



Budget Amendment Form

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|---------------|
| Amendment Name: | Labour Group - Invest to Save Proposals | Amendment Number: | 3 |
| Directorate: | Cross Cutting | | |
| Proposer: | Connie Nolan | Seconder: | Alister Brady |
| Proposed Purpose: | | | |

This amendment brings together a set of targeted “**Invest to save**” proposals that strengthen early intervention, expand in-house capacity and reduce long-term pressures in Adult Social Care and Children’s Services.

For ASCH, the package funds preventative mental-health support, a small in-house homecare service for areas with limited provision, and new Supported Homes for young adults with complex needs. These measures aim to prevent escalation, reduce reliance on costly residential and supported-living placements, and improve long-term resilience.

For CYPE, the proposals support bringing school improvement and skills employability functions back in-house, establishing a Multi-Agency Support Network for families below Early Help threshold and improving Home to School Transport assurance. Together, they strengthen early support, improve service coordination and help manage rising demand.

Two smaller cross-directorate proposals focus on safe walking routes for schoolchildren and removing Political Assistant posts to prioritise frontline delivery.

Overall, this amendment requires £1.42m investment in year 1 and a further £1.52m in year 2, funded through the temporary use of earmarked reserves (which are fully replenished in the financial modelling). **A £440k surplus is generated in year 3, which is returned to reserves and an ongoing saving to the Council of ~ £2m.**

- **In House Homecare Service - KEnH Extension (ASCH)**

We will use our existing Kent Enablement at Home infrastructure to create a small, flexible in-house homecare service focused on areas where provision is scarce or very expensive. This approach keeps start-up costs low while giving the Council greater control over quality, workforce standards and local delivery.

By offering better pay and conditions, we can improve recruitment and retention and build a stable, responsive workforce. An in-house offer also allows us to step in where the market struggles and reduce reliance on costly spot-purchased care. Initial modelling takes a prudent, cost-neutral approach, but the proposal strengthens resilience and enhances support for residents who rely on homecare.

- **Mental Health preventative services (ASCH)**

We propose further investment in preventative services that provide support to people with mental health needs, including housing-related support, debt and counselling advice, and a dedicated support line. This investment in year one aims to negate the need for some individuals to require more traditional and costly supported living packages. The primary goal is to realise savings through fewer people needing to access complex and expensive supported living arrangements, aligning with our preventative agenda. Early intervention will reduce future demand, ensuring that cost is not a barrier to accessing necessary support. This is an expansion of the Live Well Kent contract.

- **In-House Supported Homes Provision for Young Adults with Complex Needs (ASCH)**

We propose developing an in-house Supported Homes model for young adults leaving Children's Services with highly complex needs. This would build on the approach already used in Children's Services to create Council-run homes, offering stable, high-quality provision and reducing reliance on costly external Learning Disability Supported Living placements.

These homes would be time-limited and focused on building independence. Increasing in-house capacity and strengthening transitional support will improve outcomes for young adults. A small transition team would support young adults to move safely from children's settings into Supported Homes.

- School Improvement & Skills Employability (CYPE)

We propose bringing the services currently delivered by The Education People back in house by December 2026. Integrating these functions with KCC's existing corporate support, such as Finance, HR and office space, will streamline operations and reduce costs, while maintaining strong support for early years settings, schools, colleges and employers. This closer alignment with core Council structures will enable a more efficient and coordinated educational offer across the County.

- Multi-Agency Support Network for Families Below Early Help Threshold (CYPE)

We propose creating a Multi-Agency Support Network to help families who do not meet the threshold for Early Help but still need coordinated support. Delivered through Kent's Family Hubs, the service would bring together professionals from schools, health, and other partners to provide timely assistance.

Family Hub workers would organise and oversee multi-agency meetings and build relationships with families, offering a similar process to the former Common Assessment Framework (CAF). By improving early coordination, this proposal aims to prevent issues from escalating and reduce future referrals to Early Help and children's social care, supporting Kent's preventative approach and the development of the Families First model.

- Safe Walking Routes for Schoolchildren (GET/CYPE)

We propose exploring the allocation of a portion of the Local Transport or Active Travel Grant to deliver targeted infrastructure improvements that create safe, walkable routes for schoolchildren who currently have no viable alternative to travel by car or bus. This approach would support modest reductions in Home to School Transport pressures, while promoting active, safe and accessible travel for families.

As the Local Transport and Active Travel Grants are a capital funding stream, the cost of upgrading these routes would not have a direct impact on the revenue budget. However, the implications of reprioritising this funding, including the potential cancellation or delay of planned transport schemes, have been discussed with officers and would be carefully managed.

- **Parent-Centred Journey Confirmation for Home to School Transport (CED/CYPE)**

We propose introducing a simple, parent-led journey-confirmation system for Home to School Transport. This would allow parents or carers to confirm that journeys have taken place, improving transparency, safeguarding and confidence in transport arrangements.

The approach would strengthen existing checks, helping to identify missed journeys, errors or potential misuse earlier, and improving financial assurance. While immediate cashable savings may be limited, the system would help prevent financial loss, encourage better practice, facilitate provider behaviour change, and support more efficient use of public funds over time, while providing reassurance for families.

- **Removal of Political Assistant Posts (DCED)**

We propose reversing the decision approved by County Council on 18 December 2025 to appoint Political Assistants for eligible political groups. While the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 permits up to three Political Assistants for groups holding at least 10% of Council seats, the creation of these posts represents an avoidable cost at a time of significant financial pressure. This proposal removes the funding allocated for Political Assistant roles and prioritises frontline services over additional political staffing.

| Proposed Amount | | Proposed Funding Source: | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Financial Modelling and Funding | | | | | |
| Directorate | Proposal | 2026-27 £'000 | 2027-28 £'000 | 2028-29 £'000 | TOTAL £'000 |
| ASCH | In House Homecare Service - KEaH Extension | 250.0 | -250.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| ASCH | Mental Health preventative services | 327.0 | -771.6 | -111.8 | -556.4 |
| ASCH | In-House Supported Homes Provision for Young Adults with Complex Needs | 183.6 | 295.8 | -694.2 | -214.8 |
| CYPE | School Improvement & Skills Employability | 400.0 | -675.0 | -675.0 | -950.0 |
| CYPE | Multi-Agency Support Network for Families Below Early Help Threshold | 300.0 | 75.0 | -450.0 | -75.0 |
| GET/CYPE | Safe Walking Routes for Schoolchildren | 0.0 | 0.0 | -20.0 | -20.0 |
| CED/CYPE | Parent-Centred Journey Confirmation for Home to School Transport | 100.0 | 0.0 | -100.0 | 0.0 |
| DCED | Removal of Political Assistant Posts | -140.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | -140.0 |
| TOTAL >>> | | 1,420.6 | -1,325.8 | -2,051.0 | -1,956.2 |
| FUNDING: | | | | | |
| Use of earmarked reserves >>> -1,420.6 -1,515.4 0.0 | | | | | |
| Remove prior year use of reserves >>> 1,420.6 1,515.4 | | | | | |
| Replenish reserves >>> 1,420.6 1,515.4 | | | | | |
| Remove replenishment of reserves >>> -1,420.6 | | | | | |
| Surplus to return to reserves by year 3 >>> 0.0 0.0 -440.8 | | | | | |