

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Richard Long
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

19/00094

Unrestricted

Key decision: YES

Subject:

Proposal to expand Meopham School by increasing the Published Admission Number from 140 places to 200 places in September 2021.

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I:

- i. endorse a proposal to expand Meopham School, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent DA13 0AH by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 140 places to 200 places from September 2021.
- ii. agree to fund the expansion from the schools' basic need capital budget; and
- iii. delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into necessary contracts or taking other legal actions as required, to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

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 2020-24 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>

KCC forecasts indicate a growing demand for Year 7 places in Gravesham from the start of the 2020-21 academic year. The Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective Planning Group is forecast to have a deficit of 102 Year 7 places (3.5FE) from 2021-22 that increases to a deficit of 203 places (7FE) by 2023/24.

As part of the measures being taken to address the capacity issues illustrated above, KCC is proposing that Meopham School increase their PAN to 200 for 2021.

Meopham School is a popular school and the proposal to increase the number of Secondary places at the school is therefore, in line with the expectation of expanding popular & successful schools. The proposal will add an additional 60 places taking the school PAN up to 200 for September 2021. It will be achieved through building additional accommodation and service space on the Meopham site.

Equality Implications

An EqIA has been completed and with no adverse effects to any groups being identified. The following positive impacts were identified: An increase in total number of places available to meet

the needs of students with disabilities and/or SEN; more families able to access good school places; school places available to students with and without faith-based backgrounds.

https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/gf2.tiff/1088162/59090917.1/DOCX/-/Meopham_EqIA.docx

Financial Implications

Capital

A feasibility study has been carried out which estimates the cost of delivery being £7.5m, wholly funded by the CYPE Basic Need Capital Budget.

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. Following receipt of planning permission, the refined cost estimate will be presented to Infrastructure Commissioning Board and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education for a key decision to be made.

Capital will be spent developing the design. This expenditure will be below the level requiring a key decision and within that delegated to officers.

In addition, an allowance of up to £2500 may be payable to outfit the teaching room with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment.

Revenue

Should the scheme progress, £6,000 per new learning space will be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment. This will be given to the school to purchase the required equipment.

The school will receive growth funding in accordance with the Pupil Growth Policy established by KCC and its Schools' Funding Forum.

Human

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

Legal Implications

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".

Data Protection implications

An impact assessment identified no adverse implications as KCC did not handle any personal data relating to this decision.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee considered the proposal at its meeting on 11 March 2020. At the meeting the Committee RESOLVED to endorse the proposal.

The Academy held a consultation from 19 November 2019 to 16 December 2019, with a drop-in event for stakeholders to raise issues and concerns on 3 December 2019.

The Academy Trust have considered the responses received from the consultation and have confirmed that they will proceed with the expansion proposal.

The consultation can be found via this link:

<https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/meopham/consultationHome>

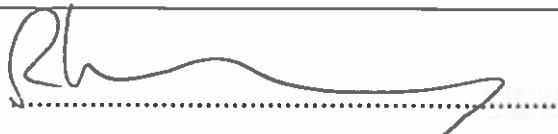
Any alternatives considered and rejected:

There are seven secondary schools in the Gravesend and Longfield Non-Selective Planning Group. These are: Longfield Academy, Northfleet School for Girls, Northfleet Technology College, Saint George's CE School (Gravesend), St. John's Catholic Comprehensive School and Meopham School.

Of these, St George's CE School, Northfleet School for Girls and Thamesview School are either being expanded or have been identified as the subject of a future proposal to expand. Northfleet Technology College is under feasibility for an expansion and Longfield School and St John's Catholic Comprehensive School have been offering additional places under a local arrangement for several years. Meopham School is the only remaining candidate for expansion.

If no action is taken, Kent County Council will find it extremely difficult to provide sufficient local secondary school places in Gravesham borough.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rh', written over a horizontal dotted line.

signed

25 March 2020

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date