From:	Helen Woodland, Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health
To:	Georgia Foster, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Subject:	**Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia**
Key Decision:	Yes
Decision no:	**26/00057**
Classification:	Unrestricted
Past Pathway of report:	Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 24 September 2026
Future Pathway of report:	Cabinet Member decision
Electoral Division:	All

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

Summary: The Community Wellbeing Service is a key component of Kent County Council's prevention offer and supported approximately 41,500 residents during 2025. The service helps people maintain their health, wellbeing and independence through community-based support, information, advice, practical assistance and social connections. This report sets out the rationale for recommissioning the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia through a Strategic Partner and Service Delivery Network model, together with a six-month extension of the current contracts to ensure continuity of provision during procurement and mobilisation.

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care is asked to:
a) **APPROVE** the commissioning of a new Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia;
b) **APPROVE** a six-month extension on the current Wellbeing Services in the Community Contracts to enable effective mobilisation and transition to the new service;
c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to take relevant actions to secure and manage the six-month extension; negotiate, finalise the terms of, and (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) award the contract for the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia;
d) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and S151 Officer) to exercise any approved contract extensions;
e) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and S151 Officer), to

accept and deploy any additional external funding secured during the lifetime of the contract to enhance the approved service, provided this does not create any unfunded financial commitment for the Council: and
f) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to enter relevant contracts or other legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Wellbeing Services are commissioned services which aim to help people take a proactive approach to their health and wellbeing, increase independence, and prevent, reduce or delay the need for additional care and support services.

1.2 The new Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia will replace the existing Wellbeing Services in the Community contracts, which are commissioned separately for older people, people with dementia, and people with physical disabilities through a range of Voluntary Community Sector Enterprise (VCSE) partners.

The current contracts are

- Wellbeing Services in the Community for Older People (55+)
- Wellbeing Services in the Community for people with dementia and their families
- Wellbeing Services in the Community for people with a physical disability

1.3 The existing contracts are due to reach the end of their permitted term on 31 March 2027, and no further contractual extension options are available. It is therefore necessary to commission a new service, and engagement has been undertaken with providers, people with lived experience and staff to co-design the new Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia offer.

1.4 The proposal to seek a six-month extension to the current contracts (as set out above) does not represent a change to the service scope. The extension will allow sufficient time for completion of the procurement process, contract award, any applicable standstill period and a comprehensive mobilisation period to support safe transition of services. This approach will maintain compliance with procurement legislation and the Council's governance requirements while ensuring continuity of service for residents. Without an extension, the Council would face a significant risk of service disruption, which could adversely affect residents, operational delivery and the Council's statutory duties.

1.5 Procurement and mobilisation will be between December 2026 to September 2027, with the new service delivery commencing from October 2027. It is proposed that the new contract will run for an initial period of two years, with two optional extension periods of 12 months. The proposed contract term balances provider stability and investment confidence with flexibility to respond

to Local Government Reorganisation, Neighbourhood Health developments and future commissioning requirements.

