

CABINET



Date of meeting:	09 March 2026
Title of Report:	SEND SUFFICIENCY PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Apprenticeships and Skills)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley, Director of Children's Services
Author:	Amanda Davis – Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills & Claire Williamson, Head of SEND
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Your Reference:	AD 24 th February 2026
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the plans for SEND Sufficiency and Capital Investment in response to the Every Child Achieving and Thriving white paper publication on 23rd February 2026. It is further updating Cabinet on the mandate to build a new special school to replace Mill Ford as recommended at a previous Cabinet Meeting. A full Member's briefing will take place to outline the Reforms and a more detailed capital plan is now being produced, reflecting and delivering the changes in the White Paper. It is a requirement of the Local Area Partnership to produce an updated plan for SEND in light of Reforms, and we will update and provide a detailed sufficiency plan as part of this work, by April 2026.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that:

- I. Cabinet notes the update for SEND Capital and Sufficiency and how this aligns with the National Reforms.

Reason: the Reforms are considerable and highly ambitious. As such, they will impact residents across Plymouth and the statutory duties of the local authority and the SEND Local Area Partnership will have renewed focus. It is imperative that we ensure value for money of any capital grants received by Plymouth, in expanding specialist provision and improving our education estate, for the benefit of all children and particularly those with SEND. It is also imperative that we prioritise the rebuild of Mill Ford School.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None as this report is to note.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

“Make Plymouth a great place to grow up ...” – children in Plymouth deserve the best learning environments to thrive in their education.

“Spending money wisely” – the use of our High Needs Capital Allocation is outlined in the paper, in terms of what we have already delivered and what we must commit to building a replacement for

Mill Ford as well as likely allocation of resource in the near future to support inclusion in mainstream schools.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

We have £12.9m high needs capital remaining. The cost of a new school to replace Mill Ford is likely to be in excess of this amount and is yet to be determined.

Legal Implications

The Council must continue to comply with its statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, and associated regulations when planning and delivering SEND provision. These duties include securing sufficient and appropriate education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and ensuring that all capital investment follows the Council's Capital Programme processes, Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders and public procurement law.

In addition to existing law, the Government's Schools White Paper *Every Child Achieving and Thriving* sets out significant forthcoming reforms to the SEND system which will have future legal implications for the Local Authority. These reforms are not yet enacted but will introduce new statutory duties once legislation is passed. The Council will need to keep legal oversight under review as detailed regulations are issued and ensure capital planning reflects emerging statutory duties.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

There will be environmental implications in building a new school and in adapting existing provision in terms of the site we select, travel to the site and potential impact on surrounding roads and routes, emissions and waste which can be detailed for each project. However, we aim to reduce travel of children to school outside of Plymouth and can ensure that any new builds are compliant with environmental regulations. We could be particularly ambitious with how we modify and build new environments to reduce emissions and improve the environment in the city.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

No other implications until projects are planned in detail.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	SEND sufficiency plan progress update							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

*Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are **unpublished** works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.*

This section is just for unpublished work (e.g. documents; excel spreadsheets etc) that has been relied upon to prepare the report

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
None							

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Amanda Davis (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 04/03/2026											
Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Cresswell approved via email Date approved: 05/03/2026											