

EXECUTIVE DECISION

From: **Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: **Children's and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 12 September 2023**

Subject: **Decision 23 – 00077 - Proposal to make prescribed changes to Meadowfield (Foundation) Special School from September 2024.**

Key decision Key - It involves expenditure or savings of more than £1m

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: Sittingbourne South – John Wright
Sittingbourne North – Mike Dendor

Summary: This report sets out the proposal to establish a secondary satellite provision of Meadowfield Special School at Fulston Manor Secondary School for 20 secondary pupils from September 2024. Meadowfield Special School is unable to expand any further on its main school site and demand for PSCN Special school places in Swale district is increasing. The establishment of satellite provisions on mainstream education sites provides additional capacity whilst also enabling the school's expertise to be shared with the host school and provide Meadowfield students the opportunity to integrate, (where appropriate) with their mainstream peers.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision to make prescribed changes to Meadowfield Special School and agree to:

- a) Authorise the allocation of £1,500,000 from the High Needs Capital Funding Budget to fund the satellite provision of Meadowfield Special School at Fulston Manor Secondary School.
- b) 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 with the Fulston Academy Trust.

c) Issue a public notice to:

- (i) Establish a satellite provision for 20 Secondary aged pupils at Fulston Manor Secondary School.
- (ii) Increase the designated number from 366 to 386

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice:

- (i) Establish a satellite provision for 20 Secondary aged pupils at Fulston Manor Secondary School.
- (ii) Increase the designated number from 366 to 386

1. Introduction

1.1 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2023-2027 sets out KCC's commissioning intentions and identified the need for additional Special School capacity. The proposal to expand Meadowfield Special School by establishing a secondary satellite provision at Fulston Manor Secondary School will help to meet this need.

1.2 Meadowfield (Foundation) Special School is a day provision for boys and girls aged 3 to 19 with Profound, Severe and Complex Needs (PSCN), including Autism. In addition to the main building at Swanstree Avenue Sittingbourne, the school also operates a 6th form provision at Ufton Lane Sittingbourne and a Primary School satellite at Sunny Bank Primary School which was established in September 2022. The satellite at Fulston Manor Secondary School will provide students with opportunities for integration in a mainstream secondary school and will provide an onward pathway from the established satellite at Sunny Bank Primary School, as well as additional opportunities and choice for Meadowfield pupils.

2. The Proposal

2.1 This proposal will help to support Framing Kent's Future – Our Council Strategy (2022-2026) Priority 1 - Levelling up. 'To maintain KCC's strategic role in supporting schools in Kent to deliver accessible, high quality education provision for all families.'

2.2 Meadowfield Special School is unable to expand any further on its main school site and demand for PSCN Special school places in Swale district is increasing. The establishment of satellite provisions on mainstream education sites provides additional capacity whilst also enabling the school's expertise to be shared with the host school and provide Meadowfield students the opportunity to integrate, (where appropriate) with their mainstream peers.

2.3 Meadowfield Special School has considerable and sustained pressure placed on them to admit additional pupils requiring a specialist school place. Their current designated number is 366, however they have been allocated additional pupils above their designated number and capacity and therefore solutions to find additional accommodation are required. Currently they have 391 funded pupils as of January 2023 and the School census reported 410 (to include

nursery and 6th form) on roll. The Sunny Bank satellite was opened to create additional capacity for Meadowfield and enabled the school to admit additional more complex pupils on its main site. The Fulston Manor satellite will ensure that there is a pathway for those pupils currently attending the primary satellite at Sunny Bank and will help the school to manage the current and future demand for places. If the Fulston Manor satellite does not go ahead, the current pupils at Sunny Bank will need to be accommodated back on the main Meadowfield site for their secondary education and this will severely limit the number of additional places the school would have available for future pupils, particularly any needing to transition into maintained specialist provision at Year 7. This would result in more pupils requiring a place at an independent special school at secondary transfer.

- 2.4 As Meadowfield Special school cannot be expanded any further on their main school site, options to open a satellite on a secondary school in Sittingbourne were investigated. Fulston Manor Secondary School was identified as a possible site for a satellite due to already established working relationships between the two schools, the support of the academy trust for the proposal and having an area on the school site that was under development and could be adapted to accommodate a satellite provision alongside the planned additional facilities the school is investing in.
- 2.5 The pupils attending the satellite would continue to have access to all the support they require and would be on the roll of Meadowfield Special School. Their Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) would name Meadowfield as their school. Significant benefits have been identified as the proposal will develop and strengthen partnership between the schools and enable staff skills and expertise to be developed through joint training, curriculum development and the sharing of good practice. Pupils will benefit from being included, where appropriate, in both the educational and social life of the school alongside their mainstream peers. A specialist assessment of the children's needs will identify their suitability for the mainstream school satellite. The headteachers of the schools will discuss who is most appropriate and should be admitted, subject to parental support.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The Education consultation was held by KCC, Meadowfield School and Fulston Manor Secondary School and ran from 21 June to 19 July 2023. The consultation documents were distributed to parents/carers, school staff and governors, County Councillors, Members of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group, local libraries, Swale District Council, and others. The consultation documents were also available on the KCC consultation website where an on-line response form could be completed. The consultation documents were also available on both school's websites. An opportunity was also provided to send in written responses via a response form to the school consultations email address.

The consultations closed on 19 July 2023 and a total 35 responses were received, 23 were supportive of the proposal with 10 against and 2 were undecided. A summary of written responses is available in Appendix 1.

- 3.2 The Headteacher and Governing body of Meadowfield School and the Governing Body of Fulston Manor Secondary School are all in support of the proposals.
- 3.3 The Area Education Officer for East Kent fully supports the expansion of Meadowfield School through the establishment of the proposed secondary satellite provision.
- 3.4 The Members for Sittingbourne have been consulted on the proposal during the consultation period and are fully supportive of the proposal.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Fulston Manor has identified an area where the new satellite will be built together with additional accommodation they were already planning to deliver for the school. The project will ensure the satellite has its own dedicated accommodation of 2 classrooms and additional intervention and office spaces. The capital costs and total budget for the new accommodation at Fulston Manor Secondary School will be £1.5m. The £1.5m is already included in the forecasts for the High Needs Capital budget and would be subject to a Funding Agreement being put in place with the Academy Trust. The current total High Needs budget for 23-24 to 25-26 is £40.5m.
- 4.2 Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the school to resource each new learning space. As per KCC policy a total of £6,000 per newly provided learning space will be provided to the school from the DGS revenue budget.
- 4.3 The anticipated revenue budget for the 20 places at the satellite at Fulston Manor will be based on the need type rates below. It is likely that the primary need of pupils placed at the Fulston Manor satellite will be ASD.

Need Type	Rate
SLD	£17,336
PD & PMLD	£24,582
ASD	£20,065

The cost of 20 places on the ASD rate per year would be £401,300.

The average cost of an independent special school place in the county is £41,448. 20 places at an independent would cost £828,960 per year.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The funding allocation to Fulston Manor Secondary School is subject to a contractual agreement between KCC and the Academy Trust to build the satellite provision for Meadowfield Special School.
- 5.2 Service level agreements specifying the responsibilities of each party and setting out any revenue costs to be covered will be put into place between Meadowfield Special School and Fulston Manor Secondary School.

5.3 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.

6. Equalities implications

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

The aims and objectives of this proposal is to

- Ensure there are sufficient special school place available for children in Swale district.
- Ensure that there is sufficient local provision through satellites at mainstream school sites.
- Children with Complex needs and ASD will be able to attend satellite provision in mainstream secondary school.

No adverse impacts were identified during the assessment.

7. Other corporate implications

7.1 None identified.

8. Governance

8.1 Once a key decision is made, Kent County Council’s Constitution (Section 10, Executive Scheme of Officer Delegation), provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions required to implement it.

9. Conclusions

9.1 The increasing demand for special school places in Swale district, particularly for pupils with complex learning difficulties including ASD, has led to Meadowfield taking additional children. Meadowfield is unable to expand on its main school site in Sittingbourne. To meet the increasing demand the establishment of satellite provisions on mainstream school sites creates the additional required capacity, enables the school’s expertise to be shared with the host provisions and also provides Meadowfield students with the opportunity to integrate, where appropriate, with their mainstream peers.

9. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision to make prescribed changes to Meadowfield Special School and agree to:

a) Authorise the allocation of £1,500,000 from the High Needs Capital Funding Budget to fund the satellite provision of Meadowfield Special School at Fulston Manor Secondary School

b) 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 with the Fulston Academy Trust.

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10. Background Documents

10.1 Consultation documents

www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

10.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision

www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision

10.3 Framing Kent's Future Our Councils Strategy 2022-2026

[**Framing Kent's Future - Kent County Council**](#)

11. Contact details

Report Author: Marisa White

Name, job title: Area Education Officer -
East Kent

Telephone number 03000 418794

Email address:

marsia.white@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Christine McInnes

Name, job title: Director -
Education

Telephone number: 03000 418913

Email address:

Chrisine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk