

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION



DECISION OF: DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
WITH ADVICE FROM: HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLACE PLANNING & CAPITAL
PROGRAMMES.

IN CONSULTATION WITH: SECTION 151 OFFICER AND HEAD OF STRATEGIC
PROCUREMENT

DECISION NO: CY027 (2025/26 Scheme)

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF CONTACTOR TO DELIVER BUILDING ENHANCEMENTS
TO VOYAGE LEARNING CAMPUS, MILTON, WESTON-SUPER-MARE AS PART OF SEND
SAFETY VALVE PHASE 4

KEY DECISION: YES

REASON: The total contract value is over £500k and the project will affect SEND provision in two or more wards. The project scope and value has increased since the commissioning plan was approved.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2022, the Department for Education announced the High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. HNPCA is paid to Local Authorities (LAs) to support the provision of places for children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those pupils requiring alternative provision (AP).

In October 2022 the DfE invited North Somerset, as part of its High Needs revenue deficit reduction plan, to submit a bid to secure additional capital to deliver building solutions to help support an increase in the availability of local SEND places so that capital investment might contribute to controlling and reducing the revenue deficit - the Safety Valve (SV) bid. The bid was successful and NSC were granted funding to deliver interventions at 20 schools that included enhancements at the VLC's site in Milton, Weston super Mare.

A Commissioning Plan for the delivery of transformational investment at schools across North Somerset to create and improve places for CYP with SEND or those requiring AP was subsequently approved (22/23 CY102).

A refurbishment of the VLC Milton school site, one of the sites of North Somerset's Pupil Referral Unit, forms part of the SV programme. Work has been ongoing with the school to develop a design to provide enhancements to enable them to accommodate additional pupils at their site on Baytree Road in Milton, Weston-super-Mare as well as having clearly defined areas within the site for primary-aged pupil referral children, for children and young people with medical and anxiety needs and for wider outreach. The refurbishment will incorporate a mix of two new build areas as well as heavy and light refurbishment of the existing site. The school's current lobby will be reconfigured and separate entrances for Phase 1 students

provided, as well as construction of an additional classroom and reconfiguration of the current classroom layout to better suit the school's requirements. The look and feel of each area will be carefully considered during the refurbishment to create the right environment for the needs of the students it will accommodate. A sufficiently progressed design proposal was used to allow for a contractor to be procured to deliver the construction of the project.

The project aims to deliver enhancements to enable the school to accommodate additional pupils at their site, as well as having clearly defined areas within the site for primary-aged pupil referral children, for children and young people with medical and anxiety needs and for wider outreach.

Utilising a grant from central government, awarded to NSC to explore potential portfolio carbon reductions, the VLC Milton site has recently been assessed to see how its carbon footprint could be reduced. This identified that the heating system is currently oil-fired and approximately 40 years old. It is therefore past its expected end-of-life and using a carbon intensive fuel. One option to address this would be to install heat-pumps, however unless the building fabric is very efficient this would increase the operating cost of the site. The installation of renewables can reduce this increase in operating costs but at VLC Milton this is not suitable. The best option therefore is to install a modern, efficient, gas-fired heating system in addition to the original scope.

Leaks have also developed at several locations within the VLC Milton buildings which has led to a survey of the roof being undertaken. This has identified that the felt and joints on a number of areas of the roof require replacement, as such this work has also been added to the scope.

Addressing the heating and roof issues had not been covered in the commissioning plan as there was insufficient information available at the time as information became available options to complete these works separately were considered but due to the nature of the site and the interaction with the planned refurbishments the best option to minimise disruption and maximise value for money was to carry out the works at the same time with one main contractor, this was approved in the procurement plan.

DECISION:

To approve the awarding of the contract for the construction works to John Perkins Construction Ltd, Unit 22 Dragon Court, Crofts End Road, St George, Bristol, BS5 7XX (company registration number 2758627) to undertake the work starting in August 2025, for circa 24 months, with a contract value of £1,057,175 and total potential value of up to £1,215,75.

REASONS:

Introduction

The contract is for a principal contractor to deliver construction works at Milton VLC which includes the construction of new classrooms, the refurbishment & reconfiguration of existing spaces, the installation of new heating system and roof repairs as detailed in the background section above. Given the condition of the building and the nature of the works to be undertaken the request includes approval for costs up to £1,215,75 to address any required

works that may be uncovered as a result of the planned works, see details under Funding section.

Governance

The Commissioning Plan CY102 and the Procurement Plan CY158 were approved by the Section 151 Officer in accordance with the delegated authority capital strategy (see Background Papers).

Market Engagement

An expression of interest exercise was carried out in November 2024 this was issued via the Supplying the Southwest Procurement Portal and was open to all suppliers. We received 16 responses from suppliers indicating an interest in the project. The exercise helped confirm there was healthy interest in the project from the local market, including SMEs. The responses also confirmed the market was comfortable with the single stage approach which the project were considering alongside a 2-stage approach, that the majority were happy with the proposed JCT terms and confirmed the proposed tender period was acceptable.

