



Member Report

Investment in Our Schools – 2024/25

Report to:	Cabinet
Report from:	Executive Director for Children & Families
Portfolio:	Children & Families
Report Date:	April 2024
Decision Type:	Key – Budget
Council Priority	Start Life Well

HEADLINE POSITION

1.0 Summary of report

- 1.1 This report sets out the capital funding available to the Council for maintaining its own school estate, and the sources of funding available to assist in securing temporary and permanent places for pupils in mainstream schools and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) schools. The paper also presents a proposed programme of investment in our Council maintained school estate and identifies an approval process for projects in development to assist in the creation of temporary and permanent mainstream and SEND places where need is identified.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- Agrees the recommended programme of school condition investment works set out at 3.3, which will be funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency's Schools Condition Allocation grant;
 - Agrees the recommended investment in school places as set out within this report, to increase mainstream and SEND capacity, which will be funded by the Department of Education's Basic Need Grant, High Needs Capital Fund and planning agreement funding;
 - Agrees to the allocation of planning agreement funding for education purposes as set out at 3.19;
 - Notes the allocation of grant funding to the Council in respect of providing pupil place capacity for mainstream and pupils with SEND, and that projects are being developed on a rolling basis that will deliver required places; and,
 - Agrees that the Executive Director for Children and Families, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, be given delegated authority to:

- I. Agree additional allocations of funding within the scope of this report in the event of urgent need, subject to the availability of relevant budget;
- II. Adjust, finalise and approve the funding levels for individual projects detailed within this report, as may be required, once detailed refinement and costing work has been completed.

DETAILED PROPOSALS

3.0 What are the objectives of the report and how do they link to the Council's priorities

Funding Available to the Council for School Capital Investment

- 3.1 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) provide an annual block grant to the Council. This is known as School Condition Allowance (SCA) and is made available to responsible bodies for keeping their school buildings safe and in good working order by tackling poor condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, and health and safety issues. SCA for the 2024/25 financial year in respect of our maintained schools has been confirmed at £366,752. This is a comparable amount to previous years, and given inflationary pressures generally represents a pressure on our programme. For 2024/25, there are no supplementary budgets available to bolster this budget, so works to be funded have had to be programmed accordingly. The proposed programme of spend for our schools is outlined at 3.1.3 below.
- 3.2 As of 1st April 2024, the Council has 7 primary and 1 special school to maintain. Lingdale Primary School converted to an Academy in 2023/24, joining Lingfield Education Trust. The Borough's schools that have converted to Academies, either have their respective condition funding allocated by the ESFA to their Multi Academy Trust if large enough or pooled into a national fund that individual Academies bid into, known as Condition Improvement Funding (CIF).
- 3.3 The table below highlights the proposed investment in 2024/25 in Council maintained schools. It should be noted that the programme allows the targeting of resources at need, such that some schools undergo building element replacement one year but may then see little or no investment in another, as the condition need dictates. In the event of surplus resources being available through cost savings, other identified condition works will be prioritised to be addressed.

Belmont Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roof recover Phase 2 ○ Heating system improvements 	90,000 5,000
Chaloner Primary	○ Phase 3 roof replacement	100,000
Highcliffe Primary	○ Energy efficiency works	15,000
Hummersea Primary	○ Phase 3 roof replacement	35,000
Lockwood Primary	○ Minor works	10,000
Newcomen Primary	○ Boiler upgrade	20,000
Misc'	Contingency/emergency works fund, health and safety specific funds to be allocated as further investigative work undertaken	51,752
Energy Efficiency	Works to assist carbon reduction	25,000
Fees	Management allowance	15,000
	Total	£366,752

DfE School Rebuilding Programme

- 3.4 The following schools in the Borough have been confirmed as selected for inclusion in the DfE's Rebuilding Programme:
- Skelton Primary Academy – design phase currently
 - Lingdale Primary Academy – due to commence in DfE programme 2025
 - Lockwood Primary – due to commence in DfE programme 2025
 - Nunthorpe Secondary Academy – due to commence in DfE programme 2027
- 3.5 Alternative Provision – The DfE announced in March that the Council had been successful in its bid to develop a new 50 place Alternative Provision Free School, in partnership with River Tees Multi Academy Trust. The timescales for implementation are not yet known. This is expected to be a wholly new build provision, for which further details will be brought to Cabinet as and when the project develops.
- 3.6 In respect of Reinforced Aerated Autoclaved Concrete (RAAC), no schools within the Borough were found to have any RAAC from investigations known to be undertaken. RAAC is a structural lightweight building product typically used in roof decks. It is noted that it is not an overall Council responsibility to report or investigate the presence of RAAC or any other structural or building condition issues in schools outside of Council control. This responsibility falls to their designated responsible body, typically the parent Academy Trust.

