

**From:** Linden Kemkaran, Leader of the Council  
Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

**To:** Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee –  
22 September 2026

**Subject:** Commissioning of an Integrated Domestic Abuse  
Programme (including KIFDAS and SAFER)

**Decision no:** 26/00047

**Key Decision :** Yes - Affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions AND  
involves expenditure exceeding £1m

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of report:** N/A

**Future Pathway of report:** Leader Key Decision

**Electoral Division:** All

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

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**Summary:**

This report seeks approval to commence the procurement and award of two interdependent contracts:

- Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS)
- Sanctuary Access For Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme

This will enable delivery of the commissioning strategy for an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme and sits within the governance and funding framework established through the Domestic Abuse Act Framework (Key Decision 26/00039), which determines the allocation and use of the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant.

Together, KIFDAS and SAFER form Kent's integrated domestic abuse programme, providing a coordinated whole-system response comprising prevention, safe accommodation support, community-based support, workforce development and targeted security interventions.

The proposals improve access, consistency and outcomes for victims, survivors, and their children, while ensuring the council meets its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

KIFDAS will replace existing arrangements (Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service, KIDAS and Safe Accommodation Support Service, SASS) with a single, integrated, more efficient service. SAFER will be recommissioned as a separate contract but forms an integral component of the overall domestic abuse programme,

working alongside the Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) and other locally commissioned services.

The maximum contractual value associated with this decision is £ 50,448,818.91 over the full potential contract terms, including all extension periods. The costs associated with implementing this decision are anticipated to be met through a combination of the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, Public Health Grant and partner contributions. This decision will not draw on the council's base budget.

Approval of this decision will enable the transition to a new integrated domestic abuse support model while ensuring there is no gap in service provision when the current contracts come to an end. The new trauma-informed and partnership-led approach will strengthen support pathways, improve outcomes for residents and contribute to reducing demand on wider public services.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Leader in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to procure and award contracts for the Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) and the SAFER Scheme to deliver a coordinated, whole-system domestic abuse support model across Kent

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Domestic abuse is a cross-cutting issue. KCC has statutory duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse (DA) Act 2021 to assess need, publish a strategy, and commission support for victims and their children residing in safe accommodation. The Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant supports delivery of these duties.
- 1.2 This report relates to the future commissioning of the council's domestic abuse programme, including the proposed Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) and the recommissioning of the Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme.
- 1.3 According to the [Office for National Statistics Crime Survey for England and Wales](#), in the year ending March 2025 an estimated 3.8 million people aged 16 and over (2.2 million women and 1.5 million men) experienced domestic abuse. Domestic abuse remains a significant issue locally, and the [Kent Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment](#) identifies ongoing demand for support services across the county and the need for a coordinated, partnership-based response.
- 1.4 Current key services to support survivors of domestic abuse are the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) and Safe Accommodation Support Service (SASS). Both contracts have been extended under Key Decision 26/00039 and are due to end 31 January 2028. These contracts form key

delivery mechanisms of the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy, associated Domestic Abuse Framework, and are primarily funded through external grant funding, including the Domestic Abuse Act Grant and wider partnership contributions.

- 1.5 In addition, the council's Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme, which provides targeted security measures to enable victims to remain safely in their own homes, is due to expire on 30 November 2027. SAFER forms a key component of the wider system, supporting prevention, early intervention, and demand management across accommodation-based services.
- 1.6 Recommissioning has provided an opportunity to strengthen and align existing domestic abuse services. The proposed programme brings together services currently delivered through separate contracts to improve coordination, consistency and the experience of victims by delivery of a single coordinated domestic abuse offer across Kent, comprising of two connected components:
  - **Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS)** – providing referral, triage, training, education, awareness, safe accommodation support and community-based domestic abuse support.
  - **Sanctuary Access For Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme** – providing specialist security measures and Cyber Sanctuary support to enable victims to remain safely in their own homes.
- 1.7 This report therefore sets out the activity undertaken to date and seeks approval to commence procurement of KIFDAS, alongside the recommissioning of the SAFER Scheme, to ensure continuity of provision. Whilst procured through separate contracts and procurement processes, these services will operate as a single domestic abuse support system, sharing pathways, referral routes and strategic outcomes.

