

## **PROJECT DOCUMENTATION**

### **OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE**

#### **Accessibility Improvement Works**

Release: Draft

Date: 10 November 2020

Author:

Document Number: V.1

---

## Document History

### Document Location

The source of the document will be found at:

...sufficiency\capital\capital bids and submissions\2020

### Revision History

Revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
	First issue	
30/11/2020	Funding information clarified	Yes

### Approvals

This document requires the following approval.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version

### Distribution

This document has been distributed to

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version

## Table of Contents

1.	Purpose of document .....	4
2.	Project aims and objectives.....	4
3.	Background.....	4
3.1.	Project Drivers and High Level Issues.....	6
4.	Scope .....	6
4.1.	Included in Scope .....	6
4.2.	Out of scope .....	6
5.	Stakeholders .....	6
6.	Constraints and dependencies .....	7
6.1.	Initiatives which depend on this project are:.....	7
6.2.	This project depends on: .....	7
7.	Budget provision.....	7
7.1.	Estimated costs and assumptions .....	7
8.	Benefits.....	8
8.1.	Cashable benefits .....	8
8.2.	Non-cashable benefits.....	8
9.	High level timeline .....	8
10.	Risks.....	8
10.1.	The key risks of not doing the project are:.....	8
10.2.	The key project risks are:.....	8
11.	Environmental Impact .....	9

## 1. Purpose of document

This outline business case contains information that describes the justification for undertaking accessibility improvement works in schools. The Business Case is to be submitted to the Children & Families Capital Programme Board and if accepted, a more detailed business case will be developed.

## 2. Project aims and objectives

If the business case is approved then the project can move into the implementation phase and deliver the following:

- Ensure the council's estate is safe and fit for purpose
- Ensure that sufficient pupil places in suitable accommodation are available to meet demand in schools
- Ensure that appropriate facilities are in place to meet the needs of children with special educational needs

The business case sets out the work required in schools to ensure the identified children with special educational needs requiring a place in a school can attend as all adaptations and improvement works required to meet their needs will be implemented.

## 3. Background

All children in Herefordshire should have a good start in life and be safe. Children with special educational needs or a disability may need extra help and support to make the most of educational and learning opportunities.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a legal term. It describes the needs of a child or young person who has a difficulty or disability which makes it harder for them to learn than the majority of others of the same age.

A disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. Not all children and young people with a disability have SEN but there is often an overlap.

When children and young people have either or both SEN and a disability it can affect their learning and education.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people.

Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs, **must** have regard to certain aspects, these include:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood

All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential.

The child's parent or the young person has the right to request a particular school be named in their Education Health and Care (EHC) plan.

If a child's parent or a young person makes a request for a particular nursery, school or post-16 institution in these groups the local authority **must** comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless:

- it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or
- the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources

Where a local authority is considering the appropriateness of an individual institution, 'others' is intended to mean the children and young people with whom the child or young person with an EHC plan will directly come into contact on a regular day-to-day basis.

The Herefordshire Council accessibility strategy (a requirement under the planning duty in the Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Section 88 (Schedule 10)) sets out the approach that the council is taking to increase access to education for disabled children and young people, so that they can benefit from educational provision to the same extent which children without disabilities can.

The Equality Act requires ALL providers to make **reasonable adjustments** to avoid disadvantaging pupils with disabilities, but schools have an additional duty to plan for better access for disabled pupils. The reasonable adjustments duty and a wider and more strategic planning approach for schools are intended to complement each other.

The council has a planning duty to improve the physical accessibility of school buildings over time. The council strategy has been i) improvement of physical access for known pupils in the system, ii) investment to create a geographical spread of accessible schools.

A system of physical accessibility ratings has been devised, based on the council's expected standards of accessibility. The accessibility of all schools was audited in 2015 using these criteria, and 78% of county schools were found to be fully or mainly accessible.

A capital investment strategy for the school estates was published in 2016. One of the aims of this is to improve the standard of physical accessibility alongside planned capital investment.

Where there is a new build, extension or refurbishment, it is expected that the school will incorporate any access facilities needed for existing pupils, as well as, in accordance with its statutory responsibilities, anticipate the needs of future pupils (e.g. level access, height adjustable work stations).

### **3.1. Project Drivers and High Level Issues**

The council has a planning duty to improve the physical accessibility of school buildings over time. The council strategy has been i) improvement of physical access for known pupils in the system, ii) investment to create a geographical spread of accessible schools.

Councils receive no dedicated funding for adaptation, improvement or alteration at any schools. It remains the case, therefore, that central funding for accessibility improvements related to pupils joining or transferring to an individual school will need to be considered by the council. There is a requirement on schools to notify the council of access needs, and parents need to identify on school admission forms that their child has physical access requirements.

There are two known children with EHC Plans who are transitioning into schools. One into primary, the other from primary into secondary. The schools that the children will ultimately be attending has not been determined. This will be ascertained as part of the admissions process which takes place at the start of each calendar year. The final places therefore will not be known until April/May 2021, however, these children will need an accessible school for September 2021. Early indications of the preferred school can be provided once the admissions round has opened for applications and plans for potential adaptations can commence at that point.

## **4. Scope**

### **4.1. Included in Scope**

Accessibility improvement works at the primary and secondary schools named in the EHC Plan.

### **4.2. Out of scope**

Accessibility improvement works at all other schools in the county.

## **5. Stakeholders**

- Headteachers of the affected Schools
- Chairs of Governors of the affected Schools
- Parents/guardians of children at the affected Schools
- Parents/guardians of the children with the EHC Plans
- Ward Councillors
- Children & Families Directorate
- Property Services
- Procurement
- Finance
- Health & Safety

- 
- Legal

## 6. Constraints and dependencies

### 6.1. Initiatives which depend on this project are:

None

### 6.2. This project depends on:

- Appropriate levels of resource and expertise
- Contractor availability
- The required level of engagement from stakeholders

## 7. Budget provision

Councils receive no dedicated funding for adaptation, improvement or alteration at any schools. It remains the case, therefore, that central funding for accessibility improvements related to pupils joining or transferring to an individual school will need to be considered by the council. The funding of adaptations to schools for children with special educational needs has been discussed in the Children & Families Capital Programme Board, chaired by Director for Children & Families, where it was agreed with finance that funding requests should be made for children requiring these adaptations.

### 7.1. Estimated costs and assumptions

The adaptations required are not known at this stage as it would depend upon the school to be attended and the ability of that school to meet the needs of the child in question. Works may be required for ramps and handrails to enable the child to move around the school to larger scale works for example the provision of hygiene and physiotherapy rooms.

New build hygiene and physiotherapy rooms, by way of an extension to the school, in previous years have cost around £40-50k per room. This is the worst case scenario. Every attempt would be made to find an internal remodelling solution initially without compromising on the quality of education provided for the children at the school.

Two children therefore would equate to an approximate cost of £200k plus contingency and professional fees, a total cost in the region of £240k.

Child 1		Child 2	
Hygiene room	£50,000	Hygiene room	£50,000
Physiotherapy room	£50,000	Physiotherapy room	£50,000
Contingency (10%)	£10,000	Contingency (10%)	£10,000
Fees (10%)	£10,000	Fees (10%)	£10,000

---

Total	£120,000	Total	£120,000
-------	----------	-------	----------

## 8. Benefits

The anticipated benefits of the proposed project are listed below:

### 8.1. Cashable benefits

None

### 8.2. Non-cashable benefits

- Compliance with government guidelines
- Fit for purpose accommodation and associated infrastructure
- A fully accessible school that could meet the needs of all future children with EHC Plans

## 9. High level timeline

Funding approved in capital programme	February 2021
Schools identified following admissions application	February 2021
Assessment of need and adaptations required at schools	March/April 2020
Accessibility improvement works completed	August 2021

## 10. Risks

Risks are potential threats that may occur but have not yet happened. Risk management will monitor the identified risks and take any remedial action should the risk happen.

### 10.1. The key risks of not doing the project are:

- Council does not fulfil their statutory duty to place children with SEN and/or disabilities in schools
- Impact on service delivery
- Reputational risk

### 10.2. The key project risks are:

- Insufficient budget
- Insufficient resource
- Disruption to school
- Contractor availability



## **11. Environmental Impact**

An assessment will be carried out once the location and work required are identified.