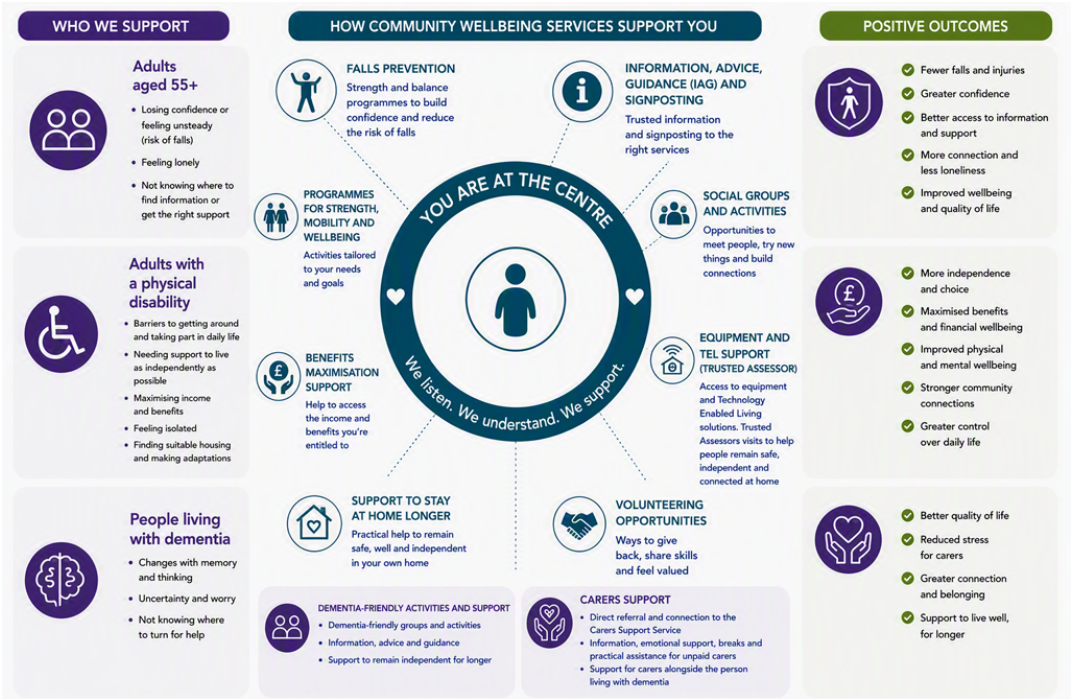
2. Background

2.1 The Community Wellbeing Service aims to help people take a proactive approach to their health and wellbeing, increase independence, and prevent, reduce or delay the need for statutory services. This is achieved via support which includes, but is not limited to: peer groups, physical activities, providing information (e.g. about support in the local community and how to manage money and benefits), supporting people to live safely in their own home, and maintaining and adapting an individual's home to their needs with low level trusted assessor equipment.

2.2 These services form part of Kent County Council's (KCC) wider prevention offer and contribute to reducing demand for statutory services by intervening early and supporting people to manage their wellbeing before needs escalate.

2.3 During 2025, the existing Community Wellbeing Services supported approximately 41,500 Kent residents, demonstrating the significant scale and reach of the Council's preventative offer. Many people accessing the service have multiple and interconnected needs associated with older age, dementia, long-term health conditions and physical disabilities, highlighting the importance of coordinated, community-based support. The service also delivers a strong preventative and financial impact. During 2025/2026, the Community Wellbeing Service for people with a physical disability secured £2.1 million in additional welfare benefits for Kent residents, representing a 14:1 return on investment**.** In addition, 75.6% of people reported increased confidence and ability to manage independently following support**.** These outcomes demonstrate the value of preventative community-based support in improving wellbeing, maintaining independence, maximising household income and helping people manage their needs before more intensive care and support interventions are required.

2.4 The infographic below shows how the Wellbeing services support people.



3. Market, Stakeholder and Public Engagement

3.1 Between November 2025 and March 2026, seventeen engagement sessions, with representation from a wide range of external and internal stakeholders, were delivered through a combination of in-person and virtual meetings and workshops. These sessions have informed the design of the future service

3.2 The key findings from the events, were that services should:

- Be person centred and fully accessible
- Aim to reduce duplication and work in partnership with other services
- Include peer support and volunteering opportunities
- Include multiple support options
- Recognise transport barriers

3.3 People with lived experience will continue to play a role in the procurement, mobilisation and contract management.

3.4 A further engagement session held in June 2026, gave providers the opportunity to help shape the proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and wider performance management approach for the new contract.