Mainstream Capacity Related Capital Funding

- 3.7 The Council has a statutory duty, as defined in the Education Act 1996, to promote high standards of education and fair access to education. It also has a general duty to secure sufficient schools in its area, and to consider the need to secure provision for SEND. To help fulfil this duty, the Council receives capital funding from various sources for mainstream capacity development through the DfE's Basic Need grant and planning agreements. Funding is typically pooled, often with recipient school and/or partner funders' resources to target priority need and ensure projects can be delivered to sufficient scale and quality to address need adequately and with some flexibility.
- 3.8 At the time of drafting this report, the DfE have not announced the next wave of Basic Need funding for the 2026/27 place planning year. It is not expected that Redcar & Cleveland will be awarded any funding. However, a total of £1.2m is unallocated from previous allocation. Basic Need funding is provided to local authorities to address capacity shortfalls. This is important in assisting our investment in school capacity as the Council has a legal duty to ensure sufficiency of places in light of housing development, demographic change and parental choice impact on the need for pupil places in particular parts of the Borough. This funding can be aligned with Section 106 Planning Agreements secured on major housing developments to help address place planning issues.

SEND Capital Funding

- 3.9 The DfE has made available High Needs Capital Funding for the provision and enhancement of SEND places on an ad hoc basis. A further tranche of funding

was announced in March, with £1,276,684 new capital available for Redcar & Cleveland. When added to existing available resources, this gives approximately £3.1m available to allocate to new projects. An outline programme of deployment has been agreed with the DfE for the earlier sum awarded, including investment in special schools to create additional places, nursery places and support bases in mainstream primary and secondary schools. This funding is not restricted to our maintained schools but for deployment across the institutions in the Borough to ensure best fit related to need. The additional funding will enable an enhancement of this programme by providing further better quality places.

Project Update – Committed and Completed

3.10 The successful delivery and/or progress of projects to improve the condition and capacity of the estate over 2022/23, are updated as follows:

3.11 SEND Provision

- Kilton Thorpe Academy – the Trust has developed a new 10 place nursery at the school with funding support of £370,000. The school also developed a new, net zero rated standalone class base facility which has helped facilitate space for the nursery and provide additional space for older learners.
- Rigwood Cottage (Halcyon Independent Special School) – This independent special school provider created 10 additional places for secondary age students with Social Emotional and Mental Health related educational needs. By providing additional local places, this project in Saltburn has helped remove the need to commission places out of Borough. The Council provided a £133,000 grant through ring fenced DfE funding to enable the property refurbishment. This first of 2 phases is now complete with places available.
- River Tees Grangetown - The ESFA's proposal for a new Tees Valley Special Free School is now projected to commence on site in July 2024. After further delays at the procurement stage, planning consent has been awarded. Due to delays, places are being provided in one of River Tees Multi Academy Trust's other schools in Middlesbrough. The new school will provide up to 100 places for pupils across Tees Valley with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs as well as some provision for Autism Spectrum needs. The school will offer provision for age groups not currently catered for in the Borough.
- South Bank Primary School – In April 2023, members agreed to a proposal to extend the Council maintained South Bank Primary School through the addition of two standard sized classrooms and associated toilet provision. South Bank Primary has a designated SEND base, which has a 20 pupil capacity. The project, which has planning consent is due to commence in May and be available for teaching in October 2024. The extension will enable the SEN unit to increase to 40 places and not compromise mainstream capacity. The project of £900,000 is being funded from Basic Need grant and High Needs Capital Funding.

