

TOWN COUNCIL
23 OCTOBER 2025

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 23 OCTOBER 2025 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Dawn Johnston – Town Mayor
Councillor Paul Parsons – Deputy Town Mayor
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Alan Reach
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Graham Taylor
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT:

Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – ATC/Responsible Financial Officer
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer
Revd. Charlie Lloyd – Evans
Councillor Thomas Mallon – Kent County Council
x4 Member of the public

ABSENT:

There were none

242/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Town Mayor explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

243/25-26. REVD. CHARLIE LLOYD-EVANS, PRIEST IN CHARGE AT ST MARY GREENHITHE & ST PETER AND ST PAUL SWANSCOMBE.

The Town Mayor welcomed Revd. Charlie Lloyd-Evans to the meeting, Revd. Lloyd-Evans thanked the Town Council for the invitation and led the Council in prayer.

244/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Anne Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Claire Pearce, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Dartford Borough Councillor Cally Gale due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Dartford Borough Councillor David Mote due to other commitments.

RESOLVED:

That the reason/s for absence, for the above Town Councillors, be formally accepted and approved.

245/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

246/25-26. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2025 AND THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2025

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2025 and the Special Town Council Meeting held on 24 September 2025 be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

247/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

The Town Mayor advised that Agenda Item 12 – Report from Kent County Councillor, would be brought forward before Item 6 to enable KCC Councillor Thomas Mallon to provide a report ahead of him leaving the meeting early due to a prior engagement.

248/25-26. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 3 SEPTEMBER 2025 AND 24 SEPTEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning, Major Developments, Transportation and Environment Committee Meetings held on 3 September 2025 and 24 September 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

249/25-26. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting held on 11 September 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

250/25-26. MINUTES OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2025

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee – 18 September 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

251/25-26. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE & EMERGENCY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Executive & Emergency Committee Meetings held on 23 September 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

252/25-26. MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Heritage Sub-Committee Meetings held on 23 September 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

253/25-26. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 1 OCTOBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Community Safety Committee Meetings held on 1 October 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

254/25-26. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

This item gave the Kent County Councillor for Swanscombe and Greenhithe, Mr Thomas Mallon, the opportunity to submit a verbal report on relevant news or issues from Kent County Council.

Councillor Mallon reported that, following the recent resident led protests against unsafe driving in and around Stanhope Road, Kent Highways Service (KHS) were taking forward this issue and a site visit with a KHS Officer had been scheduled for the coming weeks. Councillor Mallon also reported that a Highways Engineer would be undertaking an assessment of the road network.

Councillor Mallon reported that he would be actively pursuing alternative funding paths for the Pavilion Project at Broomfield Park, including any appropriate sponsorship opportunities.

The one-day closure of the High Street, Swanscombe had been raised to Councillor Mallon who would be challenging this further as the proposed plans for the diversion of public transport were not felt to be adequate.

255/25-26. PAVILION PROJECT UPDATE

Members considered the report that outlined the status of the Pavilion Project including designs and funding.

A presentation was also made by officers detailing the design aspects and providing a verbal update on discussions with the individual funders and an update on recent correspondence with the Planning Department at Dartford Borough Council.

The Chairman confirmed with the Members of the Public present, and KCC Councillor Mallon, that they were happy with the details provided in the update and asked if there were any issues they would like to raise.

After members had discussed the details contained in the update report and the design details provided it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed unanimously:

RESOLVED:

1. That the work undertaken to date on sourcing funding for the project be noted and endorsed.
2. That the submission of the bid to DBC for a contribution to the site as a strategic project be agreed.
3. That continuation of liaising with both EDC and Kent FA regarding other funding sources be agreed.
4. That an application be made to the Public Works Lending Board for a loan to cover the shortfall in the project cost, up to a maximum of 15%. This would only be implemented if it was required to proceed with the project.
5. That the project continues with the updated designs focusing on Phase 1 of the project.
6. That a publicity statement be issued via the Town Councils website and social media feeds outlining the outcome of this meeting.

256/25-26. EXTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT AND CERTIFICATE 2024 -2025

In line with statute members considered the external auditors annual letter / report for the financial year 2024 – 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the external auditors report and certificate 2024 – 2025 be noted, as required by statute.

257/25-26. LORRY PARK WORKING GROUP – UPDATE

Members considered the notes from the Working Group meeting held on 16 September 2026 and a verbal update was provided from the Working Group meeting held earlier in the week on 21 October 2025 which had been attended by the current operators of the lorry park in Manor Way.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

258/25-26. INGRESS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE – UPDATE

Members considered the information / update that had provided by the Technical Director & Deputy Managing Director - Eastern, Crest Nicholson.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

259/25-26. STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING – UPDATE.

The following training had been scheduled / undertaken: -

Town Clerk ATC/RFO	KCC Highways & Transportation Parish Seminar – 2 October 2025.	KCC – Online.
Town Clerk ATC/RFO	Beyond the Precept: exploring alternative income sources – 24 September 2025.	KALC - online.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

260/25-26. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVES

Members were advised that this item provided an opportunity for Members appointed as representatives on outside bodies to provide a report at the meeting.

Ingress Park (Greenhithe) Management Limited (IPGM).

Councillor Peter Harris and Councillor Dawn Johnston are the Town Councils representatives on IPGM. IPGM have indicated that, although unable to supply any documentation, they would like a verbal update to be submitted to the Council.

Councillor Harris reported that the vegetated (green) wall to support the flood defences on the riverfront had been reseeded. Councillor Harris also advised that the accounts from Firstport were overdue and had still to be received.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG)

Councillor Dawn Johnston is the Town Councils representatives on the WCLG. As previously agreed, the agenda and Minutes from the meeting on 23 September 2025 were available for inspection.

Elders Forum (EF)

Councillor Lesley Howes is the Town Councils representative on the EF. Councillor Howes confirmed that no meeting had taken place since the last update, and that the next meeting was scheduled for 18 November 2025.

Young Peoples Partnership / Youth Network (YPP)

Councillor Lesley Howes is the Town Councils representative on the YPP. Councillor Lesley Howes updated the meeting that presentations had been made on the challenges of social media and youth funding.

261/25-26. REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.

Unfortunately, none of the x 5 Dartford Borough Councillors were present at the meeting, and no written update/report had been submitted.

RESOLVED:

That, ahead of the next meeting of the Town Council, contact be made with the x5 Dartford Borough Councillors, requesting whether a written update/report could be submitted if they were unable to attend.

262/25-26. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.

There were none

263/25-26. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Dawn Johnston, reported that the recent Dog Show and Charity Quiz Night had both been very successful and thanks were given to all who had helped put on the events and to those that had attended.

The Town Mayor confirmed that Councillor Peter Harris would be attending St Mary's Church, Councillor Paul Parsons would be attending St Peter's & St Paul's Church, and that she would be at the Dartford Remembrance Day events.

The Town Mayor also updated the meeting on her upcoming Mayoral events including:

- Burns Night Quiz and Poetry Night on the 25 January 2026
- Charity Fashion Show in partnership with Elenor on 28 February 2026
- Mother Day Afternoon Tea on 13 March 2026
- St Patricks Day Celebration on 20 March 2026

264/23-24. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Graham Taylor;

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following items of business.

265/23-24. THE PAVILION PROJECT.

Members considered the contents of the confidential report and, after discussion it was proposed, duly seconded, and unanimously agreed:

RESOLVED:

1. That the costing provided by the Quantity Surveyor be noted.
2. That the figure being included in the draft CIL Bid to BDC be agreed.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Signed: _____
(Chairman)

Date: _____

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MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE ON WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Richard Lees – Vice-Chairman in the Chair
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Graham Taylor
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT:

Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – ATC/Responsible Financial Officer
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer

ABSENT:

There were none

232/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

233/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dawn Johnston, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hazel Stephens, due to other commitments.

Recommended:

That the reasons for absence, for the Councillor(s) listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

234/25-26. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none.

235/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

236/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

237/25-26. **TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2025.**

Recommended: The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2025 were confirmed and signed.

238/25-26 **The following planning applications had been received from Dartford Borough Council / Ebbsfleet Development Corporation / Kent County Council/ Gravesham Borough Council for Members observations** *(full details of these applications can be viewed via the Town Council, DBC, EDC GBC and the KCC websites).*

EDC/25/0171	Garage Conversion to habitable room. 20 Tickner Drive Weldon Ebbsfleet Valley.
OBSERVATIONS:	The Town Council objects to this application as the proposed development would result in the loss of an off-street parking space and would be likely to result in undesirable on-street parking in an area with limited on street parking provision. The Town Council believes that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the provision of parking in the vicinity.
DA/25/01073/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear/side extension. 44 Church Road Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
EDC/22/0110/RVARA	Submission of a Verification Report confirming the completion and effectiveness of Phase 2 remediation works (Condition 12), and a Surface Water Drainage Verification Report (Condition 13), pursuant to planning permission reference EDC/22/0110 for a waste management facility. Unit 6 Rod End Estate, Northfleet Industrial Estate, Lower Road, Northfleet.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations.
DA/25/01082/TPO	Application for 6 Maple trees - To reduce the lateral branches by 1-1.5m (spread approx. 3.5-5m from trunk to lateral ends), subject to Tree Preservation Order No.11 1990. Entrance Of Ingress Park Avenue (in front of Hyndford Crescent) Ingress Park, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations.

DA/25/01083/TPO	Application to re-pollard one London Plane, subject to Tree Preservation Order No.11 1990 East of 8-20 Capability Way Ingress Park, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations.
DA/25/01174/FUL	Erection of single storey rear extension and front porch, and replacement of PRC walls with brick cavity walls. 3 Port Avenue, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.

239/25-26. **The following Granted Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC for members information.**

DA/25/00869/FUL	Erection of single storey rear extension for laundry room. Rosewood 28 Bean Road, Greenhithe.
DA/25/00958/PDE	Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as to whether prior approval is required for the erection of a single storey rear extension. Will not require prior approval. 26 Gasson Road, Swanscombe.
DA/25/00876/CDNA	Submission of details relating to acoustic fencing pursuant to Condition 2 of planning permission DA/23/00664/COU for change of use of building/site to facilitate mixed use as a Scout Hall (Use Class F.2(b)) and a Pre-School (Use Class E(f)) (Retrospective) 110 Church Road, Swanscombe.

240/25-26. **The following Refused Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC during the summer 2025 recess for members information.**

DA/25/00950/FUL	Erection of a part single storey/part two-storey rear extension and loft conversion comprising rear dormer window with Juliette balcony in rear elevation and roof lights in front roof slope in connection with providing additional rooms in the roof space 93 Knockhall Road, Greenhithe.
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241/25-26. **KENT HIGHWAYS SERVICE – AMENDMENT 2 A PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS ORDER ALKERDEN LANE & COLYER DRIVE – CONSULTATION.**

Kent Highways Service had provided the consultation for consideration.

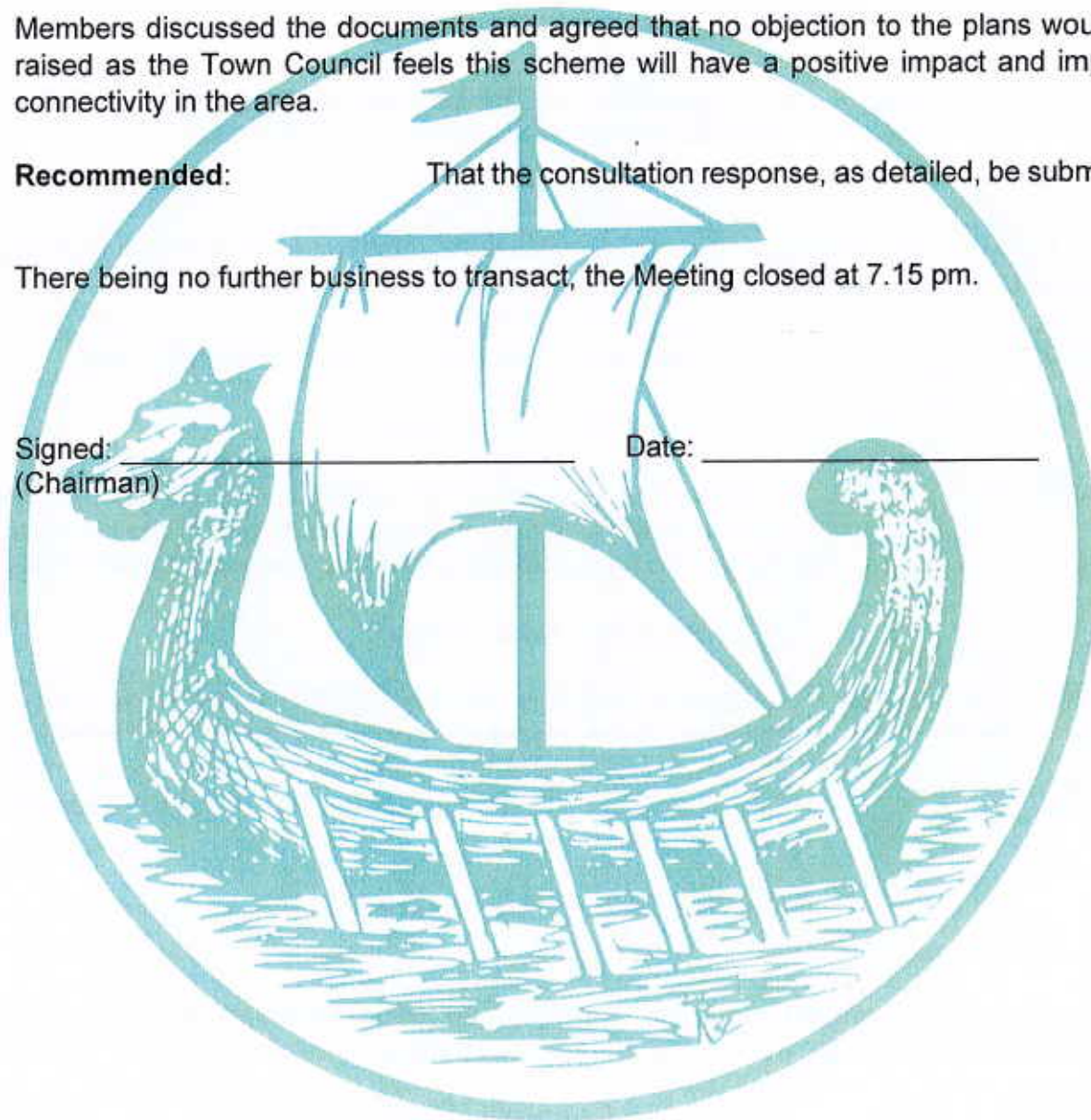
Members were forwarded the documents/information on 24 September 2025 with the deadline for responses being 20 October 2025.

Members discussed the documents and agreed that no objection to the plans would be raised as the Town Council feels this scheme will have a positive impact and improve connectivity in the area.

Recommended: That the consultation response, as detailed, be submitted.

There being no further business to transact, the Meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)



MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE ON WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Richard Lees – Vice-Chairman in the Chair
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Graham Taylor

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – ATC/Responsible Financial Officer
x 3 members of the public

ABSENT: There were none

298/25-26. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

299/25-26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lesley Howes, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dawn Johnston, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hazel Stephens, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Elizabeth Wickham, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reasons for absence, for the Councillor(s) listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

300/25-26. **SUBSTITUTES.**

There were none.

301/25-26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

The x3 residents each addressed the meeting to raise concerns regarding application DA/25/01268/FUL considered under agenda item 8.1.

The concerns raised included:

- Size, scale and overall mass of the development
- Anomalies within the parking survey in relation to available on-street parking
- A lack of sufficient off-street parking provision within the development
- A lack of active frontage resulting in a covered entranceway and parking area enabling the potential for congregation and a hotspot for anti-social behaviour
- The property out of character with the surrounding residential area
- No amenity space for the development
- A lack of engagement with neighbouring properties
- Potential boundary issues as the structure is being built abutting the boundary with neighbouring properties
- The potential for overlooking and loss of light
- Concerns regarding the site during construction, given the scale of the development, and other issues with anti-social behaviour and thefts from construction sites.

The Chairman thanked the residents for their feedback and assured them that members would take on board the points raised during the discussion of the application.

302/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

303/25-26. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2025.

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2025 were approved and signed as a true record.

304/25-26 TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE – A226 GALLEY HILL ROAD, SWANSCOMBE.

Members discussed the latest update provided by the Strategic Resilience Manager, Highways & Transportation, Kent County Council (6 October 2025).

Members noted that the current level of progress had not changed and that the project was still dependant on a successful bid to central Government.

Recommended: That the update be noted.

305/25-26 **PROPOSED DEPOSIT DOCUMENT AMENDMENT 1, INGRESS PARK AVENUE, GREENHITHE – KENT COUNTY COUNCIL.**

Members considered the proposed documents for Amendment 1 a Waiting Restriction Order on Ingress Park Avenue, Greenhithe.

Members supported the Waiting Restriction Order, in principle, as the proposal intended to improve traffic flow in the area.

Recommended: That the response as detailed be submitted.

306/25-26. **The following planning applications had been received from Dartford Borough Council / Ebbsfleet Development Corporation / Kent County Council/ Gravesham Borough Council for Members observations** *(full details of these applications can be viewed via the Town Council, DBC, EDC GBC and the KCC websites).*

DA/25/01268/FUL	<p>Re-development of yard to create nine new apartments (consisting of eight one-bed and one two-bedroom dwellings) with parking.</p> <p>600 Milton Road, Swanscombe.</p>
OBSERVATIONS:	<p>The Town Council strongly objects to this application on the following grounds:</p> <p>The sheer size, scale and positioning of the building on the site constitutes an overdevelopment of the plot that will result in a loss of light and privacy to neighbouring properties.</p> <p>The development is not in-keeping with and is out of character with the residential developments in the area in design, appearance and materials used.</p> <p>The Town Council have major concerns how the build of a development this size would be managed on site as the building covers over 90% of the space with no allowance for the storage of materials or plant / vehicles with no option or opportunity to use surrounding roads given the impact to on-street parking.</p> <p>The parking provisions allocated for the development, 8 spaces for 9 units, would not meet the expected parking standards and will add pressure to the surrounding streets regarding on-street parking.</p> <p>The development proposal does not include sufficient amenity space for the size of the development in line with Dartford Local Plan Policy M9 (criteria 2 and 3) in relation to outside space for all the units being built. The Dartford Local Plan includes a</p>

	minimum provision of amenity space for each dwelling, the proposed development has none.
DA/25/01179/FUL	Erection of a single storey extension to provide two additional dental surgery rooms. 23 High Street, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS:	<p>The Town Council strongly objects to this application on the following grounds:</p> <p>This site has had at least x9 previous planning applications and the planning decision notice for application DA/06/00044/FUL expressly stipulated, under condition 5, that the two car parking spaces and means of access shown on the approved plans shall be kept available for such use at all times and no development, whether permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 or not, shall be carried out on that area of land or to preclude vehicular access thereto. The reason for this was to ensure the permanent retention of satisfactory car parking facilities in accordance with the Local planning Authority's standards in accordance with Policies B1 and T22 of the adopted Dartford Local Plan.</p> <p>The planning decision notice for application DA/23/00451/FUL expressly stipulated, under condition 16, that the x3 parking spaces created were allocated to the three flats on site and that no development shall be carried out on that area of land or to prevent vehicular access.</p> <p>The development of the land between the existing surgery and residential dwellings would result in the loss of all amenity space allocated to the properties, constituting a failure under Dartford Local Plan Policy M9.</p> <p>The proposal stipulates provision for disabled facilities within one of the new surgeries but does not provide any disabled parking provision on site for customers with mobility issues requiring the new facilities.</p>

DA/25/01291/VCON	Demolition of the existing Public House (Sui Generis) and erection of a 3-storey building to provide café (Use Class E) at ground floor and 7 x residential units (Use Class C3) at part ground and upper floors. As well as private and communal amenity space provision and cycle and refuse storage provision (variation of Conditions 1, 3, 9, 20, 28 and removal of Condition 22 for variation of ground floor café to general Class E to allow for retail use or a hairdressers). 60 High Street, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
DA/25/01303/ADV	Replacement of existing double-sided internally illuminated 6-sheet Bus Shelter advertising displays with Double-sided digital displays. Bus Shelter East of Knockhall Chase, London Road, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS:	The Town Council objects to this application as the installation of an illuminated double-sided display with changing imagery at this location would constitute a highway safety concern. The display risks becoming a distraction to drivers on a section of road very close to a busy crossing serving a local school, two junctions, and the entrances to commercial units (garage and petrol station).

307/25-26. **The following Granted Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC for members information.**

DA/25/01021/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear extension. 16 Glasson Road, Swanscombe.
DA/25/01082/TPO	Application for 6 Maple trees - To reduce the lateral branches by 1-1.5m (spread approx. 3.5-5m from trunk to lateral ends), subject to Tree Preservation Orders No.11 1990 and No.3 2008. Entrance of Ingress Park Avenue (in front of Hyndford Crescent) Ingress Park, Greenhithe.

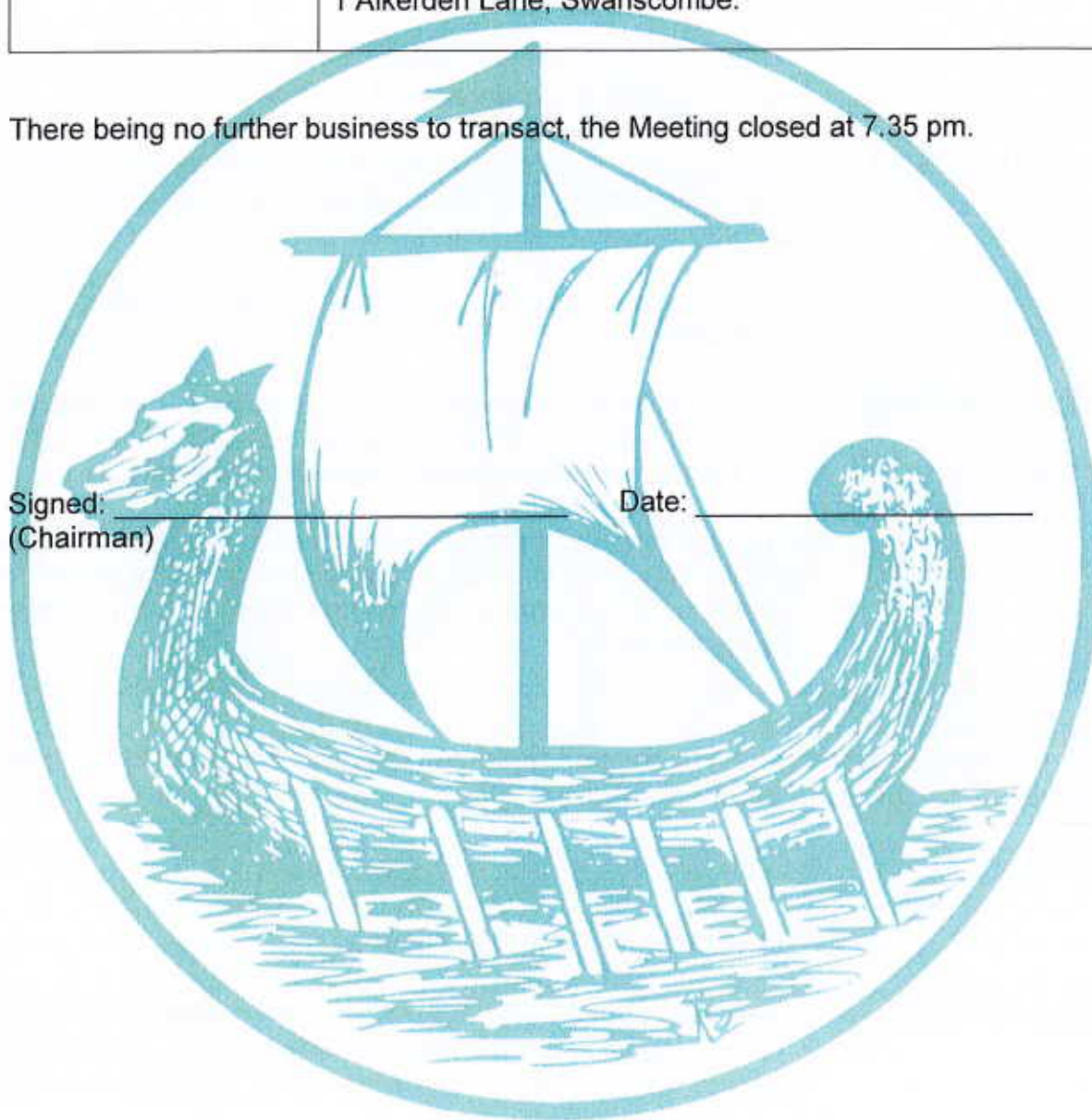
308/25-26. **The following Refused Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC for members information.**

DA/25/00916/LDC	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for proposed change of use to C4 small HMO (6 person) including loft conversion with rear dormer window and roof lights in front roof slope, single storey rear and side extension, chimney removal. 1 Alkerden Lane, Swanscombe.
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There being no further business to transact, the Meeting closed at 7.35 pm.

Signed: _____
(Chairman)

Date: _____



MINUTES of the MEETING of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2025 at 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Lesley Howes – Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross – Vice-Chairman
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Graham Taylor

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk / RFO
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer
x1 Member of the Public

ABSENT: There were none.

266/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

267/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Dawn Johnston, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Hazel Stephens, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reason for absence, for the Councillors listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

268/25-26. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none.

269/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none at this time although Councillor Lorna Cross made a declaration of a prejudicial interest later in the agenda items.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

270/25-26. TO RECEIVE ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.

There were none.

271/25-26. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2025

Recommended: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

272/25-26. MONTHLY BANK RECONCILIATIONS.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2 a member of the council other than the Town Mayor or a cheque signatory is required to be appointed to verify the bank reconciliations produced by the RFO for all the council's accounts on a regular basis, Councillor Richard Lees was appointed (minute 30/25-26).

Recommended: That the bank reconciliations for September 2025 be noted.

273/25-26. BANK TRANSFERS.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (c) Members were provided with a list of bank transfers undertaken between August and September 2025

Recommended: That the bank transfers undertaken between August and September 2025 be approved.

274/25-26. TO RECEIVE FINANCE STATEMENTS AND PASS ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (a) Members were provided with details of all receipts and payments for authorisation between February and May 2025

Recommended: That the receipts and payments between August and September 2025, as per the annexed list, be approved.

275/25-26. SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS.

Members were provided with details of the Flex-Budget Report balanced to 30 September 2025.

Recommended: That the summary of accounts to 30 September 2025 be noted.

TOWN CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S (RFO) REPORT.

Councillor Lorna Cross declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 10. Applications for funding from the Town Council as she was a committee member for the organisation that had submitted the application.

Having declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Lorna Cross left the council chamber and took no part in the discussion, or decision, of the following item.

276/25-26. APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL

Members considered the applications, and, after discussion, it was agreed that the following funding be awarded from the 2025 - 26 budget:

- Swanscombe and Greenhithe Community Transport - £200.00

Recommended: That the funding, as detailed above, be awarded.

277/23-24 ANNUAL ESTIMATES FOR 2026 – 2027.

Officers began work on the Annual Estimates for 2026 – 2027 earlier in the year. The committee were asked to consider whether financial considerations needed to be made ahead of the next part of the budget setting process. The Town Council meeting on 11 December 2025 would consider the draft Annual Estimates 2026 – 2027 which would then pass to be approved and endorsed by the full Council in January 2026 before setting the Council Tax Base for the 2026 – 2027 financial year.

Recommended: That the item be noted

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 7.20pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

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MINUTES of the MEETING of the RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE
held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 13
NOVEMBER 2025 at 7.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Peter Harris – Vice-Chairman in the Chair
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Dawn Johnston
Councillor Hazel Stephens

ALSO PRESENT:

Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Dan Usher – Senior Groundsman/Gardener
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer

ABSENT:

Councillor Emma Ben Moussa

285/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting were explained.

286/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham, due to other commitments.

Recommended:

That the reason for absence, for the Councillor listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

287/25-26. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none

288/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

289/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

290/25-26. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 September 2025 were approved and signed as a true record.

291/25-26. SENIOR GROUNDSMAN / GARDENER'S REPORT.

Members considered the report which updated on the work undertaken, by the Parks Department and the work planned which included:

Broomfield, Eagles Road, Manor Park, Swanscombe Park, Saxon Court, Equipment / Staffing and Miscellaneous.

Recommended: That the report be noted.

TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

292/25-26. INGRESS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE – PROJECT UPDATE.

Members noted the report outlining the task chart and timeline for the work outstanding in relation to the handing over/opening of the Ingress Park Community Centre.

Recommended: That the update be noted.

293/25-26. ESTIMATES FOR 2026 - 2027.

Officers began work on the Annual Estimates for 2026 – 2027 earlier in the year. The committee were asked to consider whether financial considerations needed to be made ahead of the next part of the budget setting process. The Town Council meeting on 11 December 2025 would consider the draft Annual Estimates 2026 – 2027 which would then pass to be approved and endorsed by the full Council in January 2026 before setting the Council Tax Base for the 2026 – 2027 financial year.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

294/25-26. COUNCIL OFFICE AND CAFÉ CHRISTMAS OPENING ARRANGEMENTS.

Members had been issued with a calendar for the Council Offices and Café over the Christmas and New Year and considered when they wished the office and cafe to be closed over the festive period. Officers had been consulted and had no objection to using annual leave entitlement to cover any periods of closure.

Recommended: That the Council Offices and Café be closed on the 29, 30, 31 December 2025 and 2 January 2026 with a notice being displayed, in advance, advising Members of the Public of the closures. As per previous years a relevant message would also be recorded for the Council Office answer machine for this period.

295/25-26. NEW TREES AT MANOR PARK.

Members considered the report detailing the second instance of anti-social behaviour to x2 of the x3 replacement Horse Chestnut Trees.

After discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed:

Recommended: That the x2 trees in Manor Park be replaced with suitable alternatives in locations to be agreed by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Senior Groundsman Gardener.

296/25-26. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Dawn Johnston and seconded by Councillor Hazel Stephens

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following item of business.

297/25-26. GRAVESHAM COMMUNITY LEISURE CENTRE LIMITED (GCLL) DRAFT PROPOSAL SCALE OF CHARGES 2026 FOR THE SWANSCOMBE LEISURE CENTRE.

Further to minute 253/24-25 and in accordance with the Management Agreement (Section 28), the Head of Operations, GCLL, had advised of the proposed Scale of Charges for 2026 and included the current charges for information.

After discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed:

Recommended: That the proposed Scale of Charges for 2026, submitted by GCLL, for The Swanscombe Centre, be agreed.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

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MINUTES of the MEETING of the PERSONNEL COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE, DA10 0GA on WEDNESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2025 at 11.00am

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston - Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Graham Taylor

ABSENT: Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew - Town Clerk
Martin Harding - ATC / Responsible Financial Officer

278/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

279/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Peter Harris due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reason for absence, for the above Town Councillors, be formally accepted and approved.

280/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

281/25-26. URGENT ITEMS / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.

There were none.

282/25-26. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2025.

Recommended: That the minutes from the meeting held on 12 May 2025 be confirmed and signed.

283/25-26. **STAFF MATTERS.**

Members were advised that employees 61 and 71 had recently left on 13 August and 21 August respectively. It had been decided to amalgamate the x2 part-time posts into x1 full time position which had been advertised and the recruitment process undertaken.

The successful applicant, Employee 75, began on 21 July 2025 with the probation period expected to end on the 21 January 2026.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

284/25-26. **STAFFING BUDGET 2026 – 2027.**

In line with minute 273/24-25 and as part of the wider Estimates Process for 2026 – 2027, members considered the staffing budget recommendations propose.

After Members had discussed the level of potential pay rises against the current levels of inflation etc. it was proposed, duly seconded and unanimously agreed:

Recommended:

1. That the inclusion of an initial minimum pay rise of 3.0% in the Estimates for 2026 – 2027 be agreed.
2. That the Personnel Committee at its meeting in May 2026 would set the final staffing salary award for 2026 – 2027.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 11.15 am.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(CHAIRMAN)

Vacancies:

A casual vacancy can occur for several reasons:

Resignations from the council must be made in writing to the Chairman. When the Chairman resigns, they serve the resignation in writing on the Clerk. Resignations are effective immediately on receipt by the Chairman / Clerk and cannot be post-dated or withdrawn. If a member fails to attend any meeting of the council for 6 months, without a reason for absence being formally accepted by the council, they automatically cease to be a member of the council. If a member dies, a casual vacancy occurs.

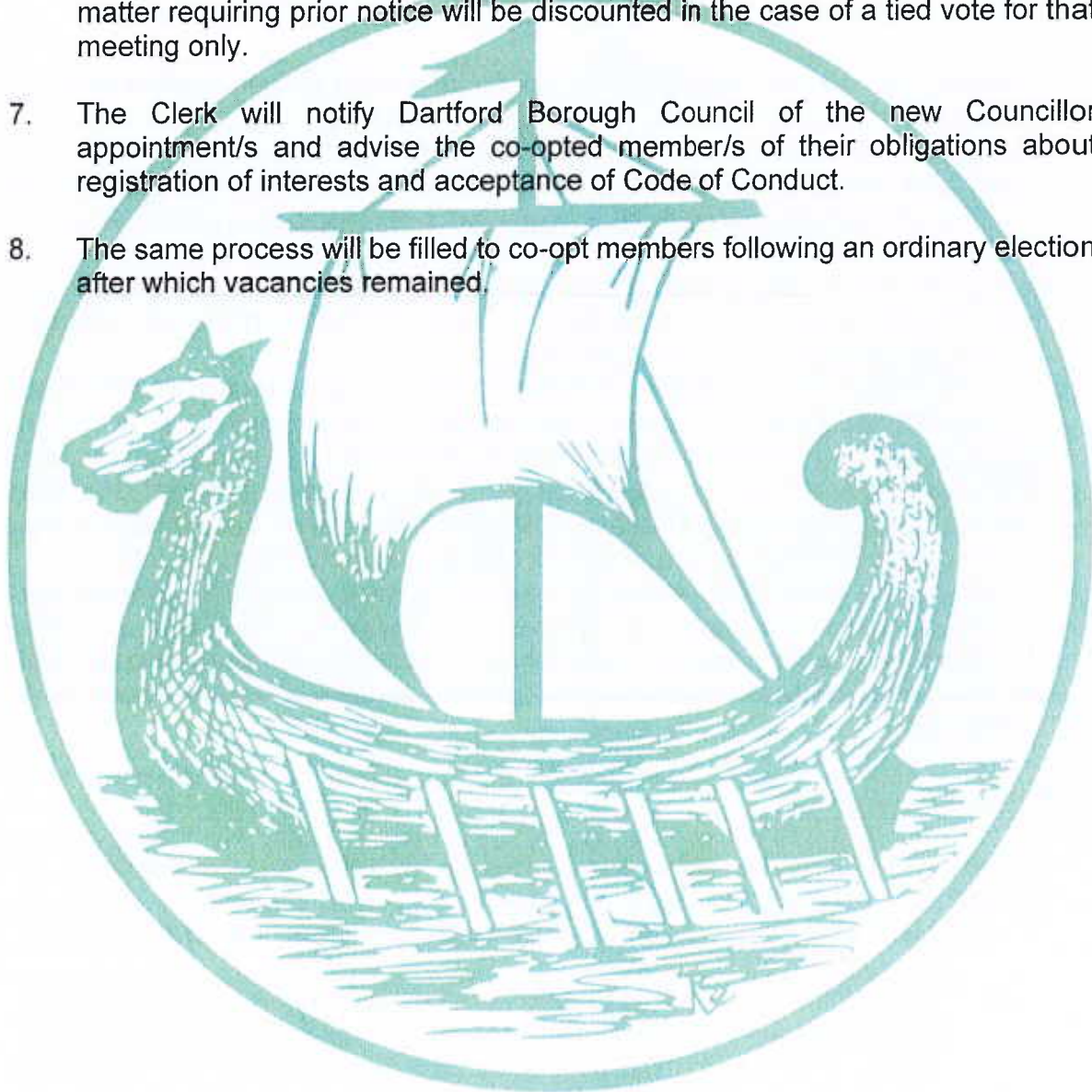
1. Following receipt of a resignation, or confirmation of a casual vacancy for any other reason, the Clerk must inform Dartford Borough Council as soon as practicable. (In accordance with s232 of the 1972 Local Government Act).
2. A notice of casual vacancy will then be issued by the Clerk on the instruction of Dartford Borough Council and will be displayed in a conspicuous place. A notice of casual vacancy allows for 10 people on the electoral register to request, in writing to the proper officer of the principal authority, that an election be held. Should this happen, a by-election must be held (unless an ordinary election is due within the next six months).
3. If no request to hold a by-election is forthcoming, the Town Council are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the council to fill a casual vacancy. Although seeking 'expressions of interest' is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.
4. Whenever the need for co-option arises, the Town Council will advertise the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' from anyone in the parish who is eligible to stand as a parish councillor. All potential candidates will be asked to complete an expression of interest form. (Attached as Appendix A of this policy).

Co-option procedure:

5. At the next available Full Council meeting following receipt of expressions of interest:
 - a. Members of the Council will have received copies of the expression of interest forms submitted.
 - b. Candidates will be asked to give a brief verbal supporting statement and Councillors will have opportunity to ask any additional questions. In the event a candidate cannot attend the meeting they will have the opportunity to submit an additional written supporting statement and they will be considered equally to any candidates in attendance.
 - c. Within the open session of the meeting members will vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39) (When there are more candidates than vacancies, the candidate with the least number of votes cast will be deleted and the vote taken again and again etc. until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies).

CO-OPTION POLICY

- d. One person will be chosen for each vacancy. However, where the Council believes it has sound reason to do so, due to the unsuitability of a candidate, it may choose not to appoint a candidate and to readvertise a vacancy. (Any decision not to appoint a candidate and leave a vacancy must be for reasons that would satisfy any future legal challenge.)
6. If present, the co-opted member/s may join the meeting after signing the acceptance of office form. However, it should be noted that their vote on any matter requiring prior notice will be discounted in the case of a tied vote for that meeting only.
7. The Clerk will notify Dartford Borough Council of the new Councillor appointment/s and advise the co-opted member/s of their obligations about registration of interests and acceptance of Code of Conduct.
8. The same process will be filled to co-opt members following an ordinary election after which vacancies remained.



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE ROLE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR.

Return to:
Mr Graham Blew, Town Clerk,
Council Offices
The Grove
Swanscombe, DA10 0GA

Email: Info@swanscombeandgreenhithe town council.gov.uk

Full name	
Home address Inc. Postcode	
Telephone number	
Mobile number	
Email	

LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A TOWN COUNCILLOR QUALIFICATIONS

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both questions below)

Are you a British, Commonwealth or a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights?	Yes / No
Are you 18 or over?	Yes / No

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions below)

Are you on the electoral register for the ward of Greenhithe within Swanscombe and Greenhithe?	Yes / No
Have you lived either in the ward of Greenhithe, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year?	Yes / No
Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the ward of Greenhithe for at least a year?	Yes / No
Have you had your only or main place of work in the ward of Greenhithe for at least a year?	Yes / No

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE ROLE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

(You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a councillor)

Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order?	Yes / No
Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine?	Yes / No
Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority?	Yes / No
Are you subject to any relevant notification requirements or a relevant order in relation to a sexual offence (as set out in the Local Government (Disqualification) Act 2022)	Yes / No

Please briefly outline of why you are interested in being a Town Councillor.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE ROLE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR.

Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business, or trade union experience.

Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the council?

Please use a separate sheet if required.

Signed

Date:

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Vacancy for a Town Councillor in Swanscombe Parish Ward.

Would you like to contribute to decisions and issues affecting the community?

Expressions of Interest are invited from anyone that would like to be considered for co-option to the Town Council.

Further details and how to apply, including the Expression of Interest Form, can be found via the Town Council website:

by calling 01322 385513

by emailing: info@swanscombeandgreenhithetowncouncil.gov.uk

APPLY NOW.

Closing date is 5pm
on Wednesday
21 January 2026



Requirements to be eligible:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a British, Commonwealth or a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights.
- meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
 - a. You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish
 - b. Occupy as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish/community area for at least a year
 - c. You have lived in the parish/community area, or within three miles of it, for a year
 - d. Your main or only place of work during the previous year has been in the parish

VACANCY



(Local Government Act 1972 Section 87 (2))

NOTICE OF CASUAL VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR THE SWANSCOMBE WARD.

Notice is hereby given that a vacancy exists in the office of Town Councillor for the Swanscombe Ward of the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council.

An election to fill the vacancy will be held if within fourteen days (computed in accordance with Rule 2 of the Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 1986) after the date of this Notice, a written request for such an election has been given to the Proper Officer, Dartford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, DA1 1DR by at least TEN Electors for the Swanscombe Ward.

If an election is not requested the Town Council will fill the vacancy as soon as practicable after the expiry of the fourteen days.

Dated: 05 November 2025

Signed:

Town Clerk

Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council
Council Offices, The Grove,
Swanscombe, Kent, DA10 0GA.

Planning Services

Mr Graham Blew
 Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council
 The Town Council Offices
 The Grove
 Swanscombe
 Kent
 DA10 0GA

Please ask for: CIL Planning Team
 Direct line: (01322) 343434

E-mail: CIL.planning@dartford.gov.uk

Your ref:
 Our ref: SWANS001

Date: 27th October 2025

Dear Mr Blew,

Subject: Dartford Community Infrastructure Levy: Duty to pass CIL to local councils (Neighbourhood Portion) under CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) Regulations 59A to 59D

Dartford Borough Council implemented the Community Infrastructure Levy for development in the Borough from 1st April 2014. All new development which incorporates new floor space or creates a new home is liable to CIL, subject to the development type and rates set out in Dartford's CIL Charging Schedule and provisions in national regulations.

The Council is required to pass on a proportion of the CIL receipts to town and parish councils that have been received from chargeable development in their area. This will be 15% of the total applicable CIL receipts up to a maximum of £100 (indexed) per dwelling within your Council's area.

I am writing to inform you that CIL payments were received by the Borough Council during the period 1st April 2025 to 30th September 2025 from development within your town council area. Therefore, a local proportion of £22,078.95 will be transferred to Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council. The payment will be paid directly into your account shortly. The CIL payments received were related to the following developments:

DA/25/00291	Former Builders Yard, Harmer Road	£13,680.13 Single payment - CIL Discharged
DA/17/01296	11 Cobham Terrace	£3,981.54 Single payment - CIL Discharged
DA/23/00970	125 & 125A Milton Road	£2,917.28 Single payment - CIL Discharged
DA/23/00983	123 & 123A Milton Road	£1,500.00 CIL Discharged

Government guidance requires that: *"The local council must use the CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of the local council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area."*

CIL Neighbourhood Proportion monies may be spent on local priorities. CIL Regulations provide the ability for the parish council to agree priority projects with the Borough Council so that the neighbourhood proportion can be used to support the funding of 'larger' infrastructure that the local council itself may not normally directly deliver (where it supports development within the local area). Please contact me if you would like to discuss the overall infrastructure delivery programme within the Borough, and the potential for the local council to use this funding to support and achieve shared priorities within its area.

Please note that under CIL Regulation 59E the Borough Council may serve a notice on the local council requiring it to repay some or all of the CIL receipts that has not been applied to support development in its area within 5 years of receipt.

Would you please bring this letter to the attention of the Chair of the town council.

Yours sincerely,

CIL Planning Team

On behalf of
Laura Fraser-Coulson
Infrastructure Levy Monitoring and Management Officer
Dartford Borough Council

BUDGET REPORT
ESTIMATES AND RESERVES 2026 – 2027
TOWN COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025

AGENDA ITEM 8

TC 11/12/25

Introduction

This report aims to set out the following:

1. The current financial position of the Town Council
2. Explain the rationale behind the proposed draft Annual Estimates for 2026 – 2027
3. The current levels of reserve, investment and plan going forward
4. Provide recommendations for options to improve finances and resilience

Forward by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

Over the last 7 years the Town Council has taken the decision to mitigate the impact of the financial pressures facing this community (Community Governance, COVID and cost of living crisis), by supplementing expenditure from reserves to keep increases to Council Tax at either low or zero levels.

Whilst this has supported the residents of the Town, it has resulted in the Council being in a financially vulnerable position.

Guidance suggests that Councils of our size should hold 50% of its annual precept figure in reserve to meet challenges that may arise and to allow for sufficient investment in services and infrastructure. The Town Council currently holds 16% in reserve.

When considering the budget for this financial year provision was set aside to attempt to invest a further contribution to the Councils reserve figure. This would increase the Town Councils reserve to 20% of precept figure. In addition, every effort would be made to reduce costs where possible to allow for greater investment and strengthen our financial stability.

Officers worked to review as much expenditure levels as possible across all areas of the Town Council including efforts to secure external funding to supplement our budget. Significant savings were made but unfortunately these had to be offset against the cost of replacing the hot water system at the Town Council Offices & Community Hall.

As part of this report members are asked to remember throughout these considerations that unknown expenditure can occur at any time, that the Town Council originally created the Financial Risk Assessments to manage reserves and mitigate against these pressures, but the use of reserves has removed the ability to hold a reserve with levels of earmarked expenditure which will be explained later in this document.

**BUDGET REPORT
ESTIMATES AND RESERVES 2026 – 2027
TOWN COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025**

Annual Estimates 2026 – 2027

As with the normal budget setting process, the Town Council and all Committees were asked in the lead up to this meeting to consider any potential areas of expenditure that they may wish to review, reduce or consider.

Attached for members consideration is a set of draft Annual Estimates that take into account the following list of considerations. The RFO will undertake the review of this document live during the meeting.

What that means in practice is that members have a draft with some considerations included which are set out. Members also have a list of potential other factors that could be included within the Estimates or impact them.

Members are asked to consider all of these, and any other areas they wish to review, and the RFO will change the live document and update on what this means in practice to the level of Council Tax Charge.

Once agreed the information will be reviewed over the coming weeks with a final version submitted to the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting on the 8 January 2026, which will then be endorsed and the precept set at the Special Town Council meeting on the same night.

Members need to be aware that the proposed overall increase within the attached draft Estimates includes a 3% uplift to the proposed precept due to the loss of the Council Tax Support Grant from Dartford Borough Council from April 2026 onwards. This equates to a reduction in £14,435 in funding. This decision has been made by Dartford Borough Council due to increased pressures on funding they are received from central Government.

BUDGET REPORT
ESTIMATES AND RESERVES 2026 – 2027
TOWN COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025

Areas included within the draft Estimates

Cost Area	Amount:	Rationale:
Public Lighting	£1,000	An additional sum added to the expenditure costs for Christmas Lighting should members consider reverting to conventional street lighting for 2026 as opposed to the solar lighting that has been used this year.
Churchyard	£2,000	<p>The Town Council has responsibility for the maintenance of the churchyard and wall at St Peter & St Pauls Church, Swanscombe.</p> <p>A 5 yearly survey was undertaken on the wall by the Diocese, and several areas of work are required. The total cost of these works sits at £18,000, of which £2,500 was undertaken in 2025 – 2026.</p> <p>External funding is being sought but a budget allowance is set aside to allow for the next section of works to be undertaken in 2026 – 2027.</p>
Civic Budget	£2,000	<p>The cost of operating the annual Town Mayors civic night each year has become unsustainable at its current level.</p> <p>To enable the event to be manageable for any Mayor going forward an additional sum is being set aside for this.</p> <p>Alternatively, members may consider whether this is an appropriate use of public funds and whether the event itself is prudent in the current financial climate. The event itself has traditionally been seen as both a thank you to community groups and a means of fundraising for the Town Mayor. The event raises between £300 to £400 for the Town Mayors Charity Fund.</p> <p>An alternative option would be to instead of having £1,500 for civic expenses and £3,500 for civic night, which is what is proposed in the draft Estimate, to just have a civic budget of £2,000 which would increase spending on activities through the year and boost the civic expenses by £500 which could be donated to the Charity Fund at the end of the year if unspent.</p>

BUDGET REPORT
ESTIMATES AND RESERVES 2026 – 2027
TOWN COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025

Council Office Building Maintenance	£4,000	<p>At present the Council Offices Community Hall is operating with an Air Conditioning system functioning at 40% capacity due to the age of the system and damaged motors.</p> <p>Whilst groups have managed during the hot summer of 2025, it has not always been practical for the pre-school and other fitness and sports groups that use the venue.</p> <p>The Town Councils contractor has provided quotes for the necessary works to be undertaken to update the system, and a budget allocation is proposed within these draft Estimates.</p>
Wage Budget within the Old Fire Station Community Café	£5,000	<p>This is the cost area within the Town Council that has seen the greatest growth over the last 3 years. Post COVID the revenue generated by the Community Café has increased from £15,000 per year to its current level of £25,000 per year. In the last 6 months alone a further 10% increase in daily sales figures has occurred.</p> <p>This rise, whilst welcome, has added pressure on the two staff that currently operate the café which becomes an even greater pressure when covering leave or sickness.</p> <p>At the meeting of the Town Councils Personnel Committee on 28 November 2024 (minute 275/24-25) members were presented with, and agreed, a series of staffing sustainability proposals for the Town Council. This included investment in the staffing levels at the café. This measure was considered to be appropriate due to the increase in revenue and to future proof the business given the age of the staff currently in post.</p> <p>This proposal allocates funds to the wage budget to allow for a third member of staff to be recruited on a 10 hour per week contract.</p> <p>It is hoped that this additional resource will become self-funding as the cover will reduce the drop off in revenue when staff are on leave or sick.</p>

BUDGET REPORT
ESTIMATES AND RESERVES 2026 – 2027
TOWN COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025

Multiple Centres	Cost	£15,000	<p>An overall contribution to the reserves via a £1,000 contribution via 10 different Cost Centres as well as the £5,000 contribution for the 5 yearly tree survey.</p> <p>This would provide a further increase to the Town Councils overall reserve figure to 25%.</p>
Cost of Living		5%	<p>All cost areas with the exception of those already mentioned, wages and rent/leases have had their budgets increased by 5% to take into account cost of living increases.</p>
Staffing Budgets		3%	<p>Further to the Personnel Meeting on the 12 November 2025, minute 284/25-26 all staffing budgets have been increased by a minimum of 3% for 2026 – 2027.</p>
Leases & Hire Charges		Various	<p>The draft Estimates include a 2.5% increase to all charges for halls, sports pitches and allotments.</p> <p>Also included is an increase in rental figures for Leases in line with agreed RPI figures or caps set out within the individual terms.</p>

BUDGET REPORT
ESTIMATES AND RESERVES 2026 – 2027
TOWN COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025

The following are additional matters that members need to consider or include within the draft Estimates:

Cost Area:	Consideration:	Financial Implications:
<p>The Council Tax Base – This is the figure provided to the Town Council each year by DBC based on the number of properties within the Town that are liable for and pay Council Tax.</p> <p>For the purposes of the draft Estimates this figure has been left unchanged from 2025 – 2026 at 4743.69.</p>	<p>Any increase or decrease in the level of this figure wouldn't change the precept requirement but would change the overall cost to each taxpayer.</p> <p>Members need to consider how they would want to mitigate any changes.</p>	<p>An increase or decrease in the numbers of properties by 1, changes the level of Band D Council Tax up or down by 2p.</p> <p>An example would be if your Council Tax Base decreased by 50 properties, the level of Band D Council Tax increases by £1.</p> <p>An increase would have the reverse effect.</p> <p>Should the Council Tax Base reduce and the Band D demand go up, members would have to choose between accepting that increase or reducing expenditure by £100 for each 1 property decrease.</p> <p>The same would be in reverse if properties increased. Members could choose to accept the reduction in tax or increase expenditure (further saving into reserves) to offset this.</p>
<p>Overall contribution to reserves.</p>	<p>Members have been made aware that the Town Council needs to target increasing its reserve figures to 50% of the precept figure.</p> <p>Members could increase the contribution to reserves further than the</p>	<p>Each additional contribution of £4,000 (1%) towards the reserves constitutes a £1 increase in the Band D Council Tax.</p>

**BUDGET REPORT
ESTIMATES AND RESERVES 2026 – 2027
TOWN COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025**

	<p>currently proposed £15,000 increase included within the draft Estimates.</p> <p>It is worth noting that continuing to increase reserves by 5% each year would take 5 years to get back to acceptable levels of reserve, that is without any large, unexpected levels of expense occurring such as the need to replace a vehicle or repair damage to a building that isn't covered by insurance.</p>	
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Reserves and Investments

The Town Council currently holds 16% of its Annual Precept figure in reserves £76,000. This is hoped to be increased to 20% at the end of the current financial year and then 25% by the end of 2026 – 2027.

Part of this reserve (£25,000) is held in a long-term investment plan with the CCLA. This currently returns approximately £1,000 a year to the Town Council.

The Draft Annual Estimates currently plans to increase the level of reserves by 5% per year over the next 5 years (target date of March 2032) to attain the expected figure of 50% of precept held in reserve (equates to £240,000).

Whilst this is achievable within the current demands / financial pressures facing the Town Council, it does not take into account any unforeseen expenditure or matters arising that require access to urgent funds beyond what is available with the Estimates.

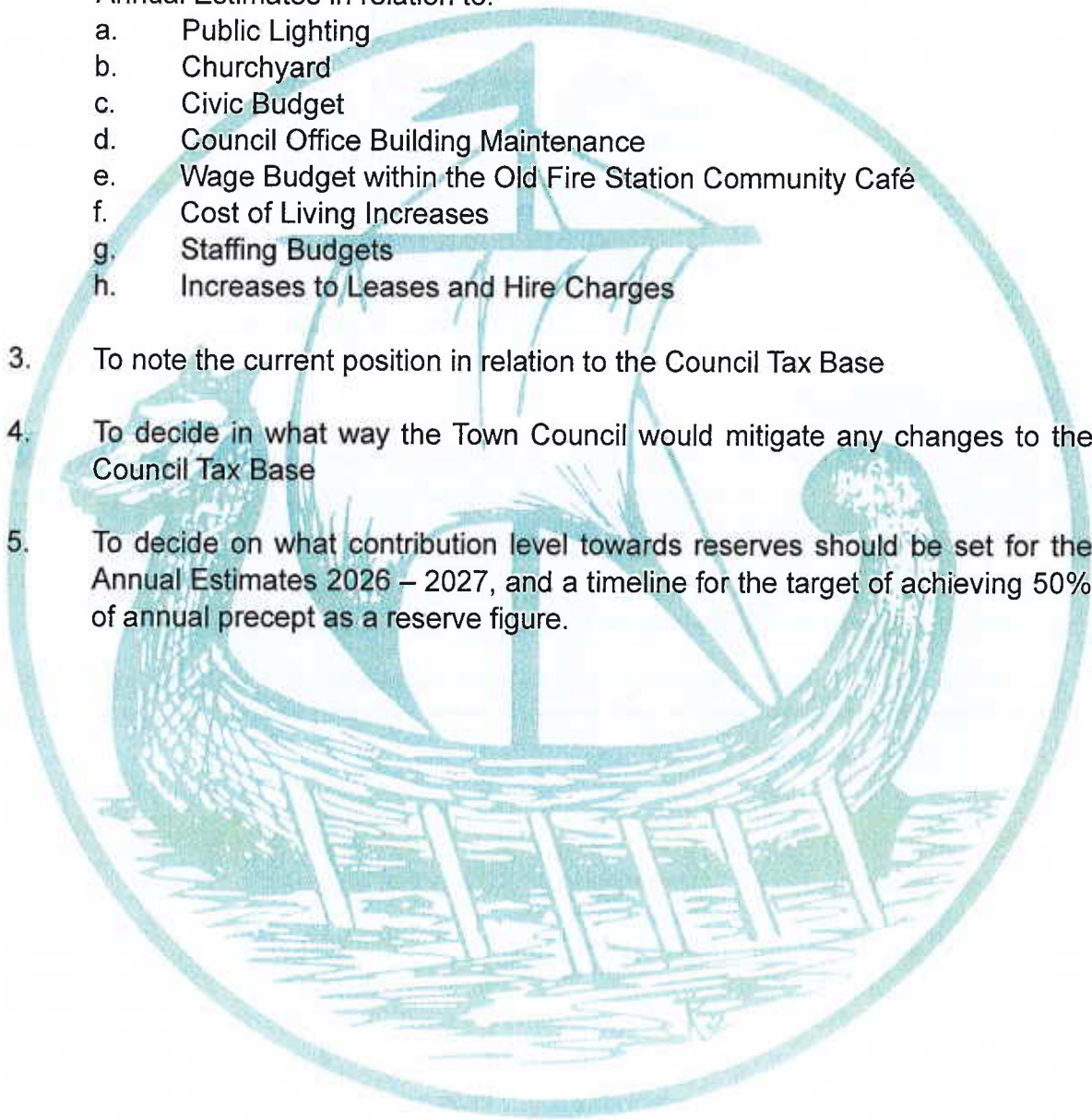
The previous section of this report highlighted the financial implications of adjusting the budget to make a greater contribution to the Town Councils reserves and in turn building up a greater level of resilience against future financial pressures.

It is worth noting at this stage that the future of Local Governance is unknown with the processes of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation moving forward.

The Town Council will need to be able to react to the changing face of council structure and the potential for additional legal and professional advice needed as this process unfolds.

BUDGET REPORT
ESTIMATES AND RESERVES 2026 – 2027
TOWN COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025

Recommendations:

1. To note the current financial position of the Town Council in line with the draft Annual Estimates.
 2. To consider each of the proposed budget adjustments put forward for the Annual Estimates in relation to:
 - a. Public Lighting
 - b. Churchyard
 - c. Civic Budget
 - d. Council Office Building Maintenance
 - e. Wage Budget within the Old Fire Station Community Café
 - f. Cost of Living Increases
 - g. Staffing Budgets
 - h. Increases to Leases and Hire Charges
 3. To note the current position in relation to the Council Tax Base
 4. To decide in what way the Town Council would mitigate any changes to the Council Tax Base
 5. To decide on what contribution level towards reserves should be set for the Annual Estimates 2026 – 2027, and a timeline for the target of achieving 50% of annual precept as a reserve figure.
- 

CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX 2026/27 AS REQUIRED BY
SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL

Balance at Bank 1st April 2025	62,731
Plus Precept - 2025/26	470,622
Plus Government Grant 2025/26	14,435
	<u>547,788</u>

Less probable expenditure 2025/26	473,693
Less reserve account	30,020
Less working balance	25,000
Less Earmarked from 2025/26 Balances	0
Available Balance	<u>19,075</u>

Estimated expenditure 2026/27	521,676
Less available balance	19,075
	<u>502,601</u>

Less Government Grant 0

Total Amount Required 502,601

COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION

Basic rate for calculation as provided by Dartford Borough Council	2025/2026
4743.69 properties	4743.69

Band	2026/27				
A	£70.63				
B	£82.41				
C	£94.18				
D	£105.95	£99.21	£6.74	Percentage	6.80
E	£129.50				
F	£153.04				
G	£176.59				
H	£211.90				

	2024/25 ACTUAL	2025/26 EST	2025/26 PROB	2026/27 EST	2027/28 FORE	2028/29 FORE
Cost Centre 1 Public Lighting						
Code Description						
1 Supply & Maintenance	1000	3150	2000	3308	3407	3509
3 Christmas Lighting	2200	4170	3500	5000	5150	5305
4 Repairs	0	500	500	525	541	557
5 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	1000	500	500
Total Expenditure	3200	7820	6000	9833	9597	9870
7 Miscellaneous Income	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Income	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total to Public Lighting Summary	3199	7819	5999	9831	9596	9869
Cost Centre 2 Grove Car Park						
Code Description						
20 Rates	2100	2100	2100	2205	2293	2385
21 Repairs & Maintenance	0	500	250	525	541	557
22 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	1000	655	655
Total Expenditure	2100	2600	2350	3730	3489	3597
7 Miscellaneous Income	4252	1000	3000	1050	800	800
Total Income	4252	1000	3000	1050	800	800
Total to Car Parks Summary	-2152	1600	-650	2680	2689	2797
Cost Centre 4 Parks Establishment						
Code Description						
40 Wages	110000	108250	120000	123600	126690	129857
41 Equipment/Materials	32000	31000	28000	32550	33364	34365
42 New Grounds Maintenance Ec	0	0	0	0	0	0
43 Fuel	3000	2000	2000	2100	2153	2217
44 Fencing	0	3000	2000	2500	2563	2639
45 Telephone	0	250	100	263	269	277
45 Vehicles	2500	2000	1800	2100	2153	2217
47 Water Rates	2300	2575	2500	2704	2771	2854
48 Gas / Electricity	8000	3000	5000	5250	5381	5543
49 Playground Equipment & Maint	5000	5000	4000	5250	5000	5150
50 Training	1000	2000	1000	1500	1538	1584
51 Knockhall Changing Rooms	200	500	500	525	538	554
52 Parks Works Area	50	750	500	788	807	831
53 Vandalism	600	500	500	525	538	554
54 Trees	7000	3000	3000	3150	3000	3000
55 New Recreational Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
56 Unexpected/Emergency Work	200	750	750	788	807	831
57 Long Term Financial Risks	5000	5000	5000	6000	10500	10500
58 New Community Facility	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	176850	169575	176650	189591	198071	202975
66 Miscellaneous Income	500	500	500	525	500	500
Total Income	500	500	500	525	500	500
Total to Parks Summary	176350	169075	176150	189066	197571	202475

