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Date: 6 February 2026

Dear Member

COUNTY COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2026

Please find enclosed papers related to Budget Amendments which may be considered at the Budget County Council meeting on 12 February 2026

Yours sincerely

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive

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By: Joel Cook – Democratic Services Manager

To: County Council – 12 February 2026

Subject: Budget Amendments – Covering Report

Classification: Unrestricted

Recommendation: N/A

For information

Budget Amendment Process

1. The overall draft budget including relevant policies and strategies, as developed and proposed by the Executive, are considered by the Council as a single motion for debate and decision at the conclusion of the meeting.
2. Members are able to propose amendments to the draft budget at relevant points of the meeting, providing these have been processed through required assessment arrangements.
3. 12 Budget Amendments have been processed and are included within this supplement pack. Any of these which are proposed and seconded during the meeting will be debated in line with relevant procedure rules.
4. Where Amendments contain detailed narrative or specific service suggestions, these are included in the documentation to support consideration of the proposals. Implementation of any such suggestions would be subject to further relevant governance processes following any potential Budget approval.

Amendment validity

5. All Budget amendments included in this pack have been reviewed by the s151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to assess financial and legal viability. This assessment has confirmed that all are, individually, capable of agreement by the County Council if Members are so minded.

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Home to School Transport	Amendment Number:	1
Directorate:	Growth, Environment & Transport and Children, Young People & Education		
Proposer:	Mr Mark Hood	Seconder:	Mr Paul Stepto
Proposed Purpose: To allocate funding to mitigate the impact of the Kent Travel Saver price increase and to maintain the Post-19 discretionary travel offer.			
Proposed Amount £1,229,000	Proposed Funding Source: Increase in Council Tax. £792,006 Remove funding for Political Assistants - £140k Freezing the increase in Member's Allowances of £54k Reduce funding allocation to Member Allowances by £242,994 (deliverable via reduction in appointment to Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member posts) – note any finalisation of the budget allocation for Allowances to be dependent on future MRP informed Full Council decisions regarding the overall Member Allowance Scheme for 2026-2030.		

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Devolution & Local Government Re-organisation Reserve	Amendment Number:	2
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Department		
Proposer:	Mr Paul Stepto	Seconder:	Mr Mark Hood
Proposed Purpose: To allocate funding to support activity required to help pay for disaggregation cost for Local Government Re-organisation as most responsible councils including Kent districts are.			
Proposed Amount		Proposed Funding Source:	
£4,443,994		Increase in Council Tax £4,443,994	



Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Labour Group - Invest to Save Proposals	Amendment Number:	3
Directorate:	Cross Cutting		
Proposer:	Connie Nolan	Seconder:	Alister Brady
Proposed Purpose:			

This amendment brings together a set of targeted “**invest to save**” proposals that strengthen early intervention, expand in-house capacity and reduce long-term pressures in Adult Social Care and Children’s Services.

For ASCH, the package funds preventative mental-health support, a small in-house homecare service for areas with limited provision, and new Supported Homes for young adults with complex needs. These measures aim to prevent escalation, reduce reliance on costly residential and supported-living placements, and improve long-term resilience.

For CYPE, the proposals support bringing school improvement and skills employability functions back in-house, establishing a Multi-Agency Support Network for families below Early Help threshold and improving Home to School Transport assurance. Together, they strengthen early support, improve service coordination and help manage rising demand.

Two smaller cross-directorate proposals focus on safe walking routes for schoolchildren and removing Political Assistant posts to prioritise frontline delivery.

Overall, this amendment requires £1.42m investment in year 1 and a further £1.52m in year 2, funded through the temporary use of earmarked reserves (which are fully replenished in the financial modelling). **A £440k surplus is generated in year 3, which is returned to reserves and an ongoing saving to the Council of ~ £2m.**

- **In House Homecare Service - KEnH Extension (ASCH)**

We will use our existing Kent Enablement at Home infrastructure to create a small, flexible in-house homecare service focused on areas where provision is scarce or very expensive. This approach keeps start-up costs low while giving the Council greater control over quality, workforce standards and local delivery.

