

EXECUTIVE

16th January 2025

Report Title	Earls Barton Primary School Expansion – Additional Funding
Lead Member	Cllr Scott Edwards – Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills Cllr David Brackenbury - Executive Member for Growth & Regeneration
Report Author	Charisse Monero – Executive Director Children’s Services Fran Cox – Assistant Director of Education Marsha Brown - Head of Access and Sufficiency

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with?	Better, brighter futures

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Climate Change Impact Assessment tool

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Earls Barton Primary School expansion project and to seek approval for additional funding which is funded primarily by S106 funding and supplemented by the Department for Education (DfE) ‘Basic Needs Grant’.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In 2022, the demand on pupil places in Earls Barton was triggered by the commencement of new housing developments by housing developers Redrow and David Wilson Homes who are delivering over 300 homes in the Earls

Barton area. S106 developer funding was allocated specifically to Earls Barton Primary School to provide additional school places and an expansion at Earls Barton Primary School.

- 2.2 The school was previously an Infant and Junior school but amalgamated into a primary school. This left the school with the legacy of two buildings which are not linked, giving the feel of two separate schools. In addition, there were two mobile classrooms on site which had neared the end of life and needed replacing with permanent classrooms, also an upstairs classroom which was not ideal for modern teaching, and some undersized teaching spaces.
- 2.3 The published admission number (PAN) is 75 pupils per year group, providing a maximum pupil roll of 525. The scheme has the potential to increase this to a total of 630 pupils over time.
- 2.4 School place planning duties (s13-14 Education Act 1996) - The Council as an education authority has a 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, and to consider the need to secure provision for children with SEND. This includes a duty to respond to parents' representations about school provision. These are referred to as the school place planning duties.
- 2.5 The Executive Committee approved the progression of the proposed Earls Barton Expansion Scheme on 22nd November 2022 and noted that the scheme would be funded via S106 and Basic Capital Grant Allocation funding received directly from central government. The budget approved for this project was £2.798m and this was included in the capital programme update also reported on 22nd November 2022. Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Children, Families and Education in consultation with the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation and the Executive Director of Place and Economy, to authorise all necessary legal, property and financial agreements to ensure effective delivery of the scheme.
- 2.6 Following a procurement exercise works commenced on site in May 2024 and currently works undertaken include the removal of the mobile classrooms, completion of car park works. Foundation works are progressing for an estimated finish summer 2025.
- 2.7 The budget and spend for this project are regularly monitored, following a recent review by the project team, design team and contractors it is estimated that a further £761.3k additional funding is required to enable this work to continue and complete the scheme. This additional funding is needed because of the original cost of the contract procured being higher than the estimated cost and because there have been several issues that have arisen on site including: the need to remove significant amounts of contaminated soil, and the impact of recent flooding events. This scheme cannot be completed if additional funding is not approved.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Notes the request contained in the Capital Update Report elsewhere on the agenda for budget approval for £761.3k of additional funding from DFE Basic Needs Funding to complete the Earls Barton Primary School Expansion scheme.
- b) Delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Member of Children, Families, Education and to take all necessary actions to deliver the project.

3.2. Reasons for Recommendations: The recommendations set out above allow the Council to move forward with the Expansion of Earls Barton Primary School by:

- a) Adopting the most cost-effective course of action.
- b) Minimising financial risk to the Council of further increased costs and liabilities to stop works.
- c) Supporting the Council in delivering its statutory duties to provide a sufficient supply of school places.

3.3 Alternative Options Considered:

The only other option available to the Council is if we do not provide the additional funding, this would therefore stop the construction and termination of the contract:

- a) There would be significant costs to the Council to shut down the works, as the site is currently a construction site and would need to be returned to a useable state and council has entered a contract therefore there could be legal costs relating to contract terminations.
- b) The S106 funding was directly attributed to Earls Barton Primary School and if it cannot be spent on this school would have to be discussed by with the developers and may need to be handed back.
- c) There would be significant reputational damage to abandon a school project after construction works have started.
- d) NNC have a duty to provide sufficient school places.

4. Report Background

4.1. As part of the planning permissions granted for the development of 300 houses in Earls Barton by Redrow and David Wilson Homes S106 funding was secured for Earls Barton Primary School to provide additional school places and expansion at Earls Barton Primary School. £2.136m developer S106 funding was allocated to provide additional school places at Earls Barton Primary School since 2021.

4.2. A Feasibility Report was commissioned in 2021 which completed in October 2022. The aim of the feasibility was to consider options and to demonstrate that additional accommodation can be provided on the existing Earls Barton Primary School site to facilitate an increase in pupil places.

