

To: Mike Whiting – Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
Roger Gough – Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance & Health Reform

By: Andy Roberts, Interim Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills

Subject Unit Review – replacement of accommodation of the ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) unit at Joy Lane Primary School (Whitstable)

Classification: Unrestricted

Reference: 10/01605(a)

Summary: To seek approval to proceed with the replacement of accommodation at the ASD unit at Joy Lane Primary School (Whitstable).

Background

1. (1) The Unit Review indicated a need to replace three existing primary units, and to provide one new secondary unit. The three existing primary units comprise of ASD units at Joy Lane Primary (Whitstable) and Cage Green Primary (Tonbridge), and also a speech and language unit at West Malling Primary. The Review also indicated the need for a secondary speech and language unit at Sittingbourne Community College, however before proceeding with this proposal it is necessary to clarify legislation within the Academies Act as regards the ability of a local authority to invest in an academy.

(2) The existing primary units are housed in unsuitable mobile accommodation that is old, in need of repair and set apart from the main school. The pupils and staff do not feel part of the school and the facilities are not conducive to the particular needs of the pupils.

(3) This report asks the portfolio holders to agree to the replacement of accommodation at the ASD unit at Joy Lane Primary (Whitstable). A separate decision (reference 10/01603) will be sought regarding the unit at Cage Green Primary (Tonbridge) and the speech and language unit at West Malling Primary, as these had been listed separately in the Forward Plan. Due to the necessary delay in pursuing a decision regarding the speech and language unit for Sittingbourne Community College, that will also now be taken as a separate decision in due course (reference 10/01605(b)).

Proposal

2. (1) The new ASD unit at Joy Lane Primary will provide bespoke facilities that suit the needs of the pupils at the school. The new facilities will be stand alone buildings in close proximity to the main school.

(2) The ASD facility will have three class bases, soft play area, sensory room, office space, therapy room, toilet facilities and will have access from the class bases direct to outside fenced play areas.

Resource Implications

3. The Medium Term Plan (MTP) provides for £3.5m for the Unit Review to fund all four projects (ASD unit at Cage Green Primary School (Tonbridge), speech and language unit at West Malling Primary School, ASD unit at Joy Lane Primary School (Whitstable), and speech and language unit at Sittingbourne Community College). The tenders have been very competitive and all four units can be achieved for £2.6m making a saving of £900k. The three primary school units would cost £2.34m.

Recommendation

Cabinet Member for Education, Learning & Skills and the Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance & Health Reform are requested TO AGREE to the replacement of accommodation at the ASD unit at Joy Lane Primary School, Whitstable.

Also that, subject to being satisfied as to the detailed terms and conditions, the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support be authorised to sign the contract on behalf of the County Council

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