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Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

19 August 2026

Kent and Medway Maternity Services Review: Purpose, Progress and Next Steps

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Summary

NHS Kent and Medway ICB is undertaking a system-wide review of maternity, neonatal and women's health services across Kent and Medway. This is the first review of this kind undertaken by the ICB. The Review responds to the national Maternity and Neonatal Investigation (the Amos Review, published 30 June 2026), and to local safety and quality concerns. Three of the four hospital trusts that provide these services are currently under enhanced national support and oversight.

This report explains why the Review is needed, what progress has been made so far, and how the ICB is working with service users, families, communities, the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership, local stakeholders and providers to shape the Review. No decision about the future shape of maternity services is being sought from the Committee at this stage. The report is intended to keep the Committee informed, invite comment on the approach, and support transparent scrutiny as the Review develops.

The Review supports the ICB's Strategic Commissioning Plan 2026-2029 and its draft 2027/28 maternity commissioning intentions.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Committee is asked to note the purpose, scope and timetable of the Kent and Medway Maternity Services Review, as set out in this report.
- 1.2. The Committee is asked to note that the ICB Board approved the agreed elements of the Review's Terms of Reference on 21 July 2026 and delegated final sign-off of the complete Terms of Reference to the ICB Chair, in

consultation with the Chief Executive, following further engagement and co-design through August 2026.

- 1.3. The Committee is asked to confirm whether it wishes to receive further updates as the Review progresses, and in particular ahead of any future recommendation involving any potential change to how services are configured, when the Committee's formal role in the statutory consultation process would apply.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1. Under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 the Council may review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision, and operation of the health service in Medway. In carrying out health scrutiny a local authority must invite interested parties to comment and take account of any relevant information available to it, and, in particular, relevant information provided to it by a local Healthwatch. The Council has delegated responsibility for discharging this function to this Committee and to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the Council's Constitution.

3. Background

- 3.1. Maternity neonatal and women's health services in Kent and Medway are under sustained pressure. Three of the four hospital trusts that provide these services are currently subject to NHS England South East Enhanced Support and Oversight. This is a formal process used where extra support and closer monitoring are needed to improve safety and quality. A system-wide review of how these services are organised across Kent and Medway has not previously been undertaken.
- 3.2. The national Maternity and Neonatal Investigation (the Amos Review) was published on 30 June 2026, following an investigation that heard directly from more than 450 families and engaged over 9,000 staff. Its central finding was that women, birthing people and families are too often not listened to, heard or believed, with serious consequences for safety, experience and trust.
- 3.3. The Kent and Medway Maternity Services Review is the ICB's main system-level response to that finding. The way the Review will be governed, and run has been designed to reflect the Amos Review's findings. This means building in co-design, collaboration and partnership working from the start, so that service users, communities, the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership, local stakeholders and the four hospital trusts all help shape and deliver the Review.
- 3.4. The ICB will track delivery of the Review's recommendations through its own quality governance arrangements, including the Quality, Safeguarding and Experience Committee. This will help make sure that progress is monitored, concerns are escalated where needed, and the Review leads to safer, more consistent and better-quality care for women, babies and families across Kent and Medway.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1. The approach to the Review is intended to balance pace with meaningful participation. The Review needs to respond to current safety and quality concerns, while making sure that its scope, governance and evidence are shaped with the people most affected by maternity, neonatal and women's health services. This includes service users, families, communities, providers and wider system partners.
- 4.2. Sustainability: Kent and Medway's spend on hospital-based maternity care is currently higher than in similar areas. The Review will consider how services can be safe, effective, reduce inequity and be sustainable for the future. This will include looking at community and midwife-led models of care alongside hospital based care, informed by evidence, engagement and the experiences of local families.
- 4.3. Equality and diversity: A full Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment will be developed as the Review progresses. This will draw on provider engagement, local population need, and direct input from service users, communities and the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership. The aim is to make sure the Review reflects the experiences of a diverse range of families using maternity, neonatal and women's health services across Kent and Medway.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. The areas of the Review's plan that remain open, including the scope of the detailed hospital-level review and how any areas of disagreement will be resolved, are being developed with all four hospital trusts: East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust, and Medway NHS Foundation Trust. Each trust's Chief Executive, Director of Midwifery and senior clinical leadership have been invited to take part in an engagement event in August 2026.
- 5.2. Service user and community voice is being built into the Review from the start. The Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership, which brings together the experiences of mothers, birthing people and families who use these services, has a standing place on the Review's Programme Board. This is intended to make sure lived experience informs the Review as it develops, rather than being sought only after proposals have already been formed.

6. Risk management

- 6.1. There are no direct risks for the Council arising from this report.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1. This report does not seek any financial commitment or approval. Financial modelling will take place after the evidence-gathering and engagement phase,

so that any future costed proposals are informed by clinical evidence, service user experience, community insight and provider input.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. This report, and the ICB Board decision it summarises, does not propose any specific service changes at this stage. If the Review's findings, once complete, lead to a recommendation to change how maternity services are configured, this would include formal oversight by this Committee and the Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where relevant.

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Appendices

Appendix A: NHS Kent and Medway ICB Board (Part 1, Public) paper, "Kent and Medway Maternity Services Review: Terms of Reference and Co-Design Approach", considered by the ICB Board on 21 July 2026.

Background papers

NHS Kent and Medway ICB Board (Part 1, Public): "Kent and Medway Maternity Services Review: Terms of Reference and Co-Design Approach", 21 July 2026.
National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation (the Amos Review) published 30 June 2026.