By offering better pay and conditions, we can improve recruitment and retention and build a stable, responsive workforce. An in-house offer also allows us to step in where the market struggles and reduce reliance on costly spot-purchased care. Initial modelling takes a prudent, cost-neutral approach, but the proposal strengthens resilience and enhances support for residents who rely on homecare.

- **Mental Health preventative services (ASCH)**

We propose further investment in preventative services that provide support to people with mental health needs, including housing-related support, debt and counselling advice, and a dedicated support line. This investment in year one aims to negate the need for some individuals to require more traditional and costly supported living packages. The primary goal is to realise savings through fewer people needing to access complex and expensive supported living arrangements, aligning with our preventative agenda. Early intervention will reduce future demand, ensuring that cost is not a barrier to accessing necessary support. This is an expansion of the Live Well Kent contract.

- **In-House Supported Homes Provision for Young Adults with Complex Needs (ASCH)**

We propose developing an in-house Supported Homes model for young adults leaving Children's Services with highly complex needs. This would build on the approach already used in Children's Services to create Council-run homes, offering stable, high-quality provision and reducing reliance on costly external Learning Disability Supported Living placements.

These homes would be time-limited and focused on building independence. Increasing in-house capacity and strengthening transitional support will improve outcomes for young adults. A small transition team would support young adults to move safely from children's settings into Supported Homes.

- School Improvement & Skills Employability (CYPE)

We propose bringing the services currently delivered by The Education People back in house by December 2026. Integrating these functions with KCC's existing corporate support, such as Finance, HR and office space, will streamline operations and reduce costs, while maintaining strong support for early years settings, schools, colleges and employers. This closer alignment with core Council structures will enable a more efficient and coordinated educational offer across the County.

- Multi-Agency Support Network for Families Below Early Help Threshold (CYPE)

We propose creating a Multi-Agency Support Network to help families who do not meet the threshold for Early Help but still need coordinated support. Delivered through Kent's Family Hubs, the service would bring together professionals from schools, health, and other partners to provide timely assistance.

Family Hub workers would organise and oversee multi-agency meetings and build relationships with families, offering a similar process to the former Common Assessment Framework (CAF). By improving early coordination, this proposal aims to prevent issues from escalating and reduce future referrals to Early Help and children's social care, supporting Kent's preventative approach and the development of the Families First model.

- Safe Walking Routes for Schoolchildren (GET/CYPE)

We propose exploring the allocation of a portion of the Local Transport or Active Travel Grant to deliver targeted infrastructure improvements that create safe, walkable routes for schoolchildren who currently have no viable alternative to travel by car or bus. This approach would support modest reductions in Home to School Transport pressures, while promoting active, safe and accessible travel for families.

As the Local Transport and Active Travel Grants are a capital funding stream, the cost of upgrading these routes would not have a direct impact on the revenue budget. However, the implications of reprioritising this funding, including the potential cancellation or delay of planned transport schemes, have been discussed with officers and would be carefully managed.

- **Parent-Centred Journey Confirmation for Home to School Transport (CED/CYPE)**

We propose introducing a simple, parent-led journey-confirmation system for Home to School Transport. This would allow parents or carers to confirm that journeys have taken place, improving transparency, safeguarding and confidence in transport arrangements.

The approach would strengthen existing checks, helping to identify missed journeys, errors or potential misuse earlier, and improving financial assurance. While immediate cashable savings may be limited, the system would help prevent financial loss, encourage better practice, facilitate provider behaviour change, and support more efficient use of public funds over time, while providing reassurance for families.

- **Removal of Political Assistant Posts (DCED)**

We propose reversing the decision approved by County Council on 18 December 2025 to appoint Political Assistants for eligible political groups. While the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 permits up to three Political Assistants for groups holding at least 10% of Council seats, the creation of these posts represents an avoidable cost at a time of significant financial pressure. This proposal removes the funding allocated for Political Assistant roles and prioritises frontline services over additional political staffing.

