

Notice of KEY Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Implementation of a 24 place Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Unit at The Brittons Academy for pupils with Communication & Interaction (C&I) needs
Decision Maker:	Councillor Kevin Gill, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Kevin Gill, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
ELT Lead:	Tara Geere, Director of Starting Well (Statutory Director for Children's Services)
Report Author and contact details:	Pooneeta Mahadeo, School Organisation Manager pooneeta.mahadeo@havering.gov.uk Tel. 01708 431092
Policy context:	Havering's SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy sets out the local authority's vision to ensure children, young people, and families have access to the same level of high-quality support and education, wherever they live in Havering. Supporting delivery of our duties under the Children's wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, so that children and young people with SEND can access the help and support they need to thrive and achieve within their local communities; ensuring that they can attend local education provision that meets their needs, access services and play an active role in the community close to where they live.

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Financial summary:	The cost of Building works required to provide a SEND unit at The Brittons Academy has been estimated at £2m and this will be funded from within the High Needs Capital grant. SEND units in Havering will be normally funded in accordance with a Place Led Funding approach that complies with the Government's SEND Funding Reforms that came into effect in April 2018. For each place in the SEND Unit at The Brittons Academy the academy will receive £30,800 (funding rate for financial year 2026/27). This is made up of basic entitlement funding from the main formula and top up from the LA's DfE high needs block.
Reason decision is Key	(a) Expenditure of £500,000 or more (b) Significant effect on two or more Wards
Date notice given of intended decision:	20/04/2026
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee:	People
Is it an urgent decision?	No
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	No

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well **X**

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. To support the implementation of a SEND unit at The Brittons Academy from September 2026.

School	SEND unit	No of pupils
The Brittons Academy	Communication & Interaction (C&I) needs	24

2. To approve the commencement of a tendering process for the construction of a SEND Unit at The Brittons Academy with a total estimated value of £2m.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

[Decision - Outline Proposals to address Early Years, Primary, Secondary and SEND rising rolls – Update to Phase 5 expansion Programme | London Borough of Havering](#)

At the above meeting Cabinet agreed to:

2. **Delegate** the power for Phase 5 of the Expansion Programme to the Cabinet Lead Member for Children & Learning Young People:
 - To take further decisions regarding the implementation of these projects and the approval of which schools/early years/childcare settings should be expanded including any amendments to the proposals above, such as a decision not to proceed or to expand a different school/early years/childcare setting, in the light of developing circumstances or the results of consultation (subject to the appropriate statutory processes).

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. Following the Royal Assent of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act in April 2026 work has started to address the national SEND reforms. The Department for Education (DfE) requires all local authorities, to work with schools, health partners and other stakeholders, to develop a local SEND reform plan
2. The plan must set out how the local area will move towards a more inclusive, effective and financially sustainable SEND system for children and young people aged 0-25. This national reform programme aims to improve outcomes through earlier intervention, stronger mainstream inclusion and better access to specialist support. Local authorities must set out their overall vision for SEND reform, with delivery plans to evidence how the proposed changes will be implemented.
3. Havering's draft Local SEND Reform Plan has been submitted to the DfE setting out the development of more local specialist provision for children and young people with the most complex or severe barriers to learning. This is the most complex or severe barriers to learning. This is intended to increase access to appropriate provision within Havering, reduce reliance on out-of-area and independent placements, reduce

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associated travel time and costs, and avoid high-cost or bespoke funding arrangements in mainstream settings where specialist places are unavailable.

4. Havering's SEND projections forecast an increase in the number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) over the next five years. The forecasts show an expected increase from 2024/2025 to 2028/2029 of 77% in Children and Young People in the borough with Communication and Interaction needs (C&I).
5. The proposed establishment of a SEND unit at the school will help address the demand for a suitable, local specialist provision for secondary aged pupils with C&I needs in line with our SEND delivery plan. There is currently one secondary SEND Unit catering for the needs of pupils with C&I and two SEND units catering for the needs of pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) which falls under the C&I heading. This totals 56 existing places, catering to the needs of pupils with C&I needs. Given the increasing numbers of C&I pupils there is a need for additional secondary SEND units to support these children within a mainstream school setting whilst receiving support from a specialist unit so that they can receive the best educational offer possible in local provision in line with the government's SEND agenda and our SEND plan.
6. The Agreed Place Number (APN) for The Brittons Academy SEND unit is 24. Admissions to the SEND unit will follow a different procedure from that operating for the rest of the school. Admissions into the SEND unit will be through the Havering SEND EHCP panel process. This will not affect pupils who are in the mainstream setting at the school. Pupils attending the SEND unit would be in addition to the mainstream Planned Admission Number (PAN) of 180. There would be 24 planned places in the SEND unit increasing the total number of places from 900 pupils to 924.
7. The creation of this local specialist provision should reduce the need to place pupils outside of Havering, thereby reducing the cost of out of borough placements whilst helping the local authority develop more SEND units/resourced provisions within the borough whilst supporting the aims of Havering's Local SEND Reform Plan.
8. The new facility will enable young people with C&I needs to have their needs met through a flexible approach, tailored and adapted to the needs of each individual pupil. It will be for pupils who will require specialist support to enable them to access a mainstream secondary curriculum. The proposal is that the children will split their time between the mainstream school and having bespoke support within the SEND Unit. The SEND Unit will be staffed by a team of support staff with knowledge and experience of working with young people with C&I, led by qualified teaching staff with recognised additional qualifications. The purpose of the unit will be to support these children to achieve their academic potential, attending a mainstream secondary school whilst receiving specialist support from the SEND Unit.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Pupils with complex SEND could be also educated within Special Schools. Expansion of existing special schools is not feasible within the required timeframe due to space constraints. A new special school opened in 2023; however, this is not sufficient to meet the high demand for places. The Council is therefore looking to increasing capacity within its existing resources and is focusing on developing new specialist provision within its own mainstream schools.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

