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|  | <p align="center">Cabinet 19 January 2026</p> |
| | <p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director of Children, Young People & Community & the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration</p> |
| | <p align="center">Lead Member(s) - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools (Councillor Gwen Grahl) Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property (Councillor Teo Benea)</p> |
| <p align="center">Phase II Capital Investment Programme for School Place Sufficiency for Children and Young People with SEND</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Wards Affected: | All |
| Key or Non-Key Decision: | Key |
| Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act) | Open |
| List of Appendices: | None |
| Background Papers: | None |
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Despite being on target to deliver 382 new SEND places since 2022, the Council continues to experience significant pressures in SEND provision linked to continued demand for local specialist places.
- 1.2 This report sets out the proposal to deliver a further 212 SEND places within the borough for a cost of £10.6m. This will reduce the financial cost of SEND provision by £4.3m per annum as well as provide more local specialist provision for Brent based young people with SEND. The actions outlined in this paper will

also support a reduction in expenditure on the Council's Special Needs Transport budget, which is also under financial pressure.

- 1.3 The programme will help achieve a number of strategic priorities including investing further in SEND provision in the borough as set out in the November 2025 Cabinet report – *School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28 (second refresh)*.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the proposed SEND Phase II Capital Programme using £10.6m from the High Needs Capital Grant Allocation provided by the Department for Education as detailed in paragraph 3.2.2 (Option 2) in order to complete the identified works within the programme.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 The SEND Phase II Capital Investment Programme supports the Borough Plan Strategic Priority 4: The Best Start in Life. By ensuring there are sufficient, suitable SEND school places for children and young people in Brent, the local authority is meeting its statutory obligations and supporting every child and young person to access high quality education locally to them in the borough.
- 3.1.2 This programme also supports the Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2024-2028 and its November 2025 refresh, which presents the objectives and operating principles to underpin the Council's approach to school organisation over four years.
- 3.1.3 Continuing the good work completed in the past three years to be on target to deliver 382 new SEND places from the 2022 approved capital programme, this second phase builds on this foundation as SEND demand continues to increase. We have worked with schools to identify spare mainstream capacity to convert to SEND to reduce costs and ensure maximum value from the SEND capital grant funding.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 In January 2022 Cabinet approved £44m of capital investment for up to an additional 427 specialist places in a new secondary special school, expansions of existing special schools and new Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs) in mainstream schools. For the purposes of this business case, this will be referred to as "SEND Phase I Capital Programme".
- 3.2.2 The SEND Phase I Capital Programme is expected to deliver 382 places. At the time of drafting this report, 298 places have already been delivered with a further 84 places expected to be delivered by January 2030. The SEND Phase

I Capital Programme includes the new secondary special school, Wembley Manor that was completed in autumn 2025, and Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) at Elsley Primary School, Newfield Primary School, Preston Park Primary School, St Margaret Clitherow Primary School and Newman Catholic College.

