

Cabinet

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Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Nina Gurung, Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure

Councillor Simon Curry, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration

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Summary

Medway is home to nationally significant heritage assets, waterfront destinations, cultural attractions and historic town centres. From Rochester Castle and Cathedral to The Historic Dockyard Chatham and Great Lines Heritage Park, these assets contribute to local identity, wellbeing, tourism and economic growth. However, many destinations are experienced in isolation rather than as part of a connected Medway-wide offer.

The Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy sets out a long-term vision for a more connected, accessible and distinctive Medway. Built around the principle of *One Medway*, it aims to improve how residents and visitors discover, navigate and experience the area's towns, heritage sites, public spaces, cultural destinations and transport hubs, while celebrating the unique character of individual communities.

More than a signage strategy, it provides a framework for placemaking, heritage interpretation, public art, storytelling, digital engagement and active travel. It supports the visitor economy by encouraging people to explore more of Medway, stay longer and engage more deeply with its heritage, culture and communities, while contributing to wider priorities including regeneration, town centre renewal, accessibility, sustainability, health and wellbeing, and Medway's a Marmot Place ambitions.

Building on the original 2023 Heritage Wayfinding work, the Strategy expands the focus from the Chatham to Rochester corridor to a Medway-wide framework connecting Medway's towns, waterfront destinations and communities through a shared approach to wayfinding, identity and storytelling.

Adoption of the Strategy does not commit the Council to immediate capital expenditure. Instead, it establishes a strategic framework to guide future investment,

regeneration, development, active travel and placemaking projects, while strengthening opportunities to secure external funding and partnership investment. Ultimately, the Strategy is about creating a better connected, more accessible and distinctive Medway, helping more people discover and enjoy everything the area has to offer.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Cabinet is asked to:
- 1.2. Agree to adopt the Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, as Medway Council's strategic framework for wayfinding, heritage interpretation, placemaking and place-based storytelling.
- 1.3. Agree to adopt the accompanying Design Guide as set out in Appendix 2 as the Council's framework for the design and delivery of wayfinding, interpretation, public art and related public realm interventions.
- 1.4. Agree that the Strategy and Design Guide informs future regeneration, active travel, tourism, culture, heritage, parks and greenspaces, sports facilities, public realm and development projects across Medway, including engagement with developers, investors, regeneration partners and funding bodies.
- 1.5. Agree that officers develop a prioritised implementation and investment plan identifying immediate, medium-term and long-term delivery opportunities, potential funding sources, partnership contributions and integration with regeneration, transport, heritage and public realm projects.
- 1.6. Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Tourism and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, to make any final minor amendments to the Strategy document, such as for the purposes of correcting factual errors, formatting or typographical issues required prior to publication.
- 1.7. Agree that, following adoption of the Medway Local Plan, officers review whether further planning guidance is required to support implementation of the Strategy, including the potential preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document or equivalent guidance relating to wayfinding and design standards.

2. Suggested reasons for decision

- 2.1. The Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy establishes a shared vision for improving connectivity, accessibility, active travel, visitor experience and heritage interpretation across Medway.
- 2.2. The Strategy will support Medway's ambitions to grow the visitor economy, encourage sustainable travel, improve health and wellbeing, strengthen

connections between destinations and contribute towards the creation of healthier, more inclusive and connected communities.

3. Budget and policy framework

- 3.1. The Strategy supports delivery of the One Medway Council Plan and contributes to objectives relating to:
 - Visitor and creative economy.
 - Healthier and more active communities.
 - Sustainable transport.
 - Inclusive economic growth.
 - Town-centre vitality.
 - Community identity and belonging.
 - Physical regeneration and investment.
- 3.2. The Strategy supports wider ambitions associated with Medway Heritage Place, Chatham Creative Quarters, Love Gillingham Vision & Gillingham Open Lines, Whose Hoo, Rainham Reimagined, Medway Marmot Place and the emerging Local Plan.
- 3.3. By improving connectivity between destinations, encouraging walking and cycling, increasing access to culture, heritage and public spaces, and creating more inclusive and accessible environments, the Strategy contributes to Medway's ambition to become a Marmot Place. The Strategy recognises that health and wellbeing are shaped by the places in which people live, work and spend their leisure time and supports wider efforts to reduce health inequalities through improved access, participation, movement and social connection across Medway.
- 3.4. The Strategy sits at the intersection of many of Medway's key policy ambitions. It supports the delivery of the One Medway Council Plan by helping create cleaner, greener and more connected communities, contributing to economic growth and improving health and wellbeing. It also provides a practical delivery mechanism for emerging priorities within the Medway Local Plan, Medway Marmot Place, Medway Heritage Place and major regeneration programmes, ensuring that future investment not only improves places physically but also strengthens connectivity, identity, accessibility and civic pride across Medway.
- 3.5. The Strategy supports the ambitions of Child-friendly Medway and the work of the Medway Youth Council by creating opportunities for children and young people to influence placemaking, storytelling, interpretation and the design of public spaces, ensuring youth voice is embedded within Medway's future development and cultural identity.

