KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Beverly Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	26/00073

Executive Decision – key decision

26/00073 – Specialist Resource Provision Update.

Proposed Decision:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is being asked to:

a) APPROVE the substitute and amended Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) schemes identified in Tables 8c to 8f of the report, replacing the relevant schemes previously approved under Key Decision 25/00085, within the existing £20m High Needs Capital Grant allocation;

b) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to take all necessary actions to implement the schemes approved under a), including, but not limited to, undertaking all necessary negotiations and consultations, progressing the establishment, expansion and delivery of SRP places, entering into any necessary contractual arrangements, and approving capital expenditure on individual schemes, subject to the total capital expenditure remaining within the approved £20m allocation and, where an individual scheme involves capital expenditure above £1m, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills;

c) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, to issue any required public notices and approve proposals on behalf of the Local Authority; and

d) DELEGATE authority to the Director for Education and Special Educational Needs to enter into any necessary contracts and service level agreements with mainstream primary and secondary schools providing new or existing SRPs, in accordance with the arrangements approved under Key Decision 23/00128.

Reasons for decision:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approved £20m to deliver a capital programme to significantly increase specialist resource base provision (SRP) in the County. The proposed schemes would deliver 889 additional places if all implemented (Decision 25/00085). The decision provided the authority to officers to progress the programme at pace, but within a tight framework. To ensure transparency in implementing the decision an Officer Record of Decision has been taken on each project as it has progressed to delivery.

As of September 2026, six new SRPs have opened, two existing SRPs have been expanded and one informal provision has been formally designated as an SRP. Together these schemes have added 98 places for September 2026 of which at the start of term 99 have been filled.

Further provisions will open in September 2027 as noted from Tables 8c to 8f.

Tables 8c to 8f also identify schemes that we have not been able to progress for a variety of reasons, for example the governing body/trust decided not to proceed. My decision provided some scope for change, but intentionally this was limited to ensure more material changes were reported and approval for these sought. Included in Tables 8c to 8f are proposed substitute schemes, which require approval, to replace those that cannot be progressed. The new proposals are the same in terms of need type and district. These amended proposals would continue to be delivered within the £20m agreed capital envelope.

Figure 8c: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in East Kent

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Lansdowne Primary School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Swale	11	9	0	0	0	0	20
Richmond Primary	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Swale	12	12	8	8	0	0	40
Newlands Primary*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	10	7	3	0	0	20
Herne Bay Primary Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Faversham Primary PG Bysing Wood	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	15	5	0	0	0	20
Total planned primary SRP places					**23**	56	30	11	0	0	**120**
Royal Harbour Academy	2026/27	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thanet Non-Selective PG	2028/29	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	15	15	20	0	0	50
Canterbury Coastal PG**	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	0	15	15	10	0	0	40
Isle of Sheppey Non-Selective Secondary	2027/28	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faversham Non-Selective PG	2027/28	Substitute; finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Thanet Non-Selective (2) PG	2027/28	Substitute; finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	10	10	10	0	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places						50	50	40			**140**
Total planned SRP places					**23**	106	80	51	0	0	**260**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery
*Newlands: potential additional number of places reduced from 40 in consultation with the school
**Canterbury Coastal Planning Group: potential additional number of places reduced from 50 in consultation with the school

Figure 8d: Planned/New Expanded SRPs in North Kent

North Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Alkerden CoE Academy (Primary)	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	4	3	3	5	0	15
Rosherville CoE Primary Academy	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Gravesham	0	6	5	4	0	0	15
Edenbridge PG: Edenbridge Primary School	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Sevenoaks Rural North PG: St Edmunds, CEP	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	7	7	6	0	0	0	20
Swanley PG: St Marys	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	6	5	4	0	0	15
Total planned primary SRP places					**7**	30	26	17	5	0	**85**
Alkerden CoE Academy (Secondary)	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	6	6	6	7	0	25
Gravesham and Longfield PG:* St George's CoE School	2028 onwards	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Gravesham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sevenoaks and Borough Green PG: Knole Academy	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective PG	2028/29	Substitute: finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	0	10	10	10	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places					**0**	14	28	26	17	0	**85**
Total planned SRP places					**7**	44	54	43	22	0	**170**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.
*St George's SRP considerably delayed as part of the DfE rebuild decision, as site constraints and temporary accommodation arrangements prevent delivery at this stage.

Figure 8e: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in South Kent

South Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Need Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Ashford Oaks Community Primary School (expansion)	2026/27	Delivered	ASD	Ashford	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
The Downs CoE Primary School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	6	4	4	0	0	0	14
Ashford North Planning Group*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Ashford East Planning Group*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Tenterden South Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Ashford South Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Total planned primary places					**16**	30	28	18	0	0	**92**
Homewood School and 6th Form Centre	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	10	20	20	0	0	0	50
Dover Christchurch Academy (expansion)	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	35	0	0	0	0	0	35
St Edmunds's Catholic School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	7	5	8	0	0	0	20
The Turner Free School** (formalisation)	2026/27	Delivered	C&L, Speech and Language	Folkestone & Hythe	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Total planned secondary SRP places					**52**	35	38	0	0	0	**125**
Total planned SRP places					**68**	65	66	18	0	0	**217**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.
*Ashford North and East Planning Group: increase of places from 14 in consultation with the school
**The Turner Free School: 30 informal places are now formal SRP places; this legally add 30 places to add to the total of new places

Figure 8f: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in West Kent

West Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Need Type	District	New Places available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
South East Maidstone Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
North West Maidstone Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Maidstone Rural	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Town 1 East Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Town 2 West Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Rural	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Total planned primary SRP places					**0**	36	30	18	0	0	**84**
St Augustine (expansion)	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Maidstone Secondary Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Skinners' Kent Academy	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places					**0**	24	36	30	0	0	**90**
Total planned SRP places					**0**	60	66	48	0	0	**174**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.

Financial implications:
Capital:
Decision 25/00085 allocated £20m to deliver the SRP expansion programme, to be funded from the High Needs Capital Grant (a ring-fenced capital grant from the Department of Education). The substitute schemes set out in Tables 8c to 8f above do not change that funding envelop. Projects will be prioritised to ensure costs remain within the overall budget allocated. Additional projects over and above those set out in table 8c to 8f are not part of this key decision and approval will be sought, separately through the appropriate governance route.

Revenue:
As set out in Decision 25/00085, one-off set up costs will be funded from the growth fund of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Council commissions schools to provide the support and provision provided in an SRP on a day-to-day basis, normally by paying a pre-agreed rate per place. The Council funds the revenue costs of SRP places from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific ring-fenced revenue grant from the DfE.

The revised list of schemes reduces the total number of potential SRP places from 889 to 821, but this remains subject to ongoing discussions with schools. This is based on the latest forecast requirements.

Legal implications:
The legal implications were set out in the papers for Decision 25/00085.

Equalities implications:
The EQIA for the SRP expansion programme was set considered as part of the process leading to Decision 25/00085. This has been reviewed and remains unchanged. The main programme will expand provision to enable more children and young people to attend specialist provision in their locality, reducing travel distances and improving choice.

Data Protection implications:
A full DPIA was published as part of the process for Decision 25/00085.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, will consider the proposal on 26 November 2026,

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Any alternatives considered and rejected:
The option of not replacing schemes that had become undeliverable was dismissed because there is an identified need for additional SRP provision, particularly in the secondary school sector.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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Signed	Date