

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Regeneration, Culture and Environment**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday, 24 March 2026**

**6.30pm to 10.29pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Present:** Councillors: Field (Chairperson), Cook (Vice-Chairperson), Campbell, Filmer, Hamilton, Hyne, Lawrence, Myton, Nestorov, Nestorova, Spring, Vye and Williams

**Substitutes:** Councillors: Hyne, Nestorova and Spring

**In Attendance:** 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 Vince Maple, Leader of the Council  
Councillor Alex Paterson, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement  
Adam Bryan, Director of Place  
Alex Constantinides, Strategic Lead Front Line Services  
Nicola Couchman, Democratic Services Officer  
Bob Dimond, Head of Sport, Leisure, Tourism & Heritage  
Ruth Du-Lieu, Assistant Director, Front Line Services and Deputy Director of Place  
Sunny Ee, Assistant Director Regeneration  
Chris Harrison, Regional Director, Project Centre Ltd  
Andy McNally-Johnson, Head of Corporate Accounts  
David Reynolds, Head of Revenue Accounts  
Dan Stone, Facilities Management and Capital Projects Head of Service  
James Sutton, Sustainable Transport Manager  
Jayne Webb, Parking Business Manager

**804 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Doe, Etheridge and Peake.

**805 Record of Meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 20 January 2026 was agreed and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

**806 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**807 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests and Whipping**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

**808 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward investment**

**Discussion:**

The Committee received an overview of progress made on the areas within the scope of the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Mahil, which fell within the remit of this Committee.

The Portfolio Holder responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

**Pride in Place Funding** – The Committee were informed that the funding was fantastic news for Medway and would be community driven. Shop Front Grants were also available to help improve high streets.

**Under 25's not in education, employment or training (NEET's)** – The Portfolio Holder reported a focus on apprenticeships and elective home education and an increase in the drop out rate for colleges that needed to be fully understood. Initiatives being delivered included an opportunities fair, functional skills in English and Maths, a retail training work experience programme and construction training programme in partnership with Medway Development Company. The Get Kent and Medway Working Plan ties all of the initiatives together.

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**Gillingham Town Centre Task Force** – The Committee were informed that the task force was an exemplar and followed a task and finish approach in partnership with Kent Police and a community panel. There had been a focus on the worst hit areas, derelict properties and in connecting council services for a targeted approach to issues.

**Inward investment from private sector** – Members were concerned about a reliance on grant funding and queried levels of inward investment and jobs created. The Portfolio Holder offered to provide data on this outside of the meeting and explained that this would be a focus in the coming year with a new strategy to guide next steps.

**Liquidation of Visit Kent** – Members queried any losses that were incurred and the Portfolio Holder offered to provide information on this outside the meeting. The Committee were informed that Visit Kent had been repackaged and the main focus had been to secure the intellectual property.

**Support for Businesses** – The Portfolio Holder explained that supported had been provided for 116 businesses over 250 sessions and a Medway Entrepreneurs Group had been created.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the report.
- b) The Portfolio Holder was asked to provide further information on inward investment and job creation.
- c) The Portfolio Holder was asked to report on any losses arising from the loss of Visit Kent.
- d) The Committee noted the Portfolio Holders note of thanks to the teams involved in economic and social regeneration and inward investment.

### **809 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure**

Discussion:

The Committee received an overview of progress made on the areas within the scope of the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure, Councillor Gurung, which fell within the remit of this Committee.

The Portfolio Holder responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

**Corn Exchange** – Members queried whether a break even position had been attained and the Portfolio Holder was pleased to report that a profit had been made.

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**Stalls at events** - The Committee were informed that all stalls needed to be filled and it was financially difficult for some stall holders to make a viable profit however the need for variety of stalls was acknowledged. The Portfolio Holder recognised the boost for the local economy from events and referenced regular diverse markets that take place in Medway.

**Theatres** – The Committee acknowledged the success of the Central Theatre and asked for thanks to be passed on to officers for the well run premises and variety of entertainment offered. With regards to the Brook Theatre it was reported that Members would be offered a visit during the next phase of refurbishment.

**Reliance on external funding streams** - Member expressed concern about the reliance on external funding and asked what plans were in place to mitigate for a loss of funding. The Portfolio Holder reported Medway's recognition as Heritage Place which confirms funding for heritage projects in Medway for 10 years and investment and moral support to strengthen creative community to increase resilience and work towards self-sufficiency.

**Cultural entitlement for all** – The Committee were informed that the partnership working with the creative sector helped in reaching out to all sectors of the community to ensure the promotion of wellbeing and cohesion for all.

**Chatham Town of Culture bid** – The Committee were informed that the bid was being led by Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust and was being well supported by council teams to help write a strong, positive narrative about resilience, courage, creativity and strength of community in Chatham.

The Portfolio Holder thanked all officers as well as managers and senior leadership for the high level of service they deliver.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the report.
- b) The Committee's expression of thanks to officers and in particular the theatre staff was noted.

## **810 School Streets Tranche 1 - Monitoring and Review Report**

### **Discussion:**

Officers summarised the report for Tranche 1 across seven school streets and highlighted the improved feeling of safety, fewer traffic related incidents, reduction in car journeys and improvements in air quality.

The Committee were informed that there had not been complaints about significant traffic displacement as any displacement had occurred over a wider area than perceived by the public. Exceptions had been granted for 1300

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drivers, in the main who were residents in a school street and the programme had received a national award of recognition.

Members noted the low response rate to some school streets surveys and officers explained that they encouraged schools to ask parents to complete the surveys and would continue to work on increasing response rates.