## **2. Current Service Overview**

- 2.1 **Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS)**, approved under key decision 16/00014, is a countywide, multi-agency funded domestic abuse service, led by Kent County Council (KCC), which delivers both safe accommodation and community-based support for adults (16+) who have experienced domestic abuse and are living in or fleeing to Kent.
  - 2.1.1 KIDAS aims to provide a coordinated, multi-agency response to domestic abuse across Kent, delivering accessible, high-quality support to adults (16+) who are experiencing or fleeing abuse.
  - 2.1.2 KIDAS has supported the council in responding to evolving statutory requirements, including the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and has adapted over time to address emerging gaps identified through needs assessments, performance data, and stakeholder feedback. The learning from this approach, including the strengths and limitations of adapting services within a multi-contract model, has directly informed the development of the proposed KIFDAS model.

- 2.1.3 The service supports individuals across all risk levels, improves safety and recovery outcomes, and ensures timely access to both safe accommodation, including refuge, and community-based interventions. It also works in partnership with statutory (e.g. police) and non-statutory agencies to reduce harm, prevent escalation, and contribute to wider safeguarding and public protection objectives.
- 2.1.4 KIDAS is funded through a partnership approach, with contributions from:
- KCC (via the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant and Public Health Grant)
  - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
  - Kent Fire and Rescue Service
  - Nine district councils (Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Gravesham, Maidstone, Swale, Thanet)
  - Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- 2.1.5 KIDAS comprises two key delivery elements:
- i. A Referral, Assessment and Triage (RAT) service, delivered countywide through a partnership arrangement under a contract held by the OPCC.
  - ii. The main delivery contract (SS16041), delivered countywide by Oasis Domestic Abuse Service, Clarion Housing Group, and Look Ahead Care and Support Ltd
- 2.1.6 In 2025–26, KIDAS received 4,035 referrals. Of these:
- 248 referrals were for refuge services, including 11 to Kent’s specialist male refuge.
- 2.1.7 A total of 3,122 adults were supported by KIDAS in 2025-26, including:
- 260 in refuge, of which 8 were in the specialist male refuge.
- 2.2 **Safe Accommodation Support Service (SASS)** approved under key decision 23/00007, is a countywide service (contract SC220255), commissioned by KCC and fully funded through the Domestic Abuse Act Grant in line with statutory duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Domestic Abuse Framework.
- 2.2.1 The service is delivered by Project Salus CIC and aims to ensure that children and young people affected by domestic abuse receive timely, specialist support while residing in safe accommodation, in line with KCC’s statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 2.2.2 The service promotes recovery, resilience and wellbeing through tailored therapeutic and non-therapeutic interventions and ensures that the needs of children are recognised and addressed as part of the wider domestic abuse response.
- 2.2.3 This includes support to children living in:
- Domestic Abuse refuge settings

- Dispersed safe accommodation, including their own homes where additional safety measures (e.g. the Kent Sanctuary Access For Eligible Residents, SAFER Scheme) are in place.

2.2.4 In 2025–26, SASS supported 327 children and young people across Kent.

2.3 **Sanctuary Access For Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme** approved under key decision 23/00074, provides targeted security measures countywide, to enable victims of domestic abuse to remain safely in their own homes where it is appropriate to do so, rather than requiring relocation. This typically includes the installation of enhanced safety features such as reinforced doors, window locks, alarms, and other protective adaptations, alongside risk assessment and partnership working with relevant agencies.

2.3.1 SAFER comprises two key delivery elements:

- i. A Single Point of Access, delivered countywide through a partnership arrangement under a contract held by the OPCC.
- ii. Property Security element (contract SC220348), delivered countywide by Secure Horizon Ltd.

2.3.2 The scheme forms a critical component of the wider domestic abuse system, supporting prevention, early intervention, and risk reduction. By enabling victims and their children to remain in their homes safely, SAFER helps to:

- Reduce disruption to family life, including children's schooling and support networks.
- Minimise the need for refuge or temporary accommodation placements.
- Alleviate demand pressures on homelessness services and safe accommodation provision.
- Support a more victim-centred, trauma-informed approach to safeguarding.

2.3.3 Recognising the increasing prevalence of technology-facilitated domestic abuse, a Cyber Sanctuary offer was introduced in March 2026 to strengthen the support available to victims experiencing online abuse, stalking, monitoring, harassment, coercive control and other forms of digital harm.

2.3.4 SAFER complements other commissioned services by providing practical security interventions, including both physical property security measures and support to address technology-facilitated abuse, whilst acting as an important access route into wider domestic abuse support.

2.3.5 Through its Single Point of Access, property security and Cyber Sanctuary offer, the scheme provides a range of preventative and protective interventions that enable victims to remain safe within their own homes wherever appropriate.

2.3.6 Its continuation is key to maintaining a balanced service offer that includes both accommodation-based and community-based interventions, ensuring victims have access to the most appropriate support based on their individual circumstances and risk.