The consultation process covered by this report ran from 23 February 2026 to 23 March 2026. The objective was to inform and gather views regarding the proposal from key stakeholders, particularly parents/carers of pupils and staff at The Brittons Academy, school governing bodies and other schools within the borough. The Consultation report can be found in Appendix A.

In total, 104 responses were received; 102 were responses to the online questionnaire and 2 were emails in support of the proposed SEND Unit. There was strong support for the proposal:

- 100 respondents were in favour of the proposal (96%)
- 4 respondents were not in favour of the proposal (4%)

Support was consistently high across all respondent categories, including:

- Parents/carers (both Brittons and other schools)
- Teaching and support staff
- Local residents and other stakeholders

Key Themes in Supportive Responses

Respondents highlighted that the proposal:

- Addresses a well recognised shortfall of SEND places in Havering.
- Will reduce the need for children to be educated out of borough.
- Supports inclusion, allowing pupils to benefit from mainstream school opportunities while receiving specialist support.
- Reflects a growing level of need, particularly for pupils with communication and interaction needs.
- Would be beneficial to the wider community and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Concerns Raised and Responses

A small number of comments raised concerns, primarily around:

- The effectiveness of SEND units within mainstream schools.
- Whether The Brittons Academy was the most suitable location.
- Broader concerns about SEND support more generally.

Responses to concerns raised confirmed that:

- The SEND Unit will be a specialist provision for pupils with complex Communication and Interaction needs.
- Staff will be appropriately trained and experienced, with specialist SEND expertise.
- Pupils whose needs do not require specialist provision will continue to be supported effectively within mainstream settings.
- The proposal builds on existing good practice at The Brittons Academy and enhances its SEND offer.

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NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Pooneeta Mahadeo

Designation: School Organisation Manager

Signature: *P. Mahadeo*

Date: 16/07/2026

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

1. Local Authorities should have regard to sections 13, 13A and 14 of the Education Act 1996 which require local authorities to ensure efficient primary, secondary and further education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area. The provision sought will be targeted to those identified with needs as assessed under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.
2. The Council has the general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual may generally do.
3. Additionally, the Council has the power to procure the contract under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 which, permits the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.
4. The Council will undertake the proposed procurement in respect of the Academy's property, with full authorisation from the Academy. The Council will need to enter into an appropriate agreement with the Academy to protect the Council's position.
5. The proposed contract value is below the applicable works contract threshold stipulated in the Procurement Act 2023 of £5,193,000 and accordingly does not fall within the full rigours of the Act.
6. However, the procurement must still comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) which requires the Council to use Constructionline to invite at least 7 organisations to tender. The tender procedure set out within this report conforms with the CPRs.
7. The DfE has approved the significant change of adding a SEND Unit to The Brittons Academy.
8. The consultation report sets out the representations of all stakeholders to the proposal and the Council's response. It is a public law duty to ensure that each of the responses to the consultation is conscientiously considered before a decision is taken. The Local Authority could decide not to support the application based on the objections received or any other reasons, however, the final decision remains with the Secretary of State.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Capital Implications

The estimated cost of delivering the SEND Unit at The Brittons Academy is set out below:

Estimate for the works:	£1,500,000
External works and abnormals:	£75,000
FF&E:	£50,000
Project contingency including inflation:	£150,000

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Professional fees (including surveys, statutory fees etc.):	£225,000
Total project cost:	£2,000,000

The works will include:

- Creating a new SEND Unit for 24 students within the main school, including internal remodelling of the library space and refurbishment of three IT spaces to provide three classrooms, a heart space, two intervention rooms, new toilets, an entrance area and a therapy room.
- Remodelling an existing area to relocate the library as a fiction library within the English block.
- Refurbishing two classrooms to accommodate two of the displaced IT rooms.

