



Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children’s Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 October 2022
Subject:	Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire Progress Update

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an update on the implementation of the Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire Strategy, approved by Executive on 6 November 2018. The report summarises the progress made between October 2021 – October 2022, within the Capital Build Programme and in all supporting system areas.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

1. Review and comment on the content of this report and progress made between October 2021 and October 2022.
2. Receive an update on Year 5 of implementation in October 2023.

1. Background

In November 2018, the Executive granted approval to implement the Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire Strategy. Implementation of this strategy commenced in January 2019 and will take place over the next five years with the final school changes being made in September 2024.

The strategy is making significant changes to the existing special education provision, creating an integrated and sustainable school system where pupils can attend their nearest special school, confident that their education and health needs can be fully met.

In order to achieve this ambition, the strategy will provide a locality-based, sector-wide approach to special education which will enable all special schools to meet the wide range of needs of pupils within their local community. As special schools had been designed to meet specific designations of need, each school was required to change its designation so they could meet a wider range of needs. In addition, the strategy will significantly increase

the special school estate by over 500 places, to address existing overcrowding issues and the growing demand, through capital investment to support expansion, in line with projected need. The allocated capital investment is being utilised to improve premises and facilities, enabling each school to offer places to pupils from within their local communities with a wider range of needs.

All special schools have been approved to make significant change to the type of need catered for and expansion where this has been identified and these are outlined in the strategy. All 14 special schools will be able to meet a wider range of needs once the strategy has been fully implemented.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Education Partnership Board and SEND Capital Governance Board provides over-sight and governance of strategic implementation.

2. Programme Update

Implementation is well underway with ten capital schemes either completed or in construction phase and supporting operating systems in place or in development. Governance is well established with budget and progress reviews taking place monthly and reporting to the SEND Capital Governance Board and the Portfolio Holder on a bimonthly basis.

Appendix A provides an overview of the timeline for the capital scheme and shows the projected completion dates for all schools.

2.1 Capital Programme

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will already have a sound understanding of the schemes which have obtained Executive approval through the Capital Appraisal process as it has, to date, scrutinised the schemes and provided its support for Executive approval.

2.1.1 Progress Overview

The Council has made significant progress in the delivery of the Strategy. There are currently seven SEND schools either completed or in construction to enable them to become all-through special schools and to cater for a wider range of needs and disabilities:

- Boston Endeavour Academy – approved by the Council in January 2020
- Bourne, Willoughby Academy – approved by the Council in August 2020
- Spilsby, The Eresby School – approved by the Council in October 2020
- Louth, St Bernard’s School – approved by the Council in January 2021
- Spalding, The Priory School (now known as Tulip Academy Waterside Campus) – approved by the Council in July 2021
- Lincoln, St Christopher’s Primary/Secondary - approved by the Council in July 2021

- Horncastle, St Lawrence School – approved by the Council in August 2022

The following schools have been redeveloped (or are in the construction phase currently) by the governing Academy Trust, following successful funding bids made directly to the Department for Education (DfE), with material financial contributions from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC):

- Grantham Ambergate Sports College - completed September 2020
- Spalding, The Garth School (now known as Tulip Academy Springview Campus) - completed December 2020
- Grantham Sandon School - currently in construction

The following schools are in feasibility/design phase:

- Lincoln St Francis School
- Gosberton House Academy
- Grantham Earl of Dysart site (to be integrated into Grantham Ambergate site).

The capital programme is on course to be completed in line with the agreed timeline.

The key milestones for the capital programme achieved in this reporting period are:

- Official opening of Boston Endeavour Academy
- Completion and official opening of new block and remodelling of The Willoughby Academy, Bourne
- Completion of new block and remodelling of The Eresby School, Spilsby
- Completion of new block at St Bernard's School, Louth
- Construction of Tulip Academy (Waterside Campus) commenced
- Merger of The Priory School and The Garth School to form Tulip Academy complete
- Construction of St Christopher's Primary School, Lincoln commenced
- Enabling work of St Christopher's Secondary School, Lincoln commenced
- Enabling works to St Lawrence School, Horncastle commenced, with main works from October 2022

For images of the completed and live capital schemes please see Appendix B – Progress in Pictures.

2.1.2 Progress by Scheme

- **Boston Endeavour Academy**

Boston Endeavour Academy was the first all needs special school to open as part of this programme having been officially handed over to the Community Inclusive Trust and welcoming its first pupils on 6 September 2021.

