

## EXECUTIVE DECISION

From: **Sarah Hammond, Interim Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education**

To: **Shellina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Subject: **Proposal to permanently expand Highsted Grammar School, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, ME10 4PT from 120 places to 150 places for September 2023.**

Decision Number: **22/00059**

Key decision *It involves expenditure or savings of more than £1m*

Classification: **Unrestricted**

### **Past Pathway of report:**

**Children and Young People's Cabinet Committee - 10 January 2021 (Decision Number 20/00115)**

**Children's and Young People's Cabinet Committee 19 July 2022**

### **Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision**

**Electoral Division:** Sittingbourne South – John Wright  
Sittingbourne North – Jason Clinch  
Sheppey – Andy Booth & Ken Pugh  
Swale East - Andrew Bowles  
Swale West – Mike Whiting

### **Summary:**

This report reiterates the need for the expansion of Highsted Girls Grammar School from a PAN of 120 to 150. The rationale for the expansion was set out in the report to Cabinet Committee of the 10 January 2021. This report requests permission to allocate an additional £2,665,574 from the Basic Need capital budget to the build programme, this will take the cost of the build programme from £4m to £6,665,574. Forecasts indicated a deficit of up to 60 Year 7 places for 2021 and a continual need through the plan period of between 1.5FE and 2FE in additional selective school places in the Sittingbourne Selective Planning Area. Borden Boys Grammar School has a current build programme to increase their PAN from 120 to 150 from September 2023. For September 2021 and September 2022 both schools have offered over their PAN to 150 to ensure that there were sufficient Grammar places available.

### **Recommendation(s):**

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

i. increase the funding allocated to expand Highsted Grammar School from £4m to £6,665,574 through providing an additional £2,665,574 million from the Basic Need capital budget.

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. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member without requiring a new Record of Decision.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-24 identified the need to commission additional capacity in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning group. Forecasts indicated 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 -69 places by 2023. Both Highsted Girls Grammar School and Borden Grammar school for boys were approached to expand by 1FE to meet the forecast need.

1.2 The table below shows the additional selective places (KCP 2020-24) required if no further action is taken in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning groups. The expansion programmes at Borden or Highsted are not included in the forecast and the figures do not include any spare capacity required for in-year admissions, or growth related to housing from any new developments.

**Table 1 - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken (KCP 2020-2024)**

	2018-19 capacity	2018-19 (A)	2019-20 (F)	2020-21 (F)	2021-22 (F)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2025-26 capacity
<b>Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective</b>	270	-5	-38	-42	-60	-45	-69	-59	-56	240

The tables below (KCP2022-2026) show the updated forecasts which include both the 1FE expansion projects at Highsted Grammar School and Borden Grammar School.

**Table 2 - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken (KCP 2022-2026) Includes Expansion of Highsted and Borden by 1FE**

Planning Group	2020-21 capacity	2020-21 (A)	2021-22 (F)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2026-27 capacity (F)	2027-28 capacity (F)	2027-28 capacity
Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective	270	-12	-65	13	-9	-4	4	13	-6	300

## 2. Background

- 2.1 There are two Grammar schools in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey planning group: Borden Grammar School (Boys) and Highsted Grammar School (Girls). For several years both grammar schools have offered over their Published Admission Number, however they are no longer able to offer any additional places from September 2022 without additional accommodation that would enable them to expand by 1FE on a permanent basis. Discussions have been held with both grammar schools in Sittingbourne and each school has agreed to progress a 1FE expansion, delivering a total of 60 additional places from September 2022.
- 2.2 The increase in the number of births from 2008 to 2012, inward migration and house building has increased the forecast need for both non-selective and selective school places in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey planning areas. The peak pressure on year 7 places in Sittingbourne and Sheppey is the 2023 to 2024 academic year.
- 2.3 Table 3 and 4 show the current forecast (KCP 2022-2026) for all Swale secondary planning areas.