Risks

There may be a risk that tender costs will be significantly higher than estimated. At which point management action will be taken, following a review of available options, which will include options to reduce costs (as appropriate) or seek additional funding, ideally from funds set aside for the Special Education Needs Schools programme. A separate decision will be submitted prior to the award of contract, which will reassess the financial implications of the project.

Revenue Implications for schools

SEND units in Havering are funded in accordance with a Place Led Funding approach that complies with the Government's SEND Funding Reforms, which came into effect in April 2018.

SEND Unit revenue funding for placements is from the LA's DfE DSG High Needs allocation. Any funding is made payable based on the responsibility of each of the different strands, e.g. each place that is agreed with the DfE, school and LA, is then funded by the DfE from the LA's DSG High Needs allocation. For the top up funding for each place, this is funded by the LA from its DSG High Needs allocation.

For each place in the SEND unit, The Brittons Academy will receive £30,800 This is made up of £10,000 'place funding' and £20,800 (2026/27 rate) 'top-up funding'.

Revenue Implications for the local authority.

The financial impact of the additional places depends on the cost of supporting those additional pupils if they were not at the Unit. Money is saved when a pupil attends this unit that would have been otherwise been spent in an expensive out of borough provision. Although a Unit place may be more costly than mainstream provision with one-to-one support, it offers a more appropriate environment, specialist expertise and tailored provision. This leads to improved outcomes for pupils and can help prevent higher costs in the longer term.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The human resources implications for the Academy will be managed by the Trust. There is likely to be a need to recruit additional teaching and support staff and the

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Academy will undertake the recruitment and selection process in accordance with the Trust's policies and procedures.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

EHIA has been carried out and the proposals in this report have been assessed as having a positive impact on groups with a protected characteristic - Appendix B

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The EQHIA indicates that the impact of this activity will have a positive impact on groups with a protected characteristic.

- No children will be displaced when the SEND unit opens.
- The implementation of the SEND unit would create new job opportunities, positively impacting adults of a working age and supporting the local economy.
- Making appropriate local provision available is positive for children with SEND and for their parents, by meeting increasing demand. Ensuring every child has access to a quality education.
- The development of local specialist provision will support a reduction in the need for out-of-borough placements, which can contribute to reduced travel distances for pupils and families
- Communities benefit from children and young people having a good education.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This project supports the delivery of a modern, energy-efficient educational facility as part of the Council's wider commitment to reducing environmental impact. The proposed development seeks to improve the environmental performance of the education estate by incorporating sustainable design and construction principles, ensuring that the building is more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable than older facilities within the portfolio.

The design of the SEND Unit has been developed to support the Council's ambition to deliver sustainable, energy-efficient infrastructure. The building will incorporate modern construction standards and materials to improve thermal performance, including enhanced insulation, efficient glazing and air permeability measures, which will reduce energy demand for heating and cooling. Energy-efficient building services will be specified, including low-energy lighting, and where feasible, smart controls to optimise energy usage. Consideration will also be given to the inclusion of low-carbon technologies, subject to feasibility within the existing site constraints and available funding.

The layout and design of the facility will maximise natural daylight and ventilation to create a healthy and comfortable learning environment, reducing reliance on artificial lighting and mechanical systems. Sustainable materials will be prioritised where possible, including those with low embodied carbon and responsible sourcing credentials. In addition, the scheme will seek to incorporate sustainable drainage solutions and, where achievable, enhancements to biodiversity through landscaping.

Construction and procurement activities will be managed to minimise environmental impact. As part of the tender process, contractors are required to demonstrate their environmental credentials and have been evaluated on their approach to waste management, energy use and carbon reduction. Contractors will be expected to outline measures to minimise waste generation, maximise recycling, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and lower the overall carbon footprint of their operations.

Furthermore, contractors will be required to evidence how they measure and seek to reduce or offset emissions associated with their activities. The procurement process itself will be undertaken through a fully digitalised approach, reducing paper usage and supporting the Council's wider commitment to sustainable working practices.

Overall, no significant adverse environmental or climate change risks have been identified. The proposal is expected to support improved environmental performance and more sustainable operational practices over the lifecycle of the building, contributing to the Council's broader environmental and climate change objectives whilst ensuring effective use of available capital funding.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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APPENDICES

- A. The Brittons Academy SEND unit Consultation Report
- B. The Brittons Academy EHIA

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Delete as applicable

Proposal NOT agreed because

Details of decision maker

Signed

Name:

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date:

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____