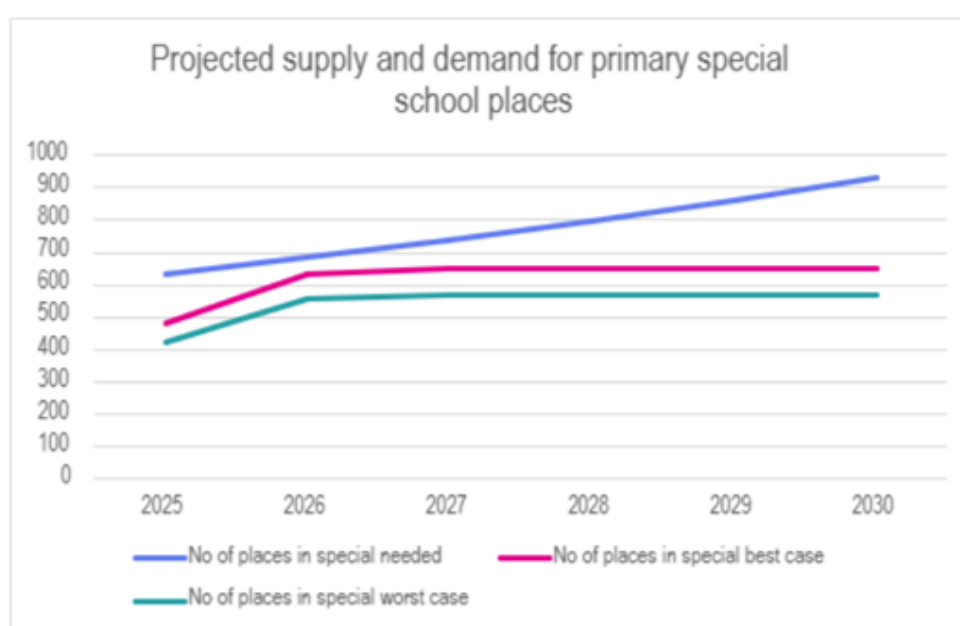
- 3.2.3 There are 977 places currently in Brent Special Schools and 246 ARP places. Brent currently has access to 88% of these places (1% less than last academic year), or 860 of the 977 local special school places and 216 of the 246 ARP places in Brent schools, as other local authorities place children in Brent provision. Brent also places children in special schools in neighbouring authorities.
- 3.2.4 Ongoing targeted work to support schools and settings to better meet the needs of children with SEND has seen an increase in the number of children remaining within mainstream education in Brent. There is increasing confidence in the mainstream sector to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. However, despite this and significant investment by Brent to increase the capacity within special educational settings and the creation of ARPs, additional special school places are required. Key data underpinning this are as follows:
- 48% of all children with an EHCP in Brent attend a mainstream school provision. This is an increase of 1% since this time last year.
 - However, in terms of age-groups, 37% of primary aged children and 49% of secondary aged children with an EHCP require a special school place. Numerically this is expressed as 634 and 587 children respectively.
 - Communication and Interaction is the area of need most strongly correlated with placement in a special school for both primary and secondary aged children with an EHCP in Brent, followed by Cognition and Learning for both age groups.
- 3.2.5 If all Brent children were to access a place at a maintained, in-borough special school, Brent would require a total of 1,221 places (634 primary and 587 secondary), with the majority of these places being for children who have either communication and interaction or cognition and learning as their primary area of need. Brent currently has 480 places in primary age special school classes and 497 places in secondary age special school places. Of these places, 12% are occupied by children from other boroughs, leaving 422 primary places available and 437 secondary places available. Given this, Brent has a current shortfall of 212 primary places in special and 150 secondary places in special. As outlined above, to prevent Brent children with EHCPs being unplaced, the independent sector, home tuition, out of borough schools and the mainstream sector are all currently being utilised. As well as being less convenient for pupils who must travel longer distances to school, this is putting increasing strain on the high needs block.
- 3.2.6 In terms of supply, Table 1 and Figure 1 model a best-case scenario (whereby all of Brent special school places are available to Brent children) and a worst-case scenario (whereby 88% of Brent special school places are available to

Brent children). The worst-case scenario is more reflective of current occupancy levels by out of borough children.

| | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| No of places in special needed | 634 | 685 | 740 | 799 | 863 | 932 |
| No of places in special best case | 480 | 632 | 649 | 649 | 649 | 649 |
| No of places in special worst case | 422 | 556 | 571 | 571 | 571 | 571 |
| Shortfall best case | 154 | 53 | 91 | 150 | 214 | 283 |
| Shortfall worst case | 212 | 129 | 169 | 228 | 292 | 361 |

Table 1: Current and projected demand and supply of primary school special places in Brent

Figure 1: Current and projected demand and supply of primary school special places in Brent

