

# Record of Cabinet decisions

**Tuesday, 7 April 2026**

**7.00pm to 9.00pm**

**Date of publication: 10 April 2026**

**Subject to call-in these decisions will be effective from 20 April 2026  
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 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                                      |

**In Attendance:** Richard Hicks, Chief Executive  
Adam Bryan, Director of Place  
Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive  
Vicky Nutley, Head of Legal Services  
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer  
Phil Watts, Chief Operating Officer

## **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader announced that a bid had been launched for Chatham to become the first UK town of culture, a bid which he was pleased to support. Everyone involved in coordination of the bid was thanked, in particular, Chatham Historic Dockyard and Nucleus Arts.

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The Leader thanked the team at Turn to Starboard, a charity working with military veterans. They currently had a boat docked in Chatham Historic Dockyard before it went on the next leg of its journey. He encouraged people, particularly the local veteran community to visit.

### **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Coombs and Councillor Murray.

### **Record of decisions**

The record of the meeting held on 10 March 2026 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.

### **Questions to the Cabinet**

6 public questions had been received and were taken in the order set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

### **Responses**

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

### **Children's Services Update**

#### **Background:**

This report updated the Cabinet on Medway Children's Services continuous improvement and the delivery of national reforms aimed at strengthening the workforce, early help, and relationship-based support. It noted positive progress recognised by recent Ofsted focused visits, which highlighted better management oversight, stronger social work practice, and increased stability for children in care.

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The report advised that Medway was continuing this progress through integrated multi-agency work, with particular success in supporting vulnerable groups such as refugee and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children through trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and well-coordinated support.

Medway Council had been selected to take part in a national pilot which would see increased support for kinship carers, who are family members other than parents, who look after children. The pilot aimed to support more children to grow up within their family networks, rather than go into the care system.

Children's Services improvement activity and the national reforms strongly supported the One Medway Council Plan priorities by strengthening the quality and safety of social care, raising educational standards, and enhancing safeguarding across communities. The reforms also reinforced the Council's focus on prevention, wellbeing and early help, while improved support for care leavers contributed to greater housing stability. Together, these changes would help by improving outcomes and life chances for vulnerable children and young people.

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

**The Cabinet noted the report, in particular the scale of system change taking place across Medway services for children.**

**Reasons:**

The report is for information only, it provides the Cabinet with an important update on Medway Children's Services' continuous improvement and the delivery of national reforms.

### **HRA Acquisition of Registered Providers Residential Stock Profile in Medway**

**Background:**

The report set out that a Registered Provider (RP) of Social Housing was seeking to transfer their Medway housing stock [excluding two specific assets] to a new registered social provider, this being Medway Council, this was in line with the RP's long term asset disposal strategy. Medway Council's Landlord Services [Housing Revenue Account - HRA] had been advised of a potential RP transfer opportunity of social housing properties as part of this organisation's larger asset disposal and rationalisation strategy. It was noted that HRA funding was ringfenced from the Council's general finances.

The report sought approval to formally commence due diligence and recommend to full Council approval of the necessary capital budget to enable the transfer of the Medway portfolio of the Registered Provider stock to Medway Council's HRA. Enabling an alternative registered provider to take ownership of the existing RP's Medway properties and maintaining much needed social housing, it was important to note that the properties would be tenanted at the time of transfer to the Council.

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Two Exempt Appendices to the report set out financial information, which was of a commercially sensitive nature and a breakdown of locations of the acquisition portfolio which was covered under a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

A diversity impact assessment had been undertaken in relation to the proposals and was attached as Exempt Appendix 3 to the report.

