

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

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

DECISION NO:

25/00081

For publication

Key decision: YES

Title of Decision: Wellbeing Services in the Community for People with Sensory Impairments - Contract Extension

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, I propose to:
A) **EXTEND** the current contract for Wellbeing Services in the Community for People with Sensory Impairments, for a period of one year from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027; and
B) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Care Act sets out local authorities' adult social care responsibilities under law. These include promoting individual wellbeing, preventing needs for care and support, providing information and advice, assessing needs, meeting needs, charging, safeguarding, and care market development.

Kent County Council (KCC) has statutory obligations regarding preventing, delaying, and reducing needs for care and support of adults and carers in Kent. It fulfils these obligations through a wide range of interventions which are not limited to Wellbeing Services in the Community, Community Navigation, and other initiatives funded and delivered by adult social care. Health and other partners in Kent also deliver services which contribute to the achievement of the same objectives. KCC will continue to discharge its statutory functions through a wide variety of approaches and initiatives. KCC is, furthermore, undertaking a longer-term, system-wide review of its approach to prevention.

Officers have undertaken a review of certain adult social care preventative services, namely the Wellbeing Services in the Community, and Community Navigation Services, funded by KCC and delivered through contractual arrangements with partners in the voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. KCC arranges for the delivery of a wide range of Wellbeing Services in the Community.

The purpose of the review was to refocus and redesign the delivery of Wellbeing Services in the Community with a view to achieving four strategic objectives:

- Removing elements of duplication within KCC's current prevention approach.
- Ensuring prevention services are more efficient, targeted and making best use of limited resources.
- Focusing on the areas and people with greatest need.
- Contributing towards savings that deliver a balanced budget for KCC.

However, certain Wellbeing Services in the Community were not included, particularly those which

support people with specific needs such as dementia, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, and mental health needs, as they already met elements of the strategic objectives and to minimise any deterioration of health or disability.

The prevention landscape in Kent is multi-faceted, in that many KCC services and activities that contribute to prevention sit outside adult social care, and include the involvement of public health, children's services, leisure, transport, housing services, and libraries.

The Wellbeing Services in the Community for People with Sensory Impairments support people who are aged 18 and over with a sensory impairment, such as people who are blind and/or deaf, including people that use British Sign Language (BSL), providing support with information and advice, equipment and training and rehabilitation.

Kent Association for the Blind (KAB) delivers this on behalf of KCC in partnership with Hi Kent and British Sign Language Community CIC (Community Interest Company). 22,834 people accessed these services in the 2024/25 and the annual budget £1.06million. The current contract is due to end on 31 March 2026, with no further extensions available.

Extending the Wellbeing Services in the Community for People with Sensory Impairments contract for a further year, and aligning the end of the contract with other Wellbeing Services that were out of scope of the Proposed Changes to Wellbeing Services in the Community, will allow a full review and redesign of services to take place should the Prevention Framework be adopted.

When setting up the Wellbeing and Community Navigation contracts, the focus was on whole population, providing preventative support to people across the county with different levels of need. This approach was taken to support as many people as possible. However, since these contracts started the support offer has developed and there needs to be a focus and response to individual needs and those of diverse communities, areas

Financial Implications

The table below shows the current contract value.

Service	Annual contract value
Wellbeing Services in the Community for people with Sensory Impairments	£1,030,000

The service budget allocation covers the contract value included above.

Legal Implications

KCC has statutory obligations regarding preventing, delaying, and reducing needs for care and support of adults and carers in Kent. It fulfils these obligations through a wide range of interventions which are not limited to Wellbeing Services in the Community, Community Navigation, and other initiatives funded and delivered by adult social care.

The initial notice (i.e. Notice No: 2020/S 025-058108) advertised in EU Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) stated that contract would be for a duration of five years, comprising an initial three year term of the contract from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024 followed by two 12 month extensions.

The extension of the contract for a further period of 12 months, from 1 April 2026 to 31st March 2027, is permissible, under Schedule 8 (1) (Additional Goods, Services or Works) of the Procurement Act 2023, which provides what is set out in Appendix 1.

The modification of the contract will result in the extension of service provision beyond the original contract term and therefore constitutes the supply of services in addition to the services provided for

in the contract.

The use of a different provider to deliver the service for a further period of twelve months, would result in the provision of services which are different or incompatible with those already provided in the contract, as a new provider may have to deliver the service from a new location/premises, systems and approaches.

Given the cohort of people who draw on care and support involved, i.e. people with sensory impairment, the Council considers that the difference or incompatibility that a new provider may bring, may cause significant inconvenience to people and may result in a substantial duplication of costs for the authority, where people are not confident in using a service provided by a new provider.

The proposed additional 12 months will not increase the overall value of the contract by more than 50%. The original contract value over all years, was £5,251,532. The additional 12 months contract is £1,030,000, which is 19.61% of the original contract value.

Therefore, in the opinion of the Commercial and Procurement Division, Regulation 8 (1) (a) to (d) is satisfied.

As the modification would increase the value of the contract by 19.61 percent and would increase the term of the contract by 20 percent, a contract change notice must be published setting out that the Council intends to modify the contract

Equalities implications

KCC is under a statutory duty to have due regard to the three equality needs under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 when exercising their functions.

An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was published when these contracts were originally awarded and has been reviewed and updated in line with the current contract activity and it is assessed the extension will not have a negative impact on individuals.

Data Protection implications

A Data Protection Impact Assessment was developed as part of the original contract award and remains relevant for the contract extension.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation: The proposed decision will be discussed at the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 10 September 2025 and the outcome included in the paperwork which the Cabinet Member will be asked to sign.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do nothing. stop funding for the Wellbeing Services in the Community for those with Sensory Impairments. This option was not taken forward as this will not achieve the strategic objectives.

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

