

# **LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM**

**Report to:** Full Council

**Date:** 21/05/2025

**Subject:** Redevelopment of Avonmore Primary School and Building New Homes

**Report of:** Councillor Andrew Jones, Cabinet Member for The Economy

**Report author:** Will Noton, Head of Development

**Responsible Director:** Bram Kainth, Executive Director of Place

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## **SUMMARY**

This report concerns the proposed development of Avonmore Primary School and seeks approval of a capital budget to enable construction of both the new school and new homes.

The proposed scheme ("Development") has been co-produced with the school governors, the wider school community and consulted on widely with local residents. It will provide a modern, fit for purpose one form entry (1FE) Primary School, as well as an enhanced nursery and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision as well as 91 new homes, of which 50% are affordable. The scheme was approved at planning committee in November 2024.

In line with the Council's ambition to deliver net-zero carbon by 2030, the school facilities and new homes have been designed to high sustainability and environmental standards which translate into an estimated 75% reduction in operational carbon emissions. This reduction will significantly reduce ongoing energy bills for the school and residents.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Full Council:

1. Agrees that appendix 1 is not for publication on the basis that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
  2. Approves a capital budget to deliver the new homes and new school which will include contingency and internal costs, as set out in exempt appendix 1.
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**Wards Affected:** Avonmore

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<b>Our Values</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the H&amp;F Values</b>
Building shared prosperity	The Development of the site will bring about measurable local benefits including realisable benefits during the construction stage where contractors, under the Council's procurement policy, will be incentivised to provide Social Value that is aligned to Council's strategies such as Upstream London as the second phase of our Industrial Strategy.
Creating a compassionate Council	The Development will help meet the acute need for affordable housing in the locality as well as the wider borough.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	The Development is being co-produced with local residents and the school in accordance with this value.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The delivery of high-quality residential homes that are operationally net-zero carbon through the use of external funding and incorporation of private sale homes demonstrates the ruthless financial efficiency of the Development while maximising the number and sizes of affordable homes.
Taking pride in H&F	The aim of the Development is to create a lasting and positive legacy through a well-designed primary school, new homes and neighbourhood amenities while addressing both the climate challenge and the acute need for affordable housing in the borough.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The Development will deliver a highly sustainable primary school and new homes that are operationally net-zero carbon and so help create and sustain a low carbon community and neighbourhood.

## **Financial Impact**

The total development budget and the required funding resources are set out in exempt appendix 1.

*Finance implications: completed by Harun Guleid, Principal Accountant (Development), 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025*

*Verified by Andre Mark, Head of Finance (strategic planning and investment), 29th April 2025*

### **Legal Implications (General)**

The recommendation is for approval of a capital budget for the delivery of a new school and homes within the Avonmore Primary School site.

The Council's Financial Regulations provides that approval by the Full Council is required for a programme of capital expenditure and capital strategy.

It is illegal for the Council to budget for a deficit.

The Council's obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 have been covered in the section titled 'Equality Implications' below.

*Mrinalini Rajaratnam, (Chief Solicitor Planning and Property), 23 April 2025*

### **Legal Implications (Contracts and Procurement)**

There are no contract and procurement implications at this stage in the scheme as the recommendation is only for budget approval. The subsequent contracts to deliver the scheme must comply with procurement legislation and the Council's Contract Standing Orders. Cabinet approved a procurement strategy for the associated construction contract in June 2024 and the tender process is proceeding in accordance with that Cabinet decision. A further Cabinet Member decision will be required for the award of the contract.