2.3.7 SAFER, including the Cyber Sanctuary offer, is funded through the Domestic Abuse Act Grant in line with the Domestic Abuse Framework.

2.3.8 In 2025–26, 945 households were referred to the SAFER Scheme, with 757 households receiving security measures within their homes. As a result, 933 adults and 1,231 children were supported to remain safely in their own accommodation, reducing the need to flee to refuge.

### 3 Key Considerations

3.1 Domestic abuse support services commissioned by the council ensure compliance with statutory requirements under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, while strengthening a coordinated, multi-agency safeguarding response for victims and their families.

3.2 Services contribute to the council's responsibilities under the following:

- **Care Act 2014**, in relation to safeguarding adults with care and support needs.
- **Children Act 2004**, in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children affected by domestic abuse;
- **Victims and Prisoners Act 2024** supporting the principles of the proposed duty to collaborate and strengthening partnership working, joint planning and system-wide commissioning across relevant agencies. (The proposed model has been developed with future implementation requirements in mind.)
- **Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-29** by contributing to its core priorities, including:
  - Prevention and early intervention;
  - Protection and support for victims and survivors;
  - Partnership working across agencies;
  - Recovery and long-term resilience.
- **National Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy**, supporting national ambitions to:
  - Reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls;
  - Improve access to support and protection for victims and survivors;
  - Strengthen the criminal justice and safeguarding response;
  - Promote system-wide prevention and cultural change.

### 4. Options

4.1 To prepare for the ending of current contracts a range of options were considered as part of the development of the future domestic abuse model, assessing how best to deliver services in line with statutory duties, available funding, and identified need:

#### Options considered

4.1.1 **Option 1: Do nothing / decommission services** - Allow the current KIDAS, SASS and SAFER contracts to expire with no replacement model and begin decommissioning of services. This option was dismissed as it would result in loss of statutory provision, particularly safe accommodation duties under the Domestic Abuse Act. This option would also create significant safeguarding risks and service gaps and leave victims/survivors without support.

**4.1.2 Option 2: Develop and commission an integrated countywide domestic abuse programme** - Comprising KIFDAS and SAFER, operating as a single coordinated domestic abuse system delivered through two complementary contracts. **This is the proposed option to be progressed** as it delivers system effectiveness; provides a balanced model within available funding; reduces fragmentation and duplication; improves access, consistency, and outcomes; supports a whole-family, trauma-informed approach; and aligns with the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy.

**4.1.3 Option 3: Develop and commission an expanded integrated service –** Including wider community support (including for children) and broader provision beyond current scope. This option was desirable however dismissed as it requires additional funding beyond the current financial envelope and is not currently deliverable or sustainable within confirmed resources.

**4.1.4 Option 4: Recommission Existing Model (KIDAS/SASS/ SAFER as is) -** Reprocore or extend services on a like-for-like basis, retaining the current KIDAS structure, separate SASS and SAFER contracts, existing service boundaries, and delivery approaches. This option was considered as it would provide continuity and minimise service disruption. However, it was discounted as it would not address the key issues identified through needs assessment, performance review, and stakeholder engagement. In particular, the existing model reflects a fragmented system, with separate services and pathways for adults and children, limited integration across provision, and variation in access and delivery. Option 4 would also not fully reflect changes in statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, nor enable the development of a more coordinated, whole-family, and preventative approach. As a result, this option was not considered sufficient to meet future demand or deliver improved outcomes.

## **5 Recommissioning Activity**

**5.1** Commissioners commenced planning and undertaking recommissioning activity in 2024 to ensure continuity of service provision beyond the expiry of the current contracts and to inform the development of future domestic abuse services across Kent. This included exploring opportunities to improve service integration, reduce duplication, increase efficiency, and maximise the impact of available resources whilst improving outcomes for victims and survivors.

**5.2** The recommissioning programme incorporated service reviews, needs assessment analysis, stakeholder engagement, market engagement, benchmarking activity, consideration of national best practice, and detailed legal, procurement and financial appraisal. As part of this activity, Commissioners have:

- Undertaken a review of current service provision, including analysis of activity, performance, and outcomes across KIDAS, SASS and SAFER
- Assessed current and future need, drawing on needs assessments, demand data, and stakeholder intelligence.

