

If Key Decision: Decision Ref. No.

B125/24

If not a Key Decision write n/a above

OFFICER DECISION RECORD ⁱ

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 agree to the proposal, following the statutory notice period, to enlarge The Collett School, Hemel Hempstead, by 50 places from January 2026, via a satellite provision.

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 agree to the proposal, following the statutory notice period, to enlarge The Collett School, Hemel Hempstead, by 50 places from January 2026, via a satellite provision.

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 from January 2026. The School is a foundation special school for children with Learning Difficulties (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 April 2024.

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.

A consultation was undertaken for 4 weeks from 15 June to 18 July 2024 on this proposal. 36 responses were received, 75% of whom were supportive. In light of this response, Cabinet approved the publication of a Statutory Notice on the 18 September which was published on 26 September 2024 for a period of 4 weeks. There were no objections received throughout this period. A local junior school (St Cuthbert Mayne) did respond with a comment regarding the parking arrangements moving forward. Officers have agreed to continue to work with the school(s) as the project progresses.

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: 11/12/2024

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.