*Angela Hogan, Chief Solicitor (Contracts and Procurement), 17 April 2025*

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### **Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report**

None

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## DETAILED ANALYSIS

### Background

1. In March 2019, Cabinet approved the strategic case for the Community Schools Programme (CSP). Cabinet approved the Avonmore school project in this report. This strategy considered the role of modern education facilities and affordable housing in driving the Council's inclusive growth agenda and Upstream London, the second phase of our Industrial Strategy, more broadly. It also acknowledged the lack of funding available from the Department for Education (DfE) to enable school improvements. The strategy has three core aims:
  - to re-provide modern, fit for purpose schools to support the borough's ambition to give children the best start in life,
  - to support the funding of education in Hammersmith & Fulham, including future repair and planned maintenance requirements across the school community, and,
  - to fund school redevelopment through the creation of much needed affordable housing which will help maintain the borough's vibrant social mix.
2. The present Avonmore Primary School building was built as a temporary post-war structure, which has been supplemented with various ad-hoc module and prefabricated building additions and alterations over the years to respond to demand. This approach has resulted in an inefficient site with operational challenges.
3. Since large parts of the school building fabric have fallen into disrepair and are considered to have surpassed their life expectancy, it has been deemed that the school buildings are no longer fit for purpose and risks failing to offer the best learning environment for pupils.
4. The Council appointed design, project and cost management support services between autumn 2019 and summer 2020 to develop the designs, engage the school and wider community and progress the scheme to planning submission.
5. The Avonmore Primary School procurement strategy for the main contractor was approved by Cabinet on 3 June 2024 and the tender process is now completed. The Council is aiming to appoint the successful contractor in late Spring 2025 (further details can be found in the programme within this report). Cabinet also noted that the budget request would be subsequently submitted for approval by Full Council. This report constitutes the budget approval decision.
6. Full details of the technical elements of the scheme and the statement of community involvement can be located within the publicly available planning application, though this report will provide a summary of the most pertinent information.

## **Design Co-Production & Consultation**

7. The Council began a series of engagement events in June 2019 with the school community to co-produce designs. A RIBA Client Design Advisor (CDA) was appointed to work closely with the school stakeholders. This process included regular meetings and design workshops with the Avonmore Steering Group (comprised of school leadership and governors) and pupil consultation events.
8. In March 2021 the Council paused the design work to enable an extended period of consultation with the local community and wider stakeholders. This decision was taken to ensure that the design team was best placed to reflect the views of the school community and residents in the emerging designs. Design work recommenced in January 2023.
9. The design work that took place in the lead up to the planning application submission included improvements to the energy strategy (i.e. removing gas boilers from the scheme and replacing these with air source heat pumps) and updating the designs to new fire safety building regulations, which included the addition of firefighting and evacuation lifts.
10. An overview of the nature of engagement and consultation events that took place between the beginning of the CSP and the submission of the planning application is included below:
  - Engagement with local community interest groups
  - Four public consultation events
  - Twelve Pre-application meetings with the LPA
  - Engagement with H&F Inclusive Design Forum
  - Two Design Review Panels
11. Throughout the design process there were public consultation events and ongoing informal opportunities for the school community and residents to provide comments on and assist in shaping the emerging proposals for the scheme. This process has included members of the design team as well as the relevant Cabinet members and senior officers.
12. In the months prior to the submission of the planning application, the Council held a series of exhibitions and on-line events, to share the co-produced proposed designs with residents, local groups and the school's community. In addition, individual presentations were offered to key external stakeholders.
13. Following the extended consultation phase and work to improve the energy strategy and fire safety strategy for the project, a planning application was submitted in November 2023. This application was approved in November 2024.

## **Design Principles**

### *Collaborative working and co-production*

14. Collaborative working and co-production with the school and residents of the design has been the foundation of the Development from the start of the project.

### *Accessibility and inclusive design*

15. Accessibility and inclusive design have been constant drivers within the design process. Specialist accessibility consultants have input into the proposals throughout to ensure that accessibility has been properly considered in all decisions. On several occasions, the resident-led Hammersmith and Fulham Inclusive Design Review Panel (IDRP) has considered emerging proposals. The feedback has consistently been positive, valuable, and important in shaping the proposals and design.

#### *Secure by Design*

16. In line with the Council's commitment to Take Pride in H&F and attempt to reduce crime wherever possible, the scheme has adopted Secure by Design principles to ensure the safety of pupils, residents, and wider users.

