KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –

RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	**26/00044**

Executive Decision – non-key

26/00044 - Replacement of modular classrooms at Dover Grammar School for Girls – Additional Funding

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Decision:

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

1). INCREASE the funding for the replacement of two modular classroom blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls by £400,000, from £1.4 million to £1.8 million, to fund the installation of a sprinkler system and associated contingency costs.

2) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Education and SEND, and the Head of Law to take relevant actions, including but not limited to negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations or other legal agreements, as required, to implement the decision; and

3) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant contractual agreements and to enter into such variations as envisaged under any of these contracts.

Reasons for decision:

Decision - 26/00001 approved £1,400,000 to replace two mobiles at Dover Grammar School for Girls. The capital funding requested was based on the RIBA stage 3 cost plan.

Planning permission has been secured and a contractor has been appointed to finalise the design. Building control were consulted throughout the planning process with any issues being addressed prior to planning permission being secured.

Since planning permission was secured, Kent Fire and Rescue Services (KFRS), who are a key consultee to the Building Control Officer, have raised a concern about

access for a fire tender to the location of the mobile replacement. A sprinkler system is now required.

KFRS approval is a requirement to achieve final Building Control approval for the building, and ultimately, to allow occupation. The additional £400,000 requested is required to cover the costs of the sprinkler system, including the tank and will increase the contingency, should this be required.

Financial implications:

Across the three financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28, £18,900,000 has been budget to the Children, Young People and Education Modernisation Programme. The Programme is funded from a combination of the Schools Condition Allocation Grant (provided by Department of Education), developer contributions and prudential borrowing. This programme is used to upgrade existing facilities in KCC maintained schools along with the repair and replacement of mobiles on KCC maintained school site where they remain an essential part of the school's accommodation.

The cost of replacing the two mobile blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls is now expected to be up to £1,800,000. The additional £400,000 requested is affordable with the current programme commitments.

No revenue funding is required to support the proposal unless, the project was aborted, which is considered low risk.

Legal implications:

Planning permission will be required for the installation of the water tank for the sprinkler system.

KCC is responsible body for maintaining Dover Grammar School for Girls and receives its School Condition Allocation Grant to assist it discharge its responsibilities to this and other maintained schools. In line with the School Premises Regulations 2012, as the responsible body for this school, we have responsibility to ensure that the school's facilities are safe, accessible, and fit for purpose.

Also, pursuant to the Education Act 1996, KCC has a duty to ensure sufficient school places are available for all pupils in its area. Replacement buildings are required by the school so as to ensure they can accommodate all pupils and therefore deliver the curriculum efficiently.

Equalities implications:

The equalities impact assessment has been reviewed. No adverse impacts on protected groups have been identified. Replacing the existing modular buildings with a new DDA compliant facility will have a positive impact for staff and pupils with a disability.

Data Protection implications:

There are no data protection implications.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee considered this decision on 15th September 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Maintaining the mobile units has again been considered and rejected. The survey of the mobiles, undertaken in 2023, suggested that c£400 per m2 would be required to maintain the buildings over the next 10 years. This could be a cost of c£600,000. Therefore, the surveyor's recommendation was that the mobile buildings had reached the end of their operational life expectancy and would be uneconomical to repair.'

At feasibility stage other locations for the new building were explored and rejected. These have been reconsidered, but again rejected:

- to replace the existing mobiles at their existing locations - replacing the Music Mobile would be cost prohibitive due to significant works required to a retaining wall. Additionally, the sprinkler system would still be required for the second mobile class block should it be rebuilt in its existing location.
- Replacing the mobiles at the boundary edge - although this would mitigate the requirement for the sprinkler system, it would require a two storey structure with a lift, additional access works and as a number of mature trees would need to be removed, significant bio net gain would have to be planned for. Additionally, a new planning application would be required. No savings would be made.

The option of doing nothing remains discarded. The current buildings are life-expired and the space they provide is required by the school.

02/10/2026

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Signed Date