

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services

DECISION NO:

23-00015

For publication [Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]

Key decision: YES / NO

Key decision criteria. 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

Family Hub Transformation Funding

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services s, I agree to:

- a. commence development and co-design of the Family Hub model for Kent in line with Government Family Hub framework for delivery and associated plans.
- b. note and confirm the expenditure, activity and planning for funding already allocated under Key Decision 22/00094, progressed under the delegation to receive and deploy initial funding in accordance with the requirement to develop and explore detailed transformation plans.
- c. Note that the implementation of the full range of changes required to transform KCC’s existing provision to meet the requirements set out in the Government’s Family Hub model plan will be subject to future Executive decision-making.
- d. to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council has been exploring how Kent could implement the national Family Hubs programme, in line with Government guidance and best practice and has been appointed a Family Hub Transformation Authority.

1.2 As a Family Hub Transformation Authority, the Council has been awarded some initial funding for this financial year (2022 – 2023) in order to undertake preliminary work to establish how Kent council implement the national Family Hub Framework.

2. Current context

2.1 The Council has been notionally allocated to receive up to £10million over three years as part of the Family Hubs Transformation Funding Programme and on the 9 February 2023, Kent was announced as one of 14 national Family Hub trailblazer areas who will receive transformation funding as set out in this report.

2.2 Trailblazer areas will receive additional support from the Department of Education (DfE) and be expected to work with other transformation authorities to progress Family Hub Transformation work.

2.3 The DfE have specified this funding should be used to develop and scope how Family Hubs could be transformed, incrementally add to existing services, complement existing services and/or offer new services in order to improve services to whole families in Kent, ensuring open access provides a 0-19 years model and children get the 'Best Start to Life'.

2.4 For 2022-23, £2,830,000 Family Hubs funding has been provisionally allocated by the DfE to Kent, with £138,164 of this being capital expenditure. A further £183,000 in revenue funding has also been allocated specifically to begin to undertake preliminary transformation activity during this financial year.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 Due to Family Hub Transformation Programme delays and DfE deadlines extending, spending the allocated funding has been delayed and the Council remain in discussions with DfE around expectations and timelines for monies which are committed but not spent at the end of this financial year.

3.2 Initial payments of £1.4m from the total year 1 allocation, have been received by the Council in November 2022 and January 2023, however discussions remain ongoing with the DfE in relation to the remaining funding with further payments anticipated to be received by the Council by the end of the March 2023.

3.3 Of the initial funding received, £1.3m has been forecasted to be spent by the end of March 2023, and the remainder of year 1 allocation committed to be spent in early 23-24, subject to DfE approval.

3.4 To date, a total of £776,200 has been spent/ payments are in progress, with the majority attributable to staffing costs for planning and preparatory work and the purchasing of some equipment to support outreach services, where needed.

3.5 As part of our activities we have engaged with key stakeholders, including initial Parent Carer groups to help plan the detail of the future delivery model and ensure meaningful coproduction, notwithstanding, we are not able to declare which buildings will become Family Hubs until after the Kent Communities consultation concludes.

3.6 As previously noted, the delivery plan is iterative, although Public Health, Midwifery and Integrated Childrens Services will continue to deliver core and statutory services.

4. Financial implications

4.1 The Council is facing significant financial challenges and it is critical that any obligations created to deliver the programme are fully funded by the grant.

4.2 This report only covers the grant funding for the current financial year, totalling £2.8m. The latest forecast indicates that only £1.3m of that total will be spent by the end of the financial year. The DfE have not yet confirmed whether it will be possible to utilise unspent year 1 (22-23) grant funding in future years. If that is not the case, year 2 and 3 funding plans will need to be reprioritised to ensure total spending commitments can be fully contained within the grant received.

4.3 The spending plans are prepared in accordance with DfE conditions of grant including the proportion of spend that can be spent on each area of activity. These include:

- Family Hubs Transformation
- Home Learning Environment Services
- Perinatal Mental Health & Parent-Infant Relationships
- Parenting Support
- Infant Feeding Support
- Publishing Start for Life Offers & establishing parent carer panels

5. Legal implications

5.1 The Council has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Education (DfE) which creates obligations to progress transformation scoping and proposal development activity this financial year.

5.2 Access to the associated funding of up to £10m, depending on the type and level of transformation activity eventually progressed, is conditional on compliance with the terms of the MOU and demonstration of progress toward an effective Family Hub Model.

5.3 The places and spaces where family hubs will be formed will be informed by the outcome of the Community Assets consultation, however the development of the practice model is independent of the outcome of the consultation.

6. Equalities implications

6.1 Initial assessment and attached Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has not identified any negative implications. Further EQIAs will need to be developed as part of future decision making in relation to individual aspects of Family Hub delivery once developed.

7. Risk and Other Factors

7.1 Currently there is a consultation taking place regarding Community Assets in which some family services are currently being delivered.

7.2 The outcome of this consultation will inform some aspects of further Family Hub proposals, specifically with regards to Community Assets, however the Family Hubs Transformation Programme has other workstreams, such as outreach and digital services which are not impacted and can progress.

8. Governance

8.1 Cabinet Member decision will provide the strategic policy position of KCC on the development of the Family Hub expenditure for 2022-2023 and delegate authority for required activity to support

the further progression on design when it is appropriate to do so.

8.2 The decision provides clear delegation for the ongoing submission of updates to Government on the iterative Delivery Plans and to enter into relevant legal agreement (e.g. MOUs) when these do not create commitments outside the scope of activity approved by this and previous Family Hub decisions.

8.3 Detailed proposals for the Family Hub model in Kent will still be subject to future decision-making, with the relevant consultation and governance activity.

Risk and Other Factors

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee consider the decision on 8 March 2023

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do nothing – additional funding to support the improvement of Family Services in Kent will not be able to be utilised failure to make use of this grant may result in it needing to be repaid unless confirmed otherwise by DfE.

Should funding not be utilised for this financial year it could put any future Family Hubs Transformation Funding for subsequent years at risk of non-receipt.

Progress expenditure - of the limited funding allocated for this financial year and utilise it to further develop and progress further exploration of what Family Hub services could look like, including improving access through community outreach, community engagement, project development and an enhanced digital offer.

Delay – further delivery of Family Hubs Transformation and request for Kent's delivery timeframes to be pushed back. DfE have outlined that they would not be in agreement, and this may impact future funding and outcomes reporting.

There is also, currently an expectation from DfE that as part of this Transformation Programme,

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

None

.....
signed

.....
date