4. Options Considered

4.1 Before deciding on the preferred way forward, the following options were considered:

Option Overview	Reason for Discounting / Carried Forward
Option 1: Do nothing / allow contract to expire Maintain the existing Community Wellbeing contracts until they expire on 31 March 2027	**Not recommended –** • This option would remove a key element of KCC's prevention offer, increasing the risk that people's needs escalate and require more intensive statutory intervention, resulting in poorer outcomes for residents and increased pressure on Adult Social Care service. • This would risk non-compliance with the Council's statutory or organisational duties. • The Council may face reputational damage by allowing essential provision to lapse. • There is a significant financial risk to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, potentially leading to job losses and a reduction in the sector's overall capacity.
Option 2: Bring service in-house KCC providing the service in house and remove the need for externally commissioned providers.	**Not recommended –** • While an in-house offer could provide greater direct control, this option would require significant upfront investment, ongoing workforce recruitment and management, and substantial operational

	infrastructure. • It would also present scalability and resilience risks given fluctuating demand. • Overall, this option would carry a high financial and resource burden and would not offer the flexibility or value for money required at scale. • There is a significant financial risk to the VCSE sector, potentially leading to job losses and a reduction in the sector's overall capacity. • This option may also reduce the flexibility and community reach currently achieved through the VCSE sector, potentially weakening the preventative impact of the service.
Option 3: Re-procure as three standalone services with separate contracts Three stand-alone contracts.	**Not recommended –** • Not recommended for services for older people, people with dementia, and those with a physical disability due to the confusion of having multiple referral pathways and the likelihood of those accessing the services requiring support from services that fall under more than one contract. • Evidence from the current service demonstrates that many people accessing support have multiple and overlapping needs. Maintaining separate contracts risks creating unnecessary hand-offs between services, duplication and a less seamless experience for residents.
Option 4: Re-procure Community Wellbeing Services for older people (55+), people with physical disabilities, and people living with dementia through a single contract structured into four separate service lots (including strategic partner)	**Recommended option –** • A simplified offer, with services for older people, adults with physical disabilities, and those with dementia brought together under one contract in recognition that people often have a range of support needs. • Enables a holistic approach to service delivery, rather than the siloed structure of the current contract arrangements.

4.2 The preferred option is for the new service to be commissioned through a single procurement exercise comprising four lots, operating under a Strategic Partner and Service Delivery Network model. It will provide support for people aged 55 and over, adults with physical disabilities, and people living with dementia and their families.

5. How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement

5.1 This commissioning exercise supports the priorities of Reforming Kent 2025-28 by enabling older people, people with physical disabilities, and those living with dementia to live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives within their communities. The Community Wellbeing Service focuses on prevention and early intervention, helping individuals maintain independence, build resilience, and stay connected to local support networks.

5.2 The proposed model aligns with the Council's strategic shift towards prevention and early intervention, supporting better outcomes, greater independence, stronger community resilience, and reduced reliance on higher-cost statutory services. Delivery will be based on partnership working with local communities, the VCSE sector, health partners, and other organisations to provide integrated, person-centred support.

5.3 Overall, the investment in sustainable community wellbeing services will help residents remain independent and socially connected for longer, while delivering value for money through reduced demand for more intensive support services.

6. Service Specifications

6.1 The Service Specifications clearly outline the vision of the service and the approach.

'***People in Kent will have easier access to information and services in their communities, helping them to lead fulfilled, healthy and independent lives for longer.'***

6.2 The Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia will provide support in the community for people living in Kent aged 55 and over (with no upper age limit) and for younger adults with complex or long-term needs. The service will also provide wellbeing support in the community for people aged 18 and over with a physical disability, and/or Dementia.

6.3 The service specifications outline how the service should provide holistic, flexible, and person-centred support, which can be achieved via support which includes, but is not limited to: peer groups, physical activities, providing information (e.g. about support in the local community and how to manage money and benefits), supporting people to live safely in their own home, and maintaining and adapting an individual's home to their needs with low level trusted assessor equipment. The Service should strengthen social connections and empower communities, acknowledging the significant role that connected communities play in improving health, wellbeing and resilience.

6.4 Delivery of the service will be via a four-lot commissioning model comprising one Strategic Partner lot and three service delivery lots as set out in the table below.