- Engaged with key partners and stakeholders, including district councils, OPCC, ICB, providers, and wider system partners through a programme of workshops and engagement activity across 2025 and 2026.
- Completed extensive market engagement, including three days of engagement activity in October 2024 with over 50 attendees, followed by further sessions in November 2025 to refine key elements of the model.
- Engaged with other local authorities to understand their models of domestic abuse support, share learning, and identify examples of good practice and innovation which could inform the development of the Kent and Medway model.
- Undertaken research into national and local policy, evidence, best practice and commissioning approaches to domestic abuse service delivery to ensure the proposed model reflects current learning and sector developments.
- Undertaken comprehensive engagement with victims and survivors, including:
  - A co-produced survey and engagement programme between April and October 2024
  - Feedback from 126 survey respondents, 14 in-depth interviews, and targeted engagement with 38 individuals from specific communities
  - Additional survivor workshops in January 2026 to test and refine the proposed model.
- Sought insights from children and young people, including:
  - Engagement sessions with Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) practitioners (April–July 2025), attended by approximately 80 participants.
  - Targeted feedback from children and young people with experience of domestic abuse and safe accommodation
- Considered lessons learned from the current model, including strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement.
- Reviewed funding arrangements and affordability, including partner contributions and ongoing funding uncertainty.
- Sought legal, procurement, and finance advice to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and governance requirements.
- Assessed risks and mitigations, including continuity of provision, workforce implications, and the impact of wider system changes (e.g. Local Government Reorganisation)

5.3 All feedback gathered through this activity has been analysed and has informed the development of a revised service model and associated specifications to better reflect strategic priorities, statutory duties, and available funding.

## **6 Future programme**

6.1 The future domestic abuse programme will comprise two interdependent contracts:

- Kent Integrated family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) and
- Sanctuary Access For Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme.

6.2 Whilst procured separately, both contracts operate as part of a single coordinated domestic abuse system.

6.3 **KIFDAS** is a redesigned, countywide service model that brings together previously separate domestic abuse services. The design of KIFDAS aligns with the Domestic Abuse Framework requirement to respond to the countywide needs assessment and strategy commitments. Its purpose is to provide a more coordinated, accessible, and person-centred response for individuals and families affected by domestic abuse.

6.3.1 The model is structured around three core components:

- i. **A central Referral Hub**, acting as the single point of access for all referrals. This ensures consistent triage, risk assessment, and timely access to appropriate support, improving navigation and reducing duplication across the system. The Referral Hub will be delivered through partnership arrangements with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
- ii. **A countywide Training, Education and Awareness (TEA) offer**, which builds workforce capability, supports early identification of domestic abuse, and strengthens the wider multi-agency response through shared understanding and best practice. Service delivery will be competitively procured in accordance with the council's procurement and governance requirements.
- iii. **Integrated delivery of safe accommodation and community-based support**, provided through geographically defined lots. This includes:
  - specialist support to adults and children within safe accommodation (including refuge and sanctuary settings) and
  - community-based support for adults across all risk levels, enabling early intervention, crisis response, and recovery support (subject to the specific arrangements set out in section 6.3.8 regarding community-based support in West Kent).

Service delivery will be competitively procured in accordance with the council's procurement and governance requirements.

6.3.2 The KIFDAS model is designed to be trauma-informed, needs-led, and inclusive, supporting individuals across all stages of their journey, from early intervention and prevention, through to crisis support and longer-term recovery.

6.3.3 KIFDAS represents a shift from a fragmented set of separately commissioned services (KIDAS, SASS and related provision) to a single, integrated commissioning framework. This includes:

- Bringing together adult and children's safe accommodation support into a unified model, making services easier to access
- Introducing a single, consistent referral pathway through the central hub
- Strengthening the whole-family approach, recognising the needs of children and young people
- Creating a more equitable offer across Kent
- Strengthening multi-agency coordination and safeguarding

6.3.4 The model ensures that the council continues to meet its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, particularly in relation to the provision of safe accommodation and support for both adults and children, while also

supporting wider safeguarding responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 and Children Act.

