

Cabinet

7 December 2021

SEND Capital Strategy: Expansion of Beaucroft School – Statutory Consultation Outcome

For Decision

Portfolio Holder:	Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Local Councillor(s):	Cllr Janet Dover, Cllr Maria Rose, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr David Morgan.
Executive Director:	T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children
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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

To agree and confirm that from September 2022 Beaucroft Special School will increase its funded capacity by an additional 80 places.

Reason for Recommendation:

The recommendation follows from item 51 (Cabinet Tuesday 27th July 2021) relating to the use of old Wimborne First School site to provide additional capacity to Beaucroft Special School as part of Dorset Council's SEND Strategy – see Appendix 1 for the report.

Section C of the report required the commencement of a 4-week statutory consultation required under Schedule 3 of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and this has been undertaken and there have been no objections to the proposal.

1. Executive Summary

A consultation was launched on the 22 September 2021 as required under Schedule 3. The consultation lasted 4 weeks.

All Dorset Schools, neighbouring Local Authorities, the local town council (Wimborne Town Council & Colehill Parish Council), all parents and carers at Beaucroft School and all relevant Elected Members received communication on the consultation.

The consultation was also launched on the Dorset Council Website.

There were 19 responses, and none of these constituted a formal objection – (see Section 9 – Background papers for response details).

2. Financial Implications

The full implications of the expansion of Beaucroft School are detailed in the report to Cabinet – see Appendix 1

3. Well-being and Health Implications

The full implications of the expansion of Beaucroft School are detailed in the report to Cabinet – see Appendix 1

4. Climate implications

The full implications of the expansion of Beaucroft School are detailed in the report to Cabinet – see Appendix 1

5. Other Implications

The full implications of the expansion of Beaucroft School are detailed in the report to Cabinet – see Appendix 1

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

The full implications of the expansion of Beaucroft School are detailed in the report to Cabinet – see Appendix 1

8. Appendices

[Appendix 1 - Cabinet Paper 27 July 2021 - SEND Capital Strategy: Expansion of Beaucroft School](#)

9. Background Papers

Responses to the Consultation:

1.1 Wimborne Minster Town Council – “Please note that the Town Council supports the proposal to increase the capacity of Beaucroft Special School” – 18/10/21.

1.2 Dorset Resident – “I whole heartily agree with making provisions for 80 new spaces for Beaucroft School on the old Wimborne First School site. We had a child at Beaucroft’s Post 16 setting. It was brilliant, but to have a real community cafe with real work experience would have been so much more beneficial than the ‘protected’ in school cafe that our child learnt his catering skills in. Well done!” – 11/10/21

1.3 Dorset Resident – “As the mother of a 17 year old with autism who had not been able to attend school for some time due to anxiety, we desperately need an expansion of our secondary and post 16 education provision for young people with special educational needs. As a professional working with autistic children and using the fantastic Beaucroft outreach provision I wholeheartedly support this expansion” – 11/10/21

1.4 Wimborne Resident – “I do not have a direct stake in this plan, but my son (now 24) has a physical disability and went to mainstream school/college, with two years at Victoria Education Centre when we felt he needed a bit more specialist input. As you are well aware, this was an expensive, out-of-county option, which is why your plans are so exciting, both this one and St Mary’s. I wish to support the Beaucroft plan – I had friends with children at the school, and they became increasingly anxious about the post-16 provision for their children and the fact that far more wanted places to stay at Beaucroft than the current post-16 unit can accommodate. So, if you can increase this provision within the

local area, brilliant. It would be nice, too, to see the buildings still used for education – 11/10/21

1.5 Dorset Resident – “As a parent of a child at Beaucroft Foundation I am writing to fully support the plan to develop the former site of Wimborne First School to allow the expansion of Beaucroft by a further 80 places. This is a desperately needed facility for the families of additional needs children across Dorset and will benefit everyone by reducing the reliance on more expensive independent or out-of-county provision. To be fully realised the School must be supported every way to develop post 19 provision on this site. This provision is very poorly provided for across the county yet is vital to allow those with additional needs to fully realise their potential. Post 19 provision will help those with additional needs achieve as independent a life as possible, reducing the reliance on continued local authority or publicly funded support” – 5/10/21

1.6 Dorset Resident – “This seems to be an excellent proposal and should be encouraged. I have no professional expertise, but as the father of a SENCO (not in Dorset), I understand this sort of provision is needed throughout the country. Well done Dorset Council” – 1/10/21

