
Report to CABINET

Spring Brook Capital Works

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Mohon Ali, (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

Officer Contact: Julie Daniels – Executive Director, Children and Young People

Report Author: Andy Collinge (Head of School Support Services)

17th November 2025

Reason for Decision

This report seeks cabinet approval for a capital project that will offer additional places and enhance provision for pupils with additional needs who are based within the Newbridge Trust.

It also seeks approval for the allocation of funding from HNPCA and Basic Need Grant towards the scheme.

Executive Summary

This report relates to a project at Spring Brook Upper School that will enhance existing provision and provide additional provision for pupils with additional needs. These proposals are now developed sufficiently for costs and proposals to be placed before the Cabinet for a final decision. This project will create a total of 36 new places in the school for children with additional needs.

Currently the Local Authority has around £2.8 M of Basic Need funding and £9.6 M of High Needs Capital Allocation Funding. It is proposed that where projects will generate additional places these projects are funded from the HNPCA Grant provision

Project Outlines and Recommendation

Spring Brook Upper School

Spring Brook Upper School is a special school that serves all areas Oldham for children with SEMH and is run by New Bridge Multi Academy Trust. This project will increase access to places for 36 children

Spring Brook Academy is a special school in Oldham that is based across two sites and currently caters for 114 pupils aged between 4-16 years old with a range of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties. Spring Brook lower school, which accommodates KS1 & KS2 pupils, shares its site with Lyndhurst Primary School, a mainstream primary academy. The Spring Brook upper school site, which accommodates KS3 pupils, is based in the Failsworth area of Oldham. Spring Brook lower school is approximately a 10-minute drive from the upper school site.

The central project objective for the Trust is how best to bring Spring Brook's lower and upper school pupils together on one site. The lower school and upper school pupils are to be predominantly based and taught in separate areas. The lower school pupils are to be accommodated within a new teaching block with the upper school pupils continuing to be taught within the existing main school building. KS1 pupils will be taught on the ground floor of the new teaching block with KS2 pupils taught on the first floor. Classrooms are to be designed to accommodate a maximum group size of between 8-10 pupils

The total cost of this project is estimated to be in the region of £1,581,199 (a total of **£1,739,319** when including 10% contingency) following completion of a RIBA stage 2 report by Spring Brook Academy. It is proposed that this project is funded by the LA Basic Need and/or HNPCA Grant.

1 Background

- 1.1 Demand for provision in special schools has risen substantially in recent years. The option recommended in this report provides an opportunity for the Council to provide funding to enhance SEMH provision in line with its Corporate Priorities, to provide a great start and skills for life.

This project will be overseen by New Bridge Academy Trust, there is no HR, Health and Safety, environmental health, property, IT or community cohesion implications arising from the report

2 Procurement Implications

- 2.1 There are no procurement implications arising from the report.

3 Risk Assessments

- 3.1 The Council will require confirmation that academies have appropriate insurance in place before releasing funds for the works.

4 Current Position

- 4.1 LA has a statutory obligation to create suitable school places for all children, this includes those with SEN and EHCP's. It is an ambition of the LA's SEND and Inclusion Strategy to increase places in special schools, where appropriate for children with additional needs. This enables children to have their needs met as part of an inclusive education offer leading to better outcomes for these children. It also has the additional benefit of reducing the need for costly independent provision outside the borough. Over the last 3 years there has been an increase of children with SEMH having to be placed in out of borough provision and independent provision due to lack of sufficiency and this has a significant impact on the High Needs Budget.

5 Options/Alternatives

- 5.1 Option 1: Approve the above capital investment for the project listed above to deliver the ambitions of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027.
- 5.2 Option 2: Do not approve the projects and risk not fulfilling the above strategy.

6 Preferred Option

- 6.1 Option 1.

7 Consultation

- 7.1 All Primary and Secondary schools including all MATS (Multi Academy Trusts) that operate in Oldham.

8 Financial Implications (Capital)

- 8.1 The cost of the associated works including a contingency of 10% is £1,739,319 and will be a charge to the educational capital programme 2025/26, which will be funded from the Basic Needs and/or HNPCA Grant. Any unspent budget will be returned to the provision budget. This school is part of an Academy Trust and as such can reclaim their own VAT, therefore any repayments to the school will be paid net of VAT. Only irrecoverable VAT will be funded by the grant payments.

As the works will be commissioned directly by the school, there will be a need for a grant agreement to detail the amount of funding awarded and the drawdown arrangements as the scheme progresses. Release of funding will be in interim periods.

The cost breakdown analysis of the scheme has been included in the Appendix Document RIBA Stage 2

Paula Buckley – Finance Manager

8.2 Financial Implications – (Resources)

Spring Brook is funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The High Needs Block covers funding to support provision for pupils and students with SEND who require additional resources to participate in education and learning, from their early years to age 25 in a range of provision including special schools, mainstream schools, alternative provision, and Independent specialist provision. The funding also contributes towards council centrally retained expenditure for High Needs.

Increasing the PAN at Spring Brook by 36 places would result in an additional £911k of required funding per annum from the High Needs Block, split between base and high needs top up funding.

Vicky Gibbons – Senior Accountant

9 Legal Implications

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- 9.1 The proposal will benefit the students at the schools and further demonstrate the ongoing commitment by the Council to the education of the children of the Borough with particular emphasis upon the most vulnerable children in the borough.

Consideration should be given around the Grant Agreement and there should be liaison with procurement and legal services to satisfy the Council that the document is appropriate, and the funding is utilised correctly.

(Alex Bougatef)

10 Equality Impact Assessment, including implications for Children and Young People

- 10.1 There are no negative implications for vulnerable groups or children and young people.

11 Key Decision

- 11.1 Yes

12 Key Decision Reference

- 12.1 EDS-03-25.

13 Background Papers

- 13.1 SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027

14 Appendices

- 14.1 RIBA Stage 2 Design and Send and Inclusion Strategy (Annex A)