	2024/25 ACTUAL	2025/26 EST	2025/26 PROB	2026/27 EST	2027/28 FORE	2028/29 FORE
Cost Centre 5 Swanscombe Park						
Code Description						
70 Bowls Pavilion Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0
75 Bowls	4272	4246	4425	4437	4373	4505
Total Income	4272	4246	4425	4437	4373	4505
Total to Parks Summary	-4272	-4246	-4425	-4437	-4373	-4505
Cost Centre 6 Knockhall Playing Field						
Code Description						
80 Rates	147	153	153	161	165	170
Total Expenditure	147	153	153	161	165	170
85 Football	6495	6240	6103	6396	6588	6786
Total Income	6495	6240	6103	6396	6588	6786
Total to Parks Summary	-6348	-6087	-5950	-6235	-6422	-6615
Cost Centre 7 Broomfield Sports Ground						
Code Description						
95 Football	9373	8600	8600	8815	9079	9352
96 Cricket	800	1000	1600	1025	0	2000
97 Miscellaneous Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	10173	9600	10200	9840	9079	11352
Total to Parks Summary	10173	9600	10200	9840	9079	11352
Cost Centre 8 Churchyard - SP & SP						
Code Description						
110 Maintenance	600	2000	2000	3000	3090	3183
Total Expenditure	600	2000	2000	3000	3090	3183
Total to Parks Summary	600	2000	2000	3000	3090	3183
Cost Centre 9 Other Projects						
Code Description						
121 General Projects (inc Sum Etr	12000	10000	11000	10500	10815	11139
Total Expenditure	12000	10000	11000	10500	10815	11139
128 Miscellaneous Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total to Parks Summary	12000	10000	11000	10500	10815	11139
Cost Centre 10 Bus Shelters						
Code Description						
130 Maintenance	0	250	0	263	300	300
Total Expenditure	0	250	0	263	300	300
128 Miscellaneous Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total to Parks Summary	0	250	0	263	300	300
Cost Centre 19 Heritage Park						
Code Description						
100 Maintenance / Rent	0	500	500	525	500	500
101 Water Supply	0	0	0	0	0	0
102 Fencing	0	0	0	0	0	0
103 Changing Rooms	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	0	500	500	525	500	500
Total to Parks Summary	0	500	500	525	500	500

	2024/25 ACTUAL	2025/26 EST	2025/26 PROB	2026/27 EST	2027/28 FORE	2028/29 FORE
Cost Centre 14						
Code Description						
146 Rates & Ins Rent - DBC	32500	32500	20812	21853	22508	23183
155 GCLL Management Fee	58000	58000	58000	58000	58000	58000
Total Expenditure	90500	90500	78812	79853	80508	81183
Total Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total To Leisure Centre Summary	90500	90500	78812	79853	80508	81183
Cost Centre 15						
Code Description						
210 Rents / Licences	220	245	245	257	265	273
211 Repairs / Maintenance	0	250	250	263	270	278
212 Water Supply	0	0	0	0	0	0
213 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	1000	1000	0
Total Expenditure	220	495	495	1520	1535	551
218 Rent	5474	5230	5512	5492	6315	7263
Total Income	5474	5230	5512	5492	6315	7263
Total To Allotment Summary	-5254	-4735	-5017	-3972	-4780	-6711
Cost Centre 16						
Code Description						
230 Wages	140000	142750	158000	162740	167622	172651
231 Furn (F&F) & Equipment	100	750	250	788	811	835
232 Photocopier	1000	1000	1000	1050	1082	1114
233 Stationery, Advertising, Postage	1300	1600	1600	1680	1730	1782
234 Telephone / Internet	10000	3700	3700	3885	4002	4122
235 Mileage Allowance	0	200	200	210	216	223
236 Insurance	15000	14000	15000	14700	15141	15595
237 Subscriptions / Publications	7000	5000	5000	5250	5408	5570
238 Civic Budget	1500	3000	3000	5000	5150	5305
240 Chains of Office	0	250	50	263	270	278
241 Legal Fees	2500	3000	2500	3150	3245	3342
242 External Audit Fees	1500	1400	1400	1470	1514	1560
243 Internal Audit Fees	210	350	250	368	379	390
244 Local Funding	1700	2000	2000	2100	2000	2000
245 Miscellaneous	6000	6000	3200	6300	6489	6684
246 Election Expenses	16000	2000	2000	2100	2000	2000
247 Training	300	1500	1000	1575	1622	1671
248 Member Training	400	1500	750	1575	1622	1671
249 IT Services	3950	4000	4500	4200	4326	4456
250 Handyman (including seasonal)	0	500	0	525	541	557
251 Council Offices Building Maintenance	20000	12000	11000	16000	16480	16974
252 Water Rates	4000	2000	2500	2625	2704	2785
253 Gas	4000	2750	3500	3675	3785	3899
254 Electricity	18000	6500	7000	7350	7571	7798
255 Rates (NNDR)	17500	17500	17500	18375	18926	19494
256 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	2000	2000	2000
Total Expenditure	271960	235250	246900	268953	276635	284754
270 Photocopier Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
271 Miscellaneous	1500	1000	2000	1050	0	0
274 Bank Interest	3900	3000	3000	3150	3245	3342
Total Income	5400	4000	5000	4200	0	0
Total to Administration Summary	266560	231250	241900	264753	276635	284754

	2024/25 ACTUAL	2025/26 EST	2025/26 PROB	2026/27 EST	2027/28 FORE	2028/29 FORE
Cost Centre 16 Church Road Hall						
Code Description						
280 Wages	5000	5800	6400	6592	6790	6993
281 Repairs & Maintenance	500	500	500	525	541	557
282 Gas & Electricity	2000	850	1400	1470	1514	1560
283 Cleaning Materials	130	100	100	105	108	111
284 Furniture & Fittings	0	100	100	105	108	111
285 Rates (NNDR)	1200	1172	700	1231	1268	1306
287 Misc Expenditure	0	125	125	131	135	139
288 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	1000	0	0
290 Telephone / Broadband	0	100	100	105	400	400
Total Expenditure	8830	8747	9425	11264	10864	11178
295 Hire Income	11500	6500	11000	6825	7030	3000
Total Income	11500	6500	11000	6825	7030	3000
Total To Community Halls Summary	-2670	2247	-1575	4439	3834	8178
Cost Centre 17 Grove Hall						
Code Description						
301 Repairs & Maintenance	70	500	500	525	-59	-61
302 Gas & Electricity	400	100	200	105	108	111
Total Expenditure	480	610	710	641	60	62
315 Hire Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total To Community Halls Summary	480	610	710	641	60	62
Cost Centre 18 Heritage Community Hall						
Code Description						
320 Wages	0	0	0	0	0	0
321 Repairs & Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0
322 Gas & Electricity	0	0	0	0	0	0
323 Cleaning Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
324 Furniture & Fittings	0	0	0	0	0	0
325 Rates (NNDR)	0	0	0	0	0	0
326 Water Rates	0	0	0	0	0	0
327 Misc Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0
328 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0
335 Hire Income	13794	13796	13796	14086	14508	14944
Total Income	13794	13796	13796	14086	14508	14944
Total To Community Halls Summary	-13794	-13796	-13796	-14086	-14508	-14944
Cost Centre 20 Sports Pavilion						
Code Description						
340 Utilities	1200	700	1000	1250	0	0
343 Rates	4000	4000	5000	6000	0	0
345 Misc Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0
346 Professional Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0
425 Construction Costs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	5200	4700	6000	7250	0	0
350 Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0
426 Grant Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total To Community Halls Summary	5200	4700	6000	7250	0	0

	2024/25 ACTUAL	2025/26 EST	2025/26 PROB	2026/27 EST	2027/28 FORE	2028/29 FORE
Cost Centre 21 Town Council Offices Community Hall						
Code Description						
360 Wages (Caretaker)	9000	8750	10000	10300	10609	10927
361 Repairs & Maintenance	250	420	420	441	454	468
362 Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings	0	100	100	105	108	111
363 Cleaning Materials	300	260	260	273	281	290
364 Miscellaneous	0	75	75	79	81	84
365 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	1000	5185	4540
Total Expenditure	9550	9605	10855	12198	16719	16420
370 Rent	50000	47500	50000	49875	48925	50393
Total Income	50000	47500	50000	49875	48925	50393
Total To Community Halls Summary	-40450	-37895	-39145	-37677	-32206	-33973
Cost Centre 22 Old Fire Station Café						
Code Description						
380 Wages	21000	20800	28000	32400	33372	34373
381 Food/Supplies	8000	4000	8000	4200	4326	4456
382 F, F & Equipment (including le	500	500	500	525	500	500
383 Advertising	0	100	100	105	108	111
384 Rates (NNDR)	2400	2250	2250	2363	2433	2506
385 Electricity & Water	4000	1500	2000	2100	2163	2228
386 Cleaning Materials	100	120	130	126	130	134
387 DBC Maintenance Service Chi	1500	1500	1500	1575	1622	1671
388 Telephone / Internet	0	500	500	525	541	557
389 Maintenance	0	500	500	525	541	557
390 Miscellaneous (and DBC Insura	700	500	500	525	541	557
391 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	1000	0	0
392 Rent DBC	5600	5600	5600	5880	5768	5941
Total Expenditure	43800	37870	49580	51849	52045	53591
395 Café Income	22200	20500	25000	21525	20000	20000
Total Income	22200	20500	25000	21525	20000	20000
Total To Community Café Summary	21600	17370	24580	30324	32045	33591
Cost Centre 23 Ingress Park Community Centre						
Code Description						
400 Wages	0	6000	2000	7000	7210	7426
401 Repairs & Maintenance	0	500	500	500	515	530
402 Gas & Electricity	0	1500	500	2000	2060	2122
403 Cleaning Materials	0	500	100	500	515	530
404 Furniture & Fittings	0	500	100	500	515	530
405 Rates (NNDR)	0	1600	500	2000	2060	2122
406 Water Rates	0	600	200	600	618	637
407 Key Holder Security	0	0	0	600	618	637
408 Misc Expenditure	0	100	0	100	103	106
409 Long Term Financial Risks	0	0	0	1000	0	0
Total Expenditure	0	11300	3900	14800	14214	14640
415 Hire Income	0	14000	4000	14000	14000	14000
416 Commuted Sum	0	6000	13500	6000	6000	6000
417 Contingency Fund	0	10000	0	0	0	0
Total Income	0	30000	17500	20000	20000	20000
Total To Community Halls Summary	0	-18700	-13600	-5200	-5786	-5360
SUMMARY						
Street Lighting	3199	7819	5999	9831	9596	9869
Car Parks	-2152	1600	-650	2680	2689	2797
Parks	188503	181092	189475	182841	210560	217829
Leisure Centre	90500	90500	78812	79853	80508	81183
Allotments	-5254	-4735	-5017	-3972	-4780	-6711
Administration	266560	231250	241900	264753	276635	284754
Community Halls	-51234	-62834	-61406	-44634	-48607	-46037
Community Café	21600	17370	24580	30324	32045	33591
	511722	462062	473693	521676	558646	577276
Total Expenditure	511722	462062	473693	521676	558646	577276

TC 11/12/25

PAVILION PROJECT UPDATE.**Designs**

Following feedback from the Borough Architect as part of the pre-planning process with Dartford Borough Council (DBC) a revised design for Phase One of the project was created with the Town Councils Design Team.

Attached are the latest floorplans and elevations that have been reviewed and agreed. Please note the image of the signage is indicative only and the final name / wording is yet to be agreed.

Funding**DBC CIL Bid**

Once a design had been agreed in principle the CIL Bid was submitted to the Planning Department at DBC on Tuesday 25 November 2025 accompanied by the updated imagery and a condition report (images) of the existing Pavilion.

Ebbfleet Development Corporation (EDC) Bid

Following submission of information to EDC for a grant to meet the shortfall between the project cost and the amount bid to DBC, the details were considered by the EDC Civic Project Board on 10 November 2025. Feedback from this meeting was received on Monday 9 November 2025.

Officers from EDC have confirmed that the Civic Project Board have agreed to take the project forward and this will now be formally considered by the EDC Board on 4 February 2025 for an 'In-Principal Decision' subject to EDC receiving their next five-year funding award from Central Government.

Football Foundation

In early November the Foundation were supplied with the latest drawings and an outline expression of interest for the project. This was completed in liaison with the Funding Support Officer from Kent FA who agreed to allow the project to move forward.

Following submission, the Expression of Interest was reviewed by the Football Foundation, and a site meeting has been agreed for Thursday 18 December 2025 to walk the recreation ground, review the existing building and talk through the project. Following this meeting the Town Council should have a better understanding of the potential levels of support the Foundation could offer.

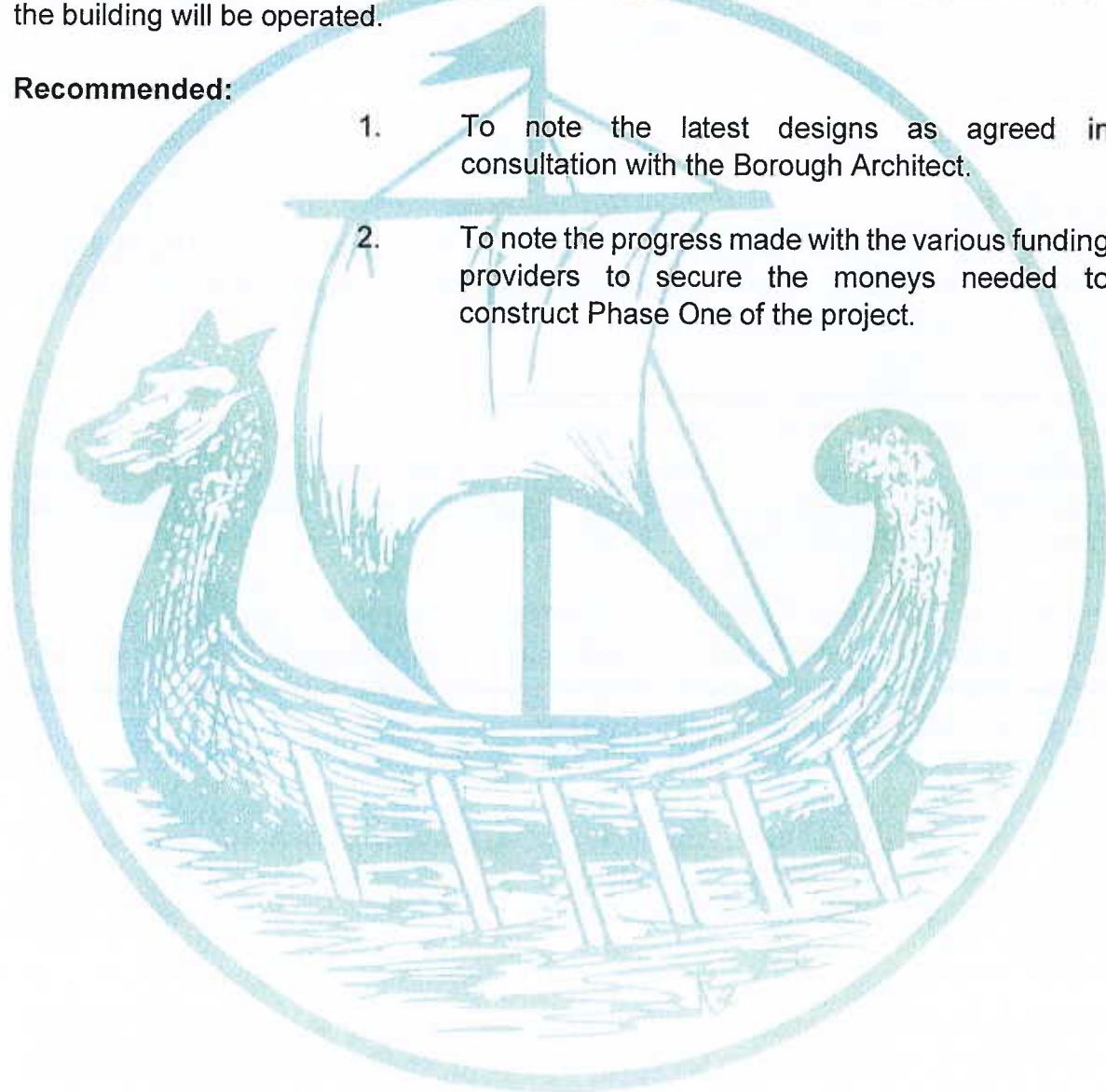
Other Funding

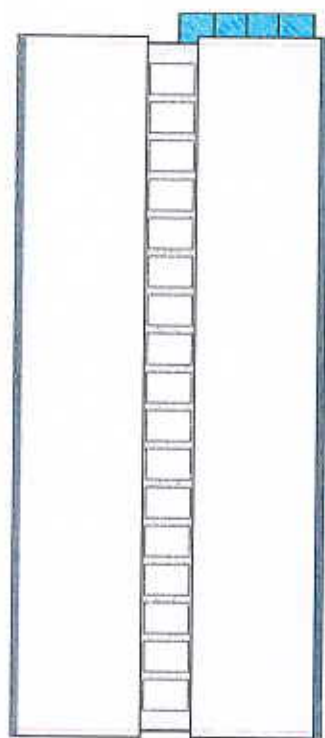
A variety of alternative funding sources are under review to check whether they could meet all or part of the money required. These searches are being conducted on a weekly basis.

As previously mentioned, the interest rates linked with the Public Works Lending Board are being reviewed monthly to ensure it is still an option as the funder of last resort. In addition, a more detailed Business Case is being finalised to support each of the bids submitted as well as for review by the Town Council in the New Year to formalise how the building will be operated.

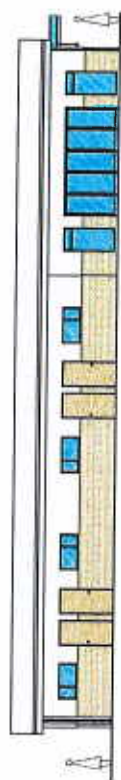
Recommended:

1. To note the latest designs as agreed in consultation with the Borough Architect.
2. To note the progress made with the various funding providers to secure the moneys needed to construct Phase One of the project.