3.12 Mainstream Capacity and Estate Maintenance

- Laurence Jackson Academy – The Trust has completed a project to extend dining capacity to help provide additional 28 places in 2023 and 5 more in 2024. Funding support of £700,000 from the DfE’s Basic Need grant allocation to the Council has been utilised to help develop this additional capacity;
- St Peter’s Catholic College, South Bank – The College increased its PAN (Published Admission Number) to 120 from 105 for the 2022/23 academic year, and have further agreed to temporarily admit a further 10 each year over this number in 2023 and 2024. This greatly assisted in meeting first preference requests for year 7 places in those years. The Council’s Cabinet agreed in April 2023 to fund works by the Trust to provide additional pupil toilet capacity to support this planned increase in numbers. The Trust are undertaking works in 2024 with £281,000 support from the Council’s Basic Need allocation;
- Normanby Primary Academy – A small extension to enable additional space for teaching to address a shortfall was completed in summer 2023. Funding of £110,000 was approved from Basic Need and planning agreement funding;
- Council maintained school’s upkeep - A successful programme of maintenance and improvement work, primarily focused on roof replacement and decarbonisation schemes to the Council’s maintained schools was carried out in 2023/24

Update on Place Planning

- 3.13 The Council has been acutely aware of the pressure the Borough wide school age population peak was predicted to, and continues to, put on available pupil places. The peak primary year group number on roll passed into secondary in the current academic year (i.e. started secondary September 2023). There are currently 1631 pupils in year 6 in RCBC primary schools. The number in our primary reception classes is currently 1352. The birth rate continues to fall and inward migration and impacts of housebuilding are not compensating for the slow down in the birth rate. This highlights the challenge of providing and resourcing places in secondary schools, against a backdrop of reducing rolls into the future.
- 3.14 National Offer Day for September’s year 7 secondary school places was on the 1st March 2024. A total of 1742 places were offered in our secondary schools, with all pupils receiving an offer of a place. Notably, 60 temporary places were made available by our Academy schools to enable this. Also notable is the large number of cross border pupil placements that are made in line with relevant Trust school admission criteria, with Nunthorpe Academy and St Peter’s Catholic College in particular admitting pupils resident in Middlesbrough due to proximity and admission criteria factors. The Borough’s schools experience a net gain of pupils, though a number of Redcar & Cleveland resident pupils do apply to schools outside of Borough.

The Proposed Programme of Capital Investment to Secure Additional Mainstream and SEND Provision

- 3.15 Officers are continuing to pursue potential schemes to help address pupil place pressures for both mainstream and SEND pupils. The identified ongoing pressures in secondary are predominantly in the West of the Borough. While numbers moving up to secondary are falling from the September 2023 year of entry peak, there is still expected to be a pressure on available places in some areas. However, it should be noted that due to the projected fall in overall pupil numbers across the Borough, as currently evidenced by low numbers in our primary schools, secondary place development needs to be considered relative to local issues (ie major housing development). Academy Trusts have, as a whole, reduced permanent places across the Borough for various reasons, with only one making permanent increases.
- 3.16 Officers remain in discussions with Trusts about the potential development of places. The development of additional capacity of an additional form year in the west of the Borough is not now felt to be possible following discussions with Trusts. The rebuild of Nunthorpe Academy will offer an opportunity to review capacity, but this will not go into delivery until after pressure has lifted on secondary admissions. Thus, in a similar fashion to preceding years it is likely that smaller projects will come forward on an ad-hoc basis in partnership with Trusts in order to deliver targeted schemes to enable additional pupil numbers to meet demand. Thus, in the interests of expediency and where values permit, emerging schemes to meet need are proposed to be considered through the delegated powers process as appropriate, but with oversight of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families.
- 3.17 **One mainstream project is in development for mainstream capacity development:**
- Outwood Academy Bydales – The Trust have agreed to take 30 pupils over their Pupil Admission Number in September 2024 for the year 7 intake. These numbers have already been built in to place allocations as part of the admissions round this year. The school require an existing first floor ‘open air teaching space’ to be converted to a standard classroom and provision of an outdoor dining canopy to help accommodate the increase in total pupil numbers on roll. The works are proposed to be managed by the incumbent PFI facilities provider and a direct Council let contract for the canopy. Total works cost will be circa £250,000, sourced from the Council’s Basic Need allocation, for which delegated approvals are already in process.
- 3.18 **Projects in development proposed to provide needed SEN places:**
- KTS Academy – Kilton Thorpe Special Academy’s specialist provision offers 170 places to children of age 3-19. The Trust operates from 4 buildings across 2 sites. With a view to further improving facilities for the children and with a target of increasing capacity by at least 10 pupils, the Trust is looking to invest in accommodation. Plans are at an early stage, and likely to be brought forward on a phased basis, building on the

recently developed new nursery and standalone class-bases as set out at 3.5.2 above. This improvement and expansion will help the Council secure more places in Borough to meet the demand for high needs places locally. As such, it is proposed to set aside High Needs Capital funding to assist the Trust achieve these aims through schemes being developed.