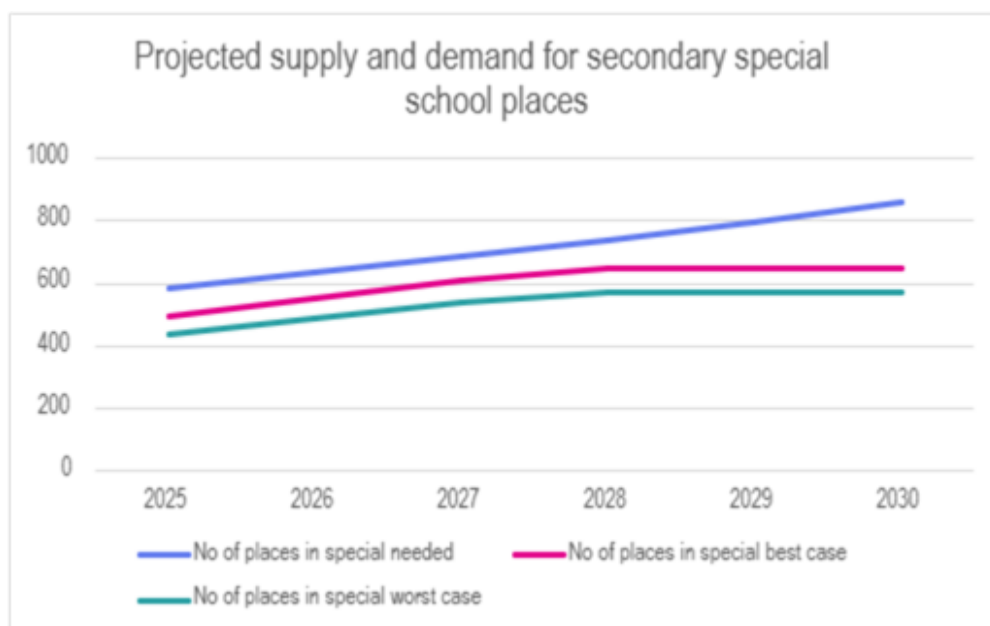


3.2.7 Current and projected (until 2030) need for special school places at secondary are shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 below. The same assumptions are made for this data set as for the primary age data set (with the exception that an assumption of 49% of total secondary aged EHCP cohort requiring special is made).

Table 2: Current and projected demand and supply of secondary school special places in Brent

| | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| No of places in special needed | 587 | 634 | 685 | 740 | 799 | 863 |
| No of places in special best case | 497 | 553 | 610 | 650 | 650 | 650 |
| No of places in special worst case | 437 | 487 | 537 | 572 | 572 | 572 |
| Shortfall best case | 90 | 81 | 75 | 90 | 149 | 213 |
| Shortfall worst case | 150 | 147 | 148 | 168 | 227 | 291 |

Figure 2: Current and projected demand and supply of secondary school special places in Brent



3.2.8 A capital programme that would deliver 212 places (SEND Phase II) is proposed to meet some of the projected SEND demand. This planned expansion of specialist school places in Brent, even if delivered on time, will not meet Brent’s current or projected need for places in special for either primary or secondary cohorts, and so will not keep pace with levels of demand anticipated by 2026/2027 (as modelled in tables 1 and 2 above). Based on this modelling, the data suggests that Brent should consider investment in a new additional special school or schools of at least 320 places, in addition to the proposed Phase II growth in places.

Options Appraisal

3.2.9 **Option 1 – Do Nothing:** Were this option to be selected, and no additional expansion of special places agreed once the Phase I projects are all delivered, Brent would continue to have a significant shortfall of places for children requiring specialist provision. As meeting the needs of a child in the way stipulated in Section F of an EHCP are statutory obligations, Brent will expose itself to significant reputational and financial risk if it chooses not to create further places. As a result, Brent would be forced to place children in out of borough maintained or day placements in independent schools (with the latter carrying significant additional costs of an average of £58k/place/annum and a correlating increase in transport costs further adding to pressure on the Special Needs Transport budget). It is also likely that Brent would see a further increase in requests for mediation, and in appeals to the first-tier tribunal (FTT) as families and schools see formal redress as the only option to accessing specialist provision. Option 1 is, therefore, not recommended.

3.2.10 **Option 2 – Implement the proposed Phase 2 expansions:** Table 3 below sets out the projects proposed to be included in the SEND Phase II programme.