Award Criteria

The award criteria for the project are based on 35% price, 55% quality and 10% social value, this weighting was agreed with an emphasis on quality given the complexity of the project and the sensitivity required while working on a live site with specialist requirements.

Procurement procedure & publishing information

An Open Tender process was used, and the tender was published on the Supplying the Southwest Portal on the 16 April 2025, after a request for an extension was granted the opportunity closed on 28 May 2025. 13 bids were received, 8 of which were compliant and evaluated. The tender was published on Contracts Finder; reference: NSOMS001-DN771259-00482686. The procurement process used adhered to the Procurement Act 2023 regulations (2024).

Assessment Panel Members

- NSC Senior Project Manager - Projects and Property
- Regional Director – AtkinsRéalis
- Project Manager – AtkinsRéalis

Moderated by a member of the Procurement Team.

Assessment outcome

An independent evaluation of the tender was carried out by a Regional Director and a Project Manager from Atkins Realis (appointed as employer's agents to support the delivery of the project) alongside a Senior Project Manager from North Somerset's Property & Projects team.

The tender was assessed on the following quality criteria which accounted for 55% of the score:

1. Climate Emergency
2. Project Delivery Approach and Management
3. Evidence of Challenging Live Environments
4. Key Project Team
5. Top 5 Risks and Mitigations

Tenders were also assessed on price (35%) and social value (10%).

All of the assessors independently scored the tenders. A member of North Somerset Council's procurement team moderated a session in which all evaluators discussed their scores and comments on the tender returns.

A Chartered Quantity Surveyor from Atkins Realis, working on behalf of North Somerset, interrogated the cost schedules, exclusions and inclusions provided as part of each tender. A balancing exercise was undertaken on these cost schedules to enable a like-for-like comparison to be made.

The results of the assessment are shown below:

	Quality Score	Price Score	Social Value Score	Total Score
John Perkins Construction Ltd	44.00%	29.78%	10%	83.78%
Supplier 2	30.25%	33.68%	10%	73.93%
Supplier 3	40.70%	24.63%	10%	75.33%
Supplier 4	33.00%	33.93%	10%	76.93%
Supplier 5	27.50%	25.85%	10%	63.35%
Supplier 6	33.00%	35.00%	10%	78.00%
Supplier 7	24.20%	32.51%	10%	66.71%
Supplier 8	17.05%	19.25%	10%	46.30%

Social Value

In accordance with the council's Social Value Policy, 10% of the overall weighting was allocated for bidders to propose their tangible social value commitments.

John Perkins Construction Ltd have made social value commitments to:

- Support Milton VLC with managing and moving existing FF&E in advance of works undertaken.
- Assist Milton VLC with installation as required of notice boards, wall fittings etc.
- Assist Milton VLC with building of furniture where required.

Contract Management

The conditions of contract to manage the design team will be the JCT Intermediate Building Contract with Contractors Design and will be signed by the contractor and NSC for this commission. The contract will be managed by the appointed AtkinsRéalís Project Manager alongside the NSC Senior Project Manager.

Implementation of contract

Following approval work will commence to finalise the contract and agree mobilisation. The contract will be implemented in a collaborative way with the appointed contractor, with both parties seeking to resolve any issues related to time, cost or quality with a constructive approach. The contract clearly sets out the requirements and deliverables related to this appointment, and the appointed contractor will be managed in line with the various terms, conditions and clauses contained within the JCT Intermediate Contract

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The use of a framework to procure the services of a contractor was considered. The reasons this option has been discounted as appropriate on this occasion are that a framework will limit the accessibility of the work to smaller, local contractors which we believe are well positioned to carry out this type of work. Related to this is that we anticipate that the larger contractors, typically on frameworks, may not be interested in bidding for this work, and if they do, may seek to deliver via a sub-contractor; adding a layer of cost and complication to project delivery.

It was acknowledged that a framework would have the advantage of pre-qualifying bidders for important issues such as financial stability, equality and health and safety however on balance we believe our chosen approach of an open tender is preferable.

Following the publication of an expression of interest on the procurement portal, 16 completed responses were received. The responses indicate that the market was comfortable with the timeframe, procurement process and contract terms (JCT Intermediate Building Contract with Contractors Design and the estimated 24-month contract duration (12 months of defects) proposed.

The use of an open tender to procure the services of the contractor was therefore considered the most appropriate route to market.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs

The cost of the project is outlined below:

The Pre-Tender Estimate (PTE) for the cost of the project is £1,246,000. The total project estimate (including all fees, FF&E and contingency) is £1,694,880.

Funding

Funding will come from the following sources:

	HNPCF 2022/23	HNPCP 2023/24	SV Bid 2023/24	School Condition 2024/25	Totals
	£	£	£	£	£
KCE312 - VLC Milton Scheme	549,750	700,000	150,250		1,400,000
New addition - Roof				100,000	100,000
New addition - Heating				194,880	194,880

Totals	549,750	700,000	150,250	294,880	1,694,880
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This contract is funded from cost code KCE312 Asset Ref 783.

