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Ask for: Emily Kennedy  
Date: 11 May 2023

Dear Member

**CHILDREN'S, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 16 MAY 2023**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Tuesday, 16 May 2023 meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, the following report(s) that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda Item No**

- 18            **23/00056 Proposed expansion of Marden Primary Academy, Marden, Kent, TN12 9JX (Pages 1 - 14)**
- 19            **23/00055 Proposed change to age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School (Pages 15 - 26)**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Watts', is written over a faint, illegible printed name.

Benjamin Watts  
General Counsel

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**From:** Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills  
Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

**To:** Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee - 16 May 2023

**Subject:** 23/00056 Proposed expansion of Marden Primary Academy

**Key decision:** *It involves expenditure of more than £1m*

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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

**Future Pathway of report:** Cabinet Member Decision

**Electoral Division:** Lottie Parfitt-Reid – Maidstone Rural South

**Summary:** This report sets out the proposed expansion of Marden Primary Academy, Marden, Kent, TN12 9JX.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member, concerning the proposals to:

- a) authorise the allocation of £3,541,411 from the Children Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to fund the permanent expansion of Marden Primary Academy to 2FE by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 45 to 60 from September 2024.
- b) authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the General Counsel and Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council with the Leigh Academies Trust.
- c) authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member without requiring a new Record of Decision.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out KCC's future plans as

Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent.

- 1.2 KCC has identified the need for additional places within the Marden and Staplehurst Planning Group, with forecasts indicating a deficit of 21 places in 2024 that gradually increases to circa 3 FE by the end of the Plan period.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 It has therefore been agreed with Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) to permanently expand Marden Primary Academy's PAN from 45 to 60 places from September 2024.
- 2.2 Marden Primary Academy joined LAT in 2020. LAT is one of the country's largest and most-established multi-academy trusts operating across Kent, Medway and South East London. It contains primary, secondary and special academies.
- 2.3 Marden has traditionally been popular with parents and this popularity continued to be demonstrated in the recent Primary school preferences, with the academy receiving 39 1st Preferences and 73 preferences in total for its PAN of 45 places.
- 2.4 The expansion works will also alter the class structure of the school, removing the need for mixed age classes. The works will entail both internal reconfiguring of the existing accommodation and the construction of a new teaching block to the rear of the school. KCC has agreed with LAT that the trust will manage the construction.

## **3. Alternative options**

- 3.1 The Marden and Staplehurst planning group covers a large rural area to the south of Maidstone and contains 4 schools: Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Marden Primary Academy, Staplehurst School and St Margaret's Collier Street Church of England Primary School.
- 3.2 Laddingford and St Margaret's Collier Street are relatively small rural schools with constricted sites that limit their potential for expansion. In the longer term, it is likely that both Staplehurst and Marden will need to be expanded to meet the forecast demand, however analysis of the current and near future additional demand indicates that Marden is under greater pressure for places.

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Capital Funding: It is proposed that it will be an academy managed scheme and LAT have engaged and funded the architects and quantity surveyors to determine the cost of the capital works, which is £3,541,411. This cost has been verified by independent quantity surveyors for KCC and it represents good value for money for the works being completed. The cost of the capital works will include the cost of the build along with associated professional fees and surveys.

- 4.2 KCC will provide the allocated Basic Need Funding in return for the school providing the necessary accommodation and resources to increase the school's PAN from 45 to 60 places. The roles and responsibility of each party will be formally set out through a legal contract between KCC and LAT. KCC will monitor progress regularly during the building works to ensure that the accommodation needs are being met.
- 4.3 The cost of this project will be funded through the basic need capital programme which has a total overall budget of £160m (as at the time of this document) that covers the period of 2023 to 2026. This included an original budget allocation for this project of £3.2m based on initial estimates. Following detailed scoping of the works the total cost estimate has increased to £3.5m, £0.3m higher. The basic need capital programme budget is managed as a programme of projects, and so the affordability of this proposal is expected to be achieved through the review of future commissioning plans across the whole basic need programme.
- 4.4 Revenue Funding: Should the scheme progress, £6,000 per new learning space would be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment, a total of £48,000. This is expected to be provided to the school to purchase required equipment. This will be funded through the Department of Education Dedicated Schools Grant for Basic Needs revenue costs (more commonly known as growth funding). This does not represent a cost to the Council. In addition, an allowance of up to £2,500 may be payable to outfit each new teaching room with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment. The school would receive funding for the additional pupils that it admits in line with the funding allocated to schools through schools local funding formula.

## **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 The expansion will be subject to a legally binding and enforceable contract being in place between KCC and the LAT. The Trust will need to secure planning permission for the new accommodation.

## **6. Equalities implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been produced and no issues were identified in the early stage EqIA, but the assessment will be reviewed as the project continues.

## **7. Governance**

- 7.1 The proposed decision will authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the General Counsel and Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council with the Leigh Academies Trust. It will also enable the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 In accordance with the DfE's Statutory Guidance 'making significant changes to an existing academy', the expansion proposal can be fast tracked without the Trust having to provide a full business case to the DfE. However, the academy is required to carry out a public consultation with stakeholders as part of their fast-track application.

## **9. Views**

### **9.1 The View of the Local Members**

The KCC Members for Maidstone Rural South, Lottie Parfitt-Reid, has been consulted on this proposal.

### **9.2 The View of the Area Education Officer**

The Area Education Officer fully supports this proposal as it will ensure that there are sufficient primary places for local children within the Marden and Staplehurst planning group.

## **10. Conclusions**

- 10.1 This report sets out a proposal to expand Marden Primary Academy to meet the forecast need for additional places within the Marden and Staplehurst planning group. In addition to offering increased places for local children, the scheme will also alter the class structure of the school, removing the need for mixed age classes. The proposed expansion would be an academy-built scheme managed by LAT. There will be a legal contract between KCC and LAT to ensure that Basic Need accommodation requirements are met.

## **11. Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member, concerning the proposals to:

- a) authorise the allocation of £3,541,411 from the Children Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to fund the permanent expansion of Marden Primary Academy to 2FE by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 45 to 60 from September 2024.
- b) authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the General Counsel and Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council with the Leigh Academies Trust.
- c) authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member without requiring a new Record of Decision.

### **13. Background documents**

Appendix 1 – PROD 23/00056

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment 23/00056

Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27

### **14. Contact details**

#### **Report Author:**

Nick Abrahams  
Area Education Officer – West Kent

#### **Telephone number**

03000 410058

#### **Email address**

[nicholas.abrahams@kent.gov.uk](mailto:nicholas.abrahams@kent.gov.uk)

#### **Relevant Director:**

Christine McInnes  
Director of Education

#### **Telephone number**

03000 418913

#### **Email address**

[Christine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk)

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# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

## DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Rory Love

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

## DECISION NO:

23/00056

## For publication

## Key decision: YES

*Key decision criteria. The decision will:*

- a) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
- *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

## Title of Decision

**Proposed expansion of Marden Primary Academy, Marden, Kent, TN12 9JX**

## Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I propose to:

- a) authorise the allocation of £3,541,411 from the Children Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to fund the permanent expansion of Marden Primary Academy to 2FE by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 45 to 60 from September 2024.
- b) authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the General Counsel and Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council with the Leigh Academies Trust.
- c) authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member without requiring a new Record of Decision.

## Reason(s) for decision:

KCC as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out KCC's future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. A copy of the plan can be viewed from this link:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/education-provision-plan>

KCC has identified the need for additional places within the Marden and Staplehurst Planning Group, with forecasts indicating a deficit of 21 places in 2024 that gradually increases to circa 3 FE by the end of the Plan period.

It has therefore been agreed with Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) to permanently expand Marden

Primary Academy's PAN from 45 to 60 places from September 2024.

## **Background**

Marden Primary Academy joined LAT in 2020. LAT is one of the country's largest and most-established multi-academy trusts operating across Kent, Medway and South East London. It contains primary, secondary and special academies and is highly inclusive and successful.

Marden has traditionally been popular with parents and this popularity continued to be demonstrated in the recent Primary school preferences, with the academy receiving 39 1st Preferences and 73 preferences in total for its PAN of 45 places.

The expansion works will improve the class structure of the school, removing the need for mixed age classes. The works will entail both internal reconfiguring of the existing accommodation and the construction of a new teaching block to the rear of the school. KCC has agreed with LAT that the trust will manage the construction.

