

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the outcome of the public consultation on the specific proposals in Phase 1 of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) strategy at four secondary schools.
- 1.2 This report should be read alongside the accompanying Part II report.

2. Summary

- 2.1 On 14 December 2020, Cabinet¹ considered a proposal to develop a countywide pattern of Specialist Resource Provision in mainstream schools and to commence public consultation on the specific proposals at the four secondary schools in Phase 1 of the SRP strategy.
- 2.2 Public consultations on the proposal to open SRPs, at the four schools in Phase 1, were held between 5 January 2021 and 1 February 2021. Across the schools, there was a positive response to the consultations. A breakdown of the consultation responses is included in section 5 and in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Approval is therefore sought to the implementation of Phase 1 of the strategy, which will involve the publication of a statutory notice for The Priory School, the one non-academy school involved.
- 2.4 Panel is asked to note that the three Academy schools in Phase 1 will need to apply to the Department for Education for permission to make a significant change. They will need to make a business case for the approval of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) who is the final decision maker. The RSC must consult the Local Authority in making the final decision and Cabinet's approval to the proposals and the capital required to support Phase 1 of the SRP programme will be an important factor in the RSC's decision-making process.

¹ [Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 14 December 2020, 2.00 pm | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

3. Recommendations

3.1.1 The Joint meeting of the Children, Young People & Families and Education, Libraries & Localism Cabinet Panel will consider a report on this item of business at its meeting on 15 March 2021. The Panel will be invited to recommend to Cabinet whether to:

- (i) approve the proposals in Phase 1 of the Specialist Resource Provision strategy or
 - a) take no further action;
 - b) initiate fresh consultation on any alternative suggestion(s); or
 - c) take alternative action.

And if approved that;

- (ii) Cabinet authorise the Director of Children's Services to publish a statutory notice to open the Specialist Resource Provision at The Priory School, Hitchin from September 2022; and
- (iii) approve the capital costs and delegate the final approval of the capital costs, as outlined in Part II of this report, to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Members for Resources & Performance and Education, Libraries & Localism and authorises the Director of Children's Services to enter into funding agreements with the schools.

3.2 The Panel's recommendations to Cabinet will be reported orally at the Cabinet meeting and circulated to Members in the Order of Business sheet.

4. Background

4.1 On 14 December 2020, Cabinet considered a proposal to develop a countywide pattern of Specialist Resource Provision in mainstream schools and to commence public consultation on the specific proposals at the four secondary schools in Phase 1 of the SRP strategy.

4.2 The proposal explained that the number of pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) who have a broader level of need that cannot be met in the existing SLCN provision is increasing, whilst the existing SLCN provision is not being fully utilised.

4.3 The number of pupils with the identified broader level of need, who are being placed at independent specialist placements, often far from their home, is increasing. Others are being placed in special schools because their needs cannot be met in mainstream schools or in existing SLCN bases. As special schools are now reaching capacity, it is likely that, without the introduction of SRPs, there will be an increased reliance on independent specialist placements.

4.4 The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of pupils in the SRPs can be developed and they would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

4.5 The SRPs will be centers of excellence and will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;

- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the School, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the area to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

- 4.6 The SRP strategy will deliver four SRPs at secondary schools and a further eight at primary schools, spread equitably across the County, delivered in phases, starting with the four secondary schools, three of which are academies. The SRPs will meet the needs of pupils with SLCN and also those with the broader need that is not currently being met, as outlined in 4.3 above.
- 4.7 Hertfordshire County Council's public consultation on the SRP Phase 1 programme was held over a four-week period, starting on 5 January 2021 and ending on 01 February 2021. For the three academy schools this was a joint consultation with the academy trusts.
- 4.8 Copies of the consultation letters, attached at Appendix 2, were sent to parents/carers of pupils on roll at The Priory, Longdean and Bushey Meads schools, as well as to school governors/trustees and staff at all four secondary schools. It should be noted that the Avanti Schools Trust school is yet to open and therefore there are no pupils currently on roll.

Copies of the consultation letters were also sent to:

- All maintained schools, free schools and academies (excluding nurseries) in Hertfordshire;
- MPs, County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and Local Authority Chief Executives;
- Trade Union representatives;
- Church Diocese representatives;
- NHS representatives;
- Parent Governor representatives on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Libraries and Citizen's Advice Bureaux;
- Headteacher Forums;
- Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI);
- Key officers within Hertfordshire County Council.

The consultation letters and online response forms were also made available on Hertfordshire County Council's website. A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools.

5. Response to the consultation

- 5.1 A summary of the responses across the four secondary schools is shown in the following table:

School name	No of responses	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Don't Know	%
Bushey Meads	36	29	80.6%	6	16.7%	1	2.8%
Longdean	54	37	68.5%	15	27.8%	2	3.7%
The Priory	61	49	80.3%	8	13.1%	4	6.6%
Avanti	118	108	91.5%	7	5.9%	3	2.5%
Total	269	223	82.9%	36	13.4%	10	3.7%

5.2 A detailed analysis of the responses for each school is attached in Appendix 1, which includes:

- a breakdown of the number of responses received;
- an analysis of the key issues raised and officer responses to them;
- copies of the governing body/trust responses; and
- officer conclusions and recommendation.

5.3 Officers are aware of a petition that had been circulated online but has not been submitted formally to the County Council. Lead officers have met with the petition organisers and have reassured them that the SRPs will meet the needs of those with speech and language communication difficulties, as well as those with the broader social communication need. A clarification statement has now been agreed with the petition organisers and is included at Appendix 4.

5.4 The concerns highlighted in the petition, around how the proposal will meet the needs of children with speech and language difficulties, notably developmental language disorder (DLN), have also been raised as formal responses to the consultations and an officer response is included in Appendix 1.

6. Financial Implications

Revenue funding

6.1 Revenue funding for specialist provision is via the High-Level Needs (HLN) block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

6.2 The average cost of an independent specialist placement is £40k greater than the cost of a place in a new SRP.

6.3 It is estimated that the introduction of SRPs, will prevent a further 12 pupils per year being placed in independent specialist placements, equating to a saving of £480k. This figure is based on the current average of 6 independent specialist placements per year, together with a further 6 children per year, who would previously have been placed in a special school as our special schools are reaching capacity. These 12 pupils per year could have their needs met in an SRP, rather than at an independent specialist placement.

6.4 The funding per place of the new SRPs will be aligned with the new banding funding model to support pupils in mainstream settings. The increased cost of the SRP programme will be offset by savings from the SLCN placements; avoiding an increased reliance on independent specialist placements; reducing the impact on the school transport budget (as pupils will be placed closer to home) and creating capacity in

special schools.

- 6.5 Revenue funding has been made available to support the opening of SRPs at the four secondary schools in Phase 1.

Capital funding

- 6.6 The full capital implications of the scheme are contained in the Part II report.

7. Equalities

- 7.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of and have themselves rigorously considered the Equality implications of the decision that they are making.
- 7.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that there is a proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the county council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 7.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the county council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to: (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.4 EqIAs have been carried out on the proposals which are the subject of this report. Copies of the EqIAs are appended to this report in Appendix 3.

Background Information

Cabinet 14 December 2020 -

<https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=2011&Ver=4>

Appendix 1

The summaries below are broken down by school.

BUSHEY MEADS SCHOOL: CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO OPEN A SPECIALIST RESOURCE PROVISION (SRP) AT THE SCHOOL.

Response to the consultation.

A total of 36 responses were received to the consultation of which 80.6% were in agreement with the proposal, while 16.7% disagreed. A small number of respondents have highlighted issues which are explored in the following 'Key Issues' section. A breakdown of the responses is shown below:

Capacity of respondent	Total responses	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parent/carer	18	17	1	0
School governor	3	3	0	0
Member of staff	3	3	0	0
Resident	2	1	1	0
Other	10	5	4	1
%		80.6%	16.7%	2.8%
Total responses	36	29	6	1

The Board of Trustees and the Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI) group fully support this proposal. A copy of both responses can be found at the end of this appendix.

The following supportive comments are noted:

- 19 respondents expressed support for what they saw as much-needed new provision for children with SEND;
- 6 respondents expressed the sentiment that the proposal would allow children to attend school more locally; and
- 2 respondents welcomed the selection of Bushey Meads as a school to host this provision, by virtue of the school's ethos and track record in SEND provision.

Key issue raised

- 1. Concern was raised around how the proposal will meet the needs of children with SLCN, notably developmental language disorder (DLD) (9 respondents)**

Officers have been clear that the County Council are not 'closing' a provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with speech and language difficulties, including DLD, who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access provision.

Children with language and communication difficulties currently have to wait for a diagnosis of DLD and this has meant that intervention is often delayed. The SRPs will enable early intervention based on a child's presenting special educational needs, without relying on a medical model of diagnosis for appropriate support.

The proposal seeks to extend the offer from the existing SLCN offer to meet the need of those children who have a broader level of need, including social communication and social interaction difficulties often with an accompanying diagnosis of autism. We have ensured that those children with DLD are included in our admission guidance and that we build on existing expertise.

Please also see Appendix 4.

2. Concerns were raised around how the mainstream school environment will support the children in the SRP (1 respondent)

The children and young people who meet the admission guidance will require access to the mainstream school environment. A highly skilled team will work with them to build resilience; for example, they may identify lessons that are motivating and build on strengths, e.g. art, and ensure that there is pre-teaching and learning success. As they progress this mainstream access will be extended so that, as the child grows in confidence, they will eventually aim to access 80% of a school day. They will always have the safety of the SRP for times of challenge.

The SRPs have been designed in co-production with the school's management team to ensure that the settings meet the needs of the child in the SRP and also supports them to access the main school setting and resources. All children in the SRP will be fully supported to access the mainstream school with the security and knowledge that the SRP will give them the space and sense of security, should they need space away from the main school environment.

SRPs will have the necessary revenue and capital funding to support the long-term delivery of this provision for children. Additional, purpose-built, dedicated accommodation will be developed to meet the needs of the pupils.

The development of SRPs will form part of the graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism. This graduated response includes access to a special school place when it is needed to meet the needs of the child.

3. Belief that there was a lack of information to allow an informed response (5 respondents)

Public consultation on the proposal began on 5 January 2021 and ended on 1 February 2021.

The consultation letter outlined the strategy to develop SRPs at a range of mainstream schools across the County. It also outlined the rationale for the strategy and explained what the SRPs will do to support children with communication difficulties, including autism.

A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools. The consultation letters and online response forms were made available on Hertfordshire County Council's website.

The consultation letter included an email address and telephone number so that people consulted could contact officers if they needed help understanding the proposal. No enquiries were received.

It should be noted that, across the four schools, only 8 individuals said they felt they had insufficient information, as a number of those mentioning this issue had responded to all four consultations.

Conclusions and recommendations

The majority of respondents (80.6%) agreed with the proposal. The relatively few issues raised have been carefully considered and responded to here.

Having analysed all the responses, it is the Officer's view that in light of:

- the full agreement of the trust and Herts Parent Carer Involvement group; and
- the fact that only 6 respondents (16.7%) disagreed with the proposal;

the proposal to open an SRP at Bushey Meads School from September 2022 is the right solution to meet the needs of children with social communication difficulties, including autism in the Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere area.

As the school is an academy, the final decision on this proposal will be made by the Regional Schools Commissioner.

LONGDEAN SCHOOL: CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO OPEN A SPECIALIST RESOURCE PROVISION (SRP) AT THE SCHOOL.

Response to the consultation.

