



# Recommends ...

The **Children Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel**, at its meeting on **13th November 2025** made the following resolution which I bring to your attention.

15<sup>th</sup> December 2025

To: Portfolio Holder Children and Education

## **SPCLL.43 URGENT BUSINESS - DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION FREE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS REQUIRED COUNCIL CAPITAL BUDGET APPROVAL**

### **Background**

The Chair agreed that this report be taken urgently so that it received pre-Cabinet consultation with scrutiny. The report outlined the requirement to secure the estimated additional £2.3 million capital funding and to enable the Authority to enter the Department of Education (DfE) contract for the project to progress.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Beasant as Ward Councillor of the land where the free school was located. He explained that it had been a long journey to get to where they were now with the free school. He understood that the estimated extra costs were quite substantial but asked that the panel recognised the need for this free school and the need to not cause any more delays.

The panel welcomed the Ward Councillors points and understood the need for this school, but they had some concerns over the need for the extra resources.

The panel agreed with the recommendations stated in the report but unanimously recommended to Cabinet:

*That the recommendations stated in the Cabinet report be supported, but that a further recommendation be considered by Cabinet to explore safeguards around exposure to risk of increasing costs and for the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel to retain oversight.*

**It is to be noted that the report to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026 has been updated since the Panel made its recommendation, to reflect further announcements from the DfE on this matter**

**Scrutiny Chair: Councillor Paul Silvester**

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