

**EXECUTIVE DECISION BRIEFING NOTE****Woodlands School SEND Expansion and Assessment Nursery  
(Early Years)**

This Executive Decision seeks approval to add £728,392 to the Capital Programme, funded from the SEN / High Needs Grant.

The Project will provide additional Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision and provide an Early Years Assessment Nursery provision at Woodlands School, creating 10 nursery assessment spaces and an additional 8-10 spaces within the fabric of the school (by reconfiguring the space). This is a cost-effective option compared to a new build. This will be both Premises and Building Bulletin compliant, from both a pupil and staff perspective.

This will utilise an unused space, following the closure of the Short Break provision on the site, whilst providing the school with an Early Years Assessment Nursery.

The nursery assessment places are for children who may either be assessed to enter one of the special schools in the city (including Woodlands), or who may be assessed as being able to have their needs met in a mainstream setting. This resource currently does not exist in the city.

The key risks if the project is not approved is the loss of additional SEND space/capacity at Woodlands Special School whilst still having to fund the unused Short Break Space, and continued cost increases from Independent Specialist Providers (ISP). A further risk is that professional nursery assessment and early intervention opportunity would potentially be missed.

Children who cannot be accommodated at Woodlands School, must then access an ISP place which would generally cost the City at least 100% more for every place. Providing the necessary transport is also an additional financial burden to the Council.

By providing the new places at Woodlands School, the Council can ensure that children with the most complex needs are offered cost effective, safe and high-quality assessment and provision within the city.

The works, if approved, are scheduled to be complete by the end of the Autumn 2025 half term holiday.

The Part 2 business case provides further detail on the project including a breakdown of project costs.