

North Somerset Council Decision



Decision Of: DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, FAMILIES, SKILLS AND
LIFELONG LEARNING

With Advice From: THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN SERVICES; SECTION 151
OFFICER AND HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLACE PLANNING & CAPITAL
PROGRAMMES

In consultation with: CABINET MEMBER CLLR GIBBONS

Directorate: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Decision No: CY149 (2025/26 Scheme)

Subject: (CAPITAL) – NAILSEA SCHOOL'S RESOURCE BASE - APPROVAL OF
AN UPLIFT TO THE COMMISSIONING PLAN TO PROGRESS THE DELIVERY OF A
15-PLACE EXPANSION FROM £675,000 TO £925,000

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: This decision will result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure in
excess of £500,000.

Background:

The School Place Planning Strategy (SPPS) 2024–2027, approved by the Executive in July 2024, outlines a strategic commitment to developing additional school places for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). As part of this commitment, the Council is advancing plans to expand Nailsea School's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Resource Base. This expansion aims to increase capacity from the current 10 places to 25 by September 2026, supporting the SPPS as well as complementing the Department for Education's 5-year Safety Valve (SV) Capital Programme (2023–2028).

The project involves the addition of three ASD-friendly classrooms, achieved through internal adaptations and new construction. The existing location of the base, situated at the front of the school, presents challenges due to the semi-wall internal structure,



external supporting diagonal beams, and integrated infrastructure ducts. These complexities have been addressed through extensive design exploration, resulting in a viable plan to adapt the space while meeting ASD-specific pedagogical needs.

Significant progress has already been achieved. Permissions for RIBA stages 1–2 were established through Decisions CY023, CY117, CY125, CY143, and CVY169. Surveys were conducted, including topographical surveys by Anthony Brookes (DN CY143) and bat and bird studies by Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy (DN CY169). A Commissioning & Procurement Plan, approved on 19 February 2025 (CY117), has allowed design studies, engineering analysis, and spatial coordination to proceed.

The initial project budget was set at £675,000. However, the challenges associated with creating appropriate ASD-friendly spaces have made it necessary to revise the allocation. A budget increase of £250,000 is therefore proposed, bringing the total to £925,000.

This additional funding, sourced from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years, will address several key needs:

- the construction of a third classroom
- the conversion of staff areas into classrooms 4 and 5
- the remodelling of spaces to meet the requirements of ASD pupils
- One new classroom originally proposed as an office will now be added

Existing rooms 14 and 11 (staff/OT room) will be repurposed into classrooms that incorporate a new kitchen and servery, while rooms 15 and 10 (kitchenette/sensory room) will also be converted into classrooms. Room 6 will be redesigned as a sensory room with a canvas, air-permeable ceiling. These improvements aim to create inclusive and functional teaching spaces tailored to the needs of ASD pupils.

Approval is now sought to proceed with the commissioning and procurement of a Design & Build contractor capable of delivering RIBA stages 4–6, with construction to be completed by September 2026. The expansion of Nailsea School's ASD Resource Base forms a critical part of the Council's commitment to addressing growing demand for SEND provisions. By enhancing the quality and inclusivity of educational spaces, this project ensures that the Council fulfils its broader objectives under the SPPS 2024–2027 while meeting the needs of local families and students.

The decision to approve the full budget for this project is on the Forward Plan for a decision not before 1 February 2026.

Decision:

To agree to the allocation of capital funds to procure a Design & Build contractor from RIBA 4 to RIBA 6 for Nailsea school resource base expansion from the HNPCA grant as below:

- £675,000 from the HNPCA 2023/24
- An additional £250,000 from the HNPCA 2025/26

Reasons:

Having Resource Bases attached to mainstream schools is part of the Council's agreed SEND strategy to create more local places and to prevent the need for pupils to attend more revenue expensive placements outside the district. This builds on the Government's High Needs capital strategy partly announced on 12 December 2025.

The previous budget was not sufficient to make the space appropriate for its intended users.

There are two options available:

- To continue with the existing budget and deliver a space that only partially works for the users of the Resources Base
- To increase the budget and have a space that meets the requirements for education delivery for pupils with ASD – **the preferred option**

Introduction:

The current scope of works for the Nailsea School Resource Base expansion includes provisions for up to five classrooms, a large group gathering space, a sensory room, therapy space for occupational therapy and physiotherapy, associated staff accommodation, welfare facilities, access control systems compatible with the Salto system, and external space that aligns with the existing provision. However, addressing the specific needs of pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has presented significant challenges, necessitating a revision of the original plans.