Table 3: Proposed SEND Phase II projects

| School | New Places | Phase | Delivery time scale | Proposals |
|--------------------|------------|--|---------------------|--|
| The Avenue | 34 | All-through / post-16 | January 2026 | Use temporary building at Newman CC. |
| Strathcona site | 50 | Primary | September 2027 | Satellite site from existing SEND school subject to consultation. |
| The Manor School 1 | 72 | Primary | April 2026 | Lease of St Mary's RC Primary spare capacity |
| The Manor School 2 | 16 | Primary | April 2026 | Expansion of early years at Bridge Road satellite |
| The Village School | 40 | All-through (but places are for secondary) | September 2029 | Rebuild KHS site and increase size to accommodate expansion of 20 with 20 places provided at main site |
| Total | 212 | (138 primary, 74 secondary) | | |

Option 2 would go some way to addressing Brent's significant shortfall in special school places. Whilst it would not deliver complete sufficiency of required places which carries some financial and reputational risk, given the uncertainty around the contents and timing of the Government's School's White Paper (expected January 2026), it represents a proactive but measured response to Brent's current sufficiency issues. Option 2 is the recommended option to provide additional SEND places as it will provide much needed places, increase confidence in the LA's control of the SEND placement issues and mitigate further spend in out-of-borough maintained and independent school day placements and accompanying transport costs.

3.2.11 Option 3 - Deliver Phase II projects as per Table 3 and deliver an additional 320 SEND places through new SEND schools: Option 3 would achieve sufficiency of special places, based on current projections for 2027. To deliver this many places, further sites would need to be identified, including giving consideration to areas of the borough where there is a surplus of current primary provision, most notably within Primary Planning Area 4. Converting mainstream schools to special schools could both deliver much needed places for children with SEND and improve the long-term sustainability of other schools in this area. Were a surplus of specialist placements to be achieved, Brent could work to bring children back from the independent sector and out-of-borough maintained schools.

Option 3 is not recommended *at this stage*. Current uncertainty regarding the Government's direction of travel on SEND means such decisions should be deferred until there is more certainty which is likely to be by autumn 2026.

Objectives and Benefits

- 3.2.12 The objective of this programme is to provide 212 SEND places supporting the Council to meet its statutory duty by ensuring that more pupils with EHCPs are offered a suitable local school place. Keeping children within Brent will also support them through key transitions, both from primary to secondary phase provision and as young people progress through the education system into local college provision that offers them appropriate education and skills development courses as part of their preparation for adulthood.
- 3.2.13 Further, the programme delivers further benefits to the Council as set out in Table 4 below. Consideration must also be given to transport related costs estimated at £1.3m per year.

Table 4: SEND Phase II Programme Benefits

| Description of Benefit | Financial/ non-financial benefit? | Estimated benefit amount? | When will the benefit be realised? | One-off or recurring? |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| High Needs Block Savings | Financial | £4.3m | September 2029 | Recurring |
| Transport Savings | Financial | £1.3m | September 2029 | Recurring |
| Additional local SEND places available for Brent children and young people in Good and Outstanding schools | Non-financial | 212 | September 2029 | Recurring |
| Increased Employment Opportunities in Teaching and associated roles | Non-financial | 63 | September 2029 | One-off |

- 3.2.14 The programme aligns with Council strategies for SEND (Brent SEND Strategy 2021 – 2025) and school place planning (Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2024 – 2028 Second Refresh approved by Cabinet in November 2025). It also aligns with the Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 2027 Strategic Priority 4 The Best Start in Life through the investment in additional SEND places.

Timescales

- 3.2.15 Please see an indicative timeline for the programme. Table 5 shows the indicative dates for the key deliverables across the programme. Each of the projects in Option 2 above have different timeframes so the start date for each of the milestones is the earliest date this activity starts across the programme and the finish date for each of the milestones is the latest date this activity finishes across the programme.

Table 5: Indicative Capital Delivery Programme

| Key Milestones | Estimated Date |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cabinet Approval | January 2026 |
| Procurement – consultants | Jan – Mar 2026 |
| Design and Surveys | April 2026 – Mar 2027 |
| Planning | April 2027 – Aug 2027 |
| Contractor Procurement | Jan 2027 – Dec 2027 |
| Works | July 2026 – August 2029 |
| School Occupation | Sept 2026 – Sept 2029 |

Procurement

3.2.16 The Council will be required to procure the following services, supplies and works contracts as part of the programme.