- 6.3.5 KIFDAS will be delivered through a partnership funding model, bringing together contributions from KCC, statutory partners, and other stakeholders to support a coordinated, system-wide response. This supports continuity of provision and reduces reliance on fragmented funding arrangements.
- 6.3.6 A structured mobilisation and transition period will ensure continuity of support, with no disruption to victims and survivors during the move from current arrangements to the KIFDAS model.
- 6.3.7 There are specific local commissioning arrangements within West Kent (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells), where community-based domestic abuse support will continue to be delivered outside of the KIFDAS model. The referral pathway will be developed in collaboration, ensuring alignment between KIFDAS and locally commissioned services and maintaining a consistent experience for victims/survivors.
- 6.3.8 The KIFDAS model has been designed to support integration with wider domestic abuse provision across Kent and Medway. Commissioners are continuing to work with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to explore the future inclusion of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) provision within acute healthcare settings. This reflects a shared ambition to develop a more coordinated, whole-system approach to domestic abuse; however, delivery will be dependent on future partnership governance, commissioning arrangements and funding being agreed.
- 6.4 **SAFER Scheme** will be recommissioned via a competitive procurement process, as a separate but integral component of the wider domestic abuse system, working alongside the Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS).
  - 6.4.1 The countywide scheme will be supported by the KIFDAS Referral Hub, ensuring a consistent, coordinated triage process and enabling victims to access SAFER alongside other elements of support, based on assessed need and risk. This will strengthen system navigation, improve accessibility, and ensure that interventions are delivered as part of a joined-up, whole-system response.
  - 6.4.2 SAFER will deliver specialist security advice and the installation of targeted safety measures (including physical security enhancements) to enable victims, including children to remain safely in their own homes where appropriate. In doing so, it will continue to expand the council's safe accommodation support offer in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, recognising that a victim's home can be made safe without the need for relocation.
  - 6.4.3 The scheme plays a key role in prevention and early intervention, reducing escalation of risk, minimising disruption to family life, and alleviating demand

on refuge and temporary accommodation provision. It will align with the broader KIFDAS support model, ensuring that practical safety measures are complemented by access to ongoing emotional, practical, and recovery-focused support.

- 6.4.4 The SAFER Scheme will also continue a Cyber Sanctuary offer, to complement physical security measures and reflect the evolving nature of abuse, ensuring a more comprehensive approach to safety within the home.

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

- 7.1 Reforming Kent (2025–2028) sets out the Council's ambition to deliver more integrated, preventative, and outcomes-focused services.
- 7.2 Together, the Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) and the Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme form a coordinated domestic abuse programme that strengthens prevention, early intervention, and support for victims and their children across Kent. The programme will deliver a more integrated and whole-system approach to domestic abuse by bringing together safe accommodation support, community-based support, workforce development, training, education, awareness raising, and targeted security interventions through a connected service model.
- 7.3 By reducing fragmentation, improving access to support, and strengthening the coordination of services, the programme will improve outcomes for residents, help people remain safe and independent within their communities where appropriate, and reduce demand on wider public services. The proposed approach aligns with the council's commitment to delivering joined-up, preventative services that achieve better outcomes and make best use of available resources.

## **8. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and OPCC reforms**

- 8.1 The proposed arrangements have been developed with regard to both Local Government Reorganisation and anticipated OPCC/PCC reforms.
- 8.2 In developing the recommissioning proposals, consideration was given to whether procurement activity should be delayed until Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) arrangements had been finalised. This option was not progressed.
- 8.3 Delaying recommissioning would have introduced significant risks, including:
- Potential disruption to service continuity at the end of current contracts
  - Reduced certainty for providers, impacting workforce stability and service quality.
  - Delays in addressing known gaps in the current system, including fragmentation and accessibility.
  - Risk to the Council's ability to meet statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
  - Increased risk of legal challenge associated with further contract extensions.

- 8.4 Whilst the future unitary authority arrangements have now been announced, implementation, governance, funding and commissioning arrangements remain subject to further development and agreement. Delaying procurement would not resolve these matters and would instead increase operational, financial and safeguarding risks.
- 8.5 The decision has therefore been taken to proceed with the development and implementation of the KIFDAS and SAFER models, ensuring continuity of support for victims/survivors and enabling the transition to the new service arrangements.
- 8.6 The proposed service model recognises the likelihood of changes to local authority boundaries, governance structures, partnership arrangements and commissioning responsibilities during the lifetime of the contracts.
- 8.7 Commissioners will continue to work with existing partners and emerging unitary authorities to ensure that future governance, funding and commissioning arrangements are reflected within contract management and service delivery as these arrangements are finalised.
- 8.8 The new contracts have been designed with sufficient flexibility to respond to changes arising from LGR and organisational reforms, including:
- Contract duration and extension options.
  - The ability to vary or novate contracts to successor authorities.
  - Break clauses
- 8.9 These arrangements will support the continued delivery of services during the transition to new local government structures and enable services to adapt to future governance arrangements where required.
- 8.10 The KIFDAS model also provides an opportunity to establish a more consistent and integrated approach to domestic abuse support that can support future collaboration across successor authorities and the wider Kent and Medway system.

