

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

To: Richard Long TD, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Subject: Proposed change to Broomhill Bank School

Decision Number: 20/00053

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

**Electoral Division: James McInroy - Tunbridge Wells West
Michael Horwood – Swanley**

Summary:

This report sets out a proposal to increase the Designated Number of places at Broomhill Bank School, Broomhill Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 0TB.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is requested to consider and endorse the decision to:

- (i) increase the Designated Number of places at Broomhill Bank School, Broomhill Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 0TB from 210 to 318 places from September 2020.
- (ii) agree to fund the expansion from the CYPE Basic Need Capital Budget.
- (iii) authorise the expenditure of up to £2m to deliver the additional accommodation required for the first phase of building works, required for the School Year commencing in September 2020.
- (iv) delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into necessary contracts or taking other legal actions as required to implement the decision.

The costs of the project are estimates and these may increase as the project is developed. If the cost of the project is greater than 10%, the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC), as the Local Authority, has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. This duty applies to Special Education Needs (SEN) provision, as well as mainstream settings. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-

24 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out KCC's future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. A copy of the plan can be viewed from this link:

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

- 1.2 The Commissioning Plan highlights the SEN place pressure that Kent has experienced, with the number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) increasing significantly in recent years. The most prevalent and fastest growing need type is ASD and data indicates that 40% of children and young people aged 0-25 years with EHCPs have ASD as their primary need type.
- 1.3 The demand for places at Broomhill Bank School has increased commensurately, with strong parental preference. Broomhill Bank has a Designated Number of 210, but there is pressure for the school to accept additional pupils to meet demand in both West and North Kent.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Broomhill Bank Governing Body, with support from Kent County Council (KCC), is proposing to increase the school's Designated Number of places from 210 to 318 places from September 2020. KCC has identified that Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the fastest growing need type and that additional places are needed to meet the demand for places in West and North Kent.
- 2.2 Feasibility work and curriculum analysis has been undertaken across both school sites to ensure the school can meet the needs of the additional number of pupils proposed. This work indicates that the school would need increased classroom provision, car parking and school access changes; alongside enhancement of existing sports provision at the Broomhill Bank North site at Swanley, and additional sports provision at the West site in Tunbridge Wells. Additional modular accommodation would be required on both the West and North sites as well as internal reconfiguration within existing buildings.
- 2.3 Legislation requires that statutory processes are undertaken where:
The proposal is an increase of the designated number by 10% or 20 pupils (whichever is lesser).
- 2.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. The screening found there is no evidence that the change will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably. The school will remain co-educational and continue to welcome pupils placed by KCC regardless of gender identity, race, ethnicity or religion beliefs. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 **Capital** – Feasibility work has been undertaken which estimates the total cost of additional accommodation to be circa £4m, which would be wholly funded by the CYPE Basic Need Capital Budget.

The delivery of the additional accommodation to provide capacity for the increased Designated Number is proposed to be delivered over two phases. The first phase of works will deliver the accommodation required for the School Year beginning in September 2020. Detailed costings have been undertaken for these works and a cost of £2m identified. Planning permission would not be required for the works. This would provide the school with the initial capacity it would need to accommodate a staggered increase in pupil numbers.

The first phase of works would entail the relocation of the sites' receptions, remodelling within the existing accommodation to create additional teaching spaces, the placement of supplementary temporary mobile classrooms and car parking improvements.

A second phase would then be undertaken to provide the school with the new additional accommodation required to gradually admit pupils to a total roll of 318 in subsequent years. This would include the provision and enhancement of sports facilities. Detailed costings for this phase are not yet available and planning permission would be required. Following receipt of planning permission, a refined cost estimate would be presented to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for a Key Decision to be made to release capital funding for this phase.

- 3.2 **Revenue Funding** – Should the scheme progress, £6,000 per new learning space would be provided towards the cost of furniture and equipment. This would be provided to the school to purchase required equipment. In addition, an allowance of up to £2,500 may be payable to outfit each new teaching room with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment. The school would receive funding for the additional pupils that it admits in line with the funding allocated to special schools through KCC's funding formula.

- 3.3 **Human** - The school will appoint additional staff as and when appropriate.

4. **Raising Standards**

- 4.1 Broomhill Bank was judged 'Good' by Ofsted in March 2018, with inspectors stating that 'Leaders have created a warm, nurturing culture in which pupils thrive. Their ambition for pupils to lead fulfilling, independent lives underpins everything the school does'. Broomhill Bank is committed to offering high standards of care and strives to enable all groups of pupils to make excellent progress. The school will recruit additional staff as required to ensure that the high quality of education can be maintained for the additional pupils.

5. **Policy Framework**

- 5.1 The proposal 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 The proposal reflects KCC’s aspirations to provide sufficient school places across the County, as set out in the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-24.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 A public education consultation carried out by the school’s Governing Body, with support from the KCC, is on-going and is scheduled to run from 1st May 2020 to 8th June 2020. A consultation document has been produced together with an Equality Impact Assessment and can be obtained from KCC’s website.
- 6.2 The consultation document has been distributed via the school to parents/carers, members of staff and governors. The consultation is also available on the school and KCC websites and was emailed to all key stakeholders. Interested parties can register their views via an online form available through the KCC consultation webpage. An opportunity to send written responses using a paper response form was provided by the school to families without online access. Due to coronavirus restrictions there will be no ‘drop-in’ information session, however interested parties are able to raise queries and gain further information via email or in writing to the school.
- 6.3 As at the time this report was drafted there have been 5 responses to the consultation, 4 from parents/carers and one from Rusthall Parish Council. Of the parents/carers who responded, 3 were in support of the proposal with one commenting that it would be ‘an excellent move. It will provide more opportunities for current and new students’. One parent/carers responded as ‘undecided’ due to concern regarding the potential for ‘the continuous change in dynamic of students’ that had been evident to them as the school has grown. The Rusthall Parish Council responded as ‘undecided’ but provided no commentary.
- 6.4 In order that his decision is fully informed by the consultation, the Cabinet Member will be provided with a summary of the full responses at the conclusion of the consultation period.

7. Views

7.1 The View of the Local Members

The following KCC Members have been consulted on the proposal:

James McInroy - Tunbridge Wells West
Michael Horwood – Swanley

7.2 The View of the Governing Body

The Governing Body proposed the change and are fully supportive.

7.3 The View of the Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher Steve Ackerley has expressed his full support for the proposal. Please see Appendix A for a copy of Steve Ackerley's letter to parents/carers that provides more detailed information regarding the school improvements incorporated into the proposal.

7.4 The View of the Area Education Officer

The Area Education Officer fully supports this proposal and feels the scheme will help provided much needed ASD places in West and North Kent. The proposal would also enable the school to reduce class sizes and improve the facilities for its pupils.

8. **Conclusions**

- 8.1 This report sets out a proposal to increase the Designated Number of places offered at Broomhill Bank School. The proposed scheme would adopt a two phased approach that enables the school to incrementally increase the number of pupils towards the new Designated Number. As well as offering a significant number of additional ASD places, the proposal will also provide the school with enhanced facilities and additional accommodation. There is a growing demand for ASD provision in West and North Kent and without the additional places provided by this proposal there is the potential for children to have extended travelling times.

9. **Recommendation(s)**

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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](https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s88604/KCP%202019%20-%202023%20_Cabinet%20Committee%20-%20FINAL%20PW.pdf)

10.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2020-2024
https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s88604/KCP%202019%20-%202023%20_Cabinet%20Committee%20-%20FINAL%20PW.pdf

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