

**CABINET
8 SEPTEMBER 2026**

RED HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL – CAPITAL WORKS

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Nick Wallis, Children and Young People Portfolio**

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet's agreement (and subsequently Council) to release £928,305 to fund priority capital works at Red Hall Primary School to bring the school up to a satisfactory condition, and so that the school can academise and be moved into the Education Village Academy Trust (EVAT).

Summary

2. Two condition surveys of Red Hall Primary, both undertaken by external consultants, have identified a significant amount of capital works as part of the due diligence process for academisation. The council, as the responsible body, is required to ensure that the school is handed over in a safe and sound condition. This report proposes that the priority works identified in the survey are funded through council borrowing of £890,755 (plus a contribution of £37,550 from the DfE School Capital Allocation) in order for the academisation to go ahead. The cost of the borrowing will be around £61,500 per annum over 30 years.
3. It is proposed that the capital funds are paid to the academy trust as a grant to undertake the identified works (most of which will need to take place in Summer 2027), this will allow them to meet the proposed academisation date of 1 January 2027. It will also ensure that any liability of cost overrun sits with the trust. The trust is aware that this will be a one-off payment and responsibility for future capital works will sit with the trust.
4. If the request is not approved the council would still have to find the funds to undertake all the necessary priority works, as the DfE grant is not sufficient, and it would retain responsibility for any subsequent capital works that arose. The priority works are currently estimated to be between £1.4m and £1.8m. EVAT are fully aware of the

estimated cost range for the work needed and have considered this when requesting funding of £0.928m from the council.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Cabinet recommend to Council to approve and release £928,305 to EVAT to fund priority capital works at Red Hall Primary School.

Reasons

6. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons: -
- (a) Agreement for the release of funding will bring the school up to a satisfactory condition and allow the academisation of Red Hall Primary School.
 - (b) Department for Education best practice guidance suggest that councils are responsible for ensuring maintained schools are in a safe and sound condition prior to academisation. If the council does not meet it's responsibilities the academisation will not proceed and the school would remain the council's responsibility, with the works still needing to be undertaken in the near future.

**James Stroyan,
Executive Director of People**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Paul Richardson: Extension 6015

Council Plan	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – supporting the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations Undertaking the necessary works would enhance the learning environment at the schools and make it safe and sound for pupils.
Addressing inequalities	All pupils at Red Hall primary will have access to a safe and sound learning environment.
Tackling Climate Change	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.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The amount proposed to fund will meet the Council's responsibilities and any continuing liabilities will sit with the Trust
Health and Wellbeing	All pupils at Red Hall primary will have access to a safe and sound learning environment.
S17 Crime and Disorder	Not applicable

Wards Affected	Red Hall and Lingfield
Groups Affected	Pupils at Red Hall Primary School
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This development has the potential to impact on looked after children who are pupils at Red Hall Primary.

MAIN REPORT

Background

7. As part of the due diligence process the Education Village Academy Trust (EVAT) commissioned Eddison's, a company of chartered surveyors, to undertake a condition survey of Red Hall Primary School, prior to their academisation and absorption into the EVAT.
8. Due to the cost of the works required EVAT put a hold on the academisation of Red Hall until a resolution was found and informed the DfE accordingly.
9. In accordance with Department for Education (DfE) due diligence best practice guide the existing responsible body (in this case DBC) should resolve any health and safety issues prior to the transfer of the school to the new sponsor. They are also responsible for ensuring that school buildings are:
 - (a) safe – including fire safety
 - (b) weatherproof
 - (c) have sufficient space, heating, lighting and ventilation
10. Despite the DfE doubling the allocation in 2025/26 the local authority has only received £150,198 from the 2026/27 DfE School Condition Allocation (SCA) to undertake condition works across all five settings in the maintained sector. Whilst this funding is not school specific the formula would suggest that Red Hall would generate around 25% of that (roughly £37,550). This funding will be used to offset the total cost of £928,305, but only for 2026/27, once the school academises the local authority will no longer receive this funding.

Information and analysis

11. The Eddison's survey (received on 21 February 2025) identified an estimated £1,141,700 of costs over a five-year period.

12. To validate those costs the local authority commissioned its own surveys which reported in November 2025.
13. The tasks identified in both surveys have been categorised along industry standards as shown in the table below:

Condition Rating	Definition
A - Good	Performing as intended.
B - Satisfactory	Performing as intended, but exhibiting minor deterioration
C - Poor	Exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended
D - Bad	Life-expired and/or at serious risk of imminent failure.

Priority Rating	Definition
Priority 1	Immediate or year 1 remedial action required
Priority 2	Year 1 - 2 action required
Priority 3	Year 3 - 5 action required
Priority 4	5 + Years action required

14. It should be recognised that we have moved on a year since the surveys were completed and works that were required in years 3-5 now require action in the next 2-4 years. Due to the nature of most of the works they won't be able to be undertaken until the 2027 summer holidays with almost another year gone by. Therefore, funding of priority 3 works will now be necessary starting from 2027/28 financial year.
15. The condition survey commissioned by the local authority estimated that the priority P1-P3 works required at Red Hall ranged from £1,424,280 (low estimate) to £1,784,080 (high estimate). Well in excess of the £928,305 requested by the trust.
16. The items identified as either Poor or Bad (C/D) condition ranged from £1,031,930 (low estimate) to £1,465,730 (high estimate).
17. As indicated above, the local authority has not received sufficient grant from the DfE over the years to cover these costs and the only way to fund these essential works and to facilitate the academisation of Red Hall, thus removing the continuing maintenance liability, would be to fund through council borrowing.
18. EVAT is keen to continue with the academisation of Red Hall and submitted a counter-offer of £928,305. EVAT have also indicated they would be prepared to commission the works themselves, thus reducing the risk to the council of any budgetary overspend. Funding would be paid to EVAT through a grant agreement and the academy lease for Red Hall would be subject to the agreed works being completed by the trust.
19. Once the school has academised future capital works become the responsibility of the academy trust.

20. As there are limited capital funds available, borrowing will be required to fund the works. The final cost of borrowing will be dependent on interest rates when the borrowing is taken out, however based on current PWLB rates borrowed over 30 years the annual charge will be circa. £61,500 per year. As this is a budget change over the £500k delegated to Cabinet for the 2026/27 MTFP (agreed in February 2026) approval will be required by Council following Cabinet agreement.