

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

14/00078

For publication

Subject: Proposal to increase the designated number of places at Five Acre Wood School

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform I agree to:

- (i) Allocate £1.726 million from Targeted Basic Need budget and £12 million from the Basic Need budget.
- (ii) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts
- (iii) Update the facilities at Five Acre Wood School
- (iv) Issue a public notice to (a) create a Satellite provision at East Borough Primary School, Vinters Road, Maidstone ME14 5DX for 15 students with complex learning difficulties (b) to increase the designated number of places from 210 places to 275 places from October 2014.

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice

- (v) Expand Five Acre Wood School,
- (vi) Create a Satellite Provision at East Borough Primary School, Vinters Road, Maidstone ME14 5DX for 15 pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs for moderate to severe learning difficulties

Should objections, not already considered by the cabinet member when taking this decision, be received during the notice period a separate decision will be required in order to continue the proposal and expand the school to allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2013-18 has identified a need for 275 additional Special Educational Needs places in Kent, 175 of which are required in Special Schools. The expansion of Five Acre Wood School, Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9QF will help to address these pressures and adheres to the principles of our Commissioning Plan as it increases capacity at an outstanding, popular school. In reaching this decision I have taken into account:

- the views expressed by those in writing in response to the consultation;
- the views of the District and Parish Councils, the local County Councillor; Governing Body of the school, the Staff and Pupils;
- the Equalities Impact Assessment and comments received regarding this.

Financial Implications

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Five Acre Wood School by 65 places increasing the designated number of places to 275 for the September 2015 intake.

- a. It is proposed that KCC funded improvements to the school will provide all necessary teaching rooms including specialist teaching spaces. Facilities within the school will be improved and designed to meet the needs of students. A feasibility study has been

completed. The total cost is estimated to be in the region of £12 million of which £1.726 million will be funded from Targeted Basic Need and the remainder from the Basic Need and Special Schools Review Budget. The costs of the project are estimates and these may increase as the project is developed. If the cost of the project would be exceeded by more than 10%, the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding.

- b. There are no capital costs for the proposal to establish a Satellite provision at East Borough Primary School for 15 students with a statement of Special Educational Needs for moderate to severe learning difficulties. It is proposed that the provision would be provided through reconfiguration of the existing site.
- c. Revenue - The schools delegated budget will be allocated on an agreed number of commissioned places in accordance with the High Needs funding methodology of Place Plus.
- d. Human – Five Acre Wood School will appoint additional teachers, as the school size increases and the need arise.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

14 October 2013

The Committee endorsed the Kent Commissioning Plan, which identified a need for additional places and recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform that a consultation takes place on the proposal to expand and redesignate Five Acre Wood School, Boughton Lane, Maidstone, ME15 9QF.

The Local Members

Maidstone South – Mr Brian Clark provided the following response:

As County Councillor for Maidstone South, I feel that Five Acre Wood School expansion from 210 student to 260 students will be of benefit to the additional pupils that will be admitted, and support expansion in principle. I do however have serious concern about additional traffic in a lane, considered by KCC Highways, to be "at capacity" (especially as there is significant further housing and a new school development proposed at this joint KCC Five Acre Wood School / Future Schools Trust Academy site). I would wish that this issue be given full consideration at the planning stage.

Furthermore I have some outstanding concerns relating to the likely capital receipt, to Future Schools Trust, for releasing the farm site from their lease agreement with KCC to allow such expansion. I feel that KCC has made some major concessions to the academy, including agreement to a land swap deal, facilitating the academy's plan for 220 new homes and a free school on county land. I find it difficult to believe that KCC could not have secured the Five Acre Wood expansion site in return for KCC's agreement to such a potentially lucrative proposal (NB I had unsuccessfully attempted to "call in" the land swap decision on this basis in December 2013).

Maidstone North East, Mr Ian Chittenden has been consulted and is in support of the proposal

Any alternatives considered:

The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2013-18 explored all options and the expansion of this school was deemed the suitable option.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

Signed

Date