

From: **Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services**

To: **Mr Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform**

Subject: **Proposed changes to Maidstone Grammar School (Boys)**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: **Education Cabinet Committee – 15 December 2015; 21 March 2016**

Future Pathway of Paper: **Cabinet Member Decision**

Electoral Divisions: **Maidstone Central, (Dan Daley and Rob Bird)**

Summary: This report sets out the proposed changes to Maidstone Grammar School (Boys), Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7BT

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to agree to:

- (i) Allocate £3.58 million from the Basic Needs budget to fund the permanent expansion of Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7BT by one form of entry, which over a period of time is expected to be offset by significant developer contributions.
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council.
- (iii) 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.

This decision is conditional upon planning permission being granted.

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 as set out in Kent's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2016-20.
- 1.2 Secondary School forecasts for the Maidstone district indicate a surplus of Year 7 places until 2018-19 when a significant deficit is projected.

	2014-15 PAN / capacity	2014-15 (A)	2015-16 (F)	2016-17 (F)	2017-18 (F)	2018-19 (F)	2019-20 (F)	2020-21 (F)	2021-22 (F)	2021-22 capacity
Year 7	2,065	171	129	129	46	-79	-173	-220	-259	2,047
Years 7-11	10,268	1,143	1,005	880	721	406	62	-287	-674	10,235

KCC is aware that a new Secondary Free School, the Maidstone School of Science and Technology', has Secretary of State approval to open with 180

Year 7 pupils, sponsored by Valley Invicta Academies Trust (VIAT). We have received confirmation from the Department for Education that the opening of the school will be delayed until September 2018, one year later than planned. It is acknowledged that the places at the Free School will meet the medium term demand for non-selective Year 7 places in central Maidstone. However, it is anticipated that there will be significant pressure for additional non-selective Year 7 places elsewhere in the Borough and for selective places, which could not be met by the Free School.

- 1.3 Maidstone Grammar School is a 6 Form Entry (FE) selective boys' school which admits girls into the sixth form. The school is located in central Maidstone and is ideally placed to meet the forecast demand for boys' selective provision.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 a. Capital

- (i) A curriculum assessment has been carried out in order to identify the additional accommodation required for this school project. In order to facilitate the enlargement of Maidstone Grammar School by an additional form of entry there would be a requirement for the demolition of an existing science block already supported by maintenance budget allocation); two new buildings, phased over the next two years plus an all-weather sports pitch. It is estimated that the cost of delivering this scheme would be £4 million of which £420,000 has already been approved under the capital maintenance budget. However, should the costs increase by more than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding. It is proposed that the school directly manage the capital scheme, under a formal agreement from the County Council. A Project Manager would oversee the project to ensure compliance with KCC requirements and procurement regulations.
- (ii) The County Council seeks funding from new housing developments towards capital projects where additional pupils generated by those developments cannot be accommodated within surplus capacity. Developments in the South and South East of Maidstone will be requested to contribute to the cost of this project. Planning applications which, if consented by Maidstone Borough Council, are expected, over time, to provide at least £1.8million to contribute to this project.

b. Revenue

- (i) The school is entitled to Growth funding for the permanent expansion. The incoming year 7 will be protected on 30 additional pupils at the KS3 basic entitlement rate (currently £3,803 for 2016-17) for the first three years of the expansion. Rising roll funding will then be payable for the remaining two years of the expansion for the incoming year 7 cohort up to a maximum of 30 pupils per year, this will be funded at the KS3 basic entitlement rate. In addition to this each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion, the sum of £6,000 will be allocated towards classroom set up costs.

c. Human

- (i) Maidstone Grammar School will appoint additional teachers and support staff, as the school size increases and the need arises within their overall funding allocation.

3. Raising Standards – Comments from Maidstone Grammar School

3.1 Maidstone Grammar School is an outstanding school. Ofsted's key findings about the school when it was inspected in September 2013 found that students make exceptionally good progress in all years and in all subjects from their above average attainment when they enter the school. By the end of Year 11, the attainment of all groups is high in comparison with national averages, as is the proportion gaining the highest GCSE A*/A grades. Students follow a wide range of programmes leading to accreditation in many more subjects than is the case in most schools. Furthermore, the impressive levels of progress students make through the school, and the outcomes in examinations across a wide range of subjects, mean that students are very well prepared for further study, training or employment beyond school.

3.2 Maidstone Grammar School believes academic standards will not be negatively impacted because the basic unit of teaching, classes of around 30 with a well-qualified teacher, will not change as a result of the increase to seven forms of entry. In fact academic standards should be enhanced and teaching and learning improve as a result of the increase in size and investment in the facilities for the following reasons:

- We will need to increase the teaching staff to accommodate seven forms of entry moving through the school. This will allow us to reduce the number of teachers having to teach outside their main subject specialism and to add to the range of specialisms available in school. Subject expertise in teaching is essential to secure the highest possible grades for students.
- A larger school and more staff will enhance the number of viable subject options that can be studied at GCSE and at A Level allowing students to specialise in those subjects that will play to their own talents.
- A larger staff will diversify on-going discussions about teaching and learning across the school and therefore enrich those conversations leading to improved outcomes for students in the classroom.
- Development of the buildings will allow the increased suiting of subject departments into particular areas of the buildings. This will aid cross subject co-operation on teaching and learning allowing staff to support each other and thus improving the management of teaching and learning leading to enhanced academic standards.
- Improved science laboratories of appropriate size will enhance the capacity for the range and amount of practical work that it is possible to do in Science. Practical work is essential for learning Science

appropriately and in particular for engendering a love of a subject which is so necessary for the future economic development of the country.

- The development of more computing and ICT facilities will ensure that the new computing curriculum will be able to be fully developed in school without facility limitations. It will also allow the continued development of new technologies in the teaching and learning of students across all subjects as facilities that are bookable for all teachers will be enhanced.
- The provision of a specific and appropriate facility for Performing Arts will allow the continuing development of these subject disciplines (Music and Drama) across the school. Drama is of particular importance as it is not fully established in school because of a lack of specialist facilities. Research shows that these subjects are particularly important in developing well-being and resilience amongst young people. The increase of mental health and anxiety issues, particular amongst adolescent boys, is a worrying national development and these enhanced facilities should help us tackle these concerns.
- The provision of an all-weather playing surface will enhance the capacity of the PE Department to provide proper physical activity to boys throughout the year, despite the weather, leading to fewer cancellations of games lessons. Physical activity is also an important part of ensuring well-being amongst students.

3.3 Maidstone Grammar School see the expansion plans as an exciting opportunity to enhance facilities to improve and enrich the learning experience for all students in the school.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 These proposals will help to secure our ambition “to ensure that Kent’s young people have access to the education, work and skills opportunities necessary to support Kent business to grow and be increasingly competitive in the national and international economy” as set out in ‘Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council’s Strategic Statement (2015-2020)’

4.2 These proposals reflect KCC’s aspirations to provide sufficient school places across the County, as set out in Kent’s Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2016-20.

5. Consultation

5.1 In accordance with the Department for Education’s Statutory Guidance (April 2016): Making ‘prescribed alterations’ to maintained schools, there is no need to undertake a formal statutory process as the proposed changes do not exceed 25% of the schools total capacity. However, the school will be consulting with parents regarding the proposed changes.

- 5.2 The proposed build scheme will also be subject to a planning application process which will provide all interested parties with an opportunity to respond.

6. Views

6.1 The View of the Local Members

The Local Members for Maidstone Central, Dan Daley and Rob Bird, have been informed about this proposal.

6.2 The View of the Headteacher and Chair of Governors

Maidstone Grammar School is delighted to have been included in Kent County Council's Commissioning Plan in November 2015 and has eagerly started the lengthy process of ensuring that the school is geared up to taking in an additional form from September 2018. I, along with my Governors and staff, have already started the process of ensuring that the school is as well-equipped as possible. This includes reviewing our existing structures and systems as well as having discussions with Building Consultants and Heads of Departments to ensure that our curriculum needs are met and that our new buildings are fit for purpose. Our building project is an exciting one and we are fully committed to delivering this in budget. Many departments will benefit from the new facilities which will obviously have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

6.3 The View of the Area Education Officer

The Area Education Officer for West Kent fully supports this proposal and, having considered other commissioning options, is of the belief that this is the most sustainable solution to increase the number of boys' selective places in the locality.

7. Proposals

- 7.1 The Maidstone Grammar School proposal will result in a 1 FE expansion, increasing the PAN from 175 to 210 (incremental expansion). It has been agreed that should this proposal proceed, Maidstone Grammar School will deliver the capital project directly. A formal agreement would be entered into between KCC and the School for the delivery of the project in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the agreement and the agreed budget.

- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to comply with the Council's equality duty to have due regard to equality considerations when proposing school expansions and commissioning additional school capacity.

8. Delegation to Officers

- 8.1 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 agreements on behalf of the County Council.

9. Conclusions

9.1 This proposal will create an additional 175 selective secondary school places in line with Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020 Policy Framework' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education – Kent' (2016 – 2020).

10. Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to:

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11. Background Documents

11.1 Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020 <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunities-improving-outcomes>

11.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2016-20
Link: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/education-provision>

12. Report Author

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