#### *Sustainability and net-zero carbon*

17. From a sustainability and net zero carbon perspective, the scheme has many positive elements within the design. Estimated operational carbon reductions in the region of 75% are expected owing to the design work, and the school facilities will achieve industry recognised BREEAM Excellent standard.

#### *Urban greening and ecology*

18. Urban greening and ecology across the site have been optimised and the scheme will see a biodiversity net gain owing to a range of ecological improvements. Features include green roofs on all buildings, new tree planting in the community and 100 new solar panels.

### **New Education Facilities**

19. The design proposals for the new Avonmore Primary School will:
  - provide a one-form entry primary school accommodating 240 pupils
  - create an enhanced and inclusive learning environment for nursery to Year 6 students
  - create a significantly larger school than the existing school. It provides 2,352sqm gross internal area compared to 1,399sqm and requires a smaller total building footprint
  - consist of three storeys plus a fully accessible roof terrace
  - provide 741sqm of outdoor space within the building footprint
  - provide a canopy of 142sqm over the early years play space
20. As set out above, the school and nursery buildings will provide additional space over and above the DfE requirements for schools of this type.
21. The usable open space within the proposed designs is 1,490sqm. This figure constitutes a 70sqm reduction to the existing usable open space of 1,560sqm. This decision translates into a 4.5% reduction in usable open space. The Council has been unable to re-provide the exact amount of usable open space within the scheme owing to the site's constraints and the need to ensure that the proposals secure the necessary improvements to educational and housing infrastructure.

22. Though the reduction in usable open space is marginal, the Council has taken several design decisions that seek to compensate for this loss. The new school building accommodates larger dedicated spaces for sports, exercise and leisure such as a sports hall, dance studio, and central atrium. Moreover, the scheme has sought to improve the school's access to the adjacent Marcus Garvey Park for organised outdoor activities.
23. The new school adds capacity for a higher number of pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Intervention rooms have been provided that exceed specialist DfE (Building Bulletin BB103) Guidance. A sensory room is also provided to improve the learning experience for pupils with autism as well as other forms of SEND relating to sensory perception.
24. A range of 'specialist teaching spaces' are also provided. These spaces include a bespoke Art and Design Technology room as well as a specialist Science facility. These elements are important to reflecting the priorities of Upstream London, our Industrial Strategy, in our education provision through enabling effective learning of creative and scientific skills that will be important to the borough's economic growth in the short-medium term.
25. The school also includes a rooftop learning deck to provide a diverse range of learning environments and to facilitate outdoor learning and play.
26. The scheme also seeks to provide wider community benefits. The intention is for the enhanced school facilities, such as the new sports hall, to be made available to the local community and community groups for use outside of school hours. Moreover, the public realm enhancements around the perimeter of the site will make the area more attractive for everyone who live or work in the area.
27. The new facilities will enable the school to support every pupil to achieve the best outcomes, whether they need specialist SEN support or not. This supports the delivery of the H&F local area SEND strategy that Cabinet recently approved. The new modern fit-for-purpose Avonmore Primary School will improve teacher training, improve recruitment, and increase teacher retention in a challenging national climate. All of which will boost the morale and support the wellbeing of staff and pupils.
28. The added facilities for teacher training, development and community users will all provide new revenue streams for the school, enabling them to be more self-sufficient and reduce the burden on the public purse. This delivery model is aligned to the recently agreed strengthening education provision in H&F plan to build a more sustainable primary school sector.
29. The new school and infrastructure will reduce future maintenance costs, and any planned refurbishment works that would have otherwise continued with the existing prefabricated 1950's temporary building.