Proposed Amount		Proposed Funding Source:			
Financial Modelling and Funding					
Directorate	Proposal	2026-27 £'000	2027-28 £'000	2028-29 £'000	TOTAL £'000
ASCH	In House Homecare Service - KEaH Extension	250.0	-250.0	0.0	0.0
ASCH	Mental Health preventative services	327.0	-771.6	-111.8	-556.4
ASCH	In-House Supported Homes Provision for Young Adults with Complex Needs	183.6	295.8	-694.2	-214.8
CYPE	School Improvement & Skills Employability	400.0	-675.0	-675.0	-950.0
CYPE	Multi-Agency Support Network for Families Below Early Help Threshold	300.0	75.0	-450.0	-75.0
GET/CYPE	Safe Walking Routes for Schoolchildren	0.0	0.0	-20.0	-20.0
CED/CYPE	Parent-Centred Journey Confirmation for Home to School Transport	100.0	0.0	-100.0	0.0
DCED	Removal of Political Assistant Posts	-140.0	0.0	0.0	-140.0
TOTAL >>>		1,420.6	-1,325.8	-2,051.0	-1,956.2
FUNDING:					
Use of earmarked reserves >>> -1,420.6 -1,515.4 0.0					
Remove prior year use of reserves >>> 1,420.6 1,515.4					
Replenish reserves >>> 1,420.6 1,515.4					
Remove replenishment of reserves >>> -1,420.6					
Surplus to return to reserves by year 3 >>> 0.0 0.0 -440.8					

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Labour Group - Service Transformation and Efficiency	Amendment Number:	4
Directorate:	Cross Cutting		
Proposer:	Alister Brady	Seconder:	Connie Nolan
Proposed Purpose:			

This amendment brings together a set of **service transformation and efficiency proposals** designed to strengthen early help for children and young people, support vulnerable adults, improve the Council's efficiency and use of resources.

For CYPE the amendment invests in new preventative services including a countywide play service for 5–11 year olds delivered through Family Hubs, and a universal youth service providing early support in schools and communities. Public Health Grant funding is partially repurposed to support the Youth Offer, and further savings are expected through reducing demand for high-cost children's placements. These proposals aim to improve outcomes while managing long-term pressures. For ASCH, the amendment uplifts a small number of the lowest-cost Older People's Residential and Nursing placements to stabilise the market and ensure fair funding levels, enabling these providers to join the Council's framework when it reopens. The package also includes cross-directorate efficiency measures: strengthening the Council's capacity to secure external funding to enhance nature, reducing Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet roles, consolidating analytics functions, and realigning strategic partnership work. Finally, the amendment includes the planned disposal of a portion of the Council's companies, generating a time-limited capital receipt for transformation activity.

Overall, this amendment requires £259k investment in year 1 and £2.1m in year 2, funded through the temporary use of earmarked reserves (which are fully replenished in the financial modelling) and the flexible use of capital receipts. **A £607k surplus is generated in year 3, which is returned to reserves or FUCRs.** It is recognised that capital receipts are a single, time-limited source of funding which will be removed year four. Although year four sits outside the scope of this proposal, it is acknowledged that further, ongoing savings will be required in future years to continue to sustain the activities supported by this amendment.

- Children's Services - Play Service (CYPE)

We will develop and roll out a play service for 5–11-year-olds across the County, based out of Kent's Family Hubs. We recognise that this age group was significantly affected by lockdowns and missed their opportunity to play and interact with other children. This universal service will utilise our existing assets to deliver the programme, with the expectation that it will reduce demand for expensive speech and language therapy in later years.

We also understand that there may be more complex needs that require support and inclusion. Through this service, staff will be given the opportunity to train so that they can provide extra support to children with more complex needs, helping them to thrive in the play environment.

- Youth Provision (CYPE)

We will create a preventative, universal youth service delivering early help and targeted support for young people across Kent. Qualified youth workers will build strong, trusted relationships with young people through consistent outreach and school-based programmes, helping them to feel safe, heard and supported. This relational approach will underpin work on mental health, social media safety and risks such as county lines, gang grooming and exploitation, while empowering young people to develop confidence, resilience and a stronger voice in shaping their futures.

Dedicated youth workers will be based in secondary schools at agreed times, using sustained engagement to support young people in managing risk-taking behaviours, including substance misuse. The service will also provide brief advice and signposting on sexual health, smoking and vaping, and other lifestyle issues, alongside targeted support for vulnerable young people and young women at risk of exploitation, coercive relationships, domestic abuse or early parenthood.

The service will be introduced as a phased pilot: one team in year one, expanding to five teams in year two and twelve teams by year three, ensuring coverage across all districts. It will complement the wider Adolescent Response Service, helping to prevent escalation of need, reduce entry into care and limit reliance on high-cost placements through earlier intervention built on trust and continuity.

- **Youth Provision - Public Health Grant Funding (CYPE)**

We propose repurposing the Public Health Grant funding currently allocated to the non-statutory targeted relationships service to support the delivery of the Labour Youth Offer pilot. This funding would enable qualified youth workers to provide a universal, preventative presence in schools, offering outreach, early support, and signposting for young people on issues such as mental health, online safety, grooming, county lines exploitation, and healthy relationships.

While the existing service is valued, reallocating this budget will allow Public Health to contribute directly to a broader, more universal early-intervention model that reaches a significantly larger cohort of young people across Kent. This approach maintains vital preventative work in schools while supporting the development of the Youth Offer.

- **Youth Provision - Savings to High-Cost Placements (CYPE)**

The implementation of the new universal youth service is expected to produce significant savings by reducing high-cost children's placements in years two and three. By providing early intervention and support, the proposal will help mitigate the escalation of issues among young people, leading to more stable and supported outcomes.

- **Adult Social Care - Provider Prices (ASCH)**

We propose uplifting the lowest-cost Older People's Residential and Nursing placements to ensure they meet the minimum rates set for next year's contract. This would apply only to a small number of providers who would then move onto the Council's framework when it opens for new placements in June. Providing this uplift will help stabilise these providers, support fairness across the market, and ensure residents receive care funded at an appropriate level.

- **Nature Benefits for our Residents (GET)**

We propose strengthening the Council's capacity to improve nature for our residents, ensuring Kent can continue taking meaningful and sustainable action that benefits local communities. This includes expanding our ability to secure external funding for projects that support carbon-reduction, carbon-capture and nature recovery, helping to offset the impact of recent policy changes. By maintaining a practical, locally grounded pathway to protect and enhance Kent's natural surroundings, this amendment supports long-term resilience for the county.

- Reduce Cabinet & Deputy Cabinet roles (CED)

We propose reducing the overall allocation for Member Allowances by reducing the number of Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member posts. The intention is to deliver savings through a smaller Executive team while ensuring the Council continues to operate effectively within its democratic governance arrangements.

- Analytics Function Reduction (CED)

Efficiency and transformation savings derived from centralising the data analysis and management information teams that currently sit in the Directorates, while also reducing the Kent Analytics budget by one third. We believe collecting data is useful, but collecting the right type of data, quality over quantity, is more useful. We want to be people-focused, not data-driven and we will be saving on duplication and reducing the excessive collection of data without context. We will only collect what is truly statutory for the service.

- Strategic Partnerships Team Amalgamation (CED)

Realignment of work within Strategy, Policy, Risk & Corporate Assurance team such that Strategic Partnerships work is delivered by core Strategy & Policy team.

- Disposal of portion of KCC Companies (NAC/CHB)

We propose selling a portion of KCC's companies to create an £6m capital receipt by year three (informed by the outcomes of the feasibility exercise in year one). This capital receipt will be utilised in accordance with the flexible use of capital receipts for local authorities, as outlined by the UK Government. This flexibility allows councils to use capital receipts from asset sales to fund the revenue costs of projects that deliver ongoing savings or improved efficiency. Using these capital receipts to fund transformation activities elsewhere in the authority will free up base budget funds.

Loss of ongoing dividend from the permanent sale of a portion of KCC's companies has been factored into the financial modelling, as has a project management resource to complete a feasibility study and oversight of the sale in year 3. It is recognised that this capital receipt is a single, time-limited source of funding which will be removed in year four. Although year four sits outside the scope of this proposal, it is acknowledged that further, ongoing savings will be required in future years to continue to sustain the activities supported by this amendment.