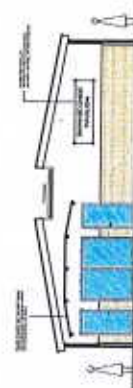
ROOF PLAN



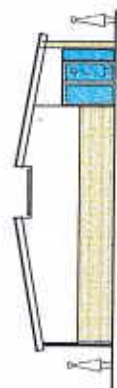
FRONT ELEVATION C



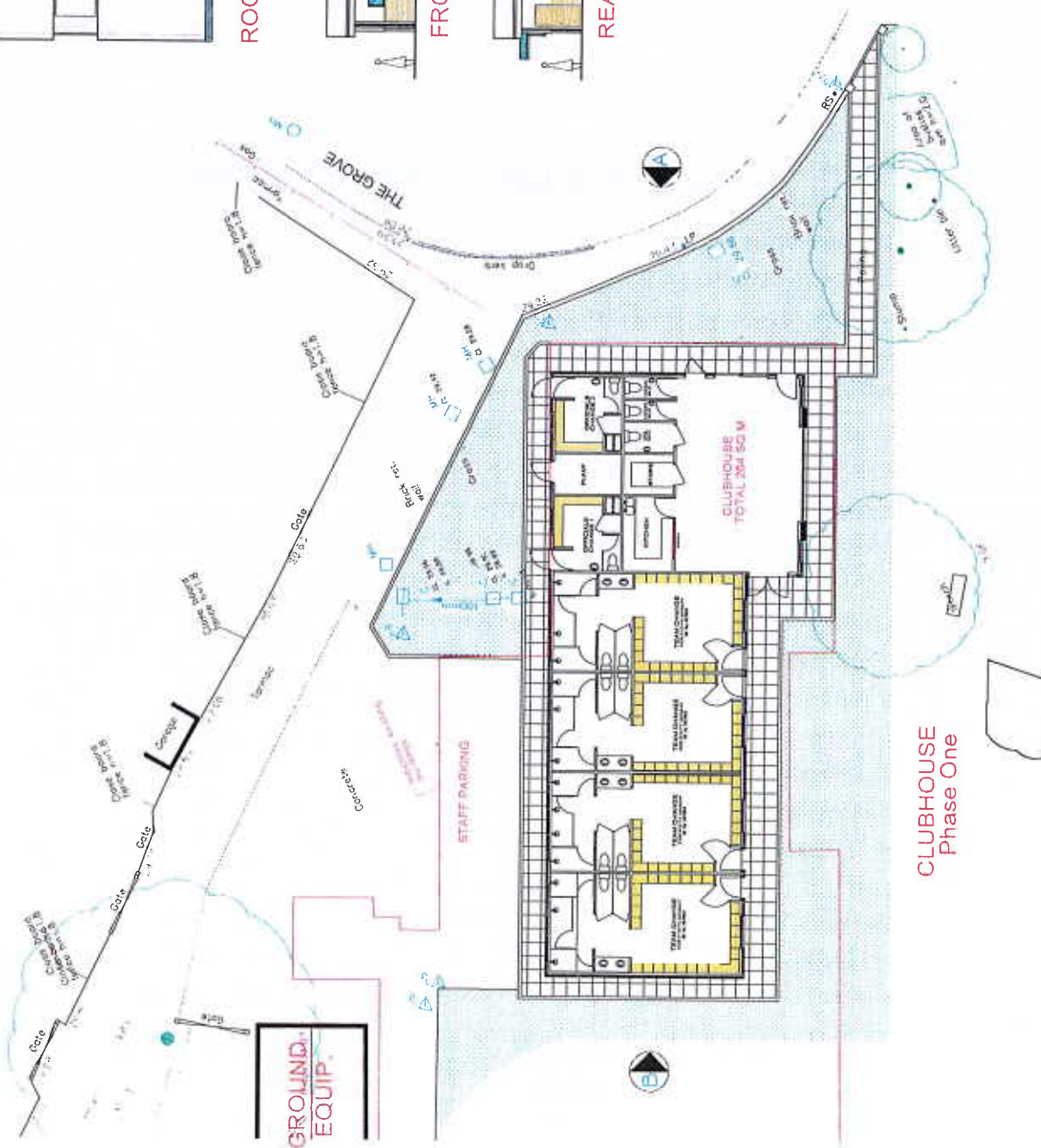
REAR ELEVATION D



SIDE ELEVATION A



SIDE ELEVATION B

AS PROPOSED PLANS
AND ELEVATIONS
PHASE 1
NEW PAVILIONSWANSCOMBE
COMMUNITY HUB

SPORTS CLUBS

Sports Club Owners

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Introduction

At the AGM on the 14 May 2025 (minute 36/25-26) members were made aware of the process being undertaken as part of the Devolution Process from Central Government which included a Local Government Reorganisation.

Members agreed to form a Devolution Working Group to meet to discuss and formulate information in relation to the potential implications of Devolution on this Council.

The Working Group have met once, and work continues on liaising with Dartford Borough Council to review assets within the Town ahead of a next meeting.

Current Position

The process from a Borough and County level is still ongoing and much of the potential impact on Town and Parish Councils will not be known until a finalised model for Local Government Reorganisation is set for Kent & Medway.

The Kent & Medway Leaders group have been working collectively over the last 6 months to formalise business cases for preferred models of governance for the County going forward.

Attached for members information are the reports that were submitted to the Cabinet at Kent County Council on 19 November 2025 and the Cabinet at Dartford Borough Council on the 20 November 2025.

As members will see both take forward a different proposal for a new structure for the County with Kent favouring a single Council for the whole of Kent but adopting smaller Area Assemblies that would localise certain elements of service delivery.

Dartford, along with Gravesham Borough Council have submitted a recommendation for a 5 unitary model with this area falling within a new Council consisting of Dartford, Gravesham, Swanley and part of Medway (north of the river).

Both of these along with any others proposed by Councils from other parts of Kent will have been submitted to Central Government on the 28 November 2025.

As per the attached timeline a statutory government led consultation on options will be held during the first half of 2026 with an expected decision on the final arrangements for Kent by mid-July.

Recommendations:

To note the current position of the Local Government Reorganisation process and the expected timeline for a decision.

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From: Linden Kemkaran, Leader
Amanda Beer, Chief Executive

To: **Cabinet, 19 November 2025**

Decision No: 25/00101

Subject: KCC's Strategic Business Case for Local Government
Reorganisation in Kent and Medway

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary:

This paper presents Kent County Council's Strategic Business Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway for Cabinet approval to submit to Government.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to:

- (1) APPROVE the KCC Strategic Business Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway;
 - (2) DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to take the required actions to submit the finalised Strategic Business Case submission to Government by the 28 November deadline.
 - (3) DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to negotiating and entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.
-

1. Background

- 1.1. Councils in Kent and Medway received a statutory invitation to submit proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in a letter from the Minister of State on 5 February 2025.
- 1.2. Areas were required to submit their Interim Plans for LGR to Government by 21 March indicating their initial thinking and providing an opportunity to seek clarity from Government on the process.
- 1.3. On 15 May 2025, Kent and Medway councils received a response from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to their Interim Plan submissions. This was a pro-forma response sent to all county areas, with the noticeable exception of it raising concerns about the impact of Kent's border location on services such as highways and children's social care, and a request for reorganisation proposals to set out how such impacts could be mitigated through future council structures.

- 1.4. The deadline by which councils in Kent and Medway are invited to submit their final proposals to Government is 28 November 2025.
- 1.5. Following submission, it is likely there will be a period of several months until councils receive notice of the Minister's decision on a selected option and geography. Early indications are that this will likely be between Spring/Summer 2026.
- 1.6. An indicative timeline setting out the next stages of the LGR process is provided for information as Appendix 1 to this report. It is important to note that the timings are subject to change at Government's discretion.

2. Options appraisal and business case development

- 2.1. KCC has undertaken preparatory work since receiving the statutory invitation earlier this year, both through a joint options appraisal (completed by KMPG on behalf of Kent Council Leaders) and through an internal options appraisal conducted by KCC. The findings of the internal options appraisal were presented to the Cabinet Committee for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation in July.
- 2.2. Having considered the findings of both the internal and joint options appraisals, it is the KCC administration's position that it will submit an independent Strategic Business Case to Government for the single-unitary option covering Kent and Medway, supported by three Area Assemblies.
- 2.3. The Strategic Business Case has been developed through detailed internal analysis, independent financial modelling, and active participation in the joint Kent and Medway LGR process. The finalised Strategic Business Case is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 2.4. Given the tight timescales, the document has been provided in Word format for the Cabinet papers publication deadline. However, the designed version will be published in advance of the meeting so that Cabinet can approve the final designed document. The content between the two versions will remain the same.
- 2.5. Whilst KCC has developed its business case independently, consistent commitment to the joint process has remained. In line with government expectations for councils to contribute to a shared evidence base, KCC has shared information and analysis with partner authorities, to ensure that all councils have had access to information about the likely impacts of LGR on current KCC services. Equally, KCC has considered evidence provided by other councils in shaping its proposal.
- 2.6. KCC will continue to be open, pro-active and transparent while working with partner authorities as the LGR process evolves.

3. Rationale for a single unitary

- 3.1.** The administration is clear that a single unitary for Kent and Medway is the most viable financial and strategic option to address the unique challenges that the county faces. The key reasons for supporting a single unitary are set out below.

3.2. Financial viability

Given the funding pressures facing Local Authorities, financial sustainability is paramount. The ongoing delivery of sustainable services to residents depends on future authorities being financially resilient. Financial modelling undertaken by KPMG shows that, in the five unitary option the costs might never outweigh the benefits, and in the other multi-unitary options the payback period is multiple years during which time the additional financial pressures would need to be managed within the county, potentially impacting service delivery and Council Tax rates. Conversely, KCC's proposed option of a single unitary has lower transition costs, a shorter payback period and is predicted to deliver greater savings. The administration is clear that the financial disbenefits of the multi-unitary options do not represent good value for money for Kent and Medway taxpayers.

3.3. Disaggregation risks

Evidence suggests that splitting up countywide, people-based services such as social care and SEND, which represents the majority of council spend in Kent and Medway, would incur significant costs and risk disruption and reductions in service quality. Disaggregating critical services on this scale across a county as large as Kent would be incredibly challenging, both operationally and financially. Whilst shared service arrangements could be developed in an attempt to mitigate some of the risks and costs associated with disaggregation, allowing the management of key services such as social care to be retained at a county level, there are few if any successful examples of such arrangements for people-based services and they are often associated with increased cost and loss of control and accountability for the constituent authorities and reduced quality of service for residents. These types of shared service arrangements would be voluntary, which means they are often difficult to agree in the first place and there is a risk that authorities could withdraw over time, especially if one partner is disproportionately affected.

3.4. Unique geography

Kent's unique geography and border position means that maintaining countywide scale is critical. As the gateway to Europe, Kent is of strategic importance, both regionally and nationally. In order to effectively manage the border, including our UAS Children responsibilities, the strategic highway network and border infrastructure must operate countywide, with Kent and Medway working with partners to manage traffic flow and port resilience. Kent and Medway has an established track record of working with partners at a pan-county level to respond to unique challenges such as these and is a responsive and reliable partner to Government to manage issues of national importance.

3.5. As a peninsula surrounded on multiple sides by 350 miles of coastline, Kent also faces economic and social challenges. This impacts on the effective provision of public services in the area, with Kent only able to look to markets in the West for the provision of services, limiting options for procurement on the most competitive terms. It is therefore important that Kent and Medway has sufficient capacity and capability within its own borders, using its scale to shape markets and develop the skilled workforce our services rely on.

3.6. Disparities in deprivation

There are varying levels of deprivation across Kent and Medway, with areas in Thanet and Swale for example in the top 10% of most deprived areas in the country according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Conversely, there are very few of these most deprived neighbourhoods in West Kent (none in some Districts). Higher levels of deprivation results in greater demand for services, limits funds that councils are able to raise through Council Tax and can create other challenges in supporting local communities. Some of the multi-unitary options group particularly deprived areas together (e.g. Thanet and Swale), leading to significant pressure on statutory services. Splitting the county through the process of LGR also risks embedding disparities between more and less deprived areas. Meanwhile, operating as a single unitary means demand pressures, income and spend can be spread across the county rather than being concentrated in individual smaller unitaries, avoiding unmanageable demand in specific localities, whilst also ensuring that resource can be targeted where it is needed most to address any disparities.

3.7. Legacy debt

The uneven distribution of debt across Kent and Medway is a key issue. West Kent districts have significantly lower levels of debt compared to other districts across the county, which means negotiations around the fair distribution of debt would likely be challenging. It also means there is a risk that smaller unitaries may inherit high levels of debt that they are unable to manage. Operating as a single unitary, meanwhile, would ensure legacy debt is manageable by spreading it across the county.

3.8. Local identity

Area Assemblies will be locally responsive and have responsibility for some place-based services. The geography of the proposed Area Assemblies in North, East and West Kent reflect sub-regional identities and are consistent with residents' travel to work, education and healthcare patterns. The geographic configurations also mirror the existing service delivery footprints of key partner agencies, allowing Area Assemblies to build on established relationships and ways of working to deliver tailored, community-based services for residents.

3.9. No timeline for devolution

At present, the government has not set out a timetable for further rounds of devolution, which means the future for Kent and Medway is unclear. The creation of a single unitary ensures that there is an appropriate strategic vehicle for the county in the absence of a Mayoral Strategic Authority. Given

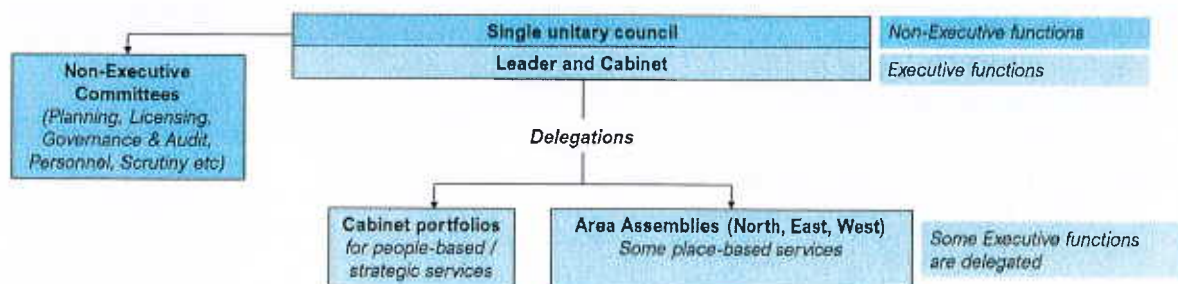
the challenges outlined above, it is imperative that Kent and Medway retains countywide scale and critical mass.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1. An internal options appraisal was conducted by KCC earlier this year to assess the relative opportunities and challenges of options for LGR in Kent and Medway that were known at the time against Government's criteria. Details of the options and the findings of the options appraisal were presented to the [Cabinet Committee for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation on 28 July 2025](#).
- 4.2. KCC then conducted a subsequent options appraisal to assess option 1a – a single unitary for Kent and Medway with three Area Assemblies in North, East and West Kent. The new proposal sought to combine the strengths of both the single unitary and three unitary options under a single model. The initial appraisal of option 1a was presented to Members of the [Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Cabinet Committee on 30 September 2025](#).
- 4.3. KCC also contributed to the joint options appraisal conducted by KPMG, which assessed options identified by Kent and Medway councils against the Government criteria, including option 1a. This is appended to the Strategic Business Case.
- 4.4. KCC's administration has considered the findings of all the options appraisals presented for LGR in Kent and Medway in developing its position that option 1a is the best option for Kent and Medway.
- 4.5. Further information on the options appraisals carried out is provided in section 4 of the Strategic Business Case, whilst a summary of the reasons why the administration has chosen to support a single unitary option and not the other options is set out in section 7.

5. How the single unitary would work

- 5.1. The proposed governance for the Kent unitary is summarised in the following diagram:



- 5.2. The single unitary council for Kent and Medway (the Full Council) would be the Non-Executive, strategic level decision-making body, which would set the

overall county strategy and budget. The Full Council would also oversee several statutory Non-Executive committees.

- 5.3. The Leader and Cabinet would take executive decisions and be responsible for critical *people-based and strategic services*, to maximise economies of scale and minimise disruption for residents and critical services and functions.
- 5.4. Area Assemblies would be local-level, Executive decision-making bodies. They would be committees of the unitary council that sit at area level – divided into North, East and West.
- 5.5. Membership of the Area Assemblies would be the councillors of the Kent and Medway unitary whose divisions are in the geographical areas that the Area Assemblies cover. The unitary council would have flexibility in how it arranges the Area Assemblies, and over time, the initial boundaries could change incrementally to reflect community/population changes.
- 5.6. Area Assemblies would have delegated responsibility from the Leader of the Kent unitary for some *place-based Executive functions*. The table below presents a very high-level, non-exhaustive, indicative split of how the services and functions could be arranged, with further detail set out in the draft Strategic Business Case.

Countywide <i>People-based & Strategic services / functions</i>	Area Assemblies <i>Some Place-based services / functions</i>
Strategic planning (Housing / Infrastructure Strategy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building development (Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)); Local Plan; Local Development Framework (LDF)) • Housing delivery • Minerals • Planning applications 	Housing & Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing options service (assessing local housing needs, advice and assistance) • Building control
Transport strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways & Transport (traffic management) planning & operations • Home to School Transport & Appeals; Concessionary travel & Public & Community transport • Cycle routes • Road safety • Street lighting & furniture 	Highways maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potholes etc.
Regulatory services & Licensing	Community services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trading standards & Consumer protection • Taxis • Alcohol • Public entertainment • Gambling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museums & Arts/Culture • Leisure • Markets • Libraries and Registration • Youth services • Village halls / community facilities
Public protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Planning & County resilience 	Public protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community safety, including Community Wardens

- 5.7. The Area Assemblies would be decision-making bodies, able to take Key Decisions, and would be responsible for delegated budget/s, strategy development and oversight of services delegated to them.
- 5.8. The new constitution of the Kent unitary would set out the arrangements for Area Assemblies and include protections to provide long-term stability for the model.
- 5.9. It is important to note that the Strategic Business Case is not expected nor intended to be a detailed operating model. Following the statutory consultation, it is inevitable that further work will need to be undertaken to refine whichever model of reorganisation is ultimately taken forward by the Minister.

6. Councillors and Community Engagement

- 6.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has advised a minimum of 30 Councillors and a maximum of 100 Councillors for new unitary authorities, and that any exceptions to this need a strong justification.
- 6.2. In determining the most appropriate size for the Kent unitary, it has been important to strike the right balance between ensuring effective democratic representation for the people of Kent and Medway, and ensuring that the council has a workable number of councillors to support the efficient discharge of the council's functions.
- 6.3. As the Kent unitary will represent a large number of people, research was undertaken to compare current unitary councils with higher ratios of people to councillors. Birmingham Council has the highest, with 11,420 people per councillor. Applying this ratio to the Kent and Medway population, this would mean 164 councillors for the Kent unitary. This is within the same range as the initial number of councillors for the Buckinghamshire unitary when it first formed (147).
- 6.4. However, 164 councillors could fail to strike the right balance of being a workable number for a single council. Taking the mid-point between KCC's

current ratio of 20,234 people per councillor and the Birmingham figure provides a ratio of 15,827. For the Kent and Medway population, this would give 122 councillors. This is a workable number for a large unitary, similar to the number of councillors in Somerset (110), for example.

122 councillors

15,827 people per councillor (Kent & Medway population of 1,931,684)

11,341 electors per councillor (Kent & Medway electorate of 1,383,647)

- 6.5.** The Strategic Business case set out a range of proposals to support and empower councillors in their role, including a dedicated Member Support Unit and a simplified committee structure, enabling them to focus on strategic leadership and community advocacy.
- 6.6.** The proposal also sets out an enhanced community engagement approach, including a dedicated Community Engagement Team and a toolkit of inclusive methods such as citizen assemblies, digital platforms, and local partnerships. Taken together, this approach aims to set out a modern and realistic way to ensure that people are engaged, involved and represented.

7. Engagement findings

- 7.1** Engagement with residents and stakeholders has been undertaken in the limited time available at this stage of the LGR process so that the views of people in Kent and Medway could be included in the Strategic Business Case to Government. The key points are set out below.
- 7.2** Respondents to the resident survey on LGR showed mixed views on the need for LGR and on preference for smaller or larger councils. People who were in favour of LGR were more likely to favour larger councils. Residents have a sense of belonging at both county and more local level. Responses showed that residents think a range of priorities are important for their council to achieve, including service quality, value for money and resident involvement. Most people felt that any changes to local government must save money in the long-term, although a minority would be prepared to pay more Council Tax for more local decision-making.
- 7.3** In general, stakeholders felt that, if well planned and implemented, reorganisation could strengthen local accountability, clarify governance arrangements, and improve responsiveness. Some stakeholders emphasised the need for any new model to preserve established partnership working and existing structures at a Kent and Medway level and supported a single strong voice for the county. Some raised concerns that a single unitary authority could weaken local identity and diminish democratic representation. Views on Area Assemblies were mixed with some seeing them as a safeguard for local accountability and others raising concerns about added cost and complexity.

8. Summary of Cabinet Committee and County Council discussion

- 8.1.** In finalising the Strategic Business Case, the administration has given due consideration to the points raised by Members in both the Cabinet Committee for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation on 03 November and at

County Council on 06 November. The key comments raised by Members are summarised below and are also included within the Proposed Record of Decision (PROD) at Appendix 3.

Concerns:

- 8.2. Option 1a was not compatible with Government's current requirements for devolution. This could therefore potentially exclude Kent and Medway from accessing the funding and powers that come with being a Mayoral Strategic Authority in the future.
- 8.3. Area Assemblies were not legally protected and so future administrations could disband them, leading to a loss in local decision-making.
- 8.4. There would be fewer Councillors making decisions on behalf of more residents. As a result, there would be a considerable reduction in democratic representation.
- 8.5. The workload for Councillors could be far too high, with Councillors unable to adequately represent residents. Some Members noted that the level of casework is often higher at district level for lower-tier services.
- 8.6. In order to avoid the continued rise in service costs, there needed to be a move away from a large single authority. The LGR process was intended to be an opportunity to do something different.
- 8.7. The public survey found that more respondents would rather have council services managed by a smaller council covering a more local area (although it is important to note that preferences were different for different age groups as set out in the Strategic Business Case and appended public survey report).

