

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Shellina Prendergast

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

22/00068

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES / NO

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Addition of dining facilities at The John Wallis Academy, Ashford, to enable the Academy to accommodate an additional 30 Year 7 pupils in September 2023.

Decision:

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

- I. Release £380,000 from the Children's, Young People and Education Basic Need Capital Budget to add additional dining facilities at The John Wallis Academy, Ashford, to enable the Academy to accommodate an additional 30 Year 7 pupils in September 2023.
- II. Authorise the Director of Education 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:**Background**

In Ashford Borough secondary school rolls have risen significantly over the last 10 years. For several years, school leaders have temporarily offered places above their published admissions number to support KCC in being able to allocate sufficient places for National Offer Day.

The pressures for non-selective places in the Ashford Town non-selective planning group are particularly acute. For September 2022, it was forecast that 52 additional Year 7 places were

required in the planning group (Figure 1). However, increased pressures led to 123 Year 7 places being added.

Figure 1: Forecast Year 7 surplus/deficit capacity if no further action is taken (KCP 2022-26)

Planning Group Name	2020-21 Capacity	2020-21 (A)	2021-22 (F)	2022-23 (F)	2023-24 (F)	2024-25 (F)	2025-26 (F)	2026-27 (F)	2027-28 (F)	2027-28 Capacity
Ashford North Non-Selective	840	12	-35	-52	-107	-69	-21	-81	-33	758
Ashford Selective	420	-13	-1	0	1	0	1	3	-2	420

If additional secondary provision is not provided forecasts suggest a shortfall of 107 Year 7 places in 2023 with places (although fewer) being required throughout the forecast period (until the 2027-28 academic year). Given the under forecast for September 2022, these forecasts could be conservative.

It should be noted that the wider Ashford Borough forecasts do not include the impact of the closure of High Weald School (Cranbrook) or Homewood School reducing their published admission number (PAN) by 30 places in 2023. Draft forecasts suggest in excess of 1FE of additional pressure (30 + Year 7 places above what is seen in Figure 1) in both September 2023 and 2024.

The planned opening of Chilmington Green Primary School in temporary provision will add 120 Year 7 places. However, the opening of this school will not be confirmed until a funding agreement is in place which will be after offer day 2023. Even with Chilmington Green opening, it is expected that additional temporary places will be required to get through offer day and to provide sufficient provision for September 2023.

Financial Implications

A funding agreement for £985,000 is already in place between KCC and the Academy which has secured 60 additional Year 7 places required in September 2022. An additional £380,000 will be required to add dining facilities that will enable the school to accommodate an additional 30 pupils in September 2023. A separate funding agreement will be completed. No further funding will be allocated. Should the costs for the dining facilities be greater than the £380,000 the Academy will be required to pick up the difference.

This will mean that KCC will have agreed to a total of £1,365,000 in funding to secure the additional places required for September 2022 and September 2023. In total this will provide 90 temporary places at a cost of £15,167 per place which is good value for money. £179,000 in developer contributions have been secured to date.

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.

A funding agreement is already in place for £985,000 to provide the additional teaching places required to accommodate the additional 60 pupils in September 2022. This will not change.

It would be appropriate to enter into a second funding agreement for the addition of dining facilities to secure an addition 30 Year 7 places for September 2023.

Equalities implications

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the initial decision. This has been reviewed and no adverse impact on protected groups have been identified at this point.

Data Protection implications

No DPIA was require.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

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

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The options of temporary provision at the other non-selective schools in the Borough has been considered. Additional places will be required in two or more of these schools in 2023 in addition to those offered at The John Wallis Academy. This and the fact that several schools have offered additional places in one or more of the last two or more academic years has limited their ability to offer further places again without investment. Places offered at other schools cannot be seen as an alternative to what is required at The John Wallis Academy.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None



.....

signed

16 August 2022

.....

date