Proposed Amount

Proposed Funding Source:

Financial Modelling and Funding

Directorate	Proposal	2026-27 £'000	2027-28 £'000	2028-29 £'000	TOTAL £'000
CYPE	Children's Services - Play Service	100.0	700.7	133.6	934.3
CYPE	Youth Provision	203.1	1,497.3	2,082.2	3,782.6
CYPE	Youth Provision - Public Health Grant Funding		-53.0	-158.9	-211.9
CYPE	Youth Provision - Savings to High Cost Placements	0.0	-171.4	-1,028.6	-1,200.0
CYPE	Adult Social Care - Provider Prices	508.7	-127.2	-127.2	254.3
GET	Nature Benefits for our Residents	93.3	-33.5	-59.8	0.0
CED	Reduce Cabinet & Deputy Cabinet roles	-243.0	0.0	0.0	-243.0
CED	Analytics Function Reduction	-456.3	-152.1	0.0	-608.4
CED	Strategic Partnerships Team Amalgamation	-146.7	-48.9	0.0	-195.6
NAC/CHB	Disposal of portion of KCC Companies	200.0	0.0	550.0	750.0
TOTAL >>>		259.2	1,611.9	1,391.4	3,262.4

FUNDING:

Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (FUCR) - Disposal of portion of KCC Companies >>>				-6,000.0
Use of earmarked reserves >>>	-259.2	-2,130.2		
Remove prior year use of reserves >>>		259.2	2,130.2	
Replenish reserves >>>		259.2	2,130.2	
Remove replenishment of reserves >>>			-259.2	
Surplus to return to reserves/FUCRs by year 3 >>>	0.0	0.0	-607.4	0.0

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Residential Care and Nursing Uplift	Amendment Number:	5
Directorate:	Adult Social Care and Health		
Proposer:	Mr Stuart Jeffery	Seconder:	Mr Stuart Heaver
Proposed Purpose:			
To increase the Hardship Fund to provide additional support to Residential and Nursing Care providers facing financial difficulty.			
Proposed Amount	Proposed Funding Source:		
£3.9m	Increase in Council Tax £3.9m		

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	In House Social Care Pilot	Amendment Number:	6
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Directorate: Adult Social Care and Health

Proposer: Cllr Bill Barrett Seconder: Cllr Robert Ford

Proposed Purpose:

We propose establishing a small, in-house homecare pilot as an alternative strategy for managing the rising costs of Adult Social Care, particularly in areas such as Sevenoaks where the external contracted provision is difficult to secure. The pilot requires a one-off £500k investment in year one, funded from earmarked reserves. These reserves will be fully repaid through savings achieved by helping more people remain safely at home, particularly in areas where homecare has been hard or expensive to secure, thereby avoiding higher-cost residential placements.

Once set up, the ongoing service will operate within existing adult social care budgets on a cost neutral or surplus basis, because the hours delivered directly by the in-house team would be offset by reduced provision in other care settings including commissioned homecare and residential care. The creation of an in-house homecare team would not in itself create any additional demand for adult social care.

Proposed Amount	Proposed Funding Source:
£500k for start-up costs, cost neutral by end of year two, with reserve draw down fully re-paid via savings in reduced placements to residential care.	Ear marked reserves.

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	In-house Educational Psychologist and Speech and Language Therapist	Amendment Number:	7
Directorate:	Children, Young People & Education		
Proposer:	Mr Richard Streatfeild, MBE	Seconder:	Mr Antony Hook
Proposed Purpose: This amendment provides funding for the recruitment of an additional in-house Educational Psychologists and/or Speech and Language Therapists, strengthening the Council's capacity to deliver timely assessments, support statutory responsibilities and improve the continuity and quality of specialist support for children and young people in Kent.			
Proposed Amount	Proposed Funding Source:		
£180k	Remove the Political Assistant posts - £140k Reduce the funding allocation to Member Allowances by £40k (deliverable via reduction in appointment to Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member posts) – note any finalisation of the budget allocation for Allowances to be dependent on future MRP informed Full Council decisions regarding the overall Member Allowance Scheme for 2026-2030.		