Support:

- 8.8. Option 1a offered the lowest transition costs and the largest future savings.
- 8.9. Option 1a minimised the risks and costs of disaggregation. These costs and risks increased as the number of unitary authorities created increased.
- 8.10. Multiple smaller unitary authorities were unlikely to achieve significant cost savings compared to a large single authority that could leverage economies of scale.
- 8.11. Dividing Kent and Medway into smaller unitaries could exacerbate existing inequalities, notably in North and East Kent.
- 8.12. Option 1a protected the existing identity of Kent.

- 8.13. The public survey indicated that most respondents wanted costs to be reduced.

General comment:

- 8.14. Some Members objected to the principle of LGR being imposed by Government but conceded that an option needed to be submitted and that option 1a was the best proposal under the current circumstances.

9. Key changes made

- 9.1. Some changes have been made to the Strategic Business Case since it was first presented to Members as a draft at the Devolution and LGR Cabinet Committee and at County Council. The key changes are summarised below.
- 9.2. The Foreword by the Leader is now complete and is included within the Strategic Business Case.
- 9.3. The full findings of the public and stakeholder engagement exercises are now included within section 5 of the Strategic Business Case. Where appropriate, some of the key points are also reflected in section 7: Assessment against Government Criteria, specifically in relation to criterion D, and in the Executive Summary.
- 9.4. As part of KCC's commitment to a shared evidence base for all LGR proposals across Kent and Medway, population and electorate figures in the Councillor numbers and support section (within section 9) have been updated so they are consistent with those used in the other Kent and Medway business cases. The figures to be used had not yet been agreed through the joint process when earlier drafts were prepared. Subsequently, the calculations on councillor numbers and costs of Basic Allowances have needed to be slightly revised to take into account the updated population and electorate figures. The revised figures are set out in section 6 of this report.
- 9.5. There have also been small changes in wording in various sections as the Strategic Business Case has been finalised in order to clarify points. These are semantic changes rather than content changes.
- 9.6. The full set of appendices have now been provided and will be attached to the Strategic Business Case when it is submitted to Government.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. To support comparability of financial analysis across options, KCC commissioned KPMG, Kent and Medway's strategic partner for LGR, to provide financial modelling using data from all councils. This is an additional piece of work within the existing contract with KPMG to support the joint process at an expected cost to KCC of less than £30,000. This has ensured that the methodology used to model costs and benefits for KCC's preferred

option has been consistent with that used for the other Kent and Medway options.

10.2. KPMG's approach is based on a high-level, top-down financial model that estimates the impact of disaggregating and aggregating existing services. The model applies broad assumptions regarding potential savings in staffing, property and third-party expenditure based upon information requested by KPMG and supplied by councils across Kent and Medway. It is important to note that the model does not take account of how transition costs will be funded and does not incorporate the potential impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0.

10.3. The table below sets out the high-level unitarisation costs for each of the different options. It compares the initial implementation costs associated with moving to a new unitary model, the ongoing disaggregation costs (i.e. the additional recurring expenditure that results from splitting up countywide services), and the net recurring annual savings that can be unlocked through reorganisation. It also compares the estimated payback period and the 10 year cumulative impact. Further detail on the financial assessment and the methodology used by KPMG is set out in the Strategic Business Case.

LGR option	Implementation costs (one off) (£m)	Reorganisation savings (gross) (£m)	1a enhancement / Disaggregation costs (£m)*	Recurring annual savings (£m)	Estimated payback period (years)	10-year cumulative impact of transformation (£m)
1a	(99.4)	75.0	(6.0)	69.0	3.3	457.4
3a	(127.7)	69.4	(19.7) - (29.2)	49.7 - 40.2	5.4 - 6.7	132.1 – 226.5
4b	(130.9)	67.5	(32.9) - (48.6)	34.6 - 18.9	7.8 - 14.3	(80.6) – 76.7
4d	(135.9)	67.5	(32.9) - (48.6)	34.6 - 18.9	7.9 - 14.5	(85.6) – 71.7
5a	(139.1)	65.7	(46.0) - (68.1)	19.7 - (2.4)	14.0 – no payback	(298.1) – (77.9)

**The range demonstrates the sensitivity of changing just one of the cost assumptions in the model between 0% and 1% for disaggregation costs following collaborative discussions around different scenarios for the impact of LGR on commissioned spend across adult and children's social care. The range is not required for option 1a as there is no disaggregation of social care in this model.*

10.4. The submission of the Strategic Business Case does not require KCC to commit any financial resource. Government will first consider all of the proposals submitted by councils in the Kent and Medway area and then decide which business case will be progressed for implementation following a statutory consultation. Further Key Decisions will then be taken by KCC as necessary during the implementation phase for any specific policy proposals and service restructures, as well as for any significant savings or expenditure programmes.

11. Legal implications

- 11.1.** Kent County Council, together with Medway Council and the 12 District and Borough Councils, were invited by the Minister of State in February to submit a request for local government reorganisation by November 28, 2025. The legislative basis for this was set out by the Government in this invitation, which can be accessed here: [Letter from MHCLG](#).
- 11.2.** It is important to note that Local Government Reorganisation is a government-led process initiated by the Secretary of State. Councils are therefore unable to stop or delay LGR. The Secretary of State can decide to take forward proposals that are submitted by areas with or without modification and will ultimately make the final decision on which business case is implemented following the statutory consultation. KCC is therefore not the decision-maker.
- 11.3.** Following consultation, if the Secretary of State decides to proceed with one of the reorganisation proposals, then a detailed Structural Change Order dealing with the transfers of powers, property, assets, and staff, as well as any boundary and electoral changes necessary to give effect to the reorganisation, will need to be laid out in Parliament. This will also set out the timescales for implementation of the new structures as well as interim arrangements.

12. Equalities implications

- 12.1.** An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken on the proposed decision to submit a Strategic Business Case to government to establish a single unitary authority for Kent and Medway (attached as Appendix 4). The EqIA identifies potential impacts for a number of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Key issues include potential risks to service continuity, communication challenges, and visibility of local needs within a larger strategic framework. The assessment also acknowledges potential workforce impacts.
- 12.2.** Regarding positive impacts, the model is expected to improve consistency and equity in how services are planned, commissioned, and delivered across the county by consolidating governance and service delivery into a single authority. This is particularly relevant for groups who may currently experience variation in access or outcomes due to the fragmented nature of the two-tier system. A unified structure will help reduce postcode lotteries and ensure that residents with protected characteristics receive a more consistent standard of support regardless of where they live. Furthermore, unlike multi-unitary options, which would disaggregate key services such as adult social care, SEND, and public health, the single unitary model preserves the scale and integration needed to manage complex countywide challenges. This is particularly critical for older residents and children and young people who rely on consistent, joined-up support across service boundaries.

- 12.3.** Further EqlAs will be undertaken as necessary for specific policy proposals, service restructures, or operational changes that emerge from the reorganisation process, ensuring that equality considerations are embedded at every stage of implementation.

13. Data Protection implications

- 13.1.** Internal advice has been sought from the Council's Data Protection team, who have confirmed that a Data Protection Impact Assessment does not need to be conducted at this stage as no personal data has been processed as part of developing the Strategic Business Case.
- 13.2.** Data Protection Impact Assessments will however be undertaken as necessary during the next stages of the LGR process. This will be particularly important during the transition phase, where it is highly likely that large volumes of client data will need to be migrated from KCC to the new successor authority/authorities.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1.** The KCC administration is clear that the most viable option for LGR in Kent and Medway is a single unitary authority. The model is uniquely designed to meet the scale, complexity, and strategic importance of the county. It delivers the benefits of reorganisation while avoiding the risks of fragmentation. Critically, it is also the most financially viable option, in both the short and the long term, helping to put Kent and Medway on a firmer financial footing.

15. Next steps

- 15.1.** Following Cabinet's approval of this Key Decision (subject to call-in), KCC's Strategic Business Case will be submitted to Government in time for the deadline of 28 November 2025.
- 15.2.** Following submission, the Strategic Business Case will be published on KCC's website (kent.gov.uk).

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (1) APPROVE the KCC Strategic Business Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway;
- (2) DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to take the required actions to submit the finalised Strategic Business Case Submission to Government by the 28 November deadline.

- (3) DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to negotiating and entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.
-

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: LGR Process Timeline

Appendix 2: KCC's Strategic Business Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway

Appendix 3: Proposed Record of Decision (PROD)

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment

Background documents:

Papers to County Council, 06 November 2025, available at <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=113&MId=9799>

Papers to Devolution and LGR Cabinet Committee, 03 November 2025, available at <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=979&MId=9846>

Papers to Devolution and LGR Cabinet Committee, 30 September 2025, available at <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=979&MId=9845>

Paper to Devolution and LGR Cabinet Committee, 28 July 2025, available at <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=979&MId=9870&Ver%20=4>

KCC webpage for Local Government Reorganisation and devolution, containing letters to and from KCC and government and further information regarding LGR and devolution, available at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/local-government-reorganisation-and-devolution>

English Devolution White Paper, Power and partnerships: Foundations for growth, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 16 December 2024

available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth>

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, July 2025, available at <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/59-01/0283/240283.pdf>

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL
17 NOVEMBER 2025

CABINET
20 NOVEMBER 2025

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – CONSIDERATION OF
OPTIONS FOR SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT**

1. Summary

- 1.1 This is a key decision as it is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.
- 1.2 Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024, all councils in Kent and Medway were invited in February 2025 by the Secretary of State to submit proposals for local government reorganisation (LGR) for the region of Kent. This paper provides an overview of the collaborative work that has taken place since February 2025 on LGR between all Kent Councils and presents the summary business cases so that a decision can be taken as to which business case this Council will submit to government on 28 November 2025.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

General Assembly of the Council:

- 2.1 That the General Assembly of the Council considers the business cases for the various options for LGR for the region of Kent and recommends to Cabinet the option to be submitted to government by this Council on 28 November 2025.

Cabinet:

- 2.2 That Cabinet approves which option for LGR for the region of Kent this Council should submit to government on 28 November 2025.

3. Background and Discussion

- 3.1. Kent and Medway's 14 Local Authorities have a strong history of working closely together on shared risks and opportunities, lobbying on significant areas of common interest, and on responding collectively to strategic developments nationally or regionally. This is primarily through existing groups, including Kent Council Leaders and Joint Kent Chief Executives (a group made up of the Chief Officers of Kent's 14 Local Authorities, alongside wider strategic local partners). As detailed in this report, the Kent Councils have taken a collaborative approach to local government reorganisation (LGR), a position which is quite different to the way that other county areas have approached LGR.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL
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- 3.2. On 16 December 2024, HM Government published the English Devolution White Paper setting out its ambition to reshape local government in England. This would be through a combination of devolution to new strategic authorities and reorganisation of all of the remaining two-tier local government areas in England into unitaries. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill published on 10 July 2025 formalised HM Government's intentions to enact these changes.
- 3.3. In response to the White Paper, Council Leaders in Kent were invited to apply for, and submitted a formal request to receive priority status to be included in the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP). If successful, this would have accelerated the devolution process and provided additional Government support for those councils on the DPP.
- 3.4. On 5 February 2025, the government notified the councils in Kent and Medway in a letter from the then Local Government Minister that they were not selected to be in the DPP and instead received a statutory invitation to submit proposals for local government reorganisation (LGR). This included guidance around the development of proposals and an expectation that all 14 councils would collaborate. The letter detailed a timeline for the process, including a requirement for a joint interim proposal by 21 March 2025 setting out direction of travel and intentions, and a deadline of 28 November 2025 to receive a final submission on reorganisation. Kent Council Leaders agreed to endeavour to work together to respond to the Minister's direction.
- 3.5. On 21 March 2025, Kent Council Leaders submitted an interim response setting out the councils' commitment to working together on reorganisation, highlighting examples of exceptional challenges faced only by Kent, the importance of aligning devolution with reorganisation and the risks of not having a strategic countywide body for Kent. Alongside the collective response signed by all 14 Council Leaders, there were a number of 'side letters' from individual councils.
- 3.6. Government have been clear that councils are expected to work together to develop LGR proposals for their areas. Each area nationally has been awarded funding to contribute towards the development of proposals. Kent and Medway were awarded £514,410. Kent Council Leaders agreed to use this money collectively to develop a shared evidence base, options appraisal and business case(s) to prepare for the 28 November 2025 submission and procure the necessary external support and expertise to meet the deadline.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL
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- 3.7. KPMG were appointed as the Kent Councils' Strategic Business Partner, following a joint procurement process for Phases 1 and 2 (as set out below). They commenced work with all 14 councils in July 2025.

- 3.8. The work is split into 4 phases as follows:

Phase 1 – Evidence Base and Options Appraisal

KPMG have worked with all 14 Councils to develop a single, impartial, shared evidence base and options appraisal, identifying a long list of options (geographies) and appraising them according to the Minister's specified criteria.

Phase 2 – Strategic Business Case Development

Whilst Kent County Council have prepared their business case in-house using the shared evidence base, KPMG have worked with the other 13 Councils on preparing and refining the chosen options into strategic business cases in preparation for the 28 November 2025 submission deadline.

Phases 3 and 4 – Ongoing Support to Vesting Day Requirements

Following Ministerial decision, significant work will then be required to prepare for transition from the existing 14 Councils to the new Unitary Council(s) in a safe and legal way. Phase 3 will run from Ministerial decision to election to shadow authority(s), and Phase 4 from election to shadow authority(s) to vesting day (the day upon which formal responsibility is handed over).

A further procurement process will be required for any additional external support determined necessary for Phases 3 and 4. The existing contract with KPMG is for Phases 1 and 2 only.

- 3.9. At an Extraordinary Kent Council Leaders meeting on 3 September 2025, Leaders were presented with the evidence base and options appraisal assembled by KPMG colleagues with significant input from staff across all 14 councils (Phase 1 above). There were seven geographies in scope. As per the governance jointly set around the strategic business partner contract and the funding from Government, each Leader was asked to select the option they would support progressing to strategic business case, the two with the most support then being prioritised for the collective process. As a result of the debate, Options 3a and 4b (see details of the options below in paragraph 3.12) were selected to progress.

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- 3.10. Leaders were then asked to consider whether they would like to progress any additional options to strategic business case at an additional cost, requiring a simple majority (8 out of 14 Leaders) to progress as part of the jointly funded work. After discussion by the Leaders, Options 1a, 4c, 4d and 5a did not attract a majority and as such were not agreed to progress within the jointly funded work.
- 3.11. Subsequently, Kent County Council (Option 1a) and Medway Council (Option 4d) determined that they were willing to self-fund strategic business cases for their specified options.
- 3.12. Following a meeting of the Dartford Borough Council Conservative Group, it was determined that their preferred option would be Option 5a (five unitary councils across Kent) on the basis that:
- Decisions would be made locally with services shaped by leaders who know their areas best;
 - This would protect Dartford's identity and safeguard it's unique heritage and character;
 - It would align with health and care services, resulting in better outcomes for residents;
 - The new councils would be fair and sustainable without losing the local connection;
 - It would result in structure that would cut waste, adapt quickly and focus resources where they're needed most.

The Leader then met with the other Group Leaders who gave their support to jointly commission KPMG with Gravesham Borough Council to develop the business case for Option 5a (see Cabinet minutes 30 October 2025).

- 3.13. The options taken to full business case are summarised below. Maps for each option are shown within the executive summaries at Appendix A to E:

Option 1A: A single unitary for the whole of Kent & Medway with three area assemblies based around the existing North, West and East Kent clusters.

Option 3A: Three unitary authorities split North Kent (Dartford, Gravesham, Medway & Swale); West Kent (Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells) and East Kent (Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe and Thanet).

Option 4B: Four unitary authorities split North Kent (Dartford, Gravesham & Medway); West Kent (Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells); East Kent (Canterbury, Dover and Thanet) and Mid Kent (Ashford, Folkestone & Hythe and Swale)

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Option 4D: Four unitary authorities split North Kent (Dartford North, Gravesham North, Medway North and Swale North); West Kent (Dartford West, Gravesham West, Medway West, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells); Mid Kent (Ashford, Folkestone & Hythe (Mid), Maidstone) and East Kent (Canterbury, Dover, Faversham, Folkestone & Hythe (East) and Thanet)

Option 5A: Five unitary authorities split North Kent (Dartford, Gravesham, parts of Medway West of the River Medway and Swanley); West Kent (Maidstone, Sevenoaks (excluding Swanley), Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells); Mid Kent (the rest of Medway and the Western part of Swale (Sittingbourne area); East Kent (the rest of Swale (Faversham area), Canterbury and Thanet) and South Kent (Ashford, Dover and Folkestone & Hythe).

- 3.14. All the business cases have progressed with support from the jointly appointed strategic business partner and have aligned with collective work around the shared evidence base and overarching governance and timescales. Ultimately, business cases can be submitted by individual councils or groups of councils. Each council can only support one case.
- 3.15. Timescales leading up to 28 November 2025 submission have been tight and as such, a regular rhythm of collaborative governance meetings, milestones and activity have been established. These included:

Steering Group – weekly chief executive and senior officer meetings to oversee the activity leading into the strategic business cases and ensure it is delivered to time and on budget with the strategic business partner.

Local Authority Chief Executives – weekly Programme Board role in terms of officer decision-making, oversight, and liaison with Leaders.

Kent Council Leaders – meetings at regular intervals and at key milestones to ensure the process is genuinely politically-led and proceeds as per Leaders collectively agreed approach, ultimately producing what Leaders need to satisfy governance in each of their individual Councils and enable a submission on 28 November 2025.

- 3.16. Officers from this Council have worked closely with officers from Gravesham Borough Council and KPMG to develop the business case for Option 5a.

The business cases for the various options can be found at <https://kentcouncilleaders.org.uk/councils-reveal-draft-business-cases-for-new-councils/> (a hard copy of each business case is available in the Members' Room). The Government's letter of 5 February 2025 sets out six criteria for successful local government reorganisation and this informs the structure and content of the business cases:

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- Establishing a single tier of local government
- Efficiency, capacity and resilience to shocks
- High quality, sustainable public services
- Collaboration to meet local needs
- Enabling devolution
- Strengthening community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment.

The Government has emphasised that these criteria are not weighted but instead, decisions will be taken based on the merits of each proposal and the local context.

Executive summaries of each business case are shown at Appendices A to E to this report and highlight the advantages of each proposal.

- 3.17. Following submission, it is likely there will be a period of several months until notice is received of the Minister's decision on a selected option and geography. Early indications are this will likely be Summer 2026.
- 3.18. The Structural Changes Order (SCO) that officially creates the new councils, the shadow elections and vesting date, will likely be enacted after the summer recess in 2026.
- 3.19. In the interim, it will be important for Councils to collectively prepare for Phases 3 and 4 so that they will be ready to progress the necessary and extensive transition work required to ensure services are safe and legal on day 1 of the new Unitary Council(s).
- 3.20. Whilst waiting for decision, it is envisaged that Kent Council Leaders and Chief Executives will work collaboratively and focus on putting in place the arrangements required and to determine any procurement activity they deem necessary for a strategic business partner for Phases 3 & 4.
- 3.21. **Consultation**

There is no statutory requirement on the Council to consult residents affected by a proposed reorganisation (see legal section). However, the Secretary of State's invitation and guidance stated that it is for councils to decide how best to engage locally and in a meaningful and constructive way.

Awareness rising and engagement in plans for local government reorganisation has been undertaken. This has been by joint process led by Canterbury City Council Communications Team, with input from officers from every Council, including Dartford Borough Council. This included an open public survey, open to anyone to complete, which was carried out between Tuesday 9 September and Friday 10 October 2025. The survey was a standardised resident survey, agreed by all Kent Councils. A summary of the key findings include:

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- A total of 2,107 responses were received.
- Service quality was ranked as residents' top priority, with 81.4% rating it very important and a further 7.5% as important, underlining the need to maintain reliable everyday services through local government reorganisation.
- Efficiency and value for money was the second priority, with 74.3% rating it very important and 12.3% as important and residents expressing anxiety about costs and desire that promised savings materialise in practice.
- Problem resolution time ranked third in importance, with 85.3% of respondents indicating it held some level of importance and emphasising concerns about delays and service gaps.

A full report of the responses can be found on the Kent Leaders website: <https://kentcouncilleaders.org.uk/councils-reveal-draft-business-cases-for-new-councils/>.

Stakeholder and Partner engagement has also been undertaken. This engagement has sought to understand:

- What are the key factors that should be taken into account for reorganisation
- What opportunities could be realised by reorganisation
- What problems could be fixed by reorganisation
- What problems could be created or will not be fixed by reorganisation

Kent Councils recognised the importance of close collaboration with their partners and the opportunities for Public Sector Reform. Therefore, workshops were also undertaken with key strategic partners (including Health, Police, Education, DWP). These workshops explored the options being considered, and having an open discussion on:

- Challenges in the current system and ways of working
- Strengths in current ways of working to be protected and/or built upon
- Opportunities that LGR brings to improve ways of working

Crucially, the approach to public and stakeholder engagement was not aimed at gauging support for specific options, but rather at exploring the potential benefits and opportunities, alongside any concerns or challenges associated with the proposals. This enabled the Councils to take a well-informed and thoughtful approach in addressing these factors within the proposals.

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4. Relationship to the Corporate Plan

N/A

5. Financial, legal, staffing and other implications and risk assessments*

Financial Implications	<p>The cost of developing the two business cases selected by the Kent Leaders is being funded from a government grant of £514,410 paid directly to KCC. The procurement of management consultants, KPMG was undertaken by KCC based on a specification determined by Kent Leaders and Chief Executives of all 14 authorities.</p> <p>Those councils working on other business cases are self-funding this. Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils have jointly commissioned KPMG to develop the business case for Option 5a at a cost of £105k, split 50/50. The Council has set aside funding within the IIR to cover the cost of support needed in preparing for local government reorganisation and so the cost of KPMG's support will be met from this.</p> <p>KPMG have provided and used a model to assess the unitary options submitted by individual councils using Government-defined criteria. Their approach is based on a high-level, top-down financial model that estimates the impact of disaggregating and aggregating existing services. This model applies broad assumptions regarding potential savings in staffing, property, and third-party expenditure based upon information requested by KPMG and supplied by the Kent Authorities.</p> <p>The modelling is based on current budgeted 2025-26 spend and forecast spend in subsequent years from the 14 individual councils. As far as possible this spend has been compiled on a like for like basis using the definitions used in statutory returns. These are based on net service spend before any income from central government grants or local taxation. This may differ from how spend is reported internally within the individual councils.</p>
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	<p>The Kent Finance Officer Group (KFOG) have collectively agreed on the following position on the analysis carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGR, whilst generally expected to be positive for local government finances in the long term, will not solve the cost, demand and associated funding challenges currently being faced. The scope of the financial modelling considers purely the impact of reorganisation, all other things being equal.• The work carried out at this stage is not a zero-based exercise of the financial impact of LGR. Assumptions are based on the past LGR business cases produced to support other areas which have been through the LGR submission process in recent years.• Due to the size and number of councils in Kent, there is not a fully comparable example of recent reorganisations elsewhere in the country to confidently benchmark against. Due to the level of complexity, payback periods in Kent may therefore be longer than some other reorganisations.• The speed of delivery and level of savings post vesting day of the new councils will largely be impacted by decisions already made by the predecessor authorities and those taken by the new authorities. These include decisions in relation to contractual obligations, borrowing, transformation and wider public service reform.• The financial modelling does not take account of how transition costs will be funded.• The assumptions in the model have not been tested against actual outturn data for any of the previous local government reorganisation programmes.
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- Given the context above, the modelling should not be seen as a set of targets that new authorities may be held to account for, as setting the post-vesting day budget will be the responsibility of the new authorities.
- Consolidation of assets, reserves and debt is outside the scope of this work and will have material implications under any of the unitary options proposed.

Whilst being fully supportive of the long-term benefits of LGR, all Kent Finance officers agree that LGR does not in itself provide a viable solution to the scale of the financial challenge faced. The modelling is a high-level assessment of the quantum and timing of potential additional revenue costs and savings arising from the reorganisation of councils. The modelling is designed to enable a reasonable like for like comparison of the potential costs and savings and ultimately pay-back periods under the possible different new unitary configurations. As such it does not make any assessment of financial viability of future new unitary councils.

However, there are limitations to this methodology. The model does not fully reflect the operational complexities of local government, including:

- Evolving property usage post-pandemic, which may affect assumptions around estate rationalisation.
- Long-term contractual arrangements that may restrict the ability to realise economies of scale.
- Local variations in service delivery models and partnership arrangements.

With regards to income, the model assumes that council tax will be equalised. However, this is contingent upon two key factors, adherence to the council tax referendum principles and particular Alternative Notional Amounts being issued by the Minister and secondly, acceptance by the public.

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	<p>Ultimately, this decision will rest with the newly formed unitary authorities, and the model reflects an assumption rather than a confirmed outcome.</p> <p>The cost of reorganisation is substantial but there is no certainty that the modelled savings will materialise to the scale required to offset these costs in the short term.</p> <p>The report is limited to the options being proposed.</p> <p>The model does not incorporate the potential impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and Business Rates Reset, nor does it account for existing budget gaps within individual authorities' Medium-Term Financial Strategies. These financial pressures will persist regardless of reorganisation and are not addressed within the scope of the options appraisal.</p> <p>The Council has created a LGR reserve which currently contains £80k. It is not clear how councils can fund the cash-flow requirements or the extent of any government funding. The majority of costs will occur in the early years of the new unitaries with the expectation that future savings can be delivered.</p> <p>The long-term financial viability of LGR and new unitaries remains questionable without fiscal devolution.</p>
Legal Implications	<p>The Secretary of State has invited (Letter from MHCLG) the Leaders of all fourteen councils in Kent and Medway to submit proposals for a single tier of local government under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act').</p> <p>Once proposals have been received, the Secretary of State will consider them and undertake the statutory public consultation on the proposals in 2026. There is no requirement to consult on every proposal received.</p> <p>Following consultation, if the Secretary of State decides to proceed with one of the reorganisation proposals (with or without modifications), then a detailed Structural</p>

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<p>Public Sector Equality Duty</p>	<p>Change Order dealing with the transfers of powers, property, assets, and staff, as well as any boundary and electoral changes necessary to give effect to the reorganisation will need to be laid in Parliament. This will also set out a timescale for implementation of the new structures and sets out interim arrangements.</p> <p>Whilst many of the specific obligations regarding a particular reorganisation are derived from the primary Statutory Instrument passed under Section 7 of the 2007 Act, the Secretary of State has also passed a series of more generic regulations applicable to all reorganisation under Section 17 of that Act. These cover the common practical issues that arise when implementing a re-organisation including finance requirements, the transfer of assets and employees and other necessary transitional arrangements. Section 16 of the act provides for agreements between successor authorities.</p> <p>The Kent Secretaries group on behalf of most Monitoring Officers across the county obtained external legal advice from leading Counsel which concluded that the decision to submit a final LGR plan in November is an executive decision and also a key decision.</p> <p>The Council has been obliged by the Secretary of State to make its proposals no later than the 28th of November. Accordingly, there would be insufficient time to allow for the normal period for call-in after the decision of Cabinet. The decision of Cabinet is therefore regarded as one which paragraph D9 of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Protocol applies as being urgent for implementation. It is noted that Cabinet will have had the benefit of the whole Council input in advance of its decision making.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken for local authorities in Kent and Medway responding to the Government's statutory invitation to submit proposals for LGR (see Appendix X). This EqIA has been developed to assess the potential general implications of</p>
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	<p>LGR and is not option specific. A more detailed and specific EqIA will be required once the government announces the final configuration of unitary councils across Kent and Medway.</p> <p>LGR offers a strategic opportunity to improve public services and outcomes for all communities, including those with protected characteristics. By enabling more integrated and efficient service delivery, enhancing accountability, and promoting inclusive governance, LGR supports a whole-system approach that strengthens collaboration across council services and external partners. It facilitates place-based planning, digital transformation, and the use of data to inform equitable service design. New unitary councils will aim to preserve local identity while embedding community voices, especially underrepresented groups, into decision-making. Aggregating services across areas such as housing, education, and employment allows for more holistic responses to diverse needs, while improved accessibility and the sharing of best practice promote innovation and continuous improvement.</p> <p>A draft EqIA, prepared by KCC, is attached at Appendix F. The EqIA will be updated as proposals evolve, evidence is gathered, and engagement continues. Further EqIAs will be undertaken as specific policy proposals, service restructures, or operational changes emerge from the reorganisation process, ensuring that equality considerations are embedded at every stage of implementation.</p> <p>It should also be noted that the decision to implement LGR has been taken by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, who will also make the decision on the geographies for the new Unitary Councils. Whilst it is appropriate that equalities impacts are considered by local authorities in implementing these decisions, the decision on the geographies for the new Unitary Councils lies with the Minister of State.</p>
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Climate Impact Assessment	Local Government Reorganisation has the potential to impact on the Council's climate commitments given that it will likely result in the Council's responsibilities being subsumed into a new, larger unitary authority. A climate impact assessment will be undertaken as part of any future reports framing the changes.
Staffing Implications	<p>It is anticipated that the majority of staff will transfer via TUPE into the new unitary council(s).</p> <p>There will be considerable work required in the period from the Government decision to vesting day. Some officers may be required to support this work with interim resource backfilling, or alternatively, interim resource may be brought in so that officers can concentrate on business as usual.</p>
Administrative Implications	It will be important to ensure that business as usual is not impacted as preparations for LGR progress.
Risk Assessment	<p>Reorganisation of councils on this scale has not taken place anywhere else in the country either in terms of the number of councils, the size of population or quantum of finances.</p> <p>Delivery of business as usual of current councils is at risk, whilst attention is diverted to the formation of shadow authorities.</p> <p>The financial difficulties of the Local Government Sector are well documented and can be linked to a system of underfunding and a lack of local flexibility around taxation and income generation. Changes to the geography of councils does not overcome these financial issues which require proper fiscal devolution.</p> <p>The business cases by KPMG do not include treasury management activities which could have fundamental implications for the cash-flow of a new unitary including headroom for further borrowing.</p> <p>If a local authority decides to not provide a submission to government by 28 November, the Minister will still take a decision on their preference for local government reorganisation,</p>

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	<p>however this will not factor in detailed local knowledge and understanding of the area alongside its strategic opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>There is a risk that a decision from the Minister on the chosen option and geography will be delayed and this will have subsequent impacts on the timeline for work to be completed in Phases 3 and 4. This can be mitigated by ensuring regular communication between MHCLG, Local Authority Chiefs, Kent Council Leaders, and planning timelines for completion of work in Phases 3 and 4 which includes some contingencies for delays.</p> <p>Risk management processes will be adopted throughout the LGR timeline, and ensure that implementation and transition risks are logged, managed and appropriately overseen.</p> <p>LGR has been added to the Strategic Risk Register and will be overseen by the Audit Board.</p>
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6. Details of Exempt Information Category

Not applicable

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Executive Summary Option 1A
Appendix B – Executive Summary Option 3A
Appendix C – Executive Summary Option 4b
Appendix D – Executive Summary Option 4d
Appendix E – Executive Summary Option 5a
Appendix F – Draft Equality Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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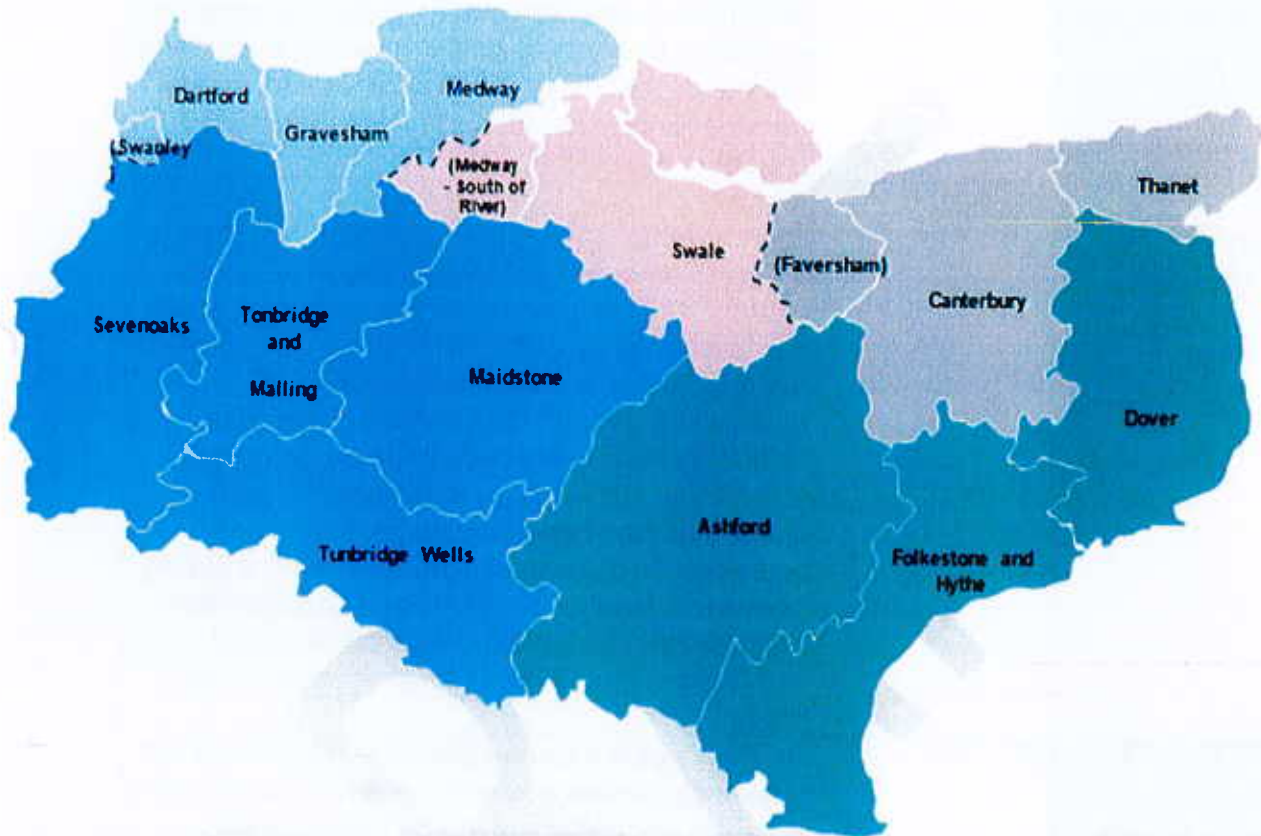
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<u>Documents consulted</u>	<u>Date / File Ref</u>	<u>Report Author</u>	<u>Section and Directorate</u>	<u>Exempt Information Category</u>
		Sarah Martin	Leadership Team	N/A

Executive summary

Introducing Option 5A

Option 5A sets out a five-unitary model of local government in Kent, built around natural places and identities, that will maximise the benefits of local, connected government and provide strong capacity for growth. The model is supported by the Borough Councils of [Councils to be inserted].



Key:

White line – District Boundary

Dotted line – Boundary Change

Unitary	Population	Description
North Kent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dartford Gravesham Medway west of River Medway Swanley 	330,536	A strategically important logistics and infrastructure hub, North Kent will drive economic growth through its proximity to London, major transport corridors (M25, M2), and international gateways like Ebbsfleet and the Port of Sheerness. It will focus on clean growth, advanced manufacturing, and professional services, with a diverse population and strong urban regeneration potential.
West Kent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maidstone Sevenoaks (excluding Swanley) Tonbridge & Malling Tunbridge Wells 	544,814	West Kent offers a mix of rural and urban economies, a thriving visitor and tourism sector, with increasing focus on innovation and service industries. Defined by strategic connectivity and a highly skilled workforce, supporting professional services, life sciences and creative

		sectors. The area has a high proportion of knowledge-based employment and is well-positioned to attract inward investment from London and beyond. Green infrastructure, heritage towns and quality of life are key drivers of investment in the sub-region.
East Kent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canterbury • Faversham • Thanet 	342,934	East Kent is defined by its international gateways, strong cultural heritage, and growing sectors in health, life sciences, and the creative economy. Canterbury leads as an education and cultural centre. Thanet and surrounding coastal towns offer regeneration potential and tourism appeal, supported by lower land values.
Mid Kent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medway east of River Medway • Swale excluding Faversham 	340,286	A growing business hub in the Kent region with a demographically diverse population, Mid Kent is set up to drive the economy through business growth. It will focus on leveraging its local sector mix involving high value technology, engineering manufacturing and knowledge intensive businesses through the Chatham Innovation Park. Mid Kent will benefit from the business growth and will focus on skill retention and growth, shared infrastructure, ambition and innovation. The area also benefits from a strong network of local Universities and Colleges that will provide a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers to support the business growth in the region.
South Kent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashford • Dover • Folkstone & Hythe 	373,115	As Kent's own international hub, South Kent will unlock significant economic potential. South Kent will drive economic growth by leveraging its strong footprint in the logistics and distribution industries through the Channel Corridor. The area also benefits from a robust and growing life sciences industry that currently houses the Discovery Park which is home to 160 companies spanning international pharmaceutical companies inviting further investment and economic growth.

Purpose and approach (see section 1)

The reorganisation of local government presents a valuable opportunity to redesign a system that better serves the diverse needs of Kent and Medway's residents.






The 14 councils of Kent have collaborated to develop a model reflecting established population and economic centres as well as community and workplace patterns.

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Through this joint effort, the councils have developed five business cases addressing the government's six reform criteria, proposing to replace the current two-tier system with more efficient and resilient unitary authorities.

These authorities aim to support devolution, enhance service delivery and strengthen community engagement.

Each proposal is underpinned by a shared evidence base, robust governance, transparent appraisal and extensive stakeholder and public consultation to form a united and evidence-led vision for the future of local government in Kent and Medway.

	Option 1a	Option 3a	Option 4b	Option 4d	Option 5a
					
Approach to drafting	Kent County Council leading with some shared input around finance and services.	Common approach to drafting with input from councils.			
Structure, formatting and branding	Separate structure, formatting and branding.	Single approach to structure, formatting and branding across four business cases. A significant proportion of content across the four cases will be shared and clearly highlighted within the cases.			

The Kent context (see section 2)

Kent, located in the south east of England, is a geographically diverse and economically important area.

Known as the Garden of England and the UK's Gateway to Europe, it covers 3,739 sq. km with a population of about 1.93 million.

The county combines densely populated urban centres with extensive rural areas.

Its landscape includes the North Downs, The Weald, and a long coastline featuring the White Cliffs of Dover. Rivers like the Thames, Medway and Stour support trade and settlement.

Economically, Kent has evolved from its agricultural roots into a modern, mixed economy encompassing manufacturing, logistics, life sciences, tourism and digital industries.

Major assets include the Port of Dover, the Discovery Park science and technology hub and excellent transport links.

Kent's strategic location, skilled workforce and innovation hubs drive regional growth and support its case for devolution and local government reform.

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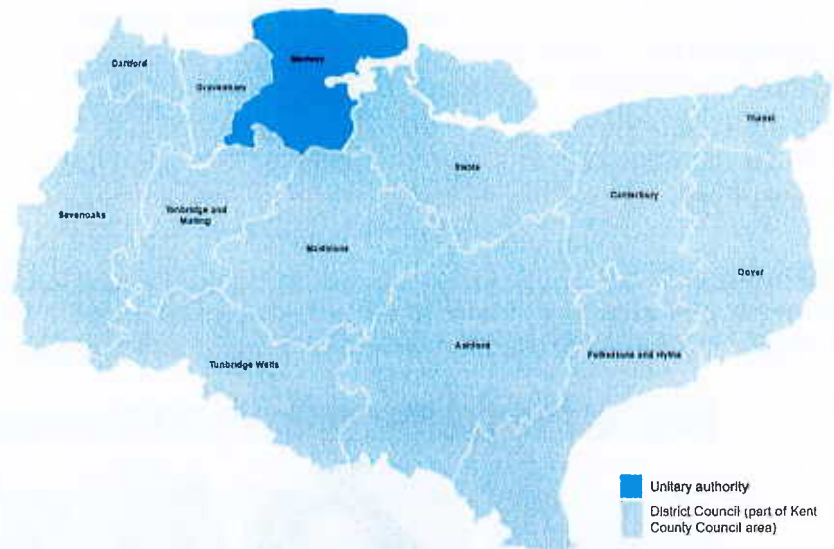
Kent currently has a two-tier local government system.

At the upper tier is Kent County Council, while the lower tier consists of 12 district and borough councils.

Medway Council functions separately as a unitary authority.

In addition, there are more than 300 town and parish councils handling local-level services.

The current mixed model of service delivery creates complexity and all 14 councils recognise the potential benefits of moving towards a single-tier system with fewer organisations and a more unified governance structure.



Challenges and opportunities (see section 3)

Councils across the county face financial pressures and rising demand.

In Kent, key pressures include:

- uneven funding and tax bases
- escalating social care and border-related costs
- workforce shortages and morale issues
- fragmented governance across the two-tier system

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) offers a unique opportunity to create a more efficient, resilient and sustainable model.

