

**From:** Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services

**To:** The Leader of the Council

**Subject:** Special School Programme – Additional Costs for Ridge View School

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee - 15 December 2015

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Decision by Leader of Kent County Council

**Electoral Division:** Tonbridge ( Richard Long and Christopher Smith)

**Summary:** This report sets out the reasons behind the request to increase the Education and Young People's Services Capital Budget allocation to the rebuild and expansion of Ridge View School

*Recommendation(s):*

The Leader of the Council is asked to:

- i) Increase the funding allocated from the Education and Young People's Services Capital Budget to the rebuild and expansion of Ridge View School from £16.8m to £18.9m.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 As the strategic commissioner of school provision, the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for the residents of Kent. This duty applies to special school provision, as well as mainstream settings. These proposals reflect KCC's aspirations to increase the number of special educational need (SEN) school places across the County, as set out in Kent's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2016-20.

1.2 A public consultation on the proposed relocation and expansion of Ridge View School took place between 7 October 2015 until 11 November 2015. The outcome of the consultation was reported to the Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee on 15 December 2015 which recommended the proposal be supported. The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform agreed to the proposal, and the Record of Decision was signed on 16 December 2015. A Public Notice was issued and no objections were received. The Decision was confirmed and £16.8m was agreed from the Education and Young People's Services Basic Need Capital Budget. This included £2.3m of targeted basic need funding to support the expansion of the special school, with approximately 75 additional places due to be available at the new site by 1 September 2017.

## **2. Cost Pressures**

2.1 Significant delays have been experienced on this project resulting from numerous planning issues associated with the previous planning application (now withdrawn), particularly relating to drainage. The new site, known as 'Yeoman's Field' is located

at Upper Haysden Lane, Tonbridge and is currently used by The Judd School as playing fields. The acquisition and future development of additional land by the Judd School has enabled the release of the Yeoman's Field site for the Ridge View School development.

2.2 Planning approvals for the Ridge View School and the sporting facilities on the land acquired by The Judd School, have been granted and it is anticipated that the scheme will be completed in August 2017. However, the aforementioned delays to the progression of the project have placed increased financial pressure on the project budget due to construction inflation and market conditions. This delay, alongside additional costs associated with the new site of the school has led to an additional capital pressure of £2.1m. The specific reasons for the increased financial pressure are set out below:

- Yeoman's Field site specific requirements which are additional to the original design. This is mainly due to specific location – requirements for mechanical ventilation; Enhanced acoustics; abnormal drainage (foul).
- Additional Planning and Building Control submissions.
- Additional site surveying and site specific design requirements.
- The costs of enabling development for the re-provision of playing facilities for the Judd School.
- Construction inflation.

2.3 The key impacts of failing to progress this scheme are listed as follows:

- The school would be left in a position that would not provide the increased pupil numbers required within the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education and would result in children travelling long distances to be educated outside of their community.
- The existing school premises would remain unsuitable in terms of space provision and would become an increased maintenance liability
- It can reasonably be expected that Government Targeted Basic Need funding of £2,383,261 would be clawed back.

### **3. Financial Implications**

3.1 **Capital:** The Ridge View School project has received planning permission, however, additional funding is required to complete the rebuild and expansion. The capital pressure is £2.1m, thus providing a revised total budget allocation of £18.9m. This includes £1.1m contribution to the relocation of the Judd Schools playing facilities as enabling development.

### **4. Conclusions**

4.1 The issues identified for Ridge View School outlined in Section 2 above have led to the increased capital costs. In order to deliver the planned scheme a further £2.1m will need to be allocated from the Education and Young People's Services Basic Need capital budget.

## 5. Recommendation(s)

**Recommendation(s): The Leader of Kent County Council is asked to agree to:**

- i) Increase the funding allocated from the Education and Young People's Services Capital Budget to the rebuild and expansion of Ridge View School from £16.8m to £18.9m.

## 6. Background Documents

### 6.1 Vision and Priorities for Improvement

[http://www.kelsi.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/29074/EYPS-Vision-and-Priorities-for-Improvement.pdf](http://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/29074/EYPS-Vision-and-Priorities-for-Improvement.pdf)

### 6.2 Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2015-19

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/education-provision>

### 6.3 Consultation Document and Equalities Impact Assessment.

[www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Record of Decision

## 8. Contact details

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