

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

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

DECISION NO:

25/00014

For publication

Key decision: YES

Title of Decision Wellbeing Services in the Community

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, I propose to:

- a) **APPROVE** following changes (which were subject to public consultation) to the Community Wellbeing Services,
- Cease to commission the Community Navigation services for older people (55+) delivered by Involve Kent, Imago Community and South East Kent (SEK). Three months' notice to be given to providers.
 - Reduce funding and redesign the Wellbeing Services in the Community for older people (55+) delivered by SEK, Involve Kent and Imago Community. This would be achieved by varying each of the three contracts and incorporate elements of community navigation. The service to focus on supporting people needing medium to higher levels of support, support for people assessed as having lower-level needs would stop. Work on this will start as soon as any decision has been taken, involving discussions with providers on the design and key performance indicators of the services, to be implemented three months after the decision. The varied Wellbeing contracts to end on 31 March 2027.
 - Mental Health Wellbeing Services in the Community (Live Well Kent and Medway) - delivered by Porchlight and Shaw Trust. The proposal is to undertake a contract modification to each provider's contract, removing the requirement to deliver the Innovation fund. Reduce the contract value for the Innovation Fund and back-office support and remove Shaw Trust unallocated spend; 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 contracts for Wellbeing in the Community Services commenced in 2019 and 2020 and reflect an earlier approach to prevention. Since the initiation of these contracts, significant developments have occurred prompting a strategic review prevention services and in order to achieve four strategic priorities:

- Removing elements of duplication within KCC's prevention approach and provision
- Ensuring prevention services are more efficient, targeted and making best use of limited resources
- Focusing on the areas and people with greatest need
- Making savings to contribute to delivering a balanced budget for KCC

KCC undertook a public consultation from 26 November 2024 to 27 January 2025. The consultation proposals would achieve the strategic objectives by reducing the funding and redesigning the Wellbeing Services in the Community for older people (55+) delivered by SEK, Involve Kent and Imago Community and Community Navigation. The wellbeing service redesign will incorporate

elements of Community Navigation and consequently the separate Community Navigation contract will be ended. The redesigned Wellbeing Service would focus on people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support.

The proposals also included ceasing to fund the Innovation Fund and back-office support and removing unallocated spend in the Shaw Trust in the Mental Health Community and Wellbeing Service.

Background

The Wellbeing Services in the Community and Community Navigation 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. These services are part of Kent County Council's (KCC) broader efforts to prevent, reduce and delay the need for care and support.

KCC's current strategic approach to prevention is addressed in a number of key documents including [Framing Kent's Future](#), [Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy](#), [KCC's 2022-27 Adult Social Care Strategy - Making a difference every day](#), [Kent Adult Carers' Strategy](#), and the [Wellbeing & Prevention Adult Social Care Commissioning Market Position Statement 2021-26](#). The integrated [Kent and Medway Social Prescribing Strategy](#) sets out a joined-up plan for proactive community support that aims to prevent isolation and loneliness and improve people's wellbeing.

The Market Position Statement (2021-2026) set out the services, demand, and future demand when drafted in 2021. The assessment of supply and demand within the Market Position Statement is using data from 2020 which is related to the impacts of covid, since this was drafted there have been many developments which are referenced in this report. The assessment of supply and demand in the Market Position Statement has been revisited as part of officers' work on the Adult Social Care Prevention Framework. For the purposes of the proposed changes to prevention services, the draft Adult Social Care Prevention Framework (and Supporting Information) supersedes the Market Position Statement. The Market Position Statement is intended to be replaced in 2026 to reflect the principles in the Adult Social Care Prevention Framework.

The Adult Social Care Prevention Framework builds on the Making a Difference Every Day Adult Social Care Strategy and Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy and sets out KCC's overarching approach to prevention. It is intended to be a long-term strategy, setting out KCC's ambition for prevention over the period 2025-2035.

There is now a greater emphasis on people's strengths, abilities and aspirations for a fulfilling life, along with ensuring more choices of personalised support available in the community, as outlined in the Adult Social Care Strategy - Making a difference every day.

The redesign of Adult Social Care Connect which serves as the initial contact point for adult social care has been a key development in providing information, advice and guidance with an emphasis on identifying and maximising the use of community-based resources.

Over recent years, KCC has extended its information, advice and guidance offer, leading to duplication between KCC's wider offer and Community Navigation.

