From: Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 26 November 2026

Subject: Proposal to relocate Tunbridge Wells Family Hub Services from Grove Hill Road to The Amelia Scott, Tunbridge Wells

Decision no: 26/00070

Key Decision: It involves a significant service development.

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Tunbridge Wells South (Martin Brice)

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report asks the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee to consider and advise the Cabinet Member on the proposed relocation of Tunbridge Wells Family Hub services from Grove Hill Road to The Amelia Scott.

The proposal would retain the full Family Hub offer in Tunbridge Wells town centre in larger, step-free and more flexible accommodation, with greater opportunities for partnership working. The public consultation received 42 questionnaire responses and supplementary feedback from eight young people. Respondents identified clear potential benefits while also setting practical conditions relating to parking and whole-journey access, privacy and confidentiality, room suitability, safeguarding, sensory needs, play and outdoor space, and service continuity. The preferred option has been reviewed against those findings. The consultation-informed measures set out in this report and the updated Equality Impact Assessment will be implemented as part of implementation and monitored before and after opening. The full Consultation Outcome Report is at Appendix B.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider, endorse or make recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services on the proposal as set out in the attached Proposed Record of Decision, to approve the relocation of Tunbridge Wells Family Hub services from Grove Hill Road to The Amelia Scott, Tunbridge Wells.

1. Introduction

1.1. Tunbridge Wells Family Hub currently operates from 39a Grove Hill Road, providing information, advice, guidance, courses, targeted sessions and drop-in support for children, young people and families. Approval is sought to relocate these services to The Amelia Scott, Mount Pleasant Road, while maintaining the Family Hub offer in Tunbridge Wells town centre.

1.2. The proposal is to relocate those services to The Amelia Scott, Tunbridge Wells. The relocation would retain the full Family Hub offer within Tunbridge Wells town centre while providing larger, step-free and more flexible accommodation. The proposed accommodation would offer improved accessibility, additional space for service delivery and greater opportunities for partnership working with other services and organisations.

1.3. At the point when the Family Hub model and venue confirmation was agreed by KCC, extensive consideration was given to the specific location of the Hubs. This proposal involves moving the service to an alternative site, recognising the potential impact such moves or changes may have, so the matter has been progressed through the significant decision process.

2. Key Considerations

2.1. Tunbridge Wells Family Hub currently operates from Grove Hill Road which provides 189 m² of accommodation over two floors, has no lift to the first floor and has limited private appointment, buggy-storage and baby-changing provision. The proposed accommodation at The Amelia Scott would provide approximately 322 m² of ground-floor Family Hub space, step-free access, lifts, buggy parking, baby-changing facilities and private appointment rooms.

2.2. The move is approximately 0.4 miles, or a ten-minute walk, from the current site. The relocation would not reduce or withdraw services and would support a more visible, flexible and partnership-focused offer.

2.3. The consultation found more support than opposition to the proposal, while also identifying practical concerns that must be addressed if the move is approved. The detailed response profile and findings are set out in section 5 and the Consultation Outcome Report at Appendix B.

2.4. The main findings are summarised in section 5.3 and reported in full at Appendix B. The measures arising from the consultation will be included in the implementation plan and checked before services begin.

3. Background

3.1. The Grove Hill Road building is a converted older town house that has supported children's and youth services for more than ten years and has operated as a Family Hub since April 2024. Its layout and limited accessibility constrain service development and future expansion. The Amelia Scott is an established public-facing civic, cultural and community building in central Tunbridge Wells.

3.2. A six-week public consultation ran from 4 August to 15 September 2026. It received 42 completed questionnaires: 30 from residents, parents or carers and 12 from professionals or people responding on behalf of organisations. The consultation webpage recorded 358 visits from 287 visitors. In addition, eight young people aged 12 to 17 shared their views through separate informal discussions with Family Hub staff. Their views were generally positive, with no negative views reported, but they wanted clearer information about how the relocated service would operate and wanted the Family Hub to remain welcoming and homely. This feedback was recorded separately and is not included in the 42 questionnaire responses. Participation was self-selecting and is not statistically representative of all Tunbridge Wells residents or Family Hub users. The findings have therefore been considered alongside service data covering 703 individual users and 377 families, service knowledge, stakeholder evidence and the updated EqIA. Further detail on the consultation activity, methodology and limitations is provided at Appendix B.

