

**From: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services**

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

**Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education**

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

**To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 16 January 2025**

**Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 21 January 2025**

**Subject: 24/00124 – Family Hubs Year 4 Grant Award**

### **Key decision**

- *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions*
- *It involves expenditure or savings of maximum £1m – including if over several phases*

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** Within the Autumn Budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a further year of funding for existing Family Hub authorities. A series of Key Decisions by the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services accepted the original transformation grant funding for Family Hubs and adopted our new Family Hub service model.

The existing Key Decisions do not extend beyond the initial transformation period which end on 31 March 2025. Therefore, a new Key Decision is required to accept the additional year of Grant funding and to utilise that funding in line with the service model adopted under the Family Hub Model Key Decision.

This decision is for the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, but is reported to the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee as well, given the implications for Public Health funding.

## Recommendations:

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee and Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee are asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE**, or **MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix 1).

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In October 2022 the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services took [decision 22/00094](#) and Kent County Council (KCC) signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department for Education (DfE) which accepted the initial 3-year transformation grant funding. This decision set out the requirement for the development of detailed proposals, public consultation and appropriate governance ahead of a further Key Decision on the Family Hub model.
- 1.2 In November 2023, after the development of detailed proposals, public consultation and appropriate governance, KCC Cabinet took [decision 23/00092](#) to implement the Family Hub model across the county.
- 1.3 Alongside the Decisions in October 2022 and November 2024, two additional decisions were taken relating to the Start for Life expenditure for Perinatal Mental Health and Parent Infant relationships ([decision 23/00075](#)) and for Infant Feeding ([decision 23/00076](#)).
- 1.4 Contained within the 2024 Autumn Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer included an additional £69m for a further year of funding for existing Family Hub authorities across the country. Detail on the specific amount of money to be awarded to KCC and any additional delivery constraints are anticipated from the DfE within the course of the next couple of months.
- 1.5 It is considered sensible that the principle of acceptance of the further year of grant money is discussed and endorsed by members in line with our governance procedures. Final decision-making on the acceptance and deployment plans for the funding will be taken once the full details are available from the DfE.

## 2. Family Hub Grant Funding

- 2.1 March 2025 marks the end of the initial Transformation period which has seen the Council adopt a policy position that moved from our previous Open Access model, to the Family Hub model.
- 2.2 The Government's commitment to the Family Hub model has been reconfirmed by the announcement of a further year of funding for Family Hub authorities.

- 2.3 We would expect that the grant money will be split across the same strands of activity as previously dictated by the DfE:
- Programme
  - Capital
  - Perinatal Mental Health & Parent Infant Relationships
  - Parenting Support
  - Infant Feeding
  - Home Learning Environment
  - Publishing the Start for Life Offer and Parent Carer Panels
- 2.4 The option to not accept the grant money has been considered. Given the financial challenges the Council currently faces, it is not considered appropriate to decline the further funding from the DfE. Final assessment will be dependent on a consideration of the deliverability of the requirements of any agreement required with the DfE to access the funding, along with a review of how far any such requirements align with the established Family Hub programme operating in Kent.
- 2.5 While understanding the risks associated with a late announcement and recognising the potential challenges involved with delivering against the requirements of any future terms and conditions, on a practical level, the Council must plan and prepare for the likelihood of it being necessary to accept the additional funding to ensure the greatest possible access to funding to support children, families and communities in the best way possible.
- 2.6 Announcement of the specific grant amount for KCC and the delivery requirements accompanying the funding is expected later in January 2025. However, a delay in the acceptance of the grant money poses a risk that the time available to spend the money and achieve the delivery requirements is reduced. This report seeks to explain the timing and staging of potential decision-making in the event that the final assessment of the funding requirements are appropriate for Kent. Therefore, endorsement of the principle of accepting the grant money and utilising it in line with the delivery requirements set out by the DfE is sought now to maximise our ability to mobilise resources to implement additional service requirements or procure services at the relevant time. Failure to do so will pose a risk to the delivery of services and cause a reputational risk for Kent County Council and poor outcomes for the families of Kent.
- 2.7 This report recommends that review of the delivery requirements and how the funding can be utilised in line with the DfE constraints is delegated to the Director of Integrated Children's Services and the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health.

### **3. Governance**

- 3.1 Acceptance of the Year 4 grant money is an executive decision of the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Public Health, building on previous Family Hub decisions and recognising the clear connections between Children's Services and the Public Health activities delivered to communities across Kent via Family

Hubs. The core principles and planned approach are presented for Cabinet Committee's consideration to support a final decision when full details are known.

- 3.2 The final decision to accept the grant money will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, subject to review of the terms and conditions when they are made available. The full implications and considerations will be detailed in the relevant published reports at the point of decision, in accordance with normal KCC decision-making processes.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The details of Year 4 money to be awarded to Kent County Council is currently unknown. However, the DfE is expected to include delivery requirements and conditions alongside the grant funding, in line with the prior Family Hub funding approach.
- 4.2 If accepted, the funding will be used to ensure the sustainable and consistent delivery of the adopted Family Hub model across Kent. It is not expected to impact the pressure on existing revenue or capital budgets. Further information will be provided via the decision report and record of decision published at the point of decision.

#### **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 KCC has a statutory duty to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of children's centres (now known as Family Hubs) to meet local need. KCC will continue to fulfil its duty to provide sufficient family hubs to meet need across Kent.
- 5.2 Acceptance of any grant money does mean that KCC is obligated to comply with the delivery requirements, terms and conditions that accompany the funding. As set out above, these are currently unknown, however they are expected to be in line with conditions of the original grant award. Review of the deliverability and legal considerations will be undertaken and referenced at the point of decision.
- 5.3 Previously the implementation of the Family Hub Programme has been in line with the DfE Family Hub National Programme Guidance, specially Annex E and F available [here](#).

#### **6. Equalities implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) will accompany the eventual decision although at this stage there are no anticipated adverse impacts that are associated with the acceptance of the year 4 grant money given the expectation that any future operations and activity will be designed to complement, develop and build on the established Family Hub arrangements. Review of existing

Family Hub Equality Impact Assessments will form part of the final decision.

## 7. Data protection implications

- 7.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not expected to be required for the acceptance of the year 4 grant money. General Data Protection Regulations are part of current contract documentation and a Schedule of Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects will be completed for any procured activity.

## 8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Following the initial three-year funded transformation period, the DfE has confirmed a further year of Family Hub grant funding. A Key Decision is required to accept the additional year of DfE Family Hub grant funding, and to enable the spend of the grant money when the grant period begins in April 2025. Any delay to accepting the grant money, or the governance around the acceptance poses a risk to the Council's ability to spend the money.
- 8.2 As set out above, in normal circumstances, the detailed proposals for accepting and deploying the Year 4 funding would be set out for Cabinet Committee consideration. However, while the detail is not yet available from DfE, this item provides an opportunity to consider the implications of additional funding and for the Cabinet Committee to provide their views to the Cabinet Member on key considerations to inform their final decision.
- 8.3 Any acceptance of the funding will involve commitments to deliver Family Hubs in a certain way and until the details are available from the DfE, it is not possible to make the required final assessment on whether it is appropriate for KCC to enter into the relevant agreements. Given the likely benefits to the community that may be realised via any additional funding, it is sensible to prepare and scope plans for the acceptance and deployment of the additional funding in advance of the final decision-making. The Cabinet Member welcomes feedback on the plan and will factor in any views when making the final decision.

## 9. Recommendations

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee and Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee are asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE**, or **MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix 1).

## 9. Contact details

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