4. Background

4.1. Why this Strategy matters

- 4.1.1. Medway's heritage assets, cultural destinations, waterfronts and town centres are among their greatest strengths, but they are often experienced as separate places rather than as part of a connected Medway-wide offer.
- 4.1.2. Medway's heritage, cultural, leisure and waterfront destinations attract significant, 5 million, visitors throughout the year. The Strategy seeks to improve connections between places, helping residents and visitors navigate more easily between destinations, encouraging longer dwell times, increased visitor spend and greater engagement with local businesses, cultural venues and heritage assets.
- 4.1.3. The Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy provides a framework to strengthen connections between places, improve accessibility, encourage walking and cycling, support the visitor economy and help residents and visitors discover more of Medway's heritage, culture and public spaces.
- 4.1.4. The Strategy also supports the ambitions of Medway's National Lottery Heritage Fund Heritage Place programme by improving access to heritage assets, strengthening interpretation of local stories and creating stronger links between destinations, communities and cultural attractions.
- 4.1.5. The Strategy supports wider Council priorities relating to regeneration, active travel, culture, heritage, health and wellbeing, parks and green spaces, sports facilities, town centre renewal and Medway Marmot Place, whilst providing a clear framework to guide future investment and partnership opportunities.
- 4.1.6. Ultimately, the Strategy is about creating a more connected, accessible and distinctive Medway, helping more people discover more of Medway and encouraging them to stay longer, explore further and engage more deeply with its places and stories.

4.2. Development of the Strategy

- 4.2.1. In 2022/23, Medway Council commissioned a Heritage Wayfinding Strategy focused on strengthening connections between key destinations in Chatham and Rochester. Whilst that work was not taken forward for formal adoption, it identified several important opportunities around connectivity, heritage interpretation and visitor experience that have informed the development of this broader Medway-wide Strategy.
- 4.2.2. Since then, Medway has experienced significant change including:
 - New Local Plan progressing at pace.

- Designation as a National Lottery Heritage Fund Heritage Place.
- New Heritage Strategy being developed.
- New Visitor Growth Strategy and Destination Management Plan being developed.
- Major regeneration investment.
- Establishment of Medway Marmot Place programme.
- Establishment of the Chatham Creative Quarters programme.
- Public realm improvements.
- Active travel planning.
- Development of parks and greenspaces.
- Improvement of sports facilities.
- Continued town centre regeneration.

4.2.3. This revised strategy builds on that original work and expands it into a Medway-wide framework that connects towns, destinations and communities through a shared approach to wayfinding, interpretation and place identity.

4.3. One Medway

4.3.1. The Strategy is founded on the principle of One Medway, recognising that whilst Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Strood, Hoo and Medway's waterfront destinations each have their own distinctive character and identity, together they form a single visitor, cultural and economic destination.

4.3.2. The Strategy seeks to strengthen the connections between these places through a coordinated approach to wayfinding, heritage interpretation, storytelling and public realm improvements, helping residents and visitors to experience Medway as a connected and coherent place rather than a collection of individual destinations.

4.3.3. To support this ambition, the Strategy identifies several examples as a potential network of strategic routes linking transport hubs, town centres, waterfronts, heritage assets, cultural destinations and key attractions across Medway. By improving connectivity and encouraging exploration, the Strategy will make it easier for people to discover, navigate and enjoy more of what Medway has to offer. The Strategy is not limited to these examples and can be built on as and when the opportunity or need arises following the principles set out in the Design Guide.