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

- 60/2026**     **The Cabinet approved the transfer/acquisition of the Registered Providers Medway Portfolio of 791 properties [portfolio breakdown in section 4 of the report] to Medway Council's HRA, subject to financial and regulatory due diligence.**
- 61/2026**     **The Cabinet recommended that full Council approve the necessary Capital borrowing of £45.95million, including associated fees.**
- 62/2026**     **The Cabinet approved the procurement of an appropriate consultant to support the transfer of stock, including the necessary due diligence.**
- 63/2026**     **The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place and Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness to authorise the transaction, subject to final due diligence.**

**Reasons:**

To secure an additional 569 units of social and affordable housing for Medway residents. These properties will form part of the HRA's portfolio and give the Council control over how they are allocated, maintained and managed, ensuring that the tenants living in them have a safe, habitable home and good landlord who places them at the heart of the business.

To prevent the loss of social housing stock to other entities.

The HRA is one of the largest social housing providers in the area and is well placed to acquire and manage the RP's Medway portfolio alongside its existing homes.

The acquisition aligns with the Council's core purpose of providing social housing and strengthens the HRA by increasing the number of social and affordable home ownership units.

Analysing the asset data provided, these homes benefit from traditional construction, long-life components and low maintenance requirements, making them cost-effective to manage and supporting the long-term sustainability of the HRA.

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The properties are located within existing management areas and can be absorbed into current operational teams without creating additional service pressures.

Tenants will benefit from having a local landlord with secure tenancy arrangements retained. Right to Buy eligibility will apply, with the Council's investment protected for 15 years under national Cost Floor regulations.

Medway Council's stock-acquisition programme has successfully added 169 general needs homes since 2016, plus 187 temporary and supported units. The HRA has a development and growth strategy with a target to grow the stock figure by at least 1% year on year.

Acquiring the RP portfolio represents the quickest and most cost-effective method of increasing supply compared with alternative delivery routes.

Based on the financial and asset data provided, the acquisition is financially viable and demonstrates a positive long-term impact on the HRA business plan.

### **One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan 2026-27 Refresh**

#### **Background:**

This report set out the Council's One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan refresh for 2026-27. The Plan was intended to meet the requirement to produce an improvement and transformation plan, as a condition of the 'exceptional financial support' approved in principle by the Secretary of State.

This refresh represented the third year of the Council's journey to financial sustainability. It included an update on progress in the delivery of the targets and actions set in the previous year, alongside ambitious plans for the year ahead. The Plan was set out in a clear and transparent way which and was intended to be straightforward to understand.

The plan set out the ambition to make Medway a great place to live, work, learn and visit. It set out five key priorities which were 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 services for all; and Living in good quality, affordable homes.

Progress would be closely monitored and reported via the Corporate Management Team and to Cabinet on a quarterly basis throughout the coming year.

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

**64/2026    The Cabinet agreed the One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan refresh for 2026-27, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.**

**The Cabinet noted that responsibility for delivering the savings and actions set out within the plan had been assigned to specified Corporate Management Team**

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colleagues and that the plan would be subject to regular and frequent monitoring via Corporate Management Team, along with quarterly reporting to Cabinet.

**65/2026** The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to add further actions to the FIT Plan following the year-end review, such as carrying forward any actions not completed in 2025/26.

### **Reasons:**

The Plan represents the plan against which the Council will monitor achievement of the 2026/27 savings targets and sets out how the Council will deliver the improvements necessary to achieve the One Medway Council Plan objectives. It will also fulfil the conditions attached to the 'exceptional financial support' approved in principle by the Secretary of State and the wider requirements of the Local Outcomes Framework.

### **Review of the Council's Petitions Scheme**

#### **Background:**

This report set out details of a review of the Council's Petitions Scheme and sought approval from the Cabinet to refer it to full Council for final consideration and approval.

The report set out that in June 2025, the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered an annual report in relation to the Council's Petitions Scheme and in doing so had asked officers to review the scheme and bring proposals to a future Committee meeting, including reference to accepting external online petitions, whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) was a risk to the integrity of petitions, and issues around awareness of the Scheme.

The Scheme had been reviewed accordingly taking into account the experience and practice of administering the Scheme for over 15 years.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken in relation to the proposed changes to the Scheme. This was attached as Appendix C to the report.

