

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NUMBER:

25/00023

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

Key decision: YES

- It involves the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;
- It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Raising Ambition. Enabling Curiosity. Building Resilience. A Strategy for the Future of Education in Kent, 2025-2030

Decision:

As the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills I agree to:

(a) ADOPT the draft Education Strategy “Raising Ambition, Enabling Curiosity, Building Resilience. A Strategy for the Future of Education in Kent 2025-2030”;

(b) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to make non-substantial revisions as appropriate during the lifetime of the strategy where changes do not require additional governance; and

(c) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the objectives of the strategy.

Reason(s) for decision:

Raising Ambition. Enabling Curiosity. Building Resilience. A Strategy for the Future of Education in Kent, 2025-2030, has been developed in response to the Government’s drive for a self-improving, school-led system. As the system evolves there is a growing understanding of the need for sector-wide collaboration to ensure that every child receives an excellent education.

KCC does not have a current strategy. The previous overarching strategy for education was Vision and Priorities for Improvement, 2018-2021.

The Local Authority’s role in state-funded education has undergone significant change over previous years and is set to change further as the new Government develops and embeds its own education agenda. The strategy outlines principles and approaches to support delivery during a period of change.

The purpose of the strategy is to create cohesion with many stakeholders around a vision for all parts of the sector from early years to post-16 across many stakeholders, and to proactively respond

to our local and sector specific context and challenges.

KCC has a wide range of statutory duties it needs to meet in education. These are a priority, and we need to consider and plan for how these are fulfilled. The strategy is built around our statutory duties and aligns our work with the national direction of travel. It also responds to the voices of our children, young people, parents, carers and educational professionals.

Raising Ambition. Enabling Curiosity. Building Resilience. A Strategy for the Future of Education in Kent, 2025-2030, is written to align with and support the delivery of wider work in education. It aligns with other strategies including:

- The County-wide Approach To Inclusive Education
- The SEND Strategy
- The Education Accessibility Strategy.

It also aligns with other sector specific strategic work such as:

- The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2023-27
- The Review of Early Years
- The work of Pathways for All
- The Funding Services to Schools

Implementation of this strategy will:

- Support sector cohesion and collaboration
- Address specific challenges and issues within the system
- Align to national direction of travel, within a rapidly changing context
- Enable KCC to meet its statutory duties with regard to education including admissions, commission of places, fair access and school improvement

The proposed decision supports the [Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy 2022-2026](#) Priority 1: Levelling Up Kent 'Our commitment is to maintain KCC's strategic role in supporting schools in Kent to deliver accessible, high quality education provision for all families'.

The proposed decision supports Securing Kent's Future 2022 -2026: [Securing Kents Future - Budget Recovery Strategy.pdf](#) It is in compliance with and supports the Council prioritising its Best Value statutory responsibility and ensure that the Best Value duty is adhered in strategic and operational decisions, including advice to executive and non-executive Members. All Members, when discharging their respective roles within the council, whether executive or non-executive, should also prioritise Best Value considerations.

It also in line with Securing Kent's Future strategic Objective 3: policy choices and scope of the Council's ambitions. Meaning that 'we must review statutory services and the extent to which they are appropriately meeting need and supporting outcomes, and where necessary reshape that spend so it frees up resources for other services, including discretionary services'.

Financial Implications

The implementation of the Raising Ambition. Enabling Curiosity. Building Resilience strategy will be progressed based on the budget allocation to the Children, Young People and Education Directorate. Operational delivery arising from this strategy for future years will be determined by the approved budget and the Medium Term and Financial Plan (MTFP) requirements.

Legal Implications

The implementation changes from the strategy will be in line with Kent County Council's education and children's social care responsibilities, as set out in relevant legislation such as the Education Act (1996), Children and Families Act (2014), and Children Act (2004).

Equalities implications

As part of the consultation process for the strategy development work, a draft equality impact assessment was developed and published alongside the draft strategy document. Comments made as part of the response to the consultation which have implications for policy and decision making will be considered and the equality impact assessment updated accordingly. The equality impact assessment will be updated and a final version produced to support the proposed decision.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The revised strategy and associated documents will be considered by the Children’s, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 27 February 2025. Their views will be added following the meeting.

Engagement and consultation

Substantial stakeholder engagement work took place prior to drafting the proposed strategy, which provided valuable insights and feedback that fundamentally shaped the strategy.

A public consultation was undertaken between 23 October 2024 and 15 December 2024 on the content and format of the strategy. There were 3,360 visits to the strategy consultation, and documentation was downloaded over 1,830 times resulting in 131 responses.

The overwhelming response to the proposed strategy was very positive with 80% or more of respondents strongly or tending to agree with all parts of the strategy. This rose to 99% for some sections.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do nothing, that is, to continue without a strategy that reflects the current operating environment and how the present and future challenges could be addressed by KCC and the stakeholder community.

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