

From: Richard Long, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Matt Dunkley CBE, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, 10 January 2020

Subject: Proposal to Expand Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 210 places to 300 places from September 2021.

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway: Cabinet Member Decision of Paper

Electoral Division: Sevenoaks, Margaret Crabtree

Summary and Recommendation:

This report asks the Children, Young People and Education Committee to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision to expand Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 210 places to 300 places, facilitated by the establishment of a satellite of the school on the Wildernesse site in Sevenoaks, from September 2021.

1. Introduction

1.1. Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2019-23 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. A copy of the plan can be viewed from this link:

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

1.2. KCC forecasts that there will be significant short and medium-term pressure for additional Year 7 places in the West Kent Selective Planning Group which indicates that additional capacity will be needed for 2020/21 and in later years. The planning group includes all Grammar schools in the districts of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tonbridge Wells

- 1.3. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys has a Published Admission Number of 210. The school has recently accommodated an expansion on their site in Tunbridge Wells and there is no scope for further expansion on that site.
- 1.4. In order to expand Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys by 3FE, KCC are proposing that a satellite of the school is established on the Wilderness site in Sevenoaks.
- 1.5. To facilitate this expansion, a new block, which adjoins the building currently occupied by the Weald of Kent Grammar Annex is proposed, together with work to update and refurbish the outdoor sporting facilities and social spaces. This work would need to be completed before the September 2021 intake to the school to offer 90 additional Year 7 places for September 2021.
- 1.6. In 2012, Kent County Council agreed to identify and pursue options to increase Grammar provision in Sevenoaks area.

2. Alternative Proposals

- 2.1. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys was judged “Good” by Ofsted in January 2017. It is a popular school with parents. It is the nearest selective school to Sevenoaks town, that is not ‘super-selective’.
- 2.2. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys has indicated that they would be committed to expanding their school on to the Sevenoaks site, subject to plans being agreed between KCC and the Governing Body. No other school is being proposed or suggested as being the subject of a proposal to expand onto the Wilderness site.
- 2.3. The majority of Kent Grammar schools are now Academies. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys remains a community Grammar school maintained by KCC and it is therefore entirely within the purview of KCC to propose an expansion and to make a determination to proceed.
- 2.4. If no action is taken, Kent County Council will find it extremely difficult to fulfil the Council decision made in March 2012 to provide local selective secondary school places in Sevenoaks.

3. Financial Implications

Capital

- 3.1. A feasibility study has been carried out which estimates the cost of delivery of buildings and appropriate site infrastructure, being approximately £15m, wholly funded by the CYPE Basic Need Capital Budget.
- 3.2. In line with the agreement of Cabinet Committee on 7 May 2019, the capital figure reported here is a budget estimate for information only. Subject to Members support for the proposal to progress, these estimates will be refined as detailed

design work is undertaken and the scheme progresses through the planning process.

- 3.3. Following receipt of planning permission, the refined cost estimate will be presented to Infrastructure Commissioning Board and the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for a key decision to be made.
- 3.4. Should that decision be taken, a public notice will be published for four weeks. A final decision to fund, can only be made once the Public Notice period has expired.
- 3.5. If Members support the progression of this proposal, capital will be spent developing the design. This expenditure will be below the level requiring a key decision and within that delegated to officers.
- 3.6. In addition, an allowance of up to £2500 may be payable to outfit each teaching room, within the satellite provision, with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment.

