

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Richard Long

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

21/00015

For publication**Key decision: YES**

- *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions, &;*
- *It involves expenditure or savings of maximum £1m*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Proposed roof replacement schemes at Birchington Church of England Primary School and Lunsford Primary School.

Decision:

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

- (i) authorise the allocation of £6.6m from the Children Young People and Education Services Capital Budget to deliver the roof replacement schemes at Birchington Church of England Primary School and Lunsford Primary School.
- (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. Contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member without requiring a new Record of Decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

Kent County Council (KCC), as the Local Authority, is responsible for the maintenance of Community and Voluntary Controlled school buildings in Kent. This responsibility is taken seriously, with continuous maintenance and modernisation programmes in place to ensure that the school estate is fit for purpose. Included within these programmes are routine building checks that identify possible future maintenance issues with accommodation.

Through this maintenance programme the proactive replacement of the roofs of Birchington Church of England Primary School and Lunsford Primary School are recommended to remove the potential development of any future risks associated with the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC).

Background

RAAC is a lightweight form of concrete used primarily for roofs from the mid-fifties to the mid-eighties, most often in schools and office buildings. RAAC roofs are known to typically have more limited long-term durability compared to other forms of roofing structures.

The LGA and DfE advise that Local Authorities and responsible school bodies identify any RAAC buildings in their portfolio and ensure that they are subject to regular and rigorous inspection by a structural engineer.

The County Council is responsible for two schools within its estate with RAAC structures. Structural engineer inspections of the RAAC material used in both schools show that they are currently performing as expected and are in a safe state. The buildings are subject to regular inspection and the correct maintenance practices.

The Standing Committee on Structural Safety recommends that building owners consider the long-term plan for RAAC roofs and for replacement to be considered where there is doubt about their structural adequacy. There are currently no concerns held regarding the structural integrity of the roofs at the two schools. The Corporate Management Team has considered the long-term options available for the RAAC roofs and recommended that they be proactively replaced to eliminate the potential for any risks to develop in the future.

The work on both replacement schemes would commence during the 2021 school Summer Holiday, with completion scheduled during the 2021/22 academic year. Both schemes will necessitate the use of temporary school accommodation whilst the works on the roofs are completed. However, it is anticipated that the disruption to pupils' education will be minimal.

Financial Implications

Feasibility studies have been carried out which estimate the cost of delivery to be £6.6m in total; £4.0m for Lunsford Primary School and £2.6m for Birchington Church of England Primary School. The funds will come from the CYPE Capital Budget.

Legal implications

None

Equalities implications

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for both schemes. The screening found there is no evidence that the change will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably. The temporary accommodation will be fully accessible and there will be no change to the schools' Published Admissions Numbers (PANs) or the admissions criteria.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee considered the decision on 9th March 2021.

There is no requirement to undertake formal statutory consultation processes, as the capacities and PANs of the schools will remain the same. The governing bodies of the schools have been kept informed of the plans. Information will be provided to parents/carers before and during the planned works.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The following options were considered by the Corporate Management Team:

Option 1 – Do nothing

This would not mitigate the risk of RAAC failure in the future or increase the longevity of the panels.

Option 2 – Remedial works to stop water ingress occurring (manage risk)

This would not fully mitigate the risk of RAAC failure in the future but would provide further longevity of the RAAC planks.

Option 3 – Remedial works to prevent future water ingress and provide support bracing to RAAC plank (manage risk)

This would not fully mitigate the risk of RAAC failure in the future but would provide further longevity of RAAC planks.

Option 4 – Full roof replacement (remove risk)

This would remove the risk of future RAAC plank failure by removing existing roof and replacing with a new roof.

After reviewing the estimated costs, potential risk elements and the key advantages/disadvantages of each option, it was agreed that Option 4, the replacement schemes, were the most appropriate solutions for both schools.

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