

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

24/00025

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

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

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

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I:

- I. APPROVE the expansion of Northfleet Technology College from a PAN of 165 to a PAN of 189.
- II. AGREE to allocate the funding from the CYPE Capital Budget that will be required to complete the project.
- III. 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
- IV. 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.

1. Reason(s) for Decision:

Reason for the decision

This proposal to expand Northfleet Technology College was 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.

Northfleet Technology College, a member of the Northfleet Schools Co-Operative Trust, is a boys secondary school. Following an inspection that took place in October 2022, Ofsted deems Northfleet Technology College to be a 'GOOD' school, in all areas.

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 sought 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.

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.

2. Securing Kent's Future

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.

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.

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>

3. Consultation

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. The school held a public drop-in session on 25 March 2024, which was attended by KCC Officers.

The consultation results were presented to the Governing Body who agreed to proceed with the proposal.

The division affected is Northfleet & Gravesend West, served by Dr Lauren Sullivan and Conrad Broadley. Mr Broadley and Dr Sullivan have been informed of the proposal.

Both the school and the Governing Body are fully supportive of the proposal.

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.

4. Equalities Assessment

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

5. Financial Implications

Capital

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.

The cost of the expansion will be borne by the CYPE Capital Budget. The initial estimated cost for the whole scheme was £8.3m. This sum is included within the Basic Need Capital Programme that was agreed by Council.

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 PFI red line. Legal costs for the DoV are included within the total project cost for the main capital works.

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.

Revenue

The initial phase involved the installation of four mobile teaching rooms at a cost of £311,168. This was a Revenue expense, funded from the Mobiles and Temporary Accommodation Budget included within the Education Revenue Budget.

As the scheme progresses, £6,000 per newly created learning space, would be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment, such as tables, desks, chairs, cabinets and learning resources.

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.

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.

Human

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

6. DPIA

The School is the Data Controller for the consultation. KCC will not handle any personal data relating to this consultation or subsequent decision.

Cabinet Committee Recommendations and Other Consultation:

This decision will be considered at the meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 16 May 2024.

Any Alternatives Considered and Rejected:

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.

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.

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