## **Proposals for New Homes**

30. A summary of the residential element of the scheme is provided below. The consented scheme includes 91 sustainable homes, of which:
- 45 (50%) of which will be affordable, comprising of:
    - 27 (30%) homes for social rent, and
    - 18 (20%) homes for shared ownership
  - 46 (50%) homes for market (leasehold) sale.
31. In line with local planning policy, 10% of the new homes will be wheelchair accessible, accommodating Part M4(3) standards. Similarly, the delivery of the 45 new affordable homes equates to 50% affordable housing provision within this scheme. When measured by habitable room, the affordable housing provision within the scheme equates to 55.5%.
32. The Council is firmly committed to the maximisation of affordable housing delivery as far as possible. Officers are exploring the use of further subsidy (such as affordable housing S106 funds) to convert some or all of the 46 market-sale homes to affordable tenures.
33. This process could include specific intermediate housing initiatives for key workers already living or working in the borough, or broader low-cost home ownership opportunities for residents. This decision would be subject to the scheme continuing to meet the viability benchmarks which are described in the exempt finance appendix of this report.

## **Next Steps**

34. Planning consent for the scheme was granted on 6 November 2024. A preferred construction contractor has been identified though the Council is yet to award a contract. To progress the scheme and award the contract to a main works contractor, approval of a capital budget is required from Full Council.
35. In parallel, the Council has applied to the DfE to secure approval under s77 (3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and has submitted an application under paragraph 4 of Schedule 1 to the Academies Act to change the use of the part of the school land to allow housing development. An appropriation strategy will be taken to Cabinet for approval before the Development commences.
36. Refurbishment works are underway to upgrade the former Queensmill School site on Mund Street. This site will act as a decant site for Avonmore Primary School during construction. The school moved in April 2025 for approximately 2 years, while the new school is under construction.
37. On the basis of the tender returns, the Council expects (subject to the approval of the capital budget in this decision) to be able to award a construction contract of a value that enables the scheme to continue to meet the organisation's financial viability hurdles. The detail in regard to the scheme's financial performance is set out within exempt appendix 1.



38. The approval of this decision will enable the Council to submit a report to the Cabinet Member for the Economy in Spring 2025 to request approval to award the contract for the construction of the scheme. On this basis, the expected key development milestones are as follows:

<b>Development Programme – Key Milestones</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Conclusion of procurement stage, review and evaluation	Apr 2025
<b>Full Council Approval of Development Budget</b>	May 2025
Award Decision – Cabinet Member Report	May 2025
Contract award and mobilisation period	Jun 2025
Anticipated contractor possession / start on site	Jul 2025
Anticipated sectional completion (school)	Jun 2027
Anticipated practical completion (residential)	Dec 2027

## **OPTIONS ANALYSIS**

39. The following section sets out the options available to Full Council in regard to this decision.

### **Option 1: Do nothing (not recommended)**

40. Option 1 constitutes a decision to do nothing which would in essence mean not proceeding with this decision. Option 1 is not recommended as a failure to proceed with this decision has a range of negative consequences.
41. Firstly, not proceeding with this decision threatens the scheme's funding strategy. The development relies on a Right to Buy receipt allocation, the availability of which depends on the scheme's ability to proceed in line with the programme set out elsewhere in this report. If the scheme were to lose this funding allocation there is no guarantee that other subsidy will become available to enable the scheme to continue to meet the Council's viability hurdles.
42. Secondly, a choice to not proceed with this decision and to essentially postpone this development could result in all costs incurred so far becoming abortive. Exempt appendix 1 details the extent of the potentially abortive costs.
43. Thirdly, not proceeding with this decision would negatively impact on the Council's ability to realise two of its primary ambitions, namely the improvement of educational infrastructure and the delivery of new, affordable housing.

### **Option 2: Revise the scheme (not recommended)**

44. Option 2 constitutes a decision to instruct officers to substantially revise the scheme for which a capital budget is requested and to which planning consent has been granted. The reasons for which this option is not recommended are as follows.
45. Firstly, as the decision to revise the scheme will substantially prolong the development process, this decision presents the same risks as Option 1, namely the threat to the funding strategy, the potential for abortive costs, and the delay

in the provision of modern educational infrastructure.

46. Secondly, this decision is not recommended on the basis that it is unlikely to add significant value. The proposals within this scheme align closely to the priorities within the adopted strategy for the Community Schools Programme and are the result of an extensive co-production and design programme that has involved a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that it reflects the Council's priorities in regard to education provision, affordable housing delivery, and sustainability. The local planning authority has deemed that the existing scheme provides a wide range of benefits and there is nothing to suggest that significant revisions to the scheme will yield added value.

