



Hi,

From an economic growth and place-based development perspective, the proposed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school at Sturmer Hall represents a positive and sustainable form of development with clear long-term economic, social, and workforce benefits.

**Addressing a Critical Skills and Provision Gap** The proposal responds directly to a well-evidenced shortfall in post-16 SEND provision locally and across the wider Essex and neighbouring authority areas. A lack of appropriate provision currently results in young people being educated at distance, creating inefficiencies for families, local authorities, and services, and limiting opportunities for young people to develop locally grounded pathways into adulthood and employment. By providing specialist education for young adults aged 16–25, the scheme contributes to a more inclusive education-to-employment pipeline, supporting individuals who are often under-represented in the labour market to gain practical, life, and transferable skills.

**Contribution to Inclusive Economic Growth** The curriculum focus on independence, life skills, and wellbeing aligns strongly with inclusive growth objectives. Supporting young adults with SEND to develop confidence, daily living capability, and work-readiness contributes to improved long-term economic participation and reduced reliance on higher-cost interventions later in life.

In economic terms, investment in local SEND provision delivers preventative value: improving individual outcomes while reducing future demand on health, social care, and transport budgets.

#### Employment and Local Economic Impact

The development is likely to support a range of direct and indirect employment opportunities, including: Specialist education and support roles, Facilities management, maintenance, and supply-chain activity

These roles contribute to the diversification of the local employment base and help anchor skilled jobs within a rural area that has more limited access to employment opportunities. Additionally, the ongoing operation of the school and associated facilities will generate regular local spend, supporting nearby villages and services.

#### Rural Sustainability and Place-Making

The proposal represents an appropriate reuse and adaptation of an established site, supporting rural sustainability while respecting heritage and environmental constraints. The careful amendments made following pre-application engagement demonstrate a constructive approach to balancing development with protection of historic assets. The inclusion of limited community access to facilities such as hydrotherapy, outside school hours, further strengthens integration with the local area and enhances the long-term viability of the scheme.

#### Conclusion

Overall, the proposed SEND school at Sturmer Hall aligns well with economic growth objectives focused on inclusion, skills development, workforce participation, and sustainable communities. It addresses a clear gap in provision, supports long-term outcomes for young adults, and delivers wider economic and social value with limited adverse impacts.

From an economic development perspective, the proposal is supported, subject to ongoing attention to heritage sensitivity, environmental management, and appropriate integration with the surrounding rural community.

Heidi Turnbull  
Economic Development Officer