3.3. The questionnaire results show more support than opposition, but also a clear minority who did not support the proposal or were unsure. Of the 35 respondents who answered the overall agreement question, 21 strongly agreed or tended to agree with the relocation, 11 strongly disagreed or tended to disagree and three neither agreed nor disagreed. Of the 40 who answered the question about benefits, 23 strongly agreed or tended to agree that the move would benefit the Family Hub service, 10 strongly disagreed or tended to disagree, four neither agreed nor disagreed and three did not know. Of the 32 who answered the question about negative impact, 14 strongly disagreed or tended to disagree that the move would have a negative impact, while six strongly agreed or tended to agree that it would; seven neither agreed nor disagreed and five did not know.

3.4. Respondents welcomed the central, well-known location, good public transport links, extra space and opportunities for services to work more closely together. Their main concerns were parking costs and availability, privacy, suitable rooms, safeguarding, access for disabled and neurodiverse people, play and outdoor space, and keeping services running during the move. It should be noted that parking is already limited at the current town-centre site: Grove Hill Road has no public parking and only a small number of on-site spaces.

3.5. Some respondents also raised concerns about the loss of Adult Education courses at The Amelia Scott. This is outside the scope of the Family Hub decision as it was a previous decision that has already been taken and implemented. That previous decision was a result of funding changes by the

Department for Education (DfE) / Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), which were effective from 1st August 2024. Due to this KCC Community Learning and Skills (CLS) undertook significant changes to its delivery model, which included ceasing all courses delivered from the Amelia. The link to that previous decision (24/00046) can be found in 16.1.2 and Appendix B includes reference to the current Adult Education offer in Tunbridge Wells following this change.

3.6. Overall, the consultation identified potential benefits from the move together with practical concerns that would need to be addressed if the proposal is approved.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

4.1. Five options were considered as the basis of the public consultation. Each option was assessed consistently against whether it could:

- provide suitable and accessible accommodation for the full Family Hub offer;
- maintain services in a central Tunbridge Wells location;
- provide sufficient private, group and flexible space;
- support safeguarding, confidentiality and the needs of disabled and neurodiverse users;
- enable partnership working;
- be affordable and deliverable; and
- make effective use of KCC's estate.

4.2. The summary of the assessment of the **options not preferred** is as follows:

Option 1 - retain services at Grove Hill Road - Retaining Grove Hill Road would maintain the existing central location but would not meet the criteria relating to accessibility, capacity, suitable private and flexible space or effective estate use, and would retain standalone running and maintenance costs.
Option 2 - relocate to another KCC-owned building - Relocation to another KCC-owned building could potentially support estate objectives, but no suitable property has been identified within the required town-centre area that meets the service and accommodation criteria.
Option 3 - co-locate in another partner building - Relocation to co-locate in another partner building could potentially support estate or partnership objectives, but no suitable property has been identified within the required town-centre area that meets the service and accommodation criteria.
Option 4 - take a new lease - Taking a new lease could provide alternative accommodation but would incur additional revenue and conversion costs and is therefore less affordable and deliverable.

4.3. **Option 5 - relocate to The Amelia Scott. - Relocation to The Amelia Scott is the proposal to be progressed** because, of the five options considered, it

best meets the assessment criteria listed in 4.1. It would retain services in a central Tunbridge Wells location; provide more accessible, private, group and flexible accommodation; support safeguarding, confidentiality and the needs of disabled and neurodiverse users through the detailed design and operational arrangements; enable closer partnership working; make effective use of an established public-facing building; and provide the most deliverable basis for maintaining and developing the full Family Hub offer. The public consultation was based on this being the preferred option.

5. Consultation

5.1. The consultation was hosted on Let's Talk Kent (link in 16.1.1) and was supported by a consultation document, questionnaire and consultation-stage Equality Impact Assessment. These materials explained the proposal, compared the current and proposed locations, set out the options considered and invited views on the likely benefits, impacts, equality issues and any alternatives. A shorter service-user questionnaire was also made available during the consultation to encourage participation. People could respond online, in writing, by email, telephone or in person, and accessible Word and paper versions were available, with alternative formats and language support offered on request. Awareness was raised through direct stakeholder emails, KCC and partner networks, schools and SEND contacts, local councils, staff communications, social media, a media release and information displayed in Family Hub, library and community locations. Partner organisations were also asked to share the consultation through their own networks. Family Hub staff held separate informal discussions with young people attending Compass sessions so that their views could also be considered. Full details of the consultation activity, responses received, analysis and findings are set out in the Consultation Outcome Report at Appendix B.

