

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

## DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,  
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

## DECISION NO:

**17/00132**

For publication

**Subject: Proposal to increase the physical capacity at Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School from 1 September 2019**

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education I agree to:

- (a) Issue a public notice to
- permanently increase the designated number of the school from 209 to 348 for 1 September 2019
  - alter the lower age range at Meadowfield School to formally include nursery provision for 1 September 2019.

And, subject to no new objections to the public notice

- (b) Allocate £3.95 million from the Children, Young People and Education Capital budget
- (c) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel (Interim) to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council; and
- (d) 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.

**Note:** The proposal for growth is subject to planning permission being secured for the additional accommodation. If, for any reason planning consent is not achieved KCC proposes to regularise the designated number to reflect the current number on roll. Therefore, under these circumstances, the proposed designated number would be 280.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent (2017-21) sets out the intention to commission additional school places in Special schools to increase PSCN provision. The Plan also mentioned a specific need to increase capacity at Meadowfield School

Over the past three years there has been an increasing demand for local places for children with profound, severe and complex special educational needs including Autism. To meet the demand for places in Swale Meadowfield has taken additional pupils. On 30 March 2017, KCC's Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee endorsed the proposal to allocate £1.14 million of capital budget to provide additional accommodation in two phases (Record of Decision reference 17/00015). Meadowfield received a reception class room and new KS1 classrooms to permanently accommodate the additional pupils.

Meadowfield School now has 282 pupils on roll but has a designated number of 209. In accordance with *The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013* ('the Prescribed Alterations Regulations' KCC is conducting an education statutory process in

order to regularise the designated number to reflect not just the current number on roll but also allow for further growth. If, for any reason we are unable to secure planning permission for the additional accommodation, we will regularise the designated number to reflect the current number on roll without the growth. The proposed designated number under these circumstances would therefore be 280.

Subject to planning approval being granted, the final phase (three) of expansion at Meadowfield School would provide continuity of education provision for KS2 and above. New facilities would include: much needed additional sports facilities and reconfiguration of KS2 classrooms

As part of the feasibility process various options were considered including possible sites for offsite 6<sup>th</sup> form provision. However, none of the sites considered were judged as appropriate for the needs of the pupils attending Meadowfield School. It is also important to note that there is no Special school on the Isle of Sheppey (Swale District) which means that significant numbers of pupils often have to travel long distances to the nearest suitable provision such as Maidstone and Tonbridge.

In reaching this decision I have taken into account:

- The need for additional school places in Meadowfield School to meet the increasing demand.
- The views of the local County Councillor, Area Education Officer; Head of SEN Assessment and Placement; Headteacher and Governing Body of Meadowfield School;
- The Equalities Impact Assessment and comments received regarding this; and
- the views of the Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee which are set out below

### **Financial Implications**

- a) Capital – Increasing the school's physical capacity requires the provision of additional accommodation and facilities. The total estimated cost is £3.95 million
- 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.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

**Past Pathway of Paper:** 30 March 2017 - The Education Cabinet Committee considered and endorsed recommendations to release £1.14m capital to provide additional infrastructure for Year R – KS1. An education consultation took place between 10 October 2017 and 14 November 2017. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. The documentation can be viewed online at: [www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

To be added after Committee meeting

Any alternatives considered: Yes.

Meadowfield Special School is the District Special School for Swale meeting the needs of pupils with profound, severe and complex special educational needs (PSCN) for children aged 4 to 19 years. All children who attend have a statement of special educational need or an Education, Health & Care Plan. Meadowfield is judged to be Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted in November 2014.

There is also no Special school on the Isle of Sheppey (Swale District) which means that significant numbers of pupils often have to travel long distances to the nearest suitable provision. Many pupils are transported to Maidstone and Tonbridge.

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

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**Signed**

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**Date**