4.4. The Threads of Medway

4.4.1. A distinctive feature of the Strategy is The Threads of Medway, inspired by the yellow fibres woven into rope produced at Chatham Dockyard. Drawing on Medway's maritime heritage, it provides a recognisable wayfinding identity that connects places, destinations and stories

across Medway.

- 4.4.2. The concept brings together wayfinding, interpretation, public art, digital content and public realm improvements to create a more coherent and engaging experience for residents and visitors. As a consistent visual cue, it supports navigation, encourages exploration and reinforces the Strategy's One Medway ambition while allowing individual places to retain their unique character.
- 4.4.3. Over time, the Threads could become a distinctive symbol of Medway, strengthening place identity, civic pride and visitor experience while supporting wider regeneration and placemaking objectives.
- 4.4.4. Stakeholder engagement identified strong support for the concept, recognising its connection to Chatham's rope-making heritage, its visibility within the public realm and its flexibility across signage, interpretation, public art, planting, digital engagement and storytelling. It also complements Medway's wider River of Light branding while remaining adaptable to the character of individual towns and neighbourhoods.

4.5. Visitor Economy and Active Travel

- 4.5.1. Supporting the visitor economy and active travel are key objectives of the Strategy. By improving connections between Medway's heritage, cultural, waterfront and town centre destinations, the Strategy aims to encourage exploration, longer stays, increased visitor spend and greater engagement with local businesses and cultural assets.
- 4.5.2. The Strategy also supports walking, cycling and public transport by improving route legibility and accessibility, making it easier for people to navigate between destinations and make sustainable travel choices.
- 4.5.3. In doing so, it complements Medway's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and supports wider priorities for regeneration, health and wellbeing, environmental sustainability and Medway Marmot Place, helping create healthier, more connected and inclusive communities.

4.6. Medway Marmot Place

- 4.6.1. The Strategy supports Medway's ambition to become a Marmot Place and contribute towards reducing health inequalities across Medway. The Marmot approach recognises that people's health and wellbeing are shaped by the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, work and age, and that action across a wide range of sectors is required to support healthier and fairer communities.
- 4.6.2. Wayfinding, active travel, accessibility, public realm quality and access to culture and heritage all have a role to play in supporting healthier places. By making it easier and more attractive for people to walk,

cycle, access public spaces, connect with local heritage, participate in community life and access employment, education and leisure opportunities, the Strategy contributes to several of the wider determinants of health that influence wellbeing and quality of life.

- 4.6.3. The Strategy's emphasis on accessibility, active travel, inclusion, connectivity and community identity aligns with the ambitions of the Medway Marmot Place Partnership to create healthier, more equitable communities and reduce inequalities across Medway over the long term.

4.7. Culture, Creativity and Storytelling

- 4.7.1. A distinctive feature of the Strategy is its emphasis on storytelling and cultural identity.
- 4.7.2. The Strategy uses heritage interpretation, public art, digital content, community stories and creative interventions to help people better understand the places they are moving through. It promotes the concept of a shared visual identity inspired by Medway's history and explores opportunities such as The Threads of Medway concept, drawing inspiration from Chatham's historic rope-making industry.
- 4.7.3. The Strategy therefore supports wider ambitions associated with Creative Medway, Chatham Creative Quarters, Medway Heritage Place and culture-led regeneration.

4.8. Accessibility and Inclusion

- 4.8.1. Accessibility is a fundamental principle of the Strategy. The Strategy promotes inclusive design, accessible route information, clear mapping, multilingual interpretation opportunities, digital accessibility and improved navigation for people of all ages and abilities. The ambition is to ensure that Medway's places, stories and destinations are accessible to the widest possible audience.
- 4.8.2. The Strategy promotes accessibility as a core design principle. Future projects will be expected to consider physical, sensory, cognitive and communication accessibility through consistent typography, strong visual contrast, inclusive mapping, plain English language, multilingual interpretation opportunities, digital accessibility, tactile and audio interpretation where appropriate, and clear route hierarchy. The aim is to ensure that Medway's heritage, culture and public spaces can be enjoyed by the widest possible audience.

4.9. Design Guide - Framework and Principles

- 4.9.1. A key objective of the Strategy is to establish a consistent yet flexible approach to wayfinding, interpretation and placemaking across

Medway.

4.9.2. Supported by the Design Guide, it provides a Medway-wide framework to guide future investment, regeneration, development and public realm projects. Based on the principle of One Medway, the framework recognises the distinct character of Medway's towns and destinations while creating a coherent, recognisable and accessible wayfinding system that improves connectivity across the area.

4.9.3. The framework is guided by the following principles:

- A consistent Medway-wide approach to wayfinding, mapping and visitor experience.
- A shared design language for signage, materials, colours, typography and mapping.
- Use of the Thread concept to connect destinations, heritage assets and stories.
- Celebration of local character within a coherent Medway-wide identity.
- Clear, accessible and user-focused information.
- Consistent mapping and navigation standards.
- Inclusive design for people of all ages and abilities.
- Reduction of visual clutter through coordinated signage and public realm interventions.
- Integration of public art, interpretation and storytelling.
- Flexibility to respond to local context while maintaining overall consistency.
- Durable, adaptable and digitally enabled infrastructure.
- Shared principles for delivery, stewardship and maintenance.

4.9.4. The Strategy recognises that wayfinding extends beyond signage and may include interpretation, public art, lighting, digital content, landscape features and other placemaking interventions that help people navigate and connect with Medway's stories and places.

4.9.5. Should further planning guidance be required following adoption of the Local Plan, it would build on these principles and provide more detailed requirements for signage, accessibility, materials, mapping, digital integration and public realm design.

4.10. Planning Policy Context

4.10.1. The original commission anticipated the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document. Since the commission was developed, national planning reforms have introduced new mechanisms within the planning system.

4.10.2. The Strategy is therefore presented as a strategic framework rather than a planning document. It is intended to influence future

regeneration, investment, development and placemaking activity whilst supporting preparation of the emerging Medway Local Plan.

4.10.3. Following adoption of the Local Plan, officers will review whether additional planning guidance is required. This may include consideration of a Supplementary Plan or similar planning document focused on technical issues such as signage hierarchy, design standards, materials, interpretation requirements and developer contributions. Alternatively, it may be determined that existing Local Plan policies provide sufficient planning support and that no separate planning document is required.

4.10.4. The accompanying Design Guide establishes expectations for how future development proposals should contribute towards the Medway-wide wayfinding network. This includes consideration of wayfinding at pre-application stage, integration within public realm design, and opportunities to secure wayfinding, interpretation and connectivity improvements through planning obligations where appropriate.

5. Options

5.1. The Strategy is intended to influence and support a wide range of emerging projects and investment programmes across Medway. Opportunities include Chatham Town Centre regeneration, Chatham Creative Quarters, Rochester Riverside, Love Gillingham, Strood regeneration, Hoo Peninsula initiatives, Medway Heritage Place, active travel programmes and future development opportunities arising through the Local Plan. Adoption of the Strategy will help ensure these projects contribute towards a coherent Medway-wide approach to connectivity, storytelling, accessibility and place identity.

5.2. Option 1: Adopt the Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy (Recommended)

Advantages

- Supports growth of the visitor economy.
- Encourages walking, cycling and other forms of active travel.
- Strengthens Medway's identity and sense of place.
- Supports regeneration, town centre renewal and placemaking.
- Creates a framework for future investment and funding opportunities.
- Supports external funding bids and partnership projects.
- Improves accessibility, connectivity and visitor experience.
- Contributes to Medway's Marmot Place ambitions by improving access to culture, heritage, public spaces and opportunities for physical activity, helping to support healthier and more inclusive communities.

Disadvantages

- Delivery will be dependent upon future funding opportunities and partnership investment.

5.3. Option 2: Do not adopt the Strategy

Advantages

- No immediate resource implications.

Disadvantages

- No strategic framework for future wayfinding and interpretation projects.
- Missed opportunities to support tourism, active travel and regeneration.
- Reduced ability to influence future development and investment.

