

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Shellina Prendergast

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

To be allocated by
Democratic Services

For publication

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*
- b) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
 - *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
 - *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Proposal to permanently expand Borden Grammar School, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne, ME10 4DB from 120 places to 150 places for September 2022.

Decision:

- i. agree to increase the funding allocated to expand Borden Grammar School from £5.46m to £6.975m through providing £1.515m million additional funding from the Basic Need capital budget.
- 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.

Reason(s) for decision:

Background

The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-24 identified the need to commission additional capacity in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning group.

2021-25 forecasts indicate a deficit of up to 64 Year 7 places for 2022 and a continual need through the plan period of between 1.5FE and 2.5FE of 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 2022.

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 additional classrooms and facilities to enable them to expand by 1FE on a permanent basis.

The report taken in September 2021 to the Children and Young People's and Education Cabinet Committee agreed to the allocation of £5,460m in capital funding from the Basic Need budget. The proposal was delayed going to planning until January 2022 and therefore the cost for the project has now been revised following additional detailed surveys and adjustments to the designs following feedback from planning officers. The cost has increased from £5.460m to £6.975m. A decision to allocate the additional funding of £1.515m is required.

Financial Implications

The additional capital allocation of £1.515m will enable the delivery of a programme providing the additional general and specialist classrooms plus a new sports hall to meet the additional pupil place need.

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.

Legal implications

Borden Grammar School will be required to complete and submit a full Business Case to the ESFA regarding the expansion of the school by 1FE.

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.

Equalities implications

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

- Sufficient year 7 places will be provided for September 2022 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.

Other Alternatives Considered and risks if decision isn't taken.

Neighbouring planning groups, including Faversham and Canterbury selective and Maidstone selective planning group also have a deficit of year 7 places therefore would not be able to accommodate students from Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee will consider the decision on 1 March 2022.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-24 identified the need to commission additional capacity in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning group to ensure sufficient Grammar School places.

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

signed

date