

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Richard Long TD
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

DECISION NO:

20/00087

For Publication

Subject: Proposed expansion and relocation of Platt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Maidstone Road, St. Mary's Platt, Nr Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 8JY under the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP) Round 2.

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education Cabinet I agree to:

- (i) Allocate £1,390,000 to the project, of which £900,000 is to be funded from the Priority Schools Building Programme Budget and £490,000 from the Children Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget.
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with KCC General Counsel and the Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts/agreements on behalf of the County Council with the Trustees of Platt CoE Primary School to secure the sale of the current school land with the sale proceeds to be paid to the County Council
- (iii) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with KCC General Counsel and the Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts/agreements on behalf of the County Council to secure funding of no less than £3,430,000 from the Department for Education for the project
- (iv) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with KCC General Counsel and the Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts/agreements on behalf of the County Council to facilitate and manage the construction of the new school buildings and associated works
- (v) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to ensure that the appropriate level of funding is received from the Department for Education to cover their agreed share (70%) of any unforeseen costs during the building's construction to ensure that the County Council minimises any unforeseen costs
- (vi) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts

Reason(s) for decision:

- 1.1 On 1 May 2014, the Minister of State for Schools announced that the Government would fund a further phase of the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP), with a value of around £2 billion. The new phase, known as PSBP2, was planned to be a five year programme operating between 2015 and 2021 and entailed major rebuilding and refurbishment projects in schools and sixth form colleges in the very worst condition.
- 1.2 On 9 February 2015, The Secretary of State for Education and the Minister of State for

Schools, announced that 277 schools across the Country had been successful in their applications. KCC were successful for 7 of the schools in addition to a further 6 schools across Kent where Academies bid directly. Platt Church of England (CE) Voluntary Aided (VA) Primary was one of the 7 successful KCC school applications.

- 1.3 In round 2 of the PSBP scheme KCC, with support from the Diocese of Rochester, as it involves a VA school, made a successful application for funding to improve Platt CEP school. The EfA funding allocation of £3,430,000 was limited to covering the rebuilding of 2 main school blocks that were in the poorest condition. The project was also selected by the EfA for local delivery with KCC to receive the necessary funding for the construction via a Project Delivery Grant.
- 1.4 Subsequently, agreement was reached with the Diocese and the EfA that third party funding would be used to rebuild the remaining two blocks that had not successfully met PSBP funding criteria. This would allow the whole school to be relocated and rebuilt on a site adjacent to the existing school building. It also enables a Basic Need expansion of the school's PAN from 26 to 30, which would provide 28 additional places across the age range of the school for local children, as a 1FE school it would be financially more sustainable and secure into the longer term future.
- 1.5 The third-party funding was to be achieved through the capital receipt from the sale of the existing school land; owned by the trustees of the school, as it is a Voluntary Aided school. An allocation of cost was agreed with the DfE based on the areas of the building, to allocate the cost of replacement of the school and the cost of increasing the capacity of the school. This increase in capacity was to be fully funded from the future sale of the existing site, which has been estimated at between £800,000 and £1.2 million.

2 Financial Implications

- 2.1 The total estimated cost of the scheme is now £4,720,000. The PSPB funding from Government will be £3,430,000, which leaves £1,290,000 to be funded by third party funding, in addition a contingency of £100k should be allowed for, the total third-party funding required is therefore £1,390,000. It was initially anticipated that the sale of the existing school site would fully fund the third party funding; however this may no longer be the case, due to the increase in costs and advice we have received that the school land may not achieve the higher end of its valuation due to value suppression and nervousness within the land sale market.
- 2.2 It is projected that there will be a funding deficit of up to £490,000 if the land sale achieves an estimated £900,000 value.
- 2.3 It is therefore necessary for the County Council to consider contributing £490,00 of capital funding in recognition of the 28 additional places that the school's relocation will provide. This represents an unanticipated additional capital pressure on a Basic Need budget but is necessary to complete the relocation and rebuild of the school. It would have been financially advantageous for the project to create the 28 additional places without KCC funding, however the objective of PSPB is for rebuilding existing accommodation based on condition and is not intended to fund additional places. This cost represents a cost per place of £17,500 which is below the lower DfE benchmark of £21,022 per place for similar projects.
- 2.4 The County Council has agreed terms with the Trustees of the school that the freehold of the school's existing site is transferred to the County Council which will then sell the site and the proceeds shall be used as reimbursement of the capital funding allocated by the County Council. The proceeds shall be prioritised to reimburse the £900,000 from the PSPB budget,

with any proceeds above £900,000 reimbursing the Children Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget up to £490,000.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment:

3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been produced and no issues were identified in the early stage EqIA, but the assessment will be reviewed as the project continues.

4. Legal implications:

4.1 KCC, as the Local Authority (LA), 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 KCC's 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>

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The report was shared with Members of the CYPE Cabinet Committee for comment, prior to a decision being taken.

In accordance with the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance (October 2018): Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools, there is no need to undertake a formal statutory consultation process.

Any alternatives considered:

Kent County Council (KCC) prioritised PSBP round 2 funding applications to the school buildings that were in the poorest condition. Platt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School was one of the 7 successful KCC PSBP applications.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None



1 September 2020

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Signed

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Date