A total of 54 responses were received to the consultation of which 68.5% were in agreement with the proposal, while 27.8% disagreed. A small number of respondents have highlighted issues which are explored in the following 'Key Issues' section. A breakdown of the responses is shown below:

Capacity of respondent	Total responses	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parent/carer	24	18	6	0
School governor	4	4	0	0
Member of staff	4	4	0	0
Resident	3	0	3	0
Other	19	11	6	2
%		68.5%	27.8%	3.7%
Total responses	54	37	15	2

The Board of Trustees and the Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI) group fully support this proposal. A copy of both responses can be found at the end of this appendix.

The following supportive comments are noted:

- 29 respondents expressed support for what they saw as much-needed new provision for children with SEND;
- 2 respondents expressed the sentiment that the proposal would allow children to attend school more locally; and

- 9 respondents welcomed the selection of Longdean as a school to host this provision, by virtue of the school's ethos and track record in SEND provision.

Key issues raised

1. Concern was raised around how the proposal will meet the needs of children with SLCN, notably developmental language disorder (22 respondents)

Officers have been clear that the County Council are not 'closing' a provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access provision.

Children with language and communication difficulties currently have to wait for a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder and this has meant that intervention is often delayed. The SRPs will enable early intervention based on a child's presenting special educational needs without relying on a medical model of diagnosis for appropriate support.

The proposal seeks to extend the offer from existing SLCN bases in recognition of the needs of children who are currently attending the existing provisions. Officers have ensured that those children with Developmental Language Disorder are included in our admission guidance and that we build on existing expertise.

Please also see Appendix 4.

2. Concern that 20 places for each school (80 places across Hertfordshire) would not be enough to meet the demand and that more places should be provided. (4 respondents)

Currently there are two secondary SLCN bases in Hertfordshire, offering 32 places in total. These bases are currently not full.

Officers are proposing the development of 4 SRPs in secondary schools, for 20 pupils at each setting. This proposal will provide 80 secondary places, distributed equally across the county.

This proposal forms part of a graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism.

The demand for places at the new SRPs will be reviewed annually.

3. Concerns were raised around how the mainstream environment will support the children in the SRPs (2 respondent)

The children and young people who meet the admission guidance will require access to the mainstream school environment. A highly skilled team will work with them to build resilience; for example, they may identify lessons that are motivating and build on strengths, e.g. art, and ensure that there is pre-teaching and learning success. As they progress this mainstream access will be extended so that, as the child grows in confidence, they will eventually aim to access 80% of a school day. They will always have the safety of the SRP for times of challenge.

The SRPs have been designed in co-production with the school's management team to ensure that the settings meet the needs of the child in the SRP and also supports them to access the main school setting and resources. All children in the SRP will be fully supported to access the mainstream school with the security and knowledge that the SRP will give them the space and sense of security, should they need space away from the main school environment.

SRPs will have the necessary revenue and capital funding to support the long-term delivery of this provision for children. Additional, purpose-built, dedicated accommodation will be developed to meet the needs of the pupils.

The development of SRPs will form part of the graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism. This graduated response includes access to a special school place when it is needed to meet the needs of the child.

4. Belief that there was a lack of information to allow an informed response (7 respondents)

Public consultation on the proposal began on 5 January 2021 and ended on 1 February 2021.

The consultation letter outlined the strategy to develop SRPs at a range of mainstream schools across the County. It also outlined the rationale for the strategy and explained that the proposal is to re-designate the existing SLCN provision at Longdean School to extend the offer so that it can more effectively meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism.

A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools. The consultation letters and online response forms were made available on Hertfordshire County Council's website.

The consultation letter included an email address and telephone number so that people consulted could contact officers if they needed help understanding the proposal. No enquiries were received.

It should be noted that, across the four schools, only 8 individuals said they felt they had insufficient information, as a number of those mentioning this issue had responded to all four consultations.

Conclusions and recommendations

The majority of respondents (68.5%) agreed with the proposal. The relatively few issues raised have been carefully considered and responded to here.

Having analysed all the responses, it is the Officer's view that in light of:

- the full agreement of the trust and Herts Parent Carer Involvement group; and
- the fact that only 15 respondents (27.8%) disagreed with the proposal;

the proposal to open an SRP at Longdean School from September 2022 is the right solution to meet the needs of children with social communication difficulties, including autism in the St Albans and Dacorum area.

As the school is an academy, the final decision on this proposal will be made by the Regional Schools Commissioner.

**THE PRIORY SCHOOL:
CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO OPEN A SPECIALIST RESOURCE PROVISION (SRP) AT THE SCHOOL.**

Response to the consultation.

A total of 61 responses were received to the consultation of which 80.3% were in agreement with the proposal, while 13.1% disagreed. A small number of respondents have highlighted issues which are explored in the following 'Key Issues' section. A breakdown of the responses is shown below:

Capacity of respondent	Total responses	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parent/carer	34	29	3	2
School governor	9	9	0	0
Member of staff	5	4	0	1
Resident	4	3	1	0
Other	9	4	4	1
%		80.3%	13.1%	6.6%
Total responses	61	49	8	4

The Governing Body and the Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI) group fully support this proposal. A copy of both responses can be found at the end of this appendix.

The following supportive comments are noted:

- 34 respondents expressed support for what they saw as much-needed new provision for children with SEND;
- 3 respondents expressed the sentiment that the proposal would allow children to attend school more locally; and
- 6 respondents welcomed the selection of The Priory as a school to host this provision, by virtue of the school's ethos and track record in SEND provision.

Key issues raised

The following key issues were raised, and officer responses are provided below.

1. Concern that this proposal would negatively affect the education of 'mainstream' pupils or the results/standing of the host school. (4 respondents)

The Priory School is an inclusive, foundation, co-educational school which represents the local community. The three secondary schools within Hitchin represent a broad spectrum of choice for families who have the opportunity to send their children to a school based on their own educational preference. Students at The Priory School receive a rounded education, focused on both progress and attainment, whilst promoting the values of responsibility, respect and resilience. The school is proud of its inclusive reputation.

The Priory School already caters for a wide range of students with a range of abilities and additional needs. The addition of the Special Resource Provision will allow for

greater professional development, resourcing and synergy within the school to support students of all abilities. All students will be expected to follow the school's protocols and policies. As is currently in place, the most appropriate learning environment and support for students with additional needs will be identified so as to benefit the progress of all students.

2. Concern about a lack of funding or accommodation to ensure that the provision is a success. (3 respondents)

SRPs will have the necessary revenue and capital funding to support the long-term delivery of this provision for children. Additional, purpose-built, dedicated accommodation will be developed to meet the needs of the pupils.

3. Concern was raised around how the proposal will meet the needs of children with SLCN, notably developmental language disorder (DLD) (8 respondents)

Officers have been clear that the County Council are not 'closing' a provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with speech and language difficulties, including DLD, who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access provision.

Children with language and communication difficulties currently have to wait for a diagnosis of DLD and this has meant that intervention is often delayed. The SRPs will enable early intervention based on a child's presenting special educational needs, without relying on a medical model of diagnosis for appropriate support.

The proposal seeks to extend the offer from the existing SLCN offer to meet the need of those children who have a broader level of need, including social communication and social interaction difficulties often with an accompanying diagnosis of autism. Officers have ensured that those children with DLD are included in our admission guidance and that we build on existing expertise.

Officers have been clear that the County Council are not 'closing' a provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with Developmental Language Disorder who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access provision.

Children with language and communication difficulties currently have to wait for a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder and this has meant that intervention is often delayed. The SRPs will enable early intervention based on a child's presenting special educational needs without relying on a medical model of diagnosis for appropriate support.

The proposal seeks to extend the offer from existing SLCN bases in recognition of the needs of children who are currently attending the existing provisions. Officers have ensured that those children with Developmental Language Disorder are included in our admission guidance and that we build on existing expertise.

Please also see Appendix 4.

4. Concerns were raised around how the mainstream environment will support the children in the SRPs (3 respondents)

The children and young people who meet the admission guidance will require access to the mainstream school environment. A highly skilled team will work with them to build resilience; for example, they may identify lessons that are motivating and build on strengths, e.g. art, and ensure that there is pre-teaching and learning success. As they progress this mainstream access will be extended so that, as the child grows in confidence, they will eventually aim to access 80% of a school day. They will always have the safety of the SRP for times of challenge.

The SRPs have been designed in co-production with the school's management team to ensure that the settings meet the needs of the child in the SRP and also supports them to access the main school setting and resources. All children in the SRP will be fully supported to access the mainstream school with the security and knowledge that the SRP will give them the space and sense of security, should they need space away from the main school environment.

SRPs will have the necessary revenue and capital funding to support the long-term delivery of this provision for children. Additional, purpose-built, dedicated accommodation will be developed to meet the needs of the pupils.

The development of SRPs will form part of the graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism. This graduated response includes access to a special school place when it is needed to meet the needs of the child.

5. Concern that 20 places for each school (80 places across Hertfordshire) would not be enough to meet the demand and that more places should be provided. (4 respondents)

Currently there are two secondary SLCN bases in Hertfordshire, offering 32 places in total. These bases are currently not full to capacity.

Officers are proposing the development of 4 SRPs in secondary schools, for 20 pupils at each setting. This proposal will provide 80 secondary places, distributed equally across the county.

This proposal forms part of a graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism.

The demand for places at the new SRPs will be reviewed annually.

6. Belief that there was a lack of information to allow an informed response (5 respondents)

Public consultation on the proposal began on 5 January 2021 and ended on 1 February 2021.

The consultation letter outlined the strategy to develop SRPs at a range of mainstream schools across the County. It also outlined the rationale for the strategy and explained what the SRPs will do to support children with communication difficulties, including autism.

A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools. The consultation letters and online response forms were made available on Hertfordshire County Council's website.

The consultation letter included an email address and telephone number so that people consulted could contact officers if they needed help understanding the proposal. No enquiries were received.

It should be noted that, across the four schools, only 8 individuals said they felt they had insufficient information, as a number of those mentioning this issue had responded to all four consultations.

Conclusions and recommendations

The majority of respondents (80.3%) agreed with the proposal. The relatively few issues raised have been carefully considered and responded to here.

Having analysed all the responses, it is the Officer's view that in light of:

- the full agreement of the trust and Herts Parent Carer Involvement group; and
- the fact that only 8 respondents (13.1%) disagreed with the proposal;

the proposal to open an SRP at The Priory School from September 2022 is the right solution to meet the needs of children with social communication difficulties, including autism in the North Herts and Stevenage area.

As The Priory School is a foundation school, it is recommended that Cabinet authorise the publication of a statutory notice for the proposal to open an SRP at The Priory School from September 2022.

NEW AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST SECONDARY SCHOOL: CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO OPEN A SPECIALIST RESOURCE PROVISION (SRP) AT THE SCHOOL.

Response to the consultation.

A total of 118 responses were received to the consultation of which 91.5% were in agreement with the proposal, while 5.9% disagreed. Whilst the number of respondents in agreement is high, a small number of respondents have highlighted issues which are explored in the following 'Key Issues' section. A breakdown of the responses is shown below:

Capacity of respondent	Total responses	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parent/carer	71	70	1	0
School governor	3	1	0	2
Member of staff	6	6	0	0
Resident	16	14	2	0
Other	22	17	4	1
%		91.5%	5.9%	2.5%
Total responses	118	108	7	3

The Board of Trustees and the Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI) group fully support this proposal. A copy of both responses can be found at the end of this appendix.

