

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

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

DECISION NO:

22/00066

Unrestricted

Key decision: YES, Over £1m

Subject:

Notification of an increase in costs to install adequate water supply and hydrants for the proposal to expand Gravesend Grammar School, Church Walk, Gravesend, Kent, DA12, as previously determined by the Cabinet Member on 22nd July 2020 by Decision No 19/00083

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills I:

- (i) Agree to the increase in costs of the project of £0.9m making the total project cost £8.5m.
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the General Counsel 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:

Without the installation of new static tanks and fire hydrants, the project will be halted by Building Control. Therefore, the original decision (19/00083) given on 22 July 2020 will not be able to be completed without an increase in the budget for this proposal.

Background

Redevelopment works at Gravesend Grammar School are underway to construct two new buildings; a new Teaching Block and Canteen building, plus associated demolition of redundant buildings and new landscaping, as part of a £7.6m scheme. The works are being completed by Baxall Construction.

However, the need for two new fire hydrants at Gravesend Grammar School has been identified and advised by Kent Fire & Rescue. The existing School does not have any fire hydrants on site and the original tendered design and scope did not include any fire hydrants within the project as they were not deemed to be a requirement at that time.

When the specification was produced, consideration was given regarding sprinklers and water supply. An approach was made to the Fire and Rescue Service to get their view via building control (Sweco/MLM), with the advice that because a fire tender could reach the front doors of the teaching block there was no need for hydrants. A sprinkler assessment was also done and concluded they weren't required.

As the design evolved, the Fire Safety Act 2021 came into force in April 2021. As a result of this, Kent Fire & Rescue were asked again to confirm that there was no need for hydrants. At the time of going to tender and despite numerous chases, no response had been received.

Given the fact that we have never been asked to make any such provision on any of our school expansion schemes, and that nothing had been received from Kent Fire and Rescue, this issue was omitted from the tender requirement. KCC started on site in August 2021, and then a response was received from the Fire Service, via Building Control in November 2021.

KCC Infrastructure now believe that this will be the position going forward for any major building schemes and therefore KCC Infrastructure will need to factor in provision for either a sprinkler system or hydrants in future.

Based on the flow rates stipulated by Kent Fire & Rescue Service (2100 litres/minute) and that the British Standard requires that enough water for 45 minutes is provided, this equates to a total of 94,500 litres of water must be provided for each building. The mains flow offered by Southern Water is not sufficient and so the only solution is the installation of static water tanks.

The largest tanks available are 46,000 litres, so to provide 94,500 litres each building will require 3 tanks.

Further works to Church Walk have also been identified related to the installation of water tank systems.

Financial Implications

Capital

The Cabinet Member decision of 22 July 2020 agreed the project cost of £7,600,000. The funds provided by this decision are fully committed. Therefore, an increase in the total budget is required to continue with this expansion project to accommodate the essential additional costs associated with the fire hydrants and Church Walk highways works.

The cost increase is £0.9m, broken down as follows:

Fire Hydrant Works	£590,529.46
Church Walk works	£221,217.71
Client-Side Contingency (10%)	£81,174.72
Rounded total	£900,000

Legal Implications

Contracting for KCC framework building contractors.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The assessment highlighted the following positive impacts: more local families able to access good school places, more school places available to students of faith or no faith. This scheme will also provide additional places for students with SEN or additional needs, where appropriate.

Data Protection implications

The school are the 'controllers' under the General Data Protection Regulation and will ensure that any personal information is processed fairly and lawfully within any consultation work completed as part of the fast-track business plan application.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

At its meeting on 19 November 2019, the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills that the decision be taken to progress the proposal.

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee considered this decision on 19 July 2022.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Not Applicable

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



11th August 2022

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signed

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date