

CABINET
14 July 2020

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) CAPITAL PROJECTS
– ADDITIONAL RELEASE OF FUNDS**

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Jon Clarke, Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adults Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek release of government grant to fund the creation of additional school places for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

Summary

2. Cabinet previously agreed the SEND strategy and a key element of which was increased provision of school places for young people with (SEMH) needs to allow more young people to be education locally.
3. Two schools agreed to work with the Council to provide additional places and Cabinet agreed to release government grant to fund the schemes.
4. This report updates Cabinet on the final designs and costs following consultation with the schools, completion of the planning process and final tenders. A number of the elements in producing a final design and cost have been impacted by COVID19.
5. Additional release of government grant to cover the final design costs of these projects is requested in this report.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Members agree to release the remaining £148,837 from the Special Provision Fund allocation and an additional £906,520 from the Basic Need Capital allocation. The additional costs for individual projects are listed below, with a further breakdown in the main body of the report:
 - (a) Red Hall Primary +£65,709
 - (b) Rise Carr College +£989,648

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) Release of the additional funds will enable capital investment to be undertaken in the SEND areas identified with the greatest need; and
 - (b) Development of the SEMH units will provide an important link in the escalation process for children and young with SEND to reduce the number who eventually progress into specialist provision, often out of area.

Suzanne Joyner
Director of Children and Adults Services

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S17 Crime and Disorder	Capital investment to improve local facilities will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	The capital projects outlined in this report will continue the Council's drive to provide buildings that enhance children's life chances and opportunities to thrive.
Carbon Impact	All work undertaken will be designed and constructed with sustainability in mind and aim to reduce the carbon footprint, and re-use energy and environmental resources.
Diversity	These projects will allow children with special educational needs to be educated in the local community.
Wards Affected	Schools located in: North Road and Red Hall & Lingfield.
Groups Affected	Children and young people of school age (5-16) in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision due to the amount of funding Members are requested to release.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Capital Programme is consistent with Aspiring Darlington: providing high quality facilities that support modern approaches to education in schools and for lifelong learning.
Efficiency	These projects should reduce the number of pupils travelling outside of the borough to specialist placements
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The proposed projects have the potential to make available additional provision for Looked After Children or Care Leavers with SEMH

MAIN REPORT

Background

8. The SEND Strategy that was approved by Cabinet in March 2019 identified a number of key priorities these included:
 - (a) Ensuring that young people are in the right placement with the right support
 - (b) Building capacity in mainstream settings to enable children and young people to be education in appropriate settings locally
 - (c) Achieving 'Best Value' (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services
9. The SEND Strategy also identified a need to commission local provision to meet need and manage demand. This included a primary SEMH base and a secondary SEMH base.
10. Following a selection exercise Red Hall Primary School came out as the successful bidder for the SEMH primary base and Rise Carr College for the SEMH secondary base. There were no other suitable bids.

Additional Costs / Risks

11. The original Cabinet paper identified a number of risks, these included:
 - (a) Planning, highways and other statutory body requirements impacting on the proposed projects
 - (b) Potential objections to the 'prescribed alteration' during the consultation
 - (c) Unforeseen site specifics or adverse weather
12. The local authority took a number of actions to mitigate these risks including undertaking environmental surveys and initial discussions with statutory bodies. However, through the planning process the design was developed taking into considerations identified through the planning consultation process. This resulted in the following design changes:
 - (a) Location of the building was amended to be more sympathetic to the existing listed building.
 - (b) Tree locations and potential TPO's also influenced the building location.
 - (c) Link between the new and existing building had to avoid the trees and be low impact in construction design.
 - (d) The design had to be more sympathetic to the existing building and its listed status which included the addition of steeper pitches to the roof segments.

- (e) Level and siting of the building had to be reconsidered to be less impacting to the existing structure and sit not much higher than the existing boundary hedge.
 - (f) A high level of detail externally to match the existing Grade II building architecture, brick features and the use of glazed bricks to mimic the existing interior design.
 - (g) The use of high-quality materials for the windows and roof were deemed necessary to match and complement the existing listed building.
13. As well as the planning and listed building requirements a number of changes were deemed necessary by the school due to end user requirements, these included:
- (a) Internal alterations to resolve safeguarding concerns in relation to access and egress links. This involved converting a Classroom into the Main Administration Office, this is located off the Main Entrance Lobby allowing direct contact with visitors whilst providing a segregated means of egress within the 'secure' portion of the building. For the same purpose it was also determined that this new Reception Office would be the Access point for all visitors, thus concentrating visitor flow to a dedicated area.
 - (b) As a result of concentrating the access point it was deemed necessary to provide a covered walkway to link the adjacent SEND building. Predominately for use by School staff and other affiliated professional workers.
 - (c) A new Classroom was proposed to the rear of the building by means of extending an existing Meeting Room, this is to re-provide the classroom used to for the Administration Office.
 - (d) The Head Teacher will also relocate within the Administration Office enabling minor adaptations within the existing Head Teachers Office to provide a large Meeting Room.
 - (e) An addition of a small group room for children with severe SEMH to be taught in on a 1:1 basis, located within the proposed SEND Building
14. The above amendments to the scheme and final tenders have led to the following revised estimates.

	Outline costs approved by Cabinet 10 Sep 2019	Revised costs following detailed planning	Difference
Red Hall	£1,572,289	£1,637,998	£65,709
Rise Carr	£1,526,920	£2,516,568	£989,648
Total	£3,099,209	£4,154,566	£1,055,357

15. The additional £65,709 for the Red Hall SEN Unit is to cover the increased timescales due to Covid-19 social distancing requirements. The additional funding requirement for the Rise Carr College can be broken down as follows:

Identified Items	Revised costs
Planning requirements and subsequent design changes (see paragraph 12 above)	£484,298
Additional condition works to main buildings identified through survey – window and roof repairs	£346,404
Internal refurbishments identified by the school (see paragraph 13 above)	£96,546
Covid 19 delays	£62,400
Total additional costs	£989,648

Financial Benefits and Implications

16. All expenditure on these schemes are fully funded by Government grant so there is no direct financial impact on the Council.
17. The Council has funding available for school works as follows :-

	£'s
Special SEND Grant	148,837
Basic Need Funding	4,773,841
Total	4,922,678

18. It is recommended that the balance of the special SEND grant be utilised and £906,520 from the Basic Need Funding.
19. The remaining balance on the Basic Needs Funding has no other competing priorities at this stage so the utilisation of it will not impact on any other schemes.
20. The building of the SEND units will provide more local SEND provision for young people with SEMH and also help reduce the number of costly out of area placements. As well as the benefits to those young people being able to access local provision and the reduced travel time and associated costs, total placement savings for the High Needs budget are projected to be just over £1 million per annum once the units reach full capacity.