

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Chris Palmer, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

DECISION NUMBER:

25/00047

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

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*
- b) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
 - *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
 - *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Title of Decision: Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 2025/2026 (Families First)

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, I agree to:

1. APPROVE the acceptance of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and deployment of the grant funding in accordance with the grant conditions
2. APPROVE the development of the required Families First model to comply with anticipated legislation and Families First programme guidance principles.
3. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education , after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to review and agree to the required terms and conditions to enter into the necessary grant arrangements.
4. Delegate authority for the detailed service design and operational transformation activity to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education.
5. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to accept and deploy future years' allocations of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant , provided funding is given on similar terms.
6. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The decision is required to formalise the acceptance and allocation of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant, which has already been confirmed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and

Local Government. This funding provides a critical opportunity to implement the Families First transformation model, which aligns with national reform priorities and Kent County Council's strategic objectives for children's services. The Government have indicated grant funding will continue for at least the next two years.

Framing Kent's Future:

Formally accepting the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant and delegating authority to the Director for Children Services to spend the grant is in line with Priority 4: New models of care and support in the [Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy 2022-2026](#).

Securing Kent's Future:

By declining the acceptance of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025-26 and in future years, Kent County Council will have to identify its own financial resources to support the transformation activity creating more financial pressures for the Council.

Finance Implications:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have confirmed Kent County Council will receive the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025-26 totalling £6,759,810. The funding was identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan, agreed by County Council in February 2025.

Legal Implications:

The changes to how Children Services are delivered will be mandated through the Children Wellbeing and Schools bill which it's making its way through Parliament. The bill will specify various expectations for reform and will mandate every Local Authority to reform children services. Acceptance of any grant money does mean that Kent County Council is obligated to comply with the delivery requirements, terms and conditions that accompany the funding. Review of the deliverability and legal considerations will be undertaken and referenced at the point of decision.

Equalities Implications: An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and at this stage there are no anticipated adverse impacts that are associated with the acceptance of the Families First grant money given the expectation that any future operations and activity will be designed to complement, develop and build on established family support services.

Data Implications: A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not required for the acceptance spent of the Families First grant money.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Children's, Young People and Education cabinet Committee on 15th July 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have already confirmed the Council's Children's Social Care Prevention Grant allocation for 2025/2026. The alternative option is to refuse this funding. The implementation of the new Families First Model is currently being debated in Parliament, through the Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill, and is expected to become a legal requirement. Therefore, refusing this funding would mean any costs associated with implementation of this new model would have to be met solely by the Council's existing budget.

Considering the Council's current financial pressures, the utilisation of this grant presents a timely

and appropriate opportunity to support service transformation and improve outcomes for children and families.

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