

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TAKEN BY:**

Richard Long, TD

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

**DECISION NO:**

20/00115

**For publication****Key decision: YES**

*Key decision criteria. The decision will:*

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*
- b) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
  - *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
  - *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

**Subject Matter / Title of Decision**

Proposal to permanently expand Highsted Grammar School, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, ME10 4PT from 120 places to 150 places for September 2022. (allocation of funding)

**Decision:****As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:**

- i. provide £4m from the Children's, Young People and Education Capital Budget for the permanent expansion of Highsted Grammar School by 1FE for September 2021.
- ii. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the General Counsel and Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts / agreements on behalf of the County Council
- iii. Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts

**Reason(s) for decision:****Background**

The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-24 identifies the need to commission additional capacity in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective planning group. Forecasts indicate a deficit of year 7 and year 7-11 places across the plan period. A deficit of -42 for year 7 in 2020 which increases to a high of -69 places in 2023.

There are two Grammar schools in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey planning group, Borden Grammar School (Boys) and Highsted Grammar School (Girls). For a number of years both grammar schools have offered over their PAN to help meet the need, however they are not able to offer any additional places from September 2022 without a build programme to provide additional classrooms to enable them to expand by 1FE permanently.

**Financial Implications**

The capital allocation of £4m is to deliver a programme to provide the additional general and specialist classrooms required to meet the additional pupil place need. The funding allocation would be subject to a contractual agreement between KCC and the Trust to offer a minimum of 150 Year 7 places for September 2021 and to expand permanently from September 2022. The £4m has been agreed based on a curriculum and space needs analysis of the school's current accommodation and this figure is in line with the DfE's benchmark figures for an expansion of a secondary school by 1FE. Highsted Grammar School has agreed to deliver, and project manage the programme.

The school will receive increased revenue funding through their Delegated Budget. The rising rolls will be protected in line with KCC Growth Funding Policy. Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the School to resource each new classroom as they come online. At present this is at a value of £6,000 per classroom.

#### Legal implications

The funding allocation is subject to a contractual agreement between KCC and the Trust to offer a minimum of 150 Year 7 places from September 2021. The school's current published admission number (PAN) is 120.

#### Equalities implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and the assessment identified the following positive impacts:

- Sufficient year 7 places will be provided for September 2021 intake.
- Year 7 pupils will be able attend Grammar school provisions in their locality
- More pupils will be able to attend a good or outstanding school.

No adverse impacts were identified during the assessment.

#### **Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee considered the decision on 15 January 2021. The Committee supported the decision.

#### **Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

Neighbouring planning groups, including Faversham and Canterbury selective and Maidstone selective planning group also have a deficit of year 7 places therefore would not be able to accommodate students from Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None**



25/01/21

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signed

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date