	Lot	**Community Wellbeing Service Strategic Partner**
Service Delivery Network	**Lot**	**Community Wellbeing Service for older people aged 55+ (Individuals under the age of 55 are eligible for support if they have complex needs)**
	Lot	**Community Wellbeing Service for adults (aged 18+) with a physical disability**
	Lot	**Community Wellbeing Service for People with Dementia and their Families in Kent**

6.5 The Strategic Partner replaces multiple existing referral and coordination arrangements and provides a single access route for residents, reducing duplication and improving consistency.

6.6 The Service Delivery Network will bring together specialist providers to deliver community wellbeing support for older people, adults with physical disabilities, and people living with dementia and their families. Through close collaboration with the Strategic Partner and local partners, including VCSE and Small or Medium Enterprise (SME) organisations, the network will provide coordinated and person-centred support that reduces barriers to access, improves the individual's experience of support, and helps people maintain their independence, wellbeing and community connections.

6.7 **Service Boundaries and Partnership Working:** To ensure clear accountability and avoid duplication, the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia will provide preventative, community-based support. The service will not undertake functions that sit within Adult Social Care, commissioned care and support services, or other separately commissioned specialist services. Where individuals are identified as requiring additional assessment, care or support, providers will make appropriate referrals and signpost people to relevant services in accordance with agreed pathways.

6.8 S**upport for Carers:** The service will identify and engage unpaid carers where appropriate, providing information, advice and signposting. Providers will work collaboratively with the commissioned Carers' Support Service to ensure carers are aware of, and can access, specialist support

6.9 The recommissioning does not propose any reduction in eligibility, access or availability of support for current or future people who access the services.

6.10 Kent Analytics population and needs projections (Appendix 1) indicate:

- The population aged 55 and over in Kent is forecast to increase by around 25% by 2039.
- The number of 18-64 year olds in Kent with impaired mobility is projected to increase by 6% by 2040, and those with moderate personal care disability are expected to increase by 8%.
- The number of people in Kent aged 65 years old and over with dementia is projected to increase by 42% by 2040.

6.11 Kent Analytics population and needs projections (Appendix 1) indicate significant growth in the number of older people living in Kent over the next 15 years. As age is a key risk factor for both dementia and mobility-related conditions, the projected increases in impaired mobility and dementia prevalence largely reflect the ageing population and increased life expectancy, rather than a sudden increase in the rate at which these conditions occur.

6.12 The performance framework for the contract will ensure that success is measured through a combination of activity, outcome and impact measures, including improvements in wellbeing and independence, reductions in loneliness and social isolation, increased community participation and access to support, user satisfaction, and evidence that preventative interventions help people remain independent and reduce reliance on statutory services.

6.13 The box below provides an example of how the future service could work.

> An individual experiencing declining mobility, social isolation and early memory difficulties may access the Community Wellbeing Service through the Single Point of Access. Following a holistic assessment, they could be connected with local wellbeing activities, peer support opportunities, assistive technology and specialist dementia support. By taking a coordinated approach to addressing multiple needs, the service helps people remain independent, maintain social connections and access support before needs escalate, reducing reliance on more intensive statutory services.

6.14 The management and implementation of the new service model will be delivered by KCC Adult Social Care and the Adults Commissioning and Partnerships Division.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The proposed cost of recommissioning the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia is £2.62m per annum.

7.2 The new service length will be two years (1 October 2027 – 30 September 2029) with two optional extension periods of 12 months.

7.3 The estimated maximum value over the full four-year term is approximately £10.48 million. This is within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

7.4 The estimated costs to KCC Adult Social Care will be consistent with current costs.

7.5 The six-month extension of the current contracts is estimated to cost £1.42m. The proposed extension reflects contract growth implemented during Years 4 and 5, resulting in costs that are £222,087 (full year) above the amount currently provided for within the MTFP. The subsequent tender exercise will realign expenditure with the MTFP allocation for Wellbeing Services of £2.62 million per year.

