

Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Medway 2.0 Update

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Summary

This report provides the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Medway 2.0 transformation programme. It highlights the substantial progress made since the previous report, the benefits being delivered for residents, the efficiencies and savings achieved, and the strengthened foundations now supporting further transformation across the Council, alongside our preparations for Local Government Reorganisation.

Medway 2.0 has moved from establishing its core platforms and methods into delivery at scale. The programme is supporting the One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation (FIT Plan). Delivery is being increasingly grouped around strategic themes, including housing, highways, customer services, commercial opportunities, asset management, and the wider deployment and adoption of successful in-house solutions.

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress made through the Medway 2.0 programme, including the improvements delivered for residents, the efficiencies achieved, and the savings incorporated into the Council's budget.
- 1.2 Members are invited to comment on the programme's current priorities and the proposed focus on sustainable transformation savings, demand reduction, prevention, and wider adoption of successful digital solutions.

2 Budget and policy framework

- 2.1 The One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation (FIT) Plan was agreed by Cabinet on 30 April 2024, with the 2026/27 refresh approved on 7 April 2026. Medway 2.0 directly supports delivery of the Plan by providing dedicated service design, digital, data, technology, business analysis, and programme management capability.
- 2.2 The 2026/27 budget includes £464,483 of direct savings from projects highlighted in this report. In addition, Medway 2.0 supports wider transformation activity within

the FIT Plan, which is targeting £3,903,698 of additional income and £12,517,362 of savings in 2026/27. The programme is now increasing its focus on identifying sustainable savings for future years as part of the Medium Term Financial Outlook planning, whilst continuing to improve resident experience and service quality.

3 Background

- 3.1 Medway 2.0 provides a structured, council-wide approach to redesigning services around resident needs. Its “*digital by default, but not digital only*” principle combines accessible self-service with continued support for residents who need alternative channels.
- 3.2 The programme uses the Council’s existing investment in JADU, Microsoft technologies, the Power Platform, data infrastructure, automation, and artificial intelligence to deliver practical improvements at pace.
- 3.3 The programme is governed through a central Programme Management Office and a regular Programme Board. Governance has become increasingly outcome-focused, with project reporting aligned to resident benefits, delivery progress, financial savings, strategic priorities, risks, and capacity.

4 Medway 2.0 Delivery Plan

- 4.1 The Medway 2.0 Delivery Plan has been developed by identifying the areas where it would have the biggest impact based on the following criteria:
 - High demand (especially in telephony),
 - High volume of duplication,
 - Extensive reach (relating to impact on large numbers of residents),
 - High volume of rework/rejections (revisiting the case),
 - Covers a range of service patterns (report it, apply for it etc.),
 - Identified as a priority for and by services,
 - Potential for significant savings.
- 4.2 The following sections provide an overview of these programmes and workstreams, with relevant updates and planned activity.

5 Medway 2.0 Programmes and Workstreams

5.1 Resident experience and demand reduction

Sustaining materially lower call volumes remains one of the programme’s clearest benefits. Between April and August 2026, the Council received 130,029 calls, broadly consistent with the same period in 2025, but approximately 45% lower than the baseline 2019/20 figure. This demonstrates that the substantial reduction already achieved has been maintained and provides a strong platform for further improvement.

- 5.2 Talkative has been successfully embedded for switchboard management, replacing the previous interactive voice response solution with a voice AI experience for residents. It is maintaining service performance whilst providing a more flexible platform for future development. The next phases will focus on helping residents reach the correct service first time, reducing calls requiring manual intervention, and using cutting edge AI voice technology to complete

digital forms on behalf of residents without the need to refer them to a digital platform.

- 5.3 The “Report It” service pattern continues to provide a consistent route for residents to report issues. Further improvements are being made to confirmation messages, emails, street-search functionality, customer records, case visibility, and JADU-to-Confirm integration. Eighty per cent of forms using the internal Customer and Business Support route have been retrofitted to replace reliance on map pin-drop functionality with street search, making it easier for staff to submit accurate reports for residents that are unable to use digital channels.

5.4 Adult Social Care Financial Assessment Estimator

The Adult Social Care Financial Assessment Estimator is now fully live and available to residents to self-serve on the Council website. This is a significant delivery achievement, bringing together business analysis, service design, content design, ICT development, and Adult Social Care expertise to translate a complex assessment process into a clear, accessible online journey.

