

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Schools Forum**

**13 June 2019**

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#### **Exeter House Special School**

##### **Purpose of report**

1. To outline the proposed changes to Exeter House and the funding required to accommodate the expansion of the school.

##### **Background**

2. Exeter House Special School was the only special school serving the south of the county until recently, when the Springfields South provision was put in place, to service the increased demand and to stem the number of pupils travelling from the south of the county to other specialist provision in the north and west of the county.
3. The agreed number of places at Exeter House has stood at 121 places for a number of years with the school frequently exceeding the number of pupils in the planned places.
4. A decision was taken by the school in 2016 to acquire the former John Ivie Centre in Salisbury, to be used provide used as a vocational centre providing the education for our young people at the school between the ages of 15-19. The provision was necessitated by increasing school numbers, demand from the local authority to provide more places and the schools lack of capacity to meet demand both at the time and into the future, on their main site alone.
5. At the point of this expansion onto the new site, the local authority had not requested or funded the school to expand and the decision was school-led. The new provision came into place from September 2017, at a point when the school saw their pupil numbers move to 124.

##### **Current Position**

6. Demand for Special School places continues to grow across the whole county. The local authority has successfully submitted a 'Place Change Request' to the Department for Education in October 2018 to increase the number of places at Exeter House Special School to 134 planned places from September 2019.
7. Current estimates have indicated that this number will be exceeded and that there will be requests for over 140 places in September 2019.
8. The local authority is now in a position where it is formally asking Exeter House to expand its provision to cater for the increased demand. Exeter House has expressed concerns about meeting the demand within its existing accommodation. If Exeter House is unable to accommodate these additional pupils, then the local authority will need to seek out of county places with independent specialist providers.

9. The remaining special schools around the county are currently unable to offer places to meet this growth in demand and therefore the local authority is now asking Exeter House to expand its provision across its two sites.
10. Due to financial viability, Exeter House has expressed concerns regarding the running of a split site school, where the two campuses are nearly two miles apart and is reviewing its current footprint.
11. Placing pupils in out of county independent special schools is considerably more expensive than placing in our in-county special schools. The additional cost is generally between £25,000 - £65,000 more per place depending upon the complexity of the individual pupil and nature of the school attended.
12. To meet the growing demand and needs of incoming pupils, Exeter House is being asked to by the local authority to re-configure its accommodation to support the needs of the pupils over both sites.
13. To align Exeter House with other special schools operating over two sites and being expanded at the request of, and in partnership with the local authority, the enhanced top up rates offered to schools operating over multiple sites must be considered, to ensure consistency across the piste. The enhanced top up rates equate to an annual extra amount of £100,000, which will be funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

### **Proposal**

14. Schools Forum is asked to note the content of the report.
15. Schools Forum to consider awarding the enhanced top up rates to Exeter House Special School, which will be reviewed annually and to ensure consistency across the special schools.

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