

From: Richard Long TD, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Matt Dunkley CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 15 January 2021

Subject: Proposal to permanently expand Highsted Grammar School, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, ME10 4PT from 120 places to 150 places for September 2022.

Decision Number and Title

20/00115 - Proposal to permanently expand Highsted Grammar School, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, ME10 4PT from 120 places to 150 places for September 2022.

Key decision Yes

- *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions*
- *It involves expenditure or savings of more than £1m*

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member decision
Electoral Division:

Sittingbourne South – John Wright
Sittingbourne North – Jason Clinch
Sheppey – Andy Booth & Ken Pugh
Swale East - Andrew Bowles
Swale West – Mike Whiting

Summary: This report sets out the need for additional Grammar school capacity in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey Grammar planning area. Forecasts indicate a deficit of up to 60 Year 7 places for 2021 and a continual need through the plan period of between 1.5FE and 2FE in additional selective school places. Discussions have been held with both grammar schools in Sittingbourne and each school has agreed to progress a 1FE expansion, delivering a total of 60 additional places from September 2021.

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 Education and Skills on the proposed decision to:

- i. Agree to provide £4m from the Children's, Young People and Education Capital Budget for the permanent expansion of Highsted Grammar School by 1FE for September 2021.

- ii. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the General Counsel and Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts / agreements on behalf of the County Council.
- iii. 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.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-24 identifies the need to commission additional capacity in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning group. Forecasts indicate a deficit of year 7 and year 7-11 places across the plan period. A deficit of -42 for year 7 in 2020 which increases to -69 places by 2023.

1.2 The tables below show the additional selective places required for selective if no further action is taken across both Canterbury and Faversham and Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning groups. These figures do not include any spare capacity required for in-year admissions, or growth related to housing from any new developments

Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

	2018-19 capacity	2018-19 (A)	2019-20 (F)	2020-21 (F)	2021-22 (F)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2025-26 capacity
Canterbury & Faversham Selective	590	-17	-29	-23	-20	-32	-37	-28	-15	605
Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective	270	-5	-38	-42	-60	-45	-69	-59	-56	240

Years 7-11 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

	2018-19 capacity	2018-19 (A)	2019-20 (F)	2020-21 (F)	2021-22 (F)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2025-26 capacity
Canterbury & Faversham Selective	2,865	-95	-92	-104	-107	-118	-142	-143	-137	3,025
Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective	1,230	-34	-76	-94	-139	-173	-237	-258	-271	1,200

2. Background

2.1 The increase in the birth rate, inward migration and house building has increased the forecast need for selective school places in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey planning group.

- 2.2 There are two Grammar schools in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey planning group, Borden Grammar School (Boys) and Highsted Grammar School (Girls). For a number of years both grammar schools have offered over their PAN to help meet the need, however they are not able to offer any additional places from September 2022 without a build programme to provide additional classrooms to enable them to expand by 1FE permanently.
- 2.3 Neighbouring planning groups, including Faversham and Canterbury Selective and Maidstone Selective planning groups also have a deficit of year 7 places and therefore would not be able to accommodate students from Sittingbourne and Sheppey.
- 2.4 This proposal 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 (2017 - 2022)’.
- 2.5 A curriculum analysis and initial feasibility has been undertaken at Highsted Grammar school to identify the requirements and scope of the 1FE expansion. Through discussions with the Trust it has been agreed that the school are willing and able to manage and deliver the project themselves with a funding agreement between the Trust and KCC.
- 2.6 Highsted Grammar School will undertake a consultation as part of the delivery of the project. It is anticipated that this will commence at the beginning of 2021. Consultation results will have to be included in the fast track case for expansion the Trust will be required to submit to the DfE.
- 2.7 The Headteacher and Governing body of Highsted school are fully supportive of the expansion project.
- 2.8 Highsted Grammar School is a well-respected and popular school in the local area. The Area Education Officer for East Kent fully supports the expansion of Highsted.
- 2.9 The Local Members for Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective Planning Group area were informed of the proposal and comments were received from John Wright, Sittingbourne South.

John Wright: I am a member of the planning committee as well as this school falling within my division. Although broadly supportive, I would raise the long running issue that would need to be addressed as part of any expansion project concerning the unsafe and non-existent footpath at the top end of Highsted road and the need to move the school buses onto the school or a neighbouring school’s site for drop-off and pick-up in order to ensure the safety of the school children and other road users.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The capital allocation of £4m is to deliver a programme to provide the additional general and specialist classrooms required to meet the additional pupil place

need. The funding allocation would be subject to a contractual agreement between KCC and the Trust to offer a minimum of 150 Year 7 places for September 2021 and to expand permanently from September 2022. The school's current published admission number (PAN) is 120. The £4m has been agreed based on a curriculum and space needs analysis of the school's current accommodation and this figure is in line with the DfE's benchmark figures for an expansion of a secondary school by 1FE. Highsted Grammar School has agreed to deliver, and project manage the programme.

- 3.2 The school will receive increased revenue funding through their Delegated Budget. The rising rolls will be protected in line with KCC Growth Funding Policy. Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the School to resource each new classroom as they come online. At present this is at a value of £6,000 per classroom.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 The funding allocation is subject to a contractual agreement between KCC and the Trust to offer a minimum of 150 Year 7 places from September 2021. The school's current published admission number (PAN) is 120.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and the assessment identified the following positive impacts:

- Sufficient year 7 places will be provided for September 2021 intake.
- Year 7 pupils will be able attend Grammar school provisions in their locality
- More pupils will be able to attend a good or outstanding school.

No adverse impacts were identified during the assessment.

6. Other corporate implications

- 6.1 None identified.

7. Governance

- 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, Strategic and Corporate Services will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Without the additional selective capacity created by the permanent expansion at Highsted Grammar School, there will not be sufficient Year 7 grammar places available in Sittingbourne to meet demand. This would result in children having to travel to other districts or planning groups for their Grammar education and would further increase transport costs for KCC.

9. Recommendation(s):

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10. Background Documents

- 10.1 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision
www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision
- 10.2 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>

11. Contact details

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