

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

To: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education & Health Reform

Subject: Proposal to increase the physical capacity of Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School from September 2017

Decision No: 17/00015

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee, Thursday 30th March 2017

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: Swale Central – Roger Truelove and Lee Burgess

Summary: This report sets out the requirement to provide Meadowfield School with additional accommodation for the increased number of pupils at the school.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to:

- a) Allocate £1.14m from the Education and Young People's Service Capital budget;
- b) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council; and
- c) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure 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 Meadowfield School provides for children aged 4 to 19 years with Profound, Severe and Complex needs (PCSN), including Autism. Ofsted judged the school to be Outstanding in all areas in November 2014.
- 1.2 The School has a designated number of 209 and has taken additional children above this number for two years to meet the demand for places. Currently there are 246 pupils on roll at the school. The school requires new accommodation and facilities in order to cater for the needs of the additional pupils.
- 1.3 Some additional accommodation has already been provided to the school, including three class bases and a hygiene suite. A Record of Decision is now required as the estimated cost for the capital allocation will exceed £1m.

2. Future Plans

- 2.1 It is planned to permanently increase the designated number of the School from 209 to 270. This permanent increase is dependent on finding a solution to provide the school with additional classrooms, specialist/practical rooms and facilities and storage, etc. Several options have been looked at including relocating the 6th form, but it has proved difficult to find affordable accommodation off site.
- 2.2 An accommodation needs analysis has recently been completed and options will be considered by the School and KCC to find a cost effective solution. If this is achieved, a consultation will be carried out on a proposal to permanently increase the designated number to 270 and a further report will be provided to Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee on the outcome. A second Record of Decision will be required to issue a public notice and allocate capital funding.

3. Financial Implications

- a. Capital – A feasibility study was completed to provide the School with accommodation to meet the needs of the additional children. Planning agreement has been confirmed. The total estimated cost is £1.14m.
- b. Revenue - The school will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget. Special schools are funded using the DfE Place Plus funding methodology for High Needs Pupils. Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the School to resource the new classrooms. At present, this is funded at a rate of £6,000 per classroom.
- c. Human – The School will appoint additional staff as the need arises.

4. Vision and Priorities for Improvement

- 4.1 These proposals will help to secure our ambition that “Every child and young person should go to a good or outstanding early years setting and school, have access to the best teaching, and benefit from schools and other providers working in partnership with each other to share the best practice as they continue to improve”, as set out in Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2016-2019.
- 4.2 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-21 identified the need to commission additional capacity at Meadowfield School and permanently expand the school by one form of entry.
- 4.3 The SEN Strategy launched in September 2014 sets out the intention to provide additional places, including those for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

5. Views

- 5.1 The view of the Local Members:
Roger Truelove and Lee Burgess
The Local Members have been informed of the plans.
- 5.2 The view of the Headteacher and Governing Body:
The school supports the planned capacity increase and the Local Authority's endeavours to permanently increase the designated number of the school.
- 5.3. The view of the Area Education Officer:

Meadowfield Special School is the District Special School for Swale meeting the needs of pupils with profound, severe and complex special educational needs (PSCN). The school was judged as “Outstanding” by Ofsted in November 2014. Honey Bees is Meadowfield's Observation and Assessment Nursery, located at the school site. Its main purpose is to provide early educational support to children who have a learning need and provide support to parents regarding appropriate schooling for their child. Numbers in the nursery have increased which has resulted in more children requiring a place in Reception Year at Meadowfield School. Therefore the additional accommodation is necessary to ensure sufficient places are available for these children, who otherwise would have to be transported at the age of 4 to alternative provision outside of Swale.

6. Delegation to Officers

- 6.1 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 Property & Infrastructure Support will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The increasing demand to provide places for pupils with PCSN and ASD has led to Meadowfield School taking additional children over a two year period. The school requires new accommodation and facilities in order to cater for the needs of the additional children. Increasing the school's physical capacity is in line with our vision to ensure that children and young people in Kent get the best start in life as set out in KCC's Strategic Statement 2015-20 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education – Kent' (2017 – 2021).

8. Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to:

- d) Allocate £1.14m from the Education and Young People's Service Capital budget;
- e) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council; and
- f) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure 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.

9. Background Documents

- 9.1 Vision and Priorities for Improvement

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

- 9.2 Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-21

www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision

- 9.3 SEND Strategy www.kent.gov.uk/sendstrategy

10. Contact details

Report Author:

- Marisa White
- Area Education Officer – East Kent
- 03000 418794
- marisa.white@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Keith Abbott
- Director of Education Planning and Access
- 03000 417008
- keith.abbott@kent.gov.uk