
Report to CABINET

High Needs Provision in Mainstream Settings (Medlock Valley Primary School – Satellite Provision)

Officer Contact: Paul Tinsley (Director of Education, Early Years and Skills)

Report Author: Jason Hudson (Schools Capital Project Manager)

7th September 2026

Reason for Decision

This report seeks Cabinet approval for a capital project to establish specialist satellite provision operated by Kingfisher Learning Trust at Medlock Valley Primary School. The project will increase local specialist capacity for children and young people with SEND, helping to meet growing demand and reduce reliance on independent and out-of-borough placements.

The report also seeks approval for the allocation of capital funding from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) and Basic Need Grant to support delivery of the scheme.

Executive Summary

This report relates to a proposal by Kingfisher Learning Trust to develop specialist satellite provision at Medlock Valley Primary School. The proposal has been developed sufficiently to enable Cabinet to consider the allocation of capital funding.

The project will create 12 additional specialist places for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), increasing local specialist capacity and supporting children to access education within their local community.

Currently the Local Authority has High Needs Capital Allocation Funding, which is released to school upon application and consideration by panel. It is proposed that where projects will generate additional places these projects are funded from the HNPCA Grant provision

Project Outlines and Recommendation

Kingfisher Satellite Provision at Medlock Valley Primary School

Medlock Valley School serves the Fitton Hill area of Oldham and is run by Kingfisher Learning Trust. Medlock Valley is a mainstream school that has a pupil capacity of 341 pupils.

The proposal will establish specialist satellite provision operated by Kingfisher Learning Trust on the Medlock Valley Primary School site. The provision will support children and young people whose needs require specialist intervention whilst maintaining links with a mainstream school environment where appropriate.

The development will provide specialist teaching spaces, therapeutic areas and outdoor learning provision designed to meet the needs of pupils with complex SEND. The project will create 12 additional specialist places and contribute to increasing specialist capacity within the borough.

The total cost of this project is estimated to be in the region of £342,300 (a total of **£376,530** when including 10% contingency) following completion of a feasibility study by Kingfisher Learning Trust. It is proposed that this project is funded by the LA Basic Need Grant

1 Background

1.1 Demand for specialist provision for children and young people with SEND has increased significantly in recent years, resulting in growing pressure on local specialist capacity and an increased reliance on independent and out-of-borough placements. The recommended option will enable the Council to invest in additional specialist provision through the development of a Kingfisher Learning Trust satellite at Medlock Valley Primary School, increasing local capacity and supporting children and young people to access appropriate provision closer to home.

1.2 Strategic alignment

The proposal aligns with Oldham's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan, which seeks to strengthen inclusion, improve local sufficiency and ensure children and young people can access the right support at the right time. The development of this satellite provision will contribute to a more coherent continuum of provision across the borough, supporting positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND while helping to create a more sustainable local system.

2 Procurement Implications

2.1 There are no procurement implications arising from the report

3 Risk Assessments

3.1 The Council will require confirmation from the trust that appropriate insurance is in place before releasing funds for the works

4 Current Position

4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to secure sufficient educational provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). In line with Oldham's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027, the Local SEND Reform Plan and the government's Every Child Achieving and Thriving reforms, the Local Authority is committed to developing a more inclusive and sustainable continuum of provision that enables children and young people to access the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

The demand for specialist provision has increased significantly in recent years, placing pressure on local capacity and resulting in a growing number of children and young people requiring independent and out-of-borough placements. The development of specialist satellite provision operated by Kingfisher Learning Trust will strengthen local sufficiency, expand local capacity and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It will also support the long-term sustainability of the High Needs Block by reducing reliance on higher-cost placements where needs can be effectively met within Oldham.

- 4.2 To ensure the effective operation and long-term sustainability of the provision, the Local Authority will enter into a formal commissioning contract with Kingfisher Learning Trust. The service specification of the contract will set out the admissions arrangements, placement criteria, governance arrangements, performance expectations, financial responsibilities and reporting requirements. This will support ongoing oversight of quality, demand and outcomes, ensuring the provision contributes to the Local Authority's sufficiency, inclusion and SEND reform objectives whilst delivering value for money.

5 Options/Alternatives

- 5.1 Option 1: Approve the capital investment required to establish the Kingfisher Learning Trust satellite provision at Medlock Valley Primary School, supporting the ambitions of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan.
- 5.2 Option 2: Do not approve the project, resulting in a missed opportunity to increase local specialist capacity and support the delivery of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan.

6 Preferred Option

- 6.1 Option 1

7 Consultation

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with Kingfisher Learning Trust, Medlock Valley Primary School and relevant Local Authority officers responsible for SEND sufficiency, capital programmes and school place planning.

8 Financial Implications (Capital)

- 8.1 The cost of the associated works including a contingency of 10% is £376,530 and will be a charge to the educational capital programme 2025/26, which will be funded from the Basic Needs Grant/HNPCA. Any unspent budget will be returned to the Basic Need/HNPCA provision budget. This school is part of Kingfisher Learning Trust and as such can reclaim their own VAT, therefore any repayments to the school will be paid net of VAT

The works will be commissioned directly by the school and funding paid to the school as part of a Grant Funding Agreement, upon receipt of periodic claims and verification of capital expenditure and satisfactory works.

Paula Buckley – Finance Manager

8.2 Financial Implications – (Resources)

The proposal to establish a specialist satellite provision operated by Kingfisher Learning Trust at Medlock Valley Primary School will be 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. The proposal to operate a satellite provision at Medlock Valley for 12 places would result in an additional £251k of required funding per annum from the High Needs Block, split between base and high needs top-up funding. This would be offset, in part, by savings in other areas of the High Needs Block where the pupils attending may be currently accessing funding.

Martin Heap – Senior Accountant

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The proposal will benefit the students at the school 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.

Alex Bougatef - Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

- 9.2 It is noted that the report refers to the proposed delivery of works in conjunction with Kingfisher Trust. Clarity is required as to the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council and the Trust including the legal basis for occupation and use of the site.

The report refers to the potential appointment of a contractor within a short timeframe. It should be noted that where the Council is procuring or funding the works any such appointment would need to be undertaken in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and subject to the necessary approvals.

The proposals appear to be at an early / feasibility stage and would remain subject to further design development, statutory approvals (including planning, building regulations and fire safety), and confirmation of funding. Any decision should be understood as being subject to compliance with all relevant legal, procurement and governance requirements including completion of a compliant procurement process where required.

Sukie Kaur - Solicitor

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

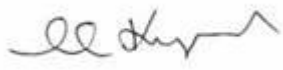
12.1 **EDS-03-25**

13 Background Papers

13.1 SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027

14 Appendices

14.1 Proposed floor plan BS25-093-02 (Revision A)

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders. Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.	
Signed:  Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive	Dated: 8 th September 2026
Date of Group Leaders meeting	7 th September 2026