- 4.3. The current Published Admission Number (PAN) is 75 pupils per year group, providing a maximum pupil roll of 525. The aim of the extension scheme at Earls Barton Primary School is to have the potential to increase this to a total of 630 pupils over time to meet the deficit of pupil places.
- 4.4. Following the approval of the scheme to expand Earls Barton Primary School by the Executive Committee in November 2022, works commenced on site in May 2024. Following a recent review by the project team, design team and contractors additional funding of £761.3k is sought because of the original cost of the contract procured being higher than the estimated cost and because there have been several issues that have arisen on site including multiple discoveries of unidentified gas and water services, the discovery of non-hazardous and hazardous soil deposits and the need to address recent flooding at the school. This has resulted in the utilisation of the contingency sum and now leaves the project with little contingency to cover any unidentified risks or additional fees that may occur, therefore additional funding is required.
- 4.5. A contingency of 10% has been identified to cover possible identified risks including extension of time, addressing any issues with trees and the need to replace materials due to flooding as well as any other unknowns.
- 4.6. In order to mitigate the risks and in order to ensure the Council fulfils its statutory obligation to provide sufficiency of places, the review supports the need to complete the project if additional sums are approved.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. In considering the proposal set out above, approval is sought for the additional funding from Basic Needs Grant funding to complete this project. The only other option would be to stop this project and not complete it, however the risks and loss/outcomes from this as identified in 3.3 are significant and would mean that the Council could not deliver its function of providing sufficient school places.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Subject to agreement by Executive of the recommendation set out in paragraph 3.1, the Council will project manage delivery of the scheme to completion.
- 6.2. Subject to permission being granted, construction has commenced and is to be completed and handed over to the school in Summer 2025.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1 The financial implications are detailed throughout this report. In summary, the S106 contributions secured is £2.136m, with the initial Basic Needs grant identified in 2022 amounted to £711.9k. If the additional funding of £761.3k is approved this will increase the Basic Needs grant to £1.474m.

7.1.2 The total Scheme amount including contingencies will have risen from £2.848m in November 2022 to £3.609m in total.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1 Under school place planning duties as set out at s13-14 of 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 provide sufficient pupil places in their area.

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1 This proposal report relates directly to the Council's statutory obligations in respect of providing safe and fit for purpose school buildings in North Northamptonshire.

7.3.2 The proposal will assist the Council to deliver Better, Brighter Futures in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2021/25.

7.3.3 This proposal 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.

7.3.4 Other relevant policies include Travel to school for children of compulsory school age Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2024; North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy; Building Bulletin 103 non-statutory area guidelines for school building.

7.4 Risk

7.4.1 The risks have been explored in the review of the scheme. The recommended Option 1 has the greatest potential in meeting the desired outcomes as well as mitigating any risks to the council in delivering additional pupil places and provide suitable safe educational facilities.

7.5 Consultation

7.5.1 No statutory consultation is required for this decision.

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

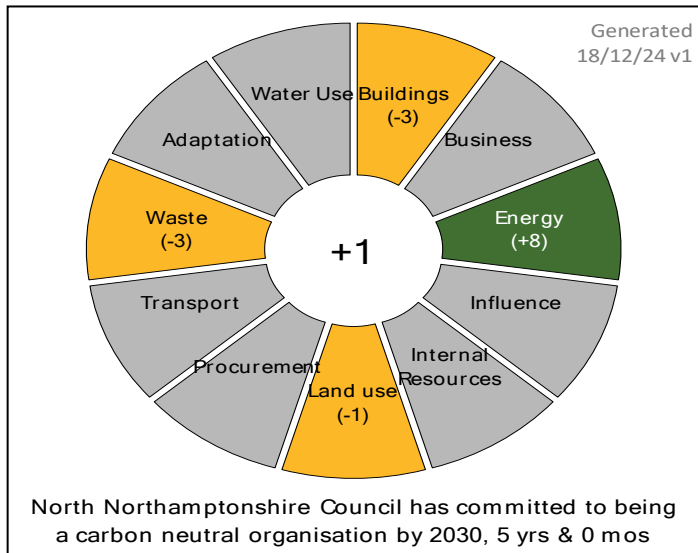
7.7.1 This report has not been considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committee

7.8 Equality Implications

7.8.1 An 'Equalities Screening Assessment' (ESA) has been completed in respect of this proposal and confirms no negative impact.

7.9 Climate Impact

7.9.1 Climate Change Impact assessment



7.9.2 The CCIA Tool at **Appendix A** gives an analysis of the climate change impact.

7.10 Community Impact

7.10.1 This proposal will lead to provision of an appropriate number of mainstream pupil places and enhancement of primary school provision in Wellingborough.

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1 This proposal will have negligible, if any, crime and disorder impact.

8. Background Papers

8.1 The November 2022 Executive Report for Earls Barton Primary School.