

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

To: Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Subject: Proposal to establish a new 2FE Primary School in Thanington Canterbury for September 2025.

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 17 January 2023

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Canterbury South - Mike Sole

Summary: This report sets out the need for a new 2FE (420 place) primary school at Thanington, Canterbury, to open in September 2025. The school will include a 26 (full time equivalent) place nursery. It outlines the process for establishing the new school.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to:

i Agree that a Free School Presumption Competition can commence in order to seek applications from potential sponsors to run the new 2FE Primary School in Thanington, Canterbury.

ii Allocate £9.9m from the Children, Young People and Education Capital budget

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

1. Introduction

1.1 Canterbury City Council's current Local Plan, adopted on 13 July 2017, proposed a total of just over 16,000 new homes during the Plan period up to 2031. Canterbury City Council is now in the process of drafting their new Local Plan for the district, which will set the blueprint up until 2040. The Canterbury Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019) identified the provision of a 2FE Primary School within the strategic site allocation at Cockerling Farm, Thanington (Policy

SP3, Site 11). This is critical infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the 2017 Canterbury District Local Plan. The new 2FE Primary School in Thanington was included in the Kent Commissioning plan which stated it would be required as and when the new housing developments progressed.

- 1.2 The new 2FE Primary School is being established to provide additional primary school places for local children to meet the demand for places from the strategic housing developments in Thanington and the vicinity. The school will also help to reduce the impact on the road system in the immediate area by providing a school local to the new housing. The school site has been transferred to KCC as part of a s106 agreement relating to the Cockerling Farm housing development.
- 1.3 In order to establish the new 2 FE primary School in Thanington, Canterbury. Kent County Council is required to run a Free School Presumptive competition to secure a Sponsor to run the school. The Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced Section 6A (the academy and free school presumption) to the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This was amended in March 2015 to be only a free school presumption. Where a local authority identifies a need for a new school in its area, it must seek proposals to establish a free school. All new free school proposals require the Secretary of State's approval.
- 1.4 The Academy and free school presumption departmental advice (November 2019) states Local authorities must notify the Secretary of State of their plans to seek proposals for a new school as soon as the need for a new school competition has been agreed. Local authorities should forward the following documents to freeschool.presumption@education.gov.uk

A copy of the new school specification, including confirmation:

- that the local authority has identified the required capital to establish the new school, the amount and its source (i.e. local authority's basic need funding);
- that the local authority will meet all pre- and post-opening revenue costs associated with establishing the new school;
- that the local authority will provide the site for the new school; of the full address and postcode of the site for the new school, or all sites where a school will operate from split sites (if the school is on a new development, local authorities should provide an approximate or nearest available postcode);
- of site ownership or tenure arrangements and how these will operate for the new school;
- Their impact and equalities assessment.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1 The new primary school at Cockerling Farm, Thanington will provide 420 places (2FE) for pupils aged 4 to 11 years and is planned to open in September 2025. Initially we are planning for the school to open as a 1FE school of 30 pupils in Year R (reception year) growing year on year. The second reception class will open at a future date as the housing development expands and houses are

occupied, this is to ensure that there are not too many primary school places in Canterbury and that additional places are brought forward as demand increases. We are also proposing to establish a 26-place nursery provision within the new school. It is likely that the nursery will also open in September 2025 along with a Reception Year class offering 30 places. Figure 1 shows the initial proposal for the growth of the school for the first 5 years.

Figure 1: Proposed Admissions Numbers at the new school over the first 5 years

	Yr. R	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Yr. 5	Yr. 6	Total Pupil Numbers
2025/26	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
2026/27	30	30	0	0	0	0	0	60
2027/28	30	30	30	0	0	0	0	90
2028/29	30	30	30	30	0	0	0	120
2029/30	30	30	30	30	30	0	0	150

2.2 Need for places

The new housing developments in Thanington will result in additional demand for primary and secondary school places in Canterbury City. Barton Manor Secondary School which opened in Canterbury in September 2022 was built to accommodate secondary pupil product from these and other Canterbury strategic sites. The expected primary pupil product for these developments is 322 primary pupils (based on all dwellings being applicable). This demand cannot be met in current local primary schools, therefore a new 2FE primary school at Cockering Farm, Thanington is required to meet the need.