The following supportive comments are noted :

- 77 respondents expressed support for what they saw as much-needed new provision for children with SEND;

- 27 respondents expressed the sentiment that the proposal would allow children to attend school more locally.

Key issues raised

The following key issues were raised, and officer responses are provided below.

- 1. Concern that 20 places for each school (80 places across Hertfordshire) would not be enough to meet the demand and that more places should be provided. (2 respondents)**

Currently there are two secondary SLCN bases in Hertfordshire, offering 32 places in total. These bases are not full.

We are proposing the development of 4 SRPs in secondary schools, for 20 pupils at each setting. This proposal will provide 80 secondary places, distributed equally across the county.

This proposal forms part of a wider graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism.

The demand for places at the new SRPs will be reviewed annually.

- 2. Concern was raised around how the proposal will meet the needs of children with SLCN, notably developmental language disorder (DLD) (5 respondents)**

We have been clear that we are not 'closing' a provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with speech and language difficulties, including DLD, who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access provision.

Children with language and communication difficulties currently have to wait for a diagnosis of DLD and this has meant that intervention is often delayed. The SRPs will enable early intervention based on a child's presenting special educational needs, without relying on a medical model of diagnosis for appropriate support.

The proposal seeks to extend the offer from the existing SLCN offer to meet the need of those children who have a broader level of need, including social communication and social interaction difficulties often with an accompanying diagnosis of autism. We have ensured that those children with DLD are included in our admission guidance and that we build on existing expertise.

We have been clear that we are not 'closing' a provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with Developmental Language Disorder who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access provision.

Children with language and communication difficulties currently have to wait for a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder and this has meant that intervention is often delayed. The SRPs will enable early intervention based on a child's presenting special educational needs without relying on a medical model of diagnosis for appropriate support.

The proposal seeks to extend the offer from existing SLCN bases in recognition of the needs of children who are currently attending the existing provisions. We have ensured that those children with Developmental Language Disorder are included in our admission guidance and that we build on existing expertise.

Please also see Appendix 4.

3. Belief that there was a lack of information to allow an informed response (6 respondents)

Public consultation on the proposal began on 5 January 2021 and ended on 1 February 2021.

The consultation letter outlined the strategy to develop SRPs at a range of mainstream schools across the County. It also outlined the rationale for the strategy and explained what the SRPs will do to support children with communication difficulties, including autism.

A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools. The consultation letters and online response forms were made available on Hertfordshire County Council's website. The consultation letter included an email address and telephone number, so that people consulted could contact officers if they needed help understanding the proposal. No enquiries were received.

It should be noted that, across the four schools, only 8 individuals said they felt they had insufficient information, as a number of those mentioning this issue had responded to all four consultations.

Conclusions and recommendations

The majority of respondents (91.5%) agreed with the proposal. The relatively few issues raised have been carefully considered and responded to here.

Having analysed all the responses, it is the Officer's view that in light of:

- the full agreement of the trust and Herts Parent Carer Involvement group; and
- the fact that only 7 respondents (5.9%) disagreed with the proposal;

the proposal to open an SRP at the new Avanti School Trust secondary school from September 2023 is the right solution to meet the needs of children with social communication difficulties, including autism in the East Herts, Broxbourne and Welwyn Hatfield area.

As the school is an academy, the final decision on this proposal will be made by the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Governing Body/ Board of Trustees responses

Bushey Meads School:

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees and as per our letter, I confirm that we are in full support of this exciting proposal." Sam Russell, Chair of Trustees, Bushey St James Trust.

Longdean School:

“As Acting Chair of the Trust, I am affirming our support for the drivers for the project. The proposal sits comfortably with our strong ethos and values around inclusive education and the careful and sensitive management of students within our current base.” Charlie Barling, Acting Chair of Trustees, Longdean School.

The Priory School:

“As Chair of Governors, I can confirm that that the Governing Body is fully in support of the proposal.” David McIntosh, Chair of Governors, The Priory School.

New Avanti Schools Trust secondary school:

“On behalf of the AST Board I want to confirm our full commitment to this proposal.” Mike Ion, Education Director, Avanti Schools Trust.

HPCI Response to the consultation on the proposals to open Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) at Longdean, The Priory and Bushey Meads schools and at the Avanti Trust.

Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI) is the parent carer forum for Hertfordshire and represents parents and carers with children and young people (CYP) aged 0-25 years who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

HPCI is in favour of all four of the current proposals to establish the SRPs. These provisions will increase the number of places available in secondary mainstream settings for CYP who have speech communication and language needs (SCLN) such as Developmental Language Delay. They will also be able to offer provision to a broader range of complex social communication difficulties including autism. This will enable these pupils to access the mainstream curriculum that they need within an environment that can meet their needs.

The establishment of these provisions would enable a wider range of pupils to have their needs met closer to home and form an important part of the recently developed HCC Special Schools Places Strategy.

Parent representatives from HPCI (along with the views of a wider group of parents and carers) have contributed to both the review of SCLN in Hertfordshire and to the analysis, shaping and decision making around the proposed development of the SRPs. We are therefore confident that this is an appropriate development. Should the proposals go ahead then HPCI parent representatives would continue to be involved in the process of establishing and reviewing the effectiveness of the SRPs.

Submitted on behalf of Herts Parent Carer Involvement.

Carol Kelsey, Coordinator HPCI

Appendix 2



**Hertfordshire County Council
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DF**

Tel: 0300 123 4043
Fax:
E Mail: education.planning@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Postal Point: CHO136
My ref: School Planning
Your ref:
Date: 5 January 2021

Dear Consultee

Consultation on a proposal to open a 'Specialist Resource Provision' (SRP) at Bushey Meads School (the School), Bushey from September 2022.

Hertfordshire County Council and the Board of Trustees of Bushey St James Trust are consulting you on a proposal to develop a Specialist Resource Provision at Bushey Meads School, an academy school, for up to 20 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with social communication difficulties, including autism.

Hertfordshire County Council is developing SRPs at a range of mainstream schools across the County. The aim is to have four SRPs at secondary schools and a further eight at primary schools, spread equitably across the County, delivered in phases, starting with the secondary sector. Secondary SRPs are also being proposed at the following schools:

- Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead;
- The Priory School in Hitchin; and
- The new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school in Bishop's Stortford.

Why is this being proposed?

There are an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have a broader and more complex level of need, including social communication difficulties and autism, that cannot be met in the existing provision. This means that more children are being placed in independent specialist provision or, unnecessarily, in special schools. The pupils with this broader and more complex need have difficulties with communication, social relationships and managing a busy school environment. This often leads to anxiety and disengagement, or inappropriate coping strategies, including 'shutting down'. These pupils need access to a mainstream curriculum and academic challenge, balanced with a safe space to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop a pattern of SRPs across the County, for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism.

What will the SRPs do?

The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of these pupils can be developed. They would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

It is proposed that each secondary SRP will provide up to 20 places. The pupils will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the School, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere area, to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Why do the Board of Trustees of the Bushey St James Trust have an interest in developing an SRP at Bushey Meads School?

Bushey Meads School and the Bushey St James Trust (the Trust) passionately believe in inclusivity and all staff across the School, and indeed the Trust, work extremely hard to ensure students are successful as life-long learners. Across the Trust they adopt a very inclusive approach and are able to meet students' needs across our broad, diverse and creative curriculum, whilst also providing small group, 1 to 1 and alternative curriculums within mainstream provision.

Bushey Meads School and the Trust are very open to providing support and outreach to other local providers, ensuring best practice is shared and to further the achievement of student outcomes across a broad spectrum of academic and personal potential. The School and the Trust fully support the delivery of Hertfordshire's SEND Strategy and have a strong desire to develop the SRP as it entirely complements the School's embedded approach to:

- providing high-quality, full-time education and support for students with communication needs with an EHCP who have been identified as requiring a place in a specialist setting within a mainstream environment;
- improving student outcomes, enabling them to make good progress;
- working with schools in the local area to reintegrate students back into their local school if they have made such progress, that they are able to have their needs met in a more local mainstream provision; and
- building capacity within the local areas through the provision of outreach services as part of the Hertfordshire Outreach Framework.

What does this mean for pupils?

The SRP will have clear admission and exit guidance. To be admitted to the SRP, a child must have an EHCP and will have social communication difficulties, including autism. They will have needs greater than, or additional to, the needs that can normally be met through full time attendance at a mainstream school. The School will be named in the child's EHCP. Admission to the SRP will be distinct from the school's general admissions process.

From time to time pupils based in the SRP would join sessions in the main school with their age group peers. Typically, these pupils would be supported by specialist staff from the SRP.

Other pupils at the School who are not in the SRP, but who have social communication needs, including autism, would benefit from main school staff working alongside specialist colleagues. However, access to SRP staff and resources would only be through admission to the SRP.

What would be the impact on staff?

The Headteacher will keep a strategic overview of the SRP, including staff recruitment, training and retention. It is expected that the Headteacher or other senior leader will be the line manager for the SRP Leader.

The County Council have developed a full staff training and development programme to ensure consistency of offer across the four secondary schools who are developing SRP provision.

Have your say

You have until 1 February 2021 to let us know your views. The easiest way you can do this is by completing the online response form on our website:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/consultations.

If you do not have access to the internet you can visit your local library where free access is available to all Hertfordshire residents¹. Staff at libraries can print off and supply consultation documents if requested to.

Should you wish to request a hard copy of the response form or need help understanding this information you can email: education.planning@hertfordshire.gov.uk or alternatively please call us on 0300 123 4043. An interpreting service is available for those who need it.

Your comments must be received by 1 February 2021. We will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments, but they will be taken into account as explained below.

How the decision will be taken

This is a consultation and no decision has been made yet. All comments received to this consultation will be made available to the Board of Trustees of Bushey St James Trust and elected members of Hertfordshire County Council. All responses may be made available in public reports, although personal details will be removed to respect individual privacy.

The following timetable outlines the decision-making process. Please note that meetings marked with * are meetings in public. Although it will not be possible to inform everyone

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individually of the decisions made, you will be able to access this information throughout the process at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/committees.

Public consultation	5 January – 1 February 2021
Children, Young People & Families Cabinet Panel*	15 March 2021
Cabinet* To consider the outcome of public consultation and decide whether to support the proposal	22 March 2021
Bushey St James Trust, as a multi-academy trust, will submit a business case to the Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC)	April 2021
RSC decision	anticipated by end of July 2021

Yours faithfully

Sam Russell
Chair of Bushey St James Trust

Jenny Coles
Director of Children's Services
Hertfordshire County Council



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My ref: School Planning
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Date: 5 January 2021

Dear Consultee

Consultation on a proposal to open a 'Specialist Resource Provision' (SRP) at Longdean School (the School), Hemel Hempstead, from September 2022.

Hertfordshire County Council and the Board of Trustees of Longdean School, an academy school, are consulting you on a proposal to re-designate the existing speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) base at the School, as a Specialist Resource Provision for up to 20 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with social communication difficulties, including autism.

Hertfordshire County Council is developing SRPs at a range of mainstream schools across the County. The aim is to have four SRPs at secondary schools and a further eight at primary schools, spread equitably across the County, delivered in phases, starting with the secondary sector. Secondary SRPs are also being proposed at the following schools:

- Bushey Meads School in Bushey;
- The Priory School in Hitchin; and
- The new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school in Bishop's Stortford.

Why is this being proposed?

There are an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have a broader and more complex level of need, including social communication difficulties and autism, that cannot be met in the existing provision. This means that more children are being placed in independent specialist provision or, unnecessarily, in special schools. The pupils with this broader and more complex need have difficulties with communication, social relationships and managing a busy school environment. This often leads to anxiety and disengagement, or inappropriate coping strategies, including 'shutting

down'. These pupils need access to a mainstream curriculum and academic challenge, balanced with a safe space to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop a pattern of SRPs across the County, for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism.

What will the SRPs do?

The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of these pupils can be developed. They would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

It is proposed that each secondary SRP will provide up to 20 places. The pupils will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the School, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the St Albans and Dacorum area to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Why do the Board of Trustees of Longdean School have an interest in developing an SRP at the School?

The Board of Trustees of Longdean School have an interest in developing the SRP because it believes very strongly that the SRP ethos and vision aligns with the School's aims and ethos. The School has always prided itself on being a fully inclusive school that caters for the needs of all students through appropriate support and challenge to facilitate student success. This is reiterated in the aims of the School: <http://www.longdeanschool.co.uk/index.php/about-us/what-we-do.html>

- Longdean School achieved Communication Friendly Status for the period (2019 - 2022) and currently provides a County provision for Speech and Language. Currently there are 10 students on roll at the SLCN base and a further 34 across the School who have an EHCP. Many of these EHCPs are related to social communication difficulties, including autism.
- Meeting the needs of children with social communication difficulties, including autism, is already at the heart of what the School does to support the integration, progress and wellbeing of these students.

- The School already meets the needs of the students in the existing SLCN provision well. Should the SLCN provision be re-designated as an SRP, the School will introduce innovative approaches to meet the needs of an additional group of pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism, whose needs are not currently being met in mainstream schools in Hertfordshire.

What does this mean for pupils currently attending the SLCN base at the School?

Going forward, the needs of children currently in the SLCN base will be reviewed as part of their annual review.

All children who meet the guidance for the current SLCN provision will continue to have their needs met via the admissions guidance for the SRP.

The SRPs will have clear admission and exit guidance. To be admitted to the SRP, a child must have an EHCP and will have social communication difficulties, including autism. They will have needs greater than, or additional to, the needs that can normally be met through full time attendance at a mainstream school. The school will be named in the child's EHCP. Admission to the SRP will be distinct from the school's general admissions process.

How would an SRP impact on other pupils at Longdean School?

From time to time pupils based in the SRP would join sessions in the main school with their age group peers. Typically, these pupils would be supported by specialist staff from the SRP.

Other pupils at the school who are not in the SRP, but who have social communication difficulties, including autism, would benefit from main school staff working alongside specialist colleagues. However, access to SRP staff and resources would only be through admission to the SRP.

What would be the impact on staff?

All existing staff in the SLCN base are employed on a Longdean School contract of employment. There will be no redundancies as a result of this proposal. The School will be recruiting additional staff for the SRP.

The Headteacher will keep a strategic overview of the SRP, including staff recruitment, training and retention. It is expected that the Headteacher or other senior leader will be the line manager for the SRP Leader.

The County Council have developed a full staff training and development programme to ensure consistency of offer across the four secondary schools who are developing SRP provision.

Have your say

You have until 1 February 2021 to let us know your views. The easiest way you can do this is by completing the online response form on our website:

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If you do not have access to the internet you can visit your local library where free access is available to all Hertfordshire residents¹. Staff at libraries can print off and supply consultation documents if requested to.

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Your comments must be received by 1 February 2021. We will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments, but they will be taken into account as explained below.

How the decision will be taken

This is a consultation and no decision has been made yet. All comments received to this consultation will be made available to the Board of Trustees of Longdean School and elected members of Hertfordshire County Council. All responses may be made available in public reports, although personal details will be removed to respect individual privacy.

The following timetable outlines the decision-making process. Please note that meetings marked with * are meetings in public. Although it will not be possible to inform everyone individually of the decisions made, you will be able to access this information throughout the process at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/committees.

Public consultation	5 January – 1 February 2021
Children, Young People & Families Cabinet Panel*	15 March 2021
Cabinet* To consider the outcome of public consultation and decide whether to support the proposal	22 March 2021
Longdean School as an Academy will submit a business case to the Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC)	April 2021
RSC decision	anticipated by end of July 2021

Yours faithfully

Charlie Barling
Acting Chair of Trustees
Longdean School

Jenny Coles
Director of Children's Services
Hertfordshire County Council

¹ Please note that during current Covid-19 conditions, access to libraries may not be available. Best endeavours will be used to publicise the proposal as widely as possible.



**Hertfordshire County Council
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SG13 8DF**

Tel: 0300 123 4043
Fax:
E Mail: education.planning@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Postal Point: CHO136
My ref: School Planning
Your ref:
Date: 5 January 2021

Dear Consultee

Consultation on a proposal to open a ‘Specialist Resource Provision’ (SRP) at The Priory School (the School), Hitchin, from September 2022.

Hertfordshire County Council is consulting you on a proposal to develop a Specialist Resource Provision at The Priory School, a foundation school, for up to 20 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with social communication difficulties, including autism.

Hertfordshire County Council is developing SRPs at a range of mainstream schools across the County. The aim is to have four SRPs at secondary schools and a further eight at primary schools, spread equitably across the County, delivered in phases, starting with the secondary sector. Secondary SRPs are also being proposed at the following schools:

- Bushey Meads School in Bushey;
- Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead; and
- The new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school in Bishop’s Stortford.

Why is this being proposed?

There are an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have a broader and more complex level of need, including autism and social communication difficulties, that cannot be met in the existing provision. This means that more children are being placed in independent specialist provision or, unnecessarily, in special schools. The pupils with this broader and more complex need have difficulties with communication, social relationships and managing a busy school environment. This often leads to anxiety and disengagement, or inappropriate coping strategies, including ‘shutting down’. These pupils need access to a mainstream curriculum and academic challenge, balanced with a safe space to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop a pattern of SRPs across the County, for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism.

What will the SRPs do?

The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of these pupils can be developed. They would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

It is proposed that each secondary SRP will provide up to 20 places. The pupils will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the School, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the North Hertfordshire and Stevenage area to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Why do the Governing Body of The Priory School have an interest in developing an SRP at the School?

The Priory School believes that every student should have the opportunity to attend a fully inclusive school; a school that believes the key to success is to have high expectations for all and the desire to understand the individual needs of every student. The School aims to ensure that each student achieves their potential in all aspects of their learning and personal development and is ready to successfully move on to the next stage of their lives. The School is a beacon of best practice in the area and already works very closely with primary and secondary settings, as well as further education colleges, to improve transition and the entitlement of students with SEND.

The School is inventive in its approach to learning and has integrated blended learning as a core part of its offer. This has resulted in a positive impact on many of the students, especially those with a range of additional needs, making use of technology that allows them to gradually and successfully reintegrate into the classroom.

The School has an imaginative raising-aspirations programme that runs throughout the young people's learning journey with us and focusses on preparing for adulthood, improving students' skills and opening their minds to different possibilities. The School believes that this opportunity is vital for lifelong success and should be available to all students.

What does this mean for pupils?

The SRP will have clear admission and exit guidance. To be admitted to the SRP, a child must have an EHCP and will have social communication difficulties, including autism. They will

have needs greater than, or additional to, the needs that can normally be met through full time attendance at a mainstream school. The school will be named in the child's EHCP. Admission to the SRP will be distinct from the School's general admissions process.

From time to time, pupils based in the SRP would join sessions in the main school with their age group peers. Typically, these pupils would be supported by specialist staff from the SRP.

Other pupils at the School who are not in the SRP, but who have social communication difficulties, including autism, would benefit from main school staff working alongside specialist colleagues. However, access to SRP staff and resources would only be through admission to the SRP.

What would be the impact on staff?

The Headteacher will keep a strategic overview of the SRP, including staff recruitment, training and retention. It is expected that the Headteacher or other senior leader will be the line manager for the SRP Leader.

The County Council have developed a full staff training and development programme to ensure consistency of offer across the four secondary schools who are developing SRP provision.

Have your say

You have until 1 February 2021 to let us know your views. The easiest way you can do this is by completing the online response form on our website:

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Your comments must be received by 1 February 2021. We will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments, but they will be taken into account as explained below.

How the decision will be taken

This is a consultation and no decision has been made yet. All comments received to this consultation will be made available to elected members of Hertfordshire County Council. All responses may be made available in public reports, although personal details will be removed to respect individual privacy.

The following timetable outlines the decision-making process. Please note that meetings marked with * are meetings in public. Although it will not be possible to inform everyone

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individually of the decisions made, you will be able to access this information throughout the process at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/committees.

Public consultation	5 January - 1 February 2021
Children, Young People & Families Cabinet Panel*	15 March 2021
Cabinet* To consider the outcome of public consultation and to decide whether to publish a statutory notice	22 March 2021
County Council publication of statutory notice	10 May - 6 June 2021
Delegated decision if no objections to the statutory notice	28 June 2021
or Cabinet* decision if objections to the statutory notice	12 July 2021

Yours faithfully

Jenny Coles
Director of Children's Services



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

**Hertfordshire County Council
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DF**

Tel: 0300 123 4043
Fax:
E Mail: education.planning@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Postal Point: CHO136
My ref: School Planning
Your ref:
Date: 5 January 2021

Dear Consultee

Consultation on a proposal to open a ‘Specialist Resource Provision’ (SRP) at the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school (the School), Bishop’s Stortford, from September 2023.

Hertfordshire County Council and the Board of Trustees of the Avanti Schools Trust (the Trust) are consulting you on a proposal to develop a Specialist Resource Provision at the new Avanti secondary school, an academy school, for up to 20 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with social communication difficulties, including autism.

Hertfordshire County Council is developing SRPs at a range of mainstream schools across the County. The aim is to have four SRPs at secondary schools and a further eight at primary schools, spread equitably across the County, delivered in phases, starting with the secondary sector. Secondary SRPs are also being proposed at the following schools:

- The Priory School in Hitchin;
- Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead; and
- Bushey Meads School in Bushey.

Why is this being proposed?

There are an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have a broader and more complex level of need, including autism and social communication difficulties, that cannot be met in the existing provision. This means that more children are being placed in independent specialist provision or, unnecessarily, in special schools. The pupils with this broader and more complex need have difficulties with communication, social relationships and managing a busy school environment. This often leads to anxiety and disengagement, or inappropriate coping strategies, including ‘shutting down’. These pupils need access to a mainstream curriculum and academic challenge,

balanced with a safe space to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop a pattern of SRPs across the County, for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism.

What will the SRPs do?

The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of these pupils can be developed. They would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

It is proposed that each secondary SRP will provide up to 20 places. The pupils will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the School, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the Welwyn and Hatfield, East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne area to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Why do the Board of Trustees of the Avanti Schools Trust have an interest in developing an SRP at the new secondary school in Bishop's Stortford?

All the schools in the Avanti Schools Trust are underpinned by an approach to education that seeks to be both inclusive and holistic. In essence, they are guided by a collective view that we are unique beings with incredible potential.

The Trust are confident that the key principles of Hertfordshire County Council's SRP strategy align with its philosophy and principles that inform its mission to help each person become a well-rounded human being. The Trust strongly believe that Hertfordshire's 6 outcome bees¹ are closely aligned, and indeed beautifully complement, Avanti's own approach to ensuring that the hierarchy of needs are both addressed and met.

What does this mean for pupils?

The SRP will have clear admission and exit guidance. To be admitted to the SRP, a child must have an EHCP and will have social communication difficulties, including autism. They will have needs greater than, or additional to, the needs that can normally be met through full time attendance at a mainstream school. The School will be named in the child's EHCP. Admission to the SRP will be distinct from the School's general admissions process.

