

If Key Decision: Decision Ref. No.

B029/24

If not a Key Decision write n/a above

## OFFICER DECISION RECORD <sup>i</sup>

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Annex 9 of the Council's Constitution <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are-and-what-we-do.aspx>)

### Subject:

Whether or not to initiate public consultation on the proposal to enlarge The Collett School, Hemel Hempstead from September 2025.

**Type of Decision:** Executive

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Executive Member:** Caroline Clapper

**Portfolio:** Education, Libraries & Lifelong Learning

**Officer Contact:** Kate Leahy, Head of School Planning  
**Tel:** 01992 555864

### 1. Decision

Whether or not to initiate public consultation on the following proposal:

The permanent enlargement of The Collett School ("the School"), Lockers Park Lane, Hemel Hempstead, through a satellite provision at the former sixth form building of Laureate Academy, which adjoins Gade Valley Primary School, Gadebridge Road, Hemel Hempstead. This would create 50 places, increasing the School's capacity from 128 to 178 places aiming to deliver from September 2025, at the earliest. The School is a foundation special school for children with Learning Disabilities (LD).

## 2. Reasons for the decision

In December 2020, the Cabinet of Hertfordshire County Council (“the county council”) approved the Special School Place Planning Strategy 2020-2023, which sets out that demand for special school places has grown sharply in recent years and is forecast to continue to grow at a rate that will exceed the current supply of places. As the majority of Hertfordshire’s special schools are now at capacity, the strategy sets out longer-term priorities which will deliver the additional school places required. However, in the short term, it identifies that additional capacity will be needed to meet the immediate demand for special school places.

The School is a foundation special school for children aged 4 - 16 years old with LD. The School was rated as Good in October 2018, and has very recently been inspected again and has maintained its Good rating.

As highlighted by the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission area SEND inspection, there is an urgent need to provide more special school places in Hertfordshire. Our most recent assessment is that there are currently 80 pupils awaiting a place at an LD provision, with this number expected to increase.

Laureate Academy’s former sixth building remains vacant and is no longer required, due to the provision of a new sixth form block on the Laureate Academy site, through the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) School Rebuild Programme. The County Council was able to successfully demonstrate the need to use the vacant building to provide additional special school places resulting in the DfE handing the building back to the county council in December 2023 at nil consideration. The proposed satellite building adjoining Gade Valley Primary School is approximately 250 metres from the School’s existing site on Lockers Park Lane, a further positive factor in favour of the proposed location of the satellite provision.

## 3. Alternative options considered and rejected

None

## 4. Consultation (see Summary of Requirements below)

**Was any Councillor consulted?** Yes

**If yes:**

(a) Comments of Executive Member

The Executive Member has no comments other than to concur with the Executive Director’s intention to agree the proposal.

(b) Comments of other consultees

None

**5. Any conflict of interest declared by a councillor who has been consulted in relation to the decision**

None

**6. Following consultation with the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Signed: Jo Fisher

Title: Executive Director of Children's Services

Date: 06/06/2024

Copies of record to:

- All consultees
- hard & electronic copy (if required to be made available for public inspection) to Democratic Services Manager - Room 213 County Hall.

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