- 5.5 The estimator gives residents and families an early indication of potential care charges before a full statutory financial assessment is completed. It improves transparency, helps residents understand likely costs earlier, and provides clear supporting information about how the estimate works. The solution was strengthened through user acceptance testing, including improved structure, wording, income questions, and calculations.

5.6 Digital, content, and service design improvements

The JADU Central 4 platform upgrade was deployed successfully on 12 August 2026. This upgrade has ensured the platform remains on an up-to-date version of JADU, providing improved performance, security, and long-term stability for the Council's websites and online services. It also enables access to future product enhancements and new functionality, reducing the risk and effort associated with maintaining older versions of the platform.

- 5.7 Private sector housing content has been updated, and the new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) application process went live on 20 August 2026.
- 5.8 Improvements to Subject Access Request forms are collecting clearer and more complete information, supporting more efficient handling and reducing avoidable clarification.
- 5.9 The Service Design Team has completed observations and discovery work with Medway Norse and contract monitoring colleagues as part of the Waste Service review. The findings have been played back to senior officers, and the next stage will develop user requirements, quantify opportunities, and identify improvements to the resident journey, operational processes, and contract management.
- 5.10 Work also continues on corporate complaints, including requirements for a fuller end-to-end redesign. The proposed approach will explore the appropriate use of AI to help summarise complaints, assess sentiment, identify the relevant service area, and highlight key complaint themes, whilst retaining human oversight and input.

5.11 Digital adoption of new technologies

Between July and September 2026, the council was contacted 202,820 times through telephone calls and digital forms. Of these, almost 60% were via digital channels (59.3%).

5.12 Content on Medway.gov.uk has continued to improve and online forms have been iteratively enhanced to make them more user friendly. Digital self-service tools, such as the adult social care cost estimator, have also been introduced, helping residents access information quickly and independently. Together, these improvements make it easier for people to interact with the Council through digital channels whilst ensuring support remains available for those who need it.

5.13 *'Develop and facilitate easy-to-use and simple digital solutions for residents to access services and engage with the public sector'* is an annual One Medway Council Plan Measure so may be subject to seasonal variation, but it has been a positive first half of the 2026/27 financial year with 60.4% of interactions being digital, demonstrating the ongoing impact of collaborative efforts of officers across the Customer and Business Support, ICT, Data and Design, and wider services to create digital channels that work for all users of council services.

5.14 This work has also supported the reduction in telephone calls received to the Council, which is reported separately within this report.

5.15 Artificial intelligence, automation, and in-house development

The programme continues to demonstrate the value of developing solutions in-house where this provides better value, faster delivery, and a closer fit with Medway's requirements.

5.16 The Orion insurance asset and case management solution is now live and operational. It was developed internally by our ICT Development Team, and the service has responded positively to the solution.

5.17 Speech Scribe has completed final user acceptance testing and is being prepared for production rollout. Testing has demonstrated strong potential to reduce the time officers spend producing notes and transcripts. Work is underway to determine the most effective central deployment approach, promote adoption, and quantify benefits against manual transcription and existing transcription methods and costs.

5.18 The Talkative and JADU integration has progressed significantly. The abandoned vehicle process is largely automated, with work underway to store submitted images within the same case. A wider voice-assisted capability is also being developed so that residents can complete JADU forms through natural conversation. Subject to successful testing, this could improve accessibility, extend assisted digital support, and reduce manual handling.

5.19 The Council's AI assistants for HR and Wellbeing continue to provide staff with consistent access to approved information. The programme is also exploring a complementary voice and chat experience for HR advice to reduce the demand within this team, using common approved information sources and prompt standards.

5.20 Data, performance, and insight

User acceptance testing has been completed for the 'Single View of the Child' reporting solution utilising the Council's new modern data platform. Feedback and matching-rule refinements are being addressed before the first phase moves into live use. Children and Adults performance colleagues have contributed strongly, and further engagement will ensure the solution reflects the needs of day-to-day users.

5.21 Nexa Performance is live, and the first round of quarterly reporting has been completed. Feedback will inform iterative improvements, while Nexa Risk reporting is being prepared for Quarter 2 updates. Together, these tools will improve the consistency, timeliness, and visibility of corporate performance and risk information.