The proposed changes relate only to limited elements of the community services commissioned by KCC, which themselves operate within a broader prevention landscape. The more specialised services commissioned by KCC are unaffected by these proposals, these include:

- Wellbeing Services in the Community for people with dementia and their families
- Wellbeing Services in the Community for those with a physical disability
- Wellbeing Services in the Community for adults with sensory impairments
- Mental Health Wellbeing Services in the Community (with the exception of the Innovation Fund)

- Community Navigation for Carers.

The council's updated strategic plan 'Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy' (SKF), approved by Cabinet and County Council in autumn 2023, recognises that in recent years the council has put significantly more into social care budgets than it has received through the adult social care council tax levy and the grants from government. KCC funding remains insufficient to fully cover the costs of spending growth, and the budget can only be balanced through a combination of spending reductions from savings plans, income generation and/or use of Council reserves. The council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget and must comply with Best Value duty for continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, whilst fulfilling all statutory requirements including those for adult social care services.

Financial Implications: The proposed decision would achieve an estimated £3.45million full year saving, achieved by:

- **Cease to commission the Community Navigation services for older people (55+) delivered by Involve Kent, Imago Community and SEK.** This amounts to a saving of £0.85million.
- **Redesign Wellbeing Services in the Community for older people (55+) delivered by SEK, Involve Kent and Imago Community.** This amounts to a cost saving of £2.24million.

The table below shows the current contract values and funding that would be available to the organisations if the proposal is implemented.

Service	Annual contract value (million)	Proposed funding (million)
Wellbeing Services in the Community for older people (55+)		
Involve Kent (West Kent)	£0.99million	£0.42million
Involve Kent (North Kent)	£0.66million	£0.28million
SEK (East Kent)	£1.24million	£0.52million
Imago Community (Ashford, Canterbury and Swale)	£0.98million	£0.41million
Total	£3.87million	£1.63million

- **Mental Health Wellbeing Services in the Community (Live Well Kent) - delivered by Porchlight and Shaw Trust.**
- Innovation Fund: This would be a saving of £0.28million. Of this, £0.21m is one off for 25/26 and for 26/27 will need to be addressed when the budget for 26/27 is developed.
- Back-office support: This would result in a saving of £0.04million.
- Removal of Shaw Trust unallocated spend: A total of £0.04million is the spend that is unallocated.
- Together, this would total £0.36million. The rest of the services commissioned with Live Well Kent and Medway are not affected by this proposal.

However, there are potential costs to social care which could reduce anticipated savings. As explained elsewhere we estimate additional costs to KCC of between £17,000 to £166,000 (full year costs).

Legal Implications: The Care Act 2014 sets out the local authorities' social care responsibilities under law. The Act aims to ensure the wellbeing of people in need of care and support. It also aims

to bring about personalisation of care and support by putting the person at the centre. Local authorities' responsibilities include promoting individual wellbeing, preventing needs for care and support, providing information and advice, assessing and meeting needs, charging, safeguarding and care market development.

KCC's prevention duties are set out in section 2 of the Act, which states: "A local authority must provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities or resources, or take other steps, which it considers will – (a) contribute towards preventing or delaying the development by adults in its area of needs for care and support; (b) contribute towards preventing or delaying the development by carers in its area of needs for support; (c) reduce the needs for care and support of adults in its area; and (d) reduce the needs for support of carers in its area".

Section 4 of the Act states that: "A local authority must establish and maintain a service for providing people in its area with information and advice relating to care and support for adults and support for carers".

KCC must also follow the "*Care and support statutory guidance*" (unless it has good admissible reasons for departing from it). The relevant provisions of the guidance are set out more fully in the Decision Report.

Officers consider that KCC will continue to properly discharge its relevant statutory duties in the event that the proposals are implemented. They have been carefully developed, having regard to KCC's statutory obligations and the Guidance, to allow KCC to discharge those duties in a more targeted, efficient way, while allowing it to make crucial savings.

Equality Implications: An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was completed at the consultation stage and updated following consultation. This will need to be considered as part of this decision.

It is assessed that the proposal will have the greatest negative impact on individuals aged 60 and over, as well as those with long-term health conditions. Additionally, a higher proportion of women are supported by these services. However, KCC considers that the proposals would be objectively justified, so as not to give rise to discrimination. This is because the proposals are pursuing the legitimate aims explained in the Cabinet Report, namely: removing elements of duplication within the prevention approach and provision; ensuring prevention services are more efficient, targeted and making best use of limited resources; focusing on the areas of greatest need; and contributing towards savings that deliver a balanced budget.

