

**From:** Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

**To:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

**Paul Carter, Leader and Cabinet Member for Traded Services and Health Reform**

**Subject:** Tunbridge Wells Secondary Pressures: Proposed expansions of schools in West Kent

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Decision Number/s:** 17/00104 (Bennett Memorial Diocesan School)  
17/00105 (The Skinners' School)  
17/00106 (St Gregory's Catholic School)  
17/00107 (Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys)  
17/00108 (The Judd School)

**Past Pathway of Paper:** Education and Young People's Committee – Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 23 November 2016.

Tunbridge Wells Secondary School Pressure report was considered by the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee of 13 October 2017

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Leader and Cabinet Member Decisions

**Electoral Division:** Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, The Skinners' School, St Gregory's Catholic School and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys: Peter Oakford - Tunbridge Wells North; The Judd School: Richard Long TD and Michael Payne – Tonbridge.

**Summary:**

This report sets out proposals to expand 5 Secondary schools in order to meet the significant demand for places in the Tunbridge Wells urban area.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Leader and Deputy Cabinet Member for Traded Services and Health Reform and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to:

- (i) Allocate £25.3 million from the Basic Need Capital Programme Budget, broken down as follows:
- Bennett Memorial Diocesan School – £6.5m
  - The Skinners' School – £3.0m
  - St Gregory's Catholic School – £6.6m
  - The Judd School – £1.5m
  - Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys – £7.7m

- (ii) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with General Counsel to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council
- (iii) 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

The Leader and Cabinet Member’s decision on each individual project will be conditional upon planning permission being granted.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As the strategic commissioner of school provision, the Local Authority (LA) has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for the residents of Kent as set out in Kent’s Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-21.

The table below, extracted from the Commissioning Plan, details the significant increase in demand for Secondary school places in Tunbridge Wells Borough and shows the anticipated shortfall in school places if no action is taken:

	2016-17 capacity	2016-17 (Actual)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 capacity
Year 7	1,550	133	113	-121	-155	-124	-144	-245	-183	1,550
Years 7-11	7,883	706	721	392	86	-155	-437	-795	-857	7,966

There is significant pressure for Year 7 places across the Borough that rises from a forecast deficit of 121 places in 2018-19 to a peak of 245 in 2022-23. There is particular pressure in the urban areas, with the forecasts skewed by the only surplus capacity available in Cranbrook, outside of the historical travel to learn distance for children resident in central Tunbridge Wells.

Forecasts indicate approximately 6FE deficit of places (allowing for a minimum working surplus capacity) in central Tunbridge Wells for the September 2018 intake, based on published admissions numbers. It is anticipated that the deficit will increase to more than 11FE within 5 years. The forecast demand cannot be met locally without increasing provision within the town centre area of Tunbridge Wells.

The Commissioning Plan clearly sets out the need for this additional capacity and without it the LA will face significant challenges in meeting its statutory duty for the sufficiency of places.

The forecast data outlined above does not account for pressures arising from new housing developments under the emerging Local Plan and therefore the demand is likely to be even greater than the forecast indicates.

### Housing/Demand for School Places

The Borough Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a need for 12,960 houses (648 per year) in Tunbridge Wells between 2013-2033. The emerging requirement is more than double its current target of 300 homes per year. In June 2017 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council consulted on an Issues and Options consultation for a new Local Plan covering growth to 2033. The consultation outlined five broad options for how the Borough might deliver housing growth: Option 1 Focused Growth; Option 2 Semi-dispersed Growth; Option 3 Dispersed Growth; Option 4 Growth Corridor-led Approach; Option 5 New Settlement Growth.

Irrespective of which growth option is chosen, KCC will need to work with the Borough Council and local schools to ensure sufficient new provision is fully integrated into any development strategy that is progressed.

## **2. Proposals**

### **2.1 Bennett Memorial Diocesan School**

Temporary expansion of 60 Year 7 places in 2018/19; followed by a permanent expansion, thereby increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 240 to 300 Year 7 places from September 2019. The detailed build project to permanently expand the school will be completed and submitted for planning permission, taking into account the statutory consultation processes. It is expected that the build project will be managed by KCC Capital Projects Team and GEN2.

### **2.2 The Skinners' School**

Temporary expansion of 10 Year 7 places in 2018/19; followed by a permanent expansion, thereby increasing the PAN from 150 to 160 boys' selective Secondary school places from September 2019. Furthermore, the school will revise its admissions arrangements to provide greater priority to children within the West Kent area and geographically closer to the school in general. It is anticipated that this change in Admissions policy will significantly increase the number of local children admitted to the school each year.

