

SEND Sufficiency Plan

PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

29 November 2024



Introduction

The Plymouth SEND Sufficiency Plan was approved by Cabinet in September 2024. The plan laid out the broad concepts and approach for how to utilise the £13million High Needs Capital Allocation Grant to increase special school capacity across the Plymouth special school estate.

Following Cabinet approval, agreement was reached to utilise the in-house project management team from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Service. Funding for project management support will be factored into the detailed costings for each project once these are produced.

Progress

Following the presentation of the SEND Sufficiency Plan at Cabinet 9 September 2024, a Project Manager has been allocated to lead upon the feasibility stage of the plan.

A Project Mandate has been approved by Capital Programme Officer Group (CPOG) providing the Service with a budget of £200,000 to allow the development of the initial feasibility work.

The feasibility stage is the first part of the programme of works. A Programme Board has been convened, along with Project Boards. A Programme Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) has also been identified.

Prioritisation has been given to the potential acquisition of a neighbouring property to an existing school site as per the direction from CPOG. It is anticipated that an initial assessment in relation to the acquisition of the property will be provided early December 2024. Following receipt of the initial assessment, this will allow the Service to determine whether further feasibility work should be undertaken on this specific project opportunity.

In conjunction, the feasibility of other project opportunities is identified within the plan. To support the feasibility stage, we are seeking to expedite appointment of a specific architectural practice with a knowledge of the property and an expertise in education and schools' Building Bulletin.

Feasibility work will be carried out on the identified project opportunities. It is initially thought that the feasibility stage will be complete within 6 months, as per the high level delivery plan. The project team will endeavour to speed up the feasibility work that must be undertaken.

HIGH LEVEL DELIVERY PLAN

Name	Detail	Timescales	Update
Priority 1			
Early Years Expansion	Increase early years provision by way of £20k grants	From September 2024	ON TRACK Early years provisions are applying for grants to increase their provisions via the Early Years Team as per DfE expectation.
Priority 2			
Mill Ford Satellite Provision	Provide additional capacity to Mill Ford via a satellite provision due to current numbers being over PAN and need for additional capacity to take additional children.	September 2024	WAS DELAYED BUT NOW ON TRACK Two schools were considered but following due diligence were found to be unsuitable, putting the project behind timescale. Riverside School has now been identified and governors have agreed to the satellite provision. Due diligence checks have been completed. Identified children are starting there in January 2025 and any works are being completed via the PFI contract which is overseen by the EPS Service. No project management from outside EPS is therefore required. Mill Ford's (and EPS) view is that this third site is the best long-term option and they are now planning transition activities for the families concerned.
Priority 3			

<p>Resourced Provision within mainstream settings</p>	<p>Resourced provisions across mainstream schools at both primary and secondary phase to be developed: 14 – 20 places per provision. Provision focused on neurodiversity in order to enable a wider group of children to be able to attend.</p>	<p>July to September 2024 – SLA and pupil funding model drafted and comms completed with schools</p> <p>11 September 2024 – launch application process</p> <p>11 October - application process closes</p> <p>1 November - outcomes notified</p> <p>30 November – individual building plans start with chosen schools.</p>	<p>DELAYED</p> <p>The expression of interest process has been completed but schools have been reticent to apply due to concern about taking on more students with EHCPs. Further work with schools to make the model work therefore needs to be completed before a plan of building works can commence.</p>
<p>Priority 4</p>			
<p>Mill Ford Refurbishment</p>	<p>Either A: Significant refurbishment and remodelling to make the Mill Ford site fit for purpose into the long term.</p> <p>Or B: Refurbishment to enable students and staff to have safe and viable working conditions while a new school building funding is sought.</p>		<p>ON TRACK</p> <p>Surveys have now been completed on Mill Ford. Findings received from Bailey Partnership on 26th November state that there are parts of the building fabric which are in a severely deteriorated condition and life limited. This means that we will now begin option B work to establish what reasonable refurbishments can take place within the confines of the life limitations of the buildings.</p>

<p>Mill Ford New School</p>	<p>New school building for Mill Ford School on the Dunstone Site</p>	<p>Timescale dependent on willingness of DfE to engage in conversation about possibility of funding a replacement building.</p>	<p>Following several other DfE meetings to persuade the DfE of the need at Mill Ford between July and November, a meeting was held with the DfE Estates Department on 14 November to discuss the state of the Mill Ford buildings and the need for funding for a replacement school building. The DfE requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation that the school is safe to remain in operation in the short term (This is confirmed as above from Bailey Partnership 26.11.24) 2. What is required to keep it going 3. How long can it be kept going? (Overview given as above) 4. Recommendations on keeping it going and what should replace it 5. Suitability of existing spaces <p>Bailey Partnership will provide the other answers and a further meeting with the DfE is arranged prior to the end of December to discuss next steps.</p>
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Priority 5

<p>Expansion of current Special Schools</p>	<p>Brook Green: 20 additional places</p>	<p>For all schools in priority 5: 25 November – 16 December 2024: Procurement of technical consultant</p>	<p>NOT YET STARTED The school are keen to progress and a potential playground space has been identified. Feasibility to start as soon as possible.</p>
	<p>Longcause: 17 additional places on top of PAN of 103 that is currently too large for the school site.</p>	<p>6 January - 26 May 2025 (21 weeks): Feasibility work including site surveys</p>	<p>ON TRACK Phase 1: the works to the shower area that has been recently converted to a new office, small</p>

		<p>2 – 16 June: Evaluation of feasibility</p> <p>30 June: determination of projects</p>	<p>kitchen area and toilets is complete via earlier work.</p> <p>Phase 2 will be either the conversion of the covered MUGA to teaching space or the infill of the Atrium space</p> <p>Phase 3 will be either infill of the Atrium, or the conversion of the covered MUGA to teaching space depending on an agreed sequence</p> <p>Phase 4 will be the remodelling of the whole school internally to create a proper structured flow thorough the school and pull the earlier phases together</p> <p>Feasibility for phases 2- 4 needs to commence as soon as possible.</p>
	<p>Cann Bridge: 8 additional places</p>		<p>NOT YET STARTED</p> <p>There are other priorities in the school, and there has been recent expansion. A further conversation is due to take place with the school in December (post their Ofsted inspection) to establish whether this is still feasible.</p>
<h2>Priority 6</h2>			
<p>Woodlands Nursery Provision</p>	<p>Repurpose unused space within the school building to provide an early years SEND assessment nursery which will be run by the school.</p>	<p>Work will be completed ready for children to start there September 2025</p>	<p>NOT YET STARTED</p> <p>Woodlands is a PFI school and as such the works, which involve internal remodelling, will be completed via the PFI contract and overseen by School Investment & Organisational Manager within EPS.</p>

Priority 7			
Longcause Additional Building Purchase	Opportunity to purchase an existing building adjacent to Longcause School. This is a grade II listed building and would need internal remodelling to bring the accommodation up to specification.	September to December 2024	ON TRACK Bailey Partnership are due to provide a letter confirming their findings from initial review of the site. Other considerations also to be made are in relation to utility costs, tree removal and net zero / carbon impacts. It is recognised that it is highly likely that the site will not be fit for purpose. The above confirmation, due at the beginning of December will enable a decision as to whether feasibility can be commenced or the project removed from the programme.