

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY

Mike Hill
Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

DECISION NO:

17/00079

For publication

Key decision*

Yes – Expenditure over £1m

Subject: Contract for Post Mortem Facilities for the North West Kent and North East Kent and Central and South East Kent coroner areas.

Decision details

As Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, I agree to award a four year contract for the provision of post mortem (PM) facilities for the period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2021 for the

- North West Kent and
- North East Kent Central and South East Kent coroner areas

Reason(s) for decision:

The Coroners and Justice Act 2009 places a duty on Coroners to investigate deaths that are referred to them if they have reason to think that:

- The death was violent or unnatural;
- The cause of death is unknown; or
- The deceased died while in prison, police custody or another form of state detention eg where a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard Order (DoLS) is in place

In some cases the Coroner will order a PM to establish the cause of death. In these cases, bodies are taken to a pre-designated mortuary.

- In 2016, of the 1,973 deaths referred to the Senior Coroner for North West Kent, 750 required a PM (38% of deaths referred).
- In 2016, of the 3,695 deaths referred to the Senior Coroner for the North East Kent and Central & South East Kent, 1,516 required a PM (41% of deaths referred).

On behalf of the Senior Coroner, KCC ensures there is adequate storage capacity for Coroner's bodies and that the Coroner has access to Post Mortem facilities. KCC does not have its own public mortuary facility and so like many other coroner areas across England and Wales it has always used local NHS hospitals which have the necessary facilities for this purpose as there are no private sector providers of PM facilities anywhere in England and Wales.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Any alternatives considered:

The service has explored alternative providers to inform the procurement process but there are no viable alternative service providers. Other Kent-based NHS providers were considered but there is no capacity to deliver this service.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date

Name: