

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Shellina Prendergast

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

22/00059

For publication

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*
- b) *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:*
 - *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
 - *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Proposal to permanently expand Highsted Grammar School, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, ME10 4PT from 120 places to 150 places for September 2023.

Decision:

- i. Agree to increase the funding allocated to expand Highsted Grammar School from £4million to £6,665,574 through providing £2,665,574 additional funding from the Basic Need capital budget.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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:

Background

The Kent Commissioning Plan 2020-2024 identified the need for additional selective places for the Sittingbourne and Sheppey Planning group. Forecasts indicated a deficit of up to 60 Year 7 places for 2021 and a continual need through the plan period of between 1.5FE and 2FE in additional selective school places. Discussions have been held with both grammar schools in Sittingbourne and each school has agreed to progress a 1 FE permanent expansion. Each school has offered over their PAN for 2021 and 2022 delivering a total of 60 additional places for each year.

The increase in the number of births from 2008 to 2012, inward migration and house building has increased the forecast need for both non-selective and selective school places in the Faversham and Swale secondary planning areas.

There are two Grammar schools in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey planning group, Borden Grammar School (Boys) and Highsted Grammar School (Girls). For a number of years both

grammar schools have offered over their PAN to help met the need, however they are not able to offer any additional places from September 2022 without a build programme to provide additional classrooms to enable them to expand by 1FE permanently.

The report taken to the Children and Young People's and Education Cabinet Committee on 15 January 2021 (ROD 20/00115) agreed to the allocation of £4m in capital funding from the Basic Need budget. The proposal has since been developed further by the school and the cost for the project has now been revised following detailed feasibility and adjustments. The cost has increased from £4m to £6,665,574 and the additional funding of £2,665,574 is due to the increase in cost of materials and labour and the requirement to revise the build programme following more detailed feasibility work.

Financial Implications

The total capital allocation of £6,665,774 is to deliver a build programme that will provide a 3 storey mixed accommodation teaching block which includes both general teaching classrooms and specialist science classrooms. The project will also include renovation and conversion of existing areas to provide the additional teaching spaces required.

The school will receive increased revenue funding through their Delegated Budget. The rising rolls will be protected in line with KCC Growth Funding Policy. Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the school to resource each new classroom as they come online. At present this is at a value of £6,000 per classroom.

Legal implications

The funding allocation is subject to a contractual agreement between KCC and the Trust to offer of 150 Year 7 places from September 2023. The school's current published admission number (PAN) is 120.

Highsted Grammar School will be required to complete and submit a fast track Business Case to the ESFA regarding the expansion of the school by 1FE.

The provision of sufficient school places is a statutory duty and contributes to the Strategic Business Plan Priorities to ensure that "Children and Young People in Kent get the best start in life.

Equalities implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and the assessment identified the following positive impacts:

- Sufficient year 7 places will be provided for September 2023 intake.
- Year 7 pupils will be able attend Grammar school provisions in their locality
- More pupils will be able to attend a good or outstanding school.

No adverse impacts were identified during the assessment.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee consider the decision on 19 July 2022

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Neighbouring planning groups, including Faversham and Canterbury selective and Maidstone selective planning group also have a deficit of year 7 places therefore would not be able to accommodate students from Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

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

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signed

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date