



## EXECUTIVE

### 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>The Avenue Infants School Extension</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	AnnMarie Dodds – Executive Director of Children’s Services <a href="mailto:annmarie.dodds@nothnothants.gov.uk">annmarie.dodds@nothnothants.gov.uk</a>  Alison Meachem – CS Capital Programme Lead <a href="mailto:alison.meachem@northnorthants.gov.uk">alison.meachem@northnorthants.gov.uk</a>
<b>Lead Member</b>	Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	

### List of Appendices

None

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

---

- 1.1. To provide Members with the necessary information to consider and approve the capital project of an Extension at The Avenue Infants School.
- 1.1. To advise members that the costs will be funded primarily by the SEND Grant also S106 development Funding.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

---

- 2.1. This report will provide details to allow Members to consider the information and decide on the proposal.
- 2.2. The report provides the details relating to North Northamptonshire Council's (NNC) statutory obligation of providing appropriate learning facilities and

spaces for pupils and staff - a safe environment conducive to teaching and learning.

2.3. The report also sets out the benefits of progression of this proposal, the cost of the works to establish the new extension.

2.4. Finally, the report will set out the risks should the proposal not be accepted.

### **3. Recommendations**

---

3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Approve the proposed Capital Project to add an extension to The Avenue Infants School.
- b) Note the scheme will be funded primarily by the SEND Grant, also S106 development Funding.
- c) Delegate authority to the Executive Member for Children, Families and Education in consultation with the Executive Director of Children's Services, and the Executive Director of Place and Economy, to authorise all necessary legal, property and financial agreements to ensure effective delivery of the scheme.

3.2. Reasons for Recommendations:

- To create additional SEND teaching and ancillary space to meet increasing demand for SEND provision including physical requirements.
- The Council has a statutory obligation to provide school buildings that are safe and fit for purpose and conducive to teaching and learning. If the Council cannot provide safe school buildings in its maintained provision in North Northamptonshire, then it could be subject to health and safety breaches.

3.3. Alternative Options Considered:

- Option 1 - Extending into the playground - The School has very limited outside space which is the children's only playground space and is undersized for the size of school.
- Option 2 - Extending / converting loft space - architects assessed this would be far more costly due to the complicated roof heights and level changes.
- Option 3 - Purchasing additional land - there is no available land adjacent to the school site. To the front of the school is the road, to the rear is a private access lane, on either side are residential homes.

## **4. Report Background**

---

- 4.1. The Avenue Infants School is a two-form entry (Pupil Admission Number of 180) - Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes, six in total. There is a dedicated SEND coordinator and teachers actively provide differentiated learning opportunities suited to pupil's specific needs.
- 4.2. The growing school needs additional learning environments which are not only appropriate for their use but are also inspiring and inclusive.
- 4.3. Currently, the school has a dedicated room for 1:1 and sensory use. However, its location within the school feels detached and subordinate, a clear contradiction of their hope for inclusivity. Expanding on these facilities and placing them at the heart of the school will not only provide a practical solution but help to reduce the stigma surrounding SEND.
- 4.4. The Avenue is also lacking ancillary accommodation; primarily storage and staff facilities. Finally, the school desperately needs reorganising to provide better storage solutions.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

---

- 5.1. This proposal relates directly to the Council's statutory obligations in respect of the providing safe and fit for purpose school buildings in North Northamptonshire. Taking no action represents a clear and immediate risk to the Council's statutory obligations.
- 5.2. This is a Victorian school on a site that offers very little option for expansion, so this business case offers an economically advantageous best option with suitable sufficiency to meets the current standards.
- 5.3. The proposal will assist the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligations of providing safe and fit for purpose school buildings.