**Table 3 - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken**

Planning Group	2020-21 capacity	2020-21 (A)	2021-22 (F)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2026-27 capacity (F)	2027-28 capacity (F)	2027-28 capacity
Faversham Non-Selective	210	12	7	18	9	17	23	33	6	210
Isle of Sheppey Non-Selective	390	110	83	116	83	77	105	125	112	390
Sittingbourne Non-Selective	810	-9	-121	-70	-148	-111	-109	-85	-149	765
Canterbury & Faversham Selective	605	-34	-29	-50	-44	-22	-9	-24	-21	615
Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective	270	-12	-65	13	-9	-4	4	13	-6	300

## Years 7-11 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group	2020-21 capacity	2020-21 (A)	2021-22 (F)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2026-27 capacity (F)	2027-28 capacity (F)	2027-28 capacity
Faversham Non-Selective	1,050	39	37	72	71	60	71	99	89	1,050
Isle of Sheppey Non-Selective	1,950	653	601	603	564	504	499	540	536	1,950
Sittingbourne Non-Selective	3,900	-66	-160	-170	-261	-319	-387	-321	-399	3,975
Canterbury & Faversham Selective	2,935	-159	-143	-157	-170	-165	-143	-137	-106	3,075
Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective	1,290	-42	-97	-72	-73	-60	-44	34	16	1,500

2.4 The report taken to the Children and Young People's and Education Cabinet Committee on 15 January 2021 agreed to the allocation of funding of £4m (Decision Number 20/00115) stated:

*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 school's current published admission number (PAN) is 120. 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.*

2.5 The proposal and build programme has since been developed further by the school following more detailed feasibilities being undertaken, and the cost for the project has now been revised. The cost has increased due to material and labour cost inflation pressures and because the build programme has had to be revised to take account of issues that have been identified through the most recent feasibilities.

### 3. Financial Implications

3.1 The additional capital allocation of £2,665,574, taking the cost of the build project from £4m to £6,665,574 will enable the delivery of a programme that will provide the additional general and specialist classrooms to meet the additional pupil place need. The programme consists of a 3 storey mixed accommodation teaching block which includes both general teaching classrooms and specialist science classrooms. The project will also include renovation and conversion of existing areas to provide the additional teaching spaces required. Developer Contributions amounting to £6,232,680.77 have been requested towards Grammar expansions in Sittingbourne. Of this £322,490.77 has been agreed with a total of £72,658.64 received. £4,550,215 has been requested but is currently unsecured pending s106 agreements. £40,860 has been refused.

3.2 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.

#### **4. Legal implications**

4.1 The funding allocation is subject to a contractual agreement between KCC and the Trust to offer of 150 Year 7 places from September 2023. The school's current published admission number (PAN) is 120.

4.2 Highsted Grammar School will be required to complete and submit a fast track Business Case to the ESFA regarding the expansion of the school by 1FE once planning permission has been granted.

4.3 The provision of sufficient school places is a statutory duty and contributes to the Strategic Business Plan Priorities to ensure that "Children and Young People in Kent get the best start in life".

#### **5. Equalities implications**

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

- Sufficient year 7 places will be provided for September 2023 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.

#### **6. Other corporate implications**

6.1 None identified.

#### **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 Education will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

#### **8. Conclusions**

8.1 Without the additional funding for this project the additional places will not be delivered and the permanent expansion at Highsted Grammar School will not be able to progress, resulting in insufficient Year 7 grammar places in Sittingbourne to meet demand. This would result in children having to travel to other districts or planning groups for their Grammar education and would further increase transport costs for KCC. The expansion of Highsted Grammar School by 1FE also means that girls requiring a grammar school place will also be able

to secure a place at their local grammar school alongside boys securing places at Borden due to their expansion by 1 Form of Entry within the same timeframe.

## 9. Recommendation(s):

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

- i. increase the funding allocated to expand Highsted Grammar School from £4m to £6,665,574 through providing an additional £2,665,574 from the Basic Need capital budget.
- 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. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member without requiring a new Record of Decision.

## 10. Background Documents

- 10.1 Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee report for Highsted Grammar School January 2021 Decision Number 20/00115  
[Decision - 20/00115 - Proposal to permanently expand Highsted Grammar School, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, ME10 4PT from 120 places to 150 places for September 2022 \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)
- 10.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision  
[www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision](http://www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision)
- 10.3 Increasing Setting the Course - Our Interim Strategic Plan  
[Setting the Course - Our Interim Strategic Plan - Kent County Council](#)

## 11. Contact details

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