KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Leader of the Council	26/00060

Executive Decision – key

26/00060 – Marmot Accelerator Programme 2026-2028

Decision:

As the Leader of the Council, I agree to:

I. **APPROVE** the allocation of a further £413,700 from Public Health funding, bringing the total funding envelope for the Marmot Accelerator Programme 2026–2028 to £1 million.

II. **APPROVE** the Framework for the management and deployment of the Marmot Accelerator Programme funding from 2026 to 2028.

III. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to implement the decision and deploy the Programme funding in accordance with the approved Framework and the Council's relevant financial, procurement, legal and governance requirements.

IV. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make minor amendments to the arrangements as set out in the Framework provided these remain within the scope, criteria and financial envelope of the Framework.

V. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, to take relevant actions, to implement the decision, including but not limited to, determining and approving individual funding allocations and commissioning arrangements within the parameters of the approved Framework; undertaking the necessary procurement and grant award processes; and negotiating, finalising and entering into contracts and other legal agreements as necessary.

Background:

Kent became the UK's first Marmot Coastal Region on 13 March 2026, marking the start of a long-term commitment to reducing health inequalities by improving the

wider factors that affect people's health and wellbeing across Kent's coastal communities.

The Marmot Accelerator Programme is part of this wider, long-term initiative. It will fund local projects that test different ways of helping people into employment, education or training. Learning from the Programme will inform future policy, commissioning and service development.

The Programme will support three pledges made when the Kent Marmot Coastal Region was launched. These are to be achieved within 2026-2028:

- To support at least 200 young people aged under 25, into education and employment who would otherwise be part of the Not in Education, Employment or Training group (NEET).
- To support at least 150 people on probation into education and employment.
- To support at least 100 people with additional barriers to employment, education and training, such as care leavers, carers and people with mental ill health, into work.

Reasons for decision:

The decision will approve a 'Marmot Accelerator Programme Framework' that will be used to guide the use of the allocated Public Health funding and support decision making. The Framework will provide a transparent and consistent approach to the commissioning, funding and oversight of projects, ensuring that investment is aligned to the Programme's objectives and targeted towards priority groups.

The Framework will ensure that all expenditure from the Marmot Accelerator Programme funding envelope will adhere to the following criteria:

A. Directly support residents within the Kent Marmot Coastal Region.
B. Directly support residents from at least one of the priority population groups: young people who are or at risk of becoming NEET, people who are on probation and people experiencing additional barriers to employment, education and training.
C. Focus on employment, education and/or training practices and opportunities.
D. Demonstrate alignment with relevant Kent-based strategies and policies.
E. Provide evidence of at least one sustainable outcome, to demonstrate impact beyond the agreed funding term.
F. Evaluate and publishes an end-of-project report.

The decision will also approve a further £413,700 to be invested from Public Health funding in the Marmot Accelerator Programme to fund local projects that help people in coastal communities into employment, education and training as part of a long-term initiative to tackle health inequalities. This additional investment will create a total funding envelope of £1 million to be allocated to projects between 2026 and 2028.

How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement:

The Marmot Accelerator Programme supports KCC to achieve the following objectives set out within the Reforming Kent Strategic Statement 2025-2028 via the Programme delivery:

- **Putting Kent residents first:** the voices of residents with lived experience and local organisations are embedded within the Programme and local businesses are encouraged to create job opportunities for Kent residents.
- **Reforming Kent County Council**: the Programme is cost-efficient, whilst enabling high-quality, innovative test-and-learn approaches.
- **Supporting residents that need help**: the Programme supports priority population groups outlined in the launch pledges, and funds innovative, test-and-learn approaches that focus on prevention and early intervention.
- **Building better communities**: the Programme prioritises addressing coastal inequalities, supporting the Council's Marmot commitment in the Strategic Statement.

Financial review:

A total funding allocation of £1 million from Public Health funding is proposed for April 2026 to March 2028.

An Officer Decision (Decision No. OD-26-00033) was taken in September 2026, which approved £586,300 Public Health funding for the Marmot Accelerator Programme.

The proposed decision seeks approval of a further £413,700 from Public Health funding to create a total financial envelope for the Programme of £1 million.

All expenditure will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's financial, procurement and governance requirements. Any additional funding for the Marmot Accelerator Programme, Programme continuation beyond March 2028, establishment of an ongoing commissioned service, or substantive changes to the approved scope or delivery arrangements will be subject to separate governance and approval processes.

Legal review:

Legal, commercial and information governance advice will be sought, as required, to ensure that the Programme complies with all relevant legal requirements. In particular, any contracts awarded under the Programme must be procured in accordance with the Council's 'Spending the Council's Money' rules and in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023. Any grants awarded would need to be assessed and made in accordance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Relevant data protection requirements must also be complied with.

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken and demonstrates a positive impact, with no negative impacts.

The Programme aims to support priority population groups within the coastal region of Kent, supporting KCC to reduce health inequalities by improving the health of Kent's population, especially for those living within coastal communities. Priority population groups include young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, people on probation and people with additional disadvantages such as care leavers, carers and those experiencing mental ill health.

Data Protection implications:

Data protection implications will be fully considered as part of Programme implementation. When required, Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) will be undertaken.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the **Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 18 November 2026**.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- **Do nothing / defer action:** Dismissed as this would not support the delivery of the launch pledges as part of the Marmot Coastal Region Initiative.
- **Deliver a single County-wide project offer:** Dismissed as the purpose of the Marmot Accelerator Programme is to test locally tailored approaches across different coastal communities, to different population groups and provide funding opportunities to a range of suppliers.
- **Deliver all funding through one procurement route:** Dismissed as a blended approach of Direct Awards, Requests for Quotations and Competitive Grant Awards provides greater flexibility, encourages innovation, supports local organisations and maximises value for money.
- **Deliver projects outside of the Framework:** Dismissed as the Framework will provide a consistent and transparent approach to spending decisions and to considering and approving proposals, ensuring that funding is allocated fairly and consistently.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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Signed	Date