

## EXECUTIVE DECISION

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

To: **Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Subject: **Allocation of additional basic need funding to permanently expand Borden Grammar School, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne, ME10 4DB from 120 places to 150 places for September 2024**

Decision Number: **23/00019**

Key decision

- *It involves expenditure or savings of more than £1m.*

Classification: **Unrestricted**

**Past Pathway of report: 14 September 2021 Decision Number 21/00069  
1 March 2022 Decision Number 22/00011**

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

**Electoral Division:**

Sittingbourne South – John Wright  
Sittingbourne North – Mike Dendor  
Swale West – Mike Baldock  
Swale East – Rich Lehmann

### **Summary:**

This report reiterates the need for the expansion of Borden Grammar School from a PAN of 120 to 150. The rationale for the expansion was set out in the report to Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee of the 14 September 2021 and the subsequent report 1 March 2022 requesting additional funding of £1,515,000. This reports requests permission to allocate an additional £1,975,282 from the Basic Need capital budget to the build programme. This will take the cost of the build programme from £6,975,000 which was agreed in March 2022, to a total of £8,950,282, required for the school to accommodate the additional pupils.

Forecasts indicate 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. The expansion will ensure sufficient Grammar School places for students in Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

### **Recommendation(s):**

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

- Increase the funding allocated to expand Borden Grammar School from £6,975,000 to £8,950,282 through providing an additional £1,975,282 from the Basic Need capital budget.

ii. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure 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 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 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-24 identified the need to commission additional capacity in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning group to ensure sufficient Grammar School places.

1.2 The Kent Commissioning Plan 2021-25 forecasts indicated a deficit of up to -64 Year 7 places for 2022 and a continual need throughout the plan period of between 1.5FE and 2.5FE of additional selective school places.

1.3 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 Sittingbourne and Sheppey planning areas. The peak pressure on year 7 places in Sittingbourne and Sheppey is the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

1.4 The tables below show the additional selective places required if no further action is taken in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning group. (KCP 2021-2025) These figures do not include any spare capacity required for in-year admissions, or growth related to housing from any new developments.

### Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2019-20 capacity	2019-20 (A)	2020-21 (F)	2021-22 (F)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2026-27 (F)	2026-27 capacity
Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective	270	-11	-46	-64	-47	-72	-66	-62	-49	240

The table below (KCP 2023-2027) show the updated forecasts which include both of the 1FE expansion projects at Highsted Grammar School and Borden Grammar Schools. It shows that with the expansions, there is sufficient capacity or Grammar places across the plan period.

### Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

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
<b>Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>300</b>

## 2. Background

- 2.1 There are two Grammar schools in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey planning group: Borden Grammar School (Boys) and Highsted Grammar School (Girls). For several years both grammar schools have offered over their Published Admission Number, however they were no longer able to offer any additional places from September 2022 and temporary accommodation has been provided to support the additional pupils for 2022 and 2023. The proposal to provide additional accommodation will ensure that the schools would be able to expand by 1FE on a permanent basis. Discussions have been held with both grammar schools in Sittingbourne and each school has agreed to progress a 1FE expansion, delivering a total of 60 additional places from September 2022 with temporary solutions until a permanent expansion is in place.
- 2.2 The outcome of the consultation was reported to the September 2021 Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee.
- 2.3 The report taken in September 2021 to the Children's, Young People's and Education Cabinet Committee agreed to the allocation of capital funding of £5.460m and the subsequent report taken in March 2022 approved additional funding to increase the allocation to £6.975m.

Planning permission was submitted at the beginning of July 2021 with a decision received January 2022.

- 2.4 The proposal was then delayed in going to contract until July 2022 based on a procurement review and recommended use of the KCC Partnering Construction Framework. Therefore, the cost for the project has now been revised following detailed surveys and adjustments to the designs, following further investigation and enabling works uncovering additional unknowns within the ground and existing building. The build cost has increased from £6,975,000 to £8,950,282. There are a number of reasons for the increase including.
- Further increased market inflation costs over the delay period.
  - Additional site investigations highlighting further abnormalities within the site.
    - Increased MEP specification to the existing building for drainage and ventilation to allow for WC provision and alterations to existing teaching space, as existing was proven to be insufficient, in poor condition or not working to requirements.
    - asbestos removal / containment
    - removal of an unknown soakaway beneath the kitchen extension
    - tracking and removal of two water pipes not known by utilities companies spanning the sports field
    - Kitchen roof repairs to enable the extension, as the current roof was shown to be failing and at end-of-life expectancy.

- Investigation into a failing boundary wall and building due to damage and collapse caused by extreme weather in recent years and at high risk to further damage from construction vibrations.
- Water hydrant was unable to be located where shown by Southern Water and needs to be replaced to ensure Borden Grammar can remain open, as not all areas of the site are covered by a fire hydrant or suitable internal fire suppression systems.
- Street works implementation.
- Removal of WWII air raid shelter.
- Increased archaeological investigations due to planning requirements.
- Additional temporary teaching space due to delays in entering contract.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The additional capital allocation of, £1,975,282 taking the cost of the build project from £6,975,000 to £8,950,282, will enable the delivery of a programme that will provide the additional general and specialist classrooms plus a new sports hall to meet the additional pupil place need.
- 3.2 Developer Contributions amounting to £4,629,846 have been agreed and requested towards Grammar expansions in Sittingbourne. An additional £262,865.77 is specific to Borden Grammar and £1,039,841.70 is specific to Highsted Grammar School.
- 3.3 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 and a total of 10 additional classrooms will be added totalling £60K from the revenue budget.

### **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1 Borden Grammar School has completed and submitted a full Business Case to the ESFA regarding the expansion of the school by 1FE.
- 4.2 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.

### **5. Equalities implications**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and the assessment identified the following positive impacts:
- Sufficient year 7 places will be provided for Grammar eligible pupils.
  - 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.

### **6. Other corporate implications**

6.1 Planning and Highways were consulted for the planning application and planning was agreed on 19 January 2022.

## **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 Without the additional funding for this project, the additional places will not be delivered and the permanent expansion at Borden Grammar School will not be able to progress, resulting in insufficient Year 7 grammar places in Sittingbourne to meet demand. This would result in children having to travel to other districts or planning groups for their Grammar education and would further increase transport costs for KCC. The expansion of Borden Grammar School by 1FE also means that boys requiring a grammar school place will also be able to secure a place at their local grammar school alongside girls securing places at Highsted due to their expansion by 1 Form of Entry within the same timeframe.

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

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

- i. Increase the funding allocated to expand Borden Grammar School from £6,975,000 to £8,950,282 through providing an additional £1,975,282 from the Basic Need capital budget.
- ii. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure 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 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.

## **10. Background Documents**

10.1 Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee report for Borden Grammar School 14 September 2022 Decision Number 21/00069  
[Decision - 21/00069 - Proposal to permanently expand Borden Grammar School, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne, ME10 4DB from 120 places to 150 places for September 2022 \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)

Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee report for Borden Grammar School 1 March 2022 Decision Number 22/00011  
[Decision - 22/00011 - Proposal to permanently expand Borden Grammar School, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne, ME10 4DB from 120 places to 150 places for September 2022 \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)

- 10.2 Consultation documents  
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/borden-grammar-school>
- 10.3 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision  
[www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision](http://www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision)
- 10.4 Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020.  
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunities-improving-outcomes>

## **11. Contact details.**

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