KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	26/00074

Executive Decision – Key

26/00074 - Ending of the Together with Parents service at contract end

Decision:

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

APPROVE the non-recommissioning of the Together with Parents service following the end of the contract on 30 April 2027

Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education (or other officer authorised by the Corporate Director of CYPE) to take all necessary actions to implement the decision, including, but not limited to, contract and provider exit arrangements, decommissioning and transition arrangements, information governance and data transfer, the transfer and management of outstanding cases, communications with affected families and providers, and to enter into any contracts or other legal agreements required to implement the decision.

Reasons for decision:

Kent County Council commissioned the Together with Parents service with the contract commencing 1 April 2022 to provide early support to parents and carers whose children have neurodevelopmental needs, including families considering referral or awaiting assessment or diagnosis. The commissioned service was targeted at families whose children were known to Children's Social Care or Early Help.

The contract was awarded for an initial three-year term with two allowable 12-month extensions. Both extensions have been used. The signed final extension confirms that the contract ends on 30 April 2027, with no further extension available. The proposed decision is therefore to end the contract at the end of its permitted term and complete a controlled decommissioning process.

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

The proposal aligns with Reforming Kent 2025–2028, including the aim of supporting residents who need help, by moving towards locality-based access through Family Hubs and connected SEND, community and voluntary sector routes.

Financial implications:

The TWP service with an approved annual value of £369,380 and ends on 30 April 2027, with no further extension available. KCC funds the full cost through the General Fund, following the end of the NHS contribution, within the key service line on the "Early Help and Preventative Services" budget. Agreeing not to recommission the services will lead to a saving in 2027/28 as other established provision is already funded separately and will not need to be expanded to compensate for this service ending.

Legal implications:

The current contract will legally expire on 30 April 2027. KCC has historically adopted a good practice approach to the decommissioning of services and therefore a 90-day notice period is considered appropriate to support an orderly exit and transition, including effective communication with service users and stakeholders and measures to minimise disruption to existing provision.

The Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when considering this decision, including having due regard to the potential impact on people with protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and identifies a medium adverse impact associated with ending the Together with Parents Service.

A structured decommissioning process, which will include liaising with referral services to identify and mitigate impact, notice to the provider, full case holding review and agreed date for cessation of referrals and related communications, will be undertaken as part of the ending of the contract.

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and identifies a medium adverse impact before mitigation, particularly for disabled children and young people, families awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment or diagnosis, and parents and carers who currently benefit from one-to-one advice, peer support and structured programmes. These impacts have been recognised and considered as part of the decision-making process, acknowledging that the potential impact of ending the Together with Parents service cannot be removed entirely..

Data Protection implications:

Upon contract cessation, the Council will ensure that all contract closure activities are undertaken in accordance with the terms of the contract and the requirements set out within the existing Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)..

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the CYPE Cabinet Committee on 26 November 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Continue with the existing contract – this was dismissed as there is no scope to extend the contract further and other successful programmes have been implemented and established focusing on a wider group of families

Commission a replacement countywide service - this was dismissed as there is no requirement to commission a further service since other successful programmes have been implemented and established focusing on a wider group of families.

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

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Signed Date