

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Mrs Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

DECISION NO:

23/00021

For publication Yes

Key decision: Yes

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: The Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023 - 2028

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

- a) APPROVE the adoption of the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028; and
- b) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Public Health to refresh and/or make revisions as appropriate during the lifetime of the Strategy.

Reason for the decision: The previous Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy ran from 2017 to 2022 and was a joint Strategy with Kent Police. During 2021/2022, a number of new issues came to light, firstly, the Dame Carol Black report, and the government's new drug Strategy, "From Harm to Hope", which prompted local areas to create a combating drugs plan, secondly, as a result of increasing drug deaths in Kent and increasing alcohol consumption during COVID-19 the risks to the most vulnerable have increased, thirdly, a new partnership structure in Kent is in place. These three issues mean that it is important to have this new and refreshed Drug and Alcohol Strategy for Kent to tackle the substance misuse harms for the next five years, which was developed in partnership and has completed public consultation.

The new Kent Drug and Alcohol 5-year Strategy

The new Strategy takes a whole system approach, improving the range of partners signed up to the Kent Alliance for Substance Misuse (including social care and safeguarding) and making better links to NHS. It is a partnership Strategy which aligns visions and priorities across the Alliance.

The Alliance is now chaired by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health. The Alliance's governance is both to the: Kent Health and Wellbeing Board and the Kent Community Safety Partnership and will also be accountable to the NHS Integrated Care Board via the health inequalities subgroups.

The Substance Misuse Alliance along with the new executive group will drive the new Strategy forward. The new Strategy has been informed by a council-to-council quality improvement peer review in 2020. The new Strategy has 13 key priorities and aims to prioritise the causes and the consequences of drug and alcohol harm. It will also seek to implement a range of harm reduction strategies and ensure there are quality services for the very high-risk families, vulnerable people and communities.

The draft Strategy has been endorsed by partners via the Kent Substance Misuse Alliance. The public consultation supported the 13 priorities and gave good guidance for the specific objectives and suggested actions that will be feature in those plans e.g. strengthening carer and service user engagement.

Risks: The risk of not having a partnership wide strategic plan will leave Kent vulnerable to poor co-

ordination, duplication of funding, confusion across the system, poorer communication, and poor opportunities to work together; ultimately for people not using our substance misuse services.

Supporting Challenges: The proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement – Framing Kent's Future in relation to economic challenge, demand challenge, partnership challenge, and financial challenge.

Financial Implications: Specifically, under this Strategy there won't be any financial implications. Needs and work identified from the Strategy may lead to financial implications however these will each be taken as their own individual decision.

Legal Implications: None

Equalities implications: An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and no negative impacts were found.

Data Protection implications: None

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation: The proposed decision was discussed at [Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee](#) on 16 March 2023 and the recommendations were endorsed.

Stakeholder and public consultation formed part of the process when the strategy was being developed.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Alternative to not have a Strategy: There is no requirement from National Government to have a local Strategy – only a plan for combatting illegal drugs. However, the absence of strategic effort to reduce both drug and alcohol harms was risk assessed to lead to inefficiency, potential duplication, confusion and poorer outcomes for people in an area as large and complex as Kent.

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

Clair Bell

23 April 2023

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signed

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date