Emergency Powers Decision Report

St Agnes C of E Primary School – Specialist Provision

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Education and Early Years
Directorate: Children's Services
Report Author: Victoria Caldwell
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Date of Decision: 2nd November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken 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 which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

This report seeks approval to allocate capital funding of £619,788 which will be funded from the Basic Need/HNPCA grants and resource funding of £166,000 from the High Needs Block.

3. Reason for urgency

The decision is required urgently to enable the planned expansion of specialist provision at St Agnes CE Primary School to progress in time for 12 additional places to be available from September 2027. Demand for specialist placements continues to increase across the Borough. Any delay in confirming the capital and associated revenue funding will risk the specialist provision not being delivered in time, reducing the Local Authority's ability to meet local demand for children and young people with SEND who require specialist provision.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to approve the proposal now will prevent the creation of 12 additional specialist places at St Agnes CE Primary School, reducing the Local Authority's ability to meet growing demand for specialist provision. This would place further pressure on existing local capacity and may lead to increased reliance on higher-cost independent and out-of-borough placements. Any delay in approving the funding risks the modular accommodation not being delivered in time for September 2027, resulting in a missed opportunity to increase local specialist capacity and support delivery of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and Local SEND Reform Plan.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Failure to proceed with the proposal is likely to result in continued or increased expenditure on higher-cost independent and out-of-borough placements where children and young people cannot be accommodated within local specialist provision. This would reduce the Local Authority's ability to manage demand within existing resources and may result in higher overall costs than investing in additional local capacity. The proposal supports the creation of 12 additional specialist places within Oldham, helping to reduce future pressure on specialist placement budgets.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 4 August 2026
Comments

Approval is sought to allocate £620k of capital funding from the Council's Basic Need and High Needs Provision Capital allocations, provided by Central Government, to expand specialist provision at St Agnes CE Primary School, creating 12 additional in-borough specialist places. Funding will be released through a grant agreement with the school.

Approval is also sought to allocate £166k per annum from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block to support the additional places. The ongoing revenue cost is expected to be partially mitigated through reductions in alternative High Needs expenditure.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef (Monitoring Officer)
Date: 17.09.26
Comments

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year, so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed, as the Council has failed at three successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.