

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TAKEN BY:**

**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

**DECISION NO:**

24/00041

**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 will 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).*

**Subject Matter / Title of Decision**

**Proposed expenditure of Blean Primary School Modular Replacement Project exceeding £1m within the Modernisation Programme.**

**Decision:**

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

- I Approve the allocation of £1,440,000 from the Children’s, Young People and Education Modernisation Programme Capital Budget to permit the required for the modular replacement.
- II Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure to, in consultation with the Director of Education, enter into any necessary contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this decision; and
- III Agree for the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements, with authority to enter variations as envisaged under the contracts.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

Kent County Council (KCC), as the relevant Local Authority, is responsible for the maintenance of Community and Voluntary Controlled school buildings in Kent. This responsibility is taken seriously, with continuous maintenance and modernisation programmes in place to ensure that the school estate is fit for purpose. Included within these programmes are routine building checks that identify possible future maintenance issues with accommodation.

Blean Primary School currently has 2 modular buildings which are severely dilapidated and have reached the end of their economic lifespan and both require replacement. For economies of scale and to suit operation of the school, it is proposed both separate units are being replaced with one new teaching block.

**Background**

Blean Primary School

Blean Primary School is a 2FE school located in the village of Blean, Canterbury. The school buildings are two single storey of brick construction built circa 1890 and 1967 with further extensions in 2000, 2003 and 2009 and includes the dilapidated mobiles.

The roof to the modular buildings is a mineral felt, the standard and type of insulation within the roof void would not meet the current building regulations and based on the age of the roof to be at the end of its expected life and would require full replacement. The walls and elevations comprise of studwork walls insulated with mineral wool cavity insulation, clad with cross ply timber sheathing coated with flexible Biomastic paint textured finish. The external envelope of the building has been compromised causing significant timber decay to the plysheets. There are multiple isolated areas where the Biomastic coating is delaminated from the substrate and is exposing the plywood below. To these areas the timber is experiencing significant decay, the decay can also be seen to be spreading to the timber floor joists in some isolated areas, contributing to the floor deflection experienced internally. The external façade is in a very poor condition and due to this water ingress and penetration along with heat loss to the building.

The two mobiles for replacement, mobile 1 was highlighted by the school early last year and raised via FM team which was referred to MW projects team to investigate if repairs could be made to the building. The feasibility recommended that this mobile had reached the end of economic lifespan. The extent of required repairs combined with the poor thermal performance of the buildings construction make the refurbishment of the building economically unviable. Later, following the implementation of the mobile replacement programme, this highlighted that the second mobile on the school site being flagged as 'red' from the mobile inspection as requiring replacement for the same reasons.

The current condition of both buildings is impacting on the school's day to day operation which they and is preventing the school from full utilization of the mobiles due to H&S concerns of the floor collapsing. The school are moving spaces and lessons around to suit the spaces and interventions being held in corridors as nowhere else to hold these due to limited areas to use. Using the hall for some occasions instead of the mobile which then impacts any clubs/PE lessons that were using the hall.

The proposal is to replace both modulars with a traditional built single storey teaching block with a flat roof structure to include three classrooms, one of which has kitchen facility, used to teach food technology (DT). Classrooms used for general teaching, music lessons and interventions. Teaching block will also include boys and girls WC's along with an accessible WC.

It is scheduled the works will commence in July 2024 during the Summer Holidays and with a forecast of 26 weeks construction period, completion is proposed for end of January 2025.

### **Financial Implications**

The combined cost is estimated at £1,440,000 which is inclusive of works, fees and contingency.

The cost for instructing the winning tender is as follows.

Proposed Tender Costs: £1,063,900.00

Professional Fees: £159,352.00

KCC Contingency: Allowance £216,748,780

Total Forecast Project = £1,436,032.00

All costs are expected to be Capital costs, there are no revenue costs with this project. The cost of this project will be funded from the Schools Modernisation Programme Capital Budget and £1.4m was included as part of the capital budget agreed by the County Council in February 2024.

Should the scheme not proceed through to completion, any costs incurred at the time of cessation would become abortive costs and are likely to be recharged to Revenue. This would be reported through the regular financial monitoring reports to Cabinet.

**Legal Implications**

KCC, as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. This duty applies to Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, as well as mainstream settings. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2024 - 28 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out KCC's future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent.

KCC has a statutory duty to provide a compliant standard of safety and comfort to staff, children and visitors to the school. KCC also have a statutory duty to provide school places and the implications of not undertaking this work will lead to further deterioration, and ultimately failure which could result in temporary school closure.

**Equalities implications**

The modular replacement scheme will not change the delivery of education with the school and therefore has no equalities implications. The Equality Impact Assessment form has been completed.

**Data Protection implications**

None – the schools will continue to adhere to Data Protections legislation during the planned works.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

**Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

**Option 1 – Do Nothing**

No further temporary repairs are deemed to be effective and water ingress is probable without replacement, we can only do safe, warm and dry for so long. Do Nothing would result in significant loss of teaching space for the school not being usable. Temporary accommodation would be required for displaced pupils and a more significant repair of the building would need to take place due to additional damage further ingress would create. KCC would be at financial loss to keep the mobiles under Safe, Warm and Dry as these mobiles are at end of economic and operational life.

**Option 2 – Localised Repairs**

Localised repairs have been undertaken over the last 5 years, there are no further localised repairs that can be carried out. The extent of required repairs combined with the poor thermal performance of the buildings construction make any localised repairs / refurbishment of the buildings economically unviable. This option would risk further water ingress and the associated risk of school closure inline with the above statement.

**Option 3 – Proceed with traditional build Replacement**

This would mitigate the risk of any future works being required in response to further water ingress and remove any further potential school closure risks and provide safe teaching environments. This is a long-term measure.

After reviewing the estimated costs, potential risk elements and the key advantages/disadvantages of each option it is recommended that replacement is the only appropriate solution.

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

.....  
signed

.....  
date