

Officer Decision Record – Executive Decision

If Key Decision: Decision Ref. No.

B033/25

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 create a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Featherstone Wood Primary School, Stevenage and Brockwood Primary and Nursery School, Hemel Hempstead from 01 September 2025; and to close the existing Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) base at Hillshott Infant School and Nursery, Letchworth from 31 August 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

To agree to the proposal, following the statutory notice period, to deliver Phase 3 of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) strategy by:

- Opening a new SRP at Featherstone Wood Primary School, Featherstone Road, Shephall, Stevenage, SG2 9PP, a community school for pupils aged 3 – 11 years old, from 01 September 2025;
- Opening a new SRP at Brockwood Primary and Nursery School, Shenley Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7QH, for pupils aged 3 – 11 years old, from 01 September 2025;

- Closing the existing SLCN base at Hillshott Infant School and Nursery, Ridge Avenue, Letchworth, Sg6 1QE, a community school for pupils aged 3 – 7 years old, from 31 August 2025.

2. Reasons for the decision

Creating new SRPs in Hertfordshire

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.

Priority 4 of the Strategy is delivery of a new communication and autism sector in Hertfordshire.

Officers identified an increasing number of pupils with SLCN who have a broader and more complex level of social communication difficulties, including autism. Often these young people access education in special schools, but the creation of SRPs in mainstream schools will allow many of these pupils to access a mainstream curriculum, balanced with a safe space to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation and emotional wellbeing.

Following a review of the existing SLCN bases, it was agreed that the county council should develop and extend the offer to include children with social communication needs, including autism. All existing SLCN settings were involved in the development of this proposal and were invited to express an interest in transitioning to an SRP setting.

Each primary SRP will offer up to 12 places each and will build on the existing SLCN provision in the area to meet a wider and more complex level of need.

Closure of the SLCN base

There are currently no pupils attending the SLCN base at Hillshott Infant and Nursery School. The school did not express an interest in re-designating from an SLCN base to an SRP and therefore the county council has worked to identify new provision in the area, including the SRP at Featherstone Wood Primary School.

Consultation

A consultation on the above proposals took place between 9 September – 23 October 2024. The following number of responses were received:

New SRP at Featherstone Wood Primary School

Total responses	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
2	2 (100%)	0	0

New SRP at Brockswood Primary School

Total responses	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
6	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	0

Closure of SLCN base at Hillshott Infant School and Nursery

Total responses	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
0	0	0	0

Between 23 January – 26 February 2025, the county council published a statutory notice relating to the above proposals. The county council did not receive any responses to the proposals during the statutory notice period.

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: 14/03/2025

Copies of record to:

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