## 9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The total cost to implement this decision is £50,448,818.91, broken down as follows:

| Service / Element | KIFDAS (£)      |                                                                                      | SAFER (£)  |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|                   | i. Referral Hub | ii TEA and iii Integrated delivery of safe accommodation and community-based support |            |
| <b>2027-2028</b>  | 35,000.00       | 1,281,666.67                                                                         | 220,000.00 |
| <b>2028-2029</b>  | 210,000.00      | 4,693,937.78                                                                         | 421,050.00 |

|                                    |                      |               |              |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>2029-2030</b>                   | 210,000.00           | 4,733,002.78  | 424,207.88   |
| <b>2030-2031</b>                   | 210,000.00           | 4,772,458.43  | 427,389.43   |
| <b>2031-2032</b>                   | 210,000.00           | 4,812,308.64  | 430,594.85   |
| <b>2032-2033</b>                   | 210,000.00           | 4,852,557.35  | 433,824.32   |
| <b>2033-2034</b>                   | 210,000.00           | 4,893,208.54  | 437,078.00   |
| <b>2034-2035</b>                   | 210,000.00           | 4,934,266.25  | 440,356.08   |
| <b>2035-2036</b>                   | 210,000.00           | 4,975,734.53  | 443,658.75   |
| <b>2036-2037</b>                   | 175,000.00           | 4,185,055.42  | 446,986.19   |
| <b>2037-2038</b>                   | 0                    | 0             | 299,477.03   |
| <b>TOTAL per Service / Element</b> | 1,890,000.00         | 44,134,196.37 | 4,424,622.55 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       | <b>50,448,818.91</b> |               |              |

### 9.1.1 Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS)

#### i. Referral Hub:

- The Referral Hub forms the central access and triage function within the KIFDAS model and will be delivered through partnership arrangements with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
- The partnership arrangements will commence on 1 February 2028 and are expected to continue for a period of up to nine years, subject to the continuation of partner funding, governance arrangements and relevant approvals.
- The total value of the Referral Hub arrangements over the maximum duration of 9 years is £1,890,000.00

#### ii TEA and iii Integrated delivery of safe accommodation and community-based support:

- The proposed contract term comprises an initial three-year six-month period, inclusive of a mobilisation period, with three optional 24-month extensions (maximum total duration of nine years and six months), subject to satisfactory performance, continued funding availability, and ongoing strategic alignment.
- The KIFDAS contract will commence 1 August 2027 with service delivery to commence on 1 February 2028, following a mobilisation period to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of service provision.
- The total cost over the maximum duration of nine years and six months, including mobilisation costs is £44,134,196.37

### 9.1.2 Sanctuary Access For Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme

- The proposed contract term comprises an initial four-year four-month period, inclusive of a mobilisation period, with the option to extend for up to three additional two-year periods (maximum total duration of ten years and four months), subject to satisfactory performance, continued funding availability, and ongoing strategic alignment.

- SAFER contract will commence 1 August 2027 with service delivery to commence on 1 December 2027, following a mobilisation period to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of service provision.
- The total cost over the maximum duration of ten years and four months is £4,424,622.55.

9.2 Additional externally funded services may be added to the KIFDAS and SAFER contracts over their lifetime to address gaps in provision and respond to emerging need. These will be funded in full by external grants and in accordance with Procurement Act 2023 and Spending the Council's Money.

9.3 Actual expenditure may vary depending on final contract awards, funding partner arrangements and the exercise of extension options, but will not exceed this amount without further approval in accordance with the council's governance requirements.

#### **9.4 Funding**

9.4.1 The costs associated with implementing this decision are anticipated to be met through a combination of the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, Public Health Grant (£590,000 per annum) and partner contributions. The Public Health contribution is fully supported by the relevant Director and Cabinet Member.

9.4.2 All funding derived from the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant will be administered in line with the Domestic Abuse Act Framework (Key Decision 26/00039) and associated grant conditions, ensuring compliance with statutory duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

9.4.3 Other funding partners may include:

- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS)
- District councils
- Integrated Care Board

9.4.4 Funding allocations are currently confirmed until March 2029, with future grant allocations and partner contributions remaining subject to future Government funding announcements, partner budget-setting processes and governance approvals.

9.4.5 Domestic abuse remains a statutory responsibility of the council under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and funding has been received annually since implementation of the Act. Whilst future funding levels cannot be guaranteed, financial modelling demonstrates that the proposed contracts are affordable based on current assumptions and anticipated funding levels.

9.4.6 Appropriate contract, financial and governance arrangements will be in place to monitor funding availability and manage any future changes in funding levels. The extension periods are discretionary and subject to continued funding availability.

9.4.7 This decision will not draw on the council's base budget.

## **10. Legal implications**

- 10.1 The proposed commissioning of both the Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) and the Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023, ensuring a compliant, transparent, and competitive procurement process.
- 10.2 The council must comply with its statutory duties set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 10.3 The council must also have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 10.4 The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it includes, as relevant, the need to:
- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; and
  - Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- 10.5 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is also required in order to ensure appropriate compliance with data protection legislation.

## **11. Equalities implications**

- 11.1 **Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS)** - An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken in relation to the procurement of the Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) to consider the potential impact of the proposed commissioning approach on individuals and groups with protected characteristics, including those disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, such as women, children and young people, disabled people, and individuals from minority ethnic communities.
- 11.1.2 The EQIA identified that the proposed model is expected to have an overall positive impact by improving access to support, strengthening early intervention, introducing a more coordinated and integrated service offer, and providing clearer pathways into specialist support. The model has been designed to improve consistency of provision whilst maintaining flexibility to respond to the diverse needs of victims, survivors and their families.

11.1.3 The EQIA recognised that some groups may experience barriers to accessing services or could be disproportionately affected by changes to service delivery arrangements. Potential risks identified included:

- Potential disruption arising from changes to referral pathways, service delivery arrangements and provider transition during implementation.
- Transition between providers and associated risks to continuity of support.
- Accessibility for individuals with protected characteristics or additional needs.
- The need to ensure services remain culturally competent and responsive to people from diverse communities.
- The need to maintain equitable access across all geographic areas.

11.1.4 Mitigating actions have been incorporated into the commissioning approach and service design, including:

- Extensive engagement with victims, survivors, stakeholders, and people with lived experience, including children and young people.
- Development of a trauma-informed, needs-led and inclusive service model.
- Requirements within the service specification relating to accessibility, equality, diversity and inclusion, cultural competence, reasonable adjustments and equitable provision.
- A central referral hub designed to simplify access to support and provide a consistent entry point into services.
- A structured mobilisation and transition period designed to minimise disruption and ensure continuity of support.
- The development and implementation of a comprehensive communications and engagement plan during mobilisation and transition, ensuring that victims and survivors, referring agencies, partners and wider stakeholders are informed of any changes and have clear information regarding access routes and referral pathways.
- Ongoing monitoring of equality impacts during mobilisation, implementation and contract delivery, with action taken where any unintended barriers or adverse impacts are identified.

11.1.5 The EQIA has directly informed the design of the service and procurement approach and will continue to be reviewed throughout procurement, mobilisation and implementation to ensure that any emerging equality impacts are identified and appropriately mitigated.

11.2 **Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme** - An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken in relation to the recommissioning of the Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme.

11.2.1 SAFER is expected to have a positive equalities impact, particularly for groups disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, by enabling victims and their children to remain safely in their own homes where appropriate. This supports a more accessible and less disruptive pathway to safety, including for individuals who may face barriers to relocating to refuge accommodation, such as those with disabilities, larger families, or strong local ties.

#### 11.2.2 Specific equalities considerations for SAFER include:

- Ensuring that eligibility criteria and referral pathways (via the KIFDAS Referral Hub) are clear, equitable, and consistently applied.
- Ensuring that security measures are appropriate and responsive to differing needs, including those of disabled residents.
- Addressing potential barriers to access for underrepresented or marginalised groups.

#### 11.2.3 These considerations will be mitigated through:

- Alignment with the KIFDAS triage and referral processes, ensuring a consistent and needs-led approach.
- Requirements within the specification for inclusive, accessible, and culturally competent delivery
- Ongoing monitoring of access, uptake, and outcomes across protected characteristics.

### **12. Data Protection Implications**

12.1 New Data Protection Impact Assessments have been drafted for KIFDAS and SAFER and both will be finalised with Providers during service mobilisation.

### **13. Other corporate implications**

13.1 Domestic abuse is a cross-cutting service, impacting delivery across multiple council directorates, including Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Public Health, and Community Safety. The new integrated model strengthens coordination and alignment across these functions.

13.2 KIFDAS will play a critical role in supporting the council to meet its statutory safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014 and Children Act 2004. Providers are required to:

- Work within Kent and Medway safeguarding arrangements.
- Participate in multi-agency forums such as MARAC.
- Contribute to Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) where required.
- Maintain robust risk management and escalation processes.

13.3 KIFDAS and SAFER will contribute to wider public health priorities, including reducing harm, improving mental wellbeing, and preventing escalation of abuse. It will also support community safety objectives through partnership working with Police and Community Safety Partnerships.

