Regulatory Services where I am kept informed of performance, quality and any challenges they are facing. It also gives me the opportunity to understand the strategic direction of the teams within their remit and to challenge where appropriate.
- 4.2 As Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, I can engage with my Cabinet colleagues to facilitate discussions to ensure our services are appropriate for our residents.

5. Championing the Interests of service users / Medway residents / Children and Young People

- 5.1 I continue to support and champion safe, sustainable travel to school for our children and young people. Following the implementation of the first tranche of School Streets in March 2024, a second tranche was launched in September 2025. Medway now has twelve school streets in operation, with further schemes under active consideration. We have implemented camera enforcement of road markings outside several other schools, to improve safety and congestion. Early monitoring of our School Streets indicates improved perceptions of safety, increased levels of active travel, and a reduction in child casualties. The initiative has also received national recognition this year, having been shortlisted for a Modeshift National Travel Award and a City Transport and Traffic Innovation (CiTTi) Award, with overall winners to be announced in late November. These nominations are a testament to the programme's impact and innovation in promoting safer, more sustainable travel for school communities.

- 5.2 In delivering a range of community safety and enforcement services I am conscious there will always be a variety of opinions on how such services should evolve, and I receive a range of correspondence on numerous aspects. I am keen to encourage officers to engage fully with correspondents to ensure their views are heard, even if it is not always possible to accede to specific requests.

6. Support for key service areas

- 6.1 Recognising the many demands on the Council's transport budgets and staff, I work with senior officers to carefully manage and prioritise our resources, focussing on locations where there is clear evidence of a need to improve road safety and traffic congestion, in line with our statutory responsibilities and Climate Change commitments.
- 6.2 I continue to represent Medway on the strategic board for the Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership, working collaboratively with Kent County Council and other key stakeholders to reduce the number of those killed and seriously injured on our roads.
- 6.3 The range of services across community safety and enforcement is so diverse I have added **Appendix 1** which gives an overview of the work that has been carried out.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The services within my Portfolio play an integral part in making Medway a safe place to live and to visit. While recognising and seeking to address the current financial challenges, there are huge opportunities to provide long-term support for our residents as well as targeting those who come to the attention of our enforcement teams. I look forward to working with colleagues and partners to bring these to fruition.
- 7.2 I continue to be fully supportive of the service and the work which is being undertaken in challenging circumstances and am committed to supporting continued progress.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Safety and Enforcement Update

Background papers

None