

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Mike Hill Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

DECISION NO:

21/00010

For publication [

Key decision: YES

. The decision will:

- a) result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or
- b) be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:
 - the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;
 - significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Digital Autopsy Unit

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services I agree to:

In relation to the delivery of the Digital Autopsy facility, to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to:

- Enter into and or vary significant legal agreements including, but not limited to, a Service Level Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding and Collaboration Agreement with Medway Council and any other stakeholders as required.
- Enter into and or vary contracts for the delivery of the Digital Autopsy service including, but not limited to, body scanning and body transport.
- Consult with the Director of Infrastructure and enter into all necessary legal agreements for the delivery and the construction of the project, including purchase of the site if necessary.

Reason(s) for decision:

This project will enable KCC to deliver a Digital Autopsy and body storage facility. The digital solution will deliver a body image scanning facility that will seek to provide efficiencies for the service by significantly reducing the number of invasive post-mortems required and making the process quicker and more efficient. This in turn will deliver a higher level of service to Kent's communities, from having their loved ones returned sooner and avoiding the need for invasive procedures which is not supported by some faith groups and can be distressing for some families.

This digital approach is supported by the Kent Senior Coroners whilst also future proofing the resilience of the service and mitigating future unfunded costs. It could also strengthen KCC's ability to respond to Mass Fatalities and mitigates against significant financial outlay that would come with such an event

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposal is being considered by Members of the Growth, Economic Development and

Communities Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 2 March 2021.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

1. Do nothing - This option is not recommended due to the risk of continuing increases in costs for covering shortfalls in pathologists, causing an ongoing unfunded inflationary, budgetary, and capacity pressure. It also does not allow for contingency planning should all NHS providers ever pull out of undertaking KCC post-mortems.
2. Deliver Digital Autopsy only with NHS Mortuary Contract(s) - This option does not allow for contingency planning should all NHS providers ever pull out of undertaking KCC post-mortems.
3. Deliver Digital Autopsy and Public Mortuary - This option is not recommended at this stage due to poor payback period, level of capital funding required, complexity of funding agreements and potential delay in constructing the Digital Autopsy facility.

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