The report had been considered by the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2026 and its comments were set out in an addendum report within Supplementary Agenda No.1. In relation to the recommendations made by the Committee to Cabinet that the Council give consideration to enhanced security for e-petitions on the Council system, the Cabinet determined that this would be looked at further, but it was not considered necessary for petition thresholds to be reviewed as these had not changed.

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

**The Cabinet noted the comments of the Business Support**

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and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the addendum report.

**66/2026**     **The Cabinet recommended approval of the revised Petitions Scheme to full Council, with effect from 1 August 2026, as set out in Appendix B to the report, subject to consideration being given to implementation of enhanced security for e-petitions on the Council system.**

### **Reasons:**

Approval of the revised Petitions Scheme will enable it to remain fit for purpose and increase the ways in which local residents can participate in local democracy.

### **Medway Norse Contract Extension Procurement**

#### **Background:**

This report sought permission to re-engage Medway Norse Limited to continue to operate services for Medway Council as a Joint Venture (JV) LATCo.

The Medway Norse partnership reflected the Council's core values by delivering customer-focused services that provided value for money. The services within this contract directly supported the Council's priority for clean, green, safe and connected communities and also contributed to wider priorities by ensuring reliable SEND Transport, supporting access to education, maintaining attractive public spaces, and improving health and wellbeing across Medway.

The report explained that the Medway Norse contract had expired in March 2023. Since then, the Council had relied on the strength of the joint venture and the well-established partnership to maintain service delivery and operate services on implied terms from the out-of-date contract. The lack of a current contract had been raised as a concern by CIPFA. Agreement of the proposed contract would ensure a structure was in place for delivery of these services up to and beyond Local Government Reorganisation but without tying the successor authority into a long term contract.

The proposed option of a new 60-month contract (with a 24-month extension option) would provide immediate stability, ensure statutory service continuity and address the governance risk identified by CIPFA arising from operating without an executed contract.

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

**The Cabinet noted the contents of the report and noted that the contract was performing equal to, or above, expectations for the services which would remain in the joint venture after April 2026 as follows:**

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- **Waste Services.**
- **Greenspace Maintenance.**
- **Household Waste Recycling Centers (HWRCs).**
- **SEND transport.**

**67/2026** The Cabinet approved the re-engagement of Medway Norse Limited to continue operating the frontline service functions detailed above [and as set out in 1.1 of the report]. This would maintain the Joint Venture arrangements, enabling Medway Norse Transport Limited to continue delivering SEND Transport.

**68/2026** The Cabinet approved the establishment of a new agreement commencing 1 April 2026 and running until 31 March 2031 (60 months), with an option to extend for a further 24 months.

### **Reasons:**

Agreement of this contract will enable the Council to continue to meet its statutory obligations and will strengthen the joint venture securing the continuity of frontline services and SEND transport.

The proposed contract structure and length strengthen client oversight and ensure the services are aligned with upcoming changes, including Local Government Reorganisation, national waste reforms and the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, ensuring the joint venture remains fit for purpose over the next contract term.

In addition, the timeframe means that the necessary investment in resources can be aligned to the forthcoming business plan objectives.

The contract must be established in accordance with TECKAL requirements to ensure the joint venture remains compliant as a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) and to enable the Council to award the contract directly without undertaking a full procurement exercise.

### **Gateway 1 Procurement Commencement: Medway Tunnel Lighting Upgrade**

#### **Background:**

This report sought permission to commence the procurement of the Medway Tunnel lighting upgrade contract.

The initial phase was anticipated to deliver immediate and substantial energy cost savings, currently estimated at approximately £200,000. In addition to reduced energy consumption, the works would also generate operational efficiencies by minimising the need for light housing replacements and reducing the maintenance burden associated with over 1,200 fittings. The financial savings realised from this phase were intended to contribute directly towards funding the second phase, which

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would encompass the replacement of the remaining fluorescent and sodium (SON) lighting units, as well as the full renewal of the obsolete master control system.