To meet these needs effectively and create appropriate ASD-friendly spaces, it has become necessary to revise the scope of the project. This includes a budget increase of £250,000, bringing the total to £925,000, funded through the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.

The revised approach involves constructing a third classroom, converting existing staff areas into classrooms 4 and 5, and repurposing one proposed office space into an additional classroom. Furthermore, rooms 14 and 11, previously allocated as staff and occupational therapy rooms, will be transformed into classrooms with an integrated kitchen and servery, and rooms 15 and 10, previously dedicated to a kitchenette and sensory room, will also be converted into classrooms.

To maintain necessary sensory provisions, Room 6 will be redesigned specifically as a sensory room, featuring a canvas, air-permeable ceiling. These changes ensure the creation of functional, inclusive educational spaces specifically tailored to the unique needs of ASD pupils, aligning the project with its broader goals of accessibility and inclusivity.

The project team received approval (CY117 - Appendix 1) on 19 February 2025 to procure a multi-disciplinary team to undertake design studies, engineering analysis and a spatially coordinated design and outline specification for the Nailsea School Resource Base Expansion. Within the tender for Professional Services, we expressed the intention to novate the designers over to the Design & Build contractor to complete the remaining design duties.

Lessons Learned from previous projects

The project team have listed some lessons learnt below and some actions to mitigate against reoccurring events in future projects.

Issue identified	Issue description	Action required
Design Inconsistencies	Lack of engagement with the client team by the delivery team that meant that the scope was not clear.	Design has now been developed in collaboration with Children’s Services as the Client and School who have formally agreed to the design.
Unauthorised Changes to Specification	Changes being agreed verbally and/or between school and EA/contractor without PM/client authority	Have a clear change request process with a change request form for each change required (excluding emergency, low value items) approved by the sponsor
Principle Contractor Poor PM Performance	Contractors have poor PM performance leading to lack of information to school, PM, and client team	PM team to review contractor PM principles and competencies during the procurement and tendering process to ensure good quality
FF&E Inconsistencies/Overspend	FF&E requirements and budget have been confusing between NSC and schools	Formally document FF&E budget and requirements for each school (via letter not email) at the early stages so we can refer to it at a later stage.
Existing School Condition Issues, Gas Elec Water, Drainage Etc Not Being Identified Until Late	Schools are not identifying issues that are affecting project budget and timescales	Create a template for schools to complete pre-design to declare known issues. This can be used as a reference point to discuss who is responsible for rectifying issues.

School Specific/Trust Specification Requirements Not Implemented - M&E, Carbon Footprint Etc	Schools/trusts have specific specification for M&E components that have been identified after design and therefore become a post contract variation	Create a form for the school to complete to identify these requirements predesign
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Table 1 - Lessons Learned

Requirement

The successful Design & Build contractor will undertake:

RIBA Stage 4: Technical Design

- Finalise and coordinate all technical aspects of the design.
- Take responsibility for completing the design in line with the Employer's Requirements.
- Obtain necessary technical approvals (e.g. building control, utilities).
- Prepare construction-ready drawings and specifications.

RIBA Stage 5: Construction

- Mobilise resources and manage all on-site works.
- Coordinate subcontractors and supply chain to deliver the works safely, on time, and to the required quality.
- Implement and monitor health & safety (CDM 2015 compliance).
- Provide regular reporting on programme, budget, and risks.
- Manage change control and ensure quality assurance processes are followed.
- Maintain communication with the client, design team, and stakeholders.

RIBA Stage 6: Handover

- Complete final commissioning, snagging, and quality checks.
- Provide building handover documentation (O&M manuals, as-built drawings, warranties)
- Achieve practical completion and address any defects under the rectification period.

Contract Structure and Value

The project team anticipate the overall costs of this Design and Build contract to be £571,256 and intend to use a JCT Design and Build contract.

The expected duration of this contract is July 2026 to December 2026.

Market

The Project Team are using the Supplying the South-West portal for this procurement and will be undertaking Pre-market engagement followed by a Request for Quotation.

The project team have obtained a list of local Design & Build contractors who had expressed interest in another NSC scheme of a similar value.

Route to Market

The project team are looking to procure through the Supplying the South-West Portal by undertaking a Request for Quotation.

The project team will undertake a pre-market engagement exercise to help them understand the current market, identify potential risks, and refine the scope before we go out to tender. Undertaking this exercise may highlight other preferred routes to market such as a framework. We will consider any proposed options that suit the requirements of the scheme and boast value for money. The Pre-Market Engagement will also be used to warm up the market and determine which suppliers have capacity and interest before issuing the Request for Quote (RFQ). The RFQ will be issued to 5 – 8 suppliers.