1.7 Dorset Resident – “I think this is an excellent idea. This would be an ideal use of the former Wimborne First School site and would provide perfect facilities for Beaucroft Special school and it’s students. Let’s hope this plan can be put into place as soon as possible” – 1/10/21

1.8 Dorset Resident – “I heartily support the proposal to extend the work and the capacity of this much needed school. I have a son-in-law and a daughter-in-law who have contributed to the important work done by these schools, one in Kent and the other in Shropshire. The commitment of the staff of these schools is exemplary and, sadly, the need for more facilities for them to continue their valuable work is yawningly large” – 1/10/21

1.9 Dorset Resident – “Please, please get this up and running ASAP. Although I only have little personal experience in this area of education I do know that we must help the next generation in every way we can. For their sake and our own”.- 1/10/21

1.10 Dorset Resident – “I think this is an admirable use of the old Wimborne First School, especially when these places are so badly needed. Beaucroft school does a magnificent job with these special needs children and young adults”. – 1/10.21

1.11 Dorset Resident – “This is an excellent idea to use the old Wimborne First school, more facilities are desperately needed here, please get this the go ahead, I have a grand daughter who attends this school” – 4/10/21.

1.12 Dorset Resident – “A brilliant idea and wonderful use of the First School” – 4/10/21

1.13 Dorset Resident – “Having read of your proposal to expand Beaucroft by utilising the old Wimborne First School site I feel I should write to say that, in my opinion, this would be a positive step. I'm aware of a need for extra spaces for those with special needs, particularly the over 16s and this site, I believe, is ideal. I wish you luck with this project” – 1/10/21.

1.14 Dorset Resident – “I am very much in favour of this proposal. We are short of provision for SEN pupils. Vehicle access is tight but possible with care for the small number of pupils involved” – 1/10/21

1.15 Dorset Resident – “, I wish to express my full support for the proposal as set out in the consultation” – 26/09/21

1.16 Dorset Resident – “I have just seen the proposals to expand the provision of post 16 students under the Beaucroft 'umbrella'. As a mainstream Inclusion Manager who has sent several children to Beaucroft, this is such great news. The provision and support that they offer the SEN community is nothing short of a miracle. We have also used them for Outreach support for some of our current pupils. I whole heartedly support this proposal and wish the staff every success for the future” – 22/09/21

1.17 Allenbourn Middle School – “Thank you for the email regarding the consultation over increased capacity at Beaucroft. Speaking on behalf of AMS, I think this is a really positive move forward and have no doubt that it will support the provision of inclusive education in the area” – 22/09/21

1.18 Dorset Resident – “Fully in support of extra capacity but the traffic congestion in the morning and afternoon needs to be carefully thought out. Currently Wimborne Road at those times is a complete nightmare so extra provision will lead to extra vehicles possible another 40 if we average 2 pupils per vehicle . This must be part of the thinking and decision process” – 1/10/21

Dorset Council Responded:

Noting comments expressed by local residents and council highway officers over safety and traffic movements, the council is investigating using a local public car park, close to the site. This would enable minibuses to drop off and collect from

the car park, with students walking to and from the site via two safe walking routes. There will be parking for staff in the existing school car park off School Lane. A small area on the existing school site will be available for overspill parking for visiting professional specialists. This existing vehicle access point will be available for occasional visiting minibuses.

1.19 Cllr Paul Kimber – “Many thanks for your email regarding the consultation and asking for my thinking on the changes and my concerns.

- Do we have enough space for the increase in numbers, and will the school be able to cope with the changes, and is large enough.
- Do we have the staff for the increase or will they be transferred from other schools.
- Are any staff being made compulsory redundant.

Dorset Council Responded:

1. Beaucroft will have enough space for the increase in numbers, and will be able to cope with the change and will be large enough. This is because the proposal utilises the old Wimborne First School site in addition to the existing Beaucroft site.

2. Decisions on staffing will be a school decision. However, it is likely that the school will need to recruit as it expands. There are no plans to transfer staff from other schools.

3. No staff are being made redundant as this proposal seeks to expand provision.

In Addition:

- Cabinet – 8 December 2020 – Agenda item 19 Provision for Dorset Children (Exempt Business)
- Cabinet – 6 April 2021 – Agenda Item 7 Capital programme 2021/22

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.