5.22 Knowledge transfer is underway for the Council's modern data platform. This is building internal capability, supporting greater reuse and "joining up" of data, and enabling future products across children's services, adults, housing, welfare and benefits, highways, and other priority areas.

5.23 Technology resilience and cyber security

The annual IT Health Check completed in August 2026 showed an overall year-on-year reduction in identified vulnerabilities. Remediation activity has begun, helping the Council remain ahead of emerging risks and supporting continued cyber security assurance.

5.24 Kyndi has achieved Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation with support from the Council's ICT team. This strengthens cyber assurance and enables Kyndi to pursue future commercial contracting opportunities.

5.25 The final decommissioning and vacation of the legacy Civic Centre CCTV control room, often referred to as "the bunker", has been completed. This resolves a longstanding technical and property dependency, improves infrastructure resilience through migration to Gun Wharf, and releases the former site from a constraint that had previously limited its wider use. This move also substantially increased the value of the old Strood Civic Centre site for future development.

5.26 Technical evaluation of Windows 365 Cloud PC continues as a potential future alternative to Citrix. The assessment is focused on viability, user experience, resilience, and potential value for money before any decision is made.

5.27 Information management and digital foundations

The SharePoint migration programme continues at scale, with 77 sites built or in progress. The programme is aiming to begin work with all remaining areas by 1 January 2027, with migrations planned to complete by 31 March 2027, except for agreed exceptions.

5.28 This will replace fragmented shared drives with a more structured and governed environment, improving collaboration, access to current information, records management, and the quality of source material available to develop AI-enabled services.

5.29 The Access PaySuite income management programme has moved into Phase 2. Work is progressing on secure call recording and payment handling so that residents can make payments while continuing conversations with officers, with

Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance maintained. Integration with JADU remains under active management.

5.30 Commercial, property, and organisational value

Digital improvements to the Rochester Corn Exchange booking process continue, with the business requirements document completed and a minimum viable product approach agreed. The wider opportunity includes improved booking conversion, bar and consumables sales, booking fees, advanced digital marketing, and self-service. These opportunities are being brought together into a coherent commercial workstream so their financial benefits can be validated.

5.31 The programme is also supporting the transfer of Medway Community Healthcare activity, including infrastructure, connectivity, and data migration. Engagement with NHS partners is intended to protect service continuity, safeguard Council data, and explore whether existing ICT capabilities can continue to support partner organisations and associated income.

5.32 The Medway archives programme continues to receive significant cross-team support. Development of the Second World War archives website is progressing towards a planned public launch on 1 November 2026, whilst large-scale records transfers and supporting facilities work continue.

5.33 Savings and future priorities

The programme's next phase will place even greater emphasis on sustainable and evidenced savings. Rather than relying on uniform reductions, Medway 2.0 will continue to use discovery, service redesign, data, automation, service insight, and digital delivery to identify the underlying causes of cost and demand. Meetings are being arranged between the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Information Officer, and each Assistant Director to review transformation opportunities within each division and service of the Council.

5.34 Opportunities will be grouped into strategic workstreams so that benefits can be evaluated and delivered at scale.

5.35 The following project areas and themes are currently emerging for the next phase of the Medway 2.0 programme:

- **Housing transformation:** including clearer prioritisation of existing projects, use of current PowerBI dashboards, and targeted AI opportunities.
- **Highways transformation:** including service redesign, virtual parking permits, payments, data, and reduction of avoidable contact.
- **Customer services:** including the Talkative voice AI roadmap, voice-assisted forms, improved routing, and removal of avoidable manual channels.
- **Corporate and back-office processes:** where automation, process simplification, AI, and in-house development can deliver transformation and structural savings.
- **Commercial services:** including theatres and the Rochester Corn Exchange, with a focus on improved booking, income, and self-service.

- **Asset management:** creating a “single view of our assets” by joining up data from Facilities Management, Value and Asset Management, Health and Safety, and Insurance, bringing related requirements together and challenging unnecessary external procurement where existing platforms or in-house capability can meet the need.

5.36 Local Government Reorganisation and collaboration

Whilst activity on specific Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) options is paused pending the Government’s review, Medway 2.0 continues to strengthen the foundations needed for any future organisational change related to LGR or Devolution.