From time to time pupils based in the SRP would join sessions in the main school with their age group peers. Typically, these pupils would be supported by specialist staff from the SRP.

¹ <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/professionals-and-volunteers/hertfordshires-6-outcome-bees.aspx>

Other pupils at the school who are not in the SRP, but who have social communication difficulties, including autism, would benefit from main school staff working alongside specialist colleagues. However, access to SRP staff and resources would only be through admission to the SRP.

What would be the impact on staff?

The Headteacher will keep a strategic overview of the SRP, including staff recruitment, training and retention. It is expected that the Headteacher or other senior leader will be the line manager for the SRP Leader.

The County Council have developed a full staff training and development programme to ensure consistency of offer across the four secondary schools who are developing SRP provision.

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If you do not have access to the internet you can visit your local library where free access is available to all Hertfordshire residents¹. Staff at libraries can print off and supply consultation documents if requested to.

Should you wish to request a hard copy of the response form or need help understanding this information you can email: education.planning@hertfordshire.gov.uk or alternatively please call us on 0300 123 4043. An interpreting service is available for those who need it.

Your comments must be received by 1 February 2021. We will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments, but they will be taken into account as explained below.

How the decision will be taken

This is a consultation and no decision has been made yet. All comments received to this consultation will be made available to the Board of Trustees of the Avanti Schools Trust and elected members of Hertfordshire County Council. All responses may be made available in public reports, although personal details will be removed to respect individual privacy.

The following timetable outlines the decision-making process. Please note that meetings marked with * are meetings in public. Although it will not be possible to inform everyone individually of the decisions made, you will be able to access this information throughout the process at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/committees.

Public consultation	5 January – 1 February 2021
Children, Young People & Families Cabinet Panel*	15 March 2021

¹ Please note that during current Covid-19 conditions, access to libraries may not be available. Best endeavours will be used to publicise the proposal as widely as possible.

Cabinet* To consider the outcome of public consultation and decide whether to support the proposal	22 March 2021
Avanti Schools Trust, as a multi-academy trust, will submit a business case to the Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC)	April 2021
RSC decision	anticipated by end of July 2021

Yours faithfully

Mike Younger
Chair of Avanti Schools Trust

Jenny Coles
Director of Children's Services
Hertfordshire County Council

Appendix 3

EqIA - Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Bushey Meads School.

1. Who is completing the EqIA and why is it being done?

Title of service / proposal / project / strategy / procurement you are assessing	Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Bushey Meads School, from September 2022.
Names of those involved in completing the EqIA	Samantha Young, Adrian Bentley
Head of Service or Business Manager	Pauline Davis
Team/Department	School Planning Team, Children’s Services
Lead officer contact details	Samantha Young
Focus of EqIA – what are you assessing?	<p>Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Bushey Meads School (“the school”), part of Phase 1 of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) strategy.</p> <p>The Phase 1 proposal is to open SRPs at the following four secondary schools: Bushey Meads School in Bushey, Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead and The Priory School in Hitchin from September 2022; and at the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school in Bishop’s Stortford from September 2023.</p> <p>Why is this being proposed?</p> <p>There are an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have a broader and more complex level of need, including social communication difficulties and autism, that cannot be met in the existing provision. This means that more children are being placed in independent specialist provision or, unnecessarily, in special schools.</p> <p>The pupils with this broader and more complex need have difficulties with communication, social relationships and managing a busy school</p>

environment. This often leads to anxiety and disengagement, or inappropriate coping strategies, including 'shutting down'. These pupils need access to a mainstream curriculum and academic challenge, balanced with a safe space to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop a pattern of SRPs across the County, for pupils with SLCN and also those with the broader and more complex level of need, including social communication difficulties, including autism.

What will the SRPs do?

The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of these pupils can be developed. They would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

It is proposed that each secondary SRP will provide up to 20 places. The pupils will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere area, to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for

	<p>children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).</p>
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>The Herts Parent Carer Involvement group have been fully involved in the development of this proposal.</p> <p>Officers have carried out a 4-week public consultation on this proposal. The consultation period started on 5 January and ended on 1 February 2021.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation letter were sent to parents/carers of pupils on roll at Bushey Meads School, as well as to school governors/trustees and staff at the school.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation letters were also sent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All maintained schools, free schools and academies (excluding nurseries) in Hertfordshire; • MPs, County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and Local Authority Chief Executives; • Trade Union representatives; • Church Diocese representatives; • NHS representatives; • Parent Governor representatives on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; • Libraries and Citizen’s Advice Bureaux; • Headteacher Forums; • Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI); • Key officers within Hertfordshire County Council. <p>The consultation letters and online response forms were also made available on Hertfordshire County Council’s website. A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools mentioned above in paragraph 2.</p>

2. List of data sources used for this EqIA

Title and brief description	Date	Gaps in data												
<p>Officers have carried out a 4-week public consultation on this proposal. The consultation period started on 5 January and ended on 1 February 2021.</p> <p>Following the end of the consultation period, officers have analysed the responses that were received and considered any issues that were raised concerning the protected characteristics listed in section 3 below. These issues and our response to them have been incorporated into this EqIA.</p>	<p>5 January– 1 February 2021</p>	<p>One respondent raised concern around how the pupils with disabilities placed in the SRP will be supported in a mainstream setting.</p> <p>Nine respondents raised concern around how the proposal will meet the needs of children with SLCN, notably developmental language disorder (DLD).</p>												
<p>Spring 2020 school census data on gender split, English as an additional language (EAL), ethnicity, free school meal (FSM) eligibility, number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (E) or SEN support (K).</p> <p>Countywide data in last column includes pupils at maintained schools, free schools and academies in Hertfordshire (including ESCs and special schools).</p>		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="954 963 1375 1075">Spring 2020 school census data</th> <th data-bbox="1375 963 1592 1075">Bushey Meads School</th> <th data-bbox="1592 963 1807 1075">County Average %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="954 1075 1375 1117">Students (Year 7 to 13)</td> <td data-bbox="1375 1075 1592 1117">1251</td> <td data-bbox="1592 1075 1807 1117">87108</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="954 1117 1375 1262">Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)</td> <td data-bbox="1375 1117 1592 1262">616</td> <td data-bbox="1592 1117 1807 1262">26591</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="954 1262 1375 1410">% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)</td> <td data-bbox="1375 1262 1592 1410">49.24%</td> <td data-bbox="1592 1262 1807 1410">30.53%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Spring 2020 school census data	Bushey Meads School	County Average %	Students (Year 7 to 13)	1251	87108	Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	616	26591	% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	49.24%	30.53%
Spring 2020 school census data	Bushey Meads School	County Average %												
Students (Year 7 to 13)	1251	87108												
Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	616	26591												
% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	49.24%	30.53%												

		Number EAL (English as an additional language) (First language Not English or believed not to be English excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	299	11023	
		% EAL (First language Not English or believed not to be English excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	23.90%	12.65%	
		Number with EHC plans (E)	53	2510	
		% with EHC plans (E)	4.24%	2.88%	
		Number with SEN support (K)	186	10400	
		% with SEN support (K)	14.87%	11.94%	
		Number Eligible for FSM (Free School Meals) (at date of Census)	98	7785	
		% Eligible for FSM (at date of Census)	7.83%	8.94%	
		Number of Male Students	706	43947	
		% of Male Students	56.43%	50.45%	
		Number of Female Students	545	43161	
		% of Female Students	43.57%	49.55%	
Summary of data in the table above.		Comparing the data in the above table for the pupils at Bushey Meads School (year 7 to 13) with the county average for the same year groups, the percentage of Minority Ethnic Students is significantly higher than the county average, as is the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The percentage of pupils with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (E) is higher than the county average, as is the percentage of pupils with SEN			

support (K). The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is lower than the county average. The percentage of male pupils is significantly higher than the county average and the percentage of female pupils is correspondingly lower. The number of male pupils at the school is significantly more than the number of female pupils.

3. Analysis and assessment: review of information, impact analysis and mitigating actions

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Age		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their age.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Disability		<p>This proposal is specifically aimed to enhance the support for children and young people with EHCPs, who have the identified need. It will ensure that children at the SRP will be supported to access the mainstream curriculum whilst providing a safe space for them, where work can be done with specially trained teachers and support staff to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Officers have been clear that the County Council are not ‘closing’ a</p>	<p>There will be purpose built accommodation provided at the school which will be designed according to the latest DfE Building Bulletin guidance (BB104).</p> <p>Dedicated staff will be employed to work with pupils in the SRP.</p> <p>The school will build on existing expertise and staff will receive bespoke training, being coordinated across the four schools in partnership with the County Council, to ensure that the staff have the skills to fully support the children placed at the SRP.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
		<p>provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with speech and language difficulties, including developmental language disorder, who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access this provision.</p> <p>From time to time, pupils based in the SRP would join sessions in the main school with their age group peers. Typically, these pupils would be supported by specialist staff from the SRP.</p> <p>Other pupils at the School who are not in the SRP, but who have SLCN needs including those with broader more complex needs including social communication difficulties, including autism, would benefit from main school staff working alongside specialist colleagues. However, access to SRP staff and resources would only be through admission to the SRP.</p> <p>This proposal forms part of a graduated response to meet the needs</p>	<p>Sufficient capital and revenue funding will be provided to enable the SRP to fully meet the needs of the pupils.</p> <p>The demand for places at the new SRPs will be reviewed annually.</p> <p>The position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>Any issues identified or known, as well as the duties found within Part 6, Section 149 and Schedules 10 and 13 of the Equality Act 2010 concerning disability will be factored into the individual scheme designs. Any building scheme will also meet the requirements to avoid Disability Discrimination under Section 15 of the Equality Act 2010.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
		of children with communication difficulties, including autism.	
Gender reassignment		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their gender reassignment.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Pregnancy and maternity		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their pregnancy or maternity.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Race		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their race.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Religion or belief		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their religion or belief.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Sex/Gender		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their sex/gender.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Sexual orientation		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their sexual orientation.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Marriage and civil partnership		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their marriage or civil partnership.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Carers		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their caring responsibility.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Other relevant groups Consider if there is a potential impact (positive or negative) on areas such as health and wellbeing, crime and disorder, Armed Forces community.		It is anticipated that this proposal will have a positive impact on the pupils who will be placed at the SRP. These pupils will be fully supported in a safe environment whilst being part of the wider mainstream school. Dedicated staff will work with the pupils to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing. Pupils will be in a suitable setting, close to their home and community, which fully meets their needs.	No additional mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.