The new Thanington 2FE Primary will sit within the Canterbury City planning group. The tables below show the forecast need for primary school places in Canterbury City and the adjoining primary planning groups for both Year R and Year R to 6. (Forecast 2022 (KCP 2023-2027))

Figure 2 - School-based surplus / deficit capacity summary (Year R)

Planning Group name	2021-22 capacity	2021-22 (A)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2026-27 (F)	2027-28 (F)	2028-29 (F)	2029-30 (F)	2030-31 (F)	2031-32 (F)	2031-32 capacity
Canterbury City	465	50	23	31	31	38	43	49	58	69	82	98	465
Marshside	119	9	3	2	5	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	119
Bridge, Barham and Adisham	105	7	-17	-14	-23	-33	-36	-39	-42	-45	-48	-52	105
Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux	30	0	-3	-5	-9	-8	-9	-9	-9	-10	-10	-11	30
Chartham and Petham	84	14	12	11	16	19	20	21	22	23	23	23	75
Canterbury City and Adjoining planning Areas	803	80	19	24	20	29	31	35	42	51	60	71	794

Figure 3 - School-based surplus / deficit capacity summary (all primary year groups)

Planning Group name	2021-22 capacity	2021-22 (A)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2026-27 (F)	2027-28 (F)	2028-29 (F)	2029-30 (F)	2030-31 (F)	2031-32 (F)	2031-32 capacity
Canterbury City	3,295	181	138	32	-15	-57	-58	-50	-29	36	92	166	3,295
Marshside	758	38	17	-10	-34	-45	-33	-22	-6	17	40	56	833
Bridge, Barham and Adisham	735	10	-26	-66	-108	-151	-193	-236	-291	-321	-359	-392	735
Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux	225	-7	-14	-30	-40	-50	-54	-59	-67	-73	-77	-78	210
Chartham and Petham	572	89	98	90	88	93	99	97	107	119	132	139	525
Canterbury City and Adjoining Planning areas	5,585	311	213	16	-109	-211	-239	-270	-287	-222	-173	-110	5,598

The forecast indicates that there will be a pressure for places across all year groups from 2024/2025. It is evident that there will be insufficient capacity in the local planning areas to meet the need of extra pupils from the housing development as it is built out.

