

## DECISION REPORT

**From:** Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

**To:** Dan Watkins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

**Subject:** **The adoption of the Infant Feeding Strategy, 'Nourishing our next generation'**

**Decision Number:** 24/00057

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of report:** Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 2 July 2024

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

**Electoral Division:** All

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**Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes**

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**Summary:** Kent County Council (KCC) has been successful in receiving Family Hub Transformation Authority status and has therefore received designated Family Hub Transformation Funding. A Start for Life Programme update was provided to Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee on the 11 July 2023. This provided an opportunity for members to ask any questions, help shape the programme of work and explained the governance route for future decisions.

A key decision is required to approve the adoption of the co-created Infant feeding strategy in order to support improvement in outcomes for children.

**Recommendation(s):** The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public is asked 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
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### 1. Introduction

1.1 This strategy supports a key area of transformation to family hubs which relates to Start for Life and is relevant to Public Health namely infant feeding.

- 1.2 Start for Life is a component of the family hubs model with a specific focus on the first 1001 days, between conception and the age of two, essential for the healthy development of babies. This focus for support was identified by the Dame Andrea Leadsom Review in 2020 and further articulated in March 2021 in publication of The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 critical days. This was followed by the announcement of £300m government funding to support Family Hubs with a focus on parent carer panels, parenting programmes, parent infant relationships, perinatal mental health and infant feeding in April 2022. Kent was one of 75 local authorities provided with the opportunity to benefit from the £300m funding.
- 1.3 On 4 October 2022 the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services took a key decision (Decision number 22/00094) to adopt the principle of Kent becoming a Family Hub Transformation Authority.
- 1.4 On 23 March 2023, a further key decision was taken under decision number 23/00015 Family Hub Transformation Funding: a) To 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) To allocate and spend funding allocated via the Family Hub Transformation Authority for 2022/23 financial year.

## **2. Infant feeding**

- 2.1 The requirement from the Department of Education (DfE) is to co-create and embed an infant feeding strategy which ensures services are tailored to the local communities and there is a coherent and joined-up approach between staff and organisations.
- 2.2 We commissioned an external organisation, Better Breastfeeding in August 2023 to develop a co-created Infant Feeding Strategy.
- 2.3 An infant feeding steering group was established in August 2023, as part of the governance process to help bring key stakeholders together.
- 2.4 Opportunities have continued to be offered and shared to enable the workforces to develop their awareness and keep their knowledge of infant feeding up to date through training webinars, and full day workshops.
- 2.5 A draft strategy, 'Nourishing our next generation' was presented to the Start for life board in January 2024.
- 2.6 The strategy contains five themes:
  - Ensuring that mother and families are well informed and well prepared for feeding their babies
  - Providing the support mother and families need in the right place and at the right time
  - Offering seamless support from an integrated and skilled workforce
  - Involving the wider community
  - Continuously improving our services as we learn over time.

- 2.7 A public consultation took place between 8 February and 3 April 2024. with presentation of materials online, digital promotion and attendance at various events across the county to enable discussion and an opportunity to complete the survey.
- 2.8 Analysis of the consultation responses was completed by Better Breastfeeding who developed the strategy. The consultation analysis is provided as an appendix to this briefing. (Appendix 1).
- 2.9 Small amendments have been made to the strategy following the public consultation.
- 2.10 Stakeholders from the local maternity and neonatal system who are part of the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) have been engaged in the process of developing this Infant Feeding Strategy and has agreed to adopt the strategy through their governance processes.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 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.

### **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.

### **5. Equalities implications**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been completed (attached as Appendix 2) and this has identified that there were impacts across all of 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.

## 6. Governance

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member decision will provide the strategic policy position of Kent County Council alongside that of partner agencies such as health, regarding the specified workstreams. The key decision will delegate authority for required activity to support the further progression of co-design, expenditure of funding and resources to commence delivery to improve services as required.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This strategy presents a framework to further develop our approach to enhancing support and information to support families on infant feeding.

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## 8. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health is asked 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
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## 9. Background Documents

Consultation analysis

## 10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consultation analysis

Appendix 2 – Equality impact assessment

## 11. Contact details

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