

From: Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills

To: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

Subject: Proposed Increase of designation pupil number and refurbishment of Oakley School, Tunbridge Wells

Decision Number: 14/00097

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Education Cabinet Committee, 27 September 2013, 14 March 2014

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Tunbridge Wells South

Summary: Following the recommendations from Education Cabinet Committee on 14 March 2014, the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is requested to agree to the recommendations below:

Recommendations:

- (i) To agree the increase of the designated pupil number from 188 to 206 by September 2014.
- (ii) Allocate £1.5 million from Special School Review Capital Programme budget in order that the school may be expanded and refurbished.
- (iii) Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Governance and Law to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council
- (iv) 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

In relation to other required officer actions not specifically delegated above, the Executive Scheme of Delegation for Officers set out in Appendix 2 Part 4 of the Constitution (and the directorate schemes of sub-delegation made thereunder) provide the governance pathway for implementation by officers.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As the strategic commissioner of school provision, the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for the residents of Kent. This duty applies to special school provision, as well as mainstream settings.

- 1.2 As part of our published SEND Strategy and review of special school provision, there are a number of areas where we need to undertake school expansions to ensure we have the right number of school places in the right locations.
- 1.3 Oakley School is a popular special school, offering primary education at its site in Tonbridge and secondary education in Tunbridge Wells. The forecasts for demand for special school places indicate a clear demand for additional places across the age range and geographical area covered by Oakley School. It is therefore proposed to increase the designated number of Oakley School and undertake capital works to increase the capacity of both sites and undertake improvements to facilities.
- 1.4 The proposed expansion of Oakley School does not necessitate statutory consultation under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 as the proposed increase in pupils is less than 10% of the current designated number.
- 1.5 Over time, in order to meet our responsibilities a number of special schools have been asked to admit additional pupils. In some cases this has led the schools involved to exceed their designated numbers to the extent that we need to undertake proposals to enlarge these schools and regularise the situation.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Oakley School will increase its designated number of pupils from 188 to 206 by September 2014. The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to allocate £1.5m from the Special School Review Capital Programme budget to complete the necessary works.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1
 - a) Capital – Proposals relating to regularising designated numbers do not have any capital implications. The capital costs, of rebuilding, refurbishing Oakley School is being allocated from Special School Review Capital Programme budget. The costs of this project are estimates and these may increase as the project is developed. If the cost of the project is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding.
 - b) 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’.
 - c) Human – Oakley School will appoint additional teachers, as the school size increases and the need arises.
- 3.2 As individual projects proceed from initial feasibility, through consultation and detailed site, building and planning considerations, initial budget estimates may be adjusted. Under the Executive Scheme of Delegation to Officers, those undertaking actions delegated to them are obliged to keep Members, in particular, the Cabinet Member informed. As part of this obligation where individual project costs vary from those set out in reports to the Education Cabinet Committee, the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic

Services will be consulted and will be asked to agree informally with the Director of Property Infrastructure that the changes can be managed within the basic need project budget. Members of Education Cabinet Committee are kept informed of changes through the regular Capital Monitoring Group meetings.

3.3 At any time the Cabinet Member may withdraw an undertaking from the scheme of delegation and escalate the decision to one that is taken at Member level via formal procedures.

3.4 Likewise at any time the officer with delegated authority may escalate a decision to the Cabinet Member for approval via formal procedure should they think it necessary.

4. Equality Impact Assessments

4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the SEN review, which highlighted the need for expansion of this school.

5. Local Member Opinion

5.1 The Local Member for Tunbridge Wells South has been informed of the proposal to expand Oakley School.

6. Area Education Officer Opinion

6.1 The Area Education Officer for West Kent fully supports this proposal and, having considered other commissioning options, is of the belief that this enlargement is not only necessary, but the most cost-effective and sustainable solution.

7. Education Cabinet Cabinet Committee Opinion

7.1 At its meeting on 14 March 2014 the Committee agreed the report on Re-designation of Special Schools and recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform that the public consultations on the remainder of the proposals set out in the report be undertaken.

7. Recommendations

the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is requested to agree to the recommendations below:

- (i) To agree the increase of the designated pupil number from 188 to 206 by September 2014.
- (ii) Allocate £1.5 million from Special School Review Capital Programme budget in order that the school may be expanded and refurbished.
- (iii) Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Governance and Law to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council.
- (iv) 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.

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8. Background Documents

Delivering Bold Steps for Kent 2013-2016 and the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2013-2018 are available on the following link:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/plans_and_consultations/education_plans.aspx

Strategy for Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/KELSI/supporting-pupil-learning/SEN/SEN/FINAL%20Strategy%20for%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%20with%20Special%20Educational%20Needs%20and%20Disabilities.pdf>

Cabinet Committee Report - Re-designation of Special Schools across Kent -14 March 2014

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=746&MId=5471&Ver=4>

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