## **Financial Implications**

**Capital Funding:** It is proposed that it will be an academy managed scheme and LAT have engaged and funded the architects and quantity surveyors to determine the cost of the capital works, which is £3,541,411. This cost has been verified by independent quantity surveyors for KCC and it represents good value for money for the works being completed. The cost of the capital works will include the cost of the build along with associated professional fees and surveys.

KCC will provide the allocated Basic Need Funding in return for the school providing the necessary accommodation and resources to increase the school's PAN from 45 to 60 places. The roles and responsibility of each party will be formally set out through a legal contract between KCC and LAT. KCC will monitor progress regularly during the building works to ensure that the accommodation needs are being met.

The cost of this project will be funded through the basic need capital programme which has a total overall budget of £160m (as at the time of this document) that covers the period of 2023 to 2026. This included an original budget allocation for this project of £3.2m based on initial estimates. Following detailed scoping of the works the total cost estimate has increased to £3.5m, £0.3m higher. The basic need capital programme budget is managed as a programme of projects, and so the affordability of this proposal is expected to be achieved through the review of future commissioning plans across the whole basic need programme.

**Revenue Funding:** Should the scheme progress, £6,000 per new learning space would be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment, a total of £48,000. This is expected to be provided to the school to purchase required equipment. This is expected to be funded through the Department of Education Dedicated Schools Grant for Basic Needs revenue costs (more commonly known as growth funding). This does not represent a cost to the Council. In addition, an allowance of up to £2,500 may be payable to outfit each new teaching room with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment. The school would receive funding for the additional pupils that it admits in line with the funding allocated to schools through schools local funding formula.

## **Legal Implications**

The expansion will be subject to a legally binding and enforceable contract being in place between KCC and the LAT. The Trust will need to secure planning permission for the new accommodation.

## **Equalities implications**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been produced and no issues were identified in the early stage EqIA, but the assessment will be reviewed as the project continues.

**Data Protection implications**

The academy trust are the 'controllers' under the General Data Protection Regulation and will ensure that any personal information is processed fairly and lawfully within any consultation work completed as part of the fast-track business plan application.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee will consider the decision on 16 May 2023.

**Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

The Marden and Staplehurst planning group covers a large rural area to the south of Maidstone and contains 4 schools: Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Marden Primary Academy, Staplehurst School and St Margaret's Collier Street Church of England Primary School.

Laddingford and St Margaret's Collier Street are relatively small rural schools with constricted sites that limit their potential for expansion. In the longer term, it is likely that both Staplehurst and Marden will need to be expanded to meet the forecast demand, however analysis of the current and near future additional demand indicates that Marden is under greater pressure for places.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:** None

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signed

.....  
date

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## EQIA Submission – ID Number

### Section A

**EQIA Title**

Marden Primary School Expansion

**Responsible Officer**

Paul Wilson - CY EPA

### Type of Activity

**Service Change**

No

**Service Redesign**

No

**Project/Programme**

Project/Programme

**Commissioning/Procurement**

No

**Strategy/Policy**

No

**Details of other Service Activity**

No

### Accountability and Responsibility

**Directorate**

Children Young People and Education

**Responsible Service**

Education, Planning and Access

**Responsible Head of Service**

Nicholas Abrahams - CY EPA

**Responsible Director**

Christine McInnes - CY EPA

### Aims and Objectives

To provide sufficient school places; KCC as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out KCC's future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent.

KCC has identified the need for additional places within the Marden and Staplehurst Planning Group, with forecasts indicating a deficit of 21 places in 2024 that gradually increases to circa 3 FE by the end of the Plan period.

It has therefore a proposal has been agreed with Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) to permanently expand Wrotham School's PAN from 45 to 60 places from September 2024.

### Section B – Evidence

**Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?**

Yes

**It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?**

Yes

<b>Is there national evidence/data that you can use?</b>
Yes
<b>Have you consulted with stakeholders?</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?</b>
In accordance with the DfE's Statutory Guidance 'making significant changes to an existing academy', the expansion proposal can be fast tracked without the Trust having to provide a full business case to the EFA. However, the academy is required to carry out a public consultation with stakeholders as part of their fast-track application.
<b>Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?</b>
No
<b>Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?</b>
Yes
<b>Section C – Impact</b>
<b>Who may be impacted by the activity?</b>
<b>Service Users/clients</b> Service users/clients
<b>Staff</b> No
<b>Residents/Communities/Citizens</b> No
<b>Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?</b>
Yes
<b>Details of Positive Impacts</b>
The proposed expansion of Marden Primary School will enable more children within the Marden and Staplehurst planning group to attend a school in their local area.
<b>Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions</b>
<b>19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for age?</b>
No
<b>Details of negative impacts for Age</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating Actions for Age</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age</b>
Not Applicable
<b>20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Disability?</b>
No
<b>Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Disability</b>
Not Applicable
<b>21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sex</b>
No
<b>Details of negative impacts for Sex</b>

Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Sex</b>
Not Applicable
<b>22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Race</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable

<b>27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Applicable



**From:** Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills  
Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

**To:** Children', young people and education Cabinet Committee – 16 May 2023

**Subject:** 23/00055 Proposed change to age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School

**Key decision:** Involves Significant Service Development

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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

**Future Pathway of report:** Cabinet Member Decision

**Electoral Division:** Simon Webb - Maidstone Rural West

**Summary:** This report sets out the proposed change to the age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Darman Lane, Laddingford, Maidstone, Kent ME18 6BL.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member, concerning the proposals to:

- a) authorise a change to the age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, to enable the school to establish a nursery class from September 2023.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In order to provide sufficient early years provision in the Laddingford area, Kent County Council (KCC), together with the school's Governing Body, is seeking to permanently change the age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, to enable the school to establish a nursery.

## 2. Body of the report

- 2.1 The proposed change would alter Laddingford's age range and increase its PAN to accommodate a cohort of nursery children, changing its lower age to 3 years, whilst keeping the upper limit at 11 years. This would expand the overall roll of the school to 104 children, educated in 8 cohorts of 13 children. In the first instance, the school would only offer 10 places in nursery at one time, to allow flexibility in class structures to meet the individual needs of children and not breach the required staffing ratios for nursery aged children.

- 2.2 In the Laddingford area there is a significant absence of nursery provision, with KCC sufficiency data indicating a 234 place deficit within the Marden and Staplehurst planning group (which contains Laddingford) and also place deficits in the neighbouring Maidstone district planning groups. This results in some parents travelling outside of the local area for nursery provision, some by choice and some also due to limited options. It can also present a barrier for parents who aren't able to travel outside of the rural area, or those who do not wish to.
- 2.3 This gap in provision combined with cultural factors means that each year many children join Laddingford Primary School having not been to a pre-school setting. Providing a nursery provision in an environment where parents already feel comfortable and have a relationship with staff is intended to allow Laddingford to support children into school earlier to avoid or close any developmental and learning gaps that may already be forming.

### **3. Alternative options**

- 3.1 Laddingford is a small village school that lies in the heart of its rural community to the South of Maidstone. Local early years places are limited and the options within the village to provide additional provision are limited.

### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There is a set up cost associated with this project estimated to be £9,534, as the school require new resources including changing facilities. The school is seeking funding to meet this cost through a grant administered by The Education People on behalf of the County Council. This grant is used to support the development of nursery provision in areas of a high place deficit, such as the Marden and Staplehurst planning group. The funding can be used to purchase new equipment up to the value of £10,000 per setting. There is no direct revenue or capital costs to the council expected from this proposal. If the school is not successful in securing the funding, the nursery would be unlikely to proceed.
- 4.2 Initially, the school is not expecting any additional staffing costs, as the school has 2 Teaching Assistants with a Level 3 childcare qualification, one of whom will work fulltime alongside the teacher in the class. Once the nursery is fully operational, the school would seek to appoint an additional member of support staff. One of the drivers for the nursery is to provide an additional funding source to support the 4th class within the school structure.
- 4.3 The school has moved between a 3 and 4 class structure in response to changes in pupil numbers over recent years. Where the numbers of pupils have started to rise, the school have moved back to a 4 class structure this year. This is both academically and operationally beneficial for the school. The addition of a nursery cohort will secure additional revenue that will help to support the funding of the 4th class teacher more sustainably and support the school to maintain the current structure.
- 4.4 Funding for the nursery class will be received separately to the school's main budget, but the school will be able to manage their budget in its totality. The

majority of funding for the nursery class is expected to be received from KCC through the funding of the 3 and 4 year old free entitlement. This is funded by the Council via the Dedicated Schools Grant received from the Department of Education. The total funding for the nursery class is determined through Kent's Early Years Funding Formula and will be dependent on the number of support hours provided. The basic rate of funding for a 3 and 4 year old place for 2023-24 is £4.55 per hour, or a total of circa £52,000 in the first year if the school is able to consistently fill the 10 places.

