

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

To: Shellina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Subject Refurbishment and reprovisioning of dining facilities at The John Wallis Academy, Ashford.

Decision Number: 22/00068

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 19 July 2022

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision.

Electoral Division: Ashford South

Summary: This report provides the Committee with the information regarding a request for funding for additional dining facilities at The John Wallis Academy to enable the Academy to accommodate an additional 30 Year 7 pupils in September 2023.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to take the proposed decision 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.

1. Introduction

1.1 The John Wallis Academy has supported the need for additional non-selective school places in Ashford by offering additional Year 7 places for the last 3 years. For September 2022, the Local Authority requested that the Academy offered an additional 60 Year 7 places.

- 1.2 To accommodate the additional pupils additional teaching facilities are required. A feasibility was completed by the Academy which demonstrated that the additional teaching facilities required could be added by reconfiguring and reprovisioning existing spaces.
- 1.3 To support this a funding agreement to the value of £985,000 has been agreed. As this is under £1,000,000 this was an officer delegated decision.
- 1.4 An additional 30 Year 7 places will be required again in September 2023. The Academy will have sufficient teaching accommodation but they will not have sufficient dining facilities to enable the school to run efficiently having added additional places for five years at the LA's request at that point. A feasibility has been completed by the Academy and they have requested £380,000 for the works.
- 1.5 Although this is a separate project and contract to the works required for the additional Year 7 places being added in September 2022 as both will be agreed in a short timeframe and the total is in excess of £1,000,000 it would seem appropriate to bring this to Members for a decision prior to entering into the funding agreement for the additional £380,000.

2. Background

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The pressures for non-selective places in the Ashford Town non-selective planning group are particularly acute. The latest pupil forecasts (Figure 1) would suggest that there has been a slight reduction in the number of Year 7 places required from September 2022 (in comparison to the previous Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent), but there will still be a significant deficit of Year 7 places which has to be addressed throughout the Plan period.

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

- 2.3 For September 2022, it was forecast that 52 additional places were required in the planning group (Figure 1). However, increased pressures led to 123 temporary places being added.
- 2.4 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.

3. Alternatives considered

- 3.1 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.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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. At £15,167 per place this represents good value for money.
- 4.3 Although this is a separate project and a separate contract to the works required for the teaching provision required for September 2022, as both will be agreed in a short timeframe and the total agreed is in excess of £1,000,000 it would seem appropriate to bring this to Members for a decision.
- 4.4 £179,000 in developer contributions have been secured to date.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 A funding agreement is already in place for £985,000 to provide the additional teaching places required to accommodate the additional 60 Year 7 pupils in September 2022. This will not change. A second funding agreement will be required for the £380,000 for the 2023-24 academic year.

6. Equalities implications

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed. It is believed that the proposal will benefit all, including protected groups, as the additional places created will support Ashford pupils in accessing secondary school provision in the Borough. No adverse impact on protected groups has been identified at this point.

7. The view of the local Member,

Cllr Dirk Ross, Ashford South

I fully support these creative proposals which meet a growing need in Ashford for more secondary school places to accommodate local children along with those from the many villages in our locality. I am aware that, as secondary numbers have grown, it has become more challenging to get places in local schools, with increasing numbers of families appealing for places.

The delay of the new Chilmington school by 2 years has added to the pressure for places as has the decision by the DfE to close High Weald Academy with pupils on role there having to be found places in existing schools.

The investment at the John Wallace Academy is a positive step. This will support the need for additional secondary school places. I fully back the proposals which provide a much-needed boost to a school which has stepped up to provide additional places for several years without compromising standards.

8. Other corporate implications

None at this point.

9. Governance

The Officer Scheme of Delegation; within the Council's Constitution, provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it.

10. Conclusions

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. Given the pressure for secondary school places in the Borough, additional places will be required throughout the forecast period.

Additional Year 7 places for September 2022 have already been agreed and a funding agreement is in place for 60 additional places at The John Wallis Academy at a cost of £985,000.

In order to accommodate a further 30 pupils for September 2023, The John Wallis Academy will need to expand their dining facilities. To support this a separate funding agreement of £380,000 will be required.

The additional accommodation will be required to ensure that there are sufficient secondary school places available in the Borough.

11. Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to take the proposed decision to:

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12. Background Documents (plus links to document)

Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2022-26

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/131486/Commissioning-Plan-for-Education-Provision-in-Kent-2022-to-2026.pdf

13. Contact details

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