- Technical Consultancy Services (design services, contract administration)
- Works contracts (traditional build contracts, design and build contracts)
- Furniture and ICT equipment supplies
- Specialist surveys (underground services, geotechnical, arboricultural)

3.2.17 The above will consist of very low value, low value, medium and high value contracts. It is proposed to batch as many commissions as possible to reduce procurement activity during the programme. For example, the technical consultancy services will be procured as one package/tender opportunity.

3.2.18 Proposals for tender opportunities will be issued via separate reports requiring approval or as part of the detailed project business cases. Those that are Low Value Contracts will ensure at least three written quotes will be sought of which one will be a local contractor. For Medium Value and High Value Contracts, tenders will be invited in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Procurement Act 2023 and the necessary approvals obtained both pre-tender and for contract award.

Risks

3.2.19 Table 6 below lists the main risks to the programme. A key risk is the quotes/tenders from contractors being higher than project budgets allocated within the programme owing to the current financial climate within the construction industry.

Table 6: High level programme risks

| Risk/issue description (incl. impact) | Planned mitigation or resolution | Owner |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| Quotes/tenders from contractors are over budget for works | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure designs/specs and methodologies are financially analysed before issuing to market 2. Liaise with market early to gauge projected costs 3. Identify potential value engineering options as a backup if needed. | Head of Capital Delivery |
| Development sites contain unidentified contaminants causing delays and cost increases | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thorough site investigation surveys completed prior to entering into works contract(s) 2. Project and programme contingency set aside to cover any unforeseen issues. 3. Potential for enabling works contracts where possible prior to main works contracts to assist with delivery of clear site(s) | Head of Capital Delivery |
| Places cannot be provided due to site(s) being identified for other Council priorities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure robust justification for SEND provision requirement 2. Obtain senior officer / political approval for SEND site use | Head of Capital Delivery |
| Funding is needed for other priorities and hence programme will require Council Capital contributions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure full understanding of financial position 2. Explore additional funding streams (e.g. CIL, S106) 3. Prepare Change Requests for approval 4. Enact change to budget and programme finances. | Head of Capital Delivery |
| Additional related works require completing. Impact is that programme does not have enough funding and will overspend | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review new identified work and confirm extent and when works are required 2. Review need for projects in later years 3. Utilise programme contingency where available 4. Seek more funding through Capital Governance | Head of Capital Delivery |
| School(s) withdraw from the programme | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with school(s) to ensure they understand the benefits 2. Line up alternatives/contingency to replace any schools that withdraw | Head of Inclusion |

Project Approach

3.2.20 In order to achieve consistency across the programme a standard brief has been utilised for the projects. The standard brief for these projects within the programme will include:

- Sufficient additional or modified accommodation to support the agreed number of places based on the current building guidelines BB104 for the following types of areas:

- General and specialist teaching spaces, WCs, Sensory rooms, therapy rooms, large areas (halls), kitchen facilities, storage and Staff accommodation (office and welfare).
- Demolition and making good of existing buildings and/or external play areas in order to facilitate the above.
- Improvement to the supply and connection to utilities on the school site to enable the expansion/new build.
- Fixed and loose furniture, equipment and ICT for the additional number of pupils.
- Temporary accommodation to enable phasing where it is logistically or financially beneficial to do so in order to provide school places when needed.
- Internal adaptation where it is required to create suitable spaces and facilitate expansions in the most practical and economical way e.g. making 3 classrooms at guideline size from 2 extra-large classrooms where one additional classroom was required.
- All new and adapted accommodation will be located with appropriate adjacencies for subject specialisms and year groups as advised by the school.
- All new and adapted accommodation will be physically accessible and reasonable adaptations will be made in the existing building where it is logical to do so.
- BREEAM Excellent rating for any new buildings (or as otherwise advised by the Local Planning Authority).
- Works to the buildings and site to support the school travel plan for the expanded schools and to facilitate increased use of public transport as appropriate.
- Improvement to local public transport infrastructure if required through the planning process.

