

From: Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member Education and Skills

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 15 September 2026

Subject: Additional funding request - Replacement of modular classrooms at Dover Grammar School for Girls

Decision no: 26/00044

Key Decision: It involves expenditure or savings of £1m

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: NA

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Dover Town, Cllr James Defriend and Cllr Albert Thorp

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: [Decision - 26/00001](#) approved £1,400,000 to replace two mobiles at Dover Grammar School for Girls. Planning permission has been secured, and a contractor has been appointed to finalise the design. Building control were consulted throughout the planning process with any issues being addressed prior to planning permission being secured. However, since planning permission was secured, Kent Fire and Rescue Services (KFRS), who are a key consultee to the Building Control Officer, have raised a concern about access for a fire tender to the location of the mobile replacement. A sprinkler system is now required and with additional contingency, this has increased the costs by £400,000.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to increase the funding for the replacement of two modular classroom blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls by £400,000, from £1.4 million to £1.8 million, to fund the installation of a sprinkler system and associated contingency costs.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee was consulted on the proposal to replace two KCC mobiles at Dover Grammar School for

Girls, following which the Cabinet Member made the decision to proceed. This allocated £1,400,000 to the project. The report is linked here: [Dover Grammar School for Girls](#)

- 1.2 The capital funding requested was based on the RIBA stage 3 cost plan.
- 1.3 Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) are a consultee to the Building Control Officer. Their approval is a requirement to achieve final Building Control approval for the building, and ultimately to allow occupation. Since planning permission was achieved, KFRS have commented that as a fire tender cannot get within 40 meters of the building, a system will need to be put in place to limit fire spread across the site. This decision is not driven solely by a life safety ("people first") evacuation approach.
- 1.4 This means that systems such as sprinklers are being required to control fire propagation. The additional £400,000 requested is required to cover the costs of the sprinkler system, including the tank and will increase the contingency, should this be required.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 KCC is the maintaining authority for Dover Grammar school for Girls. KCC is responsible for the capital costs required to replace the mobiles, ensuring that not only are there sufficient school places available, but that the buildings support the delivery of the curriculum. KCC receives grant funding from Government to support it discharge its school maintenance liabilities.

3. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

- 3.1 Maintaining the mobile units has again been considered and rejected. The survey of the mobiles, undertaken in 2023, suggested that c£400 per m2 would be required to maintain the buildings over the next 10 years. This could be a cost of c£600,000. Therefore, the surveyor's recommendation was that the mobile buildings had reached the end of their operational life expectancy and would be uneconomical to repair.
- 3.2 At feasibility stage other locations for the new building were explored and rejected. These have been reconsidered, but again rejected:
 - to replace the existing mobiles at their existing locations - replacing the Music Mobile would be cost prohibitive due to significant works required to a retaining wall. Additionally, the sprinkler system would still be required for the second mobile class block should it be rebuilt in its existing location.
 - Replacing the mobiles at the boundary edge - although this would mitigate the requirement for the sprinkler system, it would require a two storey structure with a lift, additional access works and as a number of mature trees would need to be removed, significant bio net gain would have to be planned for. Additionally, a new planning application would be required. No savings would be made.
- 3.3 The option of doing nothing remains discarded. The current buildings are life-expired and the space they provide is required by the school.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Across the three financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28, £18,900,000 has been budget to the Schools Modernisation Programme. The Programme is funded from a combination of the Schools Condition Allocation Grant (provided by Department of Education), developer contributions and prudential borrowing. This programme is used to upgrade existing facilities in KCC maintained schools along with the repair and replacement of mobiles on KCC maintained school site where they remain an essential part of the school's accommodation.
- 4.2 The cost of replacing the two mobile blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls is now expected to be up to £1,800,000. The additional £400,000 requested is affordable within the current overall programme commitments.
- 4.3 There is no additional KCC General Fund requirement expected with this decision. No revenue funding is required to support the proposal. Indirect revenue costs, such as officer time, is expected to be met from existing resources. However, there is an inherent risk with all school related capital projects, that if the project does not go ahead any abortive costs will need to be transferred to revenue. This has been assessed as low risk.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Planning permission will be required for the installation of the water tank for the sprinkler system.
- 5.2 KCC is responsible body for maintaining Dover Grammar School for Girls and receives its School Condition Allocation Grant to assist it discharge its responsibilities to this and other maintained schools. In line with the School Premises Regulations 2012, as the responsible body for this school, the Council has responsibility to ensure that the school's facilities are safe, accessible, and fit for purpose.
- 5.3 Also, pursuant to the Education Act 1996, KCC has a duty to ensure sufficient school places are available for all pupils in its area. Replacement buildings are required by the school so as to ensure they can accommodate all pupils and therefore deliver the curriculum efficiently.

6. Equalities implications

- 6.1 The equalities impact assessment has been reviewed. No adverse impacts on protected groups have been identified. Replacing the existing modular buildings with a new DDA compliant facility will have a positive impact for staff and pupils with a disability.

7. Data Protection Implications

- 7.1 There are no data protection implications.

8. Other corporate implications

- 8.1 Support from the Capital and Strategic Programmes team will be required to deliver the project.

9. Governance

- 9.1 Decision 26/00001 approved the replacement of two mobile buildings at Dover Grammar School for Girls and allocated £1.4m from the Children, Young People and Education Modernisation Capital Programme for the project. This decision seeks approval of an additional £400,000, increasing the total project budget to £1.8m.
- 9.2 Subject to the approval of the additional funding, authority will be delegated to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Director of Education and SEND and the Head of Law, to undertake the necessary actions, including but not limited to, negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations or other legal agreements, as required, to implement the decision within the revised funding of £1,800,000.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 KCC's mobile refurbishment/replacement programme has identified that two mobile blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls need replacement in the next 12 months.
- 10.2 The cost of replacing the two mobile blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls has increased as KFRS require a sprinkler system to be installed. It is now expected to be up to £1,800,000, which is £400,000 more than originally anticipated.
- 10.4 As the existing plan to replace the buildings is still the best option and the additional £400,000 is affordable with the current programme commitments, it would seem appropriate to agree to the funding increase.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to increase the funding for the replacement of two modular classroom blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls by £400,000, from £1.4 million to £1.8 million, to fund the installation of a sprinkler system and associated contingency costs. The proposed decision includes delegations to enable implementation of the revised budget and delivery of the project.

11. Background Documents

- *Equality Impact Assessment*

12. Appendices

Appendix A: PROD

13. Contact details

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