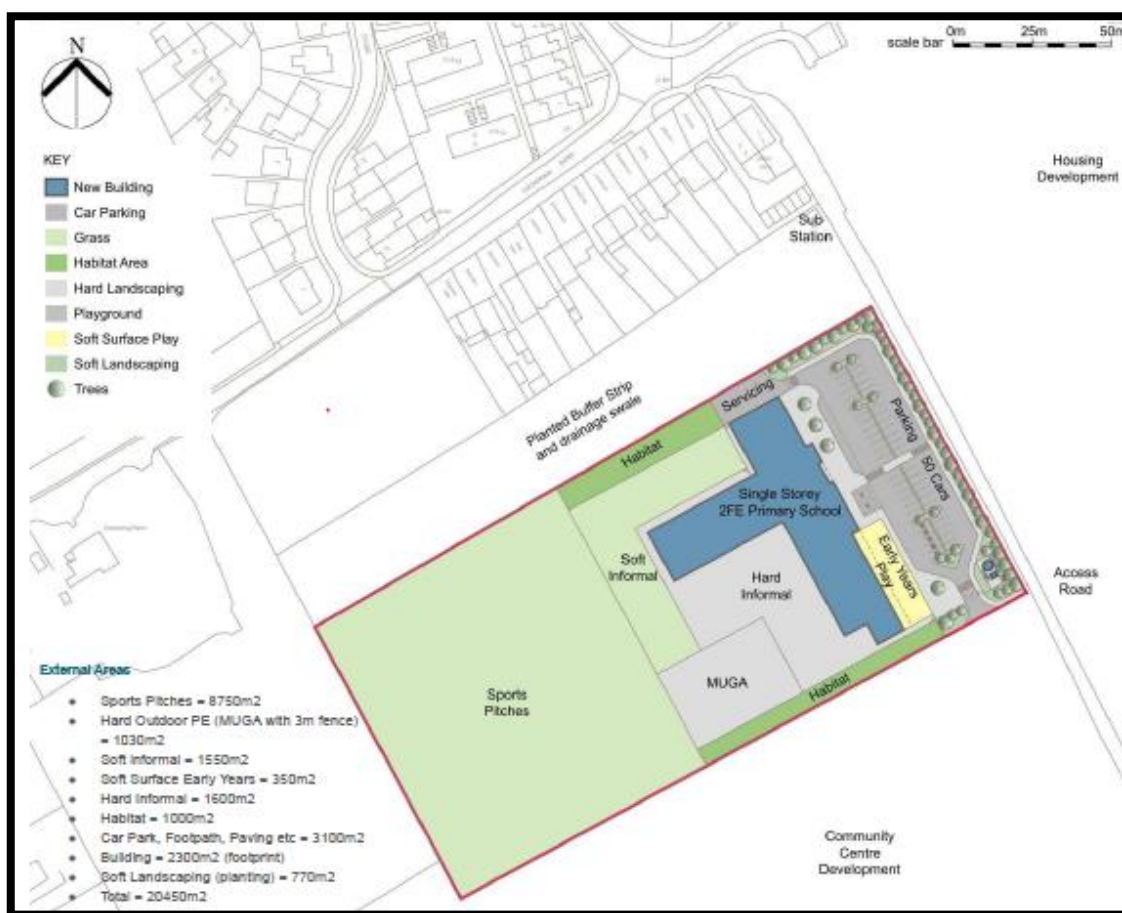
2.3 School Site

A site for the new 2FE primary school was identified by the developers and confirmed by KCC as suitable for the delivery of the new primary school. In 2016, Canterbury City Council granted outline planning permission for a primary school on the site proposed, as part of planning application CA//15/01479.

Figure 4 shows the location and situation of the new primary school.

Plans for the school will be refined and submitted for planning permission as the project develops and once a sponsor has been appointed to establish the school.

Figure 4



2.4 The Free School Presumption process

The Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced Section 6A (the academy/free school presumption) to the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This was amended in March 2015 to be only a free school presumption. Where a local authority identifies there is a need for a new school in its area it must seek proposals to establish a free school. All new free school proposals require the Secretary of State's approval. The local authority must assess all proposals received and send the outcome of the assessment to the Secretary of State for consideration and approval. The preference indicated by the local authority will be a key factor in that consideration. We are proposing the initial timeline below (figure 5) for completing the presumption free school competition to appoint a sponsor.

Figure 5: Proposed Timeline for the free school competition

Event	Proposed Dates
Community Consultation	7 November to 19 December 2022.
Start of the presumption competition - Invitation to submit a proposal published	28 February 2023
Deadline for receipt of applications	28 March 2023
KCC informs DfE of all proposals received	29 March 2023
Promoter Assessment Panel meets	15 June 2023
Education Commission considers proposals	4 July 2023
KCC submits all proposals to the Secretary of State	11 July 2023

Secretary of State appoints the successful sponsor	August/September 2023
New school opens	September 2025

2.5 Community consultation

Before the competition is launched, it is a requirement of the free school presumption process that a community consultation is undertaken by the local authority to gather the views on the proposed new school from interested parties. A 6-week community consultation for this new school was launched on 7 November 2022 finishing on the 19 December 2022. The consultation documents were posted on the KCC website and stakeholder groups were contacted at the start of the consultation. The following stakeholder groups were identified

- Schools in East Kent including Canterbury, Swale and Thanet Districts
- Elected Members (Kent County Council, Canterbury District Council)
- Parish and Town Councils
- Local MP
- Dioceses of Canterbury and Southwark
- Children’s Centres and local Early Year providers.
- Academy Trusts

A verbal update on the consultation outcome will be given at the Children’s, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee.

Presumptive Competition

The presumptive competition is proposed to be launched on 28 February 2023 where the specification for the school and application form will be published on KCC’s webpage. Potential sponsors are asked to complete an initial expression of interest form and a full application by 28 March 2023. The DfE will be informed of all applications received by KCC. KCC will assess the applications and invite the selected sponsors to present their application. Following the assessment KCC will recommend its preferred sponsor to the Secretary of State who will make the final decision on the sponsor for the school.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 Capital

The new school will be delivered in two phases to ensure that there will not be an overcapacity of places.

Phase	Build	Cost
Phase 1	1FE classrooms (& classrooms plus nursery class) and core facilities for the 2FE school including Hall, PE, and dining facilities	£8m
Phase 2	1FE expansion (7 additional classrooms and adjacent facilities)	£1.9m
Total	2FE school	£9.9m

3.2 The current predicted cost for the school at Thanington is £9.9m which is £23,581.10 per pupil, slightly lower than the DfE per pupil benchmark of

£25,880 for a Primary New School Build. Therefore, the DfE benchmark for a 2FE new primary school is currently £10,869,600.

