

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

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

Subject: Proposal to expand Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 210 places to 300 places from September 2021.

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway: Cabinet Member Decision of Paper

Electoral Division: Sevenoaks, Margaret Crabtree

Summary:

To agree to fund the proposal to expand Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 210 places to 300 places, facilitated by the establishment of a satellite of the school on the Wildernesse site in Sevenoaks, from September 2021 and to publish a Public Notice on the proposal.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to the proposal to:

- (i) expand Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, by increasing the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 210 places to 300 places, facilitated by the establishment of a satellite of the school on the Wildernesse site in Sevenoaks, from September 2021
- (ii) to publish a Public Notice on the proposal.
- (iii) Allocate £15,900,000 from the Children Young People and Education Services Capital Budget.
- (iv) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with KCC General Counsel and Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts / agreements on behalf of the County Council
- (v) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

1. Introduction

1.1. Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2019-23 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our 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. KCC forecasts that there will be significant short and medium-term pressure for additional Year 7 places in the West Kent Selective Planning Group which indicates that additional capacity will be needed for 2020/21 and in later years. The planning group includes all Grammar schools in the districts of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tonbridge Wells
- 1.3. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys has a Published Admission Number of 210. The school has recently accommodated an expansion on their site in Tunbridge Wells and there is no scope for expansion on that site.
- 1.4. In order to expand Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys by 3FE, KCC are proposing that a satellite of the school is established on the Wilderness site in Sevenoaks.
- 1.5. To facilitate this expansion, a new block is proposed, together with work to update and refurbish the outdoor sporting facilities and social spaces. This work would be carried out to allow a September 2021 intake, meaning the school would be able to offer 90 additional Year 7 places for September 2021.
- 1.6. In 2012, Kent County Council agreed to identify and pursue options to increase Grammar provision in Sevenoaks area.

2. Alternative Proposals

- 2.1. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys was judged Good by Ofsted in January 2017. It is a popular school with parents. It is the nearest selective school to Sevenoaks town, that is not 'super-selective'.
- 2.2. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys has indicated that they would be committed to expanding on their school on to the Sevenoaks site. No other school is being proposed or suggested as being the subject of a proposal to expand onto the Wilderness site.
- 2.3. The majority of Kent Grammar schools are now Academies. Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys remains a community Grammar school maintained by KCC and it is therefore entirely within the purview of KCC to propose an expansion and to make a determination to proceed.
- 2.4. If no action is taken, Kent County Council will find it extremely difficult to fulfil the Council decision made in March 2012 to provide local selective secondary school places in Sevenoaks.

3. Financial Implications

3.1. Capital

3.2. In line with the agreement of Cabinet Committee on 7 May 2019, the capital figure previously reported was a budget estimate for information only. Estimates were then refined as detailed design work was undertaken and the scheme progressed through the planning process. Following receipt of planning permission, the refined cost estimate is being presented to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for a key decision to be made.

3.3. The cost has been finalised at £15,900,000.

3.4. In addition, an allowance of up to £2500 may be payable to outfit the teaching room with appropriate ICT equipment, such as touch screens or projection equipment.

3.5. **Revenue**

3.6. An allowance is payable of £6,000 for each new teaching space.

3.7. **Human**

The school will appoint additional staff as it grows over the years.

4. **Kent Policy Framework**

4.1. The 'Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, 2019-23 identified a pressure on 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)'.

4.2. The provision of sufficient school places is a statutory duty and contributes to the Strategic Business Plan Priorities to ensure that "Children and Young People in Kent get the best start in life".

5. **Consultation**

5.1. KCC has completed a Public Consultation that ran from 28 October 2019 to 6 December 2019.

5.2. The consultation was held for the community and other stakeholders, and included the following groups: all schools in the Sevenoaks District, Elected Members (Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council), Parish and Town Councils, Local MPs, Dioceses of Rochester and Southwark, Residents groups where known and Children's Centres.

5.3. A drop-in session was held at Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys on 13 November 2019. The head teacher, Chair of Governors, KCC Officers and Gen2 were on hand to answer any questions.

5.4. A full Public Meeting was held on the Wilderness site on 20 November 2019, the results of which were reported in January 2020.

6. Cabinet Committee

- 6.1 At its meeting on 10 January 2020, the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee considered the proposed and recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills that the decision outlined above was taken.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An assessment has been completed and identified the following positive impacts, an increase in total number of places available to meet the needs of students with disabilities and/or SEN, more families able to access good school places and school places available to students with and without faith-based backgrounds. There were no negative impacts identified.

8. Views

8.1. The Local Member

- 8.2. Margaret Crabtree has been informed of the proposal.

8.3. Area Education Officer

- 8.4. The analysis of the demand for secondary selective provision in the area, indicates that there are immediate and future pressures and we need the additional capacity provided by this proposed expansion. This satellite site offers the opportunities to address the forecasted demand, the Council's decision to pursue Grammar school education in Sevenoaks and crucially, to reduce the need for many students to travel excessive distances.

- 8.5. In addition, this proposal would increase opportunities for children in Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling, regardless of their circumstances. I therefore, fully support the proposal.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The Council has determined that it wants a boys grammar provision in Sevenoaks. This is to reduce the time spent by students travelling to school.
- 9.2. The demand in the planning group cannot be adequately met using other sites.
- 9.3. The Head teacher and Chair of Governors of Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys are in favour and has put in the necessary planning to ensure that the satellite can be integrated with the main school site.

- 9.4. The consultation returned an overwhelming response in favour of the proposal. Most of those favourable responses were from parents and carers resident in Sevenoaks, with boys currently at primary school.
- 9.5. The proposal has been tested against the Department for Education criteria for a satellite expansion and found to be well within the bounds of acceptability that the provision is part of an existing school in every way.

10. Recommendations

Recommendations:

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11. Background Documents

- 11.1. Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-thecouncil/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunitiesimproving-outcomes>

- 11.2. Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision

www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision

- 11.3. Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee Report:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/g8276/Public%20reports%20pack%2010th-Jan-2020%2010.00%20Childrens%20Young%20People%20and%20Education%20Cabinet%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

11.4. Equality Impact Assessment

https://kcccconsultations.inconsult.uk/gf2.ti/f/1080450/58011205.1/DOCX/-/TW_Grammar_EqIA.docx

12. Contact details

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