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Kent Travel Saver 16+ Pass	Amendment Number:	8
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Directorate:	Growth, Environment & Transport		
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Proposer:	Mr Antony Hook	Seconder:	Mr Richard Streatfeild, MBE
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Proposed Purpose:

This amendment seeks to reduce the cost of the 16+ Travel Pass by £38, providing additional financial relief to Kent residents aged 16 and over who attend a school or college of further education, and supporting improved access to education and training opportunities.

Proposed Amount	Proposed Funding Source:
£180k	Remove the Political Assistant posts - £140k Reduce funding allocation to Member Allowances by £40k (deliverable via reduction in appointment to Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member posts) – note any finalisation of the budget allocation for Allowances to be dependent on future MRP informed Full Council decisions regarding the overall Member Allowance Scheme for 2026-2030.

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Highways Asset Maintenance Fund	Amendment Number:	9
Directorate:	Growth, Environment & Transport		
Proposer:	Mr Mike Sole	Seconder:	Mr Tim Prater
Proposed Purpose: This amendment proposes an increase to the Highways Asset Maintenance Fund, with the additional £180k specifically allocated for pothole repairs across the county.			
Proposed Amount	Proposed Funding Source:		
£180k	Remove the Political Assistant posts - £140k Reduce funding allocation to Member Allowances by £40k (deliverable via reduction in appointment to Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member posts) – note any finalisation of the budget allocation for Allowances to be dependent on future MRP informed Full Council decisions regarding the overall Member Allowance Scheme for 2026-2030.		

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Re-direction of Political Advisor(s) funding to enhance Member Grant funding	Amendment Number:	10
Directorate:	Deputy Chief Executive's Department - Governance		
Proposer:	Andrew Kennedy	Seconder:	Harry Rayner
Proposed Purpose:			
<p>The budget should be reduced by the amount being paid for political advisors and that money should be transferred into the Combined Member Grants so that it can be used for the benefit of our residents and communities rather than on partisan politics.</p>			
Proposed Amount	Proposed Funding Source:		
£140k	Reduce funding for Political Advisor(s) by £140k (which we believe should be funded by the individual Political Groups, not KCC tax payers) and then re-direct this money to the Combined Member Grant funding.		

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Maintenance Budget	Amendment Number:	11
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Department		
Proposer:	Mr Stuart Heaver	Seconder:	Stuart Jeffery
Proposed Purpose: To provide additional funding for maintenance of council-owned buildings, supporting the upkeep and safe operation of the estate to keep the most under threat of closure open.			
Proposed Amount	Proposed Funding Source:		
£1m	Increase in Council Tax £1m		

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Budget Amendment Form

Amendment Name:	Household support Fund Crisis / Kent Support & Assistance Service	Amendment Number:	12
Directorate:	Deputy Chief Executive's Department		
Proposer:	Paul Thomas	Seconder:	Oliver Bradshaw
Proposed Purpose: This amendment seeks to reduce political administrative costs and recognise the cost-of-living crisis Increasing the Crisis and Resilience fund together with reinstating a base budget to the Kent Support and Assistance Service. Removal of the Political Assistants funding and a reduction in Cabinet / Deputy Cabinet Member Allowances or positions funding (Executive SRAs) would provide the funding for this.			
Proposed Amount	Proposed Funding Source:		
£200k total. £100k increase to the household support Crisis& resilience fund (formerly managed via the Household Support Grant). This is topping up an existing Government Grant. £100k to reinstate a specific base budget for Kent Support & Assistance Service, which is a discretionary service.	Reduce funding allocation to Member Allowances by £60k (deliverable via reduction in appointment to Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member posts) – note any finalisation of the budget allocation for Allowances to be dependent on future MRP informed Full Council decisions regarding the overall Member Allowance Scheme for 2026-2030. Remove Political Assistants funding (£140K)		

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