

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform
Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director of Education and Young People's Services

To: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee – 15 December 2015

Subject: Proposal to expand Wyvern School, Ashford

Classification: Unrestricted

Decision number: 15/00083

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: Ashford South, Ashford

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to expand Wyvern School for September 2016.

Recommendation(s):

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the proposed decision to:

- (i) Issue a public notice to permanently increase the designated number of Wyvern School to with effect from 01 September 2016

And, following the ending of the public notice period:-

- (ii) Approve the permanent increase the designated number of Wyvern School to with effect from 01 September 2016
- (iii) Should objections, not already considered by me when taking this decision, be received during the notice period a separate decision will be required in order to continue the proposal and allow for a proper consideration of the points raised.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent's Strategy for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aims to address, amongst other things, gaps in provision. Therefore, the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent (2015-19) sets out the intention to commission 250 additional SEN school places. The Plan also mentioned a specific need to expand Wyvern School by up to 80 places.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed to permanently increase the designated number of Wyvern School to 270 (plus 24 nursery places).

- 2.3 This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place between 8 September and 5 October 2015. A public meeting was held on Tuesday 15 September 2015.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 a. Capital – The enlargement of the school requires the provision of additional classrooms, as well as ancillary facilities such as a medical room for the primary department. A feasibility study has been completed and the design is being developed. The total estimated cost of the expansion is likely to be in the region of £3.9 million.
- b. Revenue - The school will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget. Special schools are funded using the DfE Place Plus funding methodology for High Needs Pupils.
- c. Human – The school will appoint additional staff as required, as the school size increases and the need arises.

4. Vision and Priorities for Improvement

- 4.1 These proposals will help to secure our ambition “to ensure every child can go to a good school where they can make good progress and every child can have fair access to school places” as set out in ‘Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2015-2018’.
- 4.2 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2015-19 identified the need to commission 250 additional SEN school places

5. Consultation Outcomes

- 5.1 A total of 31 written responses were received, 27 of which supported the proposal.
- 5.2 A summary of the comments received is provided at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 A summary of the views and comments given at the public consultation meeting is attached at Appendix 2.
- 5.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

6. Views

- 6.1 The view of the Local Members Cllr D Smyth:
“I support the expansion proposals of Wyvern School. It is clear that, as Ashford grows in size, there will be an increasing demand for SEN places. It is important, as far as possible, that pupils can attend a local school rather than be forced to travel to educational facilities in other towns sometimes over long distances. These plans will address these issues.”
- 6.2 The view of the Headteacher and Governing Body:
The Head Teacher and the Governing Body of Wyvern School are in full support of the proposal to expand, providing that high quality permanent accommodation is provided. The rapid expansion of Ashford is clear and apparent. As a school we want to respond positively to the increasing need of local children.
- 6.3. The view of the Area Education Officer:
Wyvern is a popular school, currently catering for 214 pupils. This proposal will provide much needed additional PSCN places in Ashford. Ashford’s population is still growing and we want all local children to be able to attend a good, local school.

Currently some SEN children from Ashford are travelling to neighbouring towns. Local provision will reduce journey times and distances.

7. Delegation to Officers

7.1 The Officer Scheme of Delegation, under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution, provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. For information it is envisaged, if the proposal goes ahead, that the Director of Property & Infrastructure Support will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

8. Conclusions

8.1 This expansion will provide additional PSCN places in Ashford.

9. Recommendation(s)

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the proposed decision to:

(i) Issue a public notice to permanently increase the designated number of Wyvern School to with effect from 01 September 2016

And, following the ending of the public notice period:-

(ii) Approve the permanent increase the designated number of Wyvern School to with effect from 01 September 2016

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

10. Background Documents

10.1 Vision and Priorities for Improvement

http://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/29074/EYPS-Vision-and-Priorities-for-Improvement.pdf

10.2 Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2015-19

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/education-provision>

10.4 Consultation Document and Equalities Impact Assessment.

11. Contact details

Report Author:

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Relevant Director:

- Keith Abbott
- Director of Education Planning and Access
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Proposal to expand Wyvern School

Summary of Written Responses

| | |
|---|-----|
| Printed Consultation Documents distributed: | 400 |
| Consultation responses received: | 31 |

A summary of the responses received showed:

| | In Favour | Opposed | Undecided | Totals |
|---------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Governors | 2 | | | 2 |
| Staff | 1 | | | 1 |
| Parents | 24 | 3 | 1 | 28 |
| Pupils | | | | |
| Resident | | | | |
| Totals | 27 | 3 | 1 | 31 |

Comments in favour of the proposal:

- I agree that the Ashford area is in need of more SEN school places and I am in support of the expansion of Wyvern School. I hope that the outside play area is not affected by the additional building as it has already been reduced. And I hope that the building work will not be disruptive for the children.
- I think this is a great idea, giving other families the right for a fair education for their special needs child.
- There is a great need for this expansion. This would enable local children to access their local school. My child is happy here, this is a "special" place.
- I agree to this expansion if it further supports the needs and future of the children.
- I know how scarce SEN places are in Kent. This is an essential and necessary proposal which should be carried out as soon as possible. Education delayed is education denied.
- With the increase of the population in Ashford the pressure on accommodation at the school will increase. If the original plan for school expansion had been implemented this further expansion would not have been necessary.
- Parents and children in the area want and need their children to have the education provided at Wyvern.
- Wyvern School is an excellent place to learn and be taught by fabulous staff and assistants. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff are brilliant. My child enjoys Wyvern School.
- We are very much in favour of the expansion. Keeping pupils in their correct primary/secondary school setting is important to help them learn with as little disruption as possible. Such a great school needs to expand with the needs of its pupils.
- This is a much needed extension to increase places. Too many children are travelling too far to access education. Parking and access do need to be better thought out to go with the increase in places. I hope that more children can access this wonderful school.
- The expansion is fundamental to the school being able to offer specialist school places to all local children. However, traffic and parking is already a problem and there may be disruption during the building process. Will class sizes remain small following the extra intake each year?
- I am in support of the proposal but better arrangements for access will need to be made. (3)

Concerns raised:

- I am concerned about the parking. Currently there is not enough parking with 206 pupils. KCC has also reduced transport for some of the pupils. Something needs to be done about the single lane part of the entrance road as this causes major hold ups.
- The car park is too small and many disabled children have to walk between parked and moving traffic.
- The school cannot meet the children's medical needs due to staff shortages. How are they going to meet the needs of more children?
- The exit from the school needs to be adapted so that traffic cannot turn right. Signage is in place but this is still happening.
- Better access to the primary site without having to circle the car park.

Public Consultation Meeting

Proposal to permanently increase the designated number of Wyvern School to 270 places

Tuesday 15 September 2015

Panel: Chair – Cllr Michael Northey (KCC Member)

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| In Attendance: | David Adams | DA | Area Education Officer – South Kent |
| | David Spencer | BL | Headteacher – Wyvern School |
| | Julie Ely | JE | Head of SEN |

Purpose of the Meeting – Cllr Northey opened the meeting. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and handed over to David Adams who explained the proposal, including the planning process and further meetings

Questions/comments from the floor

| Name | Comment | Response |
|---------------|--|----------|
| David Spencer | From a staff perspective, we have discussed this possible proposal over many months, or even years. I am aware of the pressure on places and owe a responsibility to the local community to ensure there is adequate provision in this school. I fully support the proposal. | |
| CoG | This has been at the top of our agenda for years. We have always been worried that we would be turning away Ashford children. Pressure is already on the school at the moment. We strongly support the plan to go ahead and hope it will succeed. | |

David Adams reminded everyone how they could respond to the consultation and that any comments should be received by 5 October 2015.

9 people attended the meeting. There were no parents.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

15/00083

For publication

Subject: Proposal to permanently increase the designated number of Wyvern School to 270

Decision:

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

Issue a public notice to permanently increase the designated number of Wyvern School to with effect from 01 September 2016

And, following the ending of the public notice period:-

Approve the permanent increase the designated number of Wyvern School to with effect from 01 September 2016

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

Reason(s) for decision:

Kent's Strategy for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aims to address, amongst other things, gaps in provision. Therefore, the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent (2015-19) sets out the intention to commission 250 additional SEN school places. The Plan also mentioned a specific need to expand Wyvern School by up to 80 places.

In reaching this decision I will take into account:

- the views expressed by those attending the public consultation meeting on 15 September 2015, and those put in writing in response to the consultation;
- the views of the local County Councillors; Headteacher and Governing Body of Wyvern School;
- the Equalities Impact Assessment and comments received regarding this; and
- the views of the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee, which will be added after the meeting on 15 December 2015

Financial Implications

- a. Capital – The enlargement of the school requires the provision of additional classrooms, as well as ancillary facilities such as a medical room for the primary department. The total estimated cost of the expansion is likely to be in the region of £3.9 million.
- b. Revenue - The school will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget. Special schools are funded using the DfE Place Plus funding methodology for High Needs Pupils.
- c. Human – The school will appoint additional staff as required, as the school size increases and the need arises.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

To be added after Committee meeting

Any alternatives considered:

The SEND Strategy explored all options and the expansion of this provision was deemed the suitable option.

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

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Signed

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Date