The spend profile is:

Year	£
2023/24	9,589
2024/25	132,000
2025/26	1,553,291
TOTAL	1,694,880

The winning contractors bid was £1,057,175 however in recognition that the PTE was £1,246,000 and for the following reasons we are requesting this contract award paper signs off an additional 15% of contingency resulting in a value of up to £1,215,75.

- Refurbishment projects such as this which interface with a large percentage of the existing building have significant potential to expose legacy issues which will need addressing.
- As the school has been operational during the design stage the number of intrusive surveys undertaken has been limited increasing the number of potential issues we may encounter – particularly asbestos.
- It was decided relatively late in the design process that the oil-fired heating system should be updated to gas. The design of this is ongoing, with a provisional sum used in the contract value. This may prove to be insufficient.
- The project includes two extensions with associated groundworks. While the areas have been surveyed for underground obstacles / services as far as is practical there is always a risk with such works.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

The JCT Design and Build Form of Building Contract will be used incorporating clauses to protect the Council. Atkins Realis in the role as Employers Agent will draft the contracts.

The procurement process will be compliant with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 by ensuring it seeks additional social value during the tender process.

As per financial regs for Capital Budget Changes and Transfers, section 4.34

Virements of existing capital budgets between approved projects / schemes are permissible subject to the advice of the Section 151 Officer on any required changes to funding and subject to the following limitations. Where the virement involves more than one directorate, the agreement of all involved Directors Executive Members is required.

- Directors with the Section 151 Officer can approve virements between budgets to a maximum of £500,000

And section 4.35 Increases or changes to capital schemes are permissible subject to the funding impacts being identified and subject to the following limitations:

- Directors with the Section 151 Officer can approve changes to capital budgets up to a maximum of £500,000

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The DfE is committed to supporting the Government's targets on climate change, including achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 target, as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. To help LAs achieve the sustainability and design standards required to achieve net zero, HNPCA funding for 2022-24 includes an uplift to support LAs with the additional costs associated with net zero construction.

Having more local SEND places within the community assist the council in reducing our reliance on home to school transport for pupils with SEND or AP needs.

Designs will be developed with reference to the Council's policies on climate change and with consideration of the environmental implications.

Recent investigations have identified that the existing heating system is oil-fired and approximately 40 years old. Replacing it with a modern gas-fired system during this work will avoid significant disruption when it inevitably fails in the coming years but will greatly reduce the carbon footprint of the school.

CONSULTATION

The HNPCA consultation was made available on North Somerset's e-consult website and sent to the following groups: All schools and governing bodies across North Somerset, MATCEOs and Trust Boards; trade unions; the local MPs; Town and Parish Councils; the Diocese of Bath & Wells; Diocese of Clifton; Weston College, Early Years Stakeholders; SEND Stakeholder groups, neighbouring LAs.

Targeted updates were also sent to the SEND Partnership Board, the Education Excellence Partnership Board, the Strategic School's Forum and it was also highlighted in Noticeboard (our local schools' newsletter) and our SEND partnership colleagues.

PROCUREMENT

If this is a procurement over £5000 has the mandatory pre-procurement engagement form been sent to procurement?



Microsoft Forms

Yes. A PPEF was submitted and the number allocated is NSC-0398-25. The procurement team have been consulted on this procurement and have provided advice throughout and also on the procurement plan.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation
'Live' SEND school site	Careful programming of construction activities and regular liaison with the school and other stakeholders
Long lead time items	Early engagement with selected contractor on long lead items and early ordering
Cost exceeding allocated budget	Ensure all risks and issues considered in the development of the budget and an appropriate contingency allocated
Programme	Delays and programme impacts are always a risk but on they will cause particular issues on this scheme so creation of detailed programme coordinated by contractor but will input from school and other stakeholders

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? **Yes**

An EIA was submitted as part of the Safety Valve bid.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The provision of the building improvements demonstrated in this report will support the Council's corporate plan objectives to improve Prosperity and Opportunity, Health and Well-being and Quality Place.

Having a local school place is a requirement of most families for their children and is fundamental to the delivery of our Corporate Plan that seeks to ensure that:

- *Our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive*
- *Our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit*
- *Our communities are caring, healthy and safe, and where people help each other to live well.*
- *Within all that we do, we must ensure that Our council delivers consistently good services and value for money to support our community.*

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Commissioning Plan CY102 \(2022/23 scheme\).](#)

[Procurement Plan CY158 VLC Milton](#)

[North Somerset School Place Planning Strategy 2024 - 2027](#)

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

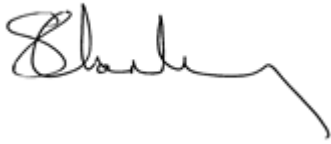
Signed:



Title: Director of Children's Services

Date: 4.7.25

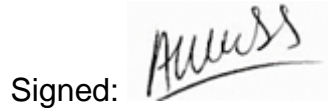
In consultation with:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shah'.

Signed:

Title: Head of Strategic Place Planning and Capital Programmes

Date: 4.7.25

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Auss'.

Signed:

Title: S151 Officer

Date: 4.7.25

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Signed:

Title: Head of Strategic Procurement

Date: 4.7.25