## **6. Next Steps**

---

- 6.1. If approved the Funding Agreement will be finalised and the school will start the procurement process.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

---

### **7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation**

- 7.1.1. The Department for Education (2022) states that, whilst the number of SEN pupils had dropped since 2010, these numbers have begun rising again in the last six years. The Avenue are also noticing this increase. As every pupil is different, it is difficult to predict exactly what resources or environments will be

required from one year to the next. It's imperative that the school is future-proofed with flexible spaces which can be adapted to suit as many children as possible, consequently helping to close the attainment gap.

- 7.1.2. The school has six main classrooms (two per year group) but is lacking in smaller group and 1:1 breakout space for activities such as phonics or individual reading support.
- 7.1.3. The Scheme is being funded. mainly by the SEND grant, also S106 funding, which is already approved and forms part of the Approved Capital Programme.
- 7.1.4. The school and consultant design team have a proven track record of delivering projects on budget and on time. It is proposed that the works will be project managed by the school and their appointed Design Team and the Council will act as the funding body only.
- 7.1.5. Any works progressed will be governed by a legally binding funding agreement between each party, that restricts the Council's maximum financial liability in respect of this scheme.
- 7.1.6. The market is experiencing considerable volatility currently, and we are recommending mitigating the impact of this volatility on tender prices by including 30% client-side contingency on all Education Capital Projects.
- 7.1.7. The sum up to a maximum of £859,800 (including the project Contingent Sum of 30%) or any part thereof to be paid to the recipient in accordance with The Legal Funding Agreement. Payments will be made against an agreed milestone payment schedule.
- 7.1.8. A Business Case has been developed following a Feasibility Study which demonstrates that the proposal is necessary to ensure that The Avenue Infants Schools extension will provide the necessary SEND teaching and learning environment needed to comply with statutory obligations.
- 7.1.9. The Estimated Delivery Schedule is showing the project completing in February 2024.

## **7.2 Legal and Governance**

- 7.2.1 Under school place planning duties (s13-14 Education Act 1996), the Council as an education authority has a statutory duty to promote high standards of education and fair access to education. It also has a general duty to secure sufficient schools in their area.
- 7.2.2 Local authorities must provide appropriate maintenance of the existing school estate and it provides an opportunity to meet our statutory responsibilities to provide sufficiency of school places in North Northamptonshire.

### 7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1 These proposals will assist the Council in meeting its commitments in the long term by providing better, brighter futures: We will care for our young people, providing them with a high-quality education and opportunities to help them flourish as well as safe and thriving places to live and learn, work and visit.

### 7.4. Risk

#### Risk(s) Associated with delivering the proposal

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
Costs higher than available budget due Market Volatility	30% Client Side has been included in the project costs to mitigate against the potential market fluctuations resulting in funding gaps and overcommitment of the Capital Programme.	Amber
Works undertaken impact on day-to-day school operation	Works to be planned in conjunction with schools and programmed to minimise impact.	Green

#### Risk(s) associated with not undertaking the proposal

Risk	Risk Rating
NNC has a statutory obligation in respect of the providing safe and fit for purpose school buildings in North Northamptonshire. Taking no action represents a clear and immediate risk to the Council's statutory obligations.	Red

### 7.5. Consultation

7.5.1 Consultation on the new building would be through the planning system so members of the public would be consulted as part of this process.

7.5.2 Ward Members have been consulted as part of the business case process.

### 7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1 This report has not been considered by the Executive Advisory Panel.

## **7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.7.1 The report is eligible for call in by the Scrutiny Commission.

## **7.8. Equality Implications**

7.8.1 An equality assessment form has been completed and confirms no negative impact.

## **7.9. Climate and Environment Impact**

7.9.1 The Council, having declared a climate change emergency in June 2021, is committed to reducing its climate impact both within its own Council buildings and in working with businesses and the wider community to achieve net zero energy emissions.

## **7.10. Community Impact**

7.10.1 This proposal will lead to improvements of schools allocated from the above funding.

## **7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1 This scheme will have no direct Crime and Disorder Impact.

## **8. Background Papers**

---

8.1 None