

APPENDIX A

Title: Barking and Dagenham College: New Post-16 SEND Provision	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement	
Open	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
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Accountable Director: Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director, Education	
Accountable Executive Team Director: Elaine Allegretti, Strategic Director, Children and Adults	
<p>Summary:</p> <p>The Council continues to experience high demand for specialist pupil places from children and young people who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). The demand is equally high at post-16 where there is currently limited provision for young people and further places are urgently required.</p> <p>Council Officers have been working closely with Barking and Dagenham College senior management team to explore the possibility of expanding their existing provision for post-16 and, in particular, for students with higher levels of SEND for which placements are difficult to find. The College has a good track record of supporting this cohort of Barking and Dagenham students and would welcome the opportunity to receive further students if they had the right type of accommodation.</p> <p>The College have come forward with a proposal to convert and refurbish an existing building on the College campus, adjacent to their existing SEND provision, which would contain the specialist facilities required and enable the College to expand their SEND provision. The proposal presents an exciting opportunity for the College to support the Council in managing the demand arising for post-16 SEND students in the Borough. However, the College does not have the capital funding to support the project, which has been assessed to cost £650,000.</p> <p>The Department of Education (DfE) has allocated the Council a High Needs Capital Grant totalling £3.783m to support the creation of additional specialist places for pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). Under the conditions of the grant, the Council can utilise this funding to support Further Education Colleges within its Borough to create local additional post-16 places.</p> <p>It is proposed to support Barking and Dagenham College to undertake the capital works which would be funded from the High Needs Capital grant up to the value of £650k. The</p>	

College will procure, and project manage the scheme through their Estates Management team.

This project has been included within the School Place Planning and Capital Investment report to Cabinet on 23 July 2024.

Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Agree the allocation of £650,000 High Needs Capital Grant funding to support the conversion of an existing building at B&D College campus to create additional post-16 SEND places for Barking and Dagenham students; and
- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director, Children and Adults, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement, the Strategic Director, Resources and the Head of Legal, to enter into all necessary or ancillary agreements to fully implement and effect the proposals.

Reason(s)

The decision will assist the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligations to provide a school place for every child and to support priority 4 of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2026.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The School Place Planning and Capital Investment report to Cabinet on 23 January 2024 (Minute 75) highlighted the continuing high demand for specialist places from children or young people with Special Educational Needs of Disabilities (SEND) and with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). The high demand for specialist places and shortage of availability means the main work of the Council's School Investment team is securing and creating new provision. The high demand and lack of specialist places is a national issue however more prolific in the London Councils are struggling to place children or young people.
- 1.2 The Director of Education has been working closely with Barking and Dagenham College who currently offer a number of post 16 placements for Barking and Dagenham students with SEND. The College currently provides a good offer for students where they are closely supported in developing their potential, leading pathways into employment or further education.
- 1.3 The College and the Council have a shared desire to expand the existing provision on the campus for students which have higher degree of SEND. This is in response to the feedback from the Just Say Parent Carer Forum which highlighted a lack of post 16 places but also intelligence led data on the SEND cohort currently working through the education system. On occasions, these students may be placed in out of borough placements if they can be secured however this is not necessarily conducive to the best outcome for the individual student and or family.
- 1.4 Following dialogue, the College have put forward a proposal where they would refurbish and convert an existing building adjacent to their current SEND facilities to

enable them to offer additional places (8 initially) for these Post 16 SEND students with high needs.

- 1.5 In order to meet the demand for specialist places for pupils with SEND the Department for Education (DfE) provides capital funding called the High Needs Capital Grant. This year the Council was awarded £3.783m. As not all specialist places are provided directly by Councils, the grant provides flexibility in which funding can be used to support other public funded establishments such as FE Colleges to create these places. In this instance, it is proposed to utilise up to 650K of the High Needs Capital funding to support the College in undertaking the scheme as it would directly benefit Barking and Dagenham students. Students are placed by the Council's Education Health Care Team in consultation with the College.
- 1.6 The College will procure and manage the refurbishment of their building through their Estates Management team. There is an urgency in taking this project forward as both the College and Council need to undertake the scheme during the summer recess so that it is available for students in the new September 24 term. The Council's Education Health Care team already have 8 students agreed with the College which they would place there once it becomes operational.

2. Proposed Procurement Strategy

- 2.1 The College's Estate Management team would procure the entire project and have already commenced obtaining quotations for the various elements and packages of works. It has been agreed that it would be on an open book basis so that the grant given would only be used to fund the capital works up to the value of £650k.
- 2.2 Following communication between the Council's Head of School Investment and the College's Director of Estate Management both organisations are assured that the £650k maximum is sufficient in terms of the funding for the project. The key risk for the project is sufficient lead-in time to order works and specialist items so that the project can be carried out in a timely manner so that it become operational in September 2024.
- 2.3 This proposed project has been included within the School Place Planning and Capital Investment report to the Council's Cabinet July 24. This report was approved by the with respective procurement, finance and legal consultation included. A copy of the proposed report is included as an appendix.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 In addition to the consultations between Council and College representatives, the proposals in this report have been considered and endorsed by the Council's Assets and Capital Board on 12 June 2024 and Leadership Team on 13 June 2024

4. Corporate Procurement

Implications completed by: Francis Parker – Senior Procurement Manager

- 4.1 Officers are satisfied that the proposals are compliant with the grand funding obligations and that the approach detailed within this report will deliver the best value for money to the Council.

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Alison Gebbett, Capital Accountant

- 5.1 This report requests progressing with procurement for the Barking College refurbishment works to create additional post-16 SEN places.
- 5.2 The value of the works would be a maximum of £650k and would be fully funded from DfE High Needs grant which has already been received and is not committed to other projects. The proposed project is in line with the grant conditions.
- 5.3 A report is being presented to Cabinet in July which sets out the available pots of DfE funding and the proposed new projects, of which this Barking College project is one. In order to complete the works before the new school year, this project is requesting urgent approval in advance of the Cabinet report.
- 5.4 If the proposed project is approved, a capital budget of £650k will be added to the Education capital programme and will be monitored, managed, and reported on as part of the Council's normal capital monitoring process.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Georgina Foster Education Lawyer

- 6.1 Young people aged 16 to 18 must stay in education or training. This is compulsory and could include: full-time education. starting an apprenticeship or traineeship. Furthermore, Local authorities have a duty to make available to all young people aged 13-19 and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training.
- 6.2 Whilst it is an unusual step to ask the CE to take urgent action outside of the usual Cabinet meetings it is appropriate in this case as the refurbishment of the existing building at Barking and Dagenham will provide for an additional 8 SEND places allowing the Council to fulfil its statutory duty for Post 16 pupils who have an EHCP.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices: None