By simplifying structures and pursuing devolution, Kent can streamline service delivery, strengthen financial stability, enhance collaboration across sectors, attract investment and build a greater sense of place to ensure more cohesive, accountable and community focused local government services.

Vision and principles for Local Government Reorganisation (see section 4)

Our vision for local government in Kent is:

Better outcomes for Kent residents through financially-sustainable and accountable local public services delivered in partnership with communities.

LGR is the catalyst for transformation and reform, creating resilient, digitally-enabled councils rooted in local identity and strong partnerships.

It is crucial that devolution and LGR are linked: structural reform unlocks the powers, funding and flexibility needed to make decisions locally and drive growth.

Kent's ambition is to deliver better outcomes for all residents through sustainable, accountable and community-focused public services.

All councils in Kent are united in their support for devolving powers to a single strategic authority.

This will ensure decisions about Kent are made in Kent, by those who know its communities best.

LGR and devolution are intrinsically linked. To fully realise our vision, we need the powers, funding and countywide collaboration that only a devolution deal and a new strategic Kent authority can provide.

We are committed to securing a devolution deal for Kent at the earliest possible opportunity.

The case for Option 5A

Option 5A strikes the best balance between local place-shaping and strategic delivery. It is the only option that both designs councils around natural communities which have existed for hundreds of years, and coherent geographies, and provides a robust platform for growth and investment. Option 5A will strengthen the engagement with people and place that effective delivery depends on.

Option 5A resolves historic boundary misalignments around Swanley and Faversham, bringing local government boundaries in line with established health geographies (HCPs), as well as children's social care and education commissioning arrangements, whilst also mirroring communities for worship and prayer. It also reflects the way local media and civic networks already operate across the County's natural community groupings. These boundary misalignments, noted since 1969, would finally be addressed through this reorganisation, setting sustainable boundaries fit for the next 50 years.¹

Importantly, Option 5A puts capacity and support where it is most needed. Against a range of metrics, there are four discrete regions within the County that have specific population needs (North, East, Mid and South Kent) - be that in terms of life expectancy, wider health determinants, skills attainment or economic factors - and one region (West Kent) which has less acute needs. Option 5A structures the new Unitary Councils in a way to match this need, with more agile Councils in those four areas to support communities through greater democratic representation. They also align with health, education, skills and employment geographies to improve outcomes for local people. This model therefore ensures tailored local focus whilst maintaining strategic coherence.

Option 5A provides the strongest relationship between the new councils and a future Strategic Authority, which will enable effective devolution of powers and resources for Kent.

Studies suggest that Kent's growth potential could include more than 400,000 homes (circa 1 million additional residents) and 480,000 jobs beyond what is encapsulated within existing adopted Local Plans. This growth potential would see the overall population of Kent rise to around 3 million. With growth forecast in the areas where Option 5A currently shows the lower population numbers (North, Mid, East and South Kent), this model will future-proof local government by aligning with the long term growth projections. As the population expands, the five council model will naturally equalise in size, ensuring responsive, resilient and locally attuned governance.

¹ <https://archive.org/details/1969-royal-commission-local-gov-vol-1-report/mode/2up>

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The benefits of Option 5A are clear: better-quality housing, improved jobs/skills opportunities and improved health outcomes for our residents. It will also simultaneously deliver sustained economic growth for both Kent and the wider UK economy. This option will realise the unlocked potential that Kent has to offer.

We have summarised the key arguments for why the five-unitary model is best for Kent.

Key theme	Arguments	Government Criteria
Reflects natural communities and geographies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivers authorities fully enabled to drive growth across the area by aligning housing delivery in the right areas, economic hubs and transport infrastructure, alongside established travel to work, education and health trends.• Uses the once in a generation opportunity to reorganise three local government boundaries to best fit our sense of place.• Reflects where we expect growth in Kent in the next 50 years and unlocks that growth by building regional architecture which harnesses those opportunities.	Criteria 1, ,3, 4, 5, 6
Delivers housing and economic growth across the whole area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflects local housing markets, and the migratory effect of London, while building scale to plan strategically to deliver housing growth across Kent.• Enables the future growth of Kent and establishes logical economic areas as the right foundation for sustainable, long-term growth.• Consolidates the existing travel to work trends spanning bus, rail and road connectivity.	Criteria 2, 3, 6
Savings of £65.7m which will pay back the investment in 14 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generates recurrent savings of £65.7m which will pay back the initial investment in 14 years.• Entails greater investment in the short term, but designs councils that ensure strong service delivery, place-based public service reform and sustainable growth, alongside providing greater scope to deliver long-term financial sustainability.	Criteria 2
Reflecting partnerships and how services are delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Builds councils where health and care partnerships and supporting health architecture will operate together, providing the right footprint for prevention and early intervention and for wider public service reform.• Reflects how adult social care, children's services and education are commissioned	Criteria 3, 6

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aligns with acute hospital demand supporting health and care integration, partnership working and public service reform.Reflects existing police boundaries allowing for safer communities and opportunities to continue good community engagement.	
Strengthening cultural and historic identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Builds boundaries that reflect local needs, historic and future community identities and the natural and infrastructural geography of Kent.Establishes councils that are closest to communities in Kent and reflect local communities, cultures and the identities of areas within Kent.	Criteria 1, 4, 6
Establishing truly local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishes five councils across Kent and Medway maximising how local councils in Kent can realise the benefits from LGR.	Criteria 1, 5
Strong governance and healthy decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishes five constituent authorities to a Strategic Authority and more constituent authorities provides stronger governance, debate and decision-making and better reflect the needs of local communities and the areas they reside in.	Criteria 5
Councils designed around communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishes councils focussed on communities allowing for more tailored and targeted service delivery, agile decision-making, community empowerment, co-creation and purposeful engagement.Designs councils around communities and how they live and work in Kent, providing the right foundations to build community resilience, stronger emergency planning, intelligence and prevention into how public services work.	Criteria 4, 6
Fostering strong partnerships to connect communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consolidates many council partnerships and shared services across Kent to build better resilience and support positive outcomes for our residents.Retains existing deanery and diocese community relationships for the Christian faith, as well as patterns of worship within the Sikh communities of Kent further strengthening local identity and allowing our residents to continue building their strong communities.	Criteria 1, 4, 6

Base case

This is a Type B proposal entailing modifications to existing Kent council boundaries under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Section 5 includes a base case which meets the government's criteria and the modifications proposed.

Implementation plan (see section 6)

Kent's LGR implementation plan aims to follow a phased and collaborative approach across all councils, leveraging a well-established shared programme with strong governance and joint planning.

The process is structured into preparation, foundational, shadow authority, officer leadership and go-live phases, each with clear priorities to ensure a smooth transition while driving ambitious public service reform alongside devolution.

The programme builds on Kent's history of joint working and lessons from previous LGR efforts, supported by targeted governance, workstreams and stakeholder engagement to mitigate risks related to service disaggregation, aggregation, ICT and working together, aiming for a seamless, efficient transition that benefits residents and public services over the long-term.

Options appraisal (see Appendix 1)

A rigorous and collaborative process undertaken by the 14 Kent local authorities to appraise potential council governance options. The aim was to provide a robust, consistent, and evidence-based foundation to support local decision-making on which options should advance to full business case development.

The appraisal followed national guidance and was aligned with the Government's six criteria for local government reorganisation, as set out in correspondence from the Secretary of State in February and June 2025. Importantly, the process did not rank or recommend any preferred option but provided a shared evidence base to inform council decisions.

Key stages of the appraisal process:



Council Leaders reviewed the appraisal findings, supported by resident and stakeholder views. While the appraisal did not determine a preferred option, it served as an objective and structured basis for informed political judgement and democratic decision-making on which options should proceed to business case development.

Financial modelling (see Appendix 2)

Finance officers across all 14 Kent councils have reviewed and adjusted the financial modelling in order to provide a single financial assessment of models for inclusion in proposals to government.

The key driver of difference between options are the number of councils being proposed.

Due to the assumptions applied within the modelling, implementation costs and recurring costs of disaggregation increase as the number of councils proposed increases.

The headline numbers for Option 5A are set out below:

LGR option	Implementation costs (one-off) (£m)	Reorganisation savings (gross) (£m)	Disaggregation costs (£m)*	Recurring annual revenue savings (£m)**	Estimated payback period
Option 5A	139.1	65.7	(46.0) – (68.1)	19.7 – (2.4)	14.0 years – no payback

**A range has been applied specifically for disaggregation costs following collaborative discussions around different scenarios for the impact of LGR on commissioned spend across adult and children's social care.*

***Recurring revenue savings = gross reorganisation savings less disaggregation costs*

The range of disaggregation costs has been agreed through the collaborative working of Kent finance officers. Our business case assumes increases in commissioned spend at the lower end of that range. There is evidence that councils with a population of 250-350k have lower unit costs across adult nursing and residential and S251 looked after children and children in residential care.² While the cost of care packages is complex this may relate to councils closer to communities being better able to tailor services and care packages to the strengths and needs of communities.

Government has been clear that whilst financial sustainability is a consideration, it is not the only indicator against which proposals will be judged. Option 5A delivers payback over the longer term whilst also placing resources where they are needed most to support local communities. The economic growth forecasts which come from that – potentially unlocking nearly 500,000 jobs which are not within existing Local Plans – and the financial return to the Treasury as a result should not be underestimated or ignored.

Data sources (see Appendix 3)

A common data set was used for all analyses presented in this case.

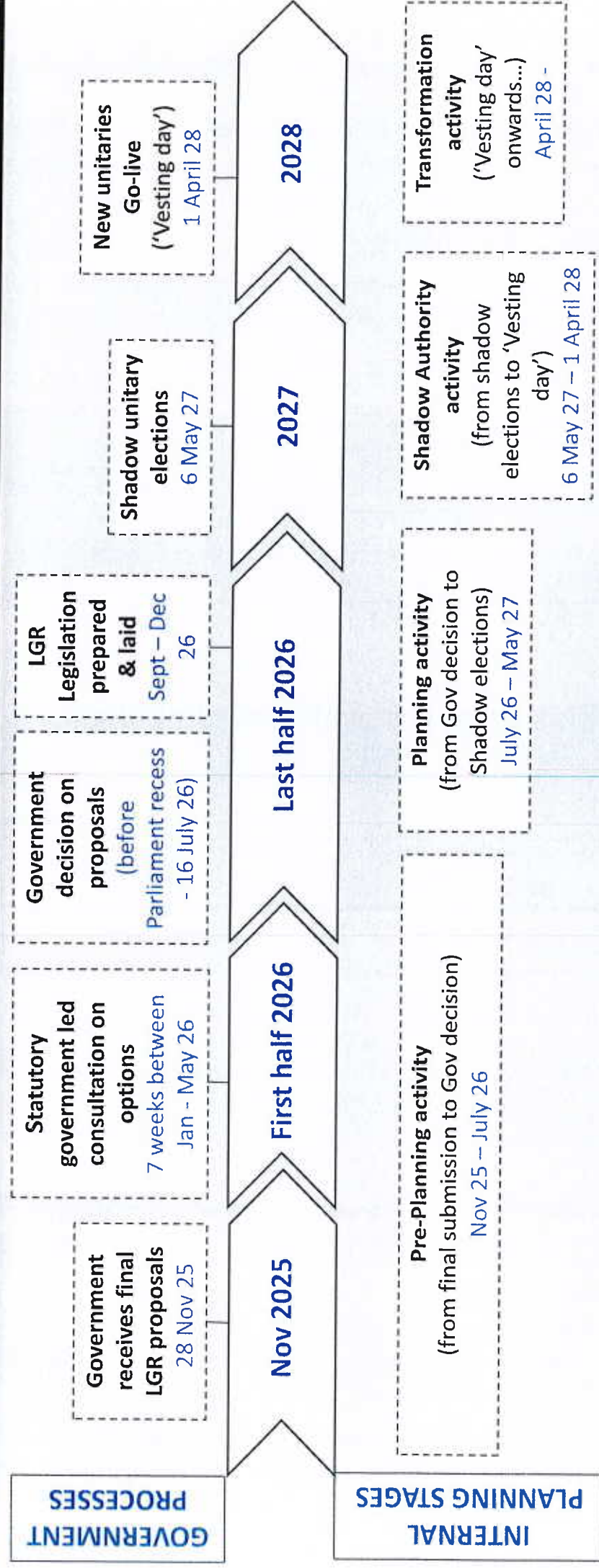
Details of the data set including its source, structure and variables, are provided in Appendix 3.

² Local Authority Interactive Tool 2023/24 and ASC-FR returns

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Timeline

Timings subject to change at Government's discretion



Chief Executive's Department –
Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance (SPRCA)

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LORRY PARK WORKING GROUP MEETING – TC 11-12-25
NOTES FROM 21 OCTOBER 2025 AT 11.00 AM

Present: Cllr Ann Duke (Substituting for Cllr Peter Harris)
Cllr Dawn Johnston
Cllr Graham Taylor

Cllr Jessica McQueen STC
Cllr Stephanie Thredgle STC

Serge Lomakin – HU United
Istran Najdeva – HU United

Apologies: Cllr Peter Harris
Cllr Claire Pearce
Cllr Elizabeth Wickham

Absent: There were none

Also Present: Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk / RFO

Cllr Johnston welcomed everyone to the meeting including the guests from HU United and briefly laid out the history of the project and the challenges being faced with freight in the area.

Cllr McQueen outlined the issues being faced in Stone and updated all present that Dartford Borough Council had postponed the meeting regarding green corridors in Stone with no confirmed date for reconsideration.

Serge Lomakin provided members with a sheet of statistics on usage levels at the site, a list of the companies who have contracts to use the site and an outline of the costs and what is included for drivers. He also highlighted the work they had undertaken in liaising with the freight companies that use their site regarding routes and avoiding the residential areas of Swanscombe and Greenhithe.

Serge also clarified that they had been investigating some of the sites highlighted in the original proposal and had visited the Port of London Authority (PLA) site in Crossways Boulevard but had been informed that the site would not be available unless an operator intended to use the jetty.

Members expressed their thanks for the information supplied by HU United and the importance of what the company offered in regard to affordable and secure facilities for lorry drivers. All parties agreed that the location was perhaps not the most suitable.

Serge also confirmed that the new owners of the site, Land Logical, were yet to make contact with any of the companies in the Business Park to outline what their future plans were for the land. Serge also advised that a second lorry park was also located on Manor Way and operated by a company called Tovizi / Mervo.

Following discussion, it was agreed that more weight needed to be put through the MP, Jim Dickson, to engage with both the Roads Minister on the strategic importance

LORRY PARK WORKING GROUP MEETING –
NOTES FROM 21 OCTOBER 2025 AT 11.00 AM

of improving freight options in this part of Kent and also to engage with the PLA to consider the value of waiting for a site operator who will use the jetty. This would be done either by members attending the MP Surgery to discuss this, or if he was available, coming to a meeting at the Town Council offices.

Cllr McQueen suggested that the contacts that Stone Town Council already have be utilised to make an approach to Land Logical to discuss their future plans for Manor Way Business Park and what support they could offer on this issue.

An email would, as per the notes from the meeting on 16 September 2025, be sent to KCC Member Thomas Mallon to set up a meeting to discuss how KCC Highways could drive this initiative forward and discuss better signage to add freight in reaching the existing lorry park without disruption.

Contact would also be made with other lorry park located at the site to see if they were willing to engage on this proposal also.

Actions Agreed:	Tasked to:
To contact Jim Dickson MP to arrange for Councillors to either have a discussion with him via his regular surgery or to attend a meeting at the Town Council offices	MH
To contact KCC Member for Swanscombe and Greenhithe, Thomas Mallon, to set up a meeting to engage on what support Kent Highways could bring to lobby to take this forward.	MH
That Stone Town Council would use its existing contacts with Land Logical to request some clarity on what future plans they have for the site and what support they could add to this proposal.	JM
To contact the other lorry park operator at Manor Business Park, Tovizi / Mervo to see if they were willing to engage on this proposal.	MH

Meeting Closed: 12.15pm

AGENDA ITEM 12

TC 11-12-25

From: Adam French <Adam.French@crestnicholson.com>

Sent: 14 November 2025 17:18

To: Graham Blew; Steve Bell

Cc: Martin Harding

Subject: RE: Teams Meeting: Update: Ingress Park Community Centre

Sorry all.

By way of an update see below –

- Community centre car park works now finished apart from landscape which our commercial team are tendering currently
- Internal works for electric, order yet to be placed to allow works to start.
- Bike + bin store – these too are currently being tendered by commercial

KR,

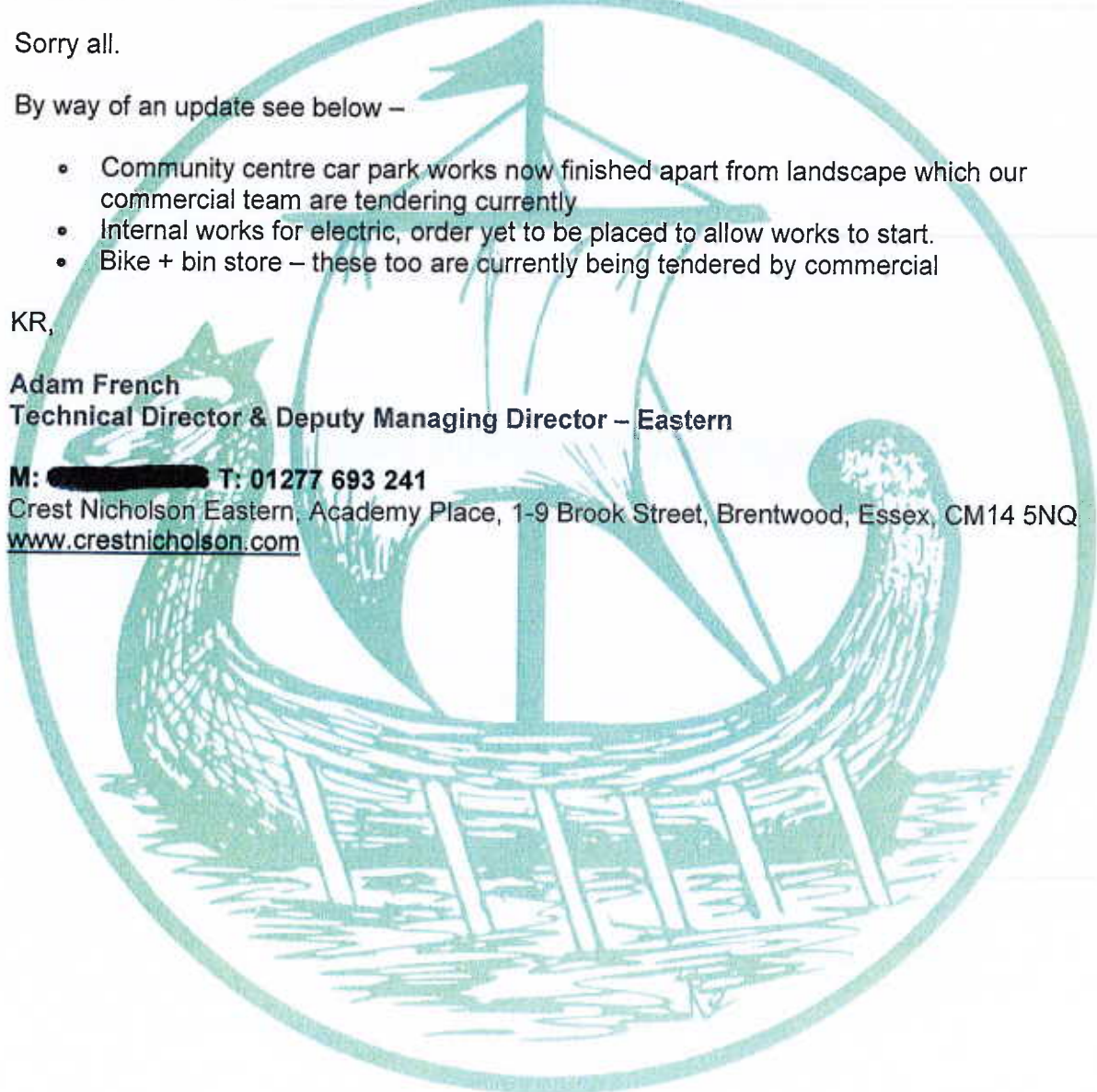
Adam French

Technical Director & Deputy Managing Director – Eastern

M: [REDACTED] T: 01277 693 241

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