Boston Endeavour Academy was officially opened by Councillor Mrs Patricia Bradwell OBE, Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement, on 13 May 2022; an event which was attended by many local dignitaries including Mr Matthew Warman, MP for Boston and Skegness. Those who attended this event were given a tour of the school, accompanied by pupils and a Ghostbuster, who also enjoyed the celebration.

This new school is now accommodating 126 pupils as part of its phased increase, with September 2023 seeing the school move to a capacity of 142.

The new school provides 16 classrooms, specialist teaching spaces including science, technology, ICT and art, and a hall. The school also benefits from a hydrotherapy pool, sensory and soft playrooms and dedicated therapy spaces. Externally, there are hard and soft surfaced play areas and sensory, horticulture and wildlife areas and a sensory courtyard which is enjoyed by staff and pupils throughout the school day.

- **The Willoughby Academy, Bourne**

All construction work has now been completed and handover to the Priory Trust took place on 10 December 2021.

The new block was officially opened by Councillor Mrs Patricia Bradwell OBE on 6 May 2022; an event which was attended by many local dignitaries, members of the local community, school staff and governors, parents/carers and pupils.

Due to the capital investment programme, the capacity of this school has increased from 80 to 135, creating an additional 55 places so far. The number of places commissioned by LCC will increase to a minimum of 148 by September 2023, as part of the agreed phased increase.

The new build accommodation block provides six classrooms, hall, specialist secondary teaching spaces including science and technology, as well as small group spaces and hygiene facilities. Remodelling work to the existing school has provided additional therapy spaces and a medical inspection room to ensure the school can offer, in conjunction with health providers, a robust health offer to all children and young people with SEND in the local area.

- **The Eresby School, Spilsby**

All construction work has now been completed and handover to the David Ross Education Trust took place on 9 May 2022. Phased increase of the additional 16 places will take place during the 2022-23 academic year.

The new build accommodation block provides improved facilities including five classrooms, hall, ICT and science spaces as well as small group rooms, hygiene facilities and staff and meeting spaces. The remodelling work to the existing school has provided a

design/technology and art room, physiotherapy space, visiting professional/therapy space, parents' room, a hygiene suite, a disabled WC and staff/administration spaces.

A formal opening is planned for early 2023 and this will be facilitated jointly by LCC and the Academy Trust; this is later than initially planned in line with the official handover period.

- **St Bernard's School, Louth**

All construction work has now been completed and handover to the Lincolnshire Wolds Federation Trust took place on 12 September 2022. Officers are currently working with the Academy Trust to agree the timeline for increased capacity, with the additional 12 places to be accessed during the 2022-23 academic year.

The new block and remodelling will provide enhanced facilities including six classrooms, hall, specialist secondary teaching spaces including science and technology, as well as small group spaces, therapy and hygiene facilities.

A formal opening is planned for early 2023 and this will be facilitated jointly by LCC and the Academy Trust.

- **Tulip Academy, Spalding**

In line with the Council's strategy, The Priory School and The Garth School successfully merged to become Tulip Academy on 1 September 2022. All construction work has been completed, as a self-delivery scheme, at the Springview Campus and construction work (LCC scheme) is ongoing at the Waterside Campus, which is due to complete in April 2023.

Once all works are completed Tulip Academy will have capacity to meet the needs of a minimum of 202 pupils.

- **Lincoln St Christopher's School**

Construction has commenced at the primary site on Skellingthorpe Road, Lincoln and is progressing very well, with a projected completion date of May 2023.

Enabling works at the Hykeham Road site, which will be the secondary school, are extensive and have commenced with a view to starting main works after the primary has been opened (Summer 2023). This will enable the school to move a large proportion of students to the primary site, leaving a maximum of 80 pupils at the current site so intrusive building work can be completed safely.

Progress visits have been made by Local Authority Officers and Councillor Mrs Patricia Bradwell OBE, and all have been very pleased with the design and delivery of this scheme.

Once all works are completed St Christopher's Primary School will be able to accommodate 130 pupils and the Secondary School will accommodate 203, increasing Lincoln City and surrounding area's special school provision by 111 places.

- **Horncastle St Lawrence School**

Buildability for the Horncastle scheme has been particularly challenging, with the site presenting significant problems with its existing condition. Design options were re-considered after detailed survey information highlighted significant condition issues with the main school building, which placed an unexpected financial pressure on the scheme. As a result, the proposal to rebuild the school on the existing site was approved.

Planning and Executive Approval for the new-build St Lawrence School scheme was approved in August 2022 and enabling works commenced early September 2022.

The new school will provide 17 classrooms, three of which are specifically designed for PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties) pupils with hoists and sensory corners, a new hall and studio allowing the school to offer rebound therapy, physical education and dining for all pupils, therapy spaces including soft play, sensory and physiotherapy, life skills and social recreation spaces and calm and group spaces. The new block will also provide hygiene facilities, a staff workspace, offices and meeting rooms.

The whole school site will be redesigned to provide improved drop off and pick up facilities for the pupils, and increased parking provision for staff and visitors ensuring all vehicles can be accommodated on the school site. There will also be reorganised and improved outdoor play spaces including a sensory garden, horticulture, formal and informal hard and soft surfaced play areas for team games, zones for trim trails and outdoor exercise equipment.

- **Ambergate Sports College and The Sandon School**

Works to the Ambergate site are now complete and the pupils are enjoying the much-improved facilities.

Due to the successful Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) application granted by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), a new Hydrotherapy pool will be built on The Sandon school site, as a condition of the funding allocation. Construction of the pool has commenced. The Community Inclusive Trust are self-delivering this project with assistance and significant funding from Lincolnshire County Council.

Further expansion of the Ambergate site is currently being considered, with feasibility being undertaken on the soon-to-be empty West Grantham Church of England Primary Academy – Upper School. As this site is located adjacent to Ambergate Sports College, there is the option to consider its development to provide additional capacity for the Grantham area in the future. Any further decisions relating to this expansion will be brought to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at a relevant time.

- **Lincoln St Francis Special School**

Feasibility and design have commenced to provide a special school which can meet a wider range of needs for 150 pupils.

- **Gosberton House Academy**

Feasibility and design have commenced to provide a special school which can meet a wider range of needs.

2.1.3 Risk Summary for remaining schemes

There are current and on-going risks around supply chain and inflationary pressures; in part related to COVID-19 and Brexit, but also now predominantly linked to the conflict in Ukraine and the rising inflationary rate which is impacting on an industry-wide basis.

In 2020, COVID-19 disrupted the construction industry. Social distancing increased costs on site due to increased cleaning and more welfare facilities being needed. The self-isolation legislation also presented challenges for contractors because they had to ensure contingency plans were in place to keep the programme to time.

Withdrawal from the European Union, and now the conflict in Ukraine, has created an issue of cost inflation from a shortage of materials within the supply chain as well as an increase in the cost of utilities, raw materials and fuel. This is a local, regional, national and global issue which is having an impact on the SEND schemes. The reasons for the supply chain shortage are multi-faceted and often interdependent.

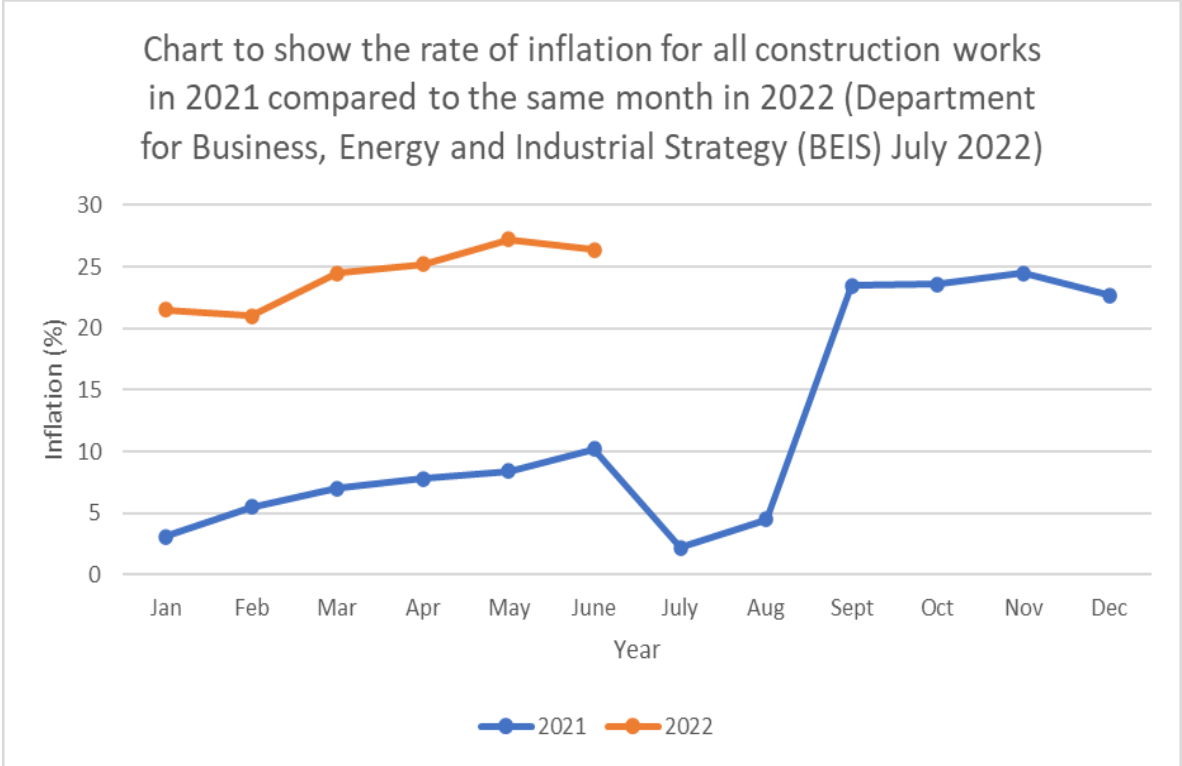
In summary, the economic climate has been severely impacted by the following challenges, which have subsequently impacted the delivery and cost of the SEND Capital Programme.

- Inflation running at a record high since the 1970's
- Labour cost increases
- National insurance rise
- Russian invasion of Ukraine
- Stopping of the use of cherry red diesel – Increased price of plant usage and fuel associated
- Wholesale utilities increase – Increasing the production costs of materials
- Fuel prices increases – increasing production and transportation costs
- Loss of labour resource following the impacts of COVID and Brexit
- Brexit implications - affecting material imports from the EU plus a shortage of lorry drivers affecting the transportation of goods

The rising cost of electricity, oil and many other raw materials is leading to record levels of inflation and the market is struggling to keep pace. The cost of construction for 'All Work' rose 24.5% for all construction work in April 2022 compared to one year prior, according

to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The month on month change from February 2022 – March 2022 was an increase of 5%.

The chart below shows the increasing rate of inflation for all construction works since January 2021. The budget for the capital programme was reprofiled in May 2021 and since this point in time, inflation in the construction industry has increased by almost 20% in the following 12 months.



The risks for the Council are longer lead in times, materials and product shortages or unavailability, the supply-chain re-pricing bids daily rather than monthly translating into higher costs and possible delays for projects.

The two main contractors on the SEND programme of works are monitoring the procurement activities on a monthly basis given the significant rise in costs in a short space of time.

2.1.4 Budget

The current programme budget is £87.093m, which reflected the increased risks and challenges facing individual schemes due to their building conditions, an emerging need to improve transport access, and provision of outside learning areas. The Government had indicated further capital SEND monies, and £2.082m was ear-marked from 2022/23 allocation to support the programme budget.

At the time this decision was made, market volatility in the construction industry was identified as a potential risk to the programme due to the impact of COVID-19 on the

workplace and early-stage concerns regarding supply and resources as an emerging impact of Brexit. The Council COVID-19 grant supported additional costs of £0.299m in the preceding two years.

Furthermore, an additional £4.465m of costs were added to the programme to fund the Horncastle St Lawrence new build solution (£2.935m) and the Lincoln St Christopher’s inflationary pressures (£1.500m) increasing the overall programme budget to £91.558m. This increase had been planned to be met from the 2022/23 and further projected DfE SEND Capital monies, since the Council was aware there would be a continuation of grant funding, and that due to national financial pressures on the High Needs budget of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a better financial settlement would be received.

In April 2022, the DfE announced Lincolnshire’s SEND Capital allocation as a total of £16.8m spanning 2022-2024; £6.547m had already been included in the overall programme budget of £91.558m. Additionally, a further £3.234m inflationary pressure has now also emerged to complete the Horncastle St Lawrence new build scheme, funds which will be required from this grant to complete this scheme. The overall committed sum from this DfE capital allocation being £9.78m on contracted schemes.

Of the £16.8m, there is therefore £7.05m remaining that is ear-marked against the remainder of the SEND capital programme to manage the cost implications of inflation as identified in this report. In order to complete the remaining schemes in the programme, and in light of the inflationary pressures being experienced, the Council will be ear-marking the remaining DfE SEND Capital Allocation from 2022-2024 to the programme.

The full budget by funding source earmarked against the SEND programme delivery is as follows:

Funding sources	Confirmed Funding Sources
DfE - Basic Need funds	£28,626,452
DfE - Schools Condition funding	£27,100,000
DfE - High Needs Capital Allocations (up to 2021/22 and forecasted)	£8,997,098
LCC net capital	£1,085,000
S77 - capital receipt income	£385,000
Dedicated Schools Grant revenue transfer	£5,000,000
LCC capital budget (funding moved from 'new schools' category)	£15,600,000
Covid grant drawn down to programme	£299,297
2021/22 Programme Budget	£87,092,847
DfE - High Needs Capital Allocations remaining 2022-23	£5,484,510
DfE High Needs Capital Allocations - 2023-24	£9,258,604
	£101,835,961

Overall, inflation caused by economic and market conditions are anticipated to see the SEND programme costs increase by £11.758m overall, which is significant (including schemes in contract and future schemes). The programme’s ambitions however need to be fulfilled and delaying future schemes would see revenue and capital costs increase further. The DfE capital allocations to 2024 will provide sufficient funding to fully implement the programme/strategy.

Project Status	£m
Completed Schemes Total	27.913
On-site Schemes Total	49.058
Future Schemes Estimate	24.843
Total	101.814
Funding Allocation	101.835

It is important to note the complexity and magnitude of this programme and appreciate the aspirations of Lincolnshire County Council and its commitment to such a transformational scheme. Embarking on a capital programme which seeks to enhance and improve thirteen school sites over five years whilst transforming the special school system to add much needed capacity, eradicate excessive journeys and reduce unnecessary out of county placements is ambitious and trail-blazing. Delivering a capital programme of this magnitude during a climate of a global pandemic, withdrawal from the European Union, conflict in Ukraine and inflation at its highest level in almost 50 years has proved to be exceptionally challenging but the programme remains on track and funding to address the inflationary impact has been secured.

2.1.5 SEND Support Structures

Workforce Development

The workforce development learning platform was commissioned on 10 February 2022 via a Public-to-Public Collaboration Agreement, under Regulation 12(7) Public Contracts Regulations 2015 between Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Wolds Federation as lead agency for the SEND Alliance. Service Specifications have been approved and signed and contract management governance established.

Agreements are in place between the SEND Alliance and Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) to utilise their existing platform, and all requirements and regulations regarding Information Assurance and Governance have been addressed to ensure compliance.

The SEND Alliance has commenced development of the learning platform site and examples of the initial content were shared with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in an update during the June 2022 meeting.

A summary of progress made in the reporting period is as follows:

- The lead agency, Lincolnshire Wolds Federation, has engaged with sector experts as authors to develop the content for the induction and tier 1 levels as per the requirements for Phase 1 of the project.
- Authors have been instructed from the following sectors:
 - Educational Psychologists
 - Therapy Services

- Intensive Interaction
 - Nuture UK
 - Education Endowment Foundation
 - LEAD Hub
 - Bishop Grosseteste University
 - Lincoln University
- In development of the Induction Tier, authors have developed training content for the following learning areas:
 - Respecting individuals
 - Working with professionals
 - Types of SEND
 - SEND Code of practice
 - The neurotypical child
 - Intensive Interaction
 - Lego therapy
 - Friends programme
 - Emotional Literacy Support Assistants programme
 - Sensory Integration –working with NHS / LCC colleagues within the Sensory Processing Difficulties Working Group
 - Restorative approaches
 - Trauma informed / attachment
- Deployment agreements have been issued by the Lincolnshire Wolds Federation to all collaborating parties and agreements are in place.
- The Workforce Development Working Group is currently reviewing all induction tier content, following a rigorous quality assurance process (exploring sources, permissions, content, relevance). Once this is complete, it is expected that the induction level will be ready to “go live” in October 2022.
- All Tier one content has been produced and is being prepared for the quality assurance process.
- Examples of content and updates can be viewed through the social media platform Twitter @SendWorkforce.

Health Offer

In order for all special schools to meet all needs, it is imperative that each school can meet the needs of children and young people with more complex medical conditions. At present, the only school with an on-site specialist nursing team is Lincoln St Francis which is the designated profound and multiple learning disability/physical disability school for the county. In order to enable children to access their local special school, there needs to be a robust and equitable health offer available to all schools. To implement this requirement, a SEND health workstream has been established, made up of Officers from

the Local Authority, Health Trusts and NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board to ensure an effective health offer can be provided to all special schools.

This partnership workstream has been responsible for the development and implementation of the SEND Strategy Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This document sets out the partnership expectations and responsibilities of both the special school and health providers to ensure the health offer is implemented and maintained. This MOU has been co-produced by the workstream's key stakeholders and is currently going through each organisation's governance processes.

The workstream is also responsible for developing a system whereby all special schools have the capabilities and confidence to meet the needs of children and young people with the most complex medical needs and those who are long-term ventilated. Senior Officers from NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board, LCC and Health Provider Trusts have agreed, in principle, that all children in Lincolnshire should be able to attend a special school as close to home as possible, if required, once it is safe to do so. This workstream is currently developing an infrastructure and guidance framework which will ensure this is possible, in a clinically safe manner.

Specialist Equipment

In order to ensure the most cost-effective use of specialist medical and therapy equipment, all special schools have now joined the existing contractual arrangements held by the Local Authority with specialist equipment providers. All special schools are now part of the Lincolnshire Community Equipment Service, which enables them to order directly through the Council's contractual arrangements. If specialist equipment is deemed to be required by a therapy professional (such as Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist) this will be prescribed and the school can order direct. They receive monthly invoices for the equipment they order, and, on its return, the school receives a refund for the cost of the equipment. This contract also covers the servicing and maintenance of specialist equipment within the school.

In the first year of the contract, the Council has received positive feedback from all the SEND Schools on the service provided by NRS over the past year. As well as being delighted with the service provided by NRS, significant cost savings have also been identified by all partners. They report being particularly pleased with the response times from NRS where, for example, emergency repairs are completed within a four-hour timeframe.

There was a spend of £6k on routine servicing over the last complete financial year (2021/2022), which demonstrates a 67% saving against the costs proposed by previous providers for the same period. Furthermore, all partners have been able to access preferential equipment pricing which has been utilised extensively during the past year, with just over £9k being spent on new equipment. One example of these savings is where St Francis have had replacement hoists provided at a price of 36% less than the retail cost. In addition to this, if the equipment is no longer required it can be returned to NRS and they receive a full credit of the cost back.

3. Conclusion

Children's Services strongly believes this capital infrastructure investment will not only achieve greater outcomes for Lincolnshire pupils, but also be an important financial decision in managing the pressures within the High Needs block by way of reducing expenditure relating to some expensive and unnecessary out of county specialist placements. On occasion, Lincolnshire families are presented with the difficult option of out of county placements due to the lack of capacity in local special schools. This is both unfair on children and families and expensive to the Council when needs could be met in a more local provision. It is important for Lincolnshire to continue securing value for money within these demand-led budgets and within the finite funding resource available. By enabling pupils requiring specialist support to go to their nearest suitable school, the Local Authority will be able to achieve operational efficiencies, improve pupils wellbeing and reduce expenditure through its delivery of home to school transport arrangements.

The financial impact of investing now at a capital level will have a positive impact on the Council's financial position long-term to both the High Need's block and Home to School Transport Budget.

The strategy was collaboratively developed to ensure a sufficient supply of special school places for children and young people with SEND, local special schools which can meet the needs of all pupils in their local community, a reduction in the travelling time for pupils with SEND by enabling them to attend a special school as close to home as possible and for our children and young people with SEND to be educated locally, bringing value and a sense of belonging to their local communities. Only by ensuring that the capital programme is fully completed can the Local Authority be confident it will achieve its strategic vision.

4. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not applicable

5. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Timeline for the Capital Scheme
Appendix B	Progress in Pictures

6. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire Strategy	Building communities of specialist provision (lincolnshire.gov.uk)

This report was written by Eileen McMorrow, who can be contacted on Eileen.mcmorrow@lincolnshire.gov.uk.