

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

Executive

DECISION TAKEN BY:

**David Adams, Interim Deputy Director – Effectiveness,
Sufficiency and Skills**

DECISION NO:

OD-26-00026

For publication

Subject matter: Opening of a new 14 place SRP for ASD/SLCN at The Downs CE Primary School (Walmer)

Cabinet Member decision to which this action relates:

25/00085 [Decision - 25/00085 - Specialist Resource Provision Review and Commissioning Intentions](#)

Decision:

I,

- (a) AGREE to enter in to the relevant SRP contract with the Deal Education Alliance Learning Trust of The Downs CE Primary School;
- (b) APPROVE up to £230,000 capital funding to set up the 14 place SRP at The Downs CE Primary Academy;
- (c) APPROVE capital funding of up to £5,000 for IT;
- (d) APPROVE revenue funding of up to £12,000;
- (e) CONFIRM that the Director of Infrastructure will deliver all property and capital works required for the SRP and is authorised, in accordance with the Director's existing constitutional responsibilities under the Council's Property Management Protocol, to negotiate, enter into, manage and vary any property-specific or capital works contracts necessary to deliver the required accommodation; and
- (f) CONFIRM that the Director of Infrastructure will act as Authority Representative only for property and capital works contracts, and not for SRP commissioning or operational agreements.

Reason(s) for decision:

A review of KCC's current specialist resource provisions (SRPs) was undertaken in 2025. The priority was to increase capacity and improve local access, particularly by expanding secondary provision by September 2026.

The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent (KCP) identified a series of proposals to increase SRP places, and to broaden the designation to improve local access and reduce travel for children.

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee considered a report on the topic on 18th November 2025 with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approving the key decision 25/00085. Relevant to this decision, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, agreed to:

- APPROVE the allocation of £20m of the High Needs Capital Grant to enable the delivery of an increase in commissioned SRP places, in line with the proposals set out in Tables 8c to 8f of the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30.

- DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to enter in to all and any necessary negotiations, consultations and contracts to commission the increase in SRP places set out in Tables 8c to 8f of the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30, to change the designations of existing SRPs as set out in Table 8g of the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30, and to decommission SRP provisions to implement the decisions set out at I. and II. above,
- DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to issue public notices, and approve proposals on behalf of the Local Authority.
- Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to approve capital expenditure on individual SRP proposals contained in Tables 8c to 8f of the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 provided that the total capital expenditure remains within the agreed £20m, and in cases involving capital expenditure above £1m, such approval to be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.
- DELEGATE authority to the Director for Education and Special Educational Needs to enter into contracts and service level agreements (SLAs) with mainstream primary and secondary schools that provide either new or existing Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs), on behalf of Kent County Council under the current contract/SLA in place agreed under key decision 23/00128.

The establishment of an SRP at The Downs CE Primary School is contained in the list of proposals in the KCP and is therefore covered by the Cabinet Member's decision. This decision enacts that of the Cabinet Member and is in line with the authority delegated to me by the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education.

Consultation process and outcome

The Trust consulted on their proposal to add a 14 place SRP for ASD/SLCN in November/December 2025. Responses to the consultation were in support.

The Trust Board has confirmed it wishes to proceed and has applied to the SoS for the change of designation.

The provision will provide much needed place for pupils with ASD/SLCN in Walmer/Deal and the surrounding villages.

Financial Implications:

Capital:

Capital funding of £20m has been approved for the SRP Expansion Programme. £230,000 of this funding will be required to provide the following:

- The conversion of the former Blossom's Children's Centre in to the SRP.
- The class bases and intervention rooms required
- A new entrance to the SRP withing the School's secure line
- Suitable secure outdoor space
- Access form the school building to the SRP

In addition, capital funding of up to £5,000 will be required for ICT infrastructure.

Revenue:

Commissioned and occupied places in an SRP are funded via the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, based on a rate per place.

For new SRPs, to reflect possible diseconomies when first opening a new SRP, start-up funding will be provided in line with the prevailing Growth Fund Policy approved by the Schools Funding Forum, and funded from the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Up to £12,000 to provide for all furniture and SEN resources needed as a consequence of opening one class in the SRP.

Any further growth or change in commissioned numbers will expect to be managed by the school.

The Dedicated Schools Grant is a ring-fenced grant provided annually by the Department of Education. The revenue cost of this proposal is expected to be fully met by this grant and will not be a cost to the General Fund.

Legal implications:

Under the Children and Families Act 2014 KCC has a duty 'to support the child and his or her parent, or the young person, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help him or her achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes'. By ensuring we have appropriate provision as locally as possible, we are delivering on our obligation in accordance with this legislation.

KCC has duties, pursuant to the Education Act 1996, for ensuring sufficient school places are available including SEND provision.

Equality Implications:

An equalities impact assessment screening was completed to inform the Cabinet Member's decision (25/00085).

A separate equalities impact assessment has been completed for this proposal. This suggested a high positive impact for those who are primary aged and/or who may have a disability who access the provision as the provision at The Downs will enable primary aged pupils requiring the support of a SRP to attend a suitable provision nearer to their homes.

No negative impacted on protected groups was noted.

Comments received from any Members or Officers consulted:

Local members were informed of the proposal. No comments were received.

Pursuant to the scheme of delegation, the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education has formally delegated authority to David Adams (Interim Deputy Director – Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills) to take officer decisions within the scope of their role and responsibilities

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The option of not delivering additional SRP places is not viable. The number of children/young people that children who require the level of adaptation of the curriculum to need specialist provision is such that without additional maintained SRP places, the Authority will continue to be dependent upon high cost placements in the independent special school sector.

The alternative of creating more special school places in Dover/Deal is not a viable option.

The option to locate the SRP at another school in Deal/Walmer was considered but rejected as the availability of the former Children's Centre at The Downs CE Primary School gave the Council the opportunity to open an SRP in short time, in a suitable location within a school committed to inclusion and at good value to the public purse.

Any conflict of interest declared by any executive member consulted by the decision maker and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None noted



Interim Deputy Director for Education
Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills

.....
signed

24 June 2026

.....
date