



Leicester  
City Council

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***Additional School places:  
Through the expansion of  
special schools and the  
creation of Designated  
Special Provision***

Decision to be taken by: Assistant City Mayor, Education  
and Housing

Decision to be taken on: 17 July 2020

Lead director: Richard Sword

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: all
- Report author: Richard Sword, Director of capital programmes and Kevin O'Brien, Interim Head of SEND
- Author contact details: richard.sword@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version v1

### 1. Summary:

1.1 This report seeks approval for the release of capital funding for expansion works to the following special schools, and the creation of Designated Specialist Provision (DSP) and Specialist Units in 10 locations across the city, in order to increase SEND places in the city by 228 children on a permanent basis.

- Leicester Partnership School,
- Ellesmere College,
- Netherhall School,
- Designated Specialist Provision across 10 locations in the city,

1.2 The aforementioned schools and creation of DSPs forms part of Leicester City Council's school expansion programme to create extra permanent special school places linked to long term projected demand for children with SEND.

1.3 The reports seek to articulate the issues of SEND demand, in both a national and local context, whilst demonstrating the business case for expansion linked to the long term need of SEND within Leicester City.

### 2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To approve funding totalling **£8,122,379** from the capital programme new school places policy provision as detailed within section 11 of this report.

### 3.0 National Context

3.1 Pressures for Special School Places has continued to rise significantly over the last 5 years. Latest figures from the Department for Education (DfE) show that there are now 354,000 children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) in England, an increase of 11% in 2018 alone.

### 4.0 Local Context

4.1 Within Leicester City, the number of pupils with an EHCP has risen steadily over the last 4 years from approximately 1400 in 2014 to 2500 this year. The areas of growth have been particularly strong in children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

On current projections the need for children with an ECHP across the city is to

continue to grow to 3000 by 2023, of this demand profile 1307 will need a special school place. Special Schools in the City are at maximum capacity with current buildings and resources at 1058 places, and there is currently a shortage of specialist places.

The average cost of placing children with SEND in an out of county placement setting is £45k per place, this is in contrast to the current average £24.6k per place which can be provided across LA maintained school. Therefore, investment to expand the schools and increase special provision, will not only have a positive effect on the lives of children within the city, and the distance they travel to school, but also positively reduce out of city placement costs.

## **5.0 Response to meet SEND demand:**

5.1 Pupils with SEND have a broad range of needs that are not always aligned with a particular type of school structure. Therefore, we need to ensure we create a spectrum of provision that effectively meets a diverse range of SEND needs. We have undertaken in depth analysis to look at the increasing profile of need across the city and have identified that the following solutions listed below within this report are the best options to address the expected growth in population of SEND children in city. The proposed provision is as follows:

### **Designated Special Provision:**

5.2 Designated Special Provision (DSP) is a model for offering a co-located specialist facility which allows pupils with SEND, who have additional needs which would normally be beyond the capacity of the mainstream environment, to have those needs met whilst still being able to access a mainstream curriculum.

5.3 The intention of a DSP is that pupils will still access a significant amount of mainstream lessons but have the support of the DSP for certain aspects of their learning and for other needs. Many children with special needs can be successfully included into a mainstream school. Maintaining a place in a mainstream setting gives access to a broader curriculum for pupils with SEND and attainments are typically higher for pupils where this is an option. In addition educating pupils with SEND alongside their peers in mainstream has significant benefits both for the pupils with SEND, who have access to the wider social life of the school, but also for the wider school community as it creates a more diverse and inclusive culture. We want our schools to be effective so that pupils learn and achieve but we also want them to be inclusive so that where possible pupils with SEND have the opportunity to learn with their peers; the DSP provision supports both of these goals. .

5.4 In conclusion, without a DSP as an option, the only feasible alternative is a move to a special school with a greater degree of specialism and intensity of provision than is actually needed. On this basis we have approached several schools across the city and propose to create a range of DSPs and Units, which will make effective provide for a wide range of pupils with SEND. These units will allow children to still be in a mainstream setting and not travel considerable distances to school. The proposed DSPs are as follows:

School	Numbers being provided	Provision	Works Needed	Date to be delivered	Cost
Sandfield Close Primary School KS 1-2	10	• ASD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal alterations: classroom, WC, Access control</li> <li>External alterations: Fencing, possible play space requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potentially Sept 2020 subject to contractors/ materials</li> <li>Alternatively, Oct 2020</li> </ul>	£50k
Rushey Mead Primary School KS 1-2	10	• ASD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TMB required to move from Barley Croft</li> <li>Minor external landscaping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan 2021, if building consents etc. completed</li> </ul>	£320k
Kestrel Mead Primary School (TMET)	8	• ASD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal building modification – requested details from TMET</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potentially Sept 2020</li> </ul>	c. £50K
Willow Brook Mead (TMET) KS 1-2	8	• SEMH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TMB required, site visit need to ascertain full requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBC subject to TMB availability</li> </ul>	£150
Fulbourn Community College KS 3-4	10	• Communication & Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal classroom modifications</li> <li>External place space &amp; access control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requested Sept 2020, school has proposed Jan 2021, currently in negotiation</li> </ul>	£70k
Orchard Mead (TMET) KS 3-4	12	• SEMH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modification of bungalow space – plans received, awaiting final costs &amp; timeline from contractors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sept 2020</li> </ul>	£280k
Hearing and Early Years Units	10	• Hearing impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist unit on each site would free up mainstream places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sept 2021</li> </ul>	£100k
Early Years Units	10	• ASD/SEMH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist unit on each site would free up mainstream places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sept 2021</li> </ul>	£100k
Mellor and Braunstone Primary	20	• ASD SEMH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal alterations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tbc</li> </ul>	TBC Prov £100k

## 5.4 Costs:

The above would provide 98 DSPs across the city, catering for a range of need from ASD, SEMH to hearing impairment, at a cost of **£1,220,000**.

## 6.0 Netherhall Special School:

6.1 Netherhall is a special school with 108 pupils currently on roll and provides education for pupils aged 4-19 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. A significant number of pupils have additional and associated needs including, speech, language, communication and interaction difficulties. Approximately 30% of pupils have a diagnosis of autism.

6.2 The school was rated good following an Ofsted inspection in March 2017 and has a reputation for providing effective provision to for some of the most complex children and young people with SEND in the City.

6.3 Nether Hall school was rebuilt in 2014 for 85 pupils, the school is currently at capacity with 108 pupils on roll. (Planned places for 2020/21 are 110). Original specialist rooms have been adapted into classrooms and some storage has been re-purposed as small teaching spaces. Restricted outdoor space prohibits building development onsite and therefore the only option to expand the school would be off site.

6.4 A review of the existing corporate estate was undertaken, which assessed buildings which would be appropriate to accommodate the expansion of Netherhall school and during this process the Armadale Centre was identified. It was determined that the proposed re-development of the Armadale Centre, will provide teaching space for three classes. The facility would accommodate an additional 30 pupils, the majority aged 16+.

6.5 The site would include a large central space to be used for pupil dining, communal activities as well as providing opportunities to operate a café accessible to

the local community. The facilities would also include space dedicated to providing independent living and personal development teaching opportunities and grounds that incorporate gardens including a polytunnel and raised vegetable beds for vocational teaching. In addition, the centre would have office, staff and meeting spaces as well as a small teaching area. The centre would include a changing space, increasing the local authorities' facilities for people with complex personal care needs.

6.6 The Armadale Centre site is in close proximity to local facilities that would be accessed to further develop pupil independence. A range of shops and health facilities can be accessed by crossing one minor road, allowing pupils to shop and practice skills more regularly within the community. There is a bus stop within a short walk, enabling a greater emphasis on travel training. Pupils' health and fitness can be enhanced by the proximity of the local park with fitness equipment and the nearby MUGA facility allowing for team games. There are already links in the local area for work experience opportunities for pupils and these could be increased. The café, gardens and office would provide real life vocational learning opportunities on site for pupils. The curriculum would enable pupils, for whom it is appropriate, to achieve vocational qualifications.

6.7 The local community will benefit from a facility with excellent access and a changing space. Local care homes, with whom we have links would be welcomed to the café, providing a secure space for residents to visit as well as adults with additional needs living within the community. The café would also welcome members of the local community.

**Extent of proposed works:**

6.8 Following detailed curriculum analysis and having undertaken a building bulletin 104 guidance review, the following new accommodation is required to enable the school to expand to accommodate 30 pupils on a permanent basis

- 3 Classrooms,
- 1 Withdrawal spaces,
- WCs, with separation between sex, staff and children
- Kitchen,
- 1 meeting room,
- Laundry Room,
- Changing space

Some external works will be required in the form of soft landscaping around the existing and new build areas of the site to ensure safe movement of children.

**Costs:**

6.9 An elemental cost plan has been produced based on a detailed RIBA stage 1 feasibility study which demonstrates funding totalling **£1,466,793** is required.

## **7.0 Ellesmere Special School:**

7.1 Ellesmere is a special school with 285 students on roll with a range of special educational needs from Early Years through to Post-16. The school has good practice in the areas of autism, Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), visual and hearing impairment

7.2 The school was rated good following an Ofsted inspection in May 2017 and is known for providing a wider range of provision to meet SEND needs.

7.3 The current site has reached its maximum capacity and it has also been identified that moving the 6<sup>th</sup> Form off site would be positive development for the pattern of provision. It is also recognised that it will improve the transition from school to college and prepare pupils for effectively for transition to adulthood. Therefore a review of the existing corporate estate was undertaken, which assessed buildings which are close to the city centre and would be appropriate to accommodate the expansion of Ellesmere school. During this process the Rowan's in Highfields located just off London Road, was identified as an appropriate building to meet this need. It was determined that the proposed re-development of the Rowans, will provide teaching space for 70 pupils, the majority aged 16+.

7.4 Changing the usage of The Rowans for Ellesmere College Post-16 would provide a bespoke setting for 60-70 16-19 year olds with SEND within the City of Leicester and in turn free up 60-70 places for younger pupils with SEND at the existing Ellesmere School site. The proposal to move the Post-16 nearer to the city centre will enable a work related curriculum where young people with SEND will have access to work experience, supported internships, vocational learning and enterprise opportunities.

7.5 Being close to the city centre will also enable our young people to access public transport services. Moving post 16 children away from the school where some students will have been since 5 years old will also help teach independence. Having their own kitchen will also enable students to run an enterprise making the school meals for the rest of the 6<sup>th</sup> form. The conference suite in particular will enable students to run a business hiring out the serviced meeting space for meetings/training. They would be involved in all aspects of the business from booking the space to providing the refreshments and managing the finances. This is not something the school are able to offer from the current accommodation where the current curriculum has to fit the constraints of a traditional school building. The Rowans provides the space required in a desirable city centre location and can become a flagship Post-16 provision for young people with SEND within the city.

### **Extent of proposed works:**

7.6 Following detailed curriculum analysis and having undertaken a building bulletin 104 guidance review, the following new accommodation is required to enable the school to expand to accommodate 70 pupils on a permanent basis

- 6 Classrooms,

- 1 Withdrawal/ Intervention space
- 1 reception room,
- 1 assembly room,
- WCs, with separation between sex, staff and children
- Kitchen,
- 1 conference suite
- 1 common room

7.7 Some external works will be required in the form of soft landscaping around the existing and new build areas of the site to ensure safe movement of children and clear separation the collegiate house which is currently being put forward for re-development.

**Costs:**

7.8 An elemental cost plan has been produced based on a detailed RIBA stage 1 feasibility study which demonstrates funding totalling **£3,573,695** is required.

**8.0 The Leicestershire Partnership School**

8.1 The primary function of Leicestershire Partnership School is to provide a range of educational provision for young people between the ages of 11-16 years. The offer both academic and vocational courses, to children who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion.

8.2 The school is rated good by Ofsted at its last inspection in July 2019, and it was noted that *“The large majority of pupils return to mainstream education. This is because they make significant progress in learning to manage their behavior”*

8.3 Over the last 12 months, LPS have extended their offer to pupils with EHCPs who are not able to access a special school place. Through this they have demonstrated that they are able to meet this need and have developed a curriculum that matches the needs of these pupils. The provision offers a mix of core skills and vocational learning which is well matched to the needs of the pupils with SEMH.

8.4 The further development of this provision has been limited by the capacity and constraints at the existing Carisbrooke Centre site. Therefore a review of the existing corporate estate was undertaken, which assessed buildings which were close to the LPS facility and would be appropriate to accommodate the expansion of LPS. During this process 80 Knighton Lane was identified as an appropriate building to meet this need.

8.5 The intention is to provide a continuum of provision at 80 Knighton Lane that sits alongside the current LPS provision that meets the needs of young people with SEMH who are no longer able to remain in mainstream provision and are therefore at risk of requiring independent provision. LPS will offer KS3 and KS4 provision with both academic and vocational courses. In addition at KS4 LPS will work in partnership to offer a range of vocational courses from a quality assured network of alternative provision (AP) providers. These AP providers offer a range of vocational

courses and LPS works closely with them to ensure that the courses that they offer are of a high quality.

8.6 Expansion of the school will provide an additional 40 places for pupils with SEMH and an EHCP above the core provision currently offered.

**Extent of proposed works:**

8.7 Following detailed curriculum analysis and having undertaken a building bulletin 104 guidance review, the following new accommodation is required to enable the school to expand to accommodate 40 pupils on a permanent basis, as follows:

- 3 Classrooms,
- Science Laboratory,
- Staff room/Kitchen,
- Assembly/sports hall,
- Lobby, reception and visiting area,
- Behaviour and intervention room,
- Staff rooms and workshop spaces,
- Staff offices,

8.8 Some external works will be required to the car parking and entrance area. This is to ensure clear separation and safe movement of children across the existing site, which has an adjacent nursery.

**Costs:**

8.9 An elemental cost plan has been produced based on a detailed RIBA stage 1 feasibility study which demonstrates funding totalling **£1,861,891** is required.

**9.0 Progress to date:**

9.1 A detailed feasibility has been undertaken on all sites up to RIBA stage 1 have been completed.

9.2 A cost plan and measure were taken from the feasibility and provided to the authority and following a technical review by the Capital Programmes Team has been accepted to be accurate.

**10.0 Proposed Programme:**

10.1 The following is proposed programme of activities for all special school projects:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Estimated Time Periods</b>
RIBA 2	June 2020
RIBA 3	July 2020
Tenders Issued	August 2020
Submission of planning	August 2020



Start on Site	September 2020
Practical completion	January 2021

**Procurement:**

10.2 In order to achieve best value for money it is proposed that the works are procured via the authority's construction framework, on a negotiated basis due to timescales. The framework has contractors who have delivered schools projects of this nature before and any proposed costs will be bench marked to ensure value for money.

**Risk and Issues:**

10.3 The design team have undertaken continual design risk analysis across in order to identify and mitigate against any of these. A detailed risk register and mitigation strategy has been developed as part of this project. There are, however, still some remaining risks against the project as follows:

- Due to the nature of these buildings, it has not been possible to conduct an asbestos demolition and refurbishment survey. T
- Current information for the sites indicates a significant upgrade of mechanical and electrical infrastructure,
- Rowans is a grade 2 listed, and whilst discussions have been held into the planning, it is likely that this process will take a considerable amount of time,
- Despite continued effort the project team have been unable to identify the capacity of the substation and incoming main services these have not been verified at this time

10.4 To date all specialist surveys have been undertaken as far as reasonably possible to mitigate our risk. The above risk remains outstanding and that basis an increased level of contingency and costed mitigation strategy has been included within the current proposed project costings.

**11.0 Decision Required**

11.1 To approve funding totalling **£8,122,379** from the capital programme new school place policy provision.

**12.0 Financial, legal and other implications**

12.1 Financial implications

The report proposes to commit £8,122 m for the expansion of SEND provision from the capital programme policy provision for new school places. This is affordable within the expected future calls upon the provision.

The additional one off increase of £6m in our High Needs Block (HNB) allocation in 2020/21 has only addressed the shortfall in the allocation from 2019/20. The continued growth in SEN numbers and costs is not matched by the ongoing increases to the HNB formula allocation. The allocation only increases by £4k per additional special school place and it is calculated on a lagged basis. This falls significantly short of a special school or DSP placement cost or for that matter the cost of support that is provided to pupils who remain in the mainstream setting.

Based on the current DfE formula funding allocation and estimated placement costs the revenue impact net of additional funding for these 238 places alone could add a further £3.7m on an annual basis to the HNB shortfall.

Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance, ext.37 4081

Martin Judson, Head of Finance

## 12 .2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report. All works should be procured in line with the procurement rules and legal services should be engaged as early as possible in relation to the projects.

Emma Jackman, Head of Law (Commercial, Property & Planning).

## 12.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

Schools were responsible for 41% of the city council's carbon footprint in 2018/19. Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, addressing emissions from schools is vital to meet Leicester City Council's ambition for both the council and the city as a whole to reach carbon neutrality.

When any new buildings are constructed or existing buildings are redeveloped or refurbished, they should be designed to be as low carbon and sustainable as practical. As such opportunities to increase energy efficiency in the new and refurbished buildings should be taken wherever possible, including through use of sustainable building materials, high levels of insulation, low carbon heating, renewable energy sources and energy efficient lighting. This will help to minimise carbon emissions as well as significantly reducing ongoing energy costs, acting as an example for other local projects and increasing comfort levels for occupants.

The works will nonetheless be required to follow building regulations and policy CS2 of the Adopted Leicester Core Strategy where applicable, which require best practice in terms of minimising energy demand for heating, ventilation and lighting, achieving a high level of fabric efficiency, and the use of low carbon or renewable sources of energy. Additional or alternative measures may need to be investigated where the existing buildings are listed, as noted in the report.

**Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284**

#### 12.4 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report seeks approval for the release of capital funding for expansion works in order to increase SEND places in the city by 228 children on a permanent basis. There are no direct equality impacts arising from the report however, this is likely to have positive impacts in terms of the aim of the PSED to advance equality of opportunity, particularly in relation to the protected characteristic/s of age and/ or disability and have a positive effect on the lives of children within the city, and the distance they travel to school.

Accessible and inclusive design will support the general aims of the PSED and will be beneficial particularly in removing barriers to participation.

Surinder Singh Equalities Officer Tel 37 4148

#### 12.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

#### **13. Background information and other papers:**

None

#### **14. Summary of appendices:**

None

#### **15. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

**16. Is this a “key decision”?**

Yes

**17. If a key decision please explain reason**

Capital expenditure in excess of £1m.