

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

Matt Dunkley CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 25 September 2018

Subject: Proposal to increase the physical capacity of Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School from September 2018

Classification: Unrestricted

Decision Number: 18/00046

Past Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Committee – 30 March 2017 and 18 January 2018

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: Sittingbourne South – John Wright

Summary:

This report sets out the reasons behind the request to increase the funding allocation from the Children, Young People and Education Capital Budget for the expansion of Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School and informs the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education of the revised cost of the project.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to **CONSIDER** and **AGREE** to increase the funding allocated from the Children, Young People and Education capital budget to expand Meadowfield from £3,950,000 to £5,096,934.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Meadowfield Special School is the District Special School for Swale, meeting the needs of pupils with profound, severe and complex special educational needs(PSCN) for children aged 4 to 19 years. All children who attend have a statement of special educational need or an Education, Health & Care Plan. Meadowfield is judged to be Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted in November 2014.
- 1.2. Over the past three years there has been an increasing demand for local places for children with PSCN including Autism. It is also important to note that there is no Special school on the Isle of Sheppey (Swale District) which means that significant numbers of pupils often have to travel long distances to the nearest suitable provision such as Maidstone and Tonbridge.
- 1.3. To meet the demand for places in Swale, Meadowfield has taken additional pupils. On 30 March 2017, KCC's Children and Young People's Services

Cabinet Committee endorsed the proposal to allocate £1.14 million of capital budget to provide additional accommodation in two phases (Record of Decision reference 17/00015). Meadowfield received a reception classroom and new KS1 classrooms with associated care suites to accommodate the additional pupils in permanent accommodation. It was recognised that these were the first phases of a building programme to expand the capacity of the school and were required to meet the immediate needs of children coming through from nursery provision where they had been assessed as requiring a special school place.

- 1.4. On 18 January 2018 the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee considered and endorsed the recommendation to issue a public notice to permanently increase the designated number of the school from 209 – 348 from 1 September 2018 and alter the lower age range at Meadowfield to formally include nursery provision from 1 September 2018.
- 1.5. The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee also recommended that the Cabinet Member agree to allocate £3.95 million to the project for phases 2 and 3 (Record of Decision 17/00132). The Record of Decision stated that if the cost of the project exceeded the estimated cost by more than 10%, a further Cabinet Member decision would be required to allocate the additional funding.
- 1.6. The cost of the build programme has since increased by £1,146,934. This is due to additional costs amounting to £693,934 for the phase 3 build programme. These costs are because of higher specification requirements for materials for the build and design adjustments to meet the specific needs of the students. The costs include a higher specification framework for the building, improved acoustics, air conditioning to classroom areas due to the level of need of the students and an increase in size to the kitchen area.
- 1.7. During the feasibility and design period for this work the school has been required to take further pupils with very complex needs resulting in an additional project (3a) that was not included in the original plans. This additional project required the addition of 2 new classrooms to accommodate the children who have been placed at Meadowfield. The cost of delivering these classrooms is £453,000. It is intended that these two classrooms will be delivered by January 2019, ahead of the main project delivery timescale due to the urgency of the need. The school has made some short term temporary arrangements to accommodate the additional classes until the building is completed.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 It has been agreed to permanently enlarge Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School, increasing the designated number from 209 to 348 and to alter the lower age range to include nursery provision.

a. Capital

Kent County Council's contribution was agreed on 18 January to be £3.95 million. KCC acknowledged at the time that the final amount may be higher as the costs of the project were an estimate. If the cost of the project is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member would be asked to make a further decision on the allocation of additional funding.

The reason for the increased in cost is due to design and materials specification changes and the addition of phase 3a to meet the additional basic need pressure that has arisen during the course of this project.

The additional funding required has been identified within the current approved Basic Need capital budget.

b. Revenue

The school will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget. Special schools are funded using the DfE Place Plus funding methodology for High Needs Pupils. Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the School to resource the new classrooms. At present, this is funded at a rate of £6,000 per classroom.

c. Human

The school will appoint additional staff as the need arises.

3. Kent Policy Framework

- 3.1. This proposal will help to secure our ambition “to ensure every child will go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places as set out in the Education Commissioning plan.
- 3.2. The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-21 identified the need to commission additional capacity at Meadowfield School.
- 3.3. Kent’s Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2017 -2019 Working Together Improving Outcomes identifies the need to Improve provision for, and easy access to, appropriate local services in childcare, education, care and health in order that more families can care for their children in their home and fewer children are educated out of their local area or out of the county. This includes delivering the additional places in Special Schools, new Free Schools and Specialist Resourced Provisions as set out in this Strategy.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. An education consultation took place between 10 October and 14 November 2017 and reported to the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 18 January 2018.

5. Views

- 5.1. Views were sought on the Cabinet paper dated 18 January 2018 from the Local Member, Headteacher, Governing Body, Head of Special Educational Needs and the Area Education Officer. The local member will be provided with a copy of this report and asked for any comments he may have.

6. Proposal Equalities Impact

- 6.1. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the original proposal. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

7. Delegation to Officers

- 7.1. The Officer Scheme of Delegation; under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution, provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. For information it is envisaged, if the proposal goes ahead, that the Director of Property & Infrastructure Support will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. The additional costs together with inflationary pressures have led to the increased in capital costs from £3,950,000 to £5,096,934. In order to deliver the expansion of Meadowfield as planned, an extra £1,146,934 will need to be allocated from the Children, Young People and Education services Capital Budget.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1. The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to **CONSIDER** and **AGREE** to increase the funding allocated from the Children, Young People and Education capital budget to expand Meadowfield from £3,950,000 to £5,096,934.

10. Background Documents

- 10.1. Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020.
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunities-improving-outcomes>
- 10.2. Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision
www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision
- 10.3. Kent's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2017 -2019 Working Together Improving Outcomes
http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/13323/Strategy-for-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities.pdf
- 10.4. Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee report dated 30 March 2017
<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Meadowfield>
- 10.5. Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee report dated 30 January 2018
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=47521&Opt=0>

11. Contact details

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

DECISION NO:

18/00046

For publication

Subject: Proposal to increase the physical capacity of Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School from September 2018

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education I agree to:

(i) Increase the funding allocated from the Children, Young People and Education capital budget to expand Meadowfield Special School from £3,950,000 to £5,096,934.

Reason for Decision:

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee paper of the 18 January 2018 estimated the total cost of the expansion of Meadowfield to be £3.95 Million.

The revised estimated project cost is now £5,096,934. As the revised estimated project cost is more than 10% of the original estimate, a further decision is required to allocate the additional funds of £1,146,934 million.

It has been agreed to permanently enlarge Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School, increasing the designated number from 209 to 348 and to alter the lower age range to include nursery provision.

a. Capital

Kent County Council's contribution was agreed on 18 January to be £3.95 million. KCC acknowledged at the time that the final amount may be higher as the costs of the project were an estimate. If the cost of the project is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be asked to make a further decision to allocate additional funding

The reason for the increase in cost is due to design changes to meet the need of the school's students and the addition of 3a phase to meet additional Basic Need pressures.

b. Revenue

The school will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget. Special schools are funded using the DfE Place Plus funding methodology for High Needs Pupils. Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the School to resource the new classrooms. At present, this is funded at a rate of £6,000 per classroom.

c. Human

The School will appoint additional staff as the need arises.

Supporting Information:

To meet the demand for places in Swale, Meadowfield has taken additional pupils. On 30 March 2017, KCC's Children and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee endorsed the proposal

to allocate £1.14 million of capital budget to provide additional accommodation in two phases (Record of Decision reference 17/00015). Meadowfield received a reception classroom and new KS1 classrooms plus care facilities to accommodate the additional pupils in permanent accommodation.

On 18 January 2018 the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations to issue a public notice to permanently increase the designated number of the school from 209 – 348 for 1 September 2019 and alter the lower age range at Meadowfield to formally include nursery provision from 1 September 2019.

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee also recommended the allocation of £3.95 million to the project. (Record of Decision 17/00132).

The cost of the build has since increased by £1,146,934 due to the increased cost of phase 3 due to materials specification and design changes and the additional of phase 3a consisting of two additional classrooms which are in addition to the original scope of the project but are required to accommodate further pupils that the school has had to admit.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other Consultations:
Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – Recommendations will be added.

Any alternatives considered:
Meadowfield special School is the District Special School for Swale meeting the needs of pupils with profound, severe and complex special educational needs (PSCN) for children 4-19 years. All Children who attend have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Meadowfield is judged to be Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted in November 2014.

There is no Special school on the Isle of Sheppey (Swale District) which means that significant numbers of pupils often have to travel long distances to the nearest suitable provision. Many pupils are transported to Maidstone and Tonbridge.

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