6. Advice and analysis

- 6.1. Officers recommend adoption of the Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy.
- 6.2. The Strategy provides a long-term framework for improving how people move through, understand and experience Medway. While wayfinding is often associated with signage and navigation, the Strategy takes a broader approach, recognising that movement, interpretation, storytelling, accessibility, public realm quality and place identity all contribute to how residents and visitors perceive and engage with places.
- 6.3. At its core, the Strategy is built around the principle of "One Medway". It recognises that Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Strood, Hoo and Medway's waterfront destinations each possess distinct identities whilst also contributing to a wider visitor, cultural and economic offer. The Strategy seeks to strengthen physical, cultural and visual connections between these places, helping residents and visitors experience Medway as a connected destination rather than as a series of separate towns.
- 6.4. Whilst the route examples presented within the strategy are primarily focused on Medway's urban centres and established heritage destinations, they should be viewed as illustrative rather than prescriptive. This framework can also support future connectivity initiatives across rural Medway, including the Hoo Peninsula, landscape destinations, heritage assets and emerging growth locations.
- 6.5. The accompanying Design Guide provides sufficient flexibility for future route development to respond to changing circumstances, emerging opportunities and local priorities across a wider geographical area. This creates scope for the network to extend beyond the principal urban areas and embrace less urbanised locations, rural landscapes, waterfront environments and growth areas, ensuring that heritage and wayfinding interventions can be tailored to local character and context. As new development, regeneration and infrastructure projects come forward, the framework is sufficiently adaptable to support the creation of additional routes and narratives that reflect both existing assets and future place-making ambitions across Medway.

6.6. Benefits for Residents, Visitors and Businesses

6.6.1. The Strategy will provide benefits for residents, visitors and businesses by improving how people move through, access and experience Medway's towns, heritage assets, cultural destinations and public spaces. By creating clearer connections between destinations and improving navigation across the area, the Strategy will support increased participation in walking and cycling, encourage greater use of local amenities and attractions, and improve access to employment, education, leisure and cultural opportunities. For visitors, the Strategy will help create a more coherent and welcoming destination experience, encouraging longer stays and wider exploration of Medway's attractions. For residents, it will enhance accessibility, strengthen civic pride and support a greater understanding and appreciation of Medway's distinctive heritage, culture and identity.

6.7. Visitor economy

6.7.1. The visitor economy is a significant contributor (£355 Million per year) to Medway's prosperity and plays an important role in supporting local businesses, cultural organisations, visitor attractions and town centres. Medway benefits from a rich and diverse visitor offer including Rochester Castle, Rochester Cathedral, The Historic Dockyard Chatham, Chatham Maritime, Riverside Country Park, Great Lines Heritage Park and a growing programme of festivals, cultural activity and creative production.

6.7.2. However, evidence gathered through the development of the Strategy highlights that many attractions are currently experienced as individual destinations rather than as part of a wider visitor journey. The Strategy seeks to address this by strengthening connections between destinations, improving orientation, enhancing interpretation and encouraging visitors to explore more of Medway. This has the potential to increase visitor dwell time, support greater visitor expenditure, encourage repeat visits and strengthen Medway's overall visitor offer.

6.7.3. The Strategy also supports wider work being undertaken through Medway Heritage Place, Chatham Creative Quarters, Rainham Reimagined, Love Gillingham Vision, Visit Medway and by partners including but not limited to, Chatham, Historic Dockyard Trust, Rochester Bridge Trust, Chatham Maritime Trust, Intra Community Trust, Peel Waters, London and South East University Group, Integrated Care Board, local businesses, voluntary sector, culture and heritage organisations, transport providers, developers and investors and by providing a common framework through which future visitor economy investment can be coordinated and delivered.

6.8. Active travel and connectivity

- 6.8.1. Supporting active travel is a key objective of the Strategy. The Strategy has been developed to complement the Council's ambitions around walking, cycling, health and wellbeing by encouraging people to move between destinations through safe, legible and attractive routes.
- 6.8.2. Research consistently demonstrates that people are more likely to walk and cycle when routes are clear, destinations are visible and navigation is straightforward. The Strategy supports walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use by improving route legibility between transport interchanges, town centres, visitor destinations and community facilities.
- 6.8.3. By improving route legibility, providing wayfinding information and creating stronger links between transport hubs, town centres, public spaces and visitor destinations, the Strategy can help support a shift towards more sustainable travel choices.
- 6.8.4. Improved wayfinding can also help unlock the value of existing active travel infrastructure by making routes easier to understand and increasing confidence amongst users who may be unfamiliar with an area. This is particularly important for visitors, occasional users and those travelling between Medway's towns for work, leisure or tourism purposes.
- 6.8.5. The Strategy also contributes to Medway's Marmot Place ambitions. Encouraging walking and cycling, improving accessibility and increasing opportunities for people to engage with public spaces, culture and heritage can help address some of the wider determinants of health. Creating environments that encourage movement, social interaction and participation can contribute to improved wellbeing and support efforts to reduce health inequalities across Medway.

6.9. Regeneration and placemaking

- 6.9.1. The Strategy should be viewed as an important placemaking tool. Well-designed wayfinding and interpretation can help create a stronger sense of place, improve public realm quality and support local regeneration objectives. The Strategy aligns closely with major regeneration programmes taking place across Medway and can help ensure that future development contributes towards a more coherent, attractive and accessible Medway.
- 6.9.2. Significant delivery opportunities exist through:
 - Chatham Town Centre regeneration;
 - Chatham Creative Quarters;
 - Rochester Town Centre & Riverside;

- Love Gillingham and the Gillingham Town Centre Vision and Action Plan;
- Rainham Reimagined;
- Strood town centre improvements;
- Hoo Peninsula initiatives;
- Active travel programmes.

6.9.3. A key benefit of the Strategy is the opportunity to rationalise existing signage, reduce visual clutter and improve the quality of the public realm. Over time this approach can contribute to cleaner, more cohesive streetscapes whilst improving legibility and accessibility.

6.9.4. The Strategy can therefore act as a common framework across multiple investment programmes, helping to ensure that individual schemes contribute towards wider place-making and connectivity objectives.

6.10. Heritage, culture and storytelling

6.10.1. A distinctive feature of the Strategy is its emphasis on heritage interpretation, community storytelling and cultural placemaking. Rather than focusing solely on directional signage, the Strategy seeks to reveal and celebrate Medway's stories, people, landscapes and heritage assets.

6.10.2. A particularly distinctive aspect of the Strategy is the proposed *The Threads of Medway* concept, inspired by the yellow fibres historically woven into rope manufactured at Chatham Dockyard. The concept provides an opportunity to create a recognisable Medway-wide identity that links destinations, heritage assets and public spaces through a shared visual language. Over time, it has the potential to strengthen Medway's sense of place, support navigation and encourage residents and visitors to explore more of Medway's towns, waterfronts and cultural destinations.

6.10.3. The Strategy also provides opportunities to engage children and young people in shaping how Medway's stories are told and experienced. Through creative interpretation, public art, digital storytelling and community co-design, future wayfinding projects could help capture and celebrate the perspectives of younger generations alongside Medway's wider heritage narratives. This aligns with the ambitions of Child-friendly Medway, which seeks to ensure young people's voices are recognised and reflected in the places, services and communities that shape their lives, and initiatives such as the Signs of Youth project, which demonstrates how young people can contribute positively to the character and stewardship of public spaces.

- 6.10.4. This approach aligns closely with the ambitions of Medway Heritage Place and Creative Medway and supports wider efforts to position Medway as a nationally recognised destination for heritage, culture and creative production. By encouraging creative interpretation, public art, digital storytelling and community participation, the Strategy aims to strengthen civic pride whilst creating more engaging experiences for residents and visitors.

6.11. Accessibility and inclusion

- 6.11.1. Accessibility is embedded throughout the Strategy and should be considered a fundamental design principle rather than an additional consideration. The Strategy promotes clear information, accessible mapping, inclusive design, multilingual interpretation opportunities and digital accessibility. It also encourages approaches that help people of all ages and abilities navigate and engage with Medway's places and stories.
- 6.11.2. The Strategy recognises that inclusive placemaking includes ensuring children and young people have opportunities to influence the design and interpretation of public spaces. Future projects should seek opportunities to engage with young people through schools, youth organisations and community programmes to ensure wayfinding, interpretation and storytelling are relevant, accessible and reflective of the experiences of all generations. This approach supports the objectives of Child-friendly Medway and wider participation initiatives across Medway.
- 6.11.3. Improved accessibility supports wider social, health and economic objectives by helping ensure that heritage, culture, public spaces and visitor destinations can be accessed and enjoyed by the widest possible audience.
- 6.11.4. All future wayfinding and signage interventions within the adopted highway must be designed to support highway safety, accessibility and the efficient operation of the transport network. Proposals should avoid unnecessary street clutter, minimise maintenance liabilities and ensure that public realm improvements do not adversely affect visibility, pedestrian movement, statutory traffic signing requirements or access for disabled users.

6.12. Future delivery and implementation

- 6.12.1. The Strategy has been developed as a long-term framework rather than a fixed capital programme. Delivery will be phased and aligned with future regeneration projects, external funding, active travel investment, heritage programmes, public realm schemes, planning contributions and partnership opportunities.

- 6.12.2. The Strategy is intended to guide and coordinate future investment rather than prescribe a single programme of works. Delivery priorities will be shaped by local needs, available resources, funding opportunities and emerging policy objectives.
- 6.12.3. Future implementation plans should consider lifecycle maintenance, replacement programmes, digital content management and stewardship arrangements to ensure interventions remain effective and sustainable over time.
- 6.12.4. It should be noted that any wayfinding, signage, public art, lighting, pavement graphics, street furniture or public realm interventions proposed within the adopted highway will require separate approval from the Highway Authority and must comply with all relevant highway, accessibility and road safety standards. Adoption of this Strategy does not constitute approval for any future works within the public highway.
- 6.12.5. Future schemes should seek to minimise additional street clutter through the rationalisation and removal of redundant or obsolete signage where appropriate. New infrastructure should be carefully designed and positioned to avoid obstructing pedestrian movement and to support accessibility for all users, including disabled people.
- 6.12.6. Short-term opportunities may include the rationalisation of existing signage, improvements to maps and interpretation, digital enhancements, pilot projects and the integration of wayfinding principles into emerging regeneration, public realm and transport schemes.
- 6.12.7. Medium-term opportunities may include the delivery of coordinated wayfinding routes, heritage interpretation projects, public realm enhancements and improved connections between transport hubs, town centres, visitor destinations, cultural attractions and community assets.
- 6.12.8. Longer-term implementation could support the development of an integrated Medway-wide wayfinding network, improving connectivity between urban and rural destinations, encouraging active travel and strengthening access to heritage, leisure, cultural and environmental assets.
- 6.12.9. Key delivery partners may include developers, transport providers, heritage organisations, cultural institutions, funding bodies, businesses and community stakeholders. The Strategy provides a framework to ensure future investment contributes to a consistent, accessible and recognisable Medway-wide approach to wayfinding, interpretation and place identity.

- 6.12.10. Officers consider the Strategy provides a flexible framework that supports the visitor economy, active travel, accessibility, placemaking and regeneration, while celebrating Medway's heritage, culture and identity. Adoption will provide a clear direction for future investment whilst retaining flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities and policy change.
- 6.12.11. The accompanying Design Principles establish a consistent framework for wayfinding, interpretation, public art, digital engagement and public realm interventions, providing practical tools to support delivery across public, private and partnership projects.
- 6.12.12. The Design Principles also promote a sustainable approach to stewardship, maintenance and asset management, ensuring future interventions remain effective, accessible, consistent and well managed throughout their lifecycle.
- 6.12.13. Success of the Strategy could be monitored through:
- Town centre footfall;
 - Visitor dwell time and satisfaction;
 - Walking, wheeling and cycling activity;
 - Digital engagement and use of interpretation content;
 - External funding secured;
 - Number of projects adopting the Design Principles;
 - Improvements to connectivity between key destinations and transport hubs;
 - Rationalisation of signage and reduction in street clutter.

7. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of funding opportunities	Future projects identified within the Strategy are not able to secure funding or investment.	Embed the Strategy within regeneration programmes, active travel projects, heritage initiatives, developer contributions and external funding bids to maximise delivery opportunities.	B2
Inconsistent implementation	Wayfinding and interpretation projects are delivered without reference to the Strategy, leading to inconsistency.	Use the Strategy to inform future regeneration schemes, public realm projects, planning guidance and funding applications.	C3
Reduced partner engagement	Strategic partners do not adopt or embed the	Continue engagement with cultural, heritage, regeneration and tourism	C2

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
	principles of the Strategy in future projects.	partners and promote the Strategy as a shared framework.	
Planning policy changes	National planning reforms alter the mechanisms available for implementing planning guidance.	Review the need for additional planning guidance following adoption of the Local Plan and respond to changes in national policy.	C3
Highway and public realm approval	Future projects may require approvals from the Highway Authority and may need design amendments to address safety, accessibility, maintenance or operational considerations.	Early engagement with Highways and other relevant stakeholders during project development. All projects to be subject to site-specific assessment and approval processes.	C3
Local Government Reorganisation	Changes in governance arrangements affect long-term implementation priorities.	Ensure the Strategy remains flexible and capable of supporting future North Kent arrangements.	B3

For risk rating, please refer to the following table

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	1 Critical 2 Major 3 Moderate 4 Minor

8. Consultation

- 8.1. The Strategy and Design Guide have been informed through a programme of stakeholder and public engagement led by HTA Design and Medway Council.
- 8.2. The Strategy has been developed through engagement and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders including Intra Community Trust, Chatham, Marime Trust, culture & heritage organisations, officers in town centre management, regeneration, transport and active travel, planning policy, greenspaces, public rights of way alongside accessibility specialists and community groups. Feedback from these organisations has directly informed

the final Strategy and Design Guide.

- 8.3. Site visits, walkabouts, community discussions and public surveys helped identify priorities including improved connectivity, stronger place identity, enhanced accessibility, decluttering of signage, active travel opportunities and the use of storytelling to celebrate Medway's heritage and communities. These findings have directly informed the Strategy's vision, design principles and delivery framework.
- 8.4. The Strategy is intended to provide a strategic framework rather than a detailed delivery plan. Further consultation will take place where individual projects, planning proposals, funding applications or implementation initiatives require more detailed engagement.

9. Climate change implications

- 9.1. The Strategy has positive implications for climate change, air quality and public health.
- 9.2. A key objective of the Strategy is to encourage walking, cycling and other forms of active travel by improving route legibility, strengthening connections between destinations and providing greater confidence for users moving around Medway. Improved wayfinding can support a reduction in reliance on private vehicles for short journeys and help encourage more sustainable travel choices.
- 9.3. By promoting active travel, improving connections between transport hubs and destinations, and encouraging the use of public transport, walking and cycling, the Strategy supports wider Council objectives around reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and supporting healthier lifestyles.
- 9.4. In addition to environmental benefits, increased levels of walking and cycling can support health improvement and contribute to wider Marmot Place objectives by encouraging more active lifestyles and improving access to local opportunities and services.

10. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution implications

- 10.1. Following the announcement of the pause on 7 September 2026, officers will monitor the ongoing situation and will consider any relevant impacts as they arise.

11. Financial implications

- 11.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of the Strategy.

- 11.2. The Strategy is intended to provide a framework for influencing future investment, regeneration and development activity rather than commit the Council to a specific programme of capital expenditure.
- 11.3. Implementation is expected to be achieved incrementally through a range of opportunities including:
- Regeneration and public realm programmes.
 - Active travel and transport investment.
 - Heritage and cultural funding.
 - External grant funding.
 - Developer contributions.
 - Partnership projects.
 - Future capital investment programmes.
- 11.4. The Strategy is also intended to strengthen future funding bids and investment opportunities by providing a clear strategic framework to support applications relating to regeneration, placemaking, active travel, visitor economy development, heritage and cultural projects.
- 11.5. Any future projects arising from the Strategy that require capital or revenue expenditure will be subject to separate approval processes and business cases.

12. Legal implications

- 12.1. The Council has powers under the Local Government Act 2000, the Localism Act 2011 and other relevant legislation to undertake activities that support economic development, regeneration, tourism, culture, heritage, community wellbeing and placemaking.
- 12.2. The recommendations in this report relate to the adoption of a strategic framework document and do not in themselves create any statutory planning policy or development management requirements.
- 12.3. Any future consideration of planning guidance, including a Supplementary Plan or similar planning document, will need to be undertaken in accordance with the relevant planning legislation, regulations and national planning policy framework applicable at that time.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy

Appendix 2 - More to Medway Design Guide

Appendix 3 - Strategic Alignment

Appendix 4 - Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

[One Medway Council Plan](#)

[Medway Local Plan 2041](#)

[Medway Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)

[Bus Operators Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme](#)

[Medway Marmot Place Programme](#)

[Medway Regeneration Programme](#)

[Chatham Design Code](#)

[Love Gillingham Vision and Action Plan](#)

[Rainham Reimagined](#)

[Medway Heritage Place Programme](#)

[Chatham Creative Quarters Framework](#)

[Whose Hoo Programme](#)

[Child-Friendly Medway](#)

[Young Medway](#)