

From: **Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education**  
**Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education**

To: **Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 13 October 2017**

Subject: Tunbridge Wells Secondary School Pressure

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee – Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 23 November 2016.

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decisions

Electoral Division: Richard Long TD and Michael Payne - Tonbridge; James McInroy - Tunbridge Wells West; Peter Oakford - Tunbridge Wells North; Catherine Rankin - Tunbridge Wells South; Paul Barrington-King - Tunbridge Wells East

**Summary:** To advise Committee Members of the pressure on Year 7 places in Tunbridge Wells and propose provision planning measures for the Cabinet Member to approve to mitigate the pressure.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member on the proposed measures to mitigate the pressure for Year 7 Secondary school places in Tunbridge Wells Borough.

**1. Introduction**

There is significant pressure for Year 7 places in Secondary schools across the Tunbridge Wells Borough that rises from a forecast deficit of 121 places in 2018-19 to a peak of 245 in 2022-2023. There is particular pressure in the urban areas, with the only surplus capacity available in Cranbrook, which is outside of the historical travel to learn distance for children resident in central Tunbridge Wells.

Forecasts indicate approximately 8 forms of entry (FE) deficit of places, allowing for the recommended surplus capacity, in central Tunbridge Wells for the September 2018 intake, based on published admissions numbers. It is anticipated that the deficit will increase to more than 11FE within 5 years. The minimum additional places requirements to meet the demand are as follows:

- 6.3 additional forms of entry (190 Year 7 places) for September 2018
- 2 additional forms of entry (60 Year 7 places) for September 2019
- 3 additional forms of entry (90 Year 7 places) by September 2021

The Education Commissioning Plan clearly sets out the need for this additional capacity and without it KCC will face significant challenges in meeting our statutory duty for the sufficiency of school places.

## **2. Background**

The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2015-2019 first identified the need for an additional all ability Secondary school provision in Tunbridge Wells by September 2018. KCC sought to secure a new Free school through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Free School bidding process, known commonly as the 'Wave' process.

In 2016 KCC Officers met with ESFA officials and the Borough Council and agreed a strategy through which a new Secondary Free school would be provided for Tunbridge Wells. All parties agreed that it was necessary to identify and secure a site aligned to the Borough Council's Local Plan process prior to actively seeking applications from potential sponsors for a new school.

Site searches were undertaken and the ESFA identified a preferred site. A seminar for potential sponsors was run by KCC, ESFA, the RSC (Regional Schools Commissioner) and New Schools Network. It was anticipated that there would be a Wave application for a new 6FE free school opening in 2018/19, to meet the majority of the central Tunbridge Wells place demand. However, there were no applications from prospective sponsors in Wave 12 and in November 2016 the ESFA changed its policy on land acquisition to preclude 'speculative land purchases', which prevented the acquisition of the required land. Wave 13 of the Free School programme was then postponed indefinitely. Consequently, a wholly new school cannot realistically be delivered before 2021/22, necessitating the expansion of existing schools to meet the significant demand forecast.

## **3. Proposed Actions:**

To meet the immediate place pressures for September 2018 there is a need for 190 additional Year 7 places offered via temporary expansions of existing schools in Tunbridge Wells. In order to mitigate the short to medium pressure in 2019-20 we propose 4.3 FE permanent expansions of existing schools, augmented by 120 temporary Year 7 places (plus a 1 FE permanent expansion of the Judd School in Tonbridge). The expansions are proposed as follows:

<b>School</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Bennett Memorial Diocesan School	60 Temporary Places
St Gregory's Catholic School	60 Temporary Places
Tunbridge Wells Grammar School For Boys	60 Temporary Places
The Skinners' School	10 Temporary Places

Discussions are ongoing with schools to finalise the proposals for permanent and temporary expansion in 2019/20; further analysis will be included in the November report to this Committee.

These proposals for additional provision are intended to meet the immediate demand and will not offer surplus capacity within the central Tunbridge Wells area; the only spare capacity will be in Cranbrook. The proposed actions will still leave a requirement of 6FE permanent provision by September 2021 at the latest. We continue to investigate possible options to create additional provision to meet this need.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

The financial implications of the proposed expansions will be set out within a further report to the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee at its meeting of 22 November 2017.

#### **5. Kent Policy Framework**

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)'

The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-2021 sets out how we will carry out our responsibility for ensuring there are sufficient places of high quality, in the right places, for all learners and this proposal supports that aim to provide sufficient places where they are needed.

#### **6. Conclusions**

This report highlights the place pressure in Tunbridge Wells and recommends provision planning measures to mitigate the identified pressure. Without the additional provision there will be significant challenges in providing adequate Year 7 Secondary school places for the Borough.

#### **7. Recommendation(s):**

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education on the proposed measures to mitigate the pressure for Year 7 places in Tunbridge Wells Borough.

#### **8. Background Documents (plus links to document)**

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>

Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2017-2021  
[http://www.kent.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/66990/Kent-Commissioning-Plan-for-Education-Provision-2017-21.pdf](http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/66990/Kent-Commissioning-Plan-for-Education-Provision-2017-21.pdf)

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