5.37 Standardised digital services, improved data, modern infrastructure, stronger information management, and reusable service patterns all increase the Council’s resilience and adaptability whilst at the same time setting the foundations for Local Government Reorganisation.

5.38 Kent-wide workstreams continue where appropriate, and Medway will be well represented within the Kent-wide discussions by participation in the Digital, Data, and Technology Theme Board that is currently being mobilised.

6 Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
The Division does not/cannot recruit to the required posts promptly.	Delivery of existing transformation is currently being constrained by available capacity and capability	Job profiles have been developed. Recruitment would be carried out at pace with secondment opportunities offered.	C2
Lack of availability of services involved in the mapping process.	A lack of capacity within services may mean that subject matter experts are not available to participate in service mapping and redesign.	The scheduling of processes and services to be reviewed will take account of imperatives, seasonal demands, and where necessary, will escalate to CMT for direction.	C3
The transformation roadmap focusses solely on in-year savings.	There is a risk that if we target immediate/short-term savings by “salami slicing” or applying arbitrary savings targets, we will miss the opportunity to deliver longer-term sustainability and resilience.	The proposed roadmap has built in a discovery phase to identify, and quantify, long-term savings, which can be planned and agreed with services, cutting across financial years.	C2
Prioritisation of processes	Criteria and rationale for selection of areas to be reviewed and redesigned may not be clear.	A robust definition of the criteria and thresholds for selecting candidate business flows for further development has been agreed.	C3

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

7 Consultation

- 7.1 Formal consultation is not required at this stage. However, any services undergoing service redesign will be informed, involved, and consulted with at all stages, as they are considered the subject matter experts.
- 7.2 Consultation with residents and users will be carried out where appropriate depending on the scale of the potential change.
- 7.3 Staff and residents will be invited to participate in user testing where appropriate.
- 7.4 The new cross-party “Member User Testing Group” will allow Councillors to experience the service design process and beta-test new services and solutions that have been developed.

8 Climate change implications

- 8.1 [The Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019](#) and has set a target for Medway to become carbon neutral by 2050.
- 8.2 The declaration fits into the Council Plan priority of making Medway a place to be proud of; the main outcome being a clean and green environment.
- 8.3 A Climate Change action plan has been developed (www.medway.gov.uk/climatechangeplan), informed by the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, to ensure Medway is on a pathway to achieve its net zero carbon ambitions.
- 8.4 The action plan is shaped by 11 priority areas including Priority 6 – Transport, Travel and Digital Connectivity.
- 8.5 Digital connectivity has a vital role to play in reducing emissions from travel. The technologies developed as part of the Medway 2.0 Delivery Plan can help us to better manage energy usage and minimise our environmental impact. Specific processes have been identified to utilise technology to reduce the amount of printing and paper usage throughout the Council, which will be built into any service redesign.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 The 2026/27 budget build includes a provision of £2,698,474 of transformation funding from the flexible use of capital receipts. This funding covers the specific work on Medway 2.0, the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, and Local Government Reorganisation.
- 9.2 The 2026/27 budget build also includes direct savings from some of the projects highlighted within this report, totaling £464,483; however, Medway 2.0 is also supporting the wider transformation activity within the One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation (FIT) Plan, which is targeting additional income of £3,903,698 and savings of £12,517,362.
- 9.3 The Medway 2.0 approach described in this report is designed to break the cycle of focusing on immediate, in-year savings and takes a longer-term sustainable approach which will increase our resilience both financially and with regards to resources.

- 9.4 Savings identified from the redesign of services will be added to the draft budget build for 2027/28, and beyond, when services are comfortable to reflect them in our Medium Term Financial Outlook (MTFO) figures. This approach will ensure that arbitrary savings targets are not applied, and projects to deliver the savings are carried out by working in collaboration with services.

10 Legal implications

- 10.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.
- 10.2 Any legal implications arising from redesigning services will be raised with legal where appropriate throughout the duration of the delivery plan.

11 Conclusions

- 11.1 This report highlights the wide range of projects being covered within the Medway 2.0 Delivery Plan, and the potential for savings, efficiencies, and improvements across the whole Council.
- 11.2 Work will continue with all directorates to ensure savings are captured in the appropriate budgets for the 2027/28 budget build and beyond.

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