

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

To: Shelina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Subject: Proposal to expand Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School from 192 places to 240 places, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 48 to 60 for Year three entry in September 2022

Decision Number and Title – 21/00070

Proposal to expand Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School from 192 places to 240 places, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 48 to 60 for Year three entry in September 2022

Key Yes – Expenditure is over 1m,

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report:

Children’s and Young People’s Cabinet Committee – 14 September 2021
15 January 2021 Decision Number 20/00114

Future Pathway of report:

Electoral Division: Whitstable West – Mark Dance

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

Summary: This report reiterates the need for the expansion of Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE primary school from a PAN of 48 to 60 that was set out in the report to Children’s and Young People Cabinet Committee of the 15 January 2021. It requests permission to spend related to the build programme required for the school to accommodate the additional pupils. The expansion will ensure the financial viability of both junior schools in Whitstable and ensure that all children attending the infant schools can have the opportunity to move onto a Whitstable Junior school.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to:-

- (i) Expand Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School from 48 to 60 PAN from September 2022.
- (ii) agree to provide £1.8 million from the Children’s, Young People and Education Capital Budget for the permanent expansion of Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School from 48 to 60 PAN from September 2022.
- (iii) 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.

(iv) 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.

1. Introduction

1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Authority has a duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's commissioning plan for Education Provision in Kent 2021-2025 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. A copy of the plan can be viewed from this link:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/education-provision/education-provision-plan>

1.2 The Commissioning Plan 2020-2024 identified the need to expand Whitstable and Seasalter CE Endowed Junior School to ensure the financial viability of both junior schools in Whitstable and ensure that all children attending the infant schools can have the opportunity to move onto a Whitstable Junior school. At present the combined Published Admission Number of the two Infant Schools is 120 and before any expansion of Whitstable Endowed, the combined Published Admission Number of the two Junior Schools is 108.

1.3 This proposal will help to secure our ambition "to ensure that Kent's young people have access to the education, work and skills opportunities necessary to support Kent business to grow and be increasingly competitive in the national and international economy" as set out in 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)'.

1.4 A report was taken to Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 15 January 2021 as it was envisaged that planning was to be submitted in February. Planning has now been delayed and due to number of factors including Covid, method of construction, roofing and drainage the costs of the project have now increased to over £1million, therefore requiring a Cabinet Member decision.

2. Body of the report

2.1 Whitstable has two junior schools and they historically have operated for many years with inoperable Published Admission Numbers (the number of pupils it can take in each year group). In December 2018 Whitstable Junior School ran a consultation to reduce its Published Admission Number from 75 to 60 with effect from September 2020 onwards. This reduction was agreed by the Schools Adjudicator but conditional on Whitstable and Seasalter CE Endowed consulting on a proposal to increase its PAN from 48 to 60 to ensure that there were sufficient Junior places to match the number of places in the Whitstable Infant schools. The school has taken an additional 12 pupils for September 2021 Year 3 admission on a temporary basis until the permanent expansion has confirmed.

- 2.2 Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School is a popular school judged “Outstanding” by Ofsted.
- 2.3 The report taken in January 2021 to the Children and Young People’s and Education Cabinet Committee stated:

The feasibility estimates the costs for this proposal to be £959,926. Final costs will be confirmed as the plans are finalised for submission for planning. The costs will be met through the allocation of funding from the capital budget.

The final cost for the project has now been received following detailed surveys and adjustments to the designs following feedback from planning officers. The cost has increased to £1.8m. There are a number of reasons for the increase including.

- a) 48m² area discrepancy between feasibility and measured survey. This has notably impacted all project costs.
- b) Stairs & Ramps – this was not allowed for at feasibility stage. Fire/DDA advice would necessitate this
- c) Further surveys on site, in particular ecological, gas, electrical and drainage, have resulted in additional works (particularly to drainage) that have added to costs.
- d) The site is a very tight town centre site, bordered on all sides by housing, shops and a church and options are very limited when it comes to space for additional accommodation whilst allowing access to emergency services etc. This also necessitates the use of a crane to bring materials on site.
- e) Pre-planning discussions with Planning Officers have resulted in additional requirements to reflect the school’s town centre position, proximity to established housing and tree line, loss of environmental area and the nature of the historic school building. This includes the requirement for a green roof on the new canteen/kitchen area and the extension to the school to provide the additional classrooms having to be in keeping with the façade of the school.
- f) The age of the school and condition and capacity of the drainage to serve what is an older area of Whitstable and school site have given rise to both the additional works to drainage and to the requirement to re-copestone work and repoint brickwork.
- g) The re-provision of the kitchen has also meant that additional upgraded kitchen equipment has had to be included following an appraisal of current kitchen equipment to cope with the number of pupils (there will be some move across of current equipment).
- h) Delays to the project have meant that some interim works have had to be carried out to enable the school to take the additional pupils for this September.
- i) Delays to the project (It has been 14 months from the initial feasibility and costings to the present costed designs) have resulted in additional costs related to supply challenges and material and labour cost increases.

- 2.4 The outcome of the education consultation was reported to the Committee in January 2021. The consultation was undertaken from 21 September to 19 October 2020 and a total of 21 responses were received during the consultation period with 10 supportive, 2 Undecided and 9 against.
- 2.5 The Headteacher and Governing Body are fully supportive of this proposal to expand the school.
- 2.6 The Canterbury Diocese are fully supportive of the scheme and are providing up to £200k to address aspects of modernisation within the school that have had to be discounted from this scheme due to rising costs.
- 2.7 The Area Education Officer for East Kent fully supports the proposal to increase the PAN at Whistable and Seasalter Endowed Junior School to ensure the Published Admission Numbers in the Junior schools in Whitstable match those of the Infant Schools.
- 2.8 Mark Dance, the County Council Member for Whistable West supports the proposal.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The final project cost for the expansion is £1.8million. The cost will be met through the allocation of funding from the Basic Need capital budget, and modernisation budget.
- 3.2 As per KCC policy, a total of £6,000 per new classroom will be provided to the school from the DGS revenue budget.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Any further Legal advice required will be sought from Legal Services.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced as part of the consultation process and is attached. The assessment identified the following positive impacts:
- Sufficient local junior provision for children in Whitstable.
 - Future financial viability of the school and local Infant schools.
- No adverse impacts were identified during the assessment. The outcome of the public consultation and community consultation will enable the Local Authority to test out these assumptions.

6. Other corporate implications

6.1 Planning and Highways have been consulted for the planning application.

7. Governance

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 proposal to expand Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School in Whitstable will ensure that there are sufficient Year 3 places in Whitstable and that Junior places match the number of places in the Whitstable Infant schools.

9. Recommendation(s):

9.1 The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree

- (i) Expand Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School from 48 to 60 PAN from September 2022.
- (ii) agree to provide £1.8 million from the Children's, Young People and Education Capital Budget for the permanent expansion of Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School from 48 to 60 PAN from September 2022.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.

10. Background Documents

10.1 It is a Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision
www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision

10.2 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>

10.3 KCC consultation page.
<https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/WhitstableandSeasalterEndowed/consultationHome>

11. Contact details

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