

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Cabinet

DECISION NO:

21/00035

For Publication

Key decision: YES

Decision 21/00035 – Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme

Cabinet:

1. Agree the creation of the 'Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme';
2. Confirm that this decision establishes the Programme via formal governance to ensure transparency, evidence a clear intention to deliver in the future and allow appropriate preparatory work to be undertaken, prior to a further key decision where scope, objectives, outcomes and funding for the full project may be confirmed;
3. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Members for Integrated Children's Services and Education and Skills, to take necessary actions, including but not limited to, entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as required to establish the Programme and undertake relevant preparatory work within normal delegated spend thresholds;
4. Approve acceptance of the £5.3m specific grant funding from the Department for Education to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme and confirm that this will be an integral part of the Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme;
5. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education to develop a funding framework, and manage and deploy the accepted HAF funding, in accordance with the grant conditions and arrangements detailed in the relevant appendix of this report.
6. Agree that full implementation of the Programme will be subject to a future Key Decision which will confirm;
 - i. The detailed scope, objectives and measurable outcomes of the Programme.
 - ii. The full funding allocation.
 - iii. Monitoring arrangements for delivery of outcomes and spend.
 - iv. Delegated spend arrangements via an appropriate framework.
 - v. General delegations as required to allow for effective implementation of the decision.
7. Note any comments or other input from non-Executive Members consulted as part of this decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Covid pandemic has had an impact on all children and young people in Kent. The effects will vary between individuals depending upon their circumstances, recognising these will be both positive and negative. However, it is recognised nationally and internationally that children and young people have sacrificed more than most over the course of the pandemic.

It is proposed that the County Council leads a wide-ranging programme across the whole of Kent to reconnect children and young people to some of the things they have missed and provide a wide range of new opportunities over the remainder of this academic year, and the entirety of the next. This will be an ambitious programme which will require the support and endeavour of the whole Council and reaches across all Cabinet portfolios. The programme is in addition to rather than instead of existing services and commitments. The programme will focus on positive opportunities and hopefully draw together a wide range of partners and resources, including community resources, to invest in the children and young people of Kent.

The programme will be shaped with children and young people and seek to reconnect them to:

- Health and happiness
- Learning missed
- Friends, family and community
- Sports, activities and the outdoors
- Economic wellbeing

Financial Implications:

Spend from available funding via normal Officer delegation arrangements will support and facilitate the establishment phase of the Programme, with detailed funding allocation and arrangements to be confirmed in the later separate key decision to implement the full scoped project. Grant funding is being made available by the DfE for the HAF element of this planned decision. This will amount to £5.3m for Kent in total. Planned delivery will need to take place within this funding envelope. The DfE has confirmed that up to 10% i.e., £530k of the available grant can be used to meet the additional costs that Local Authorities may incur in administering the scheme. In light of this there are no revenue budget implications for KCC.

Reason for Urgency:

The need to undertake relevant preparatory work as soon as possible, combined with the pre-election period, prevented this decision from being published on the FED for the normal 28 days. The minimum 5 clear days' notice is provided.

Member and other consultation:

No Cabinet Committee consultation due to partial / semi-urgent decision processes.

Mr Bird as Leader of the Opposition commented on the decision during Cabinet. He welcomed the

decision but noted that it would have been preferable to involve other Members in a positive way at an earlier stage. Mr Bird highlighted the need to ensure the support provided would be available across the county, with equitable distribution, supported by a range of engagement with children and parents of all backgrounds.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The activities planned will be in addition to rather than instead of existing arrangements – therefore consideration was given to not implementing the Reconnect Programme, however in view of the clear demand (based on engagement and discussion with young people) this was discarded as the extra activity was needed.

Similarly, the HAF funding could have been rejected but this would have obviously disadvantaged children and families in Kent who would benefit from the support so that option was discarded.

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

None

15 March 2021

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date