

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Rory Love

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

23/00018

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)

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Additional funding required to complete the satellite provision of The Beacon Folkestone at the former Walmer Science College.

Decision:

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

- (i). Release a further £15,924,438 of capital funding from the Children's, Young People and Education Capital Budget to enable the delivery of the satellite to be completed;
- (ii). Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel to enter into any necessary contracts / agreements on behalf of the County Council; and
- (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.

Reason(s) for decision:Background

The Beacon Folkestone is a special school for pupils with Profound Severe and Complex Needs (PSCN). There is no PSCN special school in Dover district, provision has hitherto been made through Specialist Resourced Provision at Whitfield Aspen School (primary) and Dover Christ Church Academy (secondary), together with pupils travelling to special schools in Canterbury, Thanet and Folkestone. In March 2020 this Committee considered a proposal to expand The Beacon School via a satellite site at the former Walmer Science College, Dover, following which the proposal was approved by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

The need for additional special school provision in Dover district, to support local children, young people and their families has not changed.

The reasons for the increased costs are outlined in the full report.

The cost of this proposal is now estimated at £19,924,438. The capital cost will be fully covered from the Government's High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA). This is already accounted for in The Council's approved capital programme includes the HNPCA allocations for 2022/23 and 2023/24, which together total just under £41.5m. This means the increased cost for this scheme, will not impact on the main Basic Need Capital Programme. The proposal has been presented to Education Asset Board and agreed, in KCP 2020-24.

Revenue:

£8,000 per classroom for fixtures and resources will be allocated to the school as the phases are occupied. The total cost being c£240,000.

Split site funding of £42,810 was allocated for the financial year 2022-23. Split site funding will be allocated in future years as agreed in the schools funding policy.

Legal implications

KCC as the LA has a duty to ensure sufficient school places are available.

Equalities implications

An EqIA has been reviewed and found that the proposal has an overall positive impact.

However, analysis continues to show that girls will be less likely to benefit from this proposal than boys. As of May 2022, there were 2,460 boys and 1,115 girls on roll in the ten PSCN special schools across the County.

In addition, the most physically disabled may be indirectly discriminated as the satellite building will suit the more ambulant pupils. Therefore, some Dover residents may still need to travel out of the district to attend a suitable provision.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The expansion of the school on to the satellite site was recommended by Members in March 2020 and approved by the Cabinet Member.

Stakeholders were consulted at that time and the expansion was supported.

Despite the significant cost increase, it would still be in the best interest of the pupils and families to continue with the expansion and to therefore agree the additional capital expenditure.

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee considered the decision on 08 March 2023.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Alternative options have been considered within the report including:

- Seek an alternative location for the satellite and dispose of the Walmer Science College site.
- The closure of the satellite and a reduction of the designated number of The Beacon accordingly. Dispose of Walmer Science College site.
- No further development of the Walmer buildings, thus limiting the satellite to the current capacity, with a reduction of the designated number of The Beacon accordingly. Dispose of part of the Walmer Science College site.
- Reduce the size of the satellite to fit within Phases 1 and 2. Some disposal may be possible

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



3 April 2023

Signed

date