3.2.21 The projects will not provide:

- Expansion of mainstream post-16 provision and/or mainstream provision.
- Any improvement/addition/modification/re-location/demolition of existing buildings or external play areas that do not directly or indirectly facilitate the new build or expansion in line with BB104 requirements. This includes but is not limited to the following:
 - Accommodation for post-16 provision unless changes to post-16 provision facilitates accommodation for years 7-11 and is the most cost-effective way to do so
 - Improvements to existing external sports facilities unless required for planning purposes
 - Existing dining and assembly areas
 - Internal sports facilities or other specialist teaching areas
 - Additional staff office or welfare space
 - Storage
 - Circulation space.
- Improvement to the condition and/or suitability of the existing buildings, plant and external areas that are not directly related to the SEND requirements.

- Improvement to the accessibility of the existing buildings and external areas except in new areas that are not directly related to the SEND requirements.
- Improvement to adjacencies of subject/faculty areas not affected by the expansion.
- Re-location of furniture, ICT and resources within the school.

3.2.22 In managing the programme of projects the Council will provide the following services. Some of the services above will be procured for the purposes of delivering the programme:

- Project management including:
 - Budget and cost management
 - Programme management
 - Stakeholder engagement including with Members
 - Public consultation for all statutory processes (including where the Academy Trust must lead)
 - Risk and issue management
 - Procurement activities
 - Contract administration.
- Governance over the projects and programme to enable oversight and direction
- Legal advice
- Procurement advice
- Technical expertise from a full design team.

3.2.23 The Council will be responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals to undertake the capital projects including planning approval, Section 77 approval for development on playing fields (where appropriate) from the Department for Education (DfE) and building control approval.

3.2.24 The Governing Boards for each school have indicated their approval in principle to proceed with their school project, but schools will be required to provide further formal sign off at key stages. This includes agreement to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and a Development Agreement where school are Academies.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Members will be updated on projects within their wards as they progress through the delivery stages.
- 4.2 Plans to further expand local special school provision have been discussed at the multi-agency Inclusion Board (a sub-group of the Children's Trust) and the Brent Parent Carer Forum.
- 4.3 Schools have been consulted on proposed expansions and new SEND provision to which they are an integral part of the process.

- 4.4 Proposed use of the Strathcona site for SEND provision will be subject to consultation with key stakeholders, including the local community.
- 4.5 There will be opportunities for consultation with the Brent Parent Carer Forum to assist with co-design and to provide updates of progress on the projects within the programme.

5.0 Financial Considerations

Capital Implications

- 5.1 Table 7 summarises the cost of the SEND Phase II capital programme.

Table 7: SEND Phase II Capital Budget

| Project | Cost (£m) |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| The Avenue | 0.1 |
| Strathcona site | 1.0 |
| The Manor School 1 | 1.5 |
| The Manor School 2 | 0.2 |
| The Village School | 6.0 |
| Programme Contingency | 1.8 |
| Total | 10.6 |

- 5.2 It is proposed to fund the programme from the High Needs Capital Grant allocation provided to the Council by the DfE. The Council has received £22.6m of which £11.6m is unallocated.
- 5.3 The proposed cost of the SEND Phase II programme is £10.6m which will leave £1.0m of High Needs Capital Grant. There is also £2.2m of unallocated/uncommitted Basic Need Grant funding which can be used for any future projects. The Council will receive £9.7m of Basic Need grant during the period 25/26 – 27/28 which will increase the unapplied Basic Need funding to £11.9m.
- 5.4 Officers have sought external legal advice on the VAT treatment of the capital expenditure. This advice confirms that as the works are to fulfil the Council's statutory duty of providing sufficient school places and for nil consideration, the VAT is recoverable on the basis it is incurred for the Council's non-business activities.

Revenue Implications

- 5.5 199 Brent pupils with EHC Plans attend out-of-borough maintained special schools (an increase of 2% since this time last year), at a cost of £5.6m/annum. This represents 8% of Brent's school age children with an EHCP. Additionally, 197 children attend independent day schools (an increase of 1.5% since last year), at a cost of £11.9m/annum. This also represents 8% of Brent's school age children with an EHCP. The use of independent places has increased along with the cost of each place meaning that cost pressures associated with

independent places have increased disproportionately to the percentage increase in places used.

- 5.6 The average cost for out of borough special schools is £38k/place/annum, as compared with an average of £37k/place/annum for Brent's in-borough placements. The average cost for children in independent placements is £58k/place/annum. Consideration must be given to transport costs for out of borough and independent placements which are generally higher than in-borough placements.
- 5.7 Based on the proposed completion dates, the programme could achieve potential cost avoidance of £4.3m over its duration, including £2.6m in 2026/27. This is based on creating 212 new places, with an average cost avoidance of £21k per place, representing the difference between placing a Brent child in an independent special school versus an in-borough special school. There is also the potential for transport cost avoidance for 212 places estimated as £1.3m.

Table 8: Cost avoidance modelling

| School | New Places | Phase | Delivery time scale | FY 26/27 | FY 27/28 | FY 29/30 |
|--------------------|------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| The Avenue | 34 | All-through / post-16 | Jan-26 | 34 | | |
| Strathcona site | 50 | Primary | Sep-27 | | 50 | |
| The Manor School 1 | 72 | Primary | Apr-26 | 72 | | |
| The Manor School 2 | 16 | Primary | Apr-26 | 16 | | |
| The Village School | 40 | All-through (but places are for secondary) | Sep-29 | | | 40 |
| Total | 212 | (138 primary, 74 secondary) | | 122 | 50 | 40 |
| | | Total cost avoidance | | £2,562,000 | £1,050,000 | £840,000 |

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The legal implications associated with the Council's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available to meet the needs of the local population are set out in the School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28.
- 6.2 The Council would need to enter into agreements for the delivery of the projects and the nature of the agreements will be determined by the way the project is structured. It is envisaged that the Council will enter into agreements with self-governing Academies in the form of a development agreement, which will include a licence for works/to build at the school premises. The agreement would also recognise the Council's project management role and the school's right to review key stages of the works. There will also be a Memorandum of Understanding between the parties to cover the period of collaboration before

the construction works begin and it will set out expectations from both parties in respect of the design and decision-making processes.

- 6.3 Academies will be required to follow statutory processes in order to obtain approval to expand from the Regional Schools Commissioner acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and to alter admissions arrangements. Consultation will also be undertaken on the proposal to develop the Strathcona site for SEND provision, including with the local community. The progression of the Council's programme will be dependent on these processes being successfully concluded.
- 6.4 If as a result of refurbishing mainstream accommodation to accommodate any SEND provision, the Published Admission Number of a school will need to be reduced the admission authority for the school will need to undertake consultation. The Council as admission authority for community schools has a duty to undertake this consultation in order to determine admission arrangements, including admission numbers under Part III of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012/8.
- 6.5 As detailed within this report, the Council will be responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals to undertake the capital projects including planning approval, approval to development on playing fields (where appropriate) from DfE pursuant to Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and building control approval.
- 6.6 This programme will require the procurement of very low, low, medium and high services and works contracts. All procurement will be conducted in accordance with Contract Standing Orders and the Procurement Act 2023. It will be recommended that Cabinet delegate authority in respect of procurement, approval of pre-tender considerations and subsequently award of services contracts valued in excess of £5m and works contracts valued in excess of £10m to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property.
- 6.7 There is an ongoing risk that if the Council does not increase the number of special school places it has, the borough will be likely to see a further increase in the number of first tier tribunals it is summoned to. Brent has already seen a 40% increase in the number of tribunals in the last academic year, mostly for Section I (placement). It is suggested that without swift action to create more special school places this number will continue to rise.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 The equality implications associated with the School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28 were set out in the report to Cabinet to approve the same (November 2023) and updated in the November 2025 refresh approved by Cabinet. This report considers more specifically the demographics around the demand for SEND school places and the options for meeting that demand.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 The Climate Change Strategy commits the Council to include the need to set standards that support the Council's Zero Carbon ambitions. These will be factored into schemes designs where possible including but not limited to use of solar PV and enhancements to building fabric insulation levels.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 9.1 The services in this report are proposed to be provided by external providers and there are no direct impacts on Council staff. Schools will need to recruit additional staff in due course as pupil numbers increase.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 Key stakeholders and the local community, including school communities, will be kept updated on project progress.

Related documents for reference:

[School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28 Second Refresh - Cabinet Report November 2025](#)

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director Children, Young People and
Community Development

Report sign off:

Jehan Weerasinghe

Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and
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