

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

**Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and
Education**

DECISION NO:

19/00034

Unrestricted

Key decision: **YES**

Subject: Establishment of a New Special Free School on the Isle of Sheppey through the successful bid to DfE in Wave14.

Decision:

The Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to agree to the proposal to:

- i. Support the DfE competition process to select a sponsor to establish a new special free school on the Isle of Sheppey.
- ii. Commit to the conditions of the bid as set out in Appendix A of the DfE letter of the 11 March 2019 in particular:
 - a. provide a site on a 125 year lease
 - b. meet any abnormal costs relating to access works or any section 278 cost which may be imposed.

Reason(s) for decision:

1.1. KCC does not have enough local specialist provision and too many children and young people have to go to a Special School far from home to have their education, health and care needs met.

1.2. Currently there is no special school on the Island. The result is that students requiring a special school place are transported off the Island to a combination of maintained special school provision in Maidstone and costly independent provision. Consequently, students spend up to 3 hours in transport, at considerable cost to the SEN Transport budget and with an inevitable impact on those children's learning.

1.3. Swale district already has the highest number of EHCPs and Statements in the County at 1325 and this number is set to continue to increase. Growth forecasts indicate that the number of children and young people in Swale with ECHPs will increase by a further 23% between 2017 and 2024.

1.4. KCC therefore identified the need for a special free school on the Isle of Sheppey. A wave 14 bid was submitted to the DfE in October 2018 for funding for a new special free school for secondary pupils on the Isle of Sheppey.

1.5. KCC were advised in March 2019 that the bid was successful and that a competition process to find a sponsor for the proposed school needed to commence.

1.6. The new proposed special free school will provide 120 places for Secondary aged pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties with social, emotional and mental health difficulties with autism spectrum conditions or social communication difficulties.

Equality Implications

2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced for the proposal and can be found via this link:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=894&MId=8272&Ver=4>

Financial Implications

- 3.1. The cost of capital build for the school will be met by the DfE through the wave process.
- 3.2. The proposed school would be situated on a site owned by KCC. This land forms part of the former Danley Middle School site and the new school would be situated next to the new Halfway Houses Primary School.
- 3.3. As part of the acceptance of the conditions of the successful bid, KCC is required to provide the site on a 125 year lease and will also be expected to meet any abnormal costs relating to access works and any section 278 costs which may be imposed. These costs are not available at this stage of the project.
- 3.4. KCC will commission the places at the proposed new school and based on current agreed rates would expect to pay £19,113 per pupil.

Legal Implications

4. The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2019-23 sets out how we will carry out our responsibility for ensuring there are sufficient places of high quality, in the right places, for all learners and this proposed new Special Free School supports that aim to provide sufficient places, where they are needed.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2019-23 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. All alternatives were explored as part of this process.

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

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signed

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date