The detailed build project to permanently expand the school will be completed and submitted for planning permission, taking into account the result of statutory planning consultation. It has been agreed that should this proposal proceed, The Skinners' School will deliver the capital project directly. A formal agreement would be entered into between KCC and the School for the delivery of the project in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the agreement and the agreed budget. This agreement will also stipulate a minimum period for the revised admissions arrangements to remain in force.

### **2.3 St Gregory's Catholic School**

Temporary expansion of 60 Year 7 places in 2018/19; followed by a permanent expansion, thereby increasing the PAN from 180 to 210 Secondary school places from September 2019. The detailed build project to permanently expand the school will be completed and submitted for planning permission, taking into account the result of statutory planning consultation. It has been agreed that the build project will be managed by KCC Capital Projects Team and GEN2.

### **2.4 Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys**

Temporary expansion of 60 places in 2018/19; followed by a permanent expansion, thereby increasing the PAN from 180 to 210 selective Secondary school places from September 2019. The detailed build project to permanently expand the school will be completed and submitted for planning permission, taking into account the result of statutory planning consultation. It has been agreed that the build project will be managed by KCC Capital Projects Team and GEN2.

## 2.5 The Judd School

Temporary expansion of 60 places in 2018/19; followed by a permanent expansion, thereby increasing the PAN from 155 to 180 selective Secondary school places from September 2019. Additional year 7 places at the Judd School will help to meet pressure on Secondary school places in Tunbridge Wells, as part of an established West Kent Travel to Learn area. This area reflects the historic patterns for accessing Secondary school provision in Tunbridge Wells town, south Tonbridge and south Sevenoaks.

The detailed build project to permanently expand the school will be completed and submitted for planning agreement. It has been agreed that should this proposal proceed, the build project will be managed by KCC Capital Projects Team and GEN2.

- 2.6 An Equality Impact Assessments have been completed for the Bennett Memorial consultation to comply with the Council's equality duty to have due regard to equality considerations when proposing school expansions and commissioning additional school capacity.

## 3. **Financial Implications**

### 3.1 Capital

The expansions require each school to be provided with additional general teaching spaces, specialist teaching areas and facilities. Curriculum assessments and feasibility studies have been carried out in order to identify the additional accommodation needed for each school project.

The costs for each project indicated below are estimates based on the curriculum assessments and these may increase as they develop. If the cost increase is greater than 10%, the Leader and Cabinet Member for Traded Services and Health Reform and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding.

- Bennett Memorial Diocesan School – £6.5m
- The Skinners' School – £3.0m
- St Gregory's Catholic School – £6.6m
- The Judd School – £1.5m
- Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys – £7.7m

The agreed capital programme currently includes £9m allocation for Secondary capital pressures in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling to contribute towards the total cost of £25.3m for these schemes. The balance will need to be identified as we finalise the new 2018-21 capital programme over the next few months. The shortfall of £16.3m is part of the

overall £149m pressure that we face, which is explained in more detail in the separate report on the KCP.

The County Council seeks funding from new housing developments towards capital projects where additional pupils generated by those developments cannot be accommodated within surplus capacity. Developments in Tunbridge Wells will be requested to contribute to the cost of this project. Planning applications which, if consented by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, are expected, over time, will provide approximately £2 million to contribute to these projects. We will continue to seek the maximum level of developer contributions towards increases in Primary and Secondary school places across Tunbridge Wells.

### 3.2 Revenue

The schools will be entitled to Growth funding protection for their permanent expansion. The Year 7 intakes will be protected on the additional places commissioned at the KS3 basic entitlement rate (currently £3,803) for the first three years of the expansion. Rising roll funding will then be payable for the remaining two years of the expansion for the incoming Year 7 cohort, funded at the KS3 basic entitlement rate. In addition, for each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion, the sum of £6,000 will be allocated towards classroom set up costs.

### 3.3 Human

The schools will appoint additional staff as and when appropriate.

## 4. **Raising Standards –**

### 4.1 Bennett Memorial Diocesan School

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School is a very popular school that was judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in June 2012 and is consistently among the highest achieving schools. Ofsted's key findings indicated that 'at the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is high. They reach levels in many subjects and skills that are well above those expected for their age, particularly in English language and mathematics... Attainment at A and AS level is above average and students make at least very good progress and often excellent progress.

There are no underperforming groups of students. Most make rapid and sustained progress. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are fully integrated into school life and make exceptional progress because of the individually tailored programmes and high quality support and guidance they receive.'