13.4 There are strong links with housing functions, particularly in relation to provision of safe accommodation, homelessness prevention, and move-on pathways. Effective partnership working with district and borough councils is essential.

13.5 Delivery relies on close collaboration with key partners including NHS/ICB, Police, OPCC, and the voluntary and community sector. This aligns with the upcoming statutory duty to collaborate introduced through the Domestic

Abuse Act 2021 and strengthened through the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.

- 13.6 The new services will support improved data collection, analysis, and sharing across partners, enabling a more robust understanding of demand, outcomes, and gaps in provision. This will inform strategic planning, commissioning, and delivery of the [Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-29](#).
- 13.7 KIFDAS is expected to reduce demand on wider Council services, including Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, housing services, and the criminal justice system, through earlier intervention, improved coordination, and more effective support pathways.

## **14. Governance**

- 14.1 The proposed decision is a Key Decision and will be taken by the Leader of the Council, following consideration by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee to:
- a) Approve the procurement and award of:
    - Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) (contract number CN 260248) - Three-year and six-month contract, 1 August 2027 to 31 January 2031, with three optional 24-month extensions;
    - Sanctuary Access For Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme (contract number CN260173) - Four-year and four-month contract, 1 August 2027 to 30 November 2030, with three optional 24-month extensions;
  - b) The continuation of partnership working arrangements with the KIFDAS funding partners to support the delivery of KIFDAS
- 14.2 Subject to approval, authority will be delegated to the Director of Public Health to:
- a) Finalise the service specifications for the Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) and the Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme;
  - b) Implement the procurement process and enter into contracts for the KIFDAS and SAFER services, and to negotiate, finalise and enter into contracts or other legal agreements, including a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with relevant partners, to deliver KIFDAS;
  - c) In consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Public Health, exercise relevant contract extensions, subject to continued funding availability.

- d) Take all necessary actions to implement this decision, including but not limited to negotiating, finalising the terms of and entering into contracts or other legal agreements, contract mobilisation and to approve variations to contracts (including KIFDAS and SAFER) to incorporate additional or enhanced activity, subject to the securing of additional external funding.
- 14.3 As Public Health is a funding contributor to the services, the Director of Public Health and relevant Cabinet Member have been appropriately consulted in the development of this proposal and will continue to provide oversight of delivery and performance.
- 14.4 This decision is made within the governance and funding framework established by Key Decision 26/00039; in relation to an array of Domestic Abuse Service activity and a further decision will be required to establish a successor framework beyond 2029 to support ongoing service delivery.

## **15. Conclusion**

- 15.1 Domestic abuse has a significant and far-reaching impact on individuals, families, and communities across Kent. The proposed recommissioning of domestic abuse services through the Kent Integrated Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS), alongside the recommissioning of the Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme, represents a step forward in delivering a more coordinated, effective, and sustainable system of support.
- 15.2 The combined model strengthens the council's ability to meet its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, while improving access, consistency and outcomes for victims and survivors, including children. It brings together previously fragmented services into a more integrated, whole-family approach, while retaining SAFER as a critical preventative intervention that enables victims to remain safely in their own homes where appropriate.
- 15.3 The proposals are evidence-based, informed by extensive engagement with survivors, partners, and the market, and have been designed to operate within available funding while maintaining flexibility to respond to future system changes, including Local Government Reorganisation.
- 15.4 Approval to proceed with procurement will ensure continuity of provision beyond existing contract end dates and support the delivery of a coherent, trauma-informed, and partnership-led domestic abuse system, aligned to both statutory requirements and strategic priorities.

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## **Recommendation(s):**

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Leader in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to procure and award contracts for the Kent Integrated

Family Domestic Abuse Service (KIFDAS) the SAFER Scheme to deliver a coordinated, whole-system domestic abuse support model across Kent

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## 16. Background Documents

- [Decision - 26/00039 - Extension of Domestic Abuse Act Framework and associated services - Kent County Council - Council & Democracy](#)
- [Decision - 16/00014 - Commissioning of Integrated Domestic Abuse Support Services - Kent County Council - Council & Democracy](#)
- [Decision - 23/00007 - Domestic Abuse - Commission a new Safe Accommodation Support Service - Kent County Council - Council & Democracy](#)
- [Decision - 23/00074 - Contract Award of the Property Security element of the countywide Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents \(SAFER\) Scheme - Kent County Council - Council & Democracy](#)
- [EQIA KIFDAS](#)
- [EQIA SAFER](#)

## 17. Appendices

- Appendix A – PROD

## 18. Contact details

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