

Consultation on the Proposal to Increase the capacity at Beaucroft Foundation Special School by 80 places from September 2022.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The SEND Capital Strategy 2020 -2025 was agreed by Cabinet on 8th December 2020 and committed to future capital funding to a programme of work to deliver increased SEND specialist provision across the county. This was to support the mitigation of the deficit on the High Needs Block and support more children being educated locally in their communities.
- 1.2 The proposal to refurbish the former Wimborne First School premises to use as part of an expanded Beaucroft School forms part of the SEND Capital Strategy and supports the need to provide additional places within the SEND sector, with this particular project focussed on post 16 provision, but benefitting increases across multiple year groups. The project has the full support of Beaucroft School.
- 1.3 The proposal is to add 80 places through the repurposing of the Wimborne First School site on School Lane in Wimborne.
- 1.4 The proposal, amongst other outcomes, looks to ensure sufficient Post 16 capacity within Dorset and specifically targeting those being educated outside Dorset in independent settings.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 At their meeting on 6th April 2021 Cabinet agreed a funding commitment of between £35m and £40m to support the implementation of the SEND Capital Strategy, subject to feasibility studies and further planning and individual projects such as this would be brought forward for approval. This is the first project being brought forward under this capital allocation

3. Well-being and Health Implications

- 3.1 The provision of good quality SEND local education provision is essential for health and wellbeing of children, young people, and families.

4. Climate implications

- 4.1 It is anticipated that through the delivery of this project it will enable suitable places to be located more locally which will avoid the significant travel implications some pupils currently have to undertake.
- 4.2 As with all property related work climate change implications are always considered and will be addressed where possible.

5. Other Implications

- 5.1 Revenue costs for the running of the school will be paid from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). It is anticipated that space made available will be filled by students who otherwise would attend Specialist Post 16 institutions (at an average cost of £55,700 compared to an average cost of a place at Beaucroft of £18,200). This proposal to have additional capacity delivered at the old Wimborne First School site for Beaucroft Special School will be subject to consideration under the split-site funding protocol.
- 5.2 Special Schools may not be funded for post 19 pupils from the DSG. Post 19 pupils may undertake further education, training, a supported internship, or an apprenticeship as an adult learner if it supports the outcomes set out in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Schools are not legally set up to provide education for adult learners and therefore cannot supply education to this age group.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This proposal will increase the number of Special School places available to Dorset pupils, with the intention of reducing the number having to be placed outside the Council area.

Letter of support from Beacroft School

Beacroft Foundation School Specialists in Education



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Dear Sir/Madam

Beacroft College is a very exciting prospect. After years of discussion, we are delighted that a feasibility study has been completed and we thank the Local Authority for their vision and commitment to addressing the increasing demand for SEND places in Dorset.

The rationale is clear. There has been a graduated increase in demand for places evidenced by historic admissions panels and volume of direct consultations. Disconcertingly, the vast majority of these referrals are wholly appropriate, and are children who would thrive in our establishment if we had the physical space to accommodate them. Our outreach casework in mainstream schools reinforces this evidence of need. Local Authority data indicates a significant increase in demand for quality, local Post 16 SEND places. Currently, many of these young people are accessing expensive, out of county placements as local Post 16 provisions, such as Beacroft, are at capacity.

The strategic principle is invest to save. Naturally, a preferable, local, outstanding Post 16 provision is essential for the young people and their families, as well as being a long term, cost effective solution.

We believe the town centre location of the Wimbome First School site is an excellent, one-off opportunity to base our Post 16 provision. A fundamental aim for our students is to participate and contribute to the local community in a relevant and meaningful way. Our very successful community café will thrive with a permanent base in the heart of the community. A shop, workshop and horticultural enterprise will also contribute to enhancing social value and create a community resource the whole town can be proud of.

Beacroft School has always enjoyed positive relationships within the town and this opportunity will extend these links through further work experience and community links.

Ultimately, we believe these young people deserve every opportunity to thrive and fulfil their potential by playing a meaningful role in their local community. We trust this letter reflects our passion and commitment to this wonderful venture.

Yours faithfully

Diane Makariou / Joe Barnett

Co-Head Teachers



South Central
Teaching School Hub



2018

Site of former Wimborne First School, School Lane Wimborne.

1. Land ownership

- 1.1 The area outlined in red on the plan below is in the ownership of Dorset Council and until June 2020 was occupied by Wimborne First School. T
- 1.2 It is proposed to use the whole of the area outlined in red, with the exception of the area occupied by Wimborne Kindergarten on the playing field, for the Beaucroft College proposal.

Aerial Photograph of Site