Opportunity to advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with SLCN needs and those with broader social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council’s graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere area, to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Conclusion of your analysis and assessment

OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS	SUMMARY
<p>i. No equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No major change required to proposal 	<p>No major changes are required to this proposal at this time. The proposal will enhance the offer for children with Education, Health & Care Plans. Dedicated staff will work with the pupils in purpose-built accommodation designed to meet their needs. The proposal will ensure that pupils in the SRP are fully supported in a mainstream setting. In addition, the expertise of staff in the SRP will be shared with other staff at the school, enhancing the school’s ability to support children with SEND needs.</p>
<p>ii. Minimal equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adverse impacts have been identified, but have been objectively justified (provided you do not unlawfully discriminate) - Ensure decision makers consider the cumulative effect of how a number of decisions impact on equality - No major change required to proposal 	

<p>iii. Potential equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Take 'mitigating action' to change the original policy/proposal, remove barriers or better advance equality- Set out clear actions in the action plan in section 4.	
<p>iv. Major equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The adverse effects are not justified, cannot be mitigated or show unlawful discrimination- You must stop and remove the policy [you should consult with Legal Services]- Ensure decision makers understand the equality impact	

4. Prioritised Action Plan

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Lead officer and timeframe
Stakeholders	Explore ways of supporting parents, carers, governors and staff through the change process.	Stakeholders are fully supported throughout the process.	Absence of negative feedback from stakeholders and pupils, their families and carers, and staff are happy and supported in the new provision.	Samantha Young February – December 2022
Disabled Pupils	Ensure that any known issues around disability are factored into the individual scheme designs and that all building schemes are compliant with the Equalities Act and DfE Building Bulletin BB104.	New build is fully compliant with build requirements.	Absence of negative feedback and pupils are happy and supported in purpose-built provision that meets their needs and supports their learning and wellbeing.	Samantha Young February – December 2022

This EqlA has been signed off by:

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer: Samantha Young

Date: 10 February 2021

Head of Service or Business Manager: Pauline Davis

Date: 10 February 2021

Review date: 11 June 2021

EqIA - Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Longdean School.

1. Who is completing the EqIA and why is it being done?

Title of service / proposal / project / strategy / procurement you are assessing	Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Longdean School, from September 2022.
Names of those involved in completing the EqIA	Samantha Young, Adrian Bentley
Head of Service or Business Manager	Pauline Davis
Team/Department	School Planning Team, Children’s Services
Lead officer contact details	Samantha Young
Focus of EqIA – what are you assessing?	<p>Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Longdean School (“the school”), part of Phase 1 of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) strategy.</p> <p>The Phase 1 proposal is to open SRPs at the following four secondary schools: Bushey Meads School in Bushey, Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead and The Priory School in Hitchin from September 2022; and at the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school in Bishop’s Stortford from September 2023.</p> <p>Why is this being proposed?</p> <p>There are an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have a broader and more complex level of need, including social communication difficulties and autism, that cannot be met in the existing provision. This means that more children are being placed in independent specialist provision or, unnecessarily, in special schools.</p> <p>The pupils with this broader and more complex need have difficulties with communication, social relationships and managing a busy school environment. This often leads to anxiety and disengagement, or inappropriate coping strategies, including ‘shutting down’. These pupils need access to a mainstream curriculum and academic challenge, balanced with a safe space</p>

to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop a pattern of SRPs across the County, for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism.

What will the SRPs do?

The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of these pupils can be developed. They would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

It is proposed that each secondary SRP will provide up to 20 places. The pupils will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the St Albans and Dacorum area, to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

At Longdean School, it is proposed to re-designate the existing speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) base at the school, as a Specialist Resource Provision for up to 20 pupils with an Education Health

	<p>and Care Plan (EHCP) with social communication difficulties, including autism.</p> <p>Going forward, the needs of children currently in the SLCN base will be reviewed as part of their annual review.</p> <p>All children who meet the guidance for the current SLCN provision will continue to have their needs met via the admissions guidance for the SRP.</p>
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>The Herts Parent Carer Involvement group have been fully involved in the development of this proposal.</p> <p>Officers have carried out a 4-week public consultation on this proposal. The consultation period started on 5 January and ended on 1 February 2021.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation letter were sent to parents/carers of pupils on roll at Longdean School, as well as to school governors/trustees and staff at the school.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation letters were also sent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All maintained schools, free schools and academies (excluding nurseries) in Hertfordshire; • MPs, County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and Local Authority Chief Executives; • Trade Union representatives; • Church Diocese representatives; • NHS representatives; • Parent Governor representatives on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; • Libraries and Citizen’s Advice Bureaux; • Headteacher Forums; • Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI); • Key officers within Hertfordshire County Council.

	<p>The consultation letters and online response forms were also made available on Hertfordshire County Council's website. A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools mentioned above in paragraph 2.</p>
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2. List of data sources used for this EqIA

Title and brief description	Date	Gaps in data
<p>We have carried out a 4-week public consultation on this proposal. The consultation period started on 5 January and ended on 1 February 2021.</p> <p>Following the end of the consultation period we have analysed the responses that were received and considered any issues that were raised concerning the protected characteristics listed in section 3 below. These issues and our response to them have been incorporated into this EqIA.</p>	<p>5 January– 1 February 2021</p>	<p>22 respondents raised concern around how the proposal will meet the needs of children with SLCN, notably developmental language disorder (DLD).</p> <p>Four respondents felt that the number of places created across the four schools would be insufficient to meet demand.</p> <p>Two respondents raised concern around how the pupils with disabilities placed in the SRP will be supported in a mainstream setting.</p>

Spring 2020 school census data on gender split, English as an additional language (EAL), ethnicity, free school meal (FSM) eligibility, number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (E) or SEN support (K).

Countywide data in last column includes pupils at maintained schools, free schools and academies in Hertfordshire (including ESCs and special schools).

Spring 2020 school census data	Longdean School	County Average %
Students (Year 7 to 13)	1334	87108
Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	448	26591
% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	33.58%	30.53%
Number EAL (English as an additional language) (First language Not English or believed not to be English excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	177	11023
% EAL (First language Not English or believed not to be English excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	13.27%	12.65%
Number with EHC plans (E)	37	2510
% with EHC plans (E)	2.77%	2.88%
Number with SEN support (K)	114	10400
% with SEN support (K)	8.55%	11.94%
Number Eligible for FSM (Free School Meals) (at date of Census)	173	7785
% Eligible for FSM (at date of Census)	12.97%	8.94%
Number of Male Students	674	43947
% of Male Students	50.52%	50.45%

		Number of Female Students	660	43161	
Summary of data in the table above.		% of Female Students	49.48%	49.55%	<p>Comparing the data in the above table for the pupils at Longdean School (year 7 to 13) with the county average for the same year groups, the percentage of Minority Ethnic Students is higher than the county average, as is the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The percentage of pupils with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (E) is lower than the county average, as is the percentage of pupils with SEN support (K). The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is higher than the county average. The percentage of male and female pupils is about the same as the county average. The number of male pupils at the school is slightly higher than the number of female pupils.</p>

3. Analysis and assessment: review of information, impact analysis and mitigating actions

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Age		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their age.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Disability		<p>This school has an existing SLCN base which will be re-designated to an SRP as part of this proposal. The needs of the children with SLCN, including those with developmental delay will continue to be met through the new SRP, where they meet the entry criteria. The school and the County Council are working closely with the pupils in the SLCN base and their families and carers to ensure that they are fully supported through this transition period.</p> <p>This proposal is specifically aimed to enhance the support for children and young people with EHCPs, who have the identified need. It will ensure that children at the SRP will be supported to access the mainstream curriculum whilst providing a safe space for them, where work can be done with specially trained teachers and</p>	<p>There will be purpose built accommodation provided at the school which will be designed according to the latest DfE Building Bulletin guidance (BB104).</p> <p>Dedicated staff will be employed to work with pupils in the SRP.</p> <p>The school will build on existing expertise and staff will receive bespoke training, being coordinated across the four schools in partnership with the County Council, to ensure that the staff have the skills to fully support the children placed at the SRP.</p> <p>Sufficient capital and revenue funding will be provided to enable the SRP to fully meet the needs of the pupils.</p> <p>The demand for places at the new SRPs will be reviewed annually.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
		<p>support staff to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Officers have been clear that the County Council are not ‘closing’ a provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with speech and language difficulties, including developmental language disorder, who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access this provision.</p> <p>From time to time, pupils based in the SRP would join sessions in the main school with their age group peers. Typically, these pupils would be supported by specialist staff from the SRP.</p> <p>Other pupils at the School who are not in the SRP, but who have SLCN needs including those with broader more complex needs including social communication difficulties, including autism, would benefit from main school staff working alongside specialist colleagues. However, access to SRP</p>	<p>The position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>Any issues identified or known, as well as the duties found within Part 6, Section 149 and Schedules 10 and 13 of the Equality Act 2010 concerning disability will be factored into the individual scheme designs. Any building scheme will also meet the requirements to avoid Disability Discrimination under Section 15 of the Equality Act 2010.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
		<p>staff and resources would only be through admission to the SRP.</p> <p>This proposal forms part of a graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism.</p>	
Gender reassignment		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their gender reassignment.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Pregnancy and maternity		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their pregnancy or maternity.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Race		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their race.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Religion or belief		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their religion or belief.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Sex/Gender		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their sex/gender.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Sexual orientation		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their sexual orientation.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Marriage and civil partnership		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their marriage or civil partnership.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Carers		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their caring responsibility.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Other relevant groups Consider if there is a potential impact (positive or negative) on areas such as health and wellbeing, crime and disorder,		It is anticipated that this proposal will have a positive impact on the pupils who will be placed at the SRP. These pupils will be fully supported in a safe environment whilst being part of the wider mainstream school. Dedicated staff will work with the pupils to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing. Pupils will be in a suitable setting, close to their	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Armed Forces community.		home and community, which fully meets their needs.	

Opportunity to advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council’s graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the St Albans and Dacorum area, to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Conclusion of your analysis and assessment

OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS	SUMMARY
<p>i. No equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No major change required to proposal 	<p>No major changes are required to this proposal at this time. The proposal will enhance the offer for children with Education, Health & Care Plans. Dedicated staff will work with the pupils in purpose-built accommodation designed to meet their needs. The proposal will ensure that pupils in the SRP are fully supported in a mainstream setting. In addition, the expertise of staff in the SRP will be shared with other staff at the school, enhancing the school’s ability to support children with SEND needs.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
<p>ii. Minimal equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adverse impacts have been identified, but have been objectively justified (provided you do not unlawfully discriminate) - Ensure decision makers consider the cumulative effect of how a number of decisions impact on equality - No major change required to proposal 			
<p>iii. Potential equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take ‘mitigating action’ to change the original policy/proposal, remove barriers or better advance equality - Set out clear actions in the action plan in section 4. 			
<p>iv. Major equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The adverse effects are not justified, cannot be mitigated or show unlawful discrimination - You must stop and remove the policy [you should consult with Legal Services] - Ensure decision makers understand the equality impact 			

4. Prioritised Action Plan

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Lead officer and timeframe
Stakeholders	Explore ways of supporting parents, carers, governors and staff through the change process.	Stakeholders are fully supported throughout the process.	Absence of negative feedback from stakeholders and pupils, their families and carers, and staff are happy and supported in the new provision.	Samantha Young February – December 2022
Disabled Pupils	Ensure that any known issues around disability are factored into the individual scheme designs and that all building schemes are compliant with the Equalities Act.	New build is fully compliant with build requirements.	Absence of negative feedback and pupils are happy and supported in purpose-built provision that meets their needs and supports their learning and wellbeing.	Samantha Young February – December 2022

This EqlA has been signed off by:

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer: Samantha Young

Date: 10 February 2021

Head of Service or Business Manager: Pauline Davis

Date: 10 February 2021

Review date: 11 June 2021

EqIA - Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at The Priory School.