Members were concerned about the 67% collection. Officers informed the Committee that collection rates were changing daily as collections were complex as PCN's had a life span of 3 years and the appeals process can take 6-12 months.

Members reported some correspondence from residents that felt trapped in their streets as they lived in a school street. Officers explained that residents can exit a school street at any time as PCN's are only issued when you enter a restricted area. The exemption policy was briefly explained as this could assist with some of the issues being raised and Medway Licensed Taxi Drivers Association were aware of the policy.

Members discussed the issue of traffic displacement at some length and were concerned that displacement impacted on road safety. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement explained that displacement was wide and not concentrated and that school streets had been an absolute success in reducing moving traffic in school streets and keeping children safe.

The focus on primary schools rather than secondary schools was queried and it was reported that the ambition was to operate school streets wherever they can have the greatest impact and realise benefits.

Members queried the improvements in air quality and whether this had taken into account the increase in electric vehicles since 2023. The Committee were informed that electric vehicles were only a small proportion of vehicles on the road and air quality had been measured for a two week period before and after implementation. Due to the benefits of school streets, the Portfolio Holder was not concerned about the minimal available air quality data as the schemes had much wider benefits.

Members requested that schools have better cycle/scooter storage facilities and were informed that this was included in the Medway Sustainable School Travel Strategy.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the findings of the School Streets Tranche 1 Monitoring Report as set out in Appendix A and the majority supported the continued development of the programme, informed by this evidence and national best practice.
- b) The Committee requested detailed information on the number of exemption applications refused.

**811 Members Item: Facilities Management Contracts**

**Discussion:**

Councillor Lawrence explained that the item had been brought to the Committee to help understand the political decision made to move away from a contract with Medway Norse to nine separate contracts.

Councillor Maple informed the Committee that there had not been a contract in place with Medway Norse when the service was inherited by the current administration. There were 13 years of practice and data to review before deciding which services should stay with Medway Norse, come back in house or be put to an open tendering process. The decision making had been based on the quality and management of services and the moral duty owed to staff as well as cost.

Members queried exactly when TUPE discussions had started. Officers explained that whilst discussions began with Medway Norse back in 2024, it was not possible to engage with staff at that point as they were not council employees. Formal TUPE engagement was triggered by the Gateway 3 procurement report and formal engagement with staff began in February/March 2026.

With regards to previous regular reporting from Medway Norse, officers explained that the monitoring reports did not accurately reflect the growth in services over the years and were no longer fit for purpose.

Members queried the potential impact of differing salaries and terms and conditions

And any associated costs. Officers explained that the budget of £6m had taken all relevant factors into account and calculated costs accordingly and there was a contingency fund for any additional challenges that may arise.

Members queried the impact on the remaining waste contracts and were informed that the waste contracts still provided high levels of satisfaction and value for money and new contracts were in the process of being negotiated for all services that would remain with Medway Norse.

Members queried the contract monitoring being put in place for the nine new contracts and were informed that teams had a robust monitoring framework and KPI's in place with a dedicated compliance manager and quarterly reporting to Corporate Landlord Board.

**Decision:**

The Committee noted the comments from the Director of Place in response to the Member's item.

**812 Capital Budget Monitoring - Round 3 2025/2026**

**Discussion:**

The report was taken as read and Members did not have any queries.

**Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the results of the third round of capital budget monitoring for 2025/26.
- b) The Committee noted the changes to the approved budget since Round 1 as set out in sections 8.1 and 8.2 of the report.

**813 Revenue Budget Monitoring - Round 3 2025/2026**

**Discussion:**

The report was taken as read and Members did not have any queries.

The Committee noted their thanks to Dave Reynolds as we would be leaving Medway in the near future.

**Decision:**

- a) The Committee notes the results of the third round of revenue budget monitoring for 2025/26.
- b) The Committee notes that Cabinet instructed the Corporate Management Team to implement further urgent action to bring expenditure back within the budget agreed by Full Council.
- c) The Committee notes that officers have submitted an Exceptional Financial Support request to the Government seeking a further £9.9million in respect of 2025/26, in addition to the £18.184million incorporated into the budget.
- d) The Committee notes that Cabinet recommended that Full Council approves the use of £2.783million of Capital receipts under flexibilities to fund transformational activity in Adult Social Care and Business Support.
- e) The Committee notes that Cabinet recommended that Council declassifies the following amounts currently held in earmarked reserves and transfers them to general reserves:
  - £1,597,513 held in the Collection Fund reserve;
  - £450,000 held in the severance reserve;
  - £750,000 held in the SELEP reserve;
  - £27,000 held in the unrepresented Cheques reserve.

**814 The One Medway Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report and  
Strategic Risk Summary - Quarter 3 2025/2026**

**Discussion:**

Members expressed concern about levels of employment and suggested that performance indicators should be concentrated on the 16 national priority measures announced by Central Government.

**Decision:**

- a) The Committee considered the Quarter 3 2025/26 progress of the performance indicators used to monitor progress of the Council's priorities as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- b) The Committee noted the Strategic Risk Summary, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- c) The Committee requested that officers continue to review and refine the performance indicators with a focus on national priority measures.

**815 Petitions Report**

**Discussion:**

The report was taken as read and Members did not have any queries.

**Decision:**

The Committee noted the petition responses and appropriate officer actions in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

**816 Work programme**

**Discussion:**

The report was taken as read and Members did not have any queries.

**Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the report and changes set out in section 4.2 of this report and agreed the Work Programme as set out at Appendix A to the report.
- b) The Committee noted the action log as set out at Appendix B to the report.

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**Chairperson**

**Date:**

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