

Title of report: Aylestone School Expansion Additional Works

Decision maker: Corporate Director - Children & Young People

Decision date: 18 December 2025

Report by: Head of Educational Development

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

Aylestone Hill;

Purpose

To approve the allocation of **£495,000 of Basic Need Grant** to fund additional highways and site access works required during the planning determination for the Aylestone School expansion project.

Recommendations

That:

- a) **The spend of £495,000 of Basic Need Grant be approved to deliver the additional highways-related works required as part of the Aylestone School expansion; and**
- b) **Authority be delegated to the Service Director for Education, Skills and Learning, to take all operational decisions necessary to complete these works.**

Alternative options

1. Do nothing - Not delivering the required access improvements would leave the scheme unable to satisfy Highways requirements. The Local Highway Authority has been clear that without a formalised internal loop and drop-off/pick-up area, the proposal presents an unacceptable highway safety risk and could not be supported. This option would therefore jeopardise planning consent and prevent the school expansion from proceeding. This option is rejected.
2. Fund works from within the existing project budget - Absorbing £495,000 of unplanned highways works would require removing key educational accommodation from the main

scheme, undermining the project objectives and the original [Cabinet approval in February 2023](#). This option is not viable.

3. Request that the school contributes to costs - Schools do not hold capital balances capable of meeting costs of this scale for statutory highways mitigation.
This option is not viable.

Key considerations

4. Cabinet approved the Aylestone School expansion programme in February 2023. The scheme originally included a new teaching block, sports hall and associated improvements. No significant highways alterations were included within the original scope.
5. Planning application 251073 was submitted in early 2025. During the statutory consultation, the Local Highway Authority raised extensive concerns relating to congestion on Broadlands Lane, pupil and pedestrian safety and the lack of an on-site drop-off solution.
6. The first Highways response dated 29 April 2025 identified that:
 - Broadlands Lane already experiences significant congestion during peak school times.
 - The expansion would generate +321 AM and +261 PM peak-hour trips, with no mitigation proposed.
7. Crucially, Highways stated: “No dedicated on-site pick-up/drop-off facility is proposed... the internal loop should be incorporated... this mitigation is vital to accommodate the school expansion.”
8. Highways also emphasised that the Safer Routes to School trial could not be relied upon as mitigation.
9. As part of the wider context, the Council has been operating a Safer Routes to School (SRTS) trial on Broadlands Lane. This is a time-limited initiative that temporarily restricts vehicular access to the lane for one hour at school start and finish times, with the aim of reducing congestion, improving pupil safety, and encouraging active travel such as walking and cycling. The trial requires parents to use designated off-site drop-off locations, creating a calmer and safer streetscape for both pupils and residents.
10. However, the continuation of the SRTS scheme beyond the six-month pilot period cannot be guaranteed, and therefore the Local Highway Authority made clear during planning consultation that the Aylestone School expansion must include a permanent on-site mitigation solution, namely, the widened internal loop and drop-off/pick-up area, to ensure safe and sustainable access irrespective of the outcome of the trial.
11. Following further consultation with Highways, the school expansion projects design team submitted a revised Transport Assessment and updated layout incorporating:
 - i. A widened, formalised one-way internal loop for access and egress.
 - ii. 24 short-stay drop-off spaces (approx. 15 usable during peak flow)
 - iii. Segregated pedestrian loop for safe walking routes.
 - iv. Revised entrance and exit arrangements.
 - v. 98 total parking spaces, including minibus and accessible bays.

- vi. 70 secure cycle spaces across three locations
12. The Local Highway Authority supported these amendments.
 13. The Planning Committee has now approved the application (subject to a 21 day call in period by the Secretary of State), and the Local Planning Authority will secure the required highways, access and travel plan measures through planning conditions. These conditions require the delivery of the widened internal loop, drop-off/pick-up layout, pedestrian segregation, parking provision and associated safety improvements prior to first occupation of the new accommodation. This formalises the mitigation requested by the Local Highway Authority and makes the implementation of these works a legal requirement of the planning permission.
 14. All of the above access, circulation, fencing, walling and parking amendments were identified during the planning process in response to Highways requirements. These works were not included in the Cabinet-approved scope or budget and therefore require additional Basic Need capital funding.
 15. If the Safer Routes to School pilot is ultimately implemented on a permanent basis, the requirement for a full on-site drop-off and pick-up loop could be reduced, as the permanent scheme would provide a long-term traffic mitigation solution on Broadlands Lane.

Community impact

16. The additional works:
 - i. Improve safety for pupils, including those with SEND, by separating vehicles and pedestrians.
 - ii. Reduce congestion on Broadlands Lane, benefiting residents, road users and the wider community.
 - iii. Improve active travel infrastructure, including new safe pedestrian routes and significantly expanded cycle parking.
17. As corporate parents, the council must ensure that school sites are safe, accessible and suitable for current and future pupils, including those most vulnerable.
18. The term 'corporate parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by the Council. Being a good corporate parent means we should; accept responsibility for children in the Council's care; make their needs a priority; and seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.
19. Corporate parenting responsibilities are not confined to elected members. All officers share the responsibility to promote the needs of looked after children. Key responsibilities of all officers are to promote the life chances of looked after children and care leavers in their area of responsibility; and to consider the impact of decision making on looked after children and care leavers.

Environmental impact

20. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors

we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

21. The development of this project has sought to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance throughout delivery. The additional highways and access works required through the planning process have been designed to reduce congestion, vehicle idling and associated emissions on Broadlands Lane by providing safe and efficient on-site circulation.
22. The revised scheme also supports sustainable travel through the provision of 70 secure cycle spaces, segregated pedestrian routes and improvements that complement the council's Safer Routes to School initiative, encouraging more active travel for pupils and staff.
23. During implementation, the project will continue to adopt good environmental practice by minimising construction waste, reducing energy usage through efficient site management, and ensuring that materials are responsibly sourced. The design process has also sought to minimise the loss of existing vegetation and integrate biodiversity mitigation measures required through the planning process, helping to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Equality duty

24. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
25. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this project, and it has been found to have low impact for equality.
26. Due to the potential impact of this project being low, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However, the following considerations have been taken into account:
 - a) Enhanced pedestrian segregation improves safety for pupils with mobility or sensory needs.
 - b) Improved access arrangements support equitable and safe arrival for all users.

Resource implications

27. The required £495,000 will fund the additional highways and access works required through the planning process, including the formalised internal loop, drop-off/pick-up area, fencing, retaining structures, revised entrances, and associated surfacing and drainage modifications.
28. Related professional, design and project management costs will be absorbed within the main Aylestone School expansion project budget, ensuring that the additional funding requested is limited solely to the construction cost of the new highway's requirements.
29. The construction contractor for the wider Aylestone School project has already been procured through a competitive process via an approved framework, in full accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The additional works will be delivered through this existing contractual arrangement, ensuring value for money, programme continuity, and compliance with procurement legislation.
30. There are no revenue implications arising from this decision. Ongoing maintenance of the completed works will fall to the school.

Capital cost of project	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Construction Costs</i>			495		495
TOTAL			495		495

Funding streams	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Basic need Grant</i>			495		495
TOTAL			495		495

Legal implications

21. There no further legal implications other than those set out in other parts of the report.

Risk management

Risk / Issue	Mitigation / Control
Delivery of the highway's mitigation required by planning conditions is essential to comply with the planning permission and enable the occupation of the new accommodation.	Provide the required funding to implement all approved highways measures; contractor to deliver works in accordance with the approved plans and planning conditions.
Construction or operational safety risks arise if the internal loop and pedestrian segregation are not implemented as designed.	Ensure the contractor adheres to the Construction Environmental Management Plan and Traffic Management Plan agreed with the Local Highway Authority.
Cost increases or inflationary pressures impact deliverability.	Works delivered through the existing competitively procured framework contractor, supported by project cost control, contract management and value engineering processes.
Delay to the wider Aylestone School expansion programme.	Early approval and integration of these works into the main project programme to avoid sequencing issues and reduce programme risk.
Reputational risk if the school cannot operate safely at expanded capacity.	Deliver required mitigation to address congestion concerns and ensure safe pupil, staff and visitor movements on and around the site.
Future changes to the Safer Routes to School scheme alter mitigation requirements.	Should the Safer Routes to School scheme become permanent, a further discussion with the Planning Authority and Local Highway Authority would be required. Elements such as the additional parking would still benefit the school operationally.

31. All risks will be monitored at service level within the project risk register, in line with the Council's corporate risk management framework.

Consultees

32. Public consultation events and political group consultation have also been undertaken as part of the wider Aylestone School expansion programme, and feedback from these engagement activities has informed the development of the overall scheme.
33. During the statutory re-consultation period (19 September – 24 October 2025), a number of public objections were received in response to the amended plans and updated technical documents. These included concerns relating to traffic management, the effectiveness of the revised drop-off/pick-up loop, the impact on parking and congestion, loss of playing field space, tree planting, and wider issues raised about governance, consultation processes and educational justification. Objectors specifically referenced the September 2025 amendments, revised Transport Assessment and updated site layout (e.g., submissions of 22 September, 21 October and 29 October). All representations were considered as part of the planning process,

and Planning Committee subsequently resolved to approve the application subject to conditions.

34. Aylestone School Leadership have engaged throughout the design revision process and supportive of the additional works.
35. Cabinet Member for Children and Young People has been briefed on the scheme and supportive of the proposals.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None identified

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.