- Prior Pursglove College – Tees Valley Collaborative Trust deliver post 16 further education at Prior Pursglove Campus in Guisborough. The Trust has experienced an increasing demand for places for students with SEND needs, but due to insufficient capacity, is unable to cater for such demand. This has an impact on special schools who offer post 16 education, as it limits parental choice as pupils who may otherwise elect to go to college, then stay on in their school setting. This then reduces schools' ability to cater for younger learners. Prior Pursglove are keen to develop their SEN cohort, and this development would help free capacity elsewhere in special schools. The Trust is undertaking a feasibility study to understand physical development options to extend the school to cater for this growing provision. Subject to the Trusts strategy to develop such a facility and scheme costs, it is proposed the Council assist the Trust through offering grant aid from our High Needs Capital Fund allowance, as it meets relevant criteria. This project will be developed in the coming months, with a working delivery of late 2025.
- Kirkleatham Hall School – The placement of some pupils with SEN needs has been challenging for those moving up to secondary September 2024 due to overall numbers and relatively few leavers freeing up space in our special schools this year. Kirkleatham School are now full despite recent expansion, but the recent extension has provided sufficient core facilities to allow a temporary intake of additional secondary age pupils. Options are being explored with temporary accommodation and possibly a small classroom permanent extension at the school to cater for a bulge year. The temporary unit is a priority for delivery, which if achieved will allow an additional 7 students to be placed, which will reduce the need for out of Borough placements. Basic Need and/or High Needs Capital will be utilised for this provision, expected to be circa £150,000.
- Rigwood House – Operators Halcyon are expected to bring forward the Phase 2 refurbishment to convert Rigwood House in Saltburn to use for an expanded Independent Special School provision, building on that already in operation at Rigwood Cottage. Details and level of funding support are yet to be finalised.

Allocation of Planning Agreement Funding for the TS6/TS7 area

- 3.19 Members will be aware that Planning Agreement (Section 106) funding for Education was made available when the major housing development off Flatts Lane was approved on appeal. This funding was not geographically ring fenced, instead it has a broad 'education' related use. Some of the resource has been utilised in expanding Kirkleatham Hall School and supporting other projects which has levered more funding in. A total of £600,000 remains unallocated. It is proposed to allocate £400,000 to Academy Trusts operating primary schools in

the TS6/7 and retain £200,000 to assist with discussions with Academy Trusts regarding further secondary places going forward. Proposals have been sought from all Academy Trusts operating in the TS6/TS7 area. The premise being that schemes should invest in capital assets for the betterment of the education provision at each school, and not simply cover condition maintenance issues, for which Trusts can seek funding direct. Funding available would be capped at £100,000 per Trust, with the Trust's having to fund costs in excess of this. The following schemes have been proposed:

- Ironstone Academy Trust – Normanby Primary is the closest school to the new housing development. As above some work has already been completed to increase teaching provision space. Further works are proposed to address limited toilet provision for KS2 pupils and provide level access to the KS2 block. Discussions are also ongoing about works at other Trust schools, with proposed grant funding up to £100,000 in total.
- Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust – works proposed to provide additional teaching floorspace through part funding a small extension in one of their schools. The Trust are still evaluating options. Total contribution up to £100,000
- Teesville Primary Academy – The Trust have put forward a number of proposals to improve the external environment, including extended playground, trim trail, Multi Use Games Area, fencing and soft surfacing for the Early Years area. This totals up to £190,000. It is noted that it has previously been established that the school is under area requirements for hard play surfacing, and as such the DfE placed a land disposal condition on the nearby Eston Park site, such that if/when the Council disposes of that site, it has to ring fence £95,000 toward investment in Teesville Academy's outdoor provision. Thus, it is proposed to work with the Trust to phase this investment, with an initial £100,000 from the S106 funding and remainder should the Council dispose of the Eston park site.
- Steel River Academy Trust – The Trust have put forward projects at all 4 primary schools in the TS6 area. The proposed projects primarily involve investing in improvements to outdoor learning spaces that have already been identified as required, but funding hasn't been available for. Examples include covered learning, MUGA investment and outdoor equipment. It is proposed that £100,000 be allocated to the Trust but that a defined list of targeted works are drafted that offer the most favourable outcome from investment and potential to lever in supporting funding.

3.20 The proposed projects in effect contribute to all of the Council's Corporate Priorities, although the overriding impact is to support children and young people to Start Well, through the upkeep of our schools and provision of pupil places close to residents' homes.

4.0 What options have been considered

- 4.1 The programme of school maintenance is now relatively modest due to funding available so this is managed in house. Options to broaden the scope of works have been discounted as to do so would need to draw on Council borrowing. Instead, bids have been submitted to the DfE's rebuilding programme.
- 4.2.1 The delivery of additional school places can only realistically be achieved through working with our Academy providers to evaluate need and potential to provide additional places. A new school route would not be sustainable due to the forecast medium to long-term reduction in pupils on roll. However, opportunities to secure further funding for SEND places will be considered should the DfE open future rounds for application.

5.0 Impact Assessment

- 5.1 Climate Emergency** - The backlog maintenance programme includes heating system improvement schemes that link to a carbon reduction bid by the energy team. Roofing work includes insulation which will help reduce our carbon footprint and minimise the need for patch repairs and emergency repairs which are resource intensive and inefficient. Grant funded works wherever possible seek to support projects that minimize environmental impacts.
- 5.2 Health and Safety** - The proposed works will help ensure the Council meets its obligations to keep its maintained schools safe, warm and weathertight. However, it should be noted that the quantity of works required to meet outstanding backlog maintenance are in excess of funding available, and thus works have to be prioritised based on need.
- 5.3 Social Value** - The proposed works will be procured wherever possible using the Council's existing procurement processes and given the values and experience of letting similar works, successful contractors are expected to be local or sub regional in the main.
- 5.4 Legal** - The backlog maintenance identified needs to be completed in order for the Authority to meet its statutory obligation in respect of maintained school provision. Works to provide additional temporary and permanent places are required to help in our general duty to secure sufficient schools in its area, and to consider the need to secure provision with SEND.
- 5.5 Financial** - The identified maintenance works are proposed to be funded through grant funding. While the grant has reduced as expected due to the number of schools the Council is responsible for reducing, there is still a risk that funds available will struggle to keep pace with the level of work required in our schools. The Council need to be mindful the funding gap between condition need and funding available is likely to widen and thus condition may worsen despite investment being made. All works are proposed to be funded from ring fenced grants specifically for education capital projects.

5.6 Equality and Diversity – There will be a positive impact on equality and diversity. The nature of the programme is to maintain and improve our school's estate and address issues that could have a negative impact on equality.

6.0 Implementation Plan

6.1 Timetable for Implementing Decision:

Maintained School maintenance works

March 2024 - DFE grant confirmed (SCA, Basic Need and SEND)

April 2024 – works procurement commences

July – September 2024 – majority of maintenance programme delivered

6.2 Lead Officer – Susan Beevers and Ian Dunn

6.3 Reporting Progress – Progress will continue to be reported internally on a regular basis, with diarised monthly meetings between project leads, Executive Director of Children & Families and portfolio Lead Member. Decision making relating to capacity development work will be routed through Departmental management structure and escalated to scrutiny and Cabinet as appropriate. Urgent decision making is proposed to be delegated to the Director of Children & Families and lead Member for Children.

6.4 Communications Plan - Upon agreement of the school maintenance programme, officers will inform head teachers and ensure liaison as project design and delivery commences

7.0 Consultation and Engagement

7.1 Internal advice has been sought from Asset Management, the Health and Safety Team and Children and Families Services. The Schools Capital Projects Officers in conjunction with Children & Families leadership will continue to refine the proposals ahead of delivery. Head teachers and school estate officers have been consulted where necessary.

8.0 Contact Officer

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