7.6 A mobilisation budget is recommended to support a safe and effective transition from contract award to service commencement. Mobilisation activity will include workforce transfer arrangements where applicable, recruitment, information governance, referral pathway development, system implementation, stakeholder engagement and service readiness. Mobilisation costs are currently estimated at up to £200,000 and will be confirmed through the procurement process. These costs will be funded through approved savings within the Carers' contract budget and are one-off implementation costs and not recurring annual expenditure.

7.7 The proposed commissioning approach comprises a Strategic Partner and Service Delivery Network model. Financial modelling indicates that implementation of the Strategic Partner function will require additional investment of £44,696 per annum, equivalent to approximately 1.2% of the annual contract value. The Strategic Partner will replace multiple existing coordination and referral arrangements, providing a more streamlined and consistent approach to access, oversight and service integration. Public Health has confirmed that this additional investment will be funded separately and will not create any additional pressure on the Adult Social Care budget. The Council considers this investment to represent good value for money, delivering improved system leadership, stronger accountability, greater consistency of access, reduced duplication and a more coordinated experience for Kent residents.

7.8 The table below provides a summary of the contract value:

Item	Value
Annual contract value	£2.62m
Initial term (2 years)	£5.24m
Maximum value including extensions	£10.48m
Six-month extension	£1.42m
Mobilisation budget	up to £200k
Strategic Partner additional investment provided by Public Health	£44,696 p.a.

7.9 Should additional external funding become available within the lifetime of the contract, it is proposed authority is delegated to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult

Social Care and the Section 151 Officer, to accept and deploy such funding to enhance the approved service.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 KCC has statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 to promote individual wellbeing and to take steps to prevent, reduce or delay the development of needs for care and support. KCC also has a statutory duty to improve the health of the population and reduce health inequalities (Health and Social Care Act 2012). The proposed Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia contributes to the discharge of these duties by providing preventative support which helps maintain independence and wellbeing.

8.2 KCC also has a duty to consider the sustainability of the care and support market when exercising its functions under the Care Act 2014. The proposed commissioning approach seeks to support a sustainable VCSE market whilst securing value for money and continuity of preventative services for Kent residents.

8.3 TUPE regulations may apply. During mobilisation, the Council needs to be conscious to mitigate the disruptive effect this may have on current people accessing the service.

9. Commercial Implications

9.1 The current contract is due to expire on 31 March 2027 and does not have any further permitted extensions.

9.2 The proposed contract modification, to extend the current contract arrangements, is permitted under Regulation 72(1)(b) of the Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015. The extension relates to additional services not anticipated within the original procurement and is required to allow time to remodel and recommission the Community Based Wellbeing Service (SC19050). A change of provider for the proposed six-month period would create significant inconvenience and duplicate costs for the Council. The value of the extension is below 50% of the original contract value and therefore satisfies the requirements of Regulation 72(1)(b).

9.3 The modification is also permissible under Regulation 72(1)(e), as it is not considered substantial under Regulation 72(8). The nature and scope of the contract remain unchanged, there is no alteration to the economic balance in favour of the contractor, no change of provider, and no amendments that would have affected competition or bidder participation in the original procurement. The contract therefore remains materially the same.

9.4 In accordance with Regulation 72(3), a contract modification notice will be published. Following publication, any challenge must be brought within 30 days. If no challenge is received, the Council may proceed with the modification.

9.5 The Community Wellbeing Service will subsequently be recommissioned in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and associated regulations, with appropriate procurement and legal support in place to ensure compliance and manage risk. No further contract extensions are proposed.

9.6 The new Community Wellbeing Services for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia Contract will include specific clauses to account for potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Including such provisions will ensure the contract is flexible, legally robust, and able to adapt to future structural changes in local government while maintaining uninterrupted service delivery.

9.7 Spending will comply with 'Spending the Council's Money' and all relevant procurement legislation, including the Procurement Act 2023, which is expected to govern this procurement. A final confirmation of the applicable procurement regime will be made following assessment and advice from the Commercial and Procurement Division.

9.8 The commissioning activity required to support the re-procurement has been completed, including service review, stakeholder engagement, co-design and market preparation. However, the procurement process will not commence until December 2026 due to competing demands on Commercial and Procurement resources arising from the concurrent re-procurement of several of the Council's largest Adult Social Care contracts, alongside implementation of the new procurement legislative framework. The proposed extension will provide sufficient time to undertake a compliant, robust and appropriately resourced procurement process, securing best value outcomes for both the Council and its residents.

10. Equalities Implications

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed (attached as Appendix 2). The assessment considered the potential impact of the proposed commissioning approach on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The assessment confirmed that the proposed service promotes equitable access to care and support, supports fair and consistent decision-making, and mitigates the risk of disparities in service delivery across different localities in Kent.

10.2 Particular consideration has been given to older people, disabled people and people living with dementia, who are among the primary beneficiaries of the service.

10.3 No adverse impacts have been identified that cannot be mitigated through service design, procurement and contract management arrangements.

10.4 The providers are required to work with the Council to undertake an annual review of the EqIA for the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia and demonstrate how they are delivering the recommendations identified by the EqIA to ensure the needs of populations with protected characteristics are met in the service the providers deliver. This will include making reasonable adjustments to make services accessible and tailored to meet different needs. Equality data will also need to be captured by the providers as part of the performance management of the contract.

11. Data Protection Implications

11.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been started and will be updated with any information required as the recommissioning process progresses.

11.2 The providers will also be required to undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment during mobilisation and support the completion of KCC's Data Protection Impact Assessment.

12. Conclusions

12.1 The recommissioning of the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia will ensure Kent County Council continues to deliver a strong prevention and early intervention offer that supports people to remain independent, connected and resilient within their communities. The proposed model responds to increasing demand, changing demographics and the growing need for coordinated community-based support.

12.2 The proposed Strategic Partner and Service Delivery Network model will provide a more integrated and person-centred approach to service delivery, improving access to support through a Single Point of Access, strengthening partnership working, and ensuring people are connected to the most appropriate services to meet their needs. The model recognises that many individuals experience multiple and overlapping needs and aims to provide a more seamless experience for residents.

12.3 The proposed service has been shaped through extensive engagement with Kent residents, providers, partners and staff, ensuring that the future model reflects local priorities, builds on community strengths and supports the Council's ambitions for prevention, wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

12.4 A two-year contract, with two optional extension periods of 12 months, will provide stability for residents and providers while supporting investment, innovation and sustainable service delivery. The proposed contract arrangements have been designed to retain flexibility and respond to future developments, including opportunities arising from Neighbourhood Health and Local Government Reorganisation.

12.5 The recommissioning can be delivered within the approved financial envelope and does not propose any reduction in eligibility, access to support or service availability. A six-month extension to the current contracts is required to ensure continuity of provision whilst procurement and mobilisation are completed.

13. Recommendations

Recommendations: The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care is asked to:
a) **APPROVE** the commissioning of a new Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia;
b) **APPROVE** a six-month extension on the current Wellbeing Services in the Community Contracts to enable effective mobilisation and transition to the new service;
c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to take relevant actions to secure and manage the six-month extension; negotiate, finalise the terms of, and (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) award the contract for the Community Wellbeing Service for Older People, Physical Disability and Dementia;
d) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and S151 Officer) to exercise any approved contract extensions;
e) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and S151 Officer), to accept and deploy any additional external funding secured during the lifetime of the contract to enhance the approved service, provided this does not create any unfunded financial commitment for the Council: and
f) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to enter relevant contracts or other legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

14. Background Documents

Prevention Framework
Decision - 25/00014 - Wellbeing Services in the Community - Kent County Council - Council & Democracy

15. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Kent Analytics Report
Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

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