5.2. The Consultation Outcome Report at Appendix B sets out the response profile, questionnaire results, written comments, young people's feedback and analytical limitations. The key findings and their relevance to the preferred option are summarised in sections 2 and 3 of this report. The consultation-informed measures are addressed through the options and risk assessment in section 4, the EqIA and action plan in section 8 and the proposed implementation and governance arrangements. Members should consider this evidence alongside the other matters in this report when advising the Cabinet Member on the proposed decision.

5.3 The main consultation concerns and the proposed response are summarised below. The measures respond directly to the feedback received and will form part of the implementation plan if the relocation is approved. Further detail is provided in the Consultation Outcome Report at Appendix B and the EqIA action plan at Appendix C.

Consultation feedback	Proposed mitigation
Parking costs, limited nearby parking and difficulties completing the full journey to the building,	Complete a whole-journey access review and provide clear information on parking, charges, Blue Badge spaces, drop-off points, walking

particularly for disabled users and families with young children. Grove Hill Road also has no public parking and only limited on-site spaces, so parking is already constrained at the current town-centre location.	routes and public transport. Put reasonable adjustments or alternative arrangements in place where needed.
Privacy and confidentiality in a busy public building.	Provide discreet check-in and waiting arrangements, enough private rooms, suitable soundproofing and secure storage. Test these arrangements before services begin.
The need for rooms that are suitable and reliably available for confidential appointments, therapy, group work and specialist support.	Agree room sizes, equipment, storage and booking arrangements with staff and partners before opening, and monitor room availability once services are operating.
Safeguarding, security and visitor management in a shared building.	Agree controlled access, visitor procedures, safe waiting arrangements, safeguarding protocols, lone-working procedures and incident-response arrangements before opening.
Noise, busy shared areas and changes in routine for disabled and neurodiverse users.	Provide quiet or low-stimulation options, clear arrival information, familiarisation visits and individual reasonable adjustments.
The need for suitable indoor play and outdoor activity space.	Agree suitable indoor play arrangements and assess safe use of the courtyard or other outdoor locations as part of the detailed service design.
Concern that the move could interrupt access to advice, activities or ongoing support.	Prepare a transition and business-continuity plan, give advance notice and confirm any temporary, outreach or alternative arrangements before relocation.
The importance of keeping the Family Hub welcoming, easy to identify and homely.	Involve children, young people, families, staff and partners in the layout, signs and welcome arrangements, and gather feedback after opening.
The need for accessible information and support for people who cannot use digital channels or need information in another format or language.	Continue to provide accessible, translated and non-digital information and offer support to understand the new access and service arrangements.

5.4 These measures will be assigned to responsible officers with clear completion dates. Readiness checks will confirm that the required arrangements are in place before services open at The Amelia Scott. Their effectiveness will then be monitored through feedback from service users, young people, staff and partners, together with attendance information, complaints, incidents and requests for reasonable adjustments. Where a measure is not working as intended, further action or an alternative way of providing support will be required.

5.5 The KCC Member for Tunbridge Wells South, Cllr Martin Brice, has been consulted on the proposal.

6. Review of preferred option following consultation

6.1. Following the close of the consultation, the proposal to relocate Tunbridge Wells Family Hub services from Grove Hill Road to The Amelia Scott has been reviewed in light of the consultation findings, the updated Equality Impact Assessment and the financial, legal and operational implications set out in the consultation outcome report (appendix B). Having considered these matters, the recommended proposal remains the relocation to The Amelia Scott. The consultation has identified a number of matters that would need to be addressed through detailed design and implementation should the relocation be approved, including privacy, room suitability, parking and access, safeguarding, sensory needs, play space and service continuity.

6.2. The main risks are that agreed measures may not fully address the issues raised through the consultation. These risks will be managed by completing the detailed design and confirming mitigations that will be in place before any commitment is made; agreeing clear timescales for occupation, procurement and building works; completing the actions in the EqIA and DPIA; and testing the arrangements for private rooms, soundproofing, access control and safeguarding. Clear communications, plans to maintain services during the move and final readiness checks will also be required before the new site opens. Any risks that remain will be recorded in the project risk register and escalated through the agreed governance process.

6.3. The assessment also took account of the consultation findings, including the benefits respondents identified in a central, visible and accessible location and their concerns about parking, privacy, suitable rooms, safeguarding, play space and continuity of services.

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

7.1. The proposal supports *Reforming Kent 2025–2028* by putting Kent residents first and supporting residents who need help. It would maintain Family Hub services in a central, visible and accessible location; strengthen early help and family support; and enable more joined-up delivery with health, community and other partners. By using larger, more flexible accommodation within an established public building and avoiding the continued operation of Grove Hill Road as a standalone site, the proposal also supports more efficient use of KCC's estate.

8. Financial and Property Implications

8.1. The project can be delivered within a capital envelope of £300k inclusive of core works, associated fees, contingency and fitout costs. There is also likely

to be c£20k revenue costs to manage the move between locations. This will be funded from existing capital and revenue budgets held by Infrastructure for rationalisation of assets.

8.2. The design will be developed further to incorporate the mitigations identified in response to the feedback received from the public consultation. This next stage will provide greater clarity on the detailed scope of the refurbishment and fit-out works and enable the associated costs to be reviewed in more detail. The full scheme cost will therefore be refined and confirmed as detailed design and cost planning progress, ensuring that the costs do not exceed the capital envelope of £300k. The capital costs, together with any associated revenue project delivery costs, will be met from Infrastructure's existing budgets.

8.3. The service's staffing costs are expected to remain unaffected by the proposed relocation, as no changes to the existing staffing arrangements are currently anticipated. The current site at Grove Hill Road has a revenue budget of £42,500 for 2026/27. If the relocation proceeds, Grove Hill Road would no longer be required for the Family Hub. Its future would then be reviewed separately through established property governance. An alternative operational use would need to demonstrate a sufficiently strong case when assessed against the option of disposal.

8.4. The future of Grove Hill Road falls outside the scope of this decision and no assumption is being made at this stage about its future use or the extent of any resulting saving. The site will instead be reassessed separately in accordance with the Council's Property Management Protocol and Asset Management Strategy**.**

9. Legal implications

9.1. KCC must comply with its statutory responsibilities for children, young people and families, safeguarding duties, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the public-law requirements for lawful, rational and evidence-based decision-making. The consultation was undertaken at a formative stage, provided sufficient information and time for response. The decision-maker must conscientiously consider the responses, particularly the need to address those issues/requirements (mitigations) set out within paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 of this report, alongside the updated EqIA and all material financial, property, accessibility, safeguarding, service-continuity and implementation matters. Occupation and use of The Amelia Scott, any works and procurement, and any future consideration of Grove Hill Road will follow the relevant legal, property and governance requirements.

9.2. No separate legal barrier arising from Local Government Reorganisation has been identified for this service decision. Any consequential property, occupancy, contractual or transition matters will be managed through the established corporate governance arrangements and will not alter the need for the approved controls to be in place before implementation.

10. Equalities implications

10.1. The post-consultation EqIA has been submitted and approved through the EqIA process. It reflects the consultation findings, service-user data, stakeholder engagement, service knowledge and supplementary feedback from young people. The evidence includes 42 consultation responses and CYPE management information for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, covering 703 individual service users and 377 families, including 402 children and 301 carers.

10.2. The consultation was self-selecting and is not statistically representative of all residents or Family Hub users; its findings have therefore been considered alongside the wider evidence base.

10.3. The EqIA identifies potential positive impacts from retaining services in a central town-centre location with public transport links, step-free ground-floor accommodation, larger and more flexible space, increased visibility and greater opportunities for partnership working. Consultation feedback did not identify significant new equality impacts beyond those already recognised but reinforced the need to address parking and the whole journey, privacy and dignity in a busy public building, confidential-room capacity and acoustic suitability, SEND, sensory and neurodiverse needs, changes in routine, accessible information, language, literacy and digital barriers, caring responsibilities and continuity of support. These issues may particularly affect disabled and neurodiverse people, children and young people with SEND, pregnant women and new mothers, young parents, older carers and people whose overlapping needs compound barriers to access.

10.4. If the relocation is approved, the consultation-informed mitigations will include a whole-journey accessibility walk-through; clear information on travel, parking, Blue Badge provision, drop-off points, entrances and arrival arrangements; reasonable adjustments, quiet-space options and familiarisation support; sufficient private rooms, appropriate acoustic controls, discreet check-in and suitable waiting arrangements; accessible and non-digital communications; managed access, secure storage, visitor, incident, lone-working and safeguarding procedures; and outreach or alternative arrangements where individual barriers cannot reasonably be resolved.

10.5. The detailed impacts, actions, responsible officers and monitoring arrangements are set out in the post-consultation EqIA and action plan in Appendix C. Completion of the required actions will be checked before services commence and monitored during the transition and settling-in period.

11. Data Protection Implications

11.1. DPIA 846, *Public Consultation for Relocating Tunbridge Wells Family Hub Services*, has been approved by the Information Asset Owner following review by Information Governance. It sets out the measures required to protect personal information during the relocation and subsequent delivery of services, including children’s data and special-category data. Before services commence, arrangements will be confirmed for role-based access, secure

storage and disposal, confidential meetings, records retention, incident management and any information sharing with co-located partners, including the lawful basis for that sharing. All actions and recommendations arising from the DPIA will be assigned, completed and monitored through the implementation plan.

12. Other corporate implications

12.1. The relocation will require coordinated support from Infrastructure, ICT, HR, procurement, communications, health and safety, safeguarding, business continuity, workforce and delivery partners. Required arrangements will be confirmed and tested before opening, including occupation and works, secure ICT, accessible communications, safe access, service continuity, staff support and partnership protocols. The Capital and Strategic Programmes team will coordinate delivery, assurance and readiness checks.

13. Governance

13.1. The relocation represents a significant service development because it changes the way in which Tunbridge Wells Family Hub services are delivered, through delivery from a different location.

13.2. The decision proposed is approval to relocate Tunbridge Wells Family Hub services from Grove Hill Road to The Amelia Scott, Tunbridge Wells.

13.3. As part of the decision, authority will be delegated to the Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services to oversee implementation of the approved relocation, including service continuity, safeguarding arrangements, communications, completion of the required EqIA and DPIA actions and service readiness.

13.4. Furthermore, authority will be delegated to the Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services to oversee implementation of the approved relocation, including service continuity, safeguarding arrangements, communications, and delivery of the required EqIA and DPIA actions

13.5. The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services, will be responsible for delivering the property and project elements of the relocation, including occupation arrangements, design and building works, procurement, contractual arrangements and other actions necessary to implement the approved relocation. Authority will be delegated to the Director of Infrastructure to take all necessary actions, including negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts and other legal agreements, required to implement the decision

13.6. This decision relates solely to the relocation of the Family Hub Services and does not cover the future use or disposal of the Grove Hill Road building. Any future decision regarding the use, retention or disposal of the Grove Hill property would consider separately through KCC's property and decision-making processes.

13.7. Local County Council Members were briefed before the consultation and contacted again while it was open. Any material comments received will be included in the formal decision record.

14. Conclusions

The evidence presented in this report supports the proposed relocation of Tunbridge Wells Family Hub services to The Amelia Scott. The move would retain the Family Hub offer in the town centre while providing more accessible, flexible and visible accommodation, strengthening partnership working and making more efficient use of KCC's estate. The consultation and updated EqIA identified practical matters requiring mitigation rather than reasons not to proceed. The assessments undertaken have identified a number of detailed measures relating to accessibility, privacy, safeguarding, information governance and service continuity, which will be addressed through the detailed design and implementation of the proposed relocation.

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15. Recommendation(s):

15.1. The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider, endorse or make recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services on the proposal as set out in the attached Proposed Record of Decision, to approve the relocation of Tunbridge Wells Family Hub services from Grove Hill Road to The Amelia Scott, Tunbridge Wells.

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16. Background Documents

16.1.1. Consultation link **www.kent.gov.uk/tunbridgewellsfamilyhub**

16.1.2. Link to previous key decision about Kent Adult Education changes - **Decision - 24/00046 - KCC CLS Adult Education Funding Reform - Kent County Council - Council & Democracy**

17. Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
Appendix B – Tunbridge Wells Family Hub Consultation Outcome Report
Appendix C – Updated Equality Impact Assessment post consultation

18. Contact details

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