## **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications for KCC. The change relates to children who are under the statutory school age.

## **6. Equalities implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been produced and no issues were identified in the early stage EqIA, but the assessment will be reviewed as the project continues.

## **7. Governance**

- 7.1 The Cabinet Member decision will be made in accordance with KCC's constitution and will be subject to a Public Notice prior to the confirmation of the decision.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 In accordance with the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance (January 2023): Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools, there is a need to undertake a formal statutory consultation process. An informal education consultation will run from 19 April to 19 May 2023. Subject to the decision from the Cabinet Member, a Public Notice is planned to run in June/July 2023.

## **9. Views**

### **9.1 The View of the Local Members**

The KCC Members for Maidstone Rural West, Simon Webb, has been consulted on this proposal and asked for the following to be included:

'The proposed change is a sensible solution to support the early engagement for our young people within the Laddingford area. It is vital that as an authority we seek to strengthen the community bonds by allowing entry of 3year old children. This cements the excellent use of the school facilities and should provide certainty of future pupil numbers for the school.'

### **9.2 The View of the Area Education Officer**

The Area Education Officer fully supports this proposal as it will ensure that there are sufficient early years provision in the Laddingford area.

## 10. Conclusions

10.1 This report sets out a proposal to change the age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School to enable the school to establish a nursery class. The introduction of a nursery at Laddingford will help local children into school earlier to avoid or close any academic gaps that may already be forming. It will also support the financial sustainability of the school.

### 11. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member, concerning the proposals to:

- a) authorise a change to the age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, to enable the school to establish a nursery class from September 2023.

## 13. Background documents

Appendix 1 – PROD 23/00055

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27

## 14. Contact details

### Report Author:

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Area Education Officer – West Kent

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### Relevant Director:

Christine McInnes  
Director of Education

#### Telephone number

03000 418913

#### Email address

[Christine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk)

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:**

Rory Love,

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

**DECISION NO:**

23/00055

For publication

Key decision: No

**Subject Matter / Title of Decision**

Proposed change to age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Darman Lane, Laddingford, Maidstone, Kent ME18 6BL

**Decision:**

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I propose to:

- a) authorise a change to the age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, to enable the school to establish a nursery class from September 2023.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

In order to provide sufficient early years provision in the Laddingford area, Kent County Council (KCC), together with the school's Governing Body, is seeking to permanently change the age range of Laddingford St Mary's Church of England Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, to enable the school to establish a nursery.

**Background**

The proposed change would alter Laddingford's age range and increase its PAN to accommodate a cohort of nursery children, reducing its lower age to 3 years, whilst keeping the upper limit at 11 years. This would expand the overall roll of the school to 104 children, educated in 8 cohorts of 13 children. In the first instance, the school would only offer 10 places in nursery at one time, to allow flexibility in class structures to meet the individual needs of children and not breach the required staffing ratios for nursery aged children.

In the Laddingford area there is a significant absence of nursery provision, with KCC sufficiency data indicating a 234 place deficit within the Marden and Staplehurst planning group (which contains Laddingford) and also place deficits in the neighbouring Maidstone district planning groups. This results in some parents travelling outside of the local area for nursery provision, some by choice and some also due to limited options. It can also present a barrier for parents who aren't able to travel outside of the rural area, or those who do not wish to.

This gap in provision combined with cultural factors means that each year many children join Laddingford Primary School having not been to a pre-school setting. Providing a nursery provision in an environment where parents already feel comfortable and have a relationship with staff is intended to allow Laddingford to support children into school earlier to avoid or close any academic gaps that may already be forming.

### **Financial Implications**

There is a set up cost associated with this project estimated to be £9,534, as the school require new resources including changing facilities. The school is seeking funding to meet this cost through a grant administered by The Education People on behalf of the County Council. This grant is used to support the development of nursery provision in areas of a high place deficit, such as the Marden and Staplehurst planning group. The funding can be used to purchase new equipment up to the value of £10,000 per setting. There is no direct revenue or capital costs to the council expected from this proposal. If the school is not successful in securing the funding, the nursery would be unlikely to proceed.

Initially, the school is not expecting any additional staffing costs, as the school has 2 Teaching Assistants with a Level 3 childcare qualification, one of whom will work fulltime alongside the teacher in the class. Once the nursery is fully operational, the school would seek to appoint an additional member of support staff. One of the drivers for the nursery is to provide an additional funding source to support the 4th class within the school structure.

The school has moved between a 3 and 4 class structure in response to changes in pupil numbers over recent years. Where the numbers of pupils have started to rise, the school have moved back to a 4 class structure this year. This is both academically and operationally beneficial for the school. The addition of a nursery cohort will secure additional revenue that will help to support the funding of the 4th class teacher more sustainably and support the school to maintain the current structure.

Funding for the nursery class will be received separately to the school's main budget, but the school will be able to manage their budget in its totality. The majority of funding for the nursery class is expected to be received from KCC through the funding of the 3 and 4 year old free entitlement. This is funded by the Council via the Dedicated Schools Grant received from the Department of Education. The total funding for the nursery class is determined through Kent's Early Years Funding Formula and will be dependent on the number of support hours provided. The basic rate of funding for a 3 and 4 year old place for 2023-24 is £4.55 per hour, or a total of circa £52,000 in the first year if the school is able to consistently fill the 10 places.

### **Legal Implications**

There are no specific legal implications for KCC. The change relates to children who are under the statutory school age.

### **Equalities implications**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been produced and no issues were identified in the early stage EqIA, but the assessment will be reviewed as the project continues.

### **Data Protection implications**

When handling consultation and scheme responses KCC is the 'controller' under the General Data Protection Regulation and will ensure that any personal information is processed fairly and lawfully within any consultation.

### **Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

**The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee will consider the decision on 16 May 2023.**

### **Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

Laddingford is a small village school that lies in the heart of its rural community to the South of Maidstone. Local early years places are limited and the options within the village to provide additional provision are limited.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None**

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## EQIA Submission – ID Number

### Section A

**EQIA Title**

Laddingford Primary School Nursery

**Responsible Officer**

Paul Wilson - CY EPA

### Type of Activity

**Service Change**

No

**Service Redesign**

No

**Project/Programme**

Project/Programme

**Commissioning/Procurement**

No

**Strategy/Policy**

No

**Details of other Service Activity**

No

### Accountability and Responsibility

**Directorate**

Children Young People and Education

**Responsible Service**

Education, Planning and Access

**Responsible Head of Service**

Nicholas Abrahams - CY EPA

**Responsible Director**

Christine McInnes - CY EPA

### Aims and Objectives

In Laddingford's local area there is a significant lack of nursery provision, with KCC sufficiency data indicating a 234 place deficit within the Marden and Staplehurst planning group (that contains Laddingford) and also place deficits in the neighbouring Maidstone district planning groups. This gap in provision combined with cultural factors means that each year many children join Laddingford having not been to pre-school. Providing a nursery provision, in an environment where parents already feel comfortable and have a relationship with staff will hopefully allow Laddingford to get children into school earlier to avoid or close any academic gaps that may already be forming.

### Section B – Evidence

**Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?**

Yes

**It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?**

Yes

**Is there national evidence/data that you can use?**

Yes

**Have you consulted with stakeholders?**

No

**Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?**

A public consultation will run from 19th April to the 19th May 2023

**Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?**

No
<b>Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?</b>
Yes
<b>Section C – Impact</b>
<b>Who may be impacted by the activity?</b>
<b>Service Users/clients</b> Service users/clients
<b>Staff</b> No
<b>Residents/Communities/Citizens</b> No
<b>Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?</b>
Yes
<b>Details of Positive Impacts</b>
There is currently a deficit of Early Year places in the Laddingford area and this will enable more local children to benefit from nursery provision. It will also help with the integration of children from nursery to primary school via a trusted provider.
<b>Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions</b>
<b>19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for age?</b>
No
<b>Details of negative impacts for Age</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating Actions for Age</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age</b>
Not Applicable
<b>20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Disability?</b>
No
<b>Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Disability</b>
Not Applicable
<b>21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sex</b>
No
<b>Details of negative impacts for Sex</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Sex</b>
Not Applicable
<b>22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>

Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Race</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable

**28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities**

**Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities**

No

**Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities**

Not Applicable

**Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities**

Not Applicable

**Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities**

Not Applicable