

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

**Cabinet Member for
Adult Social Care and Public Health**

DECISION NO:

24/00057

For publication:

Key decision: Yes

Title of Decision: Approve the adoption of the Infant feeding strategy, ‘Nourishing our next generation.’

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services, I propose to:

- a) **APPROVE** the adoption of the Infant feeding strategy, ‘Nourishing our next generation.’ and to
- b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to take necessary actions, including but not limited to, allocating resources, expenditure, entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

Reason for decision:

Currently there is not an infant feeding strategy in Kent. Developing a strategy supports strategic planning and delivery and helps joined up working across organisations.

In 2022 there were 16,394 live births in Kent. Research continues to show the importance of easy access to infant feeding support and consistency of information.

Development of a cocreated Infant feeding strategy has provided an opportunity to bring stakeholders together from across the system, to engage with families and identify where there are gaps in knowledge and in support. The strategy has been made available for public consultation for a period of eight weeks February – April 2024.

This strategy will contribute to ‘*Priority 1: Levelling up Kent of the Framing Kent’s Future Our Council Strategy 2022-2026*’ as the themes relate to providing additional support for families at the start of their infant’s life which is a preventative approach to improve the populations health and narrowing of health inequalities.

Financial Implications: The DfE family hub grant is a ring-fenced grant specifically for the family hubs and start for life programme which includes a focus on perinatal mental health and parent infant relationships and does not impact the council general revenue fund. This has provided opportunity to increase workforce capability and capacity to expand the reach of low to moderate perinatal mental health and parent infant relationship support and to raise awareness of support available for those with low to moderate perinatal mental health. The implementation of this strategy will be pivotal to further progressing and embedding this work.

Securing Kent’s Future

The proposed decision aligns with Objective 3 of securing Kent’s Future

Legal Implications:

The council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department for Education (DfE) which creates obligations to meet specific deadlines and timescales set by the DfE or risk losing further funding or funding claw back.

Access to the associated funding, depending on the type and level of transformation activity progressed, is conditional on compliance with the terms of the MoU and demonstration of progress toward an effective Family Hub Model.

The council has and will enter into a number of contractual agreements to support delivery in line with Spending the Council's Money and Public Contract Regulations 2015, and aligns with Objective 3 of Securing Kent's Future.

Equality Implications: An Equality Impact Assessment had been completed and this has identified that there were impacts across all the protected characteristics. Suggested mitigations are wide ranging including training in person centred and cultural awareness, guidance on communication and sensory needs to be included in any notes.

Data Protection implications:

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.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

In February 2024 Kent County Council launched a public consultation on two co-created strategies to gain a better understanding of whether the strategies were accessible and presented a vision that was agreed on.

[Infant feeding strategy](#)

The proposed decision will be discussed at the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 2 July 2024 and the outcome included in the paperwork which the Cabinet Member will be asked to sign.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The guidelines from DfE on family hubs outline minimum requirements which includes a cocreated Infant feeding strategy. This is an important part of health and non-compliance was not considered.

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