- 3.3 Developer Contributions totalling £6,396,342.88 have been requested and agreed towards the new 2FE Thanington Primary School. Of this £232,342.88 has been received to date. Trigger points in the s106 will release the developer contributions as the new houses are built and occupied. KCC will be asked to provide the residual funding from the Children, Young People and Education capital budget.

Total cost of school	£9,900,000.00
Developer contributions	£6,396,342.88
KCC capital contributions	£3,503,657.12

- 3.4 As per KCC policy, a total of £6,000 per new classroom will be provided to the school from the DSG revenue budget.
- 3.5 In line with the agreement of the Cabinet Committee on 7 May 2019, the capital figure here is an estimate, however as the DfE require confirmation that the local authority has identified the required capital to establish the new school, the amount and its source, estimated costs have been included as a key decision. Subject to Members support for the proposal to progress, these estimates will be refined as detailed work is undertaken and the scheme progresses through the planning process. Following receipt of planning permission, the refined cost estimate will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for a further key decision to be made.

3.6 Revenue

A one-off £25,000 grant will be provided to the successful sponsor by the Department for Education to cover legal expenses. KCC will provide a budget of £50,000 for start-up costs which will typically commence from January through to 31 August prior to the new school opening on 1 September 2025. The school will receive funding through its GAG, via the Education and Skills Funding Agency. In accordance with the Pupil Growth Policy established by KCC and its Schools' Funding Forum, the school will receive guaranteed funding during the first three years. The growth fund will support the school financially to ensure it can put in place a staffing structure to provide the places commissioned. For the purposes of providing a guaranteed budget we are assuming the class organisation as laid out in figure 5. We will review the admission numbers and the school structure with the successful sponsor once appointed, to ensure sufficient capacity will be in place when required.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 The section 106 stipulated that the build contract for the new primary school must be entered into within 2 years of the land transferring to KCC. The land transferred in July 2021.
- 4.2 The Secretary of State will make the final decision on the sponsor of the school.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 An initial EQIA has been produced and the outcome of the EQIA advised There will be more places available to meet the demand for places in Thanington, Canterbury and the surrounding area. With the additional housing developments in Thanington and the surrounding areas families will be able to attend their local school provision and not have to travel distances to school.

The positive impacts have been identified as

- Ensure there are sufficient primary school places for children and families in Thanington and the surrounding area which are accessible and available for pupils
- Ensure that there is sufficient local provision to meet the need of new local housing.

Carefully consideration has been given to any impact that the new school may have on other primary schools in Canterbury district. The new primary school will initially open as a 1FE primary school, growing year on year, with the second reception class opening at a future date as the housing development expands and houses are occupied. This phased approach will ensure that there are not too many primary school places in Canterbury and will prevent any negative impact on existing schools in Canterbury.

The EqIA can be accessed via this link

[Equality Impact Assessment \(amazonaws.com\)](#)

6. Other corporate implications

- 6.1 Planning and Highways will be consulted pre planning and during the planning application.

7. Governance

- 7.1 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. For information it is envisaged, if the proposal goes ahead, that the Director of Infrastructure will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The new 2FE primary school and 26 place Nursery at Cockerling Road, Thanington will ensure that there are sufficient local primary school places for the new housing development in Canterbury. The next step in establishing the primary school is to run a competition process to select an academy sponsor for the school. The plans for the school will be developed and refined and once agreed submitted for planning permission. The proposal will return to CYPE CC once the plans and costs of the project have been finalised and final agreement will be requested for the capital funding for the project

9. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to:

- i. Agree that a Free School Presumption Competition can commence in order to seek applications from potential sponsors to run the new 2FE Primary School in Thanington, Canterbury.
- ii. Allocate £9.9m from the Children, Young People and Education Capital budget
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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.

10. Background Documents

- 10.1 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision
www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision
- 10.2 [Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy 2022-2026](#)
- 10.3 KCC consultation page. www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations
- 10.4 DfE The free school presumption (November 2019)
[Academy and free school presumption departmental advice \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://Academy and free school presumption departmental advice (publishing.service.gov.uk))
- 10.5 Canterbury City Council Local Plan.
[Local planning policies | Canterbury City Council](#)

11. Contact details

Report Author: Marisa White
Name, job title Area Education Officer –
East Kent
Telephone number 03000 418794
Email address marisa.white@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Christine McInnes
Name, job title: Director -
Education, Planning and Access
Telephone number: 03000 418913
Email address:
Chrisine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk