

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Rory Love

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

23-00077

For publication [Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision involves expenditure or savings of more than £1m

Title of Decision

Proposal to make prescribed changes to Meadowfield (Foundation) Special School from September 2024

- Establish a satellite provision for 20 Secondary aged pupils at Fulston Manor Secondary School.
- Increase the designated number of Meadowfield from 366 to 386.

Decision:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

- 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
- 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.
- Issue a public notice to:
 - Establish a satellite provision for 20 Secondary aged pupils at Fulston Manor Secondary School.
 - Increase the designated number from 366 to 386.

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

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

Reason(s) for decision:

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.

Background

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 September 2022. The satellite at Fulston Manor Secondary School will provide students with opportunities for integration at a mainstream provision and will provide an onward pathway from the established satellite at Sunny Bank Primary School and additional opportunities and choice for Meadowfield pupils.

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. This would result in more pupils requiring a place at an independent special school at secondary transfer.

Financial Implications

Capital

The project will ensure the satellite has its own dedicated accommodation of 2 classrooms and additional intervention/office spaces at Fulston Manor Secondary school. 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.

Revenue

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.

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.

KCC will work closely with the senior leadership teams of both schools to ensure that all appropriate accommodation and facilities are provided to enable them to deliver an effective curriculum with an opening date of September 2024.

Equalities implications

1.1 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.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:
The Children’s and Young People Cabinet Committee will consider the decision on 12 September 2023

Any alternatives considered and rejected:
Meadowfield is unable to expand further on its current main site. Fulston Manor Secondary School was identified as a possible site for a satellite due to its proximity to Meadowfield, established working relationships between the two schools, the support of the academy trust for the proposal and having a site at the school which was available for a new provision to be built alongside plans already in place for Fulston to invest in additional facilities.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None

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signed

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date