

**From:** Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health  
Allison Duggal, Director of Public Health

**To:** Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 20 January 2022

**Subject:** East Kent Community Drug and Alcohol Service Contract Extension

**Key decision:** The decision will result in expenditure of more than £1m and affects more than two electoral divisions

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of report:**

**Future Pathway of report:** Cabinet Member Decision

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** To provide the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee with the rationale behind the proposal to extend the East Kent Community Drug and Alcohol Service for a period of 24 of the allowable 36 months.

**Recommendation(s):** The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **consider, endorse or recommend** to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on the proposed decision to:

A. **APPROVE** the extension of the contracted East Kent Drug and Alcohol Service with The Forward Trust for a period of 24 of the allowable 36 months; and

B. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to implement the Decision

See Appendix A: PROD

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The East Kent Community Drug and Alcohol Service was commissioned in 2016/2017. The contract was awarded to the Forward Trust and commenced on 1 May 2017 with an end date of 31 March 2022. This contract has allowable extensions contained within the contract for up to a further 36 months.
- 1.2 Commissioners have undertaken a formal contract review of the service to determine whether KCC should extend the contract (as per the contract clause) or undertake a new procurement exercise. Key findings from the contract review support extending the contract as the service continues to perform effectively against agreed indicators.
- 1.3 The intention is to extend the contract by 24 months to align all adult drug and alcohol contracts to end in March 2024. This will give the Council maximum flexibility and opportunity to re-commission in a way that will effectively support

Kent residents in the future. Commissioners plan to procure all the contracts as one exercise which will allow for economies of scale and shared engagement with all the market.

- 1.4 The Key Decision to award the contract, taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health in 2017, did not reference the allowable extension although it was contained in earlier reports that went to Committee in 2016 detailing the procurement plan for the service. Formal approval is therefore required via a further Key Decision in order to extend the contract by 24 of the allowable 36 months.

## **2. Body of the report**

- 1.5 The Public Health Grant Conditions state that “A local authority must, in using the grant have regard to the need to improve the take up of, and outcomes from, its drug and alcohol misuse treatment services”, so we have a duty to offer this service.
- 1.6 Since May 2017, The Forward Trust have delivered the East Kent Community Drug and Alcohol Service. The contract started in May 2017 and was for a period of five years to the end of March 2022, with the agreed option to extend for up to a further three years. The service covers Ashford, Thanet, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, and Swale District areas.
- 1.7 The service contributes directly to the KCC Interim Strategic plan (published December 2020) by supporting older and vulnerable adults to maintain a good quality of life and contributing to children having the best start in life. The service also contributes towards improving public health outcomes, reducing health inequalities, and minimising harm caused by drugs and alcohol in East Kent.
- 1.8 Performance and effectiveness of the service is measured against the following Public Health Outcome Framework indicators:
  - Successful completion of treatment
  - Adults with drug or alcohol dependence treatment need who successfully engage in community-based structured treatment following release from prison within three weeks.
- 1.9 Performance data shows that the service is typically experiencing increasing numbers in treatment against the backdrop of budget reductions, yet the contract as operated by The Forward Trust has performed well against targets and when compared to regional and national averages. The Forward Trust and Commissioners continually work together to improve the service and such work has included service re-design, quality improvement plans, and undertaking pilot initiatives.
- 1.10 The recent Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak also supports the option of an extension to the contract as it is recognised that the coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately affected vulnerable adults. The charity sector (in which this contract sits) has also faced extremely demanding and ever-changing challenges and therefore, maximising stability is therefore recommended in any decision that is made for this service.

1.11 Given the good performance of the current contract and the potential for disruption to vulnerable individuals by making unnecessary changes, it is recommended that the extension to the contract is enacted for 24 of the allowable 36 months. This brings it in line with the end date of the West Kent Community Drug and Alcohol service which has been extended to March 2024.

1.12 If the contract was not extended and KCC went out to procurement, the increasing cost pressures, coupled with significant workforce recruitment issues across the sector, may make bidding for the contract unappealing to providers, which may result in KCC undertaking a costly process, with the risk of few resulting options for alternative provision.

### **3. Financial Implications**

3.1 The value of the 24-month contract extension (1 April 2022 to 31 March September 2024) will be approximately £9,819,620 (based upon the current financial year's figures).

### **4. Legal implications**

4.1 The proposed extension is in line with what was outlined in the original contract as a contract clause.

4.2 This proposed extension is in line with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which set out the legal basis for Local Authority procuring services.

### **5. Equalities Implications**

5.1 A detailed EqIA relating to service delivery model was undertaken when the service was commissioned in 2017. A recent EqIA was undertaken relating to the proposal to extend the contract (see Appendix B) and found that 'No change' in the current service delivery is deemed the most appropriate option. The evidence suggests that there is no potential for discrimination and that this option is an appropriate measure to advance equality and create stability for vulnerable service users.

5.2 An EQIA has been written as part of the future recommissioning process to continually assess and consider the options and whether 'No change' remains the most appropriate option.

### **6. Data Protection Implications**

6.1 General Data Protection Regulations are part of current service documentation for the contract and there is a Schedule of Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects confirming who is data controller/ processor. There is also an existing Data Protection Impact Assessment relating to the data that is shared between KCC, the provider and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (previously named Public Health England) and the services.

### **7. Conclusions**

7.1 The East Kent Community Drug and Alcohol Service contract with The Forward Trust is due to end on 31 March 2022. Commissioners have undertaken a

formal contract review of the service to determine whether KCC should extend the contract (as per the contract clause) or undertake a new procurement exercise. Key findings from the contract review support extending the contract until March 2024 as the contract continues to perform effectively against agreed indicators.

- 7.2 The intention is to extend the contract by 24 months to align both East and West adult drug and alcohol contracts to end in March 2024. This will give the Council maximum flexibility and opportunity to re-commission in a way that will effectively support Kent residents in the future. Commissioners plan to procure the contracts as one exercise which will allow for economies of scale, shared engagement with the Kent market and facilitate co-production of any future contracts.

## **8. Recommendation(s):**

The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **consider, endorse or recommend** to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on the proposed decision to:

- A. **APPROVE** the extension of the contracted East Kent Drug and Alcohol Service with The Forward Trust for a period of 24 of the allowable 36 months; and
- B. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to implement the Decision

## **9.. Background Documents**

None

## **10.. Report Author**

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