1. Who is completing the EqIA and why is it being done?

Title of service / proposal / project / strategy / procurement you are assessing	Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at The Priory School, from September 2022.
Names of those involved in completing the EqIA	Samantha Young, Adrian Bentley
Head of Service or Business Manager	Pauline Davis
Team/Department	School Planning Team, Children’s Services
Lead officer contact details	Samantha Young
Focus of EqIA – what are you assessing?	<p>Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at The Priory School (“the school”), part of Phase 1 of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) strategy.</p> <p>The Phase 1 proposal is to open SRPs at the following four secondary schools: Bushey Meads School in Bushey, Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead and The Priory School in Hitchin from September 2022; and at the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school in Bishop’s Stortford from September 2023.</p> <p>Why is this being proposed?</p> <p>There are an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have a broader and more complex level of need, including social communication difficulties and autism, that cannot be met in the existing provision. This means that more children are being placed in independent specialist provision or, unnecessarily, in special schools.</p> <p>The pupils with this broader and more complex need have difficulties with communication, social relationships and managing a busy school environment. This often leads to anxiety and disengagement, or inappropriate coping strategies, including ‘shutting down’. These pupils need access to a mainstream curriculum and academic challenge, balanced with a safe space</p>

to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop a pattern of SRPs across the County, for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism.

What will the SRPs do?

The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of these pupils can be developed. They would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

It is proposed that each secondary SRP will provide up to 20 places. The pupils will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the North Hertfordshire and Stevenage area, to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Stakeholders

The Herts Parent Carer Involvement group have been fully involved in the development of this proposal.

Officers have carried out a 4-week public consultation on this proposal. The consultation period started on 5 January and ended on 1 February 2021.

Copies of the consultation letter were sent to parents/carers of pupils on roll at The Priory School, as well as to school governors/trustees and staff at the school.

Copies of the consultation letters were also sent to:

- All maintained schools, free schools and academies (excluding nurseries) in Hertfordshire;
- MPs, County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and Local Authority Chief Executives;
- Trade Union representatives;
- Church Diocese representatives;
- NHS representatives;
- Parent Governor representatives on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Libraries and Citizen's Advice Bureaux;
- Headteacher Forums;
- Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI);
- Key officers within Hertfordshire County Council.

The consultation letters and online response forms were also made available on Hertfordshire County Council's website. A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools mentioned above in paragraph 2.

2. List of data sources used for this EqIA

Title and brief description	Date	Gaps in data												
<p>We have carried out a 4-week public consultation on this proposal. The consultation period started on 5 January and ended on 1 February 2021.</p> <p>Following the end of the consultation period we have analysed the responses that were received and considered any issues that were raised concerning the protected characteristics listed in section 3 below. These issues and our response to them have been incorporated into this EqIA.</p>	<p>5 January– 1 February 2021</p>	<p>Three respondents raised concern around how the pupils with disabilities placed in the SRP will be supported in a mainstream setting.</p> <p>Four respondents felt that the number of places created across the four schools would be insufficient to meet demand.</p> <p>Eight respondents raised concern around how the proposal will meet the needs of children with SLCN, notably developmental language disorder (DLD).</p>												
<p>Spring 2020 school census data on gender split, English as an additional language (EAL), ethnicity, free school meal (FSM) eligibility, number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (E) or SEN support (K).</p> <p>Countywide data in last column includes pupils at maintained schools, free schools</p>		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="994 1086 1413 1161">Spring 2020 school census data</th> <th data-bbox="1413 1086 1630 1161">The Priory School</th> <th data-bbox="1630 1086 1845 1161">County Average %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="994 1161 1413 1201">Students (Year 7 to 13)</td> <td data-bbox="1413 1161 1630 1201">1206</td> <td data-bbox="1630 1161 1845 1201">87108</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="994 1201 1413 1353">Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)</td> <td data-bbox="1413 1201 1630 1353">297</td> <td data-bbox="1630 1201 1845 1353">26591</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="994 1353 1413 1447">% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and</td> <td data-bbox="1413 1353 1630 1447">24.63%</td> <td data-bbox="1630 1353 1845 1447">30.53%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Spring 2020 school census data	The Priory School	County Average %	Students (Year 7 to 13)	1206	87108	Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	297	26591	% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and	24.63%	30.53%
Spring 2020 school census data	The Priory School	County Average %												
Students (Year 7 to 13)	1206	87108												
Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	297	26591												
% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and	24.63%	30.53%												

and academies in Hertfordshire (including ESCs and special schools).

excluding Refused and Not Obtained)		
Number EAL (English as an additional language) (First language Not English or believed not to be English excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	65	11023
% EAL (First language Not English or believed not to be English excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	5.39%	12.65%
Number with EHC plans (E)	16	2510
% with EHC plans (E)	1.33%	2.88%
Number with SEN support (K)	205	10400
% with SEN support (K)	17.00%	11.94%
Number Eligible for FSM (Free School Meals) (at date of Census)	123	7785
% Eligible for FSM (at date of Census)	10.20%	8.94%
Number of Male Students	605	43947
% of Male Students	50.17%	50.45%
Number of Female Students	601	43161
% of Female Students	49.83%	49.55%

Summary of data in the table above.

Comparing the data in the above table for the pupils at The Priory School (year 7 to 13) with the county average for the same year groups, the percentage of Minority Ethnic Students is lower than the county average, as is the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The

		percentage of pupils with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (E) is lower than the county average, but the percentage of pupils with SEN support (K) is higher than the county average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is higher than the county average. The percentage of male and female pupils is about the same as the county average. The number of male pupils at the school is approximately equal to the number of female pupils.
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3. Analysis and assessment: review of information, impact analysis and mitigating actions

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Age		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their age.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Disability		<p>This proposal is specifically aimed to enhance the support for children and young people with EHCPs, who have the identified need. It will ensure that children at the SRP will be supported to access the mainstream curriculum whilst providing a safe space for them, where work can be done with specially trained teachers and support staff to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Officers have been clear that the County Council are not ‘closing’ a</p>	<p>There will be purpose built accommodation provided at the school which will be designed according to the latest DfE Building Bulletin guidance (BB104).</p> <p>Dedicated staff will be employed to work with pupils in the SRP.</p> <p>The school will build on existing expertise and staff will receive bespoke training, being coordinated across the four schools in partnership with the County Council, to ensure that the staff have the skills to fully support the children placed at the SRP.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
		<p>provision but extending the offer and meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with speech and language difficulties, including developmental language disorder, who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access this provision.</p> <p>From time to time, pupils based in the SRP would join sessions in the main school with their age group peers. Typically, these pupils would be supported by specialist staff from the SRP.</p> <p>Other pupils at the School who are not in the SRP, but who have SLCN needs including those with broader more complex needs including social communication difficulties, including autism, would benefit from main school staff working alongside specialist colleagues. However, access to SRP staff and resources would only be through admission to the SRP.</p> <p>This proposal forms part of a graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism.</p>	<p>Sufficient capital and revenue funding will be provided to enable the SRP to fully meet the needs of the pupils.</p> <p>The demand for places at the new SRPs will be reviewed annually.</p> <p>The position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>Any issues identified or known, as well as the duties found within Part 6, Section 149 and Schedules 10 and 13 of the Equality Act 2010 concerning disability will be factored into the individual scheme designs. Any building scheme will also meet the requirements to avoid Disability Discrimination under Section 15 of the Equality Act 2010.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Gender reassignment		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their gender reassignment.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Pregnancy and maternity		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their pregnancy or maternity.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Race		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their race.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Religion or belief		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their religion or belief.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Sex/Gender		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their sex/gender.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Sexual orientation		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their sexual orientation.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Marriage and civil partnership		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their marriage or civil partnership.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Carers		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their caring responsibility.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Other relevant groups Consider if there is a potential impact (positive or negative) on areas such as health and wellbeing, crime and disorder, Armed Forces community.		It is anticipated that this proposal will have a positive impact on the pupils who will be placed at the SRP. These pupils will be fully supported in a safe environment whilst being part of the wider mainstream school. Dedicated staff will work with the pupils to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing. Pupils will be in a suitable setting, close to their home and community, which fully meets their needs.	No additional mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.

Opportunity to advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
<p>The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council’s graduated approach to meeting needs locally; • meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development; • build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum; • work with other schools across the North Hertfordshire and Stevenage area, to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). 			
Conclusion of your analysis and assessment			
OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS		SUMMARY	
<p>i. No equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No major change required to proposal 		<p>No major changes are required to this proposal at this time. The proposal will enhance the offer for children with Education, Health & Care Plans. Dedicated staff will work with the pupils in purpose-built accommodation designed to meet their needs. The proposal will ensure that pupils in the SRP are fully supported in a mainstream setting. In addition, the expertise of staff in the SRP will be shared with other staff at the school, enhancing the school’s ability to support children with SEND needs.</p>	

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
<p>ii. Minimal equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adverse impacts have been identified, but have been objectively justified (provided you do not unlawfully discriminate) - Ensure decision makers consider the cumulative effect of how a number of decisions impact on equality - No major change required to proposal 		<p>iii. Potential equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take ‘mitigating action’ to change the original policy/proposal, remove barriers or better advance equality - Set out clear actions in the action plan in section 4. 	
<p>iv. Major equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The adverse effects are not justified, cannot be mitigated or show unlawful discrimination - You must stop and remove the policy [you should consult with Legal Services] - Ensure decision makers understand the equality impact 			

4. Prioritised Action Plan

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Lead officer and timeframe
Stakeholders	Explore ways of supporting parents, carers, governors and staff through the change process.	Stakeholders are fully supported throughout the process.	Absence of negative feedback from stakeholders and pupils, their families and carers, and staff are happy and supported in the new provision.	Samantha Young February – December 2022
Disabled Pupils	Ensure that any known issues around disability are factored into the individual scheme designs and that all building schemes are compliant with the Equalities Act.	New build is fully compliant with build requirements.	Absence of negative feedback and pupils are happy and supported in purpose-built provision that meets their needs and supports their learning and wellbeing.	Samantha Young February – December 2022

This EqlA has been signed off by:

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer: Samantha Young

Date: 10 February 2021

Head of Service or Business Manager: Pauline Davis

Date: 10 February 2021

Review date: 11 June 2021

EqIA - Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school.

1. Who is completing the EqIA and why is it being done?

Title of service / proposal / project / strategy / procurement you are assessing	Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school, from September 2023.
Names of those involved in completing the EqIA	Samantha Young, Adrian Bentley
Head of Service or Business Manager	Pauline Davis
Team/Department	School Planning Team, Children’s Services
Lead officer contact details	Samantha Young
Focus of EqIA – what are you assessing?	<p>Proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school (“the school”), part of Phase 1 of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) strategy.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Avanti Schools Trust secondary school is yet to open and therefore there are no pupils currently on roll.</p> <p>The Phase 1 proposal is to open SRPs at the following four secondary schools: Bushey Meads School in Bushey, Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead and The Priory School in Hitchin from September 2022; and at the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school in Bishop’s Stortford from September 2023.</p> <p>Why is this being proposed?</p> <p>There are an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) who have a broader and more complex level of need, including social communication difficulties and autism, that cannot be met in the existing provision. This means that more children are being placed in independent specialist provision or, unnecessarily, in special schools.</p>

The pupils with this broader and more complex need have difficulties with communication, social relationships and managing a busy school environment. This often leads to anxiety and disengagement, or inappropriate coping strategies, including 'shutting down'. These pupils need access to a mainstream curriculum and academic challenge, balanced with a safe space to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop a pattern of SRPs across the County, for pupils with SLCN and also those with the broader and more complex level of need, social communication difficulties, including autism.

What will the SRPs do?

The vision is that, through short and appropriate intervention, the self-esteem of these pupils can be developed. They would be kept well emotionally and supported to reach their academic potential.