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

**69/2026     The Cabinet agreed to pursue the procurement of services of a contractor to procure and install the replacement LED lighting within Medway Tunnel bores as per the preferred option identified in paragraph 7.4.1 of the report.**

**Reasons:**

The Cabinet is requested to approve the tender for works associated with the Medway Tunnel, in accordance with the conditions attached to the Department for Transport (DfT) funding allocation. Specifically, the funding was granted on the basis that the tunnel's lighting infrastructure would be upgraded as part of the project.

This tender represents the initial phase of works aimed at delivering electricity savings, which are expected to support and justify the allocation of funding for the subsequent phase. Phase two will involve the full upgrade of the remaining lighting units to LED technology, along with the replacement of the tunnel's master control system.

### **Gateway 3 Contract Award: Gun Wharf Building Refurbishment Works**

**Background:**

This report sought permission to commence the award of the contract for the Principal Contractor for the refurbishment of the Gun Wharf Council offices.

Whilst this Gun Wharf Improvement Programme (GWIP) had come about due to the discovery of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in Gun Wharf in October 2023, the scope had evolved beyond the remediation and repair of the building. It had evolved to encompass aspirations to redesign the interior of the building and transform the way the Council works, supporting Medway Council's ambition to be recognised as an Employer of Choice.

The works would comprise the full refurbishment of all floors within Gun Wharf improving safety, compliance and accessibility. Delivery would be phased, with Phase 1 covering Levels 3, 4 and 5, followed by Phase 2 covering Level 2 and the basement (Level 1).

The refurbishment would recognise the primary role of Gun Wharf for the provision of services while also ensuring availability to the public. The works would include creation of a Council Chamber that could accommodate up to 100 Members which would help to make Gun Wharf suitable as a Council headquarters up to and beyond Local Government Reorganisation.

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Exempt appendices to the report set out financial analysis in relation to the procurement and a Governance Framework for contract administration and control.

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

**70/2026**      **The Cabinet agreed to award the contract for the refurbishment of Gun Wharf to Apex Contractors Ltd. for the sum of £14,995,041, understanding that they had been evaluated as the most advantageous tender against the Council's award criteria, as per the evaluation spreadsheet contained within Exempt Appendix 1 to the report.**

**Reasons:**

Apex Contractors Ltd overall provided a robust response to all the questions, which demonstrated they have an excellent understanding of the specification and expected outcomes for Gun Wharf. Evaluators all agreed that their bid was well written, with clear and concise answers that evidenced additional value and innovation over the length of the contract.

**Gateway 3 Contract Award: Intermediate Care and Reablement Service (ICRS) Contract**

**Background:**

This report sought permission to award the procurement of the Intermediate Care and Reablement Service Contract (ICRS) following the conclusion of an open procurement procedure that ended on 26 January 2026. The contract was funded by the Better Care Fund. It continued to support earlier release from hospital where safe to do so.

The current contract with Medway Community Healthcare (MCH) had begun on 1 October 2023 and was due to expire on 30 September 2026. The new contract would start on 1 October 2026 with mobilisation projected to start in May 2026.

The contract would be for 5 years with the ability to extend it for 2 years and then a further 2 years (9 years in total).

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken in relation to the procurement. This was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

An Exempt Appendix to the report set out financial analysis in relation to the procurement.

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

**71/2026**      **The Cabinet agreed to award the contract to HCRG, (Virgin Care) as the successful bidder to deliver the new ICRS**

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**contract from the 1 October 2026.**

**Reasons:**

HCRG (Virgin Care) had the most competitive tender for quality and price (75/25) with innovative Medway focussed solutions to deliver the specification outlined. This was agreed by the Evaluation Panel.

This provider delivers these services to Dartford, Gravesham and Swale therefore aligns to Local Government Reorganisation with Medway's preferred footprint.

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**Leader of the Council**

.....  
**Date**

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

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