

From: Matt Dunkley CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

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

Subject: Proposal to increase the physical capacity of Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School from September 2018

Classification: Unrestricted

Decision Number: 18/00046

Past Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Committee – 30 March 2017, 18 January 2018 & 25 September 2018

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: Sittingbourne South – John Wright

Summary:

This report sets out the reasons behind the request to increase the funding allocation from the Children, Young People and Education Capital Budget for the expansion of Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School and informs the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education of the revised cost of the project.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to **CONSIDER** and **AGREE** to Increase the funding allocated from the Children, Young People and Education capital budget to expand Meadowfield Special School from £3,950,000 to £4,792,000.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. 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.
- 1.2. Over the past three years there has been an increasing demand for local places for children with PSCN including Autism. 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.
- 1.3. To meet the demand for places in Swale, Meadowfield has taken additional pupils. On 30 March 2017, KCC's Children and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee endorsed the proposal to allocate £1.14 million of capital budget to provide additional accommodation in two phases (Record of Decision

reference17/00015). Meadowfield received a reception classroom and new KS1 classrooms with associated care suites to accommodate the additional pupils in permanent accommodation. It was recognised that these were the first phases of a building programme to expand the capacity of the school and were required to meet the immediate needs of children coming through from nursery provision where they had been assessed as requiring a special school place.

1.4. On 18 January 2018 the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee considered and endorsed the recommendation to issue a public notice to permanently increase the designated number of the school from 209 – 348 from 1 September 2018 and alter the lower age range at Meadowfield to formally include nursery provision from 1 September 2018.

1.5. The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee also recommended that the Cabinet Member agree to allocate £3.95 million to the project for phases 2 and 3 (Record of Decision 17/00132). The Record of Decision stated that if the cost of the project exceeded the estimated cost by more than 10%, a further Cabinet Member decision would be required to allocate the additional funding.

1.6. The cost of the build programme has since increased by £842,000. This is due to additional costs for the phase 3 build programme. These costs are because of higher specification requirements for materials for the build and design adjustments to meet the specific needs of the students. The costs include a higher specification framework for the building, improved acoustics, air conditioning to classroom areas due to the level of need of the students and an increase in size to the kitchen area.

1.7. During the feasibility and design period for this work the school has been required to take further pupils with very complex needs resulting in an additional project (3a) that was not included in the original plans. This additional project required the addition of 2 new classrooms to accommodate the children who have been placed at Meadowfield. The cost of delivering these classrooms is £ 453,000. It is intended that these two classrooms will be delivered by January 2019, ahead of the main project delivery timescale due to the urgency of the need. The school has made some short-term temporary arrangements to accommodate the additional classes until the building is completed.

2. Financial Implications

2.1. The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee paper of the 18 January 2018 estimated the total cost of the expansion of Meadowfield to be £3.95 Million.

2.2. The revised estimated project cost is now £4,792,000. As the revised estimated project cost is more than 10% of the original estimate, a further decision is required to allocate the additional funds of £842,000. This is a reduction from the original costings presented to Children, Young People and Education on 25 Sept from £5,096,934. At the meeting of the Children, Young People's and Education Cabinet Committee on 25 September Committee, Mr Gough (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education) offered to provide a briefing note to Members of the Committee outside of the meeting, which would give further detail relating to the revised project cost. Mr Gough sent a letter to Members outlining

reasons for the overspend on 23 November 2018 and highlighting the reduction in the estimated costs from £5,096,934 to £4,792,000.

- 2.3. It has been agreed to permanently enlarge Meadowfield (Foundation Special) School, increasing the designated number from 209 to 348 and to alter the lower age range to include nursery provision.

a. Capital

Kent County Council's contribution was agreed on 18 January to be £3.95 million. KCC acknowledged at the time that the final amount may be higher as the costs of the project were an estimate. If the cost of the project is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be asked to make a further decision to allocate additional funding

The reason for the increase in cost is due to design changes to meet the need of the school's students and the addition of 3a phase to meet additional Basic Need pressures.

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.

3 Kent Policy Framework

- 3.1. This proposal will help to secure our ambition "to ensure every child will go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places as set out in the Education Commissioning plan.
- 3.2. The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-21 identified the need to commission additional capacity at Meadowfield School.
- 3.3. Kent's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2017 -2019 Working Together Improving Outcomes identifies the need to Improve provision for, and easy access to, appropriate local services in childcare, education, care and health in order that more families can care for their children in their home and fewer children are educated out of their local area or out of the county. This includes delivering the additional places in Special Schools, new Free Schools and Specialist Resourced Provisions as set out in this Strategy.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. An education consultation took place between 10 October and 14 November 2017 and reported to the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 18 January 2018.

5. Views

- 5.1. Views were sought on the Cabinet paper dated 18 January 2018 from the Local Member, Headteacher, Governing Body, Head of Special Educational Needs and the Area Education Officer. The local member will be provided with a copy of this report and asked for any comments he may have.

6. Proposal Equalities Impact

- 6.1. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the original proposal. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

7. Delegation to Officers

- 7.1. 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.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. The additional costs together with inflationary pressures have led to the increased in capital costs from £3,950,000 to £4,792,000. In order to deliver the expansion of Meadowfield as planned, an extra £842,000 will need to be allocated from the Children, Young People and Education services Capital Budget.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1. The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to **CONSIDER** and **AGREE** to increase the funding allocated from the Children, Young People and Education capital budget to expand Meadowfield Special School from £3,950,000 to £4,792,000.

10. Background Documents

- 10.1. 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>

- 10.2. Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision

www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision

- 10.3. Kent's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2017 -2019 Working Together Improving Outcomes

http://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0012/13323/Strategy-for-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities.pdf

- 10.4. Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee report dated 30 March 2017

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Meadowfield>

10.5. Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee report dated 30 January 2018

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=47521&Opt=0>

11. **Contact details**

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