

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

22/00060

For publication [Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]

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.

Title of Decision

Governing Body Proposal to make prescribed changes to Laleham Gap (Foundation) Special School from September 2022 to:

- Change the age range of the school from 4-17 years to 4-19 years
- Change the designated number of the school from 178 to 188

Decision:

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

- I. determine the statutory public notice published by the Governing Body on the following proposed changes:
 - Change the age range of the school from 4-17 years to 4-18 years
 - Change the designated number of the school from 178 to 188

Reason(s) for decision:

As the strategic commissioner of school provision, the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for the residents of Kent, including sufficient special educational needs places. The Commissioning Plan outlines the requirement to significantly increase the number of supported internships and study programmes that include personalised support and high-quality work experience placements post 16. This post-16 provision will give the students who require more support, the additional time they need for a more successful transition into college or a supported internship and reduce the current dropout rate.

The Governing Body is proposing that in addition to their existing year 12 provision, they will offer a limited number of up to 5 year 12 and up to 5 year 13 places. These will be two-year placements, for young people that have been identified through the annual review process. This new, two-year programme, in addition to transition work, will provide more opportunities for the young people to gain qualifications and assist them in their next educational placement or employment. It is envisaged that these proposals will support students through developing their independent living skills, reduce the current dropout rate of pupils attending college from Laleham Gap and reduce

NEETs.

Background

Laleham Gap School is a Special School and has a designated number of 178. The school specialises in providing education for pupils aged 4-17 years who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs. All pupils have an Education, Health & Care plan. The proposal is that in addition to the existing year 12 provision, they will offer a limited number of up to 5 year 12 and up to 5 year 13 places. These will be two-year placements for young people that have been identified through the annual review process. This new, two-year programme, in addition to transition work, will provide more opportunities for the young people to gain qualifications and will support their transition into college or employment.

Financial Implications

Capital

There will be limited alterations to the Phoenix building at Laleham Gap school to accommodate the proposed two year placements. This can be met within the school’s own resources.

Revenue

The LA will agree the commissioned number of post 16 places with the school, based on actual level of need, up to a maximum of 10, on an annual basis. The commissioning cycle which commences each autumn will confirm the number of known students who will require a place for the following September. Approved changes can be made during the academic year if required and funding will follow.

Equalities implications

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

- There will be more places available to meet the needs of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- The additional places and change of age-range will mean that more families and children will benefit from the specialist facilities provided by the school. It is especially expected to benefit students aged 16+ and help to address the current drop out rate when students move onto FE college

No adverse impacts were identified during the assessment.

Other Alternatives Considered and risks if decision isn’t taken.

Other options were not considered as Laleham Gap is a Specialist School providing education and support to pupils with special needs and the proposal is specific to the school.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children’s and Young People Cabinet Committee consider the decision on (date)

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

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

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signed

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date