### 4.2 The Skinners' School

The Skinners' School was judged outstanding on 7 June 2007, with Ofsted noting that students 'make excellent progress and attain examination results at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form that are exceptionally high. The great majority of students reach or exceed the challenging targets they are set. The progress of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is at least in line with that of other students. The outstanding achievement of students results from a combination of high quality teaching and excellent

care, guidance and support. The tracking and monitoring of students' progress are very rigorous and there is rapid and effective intervention when there is evidence that they are underachieving.'

#### 4.3 St Gregory's Catholic School

St Gregory's is an outstanding school. The Ofsted report from October 2013 noted that 'achievement is outstanding because students make excellent progress and attain consistently above average GCSE results, especially in English, mathematics and science.

Teaching is outstanding with examples of exemplary practice in all subject areas and all years. Students learn extremely well because enthusiastic teachers give them stimulating tasks, well-structured paths towards understanding and clear guidance on how to improve their work. All students, especially those with particular physical or learning needs, receive sensitive, practical and effective care and support to help them enjoy school life and succeed. All students feel safe and secure.'

#### 4.4 The Judd School

The Judd was rated outstanding by Ofsted in May 2015. In the findings for Quality of Teaching it was noted that 'the school, with support from the local authority, has worked tirelessly to raise the quality of teaching. As a result, over time, teaching is outstanding and students continue to make excellent progress in English and mathematics, as well as across all of their subjects.

Lessons are typically characterised by high expectations, strong subject knowledge and activities that challenge students to deepen and extend their learning further. Teachers know their students very well and use this knowledge to encourage, support, engage and challenge the learning of individual students in the class.'

#### 4.5 Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys

The school was inspected by Ofsted in January 2017 and continues to be judged 'good'. Inspectors noted that 'teaching in English and mathematics is strong in the school. Progress by the end of key stage 4 is consistently high, and in 2016 the achievement of pupils in these subjects was well above the national average. Leaders have established good systems for teachers from these departments to share their strategies for sustained achievement with staff in other subjects. As a result, there is evidence that the quality of teaching continues to improve in the school, leading to improving progress for all groups of pupils across subjects.'

### 5. **Policy Framework**

- 5.1 These proposals will help to secure our ambition "to ensure that Kent's young people have access to the education, work and skills opportunities necessary to support Kent business to grow and be increasingly competitive in the national and international economy" as set out in 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)'

5.2 These proposals reflect KCC's aspirations to provide sufficient school places across the County, as set out in Kent's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-21.

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 The process to be followed to increase the physical capacity of an Academy is outlined in the Department for Education (DfE) advice for Academy Trusts on "making significant changes to an existing academy". Expansion proposals can follow a 'fast track' process without having to provide a full business case to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). However, academy trusts will need to seek approval from the Secretary of State through the ESFA.

6.2 The process to be followed to expand a Local Authority maintained school is outlined in the DfE's Statutory Guidance (April 2016): Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools. Where the expansion of a maintained school does not exceed an increase in excess of 25% of its total capacity, statutory consultation is not required.

6.3 There is no formal requirement for St Gregory's, Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, Skinners' or The Judd to hold public consultations, although local consultation will be held by the respective schools. A statutory consultation process on the proposed expansion of Bennett Memorial commenced on 11 October 2017 and will close on 14 November 2017. Further information is available on the School Consultation webpage: [www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

The response forms indicate that the majority of the respondents to date are in favour of the proposal. The final results of the consultation will be outlined verbally to the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee at the meeting on 22 November 2017. The full set of responses will be passed to the Leader and Cabinet Member for Traded Services and Health Reform and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education prior to his decision being made.

6.4 Each proposed building scheme will also be subject to a planning application process, including a statutory consultation period, which will provide all interested parties with an opportunity to provide their views.

## **7. Views**

### **7.1 The View of the Local Members**

Peter Oakford, KCC Member for Tunbridge Wells North has been consulted on the proposals for the schools in his division: Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, The Skinners' School, St Gregory's Catholic School and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys.

Richard Long TD and Michael Payne, KCC Members for Tonbridge have been consulted on the proposal for the Judd School.

Richard Long TD – "I am generally supportive so far as Judd is concerned, but will await any comments from Tonbridge residents when the planning process starts".

## 7.2 The View of the Headteacher and Chair of Governors

### Bennett Memorial Diocesan School

Ian Bauckham CBE, CEO Tenax Schools Trust - "The Governors and trustees are confident that, with adequate investment, the very significant educational, pastoral and co-curricular strengths of Bennett Memorial Diocesan School could be expanded to cater for a larger number of pupils without loss of quality or distinctive character. It has long been the mission of the Church of England to help provide good school places where they are needed. This was the original motivation for the founding of Bennett in 1952 and has underpinned every expansion since that time. We are therefore pleased to support the current proposal".