### **Option 3: Approve the recommendations within this report (recommended)**

47. Option 3 constitutes a decision to approve the recommendations within this report. This option is recommended on the basis that it will enable the Council to subsequently award a contract from this budget and realise the benefits of the school redevelopment set out within this report. This option is recommended for the following reasons.
48. Firstly, this option is recommended because the proposed scheme has a financially viable funding strategy and a successful planning consent, demonstrating that the proposals are both financially sustainable and in line with the Council's spatial strategy.
49. Secondly, it is recommended that the Council proceed with the development so that it can realise the objectives of the Community School Programme, ensuring that young people in the borough have access to a high-quality education. Improvements to the Council's education infrastructure also aligns closely to its Upstream London Industrial Strategy priorities.
50. Thirdly, this option is recommended so that the Council can boost its housing supply in line with its significant ambitions for affordable housing delivery. The proposals provide 91 new, sustainable homes of which 50% are affordable, highlighting the Council's commitment to building diverse, mixed communities with a range of housing options for local residents.

### **Reasons for Decision**

51. This decision is required to comply with the relevant requirements within the Financial Regulations that a budget request of this scale be approved by Full Council.

### **Equality Implications**

52. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and is appended at appendix 2.

### **Risk Management Implications**

53. There are no significant risks associated with the decision to approve a capital budget for this scheme. There are, however, risks arising from any decision to

award a contract for the construction of this development. This decision is expected to take place in early 2025 and the key decision report that relates explicitly to this contract award will consider the risks in detail.

*Jules Binney, Risk and Assurance Manager, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025*

## **Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications**

54. In addition to the high sustainability and environmental standards delivered to reduce operational carbon emissions, the development should explore opportunities to reduce embodied carbon through the reuse and recycling of materials and resources, including:
- setting aside materials and resources during demolition for reuse
  - maximising construction and demolition waste diversion away from landfill
  - maximising low carbon, reused and locally sourced materials for construction and refurbishment
  - considering standard design components
  - driving a circular economy through the use of modular components & reclaimed materials
  - focusing on sustainability for the replacement of defective products, fixtures & fittings (repair, reuse, recycling)
55. The development should commit to ecological improvements including but not limited to incorporating green roofs for biodiversity, sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) such as blue roofs for rainwater & surface water absorption and ensuring native species are chosen for planting - invasive species should be excluded.
56. Once in operation, the development should provide amenity spaces for community events and green skills workshops such as repair and retrofit training opportunities for local residents.

*Hinesh Mehta, Assistant Director Climate and Transport, 23/04/2025*

## **Local Economy and Social Value Implications**

57. This report requests that Full Council approve a budget to enable the construction of a new primary school and 91 new homes on the site of Avonmore Primary School.
58. The scheme is designed to provide a range of local economic benefits. The construction of new, modern educational facilities sits in line with Upstream London, Hammersmith and Fulham's Industrial Strategy, and seeks to ensure that all young people within the borough are able to access a good, rounded education. Likewise, the new school building provides a range of specialist science and arts facilities which is of particular importance in view of the role that the life-science, tech, and creative industries will play in creating sustainable jobs for residents in future.

59. The provision of 91 new homes, of which half are affordable, will also make a substantial contribution to the Council's inclusive growth agenda. The availability of new homes across a range of affordable housing tenures is key to protecting the borough's foundational economy, ensuring that key workers are able to live and work in the borough on an ongoing basis.
60. The tender for the main construction contract will need to be run in accordance with the Council's social value policy whereby social/added value is weighted at 20% of the overall tender evaluation. The development team will continue to work with the economic development service to ensure that the delivery of social value provides ongoing benefit to the residents of the borough.

*David Pack, Assistant Director – Economic Development & Growth, 16 April 2025.*

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Exempt Appendix 1 – Exempt Financial Implications  
Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment