Hillingdon SEND Capital Funding Bid – Inclusion Support Base and Sensory Environments

The Council is offering funding to support maintained and academy mainstream schools in Hillingdon to develop inclusive learning environments that enable pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to thrive. Funding is available for schools to create the following:

- Inclusion Support Base (secondary is prioritised initially but primaries can also submit expressions of interest to be considered for future dates)
- Sensory Environments (primary and secondary)

Projects should focus on improving and enhancing existing provision or creating additional space, through an Inclusion Support Base or Sensory Environments. Applicants must demonstrate how the investment will positively impact children and young people (CYP) to qualify for the capital investment. Hints and tips of what you should consider are set out in the application form.

Please note: When liaising with children and young people at the school, you should consider the questions raised by representatives from the Aim High SEND Youth Forum. Guidance and checklists are also provided to support your thinking and application.

What is the funding for?

Inclusion Support Base:

An Inclusion Support Base is a flexible, multi-purpose space designed to enhance inclusion and support children and young people across the whole school community. While it may provide targeted interventions for individual pupils or small groups, the space should be capable of being used more broadly to support learning, wellbeing, emotional regulation, SEND provision, pastoral support, and inclusion activities for all

pupils in the school as required.

Examples of works needed for an Inclusion Support Base would be:

- Partitioning to create a small intervention space and/or calm space.
- Sensory-friendly lighting with dimmable LEDs and blinds.
- ICT upgrades including interactive screens, power and data points.
- Decoration and flooring using durable, low-arousal finishes.
- Furniture for children' learning

Sensory Environments:

A Sensory Environment is a specially designed environment that provides flexibility to support a variety of sensory experiences, helping individuals or small groups to regulate emotions, reduce anxiety, enhance concentration, and support learning, wellbeing, and engagement.

The space may be located **within the school building in one or more locations or as an external provision** and should be designed to meet the needs of pupils requiring sensory support. Sensory Environments can offer opportunities for both structured interventions and informal use throughout the school day, supporting pupils to access education more effectively and remain engaged in learning.

Examples of works needed for a Sensory Environments may be:

- Soft flooring or padded areas for safe movement
- Sensory lighting, such as bubble tubes, fibre optics, LED light panels or projectors.
- Comfortable seating, beanbags or sensory cushions.
- Tactile resources, including textured wall panels and sensory toys.
- Calming auditory equipment, such as speakers for soothing sounds or music.
- Sensory regulation equipment, for example weighted blankets, body socks or rocking chairs.
- Dimmable lighting and blackout blinds to control stimulation levels.
- Soundproofing to reduce noise levels and support sensory regulation.

Schools may choose to procure items for an Inclusion Support Base or Sensory Environments directly from individual suppliers or sensory equipment providers.

What Is Not Funded?

This funding is strictly for capital works and cannot be used for:

- Staffing, operational costs and general maintenance
- Educational materials, books, training, or enrichment activities
- Individual specialist equipment needs
- Consultancy Fees

Applicants must consider the ongoing sustainability and annual maintenance costs associated with any proposal submitted through this application process, as funding for these costs will not be provided.

You **must** provide quotes to support your application for the works you are requesting.

Funding Details

A total of £1 million for Sensory Environments and £3 million for Inclusion Support Bases has been allocated by the Local Authority for this programme. Funding will be awarded on a competitive basis and allocated until the available budget has been fully committed. Once the allocated funding has been exhausted, no further awards will be made unless additional funding is identified and approved by the Local Authority.

- Primary school Sensory Environments, with funding of up to **£10,000**, plus up to **£5,000** for associated enabling works.
- Secondary school Sensory Environments with funding of up to **£10,000**, plus up to **£5,000** for associated enabling works.
- Primary school Inclusion Support Base developments and expansions.
- Secondary school Inclusion Support Base developments and expansions
- Schools may want to supplement this contribution if they are intending further works that would cost in excess of this amount

School Contribution to Higher Value Projects
The indicative funding levels for Sensory Environments and Inclusion Support Bases are intended to provide a guide for the scale of projects that can be supported through this programme. Where a school submits a bid that exceeds the typical funding amount associated with Sensory Environments or Inclusion Support Base, the assessment panel will review the application on its merits, taking into account the demonstrated need, anticipated impact, affordability, and value for money.

In considering higher-value applications, the panel will also take account of the school's financial position. Schools holding reserves exceeding 8% of their annual budget share at the start of the academic year will normally be expected to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the project and will not normally receive any further funding.

The level of contribution will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be proportionate to the scale of the project, the level of reserves held by the school, and the overall demand on the programme's available funding.

Schools may therefore be required to provide evidence of their current financial position and identify any proposed school contribution as part of the application process. The Review Panel reserves the right to attach funding conditions or approve a reduced level of funding where it considers this appropriate and necessary to achieve an equitable distribution of resources across the programme.

Bid Application Process

Submit an application via the following online link, which includes a business case, with evidence of how this is linked to Hillingdon SEND strategy and the expected impact of the project and how this would be measured, and include the relevant attachments listed below:

- All quotes for project works (minimum of 2 quotes)
- Updated proposed school plans identifying the site location including measurements

Where two or more schools wish to work together on a shared proposal, a **joint application** may be submitted. The application should clearly identify the lead school, describe how the provision will benefit pupils across the participating schools, set out the governance and management arrangements, and demonstrate the added value of the collaborative approach.

If you require any advice or support with your application, please contact the School Place Planning Team via email schoolplaceplanning@Hillingdon.gov.uk.

Procurement and Financial Governance

Schools are responsible for ensuring that all expenditure funded through the Sensory Environments and Inclusion Support Bases Capital Programme is undertaken in accordance with their own procurement procedures, financial regulations, and scheme/schedule of delegation.

Before committing any expenditure, schools must:

- Follow their governing body's approved procurement and financial procedures.
- Ensure that the appropriate approvals are obtained in line with their scheme or schedule of delegation.

- Demonstrate value for money through proportionate procurement activity, including obtaining quotations or undertaking a competitive process where required by their own policies.
- Maintain appropriate records of procurement decisions, quotations, tenders, approvals, contracts, and invoices for audit purposes.
- Ensure any conflicts of interest are identified and managed in accordance with the school's governance arrangements.
- Comply with all relevant legal, financial, and regulatory requirements applicable to the school.

The Local Authority will not prescribe a specific procurement route for individual projects. Responsibility for compliance with procurement requirements, financial governance, contract management, and expenditure approvals rests with the school and its governing body, academy trust, or other accountable body.

The submission of a funding application will be deemed confirmation that the school has reviewed the proposed project and is satisfied that it can be delivered in accordance with the school's procurement and governance arrangements.

Approval and Next Steps

Submissions will be reviewed by a panel made up of local authority officers and school representatives where they will review the business case and funding requested. Following panel review, outcomes will be shared with schools.

Council Officers have also negotiated preferential rates with the following Provider, who have offered a further discount for Hillingdon schools, so we recommend this Provider should be approached for a quote as part of your business case:

- Rhino UK Sensory – enquires@rhinouk.com - Please ensure that, in your initial enquiry, you confirm that your school is located within Hillingdon.

If your project is approved you will need to:

- Ensure you meet any legislative procurement requirements
- Complete the usual internal governance process to proceed with the works
- Proceed with the works.
- Submit summary invoice and photos of the completed project to schoolplaceplanning@hillingdon.gov.uk.
- Reimbursement will be processed by the Schools Finance Team upon completion of the works and submission of the relevant invoices, as detailed in the bid, up to the maximum amount agreed by the panel.

Application Outcomes

Successful Applications

Schools whose applications are approved will receive a formal funding offer setting out the award amount, conditions of funding, reporting requirements, and project delivery expectations.

Successful schools will be required to:

- Formally accept the funding offer and any associated conditions.
- Deliver the project in accordance with the approved application and agreed timelines.
- Comply with their own procurement procedures, financial regulations, and scheme of delegation.
- Notify the Local Authority of any significant changes to the scope, cost, or delivery of the project.
- Retain evidence of expenditure, procurement activity, and project completion for audit purposes.
- Participate in any reasonable monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment activities required by the Review Panel.

Funding will be paid on completion of the project.

Unsuccessful Applications

Schools whose applications are unsuccessful will be notified in writing following the completion of the assessment process. As funding is limited and demand may exceed the available budget, not all eligible applications can be supported. Applications will be assessed against the published criteria, programme priorities, and available funding.

Where possible, feedback will be provided to help schools understand the outcome of their application. This may include:

- The extent to which the proposal met the assessment criteria.
- Areas where additional supporting information or evidence may have strengthened the application.
- Considerations regarding project need, impact, deliverability, affordability, or strategic fit.
- Recommendations to support any future application.

Schools may be invited to submit a revised application in future funding rounds, subject to the availability of funding.
The assessment panel's decision will be final, and there will be no formal appeals process. However, schools may seek clarification regarding the feedback provided.

Post-Completion Monitoring and Evaluation
To ensure public funding has been used effectively and delivered the intended outcomes, the Local Authority reserves the right to undertake post-completion monitoring of funded projects.
This may include:

- A request for a short evaluation report summarising project delivery and outcomes.
- Submission of photographs, case studies, pupil outcomes, or stakeholder feedback.
- A site visit by a member of the Review Panel and/or Local Authority officer to review the completed provision.
- Consideration of the project's impact, sustainability, utilisation, and value for money.

Schools are expected to cooperate with reasonable monitoring activities. Examples of effective practice may be shared, with the school's agreement, to support the development of Sensory Environments and Inclusion Support Bases across the borough.