

From: Sarah Hammond, Interim Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Shellina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Subject: Proposal to establish a new 15 place Special Resource Provision at Copperfield Academy, Dover Road East, Gravesend DA11 0RB, for September 2022

Classification: Unrestricted

Decision number: 22/00061

Past Pathway of Paper Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, 19 July 2020

Future Pathway of Paper Cabinet Member Decision

Division: Northfleet & Gravesend West

Summary:

This report advises the Cabinet Member of the proposal to establish a Special Resource Provision (SRP) to provide 15 places for Children for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) is the primary barrier to achieving their full potential, offering places from September 2022.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to the establishment of a 15 place SRP at Copperfield Academy, for the September 2022 intake.

1. Introduction

1.1. KCC, as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. This duty applies to Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, as well as mainstream settings. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2022-26 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:

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

1.2. The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent highlights the SEN place pressure that Kent has experienced, with the number of Education

Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) increasing significantly in recent years. A key area of demand is providing support for students who have speech, language and communication needs as their primary barrier to achieving their potential.

2. Background

2.1. The demand for Speech and Language places across the North Kent Area has increased with strong parental preference towards places at Special Schools and significant house building in the area. Even though much is being done in Kent to reduce children's need for ever increasing numbers of EHCPs and place a greater proportion of young people in mainstream provision, the demand for dedicated SEN places is not forecast to reduce in the near or medium future.

2.2. Copperfield Academy is a primary school with a strong local focus, offering places to children in the Northfleet and West Gravesend area. The school is operated by the Reach2 Academy Trust. It was assessed by Ofsted to be a 'Good' school in May 2021, commenting that:

"Copperfield Academy is a vibrant school. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places, where pupils learn in a safe atmosphere. Leaders are determined that every pupil's experience, regardless of their individual needs, is a positive and successful one. As a result, pupils flourish and thrive."

3. Proposal Details

3.1. The proposal would see the creation of a 15 place SRP at Copperfield School, offering places to children for whom speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) is the primary barrier to their achieving their potential. The new provision would be ready for the September 2022 intake.

3.2. Copperfield Academy has, in place a teaching area that has been re-purposed to function as an SRP. It is fully equipped and ready to offer places to children who need the extra support that is offered by an SRP.

4. Alternative Proposals

4.1. Due to the availability of accommodation, and the willingness of the school to establish a provision, no alternative has been considered.

4.2. There have been studies undertaken into alternatives to create new Special School provision. A review is currently underway to assess the future pathways for SEN provision, but this proposal can be assessed independently due to the immediate availability of accommodation.

4.3. If the proposal does not proceed, Kent County Council will find it difficult to provide sufficient local special school places in the North Kent Area.

5. Financial Implications

5.1. **Capital Funding:** There is no capital outlay, with the accommodation already identified and equipped.

- 5.2. **Revenue Funding:** Should the scheme progress, £6,000 per newly provided learning space would be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment. This would be provided to the school to purchase required equipment.
- 5.3. The school would receive funding for the additional pupils that it admits in line with the funding allocated to special schools through KCC's Schools funding Formula.
- 5.4. **Human:** The school will appoint additional staff as required; utilising revenue funding allocated through the Schools Funding Formula for these additional pupils

6. Governance

- 6.1. The Officer Scheme of Delegation; under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. 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.
- 6.2. It will also 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.

7. Legal Implications

The expansion will be subject to a legally binding and enforceable contract being in place between KCC and the Trust.

8. Kent Policy Framework

- 8.1. The 'Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, 2022-26, identified a pressure on SLCN places in North Kent.
- 8.2. 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".

9. Consultation

- 9.1. In accordance with the statutory guidance, the Academy Trust has undertaken its own public consultation.
- 9.2. Following the consultation, the Academy Trust determined to progress the proposal and advised this formally to the Area Education Officer.
- 9.3. The Trust will also advert the responses and decision to the Education & Skills Funding Agency when they apply for their funding agreements to be amended.

10. Equalities Implications

10.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. No adverse implications were identified.

11. Data Protection implications

11.1. Reach2 Academy Trust and the school 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.

12. Views

12.1. The Local Members

The Northfleet & Gravesend West division is affected by the change. The Local members, Conrad Broadley and Dr Lauren Sullivan, have been informed of the proposal.

12.2. The School

The leadership of Copperfield Academy and the Trust are fully supportive of the proposal.

12.3. Area Education Officer

The Area Education Officer has said that the analysis of the demand for special school places in the North Kent area is pressing and this solution provides a simple and cost-effective way to increase the number of places in the short to medium term.

13. Conclusions

13.1. KCC Special School place forecasts indicated a growing demand for places across North Kent from the start of the 2021-22 academic year. Although plans are underway to ameliorate this demand in the longer term, there remains the need to provide additional places in the short and medium term. This proposal provides a ready-made and cost effective

14. Recommendations

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to the establishment of a 15 place SRP at Copperfield Academy, for the September 2022 intake.

15. Background Documents

15.1. Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision.

www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision

15.2. Setting the Course - Our Interim Strategic Plan

[Setting the Course - Our Interim Strategic Plan - Kent County Council](#)

16. Contact details

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