

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**9 January 2018**

**For immediate release**

## **Consultation opens on vision for special needs schools**

Wiltshire Council is welcoming the views of parents, carers, pupils, staff and the general public on its vision to transform special needs education.

The council proposes to invest £20m in a new centre of excellence for pupils with special needs and disabilities. It will be developed at Rowdeford near Devizes to match the excellent facilities at Exeter House, Salisbury.

The vision means that the old schools at Larkrise, Trowbridge, St Nicholas, Chippenham and Rowdeford will close in 2023.

People have until 1 March 2019 to comment on the plans. They can respond to the statutory consultation in the following ways:

- [Wiltshire Council's website consultation page](#)
- By emailing [specialschools@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:specialschools@wiltshire.gov.uk)
- At information surgeries in the schools
- At open meetings for parents/carers run by Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) which will be advertised on the [WPCC website](#)

The proposals for the purpose-built and amply-equipped school will address the need for an additional 220 SEND places for Wiltshire while providing:

- Great teaching from well-trained, caring specialist dedicated staff
- The right facilities and support – hydro-pools, sensory rooms, physio, open outdoor space, speech and language therapy and family care
- Strong community links with cafes, community gardens and public playing fields

- Closer links between SEND schools, and greater support for all mainstream schools
- Links with specialist nurseries offering children with special needs seamless attention from very small to teenage years
- Good road routes to both sites which are central to the home locations of children and young people with SEND with space to expand

Laura Mayes, cabinet member for children's services, said: "This ambitious investment will transform SEND in Wiltshire and provide outstanding schooling for special needs pupils into the future.

"We are bringing together the best facilities, the best teaching and the best learning environment. This will help our staff apply their expertise and experience in greater strength and with greater purpose.

"The vision will mean change, and that can sometimes be challenging. But we're certain that pupils, families and staff will love the new schools."

The final decision on the vision for SEND will be made at Wiltshire Council's cabinet meeting in March 2019 after completion of the consultation.

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**Notes to editors:**

For more information please contact the Wiltshire Council communications team on 01225 713115/6 or 01225 713370.

**For political comment:**

Conservatives: Laura Mayes [laura.mayes@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:laura.mayes@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Liberal Democrats: Ian Thorn [ian.thorn@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.thorn@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Labour: Ricky Rogers [ricky.rogers@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:ricky.rogers@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Independent: Ernie Clark [ernie.clark@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:ernie.clark@wiltshire.gov.uk)