### The Skinners' School

Edward Wesson, Headmaster – "Skinners' School has for five years now had five forms of entry, partly to assist KCC in its need for extra grammar school places in West Kent. We fully appreciate that the pressure on places locally has not abated, however, and in order to respond to yet more demand we would be happy to support KCC further by:

1. Increasing our PAN to 160.
2. Shifting our admissions criteria to favour West Kent pupils, prioritising 135 places for West Kent children in any given year.

In this way, we believe that we would be providing another form of entry to grammar school for West Kent, whilst also acknowledging our position so close to the county border.

Of course this expansion has not come without its challenges and I would be very hopeful that KCC could assist the school in alleviating a chronic shortage of space. Specifically we need to build to create a suite of classrooms, vastly improved Sixth Form Study Centre and a new School Library. We have a plan in place, with planning permission but require support though basic needs funding to undertake the project."

### St Gregory's Catholic School

Sean McQuillan, Head of Academy – "The Governors and myself understand the pressures on the LA to provide secondary school places in this area and are fully supportive to do all we can to provide an outstanding school offer to parents. We recognise this as a unique opportunity to improve St Gregory's Catholic School for all our students".

### The Judd School

Jon Wood, Headteacher – "The Judd School are keen to support KCC's wish for us to expand to a permanent 6 forms of entry to Year 7. We have been working with Jared Nehra and GEN2 to analyse our needs to be able to facilitate this expansion. It is critical to us that we approach this as a long term solution for the school, serving the local community, to continue to deliver the education we currently offer to five forms. We were happy to amend our admissions criteria to support the move to 5FE several years ago, maintaining those proportions for the new extra form. It is worth noting



that in addition to the students in our 'inner area', many of those in the 'outer area' are also from Kent. Our only concern, given our experience of recent expansion, is to ensure that the funds released are sufficient to complete the proposed project to a satisfactory standard, phased as the need requires, and sympathetic to the challenges this work will bring."

#### Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys

Philip Drew, Chair of Governors – "we organised a special meeting of the Full Governing Body of TWGSB this evening to consider the proposals for permanent expansion of the school to 7FE and for temporary expansion to 8FE in 2018/19 and 2019/20. The meeting was attended by all of the governors except one (whose views were sought in advance) and by both of our Associate Members. I am delighted to inform you that the Governors unanimously voted to approve your outline proposals".

### 7.3 The View of the Area Education Officer

Discussions have taken place with all the schools involved. The schools' leadership teams and Governing Bodies have confirmed their support for the proposals. Having considered all available options to meet the significant demand for Secondary school places in the locality, I am of the view that these proposals are wholly necessary and appropriate.

## 8. **Delegation to Officers**

- 8.1 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 agreements on behalf of the County Council.

## 9. **Conclusions**

- 9.1 This report sets out proposals to expand 5 Secondary schools in order to meet the significant demand for Secondary places, predominantly arising in Tunbridge Wells. The proposals detailed in this report are intended to mitigate the short to medium term pressure in 2019-20 with 4.3FE permanent expansions of existing schools in central Tunbridge Wells, plus a 1FE permanent expansion of the Judd School in Tonbridge. These permanent expansions will be augmented in the short-term by the addition of 120 temporary Year 7 places in 2018/19. Without the additional provision there will be significant challenges in providing adequate Year 7 places for the Borough.

The proposed actions will still leave a requirement of 6FE permanent provision by September 2021 at the latest. We continue to investigate possible options to create additional provision to meet this need.

## 10. **Recommendation(s)**

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Traded Services and Health Reform and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to:

- (iv) Allocate £25.3 million from the Basic Need Capital Programme Budget

broken down as follows:

- Bennett Memorial Diocesan School – £6.5m
- The Skinners' School – £3.0m
- St Gregory's Catholic School – £6.6m
- The Judd School – £1.5m
- Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys – £7.7m

(v) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with General Counsel to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council

(vi) 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

The Leader and Cabinet Member's decision on each individual project will be conditional upon planning permission being granted.

## 11. Background Documents

11.1 Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020 <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunities-improving-outcomes>

11.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2017-2021 [http://www.kent.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/66990/Kent-Commissioning-Plan-for-Education-Provision-2017-21.pdf](http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/66990/Kent-Commissioning-Plan-for-Education-Provision-2017-21.pdf)

## 12. Report Author

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