Revenue

- 3.7. For each of the first five years following the opening of the satellite, the school's revenue budget will increase by c£423,000 every year from the following April, to reflect the additional 90 pupils per year. This is because school budgets are set on a financial year which runs from April to March.
- 3.8. The current funding formula uses the current Minimum Funding Level of £4,700 per child for Kent schools. As the academic year starts from September there will be additional funding protection to cover the period from September 2021 to March 2022 in line with the Kent Schools' Growth Policy. This is currently set at £2,254.77 per child equating to a total of £202,929 per year for the first three years.
- 3.9. In addition, a one-off revenue grant of £143,000 is available plus a one-off sum of £6,000 for each new classroom.
- 3.10. There is an ongoing consultation being undertaken by the Department for Education that is considering an increase in per-pupil funding. The exact rates paid to the school will be dependent on the schools' current local funding formula at that time.
- 3.11. Once years 7 to 11 are full, the anticipated 6th form increases would attract additional funding from the Department for Education.

Human

- 3.12. The school will appoint additional staff as it grows over the years

4. Kent Policy Framework

- 4.1. The 'Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, 2019-23 identified a pressure on 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)'.
- 4.2. The provision of sufficient school places is a statutory duty and contributes to the Strategic Business Plan Priorities to ensure that "Children and Young People in Kent get the best start in life".

5. Consultation

- 5.1. KCC has completed a Public Consultation that ran from 28 October 2019 to 6 December 2019.
- 5.2. The consultation was held for the community and other stakeholders, and included the following groups: all schools in the Sevenoaks District, Elected Members (Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council), Parish and Town Councils, Local MPs, Dioceses of Rochester and Southwark, Residents groups where known and Children's Centres.
- 5.3. A drop-in session was held at Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys on 12 November 2019. The head teacher, Chair of Governors, KCC Officers and Gen2 were on hand to answer any questions.
- 5.4. A full Public Meeting was held on the Wilderness site on 20 November 2019. The meeting was chaired by Sarah Hamilton, with a panel of Ian Watts, Amanda Simpson, the Head Teacher and Philip Drew, the Chair of Governors. In addition, colleagues from Gen2, Weald of Kent Grammar and Trinity School were on hand to answer any specific questions about the site. 62 people attended. A Speech to Text facility for a deaf respondent was in operation throughout.

Responses

- 5.5. 457 responses were received for this consultation. A full report is given at Annex A. In summary:
 - 410 were in favour (89.7%)
 - 15 were undecided (3.3%)
 - 32 were opposed (7.0%)
- 5.6. All of the responses, together with a transcript of the Public Meeting were made available to the Cabinet Member, as decision maker.

6. Views

The Local Member

- 6.1. Margaret Crabtree has been informed of the proposal, and has said, “I fully support the Tunbridge Wells Boys Grammar School expansion into the annexe on the Wildernesse site in Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks.”

Area Education Officer

- 6.2. Legislation prohibits the establishment of new grammar schools. Expansion of any existing grammar school onto a satellite site can only happen if the new site is genuinely part of the existing school.
- 6.3. The Department for Education publishes a guide and criteria to consider when assessing a satellite expansion:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756572/Maintained_schools_prescribed_alterations_guidance.pdf)

This guidance advises that decision makers need to consider a list of criteria which are intended to expose the extent to which the new site is integrated with the existing site, and the extent to which it will serve the same community as the existing site. I am satisfied that KCC and the school are completely compliant with this list:

6.3.1. The reasons for the expansion

KCC forecasts indicate that there will be significant short and medium-term pressure for additional Year 7 places in the West Kent Selective Planning Group which indicates that additional capacity will be needed for 2020/21 and in later years.

6.3.2. What is the rationale for this approach and this particular site?

In March 2012, following a petition from Sevenoaks residents, KCC resolved to pursue proposals to establish a Grammar provision in Sevenoaks. Extensive analysis was carried out in the period 2013 to 2016 to determine how many students travelled outside of Sevenoaks district to access selective education.

Although there was a small amount of annual variation, every year more than 40% of secondary school aged students, who were resident in Sevenoaks, travelled outside of Sevenoaks District to access their choice of education.

Analysis of all the grammar school sites in the West Kent selective planning group showed that 3FE could not be accommodated on the existing boys grammar school sites in the planning group so a satellite was the only

alternative. No other site could be identified in the Sevenoaks district area that could accommodate a selective school satellite.

KCC determined that the Wilderness site could accommodate 3FE of girls selective provision and 3FE of boys selective provision. The girls provision was established in 2017. This site is therefore the only option available.

6.3.3. How will the of new site be used (e.g. which age groups/pupils will it serve)?

The governors of Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys have determined that the satellite will accommodate 3FE of secondary provision, at Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, offering the same range of subjects and activities that are available to students in the main school.

In addition, the school will maintain a sixth form provision. The school offers a really wide curriculum with 26 A-level courses available. A blended approach will be introduced where some subjects could be delivered on the satellite site but with the majority being delivered on the Tunbridge Wells site

6.3.4. What will the admission arrangements be?

Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys will have a new campus but remains one school. Based on the current pattern of admissions to Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, there is no need to amend the existing admissions criteria for the school for 2021/22, as the current criteria already includes the ability for pupils who are residents of Sevenoaks to apply for a place at the school. Under the current criteria, many Sevenoaks pupils have received a place in previous admission rounds.

Children will be ranked in accordance with the existing school oversubscription criteria and when all offers are known, the school will determine which site children will be based at, for the majority of their school activities.

Families will have an opportunity to make a site preference once they receive an offer of a place, but this will be determined by the school based primarily on the proximity of learners to the different school sites.

6.3.5. Will there be movement of pupils between sites?

There would be no requirement for students who attend the Sevenoaks Satellite to travel to the Tonbridge site for specific subjects or lessons as part of main curriculum timetable. This is because Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys would have the facilities and teaching capacity to ensure the school is able to deliver, in a manner that represents best use of public funds, the same timetable and standard of teaching at both sites.

Therefore, the curriculum at KS3 & KS4 would remain the same as it is currently and offered on both sites. This can only benefit the students who are resident in Sevenoaks, due to the considerable reduction in travel that they would otherwise experience.

However, the house system would enable students across both sites to share a common set of values and enjoy representing their house in a range of competitions and activities. Extra-curricular clubs and events would also be shared. The breadth of the KS5 curriculum with 26 different A levels on offer, would also mean that the majority of A level classes would take place on the Tunbridge Wells site.

6.3.6. How will whole school activities be managed?

Key stage activities will run concurrently across both sites and provide, where appropriate, an opportunity for students to mix and experience the learning environment on each campus. Examples of such could include sports day, PSHE, activities week and house activities.

6.3.7. Will staff be employed on contracts to work on both sites? How frequently will they do so?

As stated in the consultation document, certain staff will be expected to work across both sites where it is deemed appropriate. There will be a minimum expectation that members of SLT work across both sites regularly.

However, where there are staff meetings, CPD events or whole school/year group/house events, wider staffing groups will be required to travel between sites on those occasions.

6.3.8. What governance, leadership and management arrangements will be put in place to oversee the new site (e.g. will the new site be governed by the same GB and the same school leadership team)?

There are no planned changes to the existing governance arrangements for Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys. Existing Governors will oversee both sites and will visit either site to ensure they fulfil their respective responsibilities.

6.3.9. How will facilities across the two sites be used (e.g. sharing of the facilities and resources available at the two sites, such as playing fields)?

There will be many opportunities for pupils and staff to access both sites. The school will work with both providers on site to improve the facilities

available and ensure they are available for use by any pupil from those schools.

6.3.10. Is the new site in an area that is easily accessible to the community that the current school serves?

This proposal provides greater opportunity and much reduced travelling times for any pupil who is able to access the satellite provision, who would otherwise have sought a place in Tunbridge Wells.

This is evidenced by the map at Annex B, which shows the numbers and locations of students resident in Sevenoaks district, who currently travel many miles to access a grammar education in Tunbridge Wells. The map shows how much closer the satellite provision would be to their homes. This would reduce travelling time and would promote more walking and cycling to school. This would be reflected in an update to the school's travel plan.

6.4. A further assessment has been undertaken to consider whether the proposal has a positive benefit for children in local authority care or who receive free school meals.

6.5. KCC believes in keeping children at the centre of everything that we do. We believe in being ambitious for all Kent children and celebrating their achievements, regardless of their circumstances.

6.6. A cornerstone to this ambition is to ensure that education needs are appropriately assessed, supported, and maximized for future life chances. KCC does not believe that the circumstances of a child's upbringing should impact negatively on the fulfilment of their potential. Grammar schools are one of several ways that KCC seeks to ensure that this ambition is met, and it is therefore important to show that this proposal can provide a positive impact on these core KCC beliefs.

Children in Care

6.7. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys is a Community Grammar School and therefore uses the KCC common admission criteria. When considering the admission of Grammar eligible children, the first criterion, i.e, the children who are placed first on the offer list, are children in local authority care.

6.8. On 9 December 2019, there were 19 children in care in the Sevenoaks district area (0.7% of the total secondary cohort in Sevenoaks). There is no standalone grammar provision in Sevenoaks, so none of these 19 children have an opportunity to attend Grammar education. The establishment of a satellite of Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys would increase the opportunities for these children to attend a Grammar school.

- 6.9. In addition, if this proposal goes forward, there will be additional grammar capacity available for children in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling which will provide opportunities for more children in local authority care.

Children Eligible for Free School Meals

- 6.10. Across Kent, 4.2% of children who attend Grammar schools are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM). Of the three boys grammar schools in the West Kent Selective Planning Group, Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys has the highest percentage of children eligible for FSM, at 2.9%. Skinners School and Judd School are 2.1% and 1.9%, respectively.
- 6.11. Across the Sevenoaks district, the percentage of secondary aged children entitled to FSM is 12.7%. Some of these children will attend a Grammar provision in the West Kent Planning Group, but clearly, the establishment of a new provision that is accessible to Sevenoaks children will provide more opportunity for FSM-eligible children to attend a Grammar school.
- 6.12. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys is a Local Authority maintained schools and adheres to the admissions criteria determined by Kent. Within the determined admissions arrangements for the school, it states “In the event of any of the criteria being oversubscribed, priority will be given initially to children in receipt of pupil premium”.

Area Education Officer Summary

- 6.13. The analysis of the demand for secondary selective provision in the area, indicates that there are immediate and future pressures and we need the additional capacity provided by this proposed expansion. This satellite site offers the opportunity to address the forecasted demand, the Council’s decision to pursue Grammar school education in Sevenoaks and crucially, to reduce the need for c500 Sevenoaks students to travel excessive distances.
- 6.14. In addition, this proposal would increase opportunities for children in Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling, regardless of their circumstances. I therefore, fully support the proposal.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. The Council has determined that it wants a boys grammar provision in Sevenoaks. This is to reduce the time spent by students travelling to school.
- 7.2. The demand in the planning group cannot be adequately met using other sites.
- 7.3. The Head teacher and Chair of Governors of Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys are in favour and have put in the necessary planning to ensure that the satellite can be integrated with the main school site.

- 7.4. The consultation returned an overwhelming response in favour of the proposal. Most of those favourable responses were from parents and carers resident in Sevenoaks, with boys currently at primary school.
- 7.5. The proposal has been tested against the Department for Education criteria for a satellite expansion and found to be well within the bounds of acceptability that the provision is part of an existing school in every way.

8. Recommendation:

This report asks the Children, Young People and Education Committee to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision to expand Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 210 places to 300 places, facilitated by the establishment of a satellite of the school on the Wildernesse site in Sevenoaks, from September 2021.

9. Background Documents

- 9.1. 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>

- 9.2. Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision

www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision

- 9.3. Equality Impact Assessment

https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/gf2.ti/f/1080450/58011205.1/DOCX/-/TW_Grammar_EqIA.docx

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