

## Decision Report – Lead Member Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/11/11

Decision Date – 29/04/2024

Key Decision – Yes

Confidential Information – Appendix A



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**Proposed delivery of the expansion of dining and kitchen facilities at 3 secondary schools in Taunton and Wellington (Monkton Wood Academy, Pyrland School and Court Fields School).**

Executive Member(s): Cllr Heather Shearer - Lead Member for Children, Families and Education

Local Member(s) and Division:

Cllrs David Fothergill & Norman Cavill – Monkton and North Curry (Monkton Wood)

Cllrs Lee Baker & Tom Deakin – Taunton North (Pyrland School)

Cllrs Andrew Govier & Marcus Barr – Wellington (Court Fields School)

Lead Officer: Phil Curd, Head of Education Places

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### Summary / Background

1. This project seeks to address the shortfalls in dining capacity and kitchen facilities at three secondary schools in Taunton and Wellington to ensure that the core facilities support the increasing number of pupils on roll at these schools.
2. This paper seeks authority to allow the Council to go out to tender to deliver the expansion of dining and kitchen facilities at Monkton Wood Academy, Pyrland School and Court Fields School.

### Recommendations

3. The Lead Member for Children, Families and Education:
  - a. authorises officers to commission the delivery of the expansion of dining and kitchen facilities at Monkton Wood, Pyrland and Court Fields Schools.

- b. authorises the Programme Manager School Growth, under delegation, to commence delivery (including design, planning and early enabling works), in order to prepare the tender pack.
- c. approves the appointment of Futures for Somerset Ltd (strategic partner) to proceed with the project management of the schemes.
- d. authorises the Programme Manager School Growth, under delegation, to go out to tender to deliver the expansion of dining and kitchen facilities at Monkton Wood Academy, Pyrland School and Court Fields School.
- e. approves the gross maximum project costs as detailed in Appendix A. These costs include allowances for pre-construction costs, fees, ICT and furniture as required.
- f. approves the case for applying the exempt information provision and therefore to treat Appendix A in confidence, as it contains commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.
- g. delegates authority to the Service Director – Strategic Asset Management in consultation with legal services to finalise the contract documents and enter into the works with the preferred contractor.
- h. approves the appointment of Furniture, Fittings and Equipment and ICT contractors tendered in line with SC procurement policy, within the gross maximum project costs.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4. To address the shortfall in dining capacity and kitchen facilities at Monkton Wood Academy, Pyrland School and Court Fields School to ensure the core facilities support the increasing number of pupils on roll at these schools.
- 5. To approve the project management, and the contracting of this build following a competitive tender, as detailed in Appendix A.
- 6. Appendix A contains commercially sensitive information relating to the potential value of the scheme. Officers recommend that this is treated as exempt

information. “Exempt information” is defined by section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, by Schedule 12A to that Act.

### **Other options considered**

7. Doing nothing is not an option. With dining and kitchen facilities significantly smaller than schools of these sizes require, the schools in Taunton are already struggling to improve standards and all three are feeling the effects of core facilities that fall short of the DfE benchmark. There is a concern that the Academy Trusts may look to reduce admission numbers to reflect the capacity of the dining which would be hugely challenging for the LA at a time when secondary aged pupils in Taunton and Wellington are increasing.

### **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

8. This project links to the ‘Fairer, Ambitious Somerset’ priority of the Council Plan 2023-27.
9. Education outcomes in Somerset are not good enough, especially for children from lower income homes or those with additional needs. All children need access to good schools, colleges, further education, and higher education. This project supports that ambition.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

10. Feasibility Studies identified the need for the expansion of dining and kitchen facilities at Monkton Wood, Pyrland and Court Fields Secondary Schools. No council funds are required for these schemes. These projects will be fully funded by S106 and basic need grant from the DfE and there is no risk to the Council’s capital programme.

The projects will be designed with a set budget in mind and specifications reduced to ensure they are affordable; however, a contingency is built into every project based on the level of risk e.g. type of materials and ground conditions.

A programme contingency is also held which can be deployed should the project contingency be exceeded. If further funding is still required, this will be met from S106 contributions that have been secured but not yet received because the triggers for requesting the funds have not yet been reached.

- At present all 3 schools have insufficient dining capacity which has a knock-on impact on pupils, their ability to engage in learning and the wider performance of the schools.

<b>Please enter risk description</b>					
Loss of places due to Academy Trusts reducing PANs to reflect the capacity of core facilities					
Negative impact on school standards					
<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>8</b>
Our only mitigation would be to transport children from Taunton to other secondary schools with places.					
This is likely to be in West Somerset and would come at a significant additional revenue cost.					

### Legal Implications

- Somerset Council has a statutory duty under s.14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure that sufficient schools for primary and secondary education are available in its area. The delivery of this project will help to ensure that the Council meets this statutory duty.
- Consultation has been undertaken with Procurement regarding the route for tendering this project.

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### HR Implications

- There are no HR implications arising from this report.

### Other Implications:

### Equalities Implications

- The proposed expansion will be fully accessible with the proper facilities and provisions in place to cater for disabled users, pursuant to statutory obligations set out in equality legislation and brought together under the umbrella provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

The attached Equalities Impact Assessment was reviewed and approved by Tom Rutland on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

### **Community Safety Implications**

16. Improved access to quality educational facilities could serve to reduce the likelihood of low level anti-social behaviour and improve children's chances to thrive long term.

### **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

17. The delivery of this project is intended to match the ambition of the Council's approved carbon strategy. Although the availability of funding will play a role in the level of carbon reduction and sustainability that can be achieved.

### **Health and Safety Implications**

18. Risks involved in the proposed building works will be managed by the appointed contractor through their construction Health and Safety Plan required by all such projects.

### **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

19. The project is being delivered to address the shortfall in dining capacity and kitchen facilities at these schools. Ensuring the core facilities meet the DfE benchmark for schools of this size will enable a smoothly run lunch service ensuring children can fully benefit from their break times.

### **Social Value**

20. The tender pack will include a requirement to offer social value and commissioners will enter into negotiation with the chosen contractor to agree the final social value offering.

### **Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

21. The proposed decision has been sent to the Chair of Scrutiny Committee – Children and Families, for information and comment.

22. Note: Cllr Andrew Govier has not been able to respond to the report due to a conflict of interest.

## Background

22. Monkton Wood Academy and Pyrland School are two of the four secondary schools that serve Taunton and the surrounding area. Court Fields School is a secondary school that serves Wellington and the surrounding area.
23. Each of these schools has sufficient teaching accommodation with a capacity of 1350 for years 7-11 at Monkton Wood Academy, a capacity of 1050 at Pyrland School and a capacity of 860 at Court Fields School.
24. However, feasibility studies have shown that these schools are below the DfE benchmark in many areas, and of particular concern is the dining capacity and kitchen facilities, which are significantly below the benchmark for schools of their size.
25. Schools with undersize dining capacity and kitchen facilities can have a huge impact on pupils and staff alike. A positive dining experience without long queues and crowded halls means that children fully benefit from their breaktimes having plenty of time to eat and relax with friends. The impact on behaviour and standards should not be underestimated.
26. Without the expansion to the dining and kitchen facilities at these schools, the LA risks the loss of much needed capacity. Academy Trusts are likely to reduce admission numbers to match the capacity of the core facilities as management of timetables becomes more difficult and an increase in standards is sought.
27. With the number of secondary aged children increasing steadily across Taunton and Wellington and the housing growth already adding pressure to schools, the LA really cannot afford to lose any places at these secondary schools.
28. The expansion of dining and kitchen facilities is essential to ensure that capacity at these secondary schools is not lost and to improve the dining experience, which will have a positive impact on behaviour and help to improve standards.

## Background Papers

29. Feasibility studies that established a shortfall in dining capacity and kitchen facilities at Monkton Wood, Pyrland and Court Fields Schools.

30. 2023 School Population Forecasts

## Appendices




- Appendix A (Confidential)

## Assurance checklist

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	07/03/2024
Communications	Peter Elliott	08/03/2024
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	04/03/2024
Workforce	Alyn Jones	04/03/2024
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	26/03/2024
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Claire Winter	25/03/2024
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	04/03/2024
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Heather Shearer	27/03/2024
<b>Consulted:</b>	<b>Councillor Name</b>	
Local Division Members	Cllrs David Fothergill	28/02/2024
	Cllr Norman Cavill	22/03/2024
	Cllr Lee Baker	28/02/2024
	Cllr Tom Deakin	25/03/2024
	Cllr Marcus Barr	16/04/2024
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Frances Nicholson	25/03/2024
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Leigh Redman	28/02/2024

## Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or [www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment)

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)	 <p><b>Somerset</b> Council</p>		 <p><b>NHS</b> Somerset</p>		 <p><b>NHS</b> Somerset NHS Foundation Trust</p>
Version	V1	Date Completed	25/01/2024		
Description of what is being impact assessed					
The expansion of dining and kitchen facilities at Monkton Wood, Pyrland and Court Fields Secondary Schools.					
Evidence					
What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the <a href="#">Office of National Statistics</a> , <a href="#">Somerset Intelligence Partnership</a> , <a href="#">Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA)</a> , Staff and/ or <a href="#">area profiles</a> , should be detailed here					
The latest school population forecasts and Housing Land Supply Papers have been used to establish the expected number on roll in future years. The DfE guidance on accommodation for mainstream schools (BB103) has been used to establish the size of expansion required.					



**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?**

The head teacher and governors have been consulted on this proposal and no issues were raised.

**Analysis of impact on protected groups**

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The expansion of the dining and kitchen facilities will benefit all the children who attend the schools.</li> </ul>	☐	☐	☒
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new dining and kitchen facilities will be fully accessible with the proper facilities and provisions in place to cater for disabled users, pursuant to statutory obligations set out in Equality legislation and brought together under the umbrella provisions of the Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>Toilets will be accessible</li> </ul>	☐	☐	☒

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main doors will be automatic but not all fire doors will be. Internal doors are generally on magnets that release in the event of a fire.</li> <li>• Colour choices are decided with the school but a steer towards lighter walls and darker carpets is encouraged.</li> <li>• Hearing loops whist not fitted as standard can be installed if required</li> </ul>			
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified</li> </ul>	□	□	⊗
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified</li> </ul>	□	□	⊗
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified</li> </ul>	□	□	⊗
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified</li> </ul>	□	□	⊗

Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified.</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified.</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been considered and no disproportionate impact has been identified</li> </ul>	□	□	☒

**Negative outcomes action plan**

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
The expanded dining and kitchen facilities will be fully accessible	31/08/2024	MK/HW	On completion	<input type="checkbox"/>
The toilets provided will be fully accessible	31/08/2024	MK/HW	On completion	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

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Completed by:

Helen Waring

Date

25/01/2024

Signed off by:	Phil Curd
Date	25/01/2024
Equality Lead sign off name:	Tom Rutland
Equality Lead sign off date:	25/03/24
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	

