

EXECUTIVE DECISION

From: Rory Love Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 16 May 2024

Subject: Expansion of Northfleet Technology College, Colyer Rd, Northfleet, Gravesend, DA11 8BG

Decision Number: 24/00025

Key decision Expenditure of over 1m

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: None

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Northfleet & Gravesend West served by Dr Lauren Sullivan and Conrad Broadley

Summary:

This paper provides an overview on the proposed expansion of Northfleet Technology College, Colyer Rd, Northfleet, Gravesend DA11 8BG, increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 164 places per year group to 189 places per year group.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposals as set out in the PROD.

1. Introduction

1.1 This proposal to expand Northfleet Technology College has been developed because the Kent Commissioning Plan 2024/28 indicates that there will be a shortfall in year 7 places in the Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective planning group.

2. Background

2.1 Gravesham Borough's population is increasing with more families moving into the area and as a result, Kent County Council needs to add additional secondary school places to manage the increase in demand. One strategy for

providing additional school places is to expand existing successful and popular schools.

- 2.2 Northfleet Technology College, a member of the Northfleet Schools Co-Operative Trust, is a boy's secondary school. Following an inspection that took place in October 2022, Ofsted deems Northfleet Technology College to be a 'GOOD' school, in all areas.
- 2.3 Following initial discussions, Northfleet Technology College agreed to offer 189 places on a temporary basis in 2023. This agreement has been repeated for September 2024. This proposal seeks to make the expansion permanent and so the senior management and governors of Northfleet Technology College have agreed to consult on this proposal to permanently expand the school and enlarge the secondary provision within the school by the addition of 25 places per school year.
- 2.4 If no further action is taken in the longer term, Kent County Council will find it extremely difficult to provide sufficient secondary school places in the Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective planning group.

3. Proposed decision and changes

- 3.1 The proposal describes a two-phase plan. Firstly, to install four modular classrooms on the school field as a temporary measure. It is anticipated that this will be completed ready for the start of the September 2024 term start.
- 3.2 Secondly, to build a new standalone teaching block that will provide the school with sufficient accommodation for the school expansion.

4. Securing Kent's Future

- 4.1 The 'Securing Kent's Future' strategy outlines the measures that KCC intend to take to ensure that Kent remains financially stable, now and long into the future. It describes the statutory priorities, one of which being the statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available to any child or young person who requires one. This duty applies to Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, as well as mainstream settings.
- 4.2 This proposal is necessary for KCC to continue to deliver the statutory duty, in a cost-effective way, in line with the guidelines described in the Securing Kent's Future strategy. It will help to maintain KCC's strategic role in supporting schools in Kent to deliver accessible, high quality education provision for all families.
- 4.3 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. A copy of the latest plan can be viewed from this link:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/education-provision/education-provision-plan>.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Capital

- 5.1.1 Progression of the scheme to completion, will be dependent on the outcome of detailed feasibility and design work – these will inform the full overall cost of the project.
- 5.1.2 The cost of the expansion will be borne by the CYPE Capital Budget. Currently the estimated cost for the whole scheme is £8.3m. This sum has been included within the Basic Need Capital Programme that was recently agreed by Council. KCC Project Managers will be undertaking continuous checks to keep build costs as close as possible to this estimate.
- 5.1.3 Northfleet Technology College is a Public Finance Initiative (PFI) school. The PFI Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) have been on board from the start of the project and a change notice is in place for the Deed of Variation (DoV). The works will result in part of the land being removed from the red line. Forecast legal costs for the DoV will be included within the total project cost for the main capital works.
- 5.1.4 An allowance of up to £2,500 may be payable to the school, to outfit each new teaching room with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment. This will be met from the overall Capital allocation for this project.
- 5.1.5 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.

5.2 Revenue

- 5.2.1 The initial phase involves the installation of four mobile teaching rooms at a cost of £311,168. This will be a Revenue expense, funded from the Mobiles and Temporary Accommodation Budget included within the Education Revenue Budget.
- 5.2.2 As the scheme progresses, £6,000 per newly provided learning space, would be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment, such as tables, desks, chairs, cabinets and learning resources.
- 5.2.3 The school would also receive funding for the additional pupils that it admits in line with the funding allocated to schools through KCC's Schools Funding Formula.
- 5.2.4 Both the £6,000 per classroom, and the additional pupil funding will be met from the Growth Funding provision held within the dedicated school's grant.

5.3 Human

The school will appoint additional staff as required; utilising revenue funding allocated through the Schools Funding Formula for these additional pupils.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed that indicates that there are no issues.

8. Governance

- 8.1 Northfleet & Gravesend West, Dr Lauren Sullivan and Conrad Broadley. Mr Broadley and Dr Sullivan have been informed of the proposal.
- 8.2 Both the school and the Trust are fully supportive of the proposal.
- 8.3 The Assistant Director Education - North has said that the analysis of the demand that will be created by new housing development in Northfleet shows that about 30 new year 7 places will be needed. All alternatives have been considered, and the conclusion is that the best solution is to expand Northfleet Technology College.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The school is a foundation school, so ran its own consultation on the proposal, with assistance from KCC. The consultation ran from 1 March 2024 to 28 March 2024.
- 9.2 The school held a public drop-in session on 25 March 2024, which was attended by KCC Officers.
- 9.3 The consultation results were presented to the Governing Body who unanimously agreed on 16 April 2024 to proceed with the proposal.
- 9.4 The School is the data controller for the consultation. KCC will not handle any personal data relating to this consultation or subsequent decision.

9. Alternatives considered and rejected

- 9.1 Every other Secondary school in Gravesham Borough, both selective and non-selective, has either been expanded already, or considered for expansion. Nevertheless, the Assistant Director Education, North, conducted further analysis to see whether there were any schools that would be a better candidate for expansion.

- 9.2 Sites were considered on the basis of the Ofsted rating of the school, popularity, available site space, willingness of the Governing body and cost. The conclusion from this analysis was that the expansion of Northfleet Technology College is the most appropriate option to deliver the capacity that is needed in the area.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposals as set out in the PROD.

Background Documents:

- EqlA
- Kent Commissioning Plan 2024/2028

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