Options Considered:

- Open Tender - The use of an open tender to procure a contractor was considered however the RFQ route is compliant with the CSO's and will enable competition to ensure good value for money while maintaining a manageable level of resources required to administer.
- Framework – A framework route will be considered when the design has been developed, and we have a further understanding of the route contractors prefer to use.

Outline Timescales

Action	Timing
Commissioning/Procurement Plan signed off & PME	March 2026
Issue RFQ	April 2026
Site Visit	April/May 2026
Clarification Deadline	April/May 2026
Bid Deadline	May 2026
Evaluation of tenders	June 2026
Contract Award decision approval	June 2026
Contract Award	July 2026
Contract Commences	July 2026

Table 2 - Outline timescales

Governance

In accordance with CSO's, this Commissioning plan requires approval by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Families, Skills and Lifelong Learning with advice from the Director of Children Services; Section 151 Officer and Head of Strategic Place Planning & Capital Programmes.

These requirements have been factored into the timeline (see above).

Once approved, all purchase orders will be raised on Agresso and added to the cost tracker and staff recharges will all be accounted for in the project cost tracker.

The Project Sponsor is the Head of Strategic Place Planning & Capital Projects in Children's Services. The Project Delivery Team will report to the CSs Capital Projects Steering Group. Significant Permissions and Exceptions will be requested and reported to CAPB and CPPBD, with commissioning and procurement decisions taken by the CSs Director, CYPS Executive Member and the Executive as appropriate. Once approved for progression, other project approvals and exceptions will be agreed by the Head of Strategic Place Planning & Capital Programmes in Children's Services.

To successfully deliver the contracts, the Project Manager will liaise closely with colleagues in Children's Services, principally the Head of Strategic Place Planning & Capital Programmes.

Regular meetings are already held with each of the school management teams and will continue throughout the project.

Social Value, Sustainability & VCSE

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

During the tender process, bidders will be asked to provide their social value commitments as part of their bid. The short-term contract model will be used which assesses suppliers offers against specific outcomes which will be tailored to the project to deliver relevant social value.

Award Criteria

It is proposed that a 60/30/10 price/quality/SV split is used. The rationale for the criteria is based on the following factors:

Factor	Weighting
Price	60%
Quality	30%

Social Value	10%
Total	100%

Table 3 - Evaluation weightings

These weightings were chosen due to the clear need, echoed throughout consultation, to drive good value for money through this project. The inclusion of technical quality questions and minimum quality scores allow us to maintain a high minimum quality standard whilst prioritising price.

Qualitative and pricing Evaluation

Quality Assessment – 30%

Quality will be assessed against the project outputs, behaviours and project management. The quality evaluation criteria are proposed as:

1. Experience (including SEND provision) - 30%
2. Project Team - Organisation Chart and CVs - 25%
3. Quality Management & Programme - 20%
4. Project delivery Methodology, risks & mitigations - 20%
5. Climate Emergency - Carbon reduction and sustainability - 5%

The scoring matrix used during the procurement process is the following:

Score	Classification	Award Criteria
5	Excellent	A response that inspires confidence; specification is fully met and is robustly and clearly demonstrated and evidenced. Full evidence as to how the contract will be fulfilled either by demonstrating past experience or through a clear process of implementation.
4	Good	A response supported by good evidence/examples of the Bidders' relevant ability and/or gives the council a good level of confidence in the Bidders' ability. All requirements are met, and evidence is provided to support the answers demonstrating sufficiency, compliance and either actual experience or a process of implementation.

3	Satisfactory	A response that is acceptable and meets the minimum requirement but remains limited and could have been expanded upon.
2	Weak	A response only partially satisfying the requirement with deficiencies apparent. Not supported by sufficient breadth or sufficient quality of evidence/examples and provides the council a limited level of confidence in the Bidders' ability to deliver the specification.
1	Inadequate	A response that has material omissions not supported by sufficient breadth and sufficient quality of evidence/examples. Overall, the response provides the council with a very low level of confidence in the Bidders' ability to deliver the specification.
0	Unsatisfactory	No response or response does not provide any relevant information and does not answer the question.

Table 4 - Scoring matrix

Pricing Evaluation – 60%

Price will have a weighted score of 60% and will be based on the submission of a pricing schedule. Price will be calculated using a fixed price lump sum model, which asks suppliers to price the project and provide a breakdown of these costs, including labour, materials, overheads, preliminaries, trade staff and site supervision costs, with an allowance for inflationary increases, as is required within this market at the moment.

The tender with the lowest total price will receive the maximum score of 100 (weighted at 60%) and the prices of all other tenders will be expressed as a percentage of the maximum score.

Evaluation Panel

The evaluation panel will consist of:

- Project Technical Lead
- Project Manager
- Children's Services Representative

It will be moderated by a member of the NSC Procurement Team.

Contract management

Following its award, the contract will be managed within NSC by the Property and Projects team alongside externally appointed quantity surveyor services to ensure that the schemes are delivered, to quality, on time and within budget.

Regular meetings will be chaired by the project manager with the contractor at which the project will be discussed. A particular focus of these meetings will be on ‘horizon scanning’ for potential issues which could impact the project. It is anticipated that these meetings will be held fortnightly.

Implementation of contract

The project manager will be in regular contact with the contractor throughout the contract duration and will utilise standard project management systems to maintain oversight over the quality and value. No significant changes to the scheme will be made without the Sponsor's permission via the Project Manager.

Contract Award

The award of the contract will be in line with Contract Standing Order's policy.

Funding

The funding for this scheme could come from two different funding sources. Whilst there is funding from the as yet formally unallocated £4,010,623 of High Need Provision Capital Fund from the DfE (made up of £2,851,151 of an extra allocation in 2023/24 and the £1,159,472 2024/25 allocation), this can be used to create new and update current SEND provision across North Somerset without access to alternative funding.

The cost centre allocated to the scheme is KCE319 and a provisional total budget of £925,000 has been set aside for this project.

The current cost plan (Appendix 2) reflects the below:

Item	Current cost	Revised cost
Design & Build Contractor	£400,000	£571,256
Internal PM Fees	£36,000	£85,688
Principal Designer (CDM)	£4,000	£5,713
Principal Designer (BR)	£4,000	£11,425
Cost Management Fee (QS)	£8,000	£5,713

PMO Fees	£4,000	£5,713
Planning & Building Regulations Fees	£8,000	£5,713
Children's Services Fees	£4,000	£5,713
Procurement Fees	£6,000	£5,713
Legal Fees	£4,000	£5,713
FF&E	20,000	£20,000
Other Design Fees	£22,000	£22,000
Specialist Fees	£19,000	£19,000
Other consultant costs	£5,000	£4,000
Professional Services Fees	£72,886	£72,886
Surveys		£5,810
Contingency	£57,120	£72,425
Rounding	£994	£2
Total	£675,000	£924,480

Table 5 - Cost plan

Please see below *committed* spend below as at 19 May 2025 and corresponding approvals:

Item	Committed	Spend	DN
Officer fees	Committed	£13,000	N/A
Preparation of tender pack for Professional Services	Committed	£1637.50	CY125
GI and Topographical surveys	Committed	£2580	CY143
Ecology report	Committed	£1810	CY169
Professional Services	Committed	£72,885.50	CY117
		£91,913	

Table 6 - Committed spend as at 19 May 2025

Asset Register

Nailsea School is an academy. In accordance with the CIPFA code of practice the spend will be treated as REFCUS.

REFCUS Spend – REF115

Legal Powers and Implications:

Designs and all other commissioning, procurement and tender approvals for both the contractor and employer's agents alongside the North Somerset costs to the scheme will be requested through the usual NSC arrangements, using the PMs expertise to recommend the proposed route to market etc.

The contract value is below the Procurement Act 2023 Works threshold; however, the procurement will follow best practice and be in line with the Council's Contract Standing Orders. 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.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications:

This project will increase the number of SEND places within the community which will reduce the Council's reliance on home to school transport for pupils with SEND or AP needs.

The specification for the interventions will be such that the extension will be energy efficient taking account of the materials which will be used, and the quality standards achieved by using modern methods of construction.

A quality question covering Environmental Impact and Mitigations will form part of the quality evaluation, which will have a weighting of 5% to reflect the importance of these aspects. Bidders will be invited to present their ideas for innovation, such as the re-use of materials, use of recyclable materials and/or components. Suppliers will also be asked about their supply chain and the potential to utilise local suppliers wherever possible.

A Social Value question will form part of the evaluation. This question will be worth 10% of the overall evaluation score, which is in line with the council's Social Value policy. Suppliers will be encouraged to provide social value commitments relating to the outcome of reducing negative and promoting positive environmental impacts.

The contract will be managed by the NSC Property and Projects team, who will ensure adherence with the specification, including carbon management, sustainability, and mitigation of environment impacts.

Consultation:

Consultations for the agreed School Place Planning Strategy 2024 – 2027 took place with schools, the SEND community and other interested parties between January and July 2024. The Children & Young People’s Services School Organisation Steering Group, internal officer groups and the Education Excellence Partnership Board also commented on the draft plans before and during the consultation period.

Two meetings were held for all stakeholders alongside specific ones for the Chief Executives of Multi-Academy Trusts (or their representatives) and members of the SEND Schools’ Council.

Overall, the plan was supported, especially in relation to the addition of extra Resource Bases at more schools across the district.

The project was received and signed off at CAPB and CPPDB in February 2025. The uplift was approved by these Boards in December 2025.

Risk Management:

The below risks have been identified for this procurement:

Risk	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact	Residual Risk	Comments:
Inaccurate specification – not inclusive of correct details	LOW	2	1	LOW	The project team will work closely with the designers and the Clients to ensure the specification and scope is to detail and is in line with expectations.
Unsuitable specification – not fit for purpose	LOW	2	1	LOW	The project team will ensure to review the specification with technical and operational colleagues to ensure it is functional and practical and will ensure the contractor meets the requirements built into the contract specifications.
Operational – site access	MED	3	2	LOW	The Council will work collaboratively with the school to meet access requirements.
Cost – budget implications	HIGH	4	3	HIGH	Costs will be charged to the project budgets. Though costs will be tightly reviewed by the Project Manager, Quantity Surveyor and sponsor, there is still a high risk due to unknown variable at this stage of the project.

Build not completed in time	HIGH	4	4	HIGH	This scheme must be completed in July 2026. Regular meetings with contractor and stakeholders to review progress against programme and address upcoming issues.
Reputational e.g Council, EATS, P&P team	HIGH	3	2	LOW	Comms will continue to be clear and concise with the school and any stakeholders. Any queries will be answered to try and prevent any reputational risk to working relationships, school/pupil/parent rapport or risk to the Council, Directorate or P&P team.
Poorly specified product requirements	HIGH	4	2	LOW	Engage with the client and end users and technical experts to ensure design meets requirements which are built into contract specifications.
Supply issue with materials / construction	HIGH	3	2	LOW	Utilising the lessons learnt from delivering other SEND and current live projects the design team will make the contractor aware of the items they believe may have long lead times and subsequently require ordering early. The contractor will also have their own understanding of the market and will be encouraged to order as required to maintain programme.
Working on a live school site	HIGH	4	2	LOW	Will use quality question in RFQ to seek contractor with experience and understanding of site requirements

Table 7 - Risk register

Equality Implications:

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

The assessment for these two Resource Bases above aligns with the EIA for the School Place Planning Strategy (SPPS) 2024 – 2027. From the over-riding SPPS review, in summary:

- Disabled people - The new SEND facilities and upgrades to meet SEND needs in mainstream schools will be of a greater benefit to many pupils as more will have the opportunity to be offered a local school place.
- People on a low income - The aim of the plan is to provide local places in good and outstanding schools, thereby increasing opportunity for all in schools that are easily accessible from home.
- People in particular age groups - The plan applies to the provision of places for pupils of school age.

- Other specific impacts - Parents and carers who are seeking places for the children they are responsible for will have more opportunity and choice.
- Some parents and carers of children with SEND will benefit from a school place within North Somerset rather than at a school outside the area. This strategy includes a greater emphasis on the provision of local SEND places that previous plans.

It is hoped that the ability to offer a local school place within North Somerset will outweigh any disadvantages for any who may be affected.

Corporate Implications:

This procurement supports the Council's commitment to The School Place Planning Strategy (SPPS) 2024 – 2027 to deliver new local places for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Having a local school place is a requirement of most families for their children. Our [North Somerset Corporate Plan 2024-2028 \(n-somerset.gov.uk\) - https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/corporate%20plan%202024-28.pdf](https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/corporate%20plan%202024-28.pdf) – seeks to ensure that *our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive and that our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit. Schools are integral elements of existing and new communities where 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.*

The SEND Place Programme is a corporate priority. This scheme will enable young people with SEND needs to attend a local provision (*carbon reduction*) thereby enabling us to support them to have the skills to *lead an independent and fulfilling life.* By using *our resources wisely*, we can use this change to *empower and care* for some of *our more vulnerable* students.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - CY117 Joint CP Plan for PS - Gordano and Nailsea Resource Bases

Appendix 2 – Nailsea RBE Cost Plan V3

Background Papers:

CAPBCPPDB Report - Nailsea Resource Base v2

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed:

Title: DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, FAMILIES,
SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Date:

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:

Title: Director of Children's Services

Date:

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:

Title: Section 151 Officer

Date:

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:

Title: Head of Strategic Place Planning and Capital Programmes

Date:

IN CONSULTATION WITH:

Signed:

Title: DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, FAMILIES,
SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Date:

Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable: