

**CABINET  
9 NOVEMBER 2021**

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**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE**

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

**Responsible Director -  
James Stroyan, Group Director of People**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Cabinet on the progress regarding the two SEND capital projects.

**Summary**

2. In 2019 Cabinet agreed the SEND strategy, a key element of which was increased provision of school places for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, allowing more young people to be educated locally.
3. Two schools agreed to work with the Council to provide those additional places and Cabinet agreed to release government grant to fund the schemes.
4. This report updates Cabinet on the current position regarding build progress and budget for the two SEND Units.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that Members note progress.

**Reason**

6. To keep Cabinet up to date with the progress of the two SEND units.

**James Stroyan,  
Group Director of People**

**Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

S17 Crime and Disorder	Capital investment to improve local facilities will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	The capital projects will continue the Council's drive to provide buildings that enhance children's life chances and opportunities to thrive.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	All work undertaken has been 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	No.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Council Plan	The Capital Programme is consistent with the Council Plan providing high quality facilities that support modern approaches to education in schools and for lifelong learning which help increase attainment.
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 projects have the potential to make available additional provision for Looked After Children or Care Leavers with SEMH.

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

7. 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 in education in appropriate settings locally;
  - (c) Achieving “Best Value” (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. On 11 June 2020 Cabinet approved the revised costs following detailed planning permission. These were:

	Approved Budget
Red Hall	£1,637,998
Rise Carr	£2,516,568
Total	£4,154,566

### Financial Benefits and Implications

11. All expenditure on these schemes are fully funded by Government grant so there is no direct financial impact on the Council.

### Progress to Date

12. The Red Hall SEND Unit is now complete and handed over to the school on 15th March 2021 and opened to pupils in September 2021. The majority of the planned external works were completed during the school Summer holidays, with the remediation of a section of footpath to be completed in the October half term.
13. The new SEND unit at Rise Carr was handed over to the school at the end of July 2021 and opened to pupils in September 2021. Some remaining external landscaping works and additional works on the existing building are due to complete by the end of the October half term 2021.
14. Subject to receipt of a small number of final invoices both projects are expected to come in on budget, despite delays and material cost increases caused by the pandemic. Final accounts should be available by the end of the year once all invoices are processed.

15. The Red Hall Unit provides 16 primary SEMH places whilst Rise Carr provides 15 secondary SEMH places plus 4 assessment places. These new units will allow more young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Issues to undertake their learning in Darlington and also reduce the number of expensive, out of area placements.