

From: Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

Subject: **Recommendation to release funding for Phase 2 of the works to change the age range of Saint George's Church of England School to create an all-through school for pupils aged 4 to 19 from September 2019**

Decision No: 19/00048

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Northfleet & Gravesend West

Summary:

This report sets out information relating to the proposed decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education to provide Phase 2 funding to facilitate the new 2FE of primary provision at Saint George's Church of England School, in the Northfleet West planning area.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- a. Allocate £2,500,000 from the Children, Young People & Education Capital Budget to fund any necessary works or variations to accommodation for Phase 2 of the age range expansion project at St George's Church of England School.
- b. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council.
- c. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

1. Introduction

1.1. On 1st February 2017, the decision of the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee, was to recommend that St George's CE School should

expand, by virtue of a change of age range, taking pupils of ages ranging from Reception to Year 6.

- 1.2. The original Record of Decision (17/00011) agreed to allocate £7.1m from the CYPE Capital Budget to fund the build.
- 1.3. The build was phased with the original intention being that Phase 1 would provide a 2FE infrastructure core build with 1FE of accommodation for 2018, with the second FE being produced for 2021. However due to delays through the planning process, the first FE will now open in September 2019.
- 1.4. Due to pressures on the CYPE capital budget at the time of proposing this scheme it was agreed the scheme would be phased to aid cash flow, whilst recognising that this could ultimately increase the overall cost of the scheme. However, to ensure costs do not escalate further by continuing to delay the production of the second FE, the advice from Gen2 is that it would be more beneficial to the school in terms of reducing disruption to its operation and financially advantageous to build Phase 2 while the construction plant and builders are on site, rather than producing a new build some time further in the future.

2. Project Funding Details

- 2.1. There have been significant planning issues, owing to the site's proximity to the Coldharbour development area. Two ransom strips have been identified, one belonging to Colyer Ferguson Trust and one to Gravesham Borough Council. Both took some time to be resolved.
- 2.2. There have been challenging highways issues with a new access being created off a local residential road.
- 2.3. The land has required some grading as the whole site slopes upward to the south.

3. Financial Implications

3.1. Capital

Kent County Council's contribution was £7.1m from the Capital Budget to ensure the first intake of 30 year R pupils could be accommodated. This allocation of £2.5m will ensure the build programme can be completed cost effectively, and will ensure the second FE intake can be accommodated as and when it is required.

3.2. Revenue

When required, the school will offer places in the second Form of Entry. This will attract Growth Funding.

3.3. Human

- 3.4. The school will appoint additional staff as required, in line with the growth in pupil numbers.

4. Kent Policy Framework

- 4.1. These proposals will help to secure our ambition “to ensure every child will go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places” as set out in the Education Commissioning Plan.
- 4.2. The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, 2016-20 identified a pressure on primary school places in the Gravesham district due to increased demand from changes in demographics and small-scale house building. This demand is further demonstrated in the 2019-23 Kent Commissioning Plan.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. The consultation process was undertaken by the school as they are an academy.

6. Views

6.1. The Local Member

Cllr Lauren Sullivan, Member for Northfleet & Gravesend West provided the following comment:

“While the building of additional classrooms for the secondary school expansion will allegedly save money, I believe it will potentially be a detriment to the local residents and future pupils of the school due to the traffic and parking issues this will create. The purpose of waiting until phase 1 is complete was to assess the damage of additional traffic to the school in an area already congested at peak times close to a larger infant and junior school. Again I ask for the drop off zone to be sufficient and expanded and to connect to the new housing estate under construction with traffic only able to access the school via the Coldharbour Road roundabout/development or KCC does what it should have done initially and created a new access via Wrotham Road and the road exiting onto Westcott avenue to be used only for buses and pedestrians with some restrictions on allowing cars for the school and parking into the already busy roads of Westcott Avenue, Lanes Avenue and Haynes Road. If this access must be used while the estate is being built then it should have a Planning condition to ensure that this is only temporary until the new road is built. This will be the best local solution for the community. The traffic plan needs a lot of work if it is assumed 50% of people will walk to the new school which is potentially disingenuous at best as KCC have no way to enforce this and given the consistency in increasing the bus’s pass costs on local families use of public transport is becoming an increasingly difficult and expensive option for families.

While there is a need for more primary and secondary school places and I fully support the principle of more places in my division I am at a loss to explain the

need to just keep expanding schools like St. George's which is a good school and other local schools when there is evidently a sufficient need for a new fully comprehensive mixed-sex non-faith school, which is lacking in the Northfleet and Gravesend West division. "

Cllr John Burden was informed of the proposal.

Area Education Officer:

The analysis of the needs in the area, indicates that there are immediate and future pressures and we need the capacity provided by this new school.

The Director of Education Planning and Access and I considered what other alternatives were available in the immediate area. There were no other possible expansion options and I am of the firm opinion that the most appropriate and sustainable solution to the primary demand in the Northfleet and Gravesend West planning area is the new 2FE provision on the Saint George's CE School site.

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 Infrastructure will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

8. Conclusions

8.1. Forecasts for the Northfleet and Gravesend West planning areas indicate an increasing demand for primary school places.

8.2. Once complete, this new school will provide an additional 420 year R to 6 places to the Gravesham district capacity, in line with priorities in the Kent Policy Framework, 'Vision and Priorities for Education and Young People's Services' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education' (2019 – 2023).

9. Recommendations

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to:

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- c. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

10. Background Documents

10.1. Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-thecouncil/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunitiesimproving-outcomes>

10.2. Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision

www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision

11. Contact details

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