It is proposed that each secondary SRP will provide up to 20 places. The pupils will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the Welwyn and Hatfield, East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne area, to support meeting these types of

	<p>needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).</p>
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>The Herts Parent Carer Involvement group have been fully involved in the development of this proposal.</p> <p>Officers have carried out a 4-week public consultation on this proposal. The consultation period started on 5 January and ended on 1 February 2021.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation letter were sent to school governors/trustees and staff at the Avanti Schools Trust. It should be noted that the Avanti Schools Trust secondary school is yet to open and therefore there are no pupils currently on roll.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation letters were also sent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All maintained schools, free schools and academies (excluding nurseries) in Hertfordshire; • MPs, County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and Local Authority Chief Executives; • Trade Union representatives; • Church Diocese representatives; • NHS representatives; • Parent Governor representatives on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; • Libraries and Citizen’s Advice Bureaux; • Headteacher Forums; • Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI); • Key officers within Hertfordshire County Council. <p>The consultation letters and online response forms were also made available on Hertfordshire County Council’s website. A total of 8406 copies of the consultation letters were sent out across the four secondary schools mentioned above in paragraph 2.</p>

2. List of data sources used for this EqIA

Title and brief description	Date	Gaps in data												
<p>Officers have carried out a 4-week public consultation on this proposal. The consultation period started on 5 January and ended on 1 February 2021.</p> <p>Following the end of the consultation period officers have analysed the responses that were received and considered any issues that were raised concerning the protected characteristics listed in section 3 below. These issues and our response to them have been incorporated into this EqIA.</p>	<p>5 January– 1 February 2021</p>	<p>Two respondents felt that the number of places created across the four schools would be insufficient to meet demand.</p> <p>Five respondents were concerned about how the proposal will meet the needs of children with SLCN, notably developmental language disorder (DLD)</p>												
<p>Spring 2020 school census data on gender split, English as an additional language (EAL), ethnicity, free school meal (FSM) eligibility, number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (E) or SEN support (K).</p> <p>Because the new Avanti Schools Trust secondary school is yet to open, it has instead been necessary to provide an average set of data across the five existing secondary schools within the town of Bishop’s Stortford. This has been compared with the countywide average</p>		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="994 940 1413 1161">Spring 2020 school census data</th> <th data-bbox="1417 940 1630 1161">Average % for the 5 Bishop's Stortford secondary schools</th> <th data-bbox="1635 940 1848 1161">County Average %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="994 1165 1413 1201">Students (Year 7 to 13)</td> <td data-bbox="1417 1165 1630 1201">5667</td> <td data-bbox="1635 1165 1848 1201">87108</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="994 1204 1413 1353">Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)</td> <td data-bbox="1417 1204 1630 1353">1508</td> <td data-bbox="1635 1204 1848 1353">26591</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="994 1356 1413 1449">% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and</td> <td data-bbox="1417 1356 1630 1449">26.61%</td> <td data-bbox="1635 1356 1848 1449">30.53%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Spring 2020 school census data	Average % for the 5 Bishop's Stortford secondary schools	County Average %	Students (Year 7 to 13)	5667	87108	Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	1508	26591	% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and	26.61%	30.53%
Spring 2020 school census data	Average % for the 5 Bishop's Stortford secondary schools	County Average %												
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Number Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	1508	26591												
% Minority Ethnic Students (not White British and	26.61%	30.53%												

percentages in the table opposite and the text below it. The existing secondary schools in Bishop's Stortford are:

- Birchwood High School
- The Bishop's Stortford High School
- The Hertfordshire & Essex High School
- Hockerill Anglo-European College
- St Mary's Catholic School

Countywide data in last column includes pupils at maintained schools, free schools and academies in Hertfordshire (including ESCs and special schools).

excluding Refused and Not Obtained)		
Number EAL (English as an additional language) (First language Not English or believed not to be English excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	580	11023
% EAL (First language Not English or believed not to be English excluding Refused and Not Obtained)	10.23%	12.65%
Number with EHC plans (E)	70	2510
% with EHC plans (E)	1.24%	2.88%
Number with SEN support (K)	465	10400
% with SEN support (K)	8.21%	11.94%
Number Eligible for FSM (Free School Meals) (at date of Census)	204	7785
% Eligible for FSM (at date of Census)	3.60%	8.94%
Number of Male Students	2810	43947
% of Male Students	49.59%	50.45%
Number of Female Students	2857	43161
% of Female Students	50.41%	49.55%

Summary of data in the table above.

Comparing the data in the above table for the pupils at the five secondary schools in Bishop's Stortford (year 7 to 13) with the county average for the same year groups, the percentage of Minority Ethnic Students is lower than the county average, as is the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The percentage of pupils with Education, Health

		and Care (EHC) plans (E) is lower than the county average, as is the percentage of pupils with SEN support (K). The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is significantly lower than the county average. The percentage of male pupils is slightly lower than the county average and the percentage of female pupils is correspondingly higher. The number of male pupils at the school is less than the number of female pupils.
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3. Analysis and assessment: review of information, impact analysis and mitigating actions

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Age		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their age.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Disability		<p>This proposal is specifically aimed to enhance the support for children and young people with EHCPs, who have the identified need. It will ensure that children at the SRP will be supported to access the mainstream curriculum whilst providing a safe space for them, where work can be done with specially trained teachers and support staff to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Officers have been clear that the County Council are not 'closing' a provision but extending the offer and</p>	<p>There will be purpose built accommodation provided at the school which will be designed according to the latest DfE Building Bulletin guidance (BB104).</p> <p>Dedicated staff will be employed to work with pupils in the SRP.</p> <p>The school will build on existing expertise and staff will receive bespoke training, being coordinated across the four schools in partnership with the County Council, to ensure that the staff have the skills to fully support the children placed at the SRP.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
		<p>meeting the needs of children in Hertfordshire. Children with speech and language difficulties, including developmental language disorder, who meet the admissions criteria will continue to access this provision.</p> <p>From time to time, pupils based in the SRP would join sessions in the main school with their age group peers. Typically, these pupils would be supported by specialist staff from the SRP.</p> <p>Other pupils at the School who are not in the SRP, but who have SLCN needs including those with broader more complex needs including social communication difficulties, including autism, would benefit from main school staff working alongside specialist colleagues. However, access to SRP staff and resources would only be through admission to the SRP.</p> <p>This proposal forms part of a graduated response to meet the needs of children with communication difficulties, including autism.</p>	<p>Sufficient capital and revenue funding will be provided to enable the SRP to fully meet the needs of the pupils.</p> <p>The demand for places at the new SRPs will be reviewed annually.</p> <p>The position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>Any issues identified or known, as well as the duties found within Part 6, Section 149 and Schedules 10 and 13 of the Equality Act 2010 concerning disability will be factored into the individual scheme designs. Any building scheme will also meet the requirements to avoid Disability Discrimination under Section 15 of the Equality Act 2010.</p>

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Gender reassignment		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their gender reassignment.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Pregnancy and maternity		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their pregnancy or maternity.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Race		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their race.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Religion or belief		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their religion or belief.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Sex/Gender		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their sex/gender.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Sexual orientation		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their sexual orientation.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.

Protected characteristic group	What do you know? What do people tell you?	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)?	What can you do?
Marriage and civil partnership		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their marriage or civil partnership.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Carers		It is not anticipated at this stage that the proposals will affect people disproportionately because of their caring responsibility.	No mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.
Other relevant groups Consider if there is a potential impact (positive or negative) on areas such as health and wellbeing, crime and disorder, Armed Forces community.		It is anticipated that this proposal will have a positive impact on the pupils who will be placed at the SRP. These pupils will be fully supported in a safe environment whilst being part of the wider mainstream school. Dedicated staff will work with the pupils to support self-regulation, build resilience and protect emotional wellbeing. Pupils will be in a suitable setting, close to their home and community, which fully meets their needs.	No additional mitigation is currently required but the position will continue to be monitored and if any issues in respect of the protected characteristic are identified then the Action Plan below will be amended accordingly.

Opportunity to advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations

The SRP will be a centre of excellence for pupils with social communication difficulties, including autism. The SRP will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council’s graduated approach to meeting needs locally;
- meet the needs of pupils within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the pupils when they are accessing the wider school curriculum;
- work with other schools across the Welwyn and Hatfield, East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne area, to support meeting these types of needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Conclusion of your analysis and assessment

OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS	SUMMARY
<p>i. No equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No major change required to proposal 	<p>No major changes are required to this proposal at this time. The proposal will enhance the offer for children with Education, Health & Care Plans. Dedicated staff will work with the pupils in purpose-built accommodation designed to meet their needs. The proposal will ensure that pupils in the SRP are fully supported in a mainstream setting. In addition, the expertise of staff in the SRP will be shared with other staff at the school, enhancing the school’s ability to support children with SEND needs.</p>
<p>ii. Minimal equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adverse impacts have been identified, but have been objectively justified (provided you do not unlawfully discriminate) - Ensure decision makers consider the cumulative effect of how a number of decisions impact on equality - No major change required to proposal 	

<p>iii. Potential equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Take 'mitigating action' to change the original policy/proposal, remove barriers or better advance equality- Set out clear actions in the action plan in section 4.	
<p>iv. Major equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The adverse effects are not justified, cannot be mitigated or show unlawful discrimination- You must stop and remove the policy <p>[you should consult with Legal Services]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensure decision makers understand the equality impact	

4. Prioritised Action Plan

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Lead officer and timeframe
Stakeholders	Explore ways of supporting parents, carers, governors and staff through the change process.	Stakeholders are fully supported throughout the process.	Absence of negative feedback from stakeholders and pupils, their families and carers, and staff are happy and supported in the new provision.	Samantha Young February – December 2023
Disabled Pupils	Ensure that any known issues around disability are factored into the individual scheme designs and that all building schemes are compliant with the Equalities Act.	New build is fully compliant with build requirements.	Absence of negative feedback and pupils are happy and supported in purpose-built provision that meets their needs and supports their learning and wellbeing	Samantha Young February – December 2023

This EqlA has been signed off by:

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer: Samantha Young

Date: 10 February 2021

Head of Service or Business Manager: Pauline Davis

Date: 10 February 2021

Review date: 11 June 2021

Appendix 4

Clarification statement regarding the development of specialist resource provisions (SRPs) in Hertfordshire for young people with social communication difficulties, including autism, in addition to children with severe speech disorders and developmental language disorder.

Children and young people with developmental language disorder and severe speech motor disorders are currently provided for by a pattern of SLCN bases attached to mainstream schools. These children and young people continue to need access to the mainstream curriculum, delivered in a linguistically modified and visually supported environment.

Officers have identified an increasing number of pupils with speech, language and communication needs who have a broader and more complex level of need, including autism and social communication difficulties. Often these young people end up in special school, when they should have been better supported to access a mainstream curriculum instead. These pupils need access to mainstream curriculum, balanced with a safe space to be in, where work can be done to support self-regulation and emotional wellbeing.

This has led to the proposal to develop SRPs for the children and young people with social communication difficulties in addition to the children and young people with speech and language disorders, as part of the continuation of provision for children and young people with:

- developmental language disorder and / or a severe motor speech disorder (developmental verbal dyspraxia)
- social communication and social interaction difficulty who may acquire a diagnosis of autism

Access to provision will be needs-led, with a robust multi-disciplinary team overseeing admissions to ensure early intervention. Access for children and young people with social communication difficulties will not be reliant on a medical diagnosis of autism. Children with developmental language disorder and severe speech motor disorders, however, will be identified by a speech and language therapy lead clinician, ahead of being recommended to the admissions panel.