

**From:** Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

**To:** Children's and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 18 July 2023

**Subject:** Review of Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of report:** N/A

**Future Pathway of report:**

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** This report informs Members of the progress made in implementing the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27 since its adoption by Cabinet in January 2023

**Recommendation(s):**

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to note the progress achieved prior to the next version of the Commissioning Plan (2024-28) being presented to the Committee at its meeting in November 2023.

**1. Introduction**

1.1 In January 2023 Kent County Council (KCC) published the latest Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27 (KCP). The KCP sets out how the County Council, as the Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision in Kent, will carry out our responsibility for ensuring there are sufficient high quality places, in the right locations for all learners, while at the same time fulfilling our other responsibilities to raise education standards and promote parental preference.

1.2 This report reviews the progress made since the KCP's production. It includes:

- A review of forecasting accuracy;
- The progress in implementing the planned expansions of schools;
- Reviews of SEN, Early Years and Post 16 provision progress.

**2 Forecasting Accuracy**

2.1 The KCP sets out forecast roll numbers for the County and in planning groups for both primary and secondary school phases. The overall forecast relating to the total places for the 2022-23 school year were accurate to 0.3% of the actual school roll. This demonstrates a high level of forecasting accuracy and meets the performance target to be accurate to within plus or minus 1% at County level.

2.2 The Years R-6, Year 7 and Years 7-11 were all within 1%, however, the year R roll was over the 1%, at 2.9%. See breakdown below:

- Year R rolls were over forecast by 2.9%, 502 pupils.
- Years R-6 rolls were over forecast by 0.2%, 208 pupils.
- Year 7 rolls were over forecast by 0.3%, 106 pupils.
- Years 7-11 rolls were over forecast by 0.6%, 548 pupils.

2.3 The Primary Phase breakdown by district for the Year R forecasts shown in Figure 2.1 indicates that 8 districts were over or under forecast in excess of 1% and 30 places. Figure 2.2 shows that the overall years R-6 primary forecast accuracy improved from 0.4% under to 0.2% over.

**Figure 2.1: Comparison of Year R forecast v October 2022 roll**

District	Forecast roll 2022/23	Actual roll October 2022/23	Variance in places	Accuracy (%)*
Gravesham	1,335	1,323	-12	-0.9
Swale	1,812	1,812	0	0.0
Thanet	1,502	1,522	20	1.4
Folkestone & Hythe	1,071	1,089	18	1.7
Canterbury	1,418	1,448	30	2.1
Maidstone	2,076	2,135	59	2.9
Ashford	1,565	1,624	59	3.8
Tunbridge Wells	1,184	1,230	46	3.8
Dartford	1,615	1,689	74	4.6
Dover	1,107	1,161	54	4.9
Tonbridge & Malling	1,597	1,678	81	5.1
Sevenoaks	1,285	1,357	72	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,567</b>	<b>18,069</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>2.9</b>

**Figure 2.2: Comparison of Year R-6 forecast v October 2022 roll**

District	Forecast roll 2022/23	Actual roll October 2022/23	Variance in places	Accuracy (%)*
Folkestone & Hythe	8,080	7,999	-81	-1.0
Swale	13,222	13,091	-131	-1.0
Gravesham	9,977	9,944	-33	-0.3
Canterbury	10,436	10,412	-24	-0.2
Maidstone	14,466	14,492	26	0.2
Ashford	11,201	11,251	50	0.4
Dartford	11,485	11,542	57	0.5
Thanet	10,814	10,869	55	0.5
Tunbridge Wells	8,735	8,787	52	0.6
Tonbridge & Malling	11,592	11,678	86	0.7
Sevenoaks	9,336	9,407	71	0.8
Dover	8,421	8,501	80	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>127,765</b>	<b>127,973</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>0.2</b>

2.4 For secondary, figure 2.3 shows that 5 districts were over or under forecast for Year 7 in excess of 1% and 30 places. Figure 2.4 indicates that the overall years 7-11 forecast was accuracy, with only 3 districts in excess of the 1% target.

**Figure 2.3: Comparison of Year 7 forecast v October 2022 roll**

District	Forecast roll 2022/23	Actual roll October 2022/23	Variance in places	Accuracy (%)*
Thanet	1,509	1,474	-35	-2.3
Folkestone & Hythe	1,155	1,135	-20	-1.7
Gravesham	1,548	1,524	-24	-1.5
Canterbury	1,772	1,748	-24	-1.4
Tonbridge & Malling	1,912	1,894	-18	-0.9
Dartford	2,042	2,028	-14	-0.7
Tunbridge Wells	1,615	1,632	17	1.1
Sevenoaks	555	564	9	1.6
Swale	1,696	1,740	44	2.6
Maidstone	2,356	2,421	65	2.8
Dover	1,245	1,284	39	3.1
Ashford	1,608	1,674	66	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,013</b>	<b>19,119</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>0.6</b>

**Figure 2.4: Comparison of Year 7-11 forecast v October 2022 roll**

District	Forecast roll 2022/23	Actual roll October 2022/23	Variance in places	Accuracy (%)*
Dartford	9,447	9,401	-46	-0.5
Gravesham	7,566	7,545	-21	-0.3
Thanet	7,308	7,298	-10	-0.1
Canterbury	8,225	8,234	9	0.1
Folkestone & Hythe	5,527	5,535	8	0.1
Tonbridge & Malling	9,106	9,126	20	0.2
Swale	8,588	8,643	55	0.6
Tunbridge Wells	8,053	8,118	65	0.8
Maidstone	11,118	11,233	115	1.0
Sevenoaks	2,738	2,769	31	1.1
Dover	6,200	6,297	97	1.6
Ashford	7,909	8,135	226	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>91,785</b>	<b>92,333</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>0.6</b>

### 3 Progress in Implementing the Planned Expansions of Schools

- 3.1 The County Council commissions both temporary and permanent places where appropriate to ensure there are sufficient places for all children. Schools which are their own admissions authorities may also offer places above their published admissions numbers (PAN), and temporary places available in one year may not be available in subsequent years.
- 3.2 For admission in September 2023, there were 19,622 Year R places available, 81 fewer than the previous year. Within the secondary sector 20,098 Year 7 places were available, 427 more than the previous year. Not all the additional places (or reductions in PAN) were commissioned by KCC. The ability for schools to self-determine temporary increases above their PAN without recourse to the Local Authority adds to the complexity of place planning in the medium and longer term.
- 3.3 Figure 3.1 summarises the overall county position, with the new primary and secondary places identified in the 2023-27 Commissioning Plan as needing to be commissioned by September 2023 compared to the places delivered (on target to be in place by September 2023).

**Figure 3.1: Comparison of Commissioning intentions and delivered places for September 2023**

	Primary		Secondary	
	Permanent Year R	Temporary Year R	Permanent Year 7	Temporary Year 7
Need Identified in KCP	1 FE	36 Places	9 FE	285 Places
Places delivered	0 FE	30 Places	5 FE	385 places
<b>Difference</b>	<b>1 FE</b>	<b>6 Places</b>	<b>4 FE</b>	<b>100 Places</b>

- 3.4 Figures 3.2 to 3.3 set out the detail of any variation between what was planned to be commissioned for September 2023 and what was commissioned.

**Figure 3.2: Comparison of Commissioning intentions and delivered places for September 2023**

District	Planning Group	By 2023-24	Variation	Reason	Impact
Canterbury	Canterbury City		Additional 30 places commissioned for Canterbury District	Additional places required for offer day	Adequate places available for Offer day
Dartford	Dartford North	1FE expansion	1FE expansion not yet implemented	The expansion was indicated by the KCP forecast, but the AEO decided to wait until the Sept 23 Year R offer data was known. That data indicated that there were more than 1FE places in that planning group.	None, the feasibility and subsequent planning work that has taken place remains relevant if a future expansion becomes necessary. All Kent children were offered places.
Maidstone	Coxheath	6 places at Yalding CoE Primary School	No additional places offered	There were sufficient places within the Planning group at offer day	No impact; as there were sufficient places.
Tonbridge and Malling	West Malling and Medway Gap	Up to 30 places	No additional places offered	There were sufficient places within the Planning group at offer day	No impact; as there were sufficient places.

**Figure 3.3: Comparison of Commissioning intentions and delivered places for September 2023**

District	Planning Group	By 2023-24	Variation	Reason	Impact
Ashford	Ashford North Non-Selective	Up to 90 temporary year 7 places	178 temporary year 7 places	In its first year of opening, offers of places at Chilmington Green were not part of the KCC coordinated admissions process. To ensure that KCC could offer a place to all families in an existing school, additional places were available for offer day over and above what had been previously agreed.	No impact. Once families have accepted places at Chilmington Green, the numbers of pupils accepting places at existing school will reduce to forecast levels.
Canterbury	Canterbury and Faversham Selective	Up to 15 temporary places	No additional places commissioned	Additional places were not required	Adequate places were available on offer day

District	Planning Group	By 2023-24	Variation	Reason	Impact
Maidstone	Maidstone Non-Selective Planning Group	Up to 90 temporary Year 7 places in existing schools	122 Temporary places offered within existing schools	Additional places needed to ensure that every child received an offer.	Adequate places available on offer day
Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective Planning Group	Up to 2FE expansion	10 temporary places offered.	Wrotham School increased its PAN to 190 in 2022 and offered 10 over its PAN in 2023, ahead of its permanent expansion linked to the DfE school rebuilding project which is now scheduled for September 2025	No impact, sufficient places offered.
Swale	Sittingbourne and Sheppey Seletive	2FE	No additional places offered for 2023	Sufficient places available. Highstead Grammar will increase by 1FE permanently in 2024.	No impact, sufficient places offered
Thanet	Thanet Selective	Up to 15 Year 7 places	No additional places commissioned	Additional places were not required	Adequate places were available on offer day

#### **4 Progress in Commissioning Provision for SEND Pupils**

- 4.1 There were 24 Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) places identified in the KCP with a planned delivery for September 2023. Of these only 9 additional SRP places have been commissioned for the 2023/2024 academic year. Delivery of further SRP places has been paused pending a review of the continuum of provision for children and young people with special education needs (SEN) and in line with pupil population forecasts, the production of a SEND Sufficiency Plan and KCC's Safety Valve submission.
- 4.2 Figure 4.1 sets out the variations between what we planned to commission, and what we have commissioned for September 2023. An additional 16 places have been commissioned in Special Schools to meet the demand for additional Year R places in Thanet and in Dover districts for September 2023 entry.

**Figures 4.1 Specialist Provision Planned in Special Schools and SRPs Variance Tables**

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Planned commissioning delivery date in KCP</b>	<b>Number of places commissioned for 2022-23</b>	<b>Need Type</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Reason/Impact</b>
Canterbury Academy (Expansion by 9 places of current SRP for ASD through conversion to become a Primary Cullum Centre)	2023	9	ASD	Canterbury	Places planned for January 2024
Spring Head Park Primary School SRP	2023	0	SLCN	Gravesham	On hold whilst SRP review is undertaken.
<b>Total Special School places</b>		<b>9</b>			
Additional commissioned places not identified in the KCP					
Stone Bay	2023	8	ASD	Thanet	Additional Year R class due to local demand.
Beacon (Walmer)	2023	8	ASD	Dover	Additional Year R class due to local demand.
<b>Total additional places for September 2022</b>		<b>16</b>			

## **5 Progress in implementing Changes to Provision for Early Years**

- 5.1 Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, 46 settings have closed – 35 early years and 11 standalone out of school. In the same period, 25 settings have opened one of which is a standalone out of school. Recruitment and retention of staff continues to be a key factor in setting closures due to sustainability. A small but increasing number of high quality settings are having to close rooms or reduce places which is affecting overall supply. However, rising costs across the board have been the main factor in setting closures. In the past these closures have been primarily due to low numbers and the quality of provision but we are seeing settings closing with healthy numbers.
- 5.2 An ongoing (and national) concern is the decrease in the number of childminders. In Kent, between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, there were 58 new childminders and 106 closed – a net loss of 48. As of 30 April 2023 there were 767 childminders on the Ofsted Early Years Register. There are also 44 childminders registered with an agency signed up to care for early years children. A pilot of focussed outreach to support recruitment and retention of childminders is being carried out in the districts of Thanet and Canterbury, as these areas are highlighted as having the lowest number of new childminders.
- 5.3 Following the Chancellor’s announcement of free childcare for working parents for all children under five by September 2025, The Education People will seek to secure places to meet this requirement once the Government has updated Statutory Guidance and announced whether any capital and revenue funding is available to local authorities for this purpose.

## **6 Progress Post-16**

- 6.1 The KCC 16-19 review is complete and the report, Pathways for all, was launched on 28th April 2022. The Review was delivered in collaboration with providers from across the sector, and with the involvement of young people, their parents, and key stakeholders.
- 6.2 A strategic board has been established to drive forward the Pathways for All recommendations and to provide leadership to the sector. Membership includes representatives from FE, schools, training providers, employers, KCC, DWP and DfE. Working groups have been established based on the recommendations and priorities identified to fulfil the recommendations.
- 6.3 The roll-out of T-levels continues with, from September 2023, all colleges and some schools offering them. The colleges are reporting positive feedback from students but there have been no completions to based definitive judgements.
- 6.4 The government reform of Level 3 qualifications aims to ensure high quality provision and to simplify the qualification landscape to allow T-levels to flourish. From 2024 the phased removal of funding from qualifications that overlap T-levels and AS levels commences. There are still concerns that the

offer will not be adequate for those who do not pass GCSEs with strong passes, many of whom are our more vulnerable learners.

- 6.5 The loss of BTECs threatens the continuation of the International Baccalaureate Careers Programme as they are an integral to it. This is significant for Kent as we have approximately 20 schools delivering this programme.

## **7 Recommendation(s):**

- 7.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the progress achieved and to consider the report prior to the next version of the Commissioning Plan in November 2023.

## **8. Background Documents**

- 8.1 Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-27  
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/education-provision/education-provision-plan>
- 8.2 Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2020-23  
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/early-years-and-childcare-strategy-2020-2023>
- 8.3 Kent Strategy for SEND 2021-2024  
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/send-strategy/strategy-for-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities>
- 8.4 Pathways For All - Review of education and training provision for young people aged 16 to 19 in Kent  
<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/kent-16-to-19-review>

## **13. Contact details**

### **Report Author:**

Nick Abrahams  
Area Education Officer – West Kent

### **Telephone number**

03000 410058

### **Email address**

[nicholas.abrahams@kent.gov.uk](mailto:nicholas.abrahams@kent.gov.uk)

### **Relevant Director:**

Christine McInnes  
Director of Education

### **Telephone number**

03000 418913

### **Email address**

[Christine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk)