

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Richard Long,
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

21/00020

For publication

Subject: The Towers School - additional Year 7 places

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform, I agree to:

- a) Release £1,550,000 from the Children, Young People and Education Capital budget to enable The Towers School and Sixth Form Centre, Ashford to accommodate additional pupils.
- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into necessary contracts or taking other legal actions as required to implement the decision, in consultation with the Director of Education and the General Counsel.

Reason(s) for decision:

Additional Year 7 non-selective provision is required in Ashford Borough to ensure sufficient secondary school provision is available to accommodate rising rolls. The reconfiguration of science facilities at The Towers School and Sixth form Centre at a cost of £1,550,000 will secure 1FE of provision for 2021-22 onwards and opens additional specialist provision via a satellite of the Wyvern School. This will provide good value to KCC.

Financial Implications:

£1,550,000 is required to reconfigure classrooms to add additional science provision at The Towers School and Sixth form Centre. Developer contributions of £720,000 have been secured so far towards this project.

Equality Implication: (inc. link to EqIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. Additional places will ensure that all pupils, including those within a projected group will have access for secondary school provision. No adverse impact on protected groups have been identified at this point.

Legal Implications:

Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Authority has a duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. If this decision does not take place there will be a risk that we cannot meet our statutory duties to provide education provision.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's Young People and Education considered this decision at its meeting on 9th March 2021.

Any alternatives considered:

Consideration has been given to expanding one of the other schools in the Town, but this is deemed

to be the most appropriate project now due to the value for money, the improved facilities it would give the current and future pupils and the opportunity to increase special school provision.

Consideration has also been given to allocating places outside of Ashford Borough as forecasts would suggest that there are surplus places for 2021-22 and onwards in adjacent District/Boroughs. However, the places available are not always in the most accessible location and would leave students having to travel to Canterbury or Dover to access a school place.

Demanding young people and their families travel significant distances to access non-selective school provision is not ideal and would not be well received by families. In addition, KCC will be responsible for providing transport which would have a consequential impact on the Council's revenue budget.

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



19 March 2021

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Signed

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Date