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

Decision makers are to first consider and decide whether to adopt the draft Prevention Framework. The Prevention Framework cabinet report (and supporting documentation) provides details on how the Framework sets out a longer term (2025-2025) ambition which is built on five approaches to prevention.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Before identifying the proposal presented in the consultation, a number of other options were considered which are outlined below.

The proposals were tested with providers in scope of the consultation. KCC initially proposed an option which was to stop funding Community Navigation and reduce Wellbeing in the Community for 55+ to only supporting people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support. However, the providers considered that Community Navigation underpins the delivery of community prevention

services and supports people who are some of the most vulnerable and socially isolated in our communities (people assessed as needing medium to high levels of support). Therefore, the providers felt that KCC's proposals should incorporate elements of Community Navigation into the redesigned Wellbeing Services in the Community within the proposed reduced funding.

Options considered pre-consultation:

- **Maximise potential savings by ending KCC's investment in all Wellbeing Services in the Community and Community Navigation contracts.** This could achieve a total annual saving: £8.74million (24/25). This option was not taken forward to consultation because ending all Wellbeing Services in the Community and Community Navigation without an alternative approach and support would have a significant negative impact and increase the risk of more people needing social care more quickly. This would also require KCC to consider how to fulfil its statutory responsibility for carers as the commissioned services undertakes carers' assessments.
- **To stop funding the Community Navigation Contracts and reduce funding for the Wellbeing Services in the Community that support people 55+, to only support people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support. And stop the Innovation Fund, back-office support and remove the unallocated spend of the Shaw Trust.** This could achieve an annual total of £3.45million in savings. This option was not taken forward to consultation following discussions with providers, as explained above.
- **Do nothing.** This option was not taken forward as this will not achieve the strategic objectives.

The following options were considered based on consultation feedback.

Alternative option considered	Why the option has not been taken forward to consultation
Focus on people with lower levels of support to prevent them moving quickly into medium and higher levels of support.	In developing the proposals, it was felt that the support to people assessed as lower level was where there was the most duplication and alternatives available to retain people at the lower level. Based on the current numbers of people assessed as lower level, if this was to become the service focus and stop funding the support for people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support it would mean the total wellbeing saving would be £1,623,000 which is £619,000 less than the current position. The proposal that we consulted on focused on people needing medium to higher levels of support in order to promote independence, supporting individuals to carry on with their lives as independently as possible and helping people do as much as they can for themselves. Therefore, without this support people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support will quickly require support from social care. This would increase the costs of care and support and the overall net savings would be reduced. This option has not been taken forward as this will not achieve the strategic objectives of: • removing elements of duplication within the prevention approach. • ensuring prevention services are more efficient,

	targeted and making best use of limited resources. • focusing on the areas of greatest need. • contributing towards KCC's savings.
Community Navigation to remain as this provides crucial support.	When developing the proposals, Community Navigation was the area where there was duplication for people needing lower levels of support and alternative services available. Providers within scope stated that Community Navigation does provide crucial support and therefore the proposal that went out for consultation included Community Navigation within the redesigned Wellbeing Service, but with a focus on people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support. This option has not been taken forward as this will not achieve the strategic objectives of: • removing elements of duplication within the prevention approach. • ensuring prevention services are more efficient, targeted and making best use of limited resources. • focusing on the areas of greatest need.
To consider a more joined up system approach, working in collaboration to provide prevention services.	During the consultation there were suggestions on seeking opportunities to collaborate with partners to create a more joined up approach to prevention. There is a continued focus on prevention work for our communities and this will be set out in a Prevention Framework which we are currently co-designing with VCSE, Partners and Kent residents. The Framework will set out our future approach to prevention and opportunities for collaboration. And will be developed during 2025. However, this option is not alternative to the proposal that has been consulted as it will take time to develop and implement and not achieve the strategic objectives of: • removing elements of duplication within the prevention approach. • ensuring prevention services are more efficient, targeted and making best use of limited resources. • focusing on the areas of greatest need. • contributing towards KCC's savings.
To work more collaboratively with volunteers, charities and churches	This is an area we continue to develop and strengthen as a mitigation. Churches, charities and volunteers have good relationships with communities and can help connect people with information, advice and guidance provide groups and activities. However, this option alone will not achieve the strategic objectives.
Charging and means testing	Some of the groups and activities provided by the Wellbeing Services already have a small charge. Adult social care is also means tested. This option will not achieve the strategic objectives of reducing duplication and targeted approach.
Asking central government for funding	There is ongoing dialogue with central government. This option will not achieve the strategic objectives of reducing

	duplication and targeted approach.	
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